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President's Forum—An International Forum for Operational and Strategic Leadership

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Rear Admiral Jacob L. Shuford was commissioned in 1974 from the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of South Carolina. His initial assignment was to USS Blakely (FF 1072). In 1979, following a tour as Operations and Plans Officer for Commander, Naval Forces Korea, he was selected as an Olmsted Scholar and studied two years in France at the Paris Institute of Political Science. He also holds master's degrees in public administration (finance) from Harvard and in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College, where he graduated with highest distinction.

After completing department head tours in USS Deyo (DD 989) and in USS Mahan (DDG 42), he commanded USS Aries (PHM 5). His first tour in Washington included assignments to the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations and to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, as speechwriter, special assistant, and personal aide to the Secretary.

Rear Admiral Shuford returned to sea in 1992 to command USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG 60). He assumed command of USS Gettysburg (CG 64) in January 1998, deploying ten months later to Fifth and Sixth Fleet operating areas as Air Warfare Commander (AWC) for the USS Enterprise Strike Group. The ship was awarded the Battle Efficiency "E" for Cruiser Destroyer Group 12.

Returning to the Pentagon and the Navy Staff, he directed the Surface Combatant Force Level Study. Following this task, he was assigned to the Plans and Policy Division as chief of staff of the Navy's Roles and Missions Organization. He finished his most recent Pentagon tour as a division chief in J8—the Force Structure, Resources and Assessments Directorate of the Joint Staff—primarily in the theater air and missile defense mission area. His most recent Washington assignment was to the Office of Legislative Affairs as Director of Senate Liaison.

In October 2001 he assumed duties as Assistant Commander, Navy Personnel Command for Distribution. Rear Admiral Shuford assumed command of the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group in August 2003. He became the fifty-first President of the Naval War College on 12 August 2004.

PRESIDENT'S FORUM



An International Forum for Operational and Strategic Leadership

AS THE NATION CONFRONTS a dramatically altered strategic and political environment, the Naval War College has been thrust into a position of increased prominence on the Navy's agenda. Four initiatives in particular reflect what can be described as a catalytic role being played by the College, leveraging its enduring strengths as an academic and research institution to meet the challenges of today's global security environment:

- Building and sustaining global maritime partnerships
- Bolstering the ability of the Navy and its maritime partners to lead and support at the operational and strategic levels of war and diplomacy
- Evolving both the theory and practice of decision making and command and control in globally networked, self-organizing environments
- Developing strategic and operational leaders.

These initiatives are all in execution even as we continue to develop and refine our concepts of their constituent elements.

Also on the Navy's agenda is a proposal to establish a venue for the collaborative intersection of the genius and energy behind these efforts—a setting appropriate to the international stature of the Naval War College and the special, global responsibilities that fall to the U.S. Navy, and indeed, to all its partners in the maritime domain. The Navy's Commander Naval Installations Command is currently crafting a master plan for Naval Station Newport to realize post-BRAC* efficiencies and respond to associated expanded mission sets. The major element of this plan is a building to house academic and operational activities relating directly to the four initiatives just listed. This new "International

* BRAC: the Base Realignment and Closure Commission whose work was completed in August 2005.

Forum for Operational and Strategic Leadership” would—as outlined below—architecturally reorient the campus and create urgently needed space for additional mission functions, student loading, and faculty and staff associated with dramatically expanded student throughput and tasking (see my Spring 2006 and Winter 2006 “President’s Forums”).

Building and Sustaining Global Partnerships

Establishing an international forum for strategic and operational leadership would provide a permanent, world-class facility where leaders and scholars of maritime nations could work to develop an increased understanding of the international security environment, an enhanced appreciation of each others’ interests and issues, a deeper awareness of the critical role that culture plays in international relations, and effective leadership methods for implementing solutions in both policy and operational arenas. Increased and more robust engagement and dialogue between the military and civilian leaders of these maritime nations is the linchpin of global maritime partnership and of what is often referred to as the “thousand-ship navy” (cf. the “President’s Forum” of the Summer 2006 *Review*). The International Forum for Operational and Strategic Leadership would be the global center of excellence for considering the most sensitive and pressing issues affecting maritime nations.

Activities and functions centered in the Forum would, for example, expand the very successful concepts associated with the Chief of Naval Operations’ (CNO’s) biennial International Seapower Symposium (ISS) into an ongoing research and problem-solving process. Several elements to support this process come immediately to mind:

- A state-of-the-art *conference facility* capable of accommodating events from small workshops to CNO’s Navy flag officer meetings to conferences for up to two thousand people, with simultaneous translation of up to eight languages.
- *Language labs* to allow students to maintain language currency.
- *Working-group facilities*, enabling military officers and civilian practitioners and academics to explore collaboratively issues of interest to the international maritime community and provide working-group reports and recommendations at the ISS. Overarching themes for working group efforts could be determined, as an example, through discussion at each ISS.
- A *Fellows-in-Residence* program would be established to allow the Naval War College to offer one-year fellowships in Newport. These Fellows, working with NWC faculty and students, would research pressing regional issues determined by the CNO and regional maritime component

commanders, such as democratization, defense cooperation, piracy, and cultural obstacles to regional and international cooperation. In addition to their research activities, Forum Fellows would support demands for expertise in the College's recently implemented, AQD-producing* regional electives program (and provide regional expertise to courses at other Newport school commands), as well as be available to brief senior naval commanders en route to commands in various regions of the world.

- An *International Scholars* program to allow a select group of recent Naval Command College and Naval Staff College graduates to remain in Newport to study regional issues of importance to the officers' home governments and the maritime component commanders operating in their respective regions of the world. These Scholars would also serve on appropriate working groups in support of the ongoing ISS process and support the advanced regional awareness training.

The Forum would also house the office and staff of the Associate Dean for International Programs. As a direct contribution to building partner capacity, the Naval War College would bring into collaboration and focus the combined intellectual power of its faculty, the operational leadership mentoring resource of our new Operational Leadership Department, the vast joint and international experience and research of its student body, and the war gaming and applied research resident in its research faculty.

Bolstering the Ability of the Navy and Its Maritime Partners to Lead and Support Leaders at the Operational and Strategic Levels of War and Diplomacy

Recognizing that warfighting today is weighted at the operational and strategic level, Navy operational commanders have begun to insist that their staff officers be strategically focused, critical thinkers and skilled practitioners of operational art. At the start of World War II, all but one Navy flag officer in the Pacific had graduated from the Naval War College in Newport. Then, as today, the curriculum stressed operational- and strategic-level perspectives, processes, risk assessment, decision making, and leadership in peace, policy, and war. Competence at the operational level of war today is more than thinking jointly; it is long-range thinking and sophisticated analysis of the combined effects of a host of diverse actors and factors so as to integrate both military and nonmilitary elements of national power in order to achieve objectives.

Moreover, commanders at this level must develop skills and instincts appropriate to an operational environment populated by an array of nontraditional organizations, all able to access and influence mission factors horizontally (vice

* An AQD—additional qualification designator—corresponds to a billet or assignment demand for a specific set of competencies.

through the more deliberate, formal, “vertical” structures that have traditionally organized decision processes). Mission success must be assured with international and national agency and nongovernmental partners—often without clean, clear, or formal lines of communication and with diverse interests, charters, and doctrines in play.

Key to this level of command are the know-how, processes, and systems that enable commanders and their staffs to sort through the blizzard of operational detail as well as the complex array of diplomatic, political, cultural, and religious issues to correctly frame and appreciate the mission and its context. Winston Churchill wrote, “The success of a commander does not arise from following rules or models. It consists in an absolutely new comprehension of the dominant facts of the situation at the time, and all the forces at work.” To create an inventory of leaders who can do this, the Navy has established a “continuum” of professional military education (see the “President’s Forum” in the Spring 2006 issue), objectives, and requirements—the content of which is the responsibility of this College.

At the top end of this continuum are the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC) and Combined Force Maritime Component Commanders (CFMCC) courses for flag officers. At the junior end of the continuum is a Maritime Operations Center course for people who will report to maritime headquarters staffs. Supporting all elements of the continuum is the Senior Mentor program, created to leverage the wealth of expertise that resides in the retired flag and general officer community to help build command expertise at the operational level. The Forum would house the staff for these initiatives and draw upon the collective intellect and research of others colocated in the facility to reinforce and strengthen their efforts.

Evolving Theory and Practice of Decision Making and Command and Control in Chaotic, Networked Environments

Because of the importance of information and knowledge as operational tools in war and diplomacy, the International Forum would arm students, researchers, and operators with the skills and competencies they need to achieve success in the new operational environment. In order to harness the power of this new force multiplier, we must develop new theories of knowledge-based warfare. Practitioners and scholars must work together to create a set of unifying principles and constructs of the sort that establish new domains of learning—new academic disciplines.

What has to happen today in the information domain remains a subject of intense scrutiny vital to evolving the ability of commanders to operate effectively in an effects-oriented environment. Strategists from Sun Tzu to

Clausewitz to Colonel John Boyd of the U.S. Air Force have recognized the value of information and, more importantly, use of that information to gain a relative advantage over an enemy. At issue are the largely intangible conceptual skills, cognitive abilities, sentient and sensory information, socialization and acculturation, organizational structures, and interpersonal skills—not just information management—required to be harnessed in increasingly sophisticated ways to frame and appreciate a mission and to marshal diverse actors and effects to execute it. The Forum would be the focal point for testing, analyzing, and understanding the complex interdependencies required to produce decisions at the operational and strategic levels. Activity and investigation in the Forum would be channeled to identify creative ways to share knowledge, to use that knowledge better, and to generate new knowledge and ultimately create greater wisdom about complex situations and the innovative methods necessary to cope with them. The Forum would provide the new and expanded “game floor” that has been the centerpiece of the College since 1884.

The Forum would itself instantiate and exploit knowledge theory and technology through its design and would be the focus for evolving knowledge-based warfighting as an academic discipline. Coupling the theoretical effort directly into the “feedback loop” with the warfighters, policy makers, and diplomats routinely involved with the College and its Forum would create huge value for the Navy and its global maritime partners.

Developing Strategic and Operational Leaders

Going forward, none of these initiatives can bear fruit without a group of leaders of character who can function effectively and efficiently in a dynamic, self-organizing environment. The College’s Operational and Strategic Leadership Department, established under the leadership of a recently retired two-star flag officer, would also center its administrative functions in the Forum.

To support all these efforts, this facility would host a new Naval War College Library, expanded especially in the area of regional studies, cultural awareness, and knowledge systems. It would employ cutting-edge technological research and information capabilities to support the Forum and the broader range of student, faculty, Navy, national, and international needs. Reachback into this resource would be available to all graduates of both our national and international programs.

Since the International Forum is intended to be a place where the future is the focus, the building would incorporate environmentally friendly engineering. Making this building a model for future Navy building design that emphasizes energy efficiency and environmental awareness—opening outward toward the

world across the ocean approaches to historic Narragansett Bay—would also make the building speak to the Navy's approach to global environmental concerns.

The International Forum would be more than just another academic building. It would leverage the College's international reputation for intellectual objectivity and institutional integrity, and it would signal an irrevocable commitment to effective international, joint, and interagency collaboration. It would become the venue and resource of choice for U.S. and international operational and strategic leaders searching for a way to bring diverse genius and expertise to bear on the most pressing issues of mutual interest in the maritime domain. Its activities would serve to bring partner nations together to discuss, study, experiment, game, and socialize actionable approaches to operational and policy issues of importance to national, regional, and global security. It would build regional expertise and cultural awareness among those nations, and it would establish objectives and operate together with joint, governmental, and nongovernmental agencies and organizations. It would help all these to learn how, in other words, to think outside bureaucratic and political boundaries while expertly working within those boundaries. It would be a fountainhead of creative thinking and mission impact. The capability, capacity, and mission focus of the Forum would tie together, with mutually reinforcing effect, those four vital initiatives the College is pursuing with such great energy and focus for the Navy, and it would serve the current and future needs of the service, the nation, and our partners around the world for decades to come. It is a proposition worth pursuing.



J. L. SHUFORD

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