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

MAY 0 2 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Ethics, Integrity, and Accountability

We operate in an environment where our work often requires adaptation to address new challenges. As we make these adjustments, what remains constant – regardless of the circumstance – is the Department of Defense (DoD) commitment to the highest degree of integrity and ethical behavior. Our responsibility is to uphold the public trust.

We are all familiar with the minimum requirement of this commitment: the obligation to comply with Federal conflicts of interest restrictions, post-Government employment statutes, and regulatory Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch. These and other rules help to define what others expect of us. Yet, I know you share my belief that we expect far more from ourselves and that the public shares this expectation. The minimum requirement is not enough when it comes to defining integrity in our work.

To ensure we fulfill these expectations, we must vigilantly protect and reinforce ethics as a central element of our workplace culture. Even the perception of unethical behavior or impropriety must be avoided. Every DoD employee, civilian and military, bears a portion of the responsibility in this regard. I count on your personal engagement to shape our environment to ensure we work in an ethical culture.

Such a culture is one in which honesty, accountability, mutual respect, and integrity guide all actions and decisions; employees uphold core values in daily activities; leaders, managers, and supervisors model the conduct they expect; and personnel with concerns seek the advice and support of an ethics counselor. It is the sum of our expectations, communications, and actions.

Emphasizing an ethical culture must remain a priority in the days ahead, as it is essential to sustaining the trust America places in her Armed Forces. This trust is foundational to the Department's ability to protect our Nation. I ask that you continue to keep this as your mindset, be a visible role model of ethical behavior, hold yourself and others accountable, and ensure an ethical culture is a hallmark of the organizations you lead.

I request that you distribute this memorandum widely within your organizations. Thank you for your commitment and support.

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