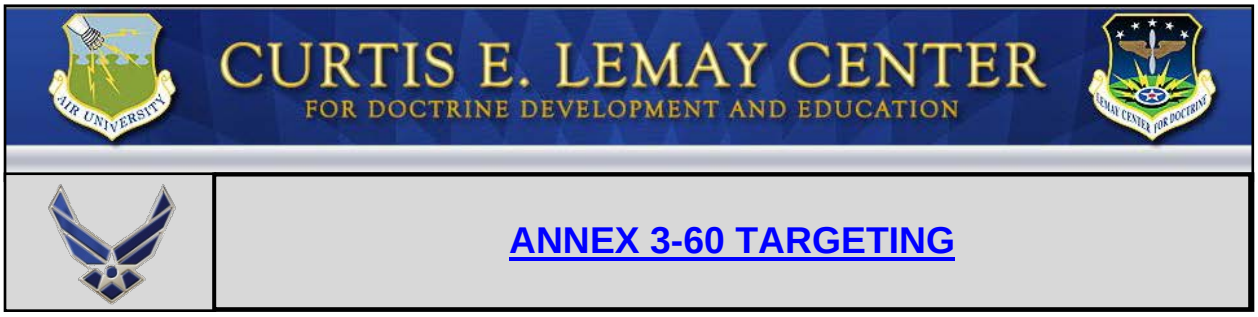

DELIBERATE TARGETING

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Deliberate targeting provides a systematic analytical approach that focuses targeting efforts on supporting operational requirements and the commander's objectives. It helps focus the appropriate capabilities against adversary targets at the right time and place to impose specific desired effects that achieve joint force objectives. **Deliberate targeting supports the air tasking cycle, which creates a daily conveyance of the overall air component strategy. Deliberate targeting within the tasking cycle is the means Airmen use to accomplish the COMAFFOR's non-dynamic targeting requirements.** Therefore, this section discusses deliberate targeting within the context of the air tasking cycle. The air tasking cycle develops the products needed to build and execute an ATO and accomplish assessment. Although it is presented below as six separate, sequential phases, in reality **the targeting process is bi-directional, iterative, multi-dimensional, sometimes executed in parallel, and part of a larger set of processes.** It is built on a foundation laid by thorough JIPOE. Participants from the AOC's strategy, ISR, plans, and operations divisions accomplish various targeting responsibilities, integrating their products into all levels and stages of the air tasking cycle

The cycle consists of the following phases performed at various levels of command:

- ✪ Objectives, effects, and guidance.
- ✪ Target development.
- ✪ Weaponeering and allocation.
- ✪ ATO production and dissemination.
- ✪ Execution planning and force execution.
- ✪ Assessment.

The tasking cycle has usually been represented as a set of distinct processes that separately accomplish targeting, apportionment and allocation of joint air capabilities to produce the ATO. In fact, these processes are all closely interrelated, regarding them as distinct entities misses the central insight that they should work together as an integrated whole, if targeting and tasking are to be most effective. **Targeting and ATO**

production are essential to the tasking cycle. Although the targeting and tasking cycles perform separate and distinct functions, they are highly intertwined and require close coordination, the two cycles run almost in parallel. Once a daily battle rhythm is established the tasking cycle as a whole encompasses the entire process of taking commander's intent and guidance; determining where to apply force or other actions to fulfill that intent, matching available capabilities and forces with targets, putting this information into an integrated, synchronized, and coordinated order, distributing that order to all users, monitoring execution of the order to adapt to changes in the operational environment, and assessing the results of that execution. The cycle is built around finite time periods required to plan, integrate, coordinate, prepare, conduct, and assess air operations. These time periods may vary from theater to theater, but **the tasking cycle and its constituent processes drive the AOC's battle rhythm and thus helps determine deadlines and milestones for related processes, including targeting.**

A principal purpose of the air tasking cycle is to produce orders and supporting documentation to place a flexible array of capabilities in a position to create desired effects in support of the commander's intent. This cycle is driven by the tyranny of time and distance. It takes time for ground crew to prepare aircraft for flight, for aircrew to plan missions, and for aircrew to fly to the immediate theater of operations from distant airfields. Likewise, commanders should have enough visibility on future operations to ensure sufficient assets and crews are available to prepare for and perform tasked missions. These requirements drive the execution of a periodic, repeatable tasking process to allow commanders to plan for upcoming operations. The ATO execution period (usually 24 hours in duration) and the preceding process during which the ATO is developed (usually 72-96 hours in duration) are a direct consequence of these physical constraints.

In contrast to the misperception that targeting information should be provided to planners 72-96 hours in advance; it is evident targets can actually be struck in minutes from when information is made available in the dynamic targeting process. The key to both the flexibility and versatility of deliberate and dynamic targeting is a shared understanding among the functional components. Misperceptions may arise because other components may not have visibility on the wide variety of missions tasked to the air component in support of the JFC's operation and because air component assets are often tasked to simultaneously conduct missions supporting overlapping operational phases. This important shared understanding is largely accomplished by ensuring component liaisons are properly positioned during planning and execution.[1]

The ATO conveys tasking for joint air operations for a specific period of time, normally 24 hours. Detailed planning generally begins 72 hours prior to the start of execution to properly assess the progress of operations, anticipate enemy actions, make needed adjustments to strategy, and enable integration of all components' requirements. The actual length of the tasking cycle may vary from theater to theater.

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[1] See Air Force Instruction 13-1 AOC, Volume 3 for a description of the AOC other service/functional component liaisons.

The tasking cycle length may be based upon JFC guidance, air component commander direction, and theater needs. The length should be specified in theater standard operating procedures or other directives. If it is modified for a particular contingency, this should be specified in JFC's operation plan (OPLAN) or the air component's JAOP. The net result of this part of the tasking cycle—and of deliberate targeting efforts—is that there are usually five ATOs in various stages of progress at any one time.

✪ One, or more, previously executed ATO undergoing assessment at various levels.

✪ Current ATO in execution.

✪ Next ATO in production.

✪ Next successive ATO in detailed planning (target development and weaponeering).

✪ Following successive ATO in strategy development (objectives and guidance).

Some assets may not operate within the established cycle. These include most space assets, which are tasked via the joint space tasking order (JSTO); cyberspace assets, which are tasked via the cyber tasking order (CTO); and airborne information operations (IO) assets, which are tasked via the ATO. However, some theater-specific space and cyberspace operations may be included in the daily ATO for the sake of situational awareness, integration, and synchronization. During major conventional operations, special operations function within a 96-hour planning cycle; however, during contingency operations they often operate within or drive the dynamic targeting process. Certain IO and other nonlethal capabilities operate within a 96-hour cycle as well, and it is critical for AOC planners to know if special operations forces (SOF) and IO personnel may assist with targeting. Intertheater air mobility assets also do not necessarily operate within the tasking cycle. In large operations, the existence of differing planning cycles among components can lead to increased complexity in the process. Most component planning cycles are approximately 72-96 hours. However, the requirement within the air tasking cycle to manage as many as five separate ATOs drives the requirement for discipline to manage defined inputs and outputs during particular slices of time.

Deliberate targeting supports every phase of the JOPPA and the joint air tasking cycle. It is interwoven throughout the phases up to and including ATO production and dissemination. Effective deliberate targeting comes at a high cost in terms of the volume and flow of information. Targeting and assessment, which are integrally related, impose most of the intelligence collection burden the joint force carries—to support deliberate targeting efforts before, dynamic targeting efforts during, and assessment during and after ATO execution. Successful targeting requires in-depth information on such things as enemy force posture; capabilities and movement; tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs); COGs and target vulnerabilities; enemy leadership's intentions, habits, and movement patterns; the flow and interconnections of enemy economic behavior; and the linkages and interconnections within major infrastructure systems, like electrical power and electronic communications webs. The process also takes into account such things as friendly objectives, concept of operations (CONOPS), ROE,

target time constraints, and friendly force capabilities to create five general types of products:

- ✪ Target nominations and target lists intended to achieve desired effects which will accomplish commander's objectives while complying with the published guidance for the use of forces.
- ✪ Capability recommendations based upon effects chosen to achieve commander's objectives.
- ✪ Capability effectiveness estimates logically linked to effects specified during target development to support force application recommendations (may also include commensurate collateral damage estimates for targets of concern).
- ✪ Force/capabilities selection and planning.
- ✪ Target materials built to support current and future targeting efforts.

Once the ATO is published, adjustments are made in the COD and targeting decisions are handled through dynamic targeting. The final phase of the cycle is assessment, which is closely tied to ISR and may lag established battle rhythms and timelines due to its heavy dependence on planning and direction, collection, processing and exploitation, analysis and production, and dissemination. It is accomplished primarily by the ISR Division and the operational assessment team (OAT) within the Strategy Division (SD).[2]

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[2] See Air Force Instruction 13-1 AOC, Volume 3 for an expanded discussion on AOC divisions and teams.