



INTEGRATING REGIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL AIR FORCE FORCES

Last Updated: 5 Jun 2013

- [Airpower](#) is usually presented through a mix of regional and functional models, with the latter usually supporting the former.
- Functional forces usually maintain a separate organization from the supported regional organization, and are integrated in the theater through specially trained liaisons attached to the regional [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR).
- The most likely functional capabilities to be provided in such a supporting relationship are [air mobility operations](#), [space operations](#), [special operations](#), [cyberspace operations](#), and [nuclear operations](#).
- **Integrating Air Mobility Operations.** Because air mobility forces serve several regions concurrently, their employment should be balanced between regional and intertheater requirements and priorities.
 - ✦ The air mobility systems performing [intratheater](#) and [intertheater](#) missions within a given region should operate in close coordination to provide responsive and integrated aerial movement to the supported [combatant commander](#) (CCDR).
 - ✦ Carefully constructed command relationships can allow an interlocking arrangement to manage intratheater and intertheater air mobility operations.
 - ✦ **The Director of Air Mobility Forces** (DIRMOBFOR). Within an air expeditionary task force (AETF), the DIRMOBFOR is the COMAFFOR's designated coordinating authority for air mobility operations. *For more discussion of the DIRMOBFOR, see Annex 3-17, [Air Mobility Operations](#).*
- **Integrating Space Operations.** Space presents another form of military operations that, much like air mobility, usually are best presented functionally to a regional commander through a supporting relationship if they are not attached.
 - ✦ Space command and control brings another level of complexity because many space assets that support military interests come from a variety of organizations, some outside of the Department of Defense (DOD). *For more detail see Annex 3-14, [Space Operations](#).*

- ✦ **Space Coordinating Authority (SCA).** Within a regional operation, the [joint force commander](#) (JFC) should designate SCA to facilitate unity of effort with DOD-wide space operations and non-DOD space capabilities. *For more on SCA including space capabilities and responsibilities see [related discussion in Annex 3-14](#).*
- ✦ **The Director of Space Forces** (DIRSPACEFOR) serves as the senior space advisor to the COMAFFOR. The DIRSPACEFOR, an Air Force space officer, coordinates, integrates, and staffs activities to tailor space support to the COMAFFOR (and the [joint force air component commander](#) [JFACC] when the COMAFFOR is so designated). *For more on DIRSPACEFOR roles and responsibilities see [related discussion in Annex 3-14](#).*
- **Integrating Special Operations.** The geographic CCDR normally exercises [combatant command \(command authority\)](#) (COCOM) of [assigned](#) Air Force special operations forces (AFSOF) and [operational control](#) (OPCON) of all [attached](#) AFSOF through the commander of the [theater special operations command](#).
 - ✦ For conventional missions, the JFACC may receive OPCON or [tactical control](#) (TACON) of AFSOF assets when directed by the JFC. However, in most cases, AFSOF will only normally be in a [direct support](#) relationship with conventional assets.
 - ✦ When SOF operate in concert with “conventional” JTFs, they normally take the form of a separate joint special operations task force (JSOTF) within the JTF, commanded by a joint force special operations component commander (JFSOCC). *For more on special operations forces capabilities and roles see [Annex 3-05, Special Operations](#).*
 - ✦ The [Special Operations Liaison Element](#) (SOLE). The SOLE is a liaison team that represents the JFSOCC to the COMAFFOR/JFACC. The SOLE integrates all SOF air and surface operations with joint air operations via the air tasking process. Additionally, the SOLE deconflicts SOF operations with other component liaisons in the AOC.
- **Integrating Cyberspace Operations.** Global [cyberspace](#) capabilities may be presented to a regional commander through a supporting relationship, to supplement regional cyberspace capabilities. US Cyber Command, as a [subordinate unified command](#) under US Strategic Command, is the focal point for providing cyberspace capabilities to other [combatant commanders](#). *For details on cyberspace operations see [Annex 3-12, Cyberspace Operations](#).*
- **Integrating Nuclear Operations.** The political and psychological effects of [nuclear weapons](#) confer upon them a unique nature. Therefore, the singular role of US Strategic Command during planning and employment necessitates close coordination with regional commanders to achieve desired results. Air Force nuclear

capabilities are central to these considerations, and require precise integration to ensure effective employment within a particular region taking into account the larger political ramifications. Refer to Annex 3-72, [Nuclear Operations](#).
