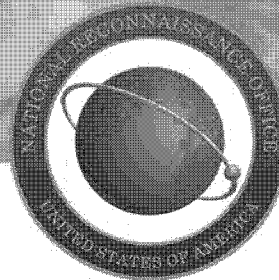
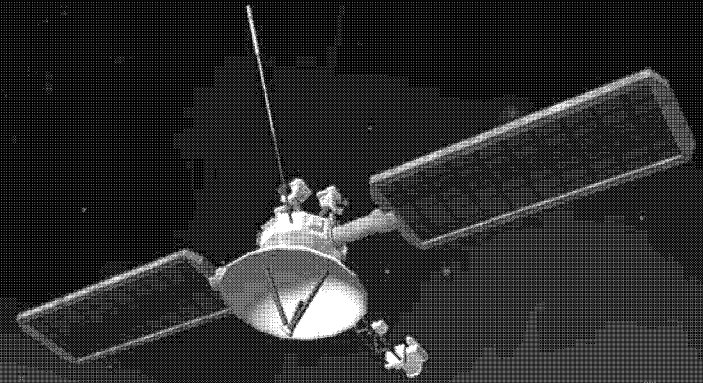


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NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

# OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

## (U) MEMORANDUM REPORT

### Inspection of the National Reconnaissance Office

#### Cadre Implementation Plan

#### for Department of Defense Civilians

**PROJECT NUMBER 2015-002 N**

**31 July 2015**

CL BY:   
DECL ON: 20400731  
DRV FM: INCG 1.0, 13 Feb 2012

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**NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE**

*Office of Inspector General  
14675 Lee Road  
Chantilly, VA 20151-1715*



31 July 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: (U) Final Memorandum Report: Inspection of the National Reconnaissance Office Cadre Implementation Plan for Department of Defense Civilians (Project Number 2015-002 N)

(U//~~FOUO~~) The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) Office of Inspector General (OIG) completed its *Inspection of the NRO Cadre Implementation Plan for Department of Defense Civilians*. I am providing this memorandum report for your attention as the NRO strives to establish a permanent NRO Department of Defense (DoD) Cadre on 4 October 2015. The NRO OIG recognized the efforts of the employees supporting the transition, and the resulting success based on those efforts. However, the OIG also identified challenges and deficiencies that may influence the NRO's ability to meet the 4 October 2015<sup>1</sup> milestone and/or manage its future workforce.

**(U) INTRODUCTION**

(U//~~FOUO~~) Unlike other government organizations, the NRO lacks its own permanent cadre of personnel and primarily relies upon other Intelligence Community (IC) agencies and DoD entities to provide personnel to support its mission. Congress has recognized that this borrowed workforce model has steadily deteriorated over time and noted that a more stable workforce model may provide the Director, NRO (DNRO) with the management capacity required to meet the organization's critical mission. Pursuant to congressional direction (Intelligence Authorization Act (IAA) of Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 and 2015) for the NRO to augment its current staffing model with career service employees, the NRO commenced efforts to establish a permanent NRO DoD Cadre.<sup>2</sup>

(U//~~FOUO~~) In the IAAs, Congress requested the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and DNRO, in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)), to provide a detailed

<sup>1</sup> (U) While some documentation reflects a 1 October 2015 milestone, 4 October 2015 is the beginning of the pay period and thus marks the official start of the NRO DoD Cadre.

<sup>2</sup> (U) The NRO DoD Cadre is also referred to as the NRO DoD Civilian Workforce.

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implementation plan for modernizing the NRO workforce. Congress requested this plan generally include a strategy for 1) transitioning the current Air Force and Navy civilians and 2) establishing a personnel system that incorporates recruitment, training and development, recognition, and promotions, as well as metrics to measure success. In addition, Congress requested the NRO work with other IC agencies and DoD entities to perform a workforce study to evaluate the NRO's future size and skills composition. The workforce study was to be provided to the congressional intelligence and defense committees within 90 days of enactment of the FY 2014 IAA. Further, Congress encouraged the IC Inspector General (ICIG) to provide annual implementation plan progress reports to Congress. After coordination with the ICIG, it was determined that the NRO OIG would assess NRO's progress in establishing a permanent NRO DoD Cadre.<sup>3</sup> As the NRO elected to focus initially on the Congressional request for a strategy for transitioning the current Air Force and Navy civilians, the NRO OIG evaluated the *Implementation Plan for Creating a DoD Civilian Workforce for the NRO* and the transition activities administered by the Workforce Stability Initiative (WSI) NRO DoD Cadre Working Group (WG).<sup>4</sup>

### (U) BACKGROUND

(U//~~FOUO~~) The DNRO's 2015 NRO Strategy endorsed the above-noted Congressional direction and established an NRO workforce goal that included the development and cultivation of unique NRO skill sets, application of innovative recruiting and retention approaches, advancement of workforce stability and opportunities, and recognition of employee creativity and innovation in advancing the NRO's mission. To address the Congressional direction and consistent with the DNRO's strategy, the NRO DoD Office of Human Resources (OHR) began efforts to establish a permanent NRO DoD Cadre through its WSI. The WSI includes the conversion of [redacted] Air Force and Navy civilians to a permanent NRO DoD Cadre<sup>5</sup> as well as the establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Directorate of Science and Technology, Office of Space Reconnaissance (CIA/DS&T/OSR).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> (U) Throughout the inspection, NRO OIG apprised the ICIG of its inspection methodology, findings, and conclusions.

<sup>4</sup> (U) See Appendix A for a description of the inspection scope and methodology.

<sup>5</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) The FY 14 IAA directed the NRO to transition [redacted] positions; however, the NRO and Congress agreed to instead convert the majority of the NRO's Air Force and Navy civilians.

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<sup>6</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) The NRO and CIA OIGs plan to jointly evaluate the implementation of the CIA/DS&T/OSR workforce in FY 2016.

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(U//~~FOUO~~) The WSI's efforts largely commenced on 29 July 2014, when NRO DoD OHR issued the *Implementation Plan for Creating a DoD Civilian Workforce for the NRO*.<sup>7</sup> The purpose of the plan was to guide the transition of current Air Force and Navy civilian positions into an NRO DoD permanent workforce. Transition activities include the creation of leadership positions and an executive board, establishment of a full range of human resources and payroll functions, development of new policies and procedures, and frequent workforce communications. The NRO established the WSI NRO DoD Cadre WG – under the leadership of the Executive Director, NRO DoD Cadre (EDD)<sup>8</sup> and Deputy Director, OSHC/Director, NRO DoD OHR – to manage and accomplish transition activities. The WG evolved over time to include a number of subject matter experts across the NRO in the areas of personnel servicing, finance and budget, policy, information technology, security, [redacted] [redacted] equal employment opportunity, grievance, career development, strategic communications, and project management. In 2014, the WG conducted preliminary activities in anticipation of the Secretary of Defense's (SecDef) approval of the formation of the NRO DoD Cadre. The SecDef approved the new workforce on 6 March 2015, and tasked the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (OUSD(I)) to oversee and assist in the transition.<sup>9</sup> With the approval to proceed, the WG efforts increased and the NRO established the milestone date of 4 October 2015 for the transition.

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### **(U) INSPECTION RESULTS**

(U//~~FOUO~~) The OIG acknowledges the WG's efforts in developing and executing an implementation plan to establish the NRO DoD Cadre. Inspectors recognized that the WG project management (PM) team shepherded numerous interactive initiatives/activities in an orderly manner. The OIG also observed effective use of communication mechanisms to educate and guide the NRO workforce regarding the transition.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Notwithstanding these efforts, the OIG identified challenges with the implementation of the plan that may influence the NRO's ability to meet the 4 October 2015 milestone. These challenges

<sup>7</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) The OIG referenced this 29 July 2014 plan (which the WG considered to be draft) throughout the inspection. A more detailed draft implementation plan titled *WSI Implementation Plan and CONOPS* is still in progress and was made available to the OIG on 29 June 2015.

<sup>8</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) The Director of the NRO formally appointed the Director of the NRO Ground Enterprise Directorate as the EDD on 30 June 2015.

<sup>9</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) During the inspection, the OUSD(I) conducted several control gate reviews to monitor the NRO's progress.

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included delays in resolving the funding mechanism, which impacted finalization of agreements with personnel service providers, and discrepancies, confusion, and indecisiveness regarding both the required policies as well as the method by which to review, organize, and approve such policies. The OIG also noted that the NRO has deferred planning for congressionally-directed key personnel system initiatives such as professional development and promotion processes. In addition, the OIG found that a congressionally-directed workforce study was not completed, within the specified timeframe, to determine the NRO's future workforce size and skills mix composition. The OIG encourages the NRO to promptly address and resolve the pressing implementation plan challenges. Once the Air Force and Navy civilians have been successfully transitioned to the NRO DoD Cadre, the OIG encourages the establishment of key personnel system initiatives and the completion of an NRO workforce study to ensure the NRO meets the 2014 Congressional guidance, as well as the DNRO's 2015 workforce goals.

(U//~~FOUO~~) The OUSD(I) will continue to monitor the NRO's progress throughout the transition, and the USD(I) must certify that all necessary actions have been taken to execute an appropriate transition at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the transition.<sup>10</sup> The OIG recognizes that the NRO is also dependent on external agencies' processes, procedures, and schedules that may put at risk the NRO meeting the 4 October milestone.

(U//~~FOUO~~) The remainder of this Memorandum Report sets forth the OIG's findings in response to the Congressional request. Although the OIG offers no recommendations, it is nonetheless critical that the NRO address the identified challenges and deficiencies in order for the NRO DoD Cadre transition to succeed. Successful and timely implementation of this workforce transition is essential to maintain and strengthen the NRO DoD Cadre personnel's confidence in the NRO's ability to effectively support and care for them. Delays may affect the NRO's ability to attract, hire, develop, advance, and retain these personnel. Before expanding on our concerns, the OIG will highlight the WG's accomplishments in the areas of project management and communications.

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<sup>10</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) In addition, on 22 June 2015, [REDACTED] was requested to perform an expedited risk assessment of the NRO's Implementation Plan, including risks to the NRO, DoD, Intelligence Community, and relevant personnel service providers.

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**(U) Accomplishments**

**(U) NRO DoD Cadre Project Management Team**

(U//~~FOUO~~) The OIG observed the execution of project management principles in transition activities. In order to manage the complex transition of the Air Force and Navy civilian workforce to the NRO DoD Cadre, a PM team developed a framework to track WG requirements, deliverables, and deadlines as well as risks and accomplishments. The OIG observed the PM team guiding the WG in modifying and enhancing the *Implementation Plan for Creating a DOD Civilian Workforce for the NRO* via weekly WG status update meetings. The PM team also continues to develop a detailed draft *WSI Implementation Plan and CONOPS* to identify and marshal transition activities. The PM team worked closely with each functional lead (e.g., personnel services, policy, finance, security, etc.) to generate status updates using established PM tools, techniques, and formats. Members of the WG complimented the PM structure, stating that it has enabled them to stay abreast of activities, requirements, and deliverables as they attempt to stay on schedule.

**(U) NRO DoD Cadre Strategic Communication Plan**

(U//~~FOUO~~) The OIG determined the WG created an effective *Strategic Communications Plan: Creating Momentum for Success* to educate and guide the NRO workforce through the transition. The plan offered timely information across multiple communication channels in an effort to "end uncertainty, create ownership, and facilitate transformation." Communication approaches included monthly Town Hall meetings, Meet and Greet events in the NRO cafeteria, newsletter articles, bi-weekly emails to the workforce, and information posted on the NRO DoD Cadre Webpage including frequently asked questions. In an effort to gauge future communication needs, the WG launched a survey to collect feedback following the first DoD Cadre Town Hall meeting, which reportedly found that 90 percent of respondents believed the Town Hall "met their information needs." Effective communication is vital to ensure a successful transition of the workforce.

**(U) Challenges and Deficiencies**

**(U) Delay in Resolving Critical Funding Mechanism**

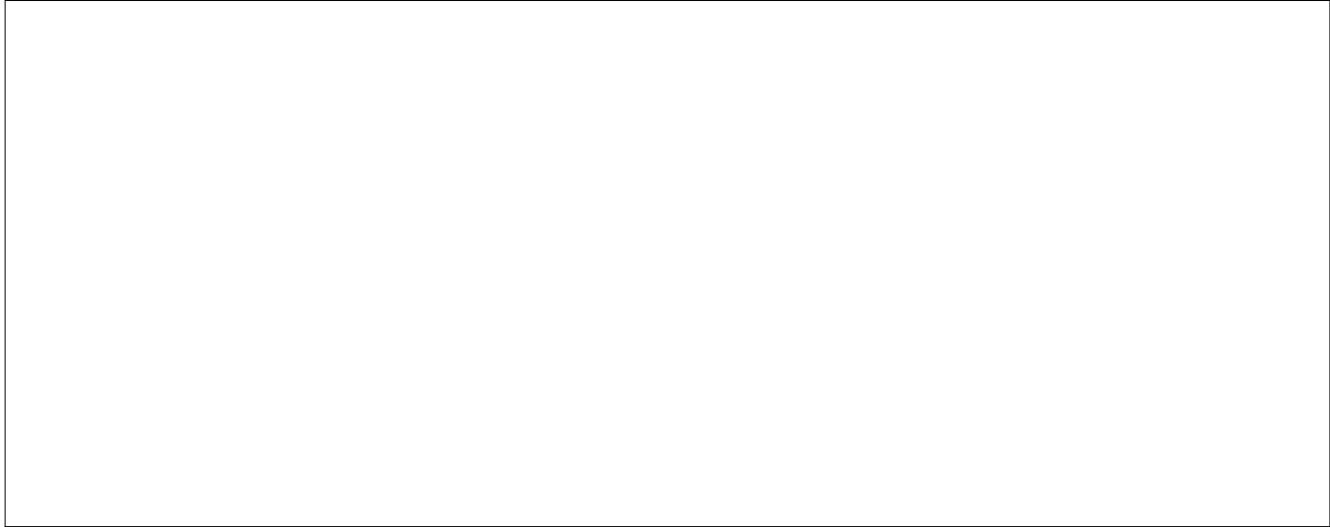
(U//~~FOUO~~) The NRO elected to obtain a significant portion of its human resource (HR) services (e.g., time and attendance, payroll processing) from external personnel service providers and tasked the Business Plans and Operations Directorate (BPO) with ensuring proper interface of HR and financial data between the NRO and personnel

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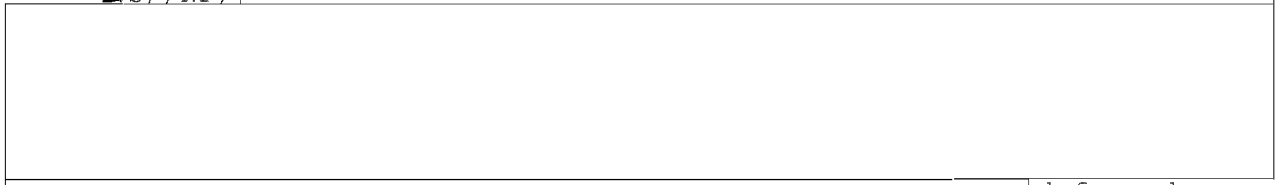
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service provider systems. In addition, the NRO designated BPO as the responsible entity for transferring money (funding mechanism) to the personnel service providers. The OIG monitored BPO's progress toward fulfilling its responsibilities and ultimately identified the delay in resolving the funding mechanism as a critical risk to the workforce transition date of 4 October 2015.




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deferred other WG initiatives and activities, such as process development and system integration and testing. Should the NRO DoD Cadre transition be delayed,<sup>11</sup> it may adversely affect employee morale, as those personnel transitioning to the new workforce have, or will, experience restrictions on hiring, position upgrades, and time-off awards. A delay would also require additional work to develop and implement a contingency plan to ensure NRO's Air Force and Navy civilians continue to be paid.

<sup>11</sup> ~~(U//FOUO)~~ If the NRO is unable to meet the 4 October 2015 deadline, the transition reportedly will be delayed until March 2016 to accommodate the  next software cycle update.

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**(U) NRO DoD Cadre Policy Challenges**

(U//~~FOUO~~) The workforce transition requires the modification and/or development of NRO policies to support the NRO DoD Cadre. As this will be the first time in NRO history that the organization will be responsible for providing personnel services to its own workforce, appropriate policy issuance is a vital component of the transition. The WG, as well as the NRO's Directorates and Offices (Ds and Os), are working to modify and/or draft new policies and coordinate reviews that will provide clear guidance to the workforce on such matters as HR<sup>12</sup> and Equal Employment Opportunity. However, the OIG noted discrepancies, confusion, and indecisiveness regarding both the required policies as well as the method by which to review, organize, and approve such policies. These issues may impact the issuance of the policies in a timely manner.

(U//~~FOUO~~) The WG and Ds and Os identified 50 NRO policies that required modification or development to support the NRO DoD Cadre. Based on the Ds and Os input, the number of policies the WG identified as *critical* (requiring issuance prior to the transition date of 4 October 2015) fluctuated between 7 and 36 over the course of the inspection. The EDD announced in the 1 July 2015 Town Hall that seven identified *critical* HR policies for the NRO DoD Cadre would be signed by 15 July 2015 and this was accomplished as planned. Thus, 43 policies currently deemed *non-critical* remain. Due to the relative importance of many of these policies (e.g., Time and Attendance, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response), the OIG suggests that NRO leadership prioritize the completion of the remaining policies.

(U//~~FOUO~~) With regard to the policy review, organization, and approval process, the EDD was recently granted the authority to approve the policies via an alternate review and approval process, rather than the NRO Tracking Information and Enterprise Response (TIER) process. In addition, the EDD and Director of the Office of Policy and Strategy (OP&S) recently made a decision to organize

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<sup>12</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) The OIG has brought to NRO DoD OHR's attention internal control weaknesses associated with the Automated Time Attendance and Production System (ATAAPS). Specifically, time and attendance (T&A) records not timely approved in the ATAAPS by the designated NRO certifiers lead to OHR staff performing a global certification to ensure all Air Force civilian employees are paid in a timely manner. However, unlike NRO certifiers, OHR members are not aware of the employees' absences and hours worked and thus are unable to ensure the propriety of T&A information. OHR agreed to strengthen its internal controls and document such in policy. The OIG will continue to monitor OHR's progress aimed at resolving this vulnerability.

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NRO DoD Cadre policies within a new and unique NRO Business Function (NBF) 70 series, rather than incorporate them into already existing NRO-wide policies. With the authority to use an alternate review and approval process and the establishment of the NBF 70 series, OP&S anticipates increased attention on policy issuance. However, the OIG has continuing reservations regarding the number of policies (approximately half of the 43 non-critical policies) which have not yet entered the review process.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Despite this recent progress, the OIG remains cautious regarding the NRO's ability to finalize and publish appropriate policies needed to provide necessary guidance and support to the NRO DoD Cadre. The OIG is particularly concerned about the potential consequences if policies are not properly deemed *critical* and formally established and publicized by 4 October 2015.

#### **(U) Deferred Personnel System Initiatives**

(U//~~FOUO~~) In the FY 2014 IAA, Congress directed the DNRO to develop a plan to establish a personnel system with the ability to recruit, train and develop, recognize, and promote its workforce. The DNRO stated in her 3 April 2014 address to the House Armed Services Committee, "We are taking steps to develop a core NRO workforce to further strengthen our workforce and to provide continuing opportunities for growth and development of our personnel." The DNRO's *2015 NRO Strategy* highlighted the importance of the NRO maintaining a highly motivated, dedicated, and diverse workforce to enable the NRO "in delivering the critical capabilities upon which our national security depends." It includes goals of developing and cultivating unique NRO skill sets, applying innovative recruiting and retention approaches, advancing workforce stability and opportunities and recognizing employee creativity and innovation in advancing the NRO's mission.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Despite the referenced direction and goals, the OIG found that neither the draft *Implementation Plan for Creating a DoD Civilian Workforce for the NRO* nor the draft *WSI Implementation Plan and CONOPS* address all of these personnel system initiatives. The plans focus on addressing the immediate needs of the workforce transition (e.g., T&A and payroll), rather than building a more comprehensive personnel system and measuring success. Some areas, that have been deferred until after IOC, are professional development

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for all career groups other than the acquisition workforce and promotion processes related to rank/grade structure.<sup>13</sup>

(U//~~FOUO~~) The OIG encourages the NRO to address the deferred personnel system initiatives in a timely manner.<sup>14</sup> These initiatives are needed not only for the current workforce, but also for new personnel. Without these personnel initiatives, the NRO may find it challenging to attract, hire, develop, advance, and retain its NRO DoD Cadre as well as to improve individual and organizational performance.

**(U) Unaccomplished NRO Enterprise Workforce Study**

(U//~~FOUO~~) In the FY 2014 IAA, Congress directed the Director of National Intelligence, in conjunction with the CIA, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the United States Air Force, and the USD(I) to complete a workforce study to determine the future NRO workforce composition, to include size and skill mix. This study was to be provided to the Congressional Intelligence and Defense Committees within 90 days of enactment of the Act. To date, the required study has not been conducted.

(U//~~FOUO~~) It is the optimal time for the NRO to conduct a comprehensive workforce study – a study that includes the entire civilian and military workforce. A workforce study provides an opportunity to identify the appropriate number of personnel, as well as skill sets and expertise required to successfully execute NRO functions. By determining the workforce size and the attributes, backgrounds, and experience required for all positions, the NRO should gain greater insight in identifying and placing the appropriate personnel in the correct position. For example, the workforce study should assist in the selection and placement of the FY 2015 IAA authorized additional NRO DoD Cadre positions to enhance stability across core functions such as acquisition and engineering, as well as to provide

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<sup>13</sup> (U) In the current rank-in-position structure, rank is based on the work performed and promotions are achieved through open competition as vacancies occur. In the proposed rank-in-person structure, rank is attached to an individual based on his/her qualifications. During annual promotion boards, managers decide promotion action based on established promotion criteria, e.g., demonstrated competencies, training, and experience.

<sup>14</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) At the completion of the inspection, the OIG learned that a senior level official was identified to assist the EDD and spearhead deferred personnel system initiatives.


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adequate support<sup>15</sup> for the new NRO DoD Cadre workforce. The NRO DoD Cadre initiative presents a critical opportunity for the NRO, but without a workforce study to identify gaps and shortfalls from an organizational perspective, the NRO will be unable to strategically optimize its workforce.

(U//~~FOUO~~) I appreciate the courtesies extended to my staff during this inspection. Please direct any questions you may have regarding this memorandum report to [redacted], Inspection Lead, at [redacted] (secure), or [redacted], Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Mission Support Inspections, at [redacted] (secure). (b)(3)



Adam G. Harris  
Inspector General

Attachment:  
(U) Scope and Methodology (U//~~FOUO~~)

<sup>15</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Such support would include performance management; compensation and benefits administration; professional development and career management; disciplinary, performance-based, and adverse actions; awards and recognition; employee grievance; personnel data management; on-boarding and out-processing.

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~~SECRET//NOFORN~~**(U) Attachment: Scope and Methodology**

(U//~~FOUO~~) The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted inspection fieldwork for the *Inspection of the National Reconnaissance Office Cadre Implementation Plan for DoD* [Department of Defense] *Civilians* between March and July 2015.<sup>1</sup> Inspection fieldwork was performed in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation as put forth by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The inspection team used a variety of methods to evaluate NRO's progress in developing and implementing its evolving plans—*Implementation Plan for Creating a DoD Civilian Workforce for the NRO* and *WSI Implementation Plan and CONOPS*. Inspectors reviewed and analyzed numerous documents, to include Congressional legislation, relevant DoD and NRO policies, the Workforce Stability Initiative (WSI) NRO DoD Cadre Working Group's (WG) "Strategic Communications Plan," and the WG's Microsoft Project Weekly Schedules and Briefings/Status Updates. Inspectors received an Overview Briefing from the WG members and attended multiple weekly WG meetings. In addition, inspectors interviewed the Executive Director and Program Manager of the NRO DoD Cadre and over 20 WG functional leads (including subject matter experts in personnel servicing, policy, financial and budget, information technology, security, [redacted] career development, and project management). The team also interviewed key personnel from external DoD agencies who will provide payroll and personnel services to the NRO. These service level providers included [redacted].

[redacted] Finally, inspectors interviewed officials in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence regarding their oversight role and independent assessment of the NRO's progress.

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<sup>1</sup> (U) A future inspection will assess the NRO's ability to support and strategically manage its NRO DoD Cadre.

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