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## From the Editors

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## FROM THE EDITORS

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The Russo-Ukrainian war understandably has taken much of the oxygen out of current debates about other aspects of American security policy. But the threat from the People's Republic of China has not gone away, and American officials continue to point to China as our most serious long-term security concern. How the Russian "roll of the iron dice" in Ukraine will affect the situation in the Far East is only beginning to be assessed, but its implications could be very substantial. In "Countering China's 'Trident' Strategy: Frustrating China's Aims in the East and South China Seas and the Indian Ocean," Kohji Kuhara provides an important perspective on the Chinese maritime posture in the Indo-Pacific today, drawing on what he sees as an instructive parallel to the global maritime posture of the former Soviet Union. Regarding both cases, he emphasizes the sometimes-neglected importance of maritime "bastions" for the defense of nuclear-armed ballistic-missile submarines. It probably is time to extend this analysis to the context of contemporary Russia's maritime strategy as well. Commander Kohji Kuhara is a serving officer in the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.

Under current international circumstances, B. A. Friedman's "War Is the Storm: Clausewitz, Chaos, and Complex War Studies" may seem to be an indulgent excursion in antiquated military theory. In fact, nothing could be more germane to an understanding of the realities of the totally unanticipated Russian failure (so far, at any rate) to subjugate Ukraine by force of arms. Friedman's piece makes a compelling case for the continuing importance of the great Prussian thinker as an analyst of war from the perspective of contemporary theories of nonlinearity or "chaos" in war and their applications to military organizations and war fighting. His discussion, for example, of questions related to the Clausewitzian *trinity*—the dialectical relationship between tactics and strategy and between offense and defense, the role of "friction," and more—has striking applications to the ongoing struggle in Ukraine. Of particular interest for military doctrinalists will be Friedman's disparagement of the concept of operational art and the standard ("linear") understanding of strategy in terms of "ways, means, and ends." B. A. Friedman is a military strategist and officer in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

*Command of the sea* may seem to some another outdated military term. Robert C. Rubel, in "Command of the Sea Redux," argues that the U.S. Navy has lost sight

of the central role of command of the sea as a strategic concept that is essential to the Navy's core functions of force planning and global deployment, especially at a time when the Chinese naval buildup of recent decades has made it quite clear that America's dominance of the global maritime commons, which it has enjoyed since World War II, no longer can be taken for granted. Rubel points to serious structural issues, particularly the absence of a central mechanism for grand strategy formulation and the constraints on flexible use of naval forces imposed by the current Unified Command Plan. Robert C. Rubel is the former dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval War College.

Grappling with the design of American naval power is not a new problem. In "No Magic Number: Predreadnought Fleet Architecture in the U.S. Navy, 1902–1905," John T. Kuehn opens a window into the internal deliberations of senior Navy officials over the future of the force at a time of rapid technological development and geopolitical change. It is well to be reminded of a time when the Monroe Doctrine was a living memory and the U.S. Navy's principal concern was a German incursion into the Caribbean and Latin America. Under the Navy's newly established General Board, the focus of effort was extended beyond a narrowly bureaucratic concern with ship construction to consider wider factors involving the likely enemy and the principal theater of operations, as well as the new challenge emanating from the threat of torpedo boats and submarines. This was, Kuehn suggests, a remarkably "rational" approach that may provide guidance for the present. John T. Kuehn is a professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

If any engagement in American naval history might be thought to have been analyzed to death, it is the Battle of Midway of early June 1942. In "What WAS Nimitz Thinking?," Jonathan B. Parshall—perhaps the leading expert on the Imperial Japanese Navy and on Midway in particular—tells us, "Not so!" On the one hand, he finds that the "miracle" of the American victory in that decisive battle has been much overstated, and that given American advantages Nimitz's basic plan had a very good chance of success, even a decisive victory. On the other hand, he argues that Nimitz seems to have been prepared to engage the Japanese even at a potential disadvantage of two carriers against five, instead of the actual three against four. This sheds a new light on Nimitz's famously laconic "acceptance of risk" message, to say the least. Building on the work of several other scholars, Parshall develops a counterfactual analysis of various potential scenarios that naval readers will find fascinating. Jonathan Parshall is the author, most notably, of *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway*.

Our final offering brings a focus to a conflict that hardly is remembered today but that has surprising relevance in the current strategic environment. Jeremy Thompson, in "The Second Anglo-Icelandic Cod War (1972–73)," recalls the

remarkable struggle between two NATO allies over access to fishing in the cod-rich waters of Iceland by British trawlers—a struggle that escalated to involvement by the coast guard and naval forces of the two sides and included hostile encounters often barely short of shooting war. The interesting takeaways here are the way Iceland played a weak hand superbly against the British and the potential of its model’s applicability—improbable as that may seem—to the ongoing maritime challenge posed by the Chinese in the South China Sea. Captain Jeremy Thompson, USN, is currently chief of staff for Navy Expeditionary Combat Command Pacific.