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September 3, 2025

Hon. Roger Wicker, SASC  
Hon. Adam Smith, HASC

Subject: NDAA for FY 2026 Fails to Meet Your Common Objectives, Part 3

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Smith:

This letter augments my letter dated August 23, Subj: NDAA for FY 2026 Fails to Meet Your Common Objectives, Part 2. That letter cited the following Defense Acquisition System (DAS) overarching policies:

DAS Section	Excerpts
1.2.a	<b>Deliver Performance at the Speed of Relevance.</b> The DAS will: (d) Conduct <i>data driven</i> analysis.
1.2.k	<b>Employ Performance Based-Acquisition Strategies</b> To maximize competition, innovation, and interoperability, acquisition managers will consider and employ performance-based strategies for acquiring and sustaining products and services. “Performance-based strategy” means a strategy that supports an acquisition approach structured around <i>the results to be achieved as opposed to the manner by which the work is to be performed.</i>

The Senate version of the NDAA for FY 2026, S. 2296, supports DAS in SEC. 131. B–21 BOMBER AIRCRAFT PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY MATRICES. Please amend the NDAA during joint conference to apply the following component of that provision, *as augmented with “Minimum Viable Products,”* to all major capability acquisitions.

SEC. 131. B–21 BOMBER AIRCRAFT PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY MATRICES.

(b) MATRICES DESCRIBED.—The matrices described in this subsection are the following:

(1) PROGRAM GOALS AND EXECUTION.—A matrix that identifies, in six-month increments, plans for and progress in achieving key milestones and events, *including Minimum Viable Products*, and specific performance metric goals and actuals for the development, production, and sustainment of the B–21 bomber aircraft program, which shall be subdivided, at a minimum, according to the following:

(C) Software development progress and related metrics, including— (i) percent of capabilities complete and system features complete.

It will also overcome the lack of outcome-based metrics and the absence of the product scope in the Earned Value Management System standard, SAE/EIA-748. In contrast, the Project Management Institute PMBOK® Guide 7th Edition definition of product scope is “The features and functions that characterize a product.”

**Rep. Smith’s Opinion Piece**

Rep. Smith's Opinion Piece, "Future of US defense depends on culture shift prioritizing innovation," included the following:

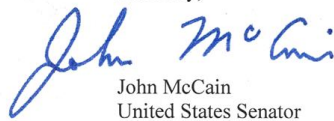
"DOD still largely follows a slow and costly acquisition process hamstrung by a focus on the process and rigid requirements rather than fielding a capability and achieving results.

Large programs of record for complex systems or large services contracts are built around onerous requirements or meaningless metrics rather than problem-solving ideas or desired outcomes."

Your joint action will support DAS overarching policies and reboot Sen. McCain's acquisition reform work, cited previously:

Again, I appreciate your continued efforts in working to improve our acquisitions process. Feel free to contact my staff at (202)224-2235 with further information.

Sincerely,



John McCain  
United States Senator



Paul Solomon

CC:

Hon. Adam Smith, HASC  
Hon. Mike Rogers, HASC  
Hon. Roger Wicker, SASC  
Hon. USD Emil Michael  
Hon. SON John Phelan  
Jon Sindreu, WSJ

Hon. USD Michael Duffey  
Hon. David Norquist NDIA  
Hon. Troy Meink, Sec. of the Air Force  
Hon. Dan Driscoll, Sec. of the Army  
Dep. Sec. Defense Hon. Stephen Feinberg,  
Anthony Capaccio, Bloomberg News