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NPS professors provide new insight on global politics and civil military relations

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NPS Professors Provide New Insight on Global Politics and Civil Military Relations

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kellie Arakawa

In an effort to bridge the gap between existing literature on defense reform and the realities of the current global-political environment, Naval Postgraduate School Distinguished Prof. Thomas Bruneau and Associate Prof. Harold Trinkunas spent more than two years editing a book that examines global trends on civil-military relations and defense reform.

Sponsored by the NPS Center for Civil Military Relations, *Global Politics of Defense Reform* consists of case studies from Europe, Asia and North and South America that analyze the affects of democratization, globalization, economic liberalization and technological innovation on civil-military relations and defense reform processes.

Bruneau and Trinkunas turned to the expertise of their colleagues for many of the book’s supporting chapters.

James Wirtz, Interim Dean of the School of International Graduate Studies, contributed to the book with a chapter titled, “Changing International Threat Perceptions,” and National Security Affairs (NSA) Assistant Prof. Anne Clunan wrote about “Globalization and the Impact of Norms on Defense Restructuring.”

NSA Prof. Douglas Porch contributed to the book’s case studies with a chapter on preserving autonomy amidst conflict in Colombia, and NSA Assistant Prof. Michael Malley wrote about the challenges of defense reform in Indonesia.

NPS Board of Advisors Chairman Kim Wincup co-wrote a case study on defense restructuring in the U.S., and NPS alumnus Marcos Robledo, International and Security Policy Advisor to the president of Chile, contributed to the volume with a case study on Chilean civil-military relations.

“NPS is pretty successful at these particular kinds of issues related to national security and international security, because of the experience of our faculty and the kind of students we have,” said Trinkunas, Chairman of the NSA Department. “This was a great opportunity to get people together to work on an issue that was immediately relevant.”

Bruneau hopes the book will create a greater recognition of international dimensions on policy and reform. “The world is globalized,” he said. “You can’t look at defense reform or civil-military relations without thinking of the whole world, so what we try to do in the book is identify what the major international or global factors are.”

Trinkunas said they want people to realize that political context plays an important role in the success of defense reform efforts and can’t be achieved with purely technical processes or standardized solutions.

“Military reform is a very important subject in general to the U.S. government,” he continued. “We see the U.S. pushing for reform around the world, and we’re providing knowledge on how the context and politics in which that takes place affects the ability to succeed.”

Bruneau and Trinkunas also hope the book draws greater attention to the academic authority of NPS’ security programs.

“I think that the study of security and intelligence and all the research and writing that we do here has

really not caught on in academia,” said Bruneau. “For us, we’re forced to think about it because it’s what our students deal with.”

NPS focuses not only on the practice of national and international security but the study of theoretical issues as well, and publishing this book through an academic press with blind reviews from other professors really validates our knowledge, Trinkunas said.

“We’re trying to make a contribution to the study of these critically important topics,” added Bruneau. “To get something like this out is going to call attention of the academic community to our group of people working on important topics and making a contribution that has academic credibility.”

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