

REENGINEERING THE OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW PROCESS FOR SYSTEMS ACQUISITION

*Col. (P) John S. Caldwell, Jr., USA, Spearheads a Difficult,
Controversial, but Rewarding Team Effort*

From 7 September through 16 December 1994, the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC) hosted the Department of Defense Acquisition Reform Oversight and Review Process Action Team (O&RPAT). Led by Col. (P) John S. Caldwell, Jr., USA, the team was handed a massive assignment by the Secretary of Defense: "...to develop within 90 days a comprehensive plan to reengineer the oversight and review process for systems acquisition, in both the Components and OSD, to make it more effective and efficient, while maintaining an appropriate level of oversight."

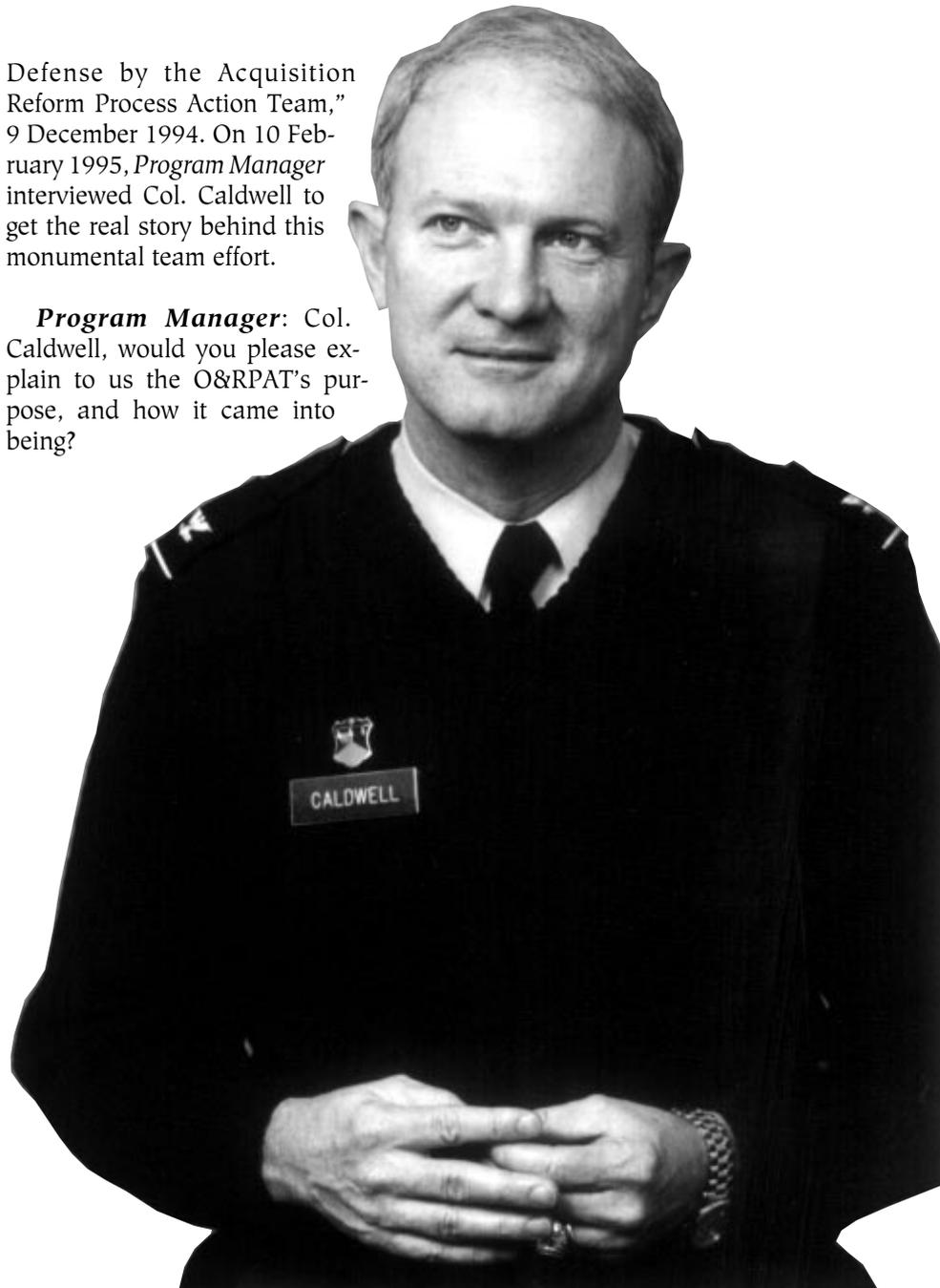
Col. Caldwell and his diversified team of acquisition professionals from all the Services set about doing just that. The results — *Reengineering the Acquisition Oversight and Review Process*, "Final Report to the Secretary of

Defense by the Acquisition Reform Process Action Team," 9 December 1994. On 10 February 1995, *Program Manager* interviewed Col. Caldwell to get the real story behind this monumental team effort.

Program Manager: Col. Caldwell, would you please explain to us the O&RPAT's purpose, and how it came into being?

Col. (P) Caldwell, USA, is the Military Assistant for Systems Acquisition, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition Reform). He is a graduate of PMC 91-1, and previously served as the Abrams Project Manager.

Ms. Collie Johnson, Managing Editor, Program Manager, conducted the interview on behalf of the DSMC Press.



Col. Caldwell: The team was formed to accomplish the tasks in the Charter that Secretary of Defense Perry personally signed. Secretary Perry, in an umbrella document called *Acquisition Reform: A Mandate to Change*, cited various positive attributes of the acquisition process, applauded the people that had been working within that process, acknowledged that we have developed and produced world-class weapons systems, and then concluded we can't afford to do business that way any more.

Dr. Perry chartered the O&RPAT to focus on a specific part of the acquisition process — the oversight and review processes, which in a nutshell comprise the decision making process within systems acquisition. We started with major systems acquisition, then went to lower categories. We were directed by the Secretary to look at the Department of Defense and OSD staff, as well as the Services, as we were reengineering the process.

Mrs. Colleen Preston, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition Reform) and her staff, through a coordinating mechanism called the Acquisition Reform Senior Steering Group, which meets every 2 weeks to coordinate all acquisition reform issues, solicited team participation from all the Services and OSD staffs. Once we received names, Mrs. Preston, her staff and Dr. Pallas, OUSD(A&T), who was appointed by the Charter to be the team Executive Director, screened the names. We approved the team's membership and convened the team for the first time on 7 September 1994.

Program Manager: Would you tell us how you put the team together and what types of professionals were working the issues?

Col Caldwell: The Services and all the stakeholders that chose to participate submitted names of potential team members. The charter appointed

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me, upon Mrs. Preston's recommendation, to be the team leader. I had recently reported to her office for duty after being the Army's Tank Project Manager for the last 4 years, and it was up to me to accomplish all the tasks specified and implied in the charter that the Secretary of Defense signed. Since this Charter charged the team with making big decisions about the way a lot of different organizations do business, our team members came from those organizations. I knew we would have to deal with controversial issues.

It was clear from the beginning it would take an awful lot of team building to accomplish our mission. The objective was for us to put together a comprehensive set of recommendations that could be *implemented* — not merely provided for academic discussion. So we knew we had to develop viable implementation plans to reengineer the process. Implementation, we believed, was going to be key. To put together a cohesive and comprehensive plan, we had to develop methods and techniques to get us

through what we knew would be very tough sessions on these issues. Quite frankly, people came in from their organizations professing to want change, but probably wanting to change things other people did, not what they did. We knew we would have to work through that. In hindsight, we probably could have done a better job by selecting only people committed to broad-based, substantive change. I do think we eventually overcame this shortcoming.

The variety of people was very good; the experience of people was very good. I think there was a balance of people that spent much of their time in program offices as well as those people with a predominant staff orientation. There were probably some weak areas we could have done a better job of filling — but our open and collaborative idea development process overcame this weakness.

We did have a broad spectrum of talent. There were people who had experience in a joint arena. There were people from all the Services except the Marine Corps. While the Joint Staff did not have a member on the team, we had active Joint Staff support, so the team credentials were very good. We supplemented those by knowing where to go for reference material. The acquisition process has been studied by many prestigious groups with substantial credentials in industry as well as government. There was no shortage of studies!

Based on our Charter, we were able to invite almost any high-level executive in any of the Services and agencies that we needed to come out to speak to us and discuss their views. Many provided frank and candid input. We had several who spent more than one session with us. These executives also were able to solicit input and comments from the people they supervise in this process. So we had a wide array of talent on the team. We gained a wider, deeper and more senior array of talent, advice and input



Photos by Richard Mattox

Col. Jeanne C. Sutton, USAF, reviews the final draft of "Reengineering the Acquisition Oversight and Review Process" with fellow process action team member, Terry R. Little.

from outside the team as we developed our report and recommendations.

Our job was to meld all of that together and to fulfill the Secretary's charge to reengineer the process, meaning *radically change it*, but in such a fashion that the recommendations could be implemented. We knew that would be a real trick. One of my objectives as the team leader was to create an environment for frank discussion of all issues, yet produce a report where all members of the team agreed with all recommendations on all issues. We achieved a consensus report, which was just one person short of unanimous on one issue. There were some small wording issues that not everybody totally agreed with, but they were not of sufficient magnitude to be considered disagreement with the recommendations.

Program Manager: You stated that producing the O&RPAT report was a difficult task. Would you tell us how difficult?

Col Caldwell: Yes, and it is really a take-off on some of the things I've already touched upon. I think we planned our process pretty well, and we worked that plan out with Mrs.

Preston early; got her approval of the schedule and the general way that the Process Action Team's business was going to be conducted, including the front-end team building. But I think all of us — I know in my case — probably underestimated just how difficult it would be to bring all the various interests together.

But I think we did that well, and the acid test was when we sent out our 30-day interim report required by our charter. We discussed and weighed the pros and cons of what that report would contain, and I made the decision that the best approach was to distribute a complete array of ideas that we were developing and generating within the group, but without recommendations. In that interim report we also gave a fairly frank assessment of the state of the practice today.

We intended that report to be a constructive launch pad, consistent with Secretary Perry's assessment of the state of the practice, as outlined in his document, *Acquisition Reform: A Mandate to Change*. However, many people reacted in some ways that were not constructive to the effort; and I believe as a result of that, the members of the team felt a lot of pressure, adding to the natural pres-

ures they were already experiencing. So we had to work through that. In the end, I believe getting through that stressful time was a strength. We had initially talked a great deal about how difficult this task was going to be, and I don't believe people realized the magnitude of difficulty until that interim report went out and the reactions followed.

The outside reaction to that report yielded a real surprise to me and the team. There was significant disagreement with the substance of the charter — yet it had been "coordinated" through the Acquisition Reform Senior Steering Group and the Service Acquisition Executives during the summer. We were not able to completely overcome this disagreement with key aspects of the charter.

We continued to work on the ideas, not only the ideas generated within the O&RPAT, but the ideas that were spawned as a result of the written comments to our interim report. We also continued to bring in Service Acquisition Executives, many of the PEOs, and others within the OSD staff. Then we sent out the 60-day report called for in the charter. In this report, we had narrowed the range of ideas and we began to make recommendations — although certainly not a complete set of recommendations. All this time we were trying to faithfully abide by the charter that said marginal adjustments are not going to be sufficient — that we needed to reengineer the process which, once again, means radical change. And radical change is a very slow process in a big bureaucracy, even when everyone is enthusiastically committed to it.

As a footnote, we also traveled to one defense contractor who was trying to undergo substantial reengineering, and the employees were running into some of the same problems, even though they had strong top-down guidance and active personal participation by the senior ex-

ecutives. Yet a few months into their process (by the way, they had taken more than a year to get to about the stage we were in about 2 months), they came to the conclusion that they could not reengineer themselves. So they had to hire outside, high-powered consultants to help facilitate their reengineering. We didn't do that, and that added to the difficulty of the process.

But in the end, as is often the case when you do team building under stress, the pressure welds the team members together and ultimately produces a better product if you stick with it.

Another key factor is momentum. Secretary Perry gave us 90 days in the charter to do this. There was apparently not agreement in the oversight community that 90 days was an appropriate length of time to accomplish our tasks. Nevertheless, I was assigned the responsibility for getting the tasks done in 90 days, and I believed that we had the capability to do it.

The momentum and speed at which we were accomplishing our tasks caused a lot of discomfort with the process, not only outside the team but inside the team. In some ways, I also believe it may have caused a kind of crisis in confidence within the team, even though we had very skilled people across an array of specialties. In my view, it took about 60 days of work as individuals and as a team before we fully believed we could do what our charter outlined for us. In the end, I believe the team felt it put together a comprehensive report that fulfilled the Secretary's charter.

It was harder than I thought it would be, but it was gratifying to put together such a comprehensive report. We are getting a lot of reaction in support of most of the recommendations, but there is some opposition to most of the recommendations. On balance, the general reaction is positive on the quality of the report and

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the substance of the recommendations. But the fact that the report has generated dialogue is positive in itself and reaffirms that we as a team did what we were told to do. We didn't, in some cases, make radical enough recommendations. In some cases we made, even though they were subtle, recommendations that would make substantial change in the way we do business — and I think, substantial improvement.

Program Manager: When you were preparing this report, what were your goals?

Col. Caldwell: Besides the goals and the tasks laid out in the charter, we as a team discussed and came to an agreement on the state of the current practice of the oversight and review process within the whole acquisition process. As we built our vision of where we wanted this process to be when recommendations would be implemented, we developed goals.

These comprehensive goals are very much customer-oriented, which we think in itself represents a change in the way this process is currently oriented. We substantially discussed, debated and evolved these goals early in the process. As we went through the process and developed recom-

mendations and implementation plans, we continually rated our work against these goals and our vision.

So we, as a team, felt very solidly and very strongly that our recommendations as a comprehensive set of plans met the goals we established and agreed to uphold.

Program Manager: What are some of the major recommendations made by the O&RPAT team?

Altogether, the team made 33 recommendations to reengineer the process. Of those 33 recommendations, which are fully discussed in Volume II of our report, let me highlight the major ones:

- *Forge a Three-Milestone Process.* To make the process more efficient, our reengineered process has three major milestone decisions,

GOALS

- Help field what the warfighter needs when he needs it.
- Demand accountability by matching managerial authority with responsibility.
- Promote flexibility and encourage innovation based on mutual trust, risk management and program performance.
- Foster constant teamwork among everyone who is a stakeholder.
- Actively promote program stability.
- Balance the value of oversight and review with its costs.
- Emulate the best practices of successful commercial companies and successful government ventures.
- Preserve the public trust.

while maintaining other critical decisions.

- *Trim Milestone Decision Documents and Activities.* There needs to be a dramatic decrease in the number of documents and activities required for a Milestone decision.
- *Collapse the Number of Formal Pre-Milestone Meetings to One.* We concluded that numerous sequential Component- and OSD-level meetings and reviews before a Milestone decision meeting are unnecessary activities.
- *Institutionalize Integrated Product Teams to Perform Oversight.* The

Those Programs Requiring Substantial Inter-Service Harmonizing. To be more efficient the reengineered process must abolish the convoluted hodge-podge of mechanisms and activities structured over time to try to harmonize joint program execution, budgets and oversight.

- *Establish More Stringent Experience Criteria for ACAT I Program Managers and Deputy Program Managers.* This will significantly improve the quality of major defense acquisition program execution, facilitate enhanced trust between the Program Manager and the Milestone Decision Authority, and minimize the requirement for independent

program control tool would eliminate the need for other documents and “contracts” (e.g., exit criteria) among the program manager, the user and the Milestone Decision Authority (MDA).

- *Institutionalize a Summit Process for ACAT I Programs.* This will highlight opportunities for cost, schedule and performance trade-offs.
- *Apply Reengineering Principles to Contractor Oversight.* In view of continuing acquisition workforce reductions, the report provides specific recommendations on selecting high performance contractors and adopting commercial oversight practices.

OUR VISION

To have a modernized oversight and review process, hard-linked to the national military strategy, responsive to the priorities of the warfighting Commanders-in-Chief, sensitive to costs, and characterized by mutual trust, flexibility, teamwork and common sense.

model abolishes the notion that advice to the decision maker should be functionally focused.

- *Align Program Accountability and Reporting.* We believe that adopting a short and clear reporting chain for **all** defense programs would be a major step toward making the oversight process more efficient and effective.
- *Centralize the Affordability Decision by Placing it Into the Warfighters’ Hands.* We concluded that making the process more efficient demands that deciding whether or not a program is affordable should be within the warfighters’ domain.
- *Consolidate the Oversight and Review Process for Joint Programs and*

program assessments by the Milestone Decision Authority oversight and review staff.

- *Stabilize Major Defense Acquisition Program Manager Tenure from Program Initiation until Start of Production.* Such stabilization is needed to provide more consistent long-term management of major programs.
- *Establish a Career Civilian Deputy for the Defense Acquisition Executive and Each Component Acquisition Executive.* These positions would provide much-needed continuity at these senior levels of the acquisition process.
- *Revitalize the Acquisition Program Baseline.* Revitalizing the Acquisition Program Baseline as the major

Program Manager: Concerning Department of Defense Instruction 5000.2, which describes the current acquisition milestone review process, do the team’s recommendations include changing the milestone process and, if so, are they major changes?

Col. Caldwell: The answer is yes. We do make a recommendation in our report to change the milestone process. In some ways we don’t radically change it, but we emphasize and better define three milestones. Therefore, it is often referred to in the report and in the comments to the report as a three-milestone process. We specified which decisions need to be elevated to the highest level, and which decisions can be delegated downward with little risk.

Our thrust in the report is to push decisions and execution down to the lowest appropriate authority. In our look at the milestone process, we studied, analyzed and debated, looked at the pros and cons, and we decided there are three review milestones that need to be elevated deliberately for decisions by a specific Milestone Decision Authority (MDA). I think our discussion of that represents a philosophy that is different from the current 5000-series instruction.

We also spent considerable time examining the front end of the process. We called that Milestone A, Need Validation. Milestone A — analogous to Milestone 0 in the current process — is not an acquisition decision; we believe it is a *requirements* decision. It follows logically that the Milestone A decision maker should be the user since the requirement or operational need is in his or her province.

The phase between that Milestone and Milestone B is called Program Initiation. It represents a significant change to the current process. We believe the decision to initiate an acquisition program is the **most critical part of the acquisition process**. Based on past history, it represents a near-irrevocable commitment to the program. Central to the decision for a new major acquisition program is the notion that the decision should reflect the entire DoD's commitment — not just the commitment of a Component, the acquisition community or the user. Also, the commitment must recognize and realistically accommodate the long-term cost implications of choosing to start an acquisition program.

Also, we articulated and recommended change to which information needs to be provided at milestone reviews and the associated documentation. We specified who is responsible for providing advice to the MDA in a particular subject area.

We looked at a wide array of people and agencies and spent a lot of time on what information was available. I think our articulation of who should provide information and recommendations to the MDA added clarity and discipline and also challenged the conventional way of providing some of that information. For example, at each milestone we charged the user representative (at the highest level the user representative would be the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) with providing the affordability recommendation to the MDA.

The first point I want to make about oversight is that the objective of the team was to have better oversight, not necessarily less oversight.

Program Manager: You've spoken at length about the review [milestone] process; could you tell us about the O&RPAT's recommendations regarding the oversight process?

Col. Caldwell: The first point I want to make about oversight is that the objective of the team was to have better oversight, not necessarily less oversight. We found in our discussions that people tended to equate, as we put it, the number of "eyeballs" in the process to the quality of oversight. We rejected that notion. Oversight is inextricably linked to the review process, and of the two, actually the more important. There are clearly certain times where the decision makers will want to review a program and make specific decisions. However, the bulk of program time is spent in oversight. The oversight process deals more with how to continuously monitor and evaluate a program between decision points.

When we defined it that way, we began to concentrate on who should be doing the oversight and what information was needed to do appropriate oversight. Remember, the Secretary of Defense stated in the Charter that we must maintain appropriate oversight. It became very clear to the team that we currently have a labor-intensive, outmoded (and definitely not an information age-based) oversight pro-

cess, and our recommendations try to address making that process nearly continuous and more modern. The report elaborates on generating information and the flow of that information to all the key nodes in the process, and making that information available to any oversight staffs and all the decision makers.

An important part of modernizing that oversight process requires eliminating much of the documentation that currently exists. We examined that thoroughly and made recommendations that eliminate or recategorize much of the documentation that exists. A lot of current documentation is mandated by statute and we, for the purposes of this Process Action Team, did not try to change statutes because that would be a long process. Instead, we focused on changes that could be made quickly that would give relief to the operators in the system, while maintaining an appropriate information flow.

Program Manager: How did your recommendations treat the subject of Acquisition Program Baseline (APB) breaches?

Col. Caldwell: Our conclusion on the APB is that it needs reinvigorated and reemphasized. We examined the baseline and it became the subject of one of our "stretch goals."

The Process Action Team agreed that the APB should be the primary contract between the corporate decision making structure within the Department, the program manager and the user. It represents a corporate commitment to the structure of the program and the key milestones and gates the program must hit. That would be the primary way that the Department — not only the program managers, but the corporate decision makers — would be measured. Today, the baseline does not have that emphasis, even though it is the way the program manager is measured. We do not believe that the corporate struc-

ture is measured against that baseline. We believe that must change.

We examined the breach status of our programs across the Department relative to their baseline. We concluded that too many (about 40 percent of ACAT ID) programs are in breach at any one time, for various reasons, and we set a stretch goal of bringing that percentage of programs that are in breach way down. We believe that the Department should be measured against this target. That was the capstone “stretch” goal.

Program Manager: What do your recommendations include to reduce cycle time?

Col. Caldwell: That’s the second “stretch” goal we laid out in our report. After considerable discussion, we incorporated an idea from a memorandum that the Secretary of Defense signed prior to the Process Action Team, directing the Department and the Services to reduce cycle time by 50 percent.

We put a timeline on that of within 5 years, and throughout our report in the discussion of the milestone process, we began to specify things that will help in the definition of cycle time, and exactly how long a cycle is that we’re going to reduce. We believed cycle time reduction was a good

goal to incorporate, and we think it’s something that the corporate body, not just the program manager, can be measured against.

Program Manager: Would you tell us what part industry plays in your recommendations?

Col. Caldwell: Indirectly, industry did play a role in our recommendations. One of the strengths of holding our Process Action Team meetings at DSMC was we could rely on the same resources the DSMC staff and faculty enjoy. Their tentacles reach into an industry network. We leveraged off that. We had some staff and faculty present industry views; we had our early reports distributed to DSMC people that interface with the industry groups. And when we got their responses, they often commented from an industry perspective.

One of the references we relied on quite heavily was a report that was done by Dr. J. Ronald Fox.* This study was ongoing before our team convened, but it was concluding simultaneously with the formulation of our report. We used some of his conclusions and data. His report addressed project management from the industry as well as the government point of view. So it was very helpful, even though we may not have agreed with a lot of the report’s conclusions.

There was another way that we got an industry view. We traveled to one contractor that I had worked with when I was a project manager, and received a thorough briefing on their reengineering effort. Additionally, there’s a lot of available literature about reengineering corporations. We read those documents. We had people go out and research and report on the findings of those studies. So I think we had a pretty good industry view.

Various drafts and the final report were widely distributed for comment as part of the agreed-to process of developing the report. We’ve had vari-

ous people comment on the quality of our report. For the most part, industry sees our recommendations as reducing their costs of doing business with the government. So they generally are enthusiastic about seeing these recommendations implemented.

Program Manager: How do you propose to measure the success of your reengineered oversight and review process?

Col. Caldwell: This is a difficult area. First of all, we very thoroughly discussed and acknowledged that one can come up with all kinds of metrics, spend a lot of time measuring a lot of things, and still not accomplish much except measuring. We attempted to be very careful and very thoughtful, about anything we measured with the idea that we did not want to sub-optimize some process by causing it to be measured. We wanted to measure macro things because the oversight and review processes are macro processes.

We found no work within DoD that could help us measure the effectiveness of these changes. So measures were very difficult to develop. We didn’t come to agreement on measures until near the end. Our measures are reflected in our “stretch” goals. We believe that all of those are measurable. Our implementation plan appoints people to be responsible for baselining these measures. They are all very macro-type criteria that would not sub-optimize any one particular function.

To supplement these measures, we also recommended leadership develop and conduct customer surveys to gauge the effectiveness of the changes based on the recommendations implemented, and to measure progress and satisfaction. Whether the survey is a precise measure will have to be worked out. But certainly it should provide program offices and various oversight organizations and staffs with a mechanism for feedback to the Service and Defense

STRETCH GOALS

- Reduce the percentage of programs with Acquisition Program Baseline breaches to no more than 5 percent.
- Reduce cycle time by 50 percent.
- Reduce the number of people in the acquisition oversight and review process by 50 percent; and
- Reduce the average cost of a milestone review by 50 percent.

Acquisition Executives to tell them what's working, what's not, and why.

Program Manager: Please describe the type of reaction you received to the O&RPAT's report.

Col. Caldwell: We have had substantial reaction to the report. That's what we wanted. We also wanted substantial reaction as we were building and developing the recommendations. Personally, I was worried that the team's tendency would be to take the easy way out and to make recommendations that would be only minor changes. The reason that would be the easy way is because when you try to coordinate any kind of paper, you often reach the lowest common denominator. In this case, that would be one that didn't change much. So reaction would be relatively lukewarm at best, and from low-level staff action officers.

At the same time, you want to consider everyone's view, because the team didn't possess all the knowledge, and in some cases we were wrong. Our facts and our perception of facts were corrected as we developed our ideas. So we wanted strong reaction. Of course it always makes you feel better if you get a lot of support rather than criticism. But most of all, you want constructive criticism of your ideas. And so, our 30-day interim report was especially structured to draw reaction. And we got it! And I think we used it to our advantage and it paid off in the end.

As we developed the 60-day report, the same thing occurred. As the recommendations began to take form, the issues began to crystalize. I don't believe they would have if we had not put some of our extreme ideas out for comment earlier. I think maybe the system would have gone to sleep, and we would not have gotten full participation at a high level.

Oftentimes when you work an issue in the Pentagon, it will be worked at a very low level unless the issue is

Oftentimes when you work an issue in the Pentagon, it will be worked at a very low level unless the issue is one that everyone recognizes is substantial and needs to be elevated.

one that everyone recognizes is substantial and needs to be elevated. Most people recognized these issues needed to be elevated very quickly. And that, along with the fact that Secretary Perry signed the charter, got high-level input early. So whether it was supportive or constructive opposition, it helped our recommendations become better.

It's really not so important that any one group agree with any specific recommendation. The important part was the process had high-level attention and high-level input so we could combine that with the expertise on the O&RPAT. And I'm very confident we had the skill and professionalism to weigh all of the input and make a coherent set of recommendations, even though there are still some agencies that don't agree with some of the recommendations. There's at least one group that doesn't agree with any of them!

Program Manager: Do you believe the team's recommendations will be adopted and implemented? And if so, how soon?

Col. Caldwell: I believe many of the team's recommendations will be adopted, even though some of them may be modified. I believe the pro-

cess is in place to put the report in front of the decision makers. The primary decision maker is going to be Dr. Kaminski, the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), and the Service Acquisition Executives, acting for Dr. Perry.

Implementation will be the key to reengineering the process now that we have put forth the set of recommendations. The stakeholders are going to present their positions on our recommendations to Dr. Kaminski and the Service Acquisition Executives. They will make the right decision about which recommendations to implement, and which ones not to implement. There may be issues that they just need to study more, because some are very big. No matter what their decisions are, the key will be the mechanism and the process for implementing those approved recommendations. In fact, the O&RPAT spent a considerable amount of time discussing the process for implementation.

I spoke earlier about other studies of the acquisition process — by talented, high-level people. The problem has been that their ideas have not been fully implemented. One of our overriding concerns as a team — not just mine as the team leader — was that we would put forth these recommendations but inadequate implementation procedures would be put in place to see these things through. So we made a very strong recommendation about how to do that.

By early March it will have been 90 days since the team published its report. This delay threatens to dissipate the momentum that was present in the 90-day effort to formulate the recommendations in the first place. The team believes that momentum is a major factor facilitating the needed change, and several team members have contacted me to express concern from the field that momentum will be lost if we don't implement soon.

Inside DSMC



The Defense Systems Management College (DSMC) welcomed James Wittmeyer as the new Editor, *Acquisition Review Quarterly*, DSMC Press, effective 2 April 1995. Prior to his DSMC assignment, Jim served as Editor of the Pentagon *Early Bird* since 1993. During his diversified career, he also worked as a public affairs specialist for Headquarters, U.S. Army Materiel Command; Headquarters, U.S. Army-Pacific; and other military commands throughout the United States and overseas. Jim's career highlights included editing two award-winning military newspapers, for which he received a Department of Defense Journalism Award (1971), and a Department of Army Journalism Award (1976). A combat veteran, he served as a U.S. Marine Corps rifleman in the Republic of Vietnam, 1967-68.

Program Manager: What do you think of facilities at the Defense Systems Management College for hosting team efforts such as O&RPAT?

Col. Caldwell: I'm happy to answer that. During the process, it became very clear to me that Mrs. Preston had made the right decision to put the team here. First, the accommodations are somewhat isolated from the Pentagon, which for me is more conducive to uninterrupted thought. Additionally, we were relatively isolated so we could shout at each other when we needed to shout at each other, without interrupting other activities.

The resource I mentioned earlier, being able to plug into the staff and faculty whose tentacles reached out into other resources, was very valuable. It would have been much more difficult and much more time consuming to gather that information from another location. Not the least of the conveniences was the structure of the support group. When we needed something, the staff, starting with General Bolton, all the way down through Colonel Knight and others, got us what we needed. We could print the reports, and we killed a lot of trees during the process; we were able to get editorial support; we were able to get anything we needed on short notice. I wrote Mrs. Preston and General Bolton a letter expressing my agreement that they had made a proper decision about doing that; and expressing the team's thanks, as it would have been very difficult to do this job in that time frame without the very direct and very close support that DSMC provided.

We also had extraordinary active support in many different forms from each of the Service Acquisition Executives. Without that support, we would not have the wide array of views on all these issues. In addition, they personally interacted with the team more than once in each case, sometimes in many cases, through

phone calls and visits to a large number of members of the Process Action Team or individuals going back on specific issues.

Others gave a lot of support and we recognized them in our report. Also, Dr. Kaminski was confirmed about a month into this process. On several occasions, the team met with him and got direct guidance and feedback. He also established a direct link with me as the team leader to facilitate access when I needed it. That also added to our capability to complete our task on schedule.

Program Manager: We understand you're going to pin on the rank of a brigadier general soon. Can you give us an idea of what's in store for you, and do you expect to stay in the acquisition arena?

Col. Caldwell: Yes, I plan to pin on the rank in April. I've been waiting for awhile. I do not know what my assignment is. I do expect to stay in the acquisition business. The Army has worked very hard to put the right people in the acquisition corps, and to get the right people to lead the acquisition corps.

I was fortunate to be selected, and my recent acquisition experience as the Abrams Project Manager probably helped. I don't know the specific assignment that's upcoming or my assignments in the future. I expect the Army will want to get the best use out of me in the acquisition arena. However, one can always be surprised!

Reference

*Fox, Dr. J. Ronald, Defense Systems Management College (DSMC) Study, "The Defense Acquisition Culture: Government and Industry Views from the Trenches" (DSMC Executive Institute, December 1994), p. 27.

Editor's Note: Col. Caldwell is now a Brigadier General, U.S. Army.