

COMMAND AND CONTROL FOR TRAINING AND COMBAT OPERATIONS:  
A CASE STUDY OF CURRENT C-NAF ORGANIZATION  
AND COMMITMENTS

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
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General Studies

by  
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## ABSTRACT

COMMAND AND CONTROL FOR TRAINING AND COMBAT OPERATIONS:  
A CASE STUDY OF CURRENT C-NAF ORGANIZATION AND COMMITMENTS,  
by Major Richard W. Waldrop, 76 pages.

At the dawn of the 21st Century, the Air Force adapted too many of the challenges presented by nearly a decade of sustained combat operations. Notable among these adaptations are the doctrinal and real-world changes with regard to senior command and control structures. The concept of the Numbered Air Force command echelon evolved and current doctrine created Component Numbered Air Forces aligned with regional combatant commanders. While these changes improved clarity of command issues, they also generated their own challenges. This study presents current command and control doctrine and analyzes two specific Component Numbered Air Forces. The 12th Air Force provides the doctrinal model for the stateside Component Numbered Air Force, while 9th Air Force in 2011 looks vastly different than it did just two years earlier. In 2009, Air Force leaders split 9th Air Force along its two major responsibilities in an effort to improve its handling of the air campaign in the Middle East. While Air Force leaders assert this change is temporary in nature, this research shows why 9th Air Force needs to remain a split command by examining the conditions in which the stateside Component Numbered Air Force can succeed.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                 | Page |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE .....   | iii  |
| ABSTRACT.....                                                   | iv   |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....                                           | v    |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.....                                          | vi   |
| ACRONYMS.....                                                   | viii |
| ILLUSTRATIONS .....                                             | x    |
| TABLES .....                                                    | xi   |
| CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....                                    | 1    |
| Background.....                                                 | 1    |
| Primary and Secondary Research Questions .....                  | 3    |
| Definitions .....                                               | 4    |
| Limitations .....                                               | 5    |
| Scope.....                                                      | 6    |
| Delimitations.....                                              | 6    |
| Significance of Thesis.....                                     | 6    |
| CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....                               | 9    |
| Doctrine .....                                                  | 9    |
| 9th Air Force Transformation .....                              | 16   |
| 12th Air Force .....                                            | 19   |
| Department of Defense Transformation .....                      | 21   |
| Summary.....                                                    | 22   |
| CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....                            | 26   |
| Introduction.....                                               | 26   |
| Doctrinal Architecture for the C-NAF.....                       | 28   |
| Key Factors for C-NAF Success.....                              | 29   |
| Comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the C-NAF Model ..... | 29   |
| Conclusions and Recommendations .....                           | 30   |
| Summary.....                                                    | 31   |

|                                                             |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS .....                     | 32 |
| Introduction.....                                           | 32 |
| Doctrinal C-NAF Architecture .....                          | 32 |
| Key Factors .....                                           | 39 |
| 9th Air Force and AFCENT Comparison to the Model C-NAF..... | 42 |
| Analysis .....                                              | 48 |
| Summary.....                                                | 50 |
| CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....             | 55 |
| Conclusions.....                                            | 55 |
| Recommendations.....                                        | 57 |
| Summary.....                                                | 60 |
| APPENDIX A FIGURE FROM JOINT PUBLICATION 3-30 .....         | 61 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY .....                                          | 62 |
| INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....                             | 65 |

## ACRONYMS

|          |                                          |
|----------|------------------------------------------|
| ACC      | Air Combat Command                       |
| ACCE     | Air Component Coordination Element       |
| ADCON    | Administrative Control                   |
| AFCHQ    | Air Force Component Headquarters         |
| AFDD     | Air Force Doctrine Document              |
| AFFOR    | Air Force Forces                         |
| AOC      | Air and Space Operations Center          |
| AOR      | Area of Responsibility                   |
| C2       | Command and Control                      |
| CAOC     | Combined Air and Space Operations Center |
| CCDR     | Combatant Commander                      |
| C-NAF    | Component Numbered Air Force             |
| COMAFFOR | Commander, Air Force forces              |
| DOD      | Department of Defense                    |
| DRU      | Direct Reporting Unit                    |
| GCC      | Geographic Combatant Commander           |
| JACCE    | Joint Air Component Coordination Element |
| JFACC    | Joint Force Air Component Commander      |
| JFC      | Joint Force Commander                    |
| JP       | Joint Publication                        |
| JTF      | Joint Task Force                         |
| MAJCOM   | Major Command                            |
| NAF      | Numbered Air Force                       |

|            |                                                               |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| OPCON      | Operational Control                                           |
| TACON      | Tactical Control                                              |
| USAFCENT   | United States Air Forces Central (also referred to as AFCENT) |
| USAFSOUTH  | United States Air Forces South (also referred to as AFSOUTH)  |
| USCENTAF   | United States Central Command Air Forces                      |
| USCENTCOM  | United States Central Command                                 |
| USSOUTHCOM | United States Southern Command                                |
| WFHQ       | War Fighting Headquarters                                     |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|                                                        | Page |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Figure 1. Basic Template for AFCHQ/WFHQ .....          | 13   |
| Figure 2. Notional A-Staff Organization.....           | 14   |
| Figure 3. Notional AOC Organization .....              | 15   |
| Figure 4. Stateside C-NAF Comparison Methodology ..... | 27   |
| Figure 5. Notional Theater Air Control System.....     | 34   |

## TABLES

|                                                                     | Page |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Table 1. Template for Doctrinal C-NAF Architecture.....             | 28   |
| Table 2. Template for Key Factors for Stateside C-NAF Success ..... | 28   |
| Table 3. 9th Air Force and AFCENT Comparison to C-NAF Model .....   | 30   |
| Table 4. Doctrinal C-NAF Architecture .....                         | 38   |
| Table 5. Key Factors for Stateside C-NAF Success .....              | 42   |
| Table 6. 9th Air Force and AFCENT Comparison to C-NAF Model .....   | 48   |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

And can you assure us that when the time comes, that the 9th Air Force will be reunited with AFCENT?

— Congressman John Spratt,  
Hearing on Budget Request from  
the Department of the Air Force

That is absolutely our intent, sir.

— Gen Schwartz,  
Hearing on Budget Request from  
the Department of the Air Force

#### Background

During a ceremony presided over by Gen David Petraeus, Commander, United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), and Gen John Corley, Commander, Air Combat Command, Lt Gen Gary North relinquished command of 9th Air Force and U.S. Air Forces Central (AFCENT).<sup>1</sup> The change of command was similar to all other changes of command except for one crucial action. Instead of passing the guidon to a new commander, he passed two different guidons to two different commanders. With this action, the Air Force deviated from standing doctrine by separating a stateside Numbered Air Force (NAF) from the Air Force component to the combatant commander (CCDR). The official Air Force position frames this as a short-term separation of the 9th Air Force and AFCENT with the intent of combining them again after conclusion of full-scale operations in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR).<sup>2</sup>

The 21st century Air Force adapted its command structure to meet the needs of a prolonged war in the Middle East, and fundamentally changed the scope of responsibility

and structure of the NAF. Some of these NAFs are the senior warfighting echelons in the Air Force and serve as the commander, Air Force forces (COMAFFOR) for the CCDR. However, these commands also have Title 10 duties to oversee Air Force wings and report to an Air Force Major Command (MAJCOM), thus they divide attention between a combat function and a training function. This dichotomy can lead to a command strong in one function and weak in the other, or potentially, weak in both. While manpower requirements to fully staff an organization charged with this much oversight are significant, realistic constraints have generated understaffed commands. This trend of smaller, understaffed echelons will likely continue as Defense Secretary Robert Gates, calls for reducing defense bureaucracy and Air Force Secretary Michael Donley, calls for consolidating overlapping commands.

As the Air Force continues its immersion in a “Long War,” the question of proper command and control (C2) over training and combat forces requires an answer. In order to fully leverage the Air Force’s ability to organize, train, and equip forces for the CCDR, the Air Force relies on the NAF to play a critical role in the C2 of MAJCOM’s training of forces. Additionally, The Air Force charged some of these NAFs, designated as Component Numbered Air Force or C-NAF, to play the role of senior Air Force warfighter as the Air Component Commander for the CCDR.<sup>3</sup> This “dual-hatted” role forced the C-NAF to make difficult decisions with respect to attention and effort. Few actions today are more important than preparing U.S. and coalition forces to engage in combat in support of ongoing Overseas Contingency Operations; however, actually commanding these forces in combat is probably the one action that qualifies as more important.

The question remains: why was 9th Air Force unable to effectively and efficiently operate according to doctrine? This question guides the focus of this study, which examines the division of 9th Air Force and AFCENT and Air Force leadership's plan to recombine the two commands. This paper's focus is to determine requirements and key factors needed for a successful stateside C-NAF by analyzing current doctrine and analyzing the Air Force's only current stateside C-NAF with an overseas responsibility, 12th Air Force. Then, by comparing AFCENT and 9th Air Force to the model for stateside C-NAF success, this study shows why the Air Force split the commands and under what conditions the Air Force can reunify them. The primary question then becomes more relevant: under what conditions should the Air Force reunify 9th Air Force and AFCENT?

#### Primary and Secondary Research Questions

Under what conditions should the Air Force reunify 9th Air Force and AFCENT in the future? Secondary questions are:

1. What are the conditions needed for a successful stateside C-NAF with an overseas responsibility?
2. What actions must AFCENT and 9th Air Force undertake in order to reunify as one stateside command?
3. Based on current and likely future events in the USCENTCOM AOR, is it likely AFCENT and 9th Air Force will have the ability to reunify?

## Definitions

A brief glossary of relevant terms is provided below. When possible, definitions are from Joint or Air Force doctrine or other official military publications. In the event a term lacks a doctrinal definition, a commonly accepted definition is used.

Combatant Commander (CCDR). According to Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, the CCDR is a commander of one of the unified or specified combatant commands established by the President.<sup>4</sup> Doctrine documents further define the combatant commander as either a geographic combatant commander (GCC) or functional combatant commander. This study used CCDR for simplicity and standardization unless addressing a specific type of combatant commander.

Component Numbered Air Force (C-NAF). According to Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2, *Operations and Organization*, the C-NAF is an operationally oriented organization within each combatant command.<sup>5</sup> The C-NAF includes a headquarters element designed to support the Air Force component commander at the operational and tactical level.<sup>6</sup> Each C-NAF contains an AFFOR staff and an AOC weapons system. In addition to AFFOR responsibilities to the CCDR, each C-NAF also handles Title 10 management tasks delegated to them by their parent MAJCOM.<sup>7</sup> These duties include C2 over various Air Force Wings and other Direct Reporting Units (DRU).

Joint Air Component Coordination Element (JACCE). JP 3-30, *Command and Control for Joint Air Operation* describes the JACCE as —a component level liaison that serves as the direct representative of the JFACC.”<sup>8</sup> AFDD 6-0, *Command and Control*, also asserts the —ACCE is a liaison function, not a C2 node.”<sup>9</sup>

Warfighting Headquarters (WFHQ). Now an obsolete term, the 2006 *Command and Control Enabling Concept* defined the WFHQ concept as ~~the~~ headquarters element designed to support the [Air Force] component commander at the operational and tactical level. The WFHQ will include an AOC weapons system and AFFOR staff.”<sup>10</sup> The vignette located in AFDD 2 updates the term by describing the C-NAF as an ~~operationally-oriented organization~~” that will ~~include~~ an AOC weapons system and AFFOR staff, each appropriately tailored to support their combatant commander.”<sup>11</sup>

### Limitations

Two significant limitations affect this study. Due to current contingency operations and heightened information security measures within 9th Air Force and AFCENT, many manning, organizational statistics, AFFOR and AOC changes, and command decisions are either classified or deemed sensitive and thus not available. Where possible, this study gathered information from unclassified sources to create the best possible understanding of 9th Air Force as well as AFCENT. The second significant limitation affecting this study is the rapidly evolving environment surrounding the Department of Defense (DOD). Spearheaded by the Secretary of Defense, efficiency initiative efforts are significantly changing the senior command landscape. Of note, Air Force Secretary Donley identified three NAFs, two of which are currently C-NAFs, for absorption into their parent MAJCOM.<sup>12</sup> Defense Secretary Gates directed the elimination or change of 140 general officer positions across the department,<sup>13</sup> and the President directed the closing of Joint Forces Command.<sup>14</sup> What this will mean for the remaining C-NAFs or even the senior Air Force command structure is still unclear and most likely will affect the conclusions of this study in some way.

### Scope

This study's scope rests solely with the stateside C-NAF that has a responsibility to the MAJCOM and a CCDR with an overseas AOR. Other events are currently happening in the Air Force affecting NAFs and their C2 authorities and abilities, but this research focuses on two primary C-NAFs to draw conclusions. This study may reference current events relevant to overseas NAFs and C-NAFs, yet they are not the focus of this work.

### Delimitations

This study looks solely at the stateside C-NAF that also maintains a critical contact with a CCDR, specifically, a GCC, thus enlarging its range of obligations. Conversely, this study does not look at the current construct or obligations of traditional NAFs not aligned with a CCDR or of C-NAFs aligned with functional combatant commanders.

### Significance of Thesis

There are multiple reasons this work holds significant value for today's Air Force. Foremost, the Air Force, like the rest of the Department of Defense, made major adjustments due to prolonged periods of high operational tempos. Many of these adjustments dealt with C2 of training and combat forces with the desire to create more efficiencies and effectiveness of the combat effort while retaining a high degree of training capacity for sustained operations. Defense Secretary Gates' efficiencies effort created another motivation for the Air Force to relook at its C2 architecture. Multiple NAFs and C-NAFs throughout the Air Force are experiencing major changes; however,

more changes are inevitable as the Air Force continues to look for more efficient processes and methods to cope with stagnant and potentially receding budgets.

While reunifying 9th Air Force with AFCENT could result in a diminished manpower demand to employ a singular staff, both the likely future events in the Middle East and the benefits of the separated staffs increase the need to maintain the current construct, to the point of changing a temporary fix into a long-term solution.

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<sup>1</sup>SSgt. Amanda Savannah, “9 AF/USAFCENT Change of Command,” The Official Web Site of the U.S. Air Force, 6 August 2009, <http://www.shaw.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123162150> (accessed 21 September 2010).

<sup>2</sup>Tech. Sgt. Amaani, “Air Force Officials mull 9th Air Force AFCENT Separation,” The Official Web Site of the U.S. Air Force, 22 May 2009, <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123150753> (accessed 21 September 2010).

<sup>3</sup>Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2, *Operations and Organization* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 3 April 2007), 45.

<sup>4</sup>Headquarters, Joint Chief of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 12 April 2001 as amended through April 2010), 82.

<sup>5</sup>AFDD 2, 45.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 6-0, *Command and Control* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), 40.

<sup>8</sup>Headquarters, Joint Chief of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-30, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006 Incorporating Change 2, 2010), xiv.

<sup>9</sup>AFDD 6-0, 63.

<sup>10</sup>Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Forces Command and Control Enabling Concept* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 6.

<sup>11</sup>AFDD 2, 45.

<sup>12</sup>Michael Donley, “Air Force Efficiencies and Enhancements” (Remarks at the Air Force Association's Air Force Breakfast Program, Arlington, VA., 12 January, 2011), <http://www.af.mil/information/speeches/speech.asp?id=635> (accessed 25 April 2011).

<sup>13</sup>Robert Gates, “Track Four Efficiency Initiatives Decisions Memorandum,” 14 March 2011.

<sup>14</sup>The White House, “Presidential Memorandum on Disestablishment of Joint Forces Command,” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/06/presidential-memorandum-disestablishment-united-states-joint-forces-comm> (accessed 3 April 2011).

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Whereas chapter 1 created the foundation for the question of should 9th Air Force and AFCENT recombine, this chapter frames the question within existing doctrine and the key factors for the success of a stateside C-NAF. This chapter consists of four main parts. The first section explores the recent transformation within doctrine during a period of sustained combat operations as well as existing doctrine surrounding C2 elements. The middle two sections address literature regarding the two C-NAFs pertinent to this study: 12th Air Force and 9th Air Force. The last section addresses literature highlighting recent transformation efforts introduced within the Department of Defense in accordance with Secretary Gates' efficiency initiatives efforts.

#### Doctrine

Doctrine, specifically Joint and Air Force doctrine, endured substantial revisions over the last decade. With respect to Air Force C2, major revisions updated the way the Air Force organizes its War Fighting Headquarters (WFHQ) to better support and suit the CCDR or the Joint Force Commander (JFC). While some doctrine incorporated these changes, others continue to lag behind. The difference in vernacular between JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, and JP 3-30, *Command and Control for Joint Air Operations* illustrates this ongoing process. Although JP 3-0 underwent revision as recently as 22 March 2010,<sup>1</sup> the revision consisted mostly of information related to cyberspace, not C2. JP 3-0, therefore, retained much of the C2 vernacular current in 2006, and mentioned only the relationship between the JFC and the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC).

No mention occurred of newer concepts or emerging C2 elements and definitions were not necessarily consistent with current doctrine. JP 3-30, however, experienced a complete revision by January 2010.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, JP 3-30 was more in line with emerging Air Force doctrine and not only updated definitions of commonly used terms, it also revised the description of the JFACC, added guidance on various JFACC organizational options, and introduced emerging concepts such as the JACCE.

Although some Joint and Air Force specific doctrine still await revision, the vast preponderance of existing doctrine does illustrate new C2 concepts well. JP 3-30 details well the more efficient organization for command of air and space for not only the JFC and JFACC, but also the COMAFFOR. Not only are the roles for the JFACC better defined, JP 3-30 expands the discussion throughout chapter II. Appendix A provides a detailed list of responsibilities for the JFACC found in JP 3-30. In addition, JP 3-30 provides options for the CCDR or JFC regarding different means to organize the JFACC either within the whole AOR or within specific Joint Task Force (JTF) operations areas. JP 3-0 also introduces the concept of the JACCE as a C2 element used by a theater JFACC to better support multiple JTF headquarters within a single theater.

Air Force doctrine followed similar progression to Joint doctrine. Newly revised Air Force doctrine streamlined processes or in some instances created new concepts to counter emerging challenges inherent in continuing conflicts. Where Air Force C2 is concerned, many ideas changed since the early days of Operation Enduring Freedom.

AFDD 2 spells out the growth process well stating:

Because of the joint nature of air and space power, attention was placed on commanding joint air operations through a JFACC; less well understood was the role of the COMAFFOR. However, during numerous deployments in the last

decade, 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.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly, much effort and attention resulted in both improved doctrine and updated Air Force culture with respect to C2 of combat forces. AFDD 2 continues by detailing the nuances differentiating the roles of the JFACC from the COMAFFOR. Separate from the JFACC, the COMAFFOR not only maintains an operational chain of responsibility of all U.S. Air Force forces in a theater or JTF commander's operating area, but also an administrative chain of responsibility, expressed as administrative control (ADCON).<sup>4</sup>

While joint doctrine discusses the roles and responsibilities of the JFACC, AFDD 2, spells out the many ADCON requirements levied on the COMAFFOR as the service component commander to the JFC. In the role of the COMAFFOR, the senior Air Force commander manages additional responsibilities not specifically assigned to the JFACC.<sup>5</sup> This bifurcation of roles and responsibilities often goes unnoticed as generally the CCDR or JFC designates the COMAFFOR as the JFACC. While it is simpler to generalize the senior Air Force commander as simply the JFACC, this generalization overly simplifies the role of the senior Air Force commander. A look at the Air Force's Foundational Doctrine Statements provides an understanding of just how to establish an air component C2 organization that maximizes effectiveness and efficiency for the CCDR.

AFDD 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, is the Air Force's premier statement of fundamental warfighting principles and beliefs.<sup>6</sup> This document lists the Air Force's foundational doctrine statements, which provide the logical basis for organizing the warfighting Air Force. One of the statements highlights the organization of the warfighting Air Force as the Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force (AETF), and the

next statement addresses the AETF commander as the COMAFFOR. Only after defining the organization and the organization's commander does the logic progress to the final observation stating “[t]he Air Force prefers—and in fact, plans and trains—to employ forces through a COMAFFOR who is also dual-hatted as a joint force air and space component commander (JFACC).”<sup>7</sup> By stepping through this logic sequence, AFDD 1 lays the foundation of C2 for Air Force forces. AFDD 2 explains how this logic becomes reality, whereas, AFDD 6-0 further refines the ideas into organizations, products, and C2 architecture.

AFDD 2 mentions studies culminating in 2006 aimed at re-engineering Air Force C2.<sup>8</sup> One such study published by the Air Force and titled *Air Force Forces Command and Control Enabling Concept* provides the precursor to concepts addressed in AFDD 2.<sup>9</sup> The study expands the WFHQ concept, introduces the Air Force Component Headquarters (AFCHQ) concept, and details how the COMAFFOR C2 organization should look and operate. The WFHQ described in the concept is what AFDD 2 named the C-NAF, while the AFCHQ description best places that function at the MAJCOM level. In the case of AFCENT and AFSOUTH, the concept shows the AFCHQ and WFHQ staffs combined as depicted in Figure 1. This combination is important to AFCENT and AFSOUTH as it places both strategic and operational responsibilities on the COMAFFOR and AFFOR staff. AFDD 6-0 builds upon the C2 ideas mentioned in the *Air Force Forces Command and Control Enabling Concept*, and captures them in current doctrine.



## Basic Template (Case 2 – CENTCOM, SOUTHCOM, NORTHCOM, STRATCOM)

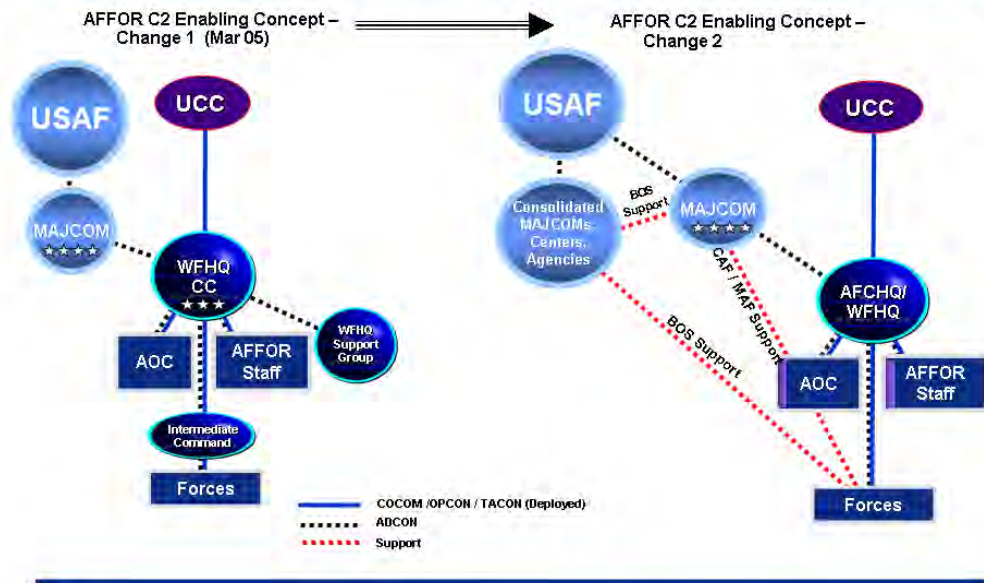


Figure 1. Basic Template for AFCHQ/WHQ

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Forces Command and Control Enabling Concept* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 10. This template, like the concept it came from, provides a framework for how to organize the C2 elements necessary for Air Force Forces presented to a CCDR.

Air Force Doctrine Document 6-0, known as AFDD 2-8 until September 2010, —establishes doctrinal guidance for C2 operations”<sup>10</sup> and clearly delineates the roles of the COMAFFOR and JFACC. Additionally, AFDD 6-0 exhaustively steps through the COMAFFOR's roles and responsibilities, both administratively and operationally. Most important to this study, it also describes the construct of the AFFOR staff including a notional AFFOR staff construct listed in figure 2. This staff construct is separate from the Air and Space Operations Center (AOC) staff and separate from the JFACC administrative staff. Also important to this study is the discussion of transition from

peacetime to contingency operations for the AFFOR staff discussed in chapter 2. AFDD 6-0 also describes concepts such as reachback and distributed operations with clarity and illustrate how the deployed AFFOR staff can augment its abilities by formalizing relationships with either non-deployed elements or establishing relationships with other elements not deployed to the same location as the AFFOR staff.

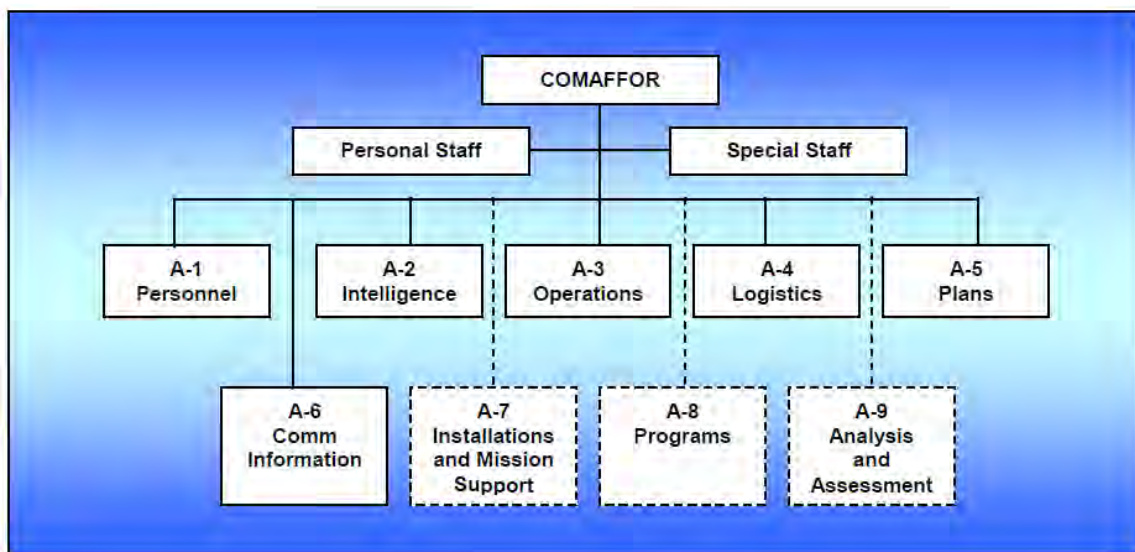


Figure 2. Notional A-Staff Organization

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 6-0, *Command and Control* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 40. While theoretical in nature, this figure presents a useful model to understand the construct of the AFFOR staff.

Chapter 3 of AFDD 6-0 details the operational responsibilities and C2 organization for the COMAFFOR. Not only does AFDD 6-0 highlight the need for a clear definition of roles between the AFFOR staff and the AOC staff, it also details the potential for further complexity when the COMAFFOR is also designated the JFACC.

The need for clearly defined roles becomes especially important as AFDD 1 highlights the Air Force's preference for the COMAFFOR to serve also as the JFACC.<sup>11</sup> Figure 3 explains the AOC staff construct in visual form.

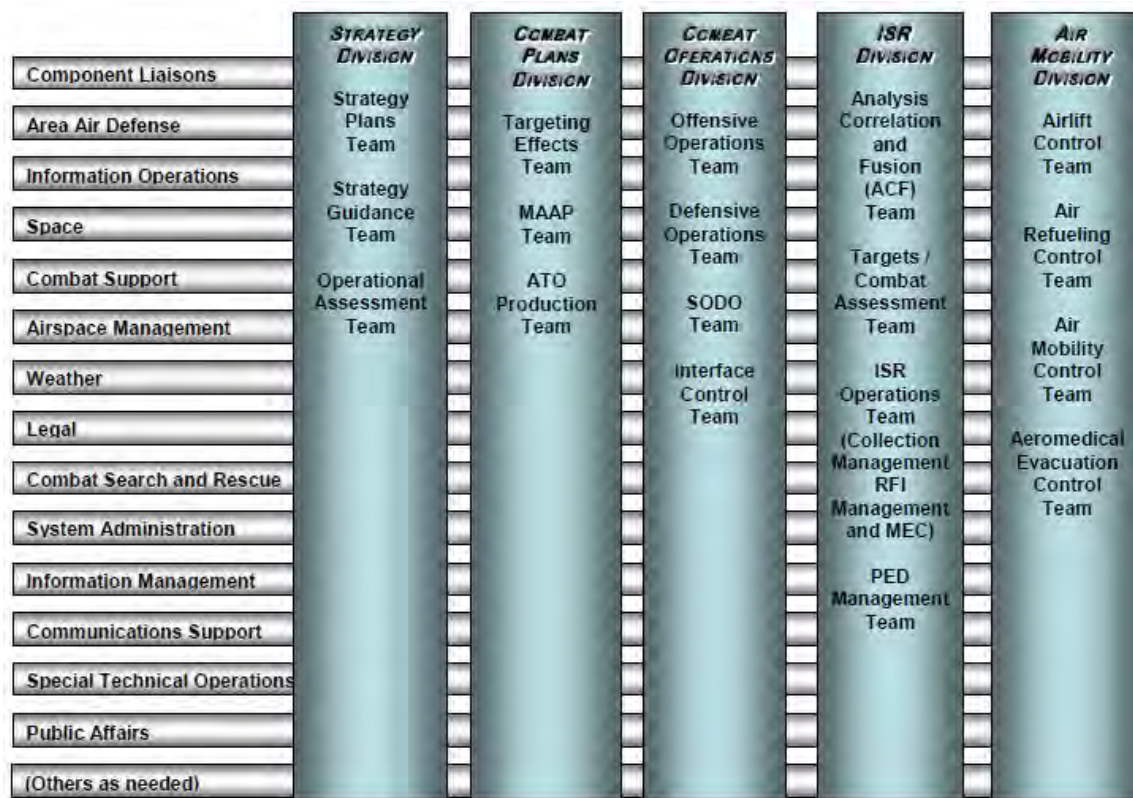


Figure 3. Notional AOC Organization

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 6-0, *Command and Control* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 62. This theoretical model represents the baseline of an AOC staff. Most AOCs will resemble this model; however, all are adapted to meet specific COMAFFOR needs or unique mission requirements.

One area where doctrine is noticeably silent is in the need for the C-NAF commander to continue working on rear echelon Title 10 management tasks while

operating as the COMAFFOR. AFDD 6-0 does address the dual tasks for the MAJCOM or NAF commander of managing the Title 10 tasks while also managing the AFFOR staff functions. The document mentions the need for a smooth transition to contingency operations, and highlights how a MAJCOM or NAF staff that becomes the core of the AFFOR staff best makes that transition. While much doctrine exists explaining how to stand up a deployed AFFOR staff, little or nothing exists detailing how the same staff would continue managing the stateside administrative mission. In practice, the answer has been for the C-NAF commander to retain the responsibility, with one noticeable exception: the 9th Air Force.

#### 9th Air Force Transformation

The 9th Air Force maintained an official relationship with USCENTCOM since 1983; however, its involvement in Middle East affairs goes back to the late 1970s. Since the 1970s, 9th Air Force evolved along with the ever-changing nature of conflict in the Middle East. From overseeing Air Force involvement in partner exercises such as Bright Star in Egypt to managing the air campaign in major combat operations such as Desert Storm, 9th Air Force changed its footprint and operations many times in the Middle East. However, operations in Afghanistan and Iraq posed unique challenges for 9th Air Force, and consequently led to the most recent changes in AFCENT C2.

The 9th Air Force began its partnership with USCENTCOM by first collaborating with its predecessor, the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force in 1980 in response to events unfolding in the Middle East.<sup>12</sup> Its first major operation came in 1990 when United States Central Command Air Forces (USCENTAF), the predecessor to AFCENT, accompanied USCENTCOM in its response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait.

Following the successful conclusion to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the majority of USCENTAF forces redeployed stateside leaving only a single wing in Saudi Arabia. However, USCENTAF redeployed to the Middle East in 1992 and established Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia (JTF-SWA) to enforce the United Nations imposed No-Fly zone in southern Iraq as part of Operation Southern Watch.<sup>13</sup> USAFCENT supported many other operations such as Vigilant Warrior in October 1994, Vigilant Sentinel from August to September 1995, Desert Strike from August to October 1996, Desert Thunder I from November 1997 to June 1998, Desert Thunder II from August to December 1998, and Desert Fox in December 1998.<sup>14</sup> In 2001, the U.S. response to the terrorist attacks in September heralded a new era in combat operations in the Middle East, and USCENTAF adapted to a new ~~normal~~ normal.”

Beginning with Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, USCENTAF shifted from operations either limited in intensity or duration to an open-ended operation destined to look unlike anything in the previous decade. In 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom replaced Operation Southern Watch and a second major warfront further complicated USCENTAF C2. During the first years of the new millennium, USCENTAF adapted to meet ever-growing responsibilities and C2 needs. Instead of short-term operations that did not necessarily tax the current C2 organization, Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom generated C2 requirements that necessitated many changes. One such change included a new enhanced Combined Air and Space Operations Center (CAOC) located within the region. Built at Al Udeid AB in Qatar,<sup>15</sup> the current CAOC stood up in 2003<sup>16</sup> to provide real-time C2 for combat Air Forces operating in the USCENTCOM AOR.<sup>17</sup> In 2008, USCENTAF became USAFCENT and once again

adapted its C2 structure, specifically its CAOC structure.<sup>18</sup> However, the most profound change did not happen until August 2009.

Just as doctrine on the command and control of Air Force forces evolved significantly in the new millennium's first decade, 9th Air Force evolved to meet an ever-growing deployed force and increasing need for C2. The JFACC staff consisted of over 1,000 members to meet C2 needs during Operation Desert Storm, while the JTF commander for Operation Southern Watch needed a staff of roughly 200 people for a JTF focused solely on an air campaign.<sup>19</sup> The differing requirements matched the differing characteristics of each operation. Operation Desert Storm's air campaign necessitated the large staff due to its high intensity; however, as the intensity dwindled relatively quickly, so did the staff. On the other hand, Operation Southern Watch's longevity necessitated literally thousands of 90-day deployment tours;<sup>20</sup> however, its limited intensity allowed for a much smaller staff. Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom perhaps created a perfect storm by combining an intensity similar to Operation Desert Storm to a longevity that outpaces Operation Southern Watch. Therefore, in 2009, Air Force leaders recognized the need for the COMAFFOR to dedicate 100 percent focus on the war effort.<sup>21</sup> In order to achieve this goal, Air Force leaders deviated from doctrine and split the COMAFFOR responsibilities resident in AFCENT from its parent C-NAF. 9th Air Force became a separate command with just administrative command over its subordinate wings and DRUs.

In 2011, AFCENT, commanded by a three-star general, spanned 10 Air Expeditionary Wings in 6 Middle Eastern countries and 1 in the United States, and oversaw roughly 29,000 personnel in the USCENTCOM AOR.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the

COMAFFOR for USCENTCOM also directly collaborated with 18 Middle Eastern countries, developed and executed an air and missile defense plan for all of the USCENTCOM AOR, and managed the Air Force effort to U.S. humanitarian assistance within the region.<sup>23</sup> In order to ensure effective and efficient C2, the AFCENT AFFOR staff included roughly 1,400 members split between its headquarters in Al Udeid, Qatar and Shaw AFB, South Carolina, while the AOC, located at Al Udeid, functioned with similar numbers.<sup>24</sup>

Concurrently, 9th Air Force, commanded by a two-star general, oversaw a stateside force consisting of seven active duty wings in four states, with additional active duty units in another eight states. The 9th Air Force managed its mission to “[p]repare 9th Air Force Officers and Enlisted Airmen to meet the demands of today’s expeditionary taskings while preparing for tomorrow’s fight,”<sup>25</sup> by overseeing the readiness of over 24,000 uniformed and civilian airmen and over 350 aircraft.<sup>26</sup> The 9th Air Force also maintained the responsibility for the operational readiness of 2 Air Force Reserve wings and 13 Air National Guard wings spread out over the eastern United States.<sup>27</sup> Aside from a personal staff, the 9th Air Force commander organized the NAF staff into areas specifically suited to meet the needs of the command. Sub-organizations consisted of operations, standardization and evaluations, logistics, legal, and a special staff.<sup>28</sup> All combined, the 9th Air Force staff consisted of fewer than 100 uniformed and civilian personnel.<sup>29</sup>

### 12th Air Force

The 12th Air Force accepted responsibility for United States Air Force Southern Command (AFSOUTH) in 1987.<sup>30</sup> As COMAFFOR for United States Southern

Command (USSOUTHCOM), the 12th Air Force commander assumed the responsibilities to plan and execute air operations in Central and South America. 12th Air Force units deployed to Panama in 1989 to support Operation Just Cause, and in 1994, 12th Air Force provided C2 for air operations in conjunction with Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti.<sup>31</sup> Most recently, 12th Air Force spearheaded air operations involved with supporting Haiti after a powerful earthquake damaged much of the country in 2010.<sup>32</sup>

Since 12th Air Force's move to Davis Monthan AFB, AZ in 1993, 12th Air Force led the way in bringing the . . . WFHC concept to life<sup>33</sup> according to its online fact sheet. It maintained a C2 element, an AFFOR staff, and an AOC all located at Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona. The 612th AOC supported 12th Air Force with an AOC staff of just over 300 personnel from not only the Air Force, but personnel from coalition nations, U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and DOD civilians.<sup>34</sup> As a subordinate command of ACC, 12th Air Force commanded 10 active duty wings and 1 DRU comprising over 40,500 uniformed and civilian airmen and over 520 aircraft. The command included units located in 10 western and midwestern states. Additionally, the 12th Air Force managed responsibility for the operational readiness of 11 Air National Guard Wings and 2 Air Reserve Wings comprising 23,800 uniformed and civilian airmen and 220 aircraft spread out over the western and midwestern states.<sup>35</sup>

In response to its tasked missions in the USSOUTHCOM AOR, 12th Air Force, acting in its capacity as AFSOUTH, oversaw five squadron-sized organizations permanently assigned to Puerto Rico and countries in the USSOUTHCOM AOR.<sup>36</sup> These five forward operating locations primarily focused on intra-theater airlift missions,

counterdrug operations, engineer support, disaster relief, and civic and humanitarian assistance.<sup>37</sup> In 2011, AFSOUTH span of control in the AOR consisted of approximately 450 personnel permanently assigned to the AOR and another approximately 600 personnel on temporary assignments within the AOR.<sup>38</sup> AFSOUTH activities in the AOR focused on theater security cooperation and involved events such as conferences with coalition nations, medical readiness training exercises, engineering readiness training exercises, exchange programs with coalition nations, and combined exercises focused on peacekeeping.<sup>39</sup>

To meet operational C2 needs, the 12th Air Force commander organized the staff along doctrinal lines with functional directorates and a personal staff.<sup>40</sup> The AFFOR staff of over 100 uniformed and civilian personnel provided the administrative needs for both the stateside subordinate commands and the AETF forces provided to USSOUTHCOM. Of the approximately 500 members of the combined 12th Air Force staff, the vast majority worked on or near Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona.

#### Department of Defense Transformation

Secretary of Defense Gates spoke on 9 August 2010 about sweeping reforms within the DOD.<sup>41</sup> Specifically, he spoke of cost saving measures intended to provide an investment of sorts into the department's highest-priority capabilities and programs. At the top of the list of changes for the Air Force was the combining of two stateside AOCs and the consolidation of three NAFs by their parent MAJCOMs. Additionally, Secretary Gates proposed cutting a minimum of 50 general officer positions within the DOD.

Secretary Donley spoke at an AFA sponsored breakfast on 12 January 2011 detailing the Air Force's planned efficiency efforts within the department. Elaborating on

Secretary Gates' earlier announcements, Secretary Donley explained, "13th Air Force at Joint Base Pearl Harbor and Hickam in Hawaii will be inactivated and combined with the staff of Pacific Air Forces with a single integrated headquarters staff and AOC supporting the U.S. Pacific Command."<sup>42</sup> He outlined similar plans for 17th Air Force, headquartered at Ramstein AB, Germany, and 19th Air Force, headquartered at Randolph AFB, TX. Two of these commands, 13th Air Force and 17th Air Force, existed as C-NAFs with AFFOR responsibilities to U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. European Command respectively.

In March 2011, Secretary Gates formalized the DOD efficiency efforts with a memorandum titled "Track Four Efficiency Initiatives Decision."<sup>43</sup> The memorandum outlined the Air Force changes to overseas C-NAFs and multiple AOCs already addressed by the Air Force Secretary, and raised the number of DOD general officer positions cut or reduced in rank to 140, including 32 positions from the Air Force.<sup>44</sup> While the drawdown in general officer positions pose little significance in manpower savings, the bigger story is the reduced staffs that accompany the cuts. The changes affect virtually all facets of Air Force command echelons, and promise to shape future Air Force command echelons as the reshuffling of staff responsibilities will continue for some time.

### Summary

Doctrine evolved significantly in the last decade to match an ever-changing contingency environment. Air Force organizations also adapted to changing needs, constraints, and restraints, while more changes appeared on the horizon. Joint and Air Force doctrine highlighted the roles and responsibilities of the JFACC for the CCCR or

JFC, while Air Force doctrine expounded on the roles and responsibilities of the COMAFFOR, the AOC, and the warfighting C-NAF as a whole. Air Force doctrine provides a clear understanding of the theoretical construct of the C-NAF as the AFFOR staff and AOC staff; however, doctrine holds few answers about how a C-NAF continues to manage Title 10 administrative oversight of stateside wings and DRUs while engaged in a prolonged, high-intensity conflict. This chapter also detailed a short history and current organizational makeup of 9th Air Force and 12th Air Force, and documented the transformation that reshaped the leadership structures within DOD. The next chapter outlines the methodology used to compare 9th Air Force to the model of a successful stateside C-NAF.

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<sup>1</sup>Headquarters, Joint Chief of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 17 September 2006, Incorporating Change 2, 22 March 2010), iii.

<sup>2</sup>JP 3-30, iii.

<sup>3</sup>AFDD 2, 35.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>5</sup>AFDD 6-0, vi.

<sup>6</sup>Curtis E. LeMay, Center for Doctrine Development and Education, “AFDD 1 Introduction,” Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education website, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/lemay/main.htm> (accessed 16 March 2010).

<sup>7</sup>Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), x.

<sup>8</sup>AFDD 2, 45.

<sup>9</sup>Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Forces Command and Control Enabling Concept*, 1.

<sup>10</sup>AFDD 6-0, v.

<sup>11</sup>AFDD 1, x.

<sup>12</sup>Department of the Air Force, U.S. Air Forces Fact Sheet, —~~United States Air~~ Forces Central Fact Sheet,” [http://www.centaf.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet\\_print.asp?fsID=10049&page=1](http://www.centaf.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet_print.asp?fsID=10049&page=1) (accessed 29 April 2011).

<sup>13</sup>Michael A. Nelson and Douglas J. Katz, —Unity of Control: Joint Air Operations in the Gulf-Part Two,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 5 (1994): 59-63.

<sup>14</sup>Department of the Air Force, —U.S. Air Forces Central Fact Sheet.”

<sup>15</sup>US Air Force Central Command (USAFCENT), —~~Mission~~ PowerPoint Brief.”

<sup>16</sup>Department of the Air Force, U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet, —~~Combined Air and~~ Space Operations Center (CAOC),” <http://www.afcent.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=12152> (accessed 5 May 2011).

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Department of the Air Force, —U.S. Air Forces Central Fact Sheet.”

<sup>19</sup>Nelson and Katz, 60.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>21</sup>House Committee on Armed Services, Hearing on Budget Request From the Department of the Air Force, 111 cong., 1st sess., 9 May 2009, 14.

<sup>22</sup>US Air Force Central Command (USAFCENT), —~~Mission~~ PowerPoint Brief.”

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Commander, 9th Air Force, —~~Ninth Air Force Overview~~,” Shaw AFB, South Carolina.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>Ninth Air Force, —~~HQ Ninth Air Force Organization Chart~~,” Shaw AFB, South Carolina.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>Department of the Air Force, U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet, —12th Air Force History,” [http://www.12af.acc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet\\_print.asp?fsID=4372&page=1](http://www.12af.acc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet_print.asp?fsID=4372&page=1) (accessed 12 April 2011).

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>TSgt Petosky, —AFSOUTH Guides Air Force Haiti Relief Effort,” <http://www.12af.acc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123187490> (accessed 12 April 2011).

<sup>33</sup>Department of the Air Force, U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet, —Twelfth Air Force and Air Forces Southern,” <http://www.12af.acc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=4470>. (accessed 8 April 2011).

<sup>34</sup>Department of the Air Force, —12th Air and Space Operations Center,” [http://www.12af.acc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet\\_print.asp?fsID=17727&page=1](http://www.12af.acc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet_print.asp?fsID=17727&page=1) (accessed 8 April 2011).

<sup>35</sup>Department of the Air Force, —Twelfth Air Force and Air Forces Southern.”

<sup>36</sup>12AF/A3X (12th Air Force Operations Planner), electronic correspondence with author, 12 April 2011.

<sup>37</sup>Department of the Air Force, —Twelfth Air Force and Air Forces Southern.”

<sup>38</sup>12AF/A3X (12th Air Force Operations Planner), electronic correspondence with author, 12 April 2011.

<sup>39</sup>Department of the Air Force, —Twelfth Air Force and Air Forces Southern.”

<sup>40</sup>12th Air Force (AFSOUTH), —Organizational Chart.”

<sup>41</sup>Robert M. Gates, —Statement on Department Efficiencies Initiative” (Speech delivered at the Pentagon, 9 August 2010), <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.asp?speechid=1496> (accessed 17 March 2011).

<sup>42</sup>Michael Donley, —Air Force Efficiencies and Enhancements.”

<sup>43</sup>Robert M. Gates, —Track Four Efficiency Initiatives Decisions Memorandum,” 14 March 2011.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the primary research question of under what conditions should the Air Force reunify 9th Air Force and AFCENT in the future. In order to dissect the primary question into more manageable parts, three secondary questions ask more C-NAF specific details. These questions guide this work and the methods used to derive meaningful analysis. While chapter 2 provided the doctrinal and current literature pertinent to this study, this chapter details the specific methods used to build a model stateside C-NAF construct and the comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model to yield answers, conclusions, and recommendations.

This study builds a model for a stateside C-NAF from documentation review and analysis of 12th Air Force. A comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model then yields data this study interprets to determine answers to the primary and secondary research questions. Figure 4 shows a pictorial display of the method. One weakness to this methodology is the inherent uniqueness of all C-NAF organizations, and the model's foundation on just one C-NAF. However, while no two C-NAF staffs encounter the exact same challenges, missions, or subordinate commands, Air Force leaders have identified a desire to return 9th Air Force to its original form, which most resembles only one other C-NAF, 12th Air Force as of 2011.

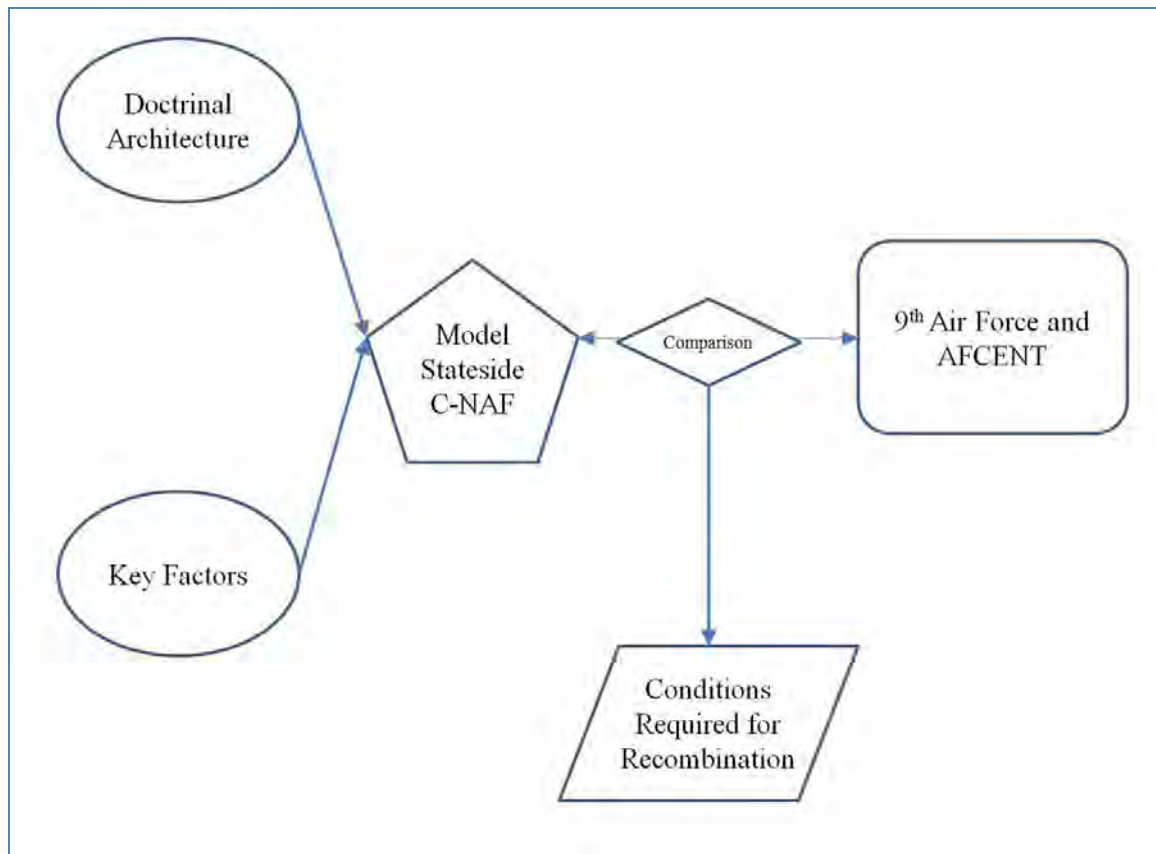


Figure 4. Stateside C-NAF Comparison Methodology

*Source:* Created by author. This methodology begins by constructing a model for a successful stateside C-NAF, then comparing 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model to yield data useful to understanding the conditions needed to recombine the two staffs.

In order to create visual clarity, this study consolidates data into two tables to build a model for the successful stateside C-NAF. Tables 1 and 2 show how this study organized data and analyzed information to determine recommendations and conclusions. Table 1 depicts the organizational requirements detailed in Joint and Air Force doctrine. The first column lists the organization or element described in doctrine, while the additional two columns describe the organization's purpose and roles and responsibilities. Table 2 depicts the key factors derived from analysis of 12th Air Force as a model for the

successful stateside C-NAF. The first column identifies the key factor vital to the C-NAF, while the second column describes the importance of the factor to the C-NAF and potential impacts if the factor is not present. The third column highlights 12th Air Force's example in providing, achieving, or adjusting to the key factor.

| Table 1. Template for Doctrinal C-NAF Architecture |         |                            |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| Organization                                       | Purpose | Roles and Responsibilities |
| Name                                               | Data    | Data                       |
| Name                                               | Data    | Data                       |

*Source:* Created by author. This template visually depicts the necessary administrative organizations and elements of the C-NAF.

| Table 2. Template for Key Factors for Stateside C-NAF Success |                        |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Factor                                                        | Importance and Impacts | 12th Air Force example |
| Name                                                          | Data                   | Data                   |
| Name                                                          | Data                   | Data                   |
| Name                                                          | Data                   | Data                   |

*Source:* Created by author. This template visually depicts the key factors essential for stateside C-NAF success.

### Doctrinal Architecture for the C-NAF

This study initially analyzed Joint and Air Force specific doctrine and other conceptual documents to determine the requirements laid out for the employment of Air Force forces and the C2 structures needed. Using doctrine as the basis for understanding, this study identified the proper shape, scope, and general architecture needed for a C-NAF to succeed. Organizations such as the AFFOR staff and AOC staff make up the core

of the C-NAF; however, the C-NAF requires other organizations and elements to perform its multiple assigned tasks. While no two C-NAFs oversee the same mission and require differing organizational elements, doctrine does provide the foundational model for all C-NAFs. By analyzing the 9th Air Force and AFCENT architectural construct to the doctrinal framework, this study provides the understanding required to determine what changes 9th Air Force and AFCENT would need for success as a singular command.

### Key Factors for C-NAF Success

Not only does the stateside C-NAF need to organize according to doctrine, it must also achieve or have conditions available in order for it to succeed as a singular command headquartered outside its AOR. The 12th Air Force, as the only successful stateside C-NAF with an overseas AOR, provides an apt model for a comparison to 9th Air Force. This study reviewed the organizational structure of 12th Air Force, examined other external factors surrounding the command, and identified the command's responsibilities in order to provide a comprehensive list of factors setting the conditions for 12th Air Force's continued success. This research reviewed current literature provided by the command and unclassified information about the command as well as literature available about the command's span of control both stateside and in the SOUTHCOM AOR.

### Comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the C-NAF Model

After constructing the model stateside C-NAF with data in the two previous tables, this study then compared 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model to determine if they meet the requirements and the key factors needed to exist as a singular stateside C-NAF. Table 3 shows the comparison template that visually highlights any deviations.

This research then analyzed deviations from the model to determine why the deviation exists, when or if 9th Air Force can bring the deviation in line with the model, and the potential costs and benefits the change will have on a unified 9th Air Force. Finally, this study concludes with recommendations derived from the comparison of 9th Air Force to the stateside C-NAF model.

| Table 3. 9th Air Force and AFCENT Comparison to C-NAF Model |                            |         |              |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|                                                             | Organization or Key Factor |         |              |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                                             | Organization               | Element | Organization | Factor | Factor | Factor | Factor | Factor | Factor |
| AFCENT                                                      |                            |         |              |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| 9th Air Force                                               |                            |         |              |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Condition favorable for Reunification                       |                            |         |              |        |        |        |        |        |        |

*Source:* Created by author. This template visually depicts the comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the C-NAF model created from doctrine review and analysis of 12th Air Force.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The last step in this study's methodology provided conclusions about 9th Air Force and AFCENT and recommendations for the Air Force regarding 9th Air Force's future construct. Findings from the analysis provide insight into the conditions needed for 9th Air Force and AFCENT to recombine. Additionally, findings show what the command split meant to the CCDR and the MAJCOM commander. Conclusions about the future of 9th Air Force come primarily from the model and the expectation of 9th Air Force's ability to regain parity with 12th Air Force.

## Summary

This research methodology provides the basis to produce a useful comparison between 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model of a successful stateside C-NAF. A foundation on current Joint and Air Force doctrine keeps the study appropriately grounded in the Air Force vision for C-NAF organizations, and a comparison to the only other stateside C-NAF with an overseas AOR provides the needed clarity of conditions needed to succeed as a singular command. Chapter 4 discusses the C-NAF model's construction and the comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

Conclusions on the necessary changes to 9th Air Force and AFCENT derived from the comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to a stateside C-NAF model. This study highlighted how the model originated as two distinct, yet equally important data sets. The first data set identified doctrinal architecture for the C-NAF to include the necessary organizations and elements key for proper C2. The second set of data provided critical factors related to the C-NAF and its operating environment. These data, while not necessarily inclusive of all components or factors present in the stateside C-NAF, provide the most relevant and meaningful information pertinent to a stateside C-NAF. This study then compared 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model to determine under what conditions the two commands can recombine as Air Force leadership forecasted. Finally, this chapter concluded with an analysis of the comparison to obtain useful conclusions and recommendations regarding 9th Air Force future structure.

#### Doctrinal C-NAF Architecture

JP 3-30 describes the manner in which the Air Force presents Air Force forces to a CCDR or JFC. The Air Force presents Air Force forces to the CCDR or JFC as an AETF, commanded by the COMAFFOR —who will normally have operational control (OPCON) over Air Force forces in the AOR.”<sup>1</sup> AFDD 6-0 details the multiple responsibilities for the COMAFFOR. As commander of the AETF, the COMAFFOR maintains both OPCON and ADCON of Air Force forces presented to the CCDR. Even if

the COMAFFOR is not dual-hatted as the JFACC, the COMAFFOR retains OPCON and ADCON of Air Force forces, while the JFACC maintains only tactical control (TACON).<sup>2</sup> Therefore, C-NAF C2 structures must maintain the ability to provide both OPCON and ADCON services for the COMAFFOR regardless if the COMAFFOR is also the JFACC.

JP 3-30 defines many C-NAF elements essential to the joint force, while AFDD 2 and AFDD 6-0 break down the C-NAF organization and its C2 requirements to support the AETF and through it, the CCDR or JFC. AFDD 6-0 highlights the importance of the COMAFFOR to “quickly establish the C2 functions necessary to control air, space, and cyberspace operations” in order for the Air Force “to employ forces anywhere in the world.”<sup>3</sup> To fulfill its C2 responsibilities, the C-NAF organizes its C2 construct along two primary entities: the AFFOR staff and the AOC staff.<sup>4</sup>

Doctrine lists many organizational elements essential to the C-NAF. At the highest level, JP 3-30 describes the overall C2 structure for joint air operations as the Theater Air Ground System (TAGS), and instructs the JFACC to “ensure all elements of the TAGS are in place and the various liaison positions are filled prior to, or as soon as possible after, the start of an operation or campaign.”<sup>5</sup> To the COMAFFOR dual-hatted as the JFACC, this requirement transcends Air Force C2 needs and requires a truly joint C2 effort separate from the AFFOR staff. The COMAFFOR component to the TAGS is the Theater Air Control System (TACS).<sup>6</sup> JP 3-30 introduces the TACS as the COMAFFOR “mechanism for commanding and controlling component air and space power.”<sup>7</sup> Figure 5 from AFDD 6-0 shows a visual depiction of the TACS and highlights the key components.

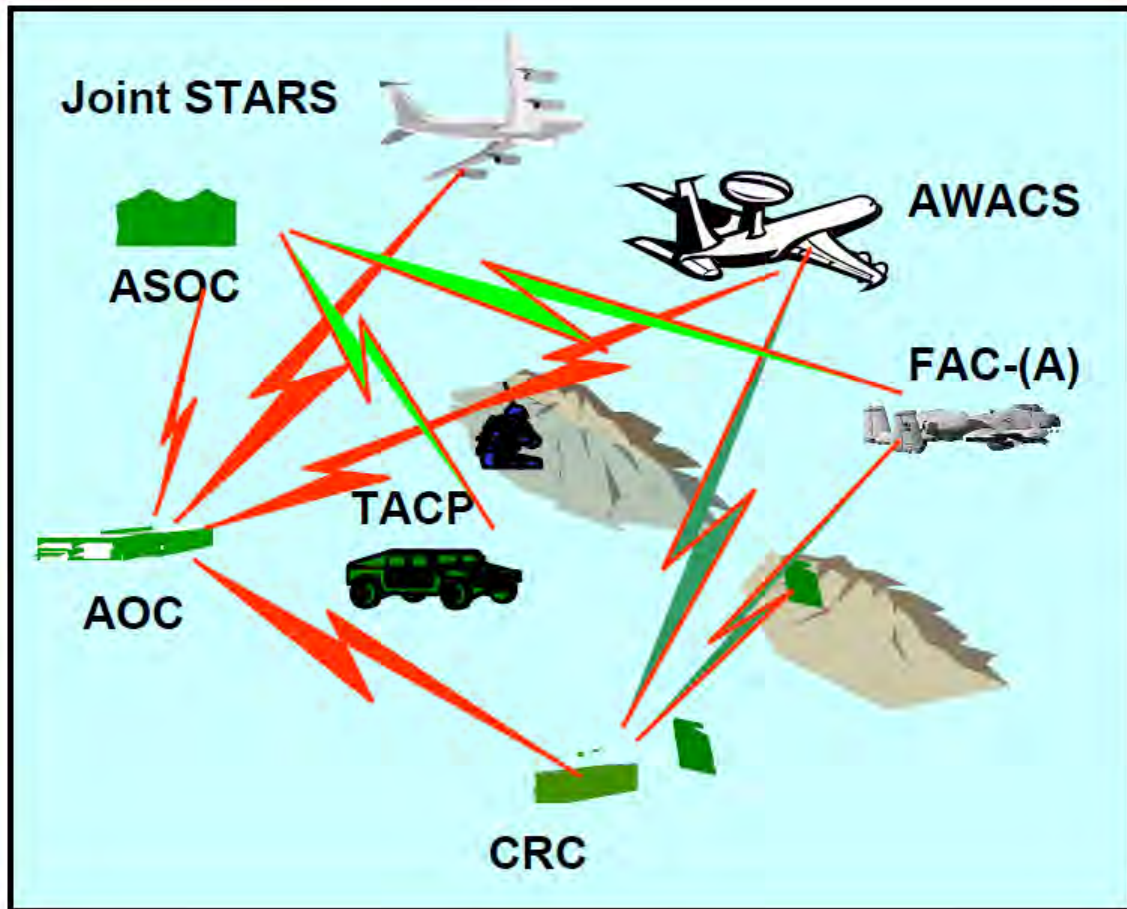


Figure 5. Notional Theater Air Control System

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 6-0, *Command and Control* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 64. This theoretical model depicts a notional TACS with key ground and air components.

AFDD 6-0 identifies the AOC as “the operational-level warfighting command center for air and space forces.”<sup>8</sup> As such, the AOC is responsible to the COMAFFOR in providing the capability to “plan, execute, and assess air and space operations.”<sup>9</sup> While each AOC is individually “configured to conduct operations across the range of military operations,”<sup>10</sup> the Air Force established the Falconer AOC as the model. The Falconer AOC is assigned to a specific GCC, organized under an AOC commander, and split into

five divisions: strategy; combat plans; combat operations; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; and air mobility.<sup>11</sup> As the operational command center for air and space operations, the AOC acts as ~~the~~ senior C2 element of the TACS.”<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the AOC, ground and air based elements also make up the TACS.<sup>13</sup> These units, tailored to the specific operational needs within the AOR, provide important situational awareness of the operations environment, provide vital links to other services and other nations’ forces, and affect the efficient integration of air power into ground operations. AFDD 6-0 describes the ground components as the control and reporting centers (CRC), the Air Support Operations Center (ASOC), and the Tactical Air Control Party (TACP).<sup>14</sup> All three components provide vital C2 for the COMAFFOR and JFACC in the effective and efficient execution of air power. Airborne elements of the TACS include Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS), and forward air controller (Airborne) (FAC[A]). These elements interface with different facets of the TACS. AWACS is subordinate to the AOC, while JSTARS provides dedicated support to ground commanders and the FAC (A) is an airborne extension of the TACP.<sup>15</sup>

AFDD 2 describes the AFFOR staff as the ~~mechanism~~ through which the COMAFFOR exercises his/her Service responsibilities.”<sup>16</sup> While the AFFOR staff must remain prepared for multiple roles in theater, if not staffed or structured carefully, the AFFOR staff may suffer from being dual or triple-hatted.<sup>17</sup> The 2006 *Air Force Forces Enabling Concept* described the role of the AFCHQ as the ~~senior~~ AF component headquarters element designed to support the AF component commander at the strategic level,” and the WFHQ as the headquarters element ~~designed~~ to support the AF

component commander at the operational and tactical level.”<sup>18</sup> Having both headquarters functions administered by the same command echelon creates tension on a staff that must focus on both strategic and operational concerns. In fact, AFDD 2 highlights the specific example of the Air Force component in USCENTCOM as an undesirable combination of strategic and operational tasks on the same staff.<sup>19</sup>

The actual construct of the AFFOR staff depends on the mission requirements levied on the AFFOR staff and the complexity of operations. AFDD 2 provides multiple constructs based on differing levels of complexity and needs.<sup>20</sup> However, a few concepts hold true in the design of the AFFOR staff regardless of the complexity of the mission. The first concept for the AFFOR staff is to remain as small as practical. Reachback, another concept important to the AFFOR, helps keep the forward AFFOR staff at the smallest levels while still achieving the desired C2. A third concept applies to the AFFOR staff’s ability to form the core of the JTF headquarters. In this role, part of the AFFOR staff would not only need augmentation from other staffs, it would need separation from the other AFFOR staff activities.<sup>21</sup>

The AFFOR staff design follows the format already presented in Figure 2. Aside from the COMAFFOR, the AFFOR staff consists of the ~~vice~~ commander, chief of staff, command master sergeant, executive assistant, and appropriate administrative support personnel.”<sup>22</sup> The administrative support personnel consist of directorates split along functional lines and named A-1 through A-9. Depending on the size and scope of operations, the AFFOR staff may not need all nine directorates; however, AFDD 2 discusses even small operations will need the first six directorates.<sup>23</sup> These primary functions include personnel to handle manpower and personnel issues, intelligence,

operations, logistics, plans, and communications. As missions become more complex or enduring, other directorates add capabilities to handle issues pertaining to installations, strategic plans and programs, and analyses, assessments, and lessons learned.

In addition to the AFFOR staff and AOC, another key component exists for the COMAFFOR to integrate fully with all components within the joint operations area or AOR. Liaisons are critical to ensuring unity of effort and seamless integration of air power into the overall scheme of operations. While the COMAFFOR and JFACC receive liaisons from other services or component commands, COMAFFOR and JFACC provided liaisons to other components are more pertinent to this study. The JFACC uses the ACCE as the liaison element to improve air and space operations integration into the overall plan.<sup>24</sup> Especially important in an AOR with multiple JTFs or multiple concurrent operations, the ACCE enables the JFACC and COMAFFOR to support all commanders with available assets within the overall JFC or CCDR guidance. Doctrine provides multiple examples where the ACCE acts as the critical liaison to other key organizations. AFDD 2 discusses situations where the JFC delegates another service as the JFACC. In this situation, doctrine urges the COMAFFOR to coordinate with the JFACC through an ACCE.<sup>25</sup> Other doctrinal uses for the ACCE include coordination with other functional combatant commands or component commands such as a special operations component commander.<sup>26</sup>

Table 4 provides a graphical depiction of required C2 architecture for the C-NAF. As many other components make up the larger structures, this list is not necessarily all-inclusive; however, this list does describe the major and critical components found in doctrine. One common theme throughout doctrine is the need for specific tailoring for

both the AFFOR staff and AOC based on specific mission demands and operational constraints or restraints. This list does not show the complexity of the organization needed as this description will change with every C-NAF and situation. Rather, this list shows a need for the organization to exist in whatever form needed based on the mission for the specific C-NAF.

| Table 4. Doctrinal C-NAF Architecture              |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Organization                                       | Purpose                                                                                                                                                       | Roles and Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| TACS                                               | Provides the means for the COMAFFOR to achieve the tenant of centralized control and decentralized execution, a key air and space power tenant. <sup>27</sup> | Provides real-time C2 of combat forces and activities within the operational environment.                                                                                                                                    |
| AOC                                                | Senior element within the TACS and the air and space operations planning and execution focal point for the COMAFFOR. <sup>28</sup>                            | Provides the COMAFFOR with the ability to plan and execute air and space operations in an AOR.                                                                                                                               |
| Ground and Air Theater Air Control System Elements | Makes up the TACS along with the AOC. Vital C2 functions provide the real-time C2 of combat Air Force forces within the AOR.                                  | Support the AOC with real-time situational awareness of the operational environment, provide necessary coordination with ground forces, and affect the integration of air power into ground scheme of movement and maneuver. |
| AFFOR staff                                        | Administrative support                                                                                                                                        | Up to nine directorates handle administrative issues such as manpower, intelligence, operations, logistics, plans, facilities communications, and lessons learned.                                                           |
| Liaisons                                           | Provide detailed integration with all vertical and horizontal C2 structures                                                                                   | ACCE provides a vital link between the JFACC or COMAFFOR to the JFC (or multiple JFCs within the same AOR), service components, or other government agencies.                                                                |

*Source:* Created by author. This table visually depicts the necessary administrative organizations and elements of the C-NAF.

### Key Factors

Unlike the previous table, this research gathered data regarding key factors for a successful stateside C-NAF from observation rather than theoretical doctrine. This study details the conditions prevalent within 12th Air Force and conditions surrounding 12th Air Force to determine what key factors led to success. While this list cannot contain all key factors due to the unique nature of all C-NAFs, this list does present the factors important to a stateside C-NAF and thus prove important to a reunified 9th Air Force.

The first, and most important, factor is the scope of operations within the supported commander's AOR. Operations in the USSOUTHCOM AOR in 2011 included the capacity for full spectrum operations; however, it centered on partnership building through supporting ~~whole~~-of-government efforts to enhance regional security and cooperation.”<sup>29</sup> AFSOUTH focused on the USSOUTHCOM mission with operations geared toward surveillance, intra-theater airlift, regional disaster relief exercises, counter-drug operations, and humanitarian and civic assistance projects.<sup>30</sup> The most recent major operation in the AOR centered on Haiti in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake. JTF-Haiti stood up in January 2010 in support of Operation Unified Response and focused exclusively on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.<sup>31</sup> AFSOUTH coordinated with USSOUTHCOM and assisted the JTF-Haiti commander by coordinating air operations. Initial operations proved intense with AFSOUTH controlling 2,457 fixed-wing aircraft arrivals, evacuating roughly 16,000 American citizens, airlifting roughly 14,000 short tons of relief supplies, and deploying and sustaining over 850 airmen in support of JTF-Haiti all within the first month of operations.<sup>32</sup> However, operations quickly subsided as the situation in Haiti stabilized, and by June 2010, JTF-Haiti stood down.<sup>33</sup> With a

relatively stable AOR, the AFSOUTH COMAFFOR can spend more time on stateside ADCON duties than deployed operations.

Another factor, related to the first, is the C-NAF commander's span of control. In 2011, The 12th Air Force provided C2 for 10 active duty wings and 1 DRU, and maintained responsibility for operational readiness of 2 reserve wings and 13 National Guard wings.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, 12th Air Force acting in its capacity as AFSOUTH maintained five squadron-sized permanent forward operating locations, four in countries in Central and South America.<sup>35</sup> The personnel permanently assigned to these forward operating locations numbered roughly 450, while roughly 600 personnel rotated to these locations on a more transitory basis.<sup>36</sup> The 12th Air Force in 2011 maintained ADCON over roughly 40,000 airmen stateside; however, it commanded approximately 1,000 personnel in the USSOUTHCOM AOR.

A key factor internal to the C-NAF organization is for the COMAFFOR to remain collocated with the AOC. Doctrine discusses the concept of reachback for AFFOR functions, and extols its virtue of keeping the forward presence of forces to a minimum; however, it also admonishes, "[t]he intent of reachback operations is to support forces forward, not to command operations from the rear."<sup>37</sup> Doctrine also highlights the AOC as not only the senior C2 element of the TACS, it is also the operational command center for the JFACC.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, operations handled by the AOC prove more dynamic requiring more real-time oversight by COMAFFOR or JFACC than AFFOR staff duties. 12th Air Force proved the doctrinal C2 model during its involvement in Operation Urgent Response. The AFSOUTH COMAFFOR monitored the initial events collocated with the AOC in Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona, and the AOC staff began crisis action planning

within a day.<sup>39</sup> Working from the AOC, the COMAFFOR maintained the needed situational awareness of air operations in Haiti, while a dispatched ACCE liaised with the JTF-Haiti headquarters 11 days into the operation.<sup>40</sup> In the *12th Air Force Operation Unified Response After Action Report*, the COMAFFOR mentioned a lesson learned to send the ACCE sooner in the operation;<sup>41</sup> however, at no point in the after action review did the COMAFFOR mention leaving the AOC.

A final key factor enabling effective and efficient stateside C2 is a strong communications link to all vertical and horizontal levels of command. A stateside AOC requires robust communications capabilities to remain stateside while CCDR and JTF headquarters will most likely move forward to the joint operations area within the AOR. Additionally, an AOC must maintain communications with subordinate commands located in theater to maintain the tenet of centralized control, decentralized execution. Just as liaisons prove critical for stateside C-NAFs to maintain a vital presence with the JFC or CCDR and maintain unity of effort, communications with all elements within the C-NAF is equally critical. The 12th Air Force relied on the 612th Air Communications Squadron (ACOMS) for communication support throughout the C2 architecture.<sup>42</sup>

Table 5 provides a graphical representation of the data relevant to the key factors for stateside C-NAF success. The data depicted in Table 5 combined with the data from Table 4 make up the stateside C-NAF model this study used for comparison with 9th Air Force and AFCENT. The next section details the 9th Air Force and AFCENT comparison to the model.

| Table 5. Key Factors for Stateside C-NAF Success |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Factor                                           | Importance and Impacts                                                                                                                                                             | 12th Air Force example                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Scope of Operations in AOR                       | Peacetime operations in a stable AOR equate to reduced demand on COMAFFOR and C-NAF allowing more focus on stateside administrative functions                                      | Central and South America remains a stable AOR with humanitarian and counter-drug missions constituting the majority of AFSOUTH responsibilities.                                                                                                        |
| Span of Control                                  | The Air Force organizes C-NAFs around stable force constructs. Additional forces attached to AETFs place strain on an AFFOR staff optimized for its baseline ADCON duties.         | 12th Air Force maintains C2 over a stable force structure that varies little within the AOR. With only four squadron-sized detachments in the AOR, AFSOUTH is able to absorb system shocks such as humanitarian missions due to their transitory nature. |
| AOC collocated with C-NAF Headquarters           | The AOC is the commander's primary C2 node for current operations in the AOR. Critical and timely decisions require close coordination between the AOC and the C-NAF headquarters. | The 612th AOC resides at Davis Monthan AFB, AZ along with 12th Air Force headquarters.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Robust communications                            | Capable communications between vertical and horizontal levels of command is vital. Liaisons provide the vital link between C2 nodes to ensure unity of effort.                     | 612th ACOMS provides robust communications both in garrison with the 612th AOC and in the AOR.                                                                                                                                                           |

*Source:* Created by author. This table visually depicts the key factors for Stateside C-NAF success.

### 9th Air Force and AFCENT Comparison to the Model C-NAF

The comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model C-NAF created earlier in this chapter began with a comparison of architecture. Since 9th Air Force and AFCENT were two distinct commands with distinct structures, both commands were compared to the model and analysis focused on the requirements to rebuild a singular stateside C-NAF organization. The comparison continued by comparing factors surrounding 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the key factors in the model. The following

analysis used the comparative data to determine deviations and find answers to the primary and secondary research questions.

The 9th Air Force organized its staff significantly differently than the doctrinal functional model. Instead of an AFFOR-type construct, the 9th Air Force staff organized into other key areas important to the command's singular mission. Similar to doctrine, the 9th Air Force commander retained a personal staff; however, converse to doctrine, the commander organized the remainder of the staff into sub-organizations consisting of operations, standardization and evaluations, logistics, legal, and a special staff.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, the small size of the staff, fewer than 100 personnel, corresponded well to an organization tasked with only administrative oversight of stateside wings and DRUs.

Unlike 9th Air Force, AFCENT maintained a robust AFFOR and AOC staff organized along doctrinal lines. The AFFOR staff conducted split operations with a small contingent collocated with the COMAFFOR in Al Udeid, while a much larger contingent provided reachback from Shaw AFB. The stateside staff, manned by over 1,400 uniformed and civilian personnel, organized along functional lines into directorates.<sup>44</sup> The AOC, collocated with AFCENT headquarters in Al Udeid, maintained a similarly robust organization with hundreds of people, working in satellite communications, imagery analysis, network design, computer programming, radio systems, systems administration and many other fields.”<sup>45</sup>

AFCENT continually improved and increased the size of the TACS as operations in the Middle East intensified throughout the first decade of the 21st century. This architecture did not originate at the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, it continually evolved from the architecture in place for the better part of two decades. The

AFCENT TACS in 2011 set the example of a mature C2 organization for theater-wide contingency operations. With multiple operating areas within the AOR, the AFCENT TACS developed an elaborate system of C2 throughout the AOR complete with multiple CRCs, ASOCs, and dozens of TACPs integrated throughout ground units in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Airborne platforms also improved the system's ability to C2 current operations, including newer platforms designed to provide improved communications by acting as "gateways" for connectivity between multiple communications networks. Central to the AFCENT TACS, its AOC evolved into a C2 node with "more than 67 miles of high-capacity and fiber optic cable . . . thousands of computers, dozens of servers, racks of video equipment and display screens"<sup>46</sup> capable of providing the necessary oversight of air operations in two geographically separated operating areas.

This study's model C-NAF highlighted the critically important liaison functions required for the COMAFFOR to work seamlessly with other command elements in the AOR. Doctrinally, the ACCE provides a critical link between COMAFFOR and other commands. In AFCENT, liaisons and subordinate commanders made up a strong communications network enabling AFCENT to remain well integrated with other supporting and supported staffs. In addition to hosting liaisons from other components such as the Battlefield Coordination Detachment from the land component commander, AFCENT also created and evolved two ACCEs assigned to United States Forces-Iraq and United States Forces-Afghanistan. The AFCENT COMAFFOR empowered these ACCEs, organized under a one-star general for Iraq and a two-star general for Afghanistan, with ADCON authorities and limited OPCON authorities over forces in their respective operating areas.<sup>47</sup> A staff of 24 to 32 personnel and extensive reachback

to the AFFOR staff enabled these ACCEs to provide the needed integration with the JTF commanders at the operational level.<sup>48</sup>

This research characterized the scope of operations for a model stateside C-NAF as a stable AOR facilitating peacetime operations. Though not immune to intense operations, this study's model C-NAF absorbed shocks to the steady state by keeping high intensity operations short. The complexity of operations in the Middle East evolved throughout the latter part of the 20th century and continued the trend during the first decade in the 21st century. The most constant trend, however, remained the increasing operations tempo throughout the Middle East. In the 1990s, following the intense, yet relatively short Operation Desert Storm, operations consisted of either long-term, low intensity operations such as Southern Watch or short-term, moderate intensity operations such as Desert Thunder I and II.<sup>49</sup> Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom and Southern Watch's transition to Iraqi Freedom, operations in the USCENTCOM AOR remained enduring, highly intense, and distributed among geographically separated JTFs. The Chief of Staff of the Air Force mentioned this increasing operational tempo during congressional questioning in 2009. When asked why the Air Force desired to split 9th Air Force in 2009 versus earlier when operations seemed more intense, General Schwartz responded by stating the operations tempo is —as high as it has ever been.”<sup>50</sup> In fact, Operation New Dawn in Iraq became the fourteenth named operation involving Air Force forces in the CENTCOM AOR since Operation Desert Shield in 1990.<sup>51</sup>

This study's model C-NAF maintained a span of control commensurate with its complexity of operations. With a relatively stable AOR alleviating the need for a large forward presence, this study's model C-NAF maintained a small footprint in the AOR

with the preponderance of forces stateside. Span of control issues increased for AFCENT as operations increased throughout the USCENTCOM AOR. As operations shifted from combat to stability operations in Iraq, the size and location of Air Force assets changed little since many Air Force missions remained the same.<sup>52</sup> Even with the uncertain future of military operations in Iraq beyond 2011, AFCENT maintained a span of control that contained ten wings in six Middle Eastern countries and one in the United States.<sup>53</sup> Commanding roughly 29,000 airmen in the AOR,<sup>54</sup> AFCENT administrative C2 demands alone rivaled other C-NAFs including 12th Air Force and 9th Air Force. Concurrently, 9th Air Force maintained its own span of control over stateside wings and DRUs. With seven wings, two DRUs, and additional operational readiness responsibility for numerous Reserve and National Guard units, 9th Air Force's stateside span of control remained similar to 12th Air Force's stateside span of control.

At the outset of Operation Urgent Response, the 12th Air Force AOC observed the event, began planning air operations, and provided C2 over executed operations all in the span of a few days.<sup>55</sup> Concurrently, the 12th Air Force commander, also COMAFFOR for AFSOUTH forces, established a battle staff, conducted crisis action planning, and monitored air operations in Haiti through the AOC. The detailed air planning and C2 required during the intense response to the natural disaster in Haiti benefitted from an AOC collocated with AFSOUTH headquarters. Similarly, when AFCENT split from 9th Air Force in 2009, the AFCENT headquarters moved to Al Udeid to collocate with its AOC. In 2011, AFCENT paralleled this study's model with its collocated headquarters and AOC; however, in order for AFCENT and 9th Air Force to

exist as a C-NAF headquartered stateside, the AOC would need to relocate with the headquarters.

AFCENT and 9th Air Force maintained a robust communications system in line with this study's model. As operations evolved, AFCENT kept the communications architecture on pace by activating expeditionary communications squadrons as operations reached new locations. AFCENT also continued to evolve its communications architecture incorporating emerging technologies such as the Battlefield Airborne Communications Node capable of providing a gateway for different platforms to communicate.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, AFCENT continued to improve its voice and data transmissions capabilities throughout the AOR, especially between the AOC and the two joint operating areas.<sup>57</sup>

Table 6 visually depicts the comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model stateside C-NAF. The left side of the table shows the comparison of 9th Air Force to the doctrinal architectural components. The columns on the right side of the table depict the comparison of the key factors surrounding 9th Air Force to the key factors of the C-NAF model. The next sections details the analysis performed on the comparison.

| Table 6. 9th Air Force and AFCENT Comparison to C-NAF Model |                            |     |                              |             |          |                            |                 |                           |              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-------------|----------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|
|                                                             | Organization or Key Factor |     |                              |             |          |                            |                 |                           |              |
|                                                             | TACS                       | AOC | Ground and Air TACS Elements | AFFOR Staff | Liaisons | Scope of Operations in AOR | Span of Control | AOC Collocated with C-NAF | Robust Comms |
| AFCENT                                                      | +                          | +   | +                            | +           | +        | -                          | -               | -                         | +            |
| 9th Air Force                                               | NA                         | NA  | NA                           | -           | +        | +                          | +               | -                         | +            |
| Condition favorable for combining                           | Yes                        | Yes | Yes                          | No          | Yes      | No                         | No              | No                        | Yes          |

*Source:* Created by author. This template visually depicts the comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the C-NAF model created from doctrine review and analysis of 12th Air Force.

### Analysis

Complexity of operations in the CENTCOM AOR helped drive the Air Force's decision to split AFCENT from 9th Air Force. The size of these operations changed little from 2009 to 2011. Additionally, as operations continued to evolve in the Middle East, increasing air operations remained one constant. With Air Force leadership basing the decision to split the commands on the operations tempo and scope of operations, the question becomes not why they made the decision, but rather, why it took so long to make it. While Air Force leadership understandably desires a return to a single C-NAF command covering 9th Air Force's stateside mission and AFCENT's contingency mission in the Middle East, the foreseeable truth is that enduring complex operations will not allow such a reunification.

As the operations tempo in the Middle East remained high, AFCENT span of control remained large, even with the drawdown in Iraq. Such a large span of control required a large forward C2 presence to maintain order and unity of effort. After almost a

decade of operations in Afghanistan and over 20 years of operations in Iraq, AFCENT built a strong C2 system in the Middle East with a robust TACS covering nearly the entire AOR. A state-of-the art, forward-deployed AOC provided the cornerstone of this C2 system. However, this C2 system also strained a command split between a stateside responsibility and a warfighting responsibility in the Middle East. Not only did an AOC situated thousands of miles away from the headquarters overly strain the command, the AFFOR staff's inability to provide the level of service required to both segments of the command ultimately drove the Air Force to devise the split.

As 9th Air Force's span of control continued to increase, its staff continued to increase to handle the demand; however, AFCENT's robust AFFOR staff provided little ability for the COMAFFOR to maintain oversight of a stateside training mission. Comments from a previous wing commander within 9th Air Force illustrate the strain on the command and commander splitting attention between stateside responsibilities and contingency operations in an overseas AOR. When asked about 9th Air Force's involvement in wing-level affairs, one former wing commander commented, "9th AF was only marginally involved in the affairs of the wing. My Boss . . . was so consumed with his duties in the AOR (justifiably so) that I was pretty much free to run the wing on my own."<sup>58</sup> When asked where support for the wing came from, the same commander replied, "[m]ost of the ADCON/functional type support I needed came from ACC."<sup>59</sup>

In contrast to the strained conditions present in the AFFOR staff prior to 2009, the 9th Air Force commander and staff in 2011 provided improved responsiveness to lower echelon concerns. A current 9th Air Force wing commander commented on the favorable changes since the command split. When asked what changes he observed, the commander

responded, “[t]he main changes I’ve seen are the difference in the amount of time the NAF/CC (Numbered Air Force Commander) has to focus on the OT&E (Organize, Train, and Equip) areas, and the confusion of building a shared staff that must work separate issues for the theater and CONUS (continental United States) commanders.”<sup>60</sup> When asked if the 9th Air Force commander was more involved in wing-level affairs, the same commander responded, “Yes, and overall it is a good thing . . . With just the OT&E part to deal with in the current construct, the 9AF/CC (9th Air Force commander) has more time to focus on those portions. This provides better understanding and advocacy with ACC.”<sup>61</sup>

There existed some areas that support the reintegration of 9th Air Force and AFCENT. The AFCENT AFFOR staff maintained a structure closely resembling the doctrinal model, and since only a small part of the staff actually deployed to the AOR, the majority of the staff remained collocated with the 9th Air Force staff. Additionally, the AFCENT ACCEs and other liaison links coupled with the robust communication architecture enabled the headquarters and AOC to remain removed from other component headquarters elements and hundreds or thousands of miles from its subordinate wings. That same liaison and communications structure could enable the command to succeed thousands of miles removed from the AOR. Similarly, improvements in technology enabled more operational C2 from greater distances outside the AOR.

### Summary

The comparison of 9th Air Force and AFCENT to this study’s model yielded not only greater clarity of the Air Force decision to separate the commands, it also illustrated the key conditions needed to affect a reunification of the commands. The comparison

highlighted significant differences in scope of operations and span of control between AFCENT and the model, and detailed how conditions in the Middle East prevented and continue to prevent the two commands from recombining. Additionally, the command split improved conditions stateside as well as in the AOR. Two 9th Air Force wing commanders showed how C2 conditions for stateside wings improved because of the command split. The next chapter draws conclusions from the analysis and provides recommendations based on those conclusions.

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<sup>1</sup>JP 3-30, II-17.

<sup>2</sup>AFDD 6-0, 36.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>5</sup>JP 3-30, II-9.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., xii.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., II-9.

<sup>8</sup>AFDD 6-0, 61.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>JP 3-30, II-10.

<sup>13</sup>AFDD 6-0, 65.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>AFDD 2, 55.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 113.

<sup>18</sup>Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Forces Command and Control Enabling Concept*, 6.

<sup>19</sup>AFDD 2, 114.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 114-115.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 148-149.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>27</sup>AFDD 6-0, 64.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>29</sup>United States Southern Command, “Command Strategy 2020: Partnership for the Americas,” <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/files/634188450787308115.pdf> (accessed, 10 May 2011).

<sup>30</sup>United States Southern Command, “USSOUTHCOM Component Commands and Units,” <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/team.php> (accessed, 10 May 2011).

<sup>31</sup>Headquarters, Air Forces Southern, “Operation Unified Response After Action Report,” Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, December 2010, 7.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>33</sup>Christen N. McCluney, “Joint Task Force Haiti Prepares for ‘New Horizon,’” U.S. Department of Defense website, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=59159> (accessed 12 May 2011).

<sup>34</sup>Department of the Air Force, “Twelfth Air Force and Air Forces Southern.”

<sup>35</sup>12AF/A3X (12th Air Force Operations Planner), Electronic correspondence with author, 12 April 2011.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>AFDD 6-0, 46.

- <sup>38</sup>AFDD 2, 69-70.
- <sup>39</sup>Headquarters, Air Forces Southern, ~~Operation~~ Unified Response After Action Report,” Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, December 2010, 19.
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., 9.
- <sup>42</sup>Department of the Air Force, U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet, —612th Air Communications Squadron Spotlight,” <http://www.dm.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID=11545> (accessed, 13 May 2011).
- <sup>43</sup>Ninth Air Force, ~~HQ~~ Ninth Air Force Organization Chart,” Shaw AFB, South Carolina.
- <sup>44</sup>US Air Force Central Command (USAFCENT), ~~Mission~~ PowerPoint Brief.”
- <sup>45</sup>Department of the Air Force, ~~Combined~~ Air and Space Operations Center (CAOC).”
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup>Gilmary Michael Hostage III, ~~Empowered~~ ACCE,” 22 March 2011.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup>Department of the Air Force, ~~U.S.~~ Air Forces Central Fact Sheet.”
- <sup>50</sup>House Committee, Hearing on Budget Request From the Department of the Air Force, 14.
- <sup>51</sup>Department of the Air Force, ~~U.S.~~ Air Forces Central Fact Sheet.”
- <sup>52</sup>US Air Force Central Command (USAFCENT), ~~Mission~~ PowerPoint Brief.”
- <sup>53</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup>Headquarters, Air Forces Southern, ~~Operation~~ Unified Response After Action Report,” 19.
- <sup>56</sup>US Air Force Central Command (USAFCENT), ~~FACS~~ PowerPoint Brief.”
- <sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Former 9th Air Force Wing Commander, Electronic correspondence with author, 30 March 2011.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>9th Air Force Wing Commander, Electronic correspondence with author, 25 April 2011.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

This study's conclusions do not revolve on the fact that 9th Air Force and AFCENT needed to separate. The Air Force recognized this in 2009 and separated the commands. Rather, this study examined the conditions necessary for the Air Force to achieve its stated goal of recombining the two commands. This study then drew conclusions on the context needed for successfully recombining the two commands and recommendations useful to the Air Force in a larger context.

According to the comparison to the stateside C-NAF model, 9th Air Force and AFCENT should remain separated, not just temporarily as Air Force leadership have suggested, but for a much longer term. Conditions in the AOR show no signs of permitting AFCENT from withdrawing its C2 nodes, specifically the AOC, from the AOR, and span of control will remain a challenge for AFCENT for the near future. Comparing 9th Air Force to the model created by this study not only defined the Air Force's decision to split the command as prudent, it also highlighted structural changes needed in order to permit the AFCENT headquarters and AOC to return to the states. Operations in the Middle East remained complex and turbulent for the better part of three decades, while the future looks just as complex. Even if the Air Force completely withdraws from Iraq by the end of 2011, operations in Afghanistan continue to require a large Air Force presence.

Historically speaking, even if conditions do permit a calculated withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan in the near future, the Air Force likely would continue its C2

forward presence. While the DOD formed JTF-SWA in 1992 primarily from CENTAF and Navy Central Command personnel, in 2011, the JTFs in Iraq and Afghanistan consisted mainly of soldiers rather than sailors or airmen. This difference in JTF leadership between the past and present could prove significant in any AFCENT decision to deploy its C2 forces in the AOR in the future. However, history also paints a turbulent Middle East where low-intensity operations often gave way to short-lived high-intensity conflicts before subsiding into low-intensity operations again. If events during the relatively low-intensity Operation Southern Watch required the Air Force to position the AOC in the AOR, a similarly scaled-down operation in Iraq or Afghanistan could also require the Air Force to keep a forward C2 presence. This lack of sustained high-intensity helped mitigate the challenges posed by a command split between duties stateside and C2 requirements in the AOR; however, the 9th Air Force C2 structure remained strained just the same.

Unless Air Force leaders leverage new technologies in improved communications and utilize improved liaison organizations, conditions in the Middle East will continue to require forward deployed C2 assets. While technology allowed the AOC to operate more efficiently hundreds or thousands of miles away from other component commands or subordinate AETF wings, the Air Force remained committed to maintain a forward deployed AOC rather than collocate it with the AFCENT headquarters stateside. As long as the AOC remains in the AOR, AFCENT will need to maintain its headquarters in the AOR or risk the same limitations on its effectiveness the Air Force cited in its 2009 decision to split the commands.

The DOD-driven efficiency efforts underway within both the combatant commands and the Air Force in 2011 provided ample incentive to consolidate staffs as much as practical. C-NAFs were not immune to this consolidation effort with two overseas C-NAFs identified for consolidation with their parent MAJCOMs, and 12th Air Force's AOC slated for combination with another AOC from 1st Air Force. Maintaining the current split command construct for 9th Air Force and AFCENT runs counter to these efficiency efforts by maintaining two staffs where one once existed; however, no other C-NAF within the Air Force is involved in an AOR as active and turbulent as the CENTCOM AOR.

### Recommendations

Rather than continue to operate under the assumption that the command split is just temporary in nature, Air Force leaders should strengthen the temporary fix into an enduring command structure. Conditions in the Middle East show no sign of improving to the relative stability needed for AFCENT and its AOC to pull back stateside, and both 9th Air Force and AFCENT are benefiting in different ways due to the split. While maintaining the two commands risks forfeiting certain efficiencies innate to a singular staff, the risk to air operations in the most volatile AOR is greater if the Air Force recombines the two commands in the near future. By treating the command split as an enduring solution, Air Force leaders could focus on maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of both staffs instead of continually seeking ways to recombine the two staffs.

The Air Force should also revise doctrine with regard to the administrative functions of the C-NAF that continue during its transition from peacetime operations to contingency operations in an overseas AOR. The Air Force should address either the

need for a rear echelon to pick up the administrative oversight of stateside wings and DRUs, or determine how best to organize the AFFOR staff to manage both training and combat missions. Just as doctrine admonishes about COMAFFORs and AFFOR staffs becoming dual-hatted with differing vertical levels of command,<sup>1</sup> both the commander and staff need to understand how to transition from peacetime operations to contingency operations without sacrificing oversight and attention on all delegated missions.

Another recommendation is for the Air Force to research other component command structures such as the Army's United States Army Forces Command for innovative C2 structures and relationships that may benefit commands like 9th Air Force and ACC. With ADCON over stateside corps and divisions,<sup>2</sup> United States Army Forces Command relieves the ADCON burdens on land component commands such as 3rd Army (United States Army Central) and allows the land component commander to focus attention completely on supporting the CCDR. Such a construct within ACC could allow C-NAFs to concentrate on supporting their respective CCDR without dual-hatted, stateside ADCON functions degrading their efforts.

Since one of the key factors for a successful stateside C-NAF is the necessity of its headquarters to reside with its AOC, future research should define conditions requiring a forward-deployed AOC, or determine how to leverage technology in communications allowing a stateside AOC to C2 operations in an overseas AOR. The AFCENT AOC already provides robust C2 even though it resides great distances from other component commands and subordinate commands. Further study could determine how a stateside AOC could achieve parity with a forward-deployed AOC using current or

emerging technologies in satellite communications and increased digital datalinking or improved liaison elements such as the ACCE.

This model holds applicability for other Air Force command elements besides 9th Air Force. With command elements consolidating during a comprehensive DOD efficiency transformation, this model can assist future research in determining suitability of other commands to consolidate or potentially move outside their respective AORs.

Lastly, this model also exhibited a potential dilemma for 12th Air Force. This model highlighted the conditions needed for 12th Air Force to remain successful as much as it defined the factors needed for 9th Air Force to recombine with AFCENT. Changes to 12th Air Force's conditions also affect its continued success. In the event activities in the USSOUTHCOM AOR increase in response to events more enduring or intense than past activities, Air Force leaders could face C2 attention issues with 12th Air Force similar to those leading to the split at 9th Air Force. The *12th Air Force Operation Unified Response After Action Report* illustrated this vulnerability stating, "[t]his operation (Operation Unified Response) also highlighted the need for rapid personnel augmentation, as our AFFOR and CAOC staffs are not manned to sustain anything beyond Phase 0 engagement activities and oversight of ten active duty wings."<sup>3</sup> The report does mention future augmentation from trained units around the 2013 timeframe<sup>4</sup>; however, the report mentions little about the increased administrative needs if operations increase beyond the short-term humanitarian missions seen in the recent past. Air Force leaders should also ensure proper C2 structures and relationships exist within 12th Air Force to negate, or at least minimize, the strain on a C2 organization conducting operations overseas from a stateside headquarters and AOC.

## Summary

This research focused on the unique command structures generated by the Air Force's decision to split AFCENT from its rear echelon administrative responsibilities. By constructing a stateside C-NAF model from doctrine review and observation of the only other stateside C-NAF with an overseas responsibility and comparing 9th Air Force and AFCENT to the model, this study determined key conditions the Air Force needed to achieve in order to meet its goal of reunifying the two commands. Analysis of the comparative data yielded insights into the key factors regarding the command split, and presented the case that 9th Air Force and AFCENT should remain separated for the long term rather than temporarily. As conditions in the Middle East show little signs of reducing in scope, AFCENT span of control will remain large necessitating a robust C2 organization within the AOR. By accepting the current split command concept as the enduring structure, the Air Force can expend the appropriate energies to face the long-term realities.

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<sup>1</sup>AFDD 2, 113-114.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), "FORSCOM Organization Chart," [http://www.forscom.army.mil/cmd\\_staff/orgchart/OrganizationalChart.htm](http://www.forscom.army.mil/cmd_staff/orgchart/OrganizationalChart.htm) (accessed 25 April 2011).

<sup>3</sup>Headquarters, Air Forces Southern, "Operation Unified Response After Action Report," 9.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

## APPENDIX A

FIGURE FROM JOINT PUBLICATION 3-30

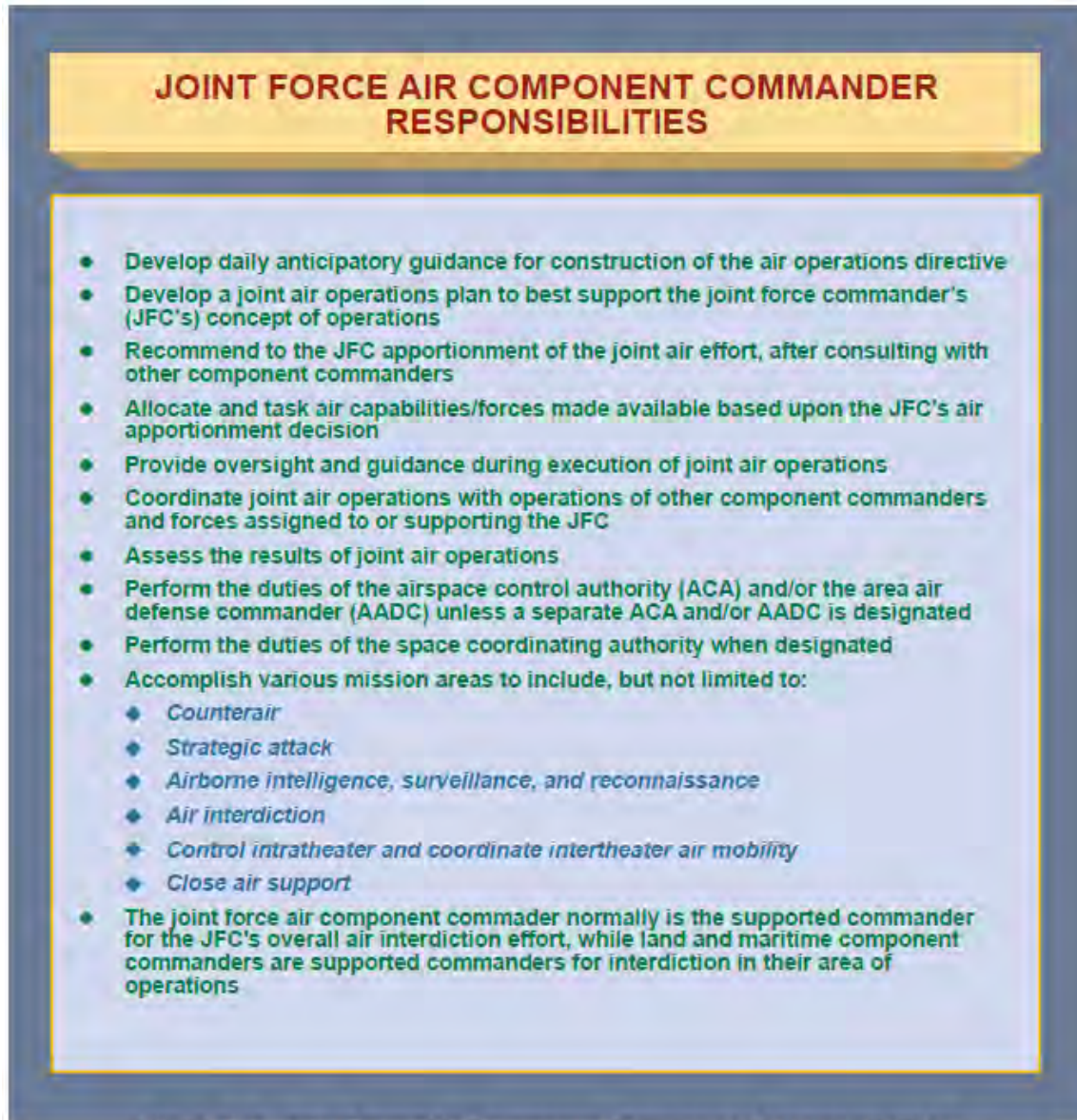


Figure II-1. Joint Force Air Component Commander Responsibilities

Source: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-30, *Command and Control for Joint Air Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), II-3.

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