



## CENTRALIZED CONTROL AND DECENTRALIZED EXECUTION

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Two [tenets of airpower](#) that drive the discussion of how to achieve [unity of command](#) for air, space, and cyberspace forces are [flexibility and versatility](#). They are also keys to ensuring [unity of effort](#) of strategic air operations. Flexibility allows [airpower](#) to be applied to multiple missions and tasks often with little, if any, weapons or systems modifications. Even with this inherent flexibility, however, there is rarely enough airpower available to satisfy all demands. The versatility is derived from the fact that it can be employed to create [effects](#) at the [strategic, operational, and tactical levels](#). [Centralized control](#) of resources maximizes airpower's potential by emphasizing the integration of limited air, space, and cyberspace resources during planning for operations. It also minimizes undue dissipation and fragmentation of effort and ensures coherence and focus on essential national or theater objectives. Because no single commander can personally direct all the detailed actions of a typical complement of forces, [decentralized execution](#) of missions and tasks is usually necessary and is accomplished by delegating appropriate authority for execution. As a rule, centralized control of operations ensures effective employment of limited assets, while decentralized execution allows tactical adaptation and accommodates the components' different employment concepts and procedures in a joint environment.

However, the nature of [strategic attack](#) (SA) operations may require increased direct influence in execution. Centralized control, to focus the effective capabilities against desired tasks, and decentralized execution, to give tactical commanders the ability to fight in the most effective way, continue to be the preferred methods to employ airpower. SA operations, however, may require very precise timing and highly focused actions based upon rapidly changing intelligence. In these circumstances, increased direct influence into tactical-level execution of SA missions may be appropriate. Nevertheless, centralized control and decentralized execution remain



The [air operations center](#) (AOC) integrates all air, space, electromagnetic spectrum, and cyberspace operations into a seamless whole based on the joint force commander's guidance.

fundamental tenets of airpower employment. Commanders should continue to push decision-making authority to the lowest practical and appropriate level.

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