COMING UP GOLDEN:

DEFENSE ACQUISITION BOARD REVIEW GUIDE FOR PROGRAM OFFICES

Colonel Harvey R. Greenberg, USAF
Ms. Lynn B. Palley

The purpose of this article is to document lessons learned from the Joint STARS experience, written primarily from a program office perspective, and provide suggestions for future programs facing DAB reviews. In May 1993, the Joint STARS (the Airborne Standoff Target Acquisition Recognition System used during Desert Storm) program underwent a Defense Acquisition Board (DAB) review for Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP). Originally established in the program baseline as DAB IIIA, this event was recast as the "Program Review for LRIP," since the revised DoD Instruction 5000.2 no longer provides for a DAB IIIA. However, the program review otherwise complied with almost all DAB procedures and documentation requirements.

A GOOD LANDING STARTS WITH THE APPROACH

Success — coming up golden — in the DAB process depends on "consistency, consistency, consistency!" Although each program follows its own course, DoD Instruction 5000.2 presumes that life begins with a Mission Needs Statement,

Col Greenberg is System Program Director, Air Force Command and Control Systems (AFCCS) at Gunter AFB, Alabama. He holds Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in mathematics and computer science from Stevens Institute of Technology and an MBA from the University of North Dakota.

Ms. Palley is a principal analyst with the ARINC Corporation and provides support to the Joint STARS program office at Hanscom AFB, Massachusetts. She graduated from Tufts University with a B.S. in mathematics.

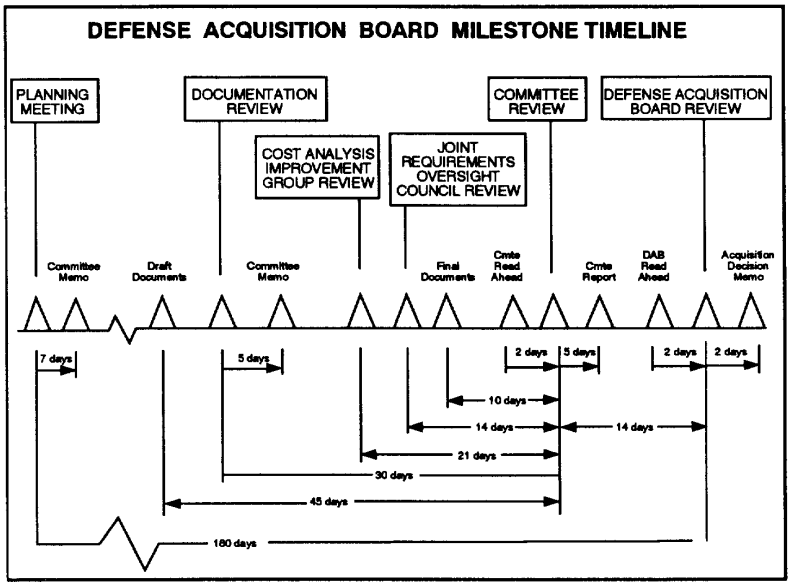

Figure 1. **From DoDI 5000.2**

from which a number of alternatives were explored, including changes in tactics, modifications to existing systems, and development of new systems such as the subject of the DAB. This model further presumes your particular system is being recommended, because a Cost and Operational Effectiveness Analysis (COEA) so indicated. In addition, it identified critical operational characteristics that flowed into the Operational Requirements Document (ORD), Acquisition Program Baseline (APB), Test and Evaluation Master Plan (TEMP), system specification, and all other aspects of your program.

While few if any programs actually evolve this way, the system will tend to force the evaluation of your program in terms of the model, and to the extent that a program conforms, the dialogue is likely to be crisper. If your program happens to resemble the model program, the risks are manageable, and the program is affordable, write it all down in the DAB documentation and you should be golden. If it differs and you have, say, two years to spruce up the foundation, the investment is well worth it.

Since the process involves both political and technical considerations, spend time before the DAB[1] to make it politically palatable. This includes strategies for cooperative development, interoperability, consideration of acquisition strate-

1 "DAB" in Pentagon jargon means both the process and the meeting (review) itself.

gies currently in vogue, and many other aspects.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The DoDI 5000.2, Part 13, contains core guidance for DAB reviews. As shown in Figure 1, the process formally begins with a planning meeting. Subsequently, draft program documentation is prepared for review by staff of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). This commences a series of further reviews to assess documentation adequacy, some requiring OSD approval, and identify issues needing resolution.

Let me note now that a DAB *cannot* be done within the specified 180 days: (1) the time is not sufficient to prepare and coordinate the documentation; (2) the draft Cost Analysis Requirements Description (CARD) must be submitted at the planning meeting; and; (3) several processes, notably the independent cost estimate, take longer than six months.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

Except for the CARD, required milestone documentation is listed in DoDI 5000.2, Part 11, Section C, and guidance for preparation is provided in the accompanying manual, DoD 5000.2-M. Preparation entails the concerted efforts of the program office, the using command, operational test agency, program executive officer and mission area director.[2]

The exercise is onerous, but all involved must appreciate that a favorable DAB outcome depends on affirmative OSD staff recommendations provided in the Integrated Program Assessment (IPA) (shown in Figure 2). If documentation detail is inadequate, additional actions by the program office, or delays, could ensue.

For some documents, such as the Integrated Program Summary (IPS) and TEMP, the directive clearly specifies the staffing process. For others, such as the Manpower Estimate Report (MER), unclear instructions make it sometimes difficult to determine who coordinates on the document. In effect, OSD staff have approval authority over all of documentation, and can recommend postponing the DAB or committee review.

Part 11 of DoDI 5000.2 lists documentation needed for a milestone review. Other parts proscribe life cycle documents. They include, but are not limited to:

- Systems Engineering Management Plan (SEMP)
- Computer Resources Life Cycle Management Plan (CRLCMP)

2 Under the current Air Force acquisition structure, the program office for most major programs reports to the Program Executive Officer (PEO), while the Program Element Monitor (PEM) resides in a Mission Area Directorate on the SAF/AQ staff.

- Configuration Management Plan
- Training Development Plan
- Human Systems Integration Plan (HSIP)
- Program Protection Plan (PPP)

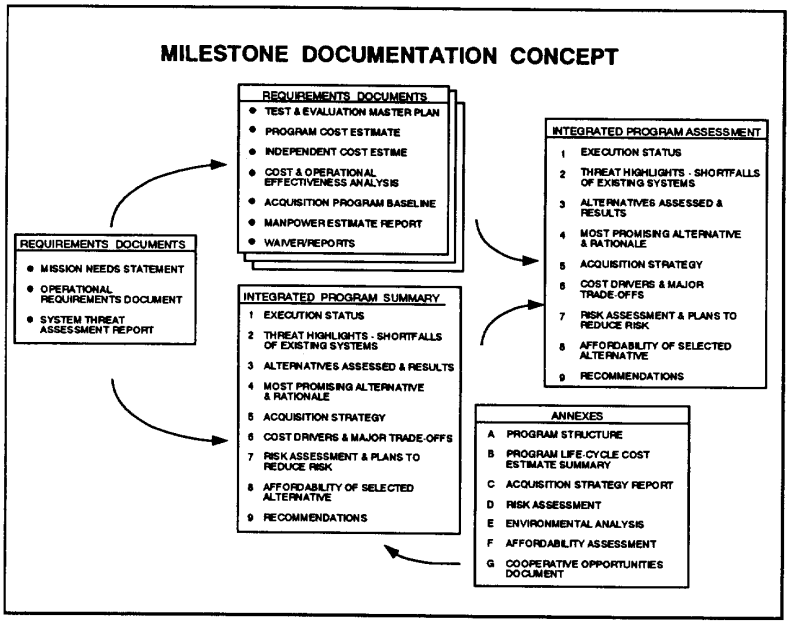

Figure 2. **From DoDI 5000.2**

Documentation requirements are agreed to at the planning meeting. In the Joint STARS DAB, OSD staffers included the Program Protection Plan and the Human Systems Integration Plan they needed for the IPA.[3] Staffers also requested a Total Quality Management Implementation Plan, unmentioned in DoD 5000.2. Though the program office should be wary about volunteering for unnecessary work by asking if a particular document is required, avoiding later surprises is important.

3 As a result of previous reviews and discussions with OSD staff, a formal Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) review was not held, nor was a COEA update required.

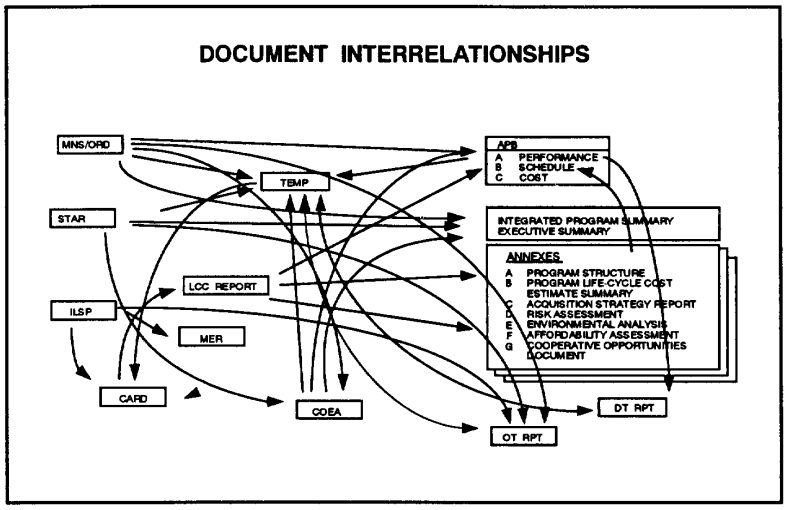

Figure 3. **Chart from DoDI 5000.2**

DOCUMENT INTERRELATIONSHIPS

Figure 3 shows major interrelationships between documents, and one could argue for several more lines. Many are direct feeds, parts of a particular document either lifted from or summarized in another, requiring consistency and accuracy. For example, the program office must summarize the life-cycle cost estimate in the IPS. Similarly, APB performance thresholds and objectives are included in the development test report as baselines against which results are reported.

OBSERVATIONS ON SPECIFIC DOCUMENTS

CARD

The CARD has the longest lead time, is required at the planning meeting in draft, and drives the independent cost estimate, which is another long lead activity. The CARD contains a system description, a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), subsystem descriptions, software descriptions, schedules, test program descriptions (consistent with the TEMP) logistics concepts (consistent with the Integrated Logistic Support Plan (ILSP)), and many other detailed aspects of the program. While it provides the basis for a cost estimate, it does not document anything in dollars, but provides requirements which estimators price out. With its detailed technical content, it may be the most suitable document for prime contractor input.

ORD

The ORD is the cornerstone for the entire building. It provides the basis for the COEA, program content, criteria for developmental and operational testing, and other bits and pieces of program documentation. Its performance thresholds, objectives and technical parameters are included in other documents such as the APB and TEMP. Don't be surprised if cost analysts or logistics staff seek information from it.

The perfect ORD has not been written. The ORD developer is constantly told to write requirements in operational terms, yet the less specific the requirement is, the more open it is to interpretation by the tester or evasion by the developer. It must be straightforward and defendable before JROC and senior military management and staff review — particularly the operational testers — and consistent with the requirement and the COEA. And, it must be simple to allow specifics to be moved easily between documents.

The Air Force has used a "Four Star Summit" process to scrub requirements separately from a milestone review. The focus of the Summit is to ensure requirements are clear, that the system meets important requirements while not spending resources at the point of diminishing returns, and that requirements are operationally testable. It was beneficial to the Joint STARS program by focusing requirements demand and allowing consideration without the DAB process political pressures. Having agonized during the 1991 Summit, the using command in 1993 had the operational rationale for every critical requirement and could respond immediately to challenges or queries without wading through historical documentation or studies. The JROC and Army and Air Force chains of command supported the outcome, making it clear requirements would not be reopened for the DAB.

IPS

The Integrated Program Summary is the most important DAB document, cross-referencing much documentation, and touching on virtually every program aspect. The IPS is the document an OSD staffer will turn to first in writing the Integrated Program Assessment. The program office should spend time with the guidance in DoD 5000.2 and use a successful example before starting work.

The heart of Annex A, the Program Structure, is a master schedule, which should also support the APB. The guidance for Annex A seems to suggest it consists of one chart, but as staff elements engage it, it may grow. Annex B, the Program Life-Cycle Cost Estimate Summary, should be drawn from the stand-alone cost documentation submitted to the CAIG, as specified by DoD 5000.2-M. You should have a understanding with OSD on definitions of cost elements, fiscal years to be shown, base years, and other aspects of the annex, which may change at the last minute as a result of Service or OSD Cost Analysis Improvement Group (CAIG) reviews.

Annex C, the Acquisition Strategy Report (ASR), requires a substantial

INTEGRATED PROGRAM SUMMARY

FOR

(PROGRAM TITLE)

1. Decision Requested .....
.....

2. Program Description .....
.....
.....
.....

Acquisition Category____ **Program Element** _____ **Project Number**___

PREPARED BY

Program Executive Officer or Designated Component Official: **Program Manager:**

_____ **Date** ____ _____ **Date** _____

CONCURRENCE

User's Representative:

_____ **Code** _____ **Date** _____

APPROVAL

_____ **Code** _____ **Date** _____
(DoD Component Acquisition Executive)

Figure 4. **IPS Cover Sheet Format**

amount of data, including broad acquisition strategy, Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) clauses and logistics support plans. Though interaction with OSD staff will vary depending on the reviewer, the Joint STARS lesson learned is: Follow the guidance *exactly*, and be prepared to provide additional information. Policy is evolving, and there are differing views between OSD and the services on who determines and approves the acquisition strategy, vis-à-vis the Acquisition Plan that the Service Acquisition Executive (SAE) approves.[4] Getting to the DAB on time suggests flexibility here and a team effort between the program manager, Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) and OSD reviewer.

4 Change 1 to DoDI 5000.2 specifies ASR approval is now required prior to release of the request for procurement (RFP).

Annex D, the Risk Assessment, is another up-front-and-early document. It will probably be widely circulated on the OSD staff, including the CAIG for consideration in the cost estimate, and it may generate questions and plant visits. Annex E, Environmental, is somewhat general, and environmental concerns vary with current events. Get your program office or product center focal point together with the appropriate OSD staffer early, and stay tuned for new legislation and regulations. If your budget does not show compliance with a new law, it is not OSD's problem!

Though DoD 5000.2-M guidance on the Affordability Annex seems to require charts showing your program in relation to broad aggregates, expect direction by OSD staff on what comparisons to make. The OSD analyst will likely be more interested in a mission area rather than Service topline. As the program office does not generally have access to mission area data, you will need headquarters help, as did Joint STARS. Revising the annex took place at the eleventh hour, and in retrospect soliciting guidance earlier in the process would have been worthwhile.

Annex G, the Cooperative Opportunities Document, is a challenge because of the political nature of international events and the number of players. For Joint STARS, no one would offer guidance on how to write it, but there was no shortage of criticism when the document was submitted.

APB

The APB is the only one of the Service-prepared documents the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition & Technology) (USD(A&T)) signs. It consists of three sections — performance, schedule, and cost — and is prepared using OSD software that controls formats and the change process. Since it is virtually the only document that survives the DAB, the OSD staff will review it with a fine toothed comb.

Check the guidance to ensure the minimum milestone set is covered, but also research the definitions. Joint STARS revised its APB to include "Required Assets Available" and provided what seemed to be an appropriate date. However, the program office's interpretation did not conform to Air Force policy and OSD analysts picked up on it when the milestones appeared out of sequence. So, keep your definitions simple, and ensure milestones are consistent with all schedule information. Section C, cost, will likely be a last-minute update due to the CAIG process. A talking paper explaining the proposed APB will help considerably.[5]

TEMP

The TEMP requires the cooperation and coordination of the program office,

5 When the APB is updated between milestones, it must be accompanied by a Baseline Change Request memo. For a milestone review, it is just another DAB document.

user, test activities and Services. Joint STARS showed that meeting OSD expectations is difficult, and that DoDI 5000.2 requirements amass detailed annexes. Even with strong leadership and discipline, the TEMP may delay the DAB.

Joint STARS began revising the draft TEMP before the DAB clock started, but after a year the document was getting dated. The draft elicited extensive comments from OSD staff reviewers, including some offices normally not expected to see the document. Though an acceptable TEMP was submitted in time for the DAB, it required an OSD meeting, an interagency tiger team and lots of follow-up to get the signatures. Lessons learned were:

- Assemble an interagency team *empowered to make decisions for their organization.* You do not have the time to incorporate action officers' input only to find that their managements have different views.

- Document the process in writing. Task people, get their input and prepare signed meeting minutes. Respond to each point.

- Keep the program director and Program Executive Officer (PEO) informed. You are more likely to need general officer help on the TEMP than any other document.

DT Report

The DoDI 5000.2 contains no guidance on this report, except to say that it reports the results of DT. Joint STARS prepared such a report a year before the DAB for authorization of Advance Procurement and had developed a good working relationship with the OSD(T&E) staff. The program office and OSD maintained an open line of communications.

MER

The MER presents some unique challenges. Its preparation is a using command responsibility requiring support from the program office and every affected command.[6] All players and independent cost teams need to incorporate data from the MER into the Operations and Support (O&S) estimates. Spend some time defining ownership and the chain of command. Though Joint STARS avoided show stoppers, a kickoff meeting with the sponsor and manpower shop followed by a tasker might have made the process smoother.

6 This could include users in several different theaters, any depot which performs item management or provides government furnished equipment (GFE), Air Training Command, and other organizations.

OPERATIONAL TEST REPORT OR ASSESSMENT

Although the operational test agency reports through a different chain of command, the program office has a direct stake in the report's content and timeliness. Even with the arms-length relationship, open communications and cooperation are essential, and the program office should be able to comment on the draft before it goes to the Pentagon. Though views may differ, the program office can help eliminate any errors.

MANAGING THE DOCUMENTATION PROCESS

Except for the formal DAB-minus-180 day planning meeting, documentation preparation will consume the process until the drafts are submitted 45 days before the DAB. Preparing documentation is worse than merely time consuming; it is also tedious. If all drafts are submitted on time and satisfy OSD, chances are the DAB will occur as scheduled or close to it. Otherwise, it will be delayed.

Each document must have one person (editor) responsible. Each must be broken down into components so that each author understands what and when to feed to the editor. All documents must march to the same schedule.

Aside from scheduling, the major issues in document preparation are content and consistency. While DoD 5000I.2 provides very specific guidance for some documents, guidance for others may be general or nonexistent.

In providing a foundation for the document, you should :

- Acquire all of the regulatory references, and examples from other programs that have recently gone through the process.

- Develop a vision or outline, and provide it to the team members. As a document editor, you are likely to find yourself working with specialists who, while well versed in their technical disciplines, do not understand the DAB process, the purpose of the document, or the target audience.

- Realize quality counts. Several Joint STARS documents were accepted with no change between draft and final submission, and workload for the "final" copies was limited to changing the cover and reproducing the body.

- Consider establishing a management information system strategy, but make sure it does not develop into a choke point.

- Contact an OSD reviewer for guidance and perform "expectations management."

Though informal contacts can help the process, they must be controlled through a program office clearinghouse that understands who is talking to whom and ensures only reasonable commitments are made. Closing the loop with the

PROGRAM OFFICE/SERVICE DOCUMENTATION SUMMARY			
Document	**Who Prepares**	**Guidance**	**Who Signs or Approves**
Mission Needs Statement (MNS)	User	DoD 5000..2-M	Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC)
Operational Requirements Document (ORD)	User	DoD 5000.2-M	Service Chief of Designated Representative
Integrated Program Summary (IPS)	Program Office	DoD 5000.2-M	PD, PEO, User, SAE
System Threat Assessment Report (STAR)	Component Intelligence Command	DoD 5000.2-M	DIA
Manpower Estimate Report (MER)	User	DoD 5000.2-M & Supplemental Guidance from OSD(FM&P)	USD(A)
Test & Evaluation Master Plan (TEMP)	Program Office	DoD 5000.2-M	PD, PEO,OTA, User, SAE, DOT&E, DDR&E(TE)
Cost & Operational Effectiveness Analysis (COEA)	User	DoD 5000.2-M	
Acquisition Program Baseline (APB)	Program Office	DoD 5000.2-M	PD, PEO, SAE, USD(A&T)
Cost Analysis Requirements Document (CARD)	Program Office	DoDI 5000.4 & Supplemental Guidance from OSD CAIG	
Program Office Life-Cycle Cost Estimates	Program Office	DoD 5000.2-M	SAE
Development Test Report	Program Office	No Format Specified	Director, Test Activity
Operational Test Report	OTA	No Format Specified	Commander, OTA

Table 1. **Program Office/Service Documentation Summary**

Service staff, especially the PEO action officer and program element monitor, is important so all are saying the same thing. For the IPS, Joint STARS used briefing charts for the initial outline and established positions on sensitive issues, helping senior management assign appropriate resources to the IPS writing team.

Joint STARS attempted several times to estabish a formal review process, but this added no value, perhaps because an implied certification created anxiety and reviewers were reluctant to sign. Staff summary packages were not used at all, since they habitually take too long and result in excessive editing. In the end, Joint STARS relied heavily on the program office DAB coordinator and PEO

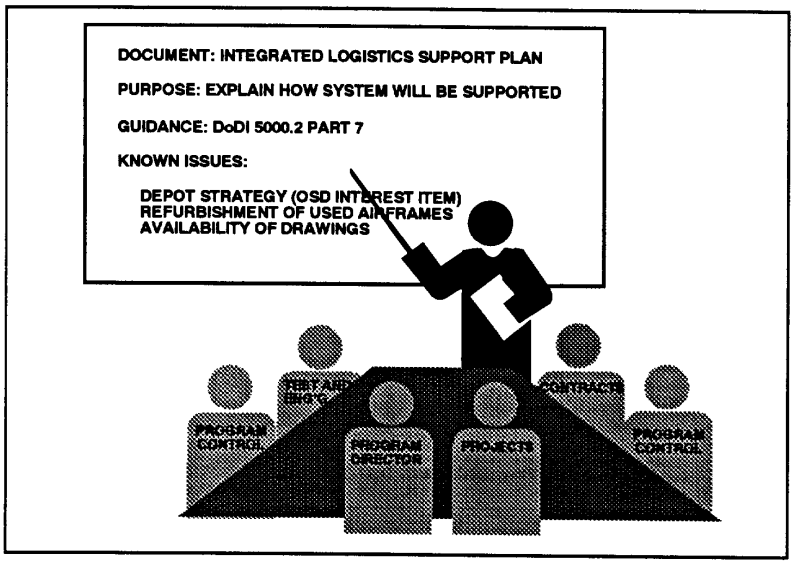

Figure 5. **Judicious use of briefings for complex or high risk documents can help secure guidance and resources before writing begins and also expedite final review.**

action officer for final review and consistency check, and this informal arrangement worked satisfactorily.

The documentation schedule must include a window for early OSD review. This lesson was relearned the hard way in the case of the Acquisition Strategy Report. Through an intense effort by the program office and PEO, including a two day turnaround on questions and a Pentagon meeting, a potential delay was avoided. The mechanics of sharing draft documentation must be worked through the Service headquarters, as some documents will have a Service stakeholder while others will not.

As the deadline for documentation approaches, the Service team needs to manage last minute activities carefull. Just understand who is doing what, so that the day after the deadline, if some documents are missing, at least someone knows where they are!

Managing the Schedule

Managing your program in the DAB process is an enormous effort. Because of the number of events and organizations involved, strict schedule discipline is mandatory. Using a schedule (PERT and/or GANTT) detailing DAB activities can provide management assistance. Activities identified would include required documentation, briefings, reviews, tests, and any other others which must

be completed prior to the DAB. Each activity should be further broken into a series of subtasks and measurable events. An OPR for each should be designated and held accountable.

Working with external organizations is particularly critical, since they have other priorities and might not be stakeholders in your DAB review. Make sure they buy in to your schedule. If a DAB-critical milestone is in jeopardy, the external organization's chain of command may be able to make a difference, but only if used in time.

The schedule requires daily review to identify which OPRs need to be contacted to discuss progress and problems being encountered, matters crucial to understanding where the program stands towards achieving its scheduled DAB Review. Keeping up with the schedule is a full time job. Finding the best person to do it is the most important assignment a program manager facing a DAB can make.[7]

ORCHESTRATING DAB EVENTS

Preplanning Meeting

Perhaps the most critical event is the one not shown on the official DAB schedule: an informal preplanning meeting which allows the OSD and Service teams to develop preliminary documentation. Four months from the planning meeting through draft document submission is generally not enough time to prepare a document. This meeting encourages team building, and the Service team begins the process of "expectations management" through a heads-up on required documentation.[8]

Planning Meeting

As specified in DoDI 5000.2, the planning meeting assesses readiness for the DAB and plans for documentation. The program manager should attend, for not doing so places the program in peril. The program office DAB coordinator can brief the program overview (including why the program is ready for a review) and recommendations for what documentation should be required and the review schedule. (These should have been negotiated earlier with OSD.)

The planning meeting output will be a memo from the DAB committee chair to the DAB Secretary and the Service Acquisition Executive (SAE) recommending the program go forward, establishing the required documentation, identifying major issues, and providing specific guidance. For example, in Joint STARS program concurrency was raised as one of several issues, and the Air Force was

7 This individual was a support contractor. Other program officies tend to appoint someone at the Major or GS-13 level.

8 The Joint STARS preplanning meeting was held five months before the formal planning meeting.

requested to address its need and risks. The planning meeting does not schedule the DAB, but it does indicate that a DAB may be forthcoming. The OSD's official posture is to await submission of *suitable* draft documentation and then update the DAB calendar after the documentation review.

The 4-1/2 half months between the planning meeting and documentation review provide an opportunity to work issues and possibly arrange for staff visits to the program office, contractor, or both. As a minimum, you can count on visits by the independent cost team(s).

Documentation Review

Upon submission of draft documentation, OSD will schedule a documentation review. The program manager will brief to the outline specified in DoDI 5000.2. Joint STARS followed the outline exactly. Draft documentation submission kicks off an intense activity period for the program and OSD. If staffers see a substantial amount for the first time, or if it does not comply with the guidance memorandum, you risk a delay.

The documentation review outcome will be a memo, and you can expect a number of action items and off-line activities. Though the documentation will prompt many comments and questions, you should work with the OSD staff to distinguish between these and specific changes that need to be made to the document in order to make the final submission acceptable. Regardless of which category the comment falls in, respond specifically and document the answer.

CAIG Review

The CAIG review will culminate months of activities by independent cost teams. Because of congressional criticism regarding the "independence" of the independent cost estimate (ICE), policy and procedures are changing in this area. Salient events in the Joint STARS ICE exercise included:

- Preparation of a draft CARD and submission at the formal planning meeting,
- Visits by the Air Force ICE team from the Air Force Cost Analysis Agency to the program office and the contractor,
- Visits by the OSD CAIG staff to the program office and the contractor,
- Visits by both agencies to the proposed depot, as well as to an AWACS operational unit for analogies,
- Voluminous amounts of paper flowing between the program office, contractor, and ICE teams supplementing the CARD,

- Submission of initial cost estimates and documentation by program office and Air Force ICE team by the financial management staff in the Office of the Air Force Secretary for review,
- A week-long reconciliation meeting between the program office and Air Force ICE team,[9]
- Revised estimates and cost documentation by both parties as indicated during reconciliation discussions,
- Two formal Air Force CAIG reviews, with an additional meeting after the first CAIG session failed to resolve differences in the time allowed,
- Adoption of a Service cost position by the Air Force CAIG,
- A major program restructure to reduce the disconnects to a level which the Air Force could commit to fund,
- Submission of program office estimate, Air Force ICE, and service cost position to the OSD CAIG,
- OSD CAIG review,
- A two week delay to the CSC review to allow the OSD CAIG to review the cost documentation on the restructured program, and
- Follow-up meetings after the OSD CAIG review, the Committee review, and the DAB to establish the USD(A) position.

The fundamental process issues from the Joint STARS DAB were the relationship between the OSD ICE and the Air Force ICE, and the Service/OSD reconciliation process. On the former, the issue revolved around whether the OSD team actually did an ICE, vice using the Air Force ICE team as an extension of themselves. On the latter, the process simply does not provide for a Service/OSD reconciliation, nor is it clear who would arbitrate.

While policy makers will no doubt refine the process in the next few years, the program office must treat development of its cost estimate and support to the ICE as a live-or-die exercise. Some lessons learned or relearned were:

9 Reconciliation ensures both teams costed the same program and allocated costs to the same accounts. It is not arbitration.

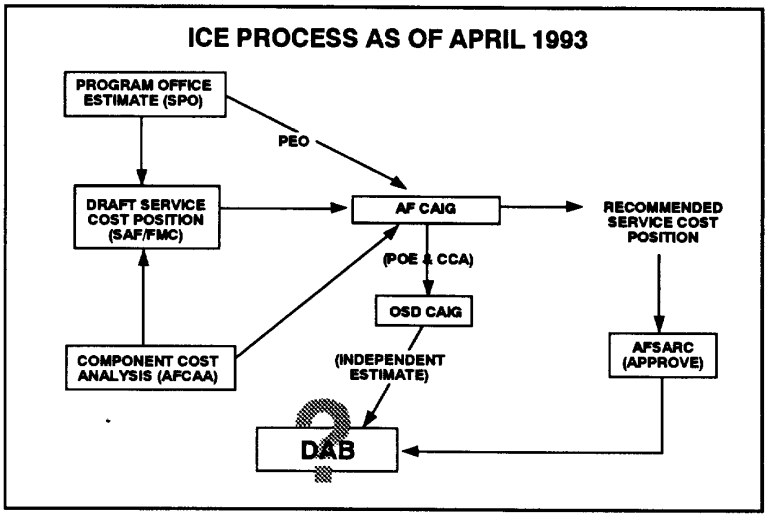

Figure 6. **ICE Process as of April 1993**

- You cannot underestimate the resources required to support all the cost estimate activities. Augmentees from the product center's "home office" can make a significant contribution.

- Teamwork between OSD, the Service ICE team, the Headquarters staff, the program office, and the contractor are essential.

- Though the CARD will never be sufficient to perform an estimate, it is both necessary and useful.

- Strict baseline discipline is crucial, especially when the program is evolving. You can't recover in time if teams diverge too far on what is being costed.

- Your cost documentation must be of quality to allow another team to reproduce your estimate.

- Since the ICE will without fail increase your required line, you must be prepared to adjust available funding and content at the 11th hour and support your new program estimate. However, be aware programs can be killed due to cost growth which is really unnecessary risk dollars.

- Know the strengths of your methodologies and stay consistent with the storyline, establishing program office credibility up front.
- Be prepared for in-depth reviews, to negotiate, and to take action items - recheck your facts off line rather than spontaneously giving an incorrect reply.
- Where you cannot agree, at least agree on how to characterize the differences.
- Use a quick turnaround, flexible automated costing model to prepare the estimate, funding profiles and documentation; and
- Take advantage of this process to gain insight into the weaker, less defined areas of the program office estimate by comparing your information to the independent estimates.

JROC Review
Since there were no issues requiring resolution, a JROC review did not take place. For those programs undergoing a JROC, the format for the review is canned, and you and the using command should obtain a current template from the JROC Secretariat.

Air Force Systems Acquisition Review Council (AFSARC) Review
The Air Force meeting equivalent to a DAB occured the week before final documentation was due. It approves the program that will go forward to OSD. Since the program was already providing ACAT I documentation, the AFSARC imposed no additional unique requirements. However, following the program office/Air Force CAIG reconciliation the program had a $900M disconnect. The program office had worked out a rephasing with the concurrence of Air Combat Command, and it was the rephased program (with roughly a $300M disconnect) which the AFSARC approved and promised to funD,[10] and the Program Office Position and Service Cost Position cost position thus became the same.

Final Document Submission and Committee Review
While draft documentation is defined as documentation over the PEO's signature, final documentation for the IPS, APB, and TEMP must have an SAE

10 Strictly speaking, policy requires the program to be funded. An IOU was accepted because the ongoing "Bottom Up Review" made it impossible for the Air Force to offer offsets.

signature.[11] The OSD staff emphasized the need to submit change-bar versions from the drafts for some of the major documents, and complying with this request was worth some midnight oil. Accordingly, the program office provided change-bar versions and a talking paper summarizing the changes.

Like the documentation review, DoDI 5000.2 also specifies the format of the briefing to the committee. Several days before the review the PEO and committee chair decided the briefing should focus on issues, and some of the required topics were not presented. This phase of the review process is where teamwork between OSD, the Air Staff, and program office really pays off. Though OSD and the Air Force disagreed on a number of issues, the program director knew what they were, and all Air Force attendees were prebriefed on the background and Air Force position. The cooperation between the PEO and Mission Area Director and their respective staffs was outstanding. Everyone involved had only one agenda: a successful DAB. During this period, staffs also began work on finalizing the APB, exit criteria for the next phase, and the wording of the Acquisition Decision Memorandum (ADM).

DAB Review

Though DoDI 5000.2 suggests a briefing outline along the lines of the IPS executive summary, the Joint STARS DAB briefing was issue oriented. The program needs a "yes," and unresolved issues risk either a "no" or a non-decision.

Joint STARS had an unresolved issue of program cost. Since this was the first DAB for the newly appointed USD(A&T), the OSD staff had no feel for expectations or even who was invited. Because of differences in cost estimates, the decision was delayed, but a compromise was reached a few days after the review and a timely ADM was received. Completed staff work also allowed the USD(A&T) to approve exit criteria and the APB in the ADM, vice assigning action items which would have needlessly extended the process another few months.

SUMMARY

Upon assuming command of the Joint STARS program, with only five months to go before the DAB, the new program manager called everyone into the auditorium and, dressed in BDUs and helmet, declared war on the DAB. In fact, prosecuting a DAB is probably as close to war as acquisition people can expect to get. Like war, there is only one objective and the stakes are high.

In the case of the Joint STARS program, a contract for advance procurement (long lead) had been let 13 months ago, betting that the DAB would not only

11 Only certain documents require signature pages. For others, signature can mean forwarded with a cover memo.

approve production, but approve it in time to avoid a work stoppage and possibly loss of funds as the fiscal year end approached.

Like war, everyone — program office, contractor, headquarters, and elsewhere — needs to execute the same battle plan. If your program is sound, if leadership supports you, if you stay focused, and if you keep sprinting until the finish line, everything will work out. You may even wind up with a better program. Good luck!