OSD IT Study - Summary

In April 2022, the Director of Administration and Management (DA&M) initiated a study to review the current Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD) Information Technology (IT) posture as it related to quality of service, performance, and gaps in customer requirements. The study was accomplished by a small team of seasoned civil servants with a proven record of effecting change within the DoD IT space. It included a detailed review of policy, technical documentation, customer surveys, individual listening sessions with users from both the Principal Staff Assistants, OSD IT providers, and interviews with former senior DoD officials.

The OSD IT Study found that with cost-driven IT consolidation efforts over the past decade, OSD users began to experience a decline in IT service, especially when compared to the technical advancements available to them at home. The findings demonstrated a lack of clear IT authorities and limited standardization, coupled with years of cost cutting IT consolidations, have led to a scenario where IT services within the Pentagon are not up to the modern IT standards for OSD to execute its mission. The themes of the OSD IT Study are as follows:

1. *Lack of clear authorities and governance created a gap in requirements management.* There is currently no IT governance construct to prioritize OSD efforts, to pool common functions for more efficient IT delivery, or to holistically drive modernization.

2. *Repeated IT consolidations for efficiency purposes resulted in significant resource shortfalls.* The Department twice executed merger and acquisition-like efforts to consolidate IT support and services and in both instances, took immediate savings that drove immediate degradation of capabilities, performance, and the user experience. The consolidation efforts did not result in the desired efficiencies, and consequently, OSD IT has been operating resource-constrained from the outset.

3. *Lack of OSD IT service standardization impacted performance and affected cybersecurity posture.* As a result of the first two themes, IT services provided were not standardized. This has created a complex IT environment that is difficult to continuously modernize, ultimately negatively affecting the user experience.

The OSD IT Study recommends the establishment of an enduring office, the **OSD Information Management and Technology Directorate**, to address the themes and associated findings in the study, ensure the continued modernization of the OSD IT enterprise, and serve as

the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for OSD. The office's responsibilities will include developing a strategic vision, planning for and managing execution of digital modernization on behalf of OSD users, functioning as a champion for requirements and associated funding, and overseeing cybersecurity risk. The new office has a simple, yet ambitious vision – to deliver a modern digital experience for the OSD IT Enterprise.

Additionally, the OSD IT Study recommends that the DA&M will develop an implementation plan focused on five key activities:

1. Define organizational roles and responsibilities as they specifically relate to the new office, OSD IT service providers, and customer engagement.
2. Establishment of a governance forum for OSD IT.
3. Development of an IT baseline and a process for updating the baseline, codified through Memorandums of agreement.
4. Determination and pursuit of resource needs and influence as it relates to OSD IT.
5. Strategic planning with both near and long-term digital priorities identified.

IT is the backbone of every action taken within the Pentagon, extending far beyond computer hardware and network connectivity to successfully execute daily mission requirements. Treating IT as a back-office function that is inconsistently resourced and managed will not work for the largest government agency tasked with ensuring the Nation's security. IT is a critical component, if not *the* critical component, to strengthen the joint force and build enduring advantages. With a strategic vision and proper resourcing, management, and governance, the OSD IT Study has created a blueprint for DoD leadership to ensure that the OSD IT Enterprise is a powerful force in effectively supporting and driving the mission.