



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 operations (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 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 questions above is “yes,” then the functional forces should be attached to the geographic combatant command. If any of the above questions 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 question 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. OPCON “normally provides full authority to organize commands and forces and to employ those forces as the commander in operational control considers necessary to accomplish assigned missions; it does

not, in and of itself, include authoritative direction for logistics or matters of administration, discipline, internal organization, or unit training.”

- ★ **Specification of TACON:** TACON is the more limited choice of control. Joint Publication 1, [*Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*](#), states “when transfer of forces to a joint force will be temporary, the forces will be attached to the gaining commands 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 combatant command lines with the specification of TACON in lieu of OPCON, such action would result in a more confused chain of command with OPCON and TACON split between two different CCDRs.
 - 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.
 - For more complete discussion on transferring functional forces, see [Annex 3-30, Command and Control](#).
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