

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”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2018 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 115-232 effective Feb. 1, 2019, with provision for the coordination of amendments and special rule for certain redesignations, see section 800 of Pub. L. 115-232, set out as a note preceding section 3001 of this title.

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—

(A) has the joint specialty under section 661 of this title; and

(B) has completed a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment (as defined in section 664(d) of this title) as a general or flag officer.

(2) The President may waive paragraph (1) in the case of an officer if the President determines that such action is necessary in the national interest.

(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMBATANT COMMANDERS.—(1) The commander of a combatant command is responsible to the President and to the Secretary of Defense for the performance of missions assigned to that command by the President or by the Secretary with the approval of the President.

(2) Subject to the direction of the President, the commander of a combatant command—

(A) performs his duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense; and

(B) is directly responsible to the Secretary for the preparedness of the command to carry out missions assigned to the command.

(3) Among the full range of command responsibilities specified in subsection (c) and as provided for in section 161 of this title, the primary duties of the commander of a combatant command shall be as follows:

(A) To produce plans for the employment of the armed forces to execute national defense strategies and respond to significant military contingencies.

(B) To take actions, as necessary, to deter conflict.

(C) To command United States armed forces as directed by the Secretary and approved by the President.

(c) COMMAND AUTHORITY OF COMBATANT COMMANDERS.—(1) Unless otherwise directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense, the authority, direction, and control of the commander of a combatant command with respect to the commands and forces assigned to that command include the command functions of—

(A) giving authoritative direction to subordinate commands and forces necessary to carry out missions assigned to the command, including authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics;

(B) prescribing the chain of command to the commands and forces within the command;

(C) organizing commands and forces within that command as he considers necessary to carry out missions assigned to the command;

(D) employing forces within that command as he considers necessary to carry out missions assigned to the command;

(E) assigning command functions to subordinate commanders;

(F) coordinating and approving those aspects of administration and support (including control of resources and equipment, internal organization, and training) and discipline necessary to carry out missions assigned to the command; and

(G) exercising the authority with respect to selecting subordinate commanders, selecting