PRESS RELEASE

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AFA's Mitchell Institute Releases new Policy Paper
Evolving Technologies and Warfare in the 21st Century: Introducing the "Combat Cloud"

ARLINGTON, Va (September 16, 2016) —The Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies is pleased to release a Mitchell Institute Policy Paper, *Evolving Technologies and Warfare in the 21st Century: Introducing the "Combat Cloud,"* by Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.). The paper highlights an operating paradigm for US and allied military forces where information, data management, connectivity, and command and control (C2) become core mission priorities. According to Deptula, the basis of the "Third Offset Strategy" will be the ubiquitous and seamless sharing of information. Current and future weapon systems will become sensor-shooter nodes that form a "combat cloud" with the potential to deliver much greater combat capability than the traditional segregated use of individual systems.

Deptula, who has spoken extensively about the need to adapt to "information age" warfare, writes that wireless connectivity, personal computing devices, and cloud-based IT tools are integral to daily civilian life, and the ability to access, process, and disseminate volumes of information has revolutionized society's function. These developments are also radically altering how the US military projects power, he notes, as our military networks and computing power are "turning information into the dominant factor in warfare."

This trend will only accelerate, Deptula notes, and will shape key areas in military affairs such as doctrine, organization, training, materiel acquisition, sustainment, and C2. Industrial age concepts and organizations must evolve to reflect this reality, he argues, as "desired military effects will increasingly be generated by the interaction of systems that share information and empower one another." This approach will foster the capability of a "combat cloud," where every platform is treated as a sensor, as well as an "effector." In his paper, Deptula explores how the combat cloud will eventually be created, what organizational considerations are needed, and specific priorities to address across all future military systems (such as automatic data links, improved data transfer capabilities, and other specific capabilities). The combat cloud "inverts the paradigm of combined arms warfare," he writes, making information the focal point of battle, not the individual domains of air, space, cyberspace, sea, and land.

The Mitchell Institute Policy Paper series presents in-depth papers and research, which provides new proposals and thinking to respond to emerging security and aerospace power challenges in the 21st century. These papers aim to provide in-depth insights and perspectives informed by experienced authors, coupled with original supporting research.

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