

# Clearing the Skies: Anti-Air for the Guerilla



This article is part of the [Antistasi Commander's Handbook](#).

## Battle Quotes

“If you control the air, you control the ground. If you don't control the air, you are not even on the battlefield.”

— Attributed to various air power advocates

## 1. PURPOSE

To establish doctrine and tactical procedures for countering the adversary's overwhelming air superiority. The enemy's control of the skies represents the single greatest threat to our operations, survival, and strategic objectives. This document provides the principles necessary to deny the enemy this advantage, protect friendly forces, and turn their greatest strength into a vulnerability.

## 2. SITUATION

The adversary possesses and will readily employ a variety of air assets against our forces. These platforms provide them with unparalleled reconnaissance, rapid force projection (QRF), and devastating firepower. To ignore this threat is to cede the initiative and invite annihilation.

## Battle Quotes

“Air power is the most difficult of all forms of military force to measure or even express in precise terms.”

— Winston Churchill

### a. Threat Air Assets

#### (1) Close Air Support (CAS)

Fixed-wing jets armed with cannons, rockets, and guided bombs. Their primary threat is their speed

and the massive, instantaneous firepower they can deliver on a target. They are difficult to engage but represent a mission-ending threat if they acquire your position.

## (2) Attack Helicopters / Gunships

Rotary-wing platforms (e.g., Mi-24 Hind, AH-64 Apache) designed for loitering and engaging ground targets with cannons, rockets, and anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM). Their ability to remain on station makes them exceptionally dangerous to both infantry and vehicles. **They are a priority threat.**

## (3) Transport Helicopters

Rotary-wing platforms used to rapidly insert and extract enemy troops (QRF). While often lightly armed, the forces they carry can quickly turn the tide of a battle. A successful shutdown of a transport helicopter is a significant tactical and psychological victory.

## b. The Consequence of Inaction

An uncontested sky allows the enemy to:

1. **Observe:** Detect our movements, positions, and ambushes, negating our element of surprise.
1. **React:** Deploy QRF directly onto our positions with impunity.
1. **Destroy:** Annihilate our forces from a position of relative safety.

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## 3. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Our strategy is not to achieve air superiority, which is impossible, but to achieve **Air Denial**. We will create a tactical environment so lethal for enemy aircraft that they are forced to operate with extreme caution, at higher altitudes, or avoid our areas of operation altogether. This is accomplished by treating anti-air warfare as a specialized form of ambush.

### a. The Three Pillars of Guerilla Air Defense

#### (1) Denial, Not Destruction

The primary objective is not to shoot down every aircraft. The objective is to make the airspace **untenable**. A single MANPADS team that forces an attack helicopter to break off its attack run has successfully accomplished its mission, even without a kill. The *threat* of anti-air is a weapon in itself. It forces the enemy to change their tactics, slows their response, and erodes the confidence of their pilots.

## (2) The Ambush Doctrine in the Third Dimension

Your AA assets are your most valuable and vulnerable weapons. They must be employed with the same principles as a ground ambush:

1. **CONCEALMENT IS PARAMOUNT:** An AA asset that can be seen is a target. Hide your MANPADS teams and static AA guns in forests, behind terrain, and within urban structures.
1. **VIOLENCE OF ACTION:** When the decision is made to engage, the engagement must be swift and decisive.
1. **SHOOT AND SCOOT:** Once an AA asset reveals its position by firing, it is compromised. Enemy CAS and artillery will immediately target that location. **You must displace immediately after firing.** An AA position is a temporary firing point, not a permanent emplacement.

### Battle Quotes

“The essence of the ambush is to strike the enemy where he is most vulnerable, at a time and place of your choosing.”

— Field Manual 21-75

## (3) Intelligent Target Prioritization

Ammunition is scarce and precious. Not every air target is worth engaging. Wasting a missile on a low-value target may mean you lack one for a high-value threat moments later.

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graph TD
  A{Threat Detected} --> B{Is it a Gunship or a Transport on final approach?};
  B -->|Yes| C{Is it within effective range and do I have a clear shot?};
  C -->|Yes| D[ENGAGE PRIORITY 1];
  C -->|No| E{Hold Fire & Re-assess};
  B -->|No| F{Is it a CAS jet making a direct attack run on us?};
  F -->|Yes| G{Is it within the engagement window?};
  G -->|Yes| H[ENGAGE PRIORITY 2];
  G -->|No| I;
  F -->|No| I{Is it a high-altitude recon or a fast-mover not threatening us?};
  I -->|Yes| J[DO NOT ENGAGE CONSERVE AMMO MAINTAIN CONCEALMENT];
```

**In Short:** Gunships and troop-carrying transports are your primary targets. Everything else is secondary. Do not waste a missile on a jet flying past at high altitude.

## 4. TACTICAL APPLICATION

### a. Tools of Air Denial

#### (1) MANPADS (Man-Portable Air-Defense System)

The premier guerilla AA weapon.

1. **Strengths:** Highly mobile, easily concealed, fire-and-forget capability.
1. **Weaknesses:** Limited ammunition, requires thermal/IR lock, relatively short range.
1. **Employment:** Deploy teams in pairs. Position them with overlapping fields of fire but sufficient dispersion to avoid a single bomb killing both. After firing, one team displaces while the other provides cover, then they switch.

#### (2) Static AA Guns (e.g., ZU-23-2)

Heavy, crew-served weapons.

1. **Strengths:** High rate of fire, large ammunition capacity, devastating against helicopters and low-flying aircraft.
1. **Weaknesses:** Immobile, highly visible, extremely vulnerable to retaliation.
1. **Employment:** These are ambush weapons. Place them along likely enemy air corridors (e.g., valleys leading to your HQ). Protect them with infantry. Have a plan to abandon the weapon if necessary; the crew's survival is more important than the gun.

#### (3) Technicals

Improvised fighting vehicles with mounted heavy machine guns or AA guns.

1. **Strengths:** Combines mobility with firepower. The ideal “shoot and scoot” platform.
1. **Weaknesses:** Lightly armored and vulnerable to any return fire.
1. **Employment:** Use them for hit-and-run attacks on helicopters. Drive to a concealed firing position, engage, and immediately relocate to a new pre-planned position.

#### Insurgent Commander's Note



The most reliable way to acquire effective AA weaponry is to capture it. Raiding enemy airfields, outposts, or ambushing convoys known to carry these assets is a high-risk, high-reward operation that can fundamentally change your ability to contest the skies. A human-operated AA asset is 10 times more effective than an AI-manned one.

## 5. SUMMARY

You cannot defeat the enemy's air force, but you can break their will to use it. By applying the classic guerilla principles of concealment, ambush, and disciplined violence, you can deny them control of the air. Every pilot you force to abort a mission is a victory. Every QRF you delay is a victory. Every moment an enemy soldier on the ground looks up at the sky with fear instead of confidence is a victory. Make the sky a place they fear to tread.

### Battle Quotes

"The war against the Americans was a war between a tiger and an elephant. If the tiger stands still, the elephant will crush him. But the tiger of the Vietnamese insurgency did not stand still. It moved, it hid, it ambushed... and it won."

— Võ Nguyên Giáp

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Last update: **2026/01/05 21:02**

