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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



ANNEX 3-04 COUNTERSEA OPERATIONS

THE JOINT FORCE AIR COMPONENT COMMANDER (JFACC)

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The commander, Air Force Forces (COMAFFOR) will normally serve as the joint force air component commander (JFACC), exercising [operational control](#) (OPCON) over assigned and attached Air Force assets and [tactical control](#) (TACON) over other component assets made available for tasking. These forces are generally centrally controlled and tasked from the [air operations center](#) (AOC). Tasking occurs through publication of the [air tasking order](#) (ATO). Countersea operations involving the use of air assets should likewise fall under a single authority capable of planning and directing such operations. There may be cases when, in order to ensure effective integration with carrier-based air, the [joint force commander](#) (JFC) may task the JFACC to support the joint force maritime component commander (JFMCC). Still, the JFACC must, by definition, control and execute the air assets assigned to the joint force operation, in whole or in part, depending on the situation.

A single air commander should command and control all joint air assets. The JFC normally designates a JFACC and apports joint air assets for the JFACC to control. The component commander with the preponderance of air forces and the capability to control and direct joint air operations should be designated the JFACC. [Centralized control and decentralized execution](#) serve to focus forces on theater objectives and provide commanders flexibility for employment. The JFACC should make apportionment recommendations to the JFC. Apportionment can change as the campaign progresses and/or as the operational situation changes. The JFACC should allocate the JFC's apportioned air power to best affect the JFC's intent and priorities.

Even though the JFACC and COMAFFOR will normally be the same individual, the staffs are separate and have different functions. Furthermore, JFACC staffing requires augmentation within the AOC from relevant Service components and coalition partners to ensure adequate joint and multinational representation. It is important during countersea operations that the naval liaison officer and/or Marine liaison officer assist the JFACC in having a clear understanding of the JFMCC or commander, Naval forces (COMNAVFOR), desired and prioritized effects.

The other Services have developed their air arms with different doctrinal and operating constructs in mind. Maritime forces have allowed for organic asset scheduling, command, and control utilizing their own assets for missions separate from the JFACC's control. For example, the Marine Corps expects that Marine aviation assets will be used organically within the Marine air-ground task force, during both amphibious operations and subsequent land operations. COMNAVFOR may have other mission priorities, such as undersea warfare or [air warfare](#), constraining asset availability to the JFACC. However, those organic sorties will normally be included on the ATO and the

sorties must comply with the ACO if being conducted as part of a joint force. Similar concerns also apply to the aviation arms of our allies. These constraints of air assets by their respective entities will normally be limited in time and scope to specific missions during certain phases of operations. The JFACC must account for these dynamics when developing the joint air operations plan and realize that all aircraft flying within the [area of responsibility](#) may not be available for tasking.

Sea-based JFACC

In operations where no shore-based AOC facility can initially be accommodated, the preponderance of air capability coordination may be located afloat on a US Navy command and control ship. This scenario is most likely during the initial stages of a campaign, in maritime forced entry operations or prior to shore-based AOC arrival/completion.

The sea-based JFACC positions are jointly manned by officers and enlisted personnel from the other Services who may fill key JFACC staff positions while aboard the command ship. These ships have the ability to host several hundred augmentees and have sufficient connectivity to meet requisite command and control requirements for initial operations until the JFACC is transitioned ashore.

In this arrangement, Air Force component and joint air component functions and responsibilities remain distinct; both are essential to successful joint air operations. The COMAFFOR will maintain OPCON of Air Force forces executed through an AOC and A–staff. When another Service is designated as JFACC, the COMAFFOR will provide Air Force forces TACON to the JFACC as directed by the JFC. In addition, the COMAFFOR will coordinate with the JFACC through a liaison team and fill designated billets within the JFACC staff and joint AOC (JAOC).

General Considerations for Command and Control of Joint Air Operations

When the JFACC transitions to a suitable host shore-based facility (or from shore-based to sea-based) and where the preponderance of air assets may be or may become Air Force, several concerns need to be addressed. The following is taken from JP 3-30, [Command and Control of Joint Air Operations](#).

- ★ **Planned Transition.** The JFACC should develop a plan for transition of JFACC duties to another component or location. Planned JFACC transitions are possible as a function of buildup or scale down of joint force operations. During transition of JFACC responsibilities, the component passing responsibilities should continue monitoring joint air planning, tasking, and control circuits, and remain ready to reassume JFACC responsibilities until the gaining component has achieved full operational capability.
- ★ **Unplanned Transition.** During unplanned shifts of JFACC responsibility, as a possible result of battle damage or major [command and control](#) (C2) equipment failure, a smooth transition is unlikely. Therefore, the JFC should pre-designate alternates (both inter- and intra-component) and establish preplanned responses/options to the temporary or permanent loss of primary JFACC capability. Frequent backup and exchange of databases is essential to facilitate a rapid resumption of operations should an unplanned transition occur.

★ **Transition Events.** The following events may cause the JFACC responsibilities to shift:

(a) Coordination requirements related to ATO planning and execution exceeds the component capability.

(b) Buildup or relocation of forces shifts preponderance of the air capabilities/forces and the ability to effectively plan, task, and control joint air operations to another component commander and the JFC decides that the other component is in a better position (location, C2 capability, or other considerations) to accomplish the JFACC responsibilities.

(c) Command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) capability becomes unresponsive or unreliable.

★ **Considerations.** Considerations to aid in JFACC transition planning and decisions:

(a) Continuous, uninterrupted, and unambiguous guidance and direction for joint air operations must be the primary objective of any JFACC transition.

(b) Appropriate C4I capabilities to ensure shift of JFACC duties are as transparent to the components as possible.

(c) Specific procedures for coordinating and executing planned and unplanned shifts of JFACC should be published in the joint air operations plan.

(d) The relieving component must have adequate communications, connectivity, manning, intelligence support, and C2 capability prior to assuming JFACC responsibilities.
