



**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

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MCM 0044-08  
23 December 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chiefs of the Services  
Commanders of the Combatant Commands  
Commander, U.S. Element, NORAD

Subject: Distribution of Unified Command Plan 2008 (UCP 08)

1. The President approved UCP 08 (enclosure) on 17 December 2008, and it is effective immediately.

2. The UCP establishes the missions and responsibilities for commanders of combatant commands and establishes their geographic areas of responsibility. UCP 08 revisions include the following:

a. Codifies USAFRICOM as a geographic combatant command through assignment of specific missions, responsibilities, and geographic boundaries; the command became fully operation capable 1 October 2008.

b. Codifies a new "Pandemic Influenza" mission and assigns it under USNORTHCOM.

c. Codifies a new "Cyberspace Operations" mission and assigns it under USSTRATCOM.

d. Applies a standardized "synchronizing planning" construct to the following global missions:

(1) Global Operations Against Terrorist Networks (USSTRATCOM)

(2) Pandemic Influenza (USNORTHCOM)

(3) Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction (USSTRATCOM)

(4) Global Missile Defense (USSTRATCOM)

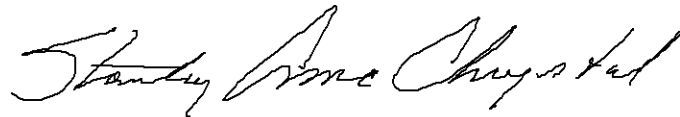
(5) Cyberspace Operations (USSTRATCOM)

e. Assigns all combatant commanders responsibility to plan and conduct military support to stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief.

f. Adopts a new format; organizes text into stand-alone combatant commander sections and streamlines the language for improved readability.

3. This memorandum supersedes MCM-0004-06, 31 May 2006, "Distribution of Unified Command Plan 2006 (UCP 06)."

For the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



STANLEY A. MCCHRYSTAL  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Director, Joint Staff

Enclosure

Copy to:

Secretary of Defense  
Secretary of State  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard  
COMUSFORESKOREA  
Directors, Joint Staff Directorates  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Director, DARPA  
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Chairman, U.S. Delegation, UN  
    Military Staff Committee  
USLO to SACLANT  
USMNR to SHAPE  
President, NDU

~~FOUO~~



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# Unified Command Plan

17 December 2008

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

December 17, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Unified Command Plan 2008

Pursuant to my authority as Commander in Chief, I hereby approve and direct implementation of the revised Unified Command Plan.

Consistent with 10 U.S.C. 161(b)(2) and 3 U.S.C. 301, you are directed to notify the Congress on my behalf.

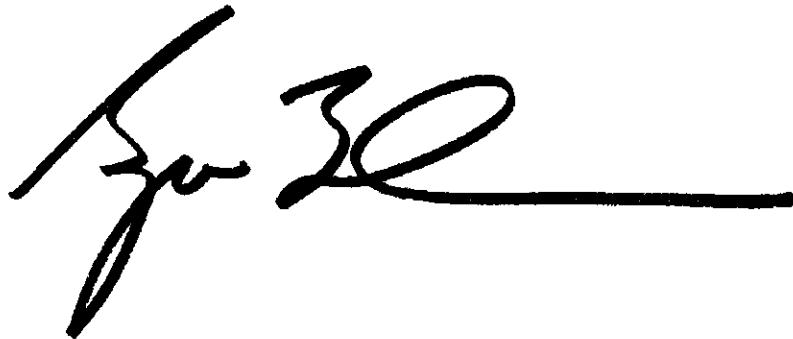
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "G. W. Bush", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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UNIFIED COMMAND PLAN

GENERAL

1. The National Security Act of 1947 and title 10 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) provide the basis for the establishment of combatant commands. The Unified Command Plan (UCP) establishes the missions, responsibilities, and geographic areas of responsibility (AORs) for commanders of combatant commands (“combatant commanders”). A “geographic combatant commander” is a commander of a combatant command that includes a geographic AOR. A “functional combatant commander” is a commander of a combatant command with transregional responsibilities. Command of combatant commands will be exercised as provided for herein and as otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense (the “Secretary”).
2. Several key strategic documents provide direction for the execution of missions established in the UCP. Though not all-inclusive, the list of documents in Appendix A represents the core of such strategic direction and is hereafter referred to as “strategic guidance.”
3. Communications between the President or the Secretary (or their duly deputized alternates or successors) and the combatant commanders shall be transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (the “Chairman”) unless otherwise directed. Throughout this document, where not specified, “otherwise directed” and “as directed” refer to direction by the President or the Secretary.

FORCES

4. The Secretary will document his direction for the assignment of forces to combatant commands and to U.S. Element North American Aerospace Defense Command (USELEMNORAD) in the “Forces for Unified Commands Memorandum” as incorporated into the Secretary’s “Global Force Management Implementation Guidance.”

5. The Secretaries of the Military Departments will assign forces to combatant commands as directed by the Secretary. These forces will be under the command of the combatant commanders. Except as otherwise directed by the Secretary, forces assigned to combatant commands do not include forces assigned to carry out those organizational, recruiting, training, supplying, and other functions of the Secretaries of Military Departments specified in sections 3013(b), 5013(b), and 8013(b) of title 10, U.S.C., or forces assigned to multinational peacekeeping organizations.

6. Except as otherwise directed or as provided in paragraph 4 above, all forces operating within the geographic AOR assigned to a combatant command, including National Guard and Reserve forces when ordered to federal active duty, will be assigned or attached to and under the command of that commander.

7. A force assigned or attached to a combatant command or USELEMNORAD under section 162 of title 10 may be transferred from that command only as directed by the Secretary and under procedures prescribed by the Secretary and approved by the President.

AUTHORITY

8. Chapter 6 of title 10 establishes the authority of the combatant commanders. Unless otherwise directed, a combatant commander will exercise command authority over all commands and forces assigned to the applicable combatant command in accordance with section 164 of title 10. When the position of the combatant commander is vacant, or in the absence or disability of the combatant commander such that the commander is unable to execute command authority, the deputy commander acts as the combatant commander and performs the duties of the combatant commander until a successor is appointed or the absence or disability ceases. If a deputy commander has not been designated, or is also absent or disabled, interim command will pass to the senior officer present for duty eligible to exercise command, regardless of Service affiliation.

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

9. Geographic AORs provide a basis for coordination by combatant commanders. These geographic AORs do not restrict accomplishment of assigned missions. Combatant commanders may operate forces wherever required to accomplish their missions. Unless otherwise directed, when significant operations overlap boundaries, a task force will be formed. Command of the task force will be determined by the Secretary and assigned to the appropriate combatant commander. Forces directed by the Secretary may also conduct operations from or within any geographic area as required for accomplishing assigned tasks.

a. Certain nations, regions, and maritime areas are of interest or influence to more than one combatant command. Where combatant commanders share continuing interests in bordering nations or states, or have a requirement to engage with the armed forces of a partner nation in another AOR, the commands will coordinate their interests or activities as agreed upon by both combatant commanders.

b. Unless otherwise directed, the geographic combatant commanders are responsible for missions in their AORs, including missions in or around territories or possessions, irrespective of the location of a territory or possession's governing country. In such cases, the geographic combatant commander executing the mission will coordinate with the geographic combatant commander whose AOR includes the governing country.

c. In general, where the boundary between two geographic combatant commands meets at the water-land interface (e.g., Eastern Mediterranean and Eastern Caspian Sea), the demarcation line will be at 12 nautical miles (nm) from the low-water line as recognized by customary international law, as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Strait of Gibraltar and the Bab el-Mandeb are assigned to USEUCOM and USCENTCOM, respectively, for the length of the straits where the distance between the low water lines is less than 24 nm.

UNIFIED COMBATANT COMMANDS

GEOGRAPHIC COMBATANT COMMANDS

10. U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM)

a. Headquarters. Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany.

b. Geographic AOR. USAFRICOM's geographic AOR for the conduct of normal operations includes the entire continent of Africa (minus Egypt), the Atlantic Ocean east and south of the line from Antarctica at 027° W, north to 21° N/027° W, and east to the African coast at 21° N; the Indian Ocean west and south of the line from Antarctica at 068° E, north to 01°40' S/068° E, and west to the African coast at 01°40' S. See map at TAB.

c. Responsibilities. On 30 September 2008, the Commander, U.S. Africa Command, will be established as the commander of a geographic combatant command and all forces assigned for the accomplishment of the commander's missions. CDRUSAFRICOM responsibilities are commensurate with those of all geographic combatant commanders, but also shall reflect a new and evolving focus on building partner operational and institutional capacity at the country and regional levels, and, when appropriate, supporting the efforts of other U.S. government agencies active in the AOR. CDRUSAFRICOM will be responsible for:

(1) Detecting, deterring, and preventing attacks against the United States, its territories, possessions, and bases, and employing appropriate force to defend the nation should deterrence fail.

(2) Carrying out assigned missions and tasks, and planning for and executing military operations as directed.

(3) Assigning tasks to, and directing coordination among subordinate commands to ensure unified action.

(4) Maintaining the security of and carrying out force protection responsibilities for the command, including assigned or attached commands, forces, and assets. The commander is also responsible for exercising force

