



ANNEX 3-30 COMMAND AND CONTROL

COMMANDING AIRPOWER

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Air Force expeditionary organization and preferred command arrangements are designed to address [unity of command](#), a key [principle of war](#). Clear lines of authority, with clearly identified commanders at appropriate echelons exercising appropriate control, are essential to achieving [unity of effort](#), reducing confusion, and maintaining priorities. Because of the joint nature of [airpower](#), early attention within the Air Force was placed on commanding joint air operations through a [joint force air component commander](#) (JFACC); less well appreciated was the role of the [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR). However, during numerous recent deployments, the Air Force has learned a great deal about the nuances of commanding Service operations afield. As a result, the Air Force no longer looks at the COMAFFOR's job, as some Air Force officers mistakenly did, as simply a "lesser included case" nested within the JFACC's tasks. Quite the opposite: it's the COMAFFOR who usually wears multiple hats.

It is important to distinguish here between an Air Force commander and a commander, Air Force forces; they are not necessarily synonymous. The former refers to any Air Force commander within a Service context (e.g., wing, group, or squadron commander). The latter is reserved exclusively for the senior Air Force commander directly responsible to a [joint force commander](#) within a joint context. Just as "all tigers are cats, but not all cats are tigers," so is every COMAFFOR an Air Force commander, but not every Air Force commander is a COMAFFOR.¹

This section discusses the following related topics:

- ✦ A detailed presentation on [the COMAFFOR](#).
- ✦ An overview of [the JFACC](#).
- ✦ A discussion on controlling [other Services' aviation capabilities](#) that may be made available for tasking.
- ✦ A discussion on the challenges of [multi-hatting commanders](#).

¹ For more discussion of this distinction, see *Air and Space Power Journal*, Nov-Dec 2013, "[Who's in Charge? Commander, Air Force Forces or Air Force Commander?](#)"