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From: MIDN Matthew M. Libby, USN

To: Mr. Sherman Teichman, Director, The Institute for Global Leadership at Tufts University

Subj: AFTER-ACTION REPORT ALLIES CONFERENCE 2009

It was a distinct pleasure for me to be involved with the Alliance Linking Leaders in Education and the Services (ALLIES) conference at the US Naval Academy. My involvement with the conference was a fortuitous mishap. When MIDN Mia Hencinski requested that I become involved with the conference as a logistical assistant, I acquiesced without any prior knowledge of the conference's objectives. Upon learning more about the nature of the conference and speaking with the incredibly intelligent and motivated participants and facilitators, I was pleased to see that the conference dwells on an issue of emerging importance throughout the world – combined joint operations.

My first exposure to the importance of these operations occurred last summer with Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in Djibouti City, Djibouti. It became irrefutably clear to me that joint efforts between the Navy, Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard from the United States and allied nations are integral in the future of military operations. My beliefs were reinforced by a recent announcement that numerous military bases all over the world will be converted to accommodate joint operations.

Another important insight I gained from my work with CJTF-HOA revolved around the diplomatic squabbling that consumed their 3-D approach: *Defense* (Department of Defense), *Diplomacy* (State Department), and *Development* (USAID). In the military, each branch of the service has their specialty; no single branch is capable of winning wars or reconstructing nations. Likewise, our civilian counterparts have their respective specialties and are capable of achieving certain results with greater efficiency. It was disheartening to see how much effort was wasted on discussions of jurisdiction from all parties involved – civilian and military; domestic and international. With a common goal, collaborative efforts will always achieve a superior outcome.

The ALLIES conference welcomed students from all branches of the military, civilian students from Tufts University, and both civilian and military students from Chile. Students had the opportunity to interact with military and civilian professionals involved with international relations. The lessons that students learned from these experts carried into the simulated exercise (SIMULEX), which was the closest possible simulation of a combined joint task force initiative that I have ever seen. Similar to the structure of CJTF- HOA, the SIMULEX took a 3-D approach: civilian students assumed the *Diplomacy* and *Development* roles as members of the State Department and USAID, respectively, while military students assumed the *Defense* role as representatives of the Department of Defense. After watching a fabricated broadcast of multiple crises in the news, the SIMULEX required students to retire to assigned roundtables where they would prioritize the United States' responses to the multiple crises. Discussions were heated but

always respectful (the civility can be attributed to the civilian informal attire, which I would encourage for all participants at future conferences. Nobody yells in a suit... except in British Parliament). Students were required to arrive at a satisfactory response for each group member, meaning that everyone in the group could live with the decision, even if it was not consistent with their personal preferences. The groups were then tasked with presenting their priorities with an appropriate rationale to a panel of experts in international relations. The students were quickly reminded by the panel of the importance of particular language and had their convictions challenged by worthy intellectual adversaries.

The intense roundtable discussions and criticisms that the groups received from the panel of experts afforded the SIMULEX participants an accurate depiction of the complications with combined joint initiatives and the unforgiving nature of diplomacy. Tomorrow's leaders must learn to work together, and ALLIES offers the most realistic depiction of what we will experience in the future. Instead of wasting time with senseless diplomatic squabbling in the future, let lessons of cooperation and compromise begin today with conferences like ALLIES. Each participant walked away from the conference with a greater appreciation of what tomorrow promises, and perhaps more importantly, lasting friendships were formed that will transcend organizational titles in the future.

Sincerely,

Matthew M. Libby
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