

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release No: NR-185-14
April 15, 2014

DoD Announces Comprehensive Review of Military Justice System

The Department of Defense announced today that it has undertaken a comprehensive review of the military justice system.

This year-and-a-half-long effort was ordered by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, on the recommendation of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the DoD general counsel. The review is focused on the structure and operation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the Manual for Courts-Martial and is being conducted by a full-time staff of military justice experts drawn from each of the services, led by The Honorable Andrew Efron, former chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

"It has been more than 30 years since the department has undertaken to examine and update the UCMJ in a systematic fashion," said Hagel. "The review we are now conducting will help ensure the continued effectiveness of our armed forces and the fair administration of justice for our service members."

To carry out this project, the Defense Department's General Counsel Stephen Preston has established the Military Justice Review Group. All of the services, including the U.S. Coast Guard, have assigned experienced judge advocates to the Group, and they have begun their work. Joining the DoD to direct the review is Judge Andrew Efron, who recently retired after 15 years of service on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces and who previously served as general counsel of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Senior Judge David Sentelle, who was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, and Judith Miller, who was DoD general counsel during the Clinton administration, have agreed to serve as senior advisors to the Group. In addition, the Department of Justice has designated an experienced career prosecutor to advise on the project. The Group will provide both a step-back look at ways to improve how the UCMJ operates and a close technical scrub to address any discontinuity after decades of individual amendments.

"Andy Efron is a distinguished jurist and recognized expert on military law and justice," Preston said. "I cannot imagine anyone more qualified or better suited to lead this effort."

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