



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

AUG - 2 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

SUBJECT: Mitigating the Disruption from Delayed General Officer and Flag Officer Confirmations

As you know, we are currently facing an indefinite, blanket hold on the Senate confirmation of all U.S. military general officer and flag officers. This unprecedented, across-the-board hold is having a cascading effect, increasingly hindering the normal operations of this Department and undermining both our military readiness and our national security.

I continue to urge the Senate to fulfill its responsibilities. For now, the Department must make every effort to limit the damage caused by this hold, including the disruption that it is causing our military families.

I hereby direct you to consider the following strategies to mitigate the harms caused by the hold:

1. Incumbent heads of organizations may be asked to remain in place until their successor has been nominated, confirmed, and appointed.
2. Officers in the grades of O-9 and O-10 who are candidates to remain in place will be considered on a case-by-case basis for retention in their position, taking into account any hardship that may result from remaining in place.
3. Officers who would assume the roles as the head of the organization due to normal succession, such as a deputy or a vice, may assume the head role in an acting or temporary capacity, regardless of whether they have been or will be nominated for the head position.
4. Officers in the grades of O-9 and O-10, which are temporary grades tied to nominative positions, may not vacate the position for which they have been confirmed while waiting to be confirmed for another O-9 or O-10 position without reverting to their permanent grade. However, without vacating their current position, these officers may perform the duties of another O-9 or O-10 position in an acting or temporary capacity if they are in the normal line of succession for that position, regardless of whether or not they have been or will be nominated for it.
5. In extraordinary cases, officers in a grade of O-8 or below who are not in the normal line of succession may be assigned to head organizations in an acting capacity, provided they have not been or will not be nominated for the head position.



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I understand that these steps will not end or offset the risk to our readiness or our global leadership position. Nor will they resolve the uncertainty and stress inflicted upon our general and flag officers and their families, or alleviate the worries rippling further down our ranks.

Let me again urge all those affected to remain resilient. I am confident that all Americans will come together to safeguard the full power of the greatest fighting force in history—and to live up to our deeply American duty to keep faith with our brave Service members and their families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen J. Hadley". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

cc:
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff