

United States Strategic Command Speech

2016 Deterrence Symposium

Adm. Cecil D. Haney

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As delivered



LA VISTA, Neb. (July 27, 2016) U.S. Navy Adm. Cecil D. Haney, U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) commander, welcomes attendees to the seventh annual USSTRATCOM Deterrence Symposium, La Vista, Neb., July 27, 2016. During the two-day symposium, industry, military, governmental, international and academic experts held discussions to promote collaboration on global deterrence. (DoD photo by Steve Cunningham/Released) [Images](#) / [News Release](#)

Adm. Cecil D. Haney, U.S. Strategic Command: I think that's the first time I've been introduced as fearless, but remember I sign his fitness report. It's great having you all here. Good morning and welcome. I'd like to thank all of you for joining us in the Heartland of America to engage in rich discussions and to explore this year's theme, "Building Deterrence and Assurance Capacity in a Changing Geopolitical Landscape."

It is truly a pleasure to be here with you this morning. I would like to extend a special welcome and thanks to our keynote speakers, panels, and panel leads. I appreciate you all being here given your busy schedules, that long list that [Maj. Gen.] Clint Crosier just went through. I know how busy you are and to have that kind of talent here is really special. I don't know in our history if we've had this number of combatant commands present at our deterrence symposium. Being comrades, as we work together on so many issues, it is great having you here.

With that, today I would like to open up here with a few of my thoughts, first on deterrence and assurance challenges we face today, the importance of continuing to sharpen our focus and effective delivery of deterrence and assurance, and our need for resiliency and flexibility in strategic deterrence.

As those of you in this audience are well aware, the current global security environment is more complex, dynamic and volatile, perhaps more so than any time in our history. Every day we see headlines pointing to

our nation's efforts supporting coalitions in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other hot spots around the globe. As commander, U.S. Strategic Command, I am concerned about all of these, obviously, but am particularly focused on these five challenges: violent extremist organizations and terrorists, Russia, China, North Korea and Iran.

Today, we are part of an international campaign against violent extremist and terrorist groups. They are recruiting and operating across political, social, and cyberspace boundaries, seeking to destroy our democratic way of life. Given what we have witnessed in places like Paris, San Bernardino, Brussels, Istanbul and Nice, we must succeed in this campaign.

By virtue of the size of its nuclear arsenal, Russia poses an existential threat to the United States. They continue to modernize, even though Russia faces some challenging economic conditions. At the same time, Russia is building conventional military forces; investing in nuclear weapons, including multiple independent targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) with tactical ranges; and it's pursuing hypersonic-glide vehicle technology.

Russia is engaged in destabilizing actions in Syria and Ukraine, developing counter-space and cyber capabilities and conducting below the threshold of armed conflict type of activities, all the while declaring and recklessly expressing its willingness to escalate if required. Having said that, Russia must understand that it would be a serious miscalculation to consider nuclear escalation as a viable option. Russia will not achieve the benefits it seeks.

Moving to the Asia Pacific, China continues attempts to advance claims over disputed areas, conducting unsafe intercepts in the South and East China Seas. It is making significant investments in its overarching military capabilities, both nuclear and conventional, as well as realignment of its command and control structure to better support its anti-access, area-denial campaign.

They are also pursuing conventional prompt global strike capabilities and offensive counter space technologies, while exploiting computer networks. These activities, coupled with China's lack of transparency, raise questions about their global aspirations.

North Korea's coercive, irresponsible rhetoric and actions undermine regional stability. Kim Jong-Un continues to defy international norms and resolutions. Their persistent, but failed, attempts to launch submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) underline this irresponsible behavior. They continue their quest for a nuclear-tipped missile capable of striking the United States and our allies and partners, launching satellites into space using ballistic missile technology, and continue threatening to conduct additional nuclear tests.

These actions are not only disturbing, but they are flagrant violations of United Nations Security Council mandates and show a serious lack of regard for peace and security in the broader region. As with Russia, North Korea must understand it cannot escalate its way to victory, and the United States will take actions to assure our allies in the region.

Iran's continued involvement in Middle East conflicts and development of ballistic missile programs and cyberspace capabilities require our attention. While it appears that Iran is following the mandates of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, we must remain vigilant for any shifts regarding nuclear ambitions.

In 1980, if you can remember back that far—some of you in the audience, perhaps, were not born then—when I was aboard my first submarine, the ballistic missile submarine John C. Calhoun as a junior officer, then our

focus was on one specific threat, rather than what we have today. We faced a specific nuclear threat, but today we face multiple actors with nuclear weapons. Seven nations were capable of launching satellites into orbit; today more than 76 entities, nations and corporations, have launched almost 18,000 objects into space.

Then, computers were just being introduced to the White House, and science fiction authors were creatively exploring how those computers would one day dominate our lives. Today our cars, our offices, and even our refrigerators seem to be run by computers. I can't imagine what people would have thought about this Pokémon Go trend.

Today, some question whether deterrence theory is still relevant in the world we live in. I can assure you it is. Our deterrence mechanisms continue to contribute to strategic stability.

Deterring in today's multi-polar world requires us to view threats across the spectrum of conflict, where escalation can occur with more than one adversary and can be transregional and can span space, cyberspace, air, land and sea domains. Given all of these complexities and the interconnectedness of globalization, these strategic problems have global ramifications that require comprehensive solutions.

We must be thoughtful going forward because comprehensive strategic deterrence, assurance and escalation control requires a long-term approach and is far more than just nuclear weapons and platforms.

It also includes a robust intelligence apparatus, a space-sensing capability that provides indication and warning along with land based radars, national and nuclear command and control and communication, cyberspace, missile defense capabilities for rogue nations, conventional capabilities, verifiable treaties and comprehensive plans that link organizations in a coherent way.

Strategic deterrence is a complex subject that is foundational to global security. It depends on the situation, and one size never fits all. Yet it is bounded in the understanding that no adversary can escalate their way out of a failed conflict, no adversary will gain the benefits they seek, restraint is always a better option, and, if necessary, we will respond in a time, a place and a domain of our choosing.

Additionally, verifiable treaties and policies are key to strategic stability. The New START Treaty promotes stability by maintaining rough equivalency in size of our strategic nuclear forces, that is between the United States and Russia, as well as transparency with an inspection regime. Furthermore, it helps assure our non-nuclear allies that they do not require their own nuclear deterrent capabilities.

Another area of concern is how we address nuclear weapons, not in the strategic category, but often in that category we call "tactical" or non-strategic nuclear weapons based on the shorter distances they travel. There are differences in arms control definitions that we must respect, especially given that unclassified sources show that, for example, Russia has thousands of these tactical weapons. Some Russian tactical nuclear weapons even have yields similar to strategic nuclear weapons. We must consider these arsenals in future arms control agreements.

Some of the questions and issues we at U.S. Strategic Command wrestle with every day are the ones this symposium will discuss, such as: how do we increase strategic stability, given the strategic environment I discussed earlier? How do we best deter adversaries and potential adversaries? How do we ensure our deterrent and assurance capabilities remain credible and relevant throughout the 21st century? How do we develop and operationalize a more comprehensive and integrated deterrence strategy?

First, we must have a comprehensive understanding of the strategic environment as perceived from an adversary's point of view. We must understand capability and intent, so that we can deny enemy action,

threaten the important targets the adversary values and prevent misperceptions and actions from escalating. We must have a deep, deep understanding of the adversary. And we can't do this alone. Building deterrence and assurance capacity in the challenging geopolitical landscape I describe requires a collaborative effort.

We also must have a whole-of-government or whole-of-governments approach, and include our allies and partners. So I want to thank all of our interational guests that General Crosier mentioned here – to have 13 nations represented here, 14 when you count the United States. I can't be more proud for having you on the same ship with us. Thank you for being here. Your presence, opinion, and your expertise are important to continued dialogue in this subject area.

Finally, we must also value the unfettered opinions and perspectives of our academic and think tank partners. This is a team effort.

Because strategic stability is vital to our national security, I cannot stress enough the importance of deterrence forums like this that challenge our thinking and build greater understanding. As stated earlier, we must have a deep understanding of the adversary in order to deliver comprehensive effects. This requires critical thinking.

I'm thrilled to see the diverse and talented audience we have here: allies and partners, international experts, members of our government, think tanks, academia, national laboratories, industry and media. It's fantastic to have your collective participation.

Let me take a few moments to talk about the U.S. Strategic Command Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance. The purpose of the alliance is to build a community of interest focused on the themes of national security, deterrence and assurance, to leverage expertise and research on the concepts, and encourage development of deterrence professionals, to meet the nation's need for future generations of leaders to address these challenges. More importantly, this Academic Alliance provides a forum for communication and collaboration. While started only a couple years ago, we currently now have 31 members, and my goal is to continue to expand our membership. We can largely attribute this success to Dr. Michelle Black. She's been leading this program here since its inception. She will leave U.S. Strategic Command soon to pursue a full-time position at the University of Nebraska in Omaha, and while I hate to see her leave, we do look forward to our continued partnership with the University of Nebraska Omaha. Michelle, thank you for all you have done for the Alliance.

Having talked through our deterrence and assurance challenges, and the importance of continuing to sharpen our focus when delivering effective deterrence and assurance, I want to stress our need for resiliency and flexibility.

First, we need to recapitalize our nuclear deterrent enterprise. This is critical in a global security environment where it is clear that other nuclear-capable nations are placing a high priority on developing, sustaining, modernizing, and in some cases expanding their nuclear forces. Failure to modernize and maintain readiness will limit our strategic options in dealing with the range of crises we anticipate and even those we don't anticipate. Furthermore, our credibility assures our non-nuclear allies that they do not require their own nuclear capabilities. Achieving comprehensive strategic deterrence, assurance and escalation control requires a long-term approach to investing in capabilities and a multi-generational commitment to intellectual capital. Here in our country, the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 strikes a responsible balance between national priorities, fiscal realities, and begins to reduce some of the risks we have accumulated because of deferred maintenance and sustainment. This budget supports my mission requirements, but there is no margin to absorb new risk. Any cuts to that budget will hamper our ability to sustain and modernize our military forces.

Second, we need to invest in cyberspace and space resiliency. In response to increased threats, we are strengthening our cyber defenses and increasing options available in case of a strategic attack. The President's budget funds almost seven billion [dollars] to improve in this area. To increase resiliency in space, U.S. Strategic Command is developing comprehensive warfighting solutions to better share information and better protect critical space-based capabilities.

Third, we must continue to aggressively pursue the third off-set capabilities and seek asymmetric advantages that capitalize on our strengths and exploit our adversaries' weaknesses. For example, Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work often cites the Joint Interagency Combined Space Operation Center, sometimes called JICSpOC, a partnership and collaborative effort between U.S. Strategic Command, the National Reconnaissance Office, Air Force Space Command, and the intelligence community, as one of our first operational and organizational constructs of the third off-set strategy. This is just one of the many capabilities the Department of Defense is pursuing.

Fourth, I cannot stress enough the importance of continuing to grow the next generation of strategic thinkers and strategic warriors. Building deterrence and assurance capabilities require talented people, whether they are serving in our Armed Forces, in our government, in industry, or within academia. As leaders, we must ensure we are developing the talent that will assume the mantle as the geopolitical landscape continues to change and evolve. If you are in that category of next generation leader, which I want to define here as under the age of 30, could you please stand, and don't be shy. Thank you for being here, and it's important because you will lead us in the future as we go forward.

Fifth, we must master the speed of information and the strategic narrative. In his book, *The Seventh Sense: Power, Fortune, and Survival in the Age of Networks*, Joshua Ramo reviews the ever more tightly-woven, connected, pervasive networks of our world and trends of increased interactivity on these networks. He predicts how these trends will dominate globalized human societies. We need leaders, organizations, and systems that understand this and maximize this networked global terrain. We have to get ahead of misinformation methodologies to ensure the facts are properly presented in an understandable way, in a nimble way, given how fast information, or shall I say, misinformation moves through the media today.

At the end of the day, as I alluded to before, our adversaries and potential adversaries must understand that they cannot escalate their way out of a failed conflict, that they will not reap the benefits they seek, and that our nation is prepared to manage escalation using all of its instruments of national power; and that restraint is always the better option. Any nation that thinks they can get away with a strategic attack on the United States or our allies, must think again.

In conclusion, as you listen to the keynote speakers and participate in the panel discussions, I charge you to engage with as many others in this forum as we work today, tomorrow and the next day. The richness of our speakers presents great opportunities for each of you. We are here to engage in debate and discussion, so I expect even disagreement. I encourage you to continue discussions during your breaks, at dinner and even after the symposium ends. I fervently hope you will leave ready to publish your thoughts as to how we can build deterrence and assurance capability to be even better in this challenging geopolitical landscape.

Before I depart this program though, please know I am honored to represent all those who carry out the varied missions assigned to U.S. Strategic Command and all who support those missions. They are dedicated professionals who represent our most precious resource, and they deserve our unwavering support. Because of their efforts, our nation's strategic nuclear deterrent force remains safe, secure, effective and ready, and we are working hard to improve resiliency and flexibility in space and cyberspace.

Thank you for investing your time and your resources to attend this important event and for what every one of you does for our nation each and every day. I appreciate your attendance, your participation, your involvement and expertise, and I know we will all benefit from this shared experience. Thank you for being here.

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