

# Distance Education students descend on Washington DC for a day of intergovernmental interaction

*Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos, USAWC Public Affairs*

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June 24, 2011 - One of the lessons of the Army War College program is that the military does not, and cannot operate as a self contained entity. In many cases, coordinating with other nations, government agencies and international forces is required.

**Michael Keays, a State Department employee with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, briefs Army War College students on the U.S. policy towards Afghanistan. The students visited the State Department and other government and non-government agencies during a trip to Washington D.C. on June 22. Photo by Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos.**



To see this process in action, on June 22 nearly 350 distance education class of 2012 students descended on Washington D.C. to gain a broader perspective of international and domestic organizations that effect and influence national security policy.

The trip allows the students the opportunity to visit with, and speak with members of these government agencies.

“This trip is an integral part of the summer educational experience exposing our students to large and complex public and private organizations with a particular emphasis on interagency organizations,” said Col. Darrell Fountain, First Residence Course Director.

Prior to the trip the students were given a list of 22 different organizations they could visit. Once they

made their choices they were broken into small groups to visit the organization or institution of their choice. The organizations that were visited included the Russian, Brazilian and Indian Embassies, the State Department, a tour of the Army Congressional Appropriations, and the Heritage Foundation. Students also had the opportunity to visit media outlets such as Reuters and CBS News.

“This visit has brought everything full circle,” said Lt. Col. Kat Walker, the executive officer for Headquarters Department of the Army, G-8 . “It is interesting to see how different agencies interact from a strategic prospective, and see some of the challenges we have strategically to implement our national interests.”



**Members of the distance education class of 2012 listen as Jason Greer, the director of the Office of Congressional & Public Affairs for the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, gives them an overview of the State Department during their small group visit to Washington D.C. Photo by Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos.**

While visiting the State Department the students listened to remarks on the situation in Libya and U.S. policy toward Afghanistan. Walker said she found the remarks interesting because it gave her a better perspective on how the Department of State works with the Defense Department to implement national policy.

“In seminar we talked about strategic leadership, and DIME, or Diplomacy, information, Military and Economic, power,” said Marine Corps Lt. Col. Wes Hayes, the strategic communications officer for US Joint Forces Command. “It is eye opening to see the diplomatic concern and everything they are involved in.”

Other students “followed the money”, and learned how the Army gets its money. The students met with Maj. Gen. Phillip McGhee, the director of the Army Budget then went to Capitol Hill to meet with staffers from both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

“This trip was helpful,” said Col. Martin Wilson, Seminar 22 distance education faculty instructor. “The students are able to see the strategic level of money.”

“I couldn’t ask for a better trip,” said Hayes. “This was definitely the highlight of our two week resident program.”

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