



RAND

PROJECT AIR FORCE



Improving Defense Acquisition: Insight From Three Decades of RAND Research

Jonathan P. Wong and Obaid Younossi

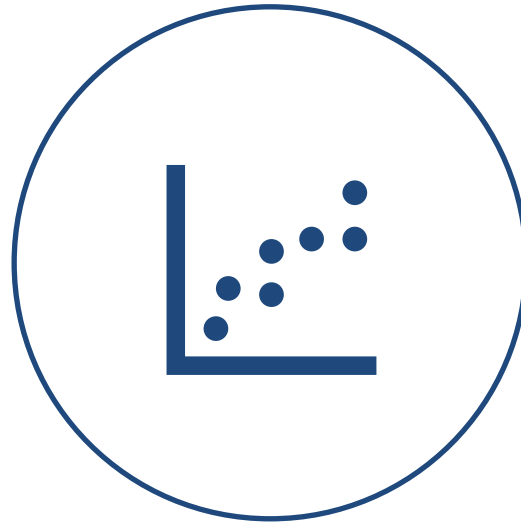
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Research overview



Improving acquisition is not a new idea

Our research is an update to a 1986 effort to synthesize four decades of RAND acquisition research



We suspected that common themes would emerge

RAND acquisition research often seeks to solve specific problems, but would an overall set of themes emerge?



A literature review methodology

44 key reports culled from across 89 reports (20,000+ pages)

DoD is faced with recurring acquisition challenges

We identified eight consistent challenges that influence acquisition outcomes

Responding to
evolving missions

Leveraging a
changing defense
industrial base

Accommodating
interoperability

Building in
cybersecurity

Planning for
technology refresh
and insertion

Rebuilding the
acquisition
workforce

Managing the
acquisition cost of
systems

Aligning incentives,
organizations, and
processes to
acquisition goals

Four key solution themes emerge from RAND research

Tailor Acquisition Approaches

- Acquisition programs may benefit from management frameworks tailored to the circumstances and characteristics of the system being considered.
- One way to synthesize these principles is by categorizing programs into four pathways along two dimensions: program need timeline and technology development risk

Better Engage an Inclusive Industrial Base

- Expand the industrial base to include nontraditional suppliers
- At the same time, improve long-term planning to sustain the legacy industrial base

Properly Size, Train, and Incentivize the Workforce

- Map workforce characteristics to acquisition activities and their outcomes
- Align incentives with desired acquisition outcomes

Track and Analyze Attributes of Acquisition

- Most reforms require several years for their full effects to be realized
- DoD must be patient in letting acquisition reforms play out before implementing additional changes

Improving defense acquisition requires a multiprong approach

Challenge	Tailor Acquisition Approaches	Better Engage an Inclusive Industrial Base	Properly Size, Train, and Incentivize the Workforce	Track and Analyze Attributes of Acquisition
Responding to evolving missions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leveraging a changing defense industrial base		✓		✓
Accommodating interoperability	✓			✓
Building in cybersecurity	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planning for technology refresh and insertion	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rebuilding the acquisition workforce		✓	✓	✓
Managing the acquisition cost of systems	✓			✓
Aligning incentives, organizations, and processes to acquisition goals	✓		✓	✓



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