Analysis Underway for E-6B Mercury Aircraft Replacement



A U.S. Navy E-6B Mercury airborne command post flies over Solomons Island, Maryland. An analysis is underway for a replacement for the E-6B. U.S. Navy photo.

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – An analysis of alternatives (AOA) is underway in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for a replacement for the Navy's E-6B Mercury strategic communications aircraft.

Speaking to an audience at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space conference here, Marine Maj. Gen Greg Masiello, the Navy's program executive officer for Air, ASW, Assault and Special Mission PEO (A), said that his office is supporting the AOA. PEO(A)'s portfolio includes the E-6B aircraft.

The E-6B is the legacy platform that relays strategic communications to and from the Navy's ballistic-missile submarines and national command authority, a program called TACAMO (Take Charge and Move Out). The E-6B also serves in the airborne command post (ABNCP) role for U.S. Strategic Command, flying with a battle staff onboard.

The AOA is for the NEAT program, which is a simplification of the terms NAOC (National Airborne Operations Center)/EA (ABNCP/TACAMO). The AOC mission is performed by the Air Force E-4B

aircraft.