



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

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MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP (SEE DISTRIBUTION)
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Organizational Role of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations
and Low Intensity Conflict

Statutory Responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)). The ASD(SO/LIC) is the principal civilian adviser to the Secretary of Defense on special operations and low intensity conflict matters and (after the Secretary and Deputy Secretary) is the principal special operations and low intensity conflict official within the senior management of the DoD. The ASD(SO/LIC)'s principal duty is the oversight of special operations activities, including oversight of policy and resources in accordance with Title 10 Section 138b(2)(A)(B). Reforms enacted by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2017 substantially changed the roles and responsibilities of the ASD(SO/LIC), including assigning to the ASD(SO/LIC) additional authority, direction, and control over special operations peculiar administrative matters relating to the organization, training, and equipping of special operations forces.

ASD(SO/LIC) is in the administrative chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

Designation as a Principal Staff Assistant (PSA). Effective immediately, the ASD(SO/LIC) is designated a PSA and advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense for special operations policy and special operations peculiar administrative matters. As a PSA, the ASD(SO/LIC) reports directly to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense and is delegated the authorities and responsibilities listed in DoD Directive 5100.01, Enclosure 2, paragraph c. The ASD(SO/LIC) and the Office of the ASD(SO/LIC) are removed from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)). The Chief Management Officer will update existing Department issuances and direct development of new issuances, as appropriate, to reflect the ASD(SO/LIC)'s designation as a PSA.

Budget Authority. For the special operations enterprise, the ASD(SO/LIC) will have a budgetary role and responsibility similar to those of the Secretaries of the Military Departments. ASD(SO/LIC) will receive its own topline guidance.

Participation in Senior Leadership Fora. The ASD(SO/LIC) is designated as a non-statutory advisor for special operations matters to the Joint Requirements Oversight Council established by 10 USC § 181. To the extent consistent with applicable law, the ASD(SO/LIC) is also designated as a member to the following senior leadership fora or successor fora: Senior Leaders Council; Secretary's Weekly Priorities Review; National Defense Strategy Implementation; Military Department Secretary Updates; Program Budget Review Small Group Discussions when matters affecting special operations are on the agenda; Issue teams, 3-star, and Deputy's Management Action Group with Special Access Program (SAP) access requirements;



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Legislative Review Panel; Defense Acquisition Regulation Council; Defense Acquisition Board; Information Technology Acquisition Board; Global Force Management Board; Global Posture Executive Council; DoD Casualty Advisory Board; Transition Assistance Program Executive Council; Manpower and Reserve Affairs Executive Council; Suicide Prevention General Officer Steering Committee; Sensitive Technical Activities Oversight Committee; and SAP Oversight Committee, Senior Review Group, and SAP Senior Working Group governance structures. These bodies are directed to provide updated attendee lists within one week of the date of this memorandum, with the expectation that they include the ASD(SO/LIC).

Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office. The ASD(SO/LIC) is authorized to transform the Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office into the Irregular Warfare Technical Support Directorate under ASD(SO/LIC)'s authority, direction, and control and to organize it under the authority, direction, and control of a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense within the Office of the ASD(SO/LIC).

Implementation of this Memorandum. The designation of ASD(SO/LIC) as a PSA and budget authority for the special operations enterprise is effective immediately. For other aspects of this memorandum, the ASD(SO/LIC) will present for approval to the Secretary of Defense or Deputy Secretary of Defense a detailed implementation plan outlining recommendations on personnel requirements and functional and organizational reporting structures within the special operations enterprise. The implementation plan will address which policy roles currently performed by the ASD(SO/LIC) should be removed from the Office of the ASD(SO/LIC) and remain in the Office of the USD(P). It should include a detailed plan to implement the ASD's organizational role within Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) with respect to USSOCOM and must identify the resources, timeline, and milestones for these actions consistent with applicable law, including limitations on the size of the OSD. This implementation plan is due within 30 days of the date of this memorandum.



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Acting

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