

## International fellows begin year of opportunities and challenges

By Robert Martin, USAWC PAO 25 June 2021



*USAWC Col. Celestino Perez briefs the international fellows on the Carlisle Scholars program and the Eisenhower speakers program*

The U.S. Army War College journey has started for 80 senior military officers of allied and partner nations, including first-time attendee from Fiji. These International Fellows will first complete a six-week orientation and then join their U.S. counterparts in the U.S. Army War College Resident Program Class of 2022, beginning Aug 13.

As international students arrived in the Carlisle area, they were administered Covid-19 testing and required to restrict their movement for seven days even though 68 had been fully immunized. Of those who arrived unvaccinated all will be vaccinated by the time the school year starts.

On June 18th 32 of those International officers graduated from the 9-week Academic Preparatory Course that sharpens their language skills for graduate-level reading, research, academic writing, and seminar

discussions.

“Our biggest challenge when starting this course was how we would succeed in the APC to prepare ourselves for the resident course,” said Lt. Col. Ibrahim Salifou Issa from the Niger Army. “Our reading and writing skills are impacted by our primary language, so we have to transition from English as our secondary language to our primary.

“At this time, I am confident that all of us are academically prepared to step into the resident course, I am expecting a lot of challenges and it’s not going to be easy, but the APC is designed to prepare all the international fellows to overcome those challenges,” Salifou Issa said.

All APC instruction, reading, discussion, and lecture are in English to enhance understanding, experience, and confidence in English-based national security studies.

“I have had to develop a listening ear for Fiji, Qatar, Bosnia, and Slovakia,” said Nigerian Army Col. Olakunle Nafie. “I have had to consciously make sure to speak in such a manner that all my classmates can understand me.

“Major General Hill spoke to us at the beginning of APC. He said, ‘this was an opportunity to hone our skills and polish our English speaking skills to prepare ourselves for graduate-level research and academic writing,’ and that’s exactly what the APC did,” said Nafie.

Beginning June 23 the six-week orientation course for the international students and their families includes briefings and staff rides on American culture and society, history and government, and values.

The course’s introduction to American society includes experiences ranging from a Harrisburg Senators baseball game to the birth-of-the-nation educational experience in Philadelphia at the National Constitution Center and a sail on the Spirit of Philadelphia.

Their understanding of American politics and government begins locally, with an introduction to local government by Carlisle Mayor Tim Scott – followed by an introduction to the justice system.

All International Fellows live in the civilian communities around Carlisle Barracks; many will send children to Carlisle Area schools.

August 13 is the first day of studies for the entire Class of 2022, and it begins with seminar introductions and acculturation. The 80 foreign officers will be intergraded within the 25 student seminars. Each seminar becomes

a forum for exchange of experiences and insights when the US military, US federal civilians, and International Fellows address case studies, exercises, and seminar discussion topics.

Their presence in the seminar brings greater diversity of viewpoints to the strategic thinking process and helps forge stronger ties of cooperation among future coalition partners.

The Chief of Staff of the Army invites military officers from these 75 countries to nominate military officers for Army War College attendance.

The 80 USAWC International Fellows in the Class of 2022 represent these 75 countries: Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Australia, Azerbaijan , Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Rep (2), Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, India (2), Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malawi, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Oman, Peru, Pakistan (2), Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia (2), Ukraine (2), United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom