

2017

On Internationalization

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Recommended Citation

Harley, Jeffrey A. (2017) "On Internationalization," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 70 : No. 4 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol70/iss4/2>

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PRESIDENT'S FORUM



On Internationalization

AFTER I ASSUMED MY POSITION as President of the Naval War College last year, I identified four broad elements of a vision for the institution. We will *operationalize*, *navalize*, *futurize*, and *internationalize* the College's education and research efforts, with an overall goal of contributing to the professionalism and capabilities of the nation's future leaders. Previously I laid out an overview in the *Naval War College Review's* Autumn 2016 edition and addressed aspects of the vision's *operationalization* component in the Winter 2017 issue, *navalization* in the Spring 2017 issue, and *futurization* in the Summer 2017 issue. I would like to round out the discussion of our vision by reviewing our ongoing efforts in the areas of international education and engagement.

Accelerating a process begun sixty-one years ago when the Naval Command College was established, and forty-eight years after the first International Seapower Symposium (ISS) was convened in Newport, the College will strive to *internationalize* itself further so that it becomes the veritable locus of international maritime cooperation. Over the past six decades, the participation of topflight international officers in the classroom greatly broadened and enhanced the educational experience of the College's U.S. alumni. But that was never the sole nor the overriding reason it first opened its doors to the international community; educating international officers always has been a goal in itself. On any given day, the College's international alumni command about 40 percent of the world's navies and coast guards. That these leaders possess a sophisticated understanding of international politics, a thorough familiarity with the United States and its military forces, and a shared appreciation for the profession's norms of behavior is of inestimable value to both the United States and the international community. The bonds of understanding, friendship, and trust forged in Newport have made

the College “neutral ground,” where the personnel of navies from around the world not only feel welcome but are inspired to work together.

Through a series of initiatives undertaken in the spirit of this *internationalization*, the College seeks to promote ever-greater levels of cooperation and interoperability among the world’s navies and coast guards. Key steps include the following:

- *Expand the Presidential Fellows Program to include four former heads of navy.* We are incredibly blessed to have Admiral Guillermo Barrera, former head of the Colombian navy; Admiral Nirmal Verma, former head of the Indian navy; and Admiral Tomohisa Takei, recently retired head of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, currently aboard. Rear Admiral Lars Saunes, former head of the Royal Norwegian Navy, will join us in the fall of 2017. In addition to writing, teaching, and mentoring students, they will advise the President of the College and, in coordination with the dean of International Programs, will develop and execute a plan that maintains policy momentum between the regularly scheduled International Seapower Symposia. Admiral Barrera notes: “When I give lectures for the College of Naval Warfare and the College of Naval Command and Staff, I stress the usefulness of the themes and tools that the NWC [Naval War College] uses and teaches, as well as the contributions of the theorists in helping to understand the finer points of maritime strategy and operations. I illustrate this by citing successes and failures that have occurred in real life. I also love supporting other areas of education at the College, such as the Combined Forces Maritime Component Commander course and the regional alumni symposia. These two initiatives are a significant part of the education of both the U.S. personnel and their global partners.”
- *Bring the International Maritime Staff Operators Course (I-MSOC) to full output by 2020.* This spring, fifteen officers from thirteen countries attended a “beta test” for the twelve-week course. Students were taught the fundamental concepts and processes necessary to support a coalition or combined maritime component commander, with emphasis on the U.S. Navy Planning Process and the organization and functions of a U.S. maritime operations center. Graduates of I-MSOC will serve as catalysts for greater interoperability of coalition forces brought together to meet the challenges of the next maritime crisis. The course will be held three times a year, for an annual throughput of seventy-five students.
- *Increase the frequency of the College’s regional alumni symposia (RASs) from one to two annually.* These symposia are international academic conferences premised on the belief that military education is not solely the product of a

schoolhouse, but rather a lifelong attempt to acquire knowledge about the profession of arms. RASs also foster professional interaction among up-and-coming military leaders within a region. This network promotes professional linkages among military officers at a crucial juncture in their careers when international contacts prove invaluable. Usually cohosted with a war college from another country, RASs offer an excellent opportunity to interact with and influence a wide range of naval professionals around the world—like a “mini-ISS.”

- *Institutionalize student military-to-military exchange efforts with China and other nations.* Building understanding, friendship, and trust is a slow, laborious process that begins with small steps—particularly with countries that harbor deep suspicions of the United States. Midlevel student exchanges are an ideal means to that end.
- *Increase the capacity of the College to conduct sustained, purposeful engagement with our international partners, particularly its war college counterparts.* The cost-effective means of influencing future generations of naval officers is through their professional military education. By adding a small cadre of active and retired foreign area officers, the College aims to expand its contacts abroad and facilitate faculty exchanges, curriculum development, and war gaming.

The return on investment of these small yet critical initiatives can be significant. The Naval War College will continue to seek ways to enhance its *internationalization* mission. It has been said that, while the sleek, gray hulls wrought by the skilled hands of patriotic shipwrights are important, we also must be vigilant in our efforts to build *friend-ships*, *relation-ships*, and *partner-ships*!

As noted in the opening paragraph of this President's Forum, the College is moving out smartly to execute a four-part vision for the institution to make it more supportive of the needs of the operating forces; more attentive to the unique challenges and opportunities represented by our naval heritage and focus; more cognizant of and attuned to the impact that technological change will have on our maritime and joint forces; and more assiduous in its efforts to enhance maritime cooperation and friendship around the globe. I can assure you that all hands are “turning to” to make this vision a reality.

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