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President's Forum

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PRESIDENT'S FORUM

The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.

VINCENT T. LOMBARDI

WHEN I ASSUMED THE PRESIDENCY of the Naval War College last July, I was tremendously impressed by the commitment to excellence I encountered in personnel at all levels of the command. I found this commitment in everyone I met, from senior educator to junior groundskeeper. Everyone believed in the value of what the College does and in the importance of his or her contribution to mission accomplishment.

A large degree of the credit for creating this “culture of excellence” goes to my predecessor, Vice Admiral Rodney P. Rempt, USN. His tenure as the forty-ninth President of the Naval War College was marked by careful analysis of alternatives, data-driven decisions, and tireless advocacy of increased professional education for the service’s officer corps. Within weeks of assuming command in August 2001, Admiral Rempt established a “skunk works” team to study graduate and professional military education. The team’s resulting report, “Transforming Graduate and Professional Military Education,” became the road map for a series of new initiatives that, once implemented, will substantially improve the professional preparation of the Navy officer corps. After 9/11, he also mobilized the College’s impressive research, analysis, and war-gaming resources to focus on combating terrorism and defending the homeland. This resulted in dozens of point papers and crisis-management games that have helped establish the nation’s new Homeland Security posture. The College and indeed the nation owe Vice Admiral Rempt a debt of gratitude for his service here in Newport.

The “state of the College” is certainly strong, and all indications are that we will grow even stronger in the months and years ahead. One of our primary missions is to prepare future leaders to face the evolving challenges of ensuring national and global security. Technological advancements, political changes, and the rise of “nonstate actors” all increase the complexity of the security solutions

that must be generated and sustained around the world. They also demand a new breed of enlightened “warrior-scholars” to lead the increasingly sophisticated military services and other security-related agencies. No school is better suited to producing these leaders than the Naval War College. The hallmarks of all of our educational programs have been, and will continue to be, their:

Rigor. Our academic programs demand intellectual engagement from our students and skillful mentorship from our faculty. As a fully accredited graduate school, NWC meets (and exceeds) the standards established by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The College will stand for reaffirmation of the accreditation of its master’s degree program in September 2004. In recent months, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has reaffirmed the accreditation of both our resident and nonresident professional military education programs to award Joint Professional Military Education Phase I credit for another five years.

Relevance. NWC’s academic programs are focused primarily on achieving one outcome—improvement of the ability of our graduates to make sound decisions in command and in staff positions. We do this by producing graduates who are “passionate about dispassionate strategic analysis”; understand the challenges inherent in leading change in large, complex organizations that deal with national security; and are practitioners of operational art. Readings, case studies, and guest lectures are directed toward the practical application of the leadership and management skills required to provide for the common defense, to deter wars when possible, and to win wars when necessary. We educate future leaders in the techniques of *joint* warfare, as seen from a *maritime* perspective.

Quality. NWC’s seminar-based teaching methodology encourages active learning and places a premium on developing the student’s ability to communicate orally and in writing. Exams, exercises, and war games serve to assess the student’s progress and to provide opportunities to synthesize the lessons learned. Our nonresident programs strive to duplicate, to the maximum extent possible, the quality of the educational experience found on our Newport campus.

These are the same traditions established by Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, our founding President, and reiterated by Admiral Stansfield Turner, the College’s thirty-seventh President, whose “revolution” over three decades ago established the academic foundations upon which our current programs are based. The strategic traditions established by these two officers are the College’s “anchors to windward.” One of our greatest challenges will be to maintain these bedrock principles while improving access to our programs for a larger segment of the Navy officer corps. We envision both increased participation in our

resident programs and skillful employment of distance-learning technologies to reach every officer with demonstrated future leadership potential.

The state of our research, analysis, and war-gaming programs is also very strong, with a potential for significant growth. Our research programs are closely aligned with, and often embedded within, our academic programs. They are also scientifically rigorous, relevant to fleet needs, and qualitatively superior. The faculty and staff of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies are doing leading-edge research in a multitude of areas, including Seapower 21, international law, regional studies, and advanced concepts. Increasingly, the Navy is looking to Newport as a primary source for unbiased research and analysis on the most complex issues. We will have more to say about this important aspect of the Naval War College's dual mission in future issues of the *Review*.

On a personal level, my wife Kip and I are thrilled to return to Newport. Our previous assignments on a destroyer homeported here, followed by various courses at the Surface Warfare Officers School, have been rather brief but very enjoyable. We are looking forward to putting our roots down for an extended stay in beautiful and historic New England. Our thanks go to the wonderful men and women who make up the "greater NWC family" for their warm welcome, and to Rod and Pam Rempt for providing us with a great foundation upon which future successes will be built.

RONALD A. ROUTE
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
President, Naval War College