

General Guidance on Read-Ahead Packages for the Secretary of Defense

- 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 Secretary of Defense (SecDef) schedules will be sent as they occur.
- Primary offices are responsible for coordinating with secondary offices and consolidating material so 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 at 703-692-7122
- Submit an original Read-Ahead plus seven (7) copies for SecDef meetings in accordance with the attached guidelines and templates.
- Read-Aheads for the SecDef should be delivered to Ms. Purifoy in Room 3E880.
 - 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, SecDef 's office may host a preparatory coordination meeting to ensure the agenda and materials are designed to best meet the objectives of the Secretary. In that case, Read-Ahead packages may be due earlier. Responsible offices will be informed accordingly.

Guidelines for Preparing Read-Ahead Packages for the Secretary of Defense

Style:

- Use short, succinct, and clear language. Ask yourself what the Secretary needs to know and why.
- Analyze and distill data so that salient information and the bottom line are arrived at clearly and succinctly.
- Provide examples to illustrate complex points or processes.
- Use of acronyms is discouraged. No acronyms unless they have been previously spelled out.
- Bullets for the body are preferred with a limit of three lines per bullet.
- Bold or underline key words and use bold subject headers to differentiate different topics as necessary.

Format (see templates attached):

- ***Talking/Discussion Points*** should be the first item in the package (limit 1-2 pages).
- ***Read-Ahead/Background*** should be the second item in the package.
- ***Attachments*** should include any documents that will be presented or referenced during the meeting.
 - If longer than three pages of text or five slides, a single-page executive summary must be attached.
- Single-sided.
- 1-inch left/right margins, 1-inch top and bottom margins.
- Font should be 13 point, Times New Roman.
- Double space between items, single space between bullets.
- Include page number on all documents longer than one page.
- Do not use room numbers, rather use:
 - SecDef Dining Room (for 3E918).
 - SecDef Conference Room (for 3E863).

- DepSecDef Conference Room (for 3E928).
- Use 2-inch paperclips to fasten packages.
- Use full names, not initials.
- Refer to DoD 5200.1-PH, “DoD Guide to marking Classified Documents,” when classifying.

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

- A Read-Ahead is considered final once it is given to the Secretary or Deputy.
- For revised Read-Ahead packages, note in the subject line or background paragraph that the submission is a revision. Underline or highlight the material that has been changed.

Foreign Visitors:

- Ensure to address:
 - Precisely what the foreign visitor is doing with respect to the Secretary’s and/or 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 the foreign visitor is doing to support U.S. security objectives; and
 - Basic defense relationship and country information, as relevant.
- 5x8 note card:
 - Include classification at the top and bottom center, the Foreign Dignitaries name, and phonetic pronunciation.
 - 4-5 main key talking points (full sentences not necessary, use bullets with key phrases).