

## DeSerio lecturer discusses accountability of the intelligence community

By Curt Keester 19 November 2018



*Dr. Loch Johnson, Regents Professor of Public and International Affairs at the University of Georgia, talks with Army War College students in Bliss Hall Nov. 15, about the need for intelligence accountability and oversight.*

**CARLISLE, Pa. (Nov. 16, 2018)** – Intelligence agencies protect democracy and keep an eye on foreign advisories, but how does the United States keep an eye on its intelligence communities, protect our personal liberties and ensure the agencies stay within lawful bounds?

That was the question posed by Dr. Loch Johnson, Regents Professor of Public and International Affairs at the University of Georgia, during a lecture to the Army War College class on the necessity for intelligence accountability and oversight in Bliss Hall Nov. 15.

“These oversight responsibilities are carried out by a number of entities within the government, the Executive Branch, the Judiciary, Congress, along with outside the government, the media and scholarly researchers,

as well as a few privacy-oriented interest groups like the ACLU,” said Johnson.

Agencies like the CIA, FBI and NSA conduct necessary operations vital to national security, and Johnson reviewed the past 50 years of accountability. However, he noted incidents when, he believes, intelligence agencies strayed beyond their charters.

He mentioned political targeting of U.S. citizens by the FBI, the CIA’s domestic espionage project and the NSA’s metadata collection. Incidents like these led lawmakers to demand more accountability by creating the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, he said.

“Every democracy must wrestle with the dilemma of ensuring security for its citizens against foreign threats and internal subversion, while at the same time shielding them from abuses to their liberty and privacy,” said Johnson. We can, and we must have strong and accountable intelligence agencies, he concluded.

Johnson is an expert on accountability and intelligence in the country, said Dr. Genevieve Lester, DeSerio Chair of Strategic Intelligence. He lived the entire history of oversight development, from the Church Committee, which was the background to our current oversight mechanisms, through all of the following stages.

“The importance of him visiting is to elucidate the framework of legal and institutional constraints on intelligence and secrecy, to help students think about the relationship between secret intelligence operations and the expectations of a free democracy, and to elaborate on the tensions between secrecy and transparency,” Lester said.

Johnson was this year’s Francis W. DeSerio lecturer, named in honor of the 1972 USAWC grad, and sponsored by the Russell Pearce Heuer and Elizabeth Crimean Heuer Foundation through the Army War College Foundation to expand student understanding of intelligence in strategic decision-making and policy development.