



COMMAND AND CONTROL MECHANISMS

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- The [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) requires [command and control](#) (C2) assets to assist in exercising [operational control](#) (OPCON), [tactical control](#) (TACON), and [administrative control](#) (ADCON). The COMAFFOR normally uses some form of an AOC to exercise control of operations and a Service component staff, commonly called the AFFOR staff, to exercise support operations and administrative control.
- The core capabilities of the air operations center (AOC) and AFFOR staff are well established, but they should be tailored in size and function according to the operation.
 - ✦ Not all operations require a “full-up” AOC with over 1,000 people or a large AFFOR staff. Smaller operations, such as some humanitarian operations, can in fact make do with a small control center that does little more than scheduling and reporting.
 - ✦ Not all elements of the operations center or AFFOR staff need be forward; some may operate “over the horizon,” using [reachback](#) to reduce the forward footprint. The goal is to maximize reachback and minimize forward presence as much as possible.
- **Air Operations Center.** In general terms, an AOC is the Air Force component commander’s C2 center that provides the capability to plan, direct, and assess the activities of assigned and attached forces.
 - ✦ AOCs do not work in isolation; they require appropriate connectivity to operations centers of higher headquarters (e.g., to the joint force headquarters for the operational branch, and to senior Air Force headquarters for the administrative branch), to lateral headquarters (e.g., other joint force components), to subordinate assigned and attached Air Force units, and to other functional and geographic AOCs as necessary. The overall C2 structure should make maximum use of reachback.
 - ✦ An AOC, along with subordinate C2 elements, should be tailored in size and capability to the mission. An AOC should generally be capable of the following basic tasks:

- Develop the component [strategy](#) and requisite planning products.
 - Task, execute, and assess day-to-day component operations.
 - Plan and execute [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance](#) (ISR) tasks appropriate to assigned missions.
 - Conduct [operational-level assessment](#).
- ✦ *For an AOC baseline description, see [Annex 3-30, appendix B](#).*
- **AFFOR Staff.** The AFFOR staff is the mechanism through which the COMAFFOR exercises Service responsibilities and is also responsible for the long-range planning and theater engagement operations that fall outside the AOC's current operational focus.
- ✦ An AFFOR staff should be ready to fill one or more roles: that of a theater-wide Air Force Service component, an Air Force warfighting component within a JTF, or the core or "plug" within a JTF headquarters.
- ✦ The COMAFFOR should avoid dual- or triple-hatting the AFFOR staff to the maximum extent possible. Dual- or triple-hatting may have detrimental consequences as the staff struggles to focus at the right level of war at the right time. Manning and distribution of workload may limit the staff's ability to cover all involved duties simultaneously and augmentation may be necessary.
- ✦ *See baseline AFFOR staff description in [Annex 3-30, appendix C](#).*
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