



APPENDIX B: THE AIR OPERATIONS CENTER

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The following discussion outlines the basic [air operations center](#) (AOC).

The Air Force has established a number of AOCs that provide the ability to [command and control](#) (C2) air, space, and cyberspace forces. By design and intent, the AOC provides the best C2 capability to command and control the joint air effort and forms the nucleus, with appropriate augmentation from other Services and components, of the joint or combined AOC (JAOC or CAOC) when [joint force commander](#) (JFC) designates the [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) as the joint force or combined force air component commander (JFACC or CFACC). The AOC is organic to the Air Force Service component. If the JFC does not designate a JFACC, the AOC does not become the JAOC but provides the COMAFFOR the ability to command and control Air Force forces for employment as the Service component. If the JFC designates some other Service component commander as the JFACC, that Service component C2 structure forms the JAOC and the AOC provides the COMAFFOR the ability to command and control Air Force forces that are made available for tasking under the TACON of the non-Air Force JFACC.

The AOC provides operational-level C2 of air component forces as the focal point for designing, planning, executing, and assessing air component operations. The AOC can be tailored and scaled to a specific or changing mission, and to the associated Service component the air component commander presents to the JFC. The AOC is organic to the air component commander's ability to command and control Air Force forces. Air Force Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures 3-3.AOC, *Air Operations Center* and [Air Force Instruction 13-1 AOC, Volume 3, Operational Procedures-Air Operations Center](#) provide further detail concerning the structure, functions, processes, and personnel within the AOC.

The primary functions of the AOC are to:

- ✦ Develop air component operations strategy and planning documents that integrate air, space, and cyberspace operations to meet air component commander objectives and guidance the JFC designates.

- ✦ Task, execute, and assess day-to-day air component operations; provide rapid reaction, [positive airspace control](#), and coordinate and deconflict weapons employment as well as integrate the total air component effort.
- ✦ Receive, assemble, analyze, filter, and disseminate all-source intelligence and weather information to support air component operations planning, execution, and assessment.
- ✦ Integrate space capabilities and coordinate space activities for the air component commander when designated as [space coordinating authority](#).
- ✦ Issue [airspace control procedures](#) and coordinate airspace control activities for the [airspace control authority](#) (ACA) when designated.
- ✦ Provide overall direction of air defense, including theater missile defense (TMD), for the [area air defense commander](#) (AADC) when designated.
- ✦ Plan, task, and execute the theater air component [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance](#) (ISR) mission.
- ✦ Conduct component-level [assessment](#) to determine mission and overall air component operations effectiveness as required by the JFC to support the theater assessment effort.
- ✦ Plan and task [air mobility](#) operations according to the theater priorities.

AOC ORGANIZATION

The baseline AOC organization includes an AOC commander, five divisions (strategy, combat plans, combat operations, ISR, and air mobility), and multiple support/specialty teams. Each integrates numerous disciplines in a cross-functional team approach to planning and execution. Liaisons from other Service and functional components may be present to represent the full range of joint air, space, and cyberspace capabilities made available to the air component commander. The following provides a summary of the major elements of an AOC.

AOC Commander

The AOC commander is charged with effectively managing air component operations and establishing the AOC battle rhythm. The AOC commander develops and directs processes to design, plan, coordinate, allocate, task, execute, and assess air component operations in the [area of operations](#) or [joint operations area](#) based on JFC and air component commander guidance. The AOC commander commands the AOC (but not Air Force forces) and should be prepared to direct a joint AOC when designated.

Strategy Division

The strategy division concentrates on long-range [design](#) and planning of air component operations to achieve JFC objectives by developing, refining, disseminating, and assessing progress toward achieving the air component commander component strategy. The strategy division is normally task organized into three functionally oriented core teams: the strategy plans team, the strategy guidance team, and the operational assessment team. During less demanding operations, the information operations team, which supports all AOC divisions, is administratively under the strategy division chief. Key products include the [joint air operations plan](#), the air operations directive (AOD), and other air component commander guidance.

Combat Plans Division

The combat plans division applies operational art to develop detailed execution plans for air component operations. The combat plans division is normally task organized into four functionally oriented core teams: the targeting effects team; the [master air attack plan](#) (MAAP) team; the [air tasking order](#) (ATO) production team, which also produces space and cyberspace tasking orders (STO and CTO), as applicable; and the C2 planning team. The division's key products are an area air defense plan, [airspace control plan](#), [area air defense plan](#), ATO, STO, CTO, [airspace control order](#) (ACO), special instructions, and [joint integrated prioritized target list](#).

Combat Operations Division

The combat operations division monitors and executes current operations. The combat operations division is also the focal point for monitoring the execution of joint and combined operations, such as time-sensitive targeting, theater missile defense, joint [suppression of enemy air defense](#) supported by theater forces, and the joint air attack team. The combat operations division is normally task-organized into four functionally oriented core teams: offensive operations, defensive operations, senior intelligence duty officer team, and interface control team. The division's main products are daily ATO, STO, CTO, and ACO changes, and changes to other plans and orders, as required.

ISR Division

The ISR division, in conjunction with the other AOC divisions, plans and executes airborne ISR operations and provides combat ISR support to air component planning, execution, and assessment activities. The ISR division has four core teams: the analysis, correlation and fusion team; the targeting and tactical assessment team; the ISR operations team; and the processing, exploitation, and dissemination management team. Major products include: the reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition annex to the ATO (or the ISR collection plan); updated intelligence preparation of the operational environment; air component target nomination list; and intelligence summaries.

Air Mobility Division

The air mobility division (AMD) plans, coordinates, tasks, and executes the theater air mobility mission. Unlike the other AOC divisions that work solely for the AOC commander, the AMD coordinates with the [director of mobility forces](#) (DIRMOBFOR) but remains responsive to the tempo and timing of the AOC commander's operation. The DIRMOBFOR is responsible for integrating the total air mobility effort for the air component commander and, in this capacity, coordinates with the AMD to execute the air mobility mission. The AMD coordinates with the theater deployment distribution operations center and the 618 AOC (Tanker/Airlift Control Center). The AMD is comprised of four core teams: the airlift control team, the air refueling control team, the air mobility control team, and the aeromedical evacuation control team. Major products include airlift apportionment plans and air refueling inputs to the MAAP, ATO, ACO, and special instructions.
