Alum Explores WMDs After Interest Sparked at NPS

Naval Postgraduate School Public Affairs Office

Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.
Air Force Maj. Benjamin Busch, a Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) alumnus, was recently accepted into the Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction’s (WMD) 2010 Program for Emerging Leaders at National Defense University (NDU).

Busch, a Air Force F-16 fighter pilot, became interested in the NDU program after exploring the challenges posed during WMD studies at NPS.

“The Master's program in security studies at NPS was really the catalyst for my deeper interest in the policy and strategic decisions related to WMD,” said Busch. “The educational foundation at NPS increased my understanding of WMD issues. It brought together a joint, interagency and international group of students in an academic environment to analyze and examine the challenges associated with WMD. It raised my awareness of what other U.S. government offices and international partners bring to the fight against the illicit transfer of WMD technologies and material,” said Busch.

The NDU program will allow Busch to build upon his knowledge gained while completing his graduate degree at NPS. The NDU program will focus specifically on understanding WMD concerns from a multi-agency perspective.

“What really interested me was the interagency aspect of the NDU program. I believe that it takes a true team effort to effect real solutions,” Busch said. “As a planner for U.S. Air Forces in Europe and an Air Component planner representative to EUCOM, I hope to broaden my perspective on how U.S. and Allies in Europe are working with Russia and other states in the region to limit the spread of WMD. I think this will help me better craft and provide inputs to operational and concept plans that are related to WMD.”

Busch's current work with 3 AF/U.S. Air Forces in Europe and EUCOM ties back in some ways to the thesis he completed while at NPS, which analyzed the use of incentives during denuclearization efforts in Ukraine in the early 1990s.

“My thesis was about how to properly apply incentives as a third party in international relations. I used a bargaining and war model by James Fearon and blended it with a cognitive model to generate one possible way to analyze when to use, and, probably more importantly, when to not use incentives to influence desired policy outcomes.”

Busch credits the education he received at NPS with directly improving his ability to perform his current job with U.S. Air Force in Europe and EUCOM.

“[My education at NPS] gave me an understanding of where to go for credible information on the strategic policy decisions that affect what concept and operation plans we develop. Additionally, it gave me an appreciation for the political considerations regarding WMD policies,” said Busch. “My NPS education also exposed me to academic literature that, while not always policy oriented, allows me to pull and broaden my understanding of a particular issue beyond a purely military perspective.”

Busch will be attending the summer immersion session at NDU in June. He hopes the knowledge gained at the session will aid him in building viable concept and operation plans for U.S Air Forces in Europe.