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## President's Notes

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*“The rapid advance of technology compels us to seek ways to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by the revolution in military affairs. There is no better place than here at the Naval War College to advance this process.”*

## President's Notes

**F**OR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, A GROWING CADRE of military analysts, strategists, and organizational experts has been formulating a vision for the future of our armed forces that has come to be called the “Revolution in Military Affairs,” or “RMA” for short. It seizes on the opportunities afforded by dramatic advances in technologies—especially information, sensor, and telecommunication technologies—and couples these with some bold thinking on how the military could organize to operate differently. Rapid leaps in technology have transformed the way the corporate world organizes and does business, and

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Rear Admiral Stark was commissioned in 1965 at the U.S. Naval Academy, studied at the University of Vienna as a Fulbright Scholar, and earned a doctorate in political science at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. He has served on the Navy Staff, the National Security Council Staff, and as Executive Director of the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel. His sea service has included command of USS *Julius A. Furer* (FFG 6), USS *Leahy* (CG 16), and, from 1994 to 1995, the Nato Standing Naval Force Atlantic, deployed in the Adriatic Sea. He assumed the duties of President of the Naval War College in June 1995.

advocates of the revolution in military affairs argue that the U.S. military should follow suit if it is to maintain its superiority as we look to the future.

This is not to say that the "revolution in military affairs" has definitely arrived. As in most eras of dramatic change, the nature, scope, and pace of this new environment are difficult to discern while we are still caught in its flux. Nevertheless, it is clear that we are in a state of rapid evolution, if not revolution, and that we shall have to change with it. There are far-reaching decisions that must be taken, changes in force structure, equipment, doctrine, and organization that have to be made if the RMA is to be realized, but already the influence on the military community is growing. The forward thinking in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's "Joint Vision 2010," in the Navy's "Forward . . . From the Sea," and in the Marine Corps' "Sea Dragon" initiative reflects key elements of the RMA concept: greatly improved situational awareness, precision strike, and adaptive communications.

A central task facing the Naval War College today is to develop leaders capable of making critical decisions in an environment characterized by change occurring at a pace unimaginable as recently as a decade ago. We must ensure that our students understand the debate on the revolution in military affairs and that they recognize the broad-ranging impact the concept can have on the future of our armed forces. We must teach the elements of the RMA in our classrooms; we must discuss it, debate it, and, above all, cultivate an environment that encourages and rewards creative, forward thinking.

The revolution in military affairs must be examined from a variety of disciplines. Just as the development of our strategy of nuclear deterrence went well beyond the cadre of nuclear physicists and engineers who developed the weapons themselves, so the development of the revolution in military affairs transcends the domain of technology. The RMA depends on understanding advances in technology, to be sure, but it requires operational innovation and organizational adaptation as well. Understanding its full potential requires integrating the perspectives of a number of disciplines that are part of the Naval War College curriculum. It should be no surprise that the concepts of RMA already appear in our Joint Military Operations, our National Security Decision Making, and our Strategy and Policy curricula. Each brings its own unique and valuable perspective to round out our students' understanding of this phenomenon.

At the same time as the revolution in military affairs is unfolding, we at the Naval War College are taking steps to bring the revolution in technology into the realm of education. Focused classroom discussion led by professors who are recognized experts in their field will continue to form the core of our learning experience. Concurrently, technology makes it possible for us to provide our students and faculty access to information in remarkable breadth and at astonishing speeds. Each student now has access to the Internet and with it access

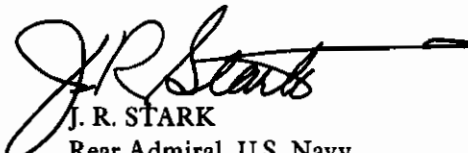
## 6 Naval War College Review

to information in depth on any subject matter of interest. The Naval War College Library, always a leader in the professional military education community, has kept abreast of the opportunities afforded by technology. It has installed advanced search and retrieval software that provides students, faculty, and staff powerful new tools to conduct up-to-date research. The best of our publications and research have begun to find their way onto the Naval War College home page, providing wide dissemination to the national security community, including elements of our fleet around the globe. This is a trend that will grow. As we at the College make more materials available on our home page, we hope you will visit it, browse through our site, and respond with any comments or suggestions you may have. You can reach our site at <<http://www.usnwc.edu/nwc>> (from which you can link to the electronic version of this journal).

Beyond the traditional classroom and research experience, technology has opened up new opportunities in distance learning. The pace of change dictates that graduates of the Naval War College will need refresher learning to stay current throughout their careers. We are looking at technologies that will allow us to expand distance learning well beyond what has been possible to date in our already well-respected correspondence courses.

War gaming has also become a more powerful tool for education, research, and exploring the future. Rapid advances in computing and display technologies allow us to assess multiple "moves" instantly, permitting a variety of sensitivity analyses and the exploration of various decision paths. Distributed play, which instantaneously links different commands, is maturing as a powerful tool to analyze military operations under increasingly realistic conditions. Planning and decision making have been revolutionized as well. The Naval War College recently established a Decision Support Center, which uses state-of-the-art technology to assist senior decision makers in developing strategy and setting priorities as they plan for the future. I look forward to keeping you apprised of developments as the Center's program matures and expands.

The rapid advance of technology compels us to seek ways to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by the revolution in military affairs. There is no better place than here at the Naval War College to advance this process. Our contribution in developing concepts to exploit these opportunities will be crucial if our naval forces and, more generally, the U.S. military are to stay at the forefront of national policy in an increasingly complex and demanding world.



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