ROLE OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL  

The judge advocate general (JAG) assists the planners and operators with reviewing targets for compliance with applicable law of war and rules of engagement (ROE) restrictions (including collateral damage and other combatant commander restrictions) prior to mission execution. Legal advice and counsel is necessary to the development, interpretation, modification, and proper implementation of the ROE. JAGs and their support staff should be trained, operationally oriented, and readily accessible to assist planners and operators with international legal considerations and ROE or related issues. JAGs provide legal advice to commanders and their staffs consistent with the international and domestic legal obligations and the governing ROE. The complexity of international legal considerations along with the ROE requires JAGs to be available at all stages in the tasking cycle. JAGs are usually available 24/7 to the strategy, plans, and operations divisions within an air operations center (AOC). Additionally, JAGs are usually available at the expeditionary wing and group level to assist commanders, aircrew, and planners at the tactical level with targeting-related issues. It should be emphasized, however, that the military commanders and operators make the ultimate targeting decisions; however, inputs and counsel provided by the JAG and JA staff are considered. Legal considerations must be addressed when analyzing military necessity, imminent threat, and/or operational gain by the commander, Air Force forces and joint force commander.