

## ACTION MEMO

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

DepSecDef Action \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: Name, Title (Principal, Principal Deputy, or ASD if appropriate)

SUBJECT: How to Prepare an Action Memo for Signature or Decision

- **Purpose.** Use this format to request SecDef approval of a concept, or to sign a letter or memo. What are you asking the principal to do? This memo seeks your approval of a letter (TAB A) to Congressman X in response to his letter (TAB B) asking about Y.
- Explain why it is important and appropriate for the recipient to take this action. Products should be based on analysis, strategic thinking, and mastery of the details; but should not include details irrelevant to the decision you are asking the principal to make.
- **Background.** Provide an abbreviated history, various perspectives on the issue, who else cares and why, where is there alignment and disagreement.
- **Format Matters.** Sentences should be tight, short, and concise. Avoid passive voice.
  - Follow the DoD Manual for Written Material (<https://www.esd.whs.mil/CMD/MFWM/>).
    - Use Times New Roman, 12-pitch, two spaces after a period, and the oxford comma. Bullets should be 5 lines or less.
- (CUI) Portion mark every classified bullet, insert two spaces after a portion marking. Follow published guidance on use of CUI and other classifications.
- **Non-Concurs/Alternate Viewpoints.** If there are non-concurs or comments that are not fully accepted, use this section to indicate the office that non-concurs, the substantive reasons, and alternative viewpoint. OPRs are not required to achieve consensus, but OPRs are accountable for fair representation of divergent views.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Provide a clear, concise recommendation statement. For example, Secretary of Defense sign letter at TAB A or Secretary of Defense approve subject matter, e.g., course of action, release of funds, by initialing below.

Approve \_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* do not include approve/disapprove/other if TAB A is a signature item \*\*

Attachment(s):

TAB A – Signature Item (if applicable)

TAB B – Incoming Correspondence (if applicable)

TAB C – Supplemental Information (if needed)

TAB D – Coordination (always last tab; must include General Counsel; coordination at Principal or Principal Deputy level in OSD or Top 4 on Joint Staff)

Classified by/Derived From:

Reason(s):

Declassify by:

Prepared by: Name, Office

Phone Number:

Controlled by:

CUI Category(ies):

Limited Dissemination Control:

POC: (Name and phone number)