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President's Notes

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Games may be so arranged as to be suitable for all ranks, by representing the minor operations of war as well as the greater . . . One of the great advantages of this game is that it obliges everyone taking part in it to think deeply, and that on the most important points connected with our profession . . . it teaches officers playing it . . . to give orders clearly and concisely, and shows distinctly the value of time. —John Middleton in *Explanation and Application of the English Rules of Playing the War Games*, 1873

In my initial "NOTES" I emphasized our prime need to keep the Naval War College pointed toward the fleet. In the short time that I have been here on Narragansett Bay, the contribution of the Center for War Gaming to this interaction of planner, operator and student has impressed me considerably. It is good and it is going to be better.

War gaming at Newport is nearly as old as the College itself. In the 1890s, under the pioneering hand of William McCarty Little, the "naval game board" and the attendant system of war games

played a significant role in the Navy's planning process. Enough controversy was evidently generated in the first two decades of this century (over the degree to which—or even if—military planners should consider political factors) that gaming in the 1920s moved from the Naval War College's preference for planning consonant with national policy to the General Board's desire for emphasis on tactics and basic professional training. Today's military planning process takes fully into account the basic truth that military and political factors are inseparable. The war gaming of today reflects this reality.

It has been instructive for me to visit the command cubicles and to talk with the flag officers and their staffs who are playing their actual wartime roles. The scenario, the complexities of command and control, the constraints on the commanders imposed by rules of engagement in time of crisis, and the employment of the forces under their command all combine to lend an air of reality to the game. The dedication of all of the participants, including the many warfare specialists on the game floor who make it all work, produces an unmatched learning experience. Since 1975 over 10,000 naval officers have enriched their professional experience at the Center for War Gaming.

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By CNO direction the gaming facilities must be made available to fleet commanders, and other naval activities, for six months of each year. For example, the Commander in Chief Atlantic Fleet conducts four war games annually. This continuing series of games is a key element in the Fleet Readiness Program. The Commander Second Fleet/Commander Strike Fleet Atlantic tests operation orders/plans annually.

The Naval Warfare Gaming System (NWGS) is also used to develop and refine concepts for future naval forces. For example, games jointly arranged by the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations/Naval Material Command have been testing concepts for the Guided Missile Hydrofoil Patrol Ship, Surface Effects Ship, and Vertical and Short Take Off and Landing (VSTOL) Aircraft employment. Investigative games, designed for use by OP-96V (Advanced Vehicle Study Group), have also been conducted.

Students at the College use the war gaming facility to improve their decisionmaking capability, enhance their knowledge of strategic and tactical considerations, conduct research in naval warfare concepts, and evaluate alternative force employment patterns. During the Naval Operations trimester each seminar develops an operation order and plays a war game based on that planning.

We have also been working closely with Marine Corps representatives to ensure that their needs are factored into the gaming. Marines play an important role in each game and are well represented.

There are shortcomings in what we can do at present. As naval warfare has become more complex, our gaming capabilities are being up-dated and enlarged to keep pace with fleet and student needs. This system improvement plan has been developed, is funded, and the follow-on NWGS is

projected to be operational in calendar 1981. This system is intended for two broad, and in some instances, overlapping, types of war gaming: (1) student gaming and (2) command gaming. In general, student gaming will be used to support the various College curricula. Command gaming will support the fleet and naval shore activities.

The student gaming system will feature software packages (i.e., game programs) for weapon system level, one-on-one engagement level, and full-scale games. These games can be pre-programmed, computer opposed or human opposed. Up to twenty games can be played simultaneously by as many students, or groups of students, enabling a twenty-fold increase in student access to the gaming facility.

The command gaming system will meet the requirements of naval commands for single play games involving the full range of command levels. It will feature a large repertoire of warfare programs to be used as needed for the scope and level of a particular scenario. Plans also include provisions for the fleet user through the establishment of remote terminals in such areas as Norfolk and San Diego. These terminals will be linked directly to the system and enable fleet personnel to participate in games from major homeports, without the necessity of traveling to Newport.

The Center for War Gaming has recently conducted the latest in the Inter-American series of war games and a game for Canadian Forces. Next spring, students from the Federal Republic of Germany will come to Newport to play a game already well along the planning road. SACLANT and Commander Second Fleet will continue to use the Center for War Gaming to good advantage.

War gaming at Newport is nearly a century old. While technology and sophisticated platforms and weaponry have added greatly to the complexities of war gaming, the basic intent has

remained constant: to plan and to learn in peace. As Stephen B. Luce so ably stated it:

As between the various scourges inherited by man there is one marked difference. No human foresight can provide against earthquakes or volcanic eruptions or pestilence or famine. War, on the other hand, may in certain instances, be averted. But mark this well: It may be averted in one

way only and that way is to be fully prepared for it. This is the meaning of this College: it is an instrumentality for the prevention of war by being prepared for it.



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