

Email from Paul Solomon to Sen. Ernst and others, Subj: Senate Nomination Hearing for Sec. Def. Nominee Pete Hegseth dated January 14, 2025

Will the new administration improve the weapons acquisition process? The SASC held a hearing today to listen to and question Pete Hegseth, the nominee for Secretary of Defense. His opening statement and answers to Advanced Policy Questions (APQ) express his stated priorities and commitments.

I wondered if and how he would address major issues in my white papers:

1. Remove barriers to entry facing non-traditional defense contractors.
2. Focus on product, not process (Buy a product that works, not a SOW)
3. Use outcome-based metrics (not botched, manipulated and misleading earned value metrics)
4. We need program managers and contractors to use common sense project management and be held accountable for the results.

Excerpts from his opening statement and answers to APQs follow.

1. Reforming the acquisition process (**no more “Valley of Death” for new defense companies**).
2. Holding everyone **accountable**, and driving toward **clear metrics**.
3. **Focus from** a high priority on **process** and bureaucracy to our warfighters able to take action and manifest lethality.
4. **Process-oriented** reform will be a high priority,
5. Establishing complimentary and aligned PPBE and management frameworks informed by data and designed for decision-making, **not maintaining status quo or simply meeting reporting requirements**.
6. Foster greater competition in the contracting space, and leverage transformative innovation of not only the traditional contractors but also the **non-traditional defense contractors**, small business, and commercial vendors.
7. **Process-oriented reform** will be a high priority of mine.
8. Management frameworks informed by data and designed for decision-making, **not maintaining status quo** or simply **meeting reporting requirements**.

Commitments made during nomination hearings may influence Senators to confirm the nominee. Unfortunately, the commitments are sometimes broken. An example of a broken commitment by USD(A&S) Bill LaPlante follows:

APQ 51. If confirmed, what steps would you take, if any, to require contractors to report valid measures of cost, schedule, and technical performance for all acquisition pathways?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work across the Department and with the industrial base—current and emerging—to validate, improve, or establish appropriate metrics across the acquisition pathways.

Most of the board members of the National Defense Industrial Association Integrated Program Management Division are employees of traditional defense contractors, the industrial base. These are the same people who repeatedly maintain the **status quo** of the Earned Value

Management Standard (EVMS) EIA-748. Compliance with the EIA-748 guidelines is required by federal regulations on specified cost-plus contracts.

I hope that the new administration will be more successful in working with the traditional industrial base to resolve the four major issues described above.

Tomorrow, the hearing for OMB Director nominee Russell Vought will be held. I will inform you of his answers and commitments.

Paul Solomon
www.pb-ev.com