

USAWC faculty member tackles narcotics, corruption as part of ISAF task force

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Dr. Paul Kan, Henry L. Stimson Chair of Military Studies and associate professor of national security studies, shakes hands with Gen. David Petraeus, Commander, International Security Assistance Force and Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan. Kan recently returned from a three-week deployment at ISAF working on an anti-narcotic and anti-corruption task force. courtesy photo.

March 24, 2011 – An Army War College faculty member knows firsthand the issues and challenges that narcotics and corruption are creating in Afghanistan, thanks to his recent assistance visit to ISAF.

Dr. Paul Kan is back from a three-week deployment to Kabul, Afghanistan where he supported the International Security Assistance Forces Afghanistan. Kan was part of the international task force *Shafafiyat*, or "transparency" which is tackling these very issues.

“Our task force took a hard look at how to tackle narcotics and corruption and focused efforts on how to link up these operations with the counter-insurgency operations to increase their effectiveness.

“Each nation and organization brings their own unique perspective and abilities to this issue,” said Kan, describing the joint and international task force with members from Canada, France, Spain, Poland, the United Kingdom and the FBI.

The task force focused their analysis on issues such as the corruption in banks, local governments and the opium trade.

“Corruption and the narcotics trade really undermine the efforts for and the viability of Afghanistan,” he said. “There needs to be a legitimate government without the criminal elements and corruption.”

Kan and the team reviewed existing doctrine and plans, taught classes about how to combat narcotics and helped set up a new initiative with the Army's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute.

“I will be working with PKSOI to develop new curriculum that will help educate people on the many elements and types of corruption, so they will know how to approach it when they encounter it,” said Kan.

His time in Afghanistan, and the experiences of other Army War College faculty and staff who deploy to support the operational force, really helps benefit the students as well, he said.

“It’s important for me to see firsthand what is happening in the ongoing operations that we discuss in seminar,” said Kan. “We have an obligation to be current for our students. They bring to the table a tremendous wealth of experience and our ability to see what they have experienced for ourselves really helps us engage and bring value to the conversation in class.”

Kan said that his time in Afghanistan made him confident in the people who are continuing this fight.

“I worked with some great people who are really dedicated to the pursuit of an unknown outcome,” he said. “They are doing their best every day. It really is a noble thing.”

Kan is the USAWC Henry L. Stimson Chair of Military Studies and associate professor of national security studies.