



# MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF WAR

December 18, 2025

It is my distinct honor to lead the warriors of the Department of War (DoW) under the leadership of our Commander-in-Chief, Donald J. Trump. Our mission is clear: to secure Peace through Strength while always putting America first. We will achieve this in three ways: by restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding our military, and reestablishing deterrence.

The Department cannot resolve decades of war, neglect of America's defense industrial base, and soaring national debt through unchecked spending. The magnitude and urgency of these challenges demand clear prioritization and sound strategic choices.

The Department of War remains steadfast in its commitment to rigorous annual financial statement audits and is actively conducting a comprehensive budget review. This regimen ensures that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently and effectively to advance President Trump's defense priorities. I have directed this budget review to identify planned expenditures from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget that could be realigned from low-priority and less-impactful programs to advance President Trump's America First vision for our national defense. Through this process, we will develop a list of potential expenditures to fund these priorities while sharpening our focus on the Department's core mission: deterring threats and winning wars.

The FY 2025 audit offers greater transparency and accountability. We are dedicated to openly sharing audit results and using them as a guide for continuous improvement. The Department firmly believes that stakeholder engagement is a sign of openness and accountability. Recognizing that trust from the American public, Congress, and our partners is essential, we are devoted to earning and maintaining that trust through clear, proactive communication and responsible financial management.

The Department of War's FY 2025 audit process marks an essential step in our ongoing commitment to enhanced transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of resources. This year's audit revealed remediations in key areas, reflecting significant progress in financial management. Moreover, the audit process has directly spurred the implementation of critical process and system improvements to address identified findings. Leveraging these findings to drive impactful reforms, technology upgrades, and process improvements is central to our strategy. We believe this report clearly illustrates that progress and our unwavering dedication to ensuring every taxpayer dollar is used effectively and efficiently to strengthen our national defense.

Guided by the principle of Peace through Strength, these strategic audit shifts represent our resolute commitment to President Trump's vision for a secure and prosperous America. By prioritizing resources, embracing innovation, and fostering a culture of accountability, the DoW will continue to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing global landscape, ensuring the readiness and dominance of the U.S. military for generations to come.

Pete Hegseth

