

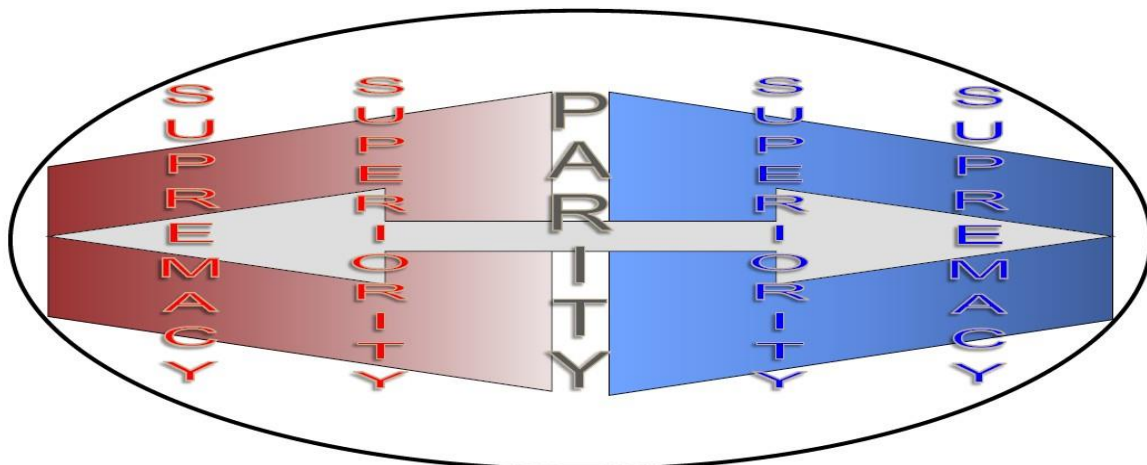
Doctrine Advisory: Control of the Air

July 2017

Terminology is important. Airmen need to understand our terminology so we can properly explain our foundational beliefs to our joint and international partners. Offensive Counter Air (OCA), Defensive Counter Air (DCA), Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD), Air Superiority and Air Supremacy are all terms that refer to Control of the Air. This Doctrine Advisory equips Airmen to better understand these terms and the relationship between them.

Control of the Air in joint doctrine

- Control of the air is the desired degree of control of the air that may vary geographically and over time from no control, to parity, to local air superiority, to air supremacy, all depending upon the situation and the joint force commander's (JFC's) concept of operations (CONOPS).
 - In some situations, the commander may have limited resources, which are only adequate to establish control of the air for specific periods of time or over only a portion of the threats (e.g., against aerodynamic but not ballistic threats). Accordingly, control of the air may not totally eliminate the air and missile threats.
- Air Superiority is that degree of control of the air by one force that permits the conduct of its operations at a given time and place without prohibitive interference from air and missile threats.
 - Historically, air superiority has proven to be a prerequisite to success for an operation/campaign
 - Prevents enemy air and missile threats from interfering with operations of friendly air, land, maritime, space, and special operations forces, thus facilitating freedom of action and movement.
- Air Supremacy is that degree of control of the air wherein the opposing force is incapable of effective interference within the operational area using air and missile threats.



Control of the Air Spectrum

Source: Annex 3-01, *Counterair*

- Counterair operations are conducted across the spectrum of conflict, using all means to ensure access and freedom of action.
 - The counterair mission integrates offensive and defensive operations to attain and maintain the JFC's desired degrees of control of the air and of protection by neutralizing or destroying enemy aircraft and missiles, both before and after launch.
 - These operations may use aircraft, air-to-air missiles (AAMs), surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs), surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), unmanned aircraft (UA), artillery, ground forces, special operations, space operations, cyberspace operations (CO), electronic warfare (EW), and other capabilities to create the desired lethal and/or nonlethal effects.
 - The counterair framework is based upon the integration of OCA and DCA operations, by all capable joint force components, against both air and missile threats. Generally, OCA operations seek to dominate enemy airspace and prevent the launch of threats, while DCA operations defeat or reduce the effectiveness of enemy air and missile threats attempting to penetrate or attack through friendly airspace. (The framework is depicted in Figure I-1, Counterair Framework from JP 3-01, *Countering Air and Missile Threats*.)

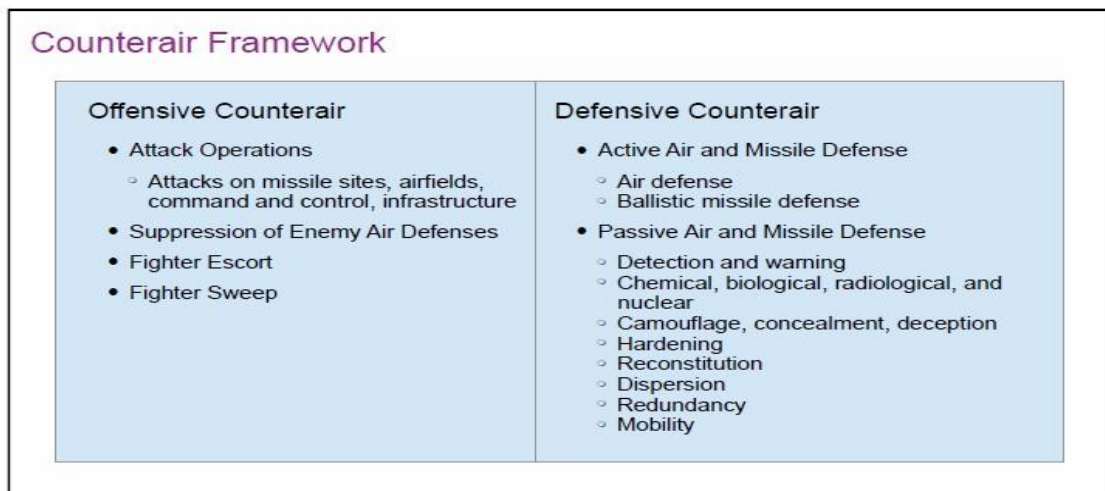
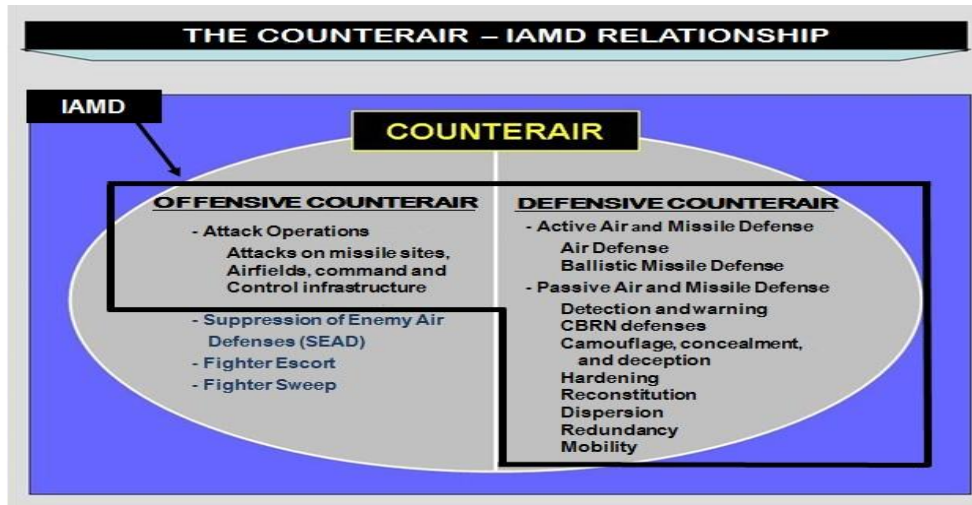


Figure I-1. Counterair Framework

JFCs conduct continuous counterair operations to maintain the desired degree of control of the air over the US homeland, key US and friendly assets, within international airspace, and over designated portions of friendly and enemy territory.

- Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) is the integration of capabilities and overlapping operations to defend the homeland and US national interests, protect the joint force, and enable freedom of action by negating an enemy's ability to create adverse effects from their air and missile capabilities.
 - IAMD is not a mission. It is an approach that synchronizes aspects of counterair with global missile defense (MD); homeland defense (HD); global strike; and counter-rocket, artillery, and mortar (C- RAM).
 - IAMD incorporates offensive and defensive measures to create a comprehensive joint and combined force capable of preventing an enemy from effectively employing its offensive air and missile weapons. IAMD is designed to deter, and failing that, to prevent an enemy from effectively employing air and missile assets.
 - At the theater level, IAMD consists of DCA supported by OCA attack operations.
 - Beyond the theater level, IAMD emphasizes the integration of these counterair operations with global MD, HD, and global strike.

The Counterair – IAMD Relationship is depicted in Air Force Doctrine Annex 3-01, *Counterair*.



Source: Annex 3-01, *Counterair*

Recent Doctrinal Changes:

The 21 April 2017 update to JP 3-01, *Countering Air and Missile Threats* now accurately reflects the Air Force position on Control of the Air as stated in Air Force Doctrine Annex 3-01, *Counterair*.

- Air superiority and supremacy descriptions and definitions were modified to reflect the degree of control of the air as the objective
- Describes counterair as the theater mission for countering all air and missile threats and IAMD as an approach (not a mission) for countering some air and missile threats
- Command and Control (C2) of IAMD states “For theater level IAMD, offensive counterair attack operations are commanded by the joint force air component commander (JFACC) and defensive counterair is commanded by the area air defense commander. The JFACC is responsible for integration between the offensive and defensive counterair components of IAMD.”

Bottomline:

Control of the Air is inherently joint. As such, it’s important Airmen understand applicable terminology so we can properly explain our foundational beliefs to our joint and international partners.

To learn more, click on [JP 3-01, Countering Air and Missile Threats](#) and [Annex 3-01, Counterair](#).

In Case You Missed It (attached – click the paperclip on the left side of your screen)

- March – June 2017 Doctrine Notices:
 - Joint MegaPub Updated w/JP 3-25 & Updated JP-Dictionary (20170302)
 - USAF MegaPub Updated w/Annex 3-03, 3-05, and 3-60 Changes (20170330)
 - USAF MegaPub Updated w/Annex 3-10, 3-70; Joint MegaPub Updated w/JP 3-01, Joint Dictionary Changes (20170605)

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