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In 2017 Erickson received NWC's inaugural Civilian Faculty Research Excellence Award. In 2012 the National Bureau of Asian Research awarded him the inaugural Ellis Joffe Prize for PLA Studies; he currently serves on the selection committee. His publications have won a variety of awards, including the NWC Foundation's Capt. Hugh G. Nott Prize (first & second place), the U.S. Naval Institute General Prize Essay Contest (third prize), and repeated recognition by the Center for International Maritime Security.

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Erickson's research focuses on Indo-Asia-Pacific defense, international relations, technology, and resource issues. He has envisioned, developed, and led a pathbreaking five-plus-year project to uncover China's critically important but insufficiently understood Maritime Militia; his coauthored China Maritime Report No. 1—China's Third Sea Force inaugurated a new series of CMSI studies. Erickson is the author of the book Chinese Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile Development (Jamestown Foundation/Brookings Institution Press, 2013). He is coauthor of two other books: Gulf of Aden Anti-Piracy and China's Maritime Commons Presence (Jamestown/Brookings, 2015) and Assessing China's Cruise Missile Ambitions (National Defense University Press, 2014). He has coauthored four additional volumes: Charting China's International Security Activism (Center for a New American Security, 2015), the CMSI monographs Chinese Antipiracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden (2013) and Chinese Mine Warfare (2009), and the China Aerospace Studies Institute monograph The PLAAF's Campaign for a Bigger Maritime Role (2019). Erickson is the editor of, and a contributor to, two volumes: Chinese Naval Shipbuilding (Naval Institute Press/NIP, 2016) and Proceedings of the 47th History Symposium of the International Academy of Astronautics (Univelt, 2015).

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