

An Early Look at EMSO Priorities in the President's FY 2025 Budget

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This week, President Joe Biden officially released his FY 2025 Budget to Congress, marking the official start of the annual defense authorization and appropriations process. Like every other year, the president's budget was quickly labeled as "dead on arrival," but the truth is that most of the budget will remain intact throughout the annual process. Congress will put its stamp on several priority funding and policy initiatives, but there will not be a significant "trickle down" effect on many programs, especially pertaining to electromagnetic spectrum operations (EMSO).

For defense, the president proposes \$849.8 billion for the Department of Defense (DOD) and related national security agencies, an increase of 4.1%. There will be pressure from key groups in Congress advocating to increase or decrease that number and these groups do not break down along party lines. Furthermore, it is very likely that Congress will not pass any appropriations bills this year, at least prior to the presidential election in November. The extent to which Congress funds government through a series of continuing resolutions after Sept. 30 will affect the final number that Congress and the administration agree upon.

While the way ahead for the defense budget is uncertain, the \$849.8 billion request is a solid jumping-off point for defense authorization and appropriations. There are several funding and policy initiatives highlighted in the budget that pertain to advancing EMSO. Specifically, the president's budget calls for the following:

- Provides \$3.9 billion for European deterrence and countering Russian aggression through the European Defense Initiative (EDI) and NATO.
- Provides \$9.9 billion for DOD's 2025 Pacific Deterrence Initiative.
- Provides for EA-18 G Growler capability modifications and the Next Generation Jammer (NGJ)
- Supports survivability improvements in the F-15 Eagle Passive Active Warning and Survivability System (EPAWSS)
- Funds the Integrated Defensive Electronic Countermeasures System for the F/A-18 fleet.
- Establishes of the Department of the Air Force Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Center of Excellence (COE) to enhance operational effectiveness, particularly Electromagnetic Warfare, Electromagnetic Spectrum-Enabled Cyberspace Attack, and Electromagnetic Battle Management. The Air Force is investing \$50 million and the Space Force is investing \$150 million to accelerate these efforts.
- Accelerates the EA-37B baseline by transferring resources from the retiring EC-130H Compass Call.
- Provides investment in critical technology areas, including \$1.6 billion for hypersonic weapons, EW, directed energy, cyber, space, trusted artificial intelligence and multi-domain operations.
- Implements survivability improvements the US maritime fleet's defensive capabilities, including the Surface Electronic Warfare Improvement Program (SEWIP) Block 3.
- Provides \$21.1 billion for C4I systems, including \$7.9 billion for communications and electronics.
- Funds several STEM workforce initiatives, including \$170 million for DOD's National Defense Education Program (NDEP) and \$1.4 billion for STEM education and workforce development at the National Science Foundation.
- Provides \$143.2 billion in RDT&E to support investment across DoD for emerging technologies and CHIPS investment for US microelectronics supply chain.

The next step for the defense budget is for DOD and military service leadership, combatant commanders, and the Joint Chiefs to testify before Congress to defend specific funding priorities and plans in the budget. The House and Senate Armed Services Committee (HASC/SASC) have already begun this process, which will continue until the HASC and SASC markup their respective versions of the National Defense Authorization Act beginning in May. This arguably presents the best opportunity to highlight EMSO priorities and advocate for greater leadership throughout DOD. AOC will provide regularly insight into each phase of the budget process and we welcome feedback from stakeholders to help focus on specific areas or technologies.