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President's Notes

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President's Notes

One of the exciting aspects of this centennial year for me has been the publication of the Centennial History of the Naval War College. In reading the history, I was particularly intrigued by the international influence that has persisted throughout the history of the War College. This influence was formalized in 1956 with the establishment of the Naval Command College (NCC). As you may know, this senior level college was the inspiration of Admiral Arleigh Burke. His vision extended to human terms when he said, “When a man reaches the end of his active career in the service, he finds that the greatest asset that he takes with him for a lifetime of work in his service, is his friends. Men whom he knows, respects, admires—and above all—men he can *trust*.” And that is the genesis of the Naval Command College, which since its creation has graduated eight hundred twenty-nine senior officers from 63 countries.

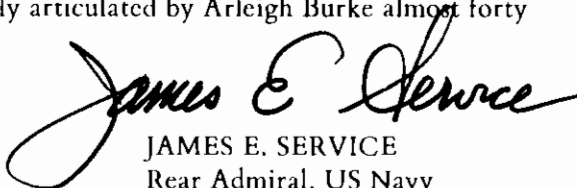
The international influence at the War College, however, dates back one hundred years to Luce’s thinking. He stressed professional exchanges and interaction between nations. Luce’s ideas paralleled the professional thinking then taking place in England, Germany, and France. He corresponded freely with his European colleagues, as did Mahan who also visited Europe. As early as 1894, two Swedish officers were assigned here and, as a result of their attendance, the Swedish Naval War College was subsequently developed. The following year a Danish officer was assigned, but in later years security clearance problems hampered the full development of a free and unrestricted international exchange of ideas. This reluctance to share tactical concepts and wider perspectives was changed with World War II when the importance of allied cooperation became clear and the need to understand and cooperate with officers from other navies became critical to preserving our national

security. Later, with the creation of Nato, the peacetime need to understand the viewpoints of international military officers became more apparent. NCC can, in many ways, be considered as an answer to this need for cooperation among international naval officers.

It was no coincidence that the President of the Naval War College at the time of the first International Seapower Symposium (ISS) in 1969 was Admiral Colbert, who had earlier served as the first director of NCC in 1956. He envisioned the Seapower Symposium as a forum to promote mutual understanding among the naval leaders of the world's maritime nations. This unusually successful meeting brought together 74 delegates representing 37 countries to discuss "changing maritime postures." Yes, NCC was the seed for the ISS and out of that Symposium, the Naval Staff College was developed. The CNOs from many nations asked that the War College expand its international program. In fulfillment of this expressed need, the Naval Staff College was created to complement the more senior course offered by NCC.

Thus, an intermediate level course was conceived that would educate mid-career officers to be the international counterparts of the students in the College of Naval Command and Staff. Four hundred sixty-one officers representing 68 countries have attended the college since its inception.

The success of the War College is mirrored by the success of our international programs. Already our international graduates are assuming senior positions in their navies and indeed their countries. With two-thirds of the NCC alumni attaining flag rank, our US students enjoy the unique opportunity of studying alongside the best officers from friendly foreign navies throughout the world. This interaction has indeed fostered the respect, admiration, and trust so capably articulated by Arleigh Burke almost forty years ago.



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