



From Situation Room to Classroom

Since I came back to SAIS last January, a number of you have asked how my experience as Counselor of the Department of State will affect what I teach, and more broadly, what the Department offers.

The honest answer is – less than you might think. A number of Strategic Studies courses have tried to develop some practical skills in memorandum writing and presentation. Nothing I saw in government changed my mind about how we do that, and although I may be able to speak with a bit more authority about the importance of clear and concise writing, but nothing new there.

What has come into sharper focus, though, is the necessity for aspiring strategists (or strategists’ staffers) to lay out pros and cons, risks and opportunities, and above all, to be concrete and specific as they recommend particular courses of action. Too often in government I saw the Secretary of State getting a memorandum that in effect, offered up only Plan A – and if she rejected it, a bit later she

would get Plan A prime, or later Plan A double prime.

I also came away with a strong appreciation of the offerings that do not aspire to convey bureaucratic skills or address contemporary issues. *Thucydides and Machiavelli*, for example, remains a course that I prize enormously, because it teaches students to think carefully about large issues, to read carefully and reason closely. Nor do I dismiss the value of extended research papers – extended, disciplined linear thinking has an important place in preparation for public service.

In sum, I thought we were doing a pretty good job before I went into government in 2007. Two years later, after having alumni work with me in my office, or seeing them staff the National Security Council, or the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in embassies abroad or at the C Street headquarters of the Department of State, I know it.

Dr. Eliot A. Cohen, Director
Merrill Center for Strategic Studies

Alumni Council

Over the years I have been fortunate to meet and travel with many who are now alumni of the SAIS Strategic Studies Program. I have always been impressed and encouraged by the quality, intensity, and humanity of the students of his program. We live in a world of difficult problems, complex issues, and hard choices. Strategic Studies Alumni know this better than most, and by virtue of Professor Cohen’s program, they are better prepared to deal with that world than most graduates. As a nation we need the most capable people, able to think about issues and threats with clear minds and a strong grasp of history, to lead us into the future. The Strategic Studies Program creates just such people.

Everyone who has graduated from the Strategic Studies program leaves with strong attachments and fond memories; not to mention a potential network in whatever career path they may follow.

With its own traditions (e.g. Dining In, Staff Rides, Challenge Coins) Strategic Studies graduates become members of a tight-knit association with strong traditions and comradery. But fond memories are not enough to sustain the level of excellence that Professor Cohen and his colleagues have created. International Staff Rides and Crisis Simulations demand not only time and effort on the part

(Continued on page 4)

<i>Inside this issue:</i>	
Alumni Dinner 2009	2
Professors at Work	2
Alumni in the World	3
Fall Staff Ride 2009	3
Students in the World	4
Status of the Program	5

Professors at Work

In response to the May 2009 newsletter, Edward Burnett (MA 04), requested that the Strategic Studies professors give an update on the projects they are currently working on. The professors supplied the following response. Thank you to Ed for the welcome suggestion and the professors for their responses!

Mary Habeck

Mary Habeck is teaching four courses for the Strategic Studies Program: History of Irregular Warfare, The Wars of Afghanistan, History of the Long War, and Decision Making During Wartime. She is also writing two books, one on the strategies and tactics of al-Qa'ida and affiliated groups titled "Attacking America: How Jihadis Are Fighting Their 200-Year War With the US," and other "Fighting The Enemy: The United States in the Long War." She continues to work with the State Department, Department of Defense, and other government agencies to educate policy-makers on jihadist ideology.

Thomas Keaney

This year, Professor Keaney had the great pleasure of shifting from the position of acting director back to being associate director of the program. He continues to teach his course on the *American Military, Strategy and Policy* during one semester, and a course on *Leaders and Leadership* (as part of another SAIS program). Last summer he partnered with Professor John McLaughlin to teach a two-week seminar on intelligence analysis and national security to a select group of graduate students done at the request of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. He also completed editing a book, *Understanding Counterinsurgency*, forthcoming in 2010. With Professor McLaughlin he conducts a fall workshop on effective briefing techniques.

Congratulations to John McLaughlin for being named SAIS's first Distinguished Practitioner in Residence

John McLaughlin

In September 2009, Professor McLaughlin was named SAIS's first Distinguished Practitioner in Residence, a new category SAIS has established for professors who come to the School from the worlds of diplomacy, the military, or intelligence. Professor McLaughlin next semester will again teach his course on American intelligence and is currently engaged in a series of projects, including the Dark Arts speakers series. He has just returned from a trip to China with a delegation of experts that engaged Chinese counterparts on various national security issues. Along with Professor Keaney, he is also preparing the second running of a summer program on national security and intelligence for students from around the US undertaken by SAIS on behalf of the Director for National Intelligence.

Alumni Dinner 2009

By Andrew Plieninger (MA07)

On October 29, 2009, over one hundred Strategic Studies alumni, staff, students and friends gathered at the Willard InterContinental Hotel in Washington, DC for the Second Annual Strategic Studies Alumni Dinner.

The evening began with a cocktail reception, which allowed former students to reconnect, meet new alums and chat with the faculty on the latest happenings in the Department. With the start of dinner, Professor Eliot Cohen, Strategic Studies Director, thanked alumni for their continued support of the department, offering the anecdote that, wherever he found himself in his travels as State Department Counselor, an

alumnus always seemed to be nearby.

Dave Fuhrmann (MA82), Chair of the Alumni Council, underscored the importance of such alumni events for both supporting the Department and maintaining contacts among the Strategic Studies community. He encouraged attending alumni to help expand the current alumni events by reaching out to other former students, and helping them connect with the Alumni Council.

Following dinner, Nadia Schadlow (BA88, MA 89, PhD05), a representative of the Alumni Council, introduced the evening's keynote speaker – Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, currently Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and

Afghanistan. After acknowledging the seeming ubiquity of what he affectionately called the "Cohen Brigade" during his travels, Lute offered his personal insights into achieving a successful career in government. The general left plenty of time for questions and spoke candidly on a variety of topics from Afghanistan to mental health issues among soldiers. Attendees ended the night with dessert and drinks and all looked forward to the Third Annual dinner next year, and the hope of including more alumni and friends of the department.

A warm thank you to all of those who put such an effort into making the event special, especially Tali Wenger (MA08) and Nadia Schadlow .

Fall Staff Ride 2009: Washington, DC & the War of 1812

By Masha Bolotinskaya (MA10)

On October 17th and 18th 44 SAIS-ers and three professors braved the cold and damp weather to study the forgotten War of 1812. Second year Strategic Studies concentrators Gabriel Serrato and Adam Pappas designed the program to focus on The Chesapeake Campaign of 1814, with the particular emphasis on naval operations, joint operations coordination, and the geopolitical implications of a rising

and declining powers. This staff ride marked the first time the Strategic Studies Department explored the War of 1812 on a staff ride and concluded with outstanding results.

Despite the torrential rain and freezing cold, staff ride participants visited all of the critical local sites of the Chesapeake Campaign. They visited the site of the British landing near Jug Bay, observed the layout of the terrain dur-

ing the Battle of Bladensburg, walked the path of the British on their way to burn the White House, and explored Ft. McHenry in Baltimore, the inspiration of Francis Scott Key's famous Star Spangled Banner.

Each student and faculty member was assigned a role of an historic figure to research and present to the rest of the group. Some of the characters included war profiteers and sailors, senators, an American president and his first lady, the British foreign minister, Emperor Napoleon, and many more. The diverse mix of historic characters combined with the variety of students from different concentrations proved to be an effective mix for learning and fun. The students and faculty did a phenomenal job researching and presenting their characters, particularly on a subject as little studied such as the War of 1812, and set high standards for the upcoming International Staff Ride next spring.



Above: Fall Staff Ride 2009 Attendees posing in front of the White House.

Alumni in the World: “Coffee”

By Phillip Reiner (MA08)

When I began my time in Strategic Studies, there was something afoot that I was very unfamiliar with, uncomfortable with, really. Something which in corporate America (I'd been working in a cubicle at Raytheon for three years) I hadn't experienced. It is a piece of the Strat landscape that may often go unnoticed, but is a vital and significant part of the program: everyone is constantly engaged with each other. The program drives constant and challenging discussion: during study sessions, with professors, in class with some of the brightest national security students in the world, on staff rides, during visits from distinguished scholars and warriors – and perhaps most importantly,

over coffee. This, almost as much as the content of the coursework, prepares Strat students for work in government.

This is how things get done in government – you talk. And then talk some more. With interagency partners. With the think-tank community (Strat mafia-facilitated of course), in order to build beltway consensus. You're always on the phone, reaching out, honing thoughts, having arguments. I don't believe any other program at SAIS pushes its students to do this to the same degree. Strat prepared me for this by invigorating my ability to take complex strategic challenges (like how to work with countries that have multiple internal insurgencies and have historically destabilizing regional military

policies) and lay them out tactically – built off the experience of tough conversations in class, with professors, on staff rides, but most importantly and most simply, over coffee.

The USG currently faces significant challenges in multiple areas of its foreign policy – Iran, Afghanistan, Israel-Palestine, Iraq and Pakistan. But I'm sure without the networks built and lessons learned traversing the Strategic Studies program, along with all that coffee we drank, Strat students (who are everywhere in the USG) would not be prepared to tackle these challenges, nor the interagency issues we face in confronting them.

And yes Dr. Cohen, when I submitted this, it was in Times New Roman 13 pt.

Students in the World: The Virtues of Soft Power

By Ryan K. Anderson (MA10)

In May I set out for Mozambique. I went to work in Maputo as a short-term consultant for Opportunity International (OI), a microfinance organization that reduces chronic poverty by stimulating entrepreneurship, microenterprise, job creation, and technical education. (Learn more at www.opportunity.org)

Tasked with finding new ways to grow the organization's US\$2.5 million urban microcredit portfolio while reducing payment delinquency, I embedded myself in the local loan officer team. We spent hours bouncing in rickety Toyota minibuses over pocked roads to dusty community

markets to meet customers and gather data. Working with local staff, we shaped and implemented new business development processes that push the loan application and credit evaluation cycles out of the "brick-and-mortar" locations and into the marketplace. We began to take the transaction to the customer, eliminated bad credit risk, and increased donor outreach.

AFRICOM has set out to protect trade routes, secure energy supplies, deny sanctuary to malevolent sub-state actors, and prevent regional conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a Strategic Studies student, this summer's work highlighted the capacity of

organizations like OI to assist in achieving those goals by building stability and quelling economic disparity. The experience also illuminated the fact that development initiatives cannot single-handedly stamp-out rampant corruption, opaque governance, and dire physical need, which make many countries in Africa seedbeds for transnational threats. My time in Southern Africa provided an invaluable introduction to a region of increasing strategic importance and equipped me with on-the-ground cultural understanding and advanced local language skills that I'll soon rely on to advance our national security objectives abroad.

Alumni Council

(Continued from page 1)

of the organizers, they also require funding, as does attracting and keeping the quality of professors found at SAIS. It is important to build a strong foundation for the program to insure its health and vitality far into the future. The STRATEGIC STUDIES ALUMNI GROUP has been established not only to help create on-going events and opportunities for Strat Studies alumni to meet, network, and stay in touch, but also as a vehicle to generate continued support for the program into the future.

In the coming weeks we will be writing to ask for your support and assistance. The SAIS Strategic Studies community already share strong bonds of experience and camaraderie, but we have hopes of much more from you. We are hoping that after you leave SAIS and progress in your careers, you will continue to stay involved with the Strategic Studies Alumni program, and you will contribute to building a sustainable foundation for the program.

Dave Fuhrmann (MA82), Chair
Strategic Studies Alumni Council

Correction: Due to an editing error the May 2009 issue incorrectly identified the founder of the Security Studies program. It was Robert E. Osgood, not Charles Osgood, who established the program over twenty years ago.



Above: Second year Strategic Studies student, Michael Murphy, portraying Secretary of the Navy William Jones during the 2009 Fall Staff Ride. (See Page 3 for details on FSR2009.)



Above: First-year Conflict Management student Mikela Trigilio portraying Dolly Madison during FSR 2009.

Status of the Program: Strategic Studies 2009-2010

After a year or more away from SAIS, Profs. Eliot Cohen and Mary Habeck have returned to full-time teaching, Eliot from the State Department and Mary Habeck from the National Security Council Staff. They and three new adjunct faculty members have made it possible to increase to sixteen the number of Strategic Studies courses. These include three new offerings: *Diplomatic Disasters* (Amb. Edelman and Prof. Eliot Cohen); *Counterinsurgency* (Prof. David Kilcullen); and *The Wars of Afghanistan* (Prof. Mary Habeck). Eliot, as you will read elsewhere in the newsletter, returned from his time at State as the Counselor to the Department and Mary from the National Security Council Staff as Special Advisor for Strategic Planning and Institutional Reform.

With their return, the program personnel include Director Eliot Cohen, Assoc. Prof. Mary Habeck, Associate

Director and Senior Adjunct Prof. Thomas Keaney, Distinguished Practitioner in Residence John McLaughlin, and the Program Coordinator, Ms. Thayer McKell. In addition to the new adjuncts mentioned above, Dr. Thomas Mahnken has rejoined the program as an adjunct professor teaching the Net Assessment course. Dr. Tom Ehrhard, who had been teaching that course for the past two years, left to take a position as Special Assistant to the Air Force Chief of Staff. Space does not allow describing the impressive professional backgrounds of these individuals, though many of you will already know them by reputation. Check the Strategic studies website for details.

Strategic Studies students continue to manage an extensive number of activities for the program. The Fall Staff Ride under the leadership of quarter-

masters Gabe Serrato and Adam Pappas was held in October, looking at the war of 1812 and the burning of Washington and assault on Fort McHenry. This year's international staff ride, led by Andrew Rothgaber and Will Upshur, will be to France for the 1940 Fall of France Campaign. Also continuing are a full schedule of speaker series, films and discussions, and the ever-popular Defense and Against the Dark Arts lecture program. The student organizers of these events deserve special recognition: Speaker Series, John Moran and Shannon O'Pray; Film Series, Jonathan Brasher and Eric Borgman; Defense Against the Dark Arts, Ryan Anderson and Karen Riley. Leadership in the events later in the year is yet to be assigned.

Dr. Thomas Keaney, Associate Director Merrill Center for Strategic Studies



Above: Brian Prior, a second year Strategic Studies student, playing Secretary of State James Monroe on the 2009 FSR.

From the Editor

Suggestions and requests for alumni article topics, professor commentaries, and student activity updates are welcome. Please submit topics/subjects that would be of interest to you. Depending on the questions received, we hope to begin a periodic feature on professor "Q&As." With this in mind, please contribute specific questions for particular professors.

We would also like to have a section devoted to Alumni/Friend news. If you have news to share, please submit a blurb for the newsletter. Photos taken in the last year, with three or more alums, will also be published. Please send article suggestions, offers to write, and personal/professional news to Strat-Newsletter@gmail.com.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Erin Schenck (MA 07)

Support the Annual

Giving Fund:

Make Strategic Studies a memorable experience for generations.

<https://jhweb.dev.jhu.edu/forms/form/saisstr>

MERRILL CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

1619 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 663-5774

Fax: (202)-663-5782

E-mail: saismerrillcenter@jhu.edu

<http://merrillcenter.sais-jhu.edu>