

§ 162. Forces assigned to combatant commands

(a) **ASSIGNMENT OF FORCES.**—(1)(A) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Secretaries of the military departments shall assign all forces under their jurisdiction to unified and specified combatant commands to perform the missions assigned to those commands. 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.

(B) As directed by the Secretary of Defense, the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands and the Secretaries of the military departments shall assign forces under their jurisdiction to any special combatant command established under this chapter to perform the missions assigned to that command.

(2) Except as otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, forces to be assigned by the Secretaries of the military departments to the combatant commands under paragraph (1) do not include forces assigned to the recruiting, organizing, training, or supplying of the armed forces.

(3) A force assigned to a combatant command under this section may be transferred from the command to which it is assigned only by authority of the Secretary of Defense and under procedures prescribed by the Secretary with the approval of the President.

(4) A force not assigned to a combatant command remains, for all purposes, in the military department concerned.

(5) Unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, all forces operating within the geographic area assigned to the commander of a unified command shall be assigned to and under the command of the commander of that command. The preceding sentence applies to forces assigned to a specified command or a special combatant command only as prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

(b) **COMMAND OF ASSIGNED FORCES.**—(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a force assigned to a combatant command under this section is under the command of the commander of that command. In this section, the term “command” means the authority to give authoritative direction to subordinate forces necessary to accomplish assigned missions.

(2) The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that commanders of combatant commands have sufficient authority over the forces assigned to their commands to exercise effective command over those forces.

(3) If a commander of a combatant command at any time considers his authority over any of the forces assigned to that command to be insufficient to command effectively, the commander shall promptly inform the Secretary of Defense.

(c) **ORGANIZATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT OF ASSIGNED FORCES.**—(1) The commander of each combatant command shall prescribe the chain of command and organizational structure of forces assigned to that command. To the extent practicable, the structure established should be the structure that would be used in the event of war or hostilities.

(2) The commander of a combatant command shall have authority—

(A) to train forces assigned to that command; and

(B) to employ those forces to accomplish assigned missions.