DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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MEMORANDUM FOR MADS, FADS, PEOS, AND DACS

FROM: SAF/AQ
1060 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1060

SUBJECT: Reality-based Acquisition System Policy for all Programs

Effective immediately, AFPD 63-1, dated 31 August 1993 is superceded by this policy memorandum. Compliance with this memorandum is mandatory. This policy memorandum applies to Acquisition Category (ACAT) IC and IAC through ACAT III acquisition programs, including system modifications; it does not cover acquisition associated with non-ACAT programs. This policy implements guidance from the SECAF and CSAF, hereafter identified as the Commanders' Intent, and Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 5000.1, The Defense Acquisition System, DoDD 5000.2, Operation of the Defense Acquisition System and DoDD 5000.2R, Mandatory Procedures for Major Defense Acquisition Programs (MDAPs) and Major Automated Information Systems (MAIS acquisition programs). This policy memorandum does not apply to Air force Space programs, which are under the perview of the Under Secretary of the Air Force.

The two overarching objectives of this policy are: 1) shortening the acquisition cycle time and, 2) gaining credibility within and outside the acquisition community.

Every action and decision by individuals responsible for program execution must map directly to, and further these two primary objectives. Members at all levels of the acquisition workforce are expected to seek innovative ways to achieve these objectives. This must be accomplished through teamwork, trust, common sense and agility. The intent is to give those accountable for program execution maximum flexibility.

Unlike previous acquisition guidance, this policy is broad and non-prescriptive. Wherever possible, it uses terminology familiar to our customer, the warfighter.

Commander's Intent:

The **primary mission** of our acquisition system is to **rapidly deliver** to the warfighters affordable, sustainable **capability that meets their expectations**. All actions by any leader, staff or supporting organizations will support the Commander's Intent.

Commander's Initial Guidance:

1) Program managers will ensure full compliance with the law; however, overrestrictive implementation of the law that goes beyond what is required in statute must be challenged if the value added to the program does not equal or exceed the resources expended.
2) Success in meeting our objective requires a shift from avoiding risk to managing it, and sometimes, simply accepting it. Taking risks will sometimes produce failure. That is acceptable as long as those in the execution chain understood the risks and we learn from the failure.
3) Speed is important. In devising and implementing acquisition approaches, the concept of time or schedule as an independent variable is one that must override prior concepts of delivering the ultimate capability at whatever cost and schedule is necessary to do so. Every key decision must have an operational sense of urgency.
4) Credibility is essential. We must create and maintain realistic expectations. Program Managers (PMs) must continually manage expectations so that senior acquisition and warfighter leadership are never surprised by sudden cost growth, performance shortfalls or schedule slippages. Each program must have a clear, unambiguous set of priorities among cost, schedule, performance and supportability. Normally, the senior leadership of the requiring MAJCOM should set these priorities as part of the initial requirement.
5) Teaming among warfighters, developers/acquirers, technologists, testers, budgeters and sustainers must begin when the requirements are being defined, not after. PMs through the MDA, are responsible for making decisions and leading implementation of programs, and are accountable for results. The PM, as the accountable agent for executing the program, has a responsibility to seek resolution if asked to do something that goes counter with meeting the Commander's Intent. There are two avenues for appeal available to the PM: the Air Force Acquisition Center of Excellence (ACE) (located both at SAF/AQ and HQ AFMC), and the MDA.
6) Solid systems engineering is required at the outset of a program to ensure a robust foundation and flexible architecture that can accommodate future requirements with minimal redesign.
7) Staffs at all level exist to advise the MDA and PM and assist them with their responsibilities. Councils, committees, advisory groups, panels and staffs are advisers at the discretion of the PM, PEO or DAC or MDA. The MDA, PEO or DAC and PM are accountable for the overall program results. Those not accountable for program outcome are expected to provide objective inputs to the program decision process, but do not have decision-making authority.

Evolutionary Acquisition (EA) is the preferred acquisition <u>strategy</u> for achieving the Commander's Intent. Spiral development is the preferred <u>process</u> to execute the EA strategy except in those exceptional cases where it is possible to field a full capability in 18 months or less.

All programs start with a "zero-based" perspective. All activities, reports, plans, coordination or reviews except those mandated by statute or previously approved by a person in the execution chain, must buy their way into the program by demonstrating that the benefit gained clearly equals or outweighs the resources expended.

The success of an acquisition program hinges on up-front, collaborative and concurrent planning by the MDA, technologists, developers/acquirers, sustainers, budgeters, warfighters, and testers. The goal is to establish, at the outset of the program, mutual, realistic expectations for content delivered, schedule of delivery, and cost.

Additional "DRAFT" guidance on the concepts required by this policy memorandum is available on the SAF/AQ web site **http:www//safaq.hq.af.mil** under "Acquisition Center of Excellence" or "Policies –SAF/AQXA."

MARVIN R. SAMBUR
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(Acquisition)

cc:
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