



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3010

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ACQUISITION,
TECHNOLOGY
AND LOGISTICS

MEMORANDUM FOR ACQUISITION PROFESSIONALS

SUBJECT: Thank You

Today is my last day as Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for the hard work, dedication, and professionalism you have demonstrated to me over these past two and a half years.

In my time as Under Secretary, I have seen you accomplish enormous feats with respect to responsive acquisition, contingency contracting, and logistics support. Nothing makes me more proud than seeing our actions reflected in lives saved, missions accomplished, and improvements in the welfare of our deployed troops and their families. This dedication to Warfighter support must always be our highest priority.

Last year, I also wrote to you describing a mandate to deliver better value to the taxpayer and Warfighter by improving the way the Department does business. I emphasized that next to supporting our troops on an urgent basis, this was the President's and the Secretary of Defense's highest priority for the Department's acquisition professionals.

It is clear that you took this message to heart. While much more work remains to be done to implement the guidance contained in "Better Buying Power," the impact of your efforts can already be felt across the Department. The Navy, for example, has used robust engineering trades to drive down the estimated unit cost of the Ohio Replacement Program. The Air Force has focused on total ownership of cost and energy use in the C-17 program and has written a provision into the C-17 sustainment contract that ensures the Government will be refunded the cost delta if these efficiencies are not achieved. And the Army, through the use of performance-based logistics, has reduced the cost per flight hour of its Apache helicopters by 24 percent, relative to 2001 levels. We have shown skill and excellence in a number of important contract awards. These are just a few of hundreds of examples of excellence in acquisition and logistics tradecraft.

These and many other best practices outlined in the "Better Buying Power" initiative would be important to apply in any budget environment, but they take on added significance now, given the sobering budgetary realities we face. In order to continue to procure the critical goods and services our forces need in the years ahead, we must continue to do more without more. Our relentless pursuit of better taxpayer and Warfighter value must continue to expand in scope, with important advances still needed in our approaches to services acquisition, information technology, control of total ownership costs, iteration with the requirements process, engagement of small and innovative business partners, smart policy towards the industrial base, and other areas.

As we adjust to this new budget environment, we must be careful to balance not only our capabilities but also the time horizons of our investments. We cannot afford to frontload in time all of our investments in order to focus exclusively on the problems we face today. We must protect our future investments as well, and in particular the best ideas that have emerged from our experience of being at war for over a decade. The resources we allocate to countering asymmetrical and emerging threats and weapons of mass destruction as well as those we allocate to nuclear deterrence, cyber, energy, and our science and technology base will provide our successors with the capabilities that they will require to address tomorrow's problems.

I want you to know that I will remain fully engaged with all that you do in my role as Deputy Secretary of Defense. I plan to consult regularly with Frank Kendall, who, as Acting USD(AT&L), will chair the Business Efficiencies Senior Integration Group that I established last year to devise and then implement Better Buying Power. I will continue to be strengthened and energized by your commitment and resolve to protect our Nation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashton B. Carter'.

Ashton B. Carter