

Prepared Statement of Susanna V. Blume  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
Nomination Hearing to be Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE)  
25 May 2021

Good morning, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished Committee Members. I am deeply honored to be here before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the Department of Defense's Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my nomination, and for all that you do for the Department, its people, and for our nation's security. The bipartisan cooperation this Committee demonstrates in tackling the most difficult challenges in national defense provides much needed stability in our nation's defense policy, and is a shining example of good governance.

I would also like to thank President Biden for nominating me for this position, and Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks for their confidence in me.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank my family, especially my parents Karolyn and Peter, who are watching today from home in Pennsylvania. Without their unwavering love and support, I would not be here before you today.

I began my career as a civil servant in the Department of Defense, and have long understood and appreciated CAPE's role supporting the Department's senior leadership in making some of the toughest decisions put before them.

In my time working for then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work, I saw first-hand how Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries rely on CAPE for frank and independent assessments grounded in rigorous analysis.

And after leaving the Department, I spent three and a half years at the Center for a New American Security working on ideas for improving DoD's decision making processes and mechanisms to drive innovation throughout the Joint Force.

If confirmed, I look forward to bringing these experiences together, continuing CAPE's long and proud tradition of rigorous independent analysis while also pursuing reforms necessary to ensure that the U.S. military remains the world's preeminent fighting force well into the future.

CAPE can serve this goal in three primary ways:

The first is supporting the Secretary and Deputy Secretary in reviewing and adjusting the Department's Future Years Defense Program. At its heart, this process is about making the defense strategy real, aligning resources to reshape the joint force in service of the nation's strategic objectives.

The second is the responsibility to produce independent cost estimates of the Department's major weapons systems, which is a mission Congress tasked the organization with when it created CAPE as we know it today.

And underlying both of these is the heart and soul of CAPE – analysis. In addition to cost and programmatic analysis, CAPE also produces strategic and operational analysis used to inform a wide range of Departmental decisions, including development of the National Defense Strategy.

In performing these functions, CAPE provides leadership across the cost, analytic, and programming communities in DoD.

In doing so, CAPE serves the American people by serving the warfighter, ensuring that our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Guardians, and civilians are appropriately resourced to protect American interests against a rising China, a revanchist Russia, rogue states, and non-state actors.

Should the Senate choose to confirm me in this role, it would be the honor of a lifetime to lead CAPE's incredibly talented and dedicated public servants in this vitally important work.

Thank you for considering my nomination, and I look forward to your questions.