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

MAY 17 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
CHIEFS OF THE MILITARY SERVICES
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

SUBJECT: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Stand-down

I know you share my absolute commitment to eliminating sexual assault from our Armed Forces. While we have implemented a number of important initiatives that address this crime in our ranks, recent events, assessments, and reports continue to demonstrate that we have much more work to do. I am concerned that this Department may be nearing a stage where the frequency of this crime – and the perception that there is tolerance of it – could very well undermine our ability to effectively carry out the mission, and to recruit and retain good people.

As such, I would like you to collaborate to develop a concept for a sexual assault prevention and response stand-down affecting your respective organizations as well as the Combatant Commands. Your plan will define a standard time period for the stand-down, to be completed no later than July 1, 2013, and will address the following mandatory, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)-related activities:

- Active review of credentials and qualifications of current-serving recruiters, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, and Victim Advocates to ensure they meet applicable selection criteria and standards of conduct;
- Refresher training for recruiters, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) and Victim Advocates on professional ethics, their critical responsibilities and standards, and the impact on mission readiness for violations of standards; and
- Purposeful and direct commander and leader engagements with their Service members and civilian employees on SAPR principles and the climate of dignity and respect necessary in every work place across the DoD.

The end state of this stand-down will be that leaders, recruiters, SARCs, and every member of the Armed Forces clearly understand they are accountable for fostering a climate where sexist behaviors, sexual harassment, and sexual assault are not tolerated, condoned, or ignored; where dignity, trust, and respect are core values we live by and define how we treat one another; where victims' reports are treated with the utmost seriousness, their privacy is protected, and they are treated with sensitivity; where bystanders are motivated to intervene because offensive or criminal conduct is neither tolerated or condoned; and where offenders know they will be held appropriately accountable by an effective system of justice.

Please provide me your proposed plan by May 24, 2013.

Thank you.

cc:
Acting USD (P&R)

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