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The Past Is Prologue

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PRESIDENT'S FORUM



The Past Is Prologue

Change—continual unremitting change—it is the law of the universe. It's not enough for us to keep abreast of times. This College must be in the very front rank of the advancement of progress.

REAR ADMIRAL STEPHEN B. LUCE

YOUR U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE continues to be the premier institution of its kind in the world. It is truly the Navy's "home of thought," and it quite simply excels at educating and preparing the national security leaders of today and tomorrow.

I was blessed and humbled to assume duties as the fifty-sixth President of the College this summer, and it brought to mind Admiral Chester Nimitz's note of 17 December 1941 upon assignment as Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, in which he wrote, "It is a great responsibility but I shall do my utmost to meet it." I share this sentiment, and will strive to help make this great institution even better.

I am also humbled by the extraordinary history of the College and the need to maintain our hard-earned reputation for excellence, while maintaining the flexibility to adapt to the unrelenting change of our dynamic world. The international security environment is not only dynamic but complex, and the need for strategic thinking about the full range of challenges of our time is more critical than ever. At the same time, globalization and information technologies have made our world smaller and, some would argue, even more dangerous. Our military forces must understand and embrace the promises of emerging technologies and apply them to the new perils on the horizon, or we may find ourselves competing from a position of weakness rather than the overwhelming power we possess today.

To keep ahead of the changes and risks we face as a Navy and a nation, the College is embarking on a series of modest course changes to enhance the institution's contributions. The College will continue to evolve to meet the specific needs of our student body while simultaneously addressing the higher-order needs of leaders and organizations across the global security arena. Our critical missions

remain the same: to educate and develop leaders, to help define our future Navy, to support combat readiness, and to strengthen global maritime relations.

To stay abreast of the changes in our strategic environment and best fulfill our mission, the College will do the following:

- *Continue to operationalize* our efforts to optimize support to the fleet. In particular, the College will provide greater focus on understanding today's emerging threats while further enhancing combat readiness through expanded teaching of maritime warfare.
- *Expand the navalization* of our curriculum to balance joint warfare concepts with an increased understanding of what sea control means in the modern era. The strategic environment of today presents access challenges that make sea control more critical than ever before.
- *Inculcate an understanding of future technologies through "futurization."* We must continue to prepare our students for the extraordinary, dynamic, and ever-increasing pace of change.

With these efforts—whether they be labeled “back to the future,” “revolutionary,” or merely “keeping pace with rapid change”—we will always contribute to the national and naval dialogue about how to fight and win our nation's wars. The strength of our military forces has always been an important deterrent to war—and we must be ready to answer the clarion call to duty. At the same time, we will honor Admiral Stephen Luce's foundational guidance to be a place of original research on all questions relating to war and to statesmanship connected to war or the prevention of war. These continuing efforts reflect the remarkable heritage of this great College and will help us to run in step with the future.

As I return to the College, I find that my perspective on life here from the vantage point of the President's office is a bit different, but I am just as energized by the gravitas of the institution and the intellectual buzz of the scholars in residence as I was when I arrived as a curious young lieutenant commander in 1995. A great deal has happened to the world in the twenty-one years between my two sets of orders to the College, but I believe these global changes have made the work being done on the shores of Narragansett Bay more important than ever. I look forward to the journey ahead!

JEFFREY A. HARLEY
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
President, Naval War College