



COUNTERLAND EFFECTS

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Counterland operations can achieve tactical, operational, or strategic-level effects and can significantly influence the course of a military operation. Counterland effects focus at the tactical and operational levels of war by targeting fielded enemy surface forces and their supporting infrastructure. When planned and executed successfully, counterland operational effects contribute to strategic effects by denying the enemy's ability to execute a coherent ground campaign. In cases where the enemy places strategic value on a specific portion of their ground combat force, counterland operations can produce more immediate effects at the strategic level.

Counterland operations are applicable across the range of military operations. Counterland operations are associated with both major combat operations as well as stability operations characterized by insurgency, guerrilla tactics, and civil strife.¹ Counterland operations against a modern, highly mechanized army differ from operations conducted in an asymmetric environment against irregular forces. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the nature of the conflict to properly apply airpower during counterland operations.²

¹ Historical examples include: British air policing in the Middle East during the interwar period, French operations during the battle for Algeria, the US in Vietnam, the insurgent war in El Salvador, and recent US air operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

² For a discussion of counterland applications in a maritime environment see [Air Force Doctrine Annex 3-04, Countersea Operations](#)