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NEED TO KNOW

April 2, 2021

Issue 49

This week's top story covers the launch of a new partnership between the National Security Innovation Network (parent company to Hacking for Defense) and the DoD Office of Small Business Programs to support, among other things, more prototyping, faster transition of technology into the acquisition process, and better market research. A related commentary piece recommends substantially increasing funding for the Small Business Innovation Research program to achieve the same goals while shoring up American manufacturing. Speaking of innovation, two articles in our Research section consider the pervasive challenge of culture as either an obstacle or an asset to organizational innovation and agility. This recent research situates the push for cultural change in the bureaucratic DoD within a larger historical context and in relation to drivers such as leadership style, disruptive vs. sustaining technologies, and systems thinking. In AI news, the JAIC just posted an RFP to get multiple companies, especially non-traditionals, to prepare data for AI usage. And while there's a big delay getting more top DoD positions officially confirmed, there's a new CEO for the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification Board and a new head performing the duties of DoD Research and Engineering.

Yesterday was April Fool's Day and, as it happens, the anniversary of the Federal Acquisition Regulation—launched April 1, 1984. For more fun April Fool's acquisition trivia, check out the Wifcon post. And check out Larry's column this week on challenges we have with our blended workforce of government employees and contractors. Enjoy, and we'll see you next week.

[This Week's Top Story](#)

[Partnership Expands Opportunities for New and Small Businesses to Work With the Department of Defense, Expand National Security Innovation Base](#)

DoD Press Release

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP), the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense on small business matters, and the National Security Innovation Network (NSIN), an innovation unit within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, signed a memorandum of agreement on March 5 to collaborate on expanding the national security innovation base.

The new partnership links two DOD organizations with a common mission to establish an annual, joint program plan to leverage OSBP and NSIN resources to achieve shared objectives:

- Collaborate to develop events and programs to engage small businesses in the National Technology and Industrial Base.
- Prototype operational concepts related to emerging technologies and accelerate the transition of technologies and services into acquisition programs and operational use.

- Support partnership between DOD and academic institutions, commercial firms, accelerators, incubators, and nonprofit organizations whose missions relate to national security innovation.
- Enhance the capabilities of the DOD in market research, source selection, partnerships with private capital, and access to commercial technologies.

[Read more.](#)

ARP and NPS News

Registration is open for the 18th Annual Acquisition Research Symposium

This year's event will be held May 11-13, 2021 as a live webinar presented through Zoom for Government. Keynote speakers are Ms. Stacy Cummings, Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, Vice Admiral Jon A. Hill, USN, Director of Missile Defense Agency, and Mr. Frederick J. (Jay) Stefany, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition. Seats are limited. Register today!

Blurry Vision: Supply Chain Visibility for Personal Protective Equipment during COVID-19

Maj. Daniel Finkenstadt USAF, Ph.D. and Robert Handfield, Ph.D

NPS professor and ARP collaborator Dan Finkenstadt continues his research on supply chain management throughout the COVID pandemic. This study explores supply chain visibility challenges in the context of our contemporary COVID pandemic, and offer insights, models and potential solutions to remove barriers to clear supply chain visibility. Visibility and velocity are the two key attributes required to enabling critical decision-making accuracy which will in turn increase the ability of local, state and federal healthcare and public health decision-makers to respond to shifts in the U.S. system.

NPS Master's Degree in Contract Management Ranks in Top 10 Nationally

Great Business Schools

Acquisition and Innovation

Enabling AI Data Readiness in the Department of Defense (Public Release of the Data Readiness for AI Data (DRAID) Acquisition Vehicle RFP)

JAIC Public Affairs

Pentagon Reviewing CMMC for Potential Improvements

Jon Harper, National Defense

Matthew Travis hired as CMMC Accreditation Body CEO

Jackson Barnett, Fedscoop

Pentagon tech office asks industry for 'leap-ahead capabilities'

Andrew Eversden, C4ISRNET

['Remotely Crewed' Systems Can Save Money, But Specialized Thinking Needed](#)

John A. Tirpak, Air Force Magazine

[Air Force Goes All in on Digital Twinning—for Bombs As Well As Planes](#)

Shaun Waterman, Air Force Magazine

[Commentary: To rebuild manufacturing, the US needs to beef up the Small Business Innovation Research program](#)

Sean O'Sullivan, TechCrunch

[On a lighter note](#)

[April Fools' Day in Federal Acquisition](#)

Wifcon

[Events](#)

["Missile Defense and Technology Warriors" by VADM Jon A. Hill, USN](#)

Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture, Naval Postgraduate School

April 13, 2001 | 3:00 pm PT

[Research](#)

[Leader and Organizational Attributes that Cultivate Innovation](#)

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Gillikin, Small Wars Journal

[Transformational Leadership in the Navy—Cultivating a Learning Organization Culture](#)

Brenda Oppermann and William Nault, Naval War College Review

[China's Belt and Road: Implications for the United States](#)

Council on Foreign Relations

[U.S. Government's 2020 Financial Statements Reveal Serious Management Weaknesses and Ongoing Efforts to Correct Those Weaknesses](#)

U.S. Government Accountability Office

[2021 Government Trends](#)

Deloitte

[Congress](#)

[Top level nominees still missing at DoD, three months after last announcements](#)

Aaron Mehta, Defense News

[Air-Land chairman talks F-35 costs and 'Buy America' in the next defense bill](#)

Joe Gould, Defense News

[Biden's infrastructure plan includes billions to develop emerging tech the military needs](#)

Andrew Eversden, C4ISRNET

[Defense and Federal Government](#)

[JAIC director: Pentagon's biggest competitive threat? Obsolescence](#)

Andrew Eversden, C4ISRNET

[CBO: Navy Still Needs Bigger Workforce To Dig Out of Submarine Maintenance Backlog](#)

Mallory Shelbourne, USNI News

[Brown Says Networks are Key to New Revolution in Military Affairs](#)

John A. Tirpak, Air Force Magazine

[Audit of the Department of Defense's Compliance With the Berry Amendment](#)

DOD Office of the Inspector General

[ACC's U-2 Federal Laboratory rapidly integrates Platform One in first weapons system flight](#)

Capt Brittany Curry, Air Combat Command

[Commentary: War is Changing. So Should the Pentagon's Budget](#)

Scott Cooper, Defense One

[Director of Defense Research and Engineering for Research and Technology Sworn In](#)

Defense Technical Information Center

(Available with CAC access only. We've copied the full content here for your convenience.)

Ms. Barbara McQuiston has been sworn in as the Director of Defense Research and Engineering for Research and Technology, and is performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering. Ms. McQuiston previously spent nearly a decade in government service at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). While at the agency, she served in the Defense Science Office, the Strategic Technology Office, and finally as a Special Assistant to the Director for Energy.

In addition to her time at DARPA, she has more than 30 years of commercial experience. Her work in the private sector has included various research roles, technology management, commercial development, and strategic planning. She has also worked on the development of innovative information, communications, biological, medical, and environmental technologies. Additionally, she has also advised capital management funds and has negotiated and managed technology transfer agreements in both the public and private sector.

[Acquisition Tips and Tools, with Larry Asch](#)

The Blended Workforce

The recent report from the National Academy of Public Administration, [*Elevating Human Capital: Reframing the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Leadership Imperative*](#), discusses numerous personnel issues that we hope are strongly considered for implementation.

One of the areas in the report that hit home with me was how the Government continues to struggle with hiring policies and practices. The second level effects of not being able to hire Government personnel is the use of more contracted Advisory and Assistance Services (A&AS) for mission support. The Blended Workforce is when Government workers are co-located with contractor personnel (e.g., A&AS contracted personnel) in the same government offices and often doing the same or similar work. This causes numerous issues with the potential for Personal Services, the concern of Public Interests versus Private Interests, Organizational Conflicts of Interest (OCI), and loss of critical knowledge and experience by Government personnel.

Nowhere are the problems more evident than in acquisition, where the number of Government workers has declined, and the workload has increased in documentation, dollar value, and complexity. We must reform hiring, pay, retention policies to ensure the Government can develop an experienced, skilled, and balanced workforce to improve acquisition practices.

As we improve the hiring process the blended workforce will continue to be woven into the government's fabric for the foreseeable future.

Some recommendations to address the improvement and oversight of contracted personnel in a Blended Workforce:

- A clear understanding of the supervision of contractor employees to ensure that a nonpersonal services contract does not inadvertently function as a personal services contract. See Section 809 Panel [Recommendation 20: Clarify the definitions of personal and nonpersonal services](#).
- Acquisition personnel must be trained to protect the government's interests (and contractors are not government employees) without telling contractors how to do their work or improperly interfering with their performance.
- Include clear terms requiring the avoidance or mitigation of conflicts (OCI) and the protection of personal information and intellectual property to which contractors will have access.
- Avoidance of OCIs for A&AS should be the preferred method with extremely strict clauses that prevent A&AS contractors from providing multiple services as A&AS and Provider.
- Improve training on how to structure A&AS Service contracts.