Enclosure

Defense Headquarters: Geographic Combatant Commands Rely on Subordinate Commands for Mission Management and Execution

Information Provided to the Senate Armed Services Committee

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Introduction

- In accordance with the National Security Act of 1947 and Title 10 of the U.S. Code, and as described in the Unified Command Plan, combatant commands are established by the President, through the Secretary of Defense, with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 1986, Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DOD) Reorganization Act of 1986, which among other things, modified Title 10 to establish the combatant command authorities to manage all military operations in designated areas of responsibility.

- DOD operates six geographic combatant commands that execute missions in designated areas of responsibility: U.S. Africa Command; U.S. Central Command; U.S. European Command; U.S. Northern Command; U.S. Pacific Command; and U.S. Southern Command.

- Each combatant command is supported by multiple subordinate commands, which include thousands of personnel who assist in coordinating operations within these areas of responsibility, including missions associated with combating transnational terrorism, building foreign partner nations' military capabilities, and conducting international disaster-relief efforts.

Source of the Work and Objectives

- You asked us to assess the missions and structures of the geographic combatant commands and their subordinate commands.

- In this briefing we describe (1) DOD's current allocation of personnel to the geographic combatant commands and their subordinate commands (service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces), excluding U.S. Central Command; and (2) how the combatant commands utilize their subordinate commands to accomplish assigned missions.

Scope and Methodology

- We obtained and analyzed documentation on authorized permanent and temporary military and civilian personnel. Specifically, we requested data contained in fiscal year 2016 joint tables of distribution, joint manpower documents, or the equivalent for each command within our scope. We compared the documentation received from the combatant commands and service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces against each other to ensure that there was consistency and completeness in the data provided. We also spoke with DOD officials about the data and shared the data with DOD officials to ensure that the data was accurate. We found these data to be sufficiently reliable for the purpose of describing the personnel authorizations at the commands. We also interviewed knowledgeable officials at the Joint Staff, geographic combatant commands, and their subordinate commands to be able to describe the personnel assigned to each command.
- We reviewed strategic classified and unclassified documents detailing the missions assigned to each command. We also interviewed knowledgeable officials to be able to describe the missions assigned to each command.
- We included five of the six geographic combatant commands (U.S. Africa Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Pacific Command, and U.S. Southern Command) and their service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces within our scope. Additionally, we included the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) because, according to U.S. Northern Command officials, each command has personnel that support both commands. We excluded U.S. Central Command and its corresponding subordinate commands from our scope due to its responsibilities to support ongoing military operations in the Middle East.

Summary

- We found 22,170 total authorized military and civilian personnel are allocated to the five geographic combatant commands, of which 6,858 personnel (31 percent) are allocated to the combatant command headquarters and 15,312 authorized personnel (69 percent) are allocated to the service component commands/joint task forces/subordinate unified commands.
- We found that the combatant commands utilize subordinate commands to execute assigned missions. The organizational construct DOD created allows for combatant command headquarters to focus on planning and oversight, while delegating operational and tactical level mission execution to service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces.
  - The extent to which each combatant command utilizes service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces to execute assigned missions varies. Some combatant commands utilize multiple joint task forces to execute their assigned missions.
- The joint task forces in the combatant commands within our scope were utilized to address continuing mission requirements and have existed for at least a decade, and some predate their parent combatant command.

Background: DOD Organizational Authorities

- Title 10 of the U.S. Code authorizes the department to establish subordinate commands to the combatant commands to address mission requirements and fulfill military service Title 10 responsibilities to organize, train, and equip U.S. forces.
- DOD's combatant commands rely on three types of subordinate commands:
  - Service component commands - established by the individual military services and provide administrative control, as part of the military service's Title 10 responsibilities over forces assigned to combatant commands, but can provide operational control when the authority is delegated from the combatant command.
  - Subordinate unified commands - established when authorized by the Secretary of Defense through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and manage operations within a geographic area or on a functional basis.
  - Joint task forces - established by the combatant commander in most cases, but the Secretary of Defense, a subordinate unified commander, and the commander of an existing joint task force may also establish subordinate joint task forces.
    - Typically, a joint task force is established for a focused and temporary purpose and is disestablished when the purpose for which it was created has been achieved or it is no longer required; however it may become a more long-lasting organization if the mission is a continuing requirement.

Background: Guidance on Personnel Requirements

- A number of DOD publications establish the policies and procedures DOD is to use when determining personnel requirements for the combatant commands and their subordinate commands. These include:
  - Department of Defense Instruction 1100.22*, Policy and Procedures for Determining Workforce Mix* (Apr. 12, 2010) states that commands are to consider a number of factors when determining personnel requirements, including total number of personnel needed and the mix of military, civilian, and contractor support needed.
  - Specific regulations and guidance within each of the military services, which guide personnel requirements at the service component commands.
  - Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1001.01B, *Joint Manpower and Personnel Program* (October 7, 2014) states that joint personnel requirements at the combatant commands are to be stated in terms of the minimum manning required to accomplish the command's approved missions and should be based on the average workload expected to continue for at least 36 months. Temporary personnel requirements for short-duration missions should be supported through augmentation, temporary duty tasking, civilian overhire or other temporary personnel solutions.
    - The combatant commands utilize augmentation to support staff operations during contingencies. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1301.01F *Joint Individual Augmentation Procedures* (November 17, 2014) provides guidance and procedures for requesting augmentation personnel to meet temporary manpower requirements.

Background: GAO Past Work

GAO has issued several reports highlighting personnel growth at the combatant commands and their subordinate commands.

- In 2013, GAO found that authorized military and civilian personnel at five geographic commands (excluding U.S. Central Command) had grown by about 50 percent from fiscal years 2001 to 2012. Authorized military and civilian personnel at the supporting service component commands also increased. GAO also found several weaknesses in DOD's management of geographic combatant command resources that challenge its ability to make informed decisions, including the absence of a comprehensive, periodic review of the size and structure of the combatant commands and a lack of visibility by the combatant commands and Joint Staff over authorized manpower and assigned personnel at the service component commands (GAO-13-293).[1]
  - In this report we recommended that DOD:
    - require a periodic evaluation of the combatant commands' size and structure;
    - use existing systems to manage and track all assigned personnel;
    - develop a process to gather information on authorized manpower and assigned personnel at the service component commands; and
    - require information in the budget on authorized positions, full-time equivalents, and funding for each combatant command.
  - DOD non-concurred with GAO's first recommendation and has not yet taken any action to address this recommendation. GAO continues to believe that actions are needed. DOD concurred with GAO's three other recommendations, and has addressed the fourth recommendation and taken some steps to address the other two recommendations, but they remain open as of April 2016.

[1] GAO, *Defense Headquarters: DOD Needs to Periodically Review and Improve Visibility Of Combatant Commands' Resources*, GAO-13-293 (Washington, D.C.: May 15, 2013).

Background: GAO Past Work (continued)

- In 2014, GAO found that there were substantial increases in authorized personnel at the functional combatant commands from fiscal years 2004 to 2013, and at U.S. Central Command from fiscal years 2001 to 2013. Authorized military and civilian personnel at the supporting service component commands also increased (GAO-14-439 and GAO-14-440).[2]
  - In GAO-14-439 we recommended that DOD:
    - reevaluate the decision to focus reductions on management headquarters to ensure meaningful savings
    - set a clearly defined and consistently applied starting point as a baseline for the reductions, and
    - track reductions against the baselines in order to provide reliable accounting of savings and reporting to Congress.
  - In GAO-14-440 we recommended that DOD:
    - develop guidance for transitioning costs funded by overseas contingency operations appropriations to DOD's base budget.
  - On GAO-14-439, DOD partially concurred with GAO's first recommendation and concurred with GAO's two other recommendations. DOD has taken some steps to set a starting point for headquarters reductions and track reductions against baselines, but GAO's recommendations remain open as of April 2016. On GAO-14-440, DOD partially concurred, stating that the transition depends on enduring missions and the criteria for future budgets.

[2] GAO, *Defense Headquarters: DOD Needs to Reevaluate Its Approach for Managing Resources Devoted to the Functional Combatant Commands*, GAO-14.439 (Washington, D.C.: June 26, 2014) and GAO, *Defense Headquarters: Guidance Needed to Transition U.S. Central Command's Costs to the Base Budget*, GAO-14-440 (June 9, 2014).

Background: Process to Review and Approve Joint Personnel Requirements

Changes to Permanent Joint Manpower:

- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1001.01B, *Joint Manpower and Personnel Program* outlines the process for determining and validating requirements for permanent personnel at the combatant commands, their subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces. As part of the process, the (1) combatant commands submit a request to the Director of the Joint Staff for additional manpower; (2) the request is analyzed by the Joint Staff and military service representatives; and (3) the Director of the Joint Staff, along with military service representatives, makes a decision on whether or not to endorse the request.

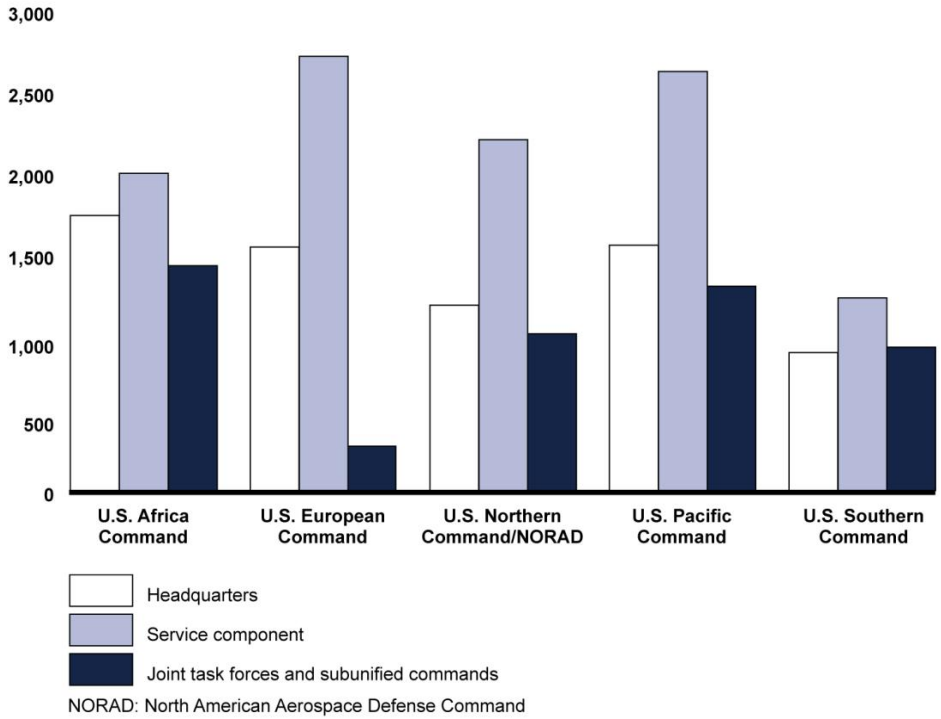
Changes to Temporary Joint Manpower:

- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1301.01F *Joint Individual Augmentation Procedures* outlines a process for allocating augmentees to meet temporary manpower requirements at the combatant commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces. As part of the process the (1) combatant command notifies the Joint Staff of the need for joint individual augmentees; (2) Joint Staff reviews and validates; and (3) if validated, the requirements are sourced by force providers, such as the military departments, combatant commands with assigned forces, and other DOD organizations.

Objective 1: Allocation of Personnel to Five Geographic Combatant Commands and Their Subordinate Commands

- The five geographic combatant commands and their service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces include 22,170 total authorized personnel.
- The allocation of personnel varies by command.
- The service component commands account for the largest allocation of personnel, with 10,799 (48 percent). The service component commands also support their respective military service's Title 10 responsibilities to organize, train and equip forces.
- Some commands are also supported by contractor personnel, but the availability of data varies and could not be quantified consistently by all the commands.

Figure 1: Authorized Fiscal Year 2016 Permanent and Temporary Military and Civilian Personnel



NORAD: North American Aerospace Defense Command

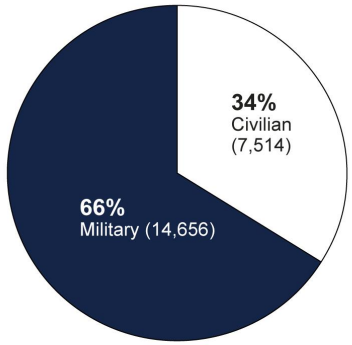
Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-652R

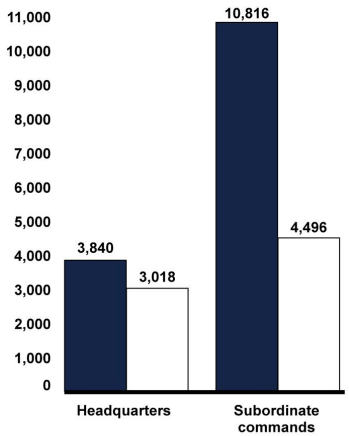
Note: Headquarters reflects authorized military and civilian personnel within each of the command's headquarters directorates and security cooperation organizations. The Navy and Air Force each have one service component command that supports both U.S. Africa Command and U.S. European Command. The allocation of personnel for these service component commands was apportioned in the figure. These figures do not include personnel performing contract services. The service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces perform staff functions that are similar to those of the combatant command such as collecting intelligence, coordinating operations, and performing strategic planning.

Objective 1: Allocation of Personnel to the Five Geographic Combatant Commands and Their Subordinate Commands

- Authorized permanent and temporary military personnel account for 14,656 (66 percent) of the total personnel allocated to both headquarters and all subordinate commands.
  - For all five of the combatant command headquarters, military personnel account for 3,840 (56 percent) of the total personnel. Civilian personnel account for 3,018 (44 percent) of the total personnel.
  - For all of the subordinate commands, military personnel account for 10,816 (71 percent) of the total personnel. Civilian personnel account for 4,496 (29 percent) of the total personnel.

Figure 2: Authorized Fiscal Year 2016 Permanent and Temporary Military And Civilian Personnel





Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-652R

Note: Data reflects personnel within the five geographic combatant commands, and their subordinate commands (service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces) excluding U.S. Central Command.

Objective 2: Subordinate Commands Are Utilized to Execute the Five Geographic Combatant Commands' Assigned Missions

- The extent to which the combatant commands utilize service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces to execute assigned missions varies. Some combatant commands utilize multiple joint task forces to execute their assigned missions.
- The organizational construct DOD created allows for combatant command headquarters to focus on planning, while delegating operational and tactical level mission execution to the service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces. For example, U.S. Southern Command has delegated its mission to manage the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to Joint Task Force-Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO).
- The service component commands, subordinate unified commands, and joint task forces perform staff functions similar to those of the combatant commands, such as collecting intelligence, coordinating operations, and performing strategic planning.
  - GAO has previously found that the combatant commands do not have oversight or visibility over authorized manpower or assigned personnel at the service component commands.

Objective 2: Joint Task Forces Addressing Continuing Mission Requirements

Table 1: Joint Task Forces by Command

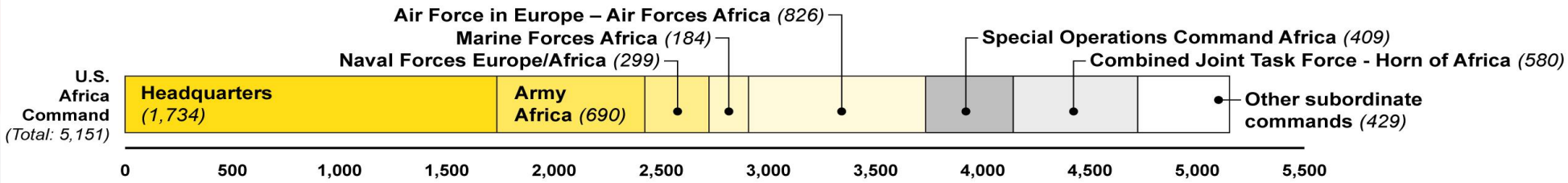
Combatant Command	Joint Task Force (JTF) / Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF)	Establishment date	Total authorized personnel (military and civilian) for fiscal year 2016
U.S. Africa Command	Combined JTF – Horn of Africa[a]	2002	580
U.S. Northern Command	JTF – North	1989	161
	Joint Force Headquarters – National Capitol Region	2004	77
	JTF – Civil Support	1999	136
U.S. Southern Command	JIATF - SOUTH	1989	405
	JTF – BRAVO	1984	91
	JTF – GTMO	2002	157
U.S. Pacific Command	JIATF - WEST	1989	99

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-652R

[a] Combined JTF – Horn of Africa was initially subordinate to U.S. Central Command prior to the creation of U.S. Africa Command.

Objective 2: U.S. Africa Command and Subordinate Commands Personnel Authorizations and Mission Delegation

Figure 3: Fiscal Year 2016 Authorized Permanent and Temporary Military and Civilian Personnel



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-652R

Note: The Navy and Air Force service component commands are dual-hatted and support both U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command. For the purposes of this report, we have apportioned the authorized personnel between the two commands. Other subordinate commands include task forces that execute specific missions as delegated by U.S. Africa Command.

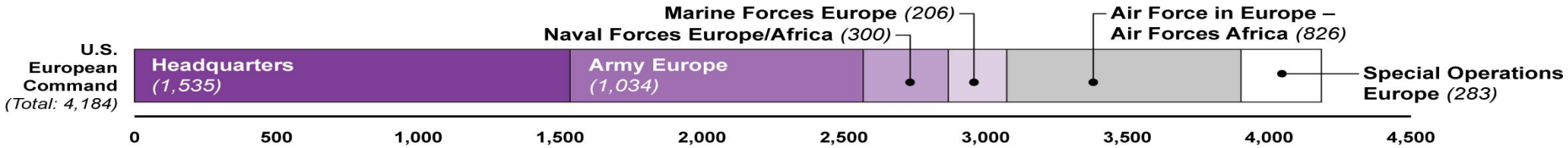
- **U.S. Africa Command –** According to officials and documents we reviewed, the combatant command conducts outreach, strategic planning, and oversight of building partner capacity activities in Africa. The command delegates several missions to its subordinate commands. For example:
  - **Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa** executes missions associated with combating terrorism and building partnership capacity in the Horn of Africa.

- U.S. Africa Command officials stated that due to the difficulties in managing operations from Germany, the command is considering the establishment of an additional task force to manage operations in western Africa. GAO has previously found that U.S. Africa Command justified keeping their headquarters in Germany in order to better manage operations in Africa.[2] GAO recommended that DOD revisit its analysis because it was not comprehensive, well-documented, and did not balance the operational and cost benefits of the options available to DOD. DOD partially concurred, stating that the decision to keep U.S. Africa Command in Germany was based primarily on military judgement and they would revisit this decision only at the direction of the Secretary of Defense.

[3] GAO, *Defense Headquarters: DOD Needs to Reassess Options for Permanent Location of U.S. Africa Command*, GAO-13-646 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2013).

Objective 2: U.S. European Command and Subordinate Commands Personnel Authorizations and Mission Delegation

Figure 4: Fiscal Year 2016 Authorized Permanent and Temporary Military and Civilian Personnel



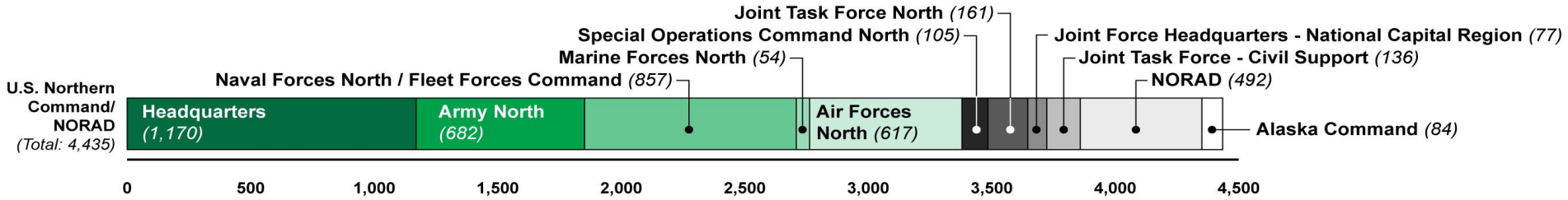
Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-652R

Note: The Navy and Air Force service component commands are dual-hatted and support both U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command. For the purposes of this report, we apportioned the authorized personnel between the two commands. In addition, U.S. European Command does not currently utilize joint task forces.

- **U.S. European Command –** According to officials and documents we reviewed, the combatant command headquarters personnel conduct outreach, strategic planning, and oversight of building partner capacity activities in Europe. The command delegates several missions to its service component commands, including missions associated with building partnership capacity and efforts to combat terrorism. U.S. European Command officials noted that while the command does not currently include any joint task forces, they would likely rely on this type of construct in certain contingencies.
  - **U.S. Army Europe** is designated by U.S. European Command to serve as the land component command during a contingency operation. Officials from U.S. Army Europe stated that their command is not staffed appropriately for this responsibility and would therefore likely rely on a temporary organization such as a joint task force, to include additional personnel, to address emergent missions, such as a contingency operation.

Objective 2: U.S. Northern Command/North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and Subordinate Commands Personnel Authorizations and Mission Delegation

Figure 5: Fiscal Year 2016 Authorized Permanent and Temporary Military and Civilian Personnel



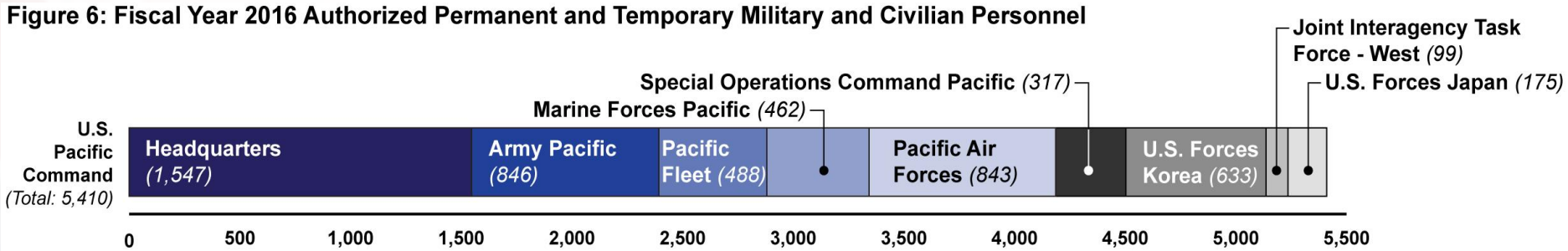
Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-652R

- **U.S. Northern Command –** According to officials and documents we reviewed, the combatant command headquarters personnel conduct outreach, strategic planning, and oversight of building partner capacity activities, defense support for civil authorities, and homeland defense-related contingencies. The command delegates several missions to its subordinate commands. For example:
  - **Joint Task Force Civil Support** is responsible for anticipating, planning, and preparing for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense support to civil authorities.
  - **Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region** plans and partners with federal and local agencies on homeland defense and civil support operations in the national capital region. However, its origins are as the Military District of Washington, which predates the establishment of U.S. Northern Command. Both the joint task force and the Military District of Washington share a commander and core staff.
  - **Joint Task Force North** supports our nation's federal law enforcement agencies in the identification and interdiction of suspected transnational criminal organizations' activities conducted within and along the approaches to the continental United States.
  - **Alaska Command**, a subordinate unified command comprised of approximately 84 authorized military and civilian personnel, is responsible for conducting homeland defense and civil support activities in Alaska. Of the 84 authorized personnel, 65 are reported by DOD as part of U.S. Pacific Command's authorized personnel, but perform work for U.S. Northern Command.

- The U.S. Northern Command commander is also the commander of the bi-lateral U.S./Canada North American Aerospace Defense Command, which is responsible for aerospace warning and control for North America.
  - According to U.S. Northern Command officials, staff assigned to U.S. Northern Command often support missions at North American Aerospace Defense Command. Additionally, officials at both commands stated that if U.S. Northern Command were disestablished, the North American Aerospace Defense Command would need over 300 additional personnel to execute its missions.

Objective 2: U.S. Pacific Command and Subordinate Commands Personnel Authorizations and Mission Delegation

Figure 6: Fiscal Year 2016 Authorized Permanent and Temporary Military and Civilian Personnel



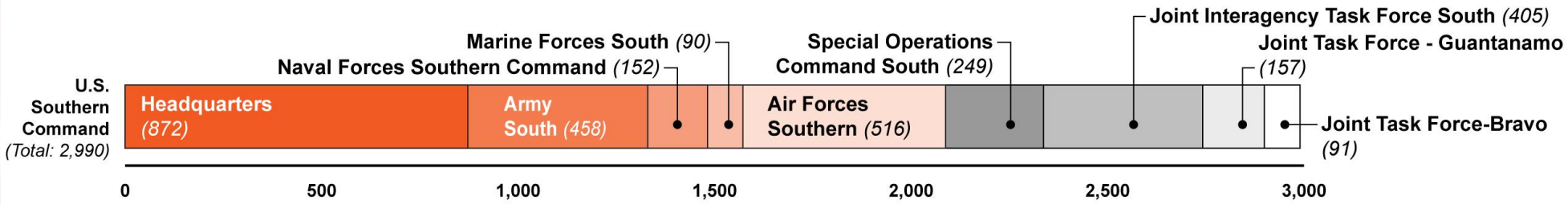
Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-652R

Note: U.S. Pacific Command Headquarters includes authorized personnel within its direct reporting units such as its Joint Intelligence Operations Center and its security cooperation organizations.

- **U.S. Pacific Command –** According to documents we reviewed, the combatant command headquarters personnel conduct outreach and planning and oversight of building partner capacity activities in their area of responsibility. The command delegates several missions to its subordinate commands. For example:
  - **U.S. Forces Korea**, a subordinate unified command comprised of 633 authorized military and civilian personnel, is responsible for deterring aggression and, if necessary, defending the Republic of Korea to maintain stability in Northeast Asia.
  - **U.S. Forces Japan**, a subordinate unified command established in 1957 and comprised of 175 authorized military and civilian personnel, is responsible for developing plans for the defense of Japan, conducting joint/bilateral exercises and studies, and is prepared, if contingencies arise, to assume operational control of assigned and attached U.S. forces.
  - **Joint Interagency Task Force West** plans, integrates, synchronizes, conducts, and assesses DOD counterdrug activities to disrupt transnational criminal organizations that threaten U.S. interests in the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility.

Objective 2: U.S. Southern Command and Subordinate Commands Personnel Authorizations and Mission Delegation

Figure 7: Fiscal Year 2016 Authorized Permanent and Temporary Military and Civilian Personnel



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-652R

- **U.S. Southern Command –** According to officials and documents we reviewed, the combatant command headquarters personnel conduct outreach and strategic planning and oversight of building partner capacity activities in the command's area of responsibility. The command delegates several missions to its subordinate commands. For example:
  - **Joint Interagency Task Force South** has primary responsibility for U.S. detection and monitoring of drug trafficking activities in the command's area of responsibility.
  - **Joint Task Force Guantanamo** manages the detention facility located at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
  - **Joint Task Force Bravo**, located at Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras, supports regional security through partner capacity building activities, disaster relief efforts, and efforts associated with countering transnational organized crime.