

AIR UNIVERSITY



Air and Space Power in Military Operations

The first battles of the future will be held in the air, and the results of those battles will either determine who shall win the war or have a very marked influence on it.

—William “Billy” Mitchell

Airpower in Joint Operations

1. US armed forces normally are employed in a joint environment.

“When a team takes to the field, individual specialists come together to achieve a team win. All players try to do their very best because every other player, the team, and the home town are counting on them to win.”

—Gen Colin Powell

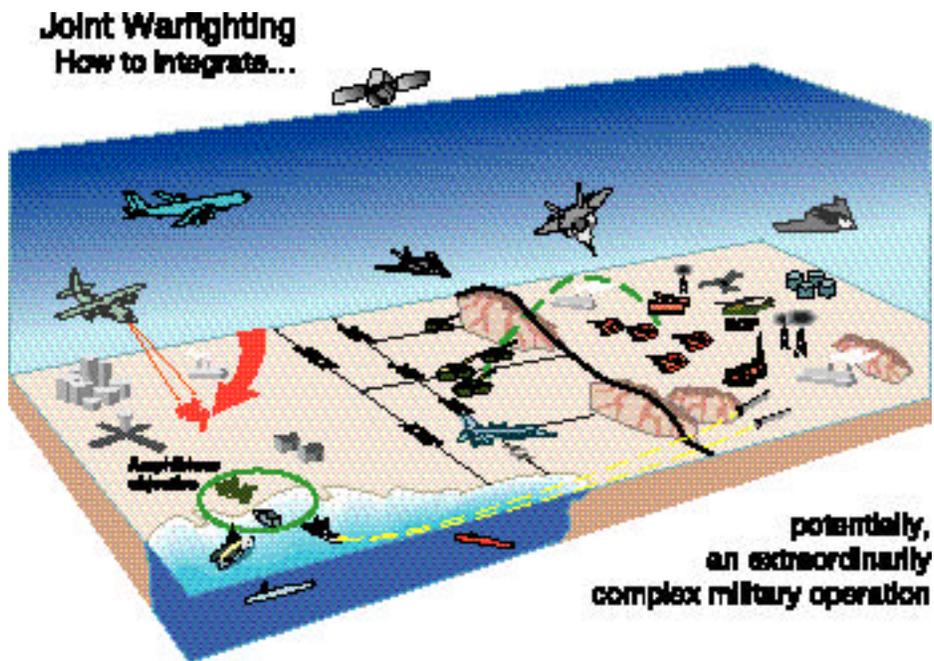
- Airpower will often be required to support surface (land and maritime) forces at the operational and tactical levels.
- Airpower can be supported by surface forces in achieving operational or strategic objectives.

- Airpower can fight on arrival to control, prepare, or condition the theater for the introduction of surface forces.

“The nature of modern warfare demands that we fight as a team. This does not mean that all forces will be equally represented in each operation.”

—Joint Pub 1

- US forces must be integrated to provide maximum combat power.



2. The joint force commander, normally the commander in chief of the unified command responsible for the area of responsibility (AOR), is responsible for the campaign plan to achieve national objectives.

- The JFC articulates theater objectives from the national objectives and develops the theater campaign plan to achieve those objectives.

3. The JFC’s overall theater objectives and campaign plan are given to the land, air, and naval component commanders so that they can develop their portions of the campaign plan.

- The joint force air component commander develops an air campaign (in concert with the land and naval campaigns) to meet theater objectives. Air forces can be used to achieve strategic or theater objectives, and can be used tactically to support land and naval forces.

Airpower in Multinational Operations

1. Employing air forces in multinational operations is significantly more challenging than in unilateral operations.

- Differences in doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures; command and control, communications, and computers; and intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination among multinational countries are significant challenges for the JFACC. Long-standing alliances such as NATO have developed a multitude of standard agreements to facilitate operations on everything from tire sizes to communications frequencies. Operating within a short-notice ad hoc coalition, however, presents similar problems without the benefit of previously agreed standards.
- Visual identification of enemy forces can be difficult; enemies could be using the same types of equipment as allies (e.g., Iraqi use of French F-1s during Desert Storm).
- Language barriers in multinational operations can be challenging. Language barriers and differences in religion, treatment of women, morals, and other values, all present challenges to cross-cultural operations.
- Cultural differences among airmen of the different countries can be equally challenging.

- Host nation support for US forces can range from nonexistent to comprehensive.

The gamut of airfield availability can range from “bare-base” to fully functional airfields. Similarly, such critical requirements as communications can range from field phones to satellite transmissions.

2. The US component commander faces many political challenges in a coalition environment.

- Coalitions are usually established on an ad hoc basis to achieve specific objectives, whereas alliances are relatively permanent and allow for formal agreements and procedures to guide operations.
- Command relationships are often extremely complex, and forces usually do not share a common military doctrine, language, standards, or operating procedures.
- Airmen, however, generally speak English which facilitates integration of coalition air forces.

3. The air campaign plan to fulfill the theater objectives can become very complex.

- Using a single, multinational air tasking order (ATO), air forces from all countries involved must be integrated in the plan. Integration can range from deconflicting routes to identifying friendly forces.
- US air forces could be assigned a geographic section or region of the theater to conduct operations. In this case, US air forces could be tasked under a US-only ATO.

Airpower in Military Operations Other Than War

1. Military operations other than war (MOOTW) encompass many different operations and include

- Arms control support. [Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty Implementation.](#)
- Combating terrorism. [El Dorado Canyon, Libyan air raid, 1986.](#)
- DOD support to counterdrug operations. [Joint Task Force 6 established in 1989 for counterdrug support along US Southwest border.](#)
- Enforcing exclusion zones. [Operation Southern Watch in Iraq, 1992, and Operation Deny Flight in Bosnia, 1993.](#)
- Enforcement of sanctions and maritime interception operations. [Operation Support Democracy off the coast of Haiti, 1993.](#)
- Ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight. [Freedom of navigation exercises in the Baltic. Berlin air corridors.](#)
- Humanitarian assistance. [Operations Provide Hope, Provide Promise, and similar airlifts.](#)
- Military assistance to civil authorities. [Disaster relief: Hurricanes Andrew and Iniki, 1992.](#)
- Nation assistance and support to counterinsurgency. [Operation Promote Liberty in Panama, 1990.](#)
- Noncombatant evacuation operations. [Eastern Exit airlift in Zaire, 1991. Quicklift in Somalia, 1991.](#)
- Peace operations. [Bosnia support, 1993.](#)
- Protection of shipping. [Reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers in 1987.](#)

- Recovery operations. [Operation Full Accounting to recover or account for missing-in-action personnel from the Vietnam War.](#)
- Show of force. [Support to President Aquino in Philippines, 1989.](#)
- Strikes and raids. [Strike: Urgent Fury, Grenada, 1983. Raid: El Dorado Canyon, Libya, 1986.](#)
- Support to insurgency. [Support of Mujahadin resistance in Afghanistan.](#)

2. Airpower employment in MOOTW covers the entire range of capabilities of air forces.

- Airlift forces can be used to carry troops, supplies, or humanitarian aid. [Airlift forces provide nonlethal power.](#)
- Combat aircraft can be used to enforce air exclusion zones, support troops on the ground, or strike ground targets. [Combat forces provide lethal power.](#)
- Special operations forces can be used in psychological operations, in support of small ground units, for intelligence gathering, or in civil affairs to provide assistance to the civilian population. [Special operations provide for both lethal and nonlethal power.](#)