IT Acquisition Advisory Council (IT-AAC)

Roadmap for Achieving Sustainable Defense IT/Cyber Acquisition Reform, 2.0

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510-6050

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515-6035

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
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The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
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The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Vice Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515-6035

September 24, 2014

Dear Chairmen, Ranking Members, and Vice Chairman of the Committees on Armed Services:

On behalf of the IT-Acquisition Advisory Council (IT-AAC), a non-partisan, non-profit public/private "do tank" we thank the House and Senate Committees on Armed Services for its political resolve and willingness to consider our views on how to improve the Defense Information Technology (IT) & Cyber Acquisition System effectiveness. IT-AAC is comprised of over a dozen internationally recognized standards bodies, universities and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), representing over 25,000 high tech companies and 200,000 individual members who stand together to advance Sustainable IT Acquisition Reforms. Since standing up in 2008, at the urging of both Congress and the White House, IT-AAC has completed a thorough examination of the root causes of Defense IT program shortcomings that have undermined delivery of mission critical solutions to the war fighter while costing taxpayers over $20B per year in avoidable waste.   IT-AAC's significant investments, led by Honorable Mike Wynne, the 21st Secretary of Air Force, includes over 56 Leadership Roundtables, 200 interviews, summary analysis of over 40 existing studies, and review of 30 major IT program failures across the federal IT landscape. This work has also identified services oriented, agile acquisition methods, sources of innovation, and lessons learned critical to transforming the Defense IT Acquisition Ecosystem. As IT-AAC is not a trade association, we are in a unique position to partner with Congress and the executive branch to overcome almost two decades of failed IT acquisition reform attempts since the signing of the Clinger Cohen Act (CCA).

We believe that recent congressional directives aimed at reforming IT & Cyber Acquisition has yielded critical awareness to the urgency of improving acquisition of commercial innovations. Disappointingly, agency efforts to implement these directives have fallen far short due to a lack of incentives and/or commercial IT expertise. Our recommendations, if enacted by Congress, could expedite the delivery of innovative IT solutions to the warfighter, improve training, empower our acquisition workforce, and apply Risk Based Decision Analytics needed to enable fact based decisions. IT-AAC's public service partners have invested years and millions of dollars to establish Agile Acquisition Processes, Risk Management Frameworks and Innovation Exchanges needed to achieve sustainable IT Acquisition Reforms. It is for these reasons that we encourage you to meet with IT-AAC to discuss how these recommendations might best be applied. These recommendations can be summarized by the following five simple actions that could remediate the most common failure patterns threatening our national security systems and wasting billions.

Recommendations:

1) **Reinforce the Rule of Law:** direct DOD to implement; Clinger Cohen Act, NDAA Sec804, OMB 25 Point Plan and Key Provisions in FITARA. GAO oversight may be needed to overcome not-invented-here thinking.
2) **Clarify Lines of Authority:** Realign DoD CIO and CMO functions as suggested in NDAA Sec 901; align accountability and incentives that drive mission outcomes versus process compliance.
3) **Embrace Agile IT Acquisition:** Direct OSD to adopt a suite of existing agile frameworks (versus modification of legacy DoD5000 processes) that have already proven to meet challenges of the fast paced IT market (i.e., AF ASAP, BTA's Capability Assessment Framework, Acquisition Assurance Method). Again, GAO or CRS oversight may be needed.
4) **Remove Innovation Barriers:** Reestablish the Technology Clearinghouse created in 2000 and redirected in 2007 NDAA that exposes emerging commercial innovations, implementation best practices and lessons learned (CCA directives).
5) **Revitalize IT Acquisition Workforce:** Train, mentor and equip the IT Acquisition Workforce by leveraging public/private partnerships and NGOs with proven access to commercial best practices.

The IT-AAC has focused its efforts on leveraging previous studies, case studies, and program reviews dating back to the Clinger Cohen Act of 1996. IT-AAC's Roadmap for Sustainable Defense IT Acquisition Reform incorporates the work of many esteemed study groups, including the Defense Science Board Report on Defense IT Acquisition of 2008, the National Academies Report on Achieving IT Acquisition of 2010, the Defense Business Board Report on IT Modernization of 2011, the Report of the Acquisition Advisory Panel commissioned by the Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003, and the Congressional Research Service Report on Defense Acquisition of 2014, to name a few. We chose these and other studies because they represent the most authoritative and widely respected perspectives of IT Acquisition Reform. These studies incorporated inputs from Industry leaders, the legislative and executive branches of government, as well as the defense mission stakeholders' whose views matter most.

Our ultimate goal is to forge a partnership with Congress and the executive branch in order to help guide organizational realignment and fill IT/Cyber "Decision Analytics" gaps in the overly prescriptive DoD5000.02 Oversight Processes that are more appropriately applied to 20-year weapon systems programs. IT-AAC suggests Congress work with the OSD CMO to enable implementation of an Agile Acquisition Process that targets baseline modernization of legacy IT & Cyber systems and QRC needs seeking to comply/align with the Clinger Cohen Act, Agile Acquisition, and the SOA/Cloud directives contained in previous NDAA guidance. Clearly, decades of failed attempts using internal resources and expertise has proven out the definition of insanity and therefore a call for new thinking. Congress could accelerate IT acquisition reforms by directing pilot implementation of Agile Methods using IT-AAC Risk Frameworks applied to high risk programs like iEHR, DCGS, Defense Cloud, JIE, and/or IPPSA/ECSS (ERP) that GAO has identified as high risk. The July 7th PSI Report on the failed AF ECSS program re-affirms the need for a more agile, best practices IT Acquisition framework.

Recognizing the long-standing cultural challenges facing previous Defense IT Reform efforts, we believe leadership resolve on this matter is essential. Previous Congressional leadership on IT reform affirms our common goals. Our principals stand ready to meet with you and your staff to discuss how best to overcome barriers to innovation and cultural aversion to change. Extrapolating from benchmarked standards & practices, there is significant opportunity for Defense Agencies to save billions of dollars annually in excessive legacy IT systems cost while accelerating the adoption of commercial best practices and innovations not visible to the Defense Industrial Complex and Pentagon Acquisition Core. Thank you for your dedication and service to country.

Very Respectfully,

Honorable Duane Andrews
Former ASD C3I

Honorable John G. Grimes
Former DOD CIO

Honorable Bill Lynn
Former DEPSEC

Honorable Jacques Gansler Ph.D.
Former USD (AT&L), UofMD

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CC:
The Honorable Robert Work, Deputy Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Frank Kendall, Under Secretary of Defense (AT&L)
The Honorable Michael McCord, Comptroller, Under Secretary of Defense (FM)
The Honorable Eric Fanning, Under Secretary of the AF
The Honorable Brad Carson, Under Secretary of the Army
The Honorable Tom Hicks, Under Secretary of the Navy (PDU)
ADM Michael S. Rogers, Commander, US Cyber Command and Director, NSA/Chief Central Security Service
The Honorable Shaun Donovan, OMB Director