

Two Sides of the DoD Coin: Budgets Slashed, UAV Market Soars

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As we embark on a new year, imminent cuts to the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) budget are top of mind for those of us in the military electronics market. At a recent House Armed Services Committee hearing, the nation's military chiefs cited a \$600 billion defense cut as "catastrophic to the military" and having a "severe and irreversible impact." According to President Obama's current budget plan, \$1 trillion could be withdrawn from military spending over the next ten years – a tactic Defense Secretary Leon Panetta says may even lead to the demise of major programs such as Lockheed Martin Corp.'s F-35 jet.

Despite these gloom and doom DoD predictions and a weak economy, the microwave/RF industry supporting the radar and electronic warfare (EW) market remains strong. At the Association of Old Crows (AOC) conference last November in Washington, D.C., Congressman Todd Young urged us to stay ahead of the technology curve and never forget how essential EW is to modern military platforms. That same month, the DoD also released a preliminary version of its small business programs for 2012. Each branch proposed their priorities for the new year and it's no coincidence that more than one proposal cited unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology as the source of many new developments. Budget cuts or not, the DoD will continue to support the critical technology that keeps military personnel out of harm's way and stays ahead of future enemy threats.

UAV Market Soars Even as Budget Descends

Northrop Grumman Unmanned Systems Development Center Site Manager Jim Zortman notes that "demand for unmanned systems and the capabilities they bring to our military will only increase." I couldn't agree more. UAVs have successfully kept countless military personnel out of harm's way – and they have

incredible potential to continue this legacy as future threats evolve. To produce accurate images of objects at ground level while flying at altitudes of 30,000 feet and higher, the UAV's radar systems require reliable sources of high-power. dB Control will continue to manufacture rugged high-power products for integration into these critical platforms. For example, the synthetic aperture radar (SAR)/ground moving target indicator (GMTI) systems currently onboard the General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper (originally the Predator B) are powered by TWT Amplifiers (TWTAs) that must meet stringent requirements for bandwidth, power and size.

There will continue to be a need for higher-performance microwave/RF products. Even in traditional manned platforms, tomorrow's radar and EW systems are being developed with even higher microwave frequencies, as well as, higher-power requirements. That's where companies like dB Control come in. We recently pushed the frequency envelope with a very wideband 2-18 GHz TWTA providing 300 Watts continuous wave (CW) power in a single nine-inch pod-mounted package. Making game-changing developments like this isn't just important to the industry – it's critical to the men and women who use these military electronic systems. By designing and manufacturing advanced, reliable TWTAs, MPMs and power products, dB Control is doing its part to support the valuable lives of military personnel, while also ensuring that we all have opportunities to prosper as a company in the coming year. Staying ahead of the technological curve is our job.

For more information, please visit our website.
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