



## TRANSITION TOPIC:

# Critical Management Controls

**TASK:** Create and sustain a true team relationship with senior subordinate leaders that ensures the Department's senior leaders stay on mission. Identify management tools that ensure senior leaders are held accountable, and avoid "going native."

## **TASK GROUP:**

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# Defense Business Board

## ISSUES:

- Building and keeping a senior leadership team united and focused is a constant challenge for the Secretary of Defense.
- Poor utilization of management tools with the Presidentially Appointed – Senate Confirmed Personnel (PAS) may result in these subordinate senior leaders becoming out-of-coordination with the Secretary's goals and objectives, *i.e.* "going native."

## IMPORTANCE:

- Hard decisions, particularly when there is overall budgetary pressure, tend to diminish alignment, and increase friction between the Service Secretaries and the Secretary.
- The true senior leadership teaming that exists at the onset of a new administration too often erodes, enabling subordinate leaders to become overly focused on their military Service's perspectives at the expense of alignment with the Secretary of Defense's agenda.



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## DISCUSSION:

- Unlike the corporate world, the Secretary doesn't customarily get to pick his/her entire leadership team
  - Corporate Selection/Hires vs. White House appointments
- Involving and cultivating alignment of the Secretary's management team leads to greater organizational effectiveness
  - The Secretary's direct reports throughout the Department need to be aligned and have fully established mutual trust, yet be appropriately decisive within their roles to be effective
  - Service Secretaries must support the President and the Defense Secretary first; then manage their military service accordingly
- "Title 10" authorities can frustrate efforts to build a unified team
  - Military Service objectives potentially running in opposition to the Defense Secretary's policies
  - Congressional pressure can widen the "seams"
- CEOs of best-performing corporations measure performance, provide feedback (even when difficult) and rapidly and decisively remove poor performers that hurt the team
  - Not doing so can break team confidence, introduce compromise, and create a fractured, splintered team that loses focus on the mission priorities – and risks "going native"



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Maintain open lines of communication and invest the time with Service Secretaries and other senior leaders to focus on priorities and goals
  - a. Aggressively utilize existing governance structures
  - b. Consider creating a higher-level executive committee where the members represent the Department and not their Services – and allow Service Secretaries to rely on each other
  - c. Conduct one-on-one performance sessions with key senior subordinate leaders – utilize cascading scorecards – publicize outcomes
2. Delegate downward, Title 10 provides significant latitude to prevent the staffs sending lesser actions upward
3. Apply the old verities:
  - a. Be decisive
  - b. State and reinforce priorities early
  - c. Delegate authority, responsibility and accountability early
  - d. Establish, communicate, and enforce standards of expected behavior
  - e. Make early accountability decisions