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News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOD SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE LEAD APPOINTED

The Department of Defense announced today that Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David S.C. Chu has directed Ellen P. Embrey, deputy assistant secretary of defense for force health protection and readiness, to lead the DoD [Task Force](#) on Care for Victims of Sexual Assaults.

“In this role, Ms. Embrey will have the full authority of my office to engage, as necessary and appropriate, the military departments to complete the review,” Chu said. “This includes the services, the Joint Staff, combatant commands, defense agencies and DoD field activities.”

On Feb. 5, the secretary of defense directed a review of how the department handles treatment of and care for victims of sexual assault, with particular attention to the special issues in a combat theater. The task force, established today, is required to report its findings and make recommendations by April 30.

“This is an extremely important endeavor,” Embrey said. “In the next few weeks, we will conduct a detailed review of DoD-wide policy, programs and their effectiveness to provide the best possible care to victims of sexual assault. In order to do that, we will have to examine -- from a command and institutional perspective -- the full spectrum of medical, psychological, other social support services available to a victim, in or out of theater and including ‘outside’ resources.”

The task force will consist of 10 members who have been selected from the services and the Joint Staff. They will draw upon experts from the medical, personnel, social services, legal and criminal investigation communities. Embrey said the task force will engage with numerous military and civilian subject-matter experts to objectively assess treatment of and care for sexual assault victims.

Embrey has already met with several Congressional members and their staffs to demonstrate her personal commitment to leading the task force. She reassured the members that she had some of the same concerns and questions they had expressed.

“We ask our servicemembers to deploy to austere, dangerous locations across the globe. In turn, we are responsible to preserve and protect their safety and well being. I welcome the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the department, particularly on behalf of those who serve our nation,” Embrey said.