

FTCN Replay: EMSO Strategy: DOD's Transformative Decade

In a recent episode of "From the Crows' Nest," Ken Miller hosted Scott Oliver, also known by his call sign "Sherm," a retired US Navy commander and an expert in electromagnetic warfare (EW). With over 23 years of experience, Sherm has significantly contributed to the field of electromagnetic spectrum operations (EMSO). He is currently working in the industry and has held notable positions, including founder and chief of staff of the congressionally mandated Secretary of Defense EMSO Cross-Functional Team. During his tenure, he served as the principal advisor to the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on EMSO matters and led efforts to develop the 2020 DOD Electromagnetic Spectrum Superiority Strategy.

The Need for a Holistic Approach

Sherm discussed the challenges and significance of the new approach to EMSO, emphasizing the necessity of integrating electromagnetic warfare and spectrum management. Previously, these areas were handled separately, creating a metaphorical "glass ceiling" that hindered progress. The new strategy, he explained, adopts a holistic approach and acknowledges the contested and congested nature of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Cultural and Organizational Challenges

One of the main challenges Sherm highlighted was the need to bring together disparate communities within the EW and spectrum management fields. These communities often operate within their own bureaucratic silos, making collaboration difficult. He noted that success lies in uniting intelligence, operations, and communications sectors to work together towards common goals. This shift in approach requires cultural changes, which take time to implement.

Congressional Involvement and Strategic Development

Sherm also touched on the involvement of Congress in shaping the EMSO strategy. The 2018 National Defense Strategy, which shifted the focus of the Department of Defense (DOD) to great power competition, played a crucial role in this evolution. The strategy aims to address modern technological interdependencies and ensure that EMSO is treated with the importance it deserves.

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The Importance of Governance

Governance, according to Sherm, is a critical aspect of the EMSO strategy. Historically, there was no high-ranking advocate for EMW at the level of other service leads and combatant command leadership. The recent update to the Unified Command Plan (UCP), designating the commanding general of USSTRATCOM as the responsible four-star officer for EMSO outcomes, marks a significant change. However, the continued involvement of senior officers in advocating for EMSO is essential for sustained progress.

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Successes and Ongoing Challenges

While Sherm acknowledged that the full impact of the strategy is still unfolding, he expressed optimism about the potential for positive outcomes. He noted that the strategy has prompted the services to align themselves better with EMSO principles, although there is still work to be done. The interoperability issues within the DOD highlight the need for a unified approach to EMSO.

Lessons from Current Conflicts

Sherm pointed out that current conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine, underscore the critical importance of EMSO. Issues like GPS interference and challenges in precision weapon guidance highlight the need for effective spectrum management. He emphasized the importance of speaking a common language within the DOD to address these challenges cohesively.

Future Directions

Looking ahead, Sherm emphasized the need for capabilities that allow commanders to understand their position in the spectrum and make informed decisions. The development of Electromagnetic Battle Management (EMBM) systems is crucial for providing commanders with real-time insights into spectrum control. Such advancements would enhance the importance of EMSO positions and ensure that commanders can effectively navigate the complexities of modern warfare.

In conclusion, Scott Oliver's insights shed light on the evolving landscape of EMSO and the challenges and opportunities it presents. The holistic approach, cultural changes, and emphasis on governance are key components of the strategy. As the DOD continues to implement these changes, the focus remains on ensuring that EMSO is treated with the importance it deserves in the context of modern warfare.

New Segment on From the Crows' Nest Podcast: Listener Mail

Introduction to the New Segment

On a recent episode of the From the Crows' Nest podcast, host Ken Miller introduced an exciting new segment dedicated to answering listener mail. This segment aims to address questions and comments from the growing audience, providing deeper insights into various topics covered by the show. **Listeners can email Ken Miller at host@fromthecrownsnest.org.**

Listener Questions and Future Topics

Ken highlighted a listener's inquiry about the range of topics covered on the podcast, particularly the scope of discussions on electronic warfare (EW). He acknowledged the challenge of

finding fresh content for weekly episodes and revealed plans to explore additional topics, such as space control matters, directed energy, high power microwave topics, and advances in radar technology. These areas have garnered significant interest from the audience, and Ken expressed enthusiasm about featuring experts in these fields in future episodes.

Focus on STEM Education

Another listener question focused on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) education. Ken emphasized the importance of fostering a love for these subjects from an early age and discussed the Association of Old Crows' (AOC) efforts to enhance STEM curricula and culture. He mentioned the need for partnerships with educational institutions to cultivate a deep appreciation for math and science among students. Ken also shared plans to feature a high school student who placed in national competition with a research project on the terahertz gap in an upcoming episode, highlighting the importance of making STEM exciting and engaging for young minds.

Impact of the 2024 Election on EMSO

Addressing a question about the potential impact of the 2024 election on Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations (EMSO), Ken provided a balanced perspective. He noted that while political changes could influence broader strategic decisions, the core focus on EMSO is likely to remain stable. The need to manage the electromagnetic spectrum effectively transcends political shifts, and Ken predicted that both Democratic and Republican administrations would continue to prioritize this area.

Conclusion

The introduction of the listener mail segment on From the Crows' Nest promises to enhance engagement with the audience and provide valuable insights into the show's direction. By addressing listener questions and exploring new topics, the podcast continues to be a vital resource for those interested in electronic warfare and related fields.

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