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President's Notes

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President's Notes

Professor Robert S. Wood, Dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies, was invited by Senator Sam Nunn early this year to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the general subject of strategy development. I have asked the *Naval War College Review* to publish his statement as the lead article in this issue because I think that Professor Wood has captured the essence of much of the work of the Naval War College. Most importantly, he has related that work to the broad concepts of strategy and the task of relating those concepts to force planning and operations. His broad approach and deep understanding of the issues give us an enduring basis upon which to discuss national issues of strategy as well as to understand the role of the College in articulating the maritime aspects of national strategy.

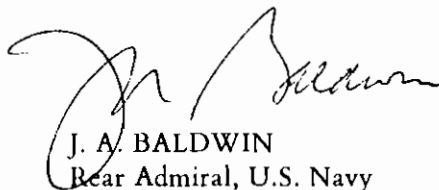
The portion of his paper titled "Introduction" was his oral statement made to support the prepared text that follows. The two statements are complementary; the oral part is a broad-based discussion that naturally flows into the second portion—his concept of strategy and the College's prepared discussion on the Naval War College and strategic development.

In Dr. Wood's testimony, one salient comment stands out. In pointing out the need to consider a variety of operational alternatives and campaign options as the very essence of readiness, he stated, "It is a mistake to confuse the development and testing of various campaign plans with the forward national strategy that they are designed to implement. The ability to remain

forward in peacetime and to prevail in wartime requires that we exercise a wide range of operations. So often this is portrayed as preparing for war in some offensive or provocative sense. Thinking—and practicing—the unthinkable—and the difficult—should be the job of our military commanders and is the most effective assurance of peace and the most certain guarantee that we will not be fixed by one set of assumptions and one set of responses. The strength of deterrence and the key to successful war termination depend on avoiding the unpreparedness of 1941 and the rigidities of 1914.”

Turning to the subject of the Naval War College, he underscores a basic premise for the founding of the College which is as valid today as it was a century ago. “Some have criticized the American military officer,” he writes, “for being more engineering than military minded—a technician rather than a student of war. We believe this criticism is unfounded. The very essence and purpose of the College is the same today as when Admiral Luce founded it: that is, ‘to ensure that officers, not their equipment, are the controlling factors in war.’ ”

I invite all who have an interest in the process of strategic development to read this article carefully.



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