

Targeting today is much more than just determining what to destroy. Since the advent of airpower, a predominant feature is a steady progression in the precise application of lethal force. Now, thanks to technology, Airmen have greater capability to achieve desired effects using nonlethal means in addition to or in place of lethal force. Revised Air Force doctrine now reflects this reality.

Air Force Doctrine Document 3-60, *Targeting* has been rescinded and has been replaced by Annex 3-60, Targeting found in the Air Force doctrine website now located at <https://doctrine.af.mil>. This Doctrine Update covers some important facets about Air Force targeting doctrine.

Targets and Targeting Defined

- A target is an entity (person, place, or thing) or object **that performs a function...** considered for possible engagement or other action.¹ Targets may include facilities, individuals, equipment, virtual (a cyberspace entity), and organizations whose functions contribute to a target system's capabilities.²
- Targeting is the process of “selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities.”³ Targeting is a central component of Air Force operational art and design....⁴

Targeting Encompasses Lethal and Nonlethal Actions and Effects

- Consequently, Airmen should employ the targeting process across the range of military operations (see figure to right)
- Targeting employs the effects based approach to operations (EBAO), and can seek first effects other than physical destruction.
 - Information related capabilities (tools, techniques, or activities employed within the information environment) may be used to create the desired nonlethal effects.⁵
 - Traditional nonlethal Air Force operations, conducting humanitarian relief operations for example, could also use the principles of targeting to gain a desired effect.



¹ Joint Publication 3-60, *Joint Targeting*, 31 January 2013 GL-8.

² Ibid., I-1.

³ Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, 11 August 2011, GL-17.

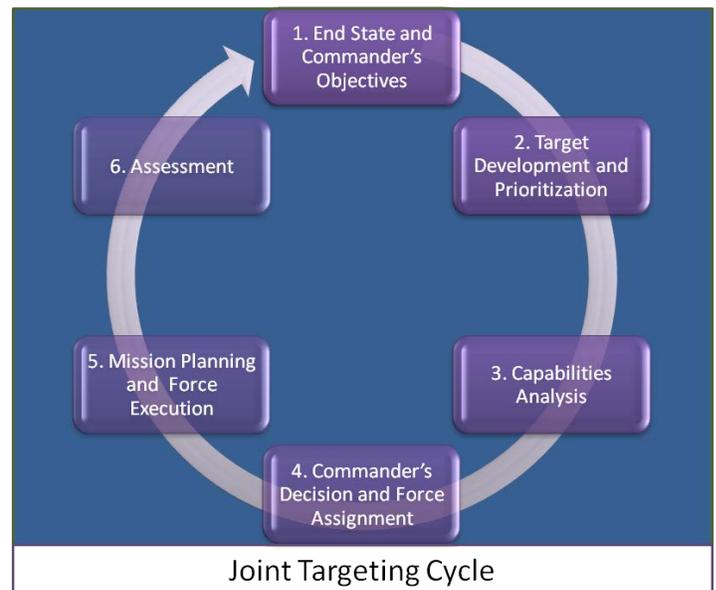
⁴ LeMay Center, “Introduction to Targeting,” <https://doctrine.af.mil/DTM/dtmtargeting.htm>.

⁵ Ibid..

- Regardless if lethal or nonlethal actions are used, target selection should “include consideration of second- and third-order consequences that may either positively contribute to campaign objectives or negatively outweigh the near-term results of the applied lethal or nonlethal capability.”⁶

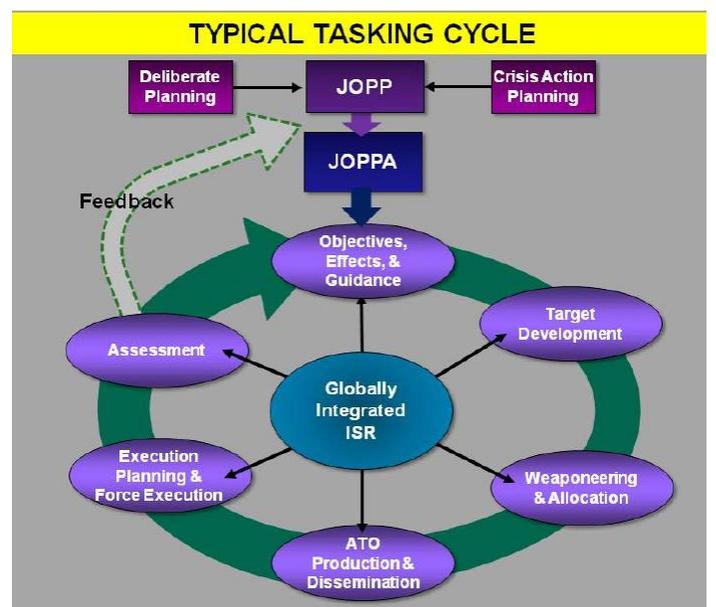
Targeting Categories

- There are two categories of targeting: deliberate and dynamic (see figure). Individuals often incorrectly associate deliberate targets with fixed targets and dynamic targets with mobile targets.
 - Deliberate targeting applies when there is sufficient time to add the target to an air tasking order (ATO) or other plan. Deliberate targets include those planned for attack by on-call resources. The air tasking cycle is sufficiently flexible to allow for most mobile targets to be planned and attacked with deliberate targeting.
 - Dynamic targets are either identified too late, or not selected in time to be included in deliberate targeting, but when detected or located, meet criteria specific to achieving objectives. When plans change and planned targets must be adjusted, dynamic targeting can also manage these changes.



The Targeting Cycle⁷

- The Air Force and the joint targeting cycle are the same. The joint targeting cycle is a comprehensive, iterative, and logical methodology for employing ways and means to create desired effects....
- “Although the targeting and tasking cycles perform separate and distinct functions, they are highly intertwined and require close coordination, the two cycles run almost in parallel.”



Published 28 February 2014. For more information, e-mail LeMayCtr.weworkflow@maxwell.af.mil. Follow us on Facebook or Twitter (#AFDoctrine) to stay up to date with the changes to doctrine!

⁶ LeMay Center, “Targeting Fundamentals,” <https://doctrine.af.mil/DTM/dtmtargeting.htm>.

⁷ LeMay Center, “The Targeting Cycle,” <https://doctrine.af.mil/DTM/dtmtargeting.htm>.