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**Military Assistant
and
Executive Officer
Handbook**



March 2021

**NOTE: THIS HANDBOOK IS INSTRUCTIONAL ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE
CITED AS BINDING AUTHORITY IN ANY INVESTIGATION OR INQUIRY.**

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SUBJECT: Military Assistant and Executive Officer Handbook

References: (a) Military Assistant and Executive Officer Handbook, March 2019
(b) DoD Manual 5110.04, Volume I, June 16, 2020
(c) DoD Manual 5110.04, Volume II, June 16, 2020

1. REISSUANCE AND PURPOSE

Reissues reference (a) to update for Office of General Counsel and Standards of Conduct Office review and to match updates in reference (b) and (c).

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

Component Military Assistants and Executive Officers should review this Handbook and should include this for review during turnover.

3. EFFECTIVE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION

This Handbook is effective immediately.

David S. Soldow
CAPT, USN
Executive Secretary

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Role of a Military Assistant.....3

 1.1 Role of a Military Assistant.....3

 1.2 DoD Organizational Structure8

Chapter 2: DoD Missions, Organizations and Functions.....9

 2.1 Mission of the Department of Defense9

 2.2 DoD Organization and Functions.....9

 2.3 Information on the Web.....13

Chapter 3: OSD Correspondence.....14

 3.1 Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense Correspondence14

 3.2 Executive Secretary Points of Contact.....15

 3.3 Executive Secretary Points of Contact by Portfolios.....16

 3.4 Correspondence Management Division.....17

 3.5 Correspondence Process18

 3.6 Schedule Proposals22

 3.7 Congressional Reports22

 3.8 Classified Correspondence.....23

 3.9 Exceptions to the CMD Process.....24

Chapter 4: Military Aircraft (MILAIR) Transportation.....25

 4.1 Request for MILAIR Transportation.....25

Chapter 5: Executive Liaison Agents for Visiting Foreign Dignitaries.....26

Appendix 1: Useful Government Agencies.....28

Chapter 1: Role of a Military Assistant

1.1 Role of a Military Assistant

As a Military Assistant or Executive Officer to a DoD Principal official, one must be able to facilitate communication at multiple echelons, ensuring talking points are in-line with Department’s messaging, as well as ensuring tasks and issues are communicated at the appropriate levels. Your primary role is enabling your Principal official to make timely decisions by reviewing and confirming appropriate coordination of Department-level actions from the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Members of Congress, the Under Secretaries of Defense, Military Department Secretaries, and the interagency.

Additionally, Military Assistants and Executive Officers play an important role protecting government resources and sensitive information from damage, loss, theft, and/or compromise. To uphold this responsibility, you must take a personal interest, and hold others equally responsible, and where necessary, accountable. To this end, you should become familiar with your organization’s security procedures, emergency evacuation protocols, Continuity of Operations Program (COOP) plan, and rules for protecting resources. The term Military Assistant refers to military officers assigned to the staff of civilian DoD Principal officials and the term Executive Officer refers to military officers assigned to the staff of military DoD Principal officials. This handbook uses the term Military Assistant, but the guidance provided applies to Executive Officers as well.

1.1.1 Standards of Conduct Regulations

Military Assistants also play a critical role in helping their Principal officials maintain the values and ethical culture of the Department of Defense and the military departments. All executive branch personnel—military and civilian—must adhere to these ethics principles and the Standards of Conduct for Executive Branch Officials, which are codified in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the DoD Joint Ethics Regulation.¹ However, all DoD personnel must consider not just whether an action is permissible under these minimum compliance standards, but also whether taking the action would call into question the impartiality or integrity of the Department (“Can I?” vs. “Should I?”).

Military Assistants and other front office staff will be the first to review correspondence (mail, phone, e-mail) from outside entities. This correspondence may include requests for official meetings; invitations to dinners, ceremonies, and other events; or requests for official speakers or other support. Thus, Military Assistants must have a good understanding of the

¹ See Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 2634-2640, and DoDD 5500.7-R. Consult an ethics attorney when you have questions about the application of these regulations.

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ethics regulations, as well as a close relationship with the ethics attorneys in their servicing legal office. For this reason, newly assigned Military Assistants should immediately contact their servicing ethics office and schedule an ethics brief. Military Assistants on the OSD staff may contact the DoD Standards of Conduct Office for this initial briefing at osd.soco@mail.mil or (703) 695-3442. Collaboration and coordination -- both within the Principal official's office and with external organizations such as SOCO -- is critical to ensure that ethics issues are identified and resolved as early as possible in the planning and scheduling process.

All political appointees, to include PAS (Presidentially-appointed, Senate confirmed) officials, are also subject to the President's Ethics Pledge.² The Ethics Pledge imposes certain additional restrictions, and supplements the Standards of Conduct regulations discussed above. Most PAS officials will have signed ethics "screening arrangements" that specify organizations from which they are recused due to financial conflicts of interest. Chiefs of Staff, Military Assistants, Executive Assistants, and other front office staff are critical participants in ensuring adherence to these screening arrangements. It is important for Military Assistants to be familiar with the particular recusals (disqualifications) or other arrangements that apply to their Principal official, in order to help that Principal official avoid an inadvertent ethics violation.

Principal officials will undoubtedly receive many requests from non-federal entities to serve as speakers, as well as invitations and offers to attend conferences, receptions, award ceremonies, and other events at no charge. Some non-federal entities may also offer to pay conference fees and travel expenses for a DoD official. Under the Standards of Conduct, such offers are considered gifts, and Military Assistants should ensure that there is an internal process to analyze every such offer and request. That process should include seeking the advice of an ethics counselor. In some instances, a written opinion from an ethics counselor is required prior to acceptance of a gift from an outside source.

Principal officials may also receive gifts from foreign government officials, non-federal entities, or subordinates. Whether the Principal official may personally retain such a gift or accept it on behalf of the U.S. Government depends upon the facts and circumstances surrounding the gift. Military Assistants are critical in gathering relevant information needed to make this determination. Military Assistants must have a thorough understanding of the ethics rules pertaining to gifts. Military Assistants should ensure that the circumstances surrounding each gift are documented, and that each gift is reviewed by an ethics attorney who can advise on the proper disposition of the gift. Key facts that should be documented for each gift include the name and official position of the presenter; the time and place of the gift; the fair market value of the gift; and for gifts given by DoD personnel (military or civilian), whether that gift was purchased using Official Representation Funds. Gifts to an accompanying spouse must also be documented, as the value of such gifts are attributed to the Principal. The ethics rules recognize

² Executive Order 13770

that gifts are traditionally exchanged when meeting with foreign government officials, and the rules are more permissive regarding the acceptance of these gifts, but such gifts still require an ethics review. The ethics rules are more restrictive when a gift is offered by a subordinate or non-federal entity. For this reason, as early in the trip planning process as possible, Military Assistants should discourage the practice of subordinates giving the Principal official gifts (e.g., ballcaps) when their Principal is visiting a DoD organization or unit. Discouraging such gifts helps prevent even the appearance of violating an ethics rule, minimizes the administrative work needed to document, transport and review the gift(s), and avoids potential embarrassment to the host by either not accepting or subsequently returning the gift. Military Assistants should also ensure that all official gifts given by their Principal official are accounted for and documented in a gift log. This includes coins purchased with government funds.

1.1.2 Ethics Training.

All Principal officials who are Presidentially-appointed and Senate confirmed (PAS) must receive initial ethics training from an ethics counselor during the *first week* they are serving in DoD. This is required by Federal ethics regulation and the “Ethics Agreement” each PAS official signs as a condition of nomination and appointment. Similarly, any new Federal employee, to include non-PAS political appointees, must receive ethics training within *30 days* of appointment, and all senior officials (PAS, SES, GO/FO) must complete ethics training annually. Military Assistants should participate in this training, in order to ensure that they have a shared understanding with their Principal of the ethics rules, and to establish a relationship with their servicing ethics office.

1.1.3 Authorized Official Support

As a Military Assistant you must only perform duties in support of your Principal’s official responsibilities. Under the Standards of Conduct rules, government resources can only be used for official purposes, and this includes use of assigned personnel, including contractor support staff. You must also ensure that all military and civilian support staff, to include executive assistants, officer aides de camp, confidential assistants (sometimes called “Schedule C” employees), schedulers, secretaries, protocol officers, personal security officers, drivers and other assigned administrative support staff only perform official support duties. Historically, the proper use of personnel has consistently been a source of inspector general oversight action, and it is an area with the potential for well-meaning staff to unintentionally put their Principal at risk of violating Standards of Conduct rules. As a Military Assistant, you have an important role in making sure the staff and Principal understand the rules, which are not always intuitive, and seek clarification when uncertain about the correct course of action.

The following examples are intended to assist and guide you, but you should consult with your ethics advisor when you have questions. (This guidance does not apply to enlisted aides. For guidance about permissible duties for enlisted aides, see DoDI 1315.09.)

Examples of Permissible Support Activities:

Schedule Official Appointments

On an infrequent basis, schedule unofficial appointments only if reasonably necessary to ensure coordination with the official schedule and the scheduling process for these events involves minimal effort. For example, a Military Assistant could be asked to assist the Principal in scheduling a medical appointment where the Principal's calendar is subject to frequent changes. Scheduling a family outing, though, would typically fall outside the scope of this limited exception. This exception should be limited to the employee who routinely manages the Principal's calendar/schedule. Contracted support staff should not be asked to make such appointments, as doing so will likely fall outside the scope of the Government's contract.

Coordinate with family members to obtain information necessary to avoid conflicts between personal and official travel of Principal.

Assist family members and friends as necessary to facilitate their attendance at official ceremonies honoring the Principal, (*e.g.*, assistance with entry to a facility or escort within the Pentagon to ensure such guests reach the proper location).

Maintain and write checks from a checking account, funded by the Principal official, for expenses incurred by the Principal official that arise from official duties (*e.g.*, paying a restaurant bill while on official travel) or are closely related to official duties (*e.g.*, purchase ball caps or command coins where appropriated funds may not be used). Military Assistants must not deposit their own money in such accounts, as doing so would be attributed to the Principal official as an improper loan even if the Principal official subsequently reimburses the Military Assistant.

While on temporary duty outside the area of the permanent duty station, a Military Assistant may perform certain tasks that would not be permissible at the permanent duty station. Such tasks should relate to the duties, health, or subsistence of the Principal, and take into account the Principal's schedule. For example, the Assistant may drive the Principal from temporary duty lodging to work, or to a gym, laundry facility, or restaurant. While on temporary duty, the Assistant may also go to the drug store to purchase sundries needed by the Principal prior to a morning meeting. On the other hand, the Assistant should not be sent to purchase items when the Principal has free time and can readily get to the store. While such tasks may be permissible while traveling, they are seldom permissible in the area of the Principal's duty station.

Supervise packing/unpacking of office furniture/supplies/decorations upon assignment to or transfer from a position. This does not include supervising a pack out of personal belongings from Government quarters or personal residence.

Examples of Impermissible Support Duties:

Pick up or drop off Principal official at home, using a privately-owned vehicle (POV) or government vehicle (GOV), while Principal official's POV is being repaired.

Repair Principal official's POV or other personal property.

Pick Principal official up at airport upon return from unofficial travel using POV or GOV.

Draft Principal official's personal correspondence.

Prepare Principal official's income taxes.

Perform personal shopping for Principal or family. Plan a party on behalf of a Principal official's spouse or other family members. Run personal errands for the Principal official while in the area of the permanent duty station.

Participate in packing or unpacking the Principal official's personal property, moving furniture, or supervising movers pursuant to the Principal's residential move, even if to or from government quarters.

Accompany Principal official and collect per diem while Principal is taking leave in conjunction with TDY/TAD travel, except when the Assistant is performing official duties (which does not include performance of mere personal services).

Schedule or coordinate personal events for Principal's family members, including medical appointments.

Schedule transportation and/or lodging for family members, unless family members are traveling on Invitational Travel Orders with Principal.

Assist Principal official's family members with personal business (e.g., arranging pet care, private lessons, childcare).

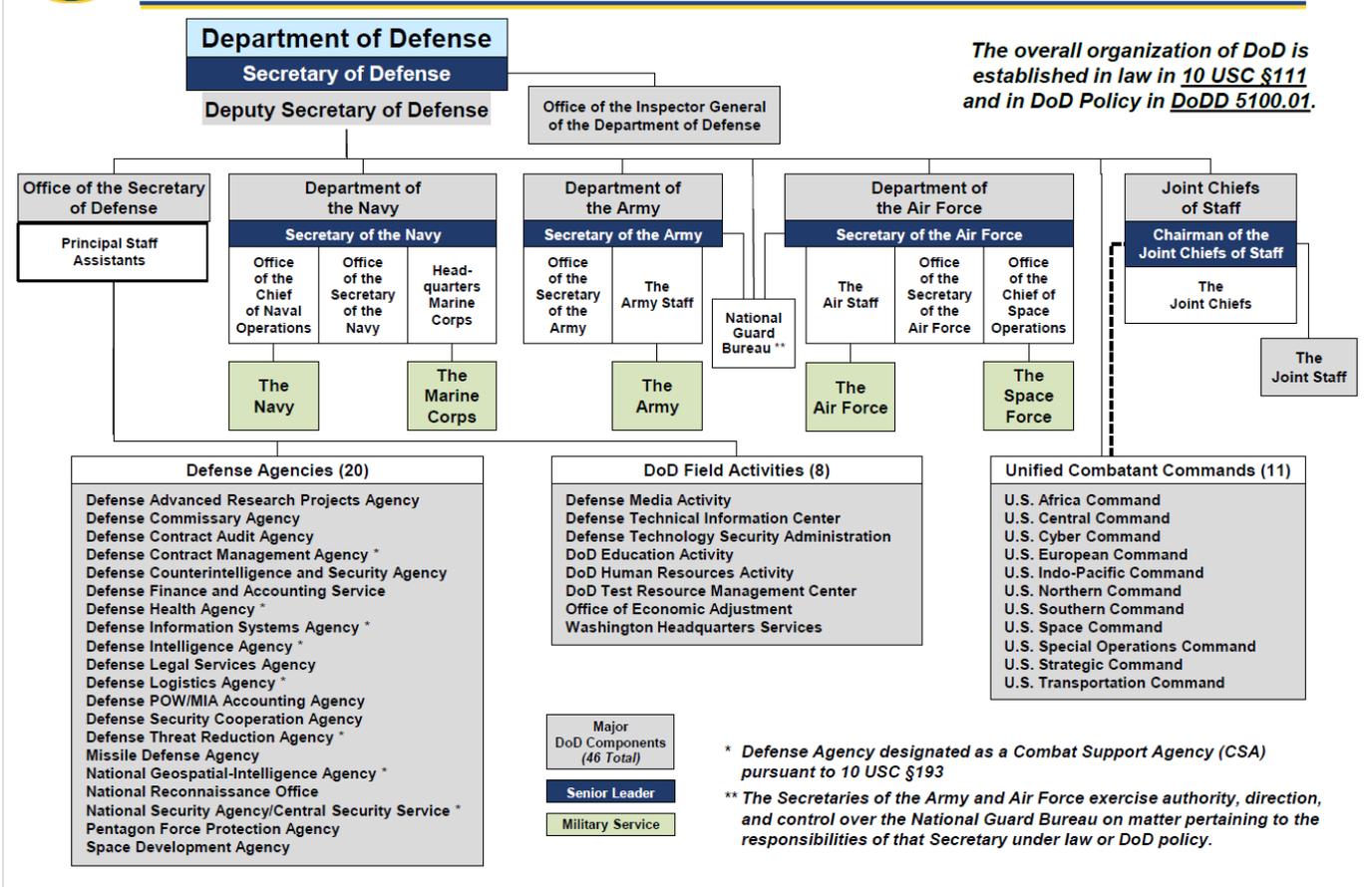
Transport or escort Principal's unofficial visitors (e.g., family members or friends whose visit is social and not related to an official ceremony or event).

1.2 DoD Organizational Structure



DoD Organizational Structure
Line-and-block Chart

Prepared by:
Organizational Policy
and Decision Support,
DA&OP/OCMO/OSD



(Note: Chart must be updated to reflect creation of US Space Command; new name for Defense Security Service; creation of Defense Microelectronics Activity (DMEA).)

Chapter 2: DoD Mission, Organizations, and Functions

2.1 Mission of the Department of Defense (DoD)

The *Department of Defense* (DoD) (DoD Directive (DODD) 5100.01) is responsible for providing military forces needed to ensure the security of the United States. The major elements of these forces are the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force. Under the President, also the Commander-in-Chief, the Secretary of Defense exercises authority, direction, and control over the Department, which includes the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, three Military Departments, eleven Combatant Commands, twenty Defense Agencies, and eight DoD Field Activities. The DoD Inspector General is an independent unit within the DoD that reports to, and, with several exceptions set out in section 8(b) of the Inspector General Act of 1978, is under the general supervision of, the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Additional guidance and organizational charts are available at:

<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/510001p.pdf>

2.2 DoD Organization and Functions

The *Office of the Secretary of Defense* (OSD) is the principal staff element of the Secretary in the exercise of policy development, planning, resource management, fiscal and program evaluation responsibilities. OSD includes the Immediate Offices of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, as well as the Chief Management Officer; Under Secretaries of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, Comptroller, Intelligence, Personnel and Readiness, Policy, and Research and Engineering; the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs; the DoD General Counsel; Director, Operational Test and Evaluation; Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation; Inspector General; Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs; and Director, Net Assessment. OSD also performs oversight and management of the Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities.

The *Secretary of Defense* is the principal defense policy advisor to the President and is responsible for the formulation of general defense policy and policy related to all matters of direct and primary concern to the DoD, and for the execution of approved policy. Under the direction of the President, the Secretary exercises authority, direction, and control over the Department of Defense.

The *Deputy Secretary of Defense* Directive (DoD 5105.02) is delegated full power and authority to act for the Secretary and to exercise the powers of the Secretary on virtually all matters for which the Secretary is authorized to act pursuant to law.

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The *Chief of Staff* manages the operation of the Immediate Office of the Secretary of Defense and serves as the Secretary's senior advisor on all matters pertaining to the Department of Defense.

The *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (DoD Directive 5100.01). The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council and the Secretary of Defense. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, headed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, consists of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; the Chief of Naval Operations; the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force; Commandant of the Marine Corps; Chief of Space Operations; and Chief, National Guard Bureau, and supported, subject to the authority, direction and control of the Chairman, by the Joint Staff, constitute the immediate military staff of the Secretary of Defense. In December 2020, the Chief of Space Operations will be added to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Chiefs of Service are the senior military officers of their respective Services and are responsible for keeping the Secretaries of the Military Departments fully informed on matters considered or acted upon by the JCS, and are military advisors to the President, the National Security Council, Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. The Vice Chairman of the JCS performs such duties as may be prescribed by the Chairman with the approval of the Secretary of Defense.

The *Military Departments* (DoD Directive 5100.01) are the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (the Marine Corps is a part of Department of the Navy and the Space Force is part of the Department of the Air Force). Each Military Department is separately organized under its own Secretary and functions under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense. The Military Departments are responsible, among other things, for recruiting, organizing, training, and equipping forces for assignment to Combatant Commands.

The *Combatant Commands* (DoD Directive 5100.01) are responsible to the President and the Secretary of Defense for accomplishing the military missions assigned to them. Commanders of the Combatant Commands exercise command authority over forces assigned to them as directed by the Secretary of Defense. The operational chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense to the Commanders of the Combatant Commands. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff functions within the chain of command by transmitting to the Commanders of the Combatant Commands the orders of the President or the Secretary of Defense. Combatant Commands include the Africa Command, European Command, Indo-Pacific Command, Northern Command, Central Command, Southern Command, Strategic Command, Cyber Command, Special Operations Command, Transportation Command, and Space Command.

The *Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Protocol* provides direct support and coordination for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense on all matters pertaining to official visits by senior level cabinet members, Congressional Members, and foreign dignitaries. The Protocol Office also coordinates all staff ceremonies and special events as directed by the Secretary and/or Deputy Secretary of Defense.

The *Executive Secretary* of the Department of Defense supports the Secretary and Deputy Secretary by executing the following responsibilities:

UNCLASSIFIED

- Manage (control, task, track, etc.) all correspondence, internal and external, prepared for/by the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Executive Secretary
- Control, task and respond to external requests for DoD support within the federal government
-
- Validate and approve military airlift transportation requests for senior OSD personnel and non-DoD agencies, including senior cabinet officials
- Oversee the approval process for external DoD detail requests
- Designate the Defense Intelligence Agency as the Executive Liaison Agent to provide administrative and logistic support for visiting senior foreign dignitaries
- Administer the Presidential Support Program (Yankee White); screen, nominate, select and retain the most suitable and qualified DoD military and civilian personnel, and contractor employees for Presidential Support duties
- Draft, approve and promulgate guidance on half-staffing of the national flag for all DoD activities
- Review, validate, and authorize release of Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense – level correspondence requested under the Freedom of Information Act
- Oversee physical, personnel, and information security programs for the immediate office
- Oversee human resource and performance management functions for the immediate office

The *Special Assistants to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense* are the principal immediate office advisors to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary in all matters pertaining to the Department of Defense (some of these include Protocol, Travel, and the Speechwriters).

The *Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for White House Liaison* supports White House and DoD policy, program and personnel efforts and serves as a representative of the Secretary of Defense to the White House and other executive organizations. This office is commonly referred to as the White House Liaison Office or “WHLO.”

The *SecDef Cable Division* (“Cables”) serves as the focal point for the receipt, dispatch, and reference source of electronically transmitted messages for the offices of the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and their principal staff assistants in the immediate office of the Secretary. The division maintains direct communications with all key members of the

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personal staff of the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Special Assistants, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Executive Secretary, the Operations Center of the Department of State, and the White House Situation Room. The Division operates on a 24-hour basis and is responsible for ensuring expeditious notification when urgent communications are received through its sources. In time-sensitive situations, the Watch determines whom should be notified of information received, e.g., other members of the OSD Staff, Secretaries of the Military Departments, or other agencies of the federal government.

The Cable Division also provides communication support to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary when traveling CONUS and OCONUS. Communications support consists of secure and non-secure teleconferencing capabilities, data, and facsimile communications. Additionally, it provides 24-hour non-secure and secure teleconferencing support and after-duty hours telephone answering service for the immediate offices of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense and designated key members of their staffs.

Cable Division can be reached 24-hours a day at **703-692-7000** or DSN **222-7000**.

The *Defense Agencies*, established by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to the provisions of Title 10, United States Code, perform selected consolidated support and service functions on a Department-wide basis; Defense Agencies that are assigned wartime support missions are designated as Combat Support Agencies. The Defense Agencies include: Defense Advanced Research Project Agency, Defense Commissary Agency, Defense Health Agency, Defense Contract Audit Agency, Defense Contract Management Agency, Defense Financial Accounting Service, Defense Information Systems Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Legal Services Agency, Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Missile Defense Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, National Security Agency/Central Security Service, Pentagon Force Protection Agency, and Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

The Secretary of Defense establishes *DoD Field Activities* under the provisions of Title 10, United States Code, to perform selected consolidated support and service functions of a more limited scope than Defense Agencies. The DoD Field Activities include: Defense Media Activity, Defense Technical Information Center, Defense Technology Security Administration, Department of Defense Education Activity, Department of Defense Human Resources Activity, Department of Defense Test Resource Management Center, Office of Economic Adjustment, and Washington Headquarters Services. The term "Fourth Estate" comprises all organizational entities in DoD that are not in the military departments or combatant commands. These include the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Defense Agencies, and DoD Field Activities.

2.3 Information on the Web

For more information both internal to DoD and external, please see Appendix 1 for a host of organizations that provide Department of Defense-related information.

3.1 Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense Correspondence

The Correspondence Management Division (CMD) of the Washington Headquarters Services, Executive Services Directorate is responsible for the administration of correspondence management policies and processes for SD, DSD, and ExecSec Correspondence. Its functions include Executive Support, Records and Logistics, Correspondence Analysis, and Classified Support at the OSD level, as well as establishing correspondence management policy and publishing guidance for the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

CMD publishes **DoD Manual (DODM) 5110.04-M-v1, *Manual for Written Material***. This manual applies to the Offices of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and activities receiving administrative support from Washington Headquarters Services. DODM 5110.04 establishes correspondence management policy and describes administrative processes and procedures for CMD. This manual provides the approved methods for preparing and submitting OSD correspondence. Additionally, it provides general guidance on grammar, punctuation, and editing unique to government writing.

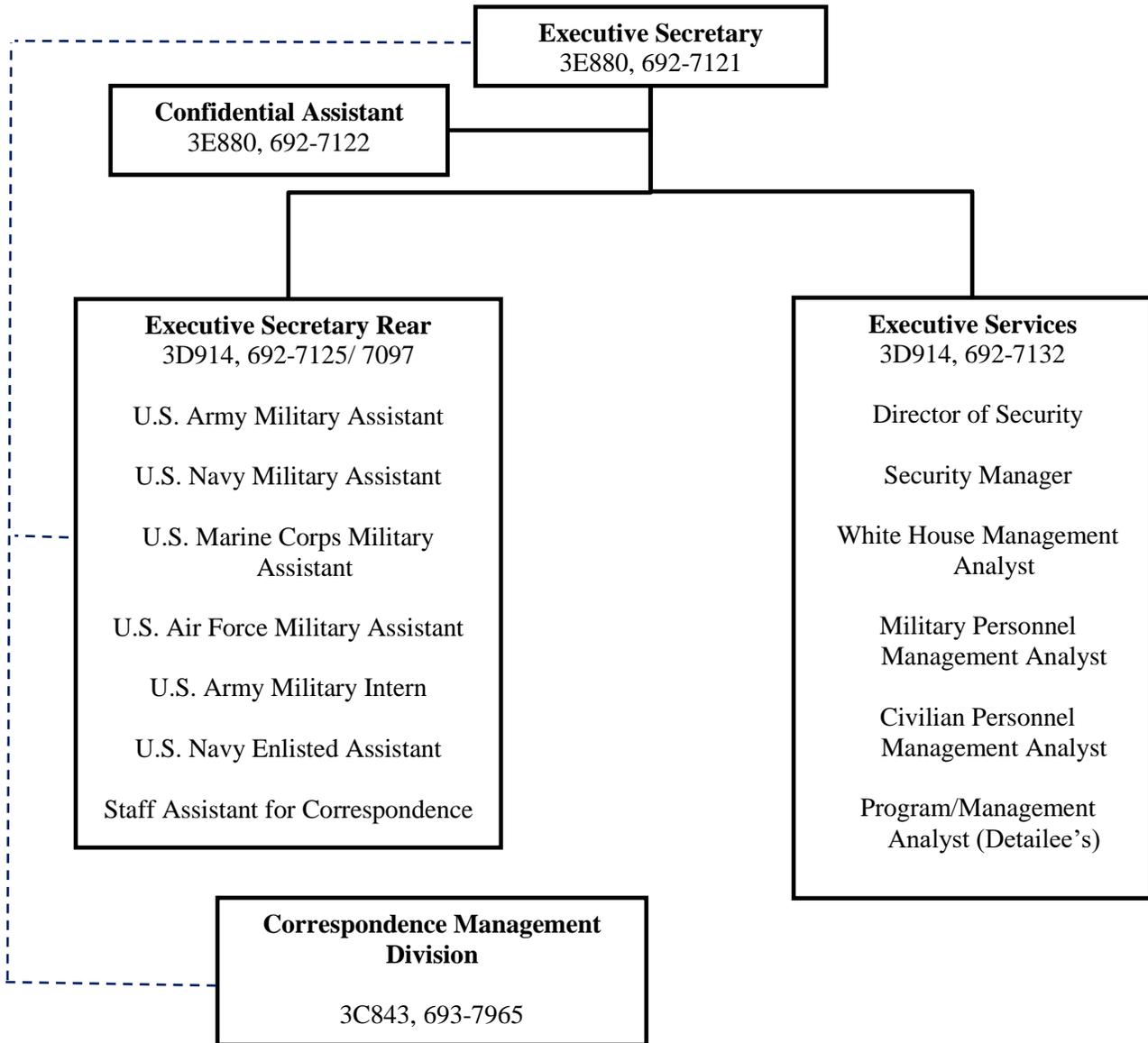
CMD also manages the enterprise task and management system for OSD referred to as the Correspondence and Task Management System (CATMS). Through CATMS there are reports available showing each component's tasks to date and their status (open, closed, overdue, or the office reviewing it). Some of these reports include the Stoplight Report and ExecSec Tracker. Due to the criticality of timeliness and the relevance of information for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, CMD also tracks the accuracy of every package submitted resulting in a monthly Trophy Award recognizing the most efficient component. Additionally, the Military Assistants to the Executive Secretary utilize the Q-Zero report to determine Individual Awards for Correspondence Excellence, which are awarded quarterly. All of these reports run through CATMS and can be found at:

<https://crm.osd.mil/CATMS1/crmreports/viewer/viewer.aspx?action=run&helpID=ExecSecTracker.rdl&id=%7bb325bc59-c347-e711-8102-000d3a193b63%7d>.

All incoming and outgoing material directed to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense must be processed through CMD. All OSD Components should establish channels and procedures to this end. E-mail is not a method of correspondence management. While it can be used for urgent matters, all content going to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense must be processed through CMD.

3.2 Executive Secretary Points of Contact

Listed below are Points of Contact for the Executive Secretary. Following this chart is a breakout of the ExecSec Rear and which components fall under each military assistant.



3.3 Executive Secretary Points of Contact by Portfolios

Mil Asst	U.S. Army MA 703-692-7127	U.S. Air Force MA 703-692-7128	U.S. Navy MA 703-692-7130	U.S. Marine Corps MA 703-692-7129
Accounts	<p>Army</p> <p>USD (P&R) - Personnel & Readiness</p> <p>ASD (LA) - Legislative Affairs</p> <p>WHLO – White House Liaison Office</p> <p>WHMO – White House Military Office</p> <p>National Guard Bureau</p> <p>DoD IG - Inspector General</p>	<p>Air Force</p> <p>USD (A&S) - Acquisition & Sustainment</p> <p>USD - (R&E) Research & Engineering</p> <p>D&AM</p>	<p>Navy</p> <p>Joint Staff</p> <p>USD (C) – Comptroller</p> <p>USD (I) – Intelligence</p> <p>ASD (PA) - Public Affairs</p> <p>ASD (CIO) - (Chief Info Officer)</p> <p>CAPE - Cost Assessment & Program Evaluation</p> <p>DOT&E</p>	<p>Marine Corps</p> <p>USD (P) – Policy</p> <p>SO/LIC</p> <p>DoD GC - General Counsel/ Standards of Conduct</p> <p>ONA – Net assessment</p>
	Projects	<p>MILAIR helicopters</p> <p>Noble Eagle Support</p> <p>USSS Support</p>	<p>MILAIR Requests</p> <p>Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S</p> <p>Domicile to Duty</p>	<p>Half-Staffing</p> <p>COOP</p>

3.4 Correspondence Management Division

Correspondence Management Division (CMD) CMD is the focal point for items sent for Secretary of Defense or Deputy Secretary of Defense for a decision or for their information. Some of CMD's responsibilities include:

- Receives and assigns incoming actions and tasks them to OPRs throughout the Components, prioritizing quick-turn responses as required for SD, DSD, ExecSec actions
- Processes SD Forms 391 upon receipt from Components' Correspondence Management Officers (CCMO)
- Handles classified and unclassified information up to Top Secret. Special Access Programs (SAP) must go through the SAP program manager. SAP Couriers will hand carry materials directly to the SD and/or DSD point of contact in the front office for secure handling. At no time shall SAP be routed through CMD. SAP Couriers are responsible for ensuring materials delivered and picked-up to mitigate inadvertent disclosure of the materials to non-cleared persons.
- Manages the Stoplight Report for OSD Stoplight Actions
- Advises the Executive Secretary and Exec Sec MAs on overdue suspense actions, recommending courses of action to ensure successful completion in a timely manner

The CMD point of contact for these actions can be reached at 703-695-7965.

3.5 The Correspondence Process

Suspense Guidelines. Suspense durations are measured in work days unless specifically stated otherwise. Action types and their corresponding suspense timeframes are listed in the following table:

STANDARD SUSPENSE TASKINGS	SUSPENSE (BUSINESS DAYS)
Answer Secretary of Defense Note (ASN)	5
Answer Deputy Secretary of Defense Note (ADN)	5
Provide Comments and or Recommendations (C&R)	5
Prepare Reply for Secretary of Defense (PRS)	10
Prepare Reply for Deputy Secretary of Defense (PRD)	10
Prepare Reply for DoD Executive Secretary (PRE)	10
Reply Direct Component Head (RDC)	14
Reply Direct (RD)	14
For Appropriate Action (FAA)	-
Answer Military Assistant Note (AMN)	-
Information and Retention (I&R)	-
SITUATION OR CATEGORY-SPECIFIC SUSPENSE TASKINGS	SUSPENSE (BUSINESS DAYS)
President, Vice President, White House Chief of Staff	1
Cabinet Heads, U.S. Governors, and Senior White House Staff	5
White House Bulk RED-DOT Cases (RD)	5
White House Referrals - Private Citizens on Behalf of the President	5
Members of Congress)	5
Ministers of Defense	5
LA Congressional (T-Cases) – Addressed to ASD/LA (RD)	14
White House Bulk Cases (RD)	14
Invitations Tasked for C&R	14
Detail Requests from Outside DoD	30
Public Bulk Correspondence	30

SD Form 391: This form is used to request completion, extension, cancellation, transfer, or downgrade of OSD actions. It is generated in CATMS and applies to all OSD actions except those that are tasked for Information and Retention (I&R) or for Information Only.

- 1) Completion. Tasks can be completed once the final response is signed, dated and the OPR completes the task within CATMS. For OSD actions, an SD Form 391 Completion Request will be emailed along with the signed and dated response immediately upon completion. The OPR can document non-written responses using a SD Form 391 to complete an action if a written response is not warranted. The justification must include names and phone numbers of those involved and an explanation as to why a written response is not required to complete the action. If the task was a PRS, PRD, ASN, ADN, C&R, or PRE, a SD Form 391 is not needed as the Action and/or Information Memo is the closer.
- 1) Extension. Sound justification is required to extend an action. It must describe the issue (cause for delay) and way ahead to completion (e.g., still pending coordination

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or pending ASD/Director or USD signature/approval) with a reasonable level of detail. The extension is initially routed through the ExecSec military assistant responsible for the relevant portfolio.

- 2) Cancellation. Tasks can be cancelled if the overarching issue driving the action has been overcome by events (OBE), if a response has been completed under a different action that applies to the action in question, or if the item is dual-tasked under another action that is already being worked by the OPR.
- 3) Transfer. Justification for transfer, receiving agency, contact name, and phone number must be included if the task is being transferred after 24 hours have elapsed. The justification must also state that the POC has accepted the task.
- 4) Downgrade. Sufficient justification is required to downgrade the response type of an assigned task. Attaching a previous example to show precedence greatly enhances the probability of approval for the downgrade.

24-Hour Rule: Rapid processing is critical to accurate assignment of incoming tasks. Tasked Components are responsible for accepting or transferring a tasking within 24 hours of receipt. A SD Form 391 must be submitted in order to transfer an action. To transfer an action to another organization before the 24-hour deadline, an accepting POC is not required; however, after 24 hours have elapsed, the transfer request must include the name and phone number of the POC for the external organization that has agreed to accept the action. Transfer of late actions to another organization is unlikely without sound justification. Weekends and Federal holidays do not count toward the 24-hour rule.

At any point during the process, should assistance be needed, it is encouraged to work with the Military Assistant(s), and/or call the Military Assistants in Exec Sec.

Preparing the Basic Correspondence Package:

- 1) Packages for SD or DSD signature shall be prepared in accordance with **DoD 5110.4-M, "DoD Manual for Written Material,"** and submitted to CMD, Room 3C843 for processing and review.
- 2) An Action Memo or Info Memo is the first document of a package. Action Memos are used when an action is required (e.g., signature, approval). Info Memos are used when information is being forwarded to a higher authority with no action necessary. NOTE: All TABs in a package must be identified in the Action or Info Memo. Do not bold the TABs when identifying them.
 - a) Action Memos recommend signature of an attached document or request approval of a specific course of action by initialing an approval line on the Action Memo itself.

UNCLASSIFIED

- b) Info Memos can be stand-alone documents or may include TABs with additional information.
 - c) Action/Info Memos are typically one page but may occasionally exceed that length.
- 3) The proposed document for signature will always be located at the first TAB.
- a) If a package contains multiple copies of a document for signature (e.g., identical letters to the congressional defense committees), the documents should be uploaded as a single Word document. If responding to an existing OSD task, upload the electrons into CATMS. If the package is a self-generated package and no OSD number exists, email the Word version to WHS.pentagon.esd.list.esb@mail.mil.
 - b) If there are different types of documents requiring signature (e.g., a memorandum and letters to Congress), the different types of documents should be separated by numerical tabs.
 - c) Detailed instructions regarding dual signed memos can be found in the manual for written material.
- 4) The incoming request, correspondence, or legislative requirement that generated the package will be at TAB B. If there is no incoming document, then TABs B, C, D, etc., should contain appropriate supporting information for the package, such as previous responses of this type, excerpts of statutory law, reports, etc.
- 5) **For any Action Memo, the final TAB must contain appropriate coordination between the Service(s) and/or Component(s) with equities, as well as General Counsel.** A consolidated coordination summary will serve as a cover sheet for the various coordination received and should include the following information: (1) the organization providing coordination; (2) the name of the coordinating individual; (3) the nature of the coordination (Concur/Concur with Comments/Non-concur); and (4) the date that the coordination was received.
- a) GC must coordinate on all correspondence that is based on law, has legal implications, or has the potential to reflect adversely on the Department of Defense.
 - b) LA must coordinate on all correspondence that is either addressed to Members of Congress or that has legislative implications.
 - c) Public Affairs must coordinate on all correspondence that contains information with public affairs implications or involves requests for SD or DSD participation in public forums, such as speaking (media events) or in DoD settings that may draw media coverage.

Annotating the Coordination Summary:

- 1) Unless substantive comments are made, do not select the “Concur with comments” option. Coordination often contains optional, non-critical comments. For these incidences, choose “Concur” after accepting and making the appropriate changes.
- 2) Use “Concur with comments” ONLY after receiving (1) a formal memorandum that offers substantive comments or (2) other substantive comments that were not incorporated but adjudicated. **Ensure these comments are included after the Coordination Summary.**
- 3) **Non-concur/Non-response:**
 - a) AOs shall not allow disagreements or lack of response from an OCR to delay the action. While AOs must take into account the time needed to complete an action when assigning a suspense date, in certain cases, organizations might non-concur or not respond to a coordination request in a timely fashion.
 - b) To address non-concur/non-response situations:
 - i. When non-concur coordination is received and a compromise cannot be reached, address this in the Action or Info Memo by explaining why the pending decision should be made or the response should be sent despite the non-concur coordination. **Ensure the non-concur comments are included under the Coordination Summary with a signature and date from the principal.**
 - ii. When an OCR fails to respond, address the non-response in the Action/Info Memo. Place comments in the Coordination Summary noting the date coordination was attempted. Although timeliness is a must, be mindful to provide ample time for coordination.

Completion: Final stage of the correspondence process.

- 1) Once ready for SD or DSD signature, the package routes through CMD, Room 3C843. Ensure Action Memos have one additional copy and all Information Memos have 2 additional copies.
- 2) The SD or DSD will either sign/approve the package or return the package with questions to the Component. In either case, the package will route through the ES to CMD for continued processing or completion and closure.

Distribution:

- 1) CMD will route packages in accordance with SD/DSD's instructions through normal channels back to the components. All outgoing (external to the Pentagon) correspondence, regardless of response type, will process through CMD for distribution as appropriate.
- 2) Classified correspondence shall be handled in accordance with DoD 5200.01-M, Volume I, "DoD Information Security Program: Marking of Classified Information," February 24, 2012 at https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodm/520001_vol2.pdf.
- 3) Controlled Unclassified Information shall be handled in accordance with DoD 5200.01-M, Volume IV, "DoD Information Security Program: Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)," February 24, 2012 at https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodm/520001_vol2.pdf.
- 4) **Electronic Distribution** is normally made within the Department and to external addressees when appropriate via CATMs and e-mail.
- 5) **Hard Copy Mail Distribution** is made to external addresses. For those agencies within the NCR, distribution will be made by courier.

3.6 Schedule Proposals

All schedule requests for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary should be processed through the Correspondence Management Division, room 3C843, in an original and three copies. Additionally, provide a copy to the Assistant to the Secretary for Protocol (OSD Protocol) once a meeting or event is added to the Secretary or Deputy's calendar.

Once the requests are controlled, they will be forwarded to the Executive Assistant to the Principal concerned for staffing.

Schedule requests will include a thorough justification of why participating in the event would be a good use of the Secretary's time and in the Department's interests.

The format for a schedule request is located in DoDM 5110.4-M-V2, June 16, 2020 DoD Manual for Written Material: Examples and Reference Material, which can be located at: <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/CMD/template-schedule-proposal.pdf?ver=2017-05-09-133854-590>.

3.7 Congressional Reports

- 1) SD designated LA as the OPR for Congressional Reporting Requirements (CRR). LA, in conjunction with each component's LA representative oversees the identification and review process, assigns CRR actions to each component, follows up with AOs, and

uploads final signed documents to the Congressional Hearing and Reporting Requirements Tracking System (CHARRTS).

- 2) The detailed functional processes from enactment of laws that establish CRR through the interfaces with LA including preparing, submitting, and completing reports to Congress (RTCs). The point of contact for RTCs is the Director of Legislative Operations and can be reached at 703-692-1168.

3.8 Classified Correspondence

All classified Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense signature items must be marked with the highest level of classification for the material on that page (Confidential, Secret, or Top Secret with all appropriate caveats) at the top and bottom of each page. Mark the first page of the document with the highest overall classification of the contents of the total document. Paragraph markings, classification authority, and declassification instructions must be applied to classified material as described in E.O. 12958.

The following is basic classification/declassification guidance:

Originally Classified Information

Classified by: Name/Personal Identifier and Position Title Reason: (Cite Category from E.O. 12958, para 1.5) Declassify on:

- A date/event less than 10 years,
- 10 years from original classification decision, or
- Exemption category from E.O. 12958, para 1.6(d)

Derivatively Classified Information

Derived from: Cite identity of source document or Classification Guide, or "Multiple Sources" Declassify on: Carry forward instructions from source document, from Classification Guide, or More than one source, enter the longest duration of any of its sources, or If source document(s) declassification instructions are Originating Agency's Determination Required (OADR), enter: "Source Marked OADR, Date of Source " (use date of most recent source).

DoD 5200. I-PH, A Guide to Marking Classified Documents, provides illustrated guidance on the application of security markings to documents prepared by the Department of Defense.

Items containing NATO materials should be marked in accordance with the U.S. Security Authority for NATO Affairs (US SAN) Instruction 1-69, dated April 21, 1982.

Signature packages not in compliance with the foregoing guidance will be returned by the Exec Sec Military Assistants to the originating office for correction.

Questions regarding this requirement should be directed to CMD, Classified Support Branch, (703) 697-6131.

3.9 Exceptions to the CMD Process

The following materials for the SecDef or DepSecDef do not require initial processing by CMD:

- Items for Day Books*
- Read Aheads*
- Green Sheet Process for Legislative Proposal Review
- Intelligence Daily Summaries
- COCOM Weeklies
- Notification to White House of service member deaths
- Communications requiring SecDef/DepSecDef attention (within two hours). The Executive Secretary will identify these actions and take them directly to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense. CMD will control these actions after they have been acted upon.

*Tasked in CATMS if required.

Day Book items should be delivered to SECDEF RAH drop box on the NIPR or SIPR intelink website.

The POC for Day Book items is the Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary, who can be reached at **703-692-7122**.

Executive Secretariat references:

DoD Manual 5110.04-M-V1, "*DoD Manual for Written Material: Correspondence Management*," 16 June 2020.

Chapter 4: Military Aircraft (MILAIR) Transportation**4.1 Request for MILAIR Transportation**

Requests for military aircraft transportation for senior OSD personnel should be addressed to the Executive Secretary (EXECSEC) for approval and delivered to the Executive Secretariat (Room 3D914) for processing. An appropriate approval package will consist of an ACTION Memorandum and accompanying DD FORM 2768, "Military Air Passenger/Cargo Request." The ACTION Memorandum must be appropriately coordinated and endorsed, in accordance with DoDM 5110.04-M-V1. If other than a standard request involving the travel of DoD personnel, the ACTION Memorandum must be coordinated through the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics, and the Office of General Counsel, at a minimum. If USD Policy and Comptroller equities exist, appropriate coordination must be accomplished with these OSD organizations.

All requests should be submitted to the EXECSEC at least 14 business days prior to the travel date to allow for processing, approval, and action, such as coordination with CVAM or the component providing the aircraft. Requests for team travel (nine or more persons) must be submitted to the EXECSEC a minimum of 21 days in advance of the travel date.

Use of military air transportation will only be approved when it meets the requirements specified in DoD Directive 4500.56, "*DoD Policy on the Use of Government Aircraft and Air Travel*," and covers the elements outlined in section 12, 12.2.a-d., of DoDI 4515.13, "*Air Transportation Eligibility*."

The Point of Contact in the ESR is the Air Force Military Assistant and can be reached at 703-692-7125 or reference <http://execsec.defense.gov/Programs/MILAIRRequestProcess.aspx>.

* Note: Even when a credible threat exists requiring a security detail, it may not prevent the use of commercial air.

Operational Support Airlift (OSA) references:

DoD Instruction 4500.43, "*Operational Support Airlift (OSA)*," incorporating CHG 3 dated 31 August 2018.

DoD Instruction 4515.13, "*Air Transportation Eligibility*," incorporating CHG 4 dated 31 August 2018.

DoD Directive 4500.56, "*DoD Policy on the Use of Government Aircraft and Air Travel*," incorporating CHG 4 dated 18 August 2018.

Chapter 5: Executive Liaison Agents for Visiting Foreign Dignitaries

Executive Liaison Agents are normally assigned for visits at the Minister of Defense (MOD) or Deputy MOD, Chief of Defense or Vice Chief of Defense level and for large, high-level groups such as Consultative Groups and Parliamentary Committees. The Executive Liaison Agents act on behalf of the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Military Department Secretaries, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Executive Liaison Agents are authorized use of Official Representation Funds in extending official courtesies to guests of the Department of Defense consistent with maintaining the standing and prestige of the United States as outlined in DoD Directive 7250.13.

Authority to invite foreign dignitaries at the expense of the Department of Defense is limited to the following officials:

- Secretary of Defense
- Deputy Secretary of Defense
- Secretaries of the Military Departments
- Undersecretaries of Defense
- General Counsel of the Department of Defense
- Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Heads of the Military Services
- Combatant Commanders
- Directors of Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities

Visits proposed by any official not listed above must be approved by one of the above officials.

Foreign dignitaries and officials visiting the United States at the invitation and expense of the Department of Defense fall into four categories. The first consists of foreign dignitaries and officials visiting the United States at the invitation of the Secretary of Defense (SecDef), Deputy Secretary of Defense (DepSecDef), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) or Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (VCJCS) and are designated as counterpart visits. The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) is the Executive Agent responsible for managing all counterpart visits.

The next category for which an Executive Liaison Agent may be requested includes visits linked to significant events such as Bilateral and Military Committee meetings. When the foreign Head of Delegation is the counterpart of the SecDef/DepSecDef/CJCS/VCJCS, DIA will assume Executive Liaison Agent responsibilities.

The third category for which Executive Liaison Agent support may be requested includes events having wide-ranging DoD implications and benefits that do not involve a counterpart of the SecDef/DepSecDef/CJCS/VCJCS. Executive Liaison Agent responsibilities will generally go to the Services, Joint Staff or a DoD Agency other than DIA. Priority for DIA Executive

UNCLASSIFIED

Liaison Agent support will be given to SecDef/DepSecDef/CJCS/VCJCS counterpart missions. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the requester to augment the DIA Executive Liaison Agent and/or be prepared to assume all responsibilities should a counterpart mission arise, precluding continued DIA support.

CJCS Foreign National and International Defense Colleges comprise the final category for which Executive Liaison Agent support may be provided. However, responsibility for providing Executive Liaison Agents will remain with the Military Departments.

For additional information concerning the Executive Liaison Agents Program, ***contact the Senior Foreign Officer Visitors Program (SFOVP) at 703-614-5151 or [Defense executive liaison@dodis.mil](mailto:Defense_executive_liaison@dodis.mil)***.

Appendix 1: Useful Government Agencies

Defense Department Links:

Defense Department: <http://www.defense.gov/home/top-leaders/>

DoD Executive Secretariat: <http://execsec.defense.gov>

DoD Issuances (Publications): <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/ins2.html>

Inter-Agency Links:

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov>

The U.S. Senate: <http://www.senate.gov>

The U.S. House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov>

Department of Agriculture: <http://www.usda.gov>

Department of Commerce: <http://www.doc.gov>

Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov>

Department of Energy: <http://www.doe.gov>

Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www.dhhs.gov>

Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov>

Department of Housing & Urban Development: <http://www.hud.gov>

Department of Interior: <http://www.doi.gov>

Department of Justice: <http://www.usdoj.gov>

Department of Labor: <http://www.dol.gov>

Department of State: <http://www.state.gov>

Department of Transportation: <http://www.dot.gov>

Department of the Treasury: <http://www.ustreas.gov>

Department of Veterans Affairs: <http://www.va.gov>

The Central Intelligence Agency: <http://www.cia.gov>

The Office of Personnel Management: <http://www.opm.gov>

The Office of Management and Budget: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>

The U.S. Trade Representative: <http://www.ustr.gov/>