



[ANNEX 3-30 COMMAND AND CONTROL](#)

**TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONAL FORCES TO A
GEOGRAPHIC COMMAND**

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In some situations, a geographic commander may request additional functional forces beyond those apportioned or allocated during deliberate or crisis action planning. The decision to transfer functional forces, with specification of [operational control](#) (OPCON) to a geographic [combatant commander](#) (CCDR) should be balanced against competing needs across multiple [areas of responsibility](#) (AORs). In some cases, the requirement for OPCON over specific forces to accomplish the geographic CCDR's missions may be of higher priority than the competing worldwide mission requirements of the functional CCDR. Therefore, after coordination with the owning functional commander and upon Secretary of Defense (SecDef) approval, functional forces may be transferred to the geographic command and organized accordingly. The decision to attach additional functional forces has two parts. First, the decision should consider whether:

- ★ The geographic CCDR will use the forces at or near 100 percent of their capability with little or no residual capability for other global missions.
- ★ The forces will be used regularly and frequently over a period of time, not just for a single mission employment.
- ★ The geographic commander has the ability to effectively [command and control](#) the forces.

If the answer to all three conditions above is “yes,” then the functional forces should be [attached](#) to the geographic [combatant command](#) (CCMD). If any of the above conditions are answered “no,” then the functional forces should remain under the OPCON of the functional CCDR's [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) and be tasked in [support](#).

If the decision is to attach forces, the second decision is whether the forces should be attached with specification of either OPCON or [tactical control](#) (TACON).

- ★ **Specification of OPCON:** OPCON is the more complete—and preferred—choice of control. It normally “provides authority to organize and employ commands and forces as the commander considers necessary to accomplish assigned missions. It does not include authoritative direction for logistics or matters of administration, discipline, internal organization, or unit training.” (Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*).

- ★ **Specification of TACON:** TACON is the more limited choice of control. It is defined as “the authority over forces that is limited to the detailed direction and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned.” [Joint Publication 1 states](#) “[w]hen transfer of forces to a joint force will be temporary, the forces will be attached to the gaining command, and JFCs, normally through the Service component commander, will exercise OPCON over the attached forces.” Thus, transfer and attachment with specification of TACON is not the expected norm. While it is possible for the SecDef to attach forces across CCMD lines with the specification of TACON in lieu of OPCON, such action would deviate from joint doctrine established in JP 1 and would result in a more complicated chain of command with OPCON and TACON split between two different CCDRs.

Regardless of which form of control is specified, regional COMAFFORs have inherent responsibilities for such issues as local [force protection](#), lodging, and dining. Thus, if a regional COMAFFOR holds OPCON of forces outside the AOR, he or she is not responsible for such issues—that is the responsibility of the COMAFFOR in the region in which they are bedded down. In a parallel fashion, if such out-of-region forces divert into bases in his/her region (for example, for emergencies), that COMAFFOR is now responsible for basic support and protection.

As an example, a CCDR requests tankers in support of a regional operation. If the tankers are totally committed to that operation and are unavailable to perform any other missions, OPCON of these tankers may be specified by the SecDef to be gained and exercised by the forward geographic CCDR/JFC. If, on the other hand, the tankers are only partially employed in that operation and thus are available for other missions (such as support to the intertheater air bridge), or there are competing priorities among other CCDRs for those tankers, the Commander, US Transportation Command, should retain OPCON to optimize overall tanker utilization. As another example, missile warning satellites can provide warning to the geographic CCDR/JFC through a direct support relationship, but the Commander, US Strategic Command, retains OPCON to optimize missile warning mission requirements globally.
