

10th Annual Pacific IO & EW Symposium

CALL FOR PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

October 18-22, 2021 | Honolulu, HI | Camp H.M. Smith, HI

SYMPOSIUM THEME

The theme for the 2021 Information Operations (IO)/Electromagnetic Warfare (EW) Symposium, “Information Operations in Great Power Competition,” reflects upon the critical importance of confronting complex security challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region. As America’s potential adversaries conduct covert and coercive influence campaigns and activities, they are effectively employing IO and EW to undermine our sovereignty and that of our Allies and partners.¹

Why focus on Great Power Competition?

The U.S. has made significant advancements in warfighting concepts and strategies to overcome the Anti-Access and Area Denial (A2/AD) strategies employed by Communist China and the Russian Federation. As former Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work explained, the Joint Warfighting Concept is designed to “fight and win against a near-peer battle network adept at systems warfare and system destruction operations,”² which is clearly directed at the PRC’s A2/AD and concept of “systems confrontation and systems destruction warfare.”³ IO and EW contributions to overcome A2/AD were examined at the 2016, 2017, and 2020 symposia.⁴ Therefore, our focus returns to the day-to-day campaigning against adversaries, primarily the People’s Republic of China, who are attempting to achieve military and political objectives, using influence operations characterized by hybrid combinations of military, para-military, law enforcement and other means to effectively control physical space, project power and condition audiences to accept the acquiescence to PRC’s coercion and aggression. There is a recursive interaction between the A2/AD umbrellas, and the hybrid operations carried out in the “gray zone” between peacetime cooperation and warfare. Hybrid operations seek to continuously seize or control new operations space, in order to further expand the reach of the A2/AD umbrella, and in so doing, extends the supporting backdrop of military capability that underwrites and supports continued hybrid operations.

Communist China is employing an overall coercive approach using tactics short of armed conflict to achieve its political and military objectives during the competition phase.⁵ Within that approach, the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) is conducting influence operations to gain and maintain favorable military and political positions to control their neighbors and the operational space. These influence operations involve direct confrontations between the PLA and its paramilitary and militia arms in hybrid combinations, and supported by the PLA’s “Three Warfares” doctrine, against the commercial, military, law enforcement arms, and ordinary citizens of nations in the region.

The 2020 DoD EMS Superiority Strategy recognizes the EMS as a battlespace and “the dynamics of great power competition demand increased appreciation and focus on freedom of action in the EMS,” and that “[t]here is tremendous advantage afforded to the competitor that gains and maintains EMS superiority across the competition continuum.”⁶ The EMS is a part of the natural world that can be occupied, and that occupation takes up space. As such, it shares many of the same attributes as the air and maritime domains with regards to national sovereignty, international commercial and economic interests, dependencies, and military usage. Communist Chinese state media reported that its military was considering the use of non-lethal electromagnetic weapons, including low-energy laser devices could be used to expel U.S. warships that entered the SCS.⁷ The PLA Navy (PLAN), has used targeting radar as a weapon of intimidation against the Philippine Navy, demonstrating how the EMS is a component of Great Power Competition.⁸

The outcome of these PLA operations is increased control over disputed boundaries and sea areas. By effectively intimidating their competitors, the PLA is driving acquiescence to Chinese Communist Party demands. To maintain international laws and norms, the U.S., her Allies and partners, must conduct operations in the physical, virtual and cognitive dimensions as part of their efforts to counter this threat.

Submit your proposal.

The symposium provides an opportunity to hear from experts in the fields of IO and EW, as well as policy studies, international relations, technologists, and Foreign Service professionals. The symposium will include one or two panels, and individual presentations appropriate to the theme. USINDOPACOM J39 and the Hawaii Diamond Head Chapter of the Association of Old Crows are soliciting original unclassified English language presentations and/or papers on the conference theme from subject matter experts in the U.S. and Allied militaries / government, as well as from academia and industry. Presentations for the full plenary session of the symposium must be UNCLASSIFIED (with Distribution Statement A for DoD presenters). Presentations for the classified sessions on 21 and 22 October for cleared personnel at Camp H. M. Smith should be at the SECRET REL USA, FRA, JPN, FVEY level (or at higher classification for smaller US-only break-out sessions held in smaller conference rooms at the HQs).

Contact the Symposium Chair, Dr. Arthur Tulak, COL(R), at arthur.n.tulak.ctr@pacom.mil if you are interested in speaking or need additional information. For presentation proposals, provide the title of the proposed presentation with a brief 1-2 page synopsis, and a short biography or curriculum vitae. Papers may also be presented, and should be accompanied by a summary of the focus of the proposed remarks, with the accepted paper being published on the symposium website. Industry presentations that support the conference theme may be submitted for either the UNCLASSIFIED or SECRET REL USA, FRA, JPN, FVEY days. Industry presentations focused solely on a company’s products and services will not be accepted, but may be part of the virtual exhibit hall. The deadline for submitting is close of business Friday, August 20, 2021, but earlier is better.

End Notes:

¹ See the U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific, declassified by the Robert C. O'Brien, January 5, 2021. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IPS-Final-Declass.pdf>

² Robert O. Work, (Dec. 17, 2020), "A Joint Warfighting Concept for Systems Warfare," Center for a New American Security, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/a-joint-warfighting-concept-for-systems-warfare>

³ See Jeffrey Engstrom, (2018), Systems Confrontation and System Destruction Warfare: How the Chinese People's Liberation Army Seeks to Wage Modern Warfare. RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1708.html

⁴ Themes for these symposia: 2016 – Challenges and Opportunities for IO/EW/Cyber in A2/AD Environments; 2017 – Non-Kinetic Fires (EW & IO) in the Multi-Domain Battlefield, and; 2020 – contributions of IO and EW in All Domain Operations from Competition into Conflict.

⁵ Office of the Secretary of Defense, (Sep. 1, 2020) *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*, p. 70. <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488689/-1/-1/1/2020-DOD-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT-FINAL.PDF>

⁶ Mark Esper, Secretary of Defense, (Oct 2020), *DoD Electromagnetic Spectrum Superiority Strategy*, Department of Defense. https://media.defense.gov/2020/Oct/29/2002525927/-1/-1/0/ELECTROMAGNETIC_SPECTRUM_SUPERIORITY_STRATEGY.PDF

⁷ CRS Report No. R42784, Op. cit., p. 10.

⁸ On February 17, 2020, the PLAN corvette with pennant number 514 turned its targeting radar on the Philippine Navy ship BRP Conrado Yap (PS39) that was on its way to the Rizal Reef Detachment in the West Philippine Sea, off Commodore Reef in the Spratly Islands. See Jim Gomez, (April 22, 2020), Associated Press, *Washington Times*, "Philippines protests China's sea claim, weapon pointing." See also ABS-CBN News (Apr 23 2020) "Chinese ship had 'hostile intent' in pointing radar gun at PH vessel: military," <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/23/20/chinese-ship-had-hostile-intent-in-pointing-radar-gun-at-ph-vessel-military><https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/apr/22/philippines-protests-chinas-sea-claim-weapon-point/>