



## ANNEX 3-03 COUNTERLAND OPERATIONS

### CLOSE AIR SUPPORT

Last Updated: 16 April 2014

Close air support (CAS) is defined as “air action by fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft against hostile targets which are in close proximity to friendly forces and which require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces. Employing ordnance within close proximity of ground troops and the requirement for detailed integration are two characteristics that distinguish CAS from other types of air warfare.

- ★ **Close proximity.** Close proximity does not represent a specific distance. Instead, the word “close” is situational and requires detailed integration and terminal attack control (TAC) based on friendly force proximity to enemy targets. Detailed integration and TAC help ensure engagement of correct targets and mitigation of fratricide. Thus, CAS is not defined by a specific region of an operation, it can be conducted at any place and time friendly surface forces are in close proximity to enemy forces. For example, special operations forces (SOF) operating anywhere in the joint operations area (JOA) may require CAS support if there are friendly troops within close proximity to the enemy forces being attacked.
- ★ **Detailed integration.** The requirement for detailed integration because of fires, proximity, or movement is the determining factor for CAS. Detailed integration describes a level of coordination required to achieve desired effects while minimizing the risk of fratricide—from either surface fires or air-delivered weapons. Because of this level of integration, each element should be controlled in real time to prevent fratricide of ground or air forces. Procedures should be flexible enough so that CAS, surface fires, and the ground scheme of maneuver are not overly restricted. The range at which the preponderance of effects against the enemy shifts from surface fires to airpower is the prime factor (among several) used to define the maximum range requiring detailed integration and a good depth for commanders to consider delineating between CAS and air interdiction (AI).

The joint force commander establishes the guidance and priorities for CAS in the concept of operations, operation plan or campaign plan, air apportionment decision, and by making capabilities and forces available to the components.

The [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) is given the authority necessary to accomplish missions and tasks assigned by the establishing commander. For CAS, these responsibilities normally include recommending [air apportionment](#), [allocating](#) forces/capabilities made available from the JFC and [components](#) including [command and control](#) elements of the [theater air control system](#) (TACS), creating and executing the [air tasking order](#) (ATO), and other applicable actions associated with CAS execution. The COMAFFOR maintains close coordination with the other component commanders to ensure CAS requirements are being met in accordance with JFC guidance.

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