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BiH Humanitarian Demining Representatives attend CSRS Workshop

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Article by Maggie Spivey

Six representatives from the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) humanitarian demining community recently attended the workshop, "Working in the Same Space," from March 17 – 20, 2011, in Monterey, Cali. The workshop was organized by the Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies (CSRS) of the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), the designated U.S. Partnership for Peace Training and Education Center (USPTC).

"This workshop emphasized cross-community understanding and communication skills that focus on ways in which government civilian agencies, non-governmental organizations, inter-governmental organizations, and the armed forces can work more effectively alongside each other in insecure environments," stated CSRS Project Coordinator Nick Tomb, who facilitated the course

During the workshop, 44 participants from 12 countries were exposed to the organizational cultures, capacities, and motivations of the diverse communities present, as well as current and emerging issues from each community, such as the UN Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affair's cluster system and the U.S. Government's Civilian Response Corps.

Consisting of a series of panel presentations, plenary discussions, and role-playing exercises, the workshop provided the six BiH representatives the opportunity to continue growing their skill set related to "Strategic Collaborative Leadership in Complex Environments," one focus area of the 3-year collaborative initiative taking place between NPS and the BiH Peace Support Operations Training Centre, also a designated NATO Partnership for Peace Training and Education Center.

As members of the over 30 different organizations working together to ensure BiH is landmine-free by 2019, these BiH representatives are providing crucial insights to the NPS and PSOTC faculty working on this project. "Our goal is to provide substantive assistance to the BiH demining community in achieving their goal of being landmine free by 2019 by helping them to work more efficiently and effectively together in strategic collaboration mode," stated Mr. Jeff Munks, consultant to NPS

Munks attended the workshop along with NPS Associate Professors Gail Thomas and Susan Hocevar of the Graduate School of Business and Public Policy (GSBPP), all working together on the project, along with GSBPP Associate Professor Dick Doyle.

"This visit of the [BiH] representatives had three purposes," stated Munks. "First, attending the CSRS workshop can personally benefit each of them. Second, it provided us the ability to network more intimately and effectively, to build stronger relationships into perpetuity in the country. Third, it provided a valuable opportunity to advance work in developing the next series of workshops in Bosnia, specifically the June workshop on strategic communications, as we were able to gain valuable insights regarding what is happening on the ground in the country."

The NPS team met with the six BiH representatives before and after the workshop to flesh out these issues and determine a way forward. With the NPS-PSOTC collaborative initiative now at the halfway mark, these exchanges are invaluable in advancing strategic collaborative leadership skills in complex environments in support of a landmine-free Bosnia and Herzegovina and other valuable endeavors.

Posted March 24, 2011







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