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Reflection Paper 1

Date: 02/08/2026

ODU Spring 2026

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## **Internship Reflection Paper**

### **First 50 Hours**

Working as an intelligence analyst for 50 hours has given me a deep appreciation for how much training, planning, and organizational effort is needed to make an Air Force unit operate effectively to complete their mission. The 36<sup>th</sup> Intelligence Squadron (36 IS) focuses on providing targeting intelligence products to the various combatant commands, such as United States Indo-Pacific Combatant Command (USINDOPACOM). Using multiple intelligence disciplines, such as geospatial intelligence (GEOINT), human intelligence (HUMINT), and signals intelligence (SIGINT), analysts within the 36 IS follow the joint targeting cycle described in Joint Publication 3-60 – Joint Targeting (JP 3-60) (Joint Staff, 2018). This publication describes each of the various functions, requirements, and standards for the US armed forces when conducting joint operations to target an adversary's threat systems. Each service branch of the US armed forces has their own targeting guidance. For the Air Force this is Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-60 – Targeting (AFDP 3-60) (US Air Force, 2021). However, the nature of modern warfare in the 21<sup>st</sup> century means that most operations are conducted in concert with other branches (i.e. the navy supporting the army, or the army supporting the air force, and so on), which turns these into joint operations. This is why JP 3-60 takes precedence over the individual services'

targeting standards. Analysts within the 36 IS train to AFDP 3-60 standards during their initial entry into the Air Force, but once they are assigned to the 36 IS they will train to JP 3-60 standards.

According to JP 3-60, targeting is “the process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities” (Joint Staff, 2018). A target can be a facility (an air field where a fighter squadron is stationed), an individual (the commander of the fighter squadron), a virtual entity (IP addresses for the squadron’s computer servers), a piece of equipment (a fighter jet parked on the runway), or an organization (the support squadron that maintains the fighters). Targeting is an ever repeating cycle and isn’t a “one and done” type of event. The joint targeting cycle is similar to the cyber kill chain I learned during my coursework in ODU’s cyber security program, but with some subtle differences. Joint targeting is a cyclical process that I will delve into during another reflection entry. The key takeaway is that joint targeting is a deliberate process that takes time and training to get right before a commander can decide to affect a target that meets his objectives. The 36 IS’s role is to gather and analyze all the available information, turn their findings into targeting recommendations for further development, and present targeting strategies that best fit the commander’s objectives and intent.

The Air Force core values are integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. Integrity first means doing the right thing, even when no one is looking and taking accountability for your actions. Service before self means that professional duties comes

before personal desires, and this leads to discipline and self-control. Excellence in all we do means that members of the Air Force strive to improve in their capabilities to be prepared to meet any challenge or complete any mission.

In addition to the work they do, the 36 IS provides a positive culture that encourages being brilliant at the basics, taking care of yourself and your wingmen, and being mentally and physically fit. Being brilliant in the basics allows analysts to tackle more complex processes with greater ease in the future. The Air Force is an important part of a larger team, and we are only as strong as our weakest link. Mental and physical fitness enables the members of the 36 IS to maintain a state of mission readiness for whenever the time may come for them to forward deploy in support of a joint operation anywhere in the world. Overall, the first 50 hours were very successful and exciting. The analysis I am providing will assist in future planning to support contingency planning and training scenarios for real-world operations.

#### References:

The Joint Staff. Joint Publication 3-60: Joint Targeting. U.S. Department of Defense, 28 Sept. 2018, [www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/FOID/Reading%20Room/Joint\\_Staff/21-F-0520\\_JP\\_3-60\\_9-28-2018.pdf](http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/FOID/Reading%20Room/Joint_Staff/21-F-0520_JP_3-60_9-28-2018.pdf), Accessed 8 Feb. 2026.

United States Air Force. Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-60: Targeting. U.S. Department of the Air Force, Nov. 2021, [www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/AFDP\\_3-60/3-60-AFDP-TARGETING.pdf](http://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/AFDP_3-60/3-60-AFDP-TARGETING.pdf), Accessed 08 Feb. 2026.