



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

JUN 04 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT

SUBJECT: Guidance

1. The Office of Net Assessment has long been my predecessors' source of independent, long term, deep thinking about our future. That is the legacy I expect you to maintain and upon which I expect you to build. I will require your unfiltered insights even (or especially) when they challenge my present thinking or the thinking of other Department officials.
2. These are the core tasks I see for your office during my tenure as the Secretary of Defense:
  - (a) The conduct of independent net assessments that examine the standing trends and future prospect of military capabilities of the United States relative to other actors, as required by law. I would like these assessments to include political and economic aspects, as well as regional implications. I am particularly interested in space and cyber.
  - (b) A comparison of our relative overmatch in each war-fighting domain from 2000-2030.
  - (c) A series of studies examining the future security environment. Synthesize where possible, as there is good work being done here by the intelligence community and others.
  - (d) Identify uncomfortable questions or problems for the United States that ought to be asked or addressed, but are not at present.
  - (e) Lead long-term war gaming.
3. There are several aspects of the office that I would like you to reinvigorate:
  - (a) Put a premium on finding opportunities, rather than just challenges.
  - (b) Seek out the finest minds globally who are thinking about the international order, foreign policy, economics, technology, and the future. Bring competing views to me and the staff.
  - (c) Identify emergent analytic practices, as well as recommendations on whether and how to incorporate them into the Department.
  - (d) Rebuild the connective tissue between Office of Net Assessment and the Intelligence Community.
4. To aid you in accomplishing these efforts, you will have:
  - (a) Access to meetings or briefings that the Deputy or I attend that you believe to be of use.
  - (b) Access to all Department of Defense classified programs and capabilities.
  - (c) The intellectual freedom to pursue studies, even those that do not bear immediate fruit.



OSD006456-15/CMD009025-15

OSD006456-15

04 JUN 15

26 MAY 15

5. Finally, help me think about the long-term consequences of near-term policy decisions; bring the imperfect wisdom of the future into the present for my consideration. Your work remains future focused, but you must ensure the team's work has present relevance to me. It is unclear to me whether the office is presently scoped and staffed to accomplish these objectives. Within thirty days, bring me your initial plan to meet my intent.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ash Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Ash" is written with a large, looped 'A' and a small 'sh'. The last name "Carter" is written with a large, looped 'C' and a trailing 'er'.

cc:

Secretaries of the Military Departments  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff  
Under Secretaries of Defense  
Deputy Chief Management Officer  
Chief of the National Guard Bureau  
General Counsel of the Department of Defense  
Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation  
Inspector General of the Department of Defense  
Director, Operational Test and Evaluation  
Department of Defense Chief Information Officer  
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs  
Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs  
Directors of the Defense Agencies  
Directors of the DoD Field Activities