VOLUME 1 BASIC DOCTRINE

AIRPOWER

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Airpower is defined as "the ability to project military power or influence through the control and exploitation of air, space, and cyberspace to achieve strategic, operational, or tactical objectives." The proper application of airpower requires a comprehensive doctrine of employment and an Airman's perspective. As the nation's most comprehensive provider of military airpower, the Air Force conducts continuous and concurrent air, space, and cyberspace operations. The air, space, and cyberspace capabilities of the other Services serve primarily to support their organic maneuver paradigms; the Air Force employs air, space, and cyberspace capabilities with a broader focus on theater-wide and national-level objectives. Through airpower, the Air Force provides the versatile, wide-ranging means towards achieving national objectives with the ability to deter and respond immediately to crises anywhere in the world.

Airpower exploits the third dimension of the operational environment; the electromagnetic spectrum; and time to leverage speed, range, flexibility, precision, tempo, and lethality to create effects from and within the air, space, and cyberspace domains. From this multi-dimensional perspective, Airmen can apply military power against an enemy's entire array of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of power, at long ranges and on short notice. Airpower can be applied across the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war simultaneously, significantly increasing the options available to national leadership. Due to its range, speed, and flexibility, airpower can compress time, controlling the tempo of operations in our favor. Airpower should be employed with appropriate consideration of land and maritime power, not just during operations against enemy forces, but when used as part of a team that protects and aids friendly forces as well.

Much of what airpower can accomplish from within these three domains is done to critically affect events in the land and maritime domains—this is the heart of joint-domain integration, a fundamental aspect of airpower's contribution to US national interests. Airmen integrate capabilities across air, space, and cyberspace domains to achieve effects across all domains in support of joint force commander objectives. For example, a remotely piloted aircraft operating from a ground station in the continental US (CONUS) relies on space and cyberspace capabilities to support operations overseas. While all Services rely more and more on such integration, cross-domain integration is fundamental to how Airmen employ airpower to complement the joint force.

Airmen exploit the third dimension, which consists of the entire expanse above the earth's surface. Its lower limit is the earth's surface (land or water), and the upper limit reaches toward infinity. This third dimension consists of the air and space domains.

From an operational perspective, the air domain can be described as that region above the earth's surface in which aerodynamics generally govern the planning and conduct of military operations, while the space domain can be described as that region above the earth's surface in which astrodynamics generally govern the planning and conduct of military operations.[1] Airmen also exploit operational capabilities in cyberspace. Cyberspace is "a global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent network of information technology infrastructures, including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers." In contrast to our surface-oriented sister Services, the Air Force uses air, space, and cyberspace capabilities to create effects, including many on land and in the maritime domains, that are ends unto themselves, not just in support of predominantly land or maritime force activities.

> **Airpower**
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> **Air Force doctrine presents airpower as a unitary construct.** The Air Force acknowledges the importance of the space and cyberspace domains. However, **Air Force doctrine should address what unifies Airmen.** Thus, in the Air Force's senior doctrine product, it is appropriate to use concepts and language that bind Airmen together instead of presenting the Air Force as a collection of tribes broken out in technological stovepipes according to the domains of air, space, and cyberspace. Other subordinate doctrine products delve into the differences and interdependencies of the core functions and missions conducted within and across the air, space, and cyberspace domains, and within the context of more specific types of operations. Where appropriate, this product will also mention air, space, and cyberspace forces or capabilities.

The evolution of contemporary airpower stems from the Airman's original vision of combat from a distance, bypassing the force-on-force clash of surface combat. Originally manifest in long-range aircraft delivering kinetic weapons, airpower has evolved over time to include many long-range supporting capabilities, notably the conduct of networked information-related operations. This evolution has accelerated as Airmen conduct a greater percentage of operations not just over-the-horizon but globally, expanding operations first through space and now also in cyberspace. Just as airpower grew from its initial use as an adjunct to surface

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[1] JP 3-30, *Command and Control for Joint Air Operations*, formally defines the air domain as "the atmosphere, beginning at the Earth's surface, extending to the altitude where its effects upon operations become negligible." The description offered above is used to more easily illustrate the difference between the air and space domains using parallel language.

operations, space and cyberspace have likewise grown from their original manifestations as supporting capabilities into warfighting arenas in their own right.