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Specified Command

"Specified Command" was first defined in Joint Action Armed Forces (JAAF), 19 September 1951, p. 34, as follows:

30266. Definition of a JCS Specified Command

A JCS Specified Command is a uni-Service command which has a broad continuing mission and which is specified as a command operating under JCS direction.

30267. Composition

Although a JCS specified command usually is comprised of forces from only one Service, it may include units and staff representation of other Services.

30268. Allocation of Other Service Forces

When units of other Services are allocated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the commander of a JCS specified command, normally the purpose and duration of the allocation will be indicated. Such allocation, in itself, does not constitute the JCS specified command as a unified command or a joint task force. If the allocation is to be of long duration and for other than service purposes, a joint force of appropriate character normally would be established in lieu of a JCS specified command.

30269. Authority of the Commander

The commander of a JCS specified command shall exercise his authorized degree of command over any units assigned or attached from his own or other Services in accordance with the provisions of this Section as applicable.

The above provisions continued unchanged until the entire JAAF was superseded by Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), November 1959, pp. 41-42. The main substantive change introduced by UNAAF in the section on Specified Command was in the first paragraph:

30241. Definition of a Specified Command

A specified command is a command which has a broad continuing mission and which is established and so designated by the President through the Secretary of Defense with the advice and assistance of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It normally is composed of forces from but one Service.

The National Security Act of 1947 contained no mention of specified commands until the amendments introduced by the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958. Such commands were not treated in Department of Defense Directive 5100.1, 16 March 1954, "Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff,"

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which followed from Reorganization Plan No. 6. They were of course included in the new DOD Directive 5100.1, 31 December 1958, "Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components," which implemented the 1958 reorganization.

Although General Vandenberg referred to SAC as a "specified command" in JCS 1259/104, 10 Nov 48, the term did not appear again in the JCS papers relating to the Unified Command Plan until JCS 1259/241, 30 Jun 52. It was used in the Unified Command Plan issued as enclosure to SM-180-55, 9 Mar 55 (derived from JCS 1259/337). It had not appeared prior to that date in any of the successive revisions of the original UCP of December 1946. From the beginning, however, the Unified Command Plan had listed certain commands--most notably the Strategic Air Command--that fit the subsequent definition.