

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES
THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Security Clearances

The Federal Government needs a qualified, trusted workforce available to successfully execute its missions. However, longstanding practices used in the security processing of individuals and contractors to work for the Government pose challenges to the speed with which these individuals can begin their work or move from one role to another. Specifically, the processes for determining eligibility for access to classified information, determining suitability for Federal employment, determining eligibility to work on a Federal contract, and for granting access to federally controlled facilities and information systems, created for separate purposes, rely on similar background data. Yet the processes for collecting and analyzing this data are not sufficiently standardized or coordinated to allow for individuals to efficiently move between agencies and positions of Government covered by one or more of these processes.

I have determined that the significant opportunities to improve these processes, and the expected benefits of doing so, argue for aggressive efforts to achieve meaningful and lasting reform. Without altering the distinct lines of authority for establishing policies and procedures relating to security clearance, Federal employment suitability, and related determinations, such reform should ensure that the executive branch executes these authorities within a framework that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness while protecting the information collected from unauthorized use or disclosure. Embedding that framework in policies, practices, and infrastructure will ensure that the reform effort and its benefits will continue into the future.

Efforts toward achieving this integration are already underway, sponsored by the Director of National Intelligence, Secretary of Defense, Director of the Office of Personnel Management, and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and coordinated by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. These efforts span near-term improvement opportunities up to a blueprint for a transformed clearance process. I

direct that their continued close coordination and integration produce a comprehensive reform proposal that:

Establishes modernized and comprehensive credentialing, security clearance, and suitability processes that employ updated and consistent standards and methods;

To the extent consistent with applicable law, ensures that investigative standards for security clearance and suitability investigations support and build on each other without requiring duplicative steps;

Enables these innovations with enterprise information technology capabilities that ensure the most effective and efficient performance across the Federal Government;

Updates Government information record systems and, as necessary, applicable laws and regulations, to ensure that information maintained by executive departments and agencies and required for investigation and adjudication is available and can be shared rapidly across Government, while still protecting privacy-related information;

Ensures that a reformed and aligned investigative system maximizes the potential for common ground in the adjudication of those programs whose security and suitability determinations are simultaneous; and,

Ensures that all resulting decisions are in the national interest, protect national security, and provide the Federal Government with an effective workforce.

Under [Executive Order 13381](#), I assigned to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget responsibility for improving the process for determining eligibility for access to classified national security information. Under Executive Orders [10450](#) and [10577](#), as amended, and related statutory authorities, the Office of Personnel Management is assigned various responsibilities related to personnel security investigations and suitability. These and all other current executive orders remain in force. However, recommendations may be made to align or otherwise alter policies and procedures to ensure the effective, efficient, and timely investigation and adjudication of security clearances and suitability for employment for all personnel performing work for or on behalf of the Federal Government.

I hereby direct the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Secretary of Defense, to submit to the President an initial reform proposal not later than April 30, 2008, that includes, as necessary, proposed executive and legislative actions to achieve the goals of reform described above. This proposal should be followed promptly by any additional proposals this group believes necessary to fulfill its mission.

Nothing in this memorandum alters or impedes the ability to carry out the authorities of the executive departments and agencies to perform their responsibilities under existing law, including, but not limited to, the authority of the Director of the Office of Personnel Management under

5 U.S.C. 1103(a)(7) to recommend executive orders amending the civil service rules governing suitability for employment in the competitive service and the excepted service of the United States, and the authority of the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, Department of Justice, under 28 C.F.R. 0.25(b) to draft, revise, and advise as to the form and legality all executive orders prior to submission to the President.

The heads of executive departments and agencies are directed to provide all information and assistance requested by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget in this important endeavor.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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