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From the Editors

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FROM THE EDITORS

Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale holds a unique position in the roster of distinguished American naval officers of the last century. In “Reflections on the Stockdale Legacy,” Martin L. Cook, current holder of the Stockdale Chair of Professional Military Ethics at the Naval War College, vividly recalls the extraordinary moral courage and leadership displayed by Stockdale during his nearly eight years of captivity in a North Vietnamese prison camp. But the core of the Stockdale legacy, he maintains, lies rather in Stockdale’s deep intellectual engagement with the classic literary and philosophical works of the Western tradition and in his appropriation of those works for the professional education of military officers. The famous course developed by Stockdale while President of the Naval War College some thirty-five years ago, “The Foundations of Moral Obligation,” continues to be offered in Newport to limited numbers of students. But, Cook believes, there is room throughout today’s Navy for a rediscovery of the admiral’s broader insights concerning character development in our officer corps. (Additional discussion of ethics in the Navy’s officer ranks is offered in an article by Captain Mark F. Light appearing later in this issue.)

Two articles offer broad perspectives on the future of the U.S. Navy in the emerging strategic environment. In “Naval Operations: A Close Look at the Operational Level of War at Sea,” Wayne Hughes explores the concept of operational art in a maritime context, stressing the importance of operational or campaign planning in testing and validating new strategic concepts. Although formal adoption of the operational-art construct is a relatively recent event in the Navy, Hughes points out that the prominence long given to logistics in naval thought and planning in fact constitutes long-standing informal acknowledgment of a dimension of naval warfare distinct from strategy and tactics. Robert B. Watts, in “The New Normalcy: Sea Power and Contingency Operations in the Twenty-First Century,” makes the case that the Navy needs a better appreciation of the nature of major crisis contingencies in the contemporary world that invite or require naval responses. Mass migrations, natural disasters, and the like, he argues, provide increasing challenges in the transparent information environment of today, and the Navy should rethink the way it prepares for and conducts such operations. Captain Watts, USCG, currently holds the U.S. Coast Guard chair at the National War College. Captain Hughes, USN (Ret.), is on the faculty of the Department of

Operations Research at the Naval Postgraduate School. He has recently stepped down from the Advisory Board of the Naval War College Press, where he has served with distinction for the past quarter-century.

One of the great (if insufficiently noticed) success stories in the U.S. Navy of recent years is ballistic-missile defense. In “The Aegis BMD Global Enterprise: A ‘High End’ Military Partnership,” Brad Hicks, George Galdorisi, and Scott C. Truver comprehensively survey this history and the current state of play in the increasingly BMD-capable fleet, with particular attention to the growing cooperation between the U.S. and allied navies in this strategically vital arena. Rear Admiral Hicks, USN (Ret.), commanded an Aegis cruiser and has served as Program Director, Aegis BMD. George Galdorisi and Scott Truver are frequent contributors to this journal.

Two articles that follow take up the issue of airpower, albeit in very different strategic contexts. Veteran airpower analyst Benjamin S. Lambeth offers in “Learning from Lebanon” a detailed and authoritative account of Israel’s 2006 monthlong conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon, focusing on the question whether the Israelis’ lackluster performance in this mini-war can be traced to an unwarranted confidence on their part in the efficacy of airpower in coercing a determined adversary. He concludes that the Israel Air Force in fact performed its role as well as could have been expected and that Israel’s overall failure owes more to its underestimation of Hezbollah, the failure of its leadership to undertake a serious strategic assessment of the situation at the outset, the lack of preparedness of Israel’s ground and air forces to operate together in a mid-intensity conflict, and perhaps most of all, bungled strategic communications. In “China’s Aerospace Power Trajectory in the Near Seas,” Daniel J. Kostecka traces the development of the maritime air capabilities of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Navy from a narrow concern for coastal defense to the increasingly expansive reach it has acquired in recent years—extending, as Chinese spokesmen have themselves said, not only out to but beyond the “first island chain.” He discusses particularly the likely role of China’s newly acquired aircraft carrier, while also calling attention to continuing weaknesses the Chinese continue to face in less conspicuous areas, such as tankers, rotary-wing aircraft, and airborne antisubmarine warfare. Daniel Kostecka is an analyst for the Department of the Navy.

Further focus on China is provided by Scott D. McDonald, Brock Jones, and Jason M. Frazee in their “Phase Zero: How China Exploits It, Why the United States Does Not.” The authors (serving military officers in the Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force, respectively) argue that traditional Chinese strategic culture embodies a very different understanding of “phase zero”—that is to say, preconflict, or “shaping”—operations from the one that has emerged in the U.S. military over the last several years. They argue that the American focus has been primarily on security cooperation and influencing third parties, whereas the

Chinese concept more seamlessly bridges conflict and nonconflict environments and is squarely focused on bending the will of the adversary. The authors argue the United States would be well-advised to rethink its doctrine and practices in this area from this perspective.

Finally, Mark F. Light takes on “The Navy’s Moral Compass: Commanding Officers and Personal Misconduct.” Based on a careful analysis of historical metrics as well as personal interviews with senior naval officers, Light’s assessment concludes that current rates of dismissal of commanding officers for reasons of personal misconduct are unsustainable and call for a fundamental rethinking of Navy education, training, and promotion policies. In particular, he argues for a revised format for Navy officer fitness reports that focuses more explicitly on qualities such as character and integrity. Captain Light, USN, a graduate of the Naval War College, currently serves in the Department of Command, Leadership and Management at the Army War College.

NEW FROM THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE PRESS

New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Sixteenth Naval History Symposium Held at the United States Naval Academy, 10–11 September 2009, edited by Craig C. Felker and Marcus O. Jones, is available for sale from the Government Printing Office online bookstore, at bookstore.gpo.gov/. This book, the twentieth in our Historical Monograph series (sponsored by the Maritime History Department), is a selection of the twelve best papers presented at that symposium, one of the most widely known annual forums for naval and maritime history. The contributors are all professional historians; the works reprinted, which range from the U.S. colonial era through the 1960s, represent the vitality of recent study in naval and maritime history.

THE REVIEW ON E-READERS

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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).