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INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

JANUARY 20, 2026

(U) Management Advisory: Immediate Attention Required to Protect DoD Covered Assets Against Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

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OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
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January 20, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR ACQUISITION AND SUSTAINMENT
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY
DIRECTOR, JOINT INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE 401

**SUBJECT: (U) Management Advisory: Immediate Attention Required to Protect
DoD Covered Assets Against Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)
(Report No. DODIG-2026-045)**

(U) This final management advisory identifies concerns found during our “Evaluation of the DoD Actions to Address Unmanned Aircraft Systems at DoD Installations in the United States and Its Territories.”¹ We previously provided copies of the draft management advisory and requested comments on the recommendation. We considered management’s comments on the draft management advisory when preparing the final advisory. These comments are included in the advisory. The Secretary of the Army, responding for the Secretary of Defense, agreed with the recommendation; therefore, we consider the recommendation resolved but open. We will close the recommendation when management officials provide us documentation showing that all agreed-on actions to implement the recommendations are completed. Send your response to either [REDACTED] if unclassified or [REDACTED] if classified SECRET.

(U) During our evaluation, we visited 10 DoD installations and activities where Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) incursions have occurred.² Additionally, we interviewed officials from 31 DoD organizations and 4 Government organizations. Furthermore, we obtained documentation such as Federal and state laws; DoD, Joint, and Service directives, instructions, manuals, policies, strategy, prioritization lists, operating procedures, technical and incident reports, memorandums of understanding, and administrative orders; program objective memorandum exhibits and funding profiles; and a Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation study on UAS and counter-UAS (C-UAS) efforts within the DoD.³

¹ (U) This report contains information that has been redacted because it was identified by the DoD as Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) that is not releasable to the public. CUI is Government-created or owned unclassified information that allows for or requires safeguarding and dissemination controls in accordance with laws, regulations, or Government-wide policies.

² (CUI) [REDACTED]

(CUI)-CJCS Execute Order, [REDACTED] December 2021.

³ (U) Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, “Counter-Small Uncrewed Aerial Systems Study Update,” February 5, 2025.

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(U) During our evaluation, we identified over 20 DoD documents, such as policies, memorandums, execution orders, manuals, and checklists, related to the use of C-UAS capabilities within the United States and its territories. Most of the DoD documents are secret and therefore specific details cannot be discussed in this advisory. However, some of the requirements within the DoD documents contradict one another and do not speak to certain aspects of C-UAS authorities and capabilities, which impact the consistency of C-UAS capabilities use across the DoD. Based on our review of the documents and field work, we found two concerns with the DoD's implementation of section 130i, title 10, United States Code and its ability to use C-UAS capabilities in the United States and its territories.⁴

(U) The DoD Did Not Provide Clear Policy for Designating a Facility or Assets as “Covered” Based on the Nine Covered Mission Areas

(U) The first concern relates to the requirements for designating a facility or asset as “covered” in accordance with section 130i. Section 130i defines a covered facility or covered assets as any facility or asset that is: (1) identified by the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, through a risk-based assessment; (2) located within the United States, including its territories and possessions; and (3) directly related to one of nine mission areas. According to section 130i, an installation, facility, or assets may be given a “covered status” designation when its mission pertains to the following nine mission areas: (1) nuclear deterrence, (2) missile defense, (3) national security space, (4) protection of the Presidential line of succession, (5) air defense of the United States, (6) combat support agencies, (7) special combat operations activities, (8) production, storage, transportation, or decommission of high yield explosive munitions, or (9) a major range or test facility base.⁵

(U) In 2018, DoD officials created the list of covered facilities and assets that the DoD determined met the section 130i requirements. This 2018 list of covered facilities and assets was part of DoD “efforts to ensure that the DoD has the legal authorities necessary and appropriate to protect 100 percent of major installations and facilities

⁴ (U) Although UAS are categorized by five groups, groups 1 through 3 are a major focus within the Homeland for DoD officials. When we refer to C-UAS capabilities to defend military installations in the Homeland, we are referring to the C-UAS capabilities for UAS groups 1 through 3.

(U) Section 130i, title 10, “Protection of certain facilities and assets from unmanned aircraft.”

⁵ (U) All installations in the United States and its territories retain the inherent right to self-defense, and defense of other DoD forces in the vicinity, in response to a hostile act or demonstrated hostile intent in accordance with the Standing Rules for the Use of Force (SRUF) regardless of section 130i status.

(U) CJCSI 3121.01B, “Standing Rules of Engagement/Standing Rules for the Use of Force for US Forces,” June 18, 2008.

(U) in the Homeland.”⁶ However, we found instances where military installations, government-owned, contractor-operated facilities, and contractor-owned, contractor-operated facilities conducting critical missions that could be related to one of nine mission areas that were not designated as covered.

- (U) For example, Luke Air Force Base (AFB), where F-35 training takes place for approximately 75 percent of the world’s F-35 pilots, is not designated as a covered facility or asset. The Air Force describes the F-35 as an “indispensable tool in future homeland defense, Joint and Coalition irregular warfare and major combat operations.” However, because training is not explicitly listed as one of the nine covered mission areas, DoD officials told us that training is not covered. Therefore, the installation officials cannot use C-UAS capabilities to prevent UAS activity while training on the F-35s.
- (U) In another example, the Air Force’s Plant 42, Palmdale, California, where contractors produce spare parts for military aircraft, conduct maintenance and modification of aircraft, and produce the Global Hawk and other unmanned craft, is not designated as covered. Additionally, DoD officials could not tell us whether or not it is covered. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD[P]) list of covered facilities and assets shows Plant 42 as not covered. However, the Air Force’s list shows Plant 42 as covered, but Air Force officials told us that Plant 42 is not covered. In August 2024, a series of UAS incursions occurred at the Air Force’s Plant 42. Air Force officials told us that the government-owned, contractor-operated facility was denied coverage during the active incursions.
- ~~(CUI)~~ In yet another example, the contractor-owned, contractor-operated Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair, USN, Newport News (SUPSHIPNN) facility, where contractors conduct aircraft carrier and submarine construction, repair, and modernization, was not designated as covered.⁷ [REDACTED]

⁶ (U) On July 25, 2018, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD[P]) tasked Military Secretaries to review section 130i and provide a list designating covered facilities and assets in accordance with section 130i.

(U) The Military Secretaries responded to this tasker with their individual lists, which became the DoD’s list of covered facilities and assets.

(U) In August 2018, DoD officials issued guidance intended to clarify section 130i coverage requirements. This memorandum delegated all Secretary of Defense responsibilities, such as maintaining the list of covered facilities and assets, to the Military Services.

(U) However, as of May 2025, both the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD[P]) and the Military Services maintained separate lists of covered facilities and assets. We also found the lists differ on which facilities and assets are designated as covered.

(U) USD(P), “OSD Report to SECDEF on 10 USC 130i Covered Locations,” July 25, 2018.

(U) USD(P), “Draft—Final Report—Domestic DoD Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Authorities,” July 2018.

(U) Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Integration and Defense Support of Civil Authorities memorandum, “Clarification of Requirements to Protect Covered Facilities and Assets Pursuant to Section 130i of Title 10, U.S. Code,” August 13, 2018.

⁷ (U) Related to this issue, according to section 130i, the Secretary of Defense may take and may authorize members of the armed forces and officers and civilian employees of the Department of Defense to use C-UAS capabilities.

(U) Navy officials told us that even with “covered status,” the security forces personnel at SUPSHIPNN are contractor personnel and do not have the authority to operate C-UAS systems under section 130i.

~~(CUI)~~ This occurred because DoD policy does not provide clear guidance regarding how certain critical missions, such as training or DoD missions at non-DoD operated facilities, can fall under the nine missions covered in section 130i.⁸ As a result, [REDACTED]

(U) The DoD Did Not Provide Clear Policy for Section 130i Packages and the Approved Use of Different Types of C-UAS Capabilities

(U) The second concern associated with the DoD's ability to use C-UAS capabilities, in accordance with section 130i, is gaining operational approval through the submission of the required section 130i package.⁹

- (U) We found that a May 2020 Deputy Secretary of Defense policy memorandum required DoD officials to: (1) purchase and field C-UAS capabilities, and (2) test C-UAS capabilities in an operational setting before submitting a section 130i package for approval.¹⁰ Therefore, DoD officials must make significant up-front investments in facilities and assets to procure and test C-UAS capabilities before submitting a section 130i package requesting operational approval to use them.
- ~~(CUI)~~ We found that the Services have different policies and procedures for how they complete and submit their section 130i packages. The package complexity, to include varying levels of organizational and leadership approvals, differs drastically by Service, making it difficult to deploy C-UAS capabilities.¹¹

⁸ ~~(CUI)~~ [REDACTED]

(U) Similar to 10 U.S.C. § 130i, 6 U.S.C. § 124(n) states that the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in consultation with the Federal Aviation Administration, can perform C-UAS actions within the Homeland to protect people, facilities, or assets.

(U) Section 124(n), title 6, United States Code, "Protection of certain facilities and assets from unmanned aircraft."

⁹ (U) The section 130i package is a consolidated package of forms showing proof of DoD checklist requirements, such as testing, coordination with organizations external to the DoD, and safety and legal assessments.

¹⁰ (U) The May 2020 policy memorandum also requires DoD officials to coordinate with Federal Aviation Administration and the Federal Communications Commission before they can submit a section 130i package to gain operational approval to use C-UAS capabilities.

(U) Deputy Secretary of Defense Policy Memorandum, "Risk-Based Assessment in Support of Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Activities to Protect DoD Facilities and Assets," May 7, 2020.

¹¹ (U) The Deputy Secretary of Defense 17-00X policy memorandum, 23 February 2018 C-UAS GENADMIN, 28 September 2018 DoD Checklist GENADMIN, and the May 2020 policy memorandums allow the Services to develop their own supplemental policies and procedures for prioritization of allocation and deployment of C-UAS capabilities.

(U) DepSecDef PM 17-00X, "Supplemental Guidance for Countering Unmanned Aircraft," July 5, 2017.

(U) GENADMIN, "Guidance for the Use of Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) in the United States", 23 February 2018.

(U) GENADMIN, "DoD Checklist for the Use of Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) Capabilities: DoD Installations, Facilities, and Fixed Assets/Platforms", 28 September 2018.

~~(CUI)~~ Therefore, a large percentage of installations do not have operational approval to use C-UAS capabilities. [REDACTED]

- ~~(CUI)~~ We found that DoD officials within the same Service described different interpretations of the approved use of different types of C-UAS capabilities. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Therefore, DoD officials may not submit a section 130i package to gain operational approval to use the C-UAS capabilities if they do not believe C-UAS capabilities are available under section 130i.

(U) This occurred because DoD officials issued over 20 policies regarding C-UAS that:

- (U) did not provide clear policy for the use of C-UAS capabilities for all military installations and facilities within the United States and its territories;
- (U) did not sufficiently standardize policy for the section 130i package; and
- (U) allowed the Services to develop different policies and procedures for prioritizing the deployment of C-UAS capabilities.

~~(CUI)~~ As a result, certain [REDACTED]

(U) On August 27, 2025, the Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum that disestablished the Joint Counter-small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-sUAS) Office and established a Joint Interagency Task Force 401 to “better align authorities and resources to rapidly deliver Joint C-sUAS capabilities to America’s warfighters, defeat adversary threats, and promote sovereignty over national airspace.”¹² Additionally, the August 2025 memorandum stated that within 30 days, the Secretary of the Army must develop and deliver to the Secretary of Defense a Joint Interagency Task Force 401 implementation plan that includes “the required resources, structure, and authorities to enable Joint Interagency Task Force 401 to execute at speed and scale” and “address acquisition authority, procurement authority, a Joint Program Executive Office-like structure, and flexible funding.”

¹² (U) Secretary of Defense memorandum, “Establishment of Joint Interagency Task Force 401,” August 27, 2025.

(U) Recommendation, Management Comments, and Our Response

(U) Recommendation 1

(U) We recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Joint Interagency Task Force 401, in coordination with Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, to review the existing DoD and Service policies for counter-unmanned aircraft systems and issue consolidated DoD policy that defines: (1) clear roles, responsibilities, and authorities; (2) requirements for covered designation for facilities and assets; and (3) a standardized and streamlined process for section 130i packages.

(U) Secretary of the Army Comments

(U) The Secretary of the Army, responding for the Secretary of Defense, agreed with the recommendation. Specifically, the Secretary of the Army stated that the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy has already reviewed Department of Defense-level counter-UAS policy and coordinated a draft updated policy to implement section 130i in response to section 925 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025. Furthermore, the Secretary stated that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is currently reviewing the existing policies and recommends that the Joint Interagency Task Force 401 collaborate with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to “ensure clear and concise policy is provided to the Force and Installation Commanders.”

(U) Our Response

(U) Comments from the Secretary of the Army addressed the recommendation by emphasizing that the Joint Interagency Task Force 401 collaborate with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to ensure clear and concise policy is provided to the Force and Installation Commanders. Therefore, the recommendation is resolved but will remain open. We will close the recommendation when we verify that the Secretary of Defense has issued the consolidated DoD policy for C-UAS and confirm that the elements of our recommendation are addressed.

(U) If you have any questions or would like to meet to discuss the management advisory, please contact [REDACTED] We appreciate the cooperation and assistance received during the evaluation.



Randolph R. Stone

Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations
Space, Intelligence, Engineering, and Oversight

(U) Management Comments

(U) Secretary of Defense

UNCLASSIFIED



UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

WASHINGTON

17 NOV 2025

INFO
ACTION MEMO

FOR: SECRETARY OF WAR

FROM: Mike Obadal, UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

SUBJECT: Management Advisory Immediate Attention Required to Protect DoW Covered Assets Against Unmanned Aircraft Systems

- 1) **Purpose.** Prepare comments and recommendations for SECWAR on the conclusions of the DoW IG Report on Unmanned Aircraft incursions.
- 2) **Background.** DoW IG conducted an evaluation beginning November 2024 to assess the Department's ability to respond to and protect DoW assets against unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

The study concluded that the DoW did not provide clear policy for designating facilities or assets as “covered” based on nine mission areas. Furthermore, the study determined that DoW did not provide clear policy for section 130i (of title 10, U.S. Code) packages.

DoW IG recommends the SECWAR direct JIATF 401 to review and consolidate all policies and provide clear guidance, roles, and responsibilities to protect DoW facilities and assets from UAS threats.

The office of the Under Secretary of War for Policy (USW(P)) has already reviewed DoW-level counter-UAS policy and coordinated a draft updated policy to implement section 130i in response to section 925 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, which provides: “the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, acting through the C-UAS Task Force, shall review and, if necessary, consolidate and update all Department of Defense memoranda and directives related to the countering of unmanned aircraft systems in United States airspace to provide clarity to and an expedited decision-making process for commanders with respect to effectively countering unmanned aircraft systems or unmanned aircraft incursions at military installations in the United States.”

RECOMMENDATION: OSW(Policy) leads the counter-UAS policy review and consolidation for the Department. JIATF 401 will collaborate with OSW(Policy) to ensure clear and concise guidance is provided to the Force and Installation Commanders through multiple forums to ensure protection of our warfighters, facilities, and equipment from small UAS.

DSD CA		DSD SA
DSD SMA		DSD SMA
DSD MA		DSD MA
CoS	2013 1/1/14	DSD CA
DSD Action Grp		DSD CoS



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