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JUN 24 2011

OPERATIONAL TEST  
AND EVALUATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Timeliness of Operational Test and Evaluation (OT&E) Plans

References: (a) DoDI 5000.02 (Operation of the Defense Acquisition System), 8 Dec 2008  
(b) DOT&E Memorandum, "Guidelines for Operational Test and Evaluation of Information and Business Systems", 14 Sept 2010

The timeline established for submittal of OT&E plans provided in Reference (a) is too frequently not followed. Therefore, effective immediately for all programs on OT&E oversight, the OT&E test concept brief presentation to me and my staff must occur as early as possible in the planning process for any test event that requires a DOT&E-approved operational test plan. If the test concept brief has not yet occurred 180 days in advance of such a test event, I will establish the date for the brief. As indicated in Reference (b), information and business systems qualifying for levels I or II OT&E do not require DOT&E approval of Test Plans. Consistent with current policy, the Test Plans (including both planned testing and the planned analysis supporting system evaluation) are required to be delivered for review 60 days before the start of testing.

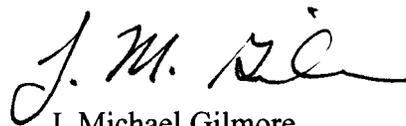
OT&E planning that begins late leaves insufficient time for program offices, test agencies, and my office to ensure needed resources are available. Late delivery of OT&E test concept briefs and drafts of Operational Test Plans leaves too little time to resolve key issues (e.g., inadequate detail in the data management, analysis, and evaluation plans). The too-common practice of initiating test event coordination without an advance agreement with the DOT&E on the test concept risks subsequent disapproval of the Test Plan and the loss of investment in whatever test resources have already been marshaled to conduct the OT.

By law, Operational Test Plans must be approved by DOT&E prior to the start of any dedicated operational testing that will supply data to an operational evaluation. These include but are not limited to: Initial OT&E, Follow-on OT&E, Multi-Service OT&E, and Early Operational Testing. DOT&E will consider for use in operational assessments and evaluations all potentially valid sources of data, including data obtained during developmental test (DT). To be useful to DOT&E, developmental test data must be collected under conditions that I determine to be operationally relevant. To ensure my concurrence that DT is conducted under operationally relevant conditions that support the requirements for operational evaluation, the PM must coordinate with DOT&E and the lead OTA. What that coordination means in practice will vary. However, it will always be best if the PM obtains my advance agreement in writing to use the data. I anticipate that the approval of TEMP's and Operational Test Plans will be the usual means (but not the sole means) by which I will agree to use the data collected during a DT or integrated test event.



I understand the timelines specified in this memorandum could be difficult to meet in some cases, such as for some Major Automated Information System (MAIS) programs and test events that occur in rapid succession. Nevertheless, the information that is available no more than 180 days prior to test must be shared with me and my staff and updated information must be shared as it becomes available. When there are fewer than 60 days between test events, concept briefs and Operational Test Plans should include advance planning for contingencies, indicating how results of one test will influence subsequent testing.

This memorandum is intended to aid the identification and resolution of issues associated with test planning as early as possible, and to avoid unnecessary churn by our staffs. This will help us all fulfill our responsibilities.

  
J. Michael Gilmore  
Director

cc:  
DASD(DT&E)

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