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ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM  
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# **Obstacles, and Possible Solutions, to the Analysis of Department of Defense Outsourcing for Goods and Services**

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## **Abstract**

This paper is an attempt by the author to understand why research and analysis of the topic of outsourcing for goods and services by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) is extremely difficult. I have researched, written, and published on at least six different topics since receiving my PhD from the University of California at Berkeley in 1970, and this topic on DoD outsourcing is by far the most difficult. In the paper, I seek to explain this difficulty in terms of seven obstacles. The most important obstacles are the following: lack of an established literature on the topic; neglect of the importance of distinguishing classified and proprietary information; generally partial and thus unreliable data; complexity of the gigantic bureaucracy that is the DoD; lack of analysis of innovation, should there be any; unwillingness by those involved in outsourcing to share information; and a stultifying attitude towards innovation by large sectors of the acquisition workforce.

## **Background**

Since obtaining a PhD in political science at the University of California at Berkeley in 1970, I have researched and published on six distinct topics. All six required foreign travel, fluency in other languages, research in documents and personal interviews, and resulted in publications in both blind refereed scholarly journals and books produced by reputable university and commercial presses. In all cases, I sought, through the research and publications, to answer a *why* question.

Beginning in 2009, I began to focus my research on outsourcing, also called contracting out, by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). This topic is extremely important both in terms of U.S. national security and the gigantic sums of money involved. The implications for national security are due to the current competition between the United States and its near-peer competitor, China. The amount of money the DoD outsourced in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, \$414.3 billion, was 57% of that year's total DoD budget of \$728.4 billion (Sanders et al., 2023).

This research is by far the most difficult I have undertaken. This may be due to the fact that in this research, as in the previous six research projects, I am attempting to answer a *why* question based on empirical data, including interview data, as evidence. In this case, the *why* pertains to the unwillingness of the acquisition workforce, totaling some 180,000 military and civilian personnel at the end of FY 2021, to utilize the so-called alternative acquisition authorities in awarding the outsourced \$414.3 billion and to instead rely overwhelmingly on the Federal



Acquisition Authority (FAR), despite its limits and liabilities, which are abundantly documented in both government and privately issued reports and studies.<sup>1</sup>

My purposes in this paper are to identify and then provide possible solutions to what I have found to be major impediments to research on the topic of DoD contracting out, focusing on the acquisition workforce and, specifically, on answering the *why* question regarding their reticence to deviate from reliance on the FAR.<sup>2</sup> As the research involves a wide variety of what I define as obstacles, it is based not only on extensive documentation from government and other sources and interviews with individuals familiar with the topics covered in the research, but also upon my experience as an employee of the DoD between 1987 and my retirement in 2013. During one-half of those 26 years, I had administrative responsibilities for personnel, budgets, and employing contractors, and for all of those 26 years, and continuing until today, I had close contact with officer students from all of the U.S. armed services. Many of these students have been promoted into leadership roles in the Pentagon, combatant commands, their own services, and defense agencies. I have not hesitated to reach out to them for information on the topic of acquisitions. For more than 20 years, I held top secret/SCI clearances, which gave me access to both information and facilities in the Pentagon, intelligence agencies, other defense establishments and U.S. embassies abroad. After retirement in 2013, I worked as a contractor for 3 years and founded a contracting firm, Global Academic Professionals, duly registered in the SAM and with appropriate NAICS numbers. In sum, this paper is based upon written material, personal interviews, and some 30 years of experience as a direct or indirect employee of the DoD.

In conducting my research, which has so far resulted in two books, several journal articles, and a chapter in a book, I have identified the following obstacles to research on the topic of DoD outsourcing. Each obstacle is followed by possible solutions to the obstacles or speculation on how solutions might be discovered.

### **Absence of an Established Literature on the Topic**

Virtually all topics in the social sciences can acknowledge an established literature in books and/or articles in scholarly journals. While Nagle's (2005) book is an excellent history of government contracting and Fox's (2021) *Defense Acquisition Reform, 1960-2009: An Elusive Goal* deals with defense acquisition issues between the 1960s and the early 21st century, neither can be considered fundamental for analysis of contemporary outsourcing by the DoD, let alone on the acquisition workforce. In order to research and write a book on outsourcing by the DoD, I had to construct my own framework, drawing heavily on my and others' conceptual work in civil-military relations.

Due to the absence of an established literature, I also have to draw heavily on two government publications. Congressional Research Service reports and Government Accountability Office (GAO) audits helped fill the gaps left by the absence of an established

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<sup>1</sup> I deal extensively with the impediments arising from reliance on the FAR and the option of using Other Transaction Authority (OTAs) in Bruneau (2023). For a list of the alternative acquisition authorities, see GAO (2020, pp. 4–5).

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the acquisition workforce, the requirements process Joint Capabilities, Integration, and Development System (JCIDS) and budgeting process Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution Process (PPBE) are often identified as major challenges in acquisition reform. Both are currently receiving great attention and scrutiny but are not included in this paper, as I have no unique insights to offer.



literature. While timely, both are, however, researched and written at the request of members and/or staff of the U.S. Congress, not by academics. They are better than nothing, but the former are spotty in coverage, and the latter are essentially financial audits.

### **Possible Solutions to the Obstacle**

My 2023 book could serve as a first approximation to establishing a baseline for a founding literature on the topic of acquisitions. The foci, and resulting publications, will depend on how other obstacles identified here are dealt with.

### **The Absence of Empirical Data Due to Two Aspects of What is Crucial in Outsourcing**

I was privileged to personally interview the late and iconic Dr. Jacques Gansler on February 23, 2009, at his office at the University of Maryland at College Park. He stated at that time what he had previously published in the Report of the Commission on Army Expeditionary Contracting. I quoted him at that time as saying, “The contract is the nexus between the warfighter and the contracting community” (J. Gansler, interview with author, February 23, 2009). This formulation is found early in the report (Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations, 2007, p. 3). I heard essentially the same formulation in my personal interview with a representative of the contracting “industry,” John Gastright, vice president for government affairs, communications, and marketing for Dyn Corp International, on January 9, 2009. He stated, “the contract is the mission statement” (J. Gastright, interview with author, January 9, 2009). In order to be awarded a contract, firms submit proposals to some entity in the DoD, the armed services, defense agencies, and other parts of the DoD. The bids include information that is often both classified and proprietary. According to the late Secretary of Defense Ash Carter (2019), who termed himself “acquisition czar,” there are “about ten million ... separate contracts awarded every year. More than ten thousand ‘contracting officers,’ trained and authorized by law to spend the taxpayer’s money, sign these contracts” (p. 9). A researcher without access to this classified and/or proprietary information can have absolutely no idea why one proposal won out over another. The researcher lacks, in short, empirical data to make a comparison or assessment. One may, however, examine the acquisition authority used in awarding contracts and get some sense of how flexible or nimble they are in bringing in emerging technologies, which appears to be a high priority in the current competition with China.

### **Possible Solutions to the Obstacle**

I can envision no solution for research on what is proposed and what is contracted by the DoD when confronted by issues of secrecy and proprietary information. However, as there is more than one acquisition authority, a researcher may attempt to determine the impact of using different authorities. That was the purpose of my 2023 book, and there is currently a great deal of interest in the DoD in using the authorities listed in the GAO document cited in footnote 1.

### **Failure to Consider Classified vs. Unclassified Contracts**

A further impediment to analysis due to information being classified is exemplified by the following experience, which demonstrates that something to be acquired can be unclassified, or, if necessary, classified and thus hidden from the general public.<sup>3</sup> In late 2018, there was a tremendous amount of media-reported agony over personnel at Google who were unwilling to work on Project Maven, which involved the use of AI to identify potential targets for armed U.S. drones. More recently, in early December 2023, it became known that the project was classified

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<sup>3</sup> This issue is dealt with in a case study contrasting acquisition authorities used by the CIA versus those used by the DoD. See Michaels (2011).



and awarded to five firms, including Google. To paraphrase an article in *The Washington Post* in January 2023, 80% of Project Maven—including the drone video analysis work—was transferred to the control of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA; Dou, 2023). Although the NGA is part of the DoD, its procurement is done through a cloud contract (Cornillie, 2020). Orders placed through that contract, known as C2E, which stands for Commercial Cloud Enterprise, do not have to be reported publicly, and the CIA did not announce a vendor list when it awarded the contract. According to the media, Amazon, Google, IBM, Microsoft, and Oracle are the vendors. Also according to the media, Google declined to say whether there has been any change in its employees' stance. Again according to the media, the DoD's Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office, which operates the other 20% of Project Maven, declined to comment. In short, by focusing only on unclassified material, the analysis of acquisitions, such as it is, can miss hugely important contracts.<sup>4</sup>

### **Possible Solution to the Obstacle**

This focus on unclassified-only documents is not really a problem within the DoD, as everyone who deals with classified information, which is everybody, is “read into” various classifications as part of the normal pattern of work. This is, however, a problem with some of the media, which either doesn't know, or maybe doesn't care, about security classifications. The solution would be, as it is practiced now in the intelligence community (IC), to state in every interaction with contractors and the media that this or that issue is classified, and at what level, and if the contractors don't have sufficient clearances, then there is nothing to say.

### **The Department of Defense is so large and diverse that no single person can begin to understand how it works, let alone implement acquisition reform.**

Between 1998 and 2001, I served as *rappporteur* of the Defense Policy Board that provides the secretary of defense and his staff with independent advice on questions of national security and defense policy. I began to understand at that time that the DoD, extending throughout much of the world, and with the giant Pentagon at the center, is huge, cumbersome, and unwieldy. My experience with the DoD since that time, which involved monthly visits to build support for programs at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), reinforced this perception again and again. Indeed, a recent Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates (2014), states,

The Department of Defense is the largest, most complex organization on the planet: three million people, civilian and military, with a budget, the last year I was there, of over \$700 billion. Nearly everyone there is a career professional, with considerable job security. Every major part of the organization – budget, acquisition programs, and policy - has a constituency both inside and outside the Pentagon. Local and state officials, members of Congress, lobbyists, industry, retired senior officers – everyone has an oar in the water, many of them pulling in different directions. (p. 577)

It is worth noting that Gates (2014) calls specific attention to the trio of acquisition programs, lobbyists, and industry.

### **Possible Solution to the Obstacle**

There have been numerous proposals to modernize and update the DoD. The most recent and, in my view, most feasible, is the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR), spearheaded by one of the two main authors of the Goldwater–Nichols Defense Reorganization

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 4 of my book and the sources cited there for the different acquisition authorities available to the intelligence community versus the DoD.



Act of 1986 and the first Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (SOLIC), James Locher. I deal with the PNSR, as well as other proposals for reform of the DoD in Chapter 4 of my 2011 book, *Patriots for Profit: Contractors and the Military in U. S. National Security*.

### **Problematic Quantitative Data**

Empirical data is the *sine qua non* in research. It is telling that the GAO classifies DoD contract management as *high risk*, which means, in the terms of the GAO, that DoD contract management is not fully accountable in fiscal terms.<sup>5</sup> Further, the DoD has failed its financial audit 6 years in a row. In addition to the problems of accountability and fiscal mismanagement, the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS), while the most comprehensive source of information about federal spending on contracts, lacks complete data, and the way data is reported makes it difficult to summarize spending on contracts.<sup>6</sup> Indicative of the serious problems with FPDS data, a CRS report on the theme of *Department of Defense Contractors and Troop Levels in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Peters, 2021) explicitly discusses the limitations of the data that is available through an update and modification of the FPDS. The report concludes as follows: “Nevertheless, some observers say that despite their shortcomings, the data available through the beta.SAM.gov Data Bank are substantially more comprehensive than what is available on government procurement activities in most other countries in the world” (Peters, 2021, p. 20). It is good to know that U.S. data is more reliable than that of Angola, for example.

Available data is incomplete. For example, other transaction (OT) data is not generally tracked in FPDS-NG. For the DoD, only 10 U.S.C. § 4022 information is tracked, but it does not differentiate between prototype and follow-on contracts. Other agencies do not report their OT data in FPDS-NG because it is optional per the statute or guidance. According to some researchers, FPDS-NG has given those agencies that want to report OT data pushback in allowing them to report the information. <http://go.usa.gov/3cAtG>. Further, there is no accountability for the data being reported. Contracting officers (COs) and acquisition officers (AOs) report this data but generally have little time to ensure accuracy. During the first month of reporting, it is the contractors’ responsibility to confirm their information. Per their instructions, they cannot report until FPDS-NG is correct. This can take 3–4 months for a CO to correct, causing contractor reporting delays since the correction is not prioritized.

Since the credibility and completeness of quantitative data is crucial for analysis by social scientists, it is not surprising that social scientists pay only negligible attention to the DoD despite the DoD’s gigantic budget. Thanks go to Gregory Sanders and his colleagues at CSIS for helping me with some quantitative data to begin to understand what the DoD is outsourcing and with what form of acquisition authority.

### **Possible Solution to the Obstacle**

It seems absurd that the DoD is allowed to get away with tremendous callousness in the use of U.S. taxpayers’ money. The U.S. Congress should not allow the DoD to be so sloppy in

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<sup>5</sup> “Over the years since we added this area to our High-Risk List, we have made numerous recommendations related to this high-risk issue, 18 of which were made since the last high-risk update in February 2017. As of November 2018, 41 recommendations related to this high-risk area are open” (GAO, #####). See also GAO (2019).

<sup>6</sup> See Federal Procurement Data System–Next Generation (FPDS-NG; n.d.). FPDS data are available at [www.USASpending.gov](http://www.USASpending.gov).

For the background of the FPDS and discussion of data accuracy issues, see Sargent Jr. et al. (2018).



the use of data, which, in fact, may play into strategies of major firms in the industry. It is encouraging that the Defense Innovation Board (DIB) has recommended to the DoD major initiatives and reform in data concerning virtually all aspects of DoD outsourcing. The plan is to include the initiatives and reform of data in an upcoming National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).<sup>7</sup>

### **Acquisition Reform is a Frequent Focus of Attention at the DoD, but Scant Evidence Is Available to Support Any Conclusion**

In line with the extreme complexity of the DoD, the theme of acquisition reform is a constant, but there is little evidence of reform. The title of the 2021 book by one of the few experts on this topic, the late J. Ronald Fox is, *Defense Acquisition Reform, 1960-2009: An Elusive Goal*. Another acquisition expert, the late Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter (2019), states in his book, *Inside the Five-Sided Box*, “most of the periodic paroxysms of ‘acquisition reform’ that sweep through government have been amateurish and counterproductive. I know, because I’ve had a front-row seat for several of them” (p. 22).

I personally had much experience with a national level program promising great things for us in managerial positions in the DoD. During the Clinton–Gore administrations, from 1993–2001, the chairman of the other largest department at NPS, Defense Management (which included acquisitions, personnel, budgets, etc.) and I very actively worked to have NPS declared the first U.S. Navy reinvention laboratory under the National Performance Review initiative led by Vice President Gore. We sought flexibility in personnel issues pertaining to GS-level staff. Despite our achieving the designation, no reforms were initiated during our tenure as chairmen, and to the best of my knowledge, no reforms were ever initiated, let alone implemented, at NPS.

The most recent effort in acquisition reform is the Section 809 Panel. An interim report of its recommendations was issued in May 2017, and the final report followed in January 2019. According to the most recent analysis of the reports’ result, dated March 7, 2022, 26 recommendations had been implemented in part or in full. Implementation means, however, in all but two or three of the 93 recommendations, inclusion in various NDAA.

It must be noted, however, that inclusion in an NDAA does not mean that the DoD acts on mandates or guidelines in an NDAA. For example, in Section 867 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, Congress directed that

the Secretary of Defense shall establish a preference, to be applied in circumstances determined appropriate by the Secretary, for using transactions other than contracts, cooperative agreements, and grants entered into pursuant to sections 2371 and 2371b of title 10, United States Code, and authority for procurement for experimental purposes pursuant to section 2373 of title 10, United States Code. Sections 2371, 2371b and 2373 are currently codified as sections 4021, 4022 and 4023 of title 10. To effectively make use of these authorities Congress has mandated as part of section 4021:

The Secretary of Defense shall-(1) ensure that management, technical, and contracting personnel of the Department of Defense involved in the award or administration of transactions under this section or other innovative forms of

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<sup>7</sup> For an introductory article on this initiative of the DIB, see Graham (2024).





contracting are afforded opportunities for adequate education and training. (NDAA, 2017)

These provisions were never implemented if the “adequate education and training” (NDAA, 2017) means anything more than online material at the Defense Acquisition University and George Washington University Law school offering one course on innovative contracting. Despite extreme due diligence, I was unable to ascertain if there is anything approaching the general meaning of “adequate” (NDAA, 2017). It is telling that in the GAO report on *alternative agreements*, there is no mention of educational institutions in “Figure 1: Key Army Organizations Related to Alternative Agreements and Approaches Supporting Army Modernization” (GAO, 2020, p. 7) nor mention of education/training in “Figure 2: Leading Practices of a Lessons Learned Process” (GAO, 2020, p. 9).<sup>8</sup>

I believe the problem at NPS, continuing with the 809 Panel, and in general acquisition reform, is essentially what J. Ronald Fox (2021) concludes in his book: “The underlying stumbling block [to acquisition reform] has been and continues to be one of implementing and institutionalizing the recommendations required to bring about more professional management” (p. 206).

### **Possible Solution to the Obstacle**

Since I began research on the general topic of DoD outsourcing, first with private security contractors in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and more recently in the effort to obtain emerging technologies in the Great Power Competition, I have met probably 20 individuals who understand the challenge of acquisition reform and have ideas on how to resolve the problem. If the U.S. Congress would appropriate the funding to hire them for 3 months to develop a reform initiative and then in the NDAA for FY 2025, require its implementation, the problem of acquisition reform could be resolved. Already, the DIB seems to be headed in the right direction, and the realignment within the DoD and huge increase in its budget for the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) is very encouraging.

### **Information Obtained Through Interviews is Important in the Social Sciences.**

However, a large percentage of those who know anything about acquisitions have good reasons to keep their knowledge to themselves.

According to a CRS report with the most up-to-date data on personnel, the 2020 DoD budget was \$738 billion, of which \$420 billion was obligated in contracts, funding 464,500 full-time contract employees (CRS in Focus, 2021).<sup>9</sup> The DoD and contracting firms provide support to think tanks, journalists, and Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs). The interpenetration of the DoD and the armed services with the contracting industry is extensive. The biggest obstacle I have encountered in conducting research on acquisitions is the lack of cooperation of people who know anything about acquisitions. I never encountered a similar obstacle to research in any of the six topics I worked and published on prior to working on this one.

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<sup>8</sup> On this same issue of lack of education in the use of OTAs see Dunn (2023, p. 1).

Pages 1 and 3 from 2017 contain the most recent data for number of employees.<sup>10</sup> I personally have no relationship with either RAND or the DMDC. For insights into the work of the two, see S. M. Gates et al. (2022).



## Possible Solution to the Obstacle

A simple requirement by the U.S. Congress, and monitored by the GAO, that all entities and individuals that receive money from outsourcing have to publicly declare so would solve the biggest part of the problem. Then, if an office in the DoD could identify benefactors of the U.S. government money, individual scholars such as myself could start with that information, acknowledging awareness of this public money and much more easily obtain information.

## Acquisition Professionals are Not Encouraged to Innovate: To Think

The main acquisition authority is undoubtedly the FAR. It encourages training (learning—what to think) versus education (how to think). Consequently, much of the literature on acquisition is in the genre of a check-the-box mentality. Depending on font size, the FAR is at least 1,600 pages long and divided into 53 parts, each dealing with a separate aspect of the procurement process. However, generating FAR-based contracts is routine, as contracting officers have several different contract writing systems available for their work. In addition, adherence to the FAR is a security blanket in that contracting officers bear a tremendous personal responsibility for awarding contracts of the American people's money, and there are simply no incentives to take a risk. There is, in addition, a great distance between contracting officers and operators in the military, currently termed *war fighters*, resulting in a lack of awareness of specific needs of the war fighters, which might possibly result in pressure on contracting officers to innovate or take a risk. I have spoken with numerous senior military officers, active duty and retired, who had responsibility for spending large sums of money. One, with whom I spent a great deal of time over 2 decades and who was responsible for both the B-1 and B-2, informed me that he has absolutely no contact with any contracting officers either working for the U.S. Air Force or, later, in the Joint Staff.

To give a sense of this latter point, I roughly quote written comments I received from one of my graduates, who was a war fighter as the CO of a U.S. Navy warship and later had an important position in the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a U.S. Navy captain:

I would define the relationship [between operators and contracting officers] as one where, like most communities in the military, each wants the others to stay out of their lane, and in fact, has a disdain for the others. As an example, think of aviators—they can think of nothing worse than integrating with the crew when they're embarked on a ship. "We're the aviators." Anything they can do to separate themselves from the SWOs [surface warfare officers] is something they proudly and usually obnoxiously do. Think about SEALs—they see themselves as the only real operators; they talk down to everyone else. The only reason SEALs talk to the other communities is because they need to be taken somewhere, need gear, or need something to support their mission.

And in the case of Supply Officers, theirs is a community of "acquisition professionals" and "contracting officers," and etc., and if you are not one of them, then you are not worthy of discussing details because 1) you wouldn't understand; and 2) you might be trying to analyze or criticize, or worse, audit them, which would get them in trouble. Best to stay far from anyone but their own kind. Their interest is not in improvements to the process or coordination, cooperation, or integration, it's protecting their own community and continuing to do the things the way they've always been done—which is failing the military.

For example, when the submarine world needs a new weapon system based upon tactics of the enemy, the consultation between warfighters and acquisition professionals isn't one (usually) where the acquisition professional understands



the TTPs [tactics, techniques, and procedures], but only what widget was asked for by some engineering duty officer, who may or may not be five or ten years past his/her war fighting days—and the result is not a true understanding by the acquisition professional of what is being sought, but merely the what. And what this leads to is that the acquisition professional doesn't ask the right questions which might even lead to a synergy of what the warfighter "wants" aligned with other possibilities that the acquisition professional could bring to the table, but merely a "get what I want" scenario. Imagine if I was a race-car driver and I told an acquisition professional that I want the fastest car, buy it; and instead of asking, "What do you want the car for, what type of racing, will it go around in a circle or need more maneuverability, etc.?", the acquisition professional simply buys me a Ferrari. Turns out, the Ferrari I get doesn't do well against NASCAR contenders, so I lose every race. I contend that this is exactly what we did with LCS [littoral combat ship] as one example. But it occurs everywhere.

Lack of common understanding of needs, requirements, TTPs, applicability, ends, means, ways, and risk—and no real communication to establish ground truths because everyone (communities) has become so siloed in their capabilities or willingness to find mutual understanding.

### **Possible Solution to the Obstacle**

The acquisition workforce must be incentivized to use alternative (to the FAR) acquisition authorities and to be trained in the use of these alternative authorities. The training for other transaction authorities (OTAs) was stipulated in the NDAA for FY 2018 but never implemented. (any other training/education for authority implemented?)

I believe these obstacles help explain the paucity of credible analysis for a phenomenon that is both extremely important for national defense as well as an intelligent use of U.S. taxpayers' money. In a system as dysfunctional as described previously, it only makes sense for a CO to take the safest way out, even if it costs too much and does little to assure U.S. national security. The *why* must be understood in the overall context described previously. There are potential solutions to these obstacles, and it will require more political will than normal to implement them.

Currently, there are several encouraging signs in DoD acquisitions. They are probably caused by an increased and general awareness of the possible threat of China and the use of emerging technologies in the war in Ukraine. These signs include the creation of the high-level DIB in the Pentagon, the much-increased budget and direct reporting authority to the secretary of defense by the DIU, progress in reform of the PPBE process, and experiments and studies of recruitment and training of a new breed of COs. There are also more conferences and workshops put on by a growing number of interested universities and think tanks dealing with innovations in acquisitions, proposals to reach beyond the FAR, and lobbying efforts by non-traditional vendors with the DoD. In my opinion the most important university-based initiatives include the multi-university Acquisition Innovation Research Center, the Boroni Center for Government Contracting at George Washington University, and the Acquisition Research Program at NPS. I have, in addition, identified at least 10 experts (due to background and/or education) who have helped me understand impediments to and possible solutions for acquisition reform. For me, however, at the end of the day, the acquisition system is based on the actions of the COs using, or not, alternative acquisition authorities. Just as the National Performance Review process of Vice President Gore and the transformation process of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld didn't lead to better performance or transformation, my concern is that the innovation won't lead to innovation. To ascertain progress in this regard, a sample survey of COs would be necessary. The RAND Corporation would be an appropriate entity to



conduct such a survey. They have experience in analysis of the acquisition workforce and an ongoing relationship with the Defense Management Data Center (DMDC) in Monterey, CA.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I personally have no relationship with either RAND or the DMDC. For insights into the work of the two, see S. M. Gates et al. (2022).



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