

**CREATIVE
DEFENSE
NETWORK**

Beyond the Valley of Death: Venture Studios and Strategic Small Business Growth

NPS Acquisition Research Symposium

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Panelists



Small Business Engineering Resource: Breaking the SBIR-Mill Business Model and Creating Big Companies from Small Ones

Hon. Nickolas Guertin, Senior Research Fellow, Virginia Tech, National Security Institute

Howard Reichel, Sr. Vice President, Integrated Systems Division, In-Depth Engineering

Venture Studios to Scale Warfighting Concepts to Capabilities

Pete Khooshabeh, Regional Lead, DEVCOM, Army Research Laboratory (ARL)

The Policy Test Lab: An Agentic AI-based Simulation Tool

Douglas Buettner, Deputy Chief Scientist, AIRC, Stevens Institute of Technology

Strategic Direction



The WHITE HOUSE
Executive Orders



Acquisition Transformation Strategy

FY26 NDAA

- Deliver warfighting capabilities at **SPEED** and **SCALE**
- Rebuild the **INDUSTRIAL BASE** by harnessing America's entrepreneurs
- Transform the culture of the workforce and industry to a **WARTIME** footing

Go Faster | Revitalize the DIB | Cut Bureaucracy

Common Reform Themes

EOs, FORGED, SPEED Acts, and DoW Actions



Portfolio Management

Empower PEOs with greater authorities, resources as PAEs.

Commercial Acquisition

Drive preference for commercial – buy before build.

Contracting Reforms

Reduce CAS and TINA, More FFP, Streamline FAR and DFARS.

Deregulation

Cut hundreds of statutes, raise thresholds, cut regulations.

Requirements

Pivot JROC to joint requirements, align w/OSW, and streamline.

Industrial Base

Increase # of companies, reduce barriers, time, fix supply chains.

Programs

Review/cancel MDAPs, drive MOSA, and rapid acquisition.

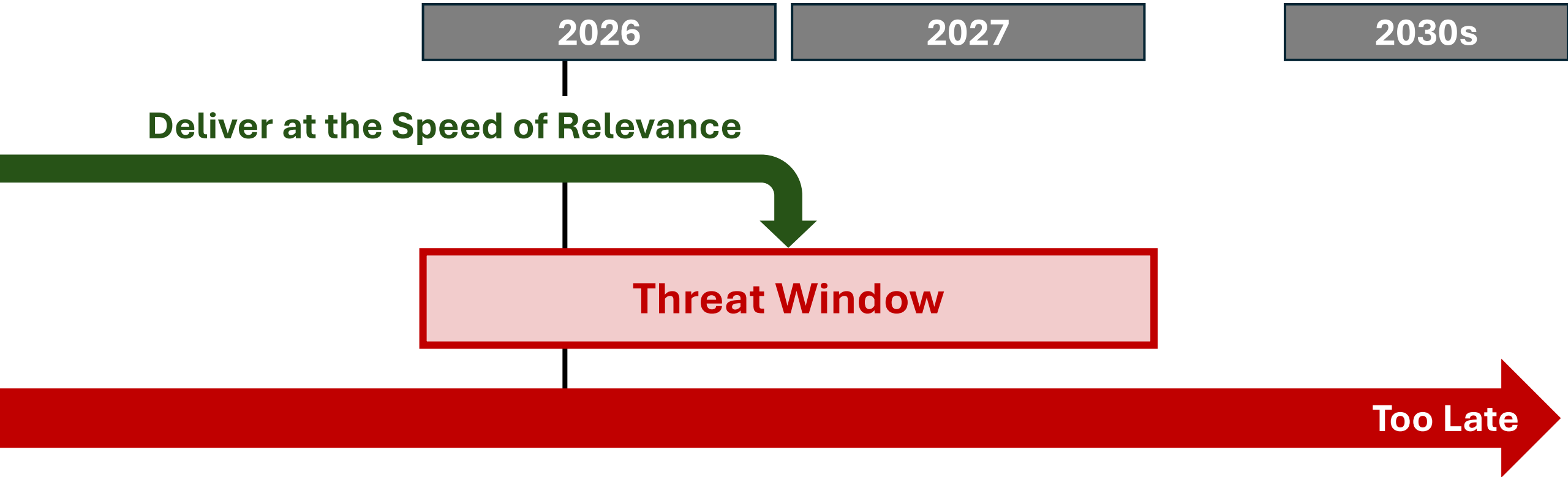
Acquisition Workforce

Review training, career paths, right-size, and culture

PPBE Reforms

Portfolio funding, increase comms w/Hill, streamline FMR.

#1 Priority: Deliver Capabilities to CCMDs ASAP



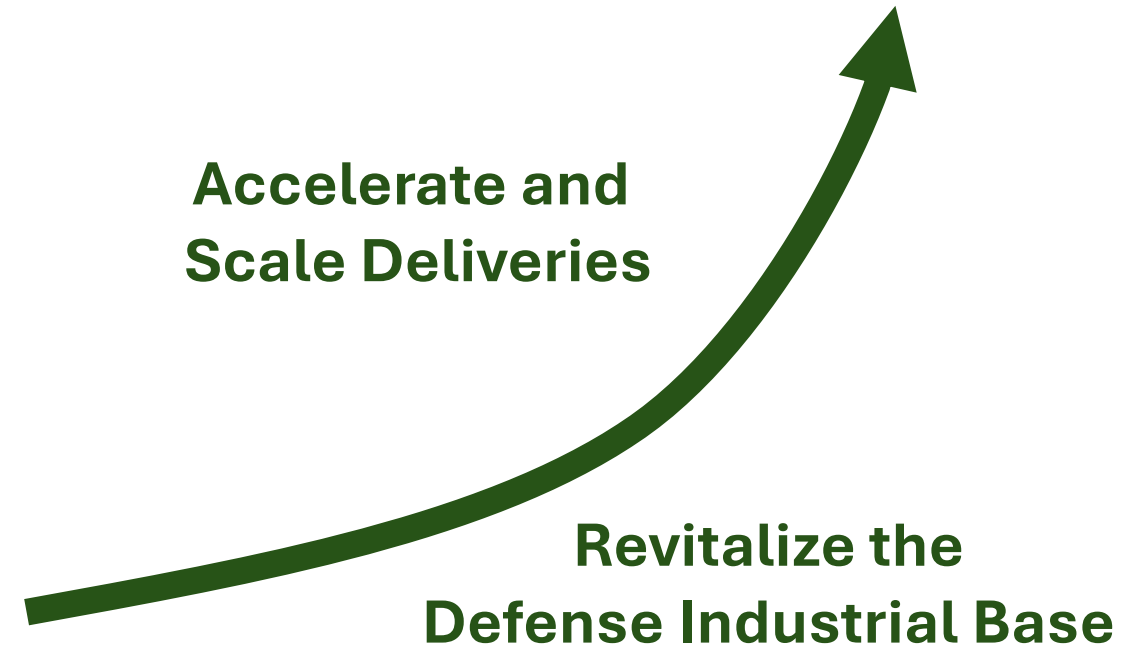
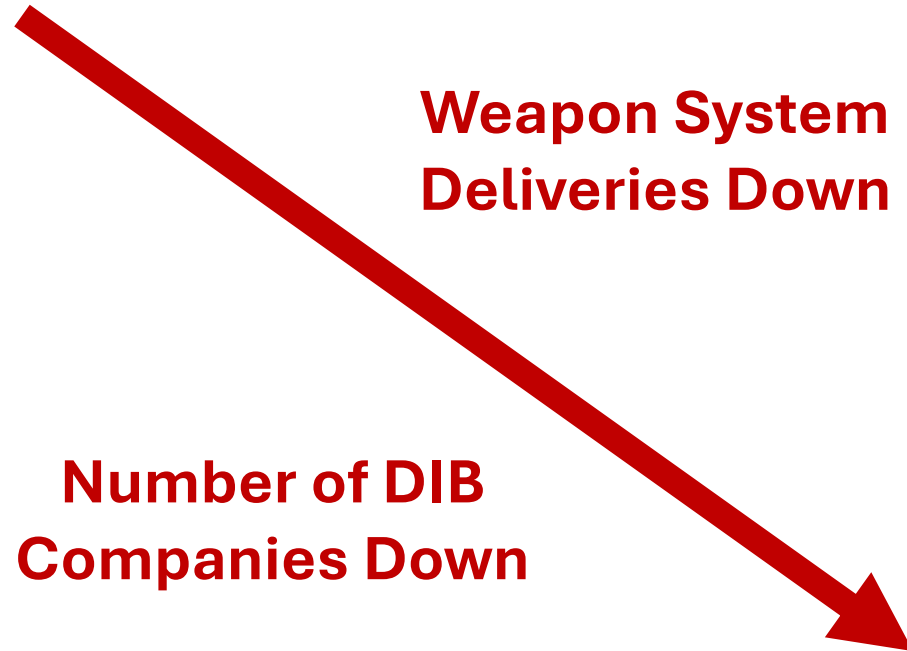
Deliver Hedge Capabilities Near Term Until New Platforms Delivered at Scale

Strategic Picture



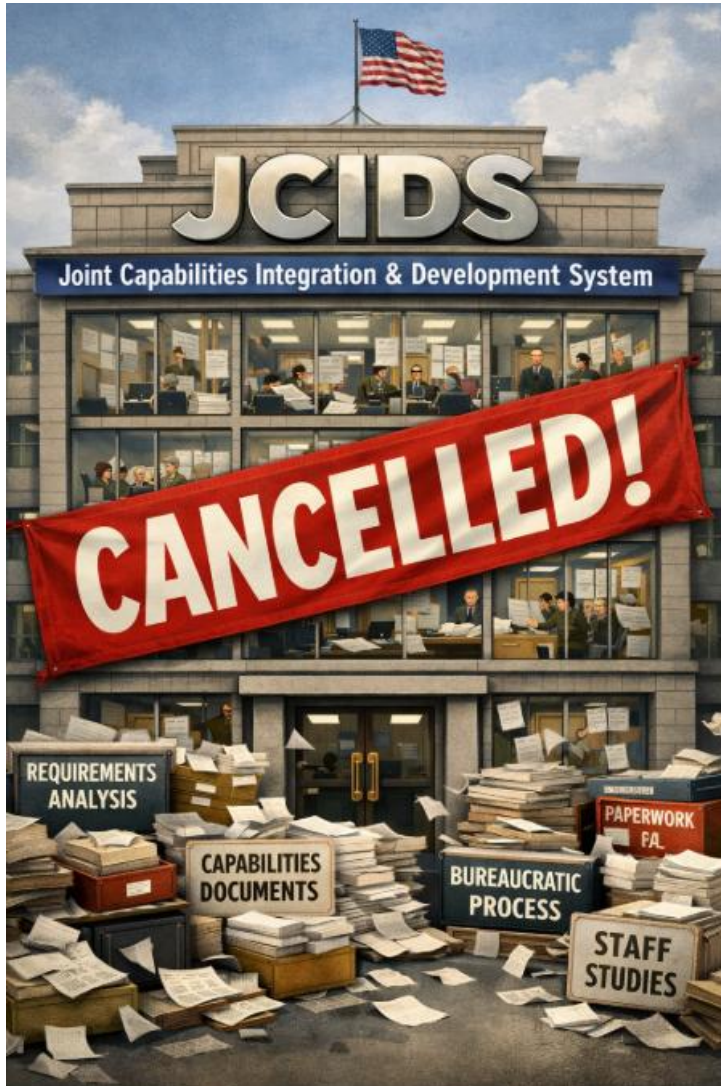
2020 ————— 2024

2025 ————— 2030



Pivot the Acquisition System and Industrial Base to a Wartime Footing

Portfolio Requirements



JS and OSW

Services

Key Operational Problems (KOPs)

Mission Engineering and Integration Activity (MEIA)

Requirements Resourcing Alignment Board (RRAB)

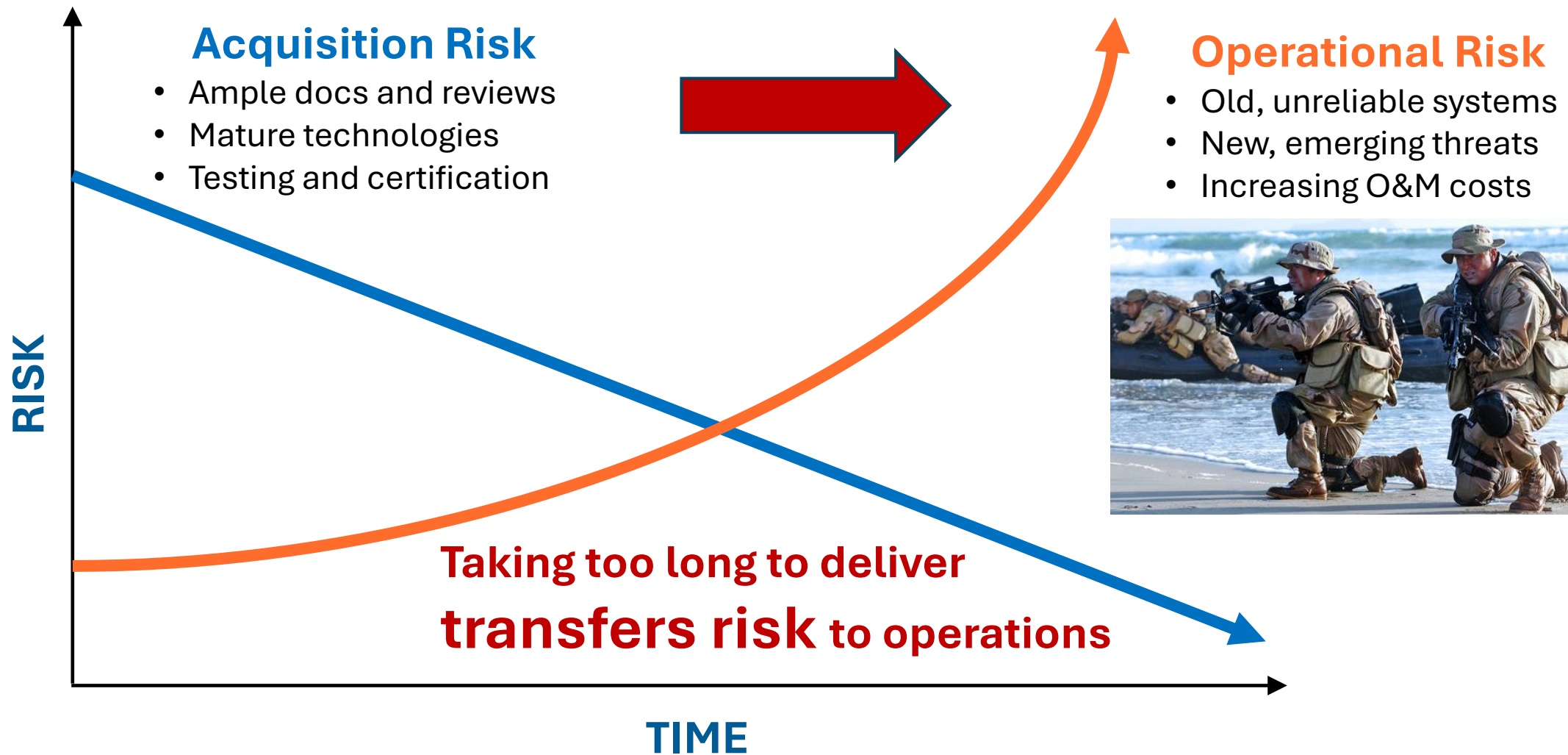
Joint Acceleration Reserve (JAR)

Req HQs

PAEs

- Portfolio level requirements: Clear Ops Goals
- Greater collab: Ops, Intel, Acq, and Industry
- Dynamic backlog of capability needs
- Mission, digital, and value engineering
- Regular ops assessments – feedback loop

Acquisition vs Operational Risk



“We mean to increase acquisition risk in order to decrease operational risk.” - SECWAR

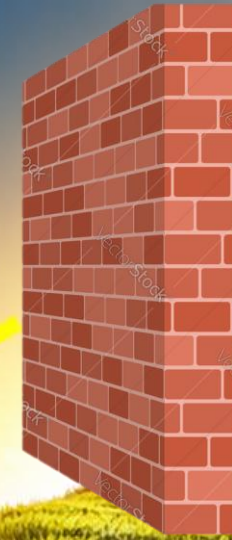
The Program Side of the Valley of Death

New Technology

**Industry
DARPA
Labs
FFRDCs**

DoD's Valley of Death

**Acquisition
Program of Record
and Operations**



- Requirements
- Program Strategies
- Budgets
- Program Baselines
- Contracts, Contractors
- Test, Interop, and Cyber
- Awareness, bandwidth

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