

HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND  
UNIT 30400  
APO AE 09131

STAFF MEMORANDUM  
NUMBER 5-30

16 May 2001

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**SUSPENSE PROCEDURES**

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1. **Summary**. This Staff Memorandum (SM) establishes procedures to respond to external and internal suspenses in a timely, professional manner.
  2. **Applicability**. This SM applies to all HQ USEUCOM Directors and Office Chiefs.
  3. **Internal Control Systems**. This Staff Memorandum contains no internal control provisions and is not subject to the requirements of the internal management control program. For HQ, USEUCOM and subordinate joint activities, the applicable internal control directive is ED 50-8, Internal Management Control Program.
  4. **Suggested Improvements**. The proponent for this Staff Memorandum is the Secretary of the Joint Staff. Suggested improvements should be forwarded to HQ, USEUCOM, ATTN: ECJS, Unit 30400, Box 1000, APO AE 09128, or ECJS Officers Group on EUCOM SLAN.
  5. **Explanation of Terms**.
    - a. **Suspense** is the date a completed action is due at the specified location in the tasker. Transmittal times are considered in establishing a suspense. The suspense should be treated as the last possible date an action may be submitted, but every package should be submitted in advance of the suspense.
    - b. **External Suspense** is the date on which a response is due to a party or agency not geographically located at Patch Barracks. As an example, actions forwarded to The Joint Staff (JS), United States Commander in Chief, Europe (USCINCEUR), and USEUCOM Component Commands would be assigned external suspenses.
    - c. **Internal Suspense** is the date on which a response is due to an office or agency geographically located at Patch Barracks. Internal suspenses are Command Group suspenses. Internal suspense adjustments will be coordinated with the Secretary of the Joint Staff (SJS) when the Command Group (the offices of the Deputy Commander in Chief (DCINCEUR), Chief of Staff (C/S)) and SJS are involved.

d. **Interim Response** will be provided when the requester has not established a suspense, but the 72-hour policy (para 7a(1) below) makes a courtesy response appropriate.

e. **Close of Business (COB)** for submission of staff actions: 1600 hours.

f. **Duty Day** is any day other than Saturday, Sunday, U.S. legal holidays, or EUCOM Training Holidays.

g. **Command Suspense List (CSL)** is the suspense list maintained by the SJS and distributed to the staff either by hard copy or on the SJS homepage of the EUCOM SIPRNET website:

[www.eucom.smil.mil/ecjs/geninfo.html](http://www.eucom.smil.mil/ecjs/geninfo.html).

h. **OPR** is the Office of Primary Responsibility.

i. **OSR** is the Office of Secondary Responsibility.

## 6. **Examples of Suspenses.**

### a. **Origins of External Suspenses:**

(1) Incoming Correspondence and Messages

(2) Plans and Directives

(3) Recurring Reports

(4) Telephone Calls

(5) Messages from USCINCEUR Executive Officer and/or comments or written directives from the DCINCEUR on proceedings of quarterly Component Commanders' Conference.

### b. **Origins of Internal Suspenses:**

(1) Memoranda for Record of USCINCEUR Updates.

(2) DCINCEUR and C/S questions, taskings and notes on Staff Summary Routing Sheets (SSRS), messages, letters and memoranda.

(3) Notes and telephone calls originated by the DCINCEUR and C/S.

(4) Other sources such as notes on staff actions and questions in meetings and office calls.

c. **Tasking Subordinate Headquarters with Suspenses:** All taskings and assignment of suspenses to subordinate commands will be accomplished only by the DCINCEUR, C/S, Directors, and Office Chiefs. In the event a Director or Office Chief is absent from the command for prolonged period of time (i.e., one day or more) this staff action may be delegated to the officer assigned as Deputy. Should both be absent from the command, requests will be forwarded to the C/S for release. This paragraph pertains to administrative taskings only. Not included are:

(1) Operational taskings involving the expenditure of resources or the movement of personnel and equipment. Operational taskings are the explicit prerogative of USCINCEUR or DCINCEUR. (Operational tasking authority may be delegated only by USCINCEUR or DCINCEUR on a selected, case-by-case basis);

(2) Taskings of security assistance organizations and other elements which are under the staff supervision of the Director of Logistics and Security Assistance.

## 7. Procedures.

### a. **Timeliness.**

(1) All congressional correspondence/messages, correspondence/messages addressed personally to USCINCEUR or DCINCEUR, and all correspondence/messages from a four star or higher/equivalent level will be answered within five working days of receipt by SJS unless a suspense date is set by the office of origin. **Interim responses are required within three working days if a complete answer cannot be provided.**

(2) In the absence of a suspense date, every effort will be made to respond to DCINCEUR, C/S originated verbal and written taskings within five days of receipt by OPR. Selected DCINCEUR, C/S, originated taskings and significant taskings arising from incoming correspondence/messages will be placed on the CSL.

(3) The SJS uses the factors below in determining suspense dates: Mailing times, USCINCEUR and Command Group calendars, holidays, quality control, and administrative processing time.

(4) "Scenesetter" suspenses use the following criterion: the message or letter is to be on the traveler's desk not later than 48 hours prior to travel.

(5) Read Aheads for USCINCEUR briefs are due to USCINCEUR not later than 48 hours prior to the scheduled brief.

### b. **Format for Response.**

(1) External suspenses must be in the format requested. Message replies may be used to answer letter requests if that is the only means of timely response.

(2) Verbal responses to the DCINCEUR and C/S are encouraged. Such responses may be via Morning Staff Meeting (MSM), telephone, or in person. If verbal responses are made to the DCINCEUR, backbrief the C/S and notify SJS so the action can be removed from the CSL.

(3) Written responses may be provided via SSRS package, memoranda, typed notes or e-mail. The response will include the original note or will summarize verbal taskings. If the tasking was included on the CSL, attach the tasking memorandum.

## 8. **Responsibilities.**

a. Directors and Office Chiefs are responsible for ensuring the SJS is informed of significant taskings received from outside authorities through their Executive Officers. In addition, Directors' Executive Officers and Office Chiefs will:

(1) Route all written responses to USCINCEUR, DCINCEUR and C/S through the SJS for administrative processing. Attach the tasking memorandum to the cover of the response package.

(2) Notify the SJS by e-mail when verbal responses are given.

(3) Notify the SJS when taskings are received directly from the USCINCEUR, DCINCEUR or C/S.

(4) Notify the SJS when external suspenses are received that are of a nonrecurring nature and require Command Group involvement.

(5) Forward all Joint Chiefs of Staff messages with tasks and suspenses requiring Command Group involvement to the SJS.

(6) Ensure tasking memoranda accompany written responses to items on the CSL.

(7) Ensure the action officer or his briefed backup is available for questions while a document is in the Command Group.

(8) Meet suspenses imposed by other HQ USEUCOM agencies. Command OPRs are responsible for suspensing command OSRs. Failure to meet OPR suspense will indicate agreement with the OPR's proposed position/findings. OPR can annotate on SSRS line for OSR coordination: "has seen" or "copy provided" to indicate OSR has had the opportunity to review.

(9) As a general rule, self-impose a suspense of not longer than 10 duty days on any action where no suspense is stated on the incoming correspondence. If the final response is not possible within 10 duty days, an interim response identifying the date of the final response should be provided.

(10) Do not delay action surfaced at staff Updates and MSMs pending receipt of official hard copy taskings.

b. SJS will:

(1) Respond to requests for extension of internal suspenses.

(2) When requested by the staff, coordinate external suspense extension requests with the C/S.

(3) Administer USCINCEUR (via SPASACS) or DCINCEUR incoming Command Group messages in accordance with paragraph 7.

9. **Control Procedures for Command Group Messages.** All messages addressed to the Command Group will be assigned to a directorate or office for action based on functional responsibilities.

a. SJS Responsibilities.

(1) Review all Command Group message traffic for possible tasking.

(2) Assign an OPR for each message requiring tasking addressed to the Command Group in accordance with instructions provided by the DCINCEUR and C/S. Assign CSL number, and forward the SJS tasking memorandum and message to the assigned OPR.

b. Executive Officers to DCINCEUR and C/S Responsibilities.

(1) Inform the SJS of DCINCEUR and C/S decision on disposition of "Personal For" and backchannel messages.

(2) Assist SJS in reviewing messages and determining OPR.

10. **Extension Procedures.**

a. CSL actions having an external suspense generally will not be extended.

b. Executive Officers may request extensions on internal suspenses involving the Command Group, via e-mail to the SJS, who may grant extensions and so annotate the CSL.

c. Requests for extensions will be made to SJS by applicable Directorate/Office Executive Officers only.

d. The C/S is the approval authority for extensions of external suspenses. If an external suspense which involves the Command Group requires extension, the Director or Office Chief must obtain C/S approval before the request is made of the outside agency and must be requested a reasonable time in advance of suspense. If the request is not made through SJS, the Director/Office Chief will ensure SJS is notified if extension request is approved. Only under the most well justified circumstances will extensions to external suspenses be requested.

11. **Clearing Suspenses.** It is the OPR's responsibility to ensure that suspenses are properly removed from the CSL in a timely manner. Clearing a suspense can be accomplished in one of the following ways:

a. When the response to a suspense is submitted in a package or other written format, the OPR will attach the tasking memorandum.

b. When a verbal response is made, the OPR will e-mail the SJS. Brief pertinent facts such as to whom, by whom, and by what (message, phone call, etc.) are required.

c. When the suspense is overcome by events for some reason, the OPR will either e-mail SJS to that effect or annotate the tasking memorandum with the facts and return it to SJS.

d. The assigned OPR is responsible for clearing a suspense even when the package is forwarded to Command Group through another Directorate/Office.

e. Upon receipt of the returned tasking memorandum, SJS will annotate the CSL accordingly.

f. SJS will annotate on specific taskers if suspense can be cleared using the classified e-mail system.

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