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

Subj: Your Testimony on Performance-based Acquisition and Accountability

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

At the HASC hearing on March 4, you said, “We are working to create a more performance-based acquisition system, one that rewards companies that meet their commitments and holds accountable those that do not.” However, you have not changed policies, regulations, or incentives for traditional contractors. Please implement recommendations in my letter to Under Secretary Feinberg over a year ago.

Letter, Subj: Acquisition Reform Strategic Objectives and Tactics, dated January 26, 2025:

Please consider adopting the strategic objectives and tactics herein to fix the acquisition process.

Strategic objectives to transform the acquisition of weapon systems.

1. Hold contractors and DoD program managers **accountable** for **outcomes**.
2. Eliminate regulations that increase costs and enable false reporting.
3. Institutionalize digital engineering.

Implementation Tactics

1. Compliance requirements and reviews divert a program manager’s focus from the product to the process. Reward real engineering, not financial engineering.
3. Real-time, automated status reports that are based on Authoritative Sources of Truth (ASOT). Replace botched metrics with outcome-based metrics.

Please incorporate my recommendations into “to do lists” for Mr. Feinberg and Mr. Phelan and connect with Mr. Vought to develop an OMB remedy. I believe that you will get bi-lateral agreement from the HASC and SASC to fix the statutes.

My recommendations for performance-based acquisition were in a letter to Sen. McCain, Subj: GAO Report on Systems Engineering (SE), dated November 28, 2016. Excerpts:

“Functional baseline” that details the system-level *performance* requirements.

To enhance program oversight and provide more robust input to budget deliberations, Congress should consider requiring DOD to report on each major acquisition program’s SE status in the department’s annual budget request. The information...at a minimum should reflect the status of a program’s functional and allocated baselines as contained in the most current version of the program’s SE Plan (SEP).

The GAO recommendations are consistent with my recommendations to integrate the SEP, configuration baselines and technical *performance* measures.

Accountability is covered in my letter to USW Michael, subj: Hold Program Managers and Contractors Accountable to Deliver on Time, dated January 18, 2026.

Excerpts:

Revise DODI 5000.97 Digital Engineering (DE) and the SE Guidebook...the DE ecosystem needs output-based metrics that are traceable to objective ASOT.

..specify digital artifacts in the digital thread as ASOT. The artifacts should be on the critical path towards delivering the Minimum Viable Product and the Minimum Viable Capability Release. The artifacts should be evidence of schedule performance and for determining technical performance incentives and disincentives.

Yours truly,



Paul Solomon

CC:

Hon. Adam Smith, HASC	Hon. Mike Turner, HASC
Hon. SecAF Meink	Hon. David Norquist NDIA
Hon. Roger Wicker, SASC	Hon. Pete Hegseth, Sec. Of War
Hon. Russell Vought, Director, OMB	Hon. Dep. Sec. of War Stephen Feinberg
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