



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

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MEMORANDUM FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PERSONNEL

SUBJECT: Message to the Force

Our fellow citizens have elected the next President of the United States. The Department will make a calm, orderly, and professional transition to the incoming Trump administration. As it always has, the U.S. military will stand ready to carry out the policy choices of its next Commander in Chief, and to obey all lawful orders from its civilian chain of command.

The U.S. military will continue, in the words of our Constitution, to “provide for the common Defence.” The U.S. military will also continue to stand apart from the political arena; to stand guard over our republic with principle and professionalism; and to stand together with the valued allies and partners who deepen our security. America’s Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Guardians swear an oath to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States”—and that is precisely what you will continue to do.

You are not just any military. You are the United States military—the finest fighting force on Earth—and you will continue to defend our country, our Constitution, and the rights of all of our citizens.

I am deeply proud of all of you—of our dedicated civilian workforce, and of the brave American troops stationed at home and deployed around the world to keep our country safe and our republic secure.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Lloyd J. Austin III", is located in the bottom right area of the page.