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Mask off? US ambassador to Russia says US practices diplomacy with aircraft carriers

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The US ambassador to Russia, Jon Huntsman, says there is little need for his craft as “200,000 tons of diplomacy” are prowling the waters of the Mediterranean, unabashedly endorsing military show-offs as a political tool.

*“Each of the carriers operating in the Mediterranean at this time represent 100,000 tons of international diplomacy,”* Huntsman [said](#) in a statement to the US Navy’s 6th Fleet.

Huntsman was speaking aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, part of the dual carrier strike group that also consists of the USS John C. Stennis, the Nimitz-class nuclear-powered supercarrier. The warships kicked off their joint training operations on Wednesday. It is the first time since summer 2016 that two carrier strike groups have operated in the Mediterranean at the same time.

Speaking to CNN, Huntsman sang the praises of the US’ maritime muscle, calling US saber-rattling virtually at Russia’s doorstep *“forward operating diplomacy.”*

***When you have 200,000 tons of diplomacy that is cruising in the Mediterranean – this is what I call diplomacy, this is forward operating diplomacy – nothing else needs to be said.***

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While Moscow has long criticized the US military build-up near its borders as a hostile move further straining the rocky relationship between the two countries, Huntsman argued that such military maneuvers are somehow a necessary prerequisite for easing tensions with Moscow.

*“You have all the confidence you need to sit down and try to find solutions to the problems that have divided us now for many, many years,”* he said.

Each US carrier strike group comprises several vessels led by the carriers and dozens of aircraft. A total of 10 ships, 130 aircraft, and 9,000 sailors and marines are taking part in the drills.

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