

## Letter from the President 2015

Over my 35 years in government and six plus years in private consulting there are many ideas being championed to improve the Acquisition process; however, in my view **“THERE ARE NO NEW IDEAS”** nor **“A SINGLE SILVER BULLET”** to improve or energize the process.

### **DO we need to rethink Defense Acquisition or just improve what we have now?**

**Today, we have 4 key areas that must be aligned for program success: Requirements, Acquisition, Budget / Congress and Private Sector communities.** My view is that improving congruency & harmonization of these 4 key communities will do a lot to improve the process. I consider all these areas very important and honestly, I could spend an hour on each one; however due to time limitations I will now give a short overview of what I consider to be the key success criteria for each of these 4 communities.

#### **First, in the Requirements area we should:**

- Know what performance is wanted and execute a Requirements analysis to be able to identify where the “good enough” break points exist (more than today’s threshold & objectives process).
- Understand clearly what is required, why & when.
- Conduct adequate mission analysis on warfighter short falls that may be complementary to more than one mission area short fall.

**When we get requirements right, we have a better chance for program success.**

#### **Secondly, my recommendations for the Acquisition community includes:**

- Having a better trained & experienced Acquisition workforce.
- Using right type of contract for the right type of program.
- Clear accountability for program managers, PEOS and & SAE’s. When you have success, reward. When you don’t, change them out.

**When I worked in the acquisition area I knew that if our program was miss managed, I would get replaced. In those days we had a strong acquisition workforce pipeline.**

#### **Thirdly, one of the most challenging is the Budget/Congress community (we never seem to have enough money for everything) but we could:**

- Provide better Budget stability at the program level (no more death by a thousand cuts).
- Embrace more block buys on large capital investment systems.
- Allow for the ability for PMs to budget at a higher confidence level & allow them to use and keep some management reserve.

#### **Finally, in the Private Sector we could:**

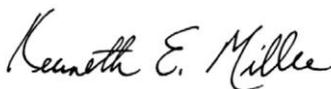
- Have better discussion during the draft RFP stage between government & contractor.
- Better alignment up front with the Private Sector and government on IR&D Requirements.
- Consider, as I do, this one item as the most important - the LOST Meaning of “Best Value”.

*Best Value in my opinion is now driven by the austere budget requirements to a selection process where lowest cost has become by default the primary and in some cases the only selection criteria. Thereby, defeating the entire purpose of Best Value and cultivating the wrong behavior resulting in sub-optimized selections.*

In conclusion, I have had an opportunity over the past 40 years to work in each of these 4 communities that I have talked about, so I guess my view is somewhat biased.

My view is that **“THERE ARE NO NEW IDEAS”** nor **“A SINGLE SILVER BULLET”** to improve or energize this process.

**But it does take solid execution by the Requirements, Acquisition, Budget/Congress, and Private Sector communities all working together.**



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