



# Department of Defense **INSTRUCTION**

**NUMBER 5230.16**

October 6, 2015

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ATSD(PA)

**SUBJECT:** Nuclear-Radiological Incident Public Affairs (PA) Guidance

**References:** See Enclosure 1

1. **PURPOSE.** This instruction reissues DoD Directive 5230.16 (Reference (a)) as a DoD instruction, in accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5122.05 (Reference (b)), to establish policy and assign responsibilities for the prompt release of information to the public in the event of incidents involving nuclear weapons or nuclear components, radioactive material, nuclear weapon launch or transport vehicles (when a nuclear weapon is aboard), or nuclear reactors under DoD control, or during an improvised nuclear device or radiological dispersal device incident, in accordance with DoD Directive 3150.08 (Reference (c)).

2. **APPLICABILITY.** This instruction applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD.

3. **POLICY.** It is DoD policy:

a. To respond to public queries about the location of nuclear weapons with the following statement: "It is U.S. policy to neither confirm nor deny the presence or absence of nuclear weapons at any general or specific location." This response must be provided even when such location is thought to be known or obvious.

b. To respond to public queries about information on nuclear-capable units, ships, submarines, and naval aircraft with the following statement: "It is general U.S. policy not to deploy nuclear weapons with ground units, or aboard surface ships, attack submarines, or aircraft. However, we do not discuss the presence or absence of nuclear weapons aboard specific ships, submarines, or aircraft."

c. To respond to public queries about why the United States has a "Neither Confirm Nor Deny" policy with the following statement: "The basis for the security requirement inherent in the U.S. policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence or absence of nuclear weapons is

to deny militarily useful information to potential or actual enemies, enhance the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence, and contribute to the security of nuclear weapons, especially against the threats of sabotage and terrorism.”

d. That exceptions to the U.S. policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence or absence of nuclear weapons at any specific location may be made in the circumstances described in paragraphs 3d(1) through 3d(3).

(1) In a nuclear-radiological incident occurring in the United States, its territories, or its possessions, the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ATSD(PA)) and the DoD Incident Commander are required to confirm to the general public the presence or absence of nuclear weapons or radioactive nuclear components, when necessary, in the interest of public safety or to reduce or prevent widespread public alarm. Notification of public authorities also is required if the public is, or may be, in danger of radiation exposure or other threats posed by the weapon or its components.

(2) In a nuclear weapon incident, the ATSD(PA) may confirm the presence of nuclear weapons in the interest of public safety or to reduce or prevent widespread public alarm.

(3) During a nuclear-radiological incident overseas, the ATSD(PA) or the Combatant Commander (CCDR), with the concurrence of the foreign government through the appropriate Chief of U.S. Mission and in the interest of public safety, may confirm the presence of nuclear weapons or radioactive nuclear components. Notification of public authorities also is required if the public is, or may be, in danger of radiation exposure or other threats posed by the weapon or its components.

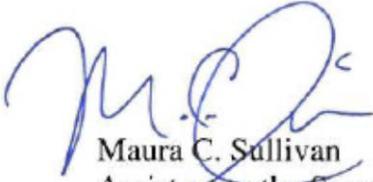
e. DoD acknowledges that the Deputy Administrator for National Nuclear Security Administration’s Office of Naval Reactors oversees the safety of reactors and associated naval nuclear propulsion plants including public information in accordance with sections 2456 and 2511 of Title 50, United States Code (Reference (d)).

4. RESPONSIBILITIES. See Enclosure 2.

5. PROCEDURES. Detailed PA procedures can be found in the Nuclear Weapon Accident Response Procedures Internet Supplement to DoD Manual 3150.08 (Reference (e)) at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/ncbdp/narp>.

6. RELEASABILITY. **Cleared for public release**. This instruction is available on the Internet from the DoD Issuances Website at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives>.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This instruction is effective October 6, 2015.



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Enclosures

1. References
2. Responsibilities

Glossary

ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES

- (a) DoD Directive 5230.16, "Nuclear Accident and Incident Public Affairs (PA) Guidance," December 20, 1993 (hereby cancelled)
- (b) DoD Directive 5122.05, "Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD(PA)), September 5, 2008
- (c) DoD Directive 3150.08, "DoD Response to Nuclear and Radiological Incidents," January 20, 2010
- (d) Title 50, United States Code
- (e) DoD Manual 3150.08, "Nuclear Weapon Accident Response Procedures (NARP)," August 22, 2013
- (f) DoD Instruction 3150.10, "DoD Response to U.S. Nuclear Weapon Incidents," July 2, 2010
- (g) Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3261.01C, "(U) Recapture and Recovery of Nuclear Weapons," January 31, 2014<sup>1</sup>
- (h) Joint Publication 1-02, "Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," current edition

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<sup>1</sup> Available on the SECRET Internet Protocol Router Network Joint Electronic Library through Joint Staff Controlled Access only.

ENCLOSURE 2

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ATSD(PA). The ATSD(PA):

a. Acts as the sole authority for the release of DoD information to the public in the event of DoD nuclear-radiological incidents.

b. Delegates, when appropriate, overall PA responsibility to the Military Department, Combatant Commander, or DoD Incident Commander having primary responsibility for the DoD response to a nuclear-radiological incident.

c. When notified of a DoD nuclear-radiological incident, establishes communications, as appropriate, with the public affairs offices of the coordinating agency, lead federal agency (if overseas), the Military Departments, the Unified Commands, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Department of Energy, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Homeland Security.

d. Notifies and consults with the U.S. Chief of Mission and the U.S. Department of State public affairs officer on nuclear-radiological incidents overseas or near a U.S. border.

2. DIRECTOR, DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY. Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, the Director, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, incorporates PA activities into the Nuclear Weapon Accident Incident Exercise program, consistent with DoD Instruction 3150.10 (Reference (f)).

3. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, AND COMBATANT COMMANDERS WITH U.S. NUCLEAR RESPONSIBILITIES. The Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Combatant Commanders having potential for U.S. nuclear weapon incidents and other nuclear or radiological incidents involving materials in DoD custody and primary responsibility for the DoD response:

a. Notify the ATSD(PA) when exceptions to the policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons must be invoked by the Combatant Commander or DoD Incident Commander.

b. Inform ATSD(PA) on the PA aspects of military nuclear weapon, reactor, or radiological material accidents or incidents, and on the progress of nuclear-radiological incident responses.

c. Include in their contingency planning comprehensive plans for PA operations during a DoD nuclear-radiological incident. Such plans should include adequate PA personnel and administrative, communications, and logistical support for a potential DoD initial response force.

d. Include PA activities in their Nuclear Weapon Accident Incident Exercise training events, consistent with Reference (f) and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3261.01C (Reference (g)).

e. As applicable, in consultation through the Chief of U.S. Mission in each country concerned, develop provisions for clearing contingency announcements and methods of release with host governments, when required by international agreement.

## GLOSSARY

### PART I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ATSD(PA) Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs

PA public affairs

### PART II. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this instruction.

chief of mission. Defined in Joint Publication 1-02 (Reference (h)).

Incident Commander. The general or flag officer designated to command the DoD response efforts at the nuclear incident or improvised nuclear device incident site.

incident. Defined in Reference (e).

improvised nuclear device. An explosive nuclear device with energy measured in kilotons that can be detonated with no warning, and may be constructed from stolen nuclear weapon components or made from scratch using nuclear material to produce a nuclear explosion. An improvised nuclear device explosion releases radioactive material, but should not be confused with a radiological dispersal device.

initial response force. Defined in Reference (e) as “IRF”.

nuclear-radiological incident. An unexpected event involving the release or potential release of radioactive material that poses an actual or perceived hazard to public health, safety, national security, or the environment. This includes terrorist use of radiological dispersal devices or improvised nuclear devices, terrorist attacks on nuclear materials or facilities, nuclear facility accidents in commercial or weapons production facilities, lost nuclear or radioactive material sources, transportation accidents involving nuclear or radioactive material, and U.S. nuclear weapons incidents involving materials in DoD custody. It also includes foreign accidents and incidents involving nuclear or radioactive material that affect the United States, its territories, possessions, or territorial waters, and the territories of U.S. allies.

nuclear weapon incident. Defined in Reference (f).

PA. Defined in Reference (h).

radiological dispersal device. Defined in Reference (h)