

# Ukraine Would be “Just a Warmup” for Washington - US Strategic Command Head

By [Lucas Leiroz de Almeida](#)

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*According to a US official, the Ukrainian tragedy appears to be just a “warmup” in the face of challenges Washington will see in the near future. US Navy Admiral **Charles Richard**, head of US Strategic Command, recently stated that his country has been preparing for prolonged conflicts with Russia and China.*

Since 2018, Moscow and Beijing have played a central role in American international strategy, being seen as threats to the US-controlled world order. In this sense, major confrontations are expected, with the current conflict in Eastern Europe being a mere initial stage of this period of tensions.

Richard explains that the US would be entering a “great power competition”, in which the disputes with its two biggest geopolitical rivals would become intense. For him, Russia and China are the leaders in a process of overthrowing the American project for the post-Cold War world – and Washington seems really willing to take drastic measures to prevent the Chinese and Russian plans from materializing.

As head of the US nuclear arsenal, Richard analyzes the current global situation with concern and seeks realistic solutions to problems. The commander claims that the US is about to be “tested” in a very serious way. He believes that in the face of new dangers the quality of US military forces will not even matter, as there will simply not be enough resources to carry out US involvement in these conflicts. Therefore, Richard defends a rapid and effective reformulation of the American defense and security strategy, which adapts the country to the new geopolitical circumstances.

“We have to do some rapid, fundamental change in the way we approach the defense of this nation (...) This Ukraine crisis that we’re in right now, this is just the warmup (...) The ‘big one’ is coming. And it isn’t going to be very long before we’re going to get tested in ways that we haven’t been tested in a long time (...) It isn’t going to matter how good our [operating plan] is or how good our commanders are, or how good our horses are – we’re not going to have enough of them. And that is a very near-term problem”, he said during a recent interview.

Indeed, Richard seems pessimistic about his country’s ability to reverse its position in the power competition scenario. Currently, Washington is already behind China in terms of missiles. Beijing already has a new generation of ultra-long-range cruise missiles, in addition to a variety of ballistic missiles and hypersonic weapons, in the face of which the US has no equivalent equipment.

In addition, the Chinese armed forces also have warships equipped with radars capable of detecting stealth aircraft, surpassing the potential of the American F-22 and F-35 fleets. Also, as far as space warfare is concerned, China seems to grow much more than Washington, with the Pentagon having several times expressed concerns about the modern Chinese system of fractional orbital bombing.

Although such data are not enough to say that China is “overcoming” the American military power, they point to a scenario of Chinese growth in war technology in front of which the US, with so many internal and external problems, does not seem able to respond with equivalent progress. Washington remains the main military power but has fewer and fewer intermediate weapons preventing the use of the nuclear arsenal, which makes the situation quite tense and worrying, since in the face of eventual intense and prolonged conflicts the US will quickly tend to resort to the use of the extreme force.

It must also be mentioned that during the Russian special military operation in Ukraine, the US encouraged an irresponsible escalation of the conflict by supplying Kiev with weapons, including modern long-range missiles, but they did not achieve any success in their objectives, as Russia continues to maintain absolute control of the military situation. For this reason, the West quickly escalated the rhetoric, appealing to clear nuclear blackmail, worrying the entire international society. The case accurately illustrates what may happen in any new conflict situations – such as a possible Chinese intervention in Taiwan, in which the US would certainly send weapons and mercenary troops to support Taipei.

In fact, Richard’s analysis is supported by the recent US government document establishing a National Defense Strategy focused on Russia and China as central adversaries in a major global competition. The US is willing to use all its resources to prevent emerging nations from questioning the unipolar world order. And, in this sense, regional conflicts, which could be resolved quickly without foreign interference, are prolonged so that Washington “warms up” and “tests its strength” for the new “challenges”.

Faced with the emergence of Multipolarity, the best thing for the US to do is simply accept it and adapt to it, consolidating it as a regional power and abdicating any role of “global police”.

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**Lucas Leiroz** is a researcher in Social Sciences at the Rural Federal University of Rio de Janeiro; geopolitical consultant. You can follow Lucas on [Twitter](#) and [Telegram](#).

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