



Hon. John E. Krings Hon. Thomas P. Christie Charles E. Adolph

5 May 2009

Senator Carl Levin
Chairman
Senator John McCain
Ranking Member

United States Senate
Committee on Armed Forces
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Senators Levin and McCain,

We wish to express our strong endorsement of the Levin-McCain bill approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee that reestablishes the Director, Developmental Test and Evaluation (DDT&E) office as a direct report to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. This office is the key to providing the requisite unfiltered assessments of program progress through developmental testing and evaluation (DT&E), as well as independent evaluations of technology readiness levels. The absence of independent assessments of developmental readiness and progress is a root cause of the systemic DoD acquisition problems.

Unfortunately, since the late 1990s, OSD has not accomplished meaningful or effective oversight of DT&E. As a result, the visibility and transparency required to perform effective program reviews at the OSD level no longer exists. The DDT&E should participate in all major OSD acquisition and PPBES program reviews (as was the case until the late 1990s), as well as submitting an annual written report to the Secretary of Defense and the appropriate Congressional Armed Services Committees on the status of the major developmental test programs.

Some minimal DT&E functions are currently performed by a small residual organization reporting to the Director, Systems & Software Engineering (DSSE). The DSSE is the focal point for policy, practice and procedural matters relating to systems and software engineering, including elements such as risk management, software engineering, test policy, quality, manufacturing, and

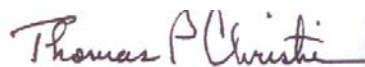
production. There is minimal interaction between the Systems engineering policy and oversight function and DT after an acquisition program is approved and developmental testing at the program level begins.

DT&E is a government as well as a contractor function, and must include active involvement by the appropriate Service, as well as robust oversight by OSD. However, the DSSE is the focal point to provide oversight for policy, practice and procedural matters to ensure "appropriate levels of systems engineering are applied through all phases of program development" and acquisition. As a result, the DSSE has an inherent conflict of interest regarding the assessment of technology maturity and program engineering progress. A single office should not be responsible for or expected to provide: 1) oversight and guidance on acquisition program systems engineering; and 2) objective assessments of program progress. Performing the oversight function by a small cadre buried within the D,SSE organization, with results merged and filtered through other elements of the D,SSE organization, will not provide the transparency and insights required for effective programmatic oversight.

Timely, robust testing requires appropriate test resources. Including the Defense Test Resource Management Center (DTRMC) in the reestablished DT&E will ensure the adequacy of this critical component of developmental (and operational) testing.

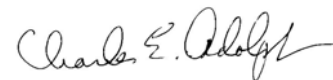
In summary, we strongly support the current draft SASC legislation. In addition, we also recommend that technology readiness assessments at the OSD level, based on test results, be accomplished by the DDT&E, as this provides a measure of objectivity that may be absent from an assessment by technology advocates. With the above recommended addition that has the DDT&E responsible for assessing technology readiness levels, we believe your proposed legislation, if implemented, will remedy many of the major problems associated with the current DoD acquisition process.

Respectfully,



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