



SECURITY

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“Security” is one of the principles of war.

The purpose of security is to never permit the enemy to acquire unexpected advantage. Friendly forces and their operations should be protected from enemy action that could provide the enemy with unexpected advantage. The lethal consequences of enemy attack make the security of friendly forces a paramount concern.

Critical to security is the understanding that it embraces [physical security](#), [operations security](#), and security of the information environment. Information has always been part of air, land, and sea warfare; now, with the proliferation of advanced communications and computer technologies, it becomes even more central to the outcome of a conflict.

Aircraft are most vulnerable on the ground. Thus, [force protection](#) is an integral part of [airpower](#) employment. Fixed bases are especially vulnerable as they not only should withstand aerial, ground, and cyberspace attacks, but should also sustain concentrated and prolonged air, space, and cyberspace activities against the enemy.

From an Airman’s perspective, **security also may be obtained by staying beyond the enemy’s reach, physically and virtually.** Airpower is uniquely suited to capitalize on this through its ability to operate over the horizon. Not only can airpower reach and strike at extended range, but it also can distribute data and analysis as well as command and control across a worldwide span.

Security from physical and electronic enemy intrusion conceals our capabilities and intentions, while allowing friendly forces the freedom to gather information on the adversary—the type of information that creates the opportunity to strike the enemy where least expected. By exploiting the vertical mediums of air and space, Airmen provide security for our nation and friendly forces by detecting enemy actions and determining intentions even in denied areas.

Commanders have an obligation to protect their forces, but the threat and the means for countering it are quite different in [contingency operations](#). The threat varies depending on local circumstances, but the commander must be aware that it always exists. Although US forces have a right to self-defense, Airmen must bear in mind the concepts of necessity and proportionality when exercising that right (as discussed in the standing [rules of engagement](#)). **Necessity** exists when a hostile act occurs or when a force

demonstrates hostile intent; use of force is then authorized while the force continues to commit hostile acts or exhibit hostile intent. **Proportionality** means the use of force should be sufficient to respond decisively, and may exceed the means and intensity of the hostile act/intent, but the nature, duration and scope of force should not exceed what is required.

The concepts of necessity and proportionality as applicable to self-defense should not be confused with those of military necessity and proportionality as applicable in the [law of armed conflict](#), which together seek to minimize [collateral damage](#) during offensive or defensive operations during armed conflict. Indeed, the defense of friendly forces against enemy attack during armed conflict would not (subject to prevailing ROE) involve the concept of self-defense at all.
