

William King Opening Remarks

26-28 July 2022

Opening remarks:

Thank you for joining us as it is a clear representation that you feel this forum and opportunity is for you to engage with and learn from others.

Please download and use the SLIDO application as it will enable you to directly engage via questions to all our guest speakers and panelist.

There will be press attending both days so be aware and acknowledge you may be attributed with statements/comments you make publically.

Take full advantage of the networking breaks to network and visit the exhibitors downstairs on the first floor.

No need to take pictures of the slides as they will all be made available to you as soon as the conference is over and the surveys have been completed. Give us your feedback as to what worked and you want our planning committee to sustain and what must be changed and/or added to make next year's forum even greater.

Now to set the stage and tone for this years' conference:

What a crazy year this last year has been and yes, as many of you have already made known to me, this coming year promises to be even more adventurous and exciting (both in good and bad ways). I have had many of you ask me why the theme of this year's conference is "Competition, Climate Change, and CBRN Defense – Defining Challenges/ Delivering Solutions." I would offer we should have added a fourth C for CYBER as these four Cs are very much what we must be keenly focused upon **NOW** and the near **FUTURE or they will consume us**.

The Joint Force and military industrial complex is at an inflection point during what will be a decisive decade. Geopolitical relationships are shifting, economies are rising and falling, rapid technological advances are fueling militaries' modernizations at scale, and external factors like climate change and pandemics are changing the way people live, work, and go to war. An undeniable and intentional international violation of sovereignty has shocked the international system and status quo. Large scale combat has now been introduced into strategic competition between autocracies and democracies, further stressing the rules-based international order.

For the first time in our Nation's history, the United States faces two major nuclear powers that may employ nuclear coercion as a way to meet their national objectives. Both China and Russia possess the will and the means to pose an existential threat to our way of life.

The current environment requires the Joint Force to strengthen and integrate deterrence across domains, theatres, and the spectrum of conflict; modernize the nuclear enterprise; assure allies and partners; and prepare to prevail in great power conflict. The United States must meet this challenge with enthusiasm, discipline, and fortitude – the window to seize strategic initiative is **NOW**. To do so may require us to prioritize the future over the present in a careful deliberate balance. A careful balance between executing required current operations **while rapidly building BOLD future warfighting advantage immediately to deter now and reduce future risks.**

Last May 26, 2021, our Chairman of the CJCS GEN Mark Miley said it best,

“We are now in the 76 year of the great power peace following World War II and the structure is under stress. We can see it fraying at the edge. And with history as our guide, we would be wise to lift our gaze from the never ending urgency of the present and set the conditions for a future that prevents great power war.”

Military power today is increasingly projected through access to data earlier and at all levels, through software, computing, and networking infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and autonomous systems. Infrastructure, technology and data architecture that enables senior leaders to make timely, informed decisions and apply the critical required forces at the time and place of need are the true enablers of victory and success.

Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, Afghanistan Withdrawal Operations, and related critical supply chain management issues have illuminated the vital importance of the Department’s existing data analytics capabilities to support decision makers and provided insight into critical data gaps.

A data view that aggregates, deciphers and provides a holistic lens of information to support the Chairman and the Secretary supports decision-making in response to incident(s) which impact Department of Defense (DoD) resources and capabilities. Joint data sharing across the DoD Community and with Allies and Partners enables a coordinated response. Expeditiously executed, courses of action can be assessed, risks calculations of critical low density, high-demand capabilities analyzed, and pre-positioning and deployment of personnel and equipment can mitigate loss of lives, property, and natural resources.

Additionally, there are clear and present indicators and trends that we must not ignore or allow to go unchallenged. If we choose to not address these trends they **will** shape and drive our National Security environment and will serve as threats to our way of life.

Trends such as GEOPOLITICAL where State and non-state actors test the post WWII international order, consisting of alliances, institutions, agreements, and norms, established with the US leadership over the proceeding decades. Amidst institutional and economic fragility and the ongoing health crisis, adversaries will attempt to weaken US leadership and rewrite international rules and norms to their own benefit. The US in coordination with our allies and partners, will modernize the international architecture to promote security and economic prosperity.

TECHNOLOGICAL trends where rapid advancement and proliferation of commercial and military technologies empower non-state actors and erode long-standing military advantages that separate the US from its competitors. Advanced technological capabilities will not be sufficient to ensure military victories; however the creative application of such technologies is critical to shaping the outcome of any contest.

EXTERNAL trends where external factors related to pandemics, climate change, demographics changes, and resource scarcity destabilize the security environment and impose changes and constraints on domestic political context. Extreme weather events, exacerbated by climate change, pose risk to military operations and increase demands on the Joint Force to support civil authorities. The health of the Joint Force personnel, harmful effects of climate change on missions, installations, and the creation of new conflicts, crisis and natural disaster response, and resulting mass migrations have the potential to devolve into greater security problems.

I offer, Technical advancements across all military domains, will threaten the US Homeland and interests in unpredictable ways. The time between indications and threat warning of tactical and strategic attack will shorten and our actions and lack of actions at the tactical level will be played out on the Global Stage and will as it does today have Strategic and long lasting implications and effects. US opponents will also achieve their objectives by combining military and non-military elements below the level of armed conflict – a conceptual area known as the “Gray Zone” – which includes operations in the information environment, territorial seizures, political subversion, economic coercion, and cyber operations. Future warfare will include protracted conflicts in contested environments - what we call the COMPETITION phase of operations. We are living and experiencing this phase TODAY and in my personal opinion we are NOT DOMINATING the enemy.

Disruptive technological advancements will further alter the character of warfare. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that biological threats do not respect national borders, treaties, or social/economic status. An infectious disease threat anywhere is a threat everywhere. Over

the past two and a half years into the pandemic, we have all seen and experienced first-hand the significant toll that COVID 19 has had and continues to have on our global society's economic and social structures, including its impact on militaries and defense departments around the world.

The COVID 19 pandemic have laid bare the threat infectious diseases pose to economic growth, social programs, and political stability, as well as global security. Yet prior to the emergence of COVID 19, global health and biological defense experts had encouraged a greater focus on pandemic preparedness. Just as we have loudly heard today.

Protecting the United States from threats is a core responsibility of the Federal government. We have robust national defense capabilities that provides us with broad and deep protection against human threats, including missiles, terrorism, and cyberattacks. In the 21st century, we also need a robust national biodefense capabilities that will provide us with broad and deep protection against biological threats, ranging from the ongoing and increasing risk of pandemic disease, to the possibility of laboratory accidents, emerging new viruses some of which have long since been eliminated from the globe only to recently re-emerge, as well as the deliberate use of bioweapons.

While the entire WMD threat spectrum requires and has started to receive attention and concern, there are growing concerns regarding new infectious disease and novel chemical threats and their potential impact on U.S. national security and defense interests. This includes the health and operational readiness of U.S. forces, allies, and partners abroad; impairing national security partnerships by producing long-term economic, political, and security destabilization; and diverting attention, resources, and capabilities from long-term strategic defense objectives to meet the immediate needs of an incident.

The current pandemic has illustrated the seriousness of biological threats and how fast they can spread if early containment strategies are not effectively implemented. As devastating as the COVID-19 pandemic is, I am not certain lessons observed have been learned. There is a reasonable likelihood that monkey pox may become entrenched in countries around the world where it had not been historically found.

Unless we make transformative investments in pandemic preparedness and response now, we will remain ill prepared. While there are important lessons to be learned from COVID-19, we must not fall into the trap of preparing for yesterday's war.

The next pandemic will likely be substantially different from COVID-19. We must be prepared to deal with any disease/ biological threat. Even with knowledge and tools that dramatically improved our ability to respond, COVID-19 has still been a catastrophe for the nation and the globe.

Serious biological threats will occur at an increasing frequency. Biological threats are increasing, whether naturally occurring, accidental, or deliberate, and the likelihood of a catastrophic biological event is similarly increasing.

For the first time in our history, we have the opportunity—due to advances in science and technology— not just to refill our stockpiles, but also to transform our capabilities. However, we need to start preparing now!! The United States must fundamentally transform its ability to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to pandemics and high consequence biological threats.

Importantly, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed fundamental issues with the Nation's public health that go far beyond pandemic preparedness. These issues include the need to increase overall public health funding, strengthen the public health workforce, eliminate barriers to access, improve data systems, address disparities, improve communication, and improve coordination across Federal, state, local and Tribal authorities.

The mission of transforming U.S. pandemic preparedness and biodefense capabilities should be managed with the seriousness of purpose, commitment, and accountability of an Apollo Program. We celebrated last week how in just 8 years we went from the President's Man on the Moon speech to the creation of an entire new Department "NASA" and spurred American Innovation and Ingenuity to build a Space Program that took Neil Armstrong to the Moon and so so much more even today.

An effective program to ensure that the United States is prepared for future pandemics and other major biological threats will require significant annual investment over a sustained period. However, the required investment is modest relative to other efforts to create the capabilities needed to protect the Nation against important threats.

The convergence of traditional health security and biological defense is long overdue and is much needed action. We must continue to monitor, evaluate, and resource the biological and chemical threat reduction enterprise to effectively counter existing and emerging global threats. This symposium explores the emergence of new biological threat landscape, how COVID 19 has impacted its outlook, and the cruciality of preparedness, allies, partners, and international organizations in response, defense against, and resilience efforts.

A critical component of the US's strategy for countering these threats is working in close coordination with interagency and international partners. **No individual country, department or agency does it alone.** It takes strong, durable alliances and partnerships to advance long-term Global and U.S. interests, maintaining favorable balances of power that deter aggression and help lessen the security burden placed on any one nation or Department. Pooling resources and working toward shared objectives for our common defense is paramount to ensuring security and defense interests are met. Continuing to deepen the level of cooperation amongst partner and allied countries on these novel threat reduction activities is critical to achieving threat reduction long-term goals.

And it is here – at engagements like the NDIA CBRN Symposium that we play a critical part in making a difference. Again, this year's theme is – “Competition, Climate Change, and CBRN Defense – Defining Challenges/ Delivering Solutions” – My challenge to each of you here today – *how do we take what we have learned as a nation and as a globe, from pandemics to war, how do we take what we anticipate before us, from climate impact to increased aggression from adversarial nations, and how can we unite our technology, our connections, and our collective ingenuity to bring solutions to the most pressing challenges of today and of tomorrow?*