DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
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DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: DoD Year 2000 (Y2K) Community Conversations

Historically, U.S. Military Service Members, DoD Civilians, and their families have always been strongly supportive of the communities in which they live and work. The Y2K challenge provides an opportunity to again demonstrate that commitment and further strengthen those relationships.

People are looking for straight talk about Y2K readiness in their own local communities. From power and phone companies to banks and water utilities, Americans want to know how the important local services upon which they rely may be affected by computers' ability to process the century date change.

I am directing that the Department actively support the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion Community Conversations Program. Local gatherings enable citizens to hear directly from key service providers about the status of efforts to ensure that computers are ready for the date change and the work that remains to be done. They also provide an opportunity for citizens to raise questions or concerns they may have about the Y2K computer problem and enable communities to work together to identify areas where additional preparation and planning are needed. The campaign kicked off in June with several regional and local meetings held across the country.

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I am asking the Secretary of each Military Department to support this effort and encourage major base, post, camp, and station commanders to engage and support their respective civic leaders and communities in holding Y2K Community Conversations. I understand that many military communities have already begun similar outreach efforts, and I applaud and support those proactive efforts. Accordingly, I have directed the Department's Year 2000 Office to support DoD's Y2K Community Conversations making available outreach materials, communicating with the President's Council and participating in events as requested by Commanders.

In the spirit of the American community and in the best traditions of the Armed Forces, I urge each of you to devote the time, talent, and resources necessary to make the President's Y2K Community Conversations Program a truly nation-wide success. Year 2000 Community Conversations will provide information necessary to plan for the date transition event, maximizing our readiness at home so that deployed forces can focus on exercising our national military strategy.

John J. Hamre