AIR FORCE WARGAME INDOPACIFIC

Test Rules V 0.10

Air Force Wargame: Indo-Pacific (AFWI)

AFWI is a tactical to low operational air warfare game set in the near-future within the INDOPACOM theater. The US faces off against China in a hypothetical conflict. This game is played with a game board, tokens, cards, and a four-sided die (1d4).

The AFWI game board consists of a game map with range bands and People's Republic of China (PRC) and United States (US) basing. US basing also includes a contingency location box for Agile Combat Employment (ACE) operations. Squadrons placed in the contingency location box are simulated at separate contingency locations.

Tokens in the AFWI game represent air, ground and maritime assets. Token layout can be referenced in the token legend section of this manual.

Cards in the AFWI game are used to employ multi-domain effects including Maritime, Space, Cyber, IAMD, Special Forces and additional air effects beyond those played by tokens. Cyber effects are also augmented by a Cyber Track which reflects how successful your cyber forces have been at penetrating enemy networks. The Cyber Track is annotated on the game board and is comprised of a zero to four scale of Cyber rates — cyber effects are dependent on the Cyber rate. In the game, it is difficult to increase the Cyber rate, and progressively more difficult as the rate goes up. To raise the Cyber rate, a player must expend an action that allows them to roll a die that meets or exceeds the associated Cyber Access Value between Cyber rates on the Cyber Track section of the game board. If a side achieves Cyber Rate 4, the game ends immediately and both sides proceed to scoring.

 The 1d4 die is used to determine the success of outcomes (acquisition, shot success, and more). The die can be rolled by itself or at Advantage/Disadvantage. Advantage/Disadvantage is a mechanic to represent significant adjustments in likelihood of success or failure; advantage being the positive and disadvantage the negative. You roll two four-sided die (2d4) and for advantage take the higher result and for disadvantage the lower result.

GAME SEQUENCE

1. SETUP
    a. Players agree on a Campaign. A Campaign is comprised of multiple Air Tasking Order (ATO) Cycles focused on a common objective as selected with a Mission Card. The Campaign will set the conditions on the ground in the game, including the ATO Cycle limit.
    b. Within a Campaign, both players select a single Mission Card. Players keep their respective missions secret from each other and place their Mission Cards face down underneath their side of the board.
    c. Place US and PRC cyber rate markers in the respective one (1) boxes on the game board Cyber Track sections.
    d. Place Intel Track markers in the "Normal" boxes on the game board.
    e. Once both players are prepared, begin playing the first ATO Cycle of the Campaign.
2. ATO CYCLE

ATO Cycles are comprised of multiple turns where players accomplish move, acquire, shoot (MAS) actions along with multi-domain actions as played with Enabler Cards.

    a. Select Posture Card for the ATO Cycle. Each ATO cycle can employ a different posture.

    b. Draw cards up to Squadron Card and Enabler Card Limits specified on selected Posture Card.

    c. Place selected Squadron Cards face down on the game board, either at Airbase or Contingency Locations (US only)[1]. Posture dictates how many squadrons may be selected.

    d. Bid for initiative. First, players may sacrifice Enabler Cards to add a bonus to the die roll. Players gain a +1 to the initiative die roll for each card discarded. Players may discard up to their whole hand. Both players then roll 1d4. In the event of a draw, both players re-roll until one player has a higher roll. The higher result chooses who moves first, rolls in attempt to increases their cyber rate by one, and moves their Intel Track marker to "Advantage." The player who goes second moves their Intel Track marker out of "Advantage," if eligible.

    e. Intelligence roll. Both players roll a 1d4, though a player with "Intel Advantage" will roll at advantage. Each player gets to see the number of opponents' Enabler Cards they roll (min one, max four). Despite the Intelligence roll, one Enabler Card shall remain unknown for each player.

    f. During a turn, a player may:

        i. Play an Enabler Card from their hand. Enabler Cards come in fundamentally two types: resilient and single use. Single use Enabler Cards may only be played once per Campaign and are marked by opposite color text saying "Single Use" under the card's title. Resilient Enabler Cards may only be played once per ATO Cycle and may be played multiple times within a Campaign. Any card that is cancelled by an enemy card is removed from the game, even if it was resilient. This represents that this asset has been destroyed.

            1. Cards with a lightning bolt icon may be played outside the normal turn structure. The card will dictate when it may be played.

            2. Cyber Enabler Cards are augmented by the cyber rate which acts as a multiplier for the Cyber Enabler Card's effect.

            3. Some Enabler Cards require the player to roll the 1d4 twice: once for success determination and a second time to determine impact. These cards are annotated with exploding dice.

        ii. Either activate a squadron to deploy aircraft OR maneuver deployed assets. Each token enters the board face down. It must be acquired to learn what it is. You will know what Squadron Card or Enabler Card generated the token, but you will have to assign systems to acquire the target at high enough fidelity to engage.

            1. When activating a squadron, the player flips a Squadron Card face up, places all associated tokens into bands on the board, and leaves those

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[1] Blue Contingency Locations reflect USAF's adaptation of Agile Combat Employment, or ACE. Red has not demonstrated comparable capabilities at time of writing.

tokens face down. Once the squadron card is face up it may not deploy aircraft again for the duration of the ATO Cycle, barring some unusual circumstances (i.e., squadron is 100% destroyed, then brought back by a card—this may allow it to be used again).

    a. Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and surface vessels may be placed in any range band desired when activated.

    b. Fighter tokens must be placed in a player's one band when activated.

    c. Bomber and Airborne Electronic Warfare (AEW) tokens may be placed in a players one band or in standoff when activated (these tokens are annotated with the word "STANDOFF").

    d. Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) tokens are placed on a player's airbase or contingency location when activated and remain there for the ATO Cycle.

2. Contingency Locations are limited due to real world constraints and cannot automatically generate all tokens. When activating a Squadron Card on a Contingency Location, roll a 1d4, the result determines how many tokens are generated.

    a. When a player uses the ACE Posture Card, a 1d4 roll is not required and all aircraft generate as if they were in the airbase box.

3. After a squadron has been activated, you may choose to maneuver. A maneuver includes three actions: move, acquire, and shoot (MAS). Only one token can be moved during a turn, only one acquire action can be accomplished during a turn and only one shoot action can be taken during a turn. While limited to only one of each action per turn, the MAS actions may be split between any eligible tokens (for example, an AWACS can acquire, a UAS can move and an F-22 can shoot all within the same turn).

    a. Movement is measured in range bands. Any token that has a MOVE rating may move up to that many range bands each time it takes a move action.

    b. Most aircraft are relatively easy to acquire. Stealth aircraft are difficult to acquire. When acquiring, the acquire symbol 🛜 on a token specifies how many bands it can see, certain tokens have an acquisition bonus specified which is added to an ▲ acquisition die roll. An acquisition die roll must be at or above the value on the adversary's token that you are trying to acquire.   Only one adversary's token may be acquired per maneuver and when a token is acquired it is flipped to display its capabilities. Any token must be acquired before another token may shoot at it.
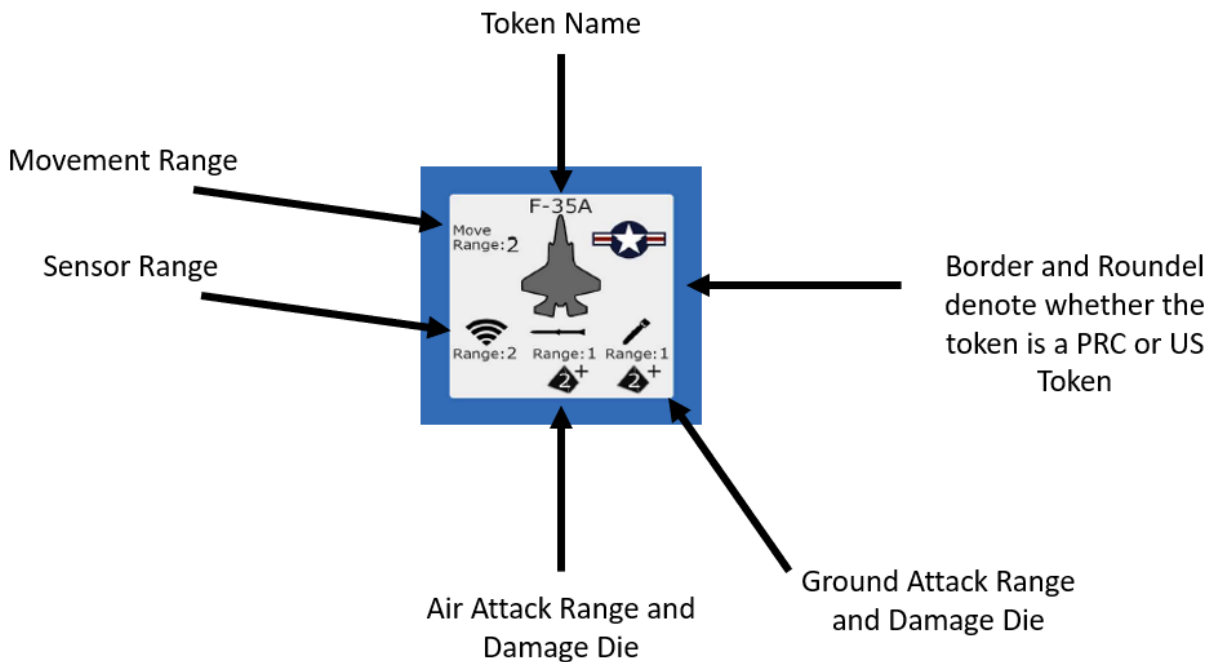
Token Type	Acquisition Roll
5G Fighter Aircraft	4
UAS	3
All Others (4G Aircraft, IADS, Surface Vessels)	2

    c. When shooting, the player must successfully roll a 1d4 at or above the attack die value depicted on the token for the shooting aircraft. Once the token has shot it gains a "Winchester" marker, unless the shooting player rolls a 4, which simulates a first-shot kill in which case the token does not receive a "Winchester" marker. Tokens with a Winchester marker must return to base at the beginning of the player's next turn. UAS have an infinity symbol, representing that they do not ever gain Winchester tokens.

        i. Aerial tokens may only be engaged by a token equipped with missiles . Range and die roll required for a missile shot is listed under the missile icon on the token.

        ii. Ground based tokens and cards may only be engaged by a token equipped with bombs . Range and die roll required for a bomb shot is listed under the bomb icon on the shooting token. Ground attack tokens may attack bases. To attack a base, roll the token's attack die or follow the instructions on the Enabler card. If the base is struck by a tactical aircraft (fighters, drones), assign one damage. If the base is struck by bombers, major surface vessels, or enabler cards, roll 1d4 to allocate damage between Squadron Cards, tokens, and if both of those are completely gone, the base itself. Squadron Cards are ground based cards that may be targeted and require two hits to be destroyed. When a Squadron Card is destroyed, any associated tokens on the airbase are also destroyed. If some or all tokens are still in the air, they are not counted as destroyed, but when they return to base, they are removed from the game.

           1. Squadron Cards placed in the contingency location box are not co-located and must be targeted individually.

          2. If the airbase is empty of all tokens and cards, the shooting player places a marker (color cube of attacking nation) on the base. Each base damage marker counts as a flat +1 VP during scoring.

       iii. IAMD Tokens must also be acquired. They unveil themselves to shoot. IAMD Tokens may only shoot once per turn, but are eligible to shoot every turn within an ATO unless they are destroyed. In order to track if a IAMD Token has shot within a turn, a "Winchester" marker may be used, but should be removed at the end of the turn. Against a missile, the intercept is automatically successful and cancels the missile roll. Against an aircraft, the IADS system rolls 1d4, hitting on a anything other than a 1, out to its max range.

       iv. Maritime units use a special double wide token. This token has 1 ground attack shot, and 4 air attack shots, represented by squares. Either "Winchester" markers or a dry erase pin can be used to annotate shots fired on Maritime Tokens. The US "Tomahawk Strike" enabler card automatically spends the 1 ground attack shot on the destroyer it brings to the battle.

     4. Return to Base (RTB). At the beginning of the following turn, tokens with a Winchester marker freely return tokens to base. Once an aircraft RTBs it cannot relaunch within an ATO Cycle.

   iii. If a player cannot play an Enabler Card OR activate a squadron/maneuver activated assets, then the player automatically passes.

  g. Alternate turns until both players pass.

    i. Within a turn, players may always pass instead of playing a card and activating/maneuvering tokens—if players do at least one of these actions, it is not a pass.

  h. Once both players have passed, the ATO Cycle ends and a new ATO Cycle begins. To begin a new ATO Cycle remove all tokens and cards from the board, select a new Posture and change out Squadron Cards and Enabler Cards as desired and limited by selected Posture Card. If a squadron has previously been destroyed or a single use Enabler Card has already been used, they may not be used in subsequent ATO Cycles.

  i. Complete ATO Cycles until either the limit is reached, or one side concedes.

  j. The Campaign ends and players move to the endgame.

3. ENDGAME
  a. Reveal Mission Cards.
  b. Calculate Victory Points (VP). Calculate the winner based on VP criteria from Mission Card and token and Squadron Card attrition (1 VP per token or base damage marker).
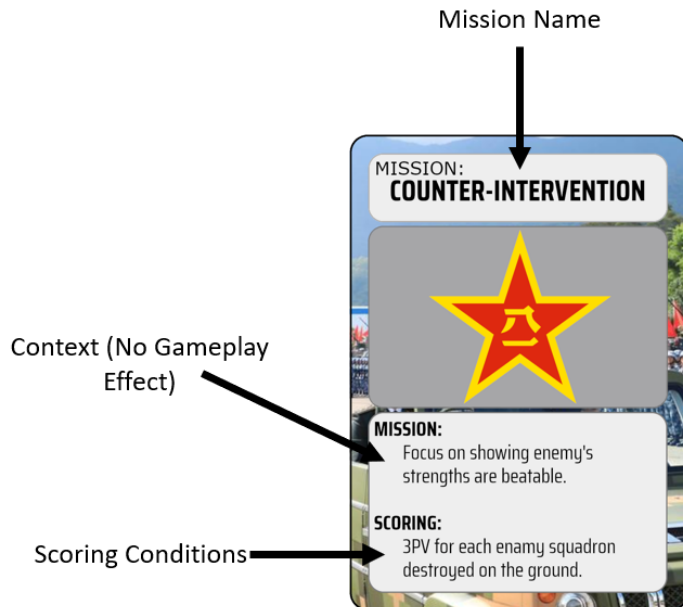
LEGEND

TOKENS

Tokens represent fielded forces. In AFWI, Tokens may represent Aircraft, Maritime combatants, or Surface to Air Missile Systems. Tokens may be generated by a Generate action from a squadron card, or by the play of an Enabler card that describes placing a Token. Once fielded, Tokens may participate in the Move, Acquire, Shoot cycle.

Tokens have a name, a border, a roundel, a sensor range, and a movement range. Many tokens also have an air attack value, a ground attack value, or both. The name states the aircraft represented by the token. The border and roundel denote whether the token is a PRC or US Token. The air and ground attack values are denoted by a missile and bomb icons, respectively. Each action can only attack within the range listed, either forward or aft. The die icon listed below the range limit specifies the die roll required for a successful attack against an acquired token, or the enemy base (which does not have to be acquired). Ground attack values with an "explosion dice" icon deal variable damage to successfully struck bases. All other tokens deal a flat 1 damage to successfully struck bases.

Aircraft have a colored silhouette showing what broad category they belong to. Gray is 5th Generation Fighter, Green is 4th Generation Fighter, Orange is UAS, Purple is Airborne Early Warning, and Pink are bombers.
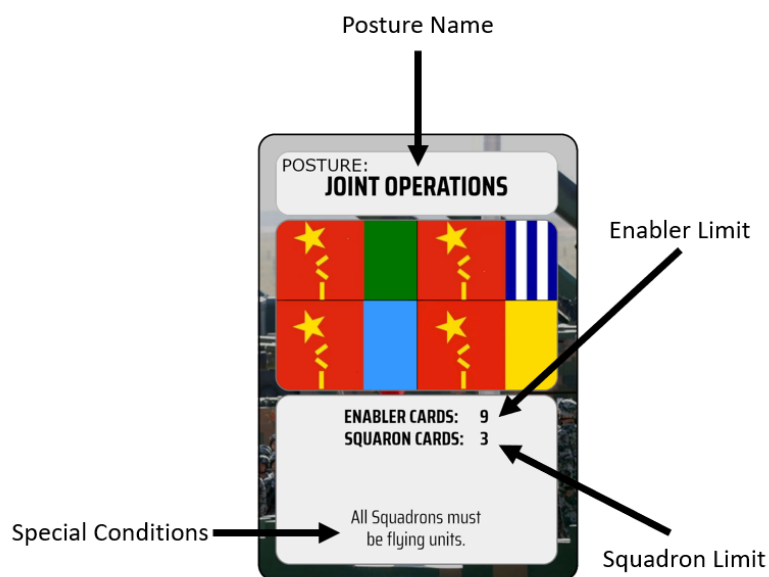
AEW may attempt to acquire two tokens within range each time they take an Acquire action.

MISSION CARDS

Mission Name

MISSION:
COUNTER-INTERVENTION

Context (No Gameplay
Effect)

MISSION:
Focus on showing enemy's
strengths are beatable.

SCORING:
Scoring Conditions
3PV for each enemy squadron
destroyed on the ground.

Mission Cards are selected in secret at the beginning of a campaign. Some campaigns may limit which missions are selected. Mission cards have three primary components—the Mission Name, the Context, and the Scoring Conditions. Mission names are used to keep Missions distinct. Context helps identify the Mission and how it relates to national security goals. Scoring conditions describe the game conditions needed to achieve additional Victory Points (VPs).

POSTURE CARDS

Posture Name

POSTURE:
JOINT OPERATIONS

Enabler Limit

ENABLER CARDS: 9
SQUARON CARDS: 3

Special Conditions

All Squadrons must
be flying units.

Squadron Limit
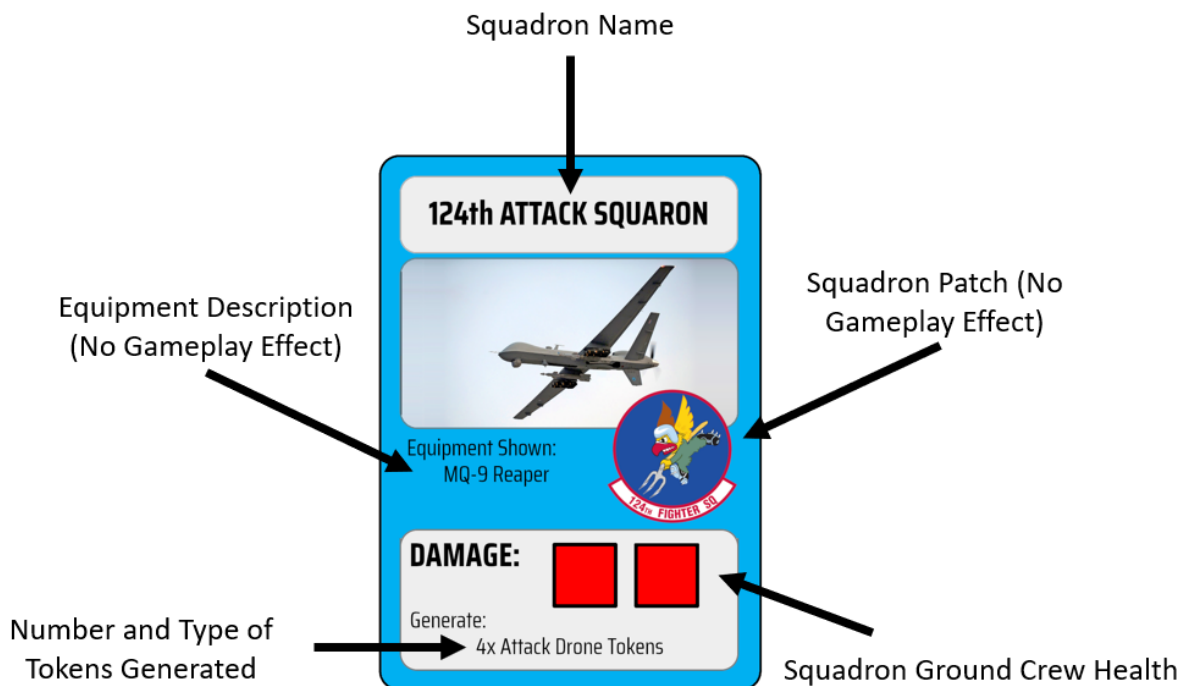
Posture cards represent how your forces are organized. Posture cards are selected, and revealed, at the start of each ATO Cycle. The Posture dictates how many Enablers and Squadrons your
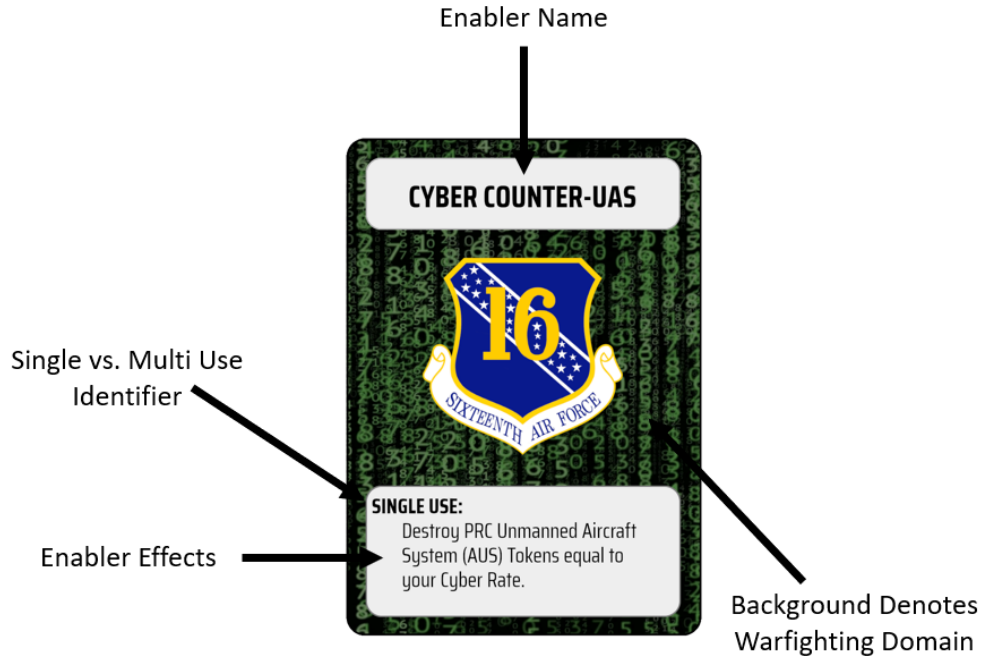
side may play. Enabler and Squadron Card limits dictate the maximum Enabler and Squadron Cards that may be used that ATO cycle. Some Postures also have Special Conditions—heed them when selecting postures.

SQUADRON CARDS

Squadron Name

124th ATTACK SQUARON

Equipment Description (No Gameplay Effect)

Equipment Shown: MQ-9 Reaper

Squadron Patch (No Gameplay Effect)

DAMAGE:

Generate: 4x Attack Drone Tokens

Number and Type of Tokens Generated

Squadron Ground Crew Health

Squadron Cards represent the ground crew and command and control necessary to operate aircraft. PRC units do not use Squadron nomenclature—but for game purposes, PRC cards that generate PLAAF aircraft and SAMs are still labelled as "Squadron Cards". Squadron Cards have a Name, a Patch, Health/Damage, Number and Type of Tokens Generated, and an equipment description. Squadron Names and Patches show certain units. These units are not necessarily units expected to fight in INDOPACOM, but rather, are to familiarize players with USAF and PLA unit iconography. The Patch and Equipment information shown are for context and do not have gameplay effects. Squadron Health is how many hits the Squadron can take. In AFWI, Squadrons can take two hits. Many base attacks can deal more than one hit. After a Squadron has taken two hits, it, and any aircraft attached to it on the ground, are destroyed. So long as a Squadron is not destroyed, it may generate its complement of Tokens. If the Squadron is at a Contingency Location, it may only generate between 1-4 tokens, subject to a die roll.

ENABLER CARDS

Enabler Name

CYBER COUNTER-UAS

16
SIXTEENTH AIR FORCE

Single vs. Multi Use Identifier

SINGLE USE:
Destroy PRC Unmanned Aircraft System (AUS) Tokens equal to your Cyber Rate.

Enabler Effects

Background Denotes Warfighting Domain

Enabler cards represent multi-domain capabilities that modern air commanders can expect to encounter on the battlefield. Enablers have a Name, a Background, a Single Use vs. Multi Use Identifier, and Enabler Effects. The name specifies the Enabler. The Background identifies the enabler's warfighting domain along with the patch or equipment shown. The Enabler Effects are the gameplay effects the Enabler brings to bear—many Enablers are contingent on other factors.

CAMPAIGNS:

There are five Campaigns. All Campaigns assume conflict, and there are no restrictions to the Rules of Engagement—if it is in the game, it may be targeted.

CAMPAIGN 1: MEETING ENGAGEMENT

ATO Cycles: 1

Missions: Attrition only.

Restricted Cards: No playable enabler cards—only squadrons. Blue selects 1x 4th Gen Fighter Squadron. Red selects 1x 4th Gen Fighter Squadron. Facilitators, make sure the two units are equivalent in stats. When in doubt, use 1x F-16 Squadron and 1x J-10 Squadron

Additional VP: None

This Campaign is a simplified game that simulates remoteness and difficulty of force projection. The expected result is a draw.

CAMPAIGN 2: TOURNAMENT CAMPAIGN

ATO Cycles: 2

Restricted Cards: Mission must be Attrition. Posture must be Standard.

Additional VP: None.

Additional Rules: 20-minute timer. Used for tournament play to remove unintentional randomness.

CAMPAIGN 3: PROLONGED CONFLICT

ATO Cycles: 5

Restricted Cards: None.

Additional VP: None.

Additional Rules: None

This Campaign showcases the full game, designed to run through resources. ATO Cycle 5 should feel desperate and depleted unless the players carefully ration valuable resources.

CAMPGAIGN 4: THE WORLD WATCHES

ATO CYCLES: 2

Restricted Cards: No long-range strike (HIMARS, Tomahawk Strike, PLARF Cards, B-52, H-6)

Additional VP: Stacking VP. Each time a unit is destroyed in the air, gain additional +1 VP, to a maximum of 2.

Additional Rules: Whoever is leading in kills automatically gets the initiative, representing world opinion shifting.

CAMPAIGN 5: RESERVES

ATO CYCLES: 2

Restricted cards: No 5th Gen aircraft (F-22, F-35, J-20), no bombers (B-52H, H-6K) no Long Range SAM for the PRC. This is a fight with second line units. Players will have to rely on multi-domain effects.

Additional VP: +1 VP for each surviving squadron at the end of 2 ATO cycles.

Additional Rules: None

FACILITATOR NOTES:

This is an educational game—it's not a perfect representation, nor is it supposed to be.

The game is intended to be rapid and should always be kept moving.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What makes this a wargame?

AFWI is an educational game primarily focused on teaching the basics of multi-domain combat in a near future environment. While smaller in scale than large DoD wargames (such as the Operational Wargame System, Air Force Futures, or the Power Deterrence Wargame series), the focus is on representing capabilities that the player may not be familiar with. In addition, AFWI is an introduction of how to simplify complex real-world concepts and technologies.

Why are there dice in the game?

Dice represent capabilities that are random, too difficult, too complex, or time-consuming to replicate in the game. An example is pilot training—a well-trained pilot with thousands of hours will beat an amateur pilot with only a few hours. However, giving each individual aircraft that kind of skill would add even more complexity to the game and has been omitted to keep the focus is on multi-domain operations. The dice roll provides variability to account for complexities—a dice roll on an attack failing may represent any number of real-world outcomes—technical failure, operator error, effective enemy countermeasures, poor electronic warfare environment, false positive kill count, etc.

Why don't all attacked units get to defend?

It boils down to complexity. In a more realistic, higher fidelity game, there would be countermeasures and evasive maneuvers. However, adding steps to account for these variables or others would slow the game down for little gain, as the game is not focused on aircraft tactics, merely the basics. Notably, tokens with the "Missile Defense" value do get to defend, as Missile Defense is an important part of multi-domain operations.

Why does the game use the "ATO Cycle" and "turn" construct?

The game needs to be separated into two parts—the overall Campaign time (representing days or weeks) and the individual action time (representing hours). ATO Cycles are composed of a series of turns. This construct is necessary to allow for Operations to play out within the game, as well as to help players understand the relevance of the ATO Cycle for modern air operations. If ATO Cycles were eliminated, the process for switching posture, generating new aircraft, and using new enabler cards would be broken.