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

Subj: F-35 TR-3 Delays Surprise; More Evidence of Pervasive Lack of Outcome-based Metrics

Dear Vice Chairman Wittman:

At the hearing on April 16, you expressed your bitter disappointment that you had to learn of another shift to the right of F-35/TR-3 “not directly from the contractor but from an earnings call.”

Why did Lockheed Martin’s integrated program management reports not provide an early warning? This is the same issue covered in the letter on April 8, Subj: Systemic Shipbuilding Delays, Congressional Defense Modernization Caucus, and Earned Value. The previous letter covered “marquee shipbuilding programs.” In that letter, I requested that you “lead in overseeing the Navy programs that are in trouble. Call in GAO to review a sample of the troubled programs” and provided recommendations for the scope of the review.”

Now, please do the same for the F-35 Block 4 effort. As you know, I have been citing these problems since working with Sen. McCain. More recently, the issue was in the attached letter to Rep. Norcross, dated Feb. 4, 2024. That letter included a table with excerpts from three letters going back to 8/14/23. The oldest letter, to LTG Schmidt, included the excerpt: “Unfortunately, there has been no effective progress towards defining and institutionalizing **technical performance/outcome-based metrics** or on providing accurate status and situational awareness of program execution for proactive resolution of issues impacting cost, schedule, and technical achievement of program objectives.”

Please markup the NDAA for FY 2025 to authorize GAO to perform the requested reviews in a sufficient sample of programs. Your action may also prod DoD to institutionalize timely, outcome-based metrics in the pending NDIS implementation plan. Otherwise, we are doomed to face recurring program surprises by traditional defense suppliers and with the new non-traditional suppliers and contract types.

Buy a Product that Works, not a SOW.



Paul J. Solomon

CC:

Hon. Donald Norcross, HASC  
Hon. Adam Smith, HASC  
Hon. Robert J. Wittman, HASC  
Hon. Nickolas Guertin (ASN RD&A)  
Anthony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

Hon. Heidi Shyu, (USD(R&E))  
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