
Learning from Our Friends

By

John Auger

Each year forty senior military officers from around the globe continue their professional military education as International Fellows at the United States Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. There they join 280 other selected students representing Colonel equivalent U.S. active duty and reserve officers from all services and twenty civilian students from agencies throughout the Federal Government, including the Department of State. The International Fellows are fully integrated into all aspects of the College's curriculum. During the school year, the Fellows participate in seminar groups to study, research, and write on subjects of significance to the security interests of their own and other nations; they establish mutual understanding and good working relationships with senior U.S. officers and senior officers of other foreign countries; they enhance their professional qualifications; and the Fellows improve their firsthand knowledge of U.S. culture and institutions through study and travel in the continental United States. Importantly, they also enhance the total educational experience for their fellow students and the faculty; this is done not only on the college's academic side but also in the social, cultural, athletic, and other aspects of the college's co-curricular activities.



Collins Hall, the Wargaming and Simulation Center
at the Army War College

Within the curriculum, the International Fellows make significant contributions during seminar instruction. The War College's teaching philosophy considers each student to be a part of the overall teaching team. The International Fellows are a critical component of this teaching team as they bring new insights and different approaches to issues of which their U.S. colleagues are often unaware. Through rigorous give and take, they expand both their own horizons and those of their fellow students. During the college's course on regional appraisals, the Fellows bring their intimate knowledge of their countries and regions to their fellow

students. During academic field trips to New York City and Washington, the Fellows arrange briefings by their U.N. missions as well as visits to their respective embassies. The culminating academic exercise and the highlight for the entire student body is Strategic Crisis Exercise (SCE) and it is here where the International Fellows truly make one of their greatest contributions.

The Strategic Crisis Exercise synthesizes all aspects of the College's curriculum into a ten day computer assisted war game which analyzes U.S. national security and military strategy across the entire spectrum of operations from Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance on the one hand to Major Theater War on the other. The SCE emphasizes using all elements of national power—diplomatic, economic, informational, and military—to solve a series of crisis set around the globe. During the exercise, the International Fellows make significant contributions to the play of the game by portraying various regional organizations and their impact on the United States' ability to develop effective strategies for dealing with crisis worldwide.

During the Strategic Crisis Exercise, the International Fellows are organized into teams representing NATO, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the OAS, and the Arab League. U.S. officers are also participants in each organization playing the roles of military advisor to the U.S. Permanent Representative or as the USPERMREP, or in the case of the Arab League as the military advisor to the U.S. Special Envoy or in the role of the Special Envoy. During the SCE, the International Fellows rotate through a number of roles in their organizations: President, Chairman of Drafting Committees, and Press Spokesperson. As they respond to various crisis, they are required to assess the situation, seek clarification and instructions from their governments, dialogue on positions within the group, participate in drafting committees where they negotiate language and positions, participate in votes, and explain the outcome of voting to their countries, the media, and others. Examples of issues that they confront include: possible out of area operations for NATO; earthquake disaster assistance to the United States for a major earthquake along the New Madrid fault for consideration by the OAS; settlement of a dispute between Eritrea and Yemen for the Arab League; and reacting to pirate activity in the Strait of Malacca for the ASEAN Regional Forum.

These organizations interacted with the other player cells in the game through the U.S. Department of State and in some instances with the Commanders-in-Chief of Unified Commands through their U.S. POLADS (Political Advisors). As U.S. players try to build coalitions and negotiate basing and overflight rights, they soon discover that our allies view many situations much differently than the U.S. government. Often to the surprise of the students, they realize first hand that not everyone is in agreement with U.S. policy or U.S. leadership in a given situation and that even our closest allies perceive different interests in specific situations. U.S. students quickly realize that they can not present issues in these international fora and expect unanimous support, or automatic approval. The U.S. representative, like all other equals at the table, is required to dialogue and compromise to develop positions that are acceptable to all. All participants, U.S. and international, increase their knowledge of how to negotiate and work with others to find commonality in approaching difficult, complex situations. The experience will stand them in good stead for assignments after graduation where they will be required to work with many diverse groups to develop acceptable solutions to common problems.

The opportunity to work with the International Fellows during SCE is a valuable experience for the entire student body. All gain a greater understanding of the role of International Organizations in solving regional crisis. Most important, the players acquire a better understanding of the diverse viewpoints that nations bring to issues and the need to work closely together to develop mutually acceptable and workable solutions that address those concerns.

The participation of the International Fellows provides a significant enhancement for overall learning during every students' course of study at the Army War College. The International Fellows take away a much better appreciation of the United States and its military forces and those of their fellow internationals. They also leave behind for their American counterparts a much fuller and deeper appreciation of the international environment in which the United States must operate.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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