SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

22 JAN 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

SUBJECT: Election Year Guidance for 2008

1. As we enter the 2008 election year, I want to ensure that you are aware of and comply with Department of Defense (DoD) and Army policies concerning use of facilities for political events and participation of Army personnel in political activities.

2. The DoD Public Affairs Guidance for 2007 (Enclosure) reiterates long-standing policy that DoD personnel acting in their official capacity may not engage in activities that associate DoD with any partisan political campaign or election. It also provides guidance on visits to installations and facilities by candidates, support of political events by military personnel, and voting assistance.

3. Army Regulation (AR) 360-1 provides additional policy and procedural guidance when considering requests for use of Army facilities by candidates or military involvement in election year activities. Installation commanders will not permit the use of installation facilities by any candidate or individual representing a candidate's interest for political assemblies, meetings, fund-raising events, press conferences, or any other activity that could be construed as political in nature.

4. Members of Congress and other elected officials, whether or not candidates for re-election, may visit Army installations to receive briefings, attend official events and receive tours. Requests from Members of Congress to visit an installation should be referred to the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison (OCLL) (See Army Regulation 1-20 for reporting requirements). Candidates who are not current Members of Congress or serving governmental officials may be given the same access to installations as that to which any other unofficial visitor is entitled. Prior to visiting an installation, political candidates must be informed that, while on the military installation, all political activity and media events are prohibited. Requests from candidates to film or tape campaign commercials in front of military equipment on Army installations and facilities will be denied. Installation commanders should immediately notify the OCLL of any concerns, disputes, unresolved issues, or potential problems involving Federal candidates.

5. Army participation or support -- including troops, bands, and color guards -- to political meetings, ceremonies, or similar events is prohibited. Note, however that a joint service color guard may participate in the national conventions of the major political parties. Requests for Army speakers at non-DoD events should be evaluated carefully to preclude participation in politically-oriented programs.

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6. Army leaders and commanders should ensure that military personnel and Federal employees under their leadership are familiar with the laws and policies regarding their active participation in the political process. Department of Defense Directive 1344.10 and AR 600-20, paragraph 5-3, set forth the basic guidance concerning the political activities of officers and enlisted soldiers of the Active Army, the United States Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. The political activities of Federal employees are governed by the revised Hatch Act amendments, 5 U.S.C. § 7321 - 7326, 5 C.F.R. Parts 733-734. The U.S. Office of Special Counsel has prepared a pamphlet and training video, available on AKO in the OCLL Knowledge Center which provides guidance on permitted and prohibited political activities for Federal employees.

7. While active duty military members and Civilian employees may participate in the political process, they are subject to restrictions that preclude them from engaging in any partisan political activity while on duty or in uniform. Army personnel may not engage in political activity while on duty. All military personnel, including National Guard and Reserve Forces, are prohibited from wearing military uniforms at political campaigns and election events.

8. DoD encourages all active duty military, Civilian personnel and their eligible Family members to register and vote. Commanders and Army leaders will support the Federal Voting Assistance Program. Commanders will provide voting assistance officers at every level of command and ensure that they have the training and resources to provide voting assistance.

9. This memorandum is not intended to provide you with exclusive or complete guidance on this area and there may be circumstances that do not clearly fall within established guidance. I expect you to exercise good judgment in handling these issues, consistent with the Army's long-standing policy against engaging in any activities that could be interpreted as associating the Army with a particular political cause or candidate. I encourage you to coordinate any potential issues or involvement with appropriate Army Commands and Headquarters, Department of the Army-level officials as soon as possible.

Pete Geren

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