



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

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MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance

When I became the Secretary of Defense, I committed to rebuild our military to match threats to capabilities. Drones are the biggest battlefield innovation in a generation, accounting for most of this year's casualties in Ukraine. Our adversaries collectively produce millions of cheap drones each year. While global military drone production skyrocketed over the last three years, the previous administration deployed red tape. U.S. units are not outfitted with the lethal small drones the modern battlefield requires.

On June 6th, President Trump issued Executive Order 14307 to support the American drone industry and arm our warfighters. The Department of Defense is going above and beyond this order. I am rescinding restrictive policies that hindered production and limited access to these vital technologies, unleashing the combined potential of American manufacturing and warfighter ingenuity. I am delegating authorities to procure and operate drones from the bureaucracy to our warfighters.

Our mission is threefold. First, we will bolster the nascent U.S. drone manufacturing base by approving hundreds of American products for purchase by our military. Leveraging private capital flows that support this industry, our overt preference is to Buy American.

Second, we will power a technological leapfrog, arming our combat units with a variety of low-cost drones made by America's world-leading engineers and AI experts. Drone dominance is a process race as much as a technological race. Modern battlefield innovation demands a new procurement strategy that fuses manufacturers with our frontline troops.

Finally, we'll train as we expect to fight. To simulate the modern battlefield, senior officers must overcome the bureaucracy's instinctive risk-aversion on everything from budgeting to weaponizing and training. Next year I expect to see this capability integrated into all relevant combat training, including force-on-force drone wars.

Emergent technologies require new funding lines. To address the urgent need for drones, investment methods outlined in Executive Order 14307 are being investigated.

The directives detailed in the attached memorandum support our industrial base, reform acquisition, and field new technology for the warfighter. Lethality will not be hindered by self-imposed restrictions, especially when it comes to harnessing technologies we invented but were slow to pursue. Drone technology is advancing so rapidly, our major risk is risk-avoidance. The Department's bureaucratic gloves are coming off.

Attachment:
As stated

