



# DENO Update



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## The Information Dominance Corps: What Does it Mean to Me?

Folks,

I'm writing to you on this topic to address a question I am consistently asked, in one form or another, by members of the "Corps" on my various road trips and visits to the Fleet. Regardless of rank, community or experience, the question usually takes one of these forms:

- "What does the establishment of the IDC mean to me?"
- "What impact will the IDC have on my career?"
- "What must I do to be successful in my community and in the IDC?"

While I can't put myself directly in your shoes, I can share with you my personal thoughts, as well as those collected from other Navy and IDC leaders, on what these changes may mean for you and your career.

In starting this conversation I think it is best to go back to the foundation of our transformational efforts...the words of the CNO, ADM Gary Roughead. Admiral Roughead is the driving force behind the transformation and exciting advances the Navy is making across its information disciplines and information-based warfighting capabilities. He has made some key decisions which have enabled the Navy to move out boldly and decisively on a variety of fronts. Half measures are not his style. Therefore, let's recap what the CNO has stated about the Navy's transformation and the importance of the Information Dominance Corps in that regard:

The legacy platform-centric approach... is a way of the past. Those artificial divisions have really caused us to sub-optimize our ability to aggregate combat capability and the movement of information in ways that can maximize the effectiveness of the fleet, of the unit, for the individual.

People who will operate in this domain will be at a premium because there will be great competition for their intellect, for their experience and for their competence. So what we have done is to take our already very proficient and experienced operators and create an "Information Dominance Corps." They will retain their individual identities, but they will be managed as a Corps, they will develop as a Corps and they will fight as a Corps.

~ Admiral Gary Roughead

Ultimately, what the IDC means to you will depend largely on who you are, what you want to make out of your career, and how well you're able to deal with the one prevailing constant you will experience for the remainder of your career: change. For everyone, but particularly for professionals in the information disciplines, the information age is about change. The agility with which you anticipate or respond to that change, and fundamentally, your ability to exploit the new opportunities created by that change, will determine your personal success.

ADM Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has also spoken on these issues:

“Success in today’s uncertain security environment demands that we continue to adapt the way we think, operate and fight. It also requires leaders to set expectations, eliminating to the maximum extent possible the uncertainty caused by the change through constant dialogue and free flow of information.”

~ ADM Mike Mullen

Thinking on this subject is not restricted to the defense and intelligence communities. Robert Reich, former Secretary of Labor said, “The intellectual equipment needed for the future is an ability to define problems, quickly assimilate relevant data, conceptualize and reorganize information, make deductive and inductive leaps with it, ask hard questions, discuss findings with colleagues, work collaboratively to find solutions, then convince others.

In short, the impacts of Information Age transformation are being felt across society. Although transformation brings inevitable uncertainty and disruption, it also offers tremendous opportunities. Pursuit of those opportunities is not for the faint hearted. But for those willing to step away from the familiar, the comfortable and the known, there are opportunities for success and professional self-fulfillment.

The CNO revealed his thinking when he directed the establishment of N2/N6, the Information Dominance Corps, and the recommissioning of the U.S. Tenth Fleet.

“The nature of our operations today demands a whole-warfighting approach to how we plan, resource and assess our operational and combat capabilities. The Navy must be organized to achieve the integration and innovation necessary for warfighting dominance across the full spectrum of operations at sea, under the sea, in the air, in the littorals, and in the cyberspace and information domains.

~ Admiral Gary Roughead

It is clear that the IDC is central to executing the transformation of the Navy from a 20th century, industrial era, institution, to the premier information age warfighting force, in any and all domains.

Within the IDC, each community possesses unique skills, specialties and sub-specialties. It is the CNO's intent (and our collective task) to improve both depth of skills and professional expertise resident in each community as well as the appreciation for each member of the capabilities resident in the other communities. Individually, each community within the IDC possesses a wealth of talented, experienced professionals. What the concept of the IDC brings is this belief in the need to deepen individual skills, but also, at appropriate times in ones career, to expand beyond individual specializations and skills, and to seek innovative partnerships and cooperation across the Navy's information disciplines. This innovative approach is best defined in "The World is Flat" by Thomas Friedman. In it he tells how the big innovative breakthroughs of the future will not be achieved through creating new mainstream disciplines, but by innovatively melding heretofore unrelated disciplines to create new, highly specialized skills.

I believe there is a set of fundamental attributes that members of the Information Dominance Corps should possess, they include:

- Professional Competence
- Dedication
- Sense of Urgency
- Leadership
- Vision
- The Highest Ethical Standards
- Attention to Detail
- Humility

If you possess all, or even most, of these attributes, you will be successful in the Information Dominance Corps.

"Leadership is understanding people and involving them to help you do a job. That takes all of the good characteristics, like integrity, dedication of purpose, selflessness, knowledge, skill, implacability, as well as determination not to accept failure."

Admiral Arleigh Burke

Among the best comments I've ever read regarding focusing on one's work was made by Admiral Hyman Rickover when he stated: "When doing a job, any job, one must feel that he owns it, and act as though he will remain in the job forever. He must look after his work just as conscientiously, as though it were his own business and his own money. If he feels he is only a temporary custodian, or that the job is just a stepping stone to a higher position, his actions will not take into account the long-term interests of the organization."

Admiral Rickover's words reveal an approach that is extremely relevant and important to all of today's Navy Information professionals, regardless of community. Focusing your attention on your current job, and taking ownership of the long-term outcome of your efforts, is vital to sustained success of people... and the organizations they serve. Indeed, I believe that with a single-minded focus on excellence in your current assignment, your future will take care of itself.

For all members of the Information Dominance Corps, I believe the objective of the creation of the IDC (and certainly the intent of its present leaders) was to elevate the proficiency and professionalism of the entire corps through increased training and educational opportunities and more effective career and community management. Our intent is to not only increase the depth of your professional skills early in your career, but to broaden the perspective of all new members of the Corps by giving all entry level personnel a baseline understanding of each of the Navy's information-centric disciplines.

As individuals gain more seniority, our intent is to continue to deepen your core skills, while adding more training and experience that encompasses cross-community issues. Once you become senior, we intend to provide considerable career opportunities and advanced training to help our next generation of leaders excel in positions of great national and Navy importance.

Before I go into specifics on what each member can expect, I want to share what this transformation means for all of you. First, you can expect new career paths that will take you outside of your core specialty. Second, you can expect a new perspective as those in information-centric disciplines become viewed not as enablers, but as warfare specialists, executing and leading the fight.

Third, you'll no longer be part of just a small, narrowly defined community. Instead, you'll be part of a larger Corps, made up of highly skilled, agile, creative, adaptive information professionals, delivering a core warfighting capability to the Joint Force.

Finally, your aperture is about to open dramatically, and encompass knowledge and understanding of a range of disciplines, many of which you have thought little about, if at all, before now. Your broadened knowledge base and skill sets will allow you to become more well rounded officers, enlisted and civilians who in turn can contribute to and lead a broader range of Navy missions.

Your increased expertise will place you in even greater demand, both within the Navy and for joint duty. These greater opportunities will provide a more diverse choice of jobs and duty stations, more opportunities to challenge yourself, and employ the greater range of capability and tools with which you'll be equipped to do your job. All of which will far surpass those available to your predecessors. If given the opportunity, I would gladly trade where I am today in my career, for the opportunity to start over and be a part of the Information Dominance

Corps of the next thirty years. I believe the future will be that exciting and the opportunities that promising.

Now, let me zoom into what the IDC may mean to the various elements of the Corps.

### **Civilians**

- o Training. Assignment-specific, introductory, on-the-job training, rounded out by intermediate training in community-specific disciplines. A syllabus of entry-level core training, common across the IDC, may be available for self-paced instruction via NKO. Advanced community-focused training, JPME, the Information Dominance Senior Leadership Symposium, and post-graduate seminars are also options are the mid-career to senior level.
- o Education. Opportunities for undergraduate and graduate-level education in military or civilian institutions. The range of options will include fully funded programs at select institutions, tuition assistance, with part-time and full-time attendance options.
- o Assignments. Assignments in Navy commands and staffs with some opportunities for rotational assignments in other Service and Joint commands and other government agencies.
- o Expectations. A career-long progression from mastery of entry-level, community-specific skill-sets, to mastery of enterprise-wide management skills and an in-depth understanding of IDC community capabilities and issues.

### **Enlisted**

- o Training. Entry-level, core community-specific training ("A" School) followed, in some cases by specialized intermediate-level training ("C" school). Completion of a PQS, comprised of both core modules common across the IDC and community-specific modules, will be required during the member's first tour.
- o Education. Opportunities for undergraduate and graduate-level education in military and civilian institutions.
- o Assignments. Navy operational followed by joint or Navy staff assignments.
- o Expectations. Mastery of entry-level, community-specific skill-sets and working level, practical understanding of what the other IDC communities bring to the table.

### **Officers**

#### **Junior.**

- o Training. Entry-level, community-specific, specialized training followed by completion of a PQS comprised of both core modules common across the IDC and community-specific modules, during the member's first tour.
- o Education. Opportunities for graduate-level education in military or civilian institutions.
- o Assignments. Navy operational followed by joint or Navy staff assignments.

- o Expectations. Mastery of entry-level, community-specific skill-sets and working level, practical understanding of what the other IDC communities bring to the table.

### **Mid-grade.**

- o Training. Intermediate, Navy or joint, community-specific training.
- o Education. Graduate-level education at a service war college. Research fellowships.
- o Assignments. Emphasis on joint, operational, and those assignments that enable exposure to cross-IDC issues.
- o Expectations. Expanding grasp of IDC issues and capabilities and their relevance to the joint fight.

### **Senior.**

- o Training. Advanced training, JPME Phase II, Information Dominance Senior Leadership Symposium, post-graduate seminars.
- o Education. Graduate-level education at a senior service war college or civilian institution, post-graduate fellowship or degree programs.
- o Assignments. Continued emphasis on joint and operational milestone assignments, potentially followed by assignment to IDC nominative billets.
- o Expectations. Deep understanding of cross-IDC issues and an ability to serve as the face of the IDC in any billet assigned.

“A person with a clear purpose will make progress even on the toughest road. A person with no purpose will make no progress even on the smoothest road.”

Thomas Carlyle

Finally, above you'll see a quote from Thomas Carlyle, Scottish writer and historian. He sums up, in simple terms, what our approach should be as members of the IDC. The CNO has provided us clear direction and a clear vision of where he what he wants us to be... the most prominent and dominant Service in the information disciplines. If we focus on delivering information dominance over our adversaries and decision superiority for our commanders and our operating forces...then I believe we'll not only make progress as a Corps, we will also achieve our professional objectives as well.

Very Respectfully,

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for Information Dominance

