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Order in Chaos: Battle Management and Command & Control

ARLINGTON, Va (March 30, 2017) —The Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies is pleased to release the tenth entry in its Forum paper series, ***Order In Chaos: The Future of Informed Battle Management and Command and Control***, by Col Tom Nicholson and Lt Col Nelson Rouleau, USAF, on behalf of "Project Everest"—a group composed of active duty USAF officers, civilians, and other national security experts. Nicholson and Rouleau lay out an argument to advance the command and control (C2) capabilities pioneered in combined air and space operations centers (CAOCs) into the 21st century, by updating concepts of operation to embrace what they call "distributed informed battle management and command and control," or informed BMC2.

US forces face an era where modern threats, from modern aircraft to cyber weapons, now challenge the centralized CAOC-driven information management system of American warfare. The time has come to evolve from this approach and distribute battle management tasks closer to combat. By embracing distributed, informed battle management the US military will ensure access and search capability to vital information, surveillance and reconnaissance for those close to the front. By embracing informed BMC2, using aerial "nodes" such as the E-8 JSTARS (and other aircraft), future operations will benefit from increased awareness and context for unfolding operations, and help eliminate the danger of relying on reach back decision making at fixed installations. Nicholson and Rouleau, both veteran airmen with deep experience in modern intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and C2 operations, note that US potential adversaries are sharpening their abilities to carry out precision warfare and target US information management capabilities to disrupt the American way of war. The US "must adapt to prevent foes from attacking the datalink system that serves as the spine of the US military's decision-making brain," they declare. By enhancing the use of relocatable airborne battle management and C2 "nodes," future operations will have a persistent, survivable hedge against datalink compromise in conflicts with a highly capable adversary.

The Mitchell Forum series provides a venue for authors with ideas, concepts, and thoughts on national defense and aerospace power to engage with current and emerging policy debates and issues. For more information on the series, and inquiries about submissions, contact Mitchell's Director of Publications Marc V. Schanz at ***mschanz@afa.org*** or visit our website, at ***www.mitchellaerospacepower.org***.

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