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## From the Editors

Pelham G. Boyer

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## FROM THE EDITORS

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In what must certainly count as the most newsworthy naval development of 2011, the People's Republic of China obtained its first aircraft carrier. The as-yet-unnamed vessel—previously *Varyag* of the Ukrainian navy (and originally the Soviet navy)—which began sea trials in the Yellow Sea last August, clearly represents an important milestone in the ongoing modernization and expansion of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). Less clear is what it tells us about the future trajectory of Chinese sea power. In “Beijing’s ‘Starter’ Carrier and Future Steps: Alternatives and Implications,” Andrew S. Erickson, Abraham M. Denmark, and Gabriel Collins explore this question through a detailed analysis of what we know about ex-*Varyag*, how the Chinese may be intending to employ it, and what implications follow for the PLAN generally, as well as for the United States and its friends and allies in Asia and the Pacific.

In this time of constrained defense budgets in the United States, it is more important than ever to appreciate the contribution that our friends and allies abroad make to the security of this nation and the world. Two articles offer important insight into the current strategic outlooks of two such countries. Duk-Ki Kim, in “The Republic of Korea’s Counter-asymmetric Strategy: Lessons from ROKS *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong Island,” assesses the current state of the threat to South Korea posed by the North, with its increasing reliance on various “asymmetric” strategies to compensate for its own military and economic disadvantages relative to the ROK, as well as for the continuing American military presence on the Korean Peninsula. He argues that, especially in the light of the new aggressiveness shown by the DPRK in such recent military provocations as the sinking of *Cheonan* by a North Korean minisubmarine and the shelling of a ROK-held island off its coast, South Korea needs to be prepared to make radical adjustments in its own preparations to counter or deter DPRK adventurism, both in a peacetime context and in the event of all-out conventional warfare. Captain Kim is a senior officer in the Republic of Korea Navy. In his article “Seeking Balance: Force Projection, Confidence Building, and the Republic of Singapore Navy,” Swee Lean Collin Koh provides an overview of the history, current force structure, and strategic outlook of the naval forces of another nation that has become an increasingly important partner of the United States in the

Asia-Pacific region. As Koh rightly notes, studies of the navies of small nations such as Singapore are not common. But Singapore is particularly deserving of notice in this context, and not only because of its strategic location near the critical Strait of Malacca. Singapore's own naval and other military forces, highly professional and technologically advanced as they are, are not only more formidable than numbers alone might suggest but capable of projecting power in the region to an extent that will undoubtedly surprise some.

The history of the Pacific War continues to provide invaluable materials for the study of naval operational art. In "The Port Moresby–Solomons Operation and the Allied Reaction, 28 April–11 May 1942," Milan Vego focuses on Japanese decision making leading up to the first major clash of Japanese and Allied naval forces in the battle of the Coral Sea. Among the most serious weaknesses in Japanese, as compared with American, military decision making during this period were, according to the author, a tendency to compromise between incompatible plans supported by different commands and the complete inadequacy of intelligence on Allied plans and intentions. Milan Vego is a professor in the Joint Military Operations Department at the Naval War College.

Finally, in "Foreign Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (FHA/DR) Operations Lessons Learned and Best Practices," Cathal O'Connor provides a useful summary assessment of the recent experience of the U.S. Navy in an important yet understudied area. Captain O'Connor served as deputy commodore of Amphibious Squadron 11 during relief operations off Japan following the earthquake and tsunami of 11 March 2011.

#### WINNERS OF OUR ANNUAL ARTICLE PRIZES

The President of the Naval War College has awarded prizes to the winners of the annual Hugh G. Nott and Edward S. Miller competitions for articles appearing in the *Naval War College Review*.

The Nott Prize, established in the early 1980s, is given to the authors of the best articles (less those considered for the Miller Prize) in the *Review* in the previous publishing year. Cash awards are funded by the generosity of the Naval War College Foundation.

This year's winner was Toshi Yoshihara, for "Chinese Missile Strategy and the U.S. Naval Presence in Japan: The Operational View from Beijing," which appeared in the Summer 2010 issue (\$1,000).

Three articles were selected for honorable mention: "The Next Geographical Pivot: The Russian Arctic in the Twenty-First Century," by Caitlyn L. Antrim (Summer 2010); "China's 'Antiaccess' Ballistic Missiles and U.S. Active Defense," by Marshall Hoyler (Autumn 2010); and "Talking about Sea Control," by Robert C. Rubel (Autumn 2010).

The Miller Prize was founded in 1992 by the historian Edward S. Miller for the author of the best historical article appearing in the *Naval War College Review* in the same period. This year's winner is Angus K. Ross, for "Four Lessons That the U.S. Navy Must Learn from the *Dreadnought* Revolution" (Autumn 2010, \$500).

#### NEWPORT PAPER 37

The latest title in our Newport Papers monograph series—*Innovation in Carrier Aviation*, by Thomas C. Hone, Norman Friedman, and Mark D. Mandeles—is now available. It is a description and analysis of how the three key innovations essential to the modern aircraft carrier (the steam catapult, angled flight deck, and mirror-light landing aid) were developed first by the Royal Navy and then quickly adopted by the U.S. Navy. Purchase a copy online from the Government Printing Office (at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>) or download a pdf version from our website (click Publications, Naval War College Press, and Newport Papers).

#### TWO NWC PRESS BOOKS WIN NASOH AWARDS

Two books published in 2010 by the NWC Press in its long-running Historical Monograph series (which is sponsored by the Maritime History Department) have won John Lyman Book Awards from the North American Society for Oceanic History (NASOH). Albert A. Nofi's *To Train the Fleet for War: The U.S. Navy Fleet Problems, 1923–1940* won in the 2011 U.S. Naval History category, and Hal M. Friedman's *Digesting History: The U.S. Naval War College, the Lessons of World War Two, and Future Naval Warfare, 1945–1947* in the Primary Source Materials, Reference Works, and Guide Books category. Both are available for sale online by the Government Printing Office, at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

#### IF YOU VISIT US

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, 334, 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 (841-2236) or use the phone at the main Sims Hall entrance (1-2236).

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Pelham G. Boyer, Managing Editor