



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

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Hawks, Pentagon, industry brace for effects of 'dreaded' stop-gap defense budget

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A stop-gap budget is likely to tie Pentagon's hands financially and create an accounting headache, said Katherine Blakeley, research fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

The Pentagon's proposed budget for 2018 focuses on bolstering the readiness of existing forces and not buying new types of weapons or starting programs, so-called "new starts" that are typically barred under a stop-gap budget, Blakeley said.

"You're not kicking off any major new acquisition programs, but you still have literally tens of billions of misalignments between various procurement programs in your military personnel accounts, and for every one of those you have to apply to Congress for reprogramming," she said.

The programming mismatches will burden the DoD comptroller with writing "dozens and dozens" of reprogramming requests and also create a ripple effect that frustrates the defense industry, Blakeley said.

"If you were expecting that your production rate would be X and instead it's like X minus 20 percent, that has an impact," Blakeley said.

Far from being unexpected, the stop-gap budgets have become a fixture of the fall budgeting season in recent years and perennial headache for the defense industry.