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February 27, 2009 message

On behalf of Secretary Gates, I want to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your willingness to stay and serve beyond January 20th. Your continuing contribution remains an important component of the unprecedented level of continuity achieved by the Department of Defense in transitioning to the new administration.

As you are likely aware, the first Executive Order signed out by President Obama established a new ethics policy. This Executive Order was designed to apply to incoming political appointees. However, the question of how this policy would apply to holdover political appointees was not addressed at the time. We recently received guidance from the White House establishing that the new Ethics Executive Order (attached) will be applicable to all individuals remaining in a holdover status after the first 100 days of the administration (i.e. after April 30, 2009).

When you were invited to remain in a holdover status, we also asked you to provide any limitations such as a specified timeline for departure or other considerations. At that time we did not anticipate the requirement to eventually sign an Ethics Pledge (attached) as prescribed by the new administration. However, it is now the case that in order for you to stay in your position beyond April 30 will require you to sign the Ethics Pledge.

Please take the time to read the attachments and assess your personal circumstance. While Secretary Gates continues to encourage you to stay if possible, it is also understood that the post-government employment restrictions imposed by the Executive Order may result in a reassessment of your decision.

Whatever your decision, your willingness to serve and contribute to the continuity of the operation of the Department will be honored and appreciated. If the requirement to sign the Ethics Pledge changes your plan to remain as a holdover until relieved or as previously noted, I ask that you notify Mr. Tom Tesch, Director of the DOD Transition Task Force(Thomas.Tesch@sd.mil), as soon as possible.

Thank you again for your patience, understanding and continued willingness to serve through this challenging period. I hope you will not hesitate to let me know if you have questions on any of the above. You are also encouraged to contact the DoD Standards of Conduct Office at (703) 695-3422 if you have particular questions regarding the ethics pledge or related matters.

Regards,

Robert Rangel

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