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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



ANNEX 3-05 SPECIAL OPERATIONS

AFSOF COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

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Air Force special operations forces (AFSOF) are under the combatant command authority of the US Special Operations Command and under Administrative Control (ADCON) of the Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). US Special Operations Command is a functional combatant command, with Service-like responsibilities in areas unique to special operations (SO), and when established as a supported command, plans and conducts certain global SO missions.

A geographic combatant commander (GCC) normally exercises operational control of Special operations forces (SOF) through the commander, theater special operations command (CDRTSOC) or a subordinate joint force commander (JFC). The CDRTSOC may also be designated as the joint force special operations component commander by the GCC (see Figure titled Command and Control of Special Operations Forces in Theater). Theater special operations commands (TSOCs) are responsive to the needs of the supported JFC whether the JFC is a GCC or a JTF commander.

When a GCC establishes and employs multiple JTFs and independent task forces, the TSOC commander may establish and employ multiple joint special operations task forces (JSOTF) to manage SOF assets and accommodate JTF/task force SO requirements. Accordingly, the GCC, as the common superior commander, normally establishes supported/supporting or tactical control command relationships between JSOTF commanders and JTF/task force commanders.

AFSOC retains ADCON of all regular AFSOF personnel. Under less than full mobilization, AFSOC exercises specified elements of ADCON over activated reserve component AFSOF personnel. AFSOC may share selected elements of ADCON with other Air Force component commands in order to obtain regional beddown support. Regardless of the arranged command relationship, commanders should provide for a clear and unambiguous chain of command.