

FM SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
TO ALDODACT  
INFO SECDEF COMMUNICATIONS WASHINGTON DC  
UNCLAS  
SUBJ/MESSAGE TO THE FORCE - WARFIGHTING READINESS  
ALDODACT 17/19  
ADDRESSEES PASS TO ALL SUBORDINATE COMMANDS

1. IN TODAY'S COMPLEX WORLD, THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF THREATS TO OUR COUNTRY'S SECURITY. GIVEN THIS REALITY, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE RIGHTFULLY EXPECT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO SAFEGUARD THE LIBERTY AND PROSPERITY THAT DEFINE THE CHARACTER OF THIS NATION, ABOVE ALL ELSE. TO DO SO, WE MUST CONTINUE TO ADAPT TO ENSURE WE REMAIN THE MOST POWERFUL WARFIGHTING FORCE IN THE WORLD.

2. OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY CHARTS THE PATH TO OUR CONTINUED DOMINANCE. DETERRING ADVERSARY AGGRESSION - OUR FIRST TASK - REQUIRES US TO THOROUGHLY PREPARE FOR WAR. AS PRESIDENT TRUMP STATED, "WE KNOW THAT WEAKNESS IS THE SUREST PATH TO CONFLICT, AND UNMATCHED POWER IS THE SUREST MEANS OF OUR DEFENSE." IN THIS NEW ERA OF STRATEGIC COMPETITION AMONG GREAT POWERS, THE JOINT FORCE MUST BE READY TO FIGHT LARGE-SCALE COMBAT OPERATIONS IN A JOINT, MULTI-NATIONAL, MULTI-DOMAIN ENVIRONMENT, UNDER THE MOST DEMANDING CONDITIONS.

3. TO DO THIS, IT IS INCUMBENT ON COMMANDERS AND LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS TO INSTILL IN THEIR UNITS THE PROFICIENCY AND DISCIPLINE NEEDED TO FIGHT AND WIN IN FUTURE CONFLICTS. GROUND FORCES MUST BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO BEING CONTINUOUSLY ON THE MOVE AND UNDER ATTACK. MARITIME FORMATIONS MUST BE CAPABLE OF FIGHTING THROUGH LAYERS OF ENEMY ANTI-ACCESS SYSTEMS. AIR FORCES MUST TRAIN TO OVERCOME INTEGRATED AIR DEFENSE NETWORKS AND FIGHT FOR CONTROL OF THE SKIES. SPACE-BASED SYSTEMS REQUIRE DEFENSE FROM ANTI-SATELLITE WEAPONS, AND OUR CYBER FORCES MUST BE CAPABLE OF PROTECTING OUR SYSTEMS AND NETWORKS. ALL FORCES MUST BE CAPABLE OF OPERATING IN A DEGRADED COMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT, WHILE UNDER CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE.

4. PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE BATTLEFIELD WILL NOT BE EASY. DEVELOPING THE NEEDED COMPETENCIES REQUIRES TOUGH, REALISTIC, ITERATIVE TRAINING. TO BE SUCCESSFUL, ALL SERVICE MEMBERS MUST STRIVE TO BE PHYSICALLY FIT, PROFICIENT IN THEIR MILITARY SPECIALTY, AND DEPLOYABLE. LEADERS NEED TO CREATE RIGOROUS AND RELEVANT TRAINING PLANS TO PREPARE FOR THIS ENVIRONMENT. THIS MEANS ELIMINATING UNNECESSARY REQUIREMENTS TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM TIME TO FOCUS ON CRUCIAL WARFIGHTING SKILLS, ALONG WITH THE MAINTENANCE NEEDED TO KEEP OUR EQUIPMENT IN FIGHTING CONDITION.

5. COMMANDERS MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE TOUGH DECISIONS AND PRIORITIZE THEIR SCARCE RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS. THEY MUST ALSO POWER DOWN DECISION-MAKING TO THE LOWEST CAPABLE LEVEL WHENEVER POSSIBLE, AND INSTILL A CULTURE OF DISCIPLINED INITIATIVE AND PRUDENT RISK-TAKING IN THEIR SUBORDINATES. DOING SO WILL BUILD TRUST THROUGHOUT THE RANKS, FURTHER EMPOWER OUR NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND STRENGTHEN THE BONDS BETWEEN OUR SERVICE MEMBERS.

6. EVERYTHING WE DO MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THE READINESS AND LETHALITY OF OUR JOINT FORCE. WE HAVE NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY IN ANY WARFIGHTING DOMAIN, AND NO MONEY OR MANPOWER TO WASTE IN ANY SERVICE. FUTURE CONFLICTS WILL REQUIRE US TO BE THE VERY BEST AND MOST MODERN MILITARY IN THE WORLD. IF WE ARE TO FULFILL OUR SACRED OBLIGATION TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, WE MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT OUR ADVERSARIES DO NOT STAND A FIGHTING CHANCE AGAINST THE U.S. MILITARY ON ANY FIELD OF BATTLE OR ANY DOMAIN OF WARFARE.

7. ESPER SENDS. //  
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