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January 3, 2026

The Honorable Robert J. Wittman
Vice Chairman, HASC
2055 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515-4601

Subj: Use of Digital Engineering and Outcome-based Metrics on Collaborative Combat Aircraft Program

My previous letters to you, in 2024, recommended oversight and legislation regarding the use of digital engineering (DE) and outcome-based metrics on the F-35 Block 4 subprogram and the Sentinel program. Now, I request that you provide the same oversight of the Collaborative Combat Aircraft Increment 1 Program (CCA).

Dr. Meink was directed to brief your committee on his plans to transition CCA prototypes to full-scale production. My letter to Dr. Meink dated January 1, included a request to include in that brief his plan to meet requirements of the NDAA for FY 2026, Sections 221 and 218 on the CCA. NDAA excerpts follow:

Section 221—Review and Alignment of Standards, Guidance, and Policies Relating to DE. This section would require:

- (A) A review of the reference architectures, standards, and best practices for the use of DE tools (including digital twins and digital threads) as in effect at the time of the review, including standards for the use of such tools at all stages of program design, development, and testing.
- (B) Identification of the current standards guiding the use of such DE engineering tools, at all stages of program design, development, and testing.
- (D) Identification of best practices for DE within each such Armed Force.
- (E) Recommendations for improvements to the use of DE tools in each such Armed Force.

SEC. 218. ALTERNATIVE TEST AND EVALUATION PATHWAY FOR DESIGNATED DEFENSE ACQUISITION PROGRAMS, requires incorporation of best practices such as integration of supporting or complementary data from digital twins or other model-based systems engineering tools.

Excerpts from the letter to you, *Subj: Limit F-35 Procurements Until DE and Outcome-based Metrics are Certified*, dated June 16, 2024, are applicable today. Please ask questions relevant to the following excerpts:

1. *All* DE capability elements are integrated, and that outcome-based metrics are finally being used to manage the program. There should be a digital thread between those metrics, the digital models, and the digital artifacts. GAO found that “botched metrics” are used on failing programs. Preclude botched metrics.
2. You stated that Lockheed Marton should “use digital twin technology, digital design, and advanced methods to make sure that we develop systems at the speed of relevance...Those are things that have to happen.” It ain’t going to happen unless you increase your oversight.

During Dr. Meink’s briefing, please determine if his plan includes all four DE Capability Elements:

1. DE ecosystem.

2. Digital models (Including digital twins).
3. Digital threads.
4. Digital artifacts.

This request complements my letter to Dr. Meink, Subj: *Use of DE on CCA Program*, dated January 1. This letter and the referenced letters may be downloaded from www.pb-ev.com, "Letters to HASC" and DE sections.

Yours truly,



Paul Solomon

CC:

Hon. Adam Smith, HASC

Hon. Mike Turner, HASC

Hon. Mike Rogers, HASC

Hon. David Norquist NDIA

Hon. Roger Wicker, SASC

Hon. Michael Duffey, USD

Russell Vought, Director, OMB

Hon. Dep. Sec. of War Stephen Feinberg

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Hon. Gen. B. Chance Saltzman, U.S. Space Force

Hon. Pete Hegseth, Sec. of War

Hon. Dan Driscoll, Sec. of the Army

Anthony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

Hon. SAF Troy Meink