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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

(S) Following additional JCS review of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) concept, I have just approved two further important steps toward streamlining the planning and command relationships involved. As you know, these issues have proved among the most controversial of all those involved in the development of a credible deterrence/defense posture in the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean (PG/IO) area.

(S) Originally HQ RDJTF was charged with responsibility for planning and executing operations in several areas of the world. In practice, however, it has had to focus almost exclusively on the PG/IO because of the urgent nature of the potential demands on us in this vital area. Therefore, on JCS advice, I have approved narrowing the mission of HQ RDJTF to coping with the threat in the key area. For the foreseeable future, the range of threats in Southwest Asia seems likely to present the greatest challenges, and it appears prudent to dedicate HQ RDJTF exclusively to preparing to meet them.

(S) As foreshadowed in my March 6 memorandum to you, I have also approved the JCS recommendation to transfer responsibility for all Southwest Asia contingency planning to HQ RDJTF. This step will further clarify planning responsibilities, although close coordination will be maintained with EUCOM and PACOM planners, because both EUCOM and PACOM must for the foreseeable future be major supporting commands for any sizable contingency in that region.

(S) However, I agree with the JCS that HQ RDJTF should remain under the operational command of REDCOM, principally because REDCOM is in a better position to deal with other unified commands than HQ RDJTF, and because this ensures a close relationship with the REDCOM elements that would have to deploy to support HQ RDJTF in a contingency. The Commandant of the Marine Corps was the only dissenter from this JCS recommendation, preferring that HQ RDJTF report directly through the JCS. However, I agree with the Chairman and other three Chiefs that this would not be a viable course of action, unless the JCS organization were modified to provide the indispensable support to HQ RDJTF that REDCOM already can.

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Such a change in OJCS would require considerable and expensive duplicative staffing.

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(8) I view the above measures as additional steps in the evolutionary process of developing the optimum command and control capability to meet new needs in the critical Southwest Asia Area -- a process which may eventually lead to certain changes in the Unified Command Plan. Ultimately it may become more feasible to establish a separate unified command somewhere in the region. For the time being no appropriate locale is available; establishing a new unified command without a land location would in my judgment both call attention to and exacerbate the political problems connected with too high a U.S. military profile. Moreover, so long as the great bulk of the ground and air forces earmarked for the RDJTF are located here in the United States, there are strong operational as well as training reasons for keeping HQ RDJTF here as well.

Office of the Secretary of Defense SVSC 3552
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Harold Brown

Harold - Oh, if you and the JCS insist, I still have the belief that in a real crisis we would have to initiate a different and simpler command structure.

J.C.

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