

Adm. Trussler: Information Warfare 'All About Speed for Advantage'



Rear Adm. Jeff Trussler, left, speaks with Oklahoma officials in this 2019 photo. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Allen Michael McNair

ARLINGTON, Va. —The admiral who sponsors the resources for the U.S. Navy's information warfare operations said the modern warfare environment is increasingly governed by the speed of information and its effects on decision-making.

"It is all about speed for advantage," said Vice Adm. Jeffrey E. Trussler, deputy chief of naval operations for information warfare and director of naval intelligence, speaking Nov. 13 at a webinar on the website of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The event was sponsored by the U.S. Naval Institute and Huntington Ingalls Industries.

"One hundred, 200 years ago it was pretty slow-moving," Trussler said. "Over the last hundred years that [advantage] has slowly whittled away and become much shorter. Now that we're in the information age, the information advantage you might hold could be a mere matter of minutes or even seconds. ... It's about understanding the domain as never before" from the seabed to space.

"Depending on where you are, the time of day, the environmental conditions, you may be offered advantages if you know how to take advantage of them, or the enemy may be subject to some disadvantages if you know how to exploit them."

Information warfare has arisen to such importance in naval operations that there is now an Information Warfare Commander

assigned to each carrier strike group on par with other composite warfare commanders such as the air warfare, undersea warfare, surface warfare, and strike warfare commanders in the strike group.

“Those windows of opportunity might be very short,” said the admiral, a submariner. “The ability to take advantage ... it’s all about speed, it’s about the precision of information you get. ... And the volume that comes in. More importantly, those things also offer vulnerabilities. It also requires the speed of decision. So, it’s not about accumulating a lot of great information. If you don’t act on it in an appropriate amount of time, that decision advantage you may have with the information you have it may just go away.”

Trussler said the speed of information “requires leaders who are going to take advantage of this. And I hope we’re evolving toward that as the information flows, the opportunity flows, those windows that can be offered into the physical environment or the RF spectrum of slight opportunities, that’s when decisions have to be made and taken advantage of before that advantage of information is lost.”