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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



ANNEX 3-30 COMMAND AND CONTROL

APPENDIX C: THE AIR FORCE FORCES (AFFOR) STAFF

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This appendix supports the basic discussion of the AFFOR staff. More specific guidance can be found in [Air Force Instruction 13-103, AFFOR Staff Operations, Readiness and Structures](#).

An Air Force forces (AFFOR) staff (sometimes also called an A-Staff) supports the [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) at the [combatant command](#), [subordinate unified command](#), or [joint task force](#) level. The AFFOR staff is the vehicle through which the COMAFFOR fulfills operational and administrative responsibilities for [assigned](#) and [attached](#) forces across the [range of military operations](#), from steady state operations in the engagement phase through [major operations](#) and [campaigns](#). In the steady state, the AFFOR staff performs administrative responsibilities (organize, train, and equip), and also plans, executes, and assesses operations in support of the CCDR's theater campaign strategies and plans. The AFFOR staff is also responsible for the operational planning that occurs outside the air tasking cycle (e.g., deliberate planning). The AFFOR staff consists of functionally oriented directorates, a command section, a personal staff, and any required liaisons. The AFFOR staff issues [mission type orders](#) on behalf of the COMAFFOR to direct subordinate units to execute actions outside of the scope of the [air tasking order](#) (ATO). Examples of such orders may include setting a baseline force protection condition, directing the move of a unit to another operating base, and overseeing the execution of steady-state or security cooperation operations.

The following discussion of AFFOR staff duties is not intended to be all-inclusive. The differing mission requirements of any given operation may dictate different task emphasis and staff arrangements. Very large or complex operations, for example, may require all staff directorates. In some cases, senior component liaison elements may not be needed; in other cases, some of the required support may be obtained through [reachback](#). For very small or limited operations, a full AFFOR staff may not be required. As a rule of thumb, the size and span of the AFFOR staff should normally be held to the smallest number of divisions necessary to handle the demands of the operation; in some cases, the COMAFFOR may combine some leadership positions (e.g., A-3/5; A-4/7). Other operations may employ an AFFOR staff split into forward and rear elements, using reachback to maintain [unity of effort](#). In each case, based upon regional requirements, the COMAFFOR determines the size, shape, and location of the AFFOR staff and [air operations center](#) (AOC) to best support the operation.

COMMAND SECTION

The command section is normally composed of the commander (i.e., the COMAFFOR), vice commander, chief of staff, command chief master sergeant, executive assistant, and appropriate administrative support personnel. Within the command section, the chief of staff coordinates and directs the daily activities of the AFFOR staff; approves actions, orders, and plans, as authorized by the COMAFFOR; and ensures COMAFFOR decisions and concepts are implemented by directing and assigning staff responsibilities.

PERSONAL STAFF

The COMAFFOR has several staff activities that normally function outside the AFFOR staff directorates. These activities fulfill specific responsibilities usually related to providing close, personal advice or services to the commander, or assist the commander and the component staff with technical, administrative, or tactical matters. These activities may include the commander's legal advisor, political advisor (POLAD), public affairs advisor, inspector general, protocol advisor, historian, chaplain, counterintelligence and special investigations, financial management, force protection, air mobility operations ([DIRMOBFOR](#)), space operations ([DIRSPACEFOR](#)), medical, knowledge operations management, and safety. Based on the needs of the operation and the requirements of the AFFOR staff, some of these activities may be located within the AFFOR staff directorates.

SENIOR COMPONENT LIAISONS

The senior liaison officer (LNO) from each component represents his or her respective commander to the COMAFFOR. Subordinate LNOs from each component may perform duties throughout the staff as required, providing weapon system expertise. LNOs should be knowledgeable of the capabilities and limitations of their units and Service.

MANPOWER, PERSONNEL, AND SERVICES (A-1)

The director of manpower, personnel, and services is the principal staff assistant to the COMAFFOR for total force accountability, personnel policy and procedures, the establishment and documentation of manpower requirements, organizational structures, mortuary affairs, food and force [beddown](#) operations, the coordination of exchange services, and the provision of quality of life programs to enable and sustain forces assigned and attached to the COMAFFOR.

INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE (A-2)

The director of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) is the principal staff assistant to the COMAFFOR for policy and guidance for all Air Force ISR operational architectures, personnel, systems, and training. The A-2 provides intelligence support

to forces within the assigned [area of operations](#). The A-2 does not normally direct ISR collection assets when an ISR division is resident in the AOC; this is normally directed by ISR division chief.

OPERATIONS (A-3)

The director of operations serves as the principal staff assistant to the COMAFFOR in the direction and control of all assigned and attached Air Force forces. When [operational control](#) (OPCON) of Air Force units is formally transferred to the COMAFFOR, the A-3 ensures they are capable of performing tasked missions. This includes monitoring unit deployments and beddown locations, combat readiness, mission rehearsals, force protection, and training activities. The A-3 is the focal point for executing component operations outside the purview of the AOC.

LOGISTICS (A-4)

The director of logistics is the principal staff assistant to the COMAFFOR for logistics and sustainment support of assigned and attached Air Force forces. This includes oversight, integration, and operational level planning for and management of logistics capabilities for deploying units and the AOC, and similar support to other US government agencies, [nongovernment organizations](#) (NGOs), and private voluntary organizations as appropriate. Most of the challenges confronting this division will likely be Air Force component-unique.

PLANS AND REQUIREMENTS (A-5)

The director of plans and requirements serves as the principal staff assistant to the COMAFFOR for all consolidated planning functions. In coordination with the A-4, the A-5 conducts comprehensive force-level movement and execution planning throughout the campaign. This involves preparation and subsequent refinement of the force flow, beddown, and redeployment in the [time-phased force and deployment data](#). The A-5 is the focal point for planning not under the purview of the AOC, to include the COMAFFOR campaign support plan and security cooperation country plans. This planning is normally preceded by the development of a COMAFFOR strategy. The A-5 is also the focal point for the operational [assessment](#) of such plans. In addition, the A-5 leads in the development of the organizational structure and [command relationships](#) for the Air Force component within the framework of the joint operation. The A-5 normally publishes the Air Force component [operations order](#) to support the JFC's campaign.

COMMUNICATIONS (A-6)

The director of communications is the principal staff assistant to the COMAFFOR for communications-electronics and information capabilities. This includes establishing the theater communications and automated systems architecture to support operational and command requirements.

INSTALLATIONS AND MISSION SUPPORT (A-7)

The director of installations and mission support is the COMAFFOR's primary advisor for installations; mission support; [force protection](#); civil engineering; [explosive ordnance disposal](#); firefighting; emergency management; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear passive defense and response; contracting; and all cross-functional expeditionary combat support. Additionally, the A-7 works in coordination with the A-4 and A-1 on formulation of beddown plans and coordination and supervision of force beddown.

STRATEGIC PLANS AND PROGRAMS (A-8)

The director of strategic plans and programs provides the COMAFFOR comprehensive advice on all aspects of strategic planning and programming. The A-8 also conducts program assessment and provides coordinated resource inputs to the supporting MAJCOM's Program Objective Memorandum processes.

STUDIES, ANALYSES, ASSESSMENTS, AND LESSONS LEARNED (A-9)

The director of studies, analyses, assessments, and lessons learned, collects, documents, reports, and disseminates critical information necessary to analyze, assess, and document Air Force aspects of [campaigns](#) and [contingencies](#), and to document lessons identified. (Note: A-9 functions do not include campaign [operational assessment](#), a task performed within the AOC). This information provides the primary source documents for both contemporary and future Air Force planning and analysis. Moreover, they serve as an official permanent record of component mission accomplishment.
