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## Reflections on Reading

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## REFLECTIONS ON READING

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*From the robot vacuum cleaner that patrols my floors to the unmanned planes that my friends in the Air Force use to patrol the skies, humanity has started to engineer technologies that are fundamentally different from all before. Our creations are now acting in and upon the world without us.*

P. W. SINGER, WIRED FOR WAR

**T**he formal mission statement underpinning the CNO PRP reads as follows: “The mission of the Chief of Naval Operations Professional Reading Program is to assist Sailors on their career-long path of personal development in the naval profession. Reading professionally relevant books will help Sailors develop as leaders of character who are strategically minded critical thinkers and skilled naval and joint warfighters, capable of meeting the operational and strategic challenges of the future.”

One way for sailors to prepare for the strategic challenges of the future is to read what the world’s foremost thinkers and futurists have written. *New York Times* best-selling author Dr. P. W. Singer is considered widely to be the premier scholar on all things futuristic, including drones, cyber warfare, and the weaponization of social media. Several of his books appear in the CNO PRP, as well as on the professional reading lists of other military services. Of particular note are four of Singer’s books, which their publishers describe as follows:

- *Ghost Fleet* (with coauthor August Cole) is a page-turning imagining of a war set in the not-too-distant future. Navy captains battle through a modern-day Pearl Harbor, fighter pilots duel with stealthy drones, teenage hackers fight in digital playgrounds, Silicon Valley billionaires mobilize for cyber war, and a serial killer carries out her own vendetta. Ultimately, victory will depend on who best can blend the lessons of the past with the weapons of the future. But what makes the story even more notable is that every trend and technology

in the book—no matter how sci-fi it may seem—is real. *Ghost Fleet* has drawn praise as a new kind of techno-thriller while also becoming the new must-read for military leaders around the world.

- *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century* explores the greatest revolution in military affairs since the atom bomb: the dawn of robotic warfare. We are on the cusp of a massive shift in military technology that threatens to make real the stuff of *I, Robot* and *The Terminator*. Blending historical evidence with interviews with an amazing cast of characters, Singer shows how technology is changing not just how wars are fought but also the politics, economics, laws, and ethics that surround war itself. Traveling from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan to modern-day “skunk works” in the midst of suburbia, *Wired for War* will tantalize a wide readership, from military buffs to policy wonks to gearheads. (This book is the primary text used in the Naval War College’s highly regarded elective course entitled “Unmanned Systems and Conflict in the 21st Century,” in which Singer is a frequent guest lecturer.)
- In *Like War: The Weaponization of Social Media*, Singer and coauthor Emerson Brooking tackle the mind-bending questions that arise when war goes online and the online world goes to war. They explore how ISIS copies the Instagram tactics of Taylor Swift, a former World of Warcraft addict foils war crimes thousands of miles away, Internet trolls shape elections, and China uses a smartphone app to police the thoughts of 1.4 billion citizens. What can be kept secret in a world of networks? Does social media expose the truth or bury it? And what role do ordinary people now play in international conflicts? Delving into the web’s darkest corners, we meet the unexpected warriors of social media, such as a rapper-turned-jihadist PR czar and the Russian hipsters who wage unceasing info wars against the West. Finally, looking to the crucial years ahead, *Like War* outlines a radical new paradigm for understanding and defending against the unprecedented threats of our networked world.
- In *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Singer and noted cyber expert Allan Friedman team up to provide the kind of easy-to-read yet deeply informative resource book that has been missing on a crucial issue of twenty-first-century life. Written in a lively, accessible style and filled with engaging stories and illustrative anecdotes, the book is structured around the key question areas of cyberspace and its security: how it all works, why it all matters, and what can we do? Along the way, they take readers on a tour of the important (and entertaining) issues and characters of cybersecurity, from the Anonymous hacker group and the Stuxnet computer virus

to the new cyber units of the Chinese and U.S. militaries. *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know* is the definitive account on the subject for us all—and comes not a moment too soon.

Military professionals at all levels are being bombarded by constant technological change and must master the complexities of their current environment while keeping a weather eye on scientific and engineering developments that could alter significantly the way in which we will fight in the future. As we frequently note at the Naval War College, the future is closer than you think!

JOHN E. JACKSON