



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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JAN 10 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER  
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU  
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION  
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER  
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT  
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT  
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES  
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Revised Guidance on Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense Read-Aheads

Effective January 15, 2014, the attached guidance will supersede guidance dated May 21, 2012, and now includes a separate read-ahead template for Principal Committee/National Security Council (PC/NSC) meetings. Read-aheads for all events involving either principal will be submitted in accordance with this guidance and not later than 1200 (noon) two workdays prior.

The guidance and associated templates will be available on the Executive Secretariat website at: <http://execsec.defense.gov/References/SecDefReadAheadGuidance.aspx>. Direct questions regarding read-aheads for the Secretary to Ms. Belinda Purifoy or Ms. Jessica Walker at (703) 692-7122/7162, and for the Deputy Secretary to the Non-Commissioned Officers at 703-692-7150.

Michael L. Bruhn  
Executive Secretary

Attachments:  
As stated



**General Guidance about Read-Ahead Packages  
for the  
Secretary and the Deputy Secretary of Defense**

- This guidance covers read-ahead packages for all meetings, briefings, interviews, phone calls, and events involving the Secretary (SecDef) and Deputy (DepSecDef). It includes procedures and templates for standard read-aheads, Principal Committee/National Security Council (PC/NSC) read-aheads, talking/discussion points, phone call talking points, and foreign visits.
- Military Assistants and Executive Officers will receive read-ahead taskings from the Office of the Executive Secretary by e-mail.
- E-mail updates reflecting changes in the SecDef schedules will be sent as they occur.
- Primary offices are responsible for coordinating with secondary offices and consolidating material so that there is a single product for each event with no unnecessary duplication.
- If you need guidance about specific topics that should be addressed in read-aheads or required coordination for the SecDef, please call Ms. Belinda Purifoy or Ms. Jessica Walker at 703-692-7122/7162, and for the DepSecDef to the Non-Commissioned Officers at 703-692-7150.
- Submit an original read-ahead plus nine (9) copies for SecDef/DepSecDef meetings in accordance with the attached guidelines and templates.
- Read-aheads for the SecDef should be delivered to Ms. Belinda Purifoy in room 3E877 and for the DepSecDef to the Non-Commissioned Officers in room 3E944.
  - Deadline is 1200 (Noon) two workdays prior to a meeting, briefing, interview or event. (e.g., if the prep session for a visit is at 1400 on Wednesday, the read-ahead is due at 1200 on Monday; if a meeting is at 1000 Monday, the read-ahead is due at 1200 on Thursday the week prior.)
  - For some meetings, a preparatory coordination meeting may be held to ensure the agenda and materials are designed to best meet the objectives of the Secretary or the Deputy. In that case, read-ahead packages may be due earlier. Responsible offices will be informed accordingly.

## **Guidelines for Preparing Read-Aheads Packages for the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary of Defense**

### **Style:**

- Use short, succinct, and clear language. Ask yourself what the Secretary needs to know and why.
- Provide examples to illustrate complex points or processes.
- Avoid acronyms. Ensure acronyms are spelled out in the first instance.
- Present information in bulletized format, with a limit of three lines per bullet.
- Bold or underline key words and use bold subject headers to differentiate different topics as necessary.

### **Standard Read-Ahead Format** (see templates attached):

- ***Read Ahead / Background:*** should be the first item in the package and the background should be limited to no more than two (2) pages.
  - Single-sided.
  - 1-inch left/right margins, 1-inch top and bottom margins.
  - Double space between items, single space between bullets.
  - Paginate all documents longer than one page.
  - Do not use room numbers, rather use: SecDef Conference Room (for 3E863)
  - Use full names, not initials
- ***Talking / Discussion Points:*** should be the second item in the package (limit to one (1) page).

These points should be short, but clear statements of major issues or points to be covered in the meeting. They should: 1) Provide the Secretary with crisp language to achieve the objectives/deliverables of the meeting; 2) Be crafted to ensure a logical flow to the conversation; and 3) Avoid pleasantries or fillers.

  - Single-sided.
  - 1-inch left/right margins, 1-inch top and bottom margins.
  - Font should be 14 point, Times New Roman.
- ***Provide a 3.88 note card*** (see template attached) with topline talking points/memory joggers for ALL meetings with non-DoD personnel (foreign counterparts, Cabinet Secretaries, associations, etc). The white cardstock cut to 3 ¾ x 7 ½ for the note card is available through the Enterprise Supplies and Services (<https://essts.whs.pentagon.mil>).
  - Include classification at the top and bottom center, the non-DoD personnel name and phonetic pronunciation (specifically foreign counterparts).
  - 4-5 main key talking points (full sentences not necessary, just bullets with key phrases).

- Font should be Calibri, 16-point, and 9-point font spacing between subjects if space needed.
- **Minimize the number of attachments:** should include any documents that will be presented or referenced during the meeting and biographies.
  - Use 2-inch paperclips to fasten packages.
  - Refer to DoD 5200.1-PH, the DoD Guide to marking Classified Documents.

**Changes:** *[NOTE: Revisions are highly discouraged, but are handled on case basis if there is a substantive change approved by your Principal.]*

- A read-ahead package is considered final once it is given to the Secretary or the Deputy.
- Any updated information should be noted in the Secretary's/Deputy's meeting prep. If no prep session is scheduled, minor updates should be provided in a separate, one-page document that summarizes any changes.
- Revised read-aheads should be provided only in instances where information is significantly different from the original package. For revised read-ahead packages, note in subject line or background paragraph that the submission is a revision. Underline or highlight the material that has been changed.

**Principal Committee/National Security Council (PC/NSC) Read-Ahead Format** (see templates attached):

- Use standard PC/NSC binder cover (see template attached), includes Meeting Subject, Date, Time, and Principal name
- Inside binder cover insert Talking Points
- Top page in binder is the Policy Read-ahead
- **Meeting Purpose:** *State clearly whether this is a decision meeting, an informational update, a request for recommendations and outline expectations for the Secretary's role (will SD be asked to provide a briefing? Are there particular agenda items where his views will be sought?)*
- Attachments: Do not include all NSS Tabs. Include the NSS agenda, the NSS paper for the meeting and any DoD papers/charts submitted for the meeting. Do not include intelligence reports or additional background documents. Aim to have no more than three (3) tabs.

**Talking/Discussion Points Format** (see template attached):

- Should be the second item in the package (limited to one (1) page).
- Refer to DoD 5200.1-PH, the DoD Guide to marking Classified Documents, when classifying.

**Phone Call Talking Points Format** (see template attached):

- **Background:** [14-point font] *In italics, state who requested call; when the two last spoke; purpose of call; and succinctly provide update on issue to be discussed.*
- **Talking Points:** Bullet style.
- 1-inch left/right margins, 1-inch top and bottom margins.
- Font should be 14-point, Times New Roman.
- Double space between items, single space between bullets.
- Paginate all documents longer than one page.
- Read-Ahead should not be more than two pages.

**Foreign Visitors:**

- Ensure to address:
  - Precisely what they are doing with respect to the Secretary's/Deputy's priorities (prevailing in current conflicts, preventing proliferation, preparing for and countering future challenges and threats, preserving the finest fighting force and core national security capabilities within current budget environment);
  - Anything else they are doing to support U.S. security objectives; and
  - Basic defense relationship and country information, as relevant.
- 3.88 note card (see template attached):
  - Include classification at the top and bottom center, the Foreign Dignitary's name and phonetic pronunciation.
  - 4-5 main key talking points (full sentences not necessary, just bullets with key phrases).
  - Font size should be Calibri, 16 point, and 9-point font spacing between subjects if space needed.
  - The white cardstock cut to 3 ¾ x 7 ½ for the note card is available through the Enterprise Supplies and Services (<https://essts.whs.pentagon.mil>).

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--SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR READ-AHEADS--

**READ-AHEAD FOR  
SECRETARY/DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
Name of Person/Group he is meeting with (Pronunciation, if needed)  
Month xx, 2014, time xxxx-xxxx, Room #**

**From:**

**Meeting Purpose:** A one-to-three sentence executive summary of the topic, the reason that the event is taking place (i.e., was it SD request, self-invite by foreign official, follow on to prior meeting, etc.), and the Secretary's role (e.g., receive an update, give guidance, make decision, prep for a future event, etc.)

**Objectives:** One-to-three bullets that highlight what SD should get from the meeting.

**Attendees:** List

**Background:** *[No more than 2 pages]*

- In several bullets, provide greater detail on key issues and additional information relevant to this specific meeting.
- Explain the choreography of the meeting, including speaking roles/order, timing of expected SecDef/DepSecDef speaking role, whom the Secretary should turn to for additional information, etc.
- Ensure you describe the bureaucratic state of play, (e.g., AT&L and Joint Staff disagree over proposal x; Cabinet Secretary x will ask you to fund project x).

**Attachments:** **Make Talking Points Tab A**

MINIMIZE supporting attachments. Provide only documents that are essential to the meeting (e.g., an MOU to be signed, briefing slides to be discussed in meeting, a letter or memo that initiated this meeting, etc.). Do not include intelligence assessments or other background materials.

Do include:

1. Biography(s)
2. Coordination: Ensure relevant coordination is completed prior to submission and indicated in attachment.

Prepared by: Name, org, phone (include on last page)  
Declassification info

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--SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR TALKING POINTS--

**TALKING POINTS**

- Should be the second item in the read-ahead package (limited to one (1) page).
- These points should be short, but clear statements of major issues or points to be covered in the meeting. They should: 1) Avoid pleasantries or fillers; 2) Focus on achieving the objectives of the meeting; and 3) Be crafted to ensure a logical flow to the conversation.
- Single-sided.
- 1-inch left/right margins, 1-inch top and bottom margins.
- Font should be **14 point**, Times New Roman.
- Provide a 3.88 note card (see template attached) with topline talking points/memory joggers for ALL meetings with non-DoD personnel (foreign counterparts, Cabinet Secretaries, associations, etc.).
  - Include classification at the top and bottom center, the non-DoD personnel name and phonetic pronunciation (specifically foreign counterparts).
  - 4-5 main key talking points (full sentences not necessary, just bullets with key phrases).
  - Font should be Calibri, 16-point, and 9-point font spacing between subjects if space needed.
- Refer to DoD 5200.1-PH, the DoD Guide to marking Classified Documents, when classifying.

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# Principals Committee Meeting on Topic

Date

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
Chuck Hagel**

**PLUS ONE: Name**

Prepared by Name, number

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--SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR PRINCIPAL COMMITTEE/NATIONAL  
SECURITY COUNCIL (PC/NSC) READ-AHEADS--

**Principals Committee/National Security Council Meeting on xxx  
Month xx, 2014, time xxxx-xxxx, Room #**

**Agenda:** List NSS agenda

**Meeting Purpose:** State clearly whether this is a decision meeting, an info update, a request for recommendations and outline expectations for DoD and SD participation (will SD be asked to provide a briefing? Are there particular agenda items where his views will be sought?)

**DoD Objectives:**

**Background:**

- Organized by Agenda Items
  - Be sure to describe the meeting roadmap (i.e., State will brief topic x, DoD will respond).
  - Include bureaucratic state of play – where do agencies/Principals stand on the topics being discussed?
- 

**Talking Points**

- On a separate page, organize talking points by Agenda Item. Place inside front binder cover.
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**Attachments:**

**TAB A -**

**TAB B -**

**Note:** Do not include all NSS Tabs. Include the NSS paper for the meeting and any DoD papers/charts submitted for the meeting. Do not include intelligence reports or additional background documents. Aim to have no more than three (3) tabs.

Prepared by: Name, org, phone  
Declassification info

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--SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR PHONE CALL TALKING POINTS--  
**TALKING POINTS FOR SECRETARY/DEPUTY SECRETARY OF  
DEFENSE CALL WITH XXXXX (Pronunciation, if needed)**  
**Date, time**

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**Background:** [14-point font] *In italics, briefly state who requested call; when the two last spoke; purpose of call; latest state of play on issue to be discussed.*

**Talking Points:** [14-point font]

- Talking points should be bulleted.

*Read-ahead should not be more than 1 page. If a second page is needed, please keep all TPs together on second page.*

--EXAMPLE OF 3.88 NOTE CARD--

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--SAMPLE TEMPLATE 3.88 NOTE CARD--

**Meeting with \_\_\_\_\_**

**Subject: (use with more than one subject, otherwise not required)**

- Talking points
- Use Calibri (Body), 16 font
- Bold subject line, if used

**Second Subject:**

- Talking points
- Backside of card can be used as page 2. If needed, place 1 of 2 at right margin bottom of card and 2 of 2 at bottom of second page. To print the second side, print page 2 orientation foot to head. SD wants to flip over card vertically.

--FRONT OF 3.88 NOTE CARD--

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**Third Subject:**

- Talking points
- You can use 9-point font spacing between subjects if space is needed.

--BACK OF 3.88 NOTE CARD--

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