

First week of distance ed resident course draws to a close

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370 members of the Distance Education Class of 2014 leave Bliss Hall after listening to Dr. Peter Singer. The class is wrapping up their first resident course at Carlisle Barracks.

Updated June 26—

Dr. Peter Feaver, spoke about civil military-relations to the class June 26. He focused his remarks on the relationship of the senior military to the senior national command authority and how it shapes policy and strategy.

Feaver, a Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University, discussed how the civil-military relationship has changed during recent presidents, and how the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have affected the relationship. He said that a civil-military case study moment of decision has come about during both and the fact that both conflicts have still uncertain outcomes which poses challenges for future relations.

“His talk was a good reinforcement of one of our courses during the self-study portion of the course,” said **Marine Corps Lt. Col. Jonathan Donigan**, Third Marine Expeditionary Unit, Okinawa. “It’s always good to be reminded about the roles of civilian leaders and what’s appropriate for retired generals and active duty officers. “

“I found it surprising when he talked about how each of the incoming administrations had viewed the civil-military relationship,” said **Lt. Col. John Maher**, deputy commander of the 8th Legal Operations Detachment. “I think we as senior leaders will need to be cognizant of how important that is when we interact with the civilian leadership.”

“I think it’s very important that we hear from a variety of speakers about topics like this,” said **Lt. Col. Dan Hash**, state training officer for the Montana National Guard. “This relationship is vital for the success of not only our military but our nation. His talk gave me insights on how our civilian leader may view an issue differently than we do in the military which is very important to know.”

June 24 - Retired **Gen. Charles Campbell**, former Commanding General, United States Army Forces Command and 1991 Army War College grad, spoke to the class June 24.

Campbell used stories from his career to frame some of the skills and abilities he felt are necessary for strategic leaders. He pointed to three strategic inflection points during his career that he felt shaped the Army – institution of the all-volunteer force after Vietnam, the falling of the Berlin Wall and 9/11 -- and how the decisions made by leadership at the time had long-term implications.

Among the skills he felt are necessary for strategic leaders were: thinking expansively; being innovative; challenging beliefs and question assumptions; working well with teammates and building consensus; and planning for the future.

He pointed out that during each of the periods, leaders had to re-invest in the force to adapt to the changes that were coming, not dissimilar to the situation currently facing the nation currently.

June 21 -Lunchtime lectures by War College experts like **Dr. Paul Kan, Col. Joel Hillison and Dr. James Bolan** adds to the experience.

Hillison discussed why Europe still matters when developing U.S. policy, especially working with NATO and the European Union.

“We’ve kind of forgotten about Europe,” said Hillison. “Our commitment has changed over the years. In the 1950’s we had more than 400,000 troops in Europe, almost one-third of our Army. That has declined significantly.”

Hillison spoke about the strategic shift to Asia and the implications for a rising Asia and declining Europe and how NATO and EU strategies have placed more pressure on the U.S. and caused shifts in policy.

“While we may place less emphasis on Europe militarily, those nations are still important to us economically and in relationship building,” he said. “Europe, and more importantly NATO, provides us valuable focal points for cooperation, while enables the nations to share the burdens when it come to

international challenges.”

Kan delivered a talk on crime in Latin America and talked at great length of the import role Mexico plays for the U.S.

He touched on violence with the drug trade as one of the most difficult challenges facing Mexico and the U.S. At one point, the country average on homicide per half hour.

“Outside of Iraq and Afghanistan, Mexico is where the highest number of Americans have died,” he said. “We can’t over look and take for granted the strategic importance and security of Mexico. The trade partnerships and long-standing relationship we have had has allowed us to focus on other regions like Iraq and Afghanistan. A stable, secure Mexico is very important to us.”

Bolan spoke to the students about the Arab Spring and other recent developments in the Middle East have long-term implications for U.S. policy.

“For the foreseeable future it seems like there will be ongoing instability in the region,” he said. “Our strategies have to support peaceful, evolutionary reforms consistent with local culture, traditions and desires. We have to rebalance using the other instruments of power.”

The key challenges according to Bolan when developing strategies for the region are to accommodate ascendant Islam, expand political and social contacts (soft power) to build a civil society, increase economic support for transitions and increased reliance on consensus building and partner contributions.

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The members of the Class of 2014 had their first Bliss Hall session this morning as Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, U.S. Army War College Commandant, welcomed the distance education students to the school and gave them advice on how to best take advantage of their time here. The class reported for the first of their

two-week residence sessions.

After more than a year of learning together behind computer screens all over the world, 370 members of the Army War College Distance Education Class of 2014 came to Carlisle Barracks for the first of two resident courses.

“You are a fantastic class and these two weeks will bond you as a class,” said **Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo**, Army War College Commandant, during his opening remarks to the class. He urged the students to take full advantage of their time here to get to know the staff, faculty and their fellow students.

Cucolo said that keeping an open mind, a willingness to venture outside their comfort zones and a willingness to challenge conventional wisdom and assumptions would be crucial as they moved forward in this new phase of their careers.

“Think about the contribution to our Nation that you want to make,” he said. “We need you to be critical-thinking advisers and generators of options for solutions to complex problems at the strategic level.”

The two-week sessions allow students to participate in seminar group sessions, to attend lectures and work with classified material relevant to the course of instruction. Attendance at both scheduled resident courses of instruction is required for successful completion of the curriculum.

“The first residence course really provides a capstone for the first year of studies,” said **Col. Darrell Fountain**, first resident course director. “We bring in guest speakers who provide a wrap-up on each of the four courses, as well as guest speakers who talk about each element of national power, diplomatic, information, military and economic.”

One of those speakers, Dr. Peter Singer, director of the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence and a senior fellow in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings, spoke to the class about future trends that are shaping the 21st century security environment. He touched on how technology has played both a positive and a negative role in defining strategy and how it also impacts leaders.

“The use of robots brings up quite the dilemma when it comes to ethics,” said **Col. Weedon Gallagher**, Commander 1297th CSSB. “I was glad that he touched on that during his remarks and dispelled many notions that operators treated them like video games and showed that it does place high level of stress on them.

“I especially liked his discussion of how technology has affected the rise of non-state actors,” said **Lt. Col. James Allen**, Deputy Director of Instruction, 10th Battalion, 98th Training Management. “I agree with his assessments that it has really changed the nature of warfare going forward. It makes abilities that they would have no way to attain before possible.

“He brought up some very through-provoking topics during his talk,” said **Marine Lt. Col. Kevin Heartwell**, Command Inspector, Marine Corps Recruiting Command. “I think sometimes we overlook the potential issues that new technologies or abilities can bring. It’s important to take a step back and take that into consideration before we ‘put all of our eggs into one basket’ like he said.”

After each Bliss Hall session, students returned to their seminar to talk about the presentations as a group. Discussions led by faculty member like **Terry Wallace, Col. William Blankmeyer** and **Dennis Keller** help bring an even great level of clarity for the students.

Dr. Peter Singer, director of the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence and a senior fellow in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings, spoke to the class June 17 in Bliss Hall.



“I think that getting back and talking about these concepts and ideas with our classmates is really helpful,” said **Lt. Col. David Filer**, a strategic planner at Camp Smith, Hawaii. “We’ve been working with them for a year behind our screens, so it’s nice to put a face with a name and have even more dialogue.”

“The faculty have done such an outstanding job helping us navigate the system, interact with others and help us understand the types of complex issues we’ll be facing later in the future,” said **Lt. Col. Kris Belanger**, commander of the 11th Battalion (OES), 97th Training Brigade.

Fountain said that the course ties together all of the strategic themes of the Army War College and prepares them for the second year of studies, including introducing them to their new seminar mates.

“When they arrive here they are split into the seminars that they will be a part of until graduation,” he said. “This allows them to form relationships here that will carry on during the next year of studies and when they arrive next year for the second residence course.”

The program differs from the resident course in the aspect that it’s a two year program instead of the one year duration for the resident class. Technology overcomes the geographical challenges of students spread around the world. Instead of mailing in papers, students log onto a secure website and watch

videos and guest speakers through Defense Connect Online. The distance education site provides students with primary and supplementary materials and allows students to participate in real-time discussions. This site is the focal point for faculty-student interaction, for viewing multimedia course work, constructing papers, sending course papers, and receiving evaluated work.

Fountain said that the distance education course remains committed to its charter when it was formed in 1960 as the correspondence course.

“We have a responsibility to emulate and parallel the curriculum and educational experience of the residence course,” he said. “The delivery method is different, but the educational experience is the same.”

The class includes 348 Army officers (153 National Guard, 156 Army Reserve and 39 Active), seven Marine Corps officers, one Navy officer and six International Fellows from Armenia, Estonia, Latvia, Netherlands, Taiwan and the United Kingdom.

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 20 June 2013