

2017

From the Editors

The United States Naval War College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

War College, The United States Naval (2017) "From the Editors," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 70 : No. 3 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol70/iss3/1>

This From the Editor is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

FROM THE EDITORS

In this era of globalization, it often is taken as axiomatic that maritime trade warfare is obsolete. Yet serious analysis of this issue is conspicuous for the most part by its absence. In “Maritime Trade Warfare: A Strategy for the Twenty-First Century?,” Christopher J. McMahon sets out to rectify this situation. After an extensive survey of the role of antitrade warfare—*guerre de course*—in modern times, he develops and assesses systematically the arguments both for and against the likely utility or threat of such warfare today. He notes that most observers in the years of “globalization” prior to 1914 were similarly convinced that the economic interests of the great powers would preclude its use in future wars—a prediction that both world wars showed to be completely unfounded. He also points out that the United States today, with its far-flung global maritime presence and relatively limited inventory of lift and sustainment shipping, should be giving more attention to this potential threat than it appears to have done in recent years. Christopher J. McMahon is the Maritime Administration Emory S. Land Chair of Merchant Marine Affairs at the Naval War College (NWC).

There has been much discussion over the last few years of what has come to be called “gray-zone conflict.” According to some, this kind of conflict—exemplified in Russia’s relatively bloodless takeover of Crimea—is a fundamentally novel phenomenon. Van Jackson, in “Tactics of Strategic Competition: Gray Zones, Redlines, and Conflicts before War,” takes issue with this view. He argues that three interrelated tactics making up gray-zone conflict—avoidance of “redlines,” the use of intermediaries, and the use of *faits accomplis*—in fact have a venerable history, yet stand in need of more-thorough conceptualization. Van Jackson is a senior lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington.

The present moment is a propitious and critical one for reexamining fundamental aspects of the Navy’s fleet architecture, emerging maritime technologies, and acquisition challenges. In his timely “Impacts of the Robotics Age on Naval Force Design, Effectiveness, and Acquisition,” Jeffrey E. Kline makes a compelling case for a new “high-low” force mix that effectively reverses the prevalent concept centered on large-platform capital ships. Instead, he proposes a forward-deployed “offensive” force using new, smaller platforms capable of dispersed and highly autonomous operations and equipped with continuously evolved missile and sensor systems, while the legacy fleet would become primarily a “defensive”

or sea-control force dedicated to protection of sea lines of communication. This argument is very much in line with the Navy's emerging concept of "distributed lethality," while drawing out some of its potentially radical implications. Jeffrey Kline is a professor of practice in the Operations Research Department of the Naval Postgraduate School.

In "Organization and Innovation: Integrating Carrier-Launched UAVs," Greg Smith also is concerned with the role of unmanned systems in the Navy of the future, but his focus is on the development of unmanned aerial strike vehicles and their integration into aircraft carrier operations. Drawing on the literature on military innovation, he explores in depth the organizational and cultural challenges involved in realizing the full potential of this revolutionary capability. Commander Greg Smith, USN, currently is assigned to the staff of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans, and Strategy.

We turn, finally, to a less familiar—but not, for that reason, less important—mission of this journal and the institution it serves. The late Vice Admiral James Stockdale remains a revered figure throughout the U.S. Navy for his exemplary conduct as a North Vietnamese prisoner of war. As President of the Naval War College, Admiral Stockdale championed the centrality of moral virtue or character in the development of military leaders, and personally taught a course on the subject. The Stockdale legacy remains very much alive—as does the "Stockdale Course"—in the College of today. Over the last half decade, NWC has been at the forefront of a Navy-wide effort to systematize and strengthen the formation of naval leaders at every level, with particular emphasis on the development of character.

Questions of ethics and character lead us inevitably to the domain of philosophy. Stockdale himself was influenced deeply by the philosophy of the ancient Stoics, which he encountered by chance as a graduate student at Stanford. It takes nothing away from Stockdale to suggest, however, that there are alternatives. Mark N. Jensen, in "Epictetus vs. Aristotle: What Is the Best Way to Frame the Military Virtues?," argues that the fourth-century BCE Greek philosopher Aristotle, because he frames ethical behavior more firmly in its social and political context, may be a better fit for today's soldiers and sailors. Mark Jensen is a professor of philosophy at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Returning to Stockdale, we conclude with two pieces that shed interesting light on the personality and character of this remarkable officer. Thomas J. Gibbons, in "Foundations of Moral Obligation: After Forty Years," provides an account of the genesis and evolution of the Stockdale Course since its inception, drawing on unpublished materials in the NWC archives. Finally, also from our archives, comes a sample of the mind of the man himself, with a brief introduction by former Stockdale Professor of Ethics at the College Martin L. Cook: "Remarks of wing commander James B. Stockdale to the pilots of Carrier Air Wing 16 aboard

USS *Oriskany*, at sea en route to the Gulf of Tonkin, on April 29, 1965, one week before they entered combat.”

IF YOU VISIT US

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). 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).