

Aldridge Delivers Keynote Address During First Official Visit to DAU-DSMC

“We Should Be As Honest and Truthful as We Can When We Put a Budget or Weapon System Before Congress”

Editor’s Note: If one sentence could capture the mindset of the new Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics E.C. “Pete” Aldridge, it would probably be: “Tell the truth and let the chips fall where they may.” The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) and the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC) welcomed Aldridge to their Fort Belvoir, Va., campus June 5, 2001, as keynote speaker for the DAU 10th Anniversary/DSMC 30th Anniversary celebration. The occasion marked his first visit to DAU-DSMC in his new capacity. In a 30-minute presentation followed by a candid question-and-answer session, Aldridge presented his new theme, five primary goals, and overall priorities. For those *Program Manager* readers seeking a clearer understanding of the new boss and his initiatives/priorities, the article is “must” reading.



This is my 14th day on the job – 14th and a few hours. So bear with me, because it’s been quite a circus ride for the last couple of weeks. As you know, the Secretary of Defense is undertaking a review of the [Department] strategy; he’s just finished the FY 01 budget supplemental that’s been given to Congress; we’re in the process of finishing an FY 02 budget amendment that will go to Congress by the end of the month; and we’re working on the QDR [Quadrennial Defense Review] for the FY 03 budget. All of this is going on simultaneously

while many of us are trying to learn our jobs – without much help. A lot of the positions have not yet been filled. And while we have some very capable acting people in the jobs, we’re still lacking the Presidential appointees and others.

As Frank [Anderson] pointed out, this is my fifth time in the Pentagon, or as some people have said, “You’re obviously going to keep doing it till you get it right.” But I have had the opportunity to work in many parts of the Department. I have worked for Don

Rumsfeld on previous occasions when he was Secretary of Defense. I was running the Program Analysis and Evaluation Office at the time. I got to know him very well. I got to work with him, and I’m very comfortable in working with him now – quite honored to have the privilege of doing so again.

During the time that I came into the office before my confirmation, I did have a chance to think about some things I wanted to do. I could listen, but I could not make any decisions; I could give only informal advice, and I couldn’t sit in the

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office in which I was eventually going to sit. But I could think about some ideas and things that we could accomplish for the future.

A New Theme

My first thought was something about a theme for the office — what's going to be the direction or vector that this office will follow? First, I considered the issue of *Acquisition Reform*, which of course has been on everyone's mind over the past seven years. A new term called *Transformation* has also been part of an ongoing theme throughout the Department. But I don't particularly like the term *Acquisition Reform* (and that is strictly my personal view). It sounds like I've done something bad; therefore, I must "repent" and "reform." And since I didn't like the term, I've decided to move into some-

Goals

I also had the opportunity during my thinking process to try to determine, "What are my goals? What are the goals of the office going to be over the next several years?" I thought we would start by writing down three or four — there are literally hundreds of areas and opportunities. It is a target-rich environment in the acquisition field for improvement as everybody in this audience certainly knows. But I wanted to focus on those things which would establish *my* priorities, and *my* direction, and *my* commitment, and also reflect the activities of the staff and the multiple agencies that carry out this acquisition business.

I started with four goals — I couldn't make it in four, so I ended up with five.

several mistakes; we've had cost overruns; and we've slipped schedules. We do that too many times because we tend to go to the Congress with an optimistic estimate of what our programs are going to cost. And as a result of that, we get micro-managed. Many of the problems — micro-management of funds that are earmarked for various activities, the schedules and milestones we have to do, and the reports that we have to write — are the result of a lack of credibility with our process. And I want to do something about that.

DAB PROCESS

I want to improve the Defense Acquisition Board process to eliminate many unnecessary meetings; we're, in fact, going to revise the Board membership to include the Service Secretaries. That sends out a very important message because the Service Secretaries in this Administration are very much acquisition-oriented. It was part of the list of qualifications for being appointed as one of the Service Secretaries. The Secretary of Defense established what qualifications he wanted for the Service Secretaries: he wanted them to have industry experience and he wanted them to have a knowledge of the Defense business. And they all have that — *in spades*. I believe they're going to be much more "hands-on" in the acquisition and logistics support business than we've seen perhaps in past Service Secretaries.

EVOLUTIONARY ACQUISITION

The new 5000-series documents include Spiral Development, or Evolutionary Development as a means to cut down cycle time, reduce risks, and reduce costs. These are the kinds of things we're going to be working on, including realistic pricing of our programs. We're going to, again, try to reduce cycle time both in the acquisition business and in the logistics business, and look at performance-based contracts.

E-BUSINESS SOLUTIONS AND E-LEARNING

And I believe an initiative, which certainly is reflective of DAU and DSMC, is the e-Business application across the Department. Electronic business can im-

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thing called *Acquisition and Logistics Excellence* — we're moving from *Acquisition Reform* to *Acquisition and Logistics Excellence*.

Hundreds of studies have been conducted on Acquisition Reform issues/Logistics Reform issues, and I believe we know what to do. Now it's just a matter of implementing what we've learned. Therefore, the theme *Acquisition and Logistics Excellence*, I believe, is a better reflection of, "Let's get on with improving capabilities and doing those things which we know are right."

That's my theme — *Acquisition and Logistics Excellence* — and you're going to hear a lot about that from a lot of people I'm sure over the next months and years. We sincerely hope it will be the right message we want to put forth.

Let me go through those and explain each one. Some of you in the audience may have already heard them. I see John Douglass [former Navy Acquisition Executive] in the audience. I recently visited with the Aerospace Industries Association in Williamsburg and had the opportunity to talk with John and other CEOs. And I think it was mutually beneficial.

Goal 1

The first goal is *to establish the credibility and the effectiveness of the acquisition and logistics support process*.

TRUST

If you look at our track record on the Hill, you will find that many of the problems that we're facing in the acquisition business are, I believe, because the Congress doesn't trust us. We have made

prove the efficiency and quality of our performance, and I am particularly interested in expanding our work on e-Business solutions. Certainly, e-Business learning is an important part of that process.

Goal 2

The second goal is *to revitalize the quality and the morale of the Acquisition Workforce*. Over the years you have all experienced the reductions in the Acquisition Workforce. And I believe the message that comes from those reductions is that maybe you're not as appreciated as you should be. I believe we need to revitalize this issue, because being a smart buyer is absolutely essential for the Acquisition Workforce and the government as we head into the future. We need to work on those things that can bring the quality of the workforce up, improve their morale, and certainly training and education is one of those critical areas.

The other issue of course as we all know, is that the Acquisition Workforce is aging. The distribution of the workforce is such that there are many people – something like 50 percent of the Acquisition Workforce – eligible to retire in the next four or five years. We need to do something about that, and we need to bring new people into the workforce. We know we have abilities to hire in some of the Laboratories for new scientists and engineers, but I'd like to expand that across the entire workforce to see what we can do to revitalize the hiring process, improve the hiring process, and make it more rapid.

We also need to really think through a Strategic Plan for the workforce. There's an ongoing expansion of that where David Chu, who was recently sworn in as the new Personnel and Readiness Under Secretary, and I have been tasked by the Secretary of Defense to look at the civilian workforce across the entire Department of Defense, and we'll be working on that. The Acquisition Workforce obviously would be an element of what we can do there. And I think the Secretary is looking for some new initiatives for the Department in that re-



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gard. Again, continuous education is an important part of this particular goal.

Goal 3

The third goal is *to improve the health of the industrial base*. If you talk to people on Wall Street and ask them what they think about investing in the defense industry, you'll find some very negative people. They'd rather invest their money in bonds than invest it in the defense industry. I think that's wrong. If we're to have the finest weapon systems in the world for our troops, we have to have the finest industry in the world as well. I believe we must realize that the industry

objective of profit (that's why they're in the business) can and must be consistent with our own objectives of having the very finest weapon systems we can. We have to appreciate their objectives; they have to appreciate ours.

And I think we can do a lot to improve the health of the [Defense] industry, which is good for us and good for them. It also makes them more competitive; it attracts investment so they can invest money in new ideas; and if the industrial base is healthy and profitable, they acquire and retain very good talent. So the health of the industrial base is good for industry and good for us, and I'm going to be doing a lot of things to support that initiative.

In fact, one policy I recently directed was that the Department of Defense would no longer co-fund or insist that industry co-fund development programs within the Department. Industry was using Independent Research and Development [IR&D] money to pay for cost increases in DoD development programs. I thought that was wrong. We should pay for these cost increases, and industry should not have to do that. [See “Aldridge Publishes Policy on Contractor Investment in Defense Programs,” p. 28, this issue.]

We're also looking at other things for industry such as incentives for reducing excess capacity, looking at the profit policies to make them more commercial-friendly. We're interested in small businesses, making sure that the small business sector of our industrial base is also in good health. We spend almost \$50 billion a year on small business – it's a major part of our defense investment. And we need to make sure that small businesses have the opportunity of providing quality products. And again, looking across our contracts to make them more commercial-like is certainly something that we ought to do.

Goal 4

The fourth goal is that we must *rationalize the weapon systems and infrastructure that will support the new strategy that's being developed by the Department*. While

that's still an ongoing process at this particular time, sometime this summer we'll finalize the Department's future strategy and direction. At that point, we can rationalize those weapon systems that support the new strategy – and perhaps those that do not – as well as the supporting infrastructure. And maybe for the first time, if we have to go through a BRAC [base realignment and closure] process again, we can identify and have a strategy that supports the BRAC analysis rather than just having some type of a one base vs. another trade-off. But I believe it is important that we clearly define weapon systems and infrastructure in the new strategy.

Goal 5

The fifth and last goal is to *initiate those high-leverage technologies that provide the warfighting capabilities and strategies of the future*. What I'm looking for here is to initiate those war-winning technologies – like Stealth was many years ago – which really make a difference in combat operations.

As we look over the past eight or nine years, we've had about an 11 percent reduction in our science and technology [S&T] budget. We need to reverse that trend. We need to build back the S&T budget and I believe if we do so, we can start doing some new, innovative things in our basic research program; we can increase the number of Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration programs, and we can get DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] back on the leading edge of technologies.

I think this is the kind of direction in which we have to move. If you've been reading in many of the Presidential statements about the war-winning capabilities and the weapons of the future, I'm seeing some encouragement from the Administration that this is certainly a goal we would all like to achieve.

How Do We Achieve These Goals?

First, I believe active and decisive leadership from the Office of the Under Secretary for AT&L [Acquisition, Technol-



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ogy and Logistics] is very important to making these goals achievable. We need to change the environment in which we

operate. I am streamlining the DAB process and getting the Service Secretaries involved so that the decisions are made at the DAB. There is no need to go off and staff-out DAB decisions after-the-fact.

I also plan to implement more use of metrics to measure progress. We're in the process right now of identifying the metrics that would go along with these goals, how we measure them, and how we report them. I have a plan for two levels of metrics: one would go to the Secretary of Defense with such broad issues as looking at acquisition cycle time, cost overruns, logistics and customer wait times – things that would identify how well we're making the five goals work, and how well we're performing across-the-board. The second level of metrics, which will be much more detailed, I will look at personally on a periodic basis.

I was impressed with the briefing I just heard from Frank Anderson [DAU President]. I think that DAU-DSMC can contribute to these goals. Together, DAU and DSMC are the cornerstone of our training and education of the AT&L workforce. I was impressed with the number of graduates – 120,000 from DSMC and over 300,000 from all of DAU. You're training essentially almost all of our PEOs [program executive officers] and program managers who make and deliver weapon systems to our forces.

But I also know that you're not resting on your past; you're making great strides in the modernization of the acquisition educational process to meet the needs of the future. And I'm very impressed with these initiatives. I particularly was impressed with the strategy-driven customer focus; training concept; expansion of e-Learning, which is consistent with the direction of e-Business; case-based training; and, of course, the strategic alliances that you've cultivated across all the universities, industry, and elsewhere.

Your challenge in the future is to ensure the excellence of the acquisition educational process. Thank you very much – and Happy Birthday!

Straight From the Top

ALDRIDGE SPEAKS OUT ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES FACING THE ACQUISITION COMMUNITY

Q Over the years it appears that the development community has changed a great deal, the requirements community has changed as well, but we struggle sometimes with changing the PPBS [planning, programming, and budgeting system] process. What suggestions would you have to help bring our “siblings” along in this endeavor?

A It’s going to be very hard as you well know. The PPBS process has been ingrained in the Department of Defense for a long time. It’s interesting to note that this year, with the change in Administration and delay in the QDR, we’re putting the summer issue cycle process together with the budget process, and I think this is going to be a very interesting test as to whether that will work. Because I believe that streamlining of the PPBS is one way to get this done, and maybe rather than doing the summer cycle and fall cycle as separate, complete entities we could, in fact, *should*, bring those two issues together.

I also think we need to get our DAB process more in line with the PPBS cycle. We tend to get out of cycle and when we do, issues that the DAB has decided upon and issues it may be implementing might be raised during the budget reviews, and therefore get out of cycle. Issues could change because of budgets, not because of logic and rationale applied to the program. There appears to be a mismatch of timing here. If we could essentially reduce the PPBS to a one-cycle period, I believe a lot of these problems would go away. And I believe we have the mechanisms and the computer programs that can do that. But we’ll see how this is going to work this year, and we’ll probably have a lot of lessons learned from this cycle to make it better.

Q Your preference for the theme Acquisition and Logistics Excellence is outstanding. Do you see a need to assess how well



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the Acquisition Reform initiatives of the last seven years have taken root?

A I think we ought to assess ourselves all the time. Yes, I believe we should. I believe a lot of good ideas were created during this process; there are many more that could be implemented. Yes, I think an assessment of how well we’ve done would be valuable. You always learn from the past, and if you have something to show in the way of Acquisition Reform lessons learned over the past seven years, I’d like to see it.

Q Do you see a need for reform in test processes and requirements?

A Absolutely. Let me talk to requirements first because I think that area tends to fall out of this. If we are serious about this evolutionary spiral development, we also have to be consistent with the requirements that lead to the weapons systems that accept spiral development. We almost have to have a spiral requirements process.

That’s a problem that I’m beginning to see the Joint Staff and the JROC [Joint Requirements Oversight Council] process pick up. That has not been the case in the past where the requirement was, “Give me the ultimate answer at the right time.”

And of course we could put F-22 in that category. That’s basically what we did. We knew what we wanted ultimately, and it’s taken us a long time. I was the source selection on the downselect for the Advanced Tactical Fighter in 1987. And we still haven’t gotten [the F-22] into production. The Joint Strike Fighter is a program where we are thinking about spiral development very carefully – Global Hawk is certainly another one. Spiral requirements have to be consistent with spiral development.

The testing process I believe is also the same way. In spiral development, you're not testing the ultimate configuration — you're testing a slightly different version of it. So maybe we ought to think about spiral testing, spiral development, and the spiral requirements process as all being intertwined.

Q

There's been some comment about trying to make industry more profitable. What kinds of ideas might you have for further cooperation between industry and government?

A

Generally, my ideas encompass several areas. One is this idea of forcing industry to co-develop or pay for development of a defense program. I think that's a bankrupt practice. It lets us [DoD] "off the hook" in the sense that we're taking the profits from industry to bail us out of underfunding a particular development program. I believe that's not the kind of philosophy that we ought to have. If we want a program, we should be able to pay for it. And industry should make a profit on what we buy from them; they're not going to be in business otherwise. That's their objective. They have stockholders to answer to, and we have to respect their objective.

There are some things we can and need to do, for example, in the removal of excess capacity. What normally happens is a company reduces a factory that is no longer producing something, and we immediately renegotiate the overhead rate so the government gets the savings. What we need to do is share the savings with industry for a couple of years. The plan, or the idea, is that the first year we'll share 50/50 with the savings, and then let that be decreased over a period of time — say after five years. Then it goes down to a normal negotiating rate. In the profit policy, we actually pay industry to make more money for excess facilities. So we need to take that equation out of the profit determination equation.

Also, I think we have to recognize that many of our businesses are not interested in doing business with the Department of Defense. I know Hewlett Packard for one "just says no" because they don't want to put up with the burdensome regulations and the low profit margins. I think we have to think more in terms of commercial-like contracts, which will attract to the Department of Defense those advanced technologies that exist in the commercial sector. We're not going to do so by having very low profit margins. We've just going to have to recognize that if we want the technology, we're going to have to pay for it. And I believe there's a fair, equitable way in which we can do that for both sides.

Q

Sometimes the issue of the acquisition budget can result in failure to budget for contingency operations or overruns in operations and support. Do you see any way to address those issues?

A

First of all, there's always going to be the situation where there's an unpredicted contingency, and that is what a supplemental [budget request] is for. Unfortunately, we are budgeting for contingencies that are somewhat ongoing. In the FY 02 budget preparation we're working on right now, we're making assumptions that we will not ask for an FY 02 supplemental. We're going to pay it all up front — the full thing — including the contingency. But I think the idea that we can eliminate supplementals altogether will not happen. At some point, there will be a real emergency — and that has to be funded.

However, on the other hand I believe we should be as honest and truthful as we can when we put a budget or weapon system before Congress. And that includes putting sufficient management reserve and margin in the program that can accept some uncertainty that will undoubtedly exist. Now that is extremely hard, and you've got to get the Comptroller "off your back" so to speak, because the Comptroller will be the first one to take that reserve away from you.

Nevertheless, I believe truth in advertising and truth in pricing of programs has to be an essential part of everything we do, which gets back to the issue of credibility. We run over to Congress every six months asking for cost increases in programs we've underpriced. We need to get away from that practice. That means, as you well know, that we won't be able to put as many programs in the budget as we would have otherwise. But my view is, "that's OK." Let's fund the ones properly that we can, and end this practice of running back to Congress when we know we're going to have a problem. If shortfalls can be absorbed within the Reserve, I believe our credibility will come back.

Q

You mentioned increasing the role of DARPA — would you briefly discuss DARPA's role in transitioning technologies?

A

We're in the process right now of looking at the FY 02 budget and trying to increase the S&T budget. If the S&T budget does get increased for 02, DARPA will get a substantial share of that as well as basic research. In that case, what we need to do is put DARPA back out on the leading edge of technologies. These additional S&T funds will allow that to happen. And as part of that, I talked to the new DARPA designee, and this is one of the things we're talking about — how we would get transitioning technology back to the Services faster. An increased number of ACTDs [Advanced

Concept Technology Demonstrations] can also do that, but I think we need to work with the Services on both sides so that we know when the technology is ready for transitioning, and the Services are prepared to receive it.



Accountability – what are we going to do to hold people accountable for some of these programs and build credibility?



First of all, I think we need to get the regulation out that tells program managers how to build their programs from the beginning. In it are all the factors that they really need to know like interoperability, making sure they have a good test plan, making sure their command and control activities are all part of their program when they come forth, and they've realistically priced their program. Now once they've done that, I think it's up to the Service Acquisition Executives to hold their program managers accountable for their programs. Again, be truthful up front. If they're truthful up front and price their programs properly, I think they can, in fact, deliver.

We [DoD] deliver a tremendous performance. Everywhere you look, we always have good performance. Cost and schedule may not look very good, but performance is always great. I think people need to be accountable for all of them. We just have to watch it.



The role of government as being a smart buyer – where is the balance between the government retaining the knowledge base internally among its own ranks vs. transferring some of that responsibility to industry?



My personal view is that I think the pendulum has swung a little too far and we need to bring it back to having the government retain the responsibility of being smart buyers. Now how we get the people to make that happen is a tougher question, because we're going to have to find a way to compete with industry for those quality people. One way we do that obviously is by giving them great jobs to do – exciting things to do.

In the direction we're going, I think we're on the verge of starting the new transformation of our future workforce. But we have to pay them competitive wages and have a process for hiring them that's not burdensome to the individual people who are directing some of these laboratories and agencies that are hiring.

This is part of an issue we talked about earlier. Congress a year ago gave the authority to the Defense Agency Directors to hire with streamlined processes. My understanding

is that it was not exercised within the Department of Defense to allow them to do that. I think that's crazy. I talked with the new Personnel and Readiness Under Secretary, Dr. David Chu, about revising that and getting us authority to proceed in that direction. We need to look at that from an overall point of view – the overall Acquisition Workforce, not just those in the laboratories. I think that's something we need to do – we've got to become competitive with industry, and we're not going to have smart buyers if we don't.



You've been a senior official at OSD; you've been a Service Secretary; now you're back as Under Secretary; and you've seen the view from industry as well. We know recently on a couple of programs, DoD has gotten in trouble and you've announced that we're going to take this back to OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense]. When industry looks at all this, and when they look at the quality of people DoD puts in as the Service Secretaries, we see a lot of good news. We see some people with real savvy, knowledgeable of the internal workings of the Pentagon as far as what works and what doesn't work. But I think it might be helpful to the group here today if you could tell us a little bit about how you use your relationship with the Service Secretaries and the Service Acquisition Executives in holding them accountable once you agree on the DAB number and commit to living within those resources.



The relationship between the Service Secretaries and me is that I'm going to hold the Service Acquisition Executives accountable. As it relates to some of the more recent actions on a couple of programs we reviewed and elevated back to essentially AT&L responsibility – one was obviously the V-22, which was a program that had experienced some problems. A blue ribbon panel had made a recommendation to slow the program down to reinstitute a wider variety of testing activities. In the process of looking at that program, it was of interest to the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and me to be a little more involved with the decision as to where that program is going. And at that time, we didn't have any Service Secretary positions filled, unfortunately, so the decision was to elevate that decision process back up to me.

As we go through this revision of the V-22 program, we've got a couple of technical activities underway that are going to happen over the next 90 days. They're going to come back and report to me. We'll make a decision on the program, and at that point we will take it back down to the Service activities. The visibility of that program is so high we thought it was appropriate to do this.

Another activity was the Chemical Demilitarization Program, a \$15 billion program that's associated with some activities on getting rid of all the chemical weapons. We

were perceived by Congress as letting that program languish a little bit, and we did find some problems. Therefore, I elevated that decision, again from the Service Secretary (in this case Army) back up to me, to take a look at the program, lay out a direction, and then give it back to the Service Secretary.

I think there is going to be a much closer relationship between the Service Secretaries and me, and I'm going to be turning to them mostly, except for some very high-visibility programs. The F-22 is one coming up as a matter of fact. These type programs are of such high visibility that basically they're looking to the Secretary of Defense to give them direction. But once the programs are going and they're operating efficiently and effectively, they are going to be given back to the Service Secretaries to implement. We shouldn't be elevating every decision for programs that are being run correctly; perhaps, that's an incentive in and of itself – that when they're being run correctly, they're on cost, on schedule, and on performance, there's no reason to elevate the decision. But when they get into trouble, it's probably best from an overall Department of Defense point of view, that someone pick that program up, and that would have to be my responsibility. I am ultimately responsible to the Secretary of Defense. Even though I've delegated acquisition to the Service Secretaries, still, "the ball rolls over here." The Secretary of Defense looks to me for those things, and I'm going to have to explain why I have done the things I've done, one way or the other.



You've talked a lot about the acquisition cycle and leading-edge technology. I'd like to hear some of your ideas about the other layer of your responsibilities – logistics. It's a large driver of total operating costs out here, and I'm just interested in how to integrate it with acquisition.



You're quite right. I did focus on acquisition. I didn't mean to. When I'm talking to my staff, I talk about *Acquisition and Logistics Excellence* – both of those are equally important. And I think we can do some things in logistics that improve our support. One is measuring what's important, and that is how fast you can get a part to the guy on the flightline. And we're looking at customer wait time as a new metric to do that.

I spent about five hours at DLA [Defense Logistics Agency] a couple of weeks ago. And I was very impressed with the

things they have ongoing out there. Their business systems, particularly the ERP [Enterprise Resource Planning] System that they're implementing, are leading the Department of Defense as far as I can see. They're privatizing as much as they can to drive their overhead costs down, and they're improving the efficiency of how they're managing their people.

But I think there's a wide variety of things we need to look at, both in the technology and how we reduce our footprint. We're actually looking across our whole depot and logistics support system with a long-range plan as well, and that's in development. We hope to have it finished before the end of the year.

Logistics is equally up on our radar screen, and I hope I did not imply that it's not important. It accounts for a lot of money out of our defense budget, and we need to manage it properly.



Your new 5000-series regulations that have recently been published provide for accelerated transitioning of items into the field. I've noticed that with the new RFPs [Requests for Proposals] that are coming out, even with some advanced technology items and with some mature technology items, there's still this effort to keep things in competition, even though it appears that they're ready to go into procurement earlier. Do you plan on putting out any guidance that clarifies when they can enter into procurement other than what's in 5000-2? It looks like program managers and program executive officers are inhibited by this requirement to keep competition, even though the items may be already developed or mature enough to enter later.



I'm unfamiliar with the provisions you speak of, but I believe the best approach would be to examine each procurement on a case-by-case basis. I'm all for competition, but when it's time for competition to be over, it should be over. Let's get on with it. I see no advantages in keeping competition beyond when it looks like competition should be over. I apologize – I can't respond to that in any direct way. But if we can reduce cycle time and keep the competition up – again, I'm all for it.