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## RSEP helping to enhance NASSG's cultural, security awareness

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## RSEP Helping to Enhance NASSG’s Cultural, Security Awareness

Nassau Expeditionary Strike Group Public Affairs  
 February 27, 2008  
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USS NASSAU, At Sea (NNS) - As the Nassau Expeditionary Strike Group (NASSG) transits the Atlantic Ocean destined for the Navy's 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operation, professors from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) are educating Sailors on the various cultures and people they will encounter during their mission.

Through the NPS Regional Security Education Program (RSEP), Sailors are receiving a graduate-level education from regional and subject-matter experts on the regional threats they are likely to encounter while in theater.

The discussions are open, face-to-face lectures that include cultural and diplomatic education designed to enhance strike group mission accomplishment and regional situational awareness.

"RSEP is simply designed to educate the crew on the regional security issues, cultural awareness and language issues that may occur in the areas that they are going to face so that they can operate more efficiently and safely," said Cmdr. Troy A. Johnson, NPS National Security Affairs department head and RSEP program officer.

The RSEP program was born from the investigation the USS Cole bombing on Oct. 12, 2000. The CNO directed the development of new initiatives that would better prepare operating forces for regional security missions and threats and NPS stepped up to the plate with the establishment of the RSEP.

In order to best reach the Navy's front lines, RSEP teams comprised of a program officer and a select number of professors from NPS and participating colleges and universities, focus on expeditionary strike groups (ESG), carrier strike groups (CSG) and Marines. The time averages eight to nine trips per year to the East Coast, West Coast and to ESG's and CSG's already deployed. But, for all of the travel and training involved, Johnson says that the program's success should be attributed directly to the professors that are leading the lectures.

"I think they're our greatest asset," he explained. "The Naval Postgraduate School is considered the center of excellence for regional security issues. The professors we have are from a wide range of respected universities and all are on a tenure track at the Naval Postgraduate School and are considered the regional experts for their assigned areas. We only bring the best, brightest and most eager to come out."

Johnson further explained that the program is one that's reciprocal. In exchange for providing Sailors and Marines with a quality education, the professors get up close and personal with the Sailors and Marines and get to experience life at sea. The lessons learned "out here," Johnson explained, help to enhance the lessons they teach in the classroom.

"Our professors teach officers from all branches of the armed services," said Johnson, "so it really helps for them to come out here and see it all first hand. It really goes towards helping their comprehension when teaching inside of the classroom."

With the NAS are three professors that bring nearly 30 years of experience at NPS with them - Dr. Ahmad Ghoreishi, senior lecturer with NPS; Dr. Scott Field, visiting lecturer with NPS; and Dr. Shaeen Mozaffar, professor of political science with Bridgewater State College. These professors are considered experts in their areas of concentration and will be traveling across the strike group during its Atlantic transit to educate the strike group on the various areas of the globe they will be visiting.

"The most important thing I can take away from here is the importance of linking and relating what I do in my academic life and in my policy analysis work with what is happening on the ground operationally," said Dr. Mozaffar, who has also done work for the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United Nations, and with agencies that analyzed and monitored the most recent elections in Iraq. "When a strike group makes a visit to a certain area of the world, I can relate what the strategic implications of that visit may be. Just being here for the last 10 days has allowed me to see what the work I am doing related to the planning processes in the field."

The Sailors receiving the lectures have been receptive and according to the NASSG Intelligence Officer and RSEP Coordinator, Lt. Cmdr. Tim Sullivan, the professors bring a "depth of expertise" that is crucial to the safety and security of the strike group.

"RSEP is a tremendously valuable program," said Sullivan. "The lessons we are learning now are definitely helping the strike group planners and decision makers to plan for naval operations and contingencies going forward. They are providing the overarching strategic foundation - politically, economically and socially - that will help us couch our planning and decision-making."

As to the program's importance, Johnson explains "RSEP is important because it's been proved that an educated crew operates more effectively, efficiently and they're better prepared to execute a safe mission."

The Nassau Expeditionary Strike Group is currently en route to the Navy's 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operation to support Maritime Security Operations (MSO) and Theater Security Cooperation efforts. MSO helps set the conditions for security and stability in the maritime environment and complements the counter terrorism and security efforts on the high seas and in nations' littoral waters.