UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Posted on: September 18, 2000

(U) DIRgram-122: "Trailblazer Acquisition Strategy"

Distribution: Director's Message to the Work Force

POC: Michael V. Hayden [talk_dirnsa@nsa]

Approved for Release by NSA on
04-26-2007, FOIA Case # 47610

(U) For the past several months you have heard me talk about Trailblazer as the core of our strategy to exploit the global digital net and to transform how we satisfy our customers' information needs. I launched Trailblazer on an extremely ambitious path to provide an end-to-end operational capability, and to do so using a robust architecture that could be deployed across the enterprise. I also asked the team to improve our acquisition skills and capabilities, and to be a forcing function for transformation. Here's an update.

(U//~~FOUO~~) I have approved a formal acquisition strategy for Trailblazer, based on a joint recommendation of the Trailblazer Executive, [redacted] and the Program Manager [redacted] The strategy takes a balanced approach that respects the concerns and feedback from Harry Gatanas (NSA Senior Acquisition Executive), Congressional staff, and the Community Management Staff; reduces some of the funding pressure in FY01, mitigates high risk factors; and still supports the deployment of substantial capabilities [redacted]

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

(U) Over the next 12 months Trailblazer will solicit and evaluate a variety of architectural concepts from industry and provide some interim mission capabilities. After evaluating industry concept studies, Trailblazer will contract for an overall, end-to-end operational capability. In later stages, having proven the operational architecture, Trailblazer will contract for rapid production and broader deployment. The overall acquisition strategy provides a balanced approach to addressing current constraints, providing interim capability and achieving end-to-end mission capacity.

(U) No matter how the details work out, we still need the skills of our technical work force to specify requirements and modify industry solutions to accommodate particular target problems. The role of our internal technical experts is shifting away from large scale systems integration and testing, and moving toward support for a rapid development environment that turns target-specific algorithms into products. Experts are needed to support acquisition activities and to adapt commercial products and analyst tools to address specific target sets. To do so, we must retain and develop first-class technical experts with mission expertise within the government

work force.
(U//FOUO)

(U) Trailblazer is building the systemic capability we need to [redacted] It has an operational reporting mission in partnership with the Operations Directorate and the distributed analytic community. In cooperation with DO customers, service organizations, and target offices, Trailblazer will soon launch a collaborative operational pilot to begin to put into practice new processes, policies and the use of new analytic tools.

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

(U) Remember what I said when we began this journey; that we would try new things, and that we would learn as we go and make adjustments. I'm confident in the direction we have set with Trailblazer both for acquisition reform and mission transformation.

(U) To learn more about Trailblazer, I encourage you to check out the team's home page:

http://www.d.nsa/HTML/trailblazer/

and to participate in Trailblazer Day on 19 September from 0930 to 1215 hours in the Friedman Auditorium.

MICHAEL V. HAYDEN
Lieutenant General, USAF
Director

Listing of Past Mailings: 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005
Agency Mass Mailer Home Page

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY