



AIRSPACE CONTROL AUTHORITY

Last Updated: 12 July 2019

Normally, the joint force commander (JFC) designates a joint force air component commander (JFACC) as the commander for joint air operations. The JFACC role is normally filled by the [commander, Air Force Forces](#) (COMAFFOR). The JFC may also concurrently designate an [airspace control authority](#) (ACA) and [area air defense commander](#) (AADC). The ACA is “the commander designated to assume overall responsibility for the operation of the airspace control system (ACS) in the airspace control area” (Joint Publication [JP] 3-52, [Joint Airspace Control](#)). The AADC is the commander assigned overall responsibility for air defense with the preponderance of air defense capability and the command, control, and communications capability to plan and execute integrated air defense operations (JP 3-01, [Countering Air and Missile Threats](#)). Because these related authorities are so integral to air operations, the COMAFFOR, as the JFACC, is normally assigned ACA and AADC responsibilities.

The ACA is responsible for planning, coordinating, and developing airspace control procedures and operating the ACS. The ACA does not have the authority to approve or disapprove combat operations. Airspace control procedures within the JOA are approved by the JFC and are derived entirely from JFC authority. If the ACA and an affected component commander are unable to obtain agreement on an airspace issue, the issue should be referred to the JFC for resolution.

In most operations, the COMAFFOR is designated as the JFACC, ACA, and AADC, primarily due to the Air Force’s ability to concurrently command and control these activities. In those joint operations where separate commanders are designated, close coordination is essential for unity of effort, prevention of friendly fire and unintended engagements against civil and neutral aircraft, and joint air operations deconfliction ([JP 3-52](#)). Because such separate arrangements are rare, the remainder of this Annex assumes the COMAFFOR has been designated as the JFACC, ACA, and AADC. This is the preferred Air Force construct for which Airmen are trained.
