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**Need to Know Weekly Newsletter from the  
Acquisition Research Program at Naval  
Postgraduate School, 2022-06-10**

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Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School

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## NEED TO KNOW

### Acquisition Research Program Newsletter

June 10, 2022 — Issue 104

This week HASC started marking up the **FY2023 NDAA** in subcommittees, so we're starting to see how priorities are getting framed out in that document. Some moves so far: Congress wants more reporting on the costs of underperforming software, more insight into the JADC2 effort, to shore up the rare earth supply chain, and is reconsidering funding for DOD's test and evaluation.

In research, GAO has released its **annual weapons system assessment**, finding continued delays in fielding MDAP capability. RAND has a report looking at the development of emerging technologies in the US and China, confirming talking points we've heard before: China is catching up.

In acquisition news and commentary, our top story looks at the role of **SBIR millsplay** in landing DOD contracts for small businesses. There's a comparison to be made with OTA consortiums, and a larger conversation about how big collectives can support small companies while still getting the intended goal of fostering competition and market diversity.

We have another new symposium panel for you to watch -- an important conversation on how the Navy does -- and should -- acquire and integrated **uncrewed systems** into the fleet. And in other NPS news, we're continuing to follow the latest **industry partnership** fostered by NPS leadership, this time with Microsoft, recognized as NPS Corporate Partner of the Year. We anticipate some interesting innovations coming out of this tech-focused collaboration, and we'll bring you news when it happens.

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## This Week's Top Story

## Are a few dozen SBIR mills sucking the air out of small business innovation?

Ben Van Roo



*"The DOD sets aside \$1 billion a year for innovations like yours!"*

Taxpayers, small businesses, defense investors, and military operators have reason to be annoyed, concerned, and/or furious. A small group of companies — “SBIR mills” — consume hundreds of millions of non-dilutive dollars each year and raise questions of innovation versus entitlement. To be specific, the top 20 SBIR mills and their histories of DOD of contracts, have received \$7.4B in total DOD funding, with \$3.4B or 46% coming from Phase I/II contracts. Someone recently said to me that SBIR mills are anecdotes for politicians, \$3.4B to 20 companies is not an anecdote, it’s a problem.

To make matters worse, the success rate of these investments (Phase III and beyond) is hard to track but all indicators say it is abysmal. Money is being wasted

and capabilities are not being fielded — the men and women in the field deserve better. The situation is bad enough to demand more oversight and reform on SBIR mills highly dependent on SBIR dollars and/or question the purpose of the entire SBIR process itself.

However, SBIR as a program has incredible potential to be the accelerant for new business and rapidly transitioning technological advancements for years to come. A few policy changes should be considered to drastically increase the pool of companies participating in the DOD SBIR program and strengthen the bond between the emerging tech community, defense investors, and the DOD.

[Read more.](#)

## ARP and NPS News

### Symposium Panel 7: Moving Forward with Unmanned Systems



Chair: Paul Mann, Executive Co-Director, US Navy Unmanned Task Force

Papers/panelists:

- Development of Uncrewed Maritime Systems  
Larri Fish and Diana Moldafsky, Government Accountability Office
- Systems and Cost-Effectiveness Modeling of Unmanned Systems Product Lines for Acquisition  
Ray Madachy and John Green, Naval Postgraduate School
- Reducing Asymmetry in Countering Unmanned Aerial System  
Capt. Christian Thiessen USMC, Britta Hale, Douglas Van Bossuyt, Naval Postgraduate School

Read papers from this and other panels published in the Symposium Proceedings:

[Read the Proceedings](#)

### **Acquisition Leaders Focus on Interdisciplinary Research During 19th Annual NPS Symposium**

James Norket, Naval Postgraduate School

The Naval Postgraduate School's (NPS) Acquisition Research Program (ARP) and Naval Warfare Studies Institute (NWSI) held the 19th Annual Acquisition Research Symposium, May 11-12. The annual symposium was once again hosted virtually by NPS in an effort to open up the discussion on the future of acquisition to the broadest audience possible, including defense and industry leaders, academics, and of course NPS students, all under the theme of "Creating Synergy for Informed Change." [Read more.](#)

### **Naval Postgraduate School Foundation names Microsoft as 2022 Corporate Partner of the Year**

The Naval Postgraduate School Foundation presented Microsoft with the 2022 Corporate Partner of the Year Award during the annual America's Heroes Charity Golf Tournament dinner, here, June 6.

In its second year, the award recognizes a corporate partner that demonstrates continued innovation and support of education, research, and applied solutions that emerge from the Naval Postgraduate School and drive world-changing

advancements for defense, industry, technology, climate and more — right now and into the future. [Read more.](#)

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## Acquisition and Innovation

### **Raytheon Technologies to Move HQ from Massachusetts to Northern Virginia**

Marcus Weisgerber, Defense One

### **GSA pilots supply chain monitoring for GSA Advantage!**

Dave Nyczepir, Fedscoop

### **Army Awards Contracts to Accelerate Javelin and Stinger Production**

Darrell Ames, DVIDS

### **White House withdraws nomination of Biniam Gebre for procurement policy chief**

John Hewitt Jones, Fedscoop

### **Polaris, Services MAC will be the first governmentwide contracts without maximum dollar values**

Jason Miller, Federal News Network

### **New Marine innovation unit plants flag in New York**

Todd South, Marine Times

### **Rebooting the Arsenal of Democracy: Anduril Mission Document**

Anduril Industries

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## Research

### **Weapon Systems Annual Assessment: Challenges to Fielding Capabilities Faster Persist**

U.S. Government Accountability Office

### **Deep Fakes and National Security**

Congressional Research Service

## **Use of Predictive Analytic Tools to Assess Technological Emergences and Acquisition Targets**

RAND Corporation

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## Defense and Federal Government

### **China secretly building naval facility in Cambodia, Western officials say**

Ellen Nakashima and Cate Cadell, The Washington Post

### **DoD-commissioned study finds major shortcomings in civilian talent management**

Jared Serbu, Federal News Network

### **US Remains Leader in Emerging Technologies, But China Makes Some Gains, Study Finds**

Greg Hadley, Air Force Magazine

### **DOD still lags in delivering software for weapons systems in a timely manner, says GAO**

Mark Pomerleau, Fedscoop

### **Commentary: In a Connected Era, We Talk Too Much About Individual Weapons**

Travis Sharp, Chris Bassler, and Tyler Hacker | Defense One

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## Congress

### **Lawmakers want clarity on Pentagon's JADC2 efforts**

Mark Pomerleau, Fedscoop

### **Lawmakers want to know how much bad software costs DOD**

Lauren C. Williams, FCW

### **The US is heavily reliant on China and Russia for its ammo supply chain. Congress wants to fix that.**

Bryant Harris, Defense News

### **House panel wants independent look at how Pentagon funds testing**

Courtney Albon, Defense News

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[Contact the editor](#)

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