

policy, our entire defense establishment is focused on supporting this special relationship and making it as effective as possible. All other aspects of our defense organization must be subordinate to this purpose.

*The Secretary of Defense.*—In particular, the law places broad authority and heavy responsibilities on the Secretary of Defense. The Secretary, in his responsibility as head of the defense establishment and in executing the directives of the Commander in Chief, embodies the concept of civilian control. No one but the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense is empowered with command authority over the armed forces. In managing the Department of Defense the Secretary must retain the authority and flexibility necessary to fulfill these broad responsibilities.

Thus, where the Congress seeks statutory changes that would affect the Secretary of Defense, I will apply the following criteria:

- I will support efforts to strengthen the authority of the Secretary of Defense if there are areas in the law where his current authority is not sufficiently clear.
- The Secretary's authority should be delegated as he sees fit, and such delegation should never be mandated in the law apart from his concurrence and approval.
- The strengthening of other offices or components of the defense establishment should never be, nor appear to be, at the expense of the authority of the Secretary of Defense.

*The Combatant Commanders.*—The Unified and Specified Commanders are the individuals in whom the American people and our defense establishment place warfighting responsibilities. The Secretary and I consult the Combatant Commanders for their joint and operational points of view in determining how our military forces should be used and in determining our military requirements for important geographic and functional areas. Their successes in any future conflict would depend in large measure on how well we plan for their needs in today's defense budgets.

With this in mind, the Secretary initiated regular meetings with the Combatant Commanders and has provided them greater access to the Department's internal budget process. In addition, I am implementing the recommendations of the Packard Commission to improve the channel of communications between the President, the Secretary, and the Combatant Commanders; to provide broader authority to those Commanders to structure their subordinate commands; to provide options in the organizational structure of Combatant Commands for the shortest possible chains of command consistent with proper supervision and support; and to provide for flexibility where issues or situations overlap the current geographical boundaries of the Combatant Commands.

These changes reflect an evolutionary and positive trend towards strengthening the role of the operational commanders within the defense establishment. While I hope and expect this trend will continue, it is not necessary that these efforts be mandated in the law. If the Congress wishes to elaborate on the current law, there are several important issues that should be considered:

- In organizing for forces to maximize their combat potential under a variety of circumstances, the President and Secretary of Defense must retain the authority for establishing Combat-