



OPERATIONAL TEST
AND EVALUATION

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MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
FOR TEST AND EVALUATION
DEPUTY, DEPARTMENT OF NAVY TEST & EVALUATION
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, TEST AND EVALUATION, HEADQUARTERS,
U.S. AIR FORCE
DEFENSE INFORMATION SYSTEMS AGENCY TEST AND
EVALUATION EXECUTIVE
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR INDEPENDENT TEST AND
EVALUATION, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
OPERATIONAL TEST AUTHORITY
COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY TEST AND
EVALUATION COMMAND
COMMANDER, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
FORCE
COMMANDER, AIR FORCE OPERATIONAL TEST AND
EVALUATION CENTER
COMMANDER, JOINT INTEROPERABILITY TEST
COMMAND
DIRECTOR, MARINE CORPS OPERATIONAL TEST AND
EVALUATION ACTIVITY

SUBJECT: Independent Operational Test and Evaluation (OT&E) Suitability Assessments

The statutory responsibilities of the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, include prescribing policies and procedures for the conduct of operational test and evaluation in the Department of Defense. Currently, *DoDI 5000.02 (December 8, 2008)* specifies the following:

- OT&E shall be used to determine the operational effectiveness and suitability of a system under realistic operational conditions, including joint combat operations; determine if thresholds in the approved CPD [Capability Production Document] and critical operational issues have been satisfied; assess impacts to combat operations; and provide additional information on the system's operational capabilities.

The Defense Acquisition Guidebook defines “operational suitability” as follows:

- Operational suitability is the degree to which a system can be satisfactorily placed in field use, with consideration given to reliability, availability, compatibility,

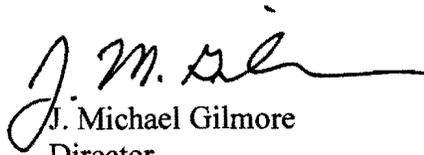


transportability, interoperability, wartime usage rates, maintainability, safety, human factors, manpower supportability, logistics supportability, documentation, environmental effects, and training requirements.

Reliability is the chief enabler of operational suitability, and failure to achieve reliability requirements typically results in a system being assessed "not suitable"; consequently, its independent evaluation is pivotal to OT&E.

I have observed that, in some instances, operational test authorities treat externally-developed failure definitions/scoring criteria as mandatory and/or allow external personnel (e.g., Capability Managers that serve as user and doctrine representatives to materiel developer forums) to vote on the scoring of reliability failures during the conduct of OT&E. These practices are inconsistent with the proper conduct of independent OT&E.

In the future, operational test authorities shall evaluate operational suitability based solely on their own independent scoring of reliability failures treating externally-generated failure definitions and scoring criteria as guidance only. This does not preclude the participation of material developers, user representatives, or developmental test authorities in the initial review of reliability failure reports in an effort to clarify relevant aspects of the failure. Nonetheless, suitability evaluations must be the independent product of the operational test authorities. All operational test plans submitted for approval by DOT&E from this date forward will contain explicit language acknowledging this requirement.


J. Michael Gilmore
Director

cc:
USD (AT&L)
DASD (DT&E)