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Naval Postgraduate School (U.S.)

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NPS IN THE NEWS

Weekly Media Report – May 2-9, 2022

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COLLABORATION:

[Navy, Microsoft Team Up to Figure Out ‘What’s Possible’ With Emerging Tech](#)

(Fed Scoop 2 May 22) ... Brandi Vincent

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[US Navy Cuts Deal to See Microsoft’s Tools Before They Hit the Market](#)

(Defense News 2 May 22) ... Megan Eestein

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[Navy Works With Microsoft On Emerging Technologies](#)

(Military Spot 2 May 22) ... Lt. Cmdr. Ed Early

(NPS.edu 2 May 22) ... Lt. Cmdr. Ed Early

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[Microsoft Partners With Naval Postgraduate School](#)

(Monterey Herald 3 May 22) ... Molly Gibbs

The company and the **Naval Postgraduate School** have teamed up to discover how evolving technologies can strengthen national security and solve operational challenges faced by the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.

[Microsoft, Naval Postgraduate School Partner on Commercial Technology Research Projects Aaron Weis](#)

(Executive Gov 3 May 22) ... Naomi Cooper

The Naval Postgraduate School has signed a cooperative research and development agreement with Microsoft to assess the potential military applications of commercial technologies.

[Naval Postgraduate School Partnering with Microsoft for Emerging Tech](#)

(MeriTalk 3 May 22) ... Lamar Johnson

The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) has entered into a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with Microsoft to look to integrate and utilize emerging technologies in service of the warfighter and national security, the Navy announced May 2.



[NPS Opens The Gates for Microsoft to Partner on Finding Solutions to Military Challenges](#)

(Monterey County Weekly 3 May 22) ... Pam Marino

Within the next two years, Microsoft will outfit a high-tech lab where its researchers will work alongside NPS professors and students to discover new technologies of use to the military.

[Microsoft, DoD Partners Celebrate Cooperative Research and Development Agreement](#)

(Next Gov 2 May 22) ... Mariam Baksh

The company may have the chance to negotiate exclusive intellectual property rights—with an exception for the government—to innovations emerging from the collaboration.

Military officials from the **Naval Postgraduate School** and representatives from Microsoft say a new contract to explore technology in four cyber research areas is a sweet deal for everyone.

RESEARCH:

[Navy Offers Patented Superdielectric Energy Storage to Industry, Challenges Battery-Centric Paradigm](#)

(Techlink 9 May 22)

Researchers at the **Naval Postgraduate School** have developed and tested a novel class of superconducting dielectric materials they believe is the technological gateway to an all-electric world.

[Are You Completely Honest in Negotiations? 'Game Frame' Lawyers Are Less Likely to Correct Misimpressions, New Study Says](#)

(ABAJournal 9 May 22) ... Debra Cassens Weiss

Lawyers who see negotiation as a game to win are less likely to be completely honest with opposing counsel, according to a new study published in the Negotiation Journal... The study was conducted by researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, the **Naval Postgraduate School** and Duquesne University.

FACULTY:

[Southern Gas Corridor Plays Major Role in Europe's Energy Security](#)

(Azer News 5 May 22)

Nowadays, Azerbaijan is viewed as one of the most reliable suppliers of energy resources in Europe. Against the background of the recent gas crises, it is not surprising that Azerbaijan is eyed as a safe source of gas... Speaking at the international forum “South Caucasus: Development and Cooperation” in Shusha, faculty member of the U.S. **Naval Postgraduate School**, international energy and foreign policy specialist Brenda Shaffer said that the Southern Gas Corridor plays a major role in Europe’s energy security.

[The Biden Administration’s ‘Disinformation’ Board Is A Tool Straight From Soviet Russia’s KGB](#)

(The Federalist 9 May 22) ... J. Michael Waller

AKGB term of tradecraft is now part of U.S. Department of Homeland Security governance... J. Michael Waller is senior analyst for strategy at the Center for Security Policy. His areas of concentration are propaganda, political warfare, psychological warfare, and subversion. He is a former professor at the Institute of World Politics, a graduate school in Washington, DC. A former instructor with the **Naval Postgraduate School**, he is an instructor/lecturer at the John F Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg.

ALUMNI:

[Rick Saccone \(R\): Running for Lt. Governor in The Pennsylvania Primary](#)

(Fox 43 6 May 22)

Rick Saccone, a Republican, is running for election for Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania.

Saccone is on the ballot for the Republican primary on May 17, 2022.

According to Ballotpedia, Saccone earned a B.S. from Weber State University in 1981, an M.A. in National Security Affairs from the **Naval Postgraduate School** in 1987 and a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh in 2002.



[Grand Marshal Chosen For West Hartford's 2022 Memorial Day Parade](#)

(Patch 5 May 22) ... Gabby DeBenedictis

(We-Ha 4 May 22)

A former West Hartford resident who currently serves as a deputy commandant for the United States Marine Corps will be grand marshal of the town's 2022 Memorial Day parade, officials announced...In 2006, Banta graduated from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. He also holds a master's degree in systems management from the **Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, California.

[Hole Lotta Doughnuts Leadership Series Focuses on Climate Change and Its Future Impact](#)

(Ashe Post and Times 3 May 22) ... Nathan Ham

The Hole Lotta Doughnuts Leadership Series returned on April 21 with a presentation from Ron Sznaider, a former CEO with more than 35 years of business experience in industries focused on the weather, agriculture, energy and transportation among others...Sznaider, a resident of Minneapolis, Minnesota, has a unique set of qualifications for speaking on the issue of climate change and its impact on business. In addition to his more than three decades of business leadership experience, Sznaider also holds a Bachelor of Science in Meteorology from the University of Wisconsin and graduate studies in Atmospheric Sciences at the U.S. **Naval Postgraduate School**.

[In Person: JJ Phelan of S&H Systems](#)

(DC Velocity 2 May 22) ... David Maloney

In our continuing series of discussions with top supply-chain company executives, JJ Phelan discusses the benefits of working with an integrator and management lessons he learned while serving his country... Phelan is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy with a bachelor's degree in systems engineering. He also holds a master's degree in electrical engineering from the **Naval Postgraduate School** and an MBA from the University of South Florida.

[Are We Informationally Disadvantaged? The Realities of Information War in Ukraine](#)

(Small Wars Journal 9 May 22) ... David Acosta

The war in Ukraine stands out as the classic David and Goliath story between the larger, more powerful Russia and the smaller, more agile Ukraine. It is a tale of how Ukraine wielding the West's spigot of truth, a deluge of TikTok videos, a band of Eastern European Elves, and Elon Musk's satellite constellation, converged information power to challenge Russia's firehose of falsehoods. Historians will study this conflict for years to come, and the information lessons are critical, especially to the US Army as it develops its emerging information advantage concept... Colonel Dave Acosta is a US Army Reserve Information Operations officer currently attending the US Army War College. He previously served in joint and Army assignments throughout the Middle East, European, and Pacific regions. He holds graduate degree from the **Naval Postgraduate School** and undergraduate degree from the US Air Force Academy.

[Interview | US 7th Fleet Commander Karl O. Thomas: On Alert in the Indo-Pacific](#)

(Japan Forward 3 May 22) ... Mizuki Okada

Reporters accompanying the Minister and Ambassador were given a tour of the USS Abraham Lincoln, the fifth nuclear powered Nimitz class US aircraft carrier. Based out of San Diego, California, it is part of the largest forward deployed fleet of the US Pacific forces... Vice Admiral Karl Thomas is a native of Northern Virginia. He received his commission through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1986 with a degree in Management Systems. He earned a Master of Science in Information Technology from **Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, California.



UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS:

May 11-12: [Acquisition Research Symposium](#)

May 13: [Discovery Day](#)

May 17: [Defense Energy Seminar](#)

May 23-27: [Joint Interagency Field Experimentation \(JIFX\)](#)

May 24: [Strategic Communication Workshop \(SCW\)](#)

May 30: Memorial Day (Federal Holiday)



COLLABORATION:

Navy, Microsoft Team Up to Figure Out ‘What’s Possible’ With Emerging Tech

(Fed Scoop 2 May 22) ... Brandi Vincent

The **Naval Postgraduate School** is formally partnering with Microsoft to jointly explore how cloud services, edge computing and other emerging technologies can be more rapidly adopted and integrated for modern national security missions.

Engineers from the company will work shoulder-to-shoulder with students and researchers from the NPS to evolve commercial capabilities intended to help solve complex operational challenges increasingly faced by U.S. military forces — all via a new Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) announced on Monday.

“Microsoft is going to help us with establishing four collaborative spaces within the space on the campus — the first time it’s ever been done. And in those, they will bring their capability and we’re going to bring our own capability when it comes to the military person who’s in there,” NPS President and retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau told reporters on the sidelines of Microsoft’s National Security Symposium. “I can’t tell you what that means for ‘cool stuff.’ But I can tell you what it does mean for cool activity, and that is people exchanging ideas and exchanging questions with each other [saying], ‘Gee, I wish, I wonder, I guess let’s try it out.’”

Microsoft Executive Vice President Jason Zander said: “We’re definitely bringing cool stuff.”

As official agreements underpinning professional exchanges of ideas and resources, CRADAs provide a legal framework enabling different entities to cooperatively engage with one another for educational purposes and to enhance operations. Funds, personnel, services and facilities can be provided and shared more seamlessly in such efforts.

“We have many different kinds of CRADAs. We have CRADAs that individual researchers and faculty in NPS have with a number of companies,” Rondeau explained. “Institutionally, though, this is really a different kind of scale, because this is institution to institution.”

NPS operates as both a Navy command and an academic institution. Its employees provide military-associated graduate education courses — including those involving classified studies and interdisciplinary research — to advance the operational effectiveness and technological leadership of the Navy’s enterprise.

More than 17,000 students engaged with the school in 2021.

“This partnership with NPS is something I’m excited about because, in particular, obviously we can work with the next up-and-coming leaders and researchers. I have a bunch of [doctoral students or] PhDs, the admiral has a bunch of PhDs. I’m looking forward to getting those folks together, just to see what we can actually accomplish together,” Microsoft’s Zander said.

Through this CRADA, the Naval Postgraduate School will tap Microsoft’s cloud services, like Azure, Office 365 and Teams, to accelerate what officials called an ongoing digital transformation journey within the school. Those efforts will come as the tech giant vies against three competitors for a spot on the Pentagon’s Joint Warfighting Cloud Capability contract.

According to a press release, officials involved will also cooperatively research new uses for cloud-enhanced networks and edge computing, and work to extend the delivery of NPS expertise and coursework deeper into the fleet and force digitally. Further, the institutions will conduct joint research into how gaming, exercising, modeling and simulation can improve military capability development and enable quicker decision-making for Navy and Marine Corps commanders.

During the roundtable, Zander noted that one of the main assets Microsoft will provide early on is its Xbox video gaming technology.

“It’s not so much even about the console because it turns out that a lot of the hardware that we run the Xbox on we’ve actually turned into datacenter versions, which means that for some of the exploration and simulation it’s actually hardware that’s sitting locked up in a datacenter, like a normal sort of cloud,” he said. “We will definitely bring that tech in, because again, we want to experiment with it.”



Microsoft's HoloLens mixed reality smart-glasses will be among other gear provided early on to NPS in this partnership, officials said.

The school will also connect to the new Azure Stack cloud computing offering.

An in-development prototype discovery tool that will allow officials to find all completed and ongoing research projects, as well as unanswered research pursuits worth working on, will also be integrated into the NPS Teams platform later this summer.

At this point though, collaboration pipelines are just starting to get up and running and Zander noted that there are no timelines set or hard dates to announce for the delivery of prototypes or products just yet.

"To me, a bunch of this is about figuring out what's possible," he said.

Microsoft's motivation here isn't to figure out items to "turn around and sell," he added, but to learn and grasp more about what technology is relevant — and where.

In Rondeau's view, for NPS this collaboration offers many prospects — like the making of a "dream team," and a deeper shared trust between the organizations.

"There is an intellectual magic here that is extraordinary," she said.

[Navy, Microsoft team up to figure out 'what's possible' with emerging tech \(fedscoop.com\)](#)

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US Navy Cuts Deal to See Microsoft's Tools Before They Hit the Market

(Defense News 2 May 22) ... Megan Ecstein

The **Naval Postgraduate School** and Microsoft have signed a cooperative research and development agreement to tackle four key technology areas where industry investments and naval operational needs may overlap.

The agreement, announced publicly on May 2, covers work involving intelligent edge computing solutions and cloud-enhanced networks; gaming, exercising, modeling and simulation to improve military capability development and command decision-making; the development of a "campus of the future" at the school's Monterey, California, campus; and establishing an infrastructure and processes that can rapidly transition research and development projects to the field.

The Navy isn't buying anything from Microsoft under this agreement, but scientists and engineers will collaborate on applying commercial technology to military problem sets.

However, the school and Microsoft are to collaborate on research in such a way that the Navy and Marine Corps will see the company's tools before they hit the market so the services can be ready to rapidly leverage them. Microsoft also benefits by better understanding the military's operational needs and addressing them in future technology offerings.

Marine Corps Col. Randy Pugh, the senior Marine at the Naval Postgraduate School and the deputy director of the Naval Warfare Studies Institute, told reporters that the military must keep up with rapidly evolving technology, which is why the services needed to "bring our industry partners in earlier and earlier into our thought process and give [industry] a great insight and insider's perspective of our most complicated problems so that we can collaborate and work side by side on solving some of those problems."

Asked about the operational needs of the Navy and Marine Corps that Microsoft and other tech companies could help with, Pugh and other project officials pointed to not just the operation side but also administrative and business issues.

"Things like talent management based on LinkedIn and the uncanny way that it presents people that I might want to invite to my network. Man, we'd love to have that in the military for our talent management purposes," Pugh said. "And so this allows us to understand the technology and the techniques, and then be able to lift and drop those onto the military quickly and efficiently."

Operationally, Pugh said, it comes down to "autonomy or intelligent autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, certainly big data and the ability to do data engineering and data science and to have



machines or computers assisting the humans and making decisions — whether those are business decisions for the services, or whether those are combat-related decisions.”

“All of those kinds of things are very immature right now in the services, but are both mature and exponentially maturing in the commercial sector, driven by industry, driven by competitive marketplaces where people — in order to maintain their position and serve their shareholders — are coming up with all these groundbreaking inventions,” he added.

Cmdr. Chad Bollman, the director of the school’s Center for Cyber Warfare, said the war in Ukraine has shined a light on the importance of using sensors on the battlefield, integrating their data and sending actionable information to commanders — and being able to do so in degraded environments. He noted that Ukrainian forces have been leveraging military and commercial systems to do just this — and fast enough to gain an advantage over Russia, which invaded the country on Feb. 24.

“And so that’s our challenge, and Microsoft is doing all of those aspects. I’m looking at this as a great opportunity to take our sensors and our use cases and leverage what [Microsoft is] working on and see where it all comes together to, again, get earlier in the design phase and shape solutions,” Bollmann said.

Microsoft’s federal senior director for the firm’s U.S. Navy portfolio, Marc Langlois, agreed that the collaboration is about creating “decision advantage.”

“Our ability to help drive decision advantage out to the tactical edge by leveraging not only our hyperscale cloud but the intelligent edge through things like 5G, through our investments in Azure Space, Azure Orbital. This gives us an opportunity to prove that we can try and help derive that decision advantage.”

[US Navy cuts deal to see Microsoft’s tools before they hit the market \(defensenews.com\)](https://www.defensenews.com)

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Navy Works With Microsoft On Emerging Technologies

(Military Spot 2 May 22) ... Lt. Cmdr. Ed Early

(NPS.edu 2 May 22) ... Lt. Cmdr. Ed Early

The **Naval Postgraduate School (NPS)** is teaming up with Microsoft to explore how rapidly evolving commercial technologies can solve operational challenges faced by the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps.

This collaboration will bring together two of the nation’s major centers for innovation and development in a cooperative research effort that aims to tackle several highly complex issues associated with rapidly integrating and adopting new technologies in support of warfighting and national security. It also provides the potential to revolutionize how the services organize, train, equip, fight, and win by combining the best of industry, academia, and the government.

“Today, so much innovation and technological research and development is powered by America’s robust corporate base. The Department of the Navy has been trying to find ways where our organizations can emulate and evolve with the nimble agility of these organizations, and with success,” said Aaron Weis, the Department of the Navy’s Chief Information Officer (DON CIO). “This agreement between NPS and Microsoft takes that initiative to the next level, creating a defined cooperative research collaboration between a global tech giant and the capabilities it brings to bear, with the Navy’s leading science and technological university, where operationalizing innovation is core to their mission.”

Microsoft became the latest industry member to team with NPS following the signing of a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) between the two organizations. CRADAs allow U.S. government research facilities to engage in collaborative efforts with non-government entities. These types of cooperative efforts benefit the Department of Defense (DOD) and industry leaders by providing opportunities to conduct joint research and learn from each other.

Under the CRADA, NPS will collaborate with Microsoft on select research efforts. The goal is to leverage the latest in commercial technologies and expertise to advance Navy and Marine Corps operations, while sharing any insights gained with the broader public.



NPS will utilize the Microsoft Cloud services, including Azure, Office 365 and Teams, to accelerate their digital transformation journey and deploy advanced cloud capabilities to tackle critical mission priorities. The first areas of shared research under the newly established Cooperative Research Initiative (CRI) will include operational uses for cloud-enhanced networks and edge computing, methods for extending delivery of NPS coursework from the school's classrooms and labs throughout the fleet and force, and ways in which the Navy and Marine Corps can leverage gaming, exercising, modeling, and simulation (GEMS) to help operational commanders make faster and better decisions.

“For over four decades, we’ve worked with the U.S. Department of Defense on a longstanding and reliable basis in support of its mission to ensure our national security,” said Jason Zander, executive vice president of Microsoft. “This Cooperative Research Initiative with the Naval Postgraduate School will provide a remarkable opportunity for us to work shoulder to shoulder with our nation’s brightest leaders and servicemembers and help them solve the complex challenges they face. And through this collaboration, we look forward to sharing our latest research and furthering our joint efforts to empower our military to make our nation safer.”

The Cooperative Research Initiative will also involve collaboration at an innovation lab on the NPS campus in Monterey, where integrated teams of NPS and Microsoft personnel will work side-by-side exploring several critical topics.

One of the major research areas will explore recent technical breakthroughs in intelligent edge computing solutions and cloud-enhanced networks, as well as how the DOD can leverage these developments for operational purposes.

NPS will also team up with Microsoft to conduct research into how gaming, exercising, modeling and simulation can improve military capability development and the decision-making of Navy and Marine Corps commanders.

Finally, NPS will investigate how it can harness recent advances in digital teaching – including the school’s own distance-learning efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic – to create an NPS “smart campus” capable of delivering critical knowledge and skills to Sailors and Marines worldwide.

Together, these collaborative research and discovery efforts by NPS and Microsoft will bring together the incredible potential and expertise of both organizations, as well as unique NPS facilities such as the Sea Land Air Military Research (SLAMR) laboratory, to accelerate shared understanding of Navy and Marine Corps challenges and accelerate solutions for how emerging technologies can be employed to tackle the most important operational challenges currently faced by the fleet and force.

“The type of cutting-edge research which will be enabled by this partnership is something that can only happen at NPS,” said the president of NPS, retired Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau. “We are, and have always been, a center for excellence and innovation – a catalyst for transformative capabilities and the education of our future Navy and Marine Corps leaders. With this agreement, we look forward to working with our colleagues at Microsoft in an effort to find solutions to all of the challenges facing our fleet and force, now and in the future.”

Further details on the collaboration between NPS and Microsoft will be provided in the coming weeks and months.

The Naval Postgraduate School provides defense-focused graduate education, including classified studies and interdisciplinary research, to advance the operational effectiveness, technological leadership and warfighting advantage of the Naval service. For additional information, visit NPS online at <http://www.nps.edu>.

The Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) does not constitute endorsement of Microsoft or its products and services by the Naval Postgraduate School, the Department of the Navy, or the Department of Defense.

[Navy Works With Microsoft On Emerging Technologies - MilitarySpot.com](#)

[Naval Postgraduate School Collaborates With Microsoft To Bring Emerging Technologies To The Fleet - Naval Postgraduate School \(nps.edu\)](#)

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Microsoft Partners With Naval Postgraduate School

(*Monterey Herald* 3 May 22) ... Molly Gibbs

The company and the **Naval Postgraduate School** have teamed up to discover how evolving technologies can strengthen national security and solve operational challenges faced by the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.

“We’re extremely excited about working with Microsoft because this gives us the opportunity to work on solving some of the most complex and difficult problems that the services and the fleet are experiencing right now,” the school’s Col. Randy Pugh said during a media roundtable held Thursday in advance of the announcement. “With the exponential pace of technology change and these increasingly complex security challenges around the world, it is certainly apparent to us that we need each other and that we need to come up with solutions that are better and faster if we are going to keep pace with the threats to national and international security.”

The partnership is part of a larger transformation effort at the school called “NPS Next,” which aims to transform the school into a collaborative gathering place for problem-solving. Some larger industry leaders collaborating with NPS include AT&T, Xerox and General Atomics.

“[NPS Next] is going to merge together the comparative advantages of the government, military academia and industry all in one place so that we can work together to roll up our sleeves and get after the priorities of the services,” Pugh said.

Microsoft became the latest industry leader to partner with the Naval Postgraduate School after a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) was signed by the two organizations. CRADAs allow U.S. government agencies and research facilities to collaborate with private companies on research and development.

Under the agreement, the school will collaborate with Microsoft in four key areas: the use of gaming, exercising, modeling, and simulation to assist operational commanders in their decision-making processes; digital enterprise and field experimentation; delivery solutions for education to the fleet; and operational uses for cloud enhanced networks and edge solutions.

In a press release announcing the partnership, the Naval Postgraduate School said the goal is to “leverage the latest in commercial technologies and expertise to advance Navy and Marine Corps operations, while sharing any insights gained with the broader public.”

Leaders from NPS and Microsoft stressed that the CRADA is a relationship rather than a legal contract. Both organizations will provide personnel, funds, capabilities, resources and facilities that will enable them to conduct research and discover new technologies and processes. As for intellectual property rights, leaders from the school explained that both Microsoft and the government will be able to license any co-innovations and discoveries cost-free.

“We can each get insights into what each other are doing,” Pugh said, pointing out that the process helps Microsoft develop its products. “... the intent is to tell everything we know to the industry side so that they can build a better product to sell to the government at a cheaper price.”

A collaboration space on campus will also be constructed for Microsoft and NPS faculty and staff to work together on the projects. Microsoft and NPS leaders said they’re still scouting locations for the facility.

“The innovation lab that we’ll be building on campus provides a remarkable opportunity for us to work shoulder to shoulder with our nation’s brightest leaders and service members to help solve the complex challenges they face,” Mark Langlois, the senior director for Microsoft’s U.S. Navy portfolio, said.

Partnering with Microsoft will provide the Naval Postgraduate School with all Microsoft Cloud services, including Azure, Office 365 and Teams. Azure is Microsoft’s cloud computing program which



includes more than 200 products and cloud services designed to help businesses manage challenges and meet their organizational goals. Over 95% of Fortune 500 companies currently use Azure.

“There’s a number of ways that this is really going to help revolutionize the way that we are researching new technologies to support the operational needs of the Navy, the Marine force and the Department of Defense in general,” said Dr. Kevin Smith, the school’s Dean of Research. “Historically, in World War II, the technological innovations were really around weapons systems. Today, a large part of it has to do with data, data management and data fusion and how you incorporate all that.”

Langlois said Microsoft can sum up what the company wants to deliver in two words: decision advantage. Microsoft has worked with farmers and agriculture industry leaders to provide technology that helps farmers decide when the best time to plow and water crops is each season. Similarly, one of the research areas the postgraduate school and Microsoft will focus on will be how to leverage gaming, exercising, modeling and simulation to help operational commanders make faster and better decisions.

“Technology is running away from the military,” Pugh explained, pointing out that the military has not kept up with new technologies like artificial intelligence, autonomous systems or data engineering and science.

“What we found with Microsoft is there is a willingness to allow us to the left of the release of these commercial capabilities so that we’re ready to see them, understand them, integrate them and then operationalize them when they appear on the marketplace.”

[Microsoft partners with Naval Postgraduate School – Monterey Herald](#)

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Microsoft, Naval Postgraduate School Partner on Commercial Technology Research Projects Aaron Weis

(Executive Gov 3 May 22) ... Naomi Cooper

The Naval Postgraduate School has signed a cooperative research and development agreement with Microsoft to assess the potential military applications of commercial technologies.

The U.S. Navy said Monday the partnership will collaborate on technology research projects to determine the possibility of using new technologies to support warfighting and national security initiatives.

The joint research projects between NPS and Microsoft will examine operational uses of intelligent edge computing and cloud-enhanced networks; identify ways to incorporate gaming, exercising, modeling and simulation into command decision-making; and develop smart campus in Monterey.

Aaron Weis, chief information officer of the Department of the Navy and a three-time Wash100 Award, said DON works to find new ways to advance the operational capabilities of its components through research and development.

“This agreement between NPS and Microsoft takes that initiative to the next level, creating a defined cooperative research collaboration between a global tech giant and the capabilities it brings to bear, with the Navy’s leading science and technological university, where operationalizing innovation is core to their mission,” Weis added.

[Microsoft, Naval Postgraduate School Partner on Commercial Technology Research Projects; Aaron Weis Quoted \(executivegov.com\)](#)

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Naval Postgraduate School Partnering with Microsoft for Emerging Tech

(MeriTalk 3 May 22) ... Lamar Johnson



The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) has entered into a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with Microsoft to look to integrate and utilize emerging technologies in service of the warfighter and national security, the Navy announced May 2.

NPS will utilize Microsoft Cloud services as part of the CRADA, and the pair will also research operational uses of cloud-enhanced networks and edge computing under the scope of the agreement.

“Today, so much innovation and technological research and development is powered by America’s robust corporate base,” Aaron Weis, Navy’s chief information officer, said in the release. “The Department of the Navy has been trying to find ways where our organizations can emulate and evolve with the nimble agility of these organizations, and with success.”

“This agreement between NPS and Microsoft takes that initiative to the next level, creating a defined cooperative research collaboration between a global tech giant and the capabilities it brings to bear, with the Navy’s leading science and technological university, where operationalizing innovation is core to their mission,” Weis added.

Other areas of research the pair plan to collaborate on include how “gaming, exercising, modeling, and simulation can improve military capability development and the decision-making of Navy and Marine Corps commanders,” and understanding how NPS can make use of the advances in digital teaching in order to create a “smart campus” available to Marines and sailors worldwide.

“The type of cutting-edge research which will be enabled by this partnership is something that can only happen at NPS,” retired Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau, president of NPS, said. “We are, and have always been, a center for excellence and innovation – a catalyst for transformative capabilities and the education of our future Navy and Marine Corps leaders.”

“With this agreement, we look forward to working with our colleagues at Microsoft in an effort to find solutions to all of the challenges facing our fleet and force, now and in the future,” Rondeau said.

[Naval Postgraduate School Partnering with Microsoft for Emerging Tech – MeriTalk](#)

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NPS Opens The Gates for Microsoft to Partner on Finding Solutions to Military Challenges

(Monterey County Weekly 3 May 22) ... Pam Marino

Within the next two years, Microsoft will outfit a high-tech lab where its researchers will work alongside NPS professors and students to discover new technologies of use to the military.

Over the past 40 years, tech giant Microsoft has worked for the U.S. Department of Defense and individual branches of the military executing billions of dollars in contracts. Now it’s about to embed itself on the campus of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey to work on new ways to combat communications and operational challenges faced by the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, at home and on the battlefield.

NPS leaders and Microsoft representatives jointly announced the on-campus collaboration via a Microsoft Teams videoconference on April 28, and then to the public on May 2. Under the agreement, Microsoft will pay to make over an existing NPS building into an innovation laboratory, installing the equipment needed to engage in research. The cost of renovation is not yet known, said Microsoft’s principal investigator, Mark Dowd.

Unlike requests for proposals in which the federal government asks commercial companies to bid on contracts for payment, this type of agreement – a cooperative research and development agreement – is a legal framework that allows government agencies and companies to perform joint research. Federal agencies may provide personnel, equipment, facilities and intellectual property, but no funding. Usually both sides are able to file patents on discoveries. Who owns what in the end is negotiated.

NPS officials said the partnership with the tech company will enhance high-level research being done by its students, mostly experienced military officers. “It’s well known that industry these days is investing a tremendous amount in innovative technologies – more than the federal government – and they’re really



at the cutting edge of these technologies,” said NPS Dean of Research Kevin Smith. “And so partnership is really to try to leverage those two things together.”

A main focus of the research will be exploring technological breakthroughs in edge computing and cloud-enhanced networks and how the Department of Defense can use those for operations. They will also research how the military can utilize such aspects as gaming, exercising, modeling and simulations to improve decision-making by commanders. In addition, they will find ways to improve distance learning to reach sailors and marines across the world.

“It gives us a chance, way early in the design and implementation cycle, to better shape research outcomes to address the problems we’ve all encountered in the fleet, both myself and my students,” said Cmdr. Chad Bollmann, faculty lead for the project.

The research will extend to exercises outside of the lab and onto the Sea Land Air Military Research laboratory located near the campus on Monterey Bay, as well as to Camp Roberts on the Monterey County/San Luis Obispo county border, said Senior Marine Representative Col. Randolph Pugh. In announcing the partnership, Pugh said it’s part of what’s been dubbed NPS Next, an initiative born after NPS experienced budget cutbacks and reorganization in 2022.

[NPS opens the gates for Microsoft to partner on finding solutions to military challenges. | News | montereycountyweekly.com](https://www.montereycountyweekly.com/news/nps-opens-the-gates-for-microsoft-to-partner-on-finding-solutions-to-military-challenges/)

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Microsoft, DoD Partners Celebrate Cooperative Research and Development Agreement

(Next Gov 2 May 22) ... Mariam Baksh

The company may have the chance to negotiate exclusive intellectual property rights—with an exception for the government—to innovations emerging from the collaboration.

Military officials from the **Naval Postgraduate School** and representatives from Microsoft say a new contract to explore technology in four cyber research areas is a sweet deal for everyone.

“This allows us to let Microsoft inside of our problem space, and allow them to go out and build better things that will serve the military ... and allies, for export, so that the collective international security enterprise is stronger,” said Col. Randy Pugh, NPS Senior Marine and Deputy Director of the Naval Warfare Studies Institute, “Also, dual use, working the other direction, there may be things that we have thought about or have invented together that can be used by the general public.”

Pugh spoke during an event Microsoft held for the media Thursday in advance of the partners’ announcement Monday. Also speaking were NPS’ dean of research Kevin Smith and director of the Center for Cyber Warfare Commander Chad Bollman, and from Microsoft: Marc Langlois, senior director for the US Navy portfolio, and Mark Dowd, a principal investigator for the cooperative research initiative.

The Naval Postgraduate School is a Navy command with access to military facilities, where the initiative is being supported by the Navy and the Marine Corps. Microsoft will get access to those facilities—and revamp them to include an on-campus innovation lab—to explore cloud networking, create a geographically flexible smart campus, study potential military applications for gaming, modeling and simulation and to faster integrate new applications, the partners said.

“There is no downside to this because, you know, national security is strengthened, international security is strengthened,” Pugh said. “The defense industrial base as well as American industry is strengthened.”

Microsoft’s Langlois added exploration of offerings like Azure Orbital—which the company has been marketing to government agencies for more than a year—and others will also benefit non-military applications, in fields like smart agriculture, for example, by providing a “decision advantage.”

“When’s the right time to plow? When’s the right time to water? What sort of nutrients do we need and that sort of thing, so the intelligent edge is pervasive, not only military, in nature,” he said. “This gives us an opportunity to prove that we can try and help derive that decision advantage.”



According to a March 2021, Azure Government blog post, Azure Orbital “provides the ability to communicate reliably and securely with satellites in multiple orbits, at multiple frequency bands, and with multiple satellite communication vendors. Government customers can select the service best suited for their theater, coalition and operational needs.”

The contract with NPS is a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement. CRADAs were congressionally authorized in 1980. The goal was to encourage commercialization of government-funded technology as industry’s collective investment in research and development was starting to overtake the government’s. But in this case, the military partners want to see how technology that is already commercially viable can be applied in advancing its capabilities.

“Intelligent autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, certainly, big data and the ability to do data engineering and data science and to have machines or computers assisting the humans in making decisions ...all of those kinds of things are very immature right now in the services,” Pugh said. “But [they] are both mature and exponentially maturing in the commercial sector, driven by competitive marketplaces where people, in order to maintain that position and, you know, and serve their shareholders are coming up with all of these groundbreaking inventions.”

According to the NPS press release, “the goal is to leverage the latest in commercial technologies and expertise to advance Navy and Marine Corps operations, while sharing any insights gained with the broader public.”

The Microsoft-NPS CRADA will allow the company and the government, including non-Defense agencies, to freely license any innovations that are jointly derived, according to Bollman, who said whether others will be able to license the tech is still to be determined.

“Within the way that CRADA’s work for intellectual property or co-discovery that we do—no-kidding—together, Microsoft gets a legal right to basically leverage that and license it from the government cost-free going forward,” Bollman said. “Now, whether or not that right is exclusive or not, that’s subject to subsequent negotiations. But because the government was also a partner in this discovery, then the government agencies and the other you know, the other parts of the federal government—no-kidding—also get to use that, whatever it is that we discover, cost-free as well. So it totally turns into a win-win.”

The NPS officials were excited by the prospect of all manner of potential ultimate developments from the partnership, from the further-off—autonomous vehicle safety—to the seemingly more mundane: solutions for human resources.

“Inside of each one of those [four research areas] campuses of the future, for example, there’s a long list of sub projects underneath of that, things like, you know, talent management based on LinkedIn, and the uncanny way that it presents people that I might want to invite to my network,” Pugh said. “Man, I would love to have that in the military for our talent management purposes. And so this allows us to understand the technology and the techniques and then be able to lift and drop those onto the military, quickly and efficiently.”

But the way innovations are derived, and who’s bringing what to the table, isn’t always carefully mapped out or easily determined. In January, a federal circuit court ruled in favor of an appellate that was suing the government for using technology it says was already proven before the execution of a CRADA, which the government didn’t opt to follow with a purchase of the tech in prototype.

“The [NPS-Microsoft] CRADA has legal protections relative to knowledge that existed before the CRADA relationship started,” Bollman said, with the disclaimer that he is not authorized to dispense legal advice.

With competitors like AWS and Google fighting for space in the government’s market for cloud services, CRADAs are giving Microsoft insightful access to the government’s digital environment, and a chance to expand their offerings.

“I think Microsoft has some ideas, they see things that could help the military and the military is not asking for them,” Pugh said. “This CRADA gives the ability to bring those things in and work on them, you know, military solutions being driven from the Microsoft side, which is pretty cool.”

[Microsoft, DoD Partners Celebrate Cooperative Research and Development Agreement - Nextgov](#)



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RESEARCH:

Navy Offers Patented Superdielectric Energy Storage to Industry, Challenges Battery-Centric Paradigm

(Techlink 9 May 22)

Researchers at the **Naval Postgraduate School** have developed and tested a novel class of superconducting dielectric materials they believe is the technological gateway to an all-electric world.

The school, which is also designated as a top-tier federal laboratory, is offering this patented energy storage technology to private companies for commercialization via license agreement.

Fuel cells and batteries are currently used for energy storage but lack the power density, and the ability to deliver power in a fraction of a second, which is necessary for propelling an entire ship or feeding a high-power rail gun.

For that work, a capacitor is required.

Using a new paradigm, that capacitors can also store power, **NPS** researchers have discovered a route to building capacitors that can equal, then surpass, the energy storage capacity of lithium-ion batteries.

How do dielectrics work? The textbook explanation left the research team puzzled. Dielectrics cancel the field produced by the charges on the electrodes, which, in theory, should allow store more electrons at the same voltage. So the researchers devised better dielectrics better at field canceling than those in use now.

Beach Sand

Using beach sand and sodium chloride, the **NPS** researchers created new materials with very high dielectric values with excellent energy densities.

In contrast to a battery, in a capacitor the only thing that is moving is a charge, there is no chemistry. And there's no lithium, no cobalt, no expensive materials and minerals to be mined and processed.

And a capacitor can charge very fast, much faster than a battery.

NPS' new class of dielectrics, built from a layer of anodized titania, creates a structure of hollow, nonelectrically conductive, titanium oxide tubes positioned orthogonal to the surface of the metal. Once the hollow tubes are filled with solution, this material becomes an excellent superdielectric.

Technology Transfer Opportunity

NPS has applied for and been granted six 20-year utility patents, the oldest granted in 2016, and the most recent was issued in 2018.

Through TechLink, the DOD's national partnership intermediary, the technology is now being made available for commercialization by companies in the private sector.

Joan Wu-Singel, a senior technology manager at TechLink, is excited about the opportunity believing it has the potential to revolutionize power delivery and storage and transform the global economy.

"Based on the weight of the anodized titania component only, direct measurement of the energy released during discharge, and computation of weight based on the weight of the dielectric component only (anodized titania and aqueous KOH solution), remarkable energy densities were directly measured," she said.

[Navy offers patented superdielectric energy storage to industry, challenges battery-centric paradigm - TechLink | TechLink \(techlinkcenter.org\)](#)

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Are You Completely Honest in Negotiations? 'Game Frame' Lawyers Are Less Likely to Correct Misimpressions, New Study Says

(ABA Journal 9 May 22) ... Debra Cassens Weiss

Lawyers who see negotiation as a game to win are less likely to be completely honest with opposing counsel, according to a new study published in the Negotiation Journal.

Lawyers who scored high on a “negotiation game frame scale” were less likely to say they would correct an opposing counsel’s wrong impressions or disclose omissions, according to the study and an April 20 press release.

The study also found that lawyers who scored high on moral character in personality tests were less likely to apply a “game frame” to negotiation and were more likely to disclose information to opposing counsel.

The study was conducted by researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, the **Naval Postgraduate School** and Duquesne University.

One of the study co-authors, Taya R. Cohen, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, told the ABA Journal in an email that the study shows that moral character and game framing play a critical role in determining how likely it is that a negotiator will honestly share information.

“Game framing permits low levels of honesty by inducing a competitive orientation in which rules are regarded as arbitrary, artificial constructs rather than moral or ethical requirements,” said Cohen, highlighting a bullet point in a recent presentation on the study.

The study relied on 215 lawyer volunteers who took a series of tests. One test asked questions about the extent to which the lawyers viewed negotiations through an adversarial game frame with artificial and arbitrary rules. The lawyers also took three personality tests that measure honesty, moral identity and a tendency to feel guilt.

Game frame questions asked lawyers to rate on a 1-to-5 scale their agreement with statements such as “Success in negotiation is a matter of who can outsmart the opposing party” and “The ethical standards in negotiation are no more binding or ‘real’ than any other social custom.”

Personality questions asked lawyers about their agreement with statements such as “I find it difficult to lie,” “I want to be famous” and “Being someone who has [moral] characteristics is an important part of who I am.” Another question asked about whether the lawyers would feel uncomfortable if they received too much change in a store and kept the money.

Cohen presented the lawyers with these three hypothetical questions:

- In settlement talks, the opposing counsel’s comments make clear that they think your client, the plaintiff, has no ability to work. You never made any such claim, and your client is able to work. How likely are you to continue to settlement without correcting the misimpression?

- 56.3% of the lawyers said they were unlikely or extremely unlikely to correct the misimpression, while 24.4% said they were likely or extremely likely to do so.

- You represent an at-will employee fired from a large company with no explanation. You are negotiating severance pay, a noncompete clause and other issues. The client had talked to the CEO and agreed to a list of companies for which they would not work for two years in exchange for enhanced severance and other economic benefits. When the opposing counsel presents the settlement document, it omits one of the companies on the noncompete list. How likely are you to continue to signatures without informing opposing counsel of the omission?

- 72.9% of the lawyers said they were unlikely or extremely unlikely to correct the omission, while 14% said they were likely or extremely likely to do so.

- You are representing the plaintiff in a mediation process involving a disability claim. The mediator informs you that the defendant has proof that the plaintiff is not disabled based on a video that they have just seen. In a private caucus with your client, you learn that they have a twin brother who came to his



home to help with physical chores—including landscaping, roof repair, car mechanics and moving furniture. How likely are you to: Keep the twin brother information quiet to allow for a “gotcha” moment at trial? Ask the mediator to ask the defense for a specific demand amount if you can discredit the video? Disclose the twin brother to the mediator to disclose to the defense at the mediator’s discretion? Disclose the twin brother to the defense in a joint session?

- 81.7% of lawyers said they were unlikely or extremely unlikely to wait for a “gotcha” trial moment, while 5.6% said they were likely or extremely likely to do so.

- 52.8% of the lawyers said they were unlikely or extremely unlikely to ask the mediator whether the defense would meet a specific demand amount if they can discredit the video, while 30.8% said they were likely or extremely likely to do so.

- 29.1% of the lawyers said they were unlikely or extremely unlikely to inform the mediator about the twin brother to disclose to the defense at the mediator’s discretion, while 44.6% said they were likely or extremely likely to do so.

- 32.2% of the lawyers said they were unlikely or extremely unlikely to disclose the twin brother directly to the opposition team, while 42.1% said they were likely or extremely likely to do so.

The more that lawyers viewed negotiations through a game frame, the more willing they were to continue to resolution without correcting misimpressions held by opposing counsel in the working client and noncompete hypotheticals and the less willing they were to disclose honest information directly to the opposition team in the twin brothers hypothetical.

Similarly, higher levels of moral character were associated with higher willingness to disclose information, although the correlation was not statistically significant in the working client hypothetical.

The other study co-authors are Erik G. Helzer, a management professor at the Naval Postgraduate School’s Graduate School of Defense Management, and Robert A. Creo, an adjunct professor at the Duquesne University School of Law.

The authors caution that the lawyers who participated in the study were not representative of the population of U.S. attorneys, but they did come from many different types of practices and from many different jurisdictions. They also say the findings are correlational rather than causal.

The researchers plan a follow-up study with two law professors that will survey law students over the course of three years about moral character, game framing in negotiation, and willingness to honestly disclose information. The study could shed light on whether law school training reduces the likelihood of honest disclosure.

Hat tip to Bloomberg Law, which had coverage of the study.

[Are you completely honest in negotiations? 'Game frame' lawyers are less likely to correct misimpressions, new study says \(abajournal.com\)](#)

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FACULTY:

Southern Gas Corridor Plays Major Role in Europe's Energy Security

(Azer News 5 May 22)

Nowadays, Azerbaijan is viewed as one of the most reliable suppliers of energy resources in Europe. Against the background of the recent gas crises, it is not surprising that Azerbaijan is eyed as a safe source of gas.

The current geopolitical situation in the world has shown that Europe cannot be completely dependent on a single gas supplier. In this regard, it is no coincidence that Europe lists Azerbaijan among the countries from where it is potentially possible to increase supplies if needed.

Some European countries have already expressed interest in doubling gas supplies from Azerbaijan via the Southern Gas Corridor.



Speaking at the international forum “South Caucasus: Development and Cooperation” in Shusha, faculty member of the U.S. **Naval Postgraduate School**, international energy and foreign policy specialist Brenda Shaffer said that the Southern Gas Corridor plays a major role in Europe’s energy security.

"We are entering a very difficult economic period. Energy security projects play a particularly important role during the current economic crisis, and the Southern Gas Corridor is one of those projects," she said.

Moreover, the German Ambassador to Azerbaijan Wolfgang Manig believes that German companies can contribute to the expansion of the capacity of the Southern Gas Corridor.

"At present, the German Energy Ministry is actively seeking alternative sources of energy imports. Germany has a wish to establish gas supplies through the Southern Gas Corridor," he said.

The Southern Gas Corridor also brings EU-Azerbaijan relations even closer together and enhances Azerbaijan’s image as a reliable gas supplier in the eyes of Europe. The SGC already plays an important role in ensuring Europe’s energy security. The corridor ensures the diversification of gas supplies to Europe and also allows Europe to receive cheaper gas.

In this regard, EU Ambassador to Azerbaijan Peter Michalko stated that the energy cooperation between the European Union and Azerbaijan has the potential for further expansion. He noted that the Southern Gas Corridor is one of the largest projects between the EU and Azerbaijan and is an example of the successful development of partnership in this sector.

"The energy sector is one of the important areas of cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan, along with successfully developing trade relations," he said.

Moreover, Greek Deputy Minister for Economic Diplomacy and Openness Kostas Fragogiannis in an interview with the Trend news agency stated that the volumes of gas deliveries through TAP play a significant role in providing Europe with a new, reliable, and affordable source of energy while facilitating the transition to clean energy. Noting that Greece is ready to explore all available alternatives to ensure its energy security, he highlighted that the country is an important partner in TAP.

“There is great potential in this area, and we expect that during 2022 the Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria (IGB) will be commissioned, which will bring the expected results in energy markets and allow to use the great potential of both countries. The possible expansion of the Southern Gas Corridor capacity will further increase the energy security of Greece and the rest of Europe,” he said.

While talking about the increase in gas supplies from Azerbaijan, first, it is important to achieve the export potential that Azerbaijan has, that is, to increase exports to 20 billion cubic meters per year. In this regard, according to the forecast of the Azerbaijani government for oil and gas production in the country until 2026, about 48 billion cubic meters of gas will be produced in 2023, 49 billion cubic meters in 2024, and about 50 billion cubic meters in 2025.

To recall, with the completion of the TAP (Trans-Adriatic Pipeline) construction on December 31, 2020, Azerbaijan began commercial gas supplies to Europe via the Southern Gas Corridor. The European Commission's Southern Gas Corridor initiative aims to build a natural gas supply route from the Caspian and Middle Eastern regions to Europe. The route from Azerbaijan to Europe consists of the South Caucasus Pipeline, the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP), and TAP.

Last year, TAP transported 8.1 billion cubic meters of gas to Europe. By late 2022, Azerbaijan plans to increase gas supplies to Europe to 9.1 billion cubic meters, and in 2023, the volume of gas supplies is expected to reach 11 billion cubic meters.

Additionally, today, the final work on the Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria (IGB), which will transport natural gas from Azerbaijan to Bulgaria, is in full swing. Gas was supposed to start flowing via IGB back in 2020, but the delay of implementing the project has been delayed for a variety of reasons.

Today the prospects for expansion of the Southern Gas Corridor are assessed positively. Taking into account Azerbaijan’s proven gas potential, it is possible to say that the capacity of the Southern Gas Corridor will be increased and Azerbaijan will increase its gas exports to Europe.

[Southern Gas Corridor plays major role in Europe's energy security \(azernews.az\)](https://azernews.az)

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The Biden Administration's 'Disinformation' Board Is A Tool Straight From Soviet Russia's KGB

(The Federalist 9 May 22) ... J. Michael Waller

AKGB term of tradecraft is now part of U.S. Department of Homeland Security governance.

The new Biden administration "Disinformation Governance Board," Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told CNN, is a "small working group" to "address threats, the connectivity between threats and acts of violence" without "infringing on free speech" and while "protecting civil rights and civil liberties, the right to privacy." The board has no "operational authority" of its own, Mayorkas said.

Mayorkas denied that the board will cause American citizens to be monitored, saying, "we, the Department of Homeland Security, don't monitor American citizens."

That might be true. But Mayorkas went on to say the Disinformation Governance Board is mandated to provide "best practices and communicate those best practices to the operators" in agencies that do have "operational authority."

Never before has "disinformation governance" been part of the official U.S. government terminology for defending the internal security of the country.

"Disinformation" is not a word from the English language. It is a direct translation of the Russian word *dezinformatsiya*. It is a KGB form of tradecraft from the Red Banner Institute of the KGB First Chief Directorate, otherwise known as the KGB foreign spy academy.

Disinformation is definition 159 in the KGB's "Lexicon of KGB Terms," published internally by the Soviet foreign intelligence service before 1984. Here it is: "Misleading by means of false information; A form of intelligence work in the Active Measures field, which consists of the secret channeling towards an adversary of false information, especially prepared materials and fabricated documents designed to mislead him and prompt him to take decisions and measures which fit with the plans and intentions of the Intelligence Service."

"Active measures" is another KGB term of tradecraft. The KGB lexicon defines active measures as "Agent operational measures aimed at exerting useful influence on aspects of the political life of a target country which are of interest, its foreign policy, the solution of international problems, misleading the adversary, undermining and weakening its positions, the disruption of his hostile plans, and the achievement of other aims."

Disinformation is a component of active measures. Foreign "agent operational measures" make the defense against disinformation and active measures a counterintelligence function, not a homeland security one. DHS has no statutory counterintelligence authority. That authority, as well as the authority to combat foreign disinformation and propaganda, rests by law with the FBI.

Whether the FBI remains fit for this role is another matter. The point is that combating foreign disinformation domestically is counterintelligence, which by law is not a DHS responsibility.

Even if the Disinformation Governance Board did have such a legitimate purpose, it would rest in the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis. Instead, this disinformation board is housed in the very political DHS Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans, and therefore is a potential domestic political instrument.

Thus the board, as Mayorkas explained it, will not spy on American citizens' free speech per se, but will provide the "best practices" and policy guidance to those who do.

"Disinformation" did not enter into widespread use in English until the 1980s, when the Reagan administration, with bipartisan support in Congress, launched a State Department-led Office to Counter Soviet Active Measures and Disinformation to combat Soviet political warfare worldwide, without impinging on the free speech of American citizens. (References to that office have been practically wiped from online search engines.) The State Department retains a small office to monitor foreign disinformation.

KGB Major Anatoliy Golitsyn, Czechoslovakian intelligence officer Ladislav Bittman, KGB Major Ladislav Levchenko, and others shed more light on disinformation after they fled to the United States



between 1961 and 1979 during the Cold War. All agreed that disinformation was a purely KGB term of tradecraft. All wrote books on the subject.

The origin of disinformation as an operational word is rooted in Joseph Stalin's NKVD secret police, with some references to the earliest days of World War II. The Oxford English Dictionary has no definition of the word prior to 1947, when the Cold War began. Merriam-Webster traces "disinformation" to hearings on Communist subversion in 1953, and to Nazi and Soviet techniques as early as 1940. Occasional usage of the word appeared in the 19th century as an infrequent, contrived, "non-standard synonym of misinformation."

"Misinformation," of course, isn't the same as disinformation. It is a mis-statement, or the inadvertent or careless spreading of inaccuracies or untruths, without malign intent. Yet Mayorkas and others have used the two terms interchangeably. So have many public "experts."

Under the Trump administration, DHS created a Countering Foreign Influence Task Force within the department's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. The Biden administration morphed it into the "Mis- Dis- and Malinformation" (MDM) team whose stated job is to build "national resilience to MDM and foreign influence activities."

Note the modification: keeping the old countering foreign influence function and adding what MDM calls "false or misleading information" in general. MDM thus became a federal government influence operational entity of its own. The Disinformation Governance Board is an interagency add-on within the DHS policy shop.

While it does explain the distinctions between misinformation and disinformation, the DHS MDM Team has sanitized the origins of "disinformation" as a KGB term of tradecraft. Indeed, it erased the distinction between disinformation as a foreign active measures technique and the simple use or abuse of words in domestic American political discourse.

Last year, DHS re-defined disinformation as follows: "Disinformation is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country."

So DHS re-defined disinformation, sanitized the term of its KGB roots, and expanded the definition by removing the foreign element and applying the label to First Amendment-protected political discourse. DHS then officially adopted the KGB word as its own to create a political board for "governance" of disinformation — whatever that is — to guide agencies to monitor American citizens' free speech.

J. Michael Waller is senior analyst for strategy at the Center for Security Policy. His areas of concentration are propaganda, political warfare, psychological warfare, and subversion. He is a former professor at the Institute of World Politics, a graduate school in Washington, DC. A former instructor with the **Naval Postgraduate School**, he is an instructor/lecturer at the John F Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg.

[Biden's 'Disinformation' Board Is A Tool Straight From Soviet Russia's KGB \(thefederalist.com\)](https://www.thefederalist.com/2022/05/17/bidens-disinformation-board-is-a-tool-straight-from-soviet-russias-kgb/)

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ALUMNI:

Rick Saccone (R): Running for Lt. Governor in The Pennsylvania Primary

(Fox 43 6 May 22)

Rick Saccone, a Republican, is running for election for Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania.

Saccone is on the ballot for the Republican primary on May 17, 2022.

According to Ballotpedia, Saccone earned a B.S. from Weber State University in 1981, an M.A. in National Security Affairs from the **Naval Postgraduate School** in 1987 and a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh in 2002.



Saccone assumed office in 2011 as a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, according to Ballotpedia. He represented the people of District 39. Saccone left office on November 30, 2018.

While working in the state house, Saccone's experience included working as a political science professor at St. Vincent College and serving as a counterintelligence officer in the U.S. Air Force.

However, Saccone resigned from his position at St. Vincent College after being seen at the U.S. Capitol Riots on Jan. 6, 2021.

Saccone was pictured near Capitol Hill with Doug Mastriano, who is running for governor of Pennsylvania.

[Rick Saccone \(R\): Running for Lt. Governor in the Pennsylvania primary | fox43.com](#)

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Grand Marshal Chosen For West Hartford's 2022 Memorial Day Parade

(Patch 5 May 22) ... Gabby DeBenedictis

(We-Ha 4 May 22)

A former West Hartford resident who currently serves as a deputy commandant for the United States Marine Corps will be grand marshal of the town's 2022 Memorial Day parade, officials announced.

Lt. Gen. Edward D. Banta, who graduated from Conard High School in 1982, will officiate the May 30 parade. He'll also give a keynote address at the High School Military Inductees Ceremony the following day.

Banta, who grew up in California and Connecticut, was promoted to his current rank on July 9, 2021, and serves as the Marines' deputy commandant for installations and logistics.

He's spent his career in the military — he joined shortly after graduating from Colgate University in 1986 — and fought in Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and more.

In 2006, Banta graduated from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. He also holds a master's degree in systems management from the **Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, California.

West Hartford's 2022 Memorial Day Parade is at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 30. It will begin on Farmington Avenue at the intersection of Woodrow Street and will end at the Town Hall.

[Rick Saccone \(R\): Running for Lt. Governor in the Pennsylvania primary | fox43.com](#)

[West Hartford Memorial Day Parade to Return, Lt. Gen. Edward Banta Chosen as Grand Marshal - We-Ha | West Hartford News](#)

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Hole Lotta Doughnuts Leadership Series Focuses on Climate Change and Its Future Impact

(Ashe Post and Times 3 May 22) ... Nathan Ham

The Hole Lotta Doughnuts Leadership Series returned on April 21 with a presentation from Ron Sznajder, a former CEO with more than 35 years of business experience in industries focused on the weather, agriculture, energy and transportation among others.

The presentation took place at the Boondocks Brew Haus and featured discussions on the local impact of climate change and how leaders can prepare future generations for dealing with this challenge.

Sznajder, a resident of Minneapolis, Minnesota, has a unique set of qualifications for speaking on the issue of climate change and its impact on business. In addition to his more than three decades of business leadership experience, Sznajder also holds a Bachelor of Science in Meteorology from the University of Wisconsin and graduate studies in Atmospheric Sciences at the U.S. **Naval Postgraduate School**.



“There are a lot of things we can do right now, small adjustments that will help us prepare and adapt to what is a gradual change in the climate,” Sznaider said during his presentation.

Sznaider explained that university research and development, as well as private sector innovation, are two of the biggest keys to preparing for a future with a warming climate.

During the presentation, Sznaider pointed out that climate change is a combination of both man-made factors and a natural warming of the climate. There isn’t a quick fix for any of the issues either.

“I think this is something that is not being talked about. Leadership is about being transparent and looking at all the different angles and not trying to purposefully avoid talking about something,” he said. “We as a society developed a fossil fuels-based energy economy. It made sense. We now understand that as the world gets bigger and more people do that, we know there are some byproducts here that are going to be complicated, but it’s not easy to just turn it off. We’re going to have to have a transition to more cleaner energy, but it’s complicated and it’s going to take a lot longer than anybody thinks.”

Some of the small changes noted in the presentation that could lead to less of a man-made impact on climate change were residential solar energy programs, installing smart thermostats in homes and entrepreneurial investments into research.

“We are warming, it’s a big problem to solve but it’s not easy. Some of it is natural, most of it is from emissions. But I do think there are a lot of pragmatic adjustments that we can do along the way,” Sznaider said. “We need balanced leadership to incorporate different points of view and we need to make it easier for private sector investors to make a difference.”

[Hole Lotta Doughnuts Leadership Series focuses on climate change and its future impact | Ashe | ashepostandtimes.com](https://www.ashepostandtimes.com)

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In Person: JJ Phelan of S&H Systems

(DC Velocity 2 May 22) ... David Maloney

In our continuing series of discussions with top supply-chain company executives, JJ Phelan discusses the benefits of working with an integrator and management lessons he learned while serving his country.

JJ Phelan is vice president system sales with S&H Systems, a material handling systems design and integration company. Phelan has been in the material handling industry for more than 17 years. Prior to joining S&H, he worked with Amazon’s North American Core Fulfillment team as a program/project manager and served as chief operating officer and president of material handling systems integrator TriFactor. He also spent nine years as an officer in the U.S. Navy.

Phelan is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy with a bachelor’s degree in systems engineering. He also holds a master’s degree in electrical engineering from the **Naval Postgraduate School** and an MBA from the University of South Florida.

Q: What do you see as the current state of the material handling industry?

A: The material handling industry is on the cusp of a significant breakthrough. Even today, we are witnessing creativity in combining fixed conveyance and sortation equipment with newer technologies—such as autonomous mobile robots (AMRs) and goods-to-person (GTP) solutions.

Investing in material handling systems has always been justified by the reduction of inefficiencies and waste within warehouses or fulfillment centers. Typically, that’s been non-value activities like associates traveling to or from storage locations to carry out their picking or replenishing tasks. Now that AMR and GTP technologies are becoming more mature and reliable, material handling engineers have options to develop unique solutions that reduce inefficiencies and increase throughput with minimal human interaction or wasted travel and search time. As an engineer, I’m excited to be a part of this evolution in technology, which should result in clients’ meeting growth and success goals sooner.



Q: What are the advantages of using a design and integration company to deploy new material handling systems?

A: Our primary advantage as an integrator—especially one that represents multiple solution providers—is that we can focus on the best technology for a given application instead of forcing a specific manufacturer’s equipment onto an operation where it might not be in the customer’s best interest. Having a broad spectrum of best-of-breed application choices also allows us to incorporate options that provide the most cost-effective solution and/or the shortest leadtimes. In every case, integrators offer customers flexibility and scalability—a competitive advantage in today’s consumer-driven environment.

Q: What did you learn as a Navy officer and an engineer that you apply to your current role in system sales?

A: My time in the Navy had a couple of phases. Initially upon commissioning from [the U.S. Naval Academy in] Annapolis, I was a surface warfare officer, served on a destroyer, and was deployed to the Persian Gulf. I was fortunate enough to be in the engineering plant and lead sailors who kept the ship running, which was right up my alley. After that, I was selected to join a very small all-officer community called “engineering duty officers.” I went to grad school and earned an MS in electrical engineering and then went back in the fleet as a project manager for ship overhauls and modernizations.

Having opportunities early in my professional career that included leadership, process management, and technical problem-solving helped groom me as an engineer in the material handling industry—dealing with multiple stakeholders, managing expectations, and creating value every day.

Q: What is the most significant change you have seen during your time in the industry?

A: I’ve been in the industry since 2004, and to me, the most significant change was when Amazon acquired [warehouse robot developer] Kiva Systems in 2012. Not many companies were willing to take that leap of faith. Yet Amazon made that solution successful and continues to use it at its Amazon Robotics Sortable Fulfillment Centers as well as other types of facilities in its network. As a result, there have been multiple companies that have developed their own version of an autonomous mobile robot, each with its own unique benefits and value proposition. Today, these solutions have been widely adopted by the industry.

Q: How has the growth of online shopping changed distribution?

A: The ability to “swipe and tap” on your phone and have a single item delivered tomorrow, or maybe even today, has caused our industry to go from boring to exciting almost overnight. Today, supply chain is being taught in business and engineering schools in most colleges and universities. Material handling used to be pallet racking and forklifts. Now, it is robotic piece picking, automated packing, hands-free labeling, high-speed sorting, and so many other technologies and applications. Our industry has moved to becoming both creative and technical—using multiple technical skills, such as data analysis, software engineering, electrical and controls engineering, mechanical engineering, and structural engineering.

Q: You give a lot back to your community through volunteer work. Why is this important to you?

A: Well, it’s a little selfish in a sense. Volunteering and sacrificing for others makes me feel good. I’m a happier human when I can use whatever gifts I have for the benefit of others.

[In Person: JJ Phelan of S&H Systems | DC Velocity](#)

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Are We Informationally Disadvantaged? The Realities of Information War in Ukraine

(Small Wars Journal 9 May 22) ... David Acosta

The war in Ukraine stands out as the classic David and Goliath story between the larger, more powerful Russia and the smaller, more agile Ukraine. It is a tale of how Ukraine wielding the West’s spigot of truth, a deluge of TikTok videos, a band of Eastern European Elves, and Elon Musk’s satellite constellation, converged information power to challenge Russia’s firehose of falsehoods. Historians will



study this conflict for years to come, and the information lessons are critical, especially to the US Army as it develops its emerging information advantage concept.

Since the first mention of information advantage in the Joint Concept for Operations in the Information Environment in 2018, the Army struggled to understand what achieving information advantage really means. Much of the Army's focus is on network degradation, systems, processes, and formations, which claim to all ensure information advantage. These discussions fail to comprehend the activities taking place in Ukraine and their implications. In essence information advantage isn't about a unit, a computer, or even a doctrine; it's all about the narrative.

The narrative is the backbone of any information advantage, and its why Ukraine dominates Russia in the information environment currently. Narrative is about the meaning and interpretation of facts, ideas, and the story. The narrative is so crucial to warfare today because in the words of author Peter Singer, "if your ideas don't win out, you can lose the war before it even begins." In analysis of the current conflict there are five factors as to why Ukraine dominates the narrative and maintains an information advantage:

- Information for effect
- The power of Open-Source Intelligence
- The Rise of Elves, Cyberpartisans, and Hackers
- The mobilized information warrior
- Information enabling

Only by understanding and harnessing these factors and their convergent power, under a credible narrative, can the US Army achieve an information advantage against future threats and adversaries.

Information for Effect

One of the first information salvos fired in this phase of the Ukrainian conflict came in the form of strategically timed public releases by the governments of the United States and Great Britain, foretelling of the Russian invasion. While many questioned these claims' validity without accompanying declassified intelligence, the releases' accuracy bolstered the credibility of the West's narrative and stripped away the Russian element of surprise. This concept of releasing factual information to negatively affect perceptions and/or damage credibility and capability of a targeted group is known in US Army doctrine as "information for effect." Singer also refers to this as "Pre-bunking," which is leveraging information to get ahead of an adversary's own narrative. Historically adversaries leveraged information for effect against the United States as was the case with the hack and release of the Democratic National Committee emails in 2016 and the 2010 WikiLeaks scandal. In the case of Ukraine, however, information for effect resulted in seizing the initiative, swaying the narrative away from Russia, and galvanizing support across the world for Ukraine, all before the first Russian tanks invaded.

Military commanders and planners must recognize the importance of information for effect to shape their information environment. Commanders must weigh the outcomes of the release of intelligence to bolster their mission's narrative and legitimacy while reducing adversary credibility or deterring an adversary from planned actions, all of which contribute to an information advantage. Commanders must realize, to paraphrase General George Patton-- that good information shared now is better than perfect information shared next week.

Open-Source Intelligence

Another emergent factor commanders must address is the ability of private citizens, reporters, and amateur sleuths to aggregate their own intelligence picture from publicly available information. Commonly referred to as Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), this capability can both assist and harm friendly forces in the execution of their mission. While some of this OSINT work comes from individuals, often formal organizations work together to provide analysis on key topics. One of the



most well-known is Bellingcat, a British-based group describing itself as an “independent international collective of researchers, investigators and citizen journalists using open source and social media investigation to probe a variety of subjects.” It was Bellingcat’s work on the 2014 Malaysian Air Flight 17 shutdown over Ukraine which exposed Russian involvement. These groups, some would argue, not only help to reduce the “fog of war,” but also force a certain level of transparency by governments and armed groups.

In both the Russian buildup and invasion of Ukraine, OSINT proved decisive in confirming US and allied claims of a potential Russian invasion, thus reinforcing the narrative. Before Putin’s announcement of a “special operation,” OSINT observers on Twitter posted screenshots of traffic buildups along major routes into Ukraine, a sign of imminent military action. In the days following the invasion these groups identified uses of possible war crimes, mapped combat events, and even reported on reinforcements moving across Russia to the frontlines. This analysis works both ways as a recent piece in the Russian Военно-промышленный курьер (Military-Industrial Courier) illustrated. The article reported on NATO aircraft, their roles, and capabilities as they flew through eastern Europe, all compiled from the website FlightRadar24. In the future, commanders and their staffs must understand their actions will be identified, analyzed, and tweeted in near real time by the masses and adversaries, and must ensure their deeds match their words. As Ukraine shows, being able to hide one’s plans is now harder than ever before.

The Rise of Elves, Cyberpartisans, and Hackers

Even as Russian forces massed on the Ukrainian border, the conflict raged in cyberspace as non-state actors challenged Russian information warfare primacy. Cyber activist groups such as the Elves helped to identify pro-Kremlin propaganda and disinformation campaigns with over 4,000 volunteers in 13 Central and Eastern European countries. The Elves’ activities focused on engaging, collecting, identifying, and neutralizing messaging coming from Russian trolls or bots. While these groups’ efforts are defensive in nature, others work specifically to attack and disrupt Russian activities in cyberspace. In late January, the Cyberpartisans, a hacker group from Belarus, compromised that nation’s railway system with a ransomware attack as means of preventing Russian troops from moving into Belarus. This group prides itself on resisting the oppression of the Lukashenko regime, particularly in the wake of the widely disputed August 2020 National Election. Finally, hackers groups such as Anonymous declared cyber war on Russia and sought to disrupt everything from Russian domestic television to the Russian Space Research Institute in an attempt to make this war costly for the Kremlin.

These non-state actors pose a challenge for military planners as they do not fit into the traditional roles of combatants and non-combatants. While some might be recruited or co-opted for defensive cyber and disinformation identification such as the Elves, other more disruptive groups have questionable loyalties and might be at odds with US military operations. Such was the case in 1991 when Dutch hackers broke into Pentagon databases, stole critical military information, and attempted to sell it to the Iraqis shortly before Operation Desert Storm. In either case, commanders must identify the role of these groups and understand their place and actions in the information environment and towards one’s own narrative.

The Mobilized Information Warrior

The power of today’s social media-enabled individuals to engage on the world stage is not new. Books like David Patrikarakos’ War in 140 Characters and Peter Singer’s and Emerson Brooking’s LikeWar highlight the power of these individuals from the streets of Cairo to the apartments of Gaza. While the Arab Spring saw the rise of Twitter, the Ukraine war in the words of Wired’s Chris Stokel-Walker, is “the first to play out on TikTok.” Views of TikTok videos tagged with #ukraine jumped from 6.4 billion to 17.1 billion views over an eight-day period alone. These short videos allowed users to quickly capture battle scenes, edit them, and then post them to the web in minutes after an event. These videos along with a bombardment of tweets and other social media posts created such powerful symbols as the Ghost of Kyiv and the Heroes of Snake Island, and serve as powerful reminders of social media’s continued importance to the modern battlefield.



While such activities by populations prove decisive in achieving an information advantage by sharing the narrative in billions of posts each day, they cannot be controlled or co-opted through military means. Furthermore, dangers exist from misinformation as these powerful images explode onto the internet without proper verification. Such were the cases with the Ghost of Kyiv and Heroes of Snake Island, but their power and symbology continues to reinforce the narrative of Ukraine's valiant resistance to the Russian invader. US military planners will never be able to compete with this kind of mass message dissemination. Instead, planners must understand the environment and the level of sophistication of the population to social media trends and applications, while remaining cognizant of misinformation and disinformation, which if shared, damage a narrative's credibility and legitimacy.

Information Enabling

While much of US doctrine focuses on ensuring continuity of US military networks, there is no mention of a population's networks. This is the last factor of Ukraine's conflict which US military leaders much recognize: ensuring information continuously flows to and from audiences, a concept I refer to as information enabling. In this war, information enabling came in two forms: enabling the Ukrainian population to share the narrative, and ensuring the Russian population received this same narrative.

The most symbolic information enabling effort in Ukraine came from Elon Musk's Starlink satellite internet system. Musk personally responded to a tweet from the Ukrainian Minister of Digital Transformation and sent shipments of Starlink receivers to Ukraine to ensure continued internet access. While Starlink's criticality to Ukrainian communication is debatable, downloads of the Starlink application in Ukraine reached 21,000 in a single day and have tripled since the war began. With Starlink and the rest of the internet service providers inside Ukraine, the country continues to share its narrative with the world.

In Russia, where officials shut down many social media forms and enacted a "fake news" law about the war, information enabling worked to ensure Russians continued to hear the narrative. News sources such as the British Broadcasting Corporation and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty posted instructions on their websites on how to use virtual private networks, download proxies, and access the Onion Router on the dark web in order to receive reports. Hackers and activists looked to breach the Kremlin's propaganda firewall by embedding comments about the war in Moscow restaurant reviews and sent millions of text messages and emails to Russian phones and internet users to share the truth about the war. As a result of these efforts and many others, Russians continue to protest the war despite the risk of arrest and prison.

Conclusion

Whatever the final outcome of the war in Ukraine, one thing is certain: Ukraine, enabled by the West, and assisted by its army of Elves, hackers, and its information warrior citizens, destroyed the notion of Russian information primacy. The convergence of the five factors described here provided Ukraine and the West the powerful narrative necessary to succeed in the information environment after years of dismal failure against Russia.

The US Army and by extension the Joint force must study and incorporate these critical lessons into any future information concept. They must realize future conflicts are not two-sided, but multi-player and multi-agenda. These factors must be accounted for and incorporated into operational planning throughout the competition continuum. Furthermore, commanders must look beyond their own formations and leverage other elements of national power along with joint, interagency, multinational, and even the private sector for solutions to address these critical factors. Failure to address these factors leaves the future force informationally disadvantaged and naïve to the future perils that await.

About the Author(s)

Colonel Dave Acosta is a US Army Reserve Information Operations officer currently attending the US Army War College. He previously served in joint and Army assignments throughout the Middle East, European, and Pacific regions. He holds graduate degree from the **Naval Postgraduate School** and undergraduate degree from the US Air Force Academy.



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Interview | US 7th Fleet Commander Karl O. Thomas: On Alert in the Indo-Pacific

(Japan Forward 3 May 22) ... Mizuki Okada

“The key is deterrence. I think you’re standing on board a large piece of that deterrence, but also the training with other like-minded nations.”

Reporters accompanying the Minister and Ambassador were given a tour of the USS Abraham Lincoln, the fifth nuclear powered Nimitz class US aircraft carrier. Based out of San Diego, California, it is part of the largest forward deployed fleet of the US Pacific forces.

Sitting down in the Captain’s Study of the USS Abraham Lincoln, Vice Admiral Thomas then gave an on-the-record interview to the reporters present.

Excerpts follow:

How do you view the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region, with increased military activity from China, Russia, and North Korea?

A lot of things happen in this region that are critical to the world. We’re all watching what’s happening in Europe with Russian aggression. We’re watching China as they gain confidence and increase expansion exercises.

Certainly North Korea has launched more missiles recently. As for our naval forces, the US Navy has deployed the 7th Fleet, along with our US Marine Corps III MEF team, and then all of our allies and partners who we can sail and operate with every day.

The key is deterrence. I think you’re standing on board a large piece of that deterrence, but it really is broader than that. It’s really the opportunity and the exercises and that training that we do with all the other like-minded nations out here in the Pacific that provides that strength and that balance.

As we saw over in Europe, the free world gets a vote and understands the importance of sovereignty, the importance of rules-based international order. And so by being out here operating as a very visible, very agile dynamic force, there’s no better way to provide the deterrence that we need in this part of the region.

How well would you say the US and its allies are walking the line?

We have RIMPAC coming up. In one of the Pacific exercises we’ll have 30 nations out there operating together. Then there’s our mission Keen Edge that we just did [from the end of January to February with the Japanese Self-Defense Forces].

There are numerous exercises in this part of the world to be able to operate at sea and exchange information, exchange tactics and be able to work as a consolidated force. That is the best deterrence that we can provide: all nations working on a common goal.

Do you feel there’s a deterrence gap in this region, with China and its ballistic missiles?

I would say it’s concerning that China might not be willing to be as transparent as the rest of the nations in this part of the world.

They certainly have been very open in their desires and their intentions. But, I do think that it’s in the news that our nations have been talking at the highest level, between our Presidents [President Joe Biden of the United States and President Xi Jinping of China). And then also at the Secretary of Defense level.

It’s encouraging that we are communicating. Certainly as we’re out there operating in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, our ships are operating in the same water space.

We operate professionally around one another. So, while I think there’s a tension, obviously, between our nations, there’s an understanding that it’s important that we communicate and try to find common ground we can agree on.

Will the US have a further response to the invasion of Ukraine, and will Russia's aggression impact the Indo-Pacific region?

We're certainly paying attention to what's going on over in Europe and with the Ukrainian War, Russian aggression into a sovereign nation. Certainly Russia is a large country, and it has a fleet on this Pacific side as well. And we watch them routinely.

I'm not going to talk about the operations that were conducted, But I think all of us in the world are watching the events unfold over in Ukraine. We're all learning from it, China's learning from it, Taiwan's learning from it, The United States is learning from it, and the world is learning from it.

We've seen the strength and power of the free world come together when a country is aggressive and doesn't abide by our international rules-based order and invades a sovereign nation. And so, we're all on alert and watching.

I'm very confident in our ability out here in the Pacific to keep an eye on the Russian fleet.

How are the US, Japan and other allies responding to North Korea's missile launches?

This ship sailed up into the Sea of Japan in April. And it was a statement by an aircraft carrier that had been sailing in the South China Sea just a week and a half earlier, could move that rapidly. That's the benefit of this aircraft carrier.

We did sail — the Abraham Lincoln sailed up through the Sea of Japan — just to make sure that other nations understood the versatility of this ship, and to maybe send a message to [North Korean leader] Kim Jong Un that we're aware of your missile launches and not appreciative of the increased tempo.

We're always ready to do that type of operation. And that's the flexibility that we bring as a forward deployed force.

What do you think of Japan's role in this Indo-Pacific region especially against China's aggressive military activities?

I think Japan has a huge role to play. Clearly, Japan's physical location puts them in close proximity to the People's Republic of China. The fact that they have a very capable military allows them the leadership role that is necessary for this entire part of the world.

And I'm very happy with the tight coordination that our two nations exhibit on a daily basis. The missions that I just talked about going up into the Sea of Japan, I had Japanese ships with this carrier operating up there. It's very important that like-minded nations operate together and Japan has a very strong leadership role to play.

How do you view the US-Japan alliance in the face of China's intention to alter the status quo?

I had the good fortune of operating out here as the strike group commander on board an aircraft carrier just like this [the USS Ronald Reagan] a few years ago. And then I came back as the [7th] fleet commander. So I've seen firsthand how strong and how rapidly the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force [has worked] with the 7th Fleet, the III MEF team and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force with our Air Force. I've seen the advancement that we've made as a team through exercises like Keen Edge where we go out and we practice together.

We're truly interoperable and interchangeable among our forces. But, the thing that strikes me is the way that we both see the problem today, the way that we react and understand the challenges that we have. And I've never seen our alliance be tighter than it is today.

[The alliance] is extremely aligned, and it's very refreshing when I work with my fleet Commander [in Chief, JMSDF Fleet] [Vice] Admiral [Hideki] Yuasa, my counterpart. He and I can almost complete each other's sentences. We talk regularly and operate together that closely.

About Vice Admiral Karl Thomas, Commander, United States 7th Fleet



Vice Admiral Karl Thomas is a native of Northern Virginia, He received his commission through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1986 with a degree in Management Systems. He earned a Master of Science in Information Technology from **Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, California.

A carrier aviator in the E-2C Hawkeye, he served at sea as executive officer and commanding officer of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 117 during Operation Iraqi Freedom. As a flag officer, his tours include Task Force 70/Commander, Carrier Strike Group 5, deploying on USS Ronald Reagan out of Yokosuka, Japan. He took command of the US 7th Fleet in July 2021.

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