Message from the Program Chair

The Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies (NPTS) program provides professional graduate education that focuses in depth on the security challenges posed by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and by violent extremist organizations. NPTS students benefit from two research centers based at the Monterey Institute of International Studies: the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) and the Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program (MonTREP). Since I became program chair in August 2012, I have been able to witness first-hand the remarkable accomplishments that NPTS students and alumnai achieve on a regular basis. I hope that this will be the first in a series of newsletters in which we can provide information about major developments and events involving NPTS students.

Jeffrey W. Knopf

MIIS Student Wins State Department Challenge

On March 4, 2013, the U.S. Department of State announced that Lovely Umayam (MANPTS ’13) won first prize and was awarded $5,000 in the first Innovation in Arms Control Challenge sponsored by the State Department’s Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance. Members of the public were invited to submit innovative approaches to using commonly available technologies to support arms control policy efforts, and the competition drew more than 500 submissions.

Lovely, a student in the MANPTS program, developed “Bombshelltoe” (www.bombshelltoe.com), an online education platform that examines the intersection of popular culture and nuclear issues, in order to facilitate better understanding among the general public of basic nuclear and arms control-related issues. She describes the goal of Bombshelltoe as being “to foster a more meaningful conversation about arms control issues” by exploring how popular culture represents nuclear policy issues.

“Lovely is an amazing young woman, who is equally adept in nonproliferation and social media,” commented MIIS Professor and Director of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies William Potter. “It is to her great credit that she has found a creative way to marry the two subjects, and by so doing, help to combat ignorance and complacency about one of our greatest security challenges.”

Students Participate in Conference on “The Nexus of Terrorism and Trafficking”

From February 21-22, 2013, the Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program (MonTREP) hosted a conference on potential relationships between criminal cartels and terrorist groups, a subject of increasing national and international security interest. Three current MIIS students and one former student presented research they had conducted in a student panel at the conference. Nathan Poffenberger (MANPTS ’13) presented timely research on the evidence for a nexus in Africa’s volatile Sahel region. Lauren Silver (MANPTS ’13) provided an overview of how relations with organized crime facilitate terrorist financing. Alexander Wells (MANPTS ’13) described possible links between Hizbollah and Latin American crime syndicates. And Brita Sands (MAIPS ’12) presented pathbreaking research on how trafficking networks in stolen art and antiquities might be exploited by terrorist groups. The student papers will be published as chapters in a forthcoming book being co-edited by MonTREP director Russell Howard. The book will be published by McGraw Hill.
UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon Delivers Address at Monterey Institute

On January 18, 2013, UN Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in a major address delivered on disarmament and nonproliferation at the Monterey Institute for International Studies (MIIS), paid a glowing tribute to the contributions made in this field by the Monterey Institute’s educational programs and the Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS). The Secretary-General held up MIIS as a model, saying “I hope we can encourage academia to include disarmament and nonproliferation issues in their curricula and research agendas, as you have done here.” He also praised the Monterey Institute’s pioneering work utilizing teaching tools such as simulations: “A 2002 UN study put it well: the goal must be ‘To learn how to think rather than what to think.’...Innovative teaching methods are one way forward, and here I credit the approach used at [MIIS], which relies heavily on simulations and role-playing.”

Students Present Research at Honors Thesis Symposium

MANPTS students Sayaka Shingu, Jonathan Ray, Cleo Haynal and Kate Fessler defended their M.A. Honors Theses before the MIIS community in a public symposium on December 7, 2012. For the second consecutive year, Professors Martha Crenshaw and Scott Sagan from Stanford University served as commentators, providing feedback to each of the students on their thesis projects. After the talks, the thesis students fielded questions from faculty, research staff, and fellow students at MIIS.

Sayaka Shingu’s research examined how U.S. interest in retaining an option to station nuclear weapons in Okinawa affected the 1969 negotiations that led to reversion of Okinawa from U.S. to Japanese control. Jonathan Ray analyzed evidence that China had during the 1970s to 1980s worked on development of a “neutron bomb.” In her talk, Cleo Haynal summarized data she had collected on the role of social media in the current uprising in Syria. Finally, Kate Fessler described the challenges the United States has faced in making its democracy promotion efforts effective, leading to a critique of efforts to use democracy promotion as a tool for combating terrorism.

Russell Howard Appointed Director of MIIS Terrorism Center

In September 2012, Special Forces veteran and terrorism expert Brigadier General (ret.) Russell D. Howard—also an alumnus of the Monterey Institute—was appointed as the new director of the Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program (MonTREP). In addition to being the former director of the Jebensen Center for Counterterrorism Studies at the Fletcher School, General Howard was the head of the Department of Social Sciences and founding director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. His previous positions include Army Chief of Staff Fellow at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, and Commander of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Lewis, Washington.

General Howard holds an M.A. in International Management from the Monterey Institute, as well as a Master of Public Administration degree from Harvard University. He is the co-author/editor of seven terrorism-related books published by McGraw-Hill, including Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment.

“Russ is exceptionally qualified to lead the Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program,” says MIIS President Sunder Ramaswamy. “His unique combination of practical experience in counterterrorism and personal history as a Monterey Institute alumnus should prove invaluable for our students.” In addition to serving as MonTREP director, Gen. Howard teaches several courses and workshops for the NPTS program on counterterrorism and related topics.