THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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MAY 30 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
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INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
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DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
DIRECTOR, PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Zero Preventable Accidents

I am committed to reducing preventable accidents as one of the cornerstones of the Department of Defense's Safety Program. Consistent with the President's Safety, Health, and Return-To-Employment (SHARE) initiative, I have set some very specific mishap reduction goals for the Department. We are focused on closely monitoring our most pressing mishap areas: civilian and military injuries, aviation accidents, and the number one non-combat killer of our military, private motor vehicle accidents.

We can no longer tolerate the injuries, costs, and capability losses from preventable accidents. Accidents cost the Department about $3 billion per year, with indirect costs up to four times that amount. We have made progress in reducing aviation accidents and civilian lost work days, but have much more to do to address military injuries and private motor vehicle fatalities. Our goal is zero preventable accidents, and I remain fully committed to achieving the 75% accident reduction target in 2008.

The current focus of our Safety Council is on increasing the accountability of individuals and leaders, as well as pursuing safety technologies. Accountability and leadership are key to an effective safety program. I urge you to continue to emphasize safety in the workplace and hold leaders accountable for their safety programs. Your efforts will make the Department a safer place to work, and more capable of defending the Nation and her interests. We have no greater responsibility than to take care of those who volunteer to serve.

Robert M. Gates

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