



**Report to the Senior Executive Council,  
Department of Defense**

**CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP  
ORIENTATION PROGRAM  
TASK GROUP**

**Report FY04-3**

- **Recommendations related to the design and execution of a formal orientation program for the Department's senior civilian leadership**

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**December 2004**

**CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION PROGRAM  
TASK GROUP REPORT**

**TASK**

This Task Group was formed to provide recommendations for a formal pre-assignment program to prepare senior civilian leaders in the Department of Defense (DoD) for the challenges they would face in their new roles, and enable them to be effective leaders in the Department. It was recognized that while these senior-level individuals were exceptionally skilled professionals, their understanding of the Department's decision-making processes, the priorities and programs of the Department, its systems and culture, and the statutory interrelationships among the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff and the Service enterprises would vary widely, allowing all to benefit from this type of orientation. This report represents the findings and the advice of the Defense Business Board (DBB) on this topic.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) assigning this task to the Board requested recommendations related to the following specific topics:

- Program of Instruction:
  - Content that enables new leaders to understand the priorities and programs of the Department, its systems and culture, and the interrelationships between the Joint, Services and staff enterprises.
  - Content that emphasizes how the decision-making processes in government are different from those in the private sector, and how to effectively manage those differences.
  - Specific sessions that, to the extent practicable, are conducted by individuals with extensive bipartisan experience at the highest levels of the National Security enterprise with content that includes budget, personnel policies, guidance on conflicts of interests, and congressional and public relations.

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- Concept of Operation:
  - Senior-level oversight and responsibility for the program.
  - Prospective costs and anticipated time commitments of the program.

Task Group Chairman: Michael Bayer

Task Group Members: Barbara Barrett, Arnold Punaro, Dov Zakheim

Task Group Sponsor and DoD Liaison: Jim O’Beirne, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for White House Liaison

Task Group Executive Secretary: Kelly S. Van Niman

### **PROCESS**

The Task Group received informational briefings of military and civilian orientation and career development programs by the Department of Defense J-7, the Office of Civilian Personnel Policy and Washington Headquarters Services. The Task Group also conducted research on private sector best practices related to executive onboarding, tapping into the expertise of the Corporate Leadership Council, Spencer Stuart and Executive OnBoarding, LCC. Finally, interviews with senior former appointees, retired Flag Officers, University Presidents and Chief Executive Officers were conducted to benchmark best practices for executive new hires. The DBB extends its sincere gratitude to those individuals and organizations for their insights and guidance to the Department.

In 2001, the Department began conducting an extensive, formal orientation program for incoming Service Secretaries and the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (AT&L), and continued with an abbreviated program in 2003. Whereas the Task Group received feedback, and would agree, that the content of the programs was excellent, it was a constant challenge to coordinate the participation of the necessary, high-caliber presenters around an organized program structure. The current, abbreviated program is lengthy -- five weeks in duration, and covers very diverse subject matters in a joint context, but offers limited coverage of the personal side of onboarding, and has no follow up or measurement of the program’s benefit or contribution to the candidate’s success in his/her position.

Successful onboarding programs teach executives the unwritten rules of “how to get things done” and do so by covering the following points: Organizational Onboarding, Business Unit Onboarding, Functional Onboarding

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and Personal Onboarding. Addressing each element allows the executive to learn organizational history, culture and strategic priorities; understand business workflow and handoffs in the decision-making process; assess his/her own organization's strengths and abilities (an area that the DoD candidate would cover after his/her Senate confirmation); and to become comfortable with the personal challenges of the new position. See the attached Task Group Final Presentation for a detailed description of the Elements of Executive Onboarding and how those could be applied to the onboarding of senior civilian leaders at the Department.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Task Group makes several, detailed recommendations regarding the program of instruction and a concept for operation. Generally, the elements of the program are divided into two phases: pre-confirmation and first year's employment. Certain pre-reading of reference materials and information on DoD governance, organization and structure are recommended during a "pre-arrival" onboarding phase.

Modeling best practices at DoD, the DBB recommends that Departmental Onboarding, Entity Onboarding, Functional Onboarding and Personal Onboarding elements be covered prior to the candidate's confirmation by the Senate. Functional and Personal Onboarding elements, that would require the candidate to be serving in his/her new role, must, by law, be covered after the candidate is confirmed by the Senate, and therefore would be covered during his/her first year of employment. See the attached report for specific objectives for each recommended program element.

Measurement of the program's value is critical. Feedback on the value of the various program elements should occur immediately following the candidate's confirmation and, again, six months into their tenure. A successful program will prepare the candidate for his/her new role and manage the "expectations-reality gap" resulting in increased collaboration among the Department's leaders (career, political and military), increased job satisfaction and less job turnover.

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The DBB recommends implementing this civilian leadership orientation program through an in-house model, rather than outsourcing the program to an established training institution. This solution would be more cost effective, and allow the Secretary to select specific program content, and to receive the advice of a “trusted agent” who would execute the program. See the attached report for details of the concept of operation.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Bayer  
Task Group Chairman

Attachment: Civilian Leadership Orientation Program Task Group Final  
Presentation



**DEFENSE BUSINESS BOARD**

**Civilian Leadership  
Orientation Program  
for  
Department of Defense**

**Final Report  
December 2004**



DBB Task Group

Michael Bayer (Task Group Chairman)

Barbara Barrett

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DoD Liaison

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## Terms of Reference Objectives

### Program of Instruction:

- Content that enables new senior leaders to understand the priorities and programs of the Department, its systems and culture, and the interrelationships between the Joint and Service enterprises.
- Content that emphasizes how the decision-making processes in government are different from those in the private sector, and how to effectively manage within those differences.
- Specific sessions conducted by individuals with extensive bipartisan experience at the highest levels of the National Security enterprise with content that includes key events, lessons learned, culture, civil-military relations, budget, personnel policies, conflicts of interests, and congressional and public relations.

### Concept of Operation for the Program:

- Senior-level oversight and responsibility for the program.
- Prospective costs and anticipated time commitments of the program.





## STUDY PROCESS

- Overviews of military and civilian orientation and career development in the Department of Defense by J-7, the Office of Civilian Personnel Policy, and Washington Headquarters Services.
- Best practices research on executive new hiring programs (Corporate Leadership Council, Spencer Stuart, Executive OnBoarding, LLC).
- Interviews with senior former appointees, retired Flag Officers, University Presidents and CEOs to benchmark best practices.



## Private Sector Approach to Developing Orientation Programs

### Private Sector Best Practices

- Determine Orientation Objectives
- Solicit Participants' Input
  
- Determine Orientation Elements
  
- Determine Delivery Methods
- Evaluate Orientation Success

### Modeling Best Practices at DoD

- Determine Orientation Objectives
- Solicit Input from Previous Appointees, Recent Senior Four Star Officers
  
- Differentiate Pre and Post Confirmation Elements
  
- Determine Delivery Methods
- Evaluate Orientation Success



## Current Onboarding for Senior DoD Leadership

- In 2001, conducted extensive (several months long) formal orientation for Level 2 PASs (Service Secretaries, USD (AT&L)); and two week program for Level 3 Service Under Secretaries and the 2 PDUSD's (AT&L) and a 1-day program for all ASD's.
  - 1 hour rotational presentations by former and current DoD civilian and uniformed personnel and outside experts conducted at Pentagon; no site/field visits.
  - Very diverse subject matters (all addressed in joint context) OMB, White House, OSD, JCS, CoComs, transformation, acquisition, OpTempo, global strategy, legal issues and culture
  - Extensive reading list provided beforehand; everyday networking lunches arranged
  - Deputy Secretary (Level 2) and other Under Secretaries in OSD (Level 3 also) not included in that orientation.



### Current Onboarding for Senior DoD Leadership

- In 2003, continued an abbreviated program for newly nominated Service Secretaries that lasted 5 weeks (with read-aheads and preparatory materials)
  - 1 hour rotational presentations by former and current DoD civilian and uniformed personnel and outside experts conducted at Pentagon; no site/field visits
  - Very diverse subject matters (all addressed in joint context) OMB, White House, OSD, JCS, CoComs, transformation, acquisition, OpTempo, global strategy, legal issues and culture
  - Extensive reading list provided beforehand; everyday networking lunches arranged
  - See Appendix A for overview of prior Service Secretary selectee orientation.
- Currently Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) approves pre-confirmation interviews/orientation (not training), but that privilege could be taken away. Need to be aware of current guidance.



## Observations of Current DoD Onboarding Program

- General content in program is excellent; a predictable standing mechanism of delivery could be problematic given timing and varying length of nomination/confirmation process
  - Difficult to provide high caliber program to all Senate-confirmed Appointees, but possible with focus on Level 2 Appointees (Under Secretaries in the Office of the Secretary, Service Secretaries and their Under Secretaries)
- The difficulty of dictating schedules of the many guest speakers, makes it difficult to have weekly themes around which presentations can be grouped (See Appendix A, slide 2)
- Elaborate scope of program designed to establish a base of knowledge from which the nominee can build. Difficult task in 3-5 weeks. Crucial if nominee is new to Washington.



## Observations of Current DoD Onboarding Program (continued)

- No follow up or measurement of orientation program's value.
- No coverage of personal elements of onboarding except ethics and protocol; no inclusion of spouses.
- Need to continue to balance OSD, Joint Staff and Service-specific perspectives; as well as, DoD background with job-specific/confirmation "cramming"; customization is critical
- Courtesy calls with former position-holder, Congressional Members and staffers are critical



## **Executive Onboarding** **What is it and why is it important?**

### **Definition of Onboarding**

- Six-month (or better) systematic approach to developing a strong foundation for future success. A non-linear, non-sequential process that requires significant commitment of the entire organization. Effective programs teach the Executive the unwritten rules on “how to get things done.”

### **Goals and Benefits of Onboarding**

- Thorough understanding of business culture and objectives
- Increased collaboration and exchange of information among senior leadership
- Effective integration of executive into leadership role
- Focused identification and implementation of critical organizational initiatives
- Increased job satisfaction
- Decreased job turnover

Source: ExecutiveOnBoarding LCC



## Elements of Executive Onboarding

- **Organizational Onboarding:** Meet top executives to learn organizational history and culture, strategic direction and initiatives to support current priorities.
- **Business Unit Onboarding:** Gain balanced understanding between strategic thinking and the mechanics of organizational functioning. Learn business workflow and handoffs, identify organizational resources and decision-making processes, formulate collegial relationships among top business leaders.
- **Functional Onboarding:** Assess function's capabilities and effectiveness; meet and size up team; learn from key stakeholders; participate in structured team assimilation process; begin creating and implementing initiatives.
- **Personal Onboarding:** Address the non-work side of the executive's life (e.g., resources), making them feel welcomed by the organization, thus increasing their long-term commitment to the organization.

Source: ExecutiveOnBoarding LCC





## DBB Observations on Implementing Best Practice Elements of Executive Onboarding at DoD

- **Pre-Arrival Onboarding:** Given breadth of information to cover, read-ahead materials, course syllabus and items of personal interest could be sent early.
- **Organizational/Departmental Onboarding:** Current orientation covers this element thoroughly and can be conducted in the pre-confirmation phase.
- **Business Unit/Entity Onboarding:** Current orientation covers this element during Service-specific portion of the program in the pre-confirmation phase. Not much attention to business workflow and handoffs (between Services and OSD), and other decision-making processes.
- **Functional Onboarding:** Current orientation does not cover this element. Would need to be covered during post-confirmation (first year of employment) phase, except for courtesy calls with key stakeholders.
- **Personal Onboarding:** Current orientation does not cover this element except for ethics briefing. Legislative restrictions will limit assistance, such as relocation assistance. No inclusion of spouses in current program.



## Recommendations - Program of Instruction

**ORIENTATION OBJECTIVE:** Enable the Department's new leaders to effectively execute their duties by gaining a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities, the decision-making processes, the priorities and programs of the Department, its systems and culture, and the statutory interrelationships between OSD, the Joint Staff and the Service enterprises.



## Guidelines for Onboarding of Senior DoD Leadership

Pre-Confirmation

Organize a plenary session on SecDef's mission (invite career SES to foster good working relationships to lead the Department)

Customized orientation briefings based on the nominee's background and position, and other functions/departments

Aggregate Nominees to minimize number of requests to top caliber experts/presenters (key to success of program)

Categorize reading materials as "mandatory" or "optional"

Dictate style/format of briefings by internal staff

First Year's Employment

Inter-agency briefings with stakeholders (Other Federal Agencies, Legislative Branch – Key Committees)

Facilitate networking opportunities and provide resources to make networking possible.

Complete orientation scorecards immediately following orientation and 6-9 months into job



## Modeling Best Practices at DoD

### PRE-CONFIRMATION

#### Pre-Arrival Onboarding - Objectives

- Provide nominees welcome letters/package and calls
  - Syllabus of content for orientation program
  - Some pre-reading and reference materials (statutory and historical) and books by former position holders
  - Information on DoD governance, organization and structure
  - Information of personal interest (info packet on local schools and realtors, last official's 12 month calendar )



## Modeling Best Practices at DoD

### PRE-CONFIRMATION

#### Departmental Onboarding - Objectives

- Orient nominees to the organizational structure of the Department and different “corporate cultures” of OSD, the Joint Staff and each Service
  - Discuss the Secretary’s goals, leadership style
  - Define the customers and suppliers
- Reinforce management skills with cultural understanding
  - Uniform and civilian, Service specifics
- Orient nominees to the history and strategic direction of the Department, and the initiatives (past and current) that support Departmental priorities
- Meet with former officials and former flag officers who held same or parallel positions to gain their perspective on Departmental history, culture, priorities and “lessons learned”



## Modeling Best Practices at DoD

### PRE-CONFIRMATION

#### Entity Onboarding - Objectives

- Orient Nominee on Departmental roles, responsibilities and functions (OSD, Joint Staff and the Services), their interrelationships and decision making processes within and among them.
  - Discuss with the combatant commanders their challenges
  - Discuss personnel policies and rules sets (promotion, hiring, firing, contractor support)
  - Manage the “Expectations-Reality Gap” that will arise from learning how differently things get done at DoD from private sector
- Conduct session on external relations strategy (Hill and press -- players, roles, processes)
- Continue networking courtesy calls inside and outside the Pentagon, and among the Nominees.



## Modeling Best Practices at DoD

### PRE-CONFIRMATION

#### Functional Onboarding - Objectives

- Arrange pre-confirmation courtesy calls with key stakeholders outside the Pentagon, i.e., NSC, DHS, senior Congressional members and staff.
- Meet current top military & career leadership of the Nominee's entity to gain their perspective on entity's programs and priorities, and lessons learned
- Stress criticality of selection and organized development of subordinate political appointees
- Follow with extensive, specific briefings by current top career and military officials from all four military Services
- Provide contact sheet for additional networking opportunities and mentoring relationships inside and outside the Department
  - career and political leadership



## Modeling Best Practices at DoD

### PRE-CONFIRMATION

#### Personal Onboarding - Objectives

- Orient the nominee on ethics guidelines covering new position
  - Assist with paperwork as appropriate
  - Include spouses and later the Military Assistants
- Conduct a session on press relations (conducting interviews on and off the record, answering impromptu press inquiries, how families should deal with the press)
  - Include spouses
- Provide protocol briefings; cover the “do’s and don’ts”
- Provide support and guidance as needed to answer personal questions





## Modeling Best Practices at DoD

### FIRST YEAR EMPLOYMENT

#### Functional Onboarding - Objectives (continued)

- Provide guidance to newly confirmed Presidential Appointee as to tempo of recommended meetings with
  - White House
  - Congress
  - Public and private sector organizations
  - other stakeholders
- With the newly confirmed Presidential Appointee, draft an outline of a first 90-day plan to be completed post confirmation with his/her new staff



## Modeling Best Practices at DoD

### FIRST YEAR EMPLOYMENT

#### Personal Onboarding - Objectives (continued)

- Obtain PAS feedback on program:
  - quality of program (immediately following orientation)
  - value of orientation information (6 months into job)
    - How well did the orientation prepare the individuals for their new roles?
    - How well did orientation help to manage the expectations-reality gap?
    - How well did the orientation prepare their families for their new roles?
- Dial into subsequent sessions



## Recommendations - Concept of Operation



## OVERSIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY

### Recommendation

- Secretary/Deputy Secretary are in charge of content
- Executed by a “trusted agent” of the Secretary, who knows what Nominees need to know (key to successful program) and knows the Department well
- Program office overseen by White House Liaison Office and paid for by Washington Headquarters Services
- Administered by one Full-Time-Employee (FTE) and one outside consultant with executive training experience
  - Ensures that competent, professional resources are managing the program



## PROSPECTIVE COSTS AND TIME COMMITMENTS

### Private Sector Example

- Flat program cost – incremental cost of additional participants is minimal

### DoD Model

- In-house solution should be more cost effective
  - 1 “trusted agent” of the Secretary is unpaid Special Government Employee
  - 1 Full-Time-Employee (FTE) in White House Liaison Office, who could be multi-tasked during program “down-times”
  - 1 part time consultant to advise on delivery methods and program structure
  - Need Military Assistants to coordinate schedules, facilitate program execution (non-reimbursable detailees from Services)
- Guest speakers currently not reimbursed for travel – funds should be available as needed



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## Appendix A

### Sample of Current Service Secretary Selectee Orientation



**Purpose:**

Provide a rapid indoctrination into DoD, Joint Staff, and Service organizations to include; structure, mechanisms, policies, programs and procedures, challenges and objectives. Emphasize DoD corporate culture and the impact and importance of dynamic interpersonal relations.

**Duration:**

Three weeks - (14 working days + 11 evenings)

**Mechanism:**

Meetings, briefings, office calls, and walkabouts in Pentagon  
Dinners in town  
Hill Calls as required

**Staff:**

Mr. Michael Bayer  
CAPT Leo Goff, USN  
LtCol Mike Stickney, USAF



**Week 1 -- DoD, Joint Staff, National Security, Pentagon Dynamics**

- Ethics & WH Liaison
- Title 10 and 32
- Global Strategy
- Strategy to Policy
- DoD Organization
- Defense Reform
- Joint Requirements
- Resetting the Force
- Transformation
- OMB / Budget Projection
- Defense Program Plan
- Acquisition Challenges

**Week 2 – Current Issues and 18 Month Projection**

- Navy/USAF Ops
- Other Service Chiefs
- Intelligence Restructuring
- Political/military
- Homeland Defense
- SOCOM
- Joint Policy and Strategy
- JFCOM
- NORTHCOM
- OIF Joint Lessons
- Alternate futures
- PA&E

**Week 3 – Service Specific Focus**

- Transformation
- Force Structure Shifts
- Active/Reserve/NG
- Warfighter support
- Service Chief
- Major Program Status
- OP Tempo
- Installations/housing
- Resourcing Challenges
- Unfunded requirements
- Joint Program Integra.
- OIF Lessons Learned

**Week 1-3 Interactions (mtgs, dinners, calls, etc)**

- Congress
- Former SECDEF
- Former DEPSECDEF
- Chairman/Vice
- Joint Staff; GO/FOs
- Current USDs, ASDs
- Executive Branch
- Interagency
- Current Service SECs
- Former Service SECs
- Current Service Chiefs
- Former Service Chiefs
- Current COCOMs
- Former COCOMs
- Former Sub Unified
- Associations





**Service Secretary Selectee Orientation**  
**Sample Interactions**

Steve Epstein	Richard Danzig	Robin Cleveland
Jim O'Beirne	Douglas Feith	Mike Hagee
Jim Haynes	James Roche	Vern Clark
Martin Hoffman	Ray Dubois	Michael Moseley
John Lehman	Michael Mies	James Schlessinger
Les Brownlee	Robert Cone	Paul McHale
John Tilelli	Newt Gingrich	Ralph Eberhart
Gordon England	Fred Weyand	Binford Peay
Tom Barnett	Barry McCaffery	George Joulwan
Andy Hoehn	Gordon Sullivan	Bryan Brown
Joseph Ralston	Walter Sharp	Stephen Cambone
Al Gray	Jim Metzger	James Loy
James Cartwright	Ed Giambastiani	Norm Augustine
Stan Szemborski	Larry Welch	Dutch Kerwin
Arnold Punaro	Pete Schoomaker	Paul Gorman
Richard Myers	Steve Blum	Wayne Downing
Chuck Larson	Denis Bovin	Jim Stavridis
Arthur Cebrowski	William Perry	Dutch Kerwin
Michael Wynne	John Hamre	



**Service Secretary Selectee Orientation**  
**Sample Army Focus Issues**

Transformation

- Alignment with current defense policy and combatant commander vision
- OIF lessons learned, relevance
- Technical achievability of key programs
- Financial and management status of key programs

Resourcing

- Plans for normal budget process allocation -- Use of Supplementals
- The challenges (long poles) -- both near and long term
- Reset--How and how much \$\$ -- Unfundeds within POM and beyond

Manpower

- RC and AC Optempo --Total active duty strength -- Early warning indicators
- Core business ---How defined -- Divestiture issues
- Institutional Army in field vs Functional Army, shifts programmed/discarded -- Staff Reorg's HQ and Field Army

Jointness

- Air Force support to the Army--Strategic and tactical
- Navy support to the Army--Strategic and tactical
- OSD and Joint Staffs-- existing relations and areas to improve relationships
- Combatant Commanders' Issues

Political Issues

- Leg Affairs and Budget Liaison
- Hill Supporters vs detractors