

(b) Subject to the limitations of section 152(c) of this title, the President or the Secretary of Defense may direct the channel of command communications to run from the Secretary of Defense to the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(c) Unless otherwise directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense, the commander of a combatant command shall prescribe the chain of command to, and the organizational relationship among, the commands and forces within that command.

(d)(1) As a means of providing for more effective control and coordination of the combatant commands, the Secretary of Defense may assign responsibility to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 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 combatant commanders prescribed in section 164(b) 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 on operational requirements. In performing such responsibility, the Chairman shall—

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

(B) evaluate and integrate such information;

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

(D) perform such other activities as may be required to communicate clearly the operational requirements of the combatant commands.

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

(a) The President may assign to serve as commanders of unified combatant commands only officers who have served in one or more joint duty positions for a substantial period of time. The President may waive the requirement of the preceding sentence in the case of any officer if the President determines such action is necessary in the national interest.

(b) Each commander of a combatant command performs his duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense and is directly responsible to the Secretary for the performance of his command and its preparedness to execute assigned missions.

(c) Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, each commander of a combatant command shall—

(1) maintain the security of his command and protect the United States, its possessions, and bases against attack or hostile incursion; and

(2) carry out assigned missions, tasks, and responsibilities; and