

Presidential Decision Directives

Presidential Decision Directives (PDDs) are the signed or authorized decisions of the President on foreign policy issues and national security matters. Facts and views of appropriate government agencies are collected and analyzed by the National Security Council (NSC). The NSC then determines alternatives and presents them to the President. A number of recent PDDs are classified.

Presidential Decision Directive 39: U.S. Policy on Counter-terrorism

PDD 39, issued June 1995, addresses the U.S. policy on counter-terrorism. In this PDD, the United States takes a stand on the deterrence, response, and defeat of all terrorist threats and activity. Terrorist attacks, whether they occur domestically or elsewhere, will be regarded as a potential threat to national security, as well as a criminal act. Such actions will result in the retaliation of appropriate U.S. force. PDD 39 iterates that the United States will pursue all efforts to “deter and preempt, apprehend and prosecute, or assist other governments to prosecute individuals who perpetrate or plan to perpetrate such attacks.”

PDD 39 instructs the United States to:

- Reduce vulnerabilities;
- Deter terrorism;
- Respond to terrorism; and
- Develop effective capabilities to respond to weapons of mass destruction.

Presidential Decision Directive 62: Combating Terrorism

PDD 62, issued in 1998, strengthens the roles and responsibilities of the Federal agencies in responding to and preventing terrorism. Some of the responsibilities include capturing and prosecuting terrorists; improving security of the airlines, waterways, and roads; and protecting the nation’s computer-based systems that play an integral role in the U.S. economy.

In order to reach these objectives, PDD 62 created the Office of the National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counter-terrorism. The National Coordinator works as part of the National Security Council and reports to the President through the assistant to the President for national security affairs. The National Coordinator offers advice for counter-terrorism budgets and takes the lead in developing crisis management guidelines. In addition he/she oversees policies and programs relating to counter-terrorism, critical infrastructure protection, terrorism preparedness, and consequence management for weapons of mass destruction.

Presidential Decision Directive 63: Protecting America’s Critical Infrastructures

PDD 63, issued in 1998, was the result of an evaluation of an earlier presidential commission’s recommendations. This previous recommendation stressed the

importance of protecting the critical infrastructure—including telecommunications, banking and finance, energy, and transportation—that supports the U.S. economy, government, and military.

The aim of PDD 63 was to introduce an improved information system infrastructure that is secure and interconnected by the year 2003, and to significantly increase security to government systems by the year 2000. PDD 63 designed a new configuration to protect the country's critical infrastructure. Some of the components are as follows:

- **A national coordinator** to handle critical infrastructure, as well as foreign terrorism and domestic mass destruction;
- **The National Infrastructure Protection Center at the Federal Bureau of Investigation** to bring together representatives from various agencies for information sharing and collaboration;
- **Information Sharing and Analysis Center** to be set up by the private sector in cooperation with the government;
- **A National Infrastructure Assurance Council** made up of private sector leaders and state/local officials to provide advice for a national plan; and
- **The Critical Infrastructure Assurance Office** to support the national coordinator in developing a national plan.

Presidential Decision Directive 67: Enduring Constitutional Government and Continuity of Government

PDD 67, issued in 1998, addressed enduring constitutional government and introduced continuity of operations plan (COOP) and continuity of government operations. PDD 67 succeeded NSD 69 “Enduring Constitutional Government” of June 1992.

PDD 67, among other things, requires federal agencies to develop COOP plans for essential operations. These COOP plans were viewed as a unifying concept not to replace existing plans but, instead, to be superimposed if and when a problem threatens a serious disruption of agency operations.

Several Federal Preparedness Circulars (FPCs) that detail a series of government policies specific to COOP planning and national security emergency preparedness have been written under the authority of PDD 67. The focus of these documents includes succession, vital records, training, COOP requirements, alternative facility requirements, and communications. They are associated with supporting all Federal organizations with viable COOP programs. FPC 65, for example, provides guidance to all Federal Executive Branch departments, agencies, and independent organizations on the development of viable and executable COOP plans. FPC 66 further supports COOP efforts by providing guidance on the development of test, training, and exercise programs to support the implementation and validation of COOP plans. FPC 67, designed as a supplement to FPC 65, provides guidance on implementing COOP plans, specifically in locating alternate facilities to support COOP efforts.