



Reply ZIP Code:
20318-0300

MCM-0003-02
11 January 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR JOINT STAFF DIRECTORS

Subject: Use of the Term "National Command Authorities".

1. The Secretary of Defense has directed that use of the term, "National Command Authorities," be discontinued. The term originates from the Unified Command Plan and is defined as "the President and the Secretary of Defense, or their duly deputized alternates and successors." It is used extensively in deployment orders, execute orders, directives, instructions, publications, and many other DoD and interagency documents.
2. In future, please discontinue use of the term "National Command Authorities." Documents should instead refer specifically to the "President" or the "Secretary of Defense," or both, as appropriate. In most cases, the term "National Command Authorities" can simply be replaced by "the Secretary of Defense." In each of your subject matter areas, however, there will be cases requiring involvement by the President or by both the President and the Secretary of Defense. Those cases will have to be identified and annotated appropriately. In case of doubt, consult with OCJCS/LC.
3. I appreciate your assistance in this matter, both in preparing documents originating from your directorates and in reviewing documents prepared by the Combatant Commanders, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and interagency departments.

For the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

JOHN P. ABIZAID
Lieutenant General, USA
Director, Joint Staff

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