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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

ANNEX 3-60 TARGETING

DYNAMIC TARGETING AND THE TASKING PROCESS

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Dynamic targeting includes prosecution of several categories of targets:

- JFC-designated time sensitive targets (TST) — targets or target sets of such high importance to the accomplishment of the JFCs mission and objectives, or one that presents such a significant strategic or operational threat to friendly forces or allies, that the JFC dedicates intelligence collection and attack assets, or is willing to divert assets away from other targets in order to engage it.
- Targets that are considered crucial for success of friendly component commanders' missions, but are not JFC-approved TSTs. Component commanders may nominate targets to the JFC for consideration as TSTs. If not approved as TSTs by the JFC, these component-critical targets may still require dynamic execution with cross-component coordination and assistance in a time-compressed fashion.
- Targets that are scheduled to be struck on the ATO being executed but have changed status in some way (such as fire support coordination measures changes).
- Other targets that emerge during execution that friendly commanders deem worthy of targeting, prosecution of which may not divert resources from higher-priority targets.

Each of the four categories of targets specified is prosecuted via the same dynamic targeting portion of the tasking process—they differ only in relative priority.

Combat Identification (CID) plays an important part in dynamic targeting. For prospective targets, there are essentially three levels of CID that are relevant to AOC personnel and those tasked to carry out actions against them. At the first level, the track or entity is identified as friendly, foe, or neutral. At the next level, the prospective target's type of platform is identified. This may aid in determining the nature of tactical action required and assist in prioritizing the target. Finally, a third level entails determining the prospective target's intent (as by its track relative to friendly forces) when possible. This should further aid in establishing the prospective target's priority, and may sometimes entail reclassifying a target as a TST based on its potential threat to friendly forces.

Dynamic targeting consists of six distinct phases: find, fix, track, target, engage, and assess (F2T2EA).

These are the same phases used to prosecute joint TSTs, as explained in the *Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Dynamic Targeting* (AFTTP 3-2.3). This method referred to as F2T2EA or colloquially as the "kill chain." Each phase is discussed below.

Find. The find phase involves detection of an emerging target, which various aspects of its characterization will result in it being binned into one of the dynamic targeting categories listed above. The find phase requires clearly designated guidance from commanders, especially concerning target priorities, and the focused ISR collection plan based on JIPOE, to include named areas of interest and target areas of interest. Following this collection plan leads to detections, some of which may be emerging targets, that meet sufficient criteria (established by the AOC with commander's guidance) to be considered and developed as a target. The time sensitivity and importance of this target may be initially undetermined. Emerging targets usually require further ISR and analysis to develop and confirm.

Commanders should not task sensors without an idea of what they may collect. They should anticipate results, not request unfocused detection. The result of the find phase is a potential target that is nominated for further investigation and development in the fix phase.

Fix. The fix phase positively identifies an emerging target as worthy of engagement and determines its position and other data with sufficient fidelity to permit engagement. When the emerging target is detected, sensors are focused upon it to confirm its identity and precise location. This may require implementing a sensor network or diverting ISR assets from other uses to examine it. The COMAFFOR may have to make the decision on whether diversion of ISR resources from the established collection plan is merited, but this decision can often be made by COD personnel. Data correlation and fusion confirms, identifies, and locates the target, resulting in its classification in one of the four target categories listed above. Target location and other information should be refined enough to permit engagement in accordance with ROE. An estimation of the target's window of vulnerability frames the timeliness required for prosecution and may affect the prioritization of assets and the associated risk assessment.

If a target is detected by the aircraft or system that may engage it (for example, by an armed remotely piloted aircraft, or platform with an advanced targeting pod), this may result in the find and fix phases being completed near-simultaneously, without the need for additional ISR assets. It may also result in the target and engage phases being completed without a lengthy coordination and approval process. Battle management systems [i.e., airborne warning and control system (AWACS) and joint surveillance target attack radar system (JSTARS) aircraft] can often fix target locations precisely enough to permit engagement without the need for further ISR collection. Growth in sensor technology has permitted "non-traditional" sources of ISR to supplement the find, fix, and track phases. Integrating data from platforms other than those traditionally dedicated to intelligence collection, to include information gleaned from weapons

systems or even munitions themselves, helps to build a common operating picture that commanders can use to shorten the F2T2EA cycle.

Track. The track phase takes a confirmed target and its location, maintaining a continuous track. Sensors should be coordinated to maintain situational awareness and track continuity on targets. Windows of vulnerability should be updated when warranted. This phase may require re-prioritization of ISR assets, just as the fix phase may, in order to maintain situational awareness. If track continuity is lost, it may be necessary to re-accomplish the fix phase—and possibly the find phase as well. The track phase results in track continuity and refining the target identification. This is maintained by appropriate sensors or sensor combinations, a sensor prioritization scheme (if required), and updates on the target's window of vulnerability (if required). The process may also be run partially "in reverse" in cases where an emerging target is detected and engaged. Once it becomes clear that it is a valid target, the sensors detecting it can examine recorded data to track the target back to its point of origin, such as a base camp. This could potentially identify threats or more lucrative targets. Such *point of origin hunting* has proven especially useful during stability and counterinsurgency operations such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Target. The target phase takes an identified, classified, located, and prioritized target; determines the desired effect and targeting solution against it; and obtains required approval to engage. During this phase, COD personnel should review target restrictions, including collateral damage, ROE, LOAC, the no strike list (NSL), the restricted target list (RTL), and fire support coordination measures (FSCM). In essence, the targeting and operational members of the COD must accomplish all facets of the "target validation" process. This phase also accomplishes effects validation, weaponeering/capabilities analysis, and collateral damage estimation (CDE) analysis. COD personnel match available strike and sensor assets against desired effects, then formulate engagement options. They also submit assessment requirements.

The selection of assets for a specific target may be based on many factors, such as the location and operational status of ISR and strike assets, support asset availability, weather conditions, ROE, target range, the number and type of missions in progress, available fuel and munitions, the adversary threat, and the accuracy of targeting acquisition data. This can be the lengthiest phase due to the large number of requirements that should be satisfied. In many cases, however, dynamic targeting can be accelerated if target phase actions can be initiated and/or completed in parallel with other phases.

Engage. In this phase, identification of the target as hostile is confirmed and engagement is ordered and transmitted to the pilot, aircrew, or operator of the selected weapon system. The engagement orders should be sent to, received by, and understood by the operator of the weapons system. The engagement should be

monitored and managed by the engaging component (for the air component, by the AOC).[1] The desired result of this phase is successful action against the target.

Assess. In this phase, predetermined assessment requests are measured against actions and desired effects on the target. ISR assets collect information about the engagement according to the collection plan (as modified during dynamic targeting) and attempt to determine whether desired effects and objectives were achieved. In cases of the most fleeting targets, quick assessment may be required in order to make expeditious re-attack recommendations.

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[1] "Recent operations have caused some to perceive an apparent disconnect regarding the Airman's stated preference for decentralized execution. Airmen should not misconstrue a given situation with what the Air Force generally believes about decentralized execution. Discipline demands that senior leaders resist the temptation to get involved with execution decisions that are normally best left to subordinate commanders and forward decision makers" (Volume 1).