



COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

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In order to properly plan and execute [homeland operations](#), an understanding of command relationships is required. The information below outlines the roles and responsibilities of relevant command elements.

Geographic Combatant Commanders

Commander, [US Northern Command](#) (CDRUSNORTHCOM) and commander, [US Pacific Command](#) (CDRUSPACOM) are geographic combatant commanders with responsibilities for conducting homeland operations. USPACOM is unique in that the forces in Alaska are under the [combatant command](#) (COCOM) of CDRUSPACOM, but Alaska is in the USNORTHCOM [area of responsibility](#) (AOR). The 11 AF commander employs the 611th [Air Operations Center](#) (AOC) to support Alaskan Command missions as well as Alaska [North American Aerospace Defense Command \(NORAD\)](#) region missions. This arrangement allows for retention of [unity of command and effort](#) in presenting Air Force forces to CDRUSNORTHCOM. If additional forces are needed for a mission under USNORTHCOM control, the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) may direct the attachment of forces from another command.

Incidents occurring in the homeland within the USPACOM AOR are normally organized around the JTF construct with forces attached from USPACOM's assigned forces. But, as in any other operation, if USPACOM does not have the resident capability required to handle the situation, the SecDef may attach forces from elsewhere as necessary. USNORTHCOM has very few assigned forces, so in most cases the SecDef will attach forces from another combatant command, or forces which are normally Service retained.

If a domestic incident occurs, CDRUSNORTHCOM or CDRUSPACOM may establish a JTF to provide [command and control](#) for the [Department of Defense](#) (DOD) response force. In the USNORTHCOM AOR, the air component to the JTF would normally be in the form of an [air expeditionary task force](#) (AETF) and the Air Forces–North (AFNORTH) commander, or his designee, would be the [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR). In some situations there may not be a need to attach Air Force forces to the JTF and AFNORTH may assume a direct support role to the JTF. In the USPACOM AOR, the [Pacific Air Forces](#) (PACAF) commander designates the COMAFFOR. In Alaska, where USNORTHCOM has responsibility for homeland security but forces are

under the COCOM of CDRUSPACOM, PACAF provides the 11 AF commander as the COMAFFOR supporting the USNORTHCOM's Alaskan Command.

There are instances where the military capability for an incident resides in a single Service and it makes sense to create a task force for only that one Service's forces. If the Air Force is so tasked, it may establish an AETF. In this case, due to the established relationships and role previously described, the AETF commander would not serve as the COMAFFOR but remain subordinate to the current designated COMAFFOR. As in all other task forces, command arrangements are approved by the combatant commander (CCDR). See Annex 3-30, [Command and Control](#).

Functional Combatant Commanders

In the area of [Homeland Defense](#) (HD), [US Strategic Command](#) (USSTRATCOM) may expect to be the supported command for DOD [space](#) and [information operations](#). USSTRATCOM is responsible for warning and, if necessary, assessing missile attack to the other CCDRs. It is tasked as a supporting command to NORAD to provide missile warning and space surveillance in furtherance of NORAD's mission of aerospace control of North America. In addition, USSTRATCOM would support USNORTHCOM and USPACOM in the event military operations are required to protect the homeland. Moreover, US Cyber Command, a subordinate unified command under USSTRATCOM, has a support relationship to homeland defense through the DOD's Integrated Cyber Center that supports the [Department of Homeland Security](#) National Cyber Security and Communications Integration Center.

[US Transportation Command](#) (USTRANSCOM) serves as the DOD single manager for transportation, providing common-user air, land, and sea transportation and terminal services to meet national security objectives. These security objectives can occur in the homeland and USTRANSCOM will normally be in a supporting role. [Air Mobility Command](#) (AMC) is USTRANSCOM's air component, and the Air Force's manager for [air mobility](#). Its mission is to provide [airlift](#), [air refueling](#), special air missions, and [aeromedical evacuation](#) in support of national objectives. These capabilities support humanitarian, HD, defense support of civil authorities (DSCA), and other operations. Through 18 AF, AMC provides these capabilities to USTRANSCOM, and in turn, to other commands.

The Commander, [US Special Operations Command](#) (CDRUSSOCOM) is responsible for planning, synchronizing, and executing global special operations against terrorist networks in coordination with other combatant commanders. During homeland defense operations, CDRUSSOCOM may provide special operations forces and expertise to the commanders of USNORTHCOM and USPACOM, as required.

North American Aerospace Defense Command

NORAD has responsibility for providing air sovereignty, air warning, and air defense of the North American continent, specifically the continental United States (CONUS),

Alaska, Canada, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. NORAD is a binational command, with two chains of command. One chain of command goes to the Canadian Prime Minister and the other to the President of the United States. **Air Force air assets supporting NORAD fall under the [operational control](#) (OPCON) of the NORAD commander in his role as commander, US Element NORAD, with OPCON delegated to the respective NORAD regional air defense commanders.** Each region has a commander triple-hatted as joint force air component commander (JFACC), airspace coordination authority, and area air defense commander for executing [defensive counterair](#) (DCA) missions. The commanders of Alaskan NORAD Region and CONUS NORAD Region do not have OPCON over entire Air Force units; rather, once forces are attached, they have OPCON over specific personnel and assets conducting the DCA mission. NORAD air defense sectors execute [tactical control](#) of DCA assets as designated in the regional air tasking order. USSTRATCOM supports NORAD by providing the necessary missile warning and space surveillance.

Other Elements of the Air Component

Below are standing Air Force organizations which aid in homeland operations:

- ✦ **National Security Emergency Preparedness Program (NSEP).** This AFNORTH directorate is responsible for integrating DSCA mission considerations into contingency plans and exercise scenarios. They also coordinate mission requirements with combatant commands and civilian agencies for planning, training, and execution. During DSCA events, they provide trained emergency preparedness liaison officers (EPLOs) to represent the Air Force to the defense coordinating officer (DCO) and civilian agencies. To support USPACOM, NSEP deploys EPLOs to Hawaii, Guam, and other US territories and commonwealths in the Pacific when required. AFNORTH maintains OPCON of the EPLOs, and transfers tactical control to the DCO.²³
- ✦ **Civil Air Patrol/United States Air Force Auxiliary (CAP/AFAUX).** Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is a federally supported, congressionally chartered non-profit corporation that may be used as a civilian volunteer auxiliary of the Air Force. The Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) can employ the services of CAP, while acting in its capacity as an Air Force auxiliary, in lieu of or to supplement Air Force resources to fulfill the noncombat programs and missions of the Air Force. 10 U.S.C. §9442 identifies CAP as an auxiliary of the Air Force when its services are used by any department or agency in any branch of the federal government, including the Air Force. CAP is deemed to be an instrumentality of the United States while carrying out missions assigned by the Secretary and as such is required to comply with the Posse Comitatus Act and intelligence oversight restrictions. CAP/AFAUX is not authorized to perform Air Force assigned missions outside of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands without specific authorization from the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force for Operations (AF/A3),

²³ All Air Force EPLOs are reservists, and therefore Air Force Reserve Command may have ADCON depending on duty status.

on behalf of the SECAF. USNORTHCOM or USPACOM may request assistance in support of DSCA during response and recovery operations, and other federal operations.

CAP/AFAUX assets, much like the ANG, can be classified into two categories within the law and can only be in one status at a time. The first category is Title 10, where these Air Force Auxiliary forces are deemed an instrumentality of the United States when carrying out a non-combat mission assigned by the Secretary of the Air Force. The second category is where these same individuals and equipment are acting in the CAP Corporate category under Title 36 as a federally sanctioned non-profit corporation.

—Information derived from Titles 10 and 36, U.S.C.

- ✦ **Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC).** CDRUSNORTHCOM delegates mission coordinator responsibilities for day-to-day search and rescue (SAR) to the COMAFFOR (AFNORTH/CC). The COMAFFOR, as JFACC, executes via the AFRCC located within AFNORTH's 601st Air Operations Center (601 AOC). The center coordinates all inland SAR response within the CONUS according to the national SAR plan. Duties include searching for missing/overdue aircraft, managing beacon alerts, and assisting the states with their SAR missions. The AFRCC validates all requests and brokers federal assistance on an "ask, not task" basis to save life and prevent undue suffering. Similarly, the 11th Rescue Coordination Center performs the same mission within Alaska.

In accordance with the national SAR plan, these functions are performed by the US Coast Guard for the state of Hawaii, and USPACOM for US territories in the Pacific.

Joint Task Forces

When a crisis requires a military response, the geographic CCDR will usually form a tailored JTF. If Air Force forces are attached to the JTF, they stand up as an AETF within the JTF. The AETF commander, designated as the COMAFFOR, provides the single Air Force face to the JTF commander. For example, USNORTHCOM's COMAFFOR, the AFNORTH commander, shares a relationship with state level JTFs when they are stood up and the AFNORTH/CC may use the 601 AOC, or other organic capabilities in the command, to support state level operations, as necessary.

Multiple COMAFFORs may be appointed within the homeland with each one assigned to a task- or event-specific JTF (e.g., JTF-Civil Support, JTF-North and JTF-National Capital Region all operate within the homeland). Coordination among all the JTFs should be taken into account when operations cross their respective geographic areas. The COMAFFOR (theater or JTF) should be cognizant of the multiple other JTFs and JTF-like entities in the interagency environment already existing in the AOR and should establish relationships with them.
