

Fellow Focus - the Stanford experience

By Patricia Hays, Fellows Office 05 April 2023



Lt. Col. (P) Jason Kim is a USAWC Fellow studying at Stanford University at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies this year

USAWC fellow Lt. Col. (P) Jason Kim is attends Stanford University at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies this year. Since 2010, he has served as a Foreign Area Officer.

Tell me about your Fellowship. My Fellowship is located at Stanford University near the San Francisco Bay Area. Within FSI, I am assigned to the Center for International Security and Cooperation. CISAC covers a broad range of global security issues, and my research is focused on how the U.S. Department of Defense can improve the way it works with allies and partners during a contingency before forming a coalition to respond to that contingency. Through my research, I introduce the idea of contingency-based security cooperation as a solution to this question.

What has been your favorite part of being an AWC Fellow? My favorite part has been the opportunity to reflect on the past decade or so of service, particularly as a Foreign Area Officer. I have experienced and witnessed many international relations events during my assignments. Looking back, researching, and thinking through solutions in a supportive academic environment like Stanford is fascinating.

Favorite book you've read this year? My favorite book thus far has been *The Kill Chain: Defending America in the Future of High-Tech Warfare* by Chris Brose, who also spoke to us in person at one of the classes I was in. It reminds me of the importance of maintaining a sense of urgency to our most difficult challenges and the fallouts of a complex and slow defense acquisition ecosystem.

You've taken a lot of interesting classes this year. What's been your favorite class so far? I thoroughly enjoyed a Technology, Innovation, and Great Power Competition course taught by former DASD for South and Southeast Asia Dr. Joe Felter, Mr. Raj Shah, former lead for the Defense Innovation Unit Experimental, and American Entrepreneur Mr. Steve Blank. This course is unique because it teaches a robust methodology through customer discovery and hypothesis testing to develop meaningful and practical solutions to a problem.

Favorite speaker, that you've had this year? A tie between former Secretary of Defense James Mattis and former National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster. Both gentlemen took the time out of their hectic schedules to engage in meaningful and personal dialogue. Mattis strongly advocates the critical importance of allies and partners and provides context for my research. As an FAO, I've dealt with many challenges in working more closely with our allies and partners, and I felt Mattis provided genuine encouragement that helped motivate and shape my FSRP.

What is your FSRP? How did you get interested in this subject, and what have you learned so far? As an FAO, most of my experience is in

security cooperation, directly tied to our relationship with allies and partners. One of the questions the security cooperation community wrestles with is how it becomes relevant or applicable during crises or wartime. I became interested in researching this topic further, not just to re-assert that it's essential, but to understand how we can be in lockstep with our allies and partners during a crisis. Thus far, it is not about making weapons faster or drawing down from our stockpiles. We need to connect campaign and contingency planning to shape the operational environment with our allies and partners according to the contingency scenarios we expect them to be a part of. We then need to rehearse transitioning from campaign to contingency *with* them.

What have you found different or the same as your expectations

before being a Fellow? I found the degree of openness and hospitality from not just my department but from all the departments here at Stanford to exceed my expectations. In particular, I did not expect the professors to be so welcoming and accommodating to my requests to observe (audit) classes.

What's your next job?

I will assume the duties as the Chief of the Security Cooperation Office, American Institute in Taiwan – Taipei. My experience and expertise are in security cooperation, and the chance to lead the security cooperation office at AIT Taipei, our de-facto embassy, is truly a privilege. Taiwan and cross-strait relations are a hot topic in the international security sphere, and there's almost a daily article or op-ed about the issue. I feel like I'm headed right into where all the focus and visibility are, but I feel well prepared given my year as a fellow at Stanford, learning from my peers, prominent scholars, and outstanding professors who have helped so much.