

Navy Must 'Expand Our Operational Reach' Through Tactical ISR



Vice Adm. Scott Conn, deputy chief of naval operations for warfighting requirements and capabilities says the Navy is facing challenges in finding a tactical ISR advantage. *NAVY LEAGUE / Lisa Nipp*

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The Navy no longer has a monopoly on key technologies as it did at the end of the Cold War and now must turn to tactical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance to gain an advantage over adversaries, a top Navy official said Wednesday.

The key challenge the Navy faces in the coming years is finding that advantage at the tactical level with communications and unmanned assets, Vice Adm. Scott Conn, deputy chief of naval operations for warfighting requirements and capabilities (N9), said during a panel discussion at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space expo in National Harbor, Maryland.

"When I say the tactical level, I'm talking at the numbered fleet level, at the task force level, at the task group level," Conn said. "The world is a different place. At the end of the Cold War, there was an anomaly in history that the U.S. had a monopoly on the key critical technologies, and that's no longer the case."

This is particularly true in the areas of range and precision of strike weapons, he said.

"Because of that, we need to expand our operational reach – our ability to sense, make sense and act," Conn said.

Part of accomplishing that is through better communication and

initiatives like Project Overmatch, and another part is using unmanned systems in the air, on the surface and in the sea to identify warfighting advantages at the tactical level.

It is of critical importance for the Navy to master these areas, Conn added.

“This is not about in times of crisis, competing – this is about winning,” he said.