

## From the Editors

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## FROM THE EDITORS

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At a time when the Russia-generated crisis in and around Ukraine largely has monopolized the attention of the international community, it is useful to be reminded that the Middle East has not exactly gone away. It is more important than ever to understand the Middle East not as an isolated geopolitical problem but rather as a key arena of major-power rivalry. In “Israeli Maritime Power and Eurasian Competition,” Seth Cropsey underscores the historical and contemporary importance of Israel’s naval capabilities as a strategic counter to these powers—principally Turkey and Iran—rather than as a counter to the marginal naval threats posed by its immediate neighbors. He notes that Israel understandably has hedged its bets in relation to the extraregional great powers Russia and China, even as he registers a warning about the risks of encouraging China’s appetite for Israeli advanced military technologies. The author emphasizes the significance of Israel’s submarine force for the credibility of its nuclear deterrent but suggests that Israel may need to embrace a new requirement for a naval (presumably, submarine) presence in the Indian Ocean to counter Iran. Seth Cropsey is president of the Yorktown Institute.

The emergence in recent years of great-power competition as the defining feature of the current strategic environment naturally has led to a revived attention to nuclear weapons and the possibility of nuclear war. At the same time, the strategic environment itself has evolved as new—and at best half-understood—military capabilities have emerged on the scene. Cyber war is the most obvious and consequential of these. In “Nuclear-Crisis Management and Cyber War: A Dangerous Crossroads,” Stephen J. Cimbala attempts to come to grips at a conceptual level with the possible interactions of cyber warfare, or information operations more generally, with nuclear-crisis management. Drawing on a well-developed but by now virtually forgotten literature on crisis management generated during the Cold War, the author reminds us that nuclear deterrence during those years was more fragile than often believed, and that careful thought needs to be given to the potential unintended consequences for command and control and crisis communications with the adversary under various scenarios of cyber attack. Stephen J. Cimbala is a professor of political science at Pennsylvania State University–Brandywine.

Matthew Cancian’s “An Offensive Minelaying Campaign against China” focuses on an aspect of a possible conventional conflict with the People’s Republic of

China that is rarely discussed, if not actively neglected, by the U.S. Navy. Cancian usefully reminds us of the underappreciated effectiveness of American mine-warfare campaigns, especially the one against Japan over five months in 1945 that sank more ship tonnage than all the “unrestricted” USN submarine attacks of World War II. He surveys existing American mine-warfare capabilities and aerial-delivery options in the Taiwan Strait, offers a detailed analysis of Chinese countermine capabilities, and highlights the overall operational advantage likely to accrue to the United States and its allies from conducting such a campaign. He also emphasizes the unique strategic advantage of mine warfare as a measure short of direct kinetic combat. Matthew Cancian is a PhD candidate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a former Marine artillery officer.

At a time when Russia’s attention seems focused largely on Ukraine and its future relationship with the West, it is important not to lose sight of Russian activities elsewhere in the world. This is particularly true of the African continent. In “‘Great Regional Engagement’ Rather than ‘Great Sea Power’: Russia’s New Supply Point on the Red Sea Coast,” Tobias Kollakowski assesses the significance of Russia’s recent acquisition of a naval logistics base at Port Sudan on the Red Sea in light of its overall interests in the region. He argues that, quite unlike the example of the Soviet Union’s naval presence in the Indian Ocean toward the end of the Cold War, Russia is concerned not with projecting blue-water naval power but rather with positioning itself to exert political and military influence in North Africa and the Sahel. It is surprising to learn that Russia is now the source of 50 percent of all arms exports to African nations. Tobias Kollakowski, an officer in the Federal German Naval Reserve, is a PhD candidate at King’s College London.

It would not be difficult to make the case that the pace of technological change today creates unprecedented challenges for those charged with the task of designing, building, and fielding the U.S. Navy of the future. David H. Lewis, in “Innovation, Interrupted: Next-Generation Surface-Combatant Design,” argues that the Navy has not embraced sufficiently the imperative of the “open architecture” approach to ship design it originally pioneered in the *Yorktown*-class aircraft carriers of the late 1930s and has followed more recently with the Littoral Combat Ship. David H. Lewis is the Acquisition Chair and Professor of the Practice at the Naval Postgraduate School.

#### ERRATUM

On page 43 of the Autumn 2021 *Review*, USS *Valley Forge* (CV 45) was identified incorrectly as a *Midway*-class carrier; it was actually a long-hull variant of the *Essex* class.

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Robert Ayer, Managing Editor