THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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ACQUISITION AND
TECHNOLOGY

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MEMORANDUM FOR SERVICE ACQUISITION EXECUTIVES

SUBJECT: Electronic Part Selection

We have made significant progress over the last few years in implementing Mil Spec reform as a key part of acquisition reform. In particular, in the electronics area we have not only moved dramatically to performance specifications allowing commercial components to be used where they meet our needs, we have also adopted buying practices which emulate those of other high reliability systems users.

It is imperative that we continue to pursue aggressively the integration of commercial products into our weapon systems. Nonetheless, we must be diligent in these initiatives to ensure that we don't invalidate technical requirements of our systems by the misapplication of microelectronics or other commercial products. The spectrum of "commercial off-the-shelf" microelectronics products includes consumer, industrial, automotive, and extended temperature range products--each with different design limits, environmental profiles, life cycle expectations, and other characteristics. These characteristics must be understood, and their impact on performance, supportability and life cycle cost must be carefully evaluated, especially with regard to design proposals which integrate these products into our weapon systems. MIL-HDBK-179 offers some practical advice in selecting components to meet the needs of the military.

One way to help ensure continued access to high quality, highly reliable, and fully tested and documented components is to use products from qualified manufacturers. The Qualified Manufacturers List (QML) for microelectronics was developed in partnership with Government and industry. Many of our most valuable suppliers of microelectronic components have implemented the QML as their main world-wide business operating system. Appropriate use of this system will not only help us insert advanced technologies, but will allow for more cost effective logistics support throughout systems' life cycles.

Please ensure that your program offices and buying activities are aware of these considerations as they select the components, subsystems, and equipment with which to equip our Service men and women.

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