



ENHANCING Our Nation's SECURITY

*The Honorable Lucian Niemeyer
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations & Environment*

TME: Describe how you have aligned your office's mission to carry out the Office of the Secretary of Defense's overall goals and objectives.

NIEMEYER: The president published a National Security Strategy in January 2018 and the Secretary of Defense followed with a National Defense Strategy in February 2018. Both documents, which I highly recommend reading, establish a clear "Commander's Intent" for the military engineering community. We are now focusing resources on programs and missions to improve the readiness, agility, resilience and lethality of our warfighters. As the secretary has stated, we must invigorate our public service and the trust of the American people with a spirit of aggressiveness and initiative to urgently pursue achievements, not activities.

I have an outstanding staff laser-focused on our goals. We are using every program and funding source available to us to eliminate waste in defense installations and infrastructure.

We continue to advocate for

adequate funding for installation and infrastructure accounts to meet mission requirements and to address risks to safety and readiness. We are working with other federal agencies, states, and communities to protect installations and ranges from incompatible development and to enhance the combat credibility of our nation's test and training ranges. We are implementing programs to ensure combat capability, missions, and resiliency by enhancing the energy security of our forces and assets.

We are exploring new opportunities for third-party partnerships, and we are engaging with industry to determine best practices and innovative solutions for our current challenges. We are working with the military engineering and contracting community to develop smarter contracts and manage them smartly. We continue to provide for the safety and welfare of our people and protection of our natural resources through unparalleled environmental stewardship and occupational safety programs.

Last, but definitely not least, we are enhancing our collaboration with the hundreds of dedicated defense communities around the country supporting our bases and providing for the quality of life for our troops and their families. We've set our goals high and are pressing aggressively because achievements in these areas are needed to enhance our nation's security.

TME: How have your career experiences shaped your approach to your position?

NIEMEYER: I do believe an education as an architect, my U.S. Air Force engineering career (including SAME time), Air National Guard service, 11 years in the Senate writing legislation and reviewing budgets, and my experience running a company in the private sector have prepared me to step in on day one with a unique understanding of the challenges we face as a military engineering community.

I started this position with the confidence and purpose that we could take our partnership with the military engineering world to the next level by tackling the difficult issues together. Throughout my 30-year career, I have had excellent mentors and colleagues who encouraged me to follow instincts; question the way we have always done things; pay attention to details; strive for constant achievement; challenge comfort zones; and consistently raise the bar of excellence.

I consider Senator John McCain a role model for public service. Regardless of your political affiliation, there has never been any doubt about his noble intentions, his determination despite the critics, his patriotism, professionalism, or his tireless commitment to our great nation. If you can identify with President Teddy Roosevelt's "Man in the Arena," then you'll recognize the approach.

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TME: How would you describe the current state of project delivery within the federal government?

NIEMEYER: We have challenges and opportunities that have been brewing for years. We must reassess the working relationship between the government's engineering, contracting and legal communities. We also must ensure that, for the development

of a facility project, the roles and responsibilities of the mission owner, the resource sponsor, and the design/construction agent are clearly delineated to produce an effective acquisition

strategy. We are in the business of providing warfighter capabilities in the form of hangars, piers, motor pools, radar sites, and launch pads. Any delays or cost overruns in these type of projects get the same scrutiny on accountability as the KC-46 or the aircraft carrier construction program.

We should not recoil under this scrutiny, but embrace the opportunity. The military engineering community has a proud tradition going back to two World Wars of working together with the "can-do" spirit to build what our forces need, in the time they need it, with the limited resources provided. We have always collaborated with each other to provide our nation unparalleled modern engineering achievements. SAME was born from this need to work together. We continue to embrace this problem-solving spirit. Our country needs the world's best engineers more than ever.

TME: What are some of the specific challenges and opportunities to reform business practices as they relate to design and construction projects?

NIEMEYER: We see more opportunities than challenges. I am thrilled to have started discussions to improve the alignment of priorities and objectives among various process owners when identifying facility requirements. We need to bring our contracting and legal communities together for a common definition of project success. These initiatives can be achieved with better communication and collaboration well before we award a project.

Just as important, we want to ensure our contractors have a clear understanding of the government decision-making authority for the project. We need to select the best acquisition method to meet the objectives of the project. And we need to re-evaluate the results of low-bid, technically acceptable awards versus best value considerations for facility and environmental projects.

TME: Looking ahead, what are some of the key milestone and investments for the services and installations to increase energy resilience and mission assurance?

NIEMEYER: We will use the recommendations contained in installation energy management plans to prioritize projects providing redundancy or a second power source without



During a tour of Crossroads Elementary School in Quantico, Va., Assistant Secretary Niemeyer discusses how the concept of the 21st century DoDEA school is enhancing the education of military children. DOD PHOTO BY CAPT. EILEEN D'ANDREA, USN

reliance on the commercial grid. We appreciate that Congress has provided the flexibility to offer energy resiliency projects funded by the Energy Resiliency and Conservation Improvement Program. We are also working within the Defense Department to identify critical defense assets that must be reliably powered, no matter the contingency, to provide a crucial national security capability. We will be identifying engineering requirements, both inside and outside the fence line, to improve the energy security of these assets.

We are also assembling a list of unfunded requirements to enhance the cybersecurity of our facility related control systems. We have an extreme sense of urgency motivated by the desire to invest quickly and effectively in projects and capabilities which will deter our adversaries from even considering an attack on our power systems to disrupt or compromise our military capabilities.

streamlining processes that will remove the barrier of time to some of these opportunities. We also see opportunities to work with the private sector to clean up thousands of former defense properties that had been laying fallow for decades with no local economic benefit. Our office continues to work with the military departments to advocate for ventures that will serve the needs of the military within a sound business model.

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TME: What outlook do you see for the government utilizing more public-private partnerships and alternative financing for infrastructure-related projects?

NIEMEYER: There would be great value in getting together and writing more sophisticated federal government guidance on the risk assessment and budget impact of public-private partnerships, also known as scoring. Until then, we will continue to have challenges at the federal level, regardless of the extent to which the private sector assumes risk in a deal.

The president's federal infrastructure plan calls for certain

venue and opportunities for increased collaboration between the military engineering community and the design and construction industry. SAME's strong program to connect small businesses with government engineering entities aligns perfectly with national goals to grow jobs and build economic prosperity. Its mission committees are focused on the department's most pressing issues with constructive goals for achievements in areas ranging from professional credentialing and STEM programs to joint engineer contingency operations, resilience, and facility asset management.

TME: How can organizations like SAME support the needs of the Department of Defense?

NIEMEYER: The Society is in an ideal position to support the department's priorities, and those of the administration, by offering the



Senior leadership from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment, March 2018. DOD PHOTO BY HEATHER BABB

SAME has a compelling positive impact when the local Posts around the country are fully committed to these goals and achievements. We in Washington, D.C., can only do so much. Solutions and improvements are best implemented at the local level by our talented engineering force.

TME: Any parting thoughts?

NIEMEYER: Sure thing. I've developed the reputation in this job that in every meeting you come away with three taskers. So readers, you are not immune.

- What can you do to support our country by delivering innovation and achievement in engineering, energy, and environmental programs?
- Are you willing to jump into the arena?
- When do you want to get started?

Thank you for the opportunity to share our goals.

TME

The Honorable Lucian Niemeyer was appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense (Energy, Installations & Environment) in August 2017. In this position, he provides budgetary, policy and management oversight of the Department of Defense's real property portfolio, which encompasses more than 500 installations and over 500,000 buildings and structures. He is responsible for enhancing the department's planning, programs, and military capabilities to provide mission assurance through construction, facilities investment, environmental restoration and compliance, installation and operational energy resilience, occupational safety, and defense community assistance programs. Niemeyer is also responsible for the policy development and execution of initiatives concerning utilization, consolidation, and optimization of domestic and overseas installations. Previously, Niemeyer served as Founder of The Niemeyer Group, where he advised public and private entities on national defense issues. From 2003-2014, he was a professional staff member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, where he was responsible for a broad portfolio of national security programs, including military installations and ranges, worldwide basing, energy programs, facility privatization initiatives, military budgets, unit readiness, and environmental issues. He also provided oversight for logistics and sustainment programs as well as U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy acquisition programs. Niemeyer is an Air Force veteran, retiring in 2008 at the rank of lieutenant colonel with 15 years of active and five years of Air National Guard service working within the installation engineering and military planning community. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Notre Dame, a Master of Business Administration from The George Washington University, and a Master of National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College.