



[ANNEX 3-52 AIRSPACE CONTROL](#)

IRREGULAR WARFARE

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[Irregular warfare](#) is defined as “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations” ([JP 1](#).)” Irregular warfare is a complex and nuanced type of warfare and does not lend itself easily to a concise universal definition. Irregular warfare is not a lesser-included form of traditional warfare, rather it encompasses a spectrum of warfare where the nature and characteristics are significantly different from traditional war. It includes, but is not limited to, activities such as counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, counterinsurgency, and stability operations. [Traditional warfare and irregular warfare](#) are not mutually exclusive; both forms of warfare may be present in a given conflict. [Airmen](#) should understand that the nature of war will often change in the course of a conflict. This is especially true in irregular warfare where the conflict is often protracted. Traditional warfare can rapidly evolve into an irregular war and vice versa, requiring the military force to adapt from one form to the other. The Air Force forces play an important role in irregular warfare ([Annex 3-2](#)), but just as with more traditional operations, their most effective employment requires careful study of the environment and appreciation for the unique characteristics of the conflict. For more information on irregular warfare see Annex 3-2, [Irregular Warfare](#); Annex 3-22, [Foreign Internal Defense](#); JP 3-07.2 [Antiterrorism](#); and JP 3-24, [Counterinsurgency Operations](#).

Irregular Warfare Operations

Recognizing that aspects of irregular warfare can occur both before and after traditional combat operations, this document addresses airspace considerations across the range of military operations during all [phases of operations](#) to include Phase 0 (Shape), Phase 1 (Deter), Phase 2, (Seize the Initiative), Phase 3 (Major Combat Operations) and the post traditional warfare phases, Phase 4 (Stability) and Phase 5 (Enable Civil Authorities) operations.

As combatants conclude major combat operations and transition to a legitimate government, military operations may continue with the goal of reducing the threat (military or political) to a level manageable by the host nation’s authorities. During this operational phase, the joint force may be required to perform local governance until legitimate local entities are functioning. The joint force air component commander (JFACC) could be required to perform roles traditionally associated with a host nation

aviation authority and may include the development of aeronautical information (e.g., instrument procedures, publications, NOTAMs), civil flight planning procedures, certification of procedures, aviation safety investigation, training of host nation or contract personnel, or operation of airspace infrastructure systems. The regional air movement control center (RAMCC) can play the critical lead role during these phases as the volume of non-military traffic increases (see [Appendix 2](#)).

A key JFACC requirement is the development of a plan to establish host nation capabilities to affect a successful transfer of [airspace control](#) from the joint force to the host nation in post-hostility operations. This phase is typically characterized by a change from sustained combat operations to stability operations with increased requests for airspace and airfield access by host nation or other non-JFC supporting organizations. The ACP should address airspace access criteria for non-JFC organizations, joint force to civil airspace priority, and identification and acceptance of associated civil airspace operating risks. A thorough review of all written guidance should be conducted when the transition to host nation governmental operations is anticipated. Documents such as the joint air operations plan, air and space operations directive, [airspace control plan](#) (ACP), area air defense plan, special instructions (SPINs), rules of engagement, aeronautical information publications, letters of agreement, and international agreements may significantly change during this phase. Priorities for airspace control should be redefined to address increasing civil authority for the airspace environment. Inextricably linked to this review of priorities is a clear determination of what level of risk will be accepted. The impacts of a catastrophic event involving a civil aircraft could significantly damage the strategic objectives of the joint force commander (JFC) and the governments involved in the joint operation. Assistance from the Department of State, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), or a contracted agency should be considered in assisting to establish host nation capabilities.

Threats and Security

Reducing the threats to air operations and establishing security are required to set conditions to transfer airspace control authority to the host nation government. During this phase in particular, the airspace environment is dynamic and may transition rapidly between varying levels of stability. The JFACC should continuously balance military operational needs against increased civil airspace access and affect the transfer of airspace control authority to a legitimate host nation entity. Transition of airspace control to the host nation should be considered carefully with regard to continuing JFC military operations. Reduced military airspace control authority may result in decreased flexibility for operations with increased coordination and approval requirements from the host nation. The main transition planning concepts include:

- ★ Improved efficiency and effectiveness in host nation control of the airspace until transition.
- ★ Installation or increased use of commercial systems.

- ✧ Consolidation and reduction of JFC manpower/systems footprint.
- ✧ Use of contracted airspace control capabilities.
- ✧ Joint force airspace control system linkage to host nation systems.
- ✧ Leveraging host nation capabilities and systems.
- ✧ Transfer of contracts or excess systems to the host nation.
- ✧ Decrease in joint force airspace control support requirements.
- ✧ Planning to ensure a successful airspace turnover to the host nation.
- ✧ Ensuring required host nation capabilities exist.
- ✧ Developing a clear agreement and timelines for airspace control transfer.
- ✧ Ensuring continuing joint force airspace mission needs are supported.

Interagency Considerations

Interagency coordination and development of an airspace transition plan with key transition milestones are required to reduce friction among the JFC, US government, and international and host nation agencies that may be involved in the airspace transition process. The identification and agreement toward establishing milestone criteria, as well as establishing the airspace infrastructure end-state by the various stakeholders, are key to a successful transition plan. Normally, a government or civil organization would handle the planning and requirements for reconstituting the host nation airspace control system. However, the JFACC may be the only one able to assume this primary leadership role, especially in seriously degraded or failed state scenarios. The JFACC may be required to provide training for host nation personnel before enabling a successful transition to host nation control. The JFACC's responsibilities as the acting host nation airspace control authority should be detailed in an appropriate delegation document from the host nation and referenced in the host nation aeronautical information publication.

Transition Plan

The pre-conflict host nation airspace control structure (civilian or military controlled) should provide the basic airspace end-state concept unless destroyed or deemed ineffective. Simplicity and basic effectiveness of the host nation airspace system should be a primary goal of the JFACC's transition plan. Additionally, the JFACC should focus specifically on the airspace control system to prevent excessive requirements or delays from other aviation related issues such as airfield construction or certification issues. The host nation or other supporting agencies may also desire to modify or upgrade the airspace control system which will most likely increase the timelines for the end-state transition milestone. Ideally, the final host nation end-state airspace infrastructure plan

should meet the minimum requirements for ICAO certification (unless post-conflict situations dictate otherwise) and also take into account host nation airspace sovereignty requirements. Interim transfer of airspace control to host nation military forces or contracted airspace control services should be considered to allow the redeployment of joint force airspace control forces.

Interoperability between military and civil airspace users and control agencies is crucial for safe and effective integration of airspace control including air defense, joint fires, air effects, and civil aviation. Use of military liaison teams embedded in host nation control facilities may be required to ensure the adequate coordination and representation of continuing joint force airspace requirements. Civil documents that govern the host nation airspace system may become more authoritative for all airspace users and by the end of this stage of conflict should be the primary source of guidance and regulation. The joint force should ensure that proper agreements exist between the host nation and adjacent nations to enable the effective air defense of the country as well as the safe and efficient flow of air traffic across borders. Management and guidance of information assurance and spectrum management should be accounted for in the transition plan. The proliferation of devices that exploit, interrupt, or use the frequency spectrum is likely during this phase as a result of increased activity of other international and host nation agencies and general increase in economic communications activities.

End State of Transition Airspace

The milestone marking the end of stabilization operations and the beginning of enabling operations is reached when the framework of the host nation airspace control system is in place and the host nation is ready to assume airspace control authority. This stage in operations is characterized by the processes and events that take place during that transition as joint force personnel and equipment are redeployed and host nation personnel and equipment take control.

Enabling Civil Authorities

This stage is predominantly characterized by joint force support to legitimate civil governance in theater. Depending upon the level of indigenous state capacity, joint force activities may be at the behest of that authority or they may be under its direction. The joint force will perform key airspace functions either as the delegated ACA or as supporting airspace service provider under the host nation aviation authority. The JFACC can expect frequent coordination and interaction on airspace issues with host nation, multinational, interagency, and other airspace system participants. The JFACC is in a supporting role to the legitimate civil aviation authority in the region throughout this stage. Normally, operations are concluded when joint force redeployment is complete; however, continued joint force support and involvement with the host nation and other agencies, beyond the termination of the joint operation, may be required to achieve the desired end state.

Airspace Authority Transition

Enabling operations could result as a normal transition from stability operations or as joint force support to a humanitarian relief effort, natural disaster, or other catastrophic

event. During such operations, host nation aviation regulations and guidance are the authoritative source for airspace control procedures. To the maximum extent possible, original host nation aviation and airspace documents should be used by the joint force to comply with host nation aviation authority intent. If derivative host nation guidance is required for dissemination or amplification within joint force documentation (e.g., ACP, ACO, ATO, or SPINS) the information should be included verbatim and refer to the original source document. In situations where host nation procedures must be modified by the military for airspace access or use, host nation authorities should be consulted and provide appropriate approval of the deviation. Formal agreement or understanding should be coordinated between joint forces and the host nation authority to ensure clarity on exact airspace control responsibilities. Frequent and extensive coordination among the joint force, host nation, and other agency personnel on airspace control issues may require close proximity of staffs or use of liaisons.

JFC Air Control Assets in Support of the Host Nation

Based on the level of required support, airspace control personnel may be required to deploy Service-specific controllers, airspace control systems, liaisons, or trainers to support host nation authorities. Senior JFACC staff personnel should ensure that an agreement is in place with the host nation authorizing DOD personnel or equipment to provide air traffic services in sovereign host nation airspaces. Joint force personnel may be required to use systems provided by the host nation or other agencies. Joint force personnel may also be embedded with host nation or other agency personnel to provide airspace control services. In these situations, training, and certification for joint forces personnel or systems should be determined by the host nation authority. Given that few organizations have the deployable airspace control personnel and systems, it should be expected that joint forces support airspace operations using Service airspace control systems. A combined FAA/Air Force system certification flight check is a unique capability often requested to certify host nation radar or navigation aids that have been installed or returned to service. The JFACC may have to orchestrate special procedures (e.g., ground patrols in vicinity of approach path, escorts, night-only operations, etc.) to accomplish flight checks in hostile airspace.

Setting the conditions and milestones for the relief of joint forces and the reestablishment of effective host nation airspace control is crucial for successful termination of joint operations. Host nations with limited capabilities may rely on joint forces for long term airspace control functions and divert available resources to other higher priority host nation programs. In such situations, international, NGO, or contracted services may provide a bridging alternative to take airspace control functions from joint forces until the host nation is prepared to accept them.
