



## ANNEX 3-17 AIR MOBILITY OPERATIONS

### **AIR REFUELING: JOINT AND MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS**

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Joint and multinational operations require unity of effort. When working with other Services and nations, differences in procedures and terminology may provide challenges. Therefore, tactics, terminology, and procedures should be standardized when working in joint or multinational operations. For example, Allied Tactical Publication 56(B), [Air-to-Air Refueling](#), was published for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members to standardize in-flight refueling operations within a NATO context. While detailed procedures depend on aircraft type, mode of employment, and national requirements, most allies should achieve sufficient commonality. Commanders of multinational forces should determine a common set of doctrine, tactics, and procedures for operations. Because airspace availability is a limitation in refueling operations, standardizing multinational formation procedures allows assets to operate in compressed airspace. Standardization is critical when refueling multiple receivers or multiple formations.

#### **Air Refueling Airspace**

Most intratheater [air refueling](#) (AR) is conducted in airspace specifically designated for AR. In peacetime, AR information, i.e., airspace boundaries, altitudes, and communication data, is published in flight information publications. During a contingency, AR airspace, as well as routing to and from the AR airspace, may change in response to air operations and enemy threats. Applicable AR information is published in the daily and weekly [airspace control plan](#), [airspace control order](#), and special instructions, and should be followed carefully to avoid conflicts or hazardous situations, especially during joint or multinational operations where the risk of midair collisions in theater is high.

There are generally two types of refueling areas: tracks and anchors. The choice of track or anchor depends on several factors such as receiver mission and routing, number and routing of tankers, offload required, receiver number and type, weather, time available to accomplish rendezvous and refueling, and availability of airspace. At times both types of refueling areas may be used to facilitate the same operation. For example, pre-strike refueling may be accomplished in an anchor to facilitate package formation, and post strike refueling may be accomplished along a track to facilitate recovery of receiver aircraft. In addition, special purpose AR areas may be established through the use of an altitude reservation. Detailed information on AR track and anchors for peacetime operations can be found in Federal Aviation Administration Joint Order 7610.4 ([Special Operations](#)), chapter 10 (Aerial Refueling), or the theater-specific instruction.

