



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
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OCT 14 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DEFENSE SCIENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Comments on the Final Report of the Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on Fulfillment of Urgent Operational Needs

The Department of the Army appreciates the efforts of the Defense Science Board's Task Force to study this important element of our mission to support Soldiers in combat. We agree with the Task Force that our modernization processes must be flexible and focused to posture our forces for success in the face of dynamic operational environments and a thinking enemy. The true effectiveness of these support systems can only be measured by the operational success of our commanders and their Soldiers on the battlefield.

The Army currently uses the "triage" concept, advocated by the Task Force, in the conduct of our urgent needs identification and validation process. As the Report noted, over 95% of the 7,000 urgent needs assessed by the Task Force were addressed by the Army through our Operational Needs Statement (ONS) process – and 95% of those could be resolved with commercial equipment or additional procurement / redistribution of military standard equipment. While the ONS process has been documented and used within the Army for over 20 years, longer-duration conflicts and unit rotation policies have presented new challenges therefore we continue to adjust our decision support systems to understand the best use of limited resources. We recognize that, in the eyes of warfighting commanders, the need to equip Soldiers with appropriate military standard equipment in mission-dictated densities can be just as urgent to mission success as rapidly-developed capabilities designed to address emergent battlefield requirements.

As noted by the DSB, the Army has developed the Capability Development for Rapid Transition (CDRT) process to determine the value of rapidly fielded solutions to the larger Army for future operations. This process serves a bridging function similar to the one depicted in the Report's description of a "dual acquisition path" model. We continue to improve our evaluation and assessment procedures and have recently expanded the effort to assist the Army sustainment community with disposition decision on deployed equipment.

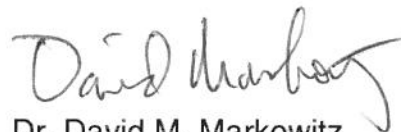
The Army strongly agrees with the Task Force's conclusion, "The most formidable barrier to rapid and effective solutions to urgent needs is available,

dedicated, flexible funds.” Service capability developers need predictable access to funding with tailored oversight reflecting the urgency of the activity.

The Army Acquisition Executive believes existing acquisition regulations provide contracting methods that allow the Services to adequately address procurement of solutions to urgent requirements. However, when these methods are used outside of the acquisition program framework of the DoD 5000 series, the Department must be sensitive to safety, suitability, supportability and interoperability issues which may be overlooked for the sake of rapid delivery. Our responsibility to provide effective military capabilities to the warfighter demands we plan and program integration and sustainment requirements for rapidly acquired equipment.

The essential elements of a viable and effective rapid acquisition capability already exist within the Defense Acquisition System. However, we owe it our Soldiers to constantly assess and improve our ability to fulfill urgent operational requirements. As noted, we have modified procedures and created new processes as necessary, and we will continue to adapt to changing operational support requirements. Codification of “best practices” in policy is a recognized element of this improvement process.

We recognize this same dialog is occurring across the Department of Defense and look forward to supporting OSD efforts aimed at improving our collective ability to effectively meet urgent operational needs.



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