



AOC POST-EVENT REPORT

AOC Discussions | EMSO Leadership

The Honorable Dr. Bruce D. Jette

On February 10, AOC hosted the next session of its AOC Discussions series with the Honorable Dr. Bruce D. Jette, former Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics & Technology (ASA(ALT)) & Army Acquisition Executive (AAE). Dr. Jette’s distinguished career spans 28 years as a decorated veteran of the US Army and more than a decade leading a technology development and engineering consulting firm before being confirmed as the ASA(ALT).

Dr. Jette opened by drawing on his vast experience with the US Army, including direct experience advocating for electronic warfare capabilities. From terrestrial to airborne to orbital, EW is facing a significant challenge across the joint and coalition forces. As a result of these challenges, he stated upfront that EW systems are analogous to “flowers blooming for a long time” in many different fields of their own. In other words, EW systems and the capabilities they provide for the warfighter are individually sophisticated and capable. Still, there are few standards across these systems for the technical and data exchange necessary for military operations today. Therefore, the EW mission fails to reach its full potential as the operational imperative it truly is. Several factors are contributing to this challenge.

The first and foremost factor holding EW back is RESOURCING. Dr. Jette noted that resources are “voted on” through a complicated system that ultimately prevents the right leaders from seeing and understanding the imperative of EW. Traditionally, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the military services have viewed the EW as a utility or “combat support” that could be used in relative isolation to achieve the desired effect. Over time, this utility mindset allowed for traditional EW capabilities to be balkanized – distancing the capability from the warfighter and allowing each Service to decide how to manage its subscription and contribution to operations inside the EMS. This lack of unified organization and advocacy has resulted in episodic management and unpredictable resourcing, leaving EW technology, systems, workforce, training, and planning to expand and contract based upon need and focused only on narrow target sets. In the end, this means there are very few of the “right” people who understand EW and what can and must be done to advance the EW mission. When DOD votes to assign money, the EW community lacks the advocacy to secure the reliable funding it sorely needs.

The second factor is that the EW community must change its IDENTITY and move from a historically passive or combat support approach to one that is operationally offensive in nature — in Army jargon, a form of fires. The EW community needs to inform all users of the capabilities

they have and how they can be used or how they can be used differently, focusing on offensive effects. Dr. Jette challenged the EW community to be more like ‘warriors planning for the fight.’ As a case in point, he related the Army’s AH-64 Apache, the US Army’s most lethal system, and other military service airborne systems with commensurate lethality. We often think about these systems’ deadly effects, but we must recognize our adversaries have air defense systems (ADS) designed to counter them. The EW community must similarly think offensively about how they must attack and exploit the radar and communications links that ADS rely upon. While we do this today, it is through mostly isolated activities. We must be holistic in our offense-minded approach across joint and coalition forces.

Another factor holding EW back from its potential is the proverbial “needle in a needle stack.” Our EW systems collect valuable data at many different operational levels. Unfortunately, our systems are insufficiently networked and otherwise unable to analyze and share information so that the commander can understand the electronic battlespace and the EW capabilities available to execute the mission. We must learn to capture all possible data better and push it to the right user at the right time to decide the right action. Improvement in this area will enable the warfighter to be a better advocate for EW capabilities, which will justify the requirement that leads to proper resourcing.

Relatedly we must strengthen joint and coalition training and operations. Dr. Jette drew upon the US Air Force efforts with the Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) mission. While JADC2 successfully drives attention to broader problems across all warfighting domains, a central challenge has come into focus - too many systems and too much data. Information is ubiquitous. We need to invest in artificial intelligence (AI) and collaborative systems at all levels to process and exchange data at all echelons so that we are not misusing or wasting critical information that our warfighters can use to defeat a threat.

Finally, we must resist efforts to over-classify material and information. The EW community must be effective advocates. We need to generate a vision and share, or “sell” it, to leaders at every level. When we over-classify a mission like EW, we leave decisions to a small group of “other” people, and they are often not the leaders voting on resources. By nature, the EMS is invisible to the naked eye, but we make our mission all the more so by placing it behind a locked door.

Dr. Jette closed by reiterating that EW needs to transition from a support mission to a warfighting mission equivalent to the Army’s Infantry, Armor, Field Artillery, Air Defense, and Aviation branches. As a support mission, EW will always be considered a secondary priority to the primary fight. Resources for weapon systems are voted on, and if a capability is not understood, funding for current and future systems and capabilities is often deferred. He further noted that there is little hope of increasing EW funding if the operators and requirements community do not appreciate its value in operational scenarios.

He also emphasized that standardization of technology and data interchanges are crucial for interoperability in joint and coalition operations. Key standardized information exchange formats will ensure and facilitate the flow of time sensitive information/data across systems

operating in multiple domains. Integrating artificial intelligence capabilities and automated systems across our coalition partners will continue to be a challenge. One country cannot afford to do everything. We have to rely on our partners and vice versa.

To learn more about AOC Discussions on EMSO Leadership, including access to past and future sessions, please visit crows.org/discussions. For questions or comments on the above summary, please contact Ken Miller, Director of Advocacy and Outreach, at crows.org.

AOC Advocacy would like to thank [RVJ Institute](#) for contributing to this report.