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## From the Editors

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## FROM THE EDITORS

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Enough time has passed since the 2003 coalition invasion of Iraq that descriptions and analyses have been published about most aspects of the run-up to, and prosecution and results of, that conflict. However, for the sake of our overall understanding of that campaign and for the benefit of those who may find themselves in similar situations in the future, more attention needs to be paid to the planning process that preceded those other efforts. In “OPLAN 1003V: Operation IRAQI FREEDOM from a Planner’s Perspective,” Don Thieme, who served as a planner for Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, has performed that function. Publication of this personal, ground-level narrative describing and analyzing his own and other individuals’ experiences provides a “capture” that is sure to become a valuable resource down the road. Don Thieme is an associate professor in the Maritime Advanced Warfighting School at the Naval War College.

The planning and calculation that went into the Allied island-hopping campaign that by the end of the Pacific War closed in on the Japanese home islands have somewhat of a mirror image in the planning and calculation currently going into the People’s Republic of China’s intention to island-hop its way out of any Western attempts to frustrate its expansionist tendencies as they radiate out from the Chinese mainland. In “Island-Hopping with Chinese Characteristics: What the PRC Is Doing in the Pacific Islands, Why It Matters, and Why the Time Has Come to ‘Block and Build,’” Cleo Paskal explains the Chinese regime’s concept of “comprehensive national power” and how it applies that concept to the circumstances of China’s particular geopolitical situation. China’s approach to amassing resources—physical, intellectual, financial, naval, social, and other—bit by bit, one small Pacific island nation at a time, should be a matter of concern and be subject to political, diplomatic, financial, naval, and other efforts at countering it. Cleo Paskal is a nonresident senior fellow for the Indo-Pacific at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

Such a serious response will be that much more difficult to carry off given the overall situation described by Robert S. Ross in “Reluctant Retrenchment: America’s Response to the Rise of China.” The “easy” ascendancy that America and the rest of the West carried out of World War II and through the Cold War is now not so easy to maintain against a rising China and amid hedging allies, partners, and neighbors. Every advance China makes in its creeping expansionist efforts, as described in the

Paskal article, further shrinks the field for U.S. responses. Ross's analysis ranges "across the waterfront"—covering security relationships, war-fighting capability, antiaccess/area-denial coverage, naval fleet force structure, and more—but its most telling commentary may be about how difficult it is for a great power to come to grips with the necessity for it to retrench (to some degree, in some areas, for some period) if it is to be capable of meeting future challenges with the necessary capabilities. Robert S. Ross is a professor of political science at Boston College and an associate at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University.

This issue's final article—"Laying the Groundwork for Sims: Albert P. Niblack as the First USN Inspector of Target Practice, and the Gunnery Revolution of the U.S. Navy," by Andrew K. Blackley—is a historical study covering a period when the United States, by way of contrast with those covered in the analyses in the earlier articles in this issue, was a victorious and rising power in the Pacific and the world. His special focus is on the U.S. Navy's efforts to turn its ships, and especially their gunnery, into a fitting capability to match that ascendancy. As is usual in the Navy and other bureaucratic, sometimes hidebound, institutions, wrenching a better future out of the past and the present can be a bruising experience for all concerned. Sometimes progress comes from those who charge in and break things; sometimes it comes from those who work patiently from within; and sometimes it takes both types, working either together or in sequence. In the application of those models to the case of the Navy and its gunnery early in the twentieth century, Albert P. Niblack makes a useful comparison with the more-famous William S. Sims. Andrew K. Blackley is an independent scholar.

## NWC PRESS BOOK PROJECTS

Most Recent Volumes		Book Line	Next Projected Volumes	
HM 31, VanDeMark, ed., <i>New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Twentieth McMullen Naval History Symposium Held at the U.S. Naval Academy 14–15 September 2017</i> (August 2023)	HM 32, Armstrong, ed., <i>New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Twenty-First McMullen Naval History Symposium Held at the U.S. Naval Academy 19–20 September 2019</i> (August 2023)	<b>Historical Monographs</b>		
NP 45, Schneider, Goldman, and Warner, eds., <i>Ten Years In: Implementing Strategic Approaches to Cyberspace</i> (December 2020)	NP 46, Ayer, ed., <i>Deterrence: Selected Articles from the Naval War College Review</i> (December 2021)	<b>Newport Papers</b>	NP 47, Burke, <i>Analogous Response Redux: Vladimir Putin's Aspirations for Altering the Maritime Balance</i>	NP 48, Augier, Barrett, and Mullen, eds., <i>Wayne Hughes Symposium proceedings</i>

Most Recent Volumes		Book Line	Next Projected Volumes	
LES 1, Crosby, <i>Inspiring Innovation: Examining the Operational, Policy, and Technical Contributions Made by Vice Admiral Samuel L. Gravely Jr. and His Successors</i> (2018; 2nd ed., October 2020)	LES 2, Demy, ed., <i>Ethics and the Twenty-First-Century Military Professional</i> (November 2018)	<b>Van Beuren Leadership &amp; Ethics Series</b>	LES 3, Stockdale, <i>James B. Stockdale on Leadership, Ethics, and Education: Selected Articles from the Naval War College Archives</i> , ed. Gibbons, Demy, and Palmer	LES 4, College of Leadership and Ethics, <i>Competence and Character: The History of the College of Leadership and Ethics</i>
RB 16, Chubb, <i>Chinese Nationalism and the “Gray Zone”: Case Analyses of Public Opinion and PRC Maritime Policy</i> (July 2021)	RB 17, Bentley, <i>The Maritime Fulcrum of the Indo-Pacific: Indonesia and Malaysia Respond to China’s Creeping Expansion in the South China Sea</i> (March 2023)	<b>China Maritime Studies Institute Red Books</b>	RB 18, <i>Sea Dragons: Special Operations and Chinese Maritime Strategy</i>	
(Preceding volumes were published by the Naval Institute Press)		<b>Studies in Chinese Maritime Development</b>	SCMD 8, Erickson, Kennedy, and Martinson, eds., <i>Chinese Amphibious Warfare: Prospects for a Cross-Strait Invasion</i>	SCMD 9, <i>Chinese Undersea Warfare: Narrowing the Gaps</i>
BB 1, Stubbs, <i>Crafting Naval Strategy: Observations and Recommendations for the Development of Future Strategies</i> , ed. Tangredi (September 2021)		<b>Leidos Chair of Future Warfare Studies Black Books</b>		

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