

Joint Publication 3-0



Joint Operations



17 January 2017
Incorporating Change 1
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tasks, and preferences, all generally follow a traditional functional staff alignment (i.e., personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, plans, and communications) depicted in Figure IV-2. The primary staff functional areas are also generally consistent with those at Service component HQ, which facilitates higher, lower, and lateral cross-command staff coordination and collaboration. Some HQ may combine functions under a staff principal, while other HQ may add staff principals. Based on the mission and other factors, some joint HQ may have additional primary staff organizations focused on areas such as engineering; force structure, resource, and assessment; and CMO.

5. Organizing Operational Areas

a. **General.** Except for AORs, which are assigned in the UCP, GCCs and other JFCs designate smaller OAs (e.g., JOA and AO) on a temporary basis. OAs have physical dimensions composed of some combination of air, land, maritime, and space domains. While domains are useful constructs for visualizing and characterizing the physical environment in which operations are conducted (the OA), the use of the term “domain” is not meant to imply or mandate exclusivity, primacy, or C2 of any domain. Specific authorities and responsibilities within an OA are as specified by the appropriate JFC. JFCs define these areas with geographical boundaries, which help commanders and staffs

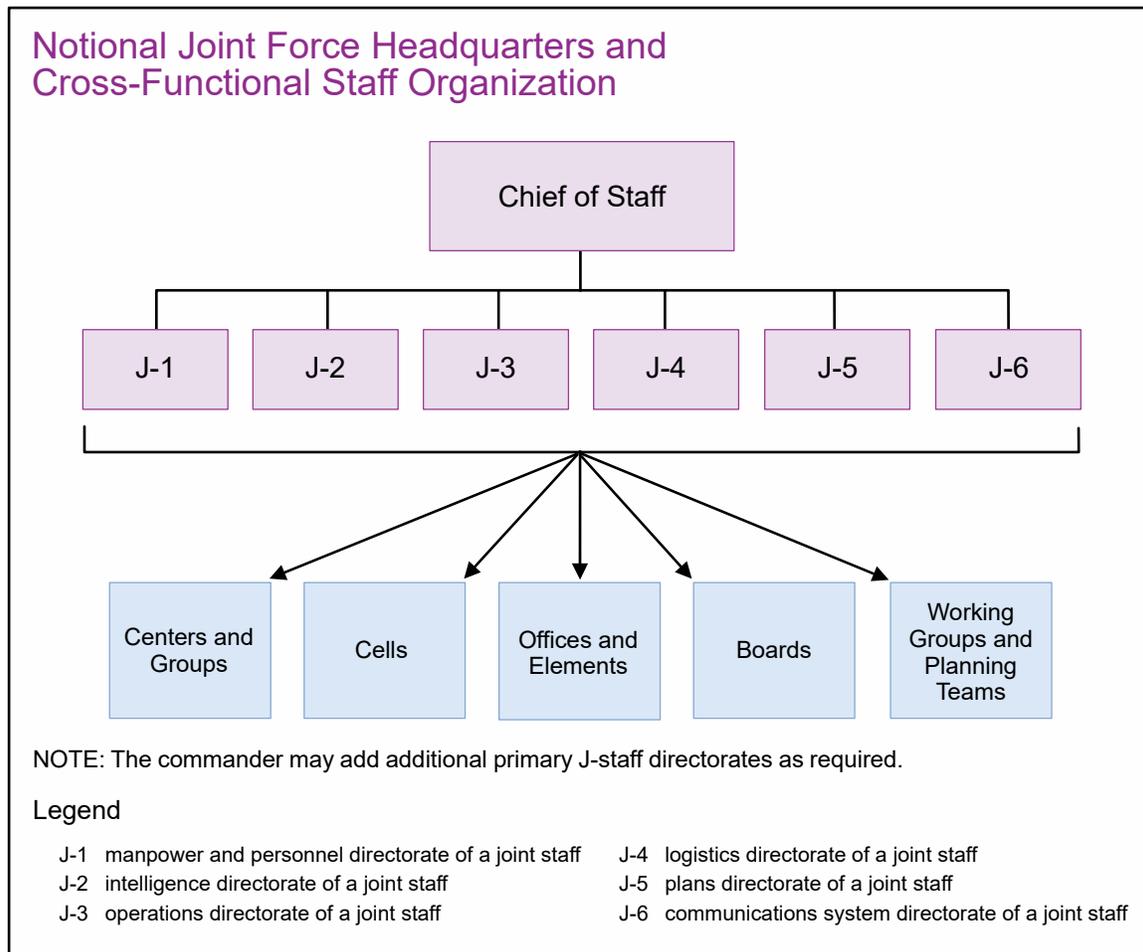


Figure IV-2. Notional Joint Force Headquarters and Cross-Functional Staff Organization

OPERATIONAL AREAS FOR OPERATION RESTORE HOPE

During Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, the joint forces rear area was centered around the separate sites of the embassy compound, port, and airfield in the city of Mogadishu, while its operational area was widely scattered around the towns and villages of the interior. The area of interest included the rest of the country and particularly those population and relief centers not under the joint force commander's supervision.

Various Sources

coordinate, integrate, and deconflict joint operations among joint force components and supporting commands. The size of these OAs and the types of forces employed within them depend on the scope and nature of the mission and the projected duration of operations.

b. **CCMD-Level Areas.** GCCs conduct operations in their assigned AORs. When warranted, the President, SecDef, or GCCs may designate a theater of war and/or theater of operations for each operation (see Figure IV-3). GCCs can elect to control operations directly in these OAs or may establish subordinate joint forces for that purpose, while remaining focused on the broader AOR. Operations that span GCC boundaries may expose gaps in C2. DOD uses a mix of formal and informal processes to synchronize actions between AORs.

(1) **AOR.** An AOR is an area established by the UCP that defines geographic responsibilities for a GCC. A GCC has authority to plan for operations within the AOR and conduct those operations approved by the President or SecDef. CCDRs may operate forces wherever required to accomplish approved missions. **All cross-AOR operations must be coordinated among the affected GCCs.**

(2) **Theater of War.** A theater of war is a geographical area established by the President, SecDef, or GCC for the conduct of major operations and campaigns involving combat. A theater of war is established primarily when there is a formal declaration of war or it is necessary to encompass more than one theater of operations (or a JOA and a separate theater of operations) within a single boundary for the purposes of C2, sustainment, protection, or mutual support. A theater of war does not normally encompass a GCC's entire AOR but may cross the boundaries of two or more AORs.

(3) **Theater of Operations.** A theater of operations is an OA defined by the GCC for the conduct or support of specific military operations. A theater of operations is established primarily when the scope of the operation in time, space, purpose, and/or employed forces exceeds what a JOA can normally accommodate. More than one joint force HQ can exist in a theater of operations. A GCC may establish one or more theaters of operations. Different theaters will normally be focused on different missions. A theater of operations typically is smaller than a theater of war but is large enough to allow for

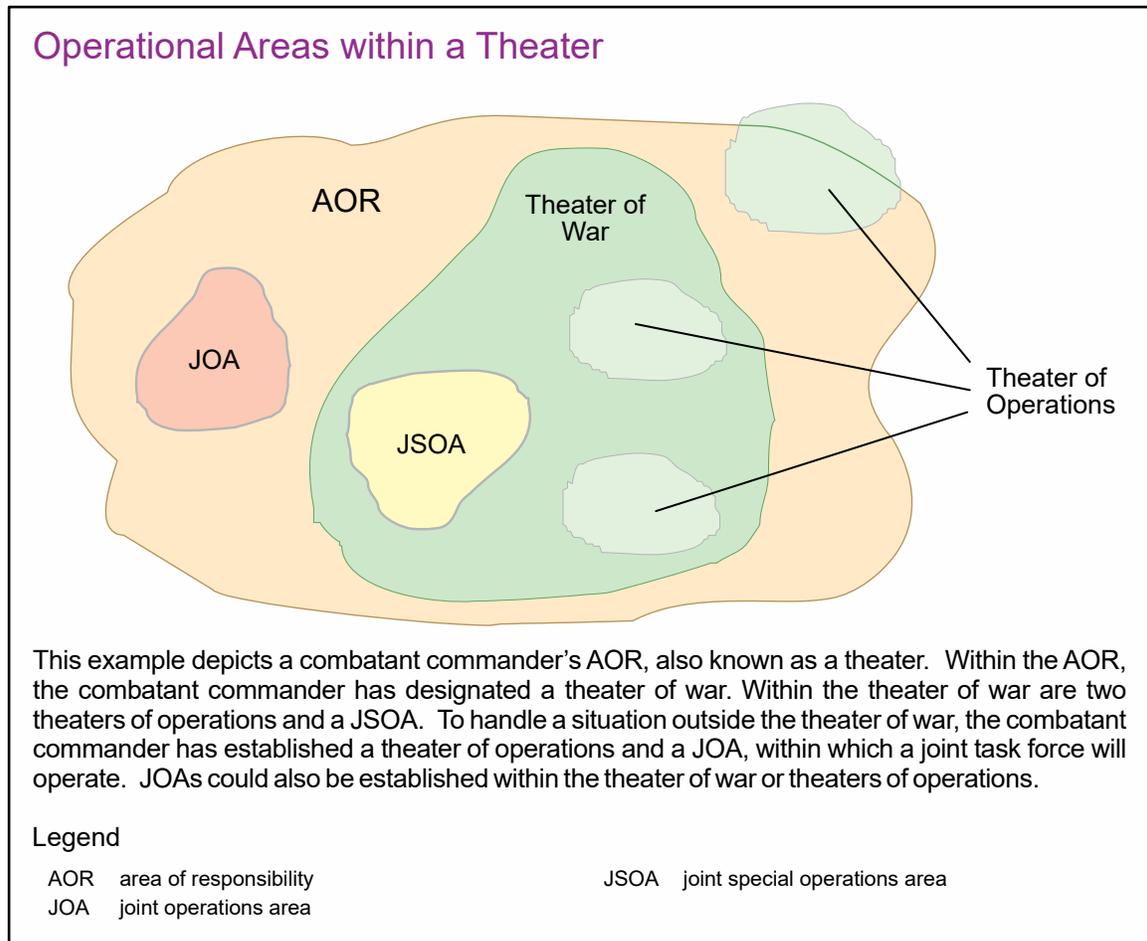


Figure IV-3. Operational Areas within a Theater

operations in depth and over extended periods of time. Theaters of operations are normally associated with major operations and campaigns and may cross the boundary of two AORs.

c. For operations somewhat limited in scope and duration, or for specialized activities, the commander can establish the following OAs.

(1) **JOA.** A JOA is an area of land, sea, and airspace, defined by a GCC or subordinate unified commander, in which a JFC (normally a CJTF) conducts military operations to accomplish a specific mission. JOAs are particularly useful when operations are limited in scope and geographic area or when operations are to be conducted on the boundaries between theaters.

(2) **JSOA.** A JSOA is an area of land, sea, and airspace assigned by a JFC to the commander of SOF to conduct special operations activities. It may be limited in size to accommodate a discreet direct action mission or may be extensive enough to allow a continuing broad range of unconventional warfare (UW) operations. A JSOA is defined by a JFC who has geographic responsibilities. JFCs may use a JSOA to delineate and facilitate simultaneous conventional and special operations. The JFSOCC is the supported commander within the JSOA.

For additional guidance on JSOAs, refer to JP 3-05, Special Operations.

(3) **AOA.** The AOA is a geographic area within which is located the objective(s) to be secured by the amphibious force. This area must be of sufficient size to accomplish the amphibious force's mission and must provide sufficient area for conducting necessary sea, air, and land operations.

For additional guidance on AOA's, refer to JP 3-02, Amphibious Operations.

(4) **AO.** JFCs may define AOs for land and maritime forces. AOs do not typically encompass the entire OA of the JFC but should be large enough for component commanders to accomplish their missions (to include a designated amount of airspace) and protect their forces. Component commanders with AOs typically designate subordinate AOs within which their subordinate forces operate. These commanders employ the full range of joint and Service control measures and graphics as coordinated with other component commanders and their representatives to delineate responsibilities, deconflict operations, and achieve unity of effort.

d. Contiguous and Noncontiguous OAs

(1) OAs may be contiguous or noncontiguous (Figure IV-4). When they are contiguous, a boundary separates them. When OAs are noncontiguous, subordinate commands do not share a boundary. The higher HQ retains responsibility for the unassigned portion of its OA.

(2) In some operations, a Service or functional component (typically the ground component) could have such a large OA that the component's subordinate units operate in a noncontiguous manner, widely distributed and beyond mutually supporting range of each other. In these cases, the JFC should consider options whereby joint capabilities can be pushed to lower levels and placed under control of units that can use them effectively.

e. Considerations When Assuming Responsibility for an OA. The establishing commander should activate an assigned OA at a specified date and time based on mission and situation considerations addressed during COA analysis and wargaming. Among others, common considerations include C2, the information environment, intelligence requirements, communications support, protection, security, LOCs, terrain management, movement control, airspace control, surveillance, reconnaissance, air and missile defense, PR, targeting and fires, interorganizational coordination, and environmental issues.

Refer to JP 3-33, Joint Task Force Headquarters, for specific guidance on assuming responsibility for an OA.

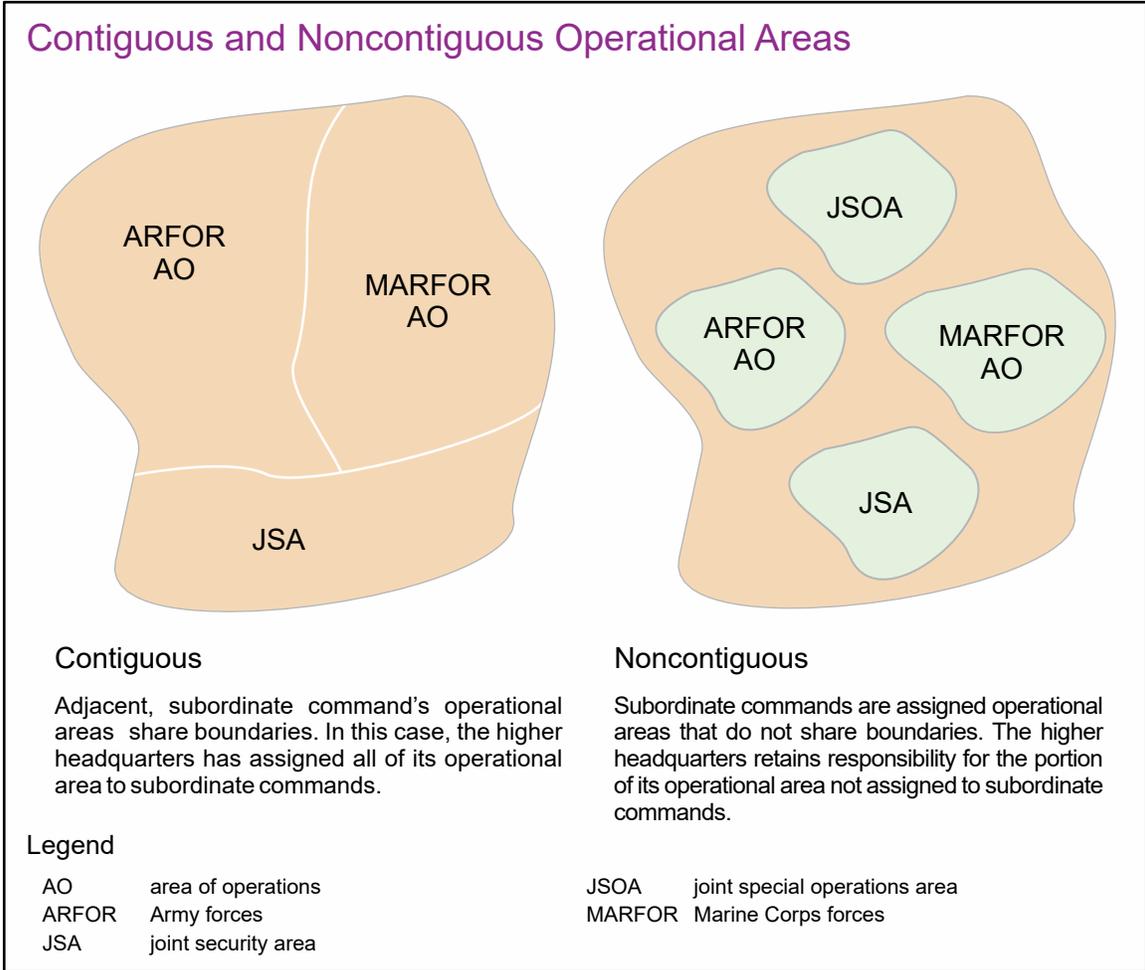


Figure IV-4. Contiguous and Noncontiguous Operational Areas