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On Navalization

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PRESIDENT'S FORUM



On Navalization

I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED that a leader's primary responsibility to the people he or she leads is to articulate clearly his vision for the future of the organization. In my change of command speech and in subsequent fora I have identified four broad elements of my vision: that the institution should *Operationalize*, *Navalize*, *Futurize*, and *Internationalize* (a new element) our efforts toward an overall goal of contributing to the professionalism and capabilities of the nation's future leaders. I addressed aspects of this vision in the Autumn 2016 and Winter 2017 issues of the *Naval War College Review*, and in this issue I would like to expand on the concepts inherent in *navalization*.

To anticipate and respond to changes in our strategic environment and best fulfill our mission, the College will expand the navalization of its curriculum to optimize understanding of sea control. The strategic environment of today presents access challenges that make sea control more critical than ever before. The College will align its curricula to teach joint requirements through a sea power lens. Future war fighting no doubt will be conducted as joint and combined operations, but the legacy of the Naval War College (NWC) and the institution's recognized role as the Navy's intellectual center for considering issues related to maritime-focused warfare at and from the sea must be the sine qua non of our educational and research efforts.

Our Joint Military Operations Department at the College has embraced and implemented this vision both in the Nimitz course offered by the College of Naval Warfare at the most senior level and in the Spruance course taught by our College of Naval Command and Staff faculty. These courses are, first and foremost, about war fighting and gaining sea control in a contested environment. Both are designed to challenge students intellectually in the theory and practice of war

fighting and are geared toward war fighting that will prepare our future military leaders to fight the maritime force across all warfare domains.

The Nimitz course incorporates the College's vision by using case studies emphasizing the role of maritime forces and their relation to joint warfare. The capstone design event for the 2016–17 academic year will focus on U.S. Pacific Command and the U.S. Pacific Fleet. We also will incorporate the work being done by various other NWC activities, such as the Halsey Advanced Research Groups, the China Maritime Studies Institute, and the Russia Maritime Studies Institute, to provide students with the opportunity to deal with current capabilities and issues.

The Spruance course objectives focus on developing future leaders able to cope with the ambiguity of warfare in the maritime domain, and the course enhances their skills in exercising critical and creative thought in the application of operational art and naval warfare theory. Sessions on naval tactics have been added to allow the students to participate in multiple active-learning events. The use of maritime-focused historical cases is designed to enable students to understand the evolution of naval warfare, to deduce major concepts of naval war fighting, and to apply them to a future war at sea. Not since the interwar years (1919–38) has such emphasis been placed on naval warfare, and with these changes we are introducing our students to a more-focused approach to theory, planning, and—importantly—execution.

At the macro level, both courses focus on operational art, critical thinking, operational leadership, and naval war fighting. These concepts are carried throughout each session and are designed to develop students who are skilled at employing naval power across the spectrum of conflict to achieve the maritime force of the future in support of the joint force.

We also are increasing the influence that a large dose of “salt water” has on our research and gaming activities. In the past year, the Navy Strategic Enterprise, through the vehicle of the Strategic Executive Group, has worked to provide more fleet input into the selection and prioritization of war games. This effort ensures that naval issues identified by the Chief of Naval Operations and the fleet commanders are addressed specifically in games and exercises, and the broad lessons learned from all these activities are captured and shared throughout the naval force. A new vehicle for this sharing is the Wargaming Virtual Community of Practice (known as a VCoP), which is currently in development, with an initial operational capability occurring in fiscal year 2017 on both the unclassified and classified networks.

Our Center for Naval Warfare Studies (CNWS) has strengthened its faculty in areas of navalization, specifically to address issues such as future fleet design, a reinvigorated Russian navy, and the emergence of “gray-zone” warfare at sea. The

research approach the faculty is pursuing fully recognizes and incorporates elements of the entire joint force, in collaboration with allies and partners, throughout the full spectrum of security operations and warfare.

CNWS also is providing expanded support to the academic mission of the College by strengthening the naval aspect of the core courses through increased incorporation of wargaming into the curriculum. This includes an evolving and growing Joint Maritime Operations war game in the Spruance course curriculum that specifically addresses the unique issues attendant to naval warfare and to contested war at sea in conjunction with joint and combined forces. In addition, the center's Wargaming Department has teamed with the National Security Affairs Department to develop and launch the first National Security Affairs Decision-Making Simulation game. Exposing more students to the processes and methodologies of wargaming provides them a deeper appreciation for this analytical tool and an experiential learning process centered on naval and maritime issues.

As you can see, we are making strides to be more "naval" at your U.S. Naval War College. The imperative of sea control demands that we make it so. The great John Paul Jones once said, "Without a Respectable Navy, alas America." Our efforts will help keep our Navy and joint force focused and relevant in the years ahead.

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