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# Naval Postgraduate School - Collaborative Strategic Leadership in Complex Environments Workshop Conducted in Sarajevo



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**Collaborative Strategic Leadership in Complex Environments Workshop Conducted in Sarajevo**

USPTC > News & Events

Article by Maggie Spivey

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has drafted a strategic plan that envisions the country landmine free by 2019. Within BiH, over 30 governmental and non-governmental humanitarian demining organizations, agencies, and institutions are all working towards this goal, which will occur 25 years after the end of the war during which the landmines were planted.

Most of these demining entities are scattered across the local, national, and international levels, and many use different methods of action, response, and reporting, often making coordinated efforts harder to achieve. One needs only to remember the US response during Hurricane Katrina to realize how difficult it can be to bring together disparate groups, despite their common goal.

It was with these factors in mind that early in the year the BiH Peace Support Operations Training Center (PSOTC) approached the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), both designated Partnership for Peace Training and Education Centers (PTCs), about working together to find a potential solution to this problem.

“As the eyes, ears, and feet on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the PSOTC is ideally positioned to uncover and articulate areas of immediate need for expansion or development of capacity in the country,” stated Jeff Munks, a consultant to NPS who is leading the project along with other NPS faculty. “Working with NPS provides the PSOTC the wherewithal to reach through and take advantage of the intellectual capacity based at NPS. “

In a situation where the participants are already very familiar with how to conduct demining, the solution then becomes how best to have these organizations work together to achieve their common goal.

To better understand the problem from the BiH perspective, in June NPS project members interviewed representatives of the BiH demining community. Interviewees included a range of people from those at the strategic level to the field-level operators, all who could offer insight on the issues, opportunities, gaps, conceptions, and misconceptions that exist within the current system.

This information allowed the NPS team to tailor a workshop to suit the needs of the participants. The result was the 3-day workshop, “Collaborative Strategic Leadership in Complex Environments,” held in downtown Sarajevo in late September. Using the NATO comprehensive approach as a model, the NPS team led the 15 high-level attendees from various demining entities through a process that was designed to enable them to better work together and define their own path going forward.

Associate Professor Susan Hocevar of the Graduate School of Business and Public Policy (GSBPP) proved to be particularly valuable in this process, drawing on her expertise and experience as an instructor at NPS in classes on organizational behavior; organizational theory; organizational change; organizational structure and design; groups and teams; and power, politics, and conflict.

Also making an important contribution to the workshop was Phil Quast, a Senior Fellow with the USPTC Program Office. As a retired Vice Admiral with 36-years of active service with the US Navy, he has held various command and leadership positions, and following retirement he spearheaded the Navy’s flag-level executive development program.

Going forward, workshop participants will continue to interface with one another and the NPS and PSOTC team through an interactive website that allows them to post comments, get feedback, and collaborate. Further, follow-on workshops are planned for the coming spring and in early 2012 to provide participants and the NPS and PSOTC team two more face-to-face meetings.

All of these collaborative efforts will be particularly useful as the BiH demining strategic plan is scheduled to be updated in 2012. The hope is the progress made at these workshops and during the time in between will help BiH achieve its goal of being landmine free by 2019.

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