



UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2000

July 12, 2012

POLICY

The Honorable Howard P. McKeon
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman,

Yesterday Secretary Panetta received your letter stating your concerns regarding the Department of Defense's transparency and process for fulfilling Congressional reporting requirements. He has asked me to respond on his behalf.

In July 2011, a memo was sent to members of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy regarding Congressional reports. This memo directed that reports to Congress be concise and well written and should not exceed ten pages unless "statutory requirements or specific circumstances" dictated otherwise. The memo was intended to ensure that the approximately 500 reports delivered to Congress each year were as timely and clear as possible, and to maximize their utility to Congress. Unfortunately, it now appears that is what was intended as a guideline for ensuring prompt and useful reports may have been misinterpreted.

The Department of Defense respects and values Congressional oversight, and continues to strive to provide requested information quickly in the most useful format. In order to ensure that the Department meets its obligation to Congress, I have rescinded the previous page-limit and directed that congressional reports be as long as necessary to ensure that they fully answer the questions posed by Congress. A copy of the new guidance is attached for your information.

Thank you for your continued support of our men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Miller".

James N. Miller

Enclosure:
As stated





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MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ASIAN AND PACIFIC
SECURITY AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (GLOBAL STRATEGIC
AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (HOMELAND DEFENSE AND
AMERICA'S SECURITY AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (SPECIAL
OPERATIONS/LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT AND
INTERDEPENDENT CAPABILITIES)
DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (STRATEGY, PLANS,
AND FORCES)
POLICY CHIEF OF STAFF
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE PRISONER OF WAR AND MISSING
PERSONNEL OFFICE
POLICY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

SUBJECT: Congressional Reports

Last year, Policy's Chief of Staff disseminated guidance to the organization which noted that "communicating with Congress is one of our most important responsibilities," and that "we can better cooperate with Congress by providing relevant, concise, and timely information." This part of the previous guidance is absolutely correct, and I want to emphasize its importance. I also want to reiterate that Policy must respond to requests for reports by a Congressional committee that are not required by statute, and that we may do so by providing a briefing instead of a report if the committee has agreed to the substitution.

The guidance promulgated last year also stated that "congressional reports from Policy should not exceed 10 pages in length except when the statutory requirements or specific circumstances dictate otherwise." The explicit intent was to ensure more concise and well-written reports to Congress. Nevertheless, this part of the previous guidance appears to have been misinterpreted, and has generated concern about the seriousness with which Policy takes its congressional reporting responsibilities. Therefore, this page-limit portion of the preceding guidance is rescinded effective immediately. Reports to Congress should still be concise and well-written – as well as relevant and timely. However, there is no page limit: Congressional reports should be as long as necessary to ensure that they fully answer the questions posed by Congress.

James N. Miller

cc: PDUSD(Policy)

