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Reflections On Reading

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REFLECTIONS ON READING

Professor John E. Jackson is the Naval War College's program manager for the Chief of Naval Operations Professional Reading Program.

Reading is the rock upon which you will build the rest of your career. Here is your chance to create real intellectual capital from which you will earn interest, draw dividends, and make withdrawals in the decades to come. In this way, I share Teddy Roosevelt's mindset when he stated, "I am a part of everything I have read."

ADMIRAL JAMES STAVRIDIS, U.S. NAVY (RET.)

Admiral James Stavridis completed a four-year assignment as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe in July 2013 and now serves as dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Widely recognized as one of the brightest minds ever to wear a Navy uniform, he speaks, in the words cited above, eloquently of the value he sees in professional reading. Recently he applied his decades of professional reading and operational experience to developing a vision of the future that may face our military leaders. In a widely published article, he identifies what he calls a "New Triad." He argues that the long-standing triad of submarine-launched ballistic missiles, manned bombers, and land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles will continue to serve as the backbone of America's nuclear defense capabilities.

He sees these systems, however, as being joined by a New Triad of conventional forces, consisting of special operations forces, unmanned vehicles, and cyber capabilities. He notes, "Each has an important individual role to play, but taken together, the sum of their impacts will be far greater than that of each of the parts when used alone." His notion of a New Triad is worthy of consideration, and several books in the Chief of Naval Operations Professional Reading Program can effectively inform such a discussion. You can find them in your command library or download them at no cost from the Navy General Library site on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO). Look for links to these and other books on the CNO-PRP website, at www.navyreading.navy.mil/.

To learn more about how the special-operations leg of the New Triad can function, we suggest reading *Seal of Honor: Operation Red Wings and the Life of*

Lt. Michael P. Murphy, USN, by Gary Williams. This very readable book provides details on what it takes to become a Navy SEAL, how SEAL teams are organized and operated, and the prices these men of honor are willing to pay for the nation's freedom. One reviewer—Brigadier General Anthony J. Tata, U.S. Army (Ret.), former deputy commander of the task force that conducted Operation RED WINGS—states, “Gary Williams tells the story of an American hero with such clarity that the leadership lessons spring from every page. This book is a must read for all who hold freedom dear.”

Much has been written about how unmanned vehicles have helped to shape the way America and its allies fight wars in the twenty-first century. The fascinating background on many aspects of the unmanned-vehicles leg of the New Triad can be found in P. W. Singer's best seller *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*. This book is widely considered to be the single best work addressing the full range of issues related to unmanned/robotic systems in warfare. Singer speaks knowledgeably on the research and development that brought these systems to the battlefield; on the operational capabilities that are redefining what it means to “go to war”; and on the moral and legal implications of using robotic warriors.

Stavridis calls the third leg of his theoretical New Triad “cyber-capabilities.” An excellent primer in this headline-grabbing topic was added to the CNO-PRP in October 2012. Former White House staffer (under four presidents) Richard A. Clarke teams with Robert Knake, a Council on Foreign Relations fellow, in the chilling *Cyber War: The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do about It*. One indication of the degree of interest in the subject of cyberwarfare is that a simple web search on the term returns over 84 million hits. This book is not written by, or for, “geeks and nerds.” Instead, it is accessible to all readers who want to understand the nature of the threat and the potential damage that unlimited cyberwarfare could have on military forces and society at large. It can be simultaneously frightening and thought provoking. (This book is not currently available on NKO.)

Naval professionals can benefit from exposure to these three interesting books, which will help prepare them if these capabilities come to be recognized as a New Triad. The CNO Professional Reading Program is about helping sailors consider new ideas. These, and the other thirty-nine books in the CNO-PRP, will help them “read to be ready.”

JOHN E. JACKSON