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President's Notes

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President's Notes

In the last issue of the *Naval War College Review* I included my first short essay as President. There I wrote about the changes in Professional Military Education as mandated in the Goldwater-Nichols legislation on JCS reform. Discussion concerning what military education should be continues as the Skelton Committee launches its congressional inquiry by taking testimony in Washington and at the various service colleges. The committee even plans to visit some of the European service colleges. Many readers have written to me on the subject of professional military education after reading my last column, and I am deeply grateful that they took the time to share their views with me.

Increasingly, as work at the Naval War College engrosses me, I become more impressed by the extent to which this institution truly serves the U.S. Navy. The highest priority of the College is, and must continue to be, education, for that is its reason for being. This process takes place in classrooms at Newport and in the College of Continuing Education across the country. In these classrooms, officers and civilians work together toward creating a perspective and honing intellectual skills which will serve our senior officers throughout the rest of their careers. I believe that education is the very solid foundation on which this institution is built. It is healthy

because a civilian and military faculty of superb quality works with a spirited and energetic student body to produce a deep and absorbing dialogue about the fundamental political, strategic, and operational issues which underlie sound thinking.

However, a truly educational institution must produce research which connects it to a changing world and the new issues in it. In this field of effort, our teaching faculty, the members of our Center for Naval Warfare Studies (CNWS), the SECNAV Senior Research Fellows, and the senior officers of the Strategic Studies Group (SSG), have all contributed impressively. The academic faculty publishes books and articles in the nation's leading journals and newspapers, thereby alerting the world beyond the Navy of the intellectual activity at the Naval War College. The work of the members of the CNWS and the SSG responds directly to questions posed by our naval leadership across the whole spectrum of commands. The War Gaming Department, which is now located within CNWS, serves both roles of research and education.

There is a healthy synergism between research and education at Newport in which the new thinking here is transmitted to the world beyond Newport. The curricula, our research, and war gaming form a triad in which each influences the other. The teaching faculty keeps the curricula up-to-date, often preserving their rigor with their own original publication. Research projects probe the frontiers of strategic thought, shape new concepts, affecting both what is taught and gamed. Meanwhile, the students contribute their professional experience so that what occurs in the classroom and on the gaming floor is an active and reciprocal, not just a passive, process. Today's bright idea appears in tomorrow's gaming scenario. As a new President, with experience in education, I see that the basic structure of the Naval War College is sound.

Its soundness does not mean I am complacent, however, for some change is inescapable and healthy. How then can I make a contribution to what is already a fundamentally sound institution? Some worthy goals suggest themselves clearly. First, education must never yield to training, which appears to be behind some—I do not say “all”—of the current outside pressure. Education deals with principles and the shaping of intellect to cope with the challenges of complexity and change. Training is important, but it deals with transitory job skills, and that is not what we do at Newport. Those who confuse education with training seem to me to be confused about the mission of the Naval War College. We will resist making any concessions to that confusion while being ready to incorporate change when a shift in focus on principles is clearly needed. My basic goal is to continue our challenging curricula with demanding quantities of quality reading and writing, led by a distinguished teaching faculty. Intellectual growth, which will serve our students throughout the years ahead, comes from hard work. There is no

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other way. If the College is ever dark or empty at night or on weekends, I shall know it is time to increase the length of our reading lists and the number of papers the officers are required to write. For now, the midnight oil still seems to be burning, and my faculty agrees that student workloads are rigorous, reasonable, and balanced.

My second goal will not be easily reached: successful performance at the War College must edge its way still further into the equation for success of bright and ambitious officers. The Naval War College must be the principal means of evaluating and rewarding our best and most energetic minds. Our students are top-notch now because the Chief of Naval Operations demands that the best be assigned here. Our uniformed officer faculty is equally talented, but the process of their assignment here is serendipitous. We need to illuminate the relationship between warfighting and intellect, between operational experience and intellectual growth, so that students and potential naval faculty members claw their way to be sent here because the assignment is a reward and underlines the shape of things to come for them. In this we have a way to go.

My third goal is to increase our institutional stability. In times of budget cuts and decremented end strength, education becomes more important because a well-educated senior officer corps is necessary to meet the growing challenge which will face us. Our labor force, i.e., our faculty and staff, is our major cost and it must remain fixed because there is no slack in our manpower allocations. All the fat has been cut; the budgeteer's knife can now only cut bone. I fear that we may risk damage to the quality of education which we have so deliberately improved here unless resources remain stable. Our budget is tiny—about the cost of half an aircraft—and I contend that the Naval War College should be reasonably free of future budget and personnel cuts, of the roller coaster, of the feast and famine cycle.

Finally, I shall try to encourage circumstances in which the Naval War College can reach out to communities of our city, state and country. I wish to encourage greater contact and communication with the other service colleges, with foreign service colleges, with civilian intellectual centers at home and abroad, with the communities in Newport and Rhode Island that support and take pride in us, and with our Reserve forces, for I believe we have things to say to each other which will be of mutual benefit.

As before, I welcome hearing from those who wish to comment. I have already benefited greatly from your letters.


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