



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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MAR 27 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE
SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
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UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
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DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES
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SUBJECT: Establishment of the Sexual Assault Accountability and Investigation Task Force

The results of the 2018 Report on Sexual Assault and Harassment in the Military Academies are unacceptable, and I am resolved that we will do all we can as a Department to address sexual assault in our military. In my testimony during the FY 2020 Posture Hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 19, 2019 and in my direct engagement with Senator Martha McSally, I pledged to do more, and I intend to carry out this commitment. To that end, I am directing a full review of the investigative and accountability processes involved in sexual assault cases. Further, effective immediately, I am establishing the Sexual Assault Accountability and Investigation Task Force (SAAITF). The SAAITF will undertake this review and make recommendations that will improve existing processes to address sexual assault, while ensuring our formations, our communities, the rights of the victim and the accused, and the integrity of the legal process are protected. Our approach to eliminate sexual assault is holistic and includes efforts to prevent this crime, support and care for our victims, and ensure a robust and comprehensive military justice process. While the immediate focus of the SAAITF will be on reforms and improvements to the military justice process, the Department will continue its steadfast efforts to prevent this crime and support our victims.

I am also very mindful of the many prior DoD/Congressional Panels that have contributed to our current efforts – and the ongoing five-year effort of the Defense Advisory



Committee on the Investigation, Prosecution and Defense of Sexual Assault in the Armed Forces (DACIPAD). We will ensure the efforts and work of the SAAITF complements the important work of the DACIPAD.

Sexual assault impacts the entire force across all Military Services. None of us are immune to this crime and all of us are responsible. As such, the SAAITF will be co-led by Dr. Elizabeth P. Van Winkle, Executive Director of the Office of Force Resiliency, the Judge Advocates General of the Military Departments, and the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. They will report directly to me on task force progress and recommendations.

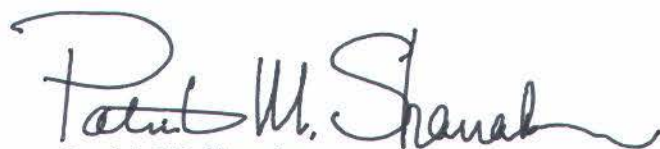
The SAAITF shall be further comprised of senior level or equivalents of the Military Criminal Investigative Organizations, a representative from the Office of the DoD General Counsel, and the Director of the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. Additional members of this task force shall be considered as required. All task force members shall be full-time or permanent part-time civilian personnel of the U.S. Government or military members.

I expect the SAAITF to identify, evaluate, and recommend immediate and significant actions to improve the accountability process, specific to the investigation and disposition of cases in which members of the Armed Forces are either victims or alleged offenders of sexual assault, while ensuring due process for both. Recommendations shall consider findings of similar previous reviews by experts internal and external to the Department, but must explore new opportunities to enhance the military justice system.

The SAAITF will provide me an interim progress report and, not later than April 30, 2019, will provide a final report that captures key recommendations addressing the investigation and disposition of sexual assault, including potential changes to policy and/or law. The Department will submit a report to Senator McSally and other members of the Armed Services Committees, identifying the initiatives the Department will undertake based on the recommendations provided by the SAAITF.

The importance of this work cannot be overstated. We have an opportunity to underscore the integrity of our military justice system and advance our capability to address sexual misconduct against the men and women of our Armed Forces, while improving the readiness and lethality of the DoD. Only through diligence and innovation will we eliminate this reprehensible crime from our ranks.

Thank you for your support.



Patrick M. Shanahan
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