

States element of the North American Aerospace Defense Command to perform missions assigned to those commands. The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that such assignments are consistent with the force structure prescribed by the President for each combatant command.

(2) A force not assigned to a combatant command or to the United States element of the North American Aerospace Defense Command under paragraph (1) shall remain assigned to the military department concerned for carrying out the responsibilities of the Secretary of the military department concerned as specified in section 3013, 5013, or 8013 of this title, as applicable.

(3) A force assigned to a combatant command or to the United States element of the North American Aerospace Defense Command under this section may be transferred from the command to which it is assigned only—

(A) by authority of the Secretary of Defense; and

(B) under procedures prescribed by the Secretary and approved by the President.

(4) Except as otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, all forces assigned to a unified combatant command shall be under the command of,¹ the commander of that command. The preceding sentence applies to forces assigned to a specified combatant command only as prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

(b) CHAIN OF COMMAND.—Unless otherwise directed by the President, the chain of command to a unified or specified combatant command runs—

(1) from the President to the Secretary of Defense; and

(2) from the Secretary of Defense to the commander of the combatant command.

(Added Pub. L. 99-433, title II, §211(a), Oct. 1, 1986, 100 Stat. 1012; amended Pub. L. 100-180, div. A, title XIII, §1313, Dec. 4, 1987, 101 Stat. 1175; Pub. L. 100-456, div. A, title VII, §711, Sept. 29, 1988, 102 Stat. 1997; Pub. L. 104-201, div. A, title X, §1073(a), Sept. 23, 1996, 110 Stat. 2657; Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title IX, §924, Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2358.)

AMENDMENTS

2016—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 114-328, §924(1), substituted “As directed by the Secretary of Defense” for “Except as provided in paragraph (2)” and “specified forces” for “all forces” and struck out “Such assignments shall be made as directed by the Secretary of Defense, including direction as to the command to which forces are to be assigned.” before “The Secretary of Defense”.

Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 114-328, §924(2), added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2) which read as follows: “Except as otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, forces to be assigned by the Secretaries of the military departments to the combatant commands or to the United States element of the North American Aerospace Defense Command under paragraph (1) do not include forces assigned to carry out functions of the Secretary of a military department listed in sections 3013(b), 5013(b), and 8013(b) of this title or forces assigned to multinational peacekeeping organizations.”

Subsec. (a)(4). Pub. L. 114-328, §924(3)(B), struck out “assigned to, and” before “under the command”.

¹ So in original. The comma probably should not appear.

Pub. L. 114-328, §924(3)(A), which directed striking out “operating with the geographic area”, was executed by striking out “operating within the geographic area” after “all forces” to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

1996—Subsec. (a)(1) to (3). Pub. L. 104-201 substituted “North American Aerospace Defense Command” for “North American Air Defense Command”.

1988—Subsec. (a)(1) to (3). Pub. L. 100-456 inserted “or to the United States element of the North American Air Defense Command”.

1987—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 100-180 inserted before period at end “or forces assigned to multinational peacekeeping organizations”.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSIGNMENT OF FORCES TO COMBATANT COMMANDS

Pub. L. 99-433, title II, §214(a), Oct. 1, 1986, 100 Stat. 1018, provided that section 162(a) of this title shall be implemented not later than 90 days after Oct. 1, 1986.

§ 163. Role of Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff

(a) COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH CHAIRMAN OF JCS; ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES.—Subject to the limitations in section 152(c) of this title, the President may—

(1) direct that communications between the President or the Secretary of Defense and the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands be transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and

(2) assign duties to the Chairman to assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in performing their command function.

(b) OVERSIGHT BY CHAIRMAN OF JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.—(1) The Secretary of Defense may assign to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsibility for overseeing the activities of the combatant commands. Such assignment by the Secretary to the Chairman does not confer any command authority on the Chairman and does not alter the responsibility of the commanders of the combatant commands prescribed in section 164(b)(2) of this title.

(2) Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff serves as the spokesman for the commanders of the combatant commands, especially on the operational requirements of their commands. In performing such function, the Chairman shall—

(A) confer with and obtain information from the commanders of the combatant commands with respect to the requirements of their commands;

(B) evaluate and integrate such information;

(C) advise and make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense with respect to the requirements of the combatant commands, individually and collectively; and

(D) communicate, as appropriate, the requirements of the combatant commands to other elements of the Department of Defense.

(Added Pub. L. 99-433, title II, §211(a), Oct. 1, 1986, 100 Stat. 1013.)

§ 164. Commanders of combatant commands: assignment; powers and duties

(a) ASSIGNMENT AS COMBATANT COMMANDER.—(1) The President may assign an officer to serve as the commander of a unified or specified combatant command only if the officer—