

1971

Challenge

Richard G. Colbert

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Colbert, Richard G. (1971) "Challenge," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 24 : No. 6 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol24/iss6/1>

This President's Forum is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

CHALLENGE !

In my last "Challenge" before "passing the watch" onto Vice Adm. B.J. Semmes later this summer, I would like to share some thoughts on the Naval War College: its role in today's Navy; some of the things we have achieved in the past 3 years; and the many challenges still ahead.

As the Navy's senior educational institution, the Naval War College mission is: "To provide Naval Officers advanced education in the science of naval warfare and related subjects in order to improve their professional competence for higher responsibilities." The goal is the well-rounded naval commander, thoroughly versed in all aspects of naval tactics, strategy, and logistics, acutely aware of U.S. foreign policy objectives and the international and domestic factors affecting the conditions under which he must operate.

Secretary of the Navy Chafee has often emphasized that we are moving toward a smaller but higher quality Navy. On the one hand, shifting national priorities have reduced available funds, necessitating a reduction in size. But on the other hand, the burgeoning Soviet maritime challenge makes the demands on the Navy more critical than ever before, requiring a maximum level of performance. As Under Secretary of the Navy Warner told a War College audience at our 1970 Global Strategy Discussions, the challenge we face in the decade of the seventies is to "Do more with less." It will therefore be imperative that our new Navy be not only equipped with the best possible weapons systems available, but also manned by the best educated officers we can produce.

In this setting, officer education has
Published by U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons, 1971



taken on greater importance than it has in any other time in recent history. In 1969, Admiral Clarey, then Vice Chief of Naval Operations, stated, "The Chief of Naval Operations and I are dedicated to preparing properly the foundation now for the strong navy of the future... It is our desire and determination to strengthen significantly the officer corps by sharply increased graduate education programs and expanded professional education at the Naval War College..." Admirals Zumwalt and Cousins have endorsed these same goals, reaffirming the role of the Naval War College in preparing our future naval leadership.

With this in mind, we have, over the past 3 years, sought to maintain a critical perspective of the entire program of education offered to our students here at the Naval War College. Several modifications and, hopefully, improvements have been initiated in order that we might more effectively respond to the greater demands of coming years. But we have only scratched the surface; so very much more remains to be done.

Perhaps the **single** most significant area in which we felt we needed redirection was in upgrading the military portion of our program. The shortcomings we perceived here were only a reflection of a deeper need faced throughout the entire Navy: developing a more professional corps of officers, whose ken

2 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

embraces the entire scope of knowledge which any flag officer ought by right to possess—ranging from tactics to strategy to weapons systems to overall defense and foreign policy.

Contributing to this insufficiency has been the failure of the Naval War College to keep a proper and careful balance between the “science of naval warfare” on the one hand and “related subjects” on the other, as set forth in our basic mission. The “related subjects” were receiving too much attention, to the detriment of the military dimensions of our curriculum. Accordingly, we took several steps to strengthen the military education aspects of the Naval War College.

For example, we have instituted a system of Military Chairs to parallel the functions of our Academic Chairs, with the only significant difference being that their orientation is on military—vice purely academic—subjects. Military Chairholders, like Academic Chairholders, assist students with research and writing in their military subject areas, conduct lectures and seminars, and assist the College directors with curriculum planning. To fill the Chairs, we carefully select naval officers recognized throughout the Navy as experts in their particular fields. Representative Chairs include: Air Strike Warfare; Naval Electronic Warfare; Surface Strike Warfare; Submarine Warfare; and Naval Intelligence. Others are scheduled to be established in the near future. The challenge is to ensure that the schedule is met!

Another area in which we have striven to enhance the military dimension of our education program has been in emphasizing the value and importance of student research and writing in matters dealing directly with national security, i.e., military and politico-military subjects. The best of these studies are briefed at the highest levels of the Navy and Department of Defense.

These, however, are only the beginning steps on the long path which lies ahead in the effort to enhance the professional quality of our education.

Another area where we have tried to strengthen our program has been in keeping our students abreast of changing social attitudes in the United States. Certainly a most important part of leadership is knowing and understanding the men one leads. This is particularly important for our students, many of whom go from the Naval War College to become commanding officers and executive officers of ships and squadrons. Because of the rapid pace with which social values and attitudes are changing in our country, understanding our youth has never been more crucial to the naval commander. He must know the basic thinking of the young men in his wardroom and in his mess. Therefore, in order to help him keep current with changing social patterns, we have made some major changes in our programs of study.

For instance, in our basic curriculum we have increased our studies of internal U.S. affairs by adding lectures and seminars dealing with the various social and political movements now demanding changes in the U.S. political and social systems.

In our Spring Term Elective program, we have initiated a Current Attitudes-Affairs seminar, bringing together students from the nearby universities—Brown, URI, and Salve Regina—plus Officer Candidate School students, junior officers from the fleet, and Naval War College students to discuss frankly the current social, political, and military problems of U.S. domestic and international affairs. We hope by these seminars to expose our students to the thinking of youth and to expose youth to the ideas of our students, with a view to promoting some degree of understanding of both views.

Again, both these steps represent only a beginning. Much remains to be

accomplished here, too.

In another area, that part of our program in which we seek to increase opportunities for greater free world naval cooperation, much has been initiated. But, again, much remains to be realized.

As you know, the Naval War College is more than an educational experience for U.S. military officers. It also is a place where up to 30 distinguished foreign naval officers, from as many countries, have come each year to participate in our Naval Command Course. Since 1956 they have joined together here at Newport for an open exchange of thoughts, opinions, and ideas—essentially focused on how all our navies, working together, can better ensure the peace and security of the free world. From this course have come meaningful and practical concepts of multinational naval cooperation which directly support the thrust of the Nixon Doctrine, particularly its principle of partnership.

A more recent innovation at the Naval War College designed to foster free world naval cooperation was the Seapower Symposium held here in November 1969. It was, indeed, a historic assembly, the first of its kind, at which the leaders of the navies of some 38 countries gathered in pursuit of one common purpose. That purpose, within an academic framework, was the study and examination of world maritime affairs and, particularly, the implications of Soviet maritime expansion. Out of this conference came much constructive and valuable thinking which might well lead to regional area security arrangements, an important goal of the Nixon Doctrine. So successful was this symposium, so favorable the comments throughout the international naval community, that I am confident it is a precursor of many other similar meetings which will be held here, at periodic intervals of 2 or 3 years, in the future. We are already planning for our next symposium, late this fall.

So far I have concentrated on what we have done at the Naval War College to date. I have left the most important matter—the future—for last. The single most essential item for the days and years ahead is the realization of the expansion program, our Master Plan. When completed, if all goes according to schedule, our student body will reach a total of 700 by 1980, more than a twofold increase over the approximately 325 which were on board when I assumed the watch in 1968. Additionally, our physical plant will be expanded and modernized to provide the necessary educational facilities.

Construction of our new auditorium, Spruance Hall, named after a great President of the Naval War College is progressing nicely. It is due to be completed in the fall of 1972. Conolly Hall, the second increment in our program of four buildings, named after another outstanding President, is included in the FY-1971 Military Construction Program; we expect construction to begin on it this summer. The remaining two buildings, an academic structure to house the major portion of the College of Naval Command and Staff and a Research Center to supplement our inadequate library facilities are programmed, and every effort must be made to have them funded and built on schedule.

With the construction of adequate facilities well underway and with the assurance of an expanding student input of highly qualified officers to meet the Master Plan goal, the major challenge will be to provide this next generation of our Navy's leaders with a comprehensive and balanced military and academic education that will prepare them for the responsibilities they will face. I am confident the challenge will be met!

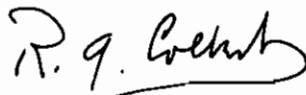
Before closing, there is one final point. While I have concentrated on the role of the Naval War College in serving the Navy, in reality we educate far more than our own naval officers. Very im-

4 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

portantly, the Naval War College is the senior service college of the Marine Corps. In addition, a substantial percentage of our students come from the Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard, as well as from the ranks of our career civil service, representing various agencies of departments of the Government. We welcome them as we join together in expanding our knowledge and professional competence to carry out our common responsibilities for the security of our country.

I have enjoyed my tour here immensely. I wish my successor the very

best in the bright days ahead as he, too, will strive to maintain the excellence which has characterized the 87-year history of our Naval War College.



R. G. COLBERT
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy
President, Naval War College

Cover: The "Celebration of Washington's Birthday at Malta on Board the U.S.S. *Constitution*" by J.G. Evans is from the Naval Academy Museum. The Naval Institute offers this and other high-quality full-color reproductions for sale; the proceeds from such are used for the restoration and preservation of the museum's fine collection of historical paintings. For information concerning the purchase of this reproduction and others in the collection, please write to: Book Order Department, U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, Md. 21402.