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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



[ANNEX 3-52 AIRSPACE CONTROL](#)

AIRSPACE CONTROL AUTHORITY

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Normally, the joint force commander (JFC) designates a joint force air component commander (JFACC) as the commander for joint air operations. The JFC may also concurrently designate an [airspace control authority](#) (ACA) and area air defense commander (AADC). The ACA is “the commander designated to assume overall responsibility for the operation of the airspace control system (ACS) in the [airspace control](#) area.” The AADC, on the other hand, is the commander assigned overall responsibility for air defense with the preponderance of air defense capability and the command, control, and communications capability to plan and execute integrated air defense operations ([JP 3-52](#)). Because these related authorities are so integral to air operations, the JFACC is normally assigned ACA and AADC responsibilities.

As the ACA, the JFACC is responsible for planning, coordinating, and developing airspace control procedures and operating the ACS. The ACA does not have the authority to approve, disapprove, or deny combat operations. That authority is vested only in operational commanders. However, airspace control procedures within the JOA are approved by the JFC and are derived entirely from JFC authority. If the ACA and an affected component commander are unable to obtain agreement on an airspace issue, the issue should be referred to the JFC for resolution.

In most operations, the [commander, Air Force Forces](#) (COMAFFOR) is designated as the JFACC, ACA, and AADC. This is largely due to the Air Force’s ability to concurrently command and control (C2) these activities. In those joint operations where separate commanders are designated, close coordination is essential for unity of effort, prevention of fratricide, and unintended engagements against civil and neutral aircraft, and joint air operations deconfliction ([JP 3-52](#)). Because such separate arrangements are rare, the remainder of this publication assumes the COMAFFOR has been designated as the JFACC, ACA, and AADC. This, in fact, is the preferred Air Force construct for which Airmen are trained.