

# Cold War Era Emissions Control Could Protect Navy Assets from Cyber Attacks, Expert Says



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Paul Ignatius (DDG 117) sails through the Baltic Sea, Sept. 4. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Aaron Lau*  
ARLINGTON, Va. – A rediscovered Cold War practice and the U.S. Navy’s unique command and control culture could protect the service’s assets from cyberattack, according to a U.S. Naval Academy cybersecurity expert.

While most information systems across the Defense Department tend to be similar, “the Navy has a different command and control culture,” Martin Libicki, holder of the academy’s Keyser Chair of Cybersecurity Studies, told a live-streamed panel discussion at Annapolis on Cyber Disruption and Disinformation Sept. 29.

Historically, the Navy has put a premium on independent action, “and one of the things navies do to protect themselves against sophisticated adversaries is not communicate. It’s called emissions control. We used to do it a lot in the Cold War, then we forgot it,” he said.

“Now we’re relearning it and that tends to isolate certain Navy assets from the rest of the world. The more you isolate them, the harder it is to carry out cyber operations against them,” noted Libicki, who researches cyberwar and the general impact of information technology on domestic and national security.

The discussion, presented by the U.S. Naval Institute, focused

largely on Russia's use of cyberattacks and disinformation before, as well as since it began its illegal invasion of Ukraine in February.

Bilyana Lilly, geopolitical risk lead at the Krebs Stamos Group and previously a cyber expert at Deloitte and the RAND Corp., noted that Russians hacked the Facebook accounts of Ukrainian military leaders to send messages urging their troops to surrender. "The Russians are trying to erode the Ukrainians' will to fight," she said.

Lilly also stressed the importance for the United States as well as Ukraine to practice cyber civil defense: Training the population to recognize disinformation and be aware that they could be a target. The Russian government has a military doctrine that stipulates "every single one of us is a target. I think that message has to be made very clear," she said.