

2017

From the Editors

Robert Ayer

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Recommended Citation

Ayer, Robert (2017) "From the Editors," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 70 : No. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol70/iss1/1>

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FROM THE EDITORS

It is well to be reminded that the global maritime domain is a vast, largely un-governed realm where good order particularly requires effective international coordination under well-understood legal regimes. In “Effective Implementation of the 2005 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation,” James Kraska uses the opportunity of the tenth anniversary of the signing of the SUA Convention (as it is generally called) to review the status of this important international agreement, which was designed to combat both maritime terrorism and transnational criminal activity. He concludes that the international community has been remiss in developing appropriate procedures to implement the agreement, and suggests a way forward for remedying this (surprising and dismaying) state of affairs. James Kraska is Howard S. Levie Professor in the Stockton Center for the Study of International Law at the Naval War College. Rick Button, in “International Law and Search and Rescue,” provides a comparable overview of the current status of international maritime law relating to search and rescue of vessels and persons in distress. Here again, considerable progress has been made in codifying the legal parameters and best practices that apply in this area, but much additional work remains to be done, particularly in clarifying the very difficult issues involving the handling of large numbers of seaborne migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. Rick Button is a senior official in U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC.

As John Hanley reminds us, war gaming has been a hallmark of the Naval War College since the late nineteenth century, and played a particularly important role during the interwar years in preparing senior officers of the U.S. Navy to prosecute the Pacific War to its successful conclusion. In “Changing DoD’s Analysis Paradigm: The Science of War Gaming and Combat/Campaign Simulation,” Hanley provides an authoritative account of the evolution of military operations analysis in the American defense community over the last half-century. He argues that recent advances in chaos and complexity theory call for a rethinking of the now-dominant “analysis paradigm” that relies on large-scale computer modeling, in favor of a return to a more traditional approach to operations research and gaming. John Hanley is a former U.S. naval officer who has served

in a number of capacities in the U.S. government, most recently as director for strategy in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

In “A Himalayan Challenge: India’s Conventional Deterrent and the Role of Special Operations Forces along the Sino-Indian Border,” Iskander Rehman offers an authoritative and timely account of the Indian government’s growing appreciation of the potential importance of special operations forces (SOFs) in strengthening the deterrent value of its regular armed forces in the face of the continuing modernization and expansion of the Chinese military presence along the two countries’ vast and inhospitable shared frontier. The situation on the China-India border has been overshadowed completely in recent years by China’s aggressive actions in the South and East China Seas, but it is well to remember that this land border never has been demarcated to the satisfaction of the parties (and indeed occasioned a short war between them in 1962); and China’s so-far-successful recourse to so-called gray-zone tactics on its maritime frontier may embolden it under certain circumstances to undertake a similar campaign in the Himalayas. As Rehman also notes, India’s very recent use of SOFs in surgical cross-border operations against Pakistan in Kashmir seems to reflect a significant reevaluation of the utility of such forces in the (historically very conventionally minded) Indian military. Iskander Rehman is a senior fellow at the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy at Salve Regina University.

Finally, Shang-su Wu, in “The Development of Vietnam’s Sea-Denial Strategy,” provides important insight into the reaction of another neighbor to China’s rise as a major regional military power. Vietnam, like India, has been the victim of a Chinese border incursion in the not-very-distant past, and also has clashed with China in a shooting incident in the South China Sea (see Toshi Yoshihara, “The 1974 Paracels Sea Battle: A Campaign Appraisal,” in our Spring 2016 issue). The author concludes that the Vietnamese have made intelligent use of their limited resources to build a maritime force that poses a credible sea-denial threat to the People’s Republic, should current frictions in that area escalate again to open military operations. Shang-su Wu is a research fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

IF YOU VISIT US

Our editorial offices are now located in Sims Hall, in the Naval War College Coasters Harbor Island complex, on the third floor, west wing (rooms W334, 335, 309). 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).

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Statement of ownership, management, and circulation (required by 39 USC 3685, PS Form 3526-R, July 2014) of the *Naval War College Review*, Publication Number 401390, published four times a year at 686 Cushing Road, Newport, R.I., 02841-1207. General business offices of the publisher are located at the Naval War College, 686 Cushing Road, Newport, R.I., 02841-1207. Name and address of publisher is President, Naval War College, 686 Cushing Road, Newport, R.I., 02841-1207. Name and address of editor is Dr. Carnes Lord, Code 32, Naval War College, 686 Cushing Road, Newport, R.I., 02841-1207. Name and address of managing editor is Dr. Robert Ayer, Code 32A, Naval War College, 686 Cushing Road, Newport, R.I., 02841-1207. Owner is the Secretary of the Navy, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., 20350-1000. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and its exempt status for federal income-tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months. Average number of copies of each issue during the preceding 12 months is: (a) Total number of copies: 8,316; (b)(1) Requested subscriptions (outside Newport County): 6,526; (b)(2) Requested subscriptions (inside Newport County): 280; (b)(3) Requested distribution outside USPS*: 659; (c) Total requested circulation: 7,465; (d)(1) Nonrequested distribution by mail (outside Newport County): 105; (d)(3) Nonrequested copies by other classes: 73; (d)(4) Nonrequested distribution outside the mail: 390; (e) Total nonrequested distribution: 568; (f) Total distribution: 8,033; (g) Copies not distributed: 283; (h) Total: 8,316; (i) Percent requested circulation: 93%. Issue date for circulation data: Summer 2016; (a) Total number of copies: 8,182; (b)(1) Requested subscriptions (outside Newport County): 6,487; (b)(2) Requested subscriptions (inside Newport County): 281; (b)(3) Requested distribution outside USPS*: 660; (c) Total requested circulation: 7,428; (d)(1) Nonrequested distribution by mail (outside Newport County): 105; (d)(3) Nonrequested copies by other classes: 56; (d)(4) Nonrequested distribution outside the mail: 340; (e) Total nonrequested distribution: 501; (f) Total distribution: 7,929; (g) Copies not distributed: 253; (h) Total: 8,182; (i) Percent requested circulation: 94%. I certify that all information furnished is true and complete.

Robert Ayer, Managing Editor