Intel/GEOINT

Pentagon requests $21.2 billion in classified intelligence funding

By: Aaron Mehta 13 hours ago



The Pentagon wants to grow its military intelligence program funding in its fiscal 2019 budget request. (Bill Roche/U.S. Army Cyber Command)

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is seeking to grow its secretive black intelligence budget for the fourth straight year.

The department announced Tuesday that its fiscal 2019 budget request for the Military Intelligence Program will be $21.2 billion. While the department's budget request was released Feb. 12, the MIP request typically comes several days or weeks after.

A 2016 Congressional Research Service report says the MIP represents "defense intelligence activities intended to support tactical military operations and priorities." That is different from National Intelligence Program funding, which goes to nondefense organizations.

The program was established in 2005, merging two previous intelligence activities, and in 2008 it was placed under the control of the undersecretary of defense for intelligence, a spot currently filled by Joseph Kernan.

In the early part of the decade, the MIP dropped from a high of $27 billion in FY10, hitting its low point in FY15 at $16.6 billion, according to numbers maintained by the analytics group Avascent.

But it has steadily increased since then, with the Pentagon receiving $17.7 billion in FY16 and $18.5 billion in FY17; the Pentagon has requested $20.7 billion in FY18 and now $21.2 billion in FY19.

While the Pentagon does not declare where those funds are going, the 2016 CRS report gives a sense of the kind of programs that can be supported by the money, which are earmarked for "tactical-level systems, people and activities" for the Pentagon and services as they work on intelligence gathering.

CRS also listed MIP funding going to U.S. Special Operations Command as it pursues "several current acquisition efforts focused on outfitting aircraft both manned and unmanned, fixed and rotary wing with advanced ISR and data storage capabilities that will work in multiple environments."

And MIP funds specific to the Office of the Secretary of Defense were, at least in 2016, being used to support the "Advanced Sensors Application Program; Foreign Materiel Acquisition and Exploitation Program, and the Horizontal Fusion Program."

Overall, the Pentagon's FY19 classified budget request comes in at $71.7 billion, about 10.5 percent of the total budget request, according to Avascent's figures.