

Abstract

Defense procurement plays a critical role in national security, yet it remains highly vulnerable to misconduct that can compromise both economic and strategic interests. The Navy’s Fat Leonard scandal which was uncovered through investigative efforts by the Navy, federal authorities, and the media, illustrates how widespread bribery can infiltrate complex defense operations. While the Fraud Triangle provides a useful framework for understanding such cases, its components manifest differently across functional roles in the defense enterprise. Personnel in logistics, procurement, operations, or investigative positions experienced and responded to pressures in distinct ways, shaping both their behavior and the extent of their involvement. This role-based analysis revealed that Vulnerability/Complicity + Opportunity resulted in Benefits for Glenn Defense Marine Asia (GDMA).

Methods



- Case study on book from journalistic research
- Sort 41 actors based on roles
- Review of DOJ investigative documents
- Develop scoring system
- Apply codes to actions
- Conduct analysis of findings

Results & Impact

- Financial pressures did not cause high ranking officials to indulge in misconduct. Their motivations were primarily driven by dinners, cigars, or prostitution.
- Every illicit act of misconduct made an actor more vulnerable to GDMA’s demands until the will to say no vanished.

Future Research

- Investigate how leadership behaviors, command climate, and informal social networks influence fraud vulnerability within DoD units.
- Research how ethical drift develops over time and how early-stage cultural cues contribute to systemic corruption.



Dwayne Simeon, TSgt, USAF
Advisors: Dr. Juanita Rendon
Dr. Rene Rendon