



## ANNEX 3-30 COMMAND AND CONTROL

### EXAMPLES OF AETFs

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This section presents three recent usages of [air expeditionary task forces](#) (AETFs). AETFs may be [attached](#) to a joint force as an Air Force Service [component](#), provided in [direct support](#) of a joint force in lieu of attachment, or temporarily established to address an internal operational Service requirement.

#### COMPONENT AETF

When directed, an AETF may be formally attached to a joint force at the [combatant command](#) (CCMD), [subunified combatant command](#), or [joint task force](#) (JTF) level, usually with specification of [operational control](#) (OPCON), forming a [Service component command](#). In these cases, the AETF commander is a [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR), and a separate [air operations center](#) and [AFFOR staff](#) are normally required to employ and support the AETF. Examples of these components are found in the form of component major commands (C-MAJCOMs) and component numbered Air Forces (C-NAFs) established to support the [combatant commanders](#) (CCDRs).

#### SUBORDINATE AETF

During some operations, especially when there may be multiple [joint operations areas](#) (JOAs) with multiple JTFs, it may not be feasible to attach AETFs to each JTF due to C2 resource constraints. In such cases, subordinate AETFs may be established and placed in support of JTFs. Examples of this structure occurred in the later phases of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM (redesignated Operation NEW DAWN), US Air Forces Central (USAFCENT) established subordinate task forces to directly support sub-theater-level JTFs operating in separate JOAs within US Central Command (USCENTCOM). With the approval of Commander, USCENTCOM (CDRUSCENTCOM), these subordinate task forces were not attached as separate Air Force components to those JTFs, but were established as supporting forces with OPCON retained by the CCDR-level COMAFFOR (Commander, USAFCENT). In this case, the USAFCENT commander delegated specified elements of OPCON and [administrative control](#) (ADCON) over forces to the subordinate task force commanders. These task forces were then provided in direct support of their respective JTF commanders. The USAFCENT commander, as the theater COMAFFOR and [joint force air component commander](#) to CDRUSCENTCOM, maintained a theater-wide perspective and the ability to re-apportion airpower across the USCENTCOM [area of operations](#) IAW CCDR priorities.

## “ADCON-ONLY” AETF

On occasion, AETFs may be established to address a specific but purely internal Service challenge and may have no direct relation to a joint force. Examples can be found during the initial phase of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, when the Air Force formed two task forces for ADCON purposes only, one in Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) under 13 AF on Guam and one in US Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) under 16 AF in Turkey. These AETFs were formed to provide more direct oversight of support activities of those forces bedded down in the US Pacific Command and US European Command AORs and supporting USCENTCOM's main effort. The operational branch of the [chain of command](#) ran through the commander charged with accomplishing the operational mission (i.e., Commander, USAFCENT, as delegated from CDRUSCENTCOM) while the administrative branch ran through the Air Force commander best positioned to provide the necessary support (i.e., Commander, 13 AF as delegated from Commander, PACAF, and Commander, 16 AF as delegated from Commander, USAFE). This solution provided a closer degree of ADCON oversight due to the size and complexity of the overall effort and, especially in PACAF's case, the distance between Diego Garcia and PACAF headquarters in Hawaii. The designation of forward-located Air Force commanders provided more informed and timely decision making affecting those forward-based Air Force elements. In this case, these task forces commanders only exercised ADCON; they were not delegated any operational authorities.

(Note: the above titles “subordinate AETF” and “ADCON-only AETF” above are descriptive, not formal.)

These are examples of extrapolating from baseline doctrinal concepts of organization and [command relationships](#) to tailor a solution to a particular set of circumstances. As with any tailored organization, there should be careful consultation among the Service and joint force commanders involved, and the CCDR retains final decision on the laydown of subordinate organization and distribution of command authorities.

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