MEMORANDUM FOR DEFENSE ACQUISITION BOARD MEMBERS AND ADVISORS

SUBJECT: Defense Acquisition Board Streamlining

This memorandum implements changes in the Defense Acquisition Board (DAB) preparation process and how DABs are conducted for Acquisition Category (ACAT) ID and ACAT IAM programs. The intent of these changes is to avoid rework by Services/Components and Program Managers (PMs) and to allow the Milestone Decision Authority (MDA) to resolve any potential issues as early as possible in order to streamline the milestone decision process. I also want to reinforce that Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) staffs’ and DAB members’ and advisors’ roles in all MDA reviews is to advise the MDA, not to provide independent direction to the Services/Components.

For several years, I have used a process of holding DAB Planning Meetings (DPMs), generally about two months prior to the actual DAB, to familiarize myself with the program, understand the pending decision, and help focus staff reviews on any specific concerns that I might have for the program. This is followed by a DAB Readiness Meeting (DRM) approximately two weeks prior to the DAB to ensure that for any open issues adequate data, technical detail, and analysis were available to support informed decisions at the DAB.

We have also tried to use Service/Component submitted Acquisition Strategy Documents to provide early feedback and guidance to the Services/Components about key aspects of their programs. Doing this is intended to allow planning, including Request for Proposals (RFP) preparation, to proceed with confidence that major changes will not be required late in the MDA decision process. The Acquisition Strategy Document, submitted well in advance of the milestone decision, is intended to obtain MDA approval for the planned contracting approach, incentives, and source selection criteria in particular. In practice, however, Acquisition Strategy Documents tend to come in too late for this purpose, are delayed too long in the Service and OSD staffing process to meet this objective, or lack detail on specific intent. As a result, I am directing the following changes.

For those DABs that precede an RFP release, the current DPMs are canceled and will be replaced with a smaller in-person meeting with the Service Acquisition Executive (SAE) or Component Acquisition Executive (CAE), Program Executive Officer (PEO), PM, Overarching Integrated Product Team (OIPT) Leader, and DAB Executive Secretary to discuss the basics of the planned acquisition strategy. Advisors and stakeholders may be included as the MDA desires and based on the OIPT Leader’s recommendations. These earlier DPMs will provide a review of the business arrangement envisioned, including the source selection approach, with a goal of minimizing any late revisions to Acquisition Strategy Documents and RFPs. At these meetings, the PM should also be prepared to discuss other key features of the program plan with the MDA. There will be no OSD staff reviews, pre-briefs, or OIPT meetings prior to these
DPMs. For DABs that do not precede an RFP release, there are no changes to the current DPM process.

There are no changes to the DRM process. A DRM will continue to be held approximately two work weeks before each scheduled DAB with the Service/Component lead (normally the SAE or CAE), the PM and PEO, the OIPT Leader, and the DAB Executive Secretary. This meeting reviews the OIPT Leader’s planned presentation material for the DAB to ensure the adequacy of the data to support an MDA milestone decision. Based upon the results of that meeting, the MDA will determine whether to proceed as scheduled, to postpone the DAB while additional information is obtained, or if there are no issues, to direct the decision to be made by Acquisition Decision Memorandum alone without a formal DAB meeting (a “paper” DAB).

The DAB will continue to be streamlined and tailored to the program circumstances. This tailoring will include determining documentation and process tailoring as appropriate. This tailoring will normally be part of the decisions made at the Materiel Development Decision or at the earliest milestone decision for a particular program.

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