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From the Editors

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FROM THE EDITORS

In our lead article, “Fighting the Naval Hegemon: Evolution in French, Soviet, and Chinese Naval Thought,” Martin N. Murphy and Toshi Yoshihara explore a strand of naval thought in modern times that tends to be neglected by those whose outlooks have been shaped primarily by the Anglo-American school most famously exemplified by Alfred Thayer Mahan at the turn of the twentieth century. The so-called *Jeune École* (“Young School”) emerged in the 1870s in France as a novel approach to dealing with the French navy’s long-standing inferiority to its principal rival, the British Royal Navy. The central claim of this school was that a weaker naval power could pose (as we say now) an “asymmetric” threat to a stronger power through reliance on a large number of inexpensive small craft armed with the recently invented torpedo instead of on a small fleet of expensive capital ships. Somewhat later, the submarine would join the torpedo boat as the weapon of choice for a weaker naval power, a weapon directed primarily against the enemy’s commerce rather than its navy. In both world wars of the last century, of course, Germany’s employment of the submarine arm provided a powerful demonstration of the merits of such a strategy.

Less familiar is the way the legacy of the *Jeune École* shaped the naval thought and practice of the Soviet Union and, more recently, of the People’s Republic of China. The authors argue that China is currently at a “crossroads,” as its navy is poised to transition from a defensive, littorally focused force to one capable of operating in blue water and around the globe. While China’s eventual course remains unclear, they argue, Chinese thinking about maritime strategy will continue to be influenced strongly by a naval heritage that privileges methods of asymmetric and guerrilla-style warfare. Martin Murphy is a research fellow at the Centre for Maritime Policy Studies, Dalhousie University; Toshi Yoshihara is the John A. van Beuren Chair of Asia-Pacific Studies at the Naval War College.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that nothing is as important in assessing the future strategic environment facing the United States as the intentions of China’s current leadership. Sukjoon Yoon, in “Implications of Xi Jinping’s ‘True Maritime Power’: Its Context, Significance, and Impact on the Region,” makes a compelling case that China’s maritime aspirations and behavior increasingly reflect a coherent grand or national strategy for which its current supreme leader bears much

personal responsibility. That strategy consciously combines “hard” and “soft” elements in a way that advances a long-term agenda of Chinese regional maritime dominance (in effect, a Chinese “Monroe Doctrine”) yet does not provoke an armed clash with its neighbors or the United States. Particularly important in this connection are high-level organizational changes evidently intended to enhance coordination among Chinese military and civilian agencies and thereby to enable an (American-style) “crisis management” approach to consolidating the nation’s position and claims in the East and South China Seas. Sukjoon Yoon, a former captain in the Republic of Korea Navy, is a research fellow at the Korea Institute of Maritime Strategy in Seoul.

The regional ambitions of the People’s Republic make it all the more necessary for the United States to sustain and strengthen its long-standing security collaboration with Japan. In “The JMSDF’s Resilient Power for Civil Society: Lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake,” Captain Takuya Shimodaira provides an eyewitness account of the massive humanitarian relief operation undertaken by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force together with elements of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps in the wake of the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan in March 2011. He argues that the JMSDF should welcome a larger role in such operations in the future. Captain Shimodaira is currently an International Fellow at the Naval War College.

As the Navy continues its service-wide effort to rethink the way it develops leaders, it has become clear that the widest gap between reality and norms continues to be in the area of so-called personal development. In “Mentoring in the U.S. Navy: Experiences and Attitudes of Senior Navy Personnel,” W. Brad Johnson and Gene R. Andersen revisit one of the key tools of personal development. With the aid of a carefully crafted opinion survey of both officer and senior enlisted personnel at the Naval War College, the authors make the case for the value of mentoring for developing Navy leaders, while cautioning against the temptation to formalize mentoring relationships or to make them mandatory. Brad Johnson is professor of psychology at the U.S. Naval Academy; Gene Andersen, a retired naval aviator, is professor of leadership education at the Naval War College.

Two historical articles round out this issue. In “‘The Navy’s Success Speaks for Itself’? The German Navy’s Independent Energy Security Strategy, 1932–1940,” Anand Toprani of the Naval War College faculty explores a little-known but remarkable chapter in Nazi Germany’s run-up to World War II. This history provides a salutary reminder of the strategic salience of military logistics requirements. The striking painting on our cover accompanies the final piece, “Frogmen against a Fleet: The Italian Attack on Alexandria 18/19 December 1941,” by

Vincent P. O'Hara and Enrico Cernuschi, a fascinating case study in asymmetric warfare at sea.

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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).