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The Honorable Emil Michael  
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Research and Engineering (USD(R&E))  
The Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301

Subj: Your Commitments and Sen. Kim's Amendment to the NDAA for FY 2027

Dear Hon. Under Secretary of War Emil Michael:

This letter augments my letter, Subj: Recommendations for Your Commitments at the Senate Confirmation Hearing, dated June 3, 2025. That letter referenced your responses to Advance Policy Questions at your confirmation hearing. You committed to "prioritize modular open systems architecture, digital engineering (DE), and workforce training to deliver capabilities to the warfighter."

Sen. Kim submitted an amendment to the NDAA for FY 2027 which, is consistent with your commitments. The amendment is SA 6589, ASSESSMENT OF FEASIBILITY AND ADVISABILITY OF A DEFENSE DE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR MODEL-BASED ACQUISITION, SECURE DATA TRANSFER, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

The provision directs you to:

Assess the feasibility and advisability of establishing a center of excellence at an accredited institution of higher education located within an established defense innovation corridor that maintains—

- (1) active defense research programs across not fewer than two military departments;
- (2) an operational DE hub or equivalent facility;
- (3) a planned or existing facility with the capability to achieve sensitive compartmented information facility accreditation; and
- (4) demonstrated capability in model-based systems engineering, additive manufacturing for defense applications, and cybersecurity.

I was pleased to read that the amendment includes a mission statement which is consistent with your commitments, as follows:

(b) MISSION.—The Center shall serve as a nationally designated hub for the following three interconnected defense DE pillars:

(1) SECURE DATA TRANSFER AND DE.

(2) MODEL-BASED ACQUISITION PILOT PROGRAM.

(B) The pilot program shall demonstrate a continuous digital thread from requirements development through design, construction, and sustainment, with the objective of eliminating duplicative data recreation by government and industry stakeholders.

(C) The Center shall develop reference architectures, data exchange standards, and interoperability protocols for model-based Technical Data Packages in coordination with the Naval Sea Systems Command, relevant Program Executive Offices, and industry partners.

(D) Not later than two years after the establishment of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report evaluating the cost savings, schedule improvements, and technical quality improvements achieved relative to static, document-centric acquisition processes.

(3) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

I support inclusion of the amendment in the NDAA for FY 2027 and look forward to your acting on your commitments and statutory requirements.

Yours truly,



Paul J. Solomon

CC:

Hon. Dep. Sec. Stephen Feinberg

Hon. Adam Smith, HASC

Hon. Mike Rogers, HASC

Hon. Roger Wicker, SASC

Hon. Russell Vought, Director, OMB

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

Hon. Dan Driscoll, Sec. of the Army

Anthony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

Hon. Sen. Andy Kim

Hon. Acting Sec. of the Navy Hung Cao

Shelby Oakley, GAO

Hon. David Norquist NDIA

Hon. Troy Meink, Sec. of the AF

Hon. Asst. Sec. of War for Industrial Base Policy, Michael Cadenazzi

Hon. Pete Hegseth, Sec. of War

Hon. DOW CIO Kirsten Davies

Hon. USW(A&S) Michael Duffey