

2016

From the Editors

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Recommended Citation

Lord, Carnes (2016) "From the Editors," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 69 : No. 4 , Article 3.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol69/iss4/3>

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FROM THE EDITORS

The reemergence in recent years of high-end naval competitors has raised some difficult questions for the U.S. Navy in assessing priorities in fleet design. In “Posture versus Presence: The Relationship between Global Naval Engagement and Naval War-Fighting Posture,” Robert C. Rubel makes the case that the too-common assumption that “war fighting” should enjoy absolute priority over the requirements of peacetime global presence or engagement fails to appreciate the important contribution the presence mission actually makes to the fleet’s war-fighting effectiveness. He argues in particular that the latest iteration of the Navy’s maritime strategy overcorrects for the emphasis on cooperative naval engagement in the original 2007 strategy document, and that the Navy needs to take steps to reaffirm its commitment to that collaborative vision. Robert C. “Barney” Rubel is the former dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval War College.

At the forefront of the concerns of our sea services today is the challenge of confronting and defeating increasingly effective antiaccess/area-denial capabilities in various parts of the world. Robert C. Owen, in “Distributed STOVL Operations and Air-Mobility Support: Addressing the Mismatch between Requirements and Capabilities,” explores options for improving logistic support for Marine Corps F-35B strike fighters in such an environment through the creative employment of air-mobility assets of the U.S. Air Force. Robert C. Owen, a retired USAF colonel, is a professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

In “When Robots Rule the Waves?,” Robert Sparrow and George Lucas tackle a topic of great current interest from the unusual perspective of military ethics. After presenting an overview of unmanned and autonomous surface and undersea vehicles currently in the inventory or under development in the U.S. Navy, they identify and discuss a range of questions that the employment of these vehicles might raise within the framework of traditional just war theory. While acknowledging that many issues remain to be investigated and resolved regarding the legal and ethical ramifications of unmanned naval systems, they argue that it is time to begin to incorporate ethical considerations into the operational concepts and even the design of such systems. George Lucas is currently a visiting fellow at the Naval War College; Robert Sparrow is a professor at Monash University in Australia and a co-chair of the IEEE Technical Committee on Robot Ethics.

Another area of intense current interest for the U.S. Navy is the potential challenge that Chinese antiship cruise missiles pose to the Navy in the western Pacific. In “A Thousand Splendid Guns: Chinese ASCMs in Competitive Control,” Lieutenant Alan Cummings, USN, lays out the nature of this challenge and discusses the developing American response, now commonly described by the label “distributed lethality.” He particularly emphasizes the need to develop new offensive antiship capabilities in close collaboration with our regional allies. Lieutenant Cummings is currently a staff officer at U.S. Southern Command.

The U.S. Navy is in the process of reevaluating at a fundamental level how it develops its leaders. It seems to be widely agreed that the Navy has paid insufficient attention in the past to the ethical or character component of leadership and that ways need to be found to foster this component throughout the fleet—other than merely promulgating bumper-sticker terms and punishing deviations from legalistically formulated regulations. In “Cultivating Sailor Ethical Fitness,” Commander Michael Hallett, USNR, echoes this view and suggests a way to think about what might be done. He argues that the phrase “ethical fitness” captures the essence of an approach based on the unique demands of the military environment—especially in crisis and combat situations—as well as the need to embed such a training regime in everyday practice. Commander Hallett is currently a staff officer in the U.S. Pacific Fleet’s Maritime Operations Center.

In the spirit of a historian’s “what if?” exercise, Stephen Turnbull, in “Wars and Rumours of War: Japanese Plans to Invade the Philippines, 1593–1637,” describes a virtually forgotten moment in early modern Asian history, but one with potentially large ramifications for Japan’s relationship with Asia and indeed the West. Stephen Turnbull is professor emeritus of Japanese studies at Akita International University.

Finally, in recognition of the centennial of the battle of Jutland in 1916, David Kohnen, in collaboration with Nicholas Jellicoe and Nathaniel Sims, provides a provocative analysis of the effects of the battle and the events of the six ensuing months on the future of the U.S. Navy in “The U.S. Navy Won the Battle of Jutland.” David Kohnen is a historian in the Maritime History Department at the Naval War College.

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