



**DEVELOPING 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE LEADERS**

**Concept Paper**

November 20, 2006

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# "DEVELOPING DoD SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE LEADERS OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY"

## Concept Paper

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This concept paper outlines the fundamental requirements for an Executive Management Framework (EMF) to develop Department of Defense Senior Executive Service Leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. While changes may be required for all career leaders, as well as those in the leadership pipeline, this paper addresses career Senior Executive Service (SES) members only.

Section 1 provides for a brief synopsis of the historical evolution of the current civil service leadership system and a summary of recent studies that have looked at the changing leadership needs of the Department of Defense.

This overview is then followed by an analysis in Section 2 of the current demographic pressures on our leadership cadre, including the looming bulge of retirements and the gap of gender and ethnic representation among our SES leaders. Such dynamics – the paper suggests – add further sense of urgency to the need to develop a new and systematic Executive Management Framework. Section 2 concludes with an examination of the current DoD executive management and development approach, arguing that the current processes are largely ad hoc and fragmented, lacking in both comprehensiveness and deliberateness.

Section 3 identifies the new demands and expectations from the SES leaders that stem not only from modern business practices, but also from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century national security challenges. It also lists the qualities that the executives need to possess to address such challenges, including adaptive, tested and proven leadership skills; a diverse and meaningful range of experiences; enterprise-spanning perspective; and skills for matters of multi-service, multi-national and multi-dimensional operations.

Section 4 posits that the present day environment and its challenges mandate not only a new and diverse set of skills among SES members, but more importantly, a new approach to management of SES leaders consistent with the Department's mission. It also spells out the guiding principles that will constitute the foundation of this new framework.

Finally, Section 5 charts the way forward for the implementation of the new management framework for SES leaders at the Department of Defense. This new and transformational approach is intended to produce the best civilian career leadership cadre possible, and one

that is fully integrated with other components of DoD's executive leadership, General/Flag Officers (G/FOs) and political leaders. It intends to do so by:

- Instituting a deliberate, systematic and predictable approach to management of the career lifecycle of all DoD career SES leaders;
- Establishing an Executive Management Framework for the career lifecycle of all SES members and for select SES positions, considered to have the most significant influence on national security matters and the DoD's strategic priorities.⁴
- Maintaining a pipeline of highly qualified SES leaders who will be developed, sustained and continuously improved to meet executive leadership requirements throughout DoD.

This three-prong strategy will ensure that:

- Recruitment, Selection and Hiring of SES leaders supports institutional criteria;
- Development, Utilization and Performance of SES leaders is systematic;
- Morale and Sustainment of the SES leaders is paramount;
- Succession Management is more thoughtful, deliberate and strategic;
- Components are responsible for developing the SES members and consequently, the pipeline in a systematic fashion;
- DoD institutes governance structures to ensure management transition from ad hoc to deliberate.

The Executive Management Framework promises to deliver SES leaders that the Department of Defense needs to aggressively pursue its mission amid the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. To this end, it is imperative that the SES community be included in the dialogue and their feedback on concepts and recommendations be invited and considered. This concept paper represents an attempt in that direction.

## INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Department of Defense is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and protect the security of the United States.<sup>1</sup> This mission is executed by maintaining an unmatched high quality military and civilian force, deterring war in the most dynamic environments known, and protecting the interests of the United States in domains previously unimagined.<sup>2</sup> For such an essential mission and in such times of challenge, the quality and caliber of executive leadership can be the difference between organizational success and failure. Therefore, it is the responsibility of enlightened leadership to see that systems and processes are designed, implemented, managed and continuously transformed to create the quality and caliber of executive leaders needed to overcome the challenges facing the organization.

The DoD Senior Executive Service leaders are a key and valued leadership resource for the Department. They bring to bear extraordinary abilities and skills in executing the mission of the Department of Defense. However, at times the SES leaders are an underutilized executive resource. Their career path can be arbitrarily segmented and unpredictable, without clear, continuous and systematic approaches that would maximize their potential. Dynamic world realities, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), and societal demographics constitute an imperative for the Department to reevaluate how SES leaders and those in the pipeline for SES positions are recruited, selected, developed, utilized, and managed. These realities also constitute an imperative to transform and reorient leadership capabilities to meet the complex challenges in the years ahead.

Like their General/Flag Officer counterparts, SES leaders must be capable and ready to execute the national security mission successfully. Today, success requires the ability of the U.S. Government to bring to bear all elements of national power at home and to work in close cooperation with allies and partners abroad.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the Department's 21st Century leadership team - military and civilian - must be adept at integrating our Nation's global efforts into a unified strategy, and be fully capable of leading DoD's efforts within a larger national security context. In addition, they must be adept in other broader enduring competencies, such as leadership, business acumen, critical thinking, and problem solving for successful executive management.

The DoD Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management and Joint Professional Military Education sets the framework to identify and inculcate these new competencies for its Military officers. The Department's initiative presented here – "Developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century DoD Senior Executive Service Leaders" – is a corollary effort to ensure the appropriate executive leadership competencies and a transparent, credible, and effective framework

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<sup>1</sup> Introductory Overview of the Department of Defense, Available at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/admin/about.html>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management and Professional Military Education, April 3, 2006

<sup>3</sup> "Achieving Unity of Effort," Quadrennial Defense Review, U.S. Department of Defense, February 6, 2006. p. 83

for the career lifecycle management of civilian executives and those in the pipeline for SES positions.

## Section 1. The Evolution of Senior Civil Service

The last major change for the Department's leadership came in 1978 when the Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA) established a new category of senior leaders, the Senior Executive Service (SES). As a result of that change, the Department's leadership team became a triumvirate (political leaders, G/FOs, and career members of the SES).

CSRA envisioned a senior executive corps with solid executive expertise, public service values, and a broad perspective of Government. The purpose was to: "Ensure that the executive management of the Government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the nation and otherwise is of the highest quality." The Office of Personnel Management's history document recounts the transition to SES from the super grades as follows:

- SES envisioned as high-prestige, high-reward, and somewhat high-risk service.
- Rank tied to person, not position, so movement from position to position (and agency to agency) would be easier.
- Based on long-established concept that a manager should be able to manage any kind of program based on managerial skills, envisioned moving members from agency to agency quickly.
- Perspectives of Government executives would be broadened and their responsibilities viewed in the context of the larger corporate and public policy interests of the government.

Many would agree that these objectives have not been met consistently throughout the Federal Government. Yet, these objectives are still valid today, and they must be viewed in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is a very different environment from that which existed in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the SES was created. The new environment, characterized in great part by its asymmetric challenges, requires increased urgency of action and precision of execution. Thus, the Department must take aggressive action to ensure that the original objectives of the SES and any new ones specific to the Department are planned for and met.

Others have looked at this issue for the Department and offered recommendations for DoD's consideration. The most recent studies are summarized below.

**Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).** To set the context for these reports, the evidence for change starts with the QDR, in which the Secretary of Defense provides his vision on the future capability of the force, both military and civilian. In fact, both QDR 2001 and

2006 called for modernization/transformation of the civilian workforce so that it is equally agile, flexible, and innovative as the transformed U.S. military force.

The 2006 QDR goes further by requiring particular level of transformation for both the U.S. military and civilian force to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> Century requirements. It called for the identification of competencies for both the military and civilian workforce and required both a competency-based and capability-focused human capital strategy. QDR 2006 identifies environmental indicators that are the catalysts for transformation in the Department. The key ones are identified below along with some of the competency requirements that we believe result from these indicators:

### **Indicators**

- September 11, 2001
- Global War on Terror
  
- Multiple, Asymmetric Threats
- Global and Domestic Disasters
  
- Global Partnership
- Humanitarian Necessities
- Uncertainty and Surprise
- Public Accountability

### **Competency Requirements**

- Wartime Sense of Urgency
- Rapid and Adaptive Planning and Execution
- Multifaceted Responses
- Comprehensive and Tailored Solutions
- Integrated Approaches
- Enterprise-Wide Perspective
- Creativity and Imagination
- Shaping Choices

**The Defense Science Board.** Recommendations from the 2002 Defense Science Board report urged the Department to change its SES management and shift from ad hoc/varied civilian development approaches to a systematic, structured program.

**The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Beyond Goldwater-Nichols, Phase I Report.** Recommendations from the 2004 CSIS report suggested that the Department:

- Establish a Defense Professionals Corps
  
- Make training, education, and required interagency rotations for senior-level appointments the cornerstone of the human resources program
  
- Create a personnel float over the next 5 years of 1000 career civilian billets (GS12 through SES) to enable education, training and rotation.

**The Defense Business Board (DBB).** The DBB recommended changes in its 2002 as well as its most recent report (May 31, 2006). Both reports recommended that the



Department adopt a systematic management model for its most senior leaders, based upon the best practices in industry. In the 2006 report, they made recommendations in the areas of recruitment, assignment, selection, development, utilization, performance management, morale, sustainability, and end of career transition of SES leaders.<sup>4</sup> The major themes of the recommendations include:

- Restore SES to its original mission of providing an executive corps for DoD
- Implement an SES general executive career track to parallel the functional career track that now dominates the SES and requires SES in general executive billets to rotate every three-five years.
- Proactively manage the careers of those SES executives with general management potential with internal development moves and external development opportunities.
- Adopt an organizational model for jointly managing the careers of SES executives and GF/Os, including early identification of GS-12-15 with general management potential and interest (enterprise-wide succession planning.)

**The Congress.** The Congress continues to urge change in the form of multiple requirements to report on increased jointness in the SES corps. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2005 requires the Secretary of Defense to submit not later than January 15, 2007, a report to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives, which provides an assessment of, and initiatives to improve, the performance in joint matters of the following: Non-Commissioned Officers, Reserve Officers, and Senior civilian officers and employees on the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Defense Agencies, and the Military Departments.

**Senior Executive Focus Group Conference.** On May 9, 2006, the Deputy Secretary of Defense hosted a Senior Executive Focus Group Conference. Approximately 170 SES members attended and engaged in healthy dialog. SES members expressed a desire to be fully engaged in creating a management and development framework. They urged a deliberate approach for reshaping for the future, including the development of a pipeline or bench of well-prepared aspiring leaders, based on requirements.<sup>5</sup>

**DoD's Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management and Joint Professional Military Education** The 2006 Plan creates a system focused on the full gamut of the career lifecycle, with particular emphasis on the development of joint qualified officers.<sup>6</sup> It

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<sup>4</sup> Defense Business Board. "Shaping and Utilizing the SES Corps Task Group," Report to the Secretary of Defense FY06-01

<sup>5</sup> The summary of the focus group comments can be found at: [www.cpms.osd.mil/sespm/docs/dod\\_ses\\_ldrshp.pdf](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/sespm/docs/dod_ses_ldrshp.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> DoD Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management and Joint Professional Military Education, April 3, 2006

ensures the development of a 21<sup>st</sup> century military leaders. Since every member of the executive leadership team contributes to the ability of the U.S. Forces to accomplish DoD's missions, the enhanced requirements of our GF/Os and other Officers will naturally cascade to our executive civilian force and workforce pipeline. The Plan identifies:

- Several strategic-level initiatives that provide a framework for identifying the new unified, integrated joint environment human capital requirements.
- New definition of "joint" (Joint will include matters related to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces, space, and cyber space; and in multi-service, multi-agency, and multi-national areas)
- New competencies for military leaders.

**The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Vision for Joint Officer Development.**

The 2005 CJCS Vision document establishes three broad descriptors overarching the more discrete, uniquely joint-leader competencies. These will have implications for the career lifecycle management and development of DoD SES as well. They are:

- Strategically Minded, Critical Thinker, and Skilled Warfighter.<sup>7</sup>
- Strategically minded – These are competencies that allow an officer to lead the Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO) envisioned force within a multi-Service, multi-agency, multi-national environment and to be able to participate in and contribute to informed decision-making on the application of all instruments of national power-not just the military instrument.
- Critical Thinker – These are competencies associated with acuity of mind at the highest level-gained as a result of a continuum of learning across a lifetime.
- Skilled Joint Warfighter – These are competencies and skills steeped in functional component core competency and infused with operational and strategic understanding of mission tasking across the range of military operations in the physical, virtual and human domains.<sup>8</sup>

These reports and studies seek to define the capabilities, characteristics, and competencies for the Department's current and future responsibilities and missions. They urge the Department to manage its executive workforce more deliberately to produce leaders with excellent executive management skills that are required for the effectiveness

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<sup>7</sup> Chairman, Joint Chief of Staff (CJCS) Vision for Joint Officer Development, November 2005, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

and efficiency of the DoD enterprise. The information in these reports will act as a change agent for the integration of new competencies and experiences in the Senior Executive Service, and adoption of strategic, systemic approaches to ensure the best qualified cadre of senior executives.

## Section 2. The Current State of the Senior Executive Service

Experience shows us that some of our DoD executives serve in the SES because of their technical expertise rather than as agency leaders and/or program executives. In other instances, SES members – while providing the needed institutional and strategic continuity to balance the frequent rotations of military G/FOs and political leaders – have stayed in the same positions for far too long to benefit the institution. And, finally, there is little movement between Federal agencies. The preponderance of selections into the DoD SES is internal to the Department's civilian workforce, or they are retired military officers hired through the open, competitive process. Thus, the existing SES management framework, after nearly three decades, has fallen short of the original goal of providing a flexible, diverse executive corps with broad experiences across Government.

### 2.1 Demographics Signal a Need for Change

In addition to the DoD reports and studies, the demographics of our DoD workforce urge change in our approach to the development and sustainment of a highly talented civilian executive service. Above all, they suggest that a deliberate succession planning effort is needed.

The Department currently has 1,248 SES positions, while there are 6,811 SES members in the U.S. Government overall.<sup>9</sup> The average age among DoD senior executives is 54.4 years with 22.5 years of service. The average years to retirement eligibility are 3.6 years.<sup>10</sup>

These figures illustrate the possibility that many SES members will retire in the next few years and, thus create a potential leadership gap, putting DoD's institutional knowledge and its future ability to acquire skilled and diverse personnel at risk. The Partnership for Public Service, a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization dedicated to revitalization of public service<sup>11</sup>, recently noted that the impact of the retirement bulge on government effectiveness will be further compounded by the concentration of turnover in high-level and hard-to-staff positions with specialized skills. It projects that 44 percent of the entire Federal government workforce will become eligible to retire by 2010 and 42 percent of Federal SES leaders will be eligible to retire by 2010.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Defense Business Board. "Shaping and Utilizing the SES Corps Task Group," Report to the Secretary of Defense FY06-01, p. 2

<sup>10</sup> Data reported from DCPDS as of August 2006

<sup>11</sup> The Partnership for Public Service conducts campaigns of educational efforts, policy research, public-private partnerships and legislative advocacy in order to revitalize the public service.

<sup>12</sup> Partnership for Public Service. Federal Brain Drain. Issues Brief PPS-05-08

In the Department, we predict that by 2010, approximately 59 percent of the SES workforce will be eligible to retire. As of August 2006, approximately 28 percent of SES leaders were eligible to retire voluntarily.<sup>13</sup> Another 18 percent of Defense Intelligence SES leaders were eligible to retire voluntarily. This would be a significant loss of talent should they all retire today, or even within a few years. In fact, over the past three years, the average years of service a SES leader had when he or she retired was 32, at age 59. These data suggest that our SES leaders are retiring about 3-4 years following eligibility.

The Department is not unlike the private sector in its need to acquire and sustain talent. In industry, it is critical that senior executives are held accountable for mentoring promising executive talent as well as current junior and senior executives. Further, the top leadership of the organization takes a personal interest and corporate role in identifying and developing the top cadre of executive leaders. Not surprisingly, when your bottom line rests – in great measure – on the performance of a talented executive team, one cannot afford to ignore or take casually the grooming of executive talent, including potential successors. Making the deliberate management and development of executive talent a core requirement of the Department human capital planning effort is what is suggested by others and by our own review.

## **2.2 The Diversity Gap**

We value diversity in our workforce because it represents the values of our society, it is a key to our transformation efforts and it enables the Department to successfully compete in an asymmetric environment. To achieve this diversity, our future executive leadership must be more representative of the workforce at large and those that the Department represents. To this end, we must be proactive in improving diversity in the DoD SES community. Today, we lag behind in representation in almost all racial/ethnic minority groups and in women compared to the nation. We also fall behind the rest of the federal workforce in many of the groups, and, if we continue our current selection practices, it is likely that the gap in representation will remain.

Approximately, 20 percent of our SES members are women and 8 percent are minorities. The Department lags behind the Federal workforce in the employment of female SES leaders. Women comprise 26.7 percent of the Federal SES positions<sup>14</sup> and nearly 39 percent in comparable private sector positions.<sup>15</sup> An analysis of August 2006 DoD Race and National Origin (RNO) data shows that the diversity representation of the DoD SES lags behind the Federal workforce and the civilian labor force representation. Again, the representation of minority SES members in DoD is at 8 percent, compared to 12 percent

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<sup>13</sup> DoD data based on DCPDS – August 2006 data.

<sup>14</sup> Federal Data based upon an Office of Personnel Management Report, "Federal Civilian Workforce Statistics, The Fact Book," 2005 Edition, page 72.

<sup>15</sup> Non-Federal data based upon U.S. Census Bureau. "Occupation by Sex and Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (In 2005 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over," Data Set: 2005 American Community Survey.

in the Federal Workforce.<sup>16</sup> The under-representation of Black SES members in the DoD workforce is the greatest, at 3 percent, as compared to the Federal SES representation at 7.09 percent, and the nation at 6.80 percent. This is followed by SES members who are Hispanic (DoD – 2 percent; Federal - 3.43 percent; Nation – 6.2 percent); Asian Pacific-Islanders (DoD – 2 percent; Federal 3.17 percent; Nation – 3.6 percent); and Native American/Alaskan Native (DoD – 1 percent; Federal - .78 percent; Nation – not reported).<sup>17</sup>

Employees in Grades GS-13-15 (and equivalent) positions are the internal civilian source for DoD SES positions. They are referred to as the "SES talent pipeline." Therefore, management and development of this group are critical to the composition and capability of the senior executive cadre. Efforts to ensure diversity within this group will be a critical success factor in increasing the diversity of the SES. During the five-year period from 2001-2005, the total employment in the GS-13-15 and equivalent strategically important mission-critical and mission-support occupations increased by 9,624 positions, from 55,354 to 64,978.<sup>18</sup> This represents a growth of 17.39 percent. The employment changes by RNO category demonstrate an encouraging trend for the pipeline. Overall, Black employment increased by 48.8 percent in the mission critical and mission support GS-13-15 positions (from 7.71 percent to 9.98 percent). For these same positions, Hispanic employment increased by 38.44 percent (from 3.42 percent to 3.99 percent); Asian Pacific Islander employment increased by 25.17 percent (from 4.94 percent to 5.21 percent); and American Indian/Native Alaskan employment increase by 13.84 percent, but a slight decrease in workforce representation (from .70 percent to .65 percent). While the number of White employees in the core mission and critical support occupations in the GS-15 (and equivalent) increased during the 5-year period by 16.79 percent, the representation rate decreased from 97.80 percent to 96.43 percent. While these data are encouraging, the total minority representation for the core mission occupations in DoD was lower than in the similar positions throughout the Federal and U.S. labor forces, with the exception of the representation of Asian/Pacific Islanders, where DoD exceeded both the representation in the Federal workforce and the U.S. labor force in mission critical and mission support positions.<sup>19</sup>

For the Department to remain competitive, it must have members from the entire spectrum of qualified talent available in the United States. Accordingly, Department must make every effort to encourage service by individuals from all backgrounds, in the broadest sense, by recruiting from all sectors of society and by providing for the equal treatment and equal consideration of all personnel.

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<sup>16</sup> Federal Data based U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Office of Federal Operations, "Annual Report on the Federal Workforce Fiscal Year 2003."

<sup>17</sup> DoD data based upon DCPDS, August 2006; Federal data based upon an Office of Personnel Management Report, "Federal Civilian Workforce Statistics, The Fact Book," 2005 Edition.

<sup>18</sup> Department of Defense Report, "Department of Defense Workforce Analysis, Part 1," May 4, 2006, page 11.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, page 12-13.

### 2.3. Current Executive Management and Development

Members remain steadfast in the commitment to public service even as they lead the Department through times of great transformation and reformation. Components, seeking to maximize leadership resources, have instituted various levels of reforms to more deliberately identify, develop, and manage the SES corps. Some even have focused on ways to increase the focus on “joint” knowledge and preparation of members for key joint positions. They have achieved success and their practices will be considered in the development of the new executive management framework. An assessment of today’s SES management and development system largely could be characterized as follows:

- Recruitment into the SES is a local decision, and new members are selected because they are a perfect fit for a specific opening.
- There are virtually no corporate level development programs or continuous learning opportunities for senior executives.
- There is no real ownership of the talent pool; there is no systematic understanding of the talent in the DoD SES pool, and there are no formal corporate succession planning programs.
- SES leaders typically are left to “fend for themselves” in terms of planning their career assignments and developmental opportunities.
- Continuity of knowledge is framed and valued in the context of the current job rather than in the context of the broader Component or Department.

Compare that with General/Flag Officer management, which more closely resembles executive management found in successful private sector companies. G/FO and private sector executive management are deliberate processes which employ a variety of strategies to purposely create a deep bench of executives. These systems typically include provisions for:

- Diversity of work experiences through a hierarchy of positions.
- Periodic, systematic talent reviews/assessments.
- Deliberate investment in development and management to create a robust pipeline that feeds the executive ranks.
- “Ownership” of talent at the highest level of the organization.

- Process to leverage skills and talents against corporate or military requirements.

To effectively address this disparity is a challenge. But best business practices imply the Department must move its SES management and development from a largely ad hoc to a deliberate process.



### **Section 3. The New Demands and Expectations for 21<sup>st</sup> Century DoD Leaders**

This DoD vision for developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century executives is consistent with the original concept behind the creation of the SES. The SES was created to be a cadre of executives with shared values, a broad perspective of government, and possession of solid executive skills. The goal was portability of the executive resources across Government which could provide greater agency flexibility for selecting and developing Federal executives within a framework that preserved the larger corporate interests of Government.

To accommodate a dynamic environment, the Department needs 21<sup>st</sup> Century leaders who are drawn from the best of America's diverse population and exhibit the highest levels of leadership, integrity, character, motivation, and desire to serve. They possess:

1. Adaptive leadership skills tested and proven in circumstances of discontinuous, disorienting, disruptive change; where the rules of the game are completely invalidated and new rules must be invented, applied, and modified continuously. Their leadership shall promote a culture that encourages and rewards creativity, innovation, intelligent risk-taking and critical thinking throughout the Department.
2. A variety of experiences leading to an understanding of the interplay and interaction of operations and policy, contribute to a broader cultural awareness, and enable effective communication in the global operating environment of the Department
3. Enterprise-spanning perspective; ability to operate across functional and organizational lines; ability to align local organizations with the enterprise perspective; and expertise to exert influence and make decisions crossing disciplines and diverse environments.
4. Skills in matters involving the integrated use of military forces relative to national military strategy; strategic and contingency planning; and command and control of operations under unified command, which may be conducted with multi-service and/or multinational, interagency and non-governmental partners under unified action across domains such as land, sea, air, space and cyberspace.

## Section 4. Guiding Principles

Today's environment and its challenges mandate a new approach to the management of SES members that is consistent with the Department's mission. The foundation for this framework is the 9 guiding principles listed below:

- Respect, engage, and value individual needs of our SES leaders
- Value talent, workforce diversity, performance, leadership, and commitment to public service
- Fully integrate SES leaders as a "Total Force" partner in the execution of DoD's mission
- Manage and develop leaders across the Department with a flexible, executable, transparent, and credible framework
- Recognize Component mission requirements in managing executive talent across DoD
- Transition the management of SES leadership careers from an ad hoc to a deliberate corporate process
- Encourage, recognize, and reward all SES leaders who are the role models and good corporate citizens
- Value a portfolio of experiences that builds perspective and expertise to exert influence and make decisions crossing disciplines and diverse environments
- Ensure deliberate and early development of a leadership pipeline that meets OPM and DoD executive core competencies

## Section 5. The Way Forward

The SES leaders are a vital part of the DoD integrated executive leadership team, which also includes General/Flag Officers and politically appointed executives. At a time when the Department is actively engaged in the Global War on Terror and the mission of the DoD and the Components is changing, it is critical that the Senior Executive Service program both represents the nation's most capable public civil servants and enables leaders to continue to grow in their roles, responsibilities, and capabilities. The Department, however, needs to be doing more to develop this talent and ensure an institutional process for the continual infusion or refreshment of required competencies on a regular basis. Adopting a deliberate approach to SES management will make available to all Components the best civilian career leadership cadre possible. To achieve this vision, deliberate steps must be taken immediately. They include:

1. An executive management framework that is established for the career lifecycle management of all DoD SES leaders and for select SES positions considered to have the most significant influence on national security matters and the DoD's strategic priorities.
2. An enterprise-wide set of strategic precepts and policies for recruiting, selecting, and developing SES leaders in general and people to fill the subset of SES positions that have unique demands of scope and breadth, in particular. The SES leaders holding these positions will be selected and developed to meet specific competencies, including: an enterprise-wide perspective; knowledge of joint matters; broad functional and/or operational expertise; and executive management skills.
3. A pipeline of SES who will be continuously developed and sustained to meet the executive leadership needs of all Components. The result shall be a mission-ready cadre of executives capable of agilely assuming new assignments.

These deliberate steps will provide for the following:

1. Recruitment, Selection and Hiring supports institutional criteria. Hiring decisions should balance the specific job requirements with enterprise-wide leadership and managements requirements focused on essential executive competencies for the future and a diverse SES workforce. These processes also should include deliberate on-boarding programs (e.g., Senior Leader Orientation Courses). The overall program should define and deliver career opportunities that will increase the appeal of DoD SES roles to high talent recruits.
2. Development, Utilization and Performance are systematic. These processes should enable the Department to:

- a. Understand the competencies its executives bring to bear and the requirements for each position. This understanding should enable the Department to design deliberate strategies for closing any gaps that emerge.
  - b. Create succession plans considering inputs from members and providing members individualized feedback. These efforts should consider available developmental opportunities (education, training or experience), member potential, and the Department's needs.
3. Morale and Sustaining of the SES are paramount. Action should be taken immediately to reinforce and institutionalize the value each SES member brings to the leadership team and consider long-term programs/initiatives to promote and sustain high morale and esprit de corps within the SES.
4. Succession management is more systematic. The Department's analysis should understand the likely retirement intentions of their members and have a bench of candidates ready to fill projected vacancies.
5. Components will retain responsibility for individual SES and their development, consistent with DoD frameworks, precepts and standards.
6. The Department must institute governance structures to ensure management transitions from ad hoc to deliberate. This change is vital to our ability to maintain a ready and prepared senior leadership and pipeline talent.
7. In implementing this vision, the Department will continue to adhere to merit systems principles.

## Communication

The SES community must be actively engaged in the development of ideas and recommendations for change. A team composed of highly regarded SES executives from each Component will help develop recommendations for consideration by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and reach out to the broader SES community to solicit their input and feedback. This team will advise senior leadership on a regular basis on the initiative and progress in achieving the Department's goals for the initiative.

**Forwarded By:**

  
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Hon. Gordon England, Deputy Secretary of Defense

12-27-06

Date

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