

2014

From the Editors

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Recommended Citation

Lord, Carnes (2014) "From the Editors," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 67 : No. 2 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol67/iss2/2>

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FROM THE EDITORS

The story of the Navy's Maritime Strategy of the 1980s is a well-known one, at least in khaki circles, but for many it has receded into an iconic past that seems to hold few obvious lessons for the present. In "Creating the 1980s Maritime Strategy and Implications for Today," John Hanley asks us to revisit the context and development of the original, Soviet-inspired Maritime Strategy in the light of the challenge currently posed to the United States and its allies by the People's Republic of China. The primary focus of his discussion is the role of the Chief of Naval Operations' Strategic Studies Group (SSG) as catalyst of the strategy. Writing as one intimately familiar with this organization and those then associated with it, many of whom would occupy very senior positions in the Navy in later years, Hanley emphasizes the critical importance of the SSG not only in effective exploitation of sensitive intelligence on the Soviet navy (by now a relatively well-known part of the story) but also in conceptual breakthroughs in combined-arms anti-submarine operations and in what later came to be called "net-centric warfare." He suggests that a group with the attributes of the SSG (collocated with the Naval War College but working more or less directly for the Chief of Naval Operations) might profitably refocus its efforts to concentrate on developing imaginative strategic counters to the near-term Chinese threat to American global maritime operations. John Hanley, a former Navy nuclear submarine officer, served on the Strategic Studies Group for eighteen years, eventually as deputy director.

Central to Chinese maritime preoccupations in the twenty-first century is certain to be the South China Sea. For some years, China has advanced a vague claim to "sovereignty" over a large swath of that strategic body of water (the "nine-dotted line"). More recently, it has tried in various ways to strengthen its hold on the Paracel and Spratly Islands, ownership of which remains contested with several Southeast Asia nations (as well as Taiwan), and has attempted to exert greater control over fisheries there and the transit of foreign shipping. James R. Holmes, in "Strategic Features of the South China Sea: A Tough Neighborhood for Hegemons," offers an analysis of the region that takes its point of departure from the geopolitical writings of the great American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan. Specifically, Holmes argues that Mahan's analysis of the significance of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean for the maritime security of the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century provides a useful template

for understanding China's relationship to the South China Sea today and in the future. His conclusion is that China's geostrategic position there is weaker than many may be inclined to think.

One of the most important mechanisms for keeping the peace in East Asia is the U.S.-Japan security relationship. Its importance for the United States is all the greater given the steady buildup of Chinese naval and maritime capabilities in the region that we have witnessed in recent years. In "The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force in the Age of Multilateral Cooperation: Nontraditional Security," Captain Takuya Shimodaira, JMSDF, argues that Japan needs to ramp up maritime cooperation with friendly navies, above all with that of the United States, by a new emphasis on the conduct of what he terms "Noncombat Military Operations," particularly humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Captain Shimodaira is currently the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Liaison Officer to the Naval War College.

In "Cyber War, Cybered Conflict, and the Maritime Domain," Peter Dombrowski and Chris C. Demchak provide a synoptic overview of an increasingly important topic on the global security agenda. They adopt a middle position between those of alarmists and skeptics concerning the potential of "cybered conflict" (a term they seek to introduce) to be a "game changer"—that is, to have a truly strategic impact—in the future security environment. Paying particular attention to the evolution of cyber capabilities in the Navy, they hold out hope that properly developed cyber forces can serve to maintain or enhance traditional American military advantages. Peter Dombrowski and Chris Demchak are professors in the Strategic Research Department of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies.

Also high on the current global security agenda is the issue of piracy. Christopher Spearin, in "Promising Privateers? Understanding the Constraints of Contemporary Private Security at Sea," provides a careful discussion of the nature and role of private military and security companies (PMSCs) today in addressing the threat of piracy, particularly in the waters off Somalia. He argues that it is misleading to understand these entities, as many have suggested, as analogous to the privateers of earlier centuries. Many questions remain to be answered, however, concerning their relationship to national navies and authorities. Christopher Spearin is a professor at the Royal Military College of Canada.

Finally, Marcus O. Jones, in "Innovation for Its Own Sake: The Type XXI U-boat," offers a fascinating case study in naval technological innovation in wartime. He argues that the introduction of an entirely new submarine design by Nazi Germany in 1943, often understood as reflecting the German obsession later in the war with technological "wonder weapons" that would compensate for strategic and tactical weaknesses, was instead a reasonable gamble that

acknowledged the growing ineffectiveness of the Nazi U-boat effort in the teeth of superior American and British countermeasures. However, he also notes that it represented a poor allocation of resources by the German high command and that it made no difference in the outcome of the war.

OUR LATEST NEWPORT PAPER

Commerce Raiding: Historical Case Studies, 1755–2009, Newport Paper 40, edited by Bruce A. Elleman and S. C. M. Paine, of the Naval War College, is now available in print for online sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office, at bookstore.gpo.gov. This, our latest monograph (also available on our own website) collects expert analyses of commerce raiding during the past two centuries in terms of the factors of time, space, and force, as well as with respect to positive and negative objectives. A consideration of the range of historical case studies in this volume provides an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which old and long-forgotten problems might reemerge to challenge future naval planners and strategists.

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