



## STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE TO THE COMMANDER, AIR FORCE FORCES ORGANIZATION

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The [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) has several staff activities that fulfill specific responsibilities. These activities are usually related to providing advice or services to the commander, or assisting the commander and the component staff with technical, administrative, or tactical matters. The COMAFFOR's [staff judge advocate](#) (SJA) provides the full spectrum of legal services and advice to the COMAFFOR and [Air Force forces \(AFFOR\) staff](#).

### THE AFFOR STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE

Judge advocates and paralegals focus on legal issues affecting the COMAFFOR's ability to provide mission-ready air, space, and cyberspace capabilities, such as those relating to the planning, deployment, reception, staging, onward movement, integration, sustainment, and redeployment of forces. With assistance from judge advocates and paralegals, the COMAFFOR establishes and maintains good order and discipline for all members assigned or attached to an [air expeditionary task force](#) (AETF). The AFFOR SJA provides guidance and managerial oversight to all subordinate judge advocates and paralegals.

Therefore, with the exception of the component major command and component numbered Air Force, AFFOR Air Force Judge Advocate General Corps personnel should not be dual-hatted as legal advisors to the joint force air component commander and [air operations center](#), if feasible.

SJA duties to the COMAFFOR include the responsibilities to:

- ★ Assess the impact of US laws, host-nation laws, and international agreements on the actions and planning of US and coalition forces (e.g., overflight issues, beddown, host-nation support, environmental laws, foreign criminal jurisdiction, and legal status of multinational and US personnel).

- ✦ Assess the impact of international law (especially the [law of war](#)) and customary practices, on operations and personnel (e.g., status of civilians, contractors, detainees, and asylum seekers).
- ✦ Provide assessment and guidance on command relationships.
- ✦ Assess the impact of fiscal and contracting authorities on operations.
- ✦ Advise the commander on how to effectively maintain good order and discipline.
- ✦ Advise the COMAFFOR, AFFOR staff, and subordinate legal offices on issues involving claims under either US law and directives or applicable international agreements and customary practice (e.g., recompense, claims for property damage, personal injury, or death).
- ✦ Advise the COMAFFOR and subordinate legal offices on the type, nature, and procedural requirements of investigations (e.g., criminal investigations, accident investigations, and friendly fire investigations).
- ✦ Advise the COMAFFOR, AFFOR staff, and subordinate legal offices on general legal issues related to combat support (e.g., ethics, foreign gifts, legal assistance, support to the Army and Air Force Exchange Service).
- ✦ Advise the COMAFFOR, AFFOR staff, and subordinate legal offices on issues regarding civil-military operations.
- ✦ Assess law and policy governing domestic use of force and homeland security.
- ✦ Assess and advise the COMAFFOR on the availability and applicability of legal authorities and funding to support security cooperation activities with partner nations.

## **Organization and Manpower**

Manning is based upon the expectation of full-time support and advice to the COMAFFOR, AFFOR staff, and subordinate legal offices. The organization of the COMAFFOR's legal staff varies based on the scope of the operation and the number of subordinate forces. The COMAFFOR's SJA determines the best way to organize subordinate judge advocates and paralegals. A common practice is to organize by subject matter areas (e.g., military justice, international law, fiscal law, civil law, and claims). The SJA is responsible for identifying AFJAGC personnel manning requirements for subordinate AFFOR units.

COMAFFOR AFJAGC personnel manning should be tailored appropriate to the operation while minimizing the forward footprint. Reachback and distributed staff capabilities should be considered when determining manning requirements.

## **Primary Functions and Capabilities**

Judge advocates and paralegals also contribute their expertise to air component planners in areas of domestic, foreign, and international law that directly affect the conduct of air, space, and cyberspace operations. To meet this challenge, judge advocates and paralegals should also have the relevant knowledge, experience, access, and training to function within a joint or multinational environment.

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