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# 14th Annual Symposium Advances Defense Acquisition Practices, Policies

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Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California

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*U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Victoria Ochoa*

## **14th Annual Symposium Advances Defense Acquisition Practices, Policies**

*By MC2 Victoria Ochoa*

Moshe Schwartz, Dr. William LaPlante and retired Vice Adm. Joseph Dyer, from left, participate in a panel discussion on regulatory and legislative approaches to improve acquisition during the Naval Postgraduate School's (NPS) 14th annual Acquisition Research Symposium at the Monterey Marriott hotel, April 26. The two-day symposium serves as a forum for the advancement of acquisition research, and the exchange of ideas among scholars and practitioners of public-sector acquisition.

NPS President, retired Vice Adm. Ronald A. Route, kicked off the symposium, expressing appreciation for the attendees' time, and for their commitment to advancing their practice, to the benefit of all participants, including future users of research and scholarly work.

"This means a great deal to the Naval Postgraduate School," Route said. Providing this opportunity for you to have these discussions, and for our professors and students to experience it with you, is invaluable, he added.

Vice Adm. David Johnson, Principal Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), served as keynote speaker on the first day, sharing his thoughts on the process of defense acquisition, and the many factors that influence it, especially in the current fiscal and defense environment.

"Acquisition professionals are being pressed to go faster, and deliver more, at reduced costs. That is a tall order," said Johnson. He emphasized the role of Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson's Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, noting the objectives of this strategy are instrumental in the acquisition research

field.

"It is clear that we need a bigger Navy. Our readiness is very important, and our strength is our people, and they matter the most," said Johnson. "We need to work closely with industry to achieve our objectives ... our Navy and Marine Corps, and industry objectives."

The service is working towards these objectives, he said, building the Navy to support the war on terror, in addition to the force required to advance Richardson's maritime strategy.

"We are producing product ... 46 ships spanning nine ship classes are under construction today across seven shipyards. We are building the next Navy," said Johnson. "The stuff that we are delivering today is making a difference, and our forces are continuing to support maritime operations."

Schwartz, LaPlante and Dyer followed Johnson's keynote with the first plenary session of the symposium, holding an engaged conversation with the audience about regulatory and legislative frameworks to improve efficiency and effectiveness in defense acquisition. The trio fielded several questions from the audience, listening to the spectators' comments and opinions.

Breakout sessions covered the Acquisition Research Symposium's usual diverse range of relevant topics, from working with Silicon Valley to advancing contracting practices.

Dr. Richard Carlin, Head of the Sea Warfare and Weapons Department for the Office of Naval Research, served as keynote speaker for the symposium's second day. Carlin discussed how the DOD is working in partnership with academic institutions, such as nearby Stanford University, to develop programs to help solve acquisition's problems through collaboration.

"I want missions solved by business," said Carlin. "Institutions and government entities working together to solve a problem."

Following a second full day of breakout sessions covering all aspects of acquisition, the symposium adjourned until 2018. Until then, organizers say the NPS Acquisition Research Program will continue to serve as a conduit for the advancement of government, industry collaboration to improve the field of federal acquisition.

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