

FTCN Replay: The Time Has Come for a Joint EMSO Combat Support Agency

The Association of Old Crows (AOC) is taking a major step forward in its effort to address long-standing gaps in joint electromagnetic spectrum operations, sponsoring a new policy proposal to the US Congress. In the latest episode of [From the Crow's Nest](#), AOC's Director of Advocacy & Outreach and host **Ken Miller** was joined by **Katy Nazaretova** of [Forza DC](#) to discuss the proposal to establish a joint EMSO combat support agency (CSA) – and what it will take to turn that idea into law.

A Big Swing at a Persistent Problem

The proposal didn't emerge out of nowhere. It grew out of a [panel discussion held at AOC 2025](#), where experts in the field examined five years of implementation under the 2020 DOD EMSO strategy. The consensus was that while progress had been made, the same fundamental gaps in governance and joint leadership that have plagued EMSO for decades remain unresolved.

Miller noted that the problems being addressed are not new. "Even when I was on the Hill, my former boss [Rep. Joseph Pitts] – a Vietnam veteran, EWO on B-52s – said we had the same problems in the '60s, the '70s, the '80s," he said. Now in 2026, AOC is arguing that incremental fixes are no longer enough, and that what's needed is a dedicated organization with the authority, resources, and charter to own the problem.

The proposed CSA would serve as DOD's principal joint combat support organization for the electromagnetic environment. Modeled after existing agencies like the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency

(DTRA), it would centralize spectrum policy, coordinate enterprise EMSO functions across services and combatant commands, and provide the senior-level advocacy currently missing from the requirements and resourcing process.

A Receptive but Cautious Audience

Miller and Nazaretova spent time on Capitol Hill in recent weeks briefing members and staff of the House Armed Services Committee and the EW Working Group ahead of key National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) submission deadlines. By both accounts, the reception was more informed than expected.

Nazaretova noted that the caliber of staff they encountered made a significant difference. “The folks that we met with ... have expertise in electrical engineering or have worked within the department doing EW,” she said. “We don’t have to go in and spend most of the meeting just giving a 101 on what EW is and why it’s important.”

That familiarity allowed conversations to move quickly into the substance of the proposal. Several staffers drew on their own operational experience to validate the gaps AOC identified – a dynamic that Miller described as immediately changing the tone of the meetings.

Still, Nazaretova was candid about the challenges ahead. “Any time that you change anything bureaucracy-wise within the department, it gets pushback,” she said, adding that recent battles over Space Force and Cyber Force are still fresh in staffers’ minds. “There’s always going to be pushback and you’re going to have to push back on the pushback.” Miller also noted that while bureaucracies, including DOD, may be effective in addressing a problem, they are not as good as solving the problem. An EMSO CSA must be chartered to be the problem-owner.

Key Questions Still to Answer

Two practical questions dominated the feedback from Hill meetings: What will it cost, and what does it mean for personnel? These are the pressure points that any congressional champion will face, and Nazaretova acknowledged they remain open. “A big issue is just having that knowledge base and that certainty of every little nook and cranny of this issue in order to be the figurehead of fighting the fight,” she said.

Miller expressed optimism that the CSA, structured as a spin-off of existing functions rather than a start-from-scratch agency, may not carry the price tag many fear. He argued that consolidating duplicative efforts could generate savings that help offset establishment costs – though he was quick to admit that neither he nor Nazaretova has experience standing up a federal agency.

A Long Road, but Real Appetite

Both Miller and Nazaretova agreed that passing legislation of this scope in a single year would be unusual, and that the effort may extend into the next Congress. The next major steps include briefing Senate Armed Services Committee staff, submitting formal NDAA language, and developing questions for the record during upcoming DOD posture hearings.

Despite the complexity, Nazaretova struck an optimistic note. “Even though this is something new and something a little bit maybe scary for some folks,” she said, “I think it has a lot more benefits than drawbacks.”

The AOC is encouraging members of the EW community to engage their own representatives and stay tuned for additional articles and updates as the proposal develops throughout the year.