



Defense Against the Dark Arts

By Jessica Sobrino (MA16)

The Defense Against the Dark Arts interview series has long been a favorite program for Strategic Studies candidates, providing a candid and insightful lens into multiple desired career tracks. The program’s moniker—an allusion to the Harry Potter series—hints at its purpose: to provide attendees with lessons on how to have a successful career in Washington or with the government, while maintaining their sense of self and integrity. Its format of off-the-record interviews with program founder Professor John McLaughlin allows for unusually intimate and personal insights and engagement.

This year, the series has upheld its celebrated traditions, while seeking to broaden its audience beyond the Strategic Studies community through support from the Career Center and other concentrations. September’s inaugural event featured a presentation by Professor McLaughlin that included experience-based insights on multiple foreign policy careers, as

well as content-related magic tricks. In October, Career Ambassador James Jeffrey shared lessons from his illustrious diplomatic experience, principally in the Middle East. He discussed how to accommodate State Department policy with local cultures; the personal sacrifices required by his career path; and essential qualities of a good diplomat. December’s event featured award-winning journalist and novelist David Ignatius. Ignatius shared his thoughts on the nature of career trajectories; how the field of journalism has changed throughout his time in the field; and whether breaking the news is always the best choice. The spring semester will feature interviews covering the congressional, intelligence, and think tank communities.

Each lesson provided by a Defense Against the Dark Arts interview is a gem to attendees. Yet the program’s popularity proves the experience is bigger than these lessons. It could be the comfortable rapport created by Professor

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Summer Internship

By Meghan Iacobacci (MA 16)

“You’re a wedding singer? Fantastic! Can you sing the national anthem at our July 4th celebration?” I was trying to make small talk with my supervisor on my first day interning at the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) but the “fun facts” I usually employ in these situations ended up being a real problem solver. Three weeks later, in front of 500 Taiwanese business and political leaders, I performed an acapella rendition of the Star Spangled Banner. But that was the easy part.

I spent the first four weeks of my State Department internship at the Kaohsiung branch office located at the Island’s southern tip. The office was quite small and, away from the buzz of Taipei, I had the freedom to work on several diverse projects. The most interesting opportunity I had was interviewing local leaders regarding their views and predictions for Taiwan’s 2016 Presidential elections. I traveled to university offices and political party headquarters throughout the city speaking with people about the most important issues of the election.

At the end of my second week, I received a call

from then-Acting Director Brent Christensen asking if I would relocate to Taipei and run the Executive Office. The timing of employee transfers meant that everyone in the Executive Office was departing post. I accepted, moved to Taipei in week four of my internship and by week eight I was the most “senior” staffer in the executive office.

The days were intense but immensely gratifying. I arranged for the incoming Director and Deputy Director introductory meetings with everyone from the President of Taiwan to the Minister of Economic Affairs. I assisted with the preparations for a congressional delegation led by Senator Tom Cotton. I also was the point-person person for coordination between

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2015 Fall Staff Ride : the Chesapeake Campaign

By Henry Holst (MA 16)

This year's Fall Staff Ride focused on a particularly interesting topic: the War of 1812's Chesapeake Campaign. This campaign was chosen due to its unique placement within U.S. history: A young and politically juvenile United States successfully fends off an invasion by the British. The war was, in effect, the second war of American independence.

Day One focused on U.S. failures: Our group went from the Navy Yard in Washington D.C. down to Fort Washington (which failed to contest the British naval advance up the Potomac), and later to Bladensburg Battlefield: the site of an embarrassing U.S. defeat. Before retiring to the campsite we conducted presentations at the White House, which British forces torched after taking the city.

The campsite turned out to be a great selection—it was out in the middle of nowhere, in a large field we had com-

pletely to ourselves, complete with a pavilion. Even better, we dodged all the rain that was forecast for all weekend! Our logistics leads, Adam Farrar (MA 16) and Grant Murphy (MA 16) did an incredible job. They also brought in what in all honesty was the best BBQ I have had in a long, long time. The night was only made better by vocal performances by honorary Strat concentrator Sergio Guzman (MA 16) and the world-class homebrew (per Staff Ride tradition).

Day Two focused on the U.S. defense of Baltimore, which, at that time, was one of the largest cities in the country and in many respects the region's economic center of gravity. On this day our group gave presentations at two battlefield sites

where U.S. forces repulsed British land and sea advances, respectively: North Point and Fort McHenry. The FSR concluded with a formal dinner in Baltimore at *The Brewers Art*, which, per the name, coupled its excellent food with quality Belgian Beer.

All Strat graduates know that Staff Rides are entirely the result of a team effort. This Fall Meghan Iacobacci (MA 16) and I were fortunate to have a strong team of committed, enthusiastic Stratters, all of whom helped continue the Staff Ride tradition.

Quartermasters: Henry Holst, Meghan Iacobacci.

Research Leads: Mike Dyer (MA 16), Alex Deep (MA 16)

Logistics Leads: Adam Farrar, Grant Murphy (MA 16)

Gunny: Adrienne Dalton (MA 16)

“The campsite turned out to be a great selection—it was in the middle of nowhere...”



Above: Fall Staff Ride 2015 Participants at Fort McHenry in Baltimore, MD.

Below: PhD candidate and FSR participant Brad Potter presenting at Fort Washington, MD as Rear Admiral George Cockburn.



Above: Participant in the Quantico Leadership Venture Experience, September 2015.

Quantico Leadership Venture Experience

By Sid Ravishankar (MA 17)

This past September, twenty-five students from SAIS travelled to the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School at Quantico, Virginia. On the bus ride over late Friday, students traded possibilities of what would likely await them, speculation often referencing Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*.

The Leadership Venture Experience at Quantico is a 24-hour event that allows students to take part in some of the experiences that officer candidates go through. After arriving at Quantico, students heard a lecture on the Marine Corps' ethos, doctrine, and purpose. After this deceptively calm event, Drill Instructors stormed the room and led students on a harrowing two-hour march around the base followed by lessons on aggressive bed-making and bathroom cleaning.

Early the following day, students marched and negotiated the obstacle Tarzan Course – involving six foot jumps off a one-foot wide plank of wood, tightropes at least twenty feet high, and a zip-line at

least two hundred feet long. The venture included two other exercises: The Reaction course, where students tested leadership skills leading “fire-teams” of four to five students in order to fulfill small objectives such as retrieving a can of ammunition from across a broken bridge, and the Quigley, a course designed to simulate the environment of the Vietnam War, complete with stench, mud, and six-foot long tunnels completely submerged in water. The trip ended with a visit to the Marine Corps museum.

Quantico gave us a small idea of what it takes to be a Marine and increased our appreciation for the Corps and its mission. The experience of following and issuing orders held important lessons in leadership and the intimidating obstacle courses required a degree of courage many of us discovered only when dangling twenty feet in the air. Ultimately, the experience was a transformative one for those who participated and we thank the Marine Corps and Mark Coppess (MA 16), the SAIS Marine Corps Fellow, for giving us this opportunity.

Alumni Dinner 2015

By Whitney McNamara (MA 16) & Edan Cohen ('MA6), Alumni Coordinators

On November 12, 2015, over 150 Strategic Studies Alumni and their guests gathered in the Department's second home at the Willard Hotel for the annual alumni dinner, which included a keynote address from the Colombian Ambassador to the US, H.E. Juan Carlos Pinzón.

Prominent program alumni, faculty, and several soon to be graduating current students (fingers crossed) kicked off the evening with a cocktail hour before the lead organizer of the event, Kinga Krisko (MA 11), opened the night with a welcome speech. Dr. Eliot Cohen then spoke about the evolution of the Strategic Studies department, and announced how a gift to SAIS from former NYC Mayor Mi-

chael Bloomberg will be used to create a new international policy institute in honor of Henry Kissinger - The Henry A. Kissinger Institute for Global Affairs.

Known to most alumni in the room, David Fuhrmann (MA 82) was presented with the JHU Alumni Association's Heritage Award for his contributions to the Strategic Studies Department.

Next, Ambassador Pinzón delivered an insightful speech combining realism and optimism regarding Colombia's future, the role of the military, and he reviewed how the US provided a positive framework for helping the Colombian security apparatus in combating narcotics. He has taken Strategic Studies courses at SAIS and also hosted SAISers during the 2015 ISR in Colombia in his previous role as

the Minister of Defense. Pinzón's final point during his speech was to advise those in attendance not to hesitate in calling Dr. Cohen and Dr. Keaney for counsel in their day jobs.

Closing out the evening's festivities, Dr. Thomas Keaney jokingly offered former students some insight into how he properly evaluates the success of the faculty. "We will only know in ten years or so based on where you land."

We want to offer a special thanks to the organizers of the event, Kinga Krisko, Dennis Huggins (MA 12), Phillip Lohaus (MA 12), with assistance from Nadia Schadlow (MA 89, PhD 05) and Christine Vargas (MA 12).

DADA (cont.)

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McLaughlin, or witnessing and engaging with renowned individuals in a humanizing setting. Whatever the reason, the program undoubtedly provides a magical but emblematic SAIS experience.

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experience for generations.**

<https://jhweb.dev.jhu.edu/efrms/form.do?formId=8025>



Above: Award-winning journalist and novelist David Ignatius with Prof. John McLaughlin in discussion at a DADA event in Dec. 2015.

Seventh Strategic Studies Alumni Fundraiser

Stephanie Papa (MA 13) and Kimberly Pucher (MA 13)

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the 2015 Strategic Studies Alumni Fundraiser! You made it a tremendous success! This was the department's seventh consecutive drive and we had a wonderful turnout. This year, 183 alumni (previous record: 166, and before that, 125) from the classes of 1980 to 2015 contributed \$47,191.

Moreover, we owe a huge thank you to a very generous alumnus who donated \$10,000, as well as another very generous alumnus who contributed a \$5,000 matching gift, which gave all of us extra motivation. We shattered our previous pre-match record by raising \$42,191 pre-match. That's nearly \$12,000 over last year's record!

Equally notable, as overall participation continues to be our prime focus, we are very excited that we increased our donor base by an additional 17 alumni, and we hope to exceed 200 contributions in the next fundraiser!

This year was particularly exciting as the highest number of gifts came from the four most recently graduated classes (accounting for just under 50% of all participation!) The Class of 2014 for a second year in a row had the highest participation with 31 contributions; followed

by the Class of 2015 with 20; the Class of 2013 with 18; and the Class of 2012 with 15.

We'd also like to extend a special thanks to the Classes of 1997, 2000, 2005, and 2007, who had large increases in participation this year.

Most of all, this year's fundraiser was an excellent reminder that the Strategic Studies network reaches far and wide, from Ethiopia to Washington to California.

As in past years, this year's drive will ensure that extracurricular educational experiences (including stateside Staff Rides, the Quanticco trip, the film series, and guest speakers) will continue to enhance the classroom and remain available to all Strategic Studies students, which is increasingly a challenge as the department continues to grow. The Alumni Fundraiser is more important than ever to the Strategic Studies department in order to ensure its continued excellence.

We would like to thank and recognize this year's Class Representatives. Three of these representatives just graduated from SAIS in the class of 2015 and were happy to immediately pitch in as alumni. All representatives provided excellent support despite the work we asked them to take on around the holidays. This year our 12 Class Representatives were: Augusta Binns-Berkey (MA 15), Will Quinn

(MA 15), Nick Morrow (MA 15), Eric Lindsey (MA 14), Elizabeth (Guvvi) McGovney (MA 14), Kat Timlin (MA 14), Kevin Cronin (MA 14), Justin Sokolowski (MA 13), Matthew Williams (MA 13), Morgan Hitzig (MA 13), Tracy Horton (MA 13), and Henry Nuzum (MA 09). Each Class Representative reached out to a few dozen alumni, ensuring that we made individual appeals to over 300 people. We would also like to thank the many former Quarter Masters who, in the last few days of the fundraiser, reached out to their former staff ride participants to urge them to donate.

The Development and Alumni Relations team, with special thanks to Louis Diez, Margaret Frondorf, and Kenna Barrett, was critical to our success as well. Finally, we would like to thank David Fuhrmann, the Alumni Council, Dr. Cohen, and Dr. Keaney for their leadership.

We will be kicking off the 2016 Alumni Fundraiser this fall. Since individual appeals are most effective, we are eager for additional Class Representatives, particularly from the Class of 2009 and earlier. We would, of course, appreciate any additional help regardless of your class. If you would like to volunteer, please email us at stratalumnifundraiser@gmail.com. Additionally, if you have any suggestions on how to improve the fundraiser, please do not hesitate to contact us with feedback.

Internship (cont.)

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AIT and Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For the day-to-day operations, I was responsible for fielding all paperwork and meetings between the Executive Office and the rest of the sections of AIT. The twelve-hour days were exhausting but the range of tasks I performed and responsibilities I held far exceeded a "typical" internship at an embassy. From performing in Kaohsiung to meeting CODELs in Taipei, interning at AIT was anything but dull!

Strategic Studies Alumni Fundraiser Records			
Year	# of Participants	Funds Raised	Funds Raised Pre-Match
2009	21	\$3,755	\$3,755
2010	65	\$23,762	\$13,762
2011	66	\$30,005	\$20,005
2012	63	\$33,316	\$18,316
2013	125	\$41,620	\$31,620
2014	166	\$50,260	\$30,260
2015	183	\$47,191	\$42,191