



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

JAN 23 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Countering Sexual Assault and Harassment – Initial Tasking

I am honored to serve with you again. And I look forward to working with you as we defend the United States. But, as I said before the Senate Armed Services Committee, we cannot accomplish that mission if we also have to battle enemies within the ranks. I'm speaking here about the scourge of sexual assault.

I know this has been a focus for you and for the Department's leadership. I know you have worked this problem for many years. I tried to tackle it myself when I, too, commanded. We simply must admit the hard truth: we must do more. All of us.

President Biden has ordered a 90-day commission to pursue solutions to sexual assault in the military. We will aggressively support that effort. But I do not want to wait 90 days to take action.

By February 5, 2021, I would like from each of you a summary of the sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and accountability measures you have taken in the last year that show promise, as well as a frank, data-driven assessment of those which do not. A primary focus should be on how you are conducting oversight to ensure programs and policies are being executed on the ground and with fidelity. Please ensure this assessment includes relevant data over the past decade, victim support efforts, and advocacy. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) will consolidate and report to me your findings.

In addition, the Department has moved towards addressing sexual misconduct within a broader violence prevention framework, and I would like to know more about how data supports this effort. To this end, I am tasking P&R to provide relevant data and information regarding their most recent initiatives towards preventing violence. This includes its current work to assess issues at the ground-level and ensure Service compliance with Office of the Secretary of Defense policies, to include the most recently released Integrated Violence Prevention policy.

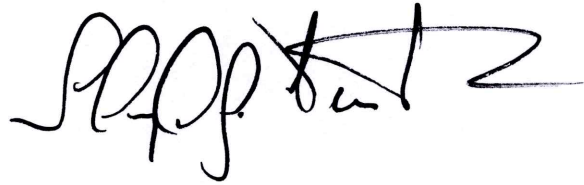
Include in your report the consideration of novel approaches to any of these areas you believe might prove fruitful. While we must ensure our approach is data-driven, we must not be afraid to get creative.

I also ask that you designate a senior general/flag officer or SES-level leader to act as a direct conduit from your Service to the commission and that you also name a senior enlisted leader to assist this individual. Please be ready to provide additional personnel as required.



I plan to host a senior leaders meeting on this issue in coming days, where you can update me on your progress and challenges. More on that soon.

This is a leadership issue. We will lead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. J. [unclear]". The signature is stylized and cursive.