
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

New Master's Degree Program for International Students

By

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Many nations face an urgent need to strengthen civilian control over their armed forces. For nations that have recently liberated themselves from authoritarianism, the requirement to recast civil-military relations along democratic lines is especially urgent. However, even in many longer-established democracies, civil-military conflicts persist over defense budgeting, the roles and missions of the armed forces, and the mutual responsibilities of officers and civilians for effective civilian control. The President and Congress of the United States have recognized this need and expanded the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program to provide for the education of foreign military officers, legislators, and civilian officials in civil military relations.

The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) has responded to the need for training and education in civil-military relations by establishing the Center for Civil-military Relations with support from the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA). The Center is a tenant activity at the School, and offers a variety of courses on civil-military relations, both in Monterey and abroad. The program that has perhaps received the most attention is the in-residence Master's degree program.

The first group of nine students in the program in International Security and Civil-military Relations graduated with Master's of Arts degrees in December 1996. The second group of eleven students began in January 1997 and will complete the one year program in December. The Master's program is offered largely within the Department of National Security Affairs, and is fully accredited, as are also the other graduate degree programs at NPS.

The Master's in International Security and Civil-military Relations is designed to educate international officers and civilians in the key issues of democratic civil-military relations. While the first quarter is devoted largely to introductory courses in quantitative analysis, comparative politics, and civil-military relations, the courses in the following three quarters focus on such issues as democratic consolidation and civil-military relations, resource allocation, strategic planning, coalition warfare, and international organizations and negotiations. The students are allowed one elective course per quarter to choose from the approximately thirty that the NSA Department offers each quarter. They have been especially interested in taking the regional politics and security courses which are offered on all the world's regions. The students write a Master's thesis which is based upon a major research project. The academic program is intense and fast-moving in that the students will complete at least twelve courses during the year as well as the Master's thesis.

The international officers and civilians participating in the program are fully integrated with the American students from all the services as well as other international students from the thirty-nine countries currently represented at the School. They are integrated in the courses, in social events, and even in housing in that most of the international students live in housing provided by

NPS at nearby LaMesa Village and Fort Ord (which has now been reconstituted as California State University at Monterey Bay). This integration is generally considered one of the most valuable side benefits of the Master's program. Not only do the international students call attention to its merits, but so do the American officers, for whom their education is all the richer, and the faculty, for whom teaching is even more rewarding.

The students in the program are broadly exposed to academic resources and the U.S. system of government. Through the School's Dudley Knox Library the students are linked not only to other libraries, but also to the "information superhighway" which includes the Internet, Lexis-Nexis, FBIS, and a variety of other data bases. Through the NPS International Programs Office the students are exposed to the local and state levels of government and to such other phenomena as Silicon Valley.

As part of the program, the students visit Washington, DC and New York City where they become more familiar with the workings of the U.S. government and conduct research for their theses. In Washington they meet with representatives of the Department of State, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Defense Security Assistance Agency, the National Security Council, Congress, and they attend a reception in their honor offered by the Navy International Programs Office. In New York they meet with representatives of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The first group of students came from six countries: two each from Colombia, Russia, and Turkey, and one each from Croatia, Poland, and Ukraine. The second group is even more diverse with two each from Russia and Ukraine, and one each from Chad, Czech Republic, Ghana, Hungary, Poland, and Senegal. Whereas the first group had three civilians, the second group has two.

The students write a Master's thesis on a topic of relevance to their countries and their future positions. The topics during the first year ranged from "The American Debate over NATO Enlargement and the Question of Russia's National Interest," to "The Vietnam Syndrome and its Effect on the U.S. Regarding the Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia." Major Alberto Mejia, Colombia Army, wrote his thesis on "The Impact of U.S. De-Certification on the Future of Colombian Democracy," and was the winner of the DSAA Award for the best student in the program.

On returning to their countries, the graduates have moved into positions where their graduate education will prove useful in helping to ensure democratic civil-military relations and enhancing security cooperation with the United States. For example, Major Mejia has assumed the position as Inspector of Studies at the Army Weapons and Services School in Bogota where he is the third in the chain of command with responsibility for seventy officers (military instructors) and civilian personnel, as well as more than 1,000 students. In that position he is able to implement programs based on his graduate education at Monterey.

The Center, NSA Department, and the School hope to increase the numbers of students and the countries from which they originate. We also hope to attract U.S. officers to enroll in this high quality and extremely relevant program for future defense missions in accordance with the execution of the U.S. strategy of engagement and enlargement.

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