



ESTABLISHING COLLABORATIVE AND SUPPORT TARGETING RELATIONSHIPS

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Targeting is a collaborative effort. Targeteers are consumers of multi-source intelligence data and operate across both the intelligence and operations functions. Manning and targeting resources at the [joint task force](#) (JTF), [air operations center](#) (AOC), and [Joint Intelligence Operations Center](#) (JIOC) are typically insufficient to support robust target planning and execution. The targeting process requires resources from many organizations to meet the commander's targeting demands. Targeting therefore requires reachback support via distributed and federated operations to be effective. Communications, information, and targeting systems of record should be established and coordinated to provide a seamless information flow of data to and from forward and rear locations.

Reachback is the process of obtaining products, services, and applications, or forces, or equipment for material, from organizations not forward deployed. For example, during crisis planning or [contingency operations](#), the Air Force Targeting Center may stand up a crisis management element (CME) to provide direct targeting support to the [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR). Personnel assigned to the CME may operate in a supporting relationship to the COMAFFOR.

Distributed operations in support of targeting occur when independent or interdependent nodes or locations participate in the operational planning and/or operational decision-making process to accomplish goals/missions for engaged commanders. In some instances, the commander may establish a formal supported/supporting relationship between distributed nodes. In other instances, distributed nodes may have a horizontal relationship.

Split operations are a type of distributed operations. The term describes those distributed operations conducted by a single entity separated between two or more geographic locations. A single commander should have oversight of all aspects of a split operation. For example, sections of the [air tasking order](#) (ATO) may be developed from a rear area or backup operation center to reduce the deployed AOC footprint. In this case, the AOC is geographically separated and is a split operation. During split operations, the COMAFFOR has the same degree of authority over geographically separated elements as he or she does over the deployed AFFOR and AOC.

Although distributed operations are similar to reachback, there is one major difference. [Reachback](#) provides ongoing combat support to the operation from organizations that are not forward deployed, while a distributed operation indicates teaming with forward deployed independent or interdependent nodes. With distributed operations, some

During the course of Odyssey Dawn, the Air Force Targeting Center developed approximately 75 percent of our targets, 90 percent of our weaponizing solutions and over 90 percent of our TLAM targets. But that's not all...

Since minimizing collateral damage was a primary objective, pre-strike collateral damage estimates and post-strike battle damage assessments were critical to making effective operational decisions.

The Targeting Center combined Airmen from multiple targeting related disciplines into a single support cell, using newly created procedures and sensitive intelligence to provide rapid, accurate assessments on both sides of the kill chain. All told, the Targeting Center provided approximately three-quarters of our collateral damage and virtually all our battle damage assessments. In my estimation, our ability to rapidly find, fix and target the enemy was a game changer in Odyssey Dawn.

**—Maj Gen Margaret H. Woodward
Commander 17th Air Force and U.S. Air Forces Africa**

**—Remarks at the Air Force Association's 2011 Air & Space Conference
& Technology Exposition, National Harbor Md., Sept. 21, 2011**

operational planning or decision-making may occur from outside the joint area of operations. The goal of effective distributed operations is to support the operational commander in the field; it is not a method of command from the rear. The concept of reachback allows functions to be supported by a staff at home station, to keep the manning and equipment footprint smaller at a forward location.

Federated operations are based on the needs of geographic [combatant commanders](#), JFCs, or COMAFFOR. Joint targeting federation needs are coordinated with the larger joint community and national agencies through the JTF staff J-2's targeting directorate. Coordination should delineate specific duties to federated partners, establish timelines, and determine the methods of communication to be used.

While the COMAFFOR may have direct authority over some units, he/she may not have control over targeting organizations beyond the AOC and those units/personnel who augment the air component. The AOC is nominally manned day-to-day to support

phase-zero and phase-one planning, but may not be suitably manned to support phase-two through phase-five operations. It is therefore crucial that theater strategists, planners, and targeteers develop the necessary relationships with supporting organizations so that surge planning and crisis operations beyond phase-one are in place. When an operation is at execution phase, it is normally too late to establish formal/informal relationships that can support the rigid targeting ops tempo of combat. Formal relationships for targeting support, through federation, distributed or reachback should be established and documented in the [operations plan](#) (OPLAN), [joint air operations plan](#) (JAOP), and memoranda of understanding/memorandum of agreement (MOU/MOA) whenever possible.

Targeting expertise is spread across the DOD enterprise that encompasses a range of targeting capabilities and specialization. Key organizations and capabilities are listed in [Appendix B](#).
