



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

**IN THE NEWS**

## **Is Russia Better at Electronic and Ground Warfare Than America?**

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By: David Axe

Related Experts: Bryan Clark, Whitney M. McNamara, Timothy A. Walton

Key point: Moscow has gotten good at jamming advanced American systems. The U.S. military is spending more and more on electronic-warfare systems, all in a desperate bid to keep pace with China and Russia's own investments in jammers.

But the roughly \$10 billion that the Pentagon plans to spend on electronic warfare every year over the next five years isn't helping as much as it should, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments explained (<https://csbaonline.org/research/publications/winning-the-invisible-war-gaining-an-enduring-u.s-advantage-in-the-electromagnetic-spectrum/publication/1>) in a November 2019 report.

"The growth in [Defense Department] E.W. spending ... is not guided by a coherent vision of how U.S. forces would operate and fight in the [electromagnetic spectrum, or EMS] and is unlikely to yield significant improvements against China and Russia, the U.S. military's most challenging competitors," CSBA experts Bryan Clark, Whitney McNamara and Timothy Walton explained.

The Pentagon in 2017 published a new strategy for E.W. investment, which covers a wide range of programs for scrambling enemy sensors and communications. But “new networked, cognitive and agile E.W. technologies called for in the 2017 E.W. strategy have been slow to transition into operational systems, and [research-and-development] spending to field those capabilities is projected to decrease for several years after [fiscal year] 2020,” the experts wrote.

Procurement funding for E.W. gear is set to grow, but even that spending won’t make much of a difference, Clark, McNamara and Walton warned. “Although E.W. procurement is projected to rise through 2024, it is concentrated in a few platform-centric programs such as the ALQ-249 Next Generation Jammer and SLQ-32 Shipboard E.W. Improvement Program. These systems update existing programs but do not fundamentally change the way U.S. forces operate in the EMS and represent a traditional move-countermove approach to military capability development.”