



## APPENDIX C: MULTI-ROLE AIRCRAFT WITH AN ISR MISSION

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Roles and missions for many Air Force assets have expanded beyond what was envisioned in their initial concept of employment. Today it is not unusual to find strike aircraft employed in an [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance](#) (ISR) role. Whether the aircraft is dedicated to providing global integrated ISR for the entire mission or performing global integrated ISR during part of the mission, the mission objectives, priorities, and guidance for multi-role aircraft employment and the authority to task the weapon system should be clear and developed in advance of mission execution. The commander, Air Force forces (COMAFFOR) should ensure the following authorities are defined to ensure clear lines of control during multi-role missions:

- ★ **Aircraft Control:** Organization or individual in authority and technically capable of controlling the aircraft.
- ★ **Sensor Control:** Organization or individual in authority and technically capable of controlling the aircraft sensor.
- ★ **Sensor Tasking:** Organization with the authority to direct sensor control and aircraft control to execute global integrated ISR tasking.

When developing collection plans, [collection managers](#) (CMs) should keep in mind that available resources are not limited to specific platforms or sensors. For example, ground based radars for ground control intercept (GCI), early warning, tracking, and acquisition are used to control the movement of aircraft and provide a degree of warning within designated airspace. The air picture they provide can be exploited for real-time data of potential intelligence value. Additionally, with the increasing sophistication of airborne sensors, aircraft can conduct reconnaissance or surveillance to varying degrees, even if intelligence collection is not their primary mission. Some examples of operational reconnaissance (ops recce) missions supporting non-traditional capabilities include F-16CJs collecting [signals intelligence](#) (SIGINT), F-15Es collecting imagery via their targeting pods, and AC-130s using video capabilities to monitor a particular operation. Understanding how to integrate these capabilities into the collection plan is increasingly important, as traditional intelligence collection-only assets can no longer satisfy all collection requirements. Typically, CMs will not be able to directly task such assets, and will need to coordinate with operations personnel in the strategy, combat plans, or combat operations division of the air operations center.

CMs should understand how ops recce is integrally linked into NTISR. Specifically, ops recce is a tactic to deliberately leverage sensor capabilities on primarily strike aircraft to increase battlespace awareness and lethality beyond those for which the sensors were originally intended. Ops Recce allows a strike platform to be intentionally tasked through the air tasking order by the COMAFFOR, outside normal joint force allocation. The strike platform's organic sensors will collect on a "target", not in-place-of, but in addition to, the normal target against which the traditional force application mission would be applied.

The clear focus of the NTISR and ops recce definition on sensors (collection) does not minimize the many legitimate issues associated with tasking/management of operations on one end or processing/exploitation on the other. These aspects are integrally linked to the evolution of NTISR concepts.

Given the uniqueness of ops recce capability in support of NTISR, the CM must comprehend and assimilate the broad range of [planning and direction; collection; processing and exploitation; analysis and production; and dissemination](#) (PCPAD) capabilities and limitations associated with specific aircraft and, based on this knowledge, articulate the intelligence these assets can provide. Depending on the operation, these assets can be called upon to provide a wide range of intelligence collection support, including but not limited to collecting post-strike intelligence for assessment and performing ad hoc collection for emerging threats. The availability of these assets may be sporadic and CMs should have knowledge of the current operational environment in order to take advantage of capabilities when they become available.

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