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Reflections on Reading

John E. Jackson

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REFLECTIONS ON READING

Professor John E. Jackson of the Naval War College is the Program Manager for the Chief of Naval Operations Professional Reading Program.

In December 2019, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Michael M. Gilday, USN, issued his Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) 01/2019 that provided Navy leaders with guidance on how to simplify, prioritize, and build on the foundation established in *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, Version 2.0*, which was published in December 2018. In this FRAGO, he directed the Navy to focus on three principal lines of effort: war fighting, warfighters, and the future Navy.

While revisions to the CNO Professional Reading Program will be forthcoming, a number of books in the existing program already are clearly aligned with these three lines of effort.

WAR FIGHTING

Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans, by Admiral James G. Stavridis, USN (Ret.)

From one of the most admired admirals of his generation—and the only admiral to serve as Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO—comes a remarkable voyage through all the world's most important bodies of water, providing the story of naval power as a driver of human history and a crucial element in our current geopolitical path. In *Sea Power*, Admiral Stavridis takes us with him on a tour of the world's oceans from the admiral's chair, showing us how the geography of the oceans has shaped the destiny of nations, and how naval power has in a real sense made the world we live in today, and will shape the world we live in tomorrow. It is also a keen-eyed reckoning with the likely sites of our next major naval conflicts, particularly the Arctic Ocean, eastern Mediterranean, and South China Sea. Finally, *Sea Power* steps back to take a holistic view of the plagues to our oceans that are best seen that way, from piracy to pollution. When most of us look at a globe, we focus on the shape of the seven continents. Admiral Stavridis sees the shapes of the seven seas. Not since Alfred Thayer Mahan's legendary *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* have we had such a powerful reckoning with this vital subject.

Red Star over the Pacific, by Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes

Combining a close knowledge of Asia and an ability to tap Chinese-language sources with naval combat experience and expertise in sea-power theory, the authors assess how the rise of Chinese sea power will affect U.S. maritime strategy in Asia. They argue that China has laid the groundwork for a sustained challenge to American primacy in maritime Asia, and to defend this hypothesis they look back to Alfred Thayer Mahan's sea-power theories, now popular with the Chinese. The book considers how strategic thought about the sea shapes Beijing's deliberations and compares China's geostrategic predicament to that of the kaiser's Germany a century ago. It examines the Chinese navy's operational concepts, tactics, and capabilities and appraises China's missile force. The authors conclude that China now presents a challenge to America's strategic position of such magnitude that Washington must compete in earnest.

WARFIGHTERS

Make Your Bed, by Admiral William H. McRaven, USN (Ret.)

If you want to change the world, start off by making your bed. On 17 May 2014, Admiral William H. McRaven addressed the graduating class of the University of Texas at Austin on commencement day. Taking inspiration from the university's slogan, "What starts here changes the world," he shared the ten principles he learned during Navy SEAL training that helped him overcome challenges not only in his training and long naval career but also throughout his life; and he explained how everyone can use these basic lessons to change themselves—and the world—for the better. Admiral McRaven's original speech went viral with over ten million views. Building on the core tenets laid out in his speech, McRaven now recounts tales from his own life and from those of people he encountered during his military service who dealt with hardship and made tough decisions with determination, compassion, honor, and courage. Told with great humility and optimism, this timeless book provides simple wisdom, practical advice, and words of encouragement that will inspire readers to achieve more, even in life's darkest moments.

Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World, by General Stanley McChrystal, USA (Ret.)

When General Stanley McChrystal took command of the Joint Special Operations Task Force in 2004, he quickly realized that conventional military tactics were failing. Al-Qaeda in Iraq was a decentralized network that could move quickly, strike ruthlessly, and then seemingly vanish into the local population. The allied forces had a huge advantage in numbers, equipment, and training—but none of that seemed to matter. General McChrystal led a hierarchical, highly

disciplined machine of thousands of men and women. But to defeat al-Qaeda in Iraq, his task force would have to acquire the enemy's speed and flexibility. McChrystal and his colleagues discarded a century of conventional wisdom and remade the task force, in the midst of a grueling war, into something new: a network that combined extremely transparent communication with decentralized decision-making authority. The task force became a "team of teams"—faster, flatter, more flexible—and beat back al-Qaeda. In this powerful book, McChrystal and his colleagues show how the challenges they faced in Iraq can be relevant to countless businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations. The world is changing faster than ever, and the smartest response for those in charge is to give small groups the freedom to experiment while driving everyone to share what they learn across the entire organization. It has the potential to transform organizations large and small.

FUTURE NAVY

7 Deadly Scenarios: A Military Futurist Explores War in the 21st Century, by Andrew F. Krepinevich

A global pandemic finds millions swarming across the U.S. border. Major American cities are leveled by black-market nukes. China's growing civil unrest ignites a global showdown. Pakistan's collapse leads to a hunt for its nuclear weapons. What if the worst that could happen actually happens? How will we respond? Are we prepared? These are the questions that Andrew F. Krepinevich asks—and answers—in this timely and often chilling book. As a military expert and consultant, Krepinevich must think the unthinkable on the basis of the latest intelligence and geopolitical trends—and devise a response in the event our worst nightmares become reality.

As riveting as a thriller, *7 Deadly Scenarios* reveals the forces—both overt and covert—that are in play; the real ambitions of world powers, terrorist groups, and rogue states; and the actions and counteractions both our enemies and our allies can be expected to take—and what we must do to prepare before it's too late.

Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century, by Geoffrey Till

The rise of the Chinese and other Asian navies, worsening quarrels over maritime jurisdiction, and the U.S. maritime pivot toward the Asia-Pacific region remind us that the sea has always been central to human development as a source of resources, and as a means of transportation, information exchange, and strategic dominion. It has provided the basis for mankind's prosperity and security, and this is even more true in the early twenty-first century, with the emergence of an increasingly globalized world trading system. In contemporary conditions, navies, and other forms of maritime power, are having to adapt, in order to exert

the maximum power ashore in the company of others and to expand the range of their interests, activities, and responsibilities. While these new tasks are developing fast, traditional ones still predominate. Deterrence remains the first duty of today's navies, backed up by the need to "fight and win" if necessary. How navies and their states balance these two imperatives will tell us a great deal about our future in this increasingly maritime century. This book investigates the consequences of all this for the developing nature, composition, and functions of all the world's significant navies, and provides a guide for anyone interested in the changing and crucial role of sea power in the twenty-first century. *Seapower* is essential reading for all students of naval power, maritime security, and naval history, and highly recommended for students of strategic studies, international security, and international relations.

These six titles are among many others that comprise the CNO Professional Reading Program. They will help all sailors meet the challenges we face as we move into the second decade of the twenty-first century. As the CNO has noted, "We have much to do. Your tenacity, drive, and initiative will take us where we need to go—and do so at flank bell." Each and every one of us must be standing by to answer all bells!

JOHN E. JACKSON

(Note: All book descriptions are drawn from Amazon.com.)