

# DENVER POST

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## *betrayal in the ranks*

<http://www.denverpost.com/Stories/0,0,36%257E30137%257E1940154,00.html>

### **DoD's Response to Sexual Assaults**

*Editor's note: This is the full text of the Department of Defense's response to the Post's series on sexual assault in the military, written by David S.C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness.*

Any offense committed against or by a member of the military is cause for concern. Rape and other sexual assaults are crimes that violate the ethos of the military and threaten readiness. These crimes simultaneously attack individual dignity and unit cohesion. Sexual assault is, simply stated, unacceptable within the Department of Defense. It will not be tolerated and those responsible must be held accountable. Those victimized must be provided the best possible care.

At various points in their training and professional development, all Service members are made aware of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Code of Conduct, policies regarding sexual assault, and the expectations of someone sworn to protect and defend the Constitution. Despite the excellent training, despite clear definitive policies, and despite what we believe is the generally exemplary conduct of our military personnel, some are questioning whether we need to do more.

This issue is too important to allow doubts to fester or concerns be left unaddressed. For this reason, the Secretary of Defense has directed a detailed review of the effectiveness of our policies and programs, the manner in which the Department deals with sexual assault, and our effectiveness in precluding such assault in the first place. Within 90 days a report will be delivered to the Secretary, but we will not wait for the completion of the report to make any changes found necessary.

We are committed to precluding sexual assault in the military. Regrettably, sexual violence is a problem that challenges American society at large. We in Defense are not immune from the ills of the larger society. We do, however, aim to set a higher standard—and we believe we are succeeding. We are eager to hear from those who believe there are remaining weaknesses we must address. Their willingness to share specific details—not merely general concerns or cases resolved long ago—will be essential in focusing our efforts at continuing improvement.

The American military is committed to high standards of personal conduct, and the prompt, proper care of those who are injured in the course of military service. We owe our people—and the American public—no less.