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The Honorable Michael Duffey
Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment
1010 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1010

Subj: MIL-HDBK-539A, DE and Modeling Practices, and Revised White Paper

Dear Hon. USD (A&S) Michael Duffey:

This letter augments the letter dated February 22, 2026, Subj: Recommended Best Practices for the Use of Digital Engineering (DE) Tools, Revised. It cites MIL-HDBK-539A w/CHANGE 1, 10 June 2026, DE AND MODELING PRACTICES.

The previous letter included information regarding the digital thread from a NDIA Systems Engineering (SE) Division report. Excerpts from the previous letter:

...incorporate additional information regarding the digital thread from the NDIA report, *IEEE 15288 Meets Lean Agile*.

...information from the NDIA report:

Make data-driven decisions:

1. Utilize data and analytics to inform decision-making at all levels of the organization. Collect, analyze, and act on data to...ensure decisions are based on objective evidence rather than intuition or assumptions. Capture *traceability across the digital thread to provide insight into the current state of the system and to provide real-time data for improved decision-making*.
2. By leveraging *real-time data* and traceability across the digital thread, engineers can monitor system performance, identify issues early.

Continuous Verification and Validation:

- Embed verification and validation (VV) activities into the development process to detect defects early, reduce rework, and ensure the system meets stakeholder expectations. Use MBSE, a digital infrastructure, and digital twins to support early and continuous VV.

Please advise each Secretary of a military department to consider the best practices for the use of DE tools in the revised white paper when developing their best practices for the use of DE tools and recommendations for improvement.

I was pleased that MIL-HDBK-539A included DE best practices and guidance regarding digital transformation, digital acquisition, digital artifacts, DE, digital thread, digital twin, the minimum viable DE deliverable acceptance criteria and their required delivery time frames, and VV and accreditation (VV&A).

I recommend that you incorporate MIL-HDBK-539A's guidance on contractor requirements for a DE management plan into policy as well as the other recommendations in the white paper, *Integrating the Embedded Software Path, Model-Based Systems Engineering, MOSA, and DE with Program Management*, August 30, 2026. The white paper was revised to reference MIL-HDBK-539A.

Also, please get rid of the DFARS Earned Value Management System clause. It is counterproductive to achieving the digital transformation, digital acquisition, and leveraging real-time data and traceability across the digital thread so engineers can monitor system performance and identify issues early.

Yours truly,



Paul Solomon

CC:

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Hon. Roger Wicker, SASC	Dep. Sec. of War Feinberg
Hon. Russell Vought, Director, OMB	Hon. USW Michael Duffey
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