



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

MAY - 5 2021

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

SUBJECT: Organizational Role of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict

On November 18, 2020 the Acting Secretary of Defense directed the separation of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)) from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)). The ASD(SO/LIC) is the principal staff assistant and civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense for special operations, low-intensity conflict, and special operations peculiar administrative matters and, after the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, is the principal official for these matters. Effective immediately, ASD(SO/LIC) will return to USD(P).

The ASD(SO/LIC) will continue to report directly to the Secretary of Defense in exercising authority, direction, and control of all special operations peculiar administrative matters relating to the organization, training, and equipping of special operations forces. ASD(SO/LIC) will continue to be a member of the senior leader fora as designated in the November 18 memo.

ASD(SO/LIC) remains in the administrative chain of command, exercises authority, direction, and control of the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, for special operations-peculiar administration, including the readiness and organization of special operations forces, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel (per 10 U.S.C. § 167(f)).

For all other policy matters, ASD(SO/LIC) will be subject to the authority, direction, and control of the USD(P).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. J. Dunst", is located in the lower center of the page.



OSD003005-21/CMD004259-21