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James A. Himes
Congress of the United States
4th District, Connecticut

April 3, 2019

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Service Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
House Armed Service Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry, thank you for this opportunity to submit a statement for the record about an issue that is of great importance to the Department of Defense. As you know, the U.S. government has struggled to keep pace with private sector technological development. This problem is particularly acute within the Department of Defense.

Our warfighters are increasingly dependent on information technology, yet the Pentagon continues to lag in its development. Major issues include an inability to both define requirements and to access the best technologies in the market. It is vital to empower the Department of Defense with the cutting-edge market research practices used in the private sector.

My suggested bill provision calls for a GAO review of the use of market research to improve the acquisition of information technology products and services. The review would include DoD's practices regarding benchmarking, assessments of market offerings, and maturity assessments of market-available capabilities and technologies. When empowered with information about the commercial supply market and global trends, the Department can make more informed procurement decisions and prevent costly program failures for its most critical IT systems.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim Himes
Member of Congress