

1999

President's Forum

Arthur K. Cebrowski

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On 18 August 1998, at the annual Naval War College Convocation ceremony—which assembled the new student body, their families, and the faculty and staff of the College on Colbert Plaza—Vice Admiral Arthur K. Cebrowski, USN, President of the Naval War College, opened the 1998–1999 academic year with remarks adapted here for publication.

President's Notes

THE START OF A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR is certainly a significant event—this one more than most. But before beginning my formal

Vice Admiral Cebrowski has commanded Fighter Squadron 41 and Carrier Air Wing Eight, both embarked in USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68). He later commanded the assault ship USS *Guam* (LPH 9) and, during Operation DESERT STORM, the aircraft carrier USS *Midway* (CV 41). Following promotion to flag rank he became Commander, Carrier Group Six, and Commander, USS *America* Battle Group. In addition to combat deployments to Vietnam and the Persian Gulf, he has deployed in support of United Nations operations in Iraq, Somalia, and Bosnia and has served with the U.S. Air Force, the staff of Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations on four occasions, with the Joint Staff (as J6), and as Director, Navy Space, Information Warfare, and Command and Control (N6). Vice Admiral Cebrowski became the forty-seventh President of the Naval War College in July 1998.

address, I wish to recognize some of the very important people here with us. First among them are our new students and their families. All of us on the faculty and staff are extremely pleased to have you with us as we start our intellectual journey together. Many of you have traveled great distances, and some have literally come from the far corners of the world to participate in what is often referred to as the "Newport Experience." Welcome! In particular, I extend greetings to the sixty-seven international students of the Naval Command College and the Naval Staff College, who have joined us from friendly nations around the globe. We are truly honored to see your national colors flying alongside our Stars and Stripes.

Also new to the College is Rear Admiral Bernard J. Smith and the growing staff of the newly formed Navy Warfare Development Command, the NWDC. Many more officers and civilians will arrive over the next few months, bringing this new organization up to "fighting strength." Admiral Smith's team will be an integral part of our effort.

Next, I welcome back our returning "phased input" students and our talented and dedicated staff. I hope each of you found a little time to recharge your batteries and prepare to face the rigors of yet another academic year—and it will be rigorous. And finally, I welcome back our outstanding faculty, who are so critical to the success of our educational programs. They have built the reputation of this college, recognized by consensus as having the finest research and gaming programs and curriculum of any service college in the world. Joining our resident faculty this afternoon are our equally talented College of Continuing Education adjunct faculty, who spearhead our impressive Nonresident Seminar Program. In several weeks they will begin teaching over a thousand nonresident students at nineteen different sites around the world, thus extending our reach far beyond the confines of our Newport campus.

The faculty and staff are ready and eager to guide another group of enthusiastic students on a challenging journey of discovery and growth. However, I would like you to keep in mind a question raised by the prophecy of Ezekiel, chapter 28, of which the fourth verse says: "By your wisdom and your understanding you have gotten wealth for yourself, and have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries." How do we use our wisdom? Toward what end? We know much, but what are the consequences?

So, we begin.

As you entered the Spruance-Connolly complex this afternoon, you may have noticed the bronze lettering over the doorway that reads simply, "Naval War College." Let us take a few moments to consider what this title means.

First, we are indeed *naval*. We investigate critical issues and concepts from a maritime perspective. We have a strong tradition of "joint" education, and appropriately so—but while we are very "joint," we are unabashedly *naval*. I see no contradiction there. I expect all students will find that intersection both

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comfortable and useful. Indeed, other services, and conflict on land, are coming to take on characteristics which some had thought uniquely naval. I care first for the operating forces, and I am committed to maintaining a fleet orientation. Here you will find the descendants of John Paul Jones. I have saltwater in my veins.

Our name clearly identifies us as a *war* college—and we must never lose sight of the fact that our mission is to prepare our students for the awesome responsibilities of leadership in crisis and in combat. No President of this historic college has sought war, but none can shy away from thinking and planning for war! I will be no different. While we study the development of national policy, we are not politicians. While we research and analyze problems, we are not scientists. We are warfighters! We are under arms, those whom the nation will call in times of crisis. Your work at the Naval War College will ensure that you are ready when the call is sounded.

One hundred and fourteen years ago, our founder, Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, said that the Naval War College would provide “a place where our officers will not only be *encouraged* but *required* to study their proper profession: war.” Pope Paul VI has said, “If you want peace, work for justice.” Our nation and, indeed, the whole world should bend to that effort. But our job here is to deal with the sad consequences, both current and historical, of failure in that effort. As we have since the founding of the Republic, we seek to prevent war by being ready to fight. Luce also said, “It is only by a close study of the science and art of war that we can be prepared for war, and thus go very far toward securing the peace.”

And finally, we are a *college*, in the finest traditions of higher education. This is a place of study and reflection, away from the distractions of operational commitments and personnel management. We enjoy an environment of academic freedom, where student and staff alike are people of considerable accomplishment, where your ideas have value and are respected, and free and open discussion is expected and encouraged. We will exercise our academic freedom to consider all relevant topics—but we will constrain ourselves to applying our limited resources to subjects with clear applicability to real-world problems. We will move well beyond the bounds of conventional wisdom, while not wasting our energy on the fringes of utility.

Among our faculty are graduates and professors from some of the world's greatest universities, and these highly respected educators help ensure that the time-honored traditions of scholarship are nurtured. The combination of scholastic excellence and the ethos of discipline and sacrifice of our student body virtually guarantees the continuation of the intellectual rigor for which this college has long been recognized.

We have a proud tradition, a legacy of accomplishments going back over a century, and I acknowledge the superb foundation built by the intellectual

labors of our predecessors. But I refuse to be captured by the lure and pleasures of historical reflection. We will not steer by the wake. Instead, I direct your attention toward the remarkable future that we will create together. I have no interest in the folly of predicting the future; I intend, with you, to create it.

Four weeks ago, from this podium, Admiral Jay Johnson, the Chief of Naval Operations said:

The challenges we expect to face in the 21st century have caused the Navy leadership to stand back and think about where we could centralize the kind of strategic inquiry, visionary innovation, and doctrinal analysis necessary to keep our Navy several steps ahead of the threats. And the answer was clear—our Naval War College at Newport. . . . [This] is the start of a new golden age of the Naval War College . . . a *new* Naval War College for a *new* era. We find ourselves in an era where the comfort of perfecting the tried and true must give way to the risks of confronting the unknown. . . . The challenges are new, and new tools must be brought to bear: the tools of innovation, experimentation, rigorous examination of concepts, . . . the tools of a high-speed, networked, Information Age.

The CNO went on to envision an institution dedicated to crafting our future as a service; an institution inclined toward the fleet; one focused on both rigorous strategic thought *and* execution; an institution destined to remain the Navy's intellectual center of gravity. By working together, by whatever means, modest or great, we can fulfill that vision.

So, we are here to create a new Naval War College—one that will prepare the Navy for the next century. We are here to incline that new organization to the fleet, and to focus that new organization on the future. Lessons can be learned from the *past*; there are staffs to deal with the *present*; it falls on us to create our *future*. We are here to link the long history of conceptual development at the Naval War College with information-age technology, modern concepts, and rigorous operational experiments—all to secure our nation's interest, in a new era, from the sea. Short of combat, institutional change is the most difficult and perilous challenge a leader can undertake. Yet, failure to do so would be irresponsible.

I have spoken about the need for change, but let me make clear from the outset that my intention is not to make a radical departure from our well established and rigorously tested curriculum and instructional methodology. It is superb! What we now do is on target. The "output" of our educational process will continue to be a student capable of critical thinking, who takes a rigorous approach to problem solving, who values and uses the tools of analysis, and who can synthesize across disciplines. The basics will remain the same: to help our students develop strategic thought and prepare for high command.

But beyond this—and in response to the CNO's vision—our size, mission, and goals have been expanded. The most visible sign of this change is the

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creation of the Navy Warfare Development Command, under the direction of Rear Admiral Smith; while a subordinate command, it is inseparable from the College. The great strength of the Naval War College has always been its ability to adapt its program and its structure to the needs of the naval service and to nurture innovation. In the 1920s, the Naval War College faculty, staff, and students together developed innovative fleet tactics, and the simulations and games required to test the feasibility of those tactics. In the 1930s the College's faculty and students together developed the concept of the effective fleet staff—a concept applied in the 1940s with devastating effect. Now, I want to foster that same sort of cooperation among the staff of the Navy Warfare Development Command, the officers who attend courses and war games, the faculty, the chair holders and the staff of the College, and the personnel who participate in the Fleet Battle Experiments.

The NWDC's mission has three main parts: to focus and champion warfare innovation and concept development and identify the capabilities which must flow from those concepts; to design, plan, and coordinate the Navy's Fleet Battle Experiment program; and to approve, synchronize, and disseminate Navy doctrine.

The dynamics of the Information Age, or more accurately, the Knowledge Age, bring us to this point. This is an age dominated by the value and power of access—to global markets, resources, people, information, and ideas. With increasing access come human interaction, the resulting adaptations, and the inevitability of nonlinear change. That is the phenomenon that characterizes the current age and befuddles the custodians of the status quo. Ours is the age when information-based processes are the value-adding process, the age when quality flows from, and is dominated by, access and speed. Ours is the age when time spent on perfecting and optimizing what is known is more profitably spent seizing the unknown, even if imperfectly. Most of all, ours is the age when the utility of an activity is measured by that activity's ability to create *new* knowledge.

In our age, the creation of new knowledge will increasingly be seen as the true measure of the value of this institution. The consumers of this new knowledge will be the decision makers and the operating forces who will participate in the development of, and increasingly value, this commodity. The judgment of the Naval War College's worth will be made by our customers, the operating forces.

To rethink that with which we are comfortable is an essential and difficult enterprise, but we must do this and more. We truly learn only when we have experienced. The successful methodology rigorously developed at the Naval War College enables us to gain experience vicariously, through dissertations, seminars, and war games. Now, with the advent of the Navy Warfare Development Command, that experience will be carried forward to the operating forces. The extent to which we move the operating forces to address needs not

yet articulated, and embrace changes still lacking consensus, will be a measure of our success.

New knowledge is not created in a vacuum. The creation of heat is inevitable as the new ideas chafe against old notions and static minds. But the proper object of friction is traction. New ideas must gain traction with the customer to create a market, because without a market there is no product. While NWDC is a new command, my focus is not on building organizational structure but on creating an effective product. Accordingly, I have asked Rear Admiral Smith to take the rudder in hand and move out smartly—and he has already done that.

The requirement for new knowledge is not novel for the Navy, but the times and the needs *have* changed. The Naval War College was the Navy's pioneer in developing the idea that the intelligent execution of the commander's intent should flow from the mutual understanding between junior and senior officers of operating concepts and procedures for a given circumstance. When the first steps were taken to develop that idea for the Navy here in Newport in 1910, it did not have a name. Today, we have come to call it doctrine.

Critics have said that navies have come late to the concept of doctrine. They should study Nelson at the battle of the Nile. In his book *Fleet Tactics*, Wayne Hughes says, "Doctrine is the companion and instrument of good leadership . . . but doctrine is not dogma." For navies, doctrine must be a dynamic process, developed collegially, and tending toward real time. To the extent that doctrine tends toward dogma or becomes static, it has no value to the Navy. The exercise of old doctrine adds no new knowledge.

We must move naval forces to the habitual practice of experimentation. We *exercise* to hone skills, but we *experiment* to create new knowledge and develop the inclination for innovation in battle. That is how battles are won. History will not reward an officer for slavish adherence to doctrine. In the Knowledge Age, doctrine that lacks a real-time, dynamic, innovative character will be seen as the refuge of the uninformed. We must do better for our fighting forces in every service.

To say that we will work at the intersection of unarticulated needs and non-consensual change begs for specificity. Intellectualization is a necessary first step but is in itself insufficient. We must do that hard work, of course, but we must also have a cultural inclination toward execution and resources. So the work we do on the items and issues I will mention is not complete until it is in the fleet. In every case, the issue and resulting work should ultimately take a future-going perspective. Whether looking at ancient battles or modern technology, the question should always be asked: What are the implications for the military and its activities in the next century?

Network-centric warfare is increasingly seen as the military expression of the Information Age. The Center for Naval Warfare Studies and the War Gaming Department will continue the good work done in our Global Game 1998.

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Network-centric warfare should become the compelling theme in the Joint Military Operations, or JMO, curriculum. NWDC will identify and refine the implied concepts, develop them for experimentation, and see that they are reflected in emerging doctrine.

More specifically, network-centric warfare enables promising alternative concepts of command, command relations, and command-and-control processes. Furthermore, there is the fundamental question of what it is that the commander commands—forces, information services, or key processes? Accordingly, I have asked Captain George Jackson, chairman of the JMO Department, to take the lead in studying these issues.

There are several emerging sciences, such as complexity, genetics, and many others, that will have implications for the military in the Knowledge Age. Accordingly, I am asking the Dean of Academics, Dr. William E. Calhoun, to examine how we may leverage the considerable work already in progress so that we think across academic disciplines to determine impacts and opportunities for concept development.

Next, our forces and the associated resource allocations are currently out of balance with respect to the challenges of knowledge-based warfare. Accordingly, I have asked the Center for Naval Warfare Studies and the National Security Decision Making Department to take up this issue in earnest. We need a new concept of what constitutes a “balanced fleet,” a balanced force.

I want our students and staff to be working in real geography with real cultures, economies, and intelligence. The Asia-Pacific and South Asia regions are of growing interest to the nation, for many enduring reasons. Accordingly, I am directing that to the extent practical and consistent with the broader objectives of the College, our work be focused on these regions.

The Navy provides two enduring “product lines” to the American people that are of immense value to the nation: freedom of the seas, and forward-deployed combat power. But in this new age, all elements of *how* to do that are open to examination. We should examine each platform and element of the force to determine where we are optimizing capabilities at decreasing rates of return and, therefore, must move to new solutions. More specifically:

- Finely tuned global economies indicate an increasing “time value” of the Navy. The Center for Naval Warfare Studies should explore that concept and its implications for presence and force deployment.

- The CNO’s vision for the twenty-first century foresees a Navy that will decisively and directly influence events ashore. Yet no one in any service has viable concepts or technologies to deal with the fastest-growing target set ashore or afloat—moving targets. For technical, doctrinal, and organizational reasons, existing capabilities fall short of required timelines. Accordingly, I am asking

Rear Admiral Smith to team with the Strategic Studies Group and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to lead this effort, as "job one."

- Next, how does one assure freedom of the seas and forward-deployed combat power in the Information Age? I am asking Dr. Robert S. Wood, the Dean of Naval Warfare Studies, to take as a top priority identifying the imperatives and opportunities for the Navy in the area of information operations and information warfare. That work later will be expanded and placed in a national context.

- With the increasing globalization of our economy, loss of access for trade can be devastating for the nation. Similarly, to the extent a regional enemy can deny access to our land-based forces, naval force tasking can exceed capacity, and national options will be narrowed. Accordingly, I am asking Rear Admiral Peter Long, Provost of the Naval War College, to leverage existing work and team with the Naval Postgraduate School and others in determining how best to address this issue.

- Speed has always been of value in warfare, and daily it is being revalued yet further. If the value of speed is increasing, then those factors, sectors, or forces that slow us down must either change or cease to exist. We must discover new measures of effectiveness, MOEs, for this new character of war. Old MOEs encourage old thinking. I want our war gamers and our faculty to take the lead in identifying and using new measures.

There are additional significant issues that must be addressed. First among these is the need to improve dramatically and demonstrably our ability to sharpen and focus weighty issues for decision makers. We will be addressing the different facets of this difficult issue under the leadership of Dr. Wood and Dr. William E. Turcotte, chairman of the National Security Decision Making Department.

With our rapidly changing society, the role of the military in that society is also changing. Accordingly, I have directed that the spring intersessional conference be focused on this issue. The Contemporary Civilization Lecture series also will feature related issues.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act is more than ten years old, and the National Security Act, which created the Department of Defense, is now a half-century old. We need a critical, rigorous rethinking of the American concept of jointness and how it is currently practiced. As the Joint Military Operations Department leads this effort, it should be in the context of the Information Age.

Dr. George Baer, chairman of the Strategy and Policy Department, has begun research into the utility of classical military force in the coming age. I encourage him to expand this valuable work and export it throughout the College for a broader determination of its implications for the Navy and the nation.

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There are also several areas of process that deserve attention. I will mention only a few, leaving the rest to develop further with staff.

- Our focus is, and must remain, on the operating forces, but financial resources for those forces come from Washington. Accordingly, I am asking Dr. Turcotte to work with me and Rear Admiral Smith to help determine the most effective way Newport can team with the emerging Navy headquarters decision team and their processes.

- I am tasking the War Gaming Department to develop or obtain new models capable of capturing the bottom-up phenomenology of network-centric warfare, and new methods so that rigorous war gaming can be brought to bear on much shorter timelines.

- Members of the staff and faculty have already provided many good suggestions for methods to strengthen the Advanced Research Program. The number of students capable of doing advanced independent research is small, but the need is great. You should expect to see that program expanded.

- We must also expand the Decision Support Department's functionality by linking it to all five numbered fleet command centers, the Acquisition Center of Excellence in Washington, the Marine Corps University in Quantico, and the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey.

- Similarly, our College of Continuing Education must expand our off-campus capability, using emerging distant-learning concepts and technology.

- Again using network technology, we must put doctrine on a real-time basis so that it will have a dynamic within the fleet consistent with this dynamic age. The fleet, not Newport, is meant to own doctrine.

- We will develop strategic teaming relationships based on interdependencies with the Strategic Studies Group, the Naval Postgraduate School, the Office of Naval Research, the warfare centers, other service battle labs, the U.S. Atlantic Command for joint experimentation, and other military and civilian intellectual centers of excellence.

How will we know when we have achieved all this? It will be when the fleet operators are habitually given to experimentation—when we move from discrete experimentation catalyzed by Newport to continuous experimentation in the fleet. It will be when we have a decision process in place capable of sharpening issues and inspiring confidence. It will be when warfighters see innovation as being in the mainstream of their daily and warfighting activities. It will be when doctrine is no longer the codification of the past but a dynamic, real-time process that fosters rather than stifles innovation. It will be when our product has direct and positive influence on the operating forces, the resource-allocation process, and the core issues of national security matters—not because we seek

such influence, but because our product merits it. It will be when these massive departments and agencies embrace change as not only an inevitability but an ally. Ultimately, our success will be measured by the extent to which we have influenced the world toward the course of justice and peace.

Nothing I have said is easy, but the work is important. These are tasks and issues worthy of the keenest intellect. Why this boldness; why the speed? For such a large ship to make a significant course change requires substantial application of rudder. Shiphandlers know that the rudder is most effective with significant way on. In the Naval War College, the CNO has selected a modest rudder to turn a mighty ship, but I am confident that we are all up to the challenge.

I am asking for a great deal, and the changing world demands that it be accomplished at best speed. The new millennium is only sixteen months away, and I am committed to seeing many of these projects and initiatives completed before the turn of the new century. If all that seems impossible, consider the first verse of Psalm 127: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

I am both thrilled and awed by the voyage ahead. With the gift of faith let us head out to sea together. Rear Admiral Smith, Rear Admiral Long, Dean Calhoun, Dean Wood: take in all lines, head us fair, ring up best speed, and make good our rendezvous with the twenty-first century



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