



# NPS IN THE NEWS

## Weekly Media Report –Oct. 20-26, 2020

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### EDUCATION:

1. [NPS' Data Science, AI Certificate Programs Support DOD Workforce Development](#)

*(Navy.mil 20 Oct 20)*

*(DoN CIO 22 Oct 20)*

*(NPS.edu 20 Oct 20)* ... Javier Chagoya

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### RESEARCH:

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The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) is the Navy and Marine Corps graduate school for science, math, engineering and technology (STEM). Because the challenge of using AI effectively in the military is multidisciplinary, NPS is a perfect environment for intelligent systems experts with military interests to congregate. Sixty NPS faculty, led by Distinguished Professor of Computer Science (CS) Dr. Peter Denning, recently formed the Consortium for Intelligent Systems Education and Research (CISER) to enable precisely that. CISER breaks down barriers to quick synthesis of innovative solutions and provides DOD-relevant answers to difficult strategic problems involving AI.

3. [Who Built the U.S. Air Force's New 6<sup>th</sup>-Generation Stealth Fighter?](#)

*(NationalInterest.org 23 Oct 20)* ... Kris Osborn

The fact that the Air Force's new sixth-generation stealth aircraft has taken to the skies raises too many interesting questions to engage at one time, however, many wonder who built the one that flew already? And what it might mean for the F-35 and F-22 jet fighters?... This challenge, explored by a Naval Postgraduate School essay called "The 6th-Generation Quandary," posed the question as to whether it might be equally if not more effective to postpone formal sixth-generation development until truly breakthrough advances emerge, while pursuing advanced variants of current, yet upgradable platforms in the interim.

### FACULTY:

4. [What Can a Retired Sailor Teach Us About Turkey?](#)

*(War On The Rocks 21 Oct 20)* ... Ryan Gingeras, NPS Dept of National Security Affairs Professor



This past spring, a hitherto obscure Turkish rear admiral, Cihat Yaycı, grabbed international headlines after his dramatic departure from the Turkish navy. Though rumors of his departure had circulated for months in advance, both Turkish and foreign journalists strained to interpret its significance. Until May, Yaycı had been celebrated in the press, and lauded by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, as the “architect” who negotiated the drawing of a shared maritime border with Libya’s Tripoli-based government. His association with Turkey’s more assertive naval posturing, dubbed the “Blue Homeland” initiative, the subject of my last article in these pages, made him the face of the country’s greater ambitions in the eastern Mediterranean. Yaycı’s resignation, in turn, was received as evidence of Erdoğan’s limited patience with the rise of politically influential senior officers. Some commentators, particularly outspoken nationalists, voiced their fear that his resignation could lead to the abandonment of the Blue Homeland concept altogether.

#### 5. [Opinion: Return to School in OKC an Important Endeavor](#)

*(The Oklahoman 25 Oct 20)*

At least one Oklahoma City Public School teacher walked into her school building last week and resigned, upset that the district had returned to in-person instruction amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Superintendent Sean McDaniel’s reaction?

“We support that,” said McDaniel, who relayed the story at a news conference. “What we’re committing to is doing everything we can do to keep people safe, and we believe we’ve taken significant strides to do that.”

In urging schools not to stay closed, Hoover Institution research fellow David Henderson and **Ryan Sullivan, an associate professor of economics at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California**, wrote last week about research led by a professor at Brown University. Her data involved nearly 200,000 students in 47 states from the last two weeks of September, and showed a COVID-19 case rate of 0.13% among students. The overall U.S. case rate is 2.6%.

### ALUMNI:

#### 6. [ECS Names Aaron Burciaga Senior Director of Artificial Intelligence and Analytics](#)

*(Business Wire 20 Oct 20)* ... Shab Nassirpour

ECS, a leader in advanced technology, science, and engineering solutions, announced that Aaron Burciaga, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, has been named senior director of artificial intelligence (AI) and analytics. In this role, Burciaga will work closely with ECS’s national security and intelligence division in the development of AI and machine learning (ML) solutions. Mr. Burciaga will also develop an Analytics Center of Excellence akin to the Cloud and Cyber Centers of Excellence.

#### 7. [IW Officer Onboard IWTC Corry Station Qualifies as Command’s First IW Warfare Tactics Instructor](#)

*(DVIDS 22 Oct 20)*

Lt. Richard Schroyer, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, recently earned a level 4 warfare tactics instructor (WTI) designation and patch, alongside 20 other information warfare (IW) professionals, becoming Information Warfare Training Command (IWTC) Corry Station’s first qualified WTI.

#### 8. [Head of Liberty’s Center for Engineering Research & Education Brings Vast Knowledge from Distinguished Military, Civilian Careers](#)

*(Liberty.edu 23 Oct 20)*

Before becoming executive director of Liberty University’s Center for Engineering Research & Education (CERE), Dr. Rich Diddams, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, fought drug lords in South America and terrorists in the Middle East. He served in more than 50 countries throughout a decorated 20-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel before retiring in 2006.

### UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS:

**November 3:** Election Day

**November 11:** Veteran’s Day

**November 17:** [V-SGL with Ambassador Harry Harris](#)

**November 26:** Thanksgiving



The Naval Postgraduate School proudly presents

# THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY GUEST LECTURE SERIES

*In Collaboration With The Naval Education Enterprise*

## Ambassador Harry Harris

*“Critical Allies: The U.S. / Republic of Korea Alliance”*



# 17 NOVEMBER 1500 (PST)

U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea **Harry Harris** is the first Asian-American to hold four-star rank in the U.S. Navy and the first to head U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), now known as the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), from May, 2015 to May, 2018. He was nominated by President Trump on May 23, 2018 and confirmed by the United States Senate on June 28, 2018. Prior to USPACOM, he commanded the U.S. Pacific Fleet. From 2011 to 2013, Ambassador Harris served as the representative of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of State. In this role, he traveled to over 80 countries with the Secretary and participated in most of the Secretary's meetings with foreign leaders.

Born in Japan and reared in Tennessee and Florida, Ambassador Harris graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1978. He holds master's degrees from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and Georgetown's School of Foreign Service. His father served in the U.S. Navy, and was a veteran of both World War II and the Korean War. Ambassador Harris is married to Ms. Bruni Bradley, herself a career Naval officer.

V-SGL series page  
[www.nps.edu/sgls](http://www.nps.edu/sgls)

Viewing link  
[www.nps.edu/web/video](http://www.nps.edu/web/video)



## EDUCATION:

### NPS' Data Science, AI Certificate Programs Support DOD Workforce Development

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On Sept. 9, during the DOD's semi-annual Artificial Intelligence Symposium and Exposition, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper affirmed that the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC) in partnership with the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and Defense Acquisition University will collaboratively develop an intensive six-week pilot course delivered to more than 80 defense acquisition professionals of all ranks and grades.

"These trainees will learn how to apply AI and data science skills to our operations," Esper said in his remarks. "With the support of Congress, the Department plans to request additional funding for the services to grow this effort over time and deliver an AI-ready workforce to the American people."

Just as the university's highly-regarded [Harnessing Artificial Intelligence video course](#) paved the way for its support of the pilot course, NPS is well positioned to support Esper's declaration for further workforce development through its existing Data Science Certificate, and an upcoming similar certificate program in Artificial Intelligence.

In the ongoing effort to expand the Navy's knowledge and expertise in the fields of data science and artificial intelligence, NPS faculty have developed courses that enable students to quickly gain insights in these critical disciplines. Data science programs are far from new at the university with coursework developed under the auspices of the NPS Data Science and Analytics Group (DSAG).

In addition to the advanced coursework developed through DSAG, leading faculty at the university recognized the broader interdisciplinary nature of the subject matter, and the expertise in residence at NPS. This led to the launch of a new effort coined CISER, or the Consortium for Intelligent Systems Education and Research, that takes a more wholistic approach to integrating education and research in intelligent systems (artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data science) across the university.

The result, officials note, is not only improved support for the certificate programs, but an improved capacity to support broader workforce development for the DOD, as well as the ability to lead advanced research in the intelligent systems space.

While the focus of CISER is new, the Data Science Certificate is not, with two cohorts of professionals from diverse backgrounds and leadership levels benefitting from the four-course certificate programs. The third offering of the Data Science certificate begins in January 2021.

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Ross J. Schuchard is an NPS assistant professor of Operations Research (OR) and the Technical Director for DSAG. He's also a veteran of the Army's Future Command, U.S. Army Cyber Command and various government agencies.

"Demand for DSAG sponsored research and student enrollment in the data science certificate continues to grow at exceptional rates," said Schuchard. "Based on current enrollment projections, the data science certificate program will graduate its seventh cohort of data scientists for DOD by the end of the summer term [of 2022]."

NPS Lecturer Kevin Maher manages the Data Science Certificate and is the point of contact for the program.

"Data Science has emerged as an area critical to the mission of the Navy and the Department of Defense because of the central role it plays in intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, talent management, cyber-security, and other related areas of critical interest," said Maher.

"A thorough understanding of the underlying infrastructure that supports Data Science as well as the statistical and machine learning methods employed is essential for the correct application and interpretation of results of a Data Science effort. The certificate program is designed to provide that skill set."

For more information on the Data Science for Military, and AI for Military graduate certificate programs, visit the CISER website at <https://nps.edu/web/ciser/welcome>.



<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2388178/naval-postgraduate-school-data-science-ai-certificate-programs-support-workforc/>

<https://www.doncio.navy.mil/CHIPS/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=14016>

<https://nps.edu/-/nps-data-science-ai-certificate-programs-support-dod-workforce-development-1>

[Return to Index](#)

## RESEARCH:

### NPS Intelligent Systems Consortium Links Field Experts and Research Opportunities

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Through its support of [online certificates](#), the consortium focuses its efforts on increasing fluency in AI and data science (DS) throughout the Naval workforce. Through its support of research, the consortium focuses on research in grand challenges in AI and DS in cooperative research projects with industry in nearby Silicon Valley and elsewhere. The consortium also collaborates with the Navy's Warfare Centers, all focusing on transitioning AI and DS technology into operational use.

CISER hosts [Harnessing AI](#), the acclaimed video course introducing AI and DS to the naval workforce. CISER supports the DOD's Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC), which has designed an introduction to AI course for the DOD that includes portions of the Harnessing AI course.

"I think it's imperative that NPS has a role here because we're able to bring the operationally current students that we have together with the education that we offer in a secure environment to be able to deliver solutions to the Department of Defense that it needs," Dr. Rob Dell, Acting Provost and Academic Dean, says. Dell is a founding member of CISER's board of advisors.

### Avoiding Another AI Winter

Denning has personally witnessed the emergence and growth of the AI and DS fields since the 1960s. He recalls that early pioneers thought AI would be so advanced by the 2000s that humans wouldn't be able to distinguish whether they were talking via computer screen with a human or a machine.

"The field gets very enthusiastic about the possibilities; they make big promises," Denning explains. "The funding agencies came aboard with generous research funding, but after a while, when the promises weren't delivered, the agencies get disillusioned and funding dries up. There have been two of these 'AI winters' since the birth of AI in the 1950s."

Denning is worried that the current wave of enthusiasm about AI could lead to a third AI winter. With his retired colleague, Ted Lewis, he wrote an essay, [Intelligence May Not Be Computable](#) that sought to tamp down the hype and focus on the huge achievable benefits of AI. Denning and his CISER colleagues want to make sure that everyone talking about the fields understand what these systems can and can't do; what they should be used for and what they shouldn't. This way, research sponsors have realistic expectations.



“I hope that CISER can help clarify the function and role of artificial intelligence, especially in military decision making,” says Matt Carlyle, OR Department Chair and CISER board member. “And getting past that veil, that sort of magical impression of AI, and having people understand practically what it does and what its benefits are and what its real dangers are. I think that advocacy is really important for CISER and I think it’s on the right path for doing that.”

### **Tackling Grand Challenges**

Even though the consortium is fairly new, it already supports three online certificate programs – one in AI for Military Use (set to begin in early 2021), one in DS for Military US (already running full cohorts twice a year), and one in Innovation and Design. With these certificates, many students are or will soon be in the position to help DOD in AI and DS.

CISER also plans to host a “provocative speaker series” where AI and DS experts present their ideas on those complex topics, especially the ones with gnarly dilemmas.

“We are now exposing each other to our research so that we can combine research efforts in a more holistic fashion to answer the call to numerous requirements that exist from DOD sponsors across all services,” says U.S. Army Lt. Col. Ross Schuchard, Assistant Professor of Operations Research and Technical Director of the Data Science Analytics Group (DSAG). He is also a CISER board member.

Schuchard says that bringing together AI and DS experts across DOD in a concerted effort will lead to a broadening of our knowledge base in these complex topics.

“The incorporation of successful AI and DS efforts through DOD requires a multidisciplinary effort rather than just individual lanes,” he says.

CISER plans to partner with industry to tackle some of DOD’s “grand challenges” relating to intelligent systems – challenges such as adversarial AI, trustworthy AI, the completely observable ocean, hidden underwater communications, analysis of threat and ethic responses, and mastering human-machine teaming. The consortium received seed funding from NPS to get started, and is looking for external financial support to start diving into these important issues for the DOD.

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2391693/new-navy-intelligent-systems-consortium-links-field-experts-and-research-opport/>

<https://nps.edu/-/nps-intelligent-systems-consortium-links-field-experts-and-research-opportunities>

[Return to Index](#)

### **Who Built the U.S. Air Force’s New 6<sup>th</sup>-Generation Stealth Fighter?**

*(NationalInterest.org 23 Oct 20) ... Kris Osborn*

The fact that the Air Force’s new sixth-generation stealth aircraft has taken to the skies raises too many interesting questions to engage at one time, however, many wonder who built the one that flew already? And what it might mean for the F-35 and F-22 jet fighters?

While the actual vendor responsible for producing the first Next Generation Air Dominance stealth fighter to fly is not available for understandable security reasons, there are only a handful of vendors capable of engineering something like this. While specifics are not known or available, and no vendor has actually confirmed that a prototype actually exists, some of the main players likely capable of building the aircraft might be Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman or Boeing.

Lockheed and Northrop have extensive experience and expertise regarding stealth technology, an attribute any sixth-generation fighter is most likely to incorporate, however there is little value in speculating given the importance of secrecy to the project. After all, next to nothing is known about the new, fast-progressing B-21 stealth bomber slated for its first flight in the next year or two.

However, it takes little imagination to examine many of the most cutting-edge technical trends with a mind to their likely impact upon any kind of new sixth-generation platform. One immediate and interesting question relates to the F-35 stealth fighter.



While early subcomponent prototyping and conceptual was underway over the last year, some raised the question as to whether it made sense to even build a new airframe given the promise and sophistication of the F-35. There are two interesting points here, one is that there likely are technological advances significant enough to inspire an interest in building an entirely new platform, and the other is the expectation that a huge priority will be placed upon fifth-to-sixth generation interoperability.

As for the first point, some early questions seem to have been resolved to a certain extent, given that a new sixth-generation aircraft has already flown. Previous deliberations regarding a sixth-generation fighter balanced themselves upon what may at the time have been the unknown maturity of various promising new weapons and technologies nearing a threshold of operational possibility. For instance, some now-in-development next-generation stealth technologies, including new radar-evading configurations, coating materials and advanced thermal-signature reduction are fast-approaching levels of combat readiness. Also, work on new stealth or artificial-intelligence-enabled sensors to ensure overmatch for decades to come may be showing promise as well.

Air Force developers seem to have come to the belief that new generations of stealth-fighter technology were sufficiently “approaching” if not “here,” inspiring a wish to build a new platform and push the current “art-of-the-possible” to the maximum extent.

This challenge, explored by a Naval Postgraduate School essay called “The 6th-Generation Quandary,” posed the question as to whether it might be equally if not more effective to postpone formal sixth-generation development until truly breakthrough advances emerge, while pursuing advanced variants of current, yet upgradable platforms in the interim.

The 2016 paper, from the Naval Postgraduate School Acquisition Research Program, cites a handful of current systems showing significant long-term promise. The paper cites “new models of the F-35 optimized for air combat,” the emerging B-21, drone-launching C-130 “mother ships” and “weapons truck arsenal planes” are positioned to leverage current technological progress.

This issue, framed years ago by this essay, seems to have evolved in some interesting ways, at least to the point wherein the Air Force decided to go ahead and “build” a new sixth-generation aircraft.

In and of itself, the decision answers some questions and seems to suggest that indeed sufficiently impactful new technologies were here or arriving to an extent justifying the interest in building a new jet.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/who-built-us-air-force%E2%80%99s-new-6th-generation-stealth-fighter-171190>

[Return to Index](#)

## FACULTY:

### **What Can a Retired Sailor Teach Us About Turkey?**

*(War On The Rocks 21 Oct 20)* ... **Ryan Gingeras, NPS Dept of National Security Affairs Professor**

This past spring, a hitherto obscure Turkish rear admiral, Cihat Yaycı, grabbed international headlines after his dramatic departure from the Turkish navy. Though rumors of his departure had circulated for months in advance, both Turkish and foreign journalists strained to interpret its significance. Until May, Yaycı had been celebrated in the press, and lauded by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, as the “architect” who negotiated the drawing of a shared maritime border with Libya’s Tripoli-based government. His association with Turkey’s more assertive naval posturing, dubbed the “Blue Homeland” initiative, the subject of my last article in these pages, made him the face of the country’s greater ambitions in the eastern Mediterranean. Yaycı’s resignation, in turn, was received as evidence of Erdoğan’s limited patience with the rise of politically influential senior officers. Some commentators,



particularly outspoken nationalists, voiced their fear that his resignation could lead to the abandonment of the Blue Homeland concept altogether.

Since then, Yaycı has spoken at length with the Turkish media about his experiences and views. While he has not avoided discussion of his resignation, the bulk of the interviews have dwelt on issues far closer to his heart, namely Turkish maritime politics and strategy. In the many hours of recorded discussions he has had over the last few months, Yaycı has rendered to the public a rather large sampling of his opinions on a wide range of subjects. His statements, as a whole, offer a general survey of the development of his own thinking. When considered within the broader context of Turkish history and contemporary affairs, Yaycı's revelations offer potential insights into the political consensus driving elements of Turkey's more militarized approach towards foreign policy. His reasoning offers clues as to how the country's foundational ideology, Kemalism, helps to form common ground among Ankara's fractured political elite.

### **Partisanship and Ideology Inside the Turkish Officer Corps**

In Turkey today, there is no shortage of former generals and admirals appearing on television. Current affairs, to some degree, warrant this. Amid news of Turkish military activity in Syria, Libya, Azerbaijan, and the Eastern Mediterranean, the Turkish armed forces are increasingly at the forefront of the country's foreign policy. Yet against the backdrop of Turkish history, the presence of so many retired officers on television is colored by a certain amount of irony. Since the founding of the country in 1923, scholars and commentators often have depicted professional officers as something of a cloistered class. As the historic "guardians" of the republic's founding principles (especially those associated with Turkey's first president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk), the military long constituted a praetorian elite, an elite best known for its tendency towards conspiracy and political intervention. Since coming to power, Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party government has done much to rein in the power and autonomy of the military. In addition to executing administrative reforms and mass purges of personnel, Erdoğan has gain greater support among disaffected officers since the attempted coup of 2016. A shared loathing of the followers of Fethullah Gülen, who is widely blamed for the coup as well as other plots, has been critical in restoring a certain amount of faith between military and civilian authorities.

Nevertheless, in spite of these developments, observers continue to question how senior officers genuinely perceive the country's politics and strategic priorities. To this day, there are relatively few post-Cold War studies that take on the military's institutional or ideological inclinations. While many former officers have made the jump to television as talking heads, the extent to which they represent the current thinking within civilian and military circles remains unclear. This uncertainty has not prevented a rampant amount of speculation as to the ideological, partisan, and personal divides that shape Ankara's strategic thinking. Convention now dictates that military officers particularly tend to fall into one of several camps. Reputedly the oldest, most established block within the military comprises so-called "Atlanticists." This group, observers contend, includes officers who uphold a more collaborative American or Euro-centric approach to foreign policy (a tendency often associated with Atatürk's preferences). Dissenting from this view are so-called "Eurasianists," an inclination largely associated with the fringe right-wing Fatherland Party. Although comprising officers who tout themselves as ardent Kemalists, this segment of the officer corps is associated with a fierce aversion to the "imperialist order" promoted by United States and Western Europe. In rejecting the collectivist interests of NATO, Eurasianists are seen as favoring closer ties with Russia and other powers of greater Asia. This group, some observers contend, has found a degree of fellowship with both the Justice and Development Party as well as with more religiously conservative officers. Although set apart by their differences on issues of secularism and identity, both Eurasianists and religious conservatives favor a more muscular, independent Turkey, a Turkey capable and willing to exert greater amounts of influence in its near abroad and on the global stage. This agreement, it is argued, lies at the core of what two scholars have called a Green (Islamist)-Kemalist (particularly Eurasianist) alliance.

Yaycı's many writings and interviews appear to confirm, but also complicate, these impressions. As a flag officer who survived multiple purges through his career, he is among the most recent, and highest-



ranking, officers to assume public prominence. In spite of his untimely resignation, Yaycı presents himself as neither a dissident nor a partisan proponent of the ruling party. The framing of his views instead emphasizes elements of consensus seen among the supposed factions comprising Turkey's military establishment. In this regard, Yaycı's outlook offers indicators as to the fears and desires driving the most dominant initiative of Ankara's current foreign policy: Turkey's Blue Homeland.

### **Parsing the Admiral's Thoughts**

Adm. Yaycı's career path speaks to his persona as a soldier-scholar. Born in the eastern town of Elazığ, he entered Turkey's military education system in middle school. After graduating from the naval academy in 1988, he cultivated a successful career as a line officer. His service on multiple warships (including captaining a frigate) culminated with a tour as commander of a flotilla within the navy's northern command. Staff tours punctuated his sea service, allowing him to focus on strategy and foreign relations. For example, he worked as a defense attaché in Turkey's embassy in Moscow. Along the way, he earned a doctorate in international affairs and a master's degree in physical and electronic engineering. And he built a reputation as a prolific writer and innovative thinker. In addition to several books on Turkey's maritime claims in the Mediterranean, he is credited with creating a so-called algorithm capable of determining the number of or detecting Gülenist members in the armed forces (an instrument called the "FETÖ meter"). His rise to prominence as a strategist, in many ways, fits a mold first set by his mentor, retired admiral Cem Gürdeniz. As the man most credited with coining and promoting the notion of Turkey's Blue Homeland, Gürdeniz acknowledges his influence upon Yaycı's ascendancy and has praised him as "one of the important academics in Turkish maritime history."

In his many interviews, Yaycı unhesitatingly asserts that he is a man devoted to the most fundamental values associated with Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal. As the son of a provincial bureaucrat, he was raised by parents who were firmly "Atatürkist" and "statist." His early years as a cadet in Turkey's military education system further solidified his singular devotion to the state. When asked whether he was embittered by his forced resignation, Yaycı responded that his years of education and service made it impossible. "I am a child of my state, not my parents," he asserted, "It is my state who taught, fed, nursed, clothed and raised me since I was 13 years old." Rhetorically, such sentiments are in line with the education and indoctrination he received as a youth. As a student he, like most children in Turkey today, took multiple iterations of a mandatory course entitled "Revolutionary History and Atatürkism." The class, which is featured in middle schools, secondary schools, and universities across the country, emphasizes the centrality of the state as a core tenet of Turkish citizenship and identity. Placing the state above everything, including family, is at the heart of Kemalist orthodoxy. What makes Yaycı's sentiments paradoxical is in their application. By placating Kemalism, Yaycı has consistently sidestepped the invitation to criticize Erdoğan or his political party. This ability to brandish his Kemalist credentials, while signaling his indifference or support to Erdoğan, is a standard theme of many of his public appearances.

His responses to a variety of other issues raised by journalists offer further evidence of Yaycı's dexterity. He has, for example, refused to criticize Erdoğan's controversial decision to open Aya Sofia as a functioning mosque. Even though Atatürk himself ordered its conversion into a museum (a gesture heralded as symbolic of Kemalism's commitment to secularism), he again deferred to the core principles of statism and attacked foreign critics. "No one," he asserted, "can criticize the Turkish Republic for the use of its sovereign rights." As an officer, he further explained, he learned to accept the orders of his commanders in spite of his opinions. "Aya Sofia was opened and from now on this is a state decision." In the same interview, his host asked his opinion of the Treaty of Lausanne, the 1923 agreement that, among other things, formally established Turkey's territorial borders with Greece. In recent years, the treaty has been subject to much criticism by conservative critics. In 2016, Erdoğan denigrated the agreement and its contemporary defenders, claiming that Aegean islands ceded to Greece at Lausanne rightfully belonged to Turkey. When pressed, Yaycı asserted that the treaty was a victory for Turkey, one entirely due to Atatürk's leadership. The problem, as he has repeated elsewhere, is not the agreement, but Greece's behavior:



It is emphasized in the Lausanne Treaty that the islands adjacent to and outside of three miles [from Asia Minor] are not to be transferred. But Greece has tried to embrace all of them. It is Greece that arms the islands, wants to increase its territorial waters, wants to protect the islands and islets whose sovereignty has not been transferred, and expands its airspace beyond land waters.

Blaming Greece is core to Yaycı's political and strategic thinking. Greek behavior in the Aegean and the Mediterranean, in his estimation, constitutes a grave challenge to Turkey's integrity and ambitions. He has characterized Greece as a "revisionist" state, one unswervingly committed to seizing and holding territory rightly belonging to Turkey (such as the Imia or Kardak islands in the Aegean). By placing troops on islands off the coast of Anatolia, Greece not only violates the Treaty of Lausanne but poses, in Yaycı's estimation, a direct military threat to Turkey. The shadow Athens casts over the Aegean and Mediterranean, he concluded, is a threat to Turkey's emergence as greater power. In addition to being a "serious (*ciddi*) state" (that is, a state that has, among other things, political parties, elections and a patriotic population), a powerful state needs independent access to the sea and sources of energy. Turkey, according to his reckoning, possesses the first criterion. Greece, with Western backing, constrains Turkey from attaining the second.

In his many indictments of Greek policy, echoes of Yaycı's education as a Turkish citizen and officer shine through. His reading of Turkish-Greek relations, both past and present, cannot be divorced from the core lessons of state-mandated education. In both mandated classwork and official statements, the state of Greece (alongside native Armenians and Orthodox Christians) is a critical foil within the story of Turkey's development. Several Turkish holidays, such as Children's Days, Sports and Youth Day, and Victory Day, mark events during Turkey's "war of independence" against Greece between 1919 and 1923. For Yaycı, Athens' claims to territorial waters in the Aegean and Mediterranean is a testament to the enduring tensions stemming from this century-old conflict. To combat what he characterizes as Greece's assertiveness, Yaycı has gone so far as to abandon use of the term Aegean (*Ege* in Turkish and *Aigaio* in Greek) for a Turkicized phrase, the Islands Sea (*Adalar Denizi*). To the trained ear, the suggested name change clearly harks back to Atatürk's efforts to "Turkify" place names deemed too Greek, Armenian, or generally foreign. "Giving things Turkish names is important," he explained, "but it is also [within our] discretionary authority."

This reading of the past and its contemporary significance resounds within the rhetoric of Eurasianists and supporters of the Justice and Development Party. As a man equally familiar with the history lessons of his school years, Erdoğan has invoked the memory of Turkey's war with Greece in referencing current events. Gürdeniz, the leading advocate of the Blue Homeland, had declared that a second war of independence against Greece is now underway in the Mediterranean. Both Gürdeniz and Erdoğan share Yaycı's "blood and soil" rendering of Turkish history and identity. Commercials produced by the Justice and Development Party often celebrate the country's Turkic past (particularly the great warriors and conquerors from the Seljuk and Ottoman periods). The lands of the Mediterranean, as Erdoğan put it, enjoyed their "most tranquil period" after they were conquered by Turks. Both Gürdeniz and Yaycı have drawn similar connections between the Ottoman Empire's era of maritime supremacy and the urgency with which Turkey should pursue a more robust policy in the Mediterranean. In one of his most recent books, *The Struggle to Share in the Eastern Mediterranean and Turkey*, Yaycı favorably quotes Barbarossa, the famed Ottoman corsair, who posed that "those who have command of the sea, command the world."

To be fair, it would be inaccurate to say that Yaycı's worldview is solely derivative of his Kemalist upbringing. In his many books advocating Turkey's rights to a large exclusive economic zone in the Mediterranean, he appeals directly to what he believes are Ankara's legal prerogatives. International law, he has stated time and again, allows Turkey the ability to disregard Greece's many islands in claiming large expanses of the Mediterranean seafloor. A heavy peppering of realist thinking also flavors his view of Turkey's approach to its maritime claims. To bypass Greek and Cypriot opposition, he advocates signing bilateral economic zone agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority. Such agreements, he argues, would appeal directly to the self-interest of each of these states. In disregarding the claims of Greece and Cyprus, each signatory would enjoy larger chunks of the seafloor.



Gürdeniz has seconded these suggestions and has encouraged the Turkish government to sign economic zone agreements with both Egypt and Israel.

To date, however, no one within the Turkish government has endorsed such a plan. Given Ankara's poor relations with Egypt and Israel, as well as signs the two states have grown closer to Greece in recent months, the likelihood of Turkey signing multiple economic zone agreements with its Mediterranean neighbors appears slim. Erdoğan, however, has heartily embraced the legalistic foundation of Yaycı's argument (despite the fact that Turkey is not a signatory to the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea). While he has previously proposed an international conference to settle the issue of Turkey's economic zone, legal analysts in Turkey speculate that Erdoğan may be in his legal right to unilaterally declare what he sees as Turkey's legitimate maritime domain.

### **Blue Homeland and the Forging of Turkey's Foreign Policy Consensus**

Over the last several months, Yaycı's statements have provided fodder for debate regarding the partisan or personal rivalries at work in Ankara today. Initially, some inferred from his resignation that he was being forced out as a result of a Gülenist-led plot. Others saw it as a potential power grab by Hulusi Akar, Turkey's powerful minister of defense, who has marginalized several influential flag officers in recent years. Still others have interpreted his departure as signs of divisions in the Eurasianist camp. *Aydınlık*, a newspaper closely tied to the Eurasianist Fatherland Party, has since taken a more negative approach towards Yaycı's views, when before it heaped praise upon him. Gürdeniz, long one of *Aydınlık*'s more prominent columnists, decided to resign after the Fatherland Party's founder, Doğu Perinçek, criticized Yaycı on television. The closeness exhibited between these two former admirals, however, does not mean they share identical views of the world. Since leaving the navy, Yaycı has not indulged in the sort of anti-American and anti-NATO rhetoric associated with Gürdeniz and many Eurasianists. More pointedly, Yaycı has disavowed any allegiance to the Eurasian or Atlanticist camps. He instead has identified his political orientation as simply "native and national (*yerli ve milli*)," a catchphrase long favored by Erdoğan and coined by the founder of the governing party's junior partner in government, the Nationalist Action Party.

There is certainly a danger in over-interpreting the significance of the words and beliefs of a single person. In the case of Yaycı, many of his statements and actions have been taken as indicators of the rise or fall of different factions within Ankara. Reading too much into each of his expressions or acts may give way to what one commentator has likened to "Turkish Kremlinology," wherein small signs are erroneously parsed for profound meaning. If there is something to be gleaned from his post-retirement interactions with the press, it is perhaps how his views reflect important points of agreement among Turkish policymakers today. Whatever his personal opinions may be with respect to domestic politics, it is clear that Yaycı, like many officers and common citizens, prioritizes his loyalty and service to the Turkish state. His stated desire to strengthen the Turkish state, and promote its national interests abroad, is one that binds him to individuals found across Turkey's political spectrum.

There are few in Turkey, even among Erdoğan's opponents, who would reject his depiction of Greece as the country's chief nemesis on the high seas. Yaycı's belief that history and geography predestine Turkey's ascendancy as a major power now holds nearly universal appeal in the country. In this regard, securing Turkey's Blue Homeland has been broadly adopted as a national imperative by both government loyalists and dissidents. To a large extent, this general consensus stands as a testament to the enduring power of Kemalist ideology. Kemalism, as one Turkish scholar recently put it, should be understood as a more diffused force in Turkish politics and society. As one of the cornerstones of Turkish education and national identity, aspects of Kemalism inform the worldview of Islamic conservatives, leftists, and nationalists of various stripes.

This shared idiom and base of reference is among the factors that allow Yaycı, Erdoğan, and others to find common cause in the service of the Turkish state. That is not to say that partisan or personal differences within this circle are irrelevant. Erdoğan, for example, may part company with Yaycı in leaning closer to Gürdeniz's animosity towards the United States. In the long term, the common ground shared between these various camps will likely remain critical to the future of Turkish foreign policy. It is



for this reason that Yaycı's vision of a more combative and self-aggrandizing Turkey is likely to endure, if not grow more entrenched, for some time to come.

<https://warontherocks.com/2020/10/what-can-a-retired-sailor-teach-us-about-turkey/>

[Return to Index](#)

## **Opinion: Return to School in OKC an Important Endeavor**

*(The Oklahoman 25 Oct 20)*

At least one Oklahoma City Public School teacher walked into her school building last week and resigned, upset that the district had returned to in-person instruction amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Superintendent Sean McDaniel's reaction?

"We support that," said McDaniel, who relayed the story at a news conference. "What we're committing to is doing everything we can do to keep people safe, and we believe we've taken significant strides to do that."

Those strides are not enough for some teachers, as shown in a survey by the Oklahoma City branch of the American Federation of Teachers. Among the 460 teachers who replied (that's 18% of the union's members), 60% said they were not comfortable having students back in school buildings.

This school year began with all students in the district working remotely. Last week, in-person instruction began for kindergarten and pre-K students under a hybrid schedule that includes three days of virtual learning. Students in grades 1 through 12 are scheduled to return Nov. 9.

Reticence on the part of teachers is understandable, particularly if their health places them at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. On the other hand, studies show low rates of infection among younger children.

In urging schools not to stay closed, Hoover Institution research fellow David Henderson and Ryan Sullivan, an associate professor of economics at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, wrote last week about research led by a professor at Brown University. Her data involved nearly 200,000 students in 47 states from the last two weeks of September, and showed a COVID-19 case rate of 0.13% among students. The overall U.S. case rate is 2.6%.

"People 19 and younger account for only 1.2% of Covid-19 hospitalizations in the U.S. during the peak of the pandemic," they wrote. "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that of all Covid-19 deaths up to Oct. 10, only 74 were of children under age 15."

The CDC, as we wrote recently, warned this summer that keeping schools closed adversely affects children's social, emotional and behavioral health, and their academic achievement, and is particularly difficult for low-income children, minorities and those with disabilities. Extended closures also "can be harmful to children's mental health and can increase the likelihood that children engage in unhealthy behaviors," CDC researchers said.

One Oklahoma City secondary school teacher told *The Oklahoman's* Nuria Martinez-Keel that only about one-fourth of his students regularly participate in his virtual class sessions. He favors returning to the classroom, something his children do five days a week at a suburban district.

Administrators are urging families to make mask-wearing a priority and to take other preventative measures. Jamie Polk, assistant superintendent of elementary education is right in saying, "This will take all of us in order for this to be a safe endeavor."

It's a necessary endeavor, and we're hopeful the district succeeds.

<http://oklahoman.com/article/5674633/opinion-return-to-school-in-okc-an-important-endeavor>

[Return to Index](#)



## ALUMNI:

### **ECS Names Aaron Burciaga Senior Director of Artificial Intelligence and Analytics**

*(Business Wire 20 Oct 20) ... Shab Nassirpour*

ECS, a leader in advanced technology, science, and engineering solutions, announced that Aaron Burciaga has been named senior director of artificial intelligence (AI) and analytics. In this role, Burciaga will work closely with ECS's national security and intelligence division in the development of AI and machine learning (ML) solutions. Mr. Burciaga will also develop an Analytics Center of Excellence akin to the Cloud and Cyber Centers of Excellence.

Mr. Burciaga is a seasoned business leader in both startup and enterprise settings, with an extensive background in automation, data science, AI, and ML. He joins ECS from HCL Technologies, where he was the global operations director for analytics and artificial intelligence. A veteran of the Iraq War, Mr. Burciaga served as an officer in the United States Marine Corps (USMC). As a reservist, he served through 2019 as the lead data technologist at USMC headquarters, assisting the service's chief information officer.

"Aaron brings two decades worth of experience leading AI, ML, and analytics teams," said ECS president George Wilson. "His insights and expertise will be integral to ECS as we continue to define, develop, and maintain world-class analytics and AI capabilities."

"I'm excited to join a company committed to leveraging the latest AI and ML technology towards national security and prosperity," said Mr. Burciaga. "In doing so, ECS continues to define the industry's best practices. Our solutions transform how commercial and federal clients collect, analyze, and ultimately make better decisions using data."

Mr. Burciaga has a **Master of Science in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School** and a Bachelor of Science from the U.S. Naval Academy.

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20201020005756/en/ECS-Names-Aaron-Burciaga-Senior-Director-of-Artificial-Intelligence-and-Analytics>

[Return to Index](#)

### **IW Officer Onboard IWTC Corry Station Qualifies as Command's First IW Warfare Tactics Instructor**

*(DVIDS 22 Oct 20)*

Lt. Richard Schroyer recently earned a level 4 warfare tactics instructor (WTI) designation and patch, alongside 20 other information warfare (IW) professionals, becoming Information Warfare Training Command (IWTC) Corry Station's first qualified WTI.

Schroyer, a native of Orlando, Florida, has served in the Navy for nine years. A couple past assignments include serving aboard USS Farragut (DDG 99) as both the electronic warfare officer and the IW officer, and attending the Naval Postgraduate School, where he earned a master's degree in electronic warfare.

IW WTIs are IW community officers, senior enlisted, and civilians who complete advanced training and developed tactical expertise across all IW mission areas – command and control/cyberspace operations, electronic warfare, intelligence operations, information operations, space, and meteorology and oceanography.

The newly qualified WTIs completed a rigorous course that consisted of an initial three-week baseline, followed by seven weeks of core training on current and near-future IW related topics focused through the pillars of battlespace awareness, assured command and control, and integrated fires.

Schroyer wishes to serve on a carrier strike group next and hopes his expertise and experience, paired with his new WTI qualification, will help usher in the next generation of electronic warfare to the units with the highest demand for it.



Schroyer, who helps instruct the Afloat Cryptologic Manager (ACM) and Cryptologic Warfare Officer Basic Course (CWOBC) classes at IWTC Corry Station, says that he is now set up better tailor training to Great Power Competition and will hopefully push others to the WTI qualification.

“Ultimately, it will help with Great Power Competition out in the fleet,” said Schroyer. “The more electronic warfare subject matter experts on flag staffs, the better the information warfare community will be.”

Schroyer also believes having the WTI program will help immensely in developing and standardization of the IW doctrine.

“IWTC Corry Station is the cradle of Navy cryptologic and cyber warfare, and our imperative mission is to cultivate operationally-focused warriors ready to synchronize and drive the innovative advantages of the Navy to stay ahead of competent adversaries,” said Cmdr. Zachary McKeehan, commanding officer of IWTC Corry Station. “The WTI program is the next evolutionary step in advancing the development of fleet-ready, high performing IW professionals by integrating exquisite weaponeering expertise across our curriculum and tactical training environments.”

The information warfare WTI program is open to commissioned officers O2 (but must be promoted to O3 before the completion of level 4) through O4, and chief warrant officers 2 through 4 who have already earned an IW officer designation pin; senior enlisted paygrades E7 through E9 who have earned an enlisted IW specialist designator pin; and GS/GG 11 through 14 civilians assigned to IW commands.

“Through the continued investment and development of a cadre of integrated WTIs, IWTC Corry Station will ensure our IW professionals achieve and maintain a lethal advantage in a rapidly evolving and high-tech profession,” added McKeehan.

IWTC Corry Station is a part of the Center for Information Warfare Training (CIWT). With four schoolhouse commands, a detachment, and training sites throughout the United States and Japan, CIWT trains over 22,000 students every year, delivering trained information warfare professionals to the Navy and joint services. CIWT also offers more than 200 courses for cryptologic technicians, intelligence specialists, information systems technicians, electronics technicians, and officers in the information warfare community.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/381599/iw-officer-onboard-iwtc-corry-station-qualifies-commands-first-iw-warfare-tactics-instructor>

[Return to Index](#)

## Head of Liberty’s Center for Engineering Research & Education Brings Vast Knowledge from Distinguished Military, Civilian Careers

*(Liberty.edu 23 Oct 20)*

Before becoming executive director of Liberty University’s Center for Engineering Research & Education (CERE), Dr. Rich Diddams fought drug lords in South America and terrorists in the Middle East. He served in more than 50 countries throughout a decorated 20-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel before retiring in 2006.

“God was with me,” said Diddams, who received both a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star with a “V” for valor on the same tour of duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 — after being shot by insurgents who invaded his camp and later fending off others who ambushed his convoy along the Tigris River.

In 1997-98, Diddams served as mission commander for the United States’ largest counterdrug operation involving drugs smuggled from South America, simultaneously coordinating and advising national assets overseas involved with extremist hostage rescues. As a counterterrorism senior advisor and analyst in Iraq from 2002-04, he assisted National Security Advisor Dr. Condoleezza Rice in developing bi-weekly Situation Terrorist Activity Reports (STAR) for President George W. Bush that helped prevent further attacks on U.S. soil after 9/11.

Following decades of courageous service on the front lines and working as a government contractor in Afghanistan, Diddams expanded his civilian career, serving as vice president for several large



engineering firms and as Chief of Staff for Halliburton's overseas operations in the Middle East and Central Asia.

In 2010, he settled in Forest, Va., and started his own security and engineering firm. In 2017, he began serving at Liberty, noting that the school's military friendliness and Purple Heart University designation were factors that led him to consider the job.

In his current role overseeing operations at both CERE — the School of Engineering's lab and small-scale testing facility in Forest — and Liberty's Career Services center, Diddams has drawn upon his wealth of industry knowledge.

"I am a vessel being used by God," said Diddams, 58, the son and grandson of missionaries and church planters. "I understand industry perspectives ... I understand the politics. I understand profit motives. I think I augment the faculty academics by providing real-world experience, problem solving, and leadership that adds a level of value to the students' experience."

As he did throughout his military career, Diddams considers himself a facilitator and a mentor providing wisdom and guidance, rather than being a strict drill sergeant shouting orders.

"The most rewarding thing you can do is help somebody achieve something they never thought was possible ... when you see their eyes light up," he said.

Diddams enjoys the opportunity to interact with students and challenge them to overcome obstacles and reach their true potential.

"To me, it's important to focus on the students so that when they graduate, they can get the type of job that God wants them to have that fulfills their mandate to witness and be examples for Christ," he said.

Throughout his military and professional career, he has learned that the best way to make a positive impact in a workplace is by setting an example of excellence through diligence and perseverance, bearing much fruit.

"Our core principles are founded in our Christianity, in our faith in Jesus Christ, but you still have to produce," said Diddams, who received his undergraduate degree in construction engineering at John Brown (Ark.) University and **master's in systems management at the Naval Postgraduate (Calif.) School**. "You still have to make money for the firm that hired you. We have found that the local industries have invested in Liberty because they know that there is a return when it comes to the valuable student that they'll get when they graduate."

CERE rents research space and equipment for several area companies, including Adaptrum, Belvac, Blue Ridge Optics, BWX Technologies, Inc. (BWXT), CyberKong, and NovaTech, which use its Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM), ARCAM 3D Printer and 3D Plastic Printing Lab, Electromagnetic Chamber, and other labs to advance their technologies.

"Our students participate in this research with a creationeering mindset, developing and analyzing materials and structural properties to determine how to redesign systems while being mentored by industry leaders," Diddams said. "This gives them tremendous experience and a leg up on their peers at other academic institutions."

On Oct. 7, Diddams and his staff hosted CEOs from several local engineering firms.

"It was fantastic," he said. "We had our engineering graduate (master's and Ph.D.) students here at CERE providing examples of the research that they are doing. They (CEOs) were very impressed with our students' professionalism, their demeanor, and their understanding of detailed knowledge in applying their research to industry. Personal dynamics are very important, and they said our students were very engaging, looking them in the eye as they made their presentations."

Diddams collaborates with School of Engineering Dean Dr. Mark Horstemeyer, who has been instrumental in establishing the school's graduate programs. Graduate students perform the bulk of the work on current projects at CERE.

"The (graduate) program continues to grow and flourish," Diddams said. "It is growing exponentially because of the caliber of professors we are hiring ... and industries are interested."

The primary focus, he said, is providing an "over the horizon" education that will prepare graduates to meet future industry demands.



“We learn the type of training our students need based on what industry tells us, so we develop a strong rapport with industry,” he said. “We ask, ‘What are the skill sets our engineers need in the future, so that they are marketable, so that they can penetrate into companies and raise the values of Christian engineering ethic worldwide?’”

CERE not only supports the School of Engineering, but also other schools and projects throughout the university, including ventures from the School of Business to test entrepreneurial projects awaiting patents.

“We are ecumenical when it comes to the various academic disciplines we support,” Diddams said. “Liberty University is very friendly toward helping faculty and students obtain patents that will provide respect for its academic programs. It is very entrepreneurial, and it also helps motivate the faculty to continue to do research.”

While Diddams has been mentoring students, he has also been a student himself. He recently completed his Doctorate in Business Administration and Management through Liberty, and during his coursework he worked to create synergy between various departments.

“I work with each of the deans and also our provost to ensure our priorities align doctrinally with what Liberty University’s vision is,” he said. “We recognize that creating *Champions for Christ* means that a champion also has work ethic, they have integrity, they have excellence in service.”

Through Liberty’s Career Services, Diddams collaborates with coaches representing various academic departments to help guide and launch graduates’ professional careers.

“I would like to ensure that we are the nation’s premier workforce pipeline for engineering, business, cybersecurity, etc.,” he said. “We can do that by teaming with customers with a great reputation, such as BWXT, Framatome, NovaTech, and Belvac, and creating the talent pipeline that separates our students from any other university’s graduates.”

“Anyone can be average, and we don’t want to be average,” he added. “The Liberty student who graduates has become more sought-after, has more skill sets than they used to, and will have a greater impact for God’s Kingdom because of that.”

<https://www.liberty.edu/news/2020/10/23/head-of-libertys-center-for-engineering-research-education-brings-vast-knowledge-from-distinguished-military-civilian-careers/>

[Return to Index](#)

