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From the Editors

Carnes Lord

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FROM THE EDITORS

The post–Cold War era has been hard on the navies of the United States and its allies. This is so for two reasons: the disappearance of a great-power maritime threat, and the urgent needs of land-centric combat in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond. In “Into the Abyss? European Naval Power in the Post–Cold War Era,” Jeremy Stöhs provides a succinct overview of how our NATO allies have coped with this situation. Emphasizing the negative impact of the financial crisis of the last decade and ongoing problems with manning and training, he is cautiously optimistic that a modest recovery is currently under way in the acquisition of modern naval capabilities, as well as a renewed appreciation of their utility, particularly in the face of a reemergent Russian threat. Jeremy Stöhs is an analyst at the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University.

In “Japan’s Defense Readiness: Prospects and Issues in Operationalizing Air and Maritime Supremacy,” Ryo Hinata-Yamaguchi provides a similarly comprehensive survey of maritime defense–related developments in Japan over the last decade or so. Of particular interest is his focus on recent legislation designed to improve the readiness of the Japan Self-Defense Forces and ensure their ability to react to Chinese “gray-area” provocations. Also important is his discussion of recent improvements in the jointness of the Japanese military and in the development of doctrine for operating in the air and maritime domains. Ryo Hinata-Yamaguchi, a former noncommissioned officer in the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (Reserve), is currently a visiting professor at Pusan National University.

Questions relating to the autonomous operation of advanced weapon systems continue to attract a great deal of attention, for reasons that are understandable; but the resulting debates too often have generated more heat than light. In “Lifting the Fog of Targeting: ‘Autonomous Weapons’ and Human Control through the Lens of Military Targeting,” Merel A. C. Ekelhof offers a detailed and authoritative discussion of the targeting process as NATO countries currently practice it as a way to better inform these debates. She argues that military targeting often is identified simplistically with putting ordinance on specific targets, as distinguished from the “software” central to contemporary targeting practices. Such software is likely to be of increasing importance, given the inability of human beings to process volumes of data on the scale we will see in the future (and indeed are seeing already). She suggests that human control of the targeting process is a

manageable problem if this more holistic perspective is kept in view. Merel A. C. Ekelhof is currently a visiting researcher at the Harvard Law School Program on International Law and Armed Conflict.

In “The Role of the Human Operator in the Third Offset Strategy,” Adam Biggs and Rees Lee address another facet of the man-machine relationship. They argue that the ongoing efforts within the American military establishment to identify cutting-edge technologies that will enable the United States to preserve (or recover) its strategic advantage in the contemporary security environment (the so-called Third Offset Strategy) need to refocus on the ways in which human performance on the battlefield of the future can be enhanced through technology, as well as new approaches to talent management. Lieutenant Adam Biggs and Captain Rees Lee, USN, currently are serving with the Naval Medical Research Unit Dayton on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

It is fair to say that the primary mission of the Naval War College is to enhance the human performance of future military leaders through education. As David Kohnen shows us in “Charting a New Course: The Knox-Pye-King Board and Naval Professional Education, 1919–23,” it never was preordained that the Navy would accept the College’s mission so understood—or, indeed, the existence of the College itself. A small cohort of naval officers—inspired above all by Admiral William Sims—had to fight the civilian and military leadership of the Navy of the day, as well as the weight of Navy culture and tradition, to make that happen. David Kohnen is a retired USN commander and the director of the newly established John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research at the Naval War College.

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Our editorial offices are located in Sims Hall, in the Naval War College Coasters Harbor Island complex, on the third floor, west wing (rooms W334, 335, 309, 332). For building-security reasons, it would be necessary to meet you at the main entrance and escort you to our suite—give us a call ahead of time (401-841-2236).