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From the Editors

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FROM THE EDITORS

That the People's Republic of China has long toyed with the idea of building aircraft carriers is widely known. It is also clear that a consensus within the Chinese military and political leadership on such a course has proven elusive. There are increasing signs, however, that the long-standing debate on this issue has been resolved in favor of a decision to embrace the aircraft carrier. The questions that remain concern the scope and purpose of a Chinese carrier program (or programs), what it might reveal about current Chinese naval or grand strategy, and what implications it will have for the U.S. Navy over the coming decades. These questions are addressed by Nan Li and Christopher Weuve in this issue's lead article, "China's Aircraft Carrier Ambitions: An Update." Professors Li and Weuve, both of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval War College, conclude that for reasons of affordability and technological complexity as well as strategic calculation, the Chinese effort will concentrate initially on a medium-sized carrier dedicated primarily to an air-defense mission on China's southern maritime frontier. Nevertheless, they do not rule out the possibility of China's eventually developing large, nuclear-powered carriers on the American model for projecting offensive power in the "far seas."

The U.S. Navy's recently articulated maritime strategy places special emphasis on the need for enhanced cooperation with foreign navies in the interests of global maritime security. Such a strategy presupposes that we know our maritime partners and friends at least as well as we know our potential adversaries. It is, to say the least, not obvious that this is currently the case. Two articles in this issue have been specially commissioned to help address this situation. In "Great Britain Gambles with the Royal Navy," Geoffrey Till, director of the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies at the University of London and the United Kingdom's foremost commentator on naval and maritime affairs, provides a comprehensive survey of the current condition and future direction of the RN. Many will be surprised to discover that the closest ally of the United States has embarked on an ambitious program of fleet recapitalization in spite of the severe and continuing fiscal challenges it faces. Next, Jack McCaffrie and Chris Rahman, of the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security, University of Wollongong, New South Wales, provide an informed analysis of

the Australian defense white paper of 2009, a document that marks a watershed in Australia's strategic outlook and signals a significant commitment to upgrading that nation's naval capabilities and reach. It is our intention to feature additional articles on allied navies in future issues of the *Review*.

Any discussion of the state of American alliances must pay particular attention to Japan, especially given recent political developments there. The resounding victory of the Democratic Party of Japan in the 2009 general election and the formation of a new government under Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama with a broad mandate for policy and administrative reform has potentially large implications for the American presence and for American interests in East Asia, as underlined by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates's visit to Tokyo in October. This important evolution in Japanese politics and its likely impact on Japan's foreign and national security policies are examined by Tobias Harris in "How Will the DPJ Change Japan?" Though it is too early to tell what reality there is behind the DPJ's stated commitment to working toward the creation of a new security "community" in East Asia, the DPJ is plainly prepared to challenge aspects of American leadership in the region—in particular, previously negotiated arrangements with respect to the U.S. military presence on Okinawa. As his title suggests, Harris is persuaded that significant departures in Japanese security policy should indeed be expected.

In "Engaging Oceania," Captain Sea Sovereign Thomas, USMC, provides a useful reminder of the continuing importance of the small island states of the Pacific for the security of the United States and its allies in the region. Particularly in the light of the active economic and diplomatic presence in Oceania of the People's Republic of China, Thomas argues, it is essential that the United States visibly engage with these states more than it is now doing, and he suggests ways in which the U.S. Pacific Command could be the vehicle of that engagement.

Finally, Milan Vego, professor in the Joint Military Operations Department at the Naval War College, offers a detailed analysis of operational-level joint warfare in the Mediterranean during World War II in defense of the strategically situated island of Malta from Axis attack. Vego argues that military planners today can learn important lessons from this history, especially in calculating acceptable levels of loss against the importance of the strategic objective.

NEW FROM THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE PRESS

Policy Studies Series, Number 4

Our first publication in a language other than English has recently appeared: Paul D. Taylor, editor, *Perspectivas sobre estrategia marítima: Ensayos de las*

Américas, la nueva estrategia marítima de EE UU y comentario sobre Una Estrategia Cooperativa para el Poder Naval en el Siglo XXI (Perspectives on Maritime Strategy: Essays from the Americas, the New U.S. Maritime Strategy, and Commentary on A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower). The book collects essays written by representatives of Western Hemisphere navies during the preparation of the U.S. 2007 maritime strategy (published in English as our Newport Paper 31) and commentaries written after its appearance (published in various issues of this journal), as well as the text of the strategy itself. U.S. Southern Command has supported the project throughout, and the book is being distributed throughout its area of responsibility; Admiral James G. Stavridis, then Commander, U.S. Southern Command, contributed an introduction. The book is also available for sale online by the U.S. Government Printing Office, at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

Historical Monograph 16

Dr. Evelyn Cherpak's *Three Splendid Little Wars: The Diary of Joseph K. Taussig, 1898–1901*, is now for sale by the U.S. Government online bookstore. This diary, Professor John B. Hattendorf writes in his foreword, is “a valuable glimpse of the initial stage of a naval officer’s professional military education just a little over a century ago.”

Newport Paper 34

Somalia . . . From the Sea, by Gary J. Ohls, also in press, is available in print and on our website. Dr. Ohls, of the Naval Postgraduate School, has written an account of the repeated U.S. attempts in the 1990s, in the framework of newly developed expeditionary doctrine, to rescue Somalia from the chaos and starvation that had engulfed it.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

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Pelham G. Boyer, Managing Editor