

FORCE PROTECTION AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS IN A JOINT ENVIRONMENT

Last Updated: 2 January 2019

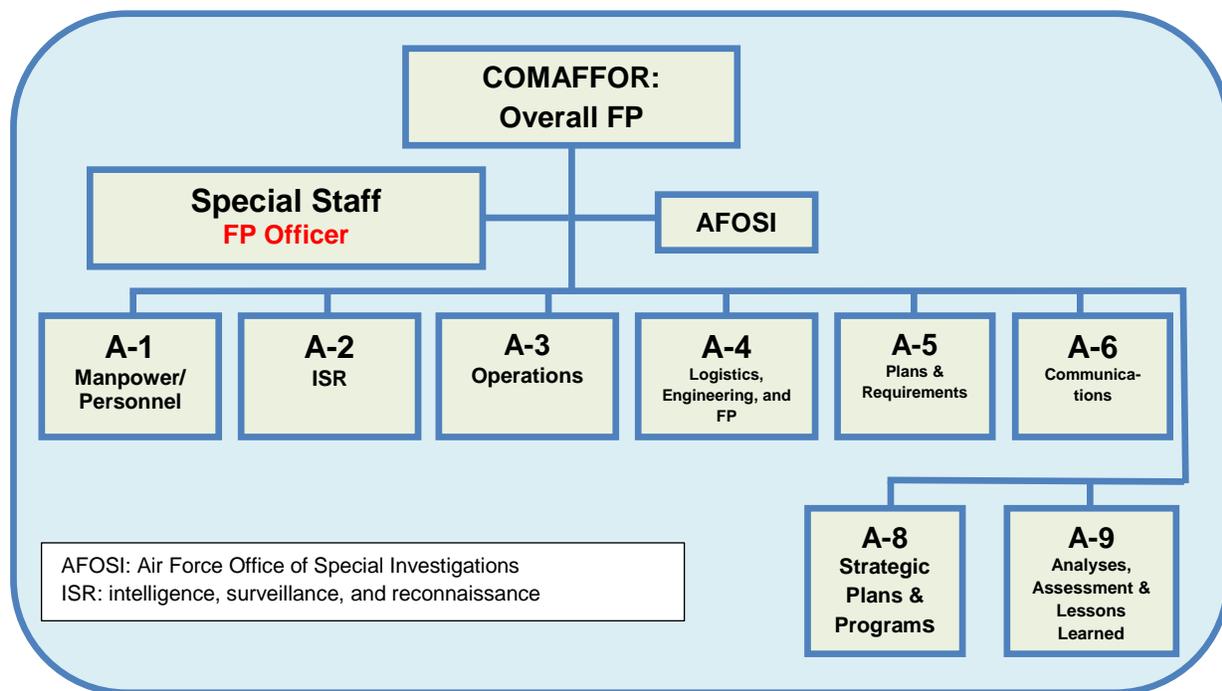
Since protecting the force is an overarching mission responsibility inherent in the command of all military operations, [joint force commanders](#) (JFCs) should consider force protection (FP) in the same fashion they consider other aspects of military operations, such as movement and maneuver; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; employing firepower; sustaining operations in a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear environment; environmental conditions; and providing command and control during the execution of operations across the range of military operations. The [geographic combatant commander](#) (GCC) or a subordinate joint task force commander can delineate the force protection measures for all Department of Defense (DOD) personnel not under the responsibility of the Department of State. If a JFC designates command of an installation to a specific Service component commander, that commander has FP responsibility over all personnel on that installation, regardless of Service or status. For instance, if an Air Force commander is given FP responsibility for an installation, it is his or her responsibility to coordinate FP operations with commanders in adjoining or surrounding geographic regions; this includes intelligence sharing and deconfliction of operations that span the seams between operational areas.

The Service authority of [administrative control](#) (ADCON) is used to support various measures of FP, but is not the appropriate term to describe where the responsibility for implementation lies. For example, each Service may have ADCON responsibility to equip its personnel deploying to a hostile environment with appropriate body armor, but the requirement to wear that armor, and under what circumstances, is the responsibility of the commander on the ground at the deployed location, as these are operational, not administrative, decisions. As the JFC normally delegates [operational control](#) to the [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) for all Air Force forces assigned or attached, the COMAFFOR normally exercises [tactical control](#) (TACON) for FP over those forces. TACON for FP over Air Force forces also resides with the joint commander of another Service who has Air Force forces attached with specification of TACON for a given responsibility.

Commander, Air Force Forces

In any operation in which the Air Force presents forces to a JFC, there will be a designated COMAFFOR who serves as the commander of US Air Force forces assigned or attached to the US Air Force component. The COMAFFOR, with the [air expeditionary task force](#), presents the JFC a task-organized, integrated package with the proper balance of force sustainment and force protection elements. This applies on installations when the JFC has designated an Air Force officer as the base commander, i.e., when the Air Force is the primary occupant of a base.¹³

Commanders at appropriate subordinate echelons (such as wing, group, and squadron level) retain ultimate responsibility for protecting people and property subject to their control and have the authority to enforce security measures. To this end, those commanders should ensure FP standards are met and make it an imperative to have an effective force protection program. These commanders face three major FP challenges: planning for FP integration and support as tasked in applicable operational plans, training for FP, and providing FP for those interests within their influence. These commanders have the added responsibility of accomplishing FP planning for the units identified to deploy to their location during contingency operations. Commanders should designate a member of their staffs as the integrator of FP subject matter experts to establish guidance for, program for, and manage FP requirements for their organizations. The figure, *COMAFFOR Staff with FP Officer Location Identified*, illustrates a notional COMAFFOR staff with the FP officer location identified.



COMAFFOR Staff with FP Officer Location Identified

¹³ Joint Publication 3-10, [Joint Security Operations in Theater, Chapter II, para 3.b.\(8\)](#).