



Press Release

United States Air Force

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August 5, 2009

Forward-deployed USAFCENT to provide enhanced support to USCENTCOM operations

WASHINGTON – The Air Force designated U.S. Air Forces Central Command (USAFCENT) as its new dedicated, forward-based Air Force component supporting the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR), Aug. 5.

The Air Force temporarily redesignated Ninth Air Force (9th AF) / Air Forces Central (AFCENT) as USAFCENT and activated a new 9th AF, to enhance continuity and focus on priority missions in the CENTCOM AOR.

“We want to download some of the [stateside] responsibilities so our three-star [commander] ... can focus on the fight in Afghanistan and Iraq,” Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, Air Force Chief of Staff said during testimony to the House Armed Services Committee May 19.

The temporary placement of the three-star USAFCENT commander and a small staff of no more than 50 personnel in a forward location allows the commander to focus exclusively on the planning and execution of air, cyber, and space operations in the CENTCOM AOR.

“The operations tempo is as high as it’s ever been and as our commitments accelerate in Afghanistan, we need 100 percent focus,” said General Schwartz. “This was in keeping with the best military judgment of Air Force leaders as well as coordinated with and favored by [CENTCOM Commander] General [David] Petraeus.”

The new 9th AF, commanded by a two-star general, will retain oversight of six stateside wings and one direct reporting unit. It will remain at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., as a numbered air force subordinate to Air Combat Command.

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The details of USAFCENT's configuration, including the exact composition of the command element, the nature of the overseas assignments for USAFCENT personnel and the proposal's projected cost, are being assessed.

When contingency operations subside, the Air Force will reset to the peacetime configuration of 9th AF (AFCENT) at Shaw AFB.