



PARALLEL AND ASYMMETRIC OPERATIONS

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- Air Force capabilities are often employed to greatest effect in **parallel, asymmetric operations**.
 - ✦ Parallel operations are those that apply pressure at many points across an enemy's system in a short period of time to cause maximum shock and dislocation effects across that system.
 - ✦ Sequential, or serial, operations, in contrast, are those that apply pressure in sequence, imposing one effect after another, usually over a significant period of time.
 - ✦ "Asymmetric," in this context, refers to any capability that confers an advantage for which the adversary cannot directly compensate.
 - ✦ Asymmetric operations can confer disproportionate advantage on those conducting them by using some capability the adversary cannot use, will not use, or cannot effectively defend against.
 - ✦ Asymmetric warfare pits friendly strengths against the adversary's weaknesses and maximizes our capabilities while minimizing those of the enemy to achieve rapid, decisive effects.
- **Experience has shown that parallel, asymmetric operations are more effective, achieve results faster, and are less costly than symmetric or serial operations.**
 - ✦ Symmetric, force-on-force warfare is often required, such as the air-to-air combat associated with achieving air superiority. At the beginning of a conflict, other operations can sometimes be accomplished in parallel with counterair operations.
 - ✦ If the enemy strongly challenges air superiority, however, forces may be constrained to conduct serial operations, in which all available assets should be dedicated to winning air superiority before any other offensive operations are conducted.

- **Airpower can provide simultaneous and rapid attack on key nodes and forces, producing effects that can overwhelm the enemy's capacity to adapt or recover.**
 - ✦ The effects of parallel operations can be achieved quickly and may have decisive impact, thereby maximizing the simultaneity, depth, timing, and tempo elements of [operational design](#).
 - ✦ The shock and surprise of such attacks, coupled with the uncertainty of when or where the next blow may fall, can decisively affect the enemy's morale.
 - **Parallel operations should be conducted in conjunction with other elements of a joint force to maximize synergy of effects against the adversary's critical vulnerabilities.**
 - ✦ For example, [counterland](#) operations, in conjunction with attack by surface forces, can overwhelm an enemy's reinforcement and resupply capacity or his ability to command his forces, creating synergistic effects that have an adverse impact throughout the enemy system.
 - ✦ Cyberspace capabilities can contribute disproportionately to asymmetric force strategy by disabling critical adversary systems, exploiting information, or disrupting adversary decision-making processes.
 - *For more complete discussion of this topic, [click here](#).*
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