SECNAV76 Shares His Vision for the Future of NPS

By MC2 Patrick Dionne

Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Richard V. Spencer addressed Naval Postgraduate School students, faculty and staff during the latest Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture (SGL), Feb. 1. Spencer shared his vision for the future NPS, and how the Navy, DOD and the nation can capitalize on the Navy’s prestigious graduate university.

“This institution is a primary incubator for the capabilities that we need now,” said Spencer. “From the railgun to unmanned systems, power solutions to business and public policy, information science to international studies, NPS is at the forefront of improving our capabilities.”

Core to the university’s mission, Spencer reinforced the importance of defense-relevant research and attracting the best and brightest students through elevated admissions standards, as well competing for, attracting and retaining the best faculty possible.

Spencer concluded his remarks by discussing the opportunities the institution has, but noted that it was up to those in the room to ensure the university meets his ambitious goals.

“The future is bright here at NPS, I am very proud of the work here you do,” said Spencer. “I am excited about the prospects and look forward to working to ensure NPS enhances its reputation as an elite institution by attracting the best, both students and faculty.

“At the end of the day it is all up to you,” he continued. “Ladies and gentlemen, I need your help in removing obstacles that undermine the academic agility and innovation we need at NPS. And when you go back to the fleet, I need your help in removing barriers blocking your way to implanting these ideas. Go forth and prosper, you have all the resources you need to make our Navy and Marine Corps team the best that it can be,” he concluded.

NPS’ Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture (SGL) program provides a series of professional lectures by senior leaders throughout defense, government, industry and academia designed to help the university’s students and faculty link their studies, teaching and research efforts to the defense needs of the nation.
The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2018 includes a compelling provision known as the Thornberry Act, which sets out to push reform to the DOD acquisition process through stronger systems of accountability, accessing new sources of information, removing unnecessary requirements, and improving the workforce.

Part of these reforms could be an enormous change in how the government makes small purchases through the Government Purchase Card (GPC) program, potentially opening up this massive volume of purchasing and federal customers to commercial online providers.

To understand what such a change would mean to the DOD acquisition process, the U.S. Air Force approached the NPS’s Graduate School of Business and Public Policy (GSBPP) and two of its Airmen, December 2017 graduates U.S. Air Force Capts. Holland Canter and Tabitha Gomez to conduct an in-depth analysis comparing Amazon Business to the online government purchasing service General Services Administration (GSA) Advantage in support of their Master of Business Administration degrees. The results of their work are getting a lot of attention, with widely-recognized finance and business media outlets such as Bloomberg and Federal News Radio publishing in-depth articles on their findings.

Gomez and Canter’s research looked at Amazon Business and the federally-managed GSA Advantage to assess the benefits and limitations of using the government purchase card on each platform, comparing the two in terms of prices, shipping costs, shipping time, ease of use and customer satisfaction.

“We did this by taking the top five categories of purchased items from the Air Force in 2015 and we came up with the 60 most commonly purchased items with the GPC and compared them on both platforms,” Canter said.

Of 300 vendors that offered the 60 items, GSA Advantage offered the lowest price a staggering 241 out of 300 times. Shipping was also both cheaper and faster on GSA Advantage – an average of 5.45 days with free shipping on GSA Advantage versus an average of 9.25 days at an average cost of $2.33 on Amazon. In spite of these benefits to GSA Advantage, more than 70 percent of those surveyed preferred Amazon over other purchasing portals.

“People use Amazon in their personal life so they are closely associated with how it works and its ease of use,” said Gomez. “There were also less problems on the back end of ordering things. While GSA Advantage is produced by the government for the government, a lot of people had to experience growing pains to get it where it is today.”

Following the students’ analysis, the study concluded with them conducting interviews with representatives from GSA on suggested improvements to their website and platform.

“Our first recommendation was to do away with minimum purchasing requirements,” said Canter. “Even though they were cheaper most of the time for the items we tested, if you wanted to buy, for example, a $1 pen, you would have to buy 50 of them, so you would have to still buy $50 worth of pens even if you only needed one.

“We also recommended to GSA that they include vendor and product ratings, which our surveys found were the most popular parts of the Amazon experience,” Canter added. “Standardized shipping was another important part of the Amazon experience that we recommended to GSA.

“Lastly, GSA can improve its image with younger buyers,” she continued. “Our survey results showed that age had a huge factor on whether a costumer would prefer GSA or Amazon, with younger buyers overwhelmingly preferring Amazon. A lot of this comes down to user experience.”

Ultimately, however the government utilizes commercial platforms will require detailed analyses, and that, faculty say, is where NPS can contribute to the process.

“What makes NPS so relevant is topics like this,” Muir noted.

“It brings in students who are so knowledgeable in this area, with both of these students coming from purchasing backgrounds, and it gives us a place to look at things like the difference between supply chain management in and outside the government. Students bring knowledge and expertise and entrepreneurial, innovative ideas that let them take studies like this and conduct invaluable research.”
The NATO-Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) recently concluded its first energy security training program with support from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS).

The week-long Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection Course, held at the NATO-ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait, was designed in part by NPS’ Energy Academic Group (EAG) after officials from the university joined a NATO exploratory delegation to Kuwait in September.

“We proposed a course on critical energy infrastructure and resilience, as this is an area that is important to the Navy and the Department of Defense, and something we’ve got strong expertise in within NPS,” said Alan Howard, Deputy Director with the NPS EAG.

Upon returning, Howard set to work inside the EAG designing and developing the course to include experts within NPS and international partners within NATO. The course focused on evolving cyber threats to critical energy infrastructure, approaches to resilience, the link between energy and geopolitics, as well as methodologies for risk analysis and mitigation.

“Developing and delivering courses such as this one helps NPS build on and improve our capabilities, offers more opportunities for hands-on learning and application of knowledge for our students, and improves awareness of NPS and the diversity of our educational offerings,” Howard said.

More than 30 participants from across the region attended the course, which was co-organized along with NPS by the Kuwaiti government, the NATO School in Oberammergau, the NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence in Vilnius and NATO’s Emerging Security Challenges Division.

Since January 2017, the NATO-ICI Regional Centre has served as the focal point for training, education and international cooperation between NATO and ICI partners in the region.

Howard added that the course has significant application within the U.S. and other international partners. For example, after the 2017 hurricanes devastated critical energy infrastructure in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Federal Emergency Management Agency approached NPS for help as they lead reconstruction efforts.

“Ensuring islanded and remote locations - such as the Virgin Islands - have resilient infrastructure is important to the Navy, as we rely on many locations such as these for our logistical and operational needs,” he said.

Looking ahead, in March of 2018, the EAG, led by Dan Nussbaum, and NPS’ Center for Infrastructure Defense, led by Dr. Dave Alderson, will bring NPS students to the Virgin Islands to begin analysis on building more resilient infrastructure. The group will also meet with Virgin Island leadership to talk about how educational courses could help them better weather the next storms.

By Matthew Schehl

Participants in a week-long course on critical energy infrastructure protection are pictured outside the NATO-Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Regional Centre in Kuwait in February 2018. The course, developed in part by NPS’ Energy Academic Group, introduced regional officials to current threats to energy infrastructure as well as the associated measures to mitigate them. (Photo courtesy the NPS Energy Academic Group)


“[The Taliban] have three key narratives ... Narratives that relate to Islam and Jihad narratives that relate to their culture; and, narratives that relate to political dynamics and even nationalism,” said Johnson.

“The Taliban not only have stories, but they relate to the people in their collective memory,” he continued.

“They have been invaded by all the great powers of the world, be it British, the Soviets or the United States, and in every instance, we have defeated them. The Americans and their supporters are here to destroy our way of life and replace it with Christianity, they say,” Johnson stressed.

Johnson has been traveling to Afghanistan on a yearly basis since 2005. Through this research and his direct connection to the U.S. military as an instructor at NPS, Johnson began developing the book’s premise that the War in Afghanistan, being a war of words, was doomed to fail from the start.

“My position is basically we have lost the war of the narrative, and with losing the war of the narrative, we basically have put ourselves in a very tough position,” said Johnson.

Johnson has developed a new class for the Defense Analysis program at NPS on the subject of narratives and conflict, and how to properly develop a counter narrative.

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Renowned Expert Lectures on the Role of Nuclear Weapons in Ending World War II

By MC2 Michael Ehrlich

Dr. John C. Hopkins, former Director of the Los Alamos Nuclear Weapons Program, offers a guest lecture on the role of nuclear weapons in World War II in Glasgow Hall, Feb. 8. The free-flowing discussion offered attendees the opportunity to re-examine the effectiveness of atomic weapons in the closing days of the second World War, leading to Japan’s ultimate surrender.

“As the years go by, the rhetoric of revisionism and conspiracy theory confuse the rationale for the use of nuclear weapons in WWII,” said Hopkins. “In my view, the original explanation for the nuclear strikes is most compelling. I will focus today on the events leading up to the two nuclear strikes on Japan in August 1945, and the Japanese Supreme War Counsel reaction to the use of nuclear weapons.”

Hopkins continued his lecture by posing a question to the audience ... Was Japan ready to surrender in the summer of 1945? At the time, research has shown that some in the Japanese Foreign Office wanted to consider an armistice, not a surrender, which was to be mediated by the Soviet Union, he explained.

“The Japanese hoped for better terms at the peace table, not necessarily to win the war,” said Hopkins.

Neither an armistice nor surrender had occurred, and the decision to exercise a nuclear strike was made, with the first weapon detonated over Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, followed by Nagasaki on Aug. 9.

Attendees posed several questions revolving around the decision to employ these weapons and Japan’s eventual surrender on Aug. 15. Was three days between each nuclear strike enough time for Japan to surrender? Was the Soviet Union’s invasion and declaration of war a motivating concern for Japan to surrender in order to maintain their territory? Was the perception of Japan’s surrender different after the nuclear strikes because of a now clear technological disadvantage versus a loss of will to fight? In closing, Perkins offered a final perspective on the ultimate question with regard to the use of nuclear weapons in WWII, morality.

“I will close with one final thought, it has to do with the perceived morality of the use of nuclear weapons during WWII,” he said. “I have heard and seen reports of Oppenheimer’s misgivings about the use of nuclear weapons against Japan. As far as I can tell he did not have any regrets, either at the time of the nuclear strikes or later. When David Bohm wrote to him in December of 1966 asking whether he felt any regret over the bombing of Hiroshima, Oppenheimer wrote back, ‘My own feelings about responsibility and guilt have always had to do with the present, and so far, in this life, that had been more than enough to occupy me.’”

Naval Institute, NPS Foundation Seek Entries Into Essay Contest

By Javier Chagoya

The NPS Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Naval Institute, announced their annual NPSF/USNI Essay Contest open to all NPS students, faculty and staff. The jointly-sponsored contest, started in 2016, encourages the communication of critical thinking applied to issues of relevance to U.S. national security and the military profession.

“We really want the call for essays to be a robust contest, and we can only have that when students submit papers. There are definitely enough military related issues out there to expound your thoughts about,” said NPS Foundation Executive Director Tim Callaham.

For U.S. NPS students, the essays can be directly related to a thesis or recent operational experience. For NPS faculty or staff, the essays could address an issue of relevance to the military profession. All previously published essays are ineligible.

One winner from NPS will be selected to have his or her essay published in USNI’s Proceedings magazine, in addition to a $5,000 cash prize.

The contest deadline is March 31, 2018. For more information, check out the contest website. https://www.usni.org/essay-contest/nps-foundationus-naval-institute-annual-essay-contest-award
NPS to Implement New DOD Performance Management System

By MC2 Patrick Dionne

Staff from NPS’ Human Resources Office have been hard at work preparing for the university’s upcoming switch to the new DOD Performance Management and Appraisal System, called DPMAP, to be implemented, Oct. 1. DPMAP is a DOD-mandated, enterprise-wide system that stresses the importance of communication, performance and accountability.

“The program requires three performance discussions throughout the year, and more encouraged, for each of the critical elements of your job .. the duties and what you actually do,” explained HR Labor Relations Specialist Kenneth Stewart. “You will receive a rating – either a five, three or a one – accompanied by a narrative that supports it.

“This forces people to take the time to adequately supervise their subordinates, and give them clear direction, hear their feed back on how they feel they did, leading to a more meaningful performance review,” continued Stewart.

With a new system, of course, comes the required training to implement. NPS’ HR team has been hard at work developing a comprehensive training plan, and has brought together a team of trainers from across campus to assist. Members of the NPS chapter of the Federal Managers Association (FMA), as well as the National Federation of Federal Employees Local 1690, and other volunteers, will join HR staff in providing several training sessions to NPS personnel, beginning March 1, to ensure the information the campus needs to implement the new system is available.

“This is a shift in culture that fosters greater, two-way communication, empowers employees, and leads to greater efficiency within the federal government,” said Stewart.

NPS’ Center for Homeland Defense and Security Hosts Alumni Professional Exchange

By MC2 Michael Ehrlich

NPS’ Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) hosts their annual Alumni Professional Exchange (APEX) in Herrmann Hall, Feb. 21. The two-day workshop provides CHDS alumni with an opportunity to share best practices and understand diverse perspectives on a number of critical homeland security issues.

“This is a great event where some of our alumni come back to attend this educational experience,” said CHDS Director Glen Woodbury. “It’s not so much an alumni conference, but a continuing education [event]. People continue the conversations they had in the classroom, using knowledge they gained at NPS to advance their critical thinking even further.”

APEX featured several guest lecturers offering insights on myriad domestic security issues, such as the opioid crisis, artificial intelligence, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, fake news and its impact on decision-makers, and the lessons learned from hurricanes Irma and Maria.

CHDS is sponsored by the National Preparedness Directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and conducts programs focused on assisting leaders in homeland security to develop the policies, strategies and programs needed to defeat terrorism and prepare for, and respond to, natural disasters and public safety threats across the United States.
NSA Guest Speaker Shares Critical Insight on Authoritarian Regimes

By Matthew Schehl

Students at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) were recently challenged to rethink the internal dynamics of authoritarian regimes.

Engaging a packed lecture room in Glasgow Hall, Feb. 22, guest speaker Dr. Mai Hassan, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan, reviewed her recent research into how Kenyan autocrats manipulate the state to win elections – and hold on to power.

“The common assumption is that these states can’t see what’s happening in their rural areas outside of the capital city,” Hassan said. “Existing literature says what you do is simply pack the state with loyal officers.”

Her research, however, tells a different story. Drawing on Kenyan archival records of approximately 20,000 officer posts between 1963 and 2012, and over 100 interviews with regime elites and state officials, Hassan demonstrated that the make-up of the bureaucracy and internal security forces is actually quite diverse.

“What I found interesting is that the largest [political] rival comprised ten percent of the security apparatus, exactly what ‘packing’ would say would never happen,” Hassan said. “Empirically, most of these states are not actually ‘packed’; their bureaucracies are often quite diverse and representative of the country’s heterogeneity.”

Hassan believes this to be deliberate, she says. By carefully co-opting and rotating officers throughout the country from a multitude of ethnic groups, a leader is best able to mitigate threats, both popular and from the elite class.

“The bottom line is the leader can’t guarantee full compliance, but compliance isn’t fully necessary across the country,” Hassan explained.

Popular threats – protests, insurgency or opposition strongholds – are also not equally likely to occur throughout the country.

“The leader will shuffle officers so areas with a popular threat are governed by bureaucrats that are willing and best able to temper that threat, she said.

“This type of executive bureaucracy exists in a host of other countries: many African countries, many Middle Eastern countries, China, India, the former Ottoman Empire, Persia and Russia,” Hassan continued.

Hassan’s presentation was part of the Global Connections Speaker Series held by NPS’ Department of National Security Affairs and funded by the NPS Foundation. Since 2015, the monthly series has engaged students and faculty in conversations with experts in international relations to gain insight into the latest developments in the field while providing NPS students with relevant knowledge to complement their studies and future careers.

Focus On … New Dean of Students
A Monthly Look at Names and Faces on Campus

U.S. Navy Capt. Markus Gudmundsson has officially assumed the duties of NPS Dean of Students. A career aviator, Gudmundsson takes the helm from Cmdr. Paul Rasmussen, who returns to his role as deputy.

“I will represent the student body and ensure our students improve their academic background with the intent of returning them to the fleet as stronger officers,” said Gudmundsson. “I look forward to playing a supporting role in their pursuit of graduate education.”

Gudmundsson says he is a firm believer in NPS’ robust educational programs, and is looking forward to getting out on campus on a regular basis. He may even sit in on a few classes as part of his learning the job.

“I had several officers in my last squadron who attended NPS, and also had officers who returned from other higher education military universities,” said Gudmundsson. “I value and appreciate the critical thinking they bring to the operational and tactical environment.”

After many years of working in a tactical environment, Gudmundsson was scouting for a job that could provide a new set of challenges, and saw the NPS DOS position as a great opportunity.

“When I saw the billet open up for the DOS position at NPS, I really wanted the job, but I first had to wrap up my tour as Commodore, Commander, Strike Fighter Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet,” said Gudmundsson. “Cmdr. Rasmussen was willing to bridge the gap, so I’m very grateful to be here.”
Fellow Students,

The President’s Student Council is happy to welcome several new members this quarter from each of the different schools across the NPS campus. Please see our updated list of members and feel free to reach out to your school’s representative with any questions or concerns you may have.

Thanks to Lt. Col. Jaramillo for allowing PSC to speak at the recent Air Force all hands to increase awareness of our organization and encourage participation of new members.

PSC has been actively building and maintaining relations around campus to provide input and facilitate feedback. We have met and coordinated with NSAM traffic safety and parking leadership, ITACS leadership, POM Army Health Clinic leadership, as well as the new Dean of Students – CAPT Gudmundsson – in which student input and feedback is welcomed.

PSC would like to encourage support for the ‘Sip the Peninsula’ fundraiser organized and hosted by the Monterey Bay Officer’s Spouse Club, as well as the new NOFFS annex organized by the Monterey Bay Athletic Center.

Feel free to join us at our next PSC meeting on Wednesday, March 7th at 1200 in room Kn-263A of the library.

Chair:
Lt. j.g. Tanya L. Herfi

Vice-Chair:
Capt. Dan Salazar

SIGS School Lead:
Capt. Alejandro Bihar

SIGS Reps:
Capt. Dan Grant, Lt. j.g. Anton Balsirow, Capt. Matt Grill, Capt. Joe Messmer, Lt. j.g. Tim Cole, Maj. Peter Cox

GSOIS School Lead:
Master sgt. Alex Eudy

GSOIS Rep:
Lt. cmdr. Santhosh Shivashankar

GSEAS School Lead:
Lt. Josh Malia

GSEAS Rep:
Lt. cmdr. Pete Harley

GSBPP Reps:
Capt. Tyler Flansburg, 1st Lt. Helene Caniac

Have a story to share? Public Affairs is constantly seeking interesting news and stories for Update NPS. Send your tips to pao@nps.edu.
In January 1951, the Naval Postgraduate School faculty rumor mill churned loudly. The preferred topic was the campus move from Annapolis, Maryland to Monterey, California. The “grapevine” gab became too much for the academic dean, Roy S. Glasgow, by the end of the month, so he sent a notice that stated he postponed the regular faculty meeting. Instead, they received Rear Admiral Ernest Edward Herrmann’s official plan. The faculty learned that Herrmann planned to move 500 students, 100 faculty and staff, and tons of books and equipment to Hotel Del Monte, which the Navy acquired from Del Monte Properties Company.

Sources: Glasgow, R. S. ”Civilian Faculty Meeting.” Notice. 30 January 1951. Naval Postgraduate School Records. Special Collections and Archives, Dudley Knox Library, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.

Historical Highlights are provided by the Dudley Knox Library.