



CNO Control of the Information is Key to the Future

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SAN DIEGO (NNS) -- "SPAWAR is the technical agent for a new era in naval warfare," said Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert to a packed audience at the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) in San Diego.

"Control of the information is going to be the key to the future. SPAWAR is the information dominance systems command and the technical agent providing and sustaining fleet capabilities through the entire spectrum."

Today's battlespace is a complex environment that makes information dominance essential and the need for secure networks and communications with a layered defense absolutely critical. The increasing cyber threat demands both a cultural and organizational change. Cybersecurity needs to be the business of every commanding officer and an "All Hands on Deck" effort.

"We need cybersafe equipment out there. The Navy must fight and win in the increasingly connected and contested cyber domain," said Greenert. "Cybersafe will apply to a hardened, very limited subset of components and processes and will include rigorous technical standards, certification and auditing."

It is an effort that comes at a price in an era of shrinking budgets, however, said Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition Sean J. Stackley at SPAWAR's change of command Aug. 7.

"Technology is changing ever so rapidly and the threat is keeping pace with that change in technology. Our job is to stay ahead of that threat. We must also stay ahead of the threat that's being posed by a budget crisis that will not go away," said Stackley. "To succeed in this arena requires absolute alignment between the fleet, the sponsor and the scientists and engineers and acquisition professionals at SPAWAR, in setting requirements, developing the systems, meeting the schedule demands and the budget pressures, [and] answering to the fleet in order to ultimately meet the CNO's priorities: warfighting first, operate forward and be ready."

To address the increased need for integrated information dominance across Navy afloat and shore commands, the CNO created Task Force Cyber Awakening to develop and institute a holistic view of the growing cybersecurity risk and fragmentation of various platforms and stove-piped systems. As the IT technical authority for the Navy, SPAWAR is responsible for integrating technical rigor into the development process to help reduce variations in Navy information technology. The new Task Force will prioritize resources to protect core capabilities while at the same time ensuring common and robust technical standards. With an increasingly connected and changing battle space, Task Force Cyber Awakening will include resourcing, acquisition and readiness and extend the effort beyond traditional IT to integration of combat systems, combat support and other information systems, while at the same time aligning and strengthening authority and accountability.

SPAWAR's Program Executive Office for Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (PEO C4I) maintains a strategic focus on acquisition professionalism and proactive sustainment which are the backbone of the program office's culture. While focused on maintaining excellence in acquisition and program management, PEO C4I also has a laser focus on proactively monitoring whether systems are operational and secure and the operators are proficient in using them.

PEO C4I's Battlespace Awareness and Information Operations Program Office (PMW 120) manages 26 programs and projects that exclusively focus on providing information dominance to the fleet. PMW 120 programs and projects detect and analyze every aspect of the battlespace in order to inform decision-making along the kill chain with complete, accurate and current intelligence data fused from multiple sources. From space to undersea platforms, the Meteorology and Oceanography, Information Operations, and Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) disciplines deliver vital capabilities that offer the fleet a decisive competitive advantage across the range of Navy missions.

PMW 120's concept of proactive sustainment has been adopted for enterprise-wide implementation through the latest revision to SPAWAR policy on help desk and distance support. The program office's emphasis on information assurance compliance has also blazed new trails by engaging heavily with the fleet to focus, not only on program of record information assurance vulnerability alert compliance, but also on user command compliance.

Susie Hartzog, the PMW 120 deputy program manager, presented an overview of PMW 120 programs to a San Diego chapter AFCEA event on August 19. Hartzog discussed the program office's strong relationships with the Office of Naval Research (ONR), which provides for demonstration and insertion of emerging capabilities into programs of record.

"We are one of PEO C4I's largest recipients of ONR research and development funds," said Hartzog, "These funds play a key role in our commitment to innovation, both in acquisition and technology."

The NITES-Next program, for example, is a pilot program for IT streamlining, where agile software development is woven into the DoD acquisition process to allow for rapid fielding of capability and an appropriate level of acquisition rigor.

"Our IT streamlining efforts are allowing us to be more flexible in addressing the fleet's highest priorities in less time," said Hartzog. "Through the use of requirements governance boards and agile development, we are shortening the amount of time it takes to get new capability out there."

As an example, the Cryptological Carry-on Program (CCOP) demonstrates SPAWAR's ability to rapidly respond to emerging threats. It is scalable to platform, reconfigurable to mission, modular (plug and play) and dynamically reprogrammable to support new threats. By using CCOP, the organization has fielded new capability to respond to emerging threats within 10 days of notification.

Also known for rapid fielding and dynamically addressing the urgent needs of the fleet is the Intelligence Carry-On Program, which provides a small footprint ISR capability to unit level platforms, where deployment of other ISR would not be feasible.

Integrated Fires is another example of where information dominance is shifting the enterprise toward cohesive and collaborative delivery of capability that spans multiple domains. Hartzog stressed the importance of developing streamlined processes to work with different systems, taking advantage of current C4I and combat systems and enabling them to better share information. The capabilities are largely there and will enable the disparate systems to share information faster in order to achieve information dominance and shorten the kill chain.

"Integrated Fires will allow the warfighter to leverage the full spectrum of information available from the battlespace, including C4I and combat systems, and enable coordinated, national tactical kinetic and non-kinetic effects," said Hartzog. "This is a new initiative that we are heavily engaged in and excited about."

As the Navy's Information Dominance systems command, SPAWAR designs, develops and deploys advanced communications and information capabilities for the warfighter. With nearly 10,000 acquisition professionals located around the world and close to the fleet, the organization is at the forefront of research, engineering and support services that provide vital decision superiority for the warfighter.