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

FEB 1 2 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Leader-Led, Values-Based Ethics Engagement

Integrity and public confidence in Department of Defense activities and in its people are indispensable to mission success. As such, I have continued to make ethics and values-based decision-making a priority. This involves more than rules-based compliance, although such compliance is imperative. Implementing values-based decision-making from the top down will foster a culture of ethics and promote accountability, respect and transparency throughout the Department.

To this end, I expect leaders at every level of the Department to engage personally with their subordinates in both formal and informal discussions about values-based decision-making. Our personnel, at all levels, should carefully consider the Department's primary ethical values set forth in Chapter 12 of the Joint Ethics Regulation, DoD 5500.07-R, and applicable organizational values, when making decisions as part of their official duties. These values include, among others, honesty, integrity, loyalty, accountability for actions and decisions, fairness and impartiality, respect, and responsible citizenship. Importantly, this engagement must begin with top leaders and cascade down to each subordinate organization's leader. Leaders at all levels must foster a culture of ethics within their organizations by setting the example in their own conduct and by making values-based decision-making central to all aspects of the Department's activities. I understand that many of you already have programs in place to ensure this is happening within your organizations. As leaders, you are in the best position to determine the optimal means for implementing this engagement effort within your respective organizations and to instill the importance of ethics and values-based decision-making within your subordinate leaders. This should be viewed as a continuing engagement rather than a one-time effort.

I have the greatest confidence in you as leaders of the Department. I believe that our dedication to ethics and values-based decision making will continue to inspire public confidence in the Department of Defense and its people.

Ash Carter

cc:
Deputy Secretary of Defense

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