



## Study: U.S. Military Communications Technology and Cyber Defense Challenges Remain

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### **Second Annual State of Military Communications Study, from Government Business Council and Viasat, Finds Military Communications Still Not Seen as a Priority; Creating Potentially Dire Implications Relative to Adversaries**

WASHINGTON and CARLSBAD, Calif., Dec. 10, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Despite the Department of Defense (DoD) making strategic moves to improve its communications technologies, a new study finds challenges still exist in fulfilling a successful military communications technology strategy for the multi-domain battlefield. Concerns regarding the DoD's acquisition process and cybersecurity were revealed in the study, conducted by the Government Business Council (GBC), the research division of [Government Executive Media Group](#), in partnership with [Viasat Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: VSAT) a global communications company.

According to the second annual State of Military Communications study, respondents reported the top three causes of defense communications technology deficiencies in their agencies include: limited funding, incompatibilities with legacy architectures and cultural complacency. Cultural complacency was also reported as the number one reason why defense agencies continue to contract with companies from the Traditional Defense Industrial Base (TDIB) over companies from the New Defense Industrial Base (NDIB).

Other key findings from the study include:

#### **Despite technology improvements, communications technology strategy is still not seen as an agency priority, with communication technology blackouts still common**

- 97% of respondents reported a complete loss in connectivity at some point while working in the military.
- The majority (60%) of respondents think U.S communications technology is either behind or only on par with their adversaries, suggesting potentially dire implications relative to near-peer adversaries.
- 76% of respondents believe that a focus on improvements to defense communications is much lower, or just on par, with other top priorities in their agency.

#### **Secure connectivity was seen as the number one improvement need in defense communications technology**

- When asked about their agency's preparedness for a cyberattack on defense communications infrastructure, confidence levels were low across the board. The highest percentage (39%) of respondents indicated they were 'moderately confident' in their agency's preparedness, while 16% said they were 'not at all confident' and only 8% reported feeling 'extremely confident.'

#### **Acquisition remains a barrier to a U.S. military lead in defense technologies**

- 67% of respondents agree there is room for the military to improve its adoption of communications technology.
- Increased commercial sector engagement could help boost the pace of improvements to the military's communications technology portfolio, according to the majority (63%) of respondents.
- Respondents (52%) also suggest that increased participation from non-traditional companies — including those from the NDIB — in DoD's acquisition process could expose the military to the latest and greatest technology and business processes.

#### **Investments in cloud, analytics and communications are being made to support the next-gen warfighter**

- Though challenges exist with developing and acquiring advanced communications technology, respondents did report their agencies are upgrading equipment to minimize challenges created by outdated legacy IT.
- Advanced satellite communications, analytics and 5G technology were flagged by respondents as the top next-gen technologies their agency must leverage to advance defense communications capabilities.
- Respondents also believe cloud computing is worthy of investment, noting their organizations were prioritizing it in order to outpace competitive adversaries. Specifically, 36% of respondents reported a concerted agency push for cloud computing technologies within the past 12 months.

"As the defense landscape evolves, global military prowess will no longer be determined by artillery alone; command over information — and the digital channels that convey it — will determine the victor," said Daniel Thomas, director, Research & Strategic Insights, Government Business Council. "This year's State of Military Communications survey continued to highlight the need for the DoD to increase its communications modernization efforts to remain competitive against global adversaries to drive real-time decision making and information sharing."

"In its second year, the State of Military Communications survey once again spotlighted the need for enhanced communications to help bridge the multi-domain battlefield and support our warfighters," said Ken Peterman, president, Government Systems, Viasat. "Status-quo acquisition models anchored in cultural complacency must evolve, the pace of technology deployment must align with the speed of relevancy and a focus on security, cloud computing, communications and analytics are all needed to ensure our U.S. competitive military advantage does not erode. Viasat is at the vanguard of the New Defense Industrial Base, focused on bringing innovative business models and game-changing technologies to the defense

sector with the goal of creating unprecedented warfighter capabilities and mission outcomes."

A complete copy of the Second Annual State of Military Communications Study can be found [here](#).

#### **About the research and methodology**

Government Business Council, the research division of Government Executive Media Group, in partnership with Viasat, conducted the State of Military Communications survey, an in-depth study of senior military decision-makers. The study, now in its second year, was fielded from September-October 2020, to a random sample of U.S. active military and DoD civilians from across the nation. Responses of 195 defense employees were captured after quality control and screening, with about 40% of respondents identifying as GS/GM-13 level or above (including Senior Executive Service). Respondents represented all branches of the military, with the greatest input from the Air Force, Navy, and Army in the 2020 survey.

#### **About Government Business Council**

As Government Executive Media Group's research division, Government Business Council (GBC) is dedicated to advancing the business of government through analysis, insight and analytical independence. An extension of Government Executive's 50 years of exemplary editorial standards, GBC produces over 100 research initiatives each year, studying influential decision-makers across all sectors in government to provide invaluable insights, thought leadership content and marketing intelligence for government contractors.

#### **About Viasat**

Viasat is a global communications company that believes everyone and everything in the world can be connected. For nearly 35 years, Viasat has helped shape how consumers, businesses, governments and militaries around the world communicate. Today, the Company is developing the ultimate global communications network to power high-quality, secure, affordable, fast connections to impact people's lives anywhere they are—on the ground, in the air or at sea. To learn more about Viasat, visit: [www.viasat.com](http://www.viasat.com), go to [Viasat's Corporate Blog](#), or follow the Company on social media at: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) or [YouTube](#).

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