



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

DEC 20 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS  
COMMANDANT OF THE COAST GUARD

SUBJECT: Countering Extremist Activities within the Department of Defense

The overwhelming majority of the men and women of the Department of Defense serve this country with honor and integrity. They respect the oath they took to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. We are grateful for that dedication.

We believe only a very few violate this oath by participating in extremist activities, but even the actions of a few can have an outsized impact on unit cohesion, morale and readiness – and the physical harm some of these activities can engender can undermine the safety of our people. We owe the men and women of the Department of Defense an environment free of extremist activities, and we owe our country a military that reflects the founding values of our democracy.

To that end, we have taken a series of actions to address and counter extremist activities within the Department. In February 2021, I directed a Department-wide stand down to educate military and civilian personnel on the harmful impact of extremist activities and the recourses available to leaders for addressing such activities within the total DoD workforce. Informed by the lessons learned from the stand down, on April 9, 2021, I directed several immediate actions to improve policy and processes within the Department. I also directed the Department's Countering Extremist Activity Working Group (CEAWG) to review the Department's standing policies, vetting procedures, insider threat program, and education and training materials on countering extremist activities. These actions are now complete.

As part of these efforts, the Department updated DoD Instruction 1325.06 "Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces," providing increased clarity for Service members and commanders on what qualifies as extremist activities, and the authorities available to commanders to prevent and respond to such prohibited activity. This policy is now in effect.

In response to the recommendations made in the CEAWG report, which we are publishing today, the Department has revised its accessions screening and transition materials, will strengthen our vetting and insider threat programs, and will increase training to address and counter extremist activities. I am directing the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) and the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S)) to oversee implementation of these actions to ensure swift implementation across the entire Department of Defense. USD(P&R) and USD(I&S) will report their progress to the Deputy Secretary of Defense each quarter, through the Deputy's Workforce Council (DWC), with the first update no later than 90 days from this memorandum.

The United States fields the greatest fighting force in the world. That is a direct result of the extraordinary men and women who volunteer to keep our country safe, the values they represent, and the oath they take to support and defend the Constitution. The work of the CEAWG and the updated policies set forth in the revised DoD Instruction 1325.06 will help clarify our expectations about upholding that oath and will help us better understand and address the corrosive effects of extremist activities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. ...". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.