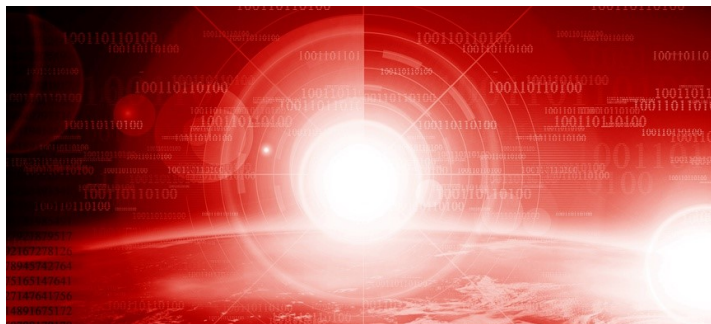


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Defense Acquisition Guidance Overhaul Will Focus Squarely on Software



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The Defense Department is undertaking a comprehensive rewrite of its main acquisition guidance and that revision work will have a heavy emphasis on software development, according to a top defense acquisition official.

The department is going to “start from scratch” rewriting DOD 5000, Kevin Fahey, assistant secretary of defense for acquisition, said Wednesday during an event hosted by the National Defense Industrial Association and the Section 809 Panel. This effort is the “biggest thing on my plate” in 2019, he said.

While the overhaul will focus on moving from a requirement-heavy procurement process to something lighter and more flexible, the technology aspect of modern weapons systems—and how that technology is purchased and maintained—will be central, Fahey said.

“The traditional way we fund weapons systems really isn’t how we should fund software,” he said. There is an upfront buy, Fahey noted, but software is constantly evolving, and acquisition systems need to be designed to upgrade and modernize the software over time.

“We are absolutely in a situation where we are trying to change the way we do software development and agile software development,” he said, citing pilot programs throughout the department focused on development best practices.

Fahey argued the next iteration of DOD 5000 is the best place to address this issue.

“There are some who say maybe we need a different 5000 document” that covers software development, he offered. “I’m not one of them because I believe almost every weapons system we do will be software intensive.”

In his remarks, Fahey also went meta, suggesting the document itself needs a technical upgrade, as well. A digital version of DOD 5000 would enable the guidance to be a living document, easily updated to account for changes in the department’s organizational structure or advancements in business and technology practices.

“That is not the situation we’re in,” he said. “Every time you want to change it, it takes three years of changes, so that by the time you’re done you want to change it again.”

Fahey did not offer a timeline for the rewrite but said the team expects to have something to show for the effort before the end of the year.