  Last week we defined program management.  The concepts associated with program management reach all corners and spectrum of DoD acquisition.  New DoD programs and systems live and die by their program managers; this is an immense responsibility.  We will shift gears a little this week and look at the way DoD acquisition takes place, including who is responsible for DoD acquisition and how certain groups decide which acquisitions will move forward and in what manner.  The reality of acquisitions in the DoD is that many different working parts must come together for a program to receive approval and funding to move forward.  Last week we talked about taking an idea and turning it into a program recognized by the DoD.  This week we will take that idea to the next step by laying the groundwork to being the acquisition process. Again, look at the syllabus for your learning objectives for this class.

**NOTE: can you** *Explain both the military and civilian Acquisition Authority Chain? Why is this important?*

            Figure 5-1 on page 25 of your book details the DoD Acquisition Authority Chain.  The Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD(AT&L)) is the top of the DoD Acquisition Authority Chain and is ultimately responsible for DoD acquisition.  As detailed in your reading, each component of the DoD has an acquisition executive who is ultimately responsible for all acquisition matters.  The specific title this person holds varies, depending on the size and nature of the specific organization.  Address a few questions for this learning objective:

            What stands out to you about the manner in which the DoD structures the acquisition authority chain?  Do you see any parallels between DoD acquisition structure and that which is seen in the civilian world?

**NOTE**:  *Can you describe what role the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics fills?*

            Your textbook details exactly what the role of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics is, so I won’t rehash that here.  Think about why one person presides over so many different functions within DoD acquisition?  Many different Government officials report to the USD(AT&L); why is that?  From a policy standpoint, the holder of this position has immense power and influence.  There was a recent initiative created from by this office called Better Buying Power.  Take a look at the principles associated with Better Buying Power and provide some discussion in your forum response as to why the USD(AT&L) would be interested in a program like this.

***NOTE:*** *Can you define the Defense Acquisition Board and the Integrated Product Team?*

            Your textbook defines several boards, which are responsible for specific programs or issues.  The main purpose of the Defense Acquisition Board (DAB) is to provide counsel and guidance to the USD(AT&L) on ACAT ID (do you recall what this means from last week?) programs.  Conduct some internet research on the various issues the DAB addresses.  What did you find?  One of the more controversial DAB actions was the V-22 Osprey program.  There were numerous issues with this program when it was in its infancy, including several crashes.  Eventually, the DAB decided to approve full-rate production of the V-22, but there was significant controversy surrounding the DABs review of the program.

An Integrated Product Team is a more formal team that is used by the DoD to accomplish multi-disciplinary integrated development.  The personnel that makes up the IPT varies by the IPTs mission.  If the mission is related to a certain type of program or acquisition, personnel associated with that program will be assigned to the IPT.  Additionally, an IPT will include those persons who bring innovative solutions to a specific issue.

There is a hierarchy of IPTs within the DoD; the following three IPTs make up this hierarchy.

1. Overarching IPTs – focus on problem-solving, strategic guidance, and assess various DoD programs.
2. Program Level IPT – includes representatives from both the Government and from industry and focus on the execution of programs.
3. Working IPTs – the most common type of IPT, determine and monitor program status, identify and resolve issues associated with a program, and seek out new opportunities where the program could see growth.

Let’s assume we have an IPT that was formed to develop requirements documents for an upcoming acquisition.  Most often, the lead of the IPT would be a systems engineer who has knowledge and background about the program.  Other members of the IPT would include a requirements engineer, design and development personnel, risk management personnel, and test and evaluation personnel.  This team gets together and discusses all major aspects of the acquisition before any steps are taken to ensure that the program starts in the right direction.  Make sure you include some discussion about what specific steps an IPT takes and give examples.

Can you find any specific information about DoD organized IPTs on the internet?  What type of IPT was this and what was the focus?  Were you able to determine who was a member of the IPT and how the membership was selected?  Was this IPT effective?