



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Definition of the Term Complex Catastrophe

In response to the Secretary of Defense July 20, 2012, memorandum, "Actions to Improve Defense Support in Complex Catastrophes," this memorandum establishes the DoD definition of the term "complex catastrophe."

complex catastrophe - Any natural or man-made incident, including cyberspace attack, power grid failure, and terrorism, which results in cascading failures of multiple, interdependent, critical, life-sustaining infrastructure sectors and causes extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the population, environment, economy, public health, national morale, response efforts, and/or government functions.

This definition provides a baseline for follow-on efforts to better identify Defense Support of Civil Authorities requirements and assess a broader range of forces, defense installations assets, and other DoD capabilities that could aid in response to complex catastrophes, if approved by the Secretary of Defense or directed by the President. It will also enable DoD to align complex catastrophes with the terms of reference in Presidential Policy Directive 8, "National Preparedness," and other key sources of policy and strategic guidance. Finally, it will help DoD focus and prioritize its strategy, policy, and planning development efforts, and assess progress in its preparedness for such incidents.

This definition will be codified in Joint Publication 1-02, "Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," and remain in effect until revised by a joint publication during the joint doctrine development process.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Curtis B. Carter", is centered on the page.



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