

Panel Suggests Changes in Long-Term Defense Planning

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JULY 29, 2010)

Lisa Daniel

WASHINGTON—A congressionally mandated panel has recommended broad changes to long-term Defense Department strategies and priorities, including funding a major recapitalization of equipment, revamping the personnel system, and expanding the number of people serving in the Navy.

Former Defense Secretary William J. Perry and former National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley gave their final report as co-chairs of the Independent Panel's Assessment of the Quadrennial Defense Review to the House Armed Services Committee today. The QDR is a legislatively mandated review of Department of Defense strategy and priorities.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates appointed 12 of the 20 members on the panel in 2009 to assess the 2010 QDR, which was released in February. The other eight panel members were selected by Congress. The panel's report is called "The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America's National Security Needs in the 21st Century."

The panel found that the QDR did not project out far enough to prepare the military for the long term, Perry said. Rather, he said, the QDR focused primarily on the next four to five years around the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "If I were secretary of defense today, I would have done the same thing," said Perry, who served from 1993 to 1997.

Perry, who served in President Bill Clinton's administration, and Hadley, who served under President George W. Bush, said the panel showed remarkable nonpartisanship and was unanimous in its findings.

The panel identified America's four "enduring national interests that transcend politics" as: defense of the homeland; assured access to sea, air, space, and cyberspace; a favorable balance of power in western Asia; and overall humanitarian good.

Among the potential threats to U.S. national interests, according to the panel, are radical Islamic extremism and terrorism, the rise of great powers in the East, tensions in the Middle East, and competition for resources.

While "soft power" capabilities of diplomacy and civilian support are important, Hadley said, "the world's first order of concern will continue to be security concerns."

Because of that, the panel recommends a recapitalization of military hardware to replace the wear and tear of nine years of war, Perry said. "This will be expensive," he said. "But deferring recapitalization will require even more expenses in the future."

The panel also recommends a restructuring of forces to build up Navy end-strength and improve the Air Force's long-range strike capabilities. Current Army and Marine Corps ground forces are sufficient for the long term, the panel said. Today's forces are fully capable of handling any threat that may emerge today, Perry said, but the panel believes a buildup of Navy forces in the western Pacific is necessary to counter emerging threats there, notably Chinese militarization.

U.S. allies in the East "are worried about China, and they want us there working with China, and we are," Perry said. He added, "I do not anticipate any military conflict with China, and if it were to happen it would be a huge failure of diplomacy."

To avoid a potential arms race in Asia, Perry said, the U.S. military needs to maintain a consistently strong force in the region.

The panel's assessment also calls for a reconsideration of managing resources. Gates' acquisition reform plans are "a good start," Perry said, but they don't go far enough.

Defense officials should require dual competition in all production programs, and set a limit of five to seven years for the delivery of all defined programs, Perry said. Historically, he said, all successful programs are delivered in four to five years, and programs that drag on beyond 10 years "are guaranteed to cost too much."

Also, Pentagon officials need to clarify roles within the department's acquisition workforce as to who is responsible for the delivery of programs, Hadley said. "It's a muddy picture, with lots of layering and lots of review without clear authority," he added.

In its review, Perry said, the panel was firmly supportive of continuing with an all-volunteer force, but found that changes are needed to reduce personnel costs in maintaining pay and benefits that have become increasingly generous since conscription ended in the 1970s. Specifically, the panel recommends establishing a commission to consider cost savings in pay and benefits and the panel's suggestion to increase length of service for retirement eligibility from 20 years to as long as 40 years.

"I don't need to tell this committee that this is politically charged," Perry said. He added that extending service is important to retain people in whom the military has invested much education and training.

The panel also recommends a re-evaluation of how the military uses National Guard and Reserve Component forces.

"Our panel thinks we really need to re-think our relationship between the active force and the Guard and reserves, and if we need a mobilization capability beyond our current mobilization force," Hadley said. "How much of the Guard and reserve is an operational reserve? How much of it is a strategic reserve? How much of it is for homeland security? All this needs to be re-thought."

Logistical Drawdown in Iraq Proceeds Ahead of Schedule

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (AUG. 6, 2010)

Donna Miles

WASHINGTON—As President Barack Obama this week hailed "one of the largest logistics operations we've seen in decades" accompanying the force drawdown in Iraq, the commander overseeing the movement credited hard work and intensive preparation with ensuring the mission proceeds smoothly and ahead of schedule.

"We're moving out millions of pieces of equipment," the president said in a speech to the Disabled American Veterans describing progress toward reducing the U.S. footprint in Iraq to 50,000 troops by Sept. 1, and ultimately to zero by the end of 2011.

Army Brig. Gen. Mark Corson, commander of the Army Reserve's 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, is the point man on the ground charged with overseeing the logistical withdrawal while continuing to support forces on the ground.

Conducting the largest re-posturing of forces and equipment in more than 40 years is nothing short of "monumental," he acknowledged during a phone interview with American Forces Press Service from his headquarters at Joint Base Balad in Iraq. It's an around-the-clock operation that involves flying several thousand troops and moving 3,000 to 4,000 trucks loaded with their accompanying equipment, property, and supplies to Kuwait or the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr every day.

The pace of the exodus—about 72,000 pieces of equipment a month since June 2009—is up, Corson reported. During May alone, U.S. forces returned 146,700 pieces of equip-

ment to the United States, including 2,700 vehicles, generators, trailers, and material-handling equipment.

Most of the equipment gets returned to the States, some gets sent forward to troops in Afghanistan, and under tightly controlled conditions based on a congressional mandate, some gets left behind for use by Iraqi security forces.

Just five weeks after assuming command of the logistical drawdown, Corson said he's satisfied by the progress. "So far, it's going extremely well," he said. "We are actually two weeks ahead of schedule."

That's a far cry from how Corson felt back in 2003, when, as commander of the 450th Control Battalion, his focus was on surging massive quantities of logistical support into Iraq to support the initial U.S. troops there.

"We got here about two weeks after forces crossed the berm [into Iraq] and found ourselves playing catch-up," he said of the initial deployment. Working with communications equipment they were issued on arrival, and having to set up the systems and processes to support the logistical operation, Corson called the mission "a period of high adventure."

"The Army did its best to train us for what we were going to face during [Operation Iraqi 1] the liberation of Iraq, but the truth was, we didn't know what we were going to face," he said. "We found that the adaptability and resourcefulness of the American servicemember really came into play, because we made a lot of our processes up and perfected them on the spot—and we were successful."

Drawing down in Iraq is a whole different story. "We now have excellent facilities, excellent infrastructure, and excellent communications," Corson said. "The biggest challenge facing us now is that we have so much stuff...and we have to make sure the movement is all coordinated, and that we execute it well and safely while also sustaining the force."

And with a clearer sense of what the drawdown mission would entail, the Army was able to set up Corson's team for success from the start.

"A tremendous amount of planning went into this, in very great detail, so we came into a very well-planned operation," he said.

Corson and his key staff spent months interfacing with the unit they replaced in Iraq—the 13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, before the deployment to ensure a smooth transition.

They also participated in several major exercises, including a massive command post exercise at Fort Lee, Va., that Corson said prepped the staff for many of the situations they're now encountering in Iraq.

"It's like we were in a simulator," he said. "When we face challenges here, I tell people, we have seen this before. We have done this before.

"We're extremely well-trained for this, and that is one of the reasons I think it's going so well," he continued. "It's because so much effort on the part of the Services was put into this that it set us up for success."

Now on the ground, Corson credits his team of active duty, Army Reserve, and National Guard soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines, as well as civilians, and contractors with putting this preparation to work as they endure grueling hours, stifling heat, and challenging conditions to keep the mission on track.

He paid particular tribute to the truck drivers and convoy escort teams who run 70 to 100 convoys every day, bumping their way down Iraq's roadway system that's notoriously busy by day and long and lonely by night.

"These are some of the hardest working folks I've ever met, and everybody wants to be here," he said. "The typical workweek is a 13- or 14-hour day, six-and-a-half days a week, and if we didn't make them take that half day, many of them wouldn't."

Concerned that they may be pushing themselves too hard—particularly in light of progress already made—Corson recently directed a "safety stand-down" so his troops can "catch their breath" and perform extra vehicle as well as personal maintenance. The mission will continue 24/7, he said, but at a slightly slower pace in the interest of keeping it safe.

These troops "are doing a fantastic job of getting things where they need to be and getting the material out," Corson said, and all recognize the magnitude of their mission. "Folks are very excited about this because they know that once again, we are making history, and this is their opportunity to contribute."



Army Brig. Gen. Mark W. Corson, commanding general of the 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command (left), along with Army Command Sgt. Maj. LeRoy Haugland, command sergeant major of the 103rd ESC, uncased the 103rd ESC colors during a transfer of authority ceremony July 1, 2010, at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The event symbolized the 13th ESC completing its mission and the 103rd ESC taking the reins to continue sustainment operations in support of the responsible drawdown of U.S. troops and equipment from Iraq.

U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Emily Walter

Gates Puts Meat on Bones of Department Efficiencies Initiative

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (AUG. 9, 2010)

Jim Garamone

WASHINGTON—Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates is putting meat on the bones of his initiative to reform the way

the Pentagon does business and to eliminate duplicative, unnecessary overhead costs.

During a Pentagon news conference today, Gates said the steps he is taking will help the U.S. military fight the wars it faces now, and help ready the force for the wars it may face in the future. With these moves, the secretary said, he wants to instill a culture of saving in the department.

Money saved with these efficiencies will go back into funding needed military capabilities. "To be clear, the task before us is not to reduce the department's top-line budget," Gates said. "Rather, it is to significantly reduce its excess overhead costs and apply the savings to force structure and modernization."

President Barack Obama has programmed in real growth of between 1 and 2 percent into future years' defense budgets, but that is not enough to maintain today's warfighting capabilities and modernize, which requires roughly 2 to 3 percent real growth. The savings in overhead are crucial to making up that difference, Gates said.

Earlier this year, the secretary tasked the Services to find \$100 billion in overhead savings over the next five years.

"This exercise is well underway, as the Services are evaluating their programs and activities to identify what remains a critical priority and what is no longer affordable," he said. "They are all planning to eliminate headquarters that are no longer needed and reduce the size of the staffs that remain."

Gates also authorized the Services to consider consolidation or closure of excess bases and other facilities. It is a measure of Gates' determination to save money that he has proposed this, he noted, since Congress has made it almost impossible to close bases. "But hard is not impossible, and I hope Congress will work with us to reduce unnecessary costs in this part of the defense enterprise," he said.

The secretary also announced a number of immediate steps he will take. Gates said he will reduce the funding for support contractor personnel by 10 percent a year for the next three years.

Gates is freezing the number of office of the secretary of defense, defense agency, and combatant command manpower positions at the fiscal 2010 levels for the next three years. He said this is just a first step to studying these leadership organizations.

"We will conduct a 'clean-sheet review' to determine what our people should be doing, where, at what level of rank in keeping with the department's most critical priorities," he said.

He is also freezing the number of senior Defense Department leaders at fiscal 2010 levels. He will appoint a senior task force to assess the number of positions for general and flag officers, senior executive service employees, and political appointees.

"At a minimum, I expect this effort to cut at least 50 general and flag officer positions and 150 senior civilian executive positions over the next two years," he said.

Gates also pushed the potential for economies of scale—especially in the information technology arena.

"All of our bases, operational headquarters, and defense agencies have their own IT infrastructures, processes, and application-ware," Gates said. "This decentralized approach results in large cumulative costs, and a patchwork of capabilities that create cyber vulnerabilities and limit our ability to capitalize on the promise of information technology." The secretary directed the department to increase the use of common information technology functions.

The Pentagon is awash in reports; the secretary is freezing the overall number of required oversight reports, and he will immediately cut by a quarter the money allocated to the effort.

The department similarly has a number of boards and commissions that have outlived their usefulness. He directed that the department eliminate those boards no longer needed and an overall funding cut of 25 percent for these boards.

The secretary also is looking for efficiencies in the department's intelligence apparatus. He has directed an immediate 10 percent reduction in funding for intelligence advisory and assistance contracts and a freeze in the number of senior executive service positions. He also is moving to end needless duplication in the intel business.

"I have directed a zero-based review of the department's intelligence missions, organizations, relationships, and contracts to be completed by Nov. 1," Gates said. James Clapper, the new director of national intelligence, has expressed interest in doing the same for civilian intelligence organizations, the secretary said.

Finally, the secretary is closing two defense offices and recommending the closure of a combatant command. The secretary is eliminating the offices of the assistant secretary of defense for network integration and the Joint Staff's section for command, control, communications, and computer systems.

"Their operational functions will be assigned to other organizations, and most of their acquisition functions will transfer to acquisition, technology, and logistics," Gates said.

Gates also will eliminate the Business Transformation Agency. The agency—with 360 people and a budget of \$340 million—will transfer responsibilities to other offices.

The secretary is recommending eliminating U.S. Joint Forces Command. The command is the arbiter and proponent for joint training, doctrine, and operations in the military, he said, but it means an extra layer in the bureaucracy. It is one of five four-star commands that need to be involved in sending a military working dog team to Afghanistan, Gates said during a speech in Abilene, Kan., earlier this year.

But driven by joint experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world, the secretary noted, the need for such a joint advocate has lessened. Training and generating joint forces still is important, as is developing and testing joint doctrine. But it does not "require a separate four-star combatant command, which, in the case of [Joint Forces Command] entails about 2,800 military and civilian positions and roughly 3,000 contractors of all kinds at an annual cost of at least \$240 million to operate," Gates said.

The secretary said the department will help employees affected by these closings.

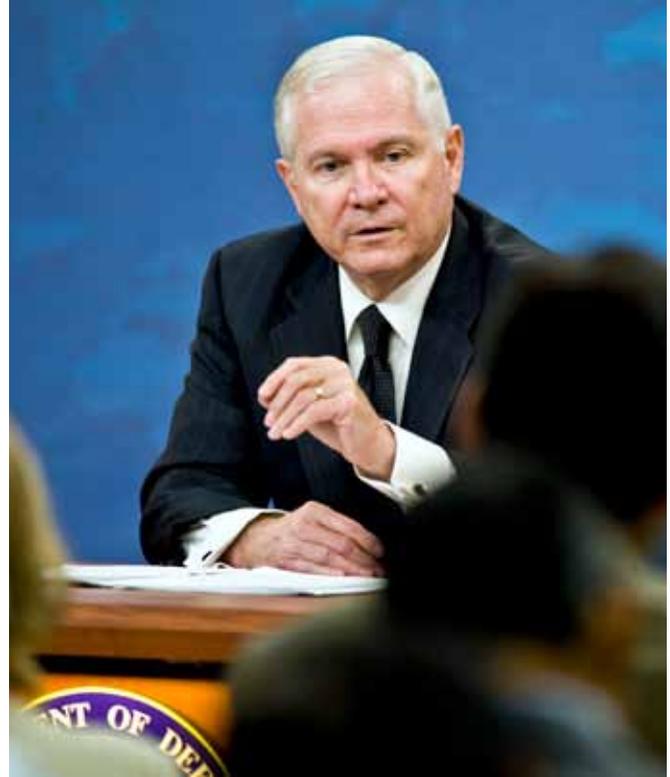
Gates also wants military personnel and civilians to think outside the box. He wants them to submit their ideas for saving resources, reducing the layers of the organizations, and eliminating duplication and overhead.

"Within the department, we are launching an online contest for the purpose of soliciting and rewarding creative ideas to save money and use resources more effectively," he said. "I would encourage all DoD employees to visit www.defense.gov.

Obama Calls Gates Announcement 'Step Forward in Reform'

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (AUG. 9, 2010)

WASHINGTON—President Barack Obama today called Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates' announcement concerning



Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates conducts a press conference at the Pentagon, Aug. 9, 2010. Gates said he is taking steps to help the U.S. military fight the wars it faces now, and help ready the force for the wars it may face in the future. With these moves, the secretary said, he wants to instill a culture of saving in the department.

DoD photo by Cherie Cullen

Pentagon efficiency initiatives "another step forward in the reform efforts he has undertaken to reduce excess overhead costs, cut waste, and reform the way the Pentagon does business."

In a written statement, Obama added that the initiatives "will ensure that our nation is safer, stronger, and more fiscally responsible."

The complete text of the president's statement follows.

Today, Secretary Gates advanced our effort to invest in the defense capabilities that we need in the 21st century, while being responsible and accountable in spending taxpayer dollars.

I have long said that we need to change the way that Washington works so that it works better for the American people. That's why we undertook the Accountable Government Initiative—to make government more

open and responsive to the American public, and to cut waste and inefficiencies that squander the people's hard-earned money. This effort is particularly important when it comes to our national defense, since waste and inefficiency there detracts from our efforts to focus resources on serving our men and women in uniform, and to invest in the future capabilities we need.

Today's announcement by Secretary Gates is another step forward in the reform efforts he has undertaken to reduce excess overhead costs, cut waste, and reform the way the Pentagon does business. The funds saved will help us sustain the current force structure and make needed investments in modernization in a fiscally responsible way. Change is never easy, and I applaud Secretary Gates and his team for undertaking this critical effort to support our men and women in uniform and strengthen our national security. These reforms will ensure that our nation is safer, stronger, and more fiscally responsible.

Army Crafts Tailorable Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Acquisition Strategy

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE NEWS RELEASE (AUG. 13, 2010)

Kris Osborn

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Army has released its tactical wheeled vehicle acquisition strategy report to Congress, calling for a tailorable approach to vehicle procurement to include new buys and repair, sustainment, and recapitalization of the existing fleet.

The acquisition strategy lays out a roadmap for tactical wheeled vehicles, including the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected, or MRAP, vehicles from 2010 through 2025.

"The acquisition objective is to have the ability to adapt to change and mitigate the risk of uncertainty caused by an evolving threat," said Tim Goddette, director, Combat Sustainment Systems.

"The challenge is finding the balance between an unconstrained requirements process and a constrained resource process that promotes stability and efficiencies."

Overall, the report takes up plans for the 260,000 TWVs in the Army inventory, representing an initial procurement investment of \$50 billion.

The acquisition strategy is nested in the philosophy that combat and threat circumstances are subject to change, thus resulting in a commensurate need to shift procurement

strategy in response to prevailing combat and budgetary circumstances.

"Finding the right balance and mix of TWVs requires the Army to continually assess and adjust investments," the report states. "Managing this fleet effectively goes beyond simply buying new vehicles as the existing vehicles age beyond their useful life. We will use a combination of new procurement, repair [sustainment], recapitalization [recap], and divestiture to achieve our strategic objective by addressing the readiness and mission issues of the fleet."

For instance, the report calls for sustainment and recapitalization of 50,000 up-armored Humvees and the progressive divestiture of up to 50,000 aging Humvees—to be incrementally replaced by the new Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, or JLTV.

For the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles or FMTVs—the Army will continue to buy new ones, 44,000 will be sustained through reset, and up to 28,000 aging trucks will be retired or divested, according to the report. In addition, the Army's truck divestiture plan calls for complete divestiture of all M35 2.5-ton vehicles by the end of FY11.

The report also places a premium on fostering competition within industry so as to increase productivity and reduce costs; it is important to have contract mechanisms in place such that production can surge should that be needed, the report says.

"Competition improves quality and reduces costs, while providing the Army access to a full range of industry [depot, private, or public private teaming] capabilities, processes, and potential technical advances," the report says.

Armor Protection

Also, the report points out how post-9/11 conflicts have changed the mission scope and threat levels encountered by tactical trucks in today's current wars, and this phenomenon has had a distinct impact on the procurement of tactical trucks as it has evolved to meet current and evolving threats.

Prior to the events leading up to Sept. 11, 2001, the main focus of effort on the TWV fleet was primarily on vehicle performance and payload, according to the report.

"The general assumption was that the battlefield was linear such that combat vehicles positioned forward in formations required protection from enemy fire, but tactical vehicles providing supporting functions did not," the report states.

"The result was a fleet designed without the burden of armor protection and the corresponding automotive impacts that potential add-on armor would have on critical truck sub-components like the engine, suspension, transmission, and axles."

The report goes on to point out that the events following 9/11 and the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism had a significant impact on the TWV fleet, in particular the need for armored trucks. Assumptions about the linear battlefields of the Cold War gave way to the complex, urban terrain and supporting the forward operating bases of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, according to the report.

"Without a front line, all vehicles proved to be targets of enemy fire, particularly emergent threats of improvised explosive devices that would drive the need for greater and greater protection levels across the truck fleet," the report states.

These dynamics have led to the creation of a Long Term Armor Strategy, or LTAS which, according to the report, seeks to build tactical trucks with an A-kit, B-kit modular armor approach—allowing trucks to adjust their protection to the potential threats they will face in combat.

"The A-kit is designed to accept additional armor in the form of a B-kit. The A-kit/B-kit concept allows the Army flexibility in several areas: the armor B-kit can be taken off when not needed, reducing unnecessary wear and tear on the vehicles; the Army can continue to pursue upgrades in armor protection, adapting B-kits to match the threat; and the versatility of the B-kit enables the transfer of armor from unit to unit, making armor requirements affordable by pooling assets versus buying armor that is only for one vehicle," the report states.

When it comes to buying armor, the strategy seeks to make room for the acquisition community to accommodate the pace of technological change and buy newer materials as they emerge.

"With armor, since it is ever-changing, our industry partners are constantly finding new ways to improve its effectiveness. You want to buy a certain amount and then to make sure you have the best going to the field and a source you can surge into production as needed," said Col. Mark Barbosa, division chief for Focused Logistics, Army G8. "We are integrating the elements TRADOC [Training and Doctrine Command] and G3 worked very hard on the long-term



U.S. Army special operations soldiers, assigned to the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan, arrive in a Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles at a staging area on an undisclosed forward operating base in Helmand Province as two CH-47 Chinook helicopters fly overhead.

Photo credit Spc. Daniel Love

protection strategy in the Tactical Vehicle Strategy, which covers all the fleets."

"Everybody wants to get the product right so that when you go to war, you meet expectations and there are no shortcomings," said Goddette. "You don't always know what kind of war you might be called upon to fight, so we must be flexible. How do we apply the art of acquisition to meet the uncertainty of the world we live in?"

Osborn writes for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology).

Biometrics Shows Increasing Promise On, Off Battlefield

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (AUG. 20, 2010)

Donna Miles

WASHINGTON—Considered a battlefield curiosity just a few years ago, biometrics has become recognized as a vital warfighting capability. Now, defense officials see the same technology as a key to helping the Defense Department make its business practices more efficient.

Biometrics—the science of using unique physical and behavioral characteristics to identify a person—has proven to be invaluable to the warfighter’s toolbox, Myra S. Gray, director of the Army’s Biometrics Identity Management Agency told American Forces Press Service.

“Five years ago, it was something very new, and the capability wasn’t fully understood. It was kind of an add-on to the mission,” she said. “Now it’s an integral part of the mission because people have seen the value that it brings.”

Gray’s office, known as the Biometrics Task Force until it was redesignated in March, is responsible for capitalizing on biometrics technology and promoting new advances to benefit the entire Defense Department.

Fingerprints and other personally identifying features such as a person’s distinct iris, facial, palm, and voice features have become particularly helpful in the intelligence and law enforcement arenas, she said.

They help combat troops tell friends from foes and identify potential terrorists before it’s too late. They also provide a foolproof way to put names and faces to insurgent activities and to identify released detainees who have returned to terrorist activity.

“You can identify an individual and associate him with certain actions,” Gray said. “You can figure out who someone associated with and what they have been involved in. You can link events such as an [improvised explosive device] at one place and a protest at another. You build a picture of what has gone on.”

Meanwhile, biometrics has become a vital tool in vetting people in the combat zone before they’re granted access “inside the wire,” or into secure or sensitive facilities. “We want to make sure that the people we permit onto our facilities are not the same people putting IEDs down,” Gray explained.

Biometrics also is widely employed beyond the combat zone to control access to military facilities worldwide. For example, every military member, family member, and Defense Department civilian employee has a common access identification card that’s embedded with their fingerprints.

But other biometric technologies are in wide use throughout the military. At Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., for example, the Air Force uses a device that “reads” hand prints to clear veterans receiving treatment at the Veterans Affairs clinic for access to the base hospital. At Fort Belvoir, Va., the Army uses iris scanning technology to provide keyless entry to sensitive

areas. And the Navy regularly uses biometrics equipment to confirm identifies as they board foreign vessels.

Gray anticipates broader use of this capability military-wide, particularly as the technology becomes increasingly faster, higher quality, and less obtrusive.

Among the more promising technologies the Defense Department is exploring are biometric systems able to scan people “on the move” without requiring them to touch anything or even stop. Commercial airports see this as a great way to eliminate long back-up lines at security checkpoints. But Gray also recognizes warfighting applications, particularly at border crossings and other ports of entry where there’s a mass movement of people and insurgents might try to blend in undetected.

“Those same ports of entry that legitimate business people or family members are crossing are the same places that the insurgents come across,” she said. “By having this technology, you will have the ability to ferret out those who are hiding amongst the populace without negatively impacting the population.”

Meanwhile, Gray anticipates broader use of biometrics off the battlefield, particularly as the department acts on Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates’ mandate to improve efficiency.

“The next big step forward in biometrics is definitely going to be in the business process arena,” she said. “It is truly a cross-cutting capability,” she said, that can be applied in “a whole spectrum of functions, from the medical field to personnel to financial fields.”

Biometrics can go a long way in streamlining recordkeeping, improving information sharing and cutting out fraud—not only for the Defense Department, but for the U.S. government as a whole, she said.

“We have a lot of benefits and a lot of services in which we rely on identifying someone so we can properly provide them what they need,” Gray explained.

She cited just a few ways biometrics would improve the inter-department sharing that supports those benefits and services. Biometrics could help the Defense Department share military medical records with the VA, civilian employee records with the Office of Personnel Management, and employee benefit records with the Social Security Administration.

"The big question is, 'How do we pull that thread of identity to make sure we are more efficient as the U.S. Government in providing services?'" Gray said. "By integrating that across the U.S. government, we can find great efficiency."

Underlying this effort, she emphasized, is "a complete and total focus on privacy" that ensures all personally identifying information is protected in accordance with the Privacy Act.

"This is one of the foundations as we build this system," Gray said. "We are building these systems with a strong focus on making sure we are within the guidelines of the law and policy in protecting that information. That is paramount. We can't compromise on that."

Government Invites Public to Solve Challenges

EMERGING MEDIA, DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY
(SEPT. 9, 2010)

Ian Graham

WASHINGTON—The Federal Government has a lot of problems to solve, and a new website it launched this week will give average citizens a forum to discuss and potentially solve those problems while vying for rewards for the best solutions.

Bev Godwin, director of the U.S. General Services Administration's Center for New Media and Citizen Engagement; Brandon Kessler, founder and CEO of ChallengePost; and Tami Griffith, science and technology manager for the U.S. Army Research Laboratory's Simulation and Training Technology Center, discussed the new site—Challenge.gov—during a "DoD Live" bloggers roundtable yesterday.

Godwin oversees the site for the government. Kessler's company designs and builds "challenge" sites for different clients. Challenge.gov is an extension of President Barack Obama's Strategy for American Innovation, which opens government solutions to the general public.

"Challenges and prizes can really change the way government in our country works, as it allows the government to bring new players to the table, to look at new ways to solve problems that can lead to new discoveries or new industries," Godwin said. "It also provides the government a way to only pay for results. It also allows government a way to



Biometrics has important battlefield applications. In this 2007 photo, Army Sgt. Timothy Box and Cpl. Ben Webber use the Biometrics Automated Tool Set system to capture information on the volunteers who sign up to become security guards in Taji, Iraq.

U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Steve Czyn

set forth a goal and let others decide how best to reach that goal."

Entrepreneurs, leading innovators, and citizen solvers can compete for prizes on Challenge.gov by providing solutions to tough problems.

"The whole concept behind the platform is that if you have a centralized network around challenges, more people will interact with multiple challenges," Kessler said. "We see, in fact, that people who engage in one challenge tend to engage in multiple challenges, because they're connected to a network."

The site works pretty simply—an agency or office can post a "challenge" to which people can provide a "solution." It also allows participants to blog, interact on discussion boards, and easily share items via different social media.

Griffith's Federal Virtual Worlds Challenge, which asks the public to submit ideas for innovative and interactive training and analysis solutions in virtual worlds, is an Army initiative to better understand different social environments on the Web.

"We're using this challenge as a way to let the public teach us in the government how to use these tools better," Griffith said.

Challenges have been posted so far by government agencies including NASA; the Environmental Protection Agency; the Social Security Administration; and the Defense, Education, Energy, Treasury, Agriculture, State, Interior, and Labor departments.

"I haven't seen any laggards," Godwin said. "Many agencies are working on challenges. Some take longer to ramp up than others, so you'll see more coming out over the next few months."

Carter Outlines Plan to Help Warfighters, Taxpayers

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (SEPT. 14, 2010)

Lisa Daniel

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department's \$400-billion-a-year system for buying goods and services is about to undergo major changes designed to save taxpayer money without affecting mission readiness, a senior Pentagon official said today.

"We're asking you to do more without more," Ashton B. Carter, under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, said in a memo to his senior acquisition staff released today.

Carter later outlined the plan at a news conference with Pentagon reporters. It contains 23 areas of improvement to make the department's procurement offices and defense contractors more efficient.

The procurement changes are the first detailed announcement as part of Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates' initiative, announced last month, to save \$100 billion over the next five years without negatively affecting warfighters.

Under the changes, the department is to mandate affordability in contracts and control cost growth. No longer will major weapons systems have to be cancelled after years in the making and billions of dollars in cost overruns have been spent, Gates said speaking before Carter at the news conference.

Procurement officers will consider not only what goods and services cost, but what they should cost, Carter explained. An example is the F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighter, for which the cost estimate ballooned from \$50 million in 2002 to \$93 million this year, he said. The contractor later agreed to absorb some costs.

The SSBNX ballistic submarine, the long-range strike system, the Army's Ground Combat System, and the Marine Corps presidential helicopter all are examples of systems

that are being procured under the new rules, at a cost of about \$200 billion, he said.

Carter used the submarine as an example of the possibility of significant cost savings, saying the new sub's price dropped from \$7 billion to \$5 billion after officials reduced the scope of the design—something he said engineers must do on the front end of projects.

The new system will reward companies that consistently deliver affordable systems on time, and those that share in any necessary cost overruns, he said.

Contractors will now have to produce systems in a specified and shorter time than has been allowed, Carter said. The contract for the F-18 Hornet fighter jet, for example, has been set at five years, allowing for better management and oversight, he said.

"These are all the ways you get productivity in an industrial activity," Carter said of the changes.

In other changes, procurement officers will:

- Eliminate redundancy in warfighter portfolios;
- Give industry incentives to reduce, rather than increase, costs;
- Put processes in place to ensure real competition;
- Require open-system architecture; and
- Increase the role of small businesses.

The changes will require particular attention to contracted services, an area that has grown substantially over the last 10 years to become a \$200 billion annual cost to the department, Carter said.

"Half of our costs are for services, and we're performing worse there," he said. "It's grown so large, we simply have to manage it better."

The department also will look inward to its "unproductive bureaucratic processes," Carter said, that waste time and resources and force unnecessary costs on contractors. "We can't leave ourselves out of this," he said. "We contribute to low productivity in the industry, and we need to step up and take responsibility for it."

Carter called the changes "very reasonable goals" that will ensure warfighters have what they need. "It's entirely possible to find \$100 billion [in savings] in the \$400 billion we spend every year in contracting," he added.



Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (left) and Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Ashton Carter brief reporters at the Pentagon, Sept. 14, 2010, about a new Department of Defense initiative to save up to \$100 billion over the next five years by implementing new reforms in acquisition/procurement policy. To that end, Carter has developed 23 specific guidelines, which should help the DoD, as well as commercial suppliers, provide the goods and services required by our fighting forces at an affordable price.

DoD photo by R. D. Ward

Carter vowed to be “relentless” in the implementation of the goals, which he said are very specific and measurable. He added that he will oversee progress daily and will provide progress reports to Gates monthly.

“To those who hesitate, to those who fear to go down this path, they need to consider the alternative: broken promises, cancelled programs, [and] unpredictability and uncertainty that is bad for industry, erodes taxpayer confidence, and worst of all, results in lost warfighter capabilities,” he said.

452nd CSH Saves Time with Medical Record System Upgrade in Afghanistan

MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR COMBAT CASUALTY CARE (MC4) (AUGUST 2010)

Bill Snethen and Ray Steen

Swapping three systems and folders stuffed with paper forms for one laptop and a few forms was too good of an idea to pass up for Army Lt. Col. Patricia Ten Haaf, commander of the 452nd Combat Support Hospital (CSH). After all, leading an eight-bed medical treatment facility at Forward Operating Base Salerno in Afghanistan had enough challenges.

The CSH dealt with the constant flux of patients suffering from traumatic injuries resulting from improvised explosive

devices, as well as sports-related injuries. To Ten Haaf, continuing a cumbersome process for documenting patient care was like adding fuel to the fire.

“Our business practices consisted of three separate systems,” Ten Haaf said. “We used AHLTA-T for outpatient notes and TC2 for inpatient notes. We also used paper charts to augment both programs. The various systems often led to duplicate data entry and it wasn’t easy to locate historical information. With notes in different locations, a key piece of information could be missed while treating a patient.”

To drive change, Ten Haaf began a Lean Six Sigma (LSS) project. It began following a major software upgrade to their medical recording system, Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care (MC4).

In the summer of 2009, MC4 staff delivered improved functionality to the EMR system that allowed medical staff to chart a limited amount of inpatient data into the once outpatient-only application—AHLTA-T. This provided the opening Ten Haaf needed to improve EMR efficiencies and became the focus of her LSS project.

The goal was to use one system to save time, reduce waste, improve patient safety, and facilitate better care throughout the patient continuum. Specific measures of success included the reduction in paper, steps to admit a patient, time to admit a patient, and number of areas providers must look for information.

Everyone got involved. Nurses, doctors and ancillary personnel met within their respective areas. They discussed workflow processes, created templates, developed best business practices and generated standard operating procedures (SOPs).

"We realized that in order to successfully study all of the processes throughout the hospital, everyone had to be involved," Ten Haaf said. "The change would affect all areas of patient care. It was important that every section of the hospital be responsible to study their daily processes to uncover areas for change."

Empowering advocates to champion MC4 for each section of the hospital proved fruitful. Providers in the ER cut their documentation requirements by 50 percent, no longer charting an electronic note and then duplicating the information on a paper trauma form.

Nurses created 22 digital templates to work with the upgraded software, reducing paper forms from nine per patient to two. This played a huge role in reducing the steps to admit a patient from 39 to 23. The duration for each admission also reduced from an average of 66.66 minutes to 58.11 minutes.

"The reduction in time is actually misleading," Ten Haaf said. "Each patient is unique; therefore, each nurse customizes the admission process accordingly. The significance with this effort is that fewer required tasks reduce the potential for omissions and errors."

While most sections could migrate from the inpatient software application, TC2, pharmacy staff still had to use it.

"Since AHLTA-T could not be used for medication administration, the nurses chose to continue using paper forms for this process," Ten Haaf said. "Clinical teams ordered medications via AHLTA-T, and the fulfillment occurred behind the scenes with TC2. It is the one of the few instances of medical documentation to remain on paper forms."

Once the LSS project proved its worth, leadership approved the process changeover. The implementation of the new

AHLTA-T system occurred slowly throughout the hospital, one patient at a time.

The 452nd CSH completed the migration project in November, exceeding their December deadline. Unit leadership issued policies to solidify the new processes and developed an educational program with training materials to help new personnel utilize the EMR system.

The policies, SOPs, and best business practices provided a smooth transition for the 344th CSH, who took over for the unit in April 2010. They learned about the study and improvements, and decided to adopt the new business practice.

"Feedback from the nursing staff confirmed that the use of AHLTA-T allows for faster patient charting, along with legible and organized notes," said Army Maj. Lorna Hosang-Davidson, deputy commander for nursing with the 344th CSH. "Utilization of an electronic system, coupled with the reduction of paper documentation, also helps to guard the safety of the information."

Utilizing the limited inpatient functionality of AHLTA-T on the battlefield may not be the ideal solution for all users. Facilities must adhere to the theater policies regarding inpatient and outpatient documentation via MC4 systems. The migration to AHLTA-T at FOB Salerno also allowed MC4's technical personnel to identify functional challenges of the application to software developers for resolution. Armed with a working knowledge of the EMR system and facility business practices, medical personnel at FOB Salerno have the opportunity to improve processes and procedures to enhance the documentation efforts throughout treatment facilities.

"We're currently developing a template to decrease the time to chart patient information in the intensive care unit," Hosang-Davidson said. "Team members mentioned that they would like to see enhancements made to the templates themselves, such as decreasing the backspacing of information while free texting notes. We want the team to drive the changes and enhancements so that the system satisfies their needs while capturing the critical patient data."

The medical team for the 344th CSH continues to refine the documentation efforts at FOB Salerno, building upon the efforts of the 452nd CSH. The new wave of process evaluation further streamlines the charting efforts, leading to additional improvements throughout the facility.