



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS

SUBJECT: Messaging for the FY 2021 DoD Budget Roll Out and Posture Hearing Season

Each component should ensure that the following themes are incorporated into oral and written statements to our oversight committees.

Overall Theme: The FY 2021 budget supports irreversible implementation of the National Defense Strategy, which remains our guidepost and drives our decision-making. Progress along all lines of effort is sustained by adequate and timely funding from our partners in Congress.

1. Continues to strengthen military readiness and invest in the modernization of a more lethal force:
  - Sustains and builds readiness to deter, fight, and win
  - Prioritizes nuclear deterrence recapitalization and strengthens homeland missile defense
  - Focuses on developing and designing a future force that is dominant in all domains: Air, Land, Sea, Space, and Cyber
  - Stands up the U.S. Space Force
  - Advances the development of crucial emerging technologies, such as hypersonic weapons, directed energy, artificial intelligence, and autonomous platforms
  - Divests legacy systems to invest in leading-edge innovation for the future fight
  - Supports the development of a Joint Warfighting Concept to align personnel, equipment, training, and doctrine to win on any battlefield
  - Supports dynamic force employment, keeping the U.S. military agile, lethal, and adaptable
  
2. Strengthens alliances, deepens interoperability, and attracts new partners:
  - Demonstrates our commitment to allies and partners and to upholding the rule-based international order through combined training, exercises, and operations
  - Supports building new partnerships and strengthening America's ties to our long-standing allies by sustaining and growing ironclad Indo-Pacific alliances, fortifying the trans-Atlantic alliance, and forming an enduring Middle East coalition
  - Advances increased burden-sharing across NATO and other allies and partners
  - Postures DoD to manage great power competition from China and Russia over the long run, supporting approaches to work by, with, and through our allies and partners



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- Promotes the enduring defeat of ISIS, al Qaeda, and other extremist non-state actors that threaten the homeland and our vital interests
3. Reforms the Department for greater performance and accountability:
- Ensures our resources are directed toward the highest priorities
  - Uses Audit and Defense-Wide Review results to inform the Department's reform initiatives, as we actively seek ways to free up time, money, and manpower to reinvest into our top priorities
  - Empowers 4<sup>th</sup> Estate reforms and a new governance architecture to constrain the growth of Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities and identify more savings to put back into lethality
  - Champions cloud initiatives integral to modernizing DoD's information technology environment to provide the warfighter the right tools at the right time
4. Supports Service members and their families, recognizing that our people are our most valuable resource:
- Strengthens the backbone of America's national security – Service members, military families, and DoD civilians – to ensure they have the resources they need to thrive
  - Focuses on providing safe, quality, and affordable housing and improving living conditions through privatized housing and continued oversight of our housing partnerships
  - Demonstrates DoD's commitment to provide military families access to quality, affordable child development programs so that our Service members can focus on their missions
  - Promotes professional development and education opportunities for Service members to ensure lifelong success
  - Supports military spouses through education and licensing programs that increase the employment of military spouses and positively impacts the retention of our Service members
  - Advocates for robust pay and benefits packages essential to attracting and retaining the best personnel and warfighters

*Mark T. Esper*