

## **Joint Service Academies Mass Atrocity Prevention Symposium (JSAMAPS)**

The CHGS and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Levine Institute for Holocaust Education, with assistance from the Naval and Air Force Academies, conducted the second annual Joint Service Academies Mass Atrocity Prevention Symposium (JSAMAPS). The event was generously sponsored by the David Berg Foundation on behalf of the service academies and the May Family Foundation on behalf of the Museum. From 27-29 April, 26 West Point cadets representing thirteen different majors traveled to Washington, D.C. and joined 23 cadets and midshipmen from the Air Force, Coast Guard, and Naval Academies. In the course of the two-day event, cadets and midshipmen presented original research on genocide and atrocities, past and present. Taking a wide range of disciplinary approaches—from history and political science to economics and data analysis—cadets and midshipmen presented research on topics ranging from the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust to Cambodia, Rwanda, and current-day Syria.



*Cadets, midshipmen, faculty, and speakers from OSD, USAID, and the State Department at the 2017 Joint Service Academies Mass Atrocity Prevention Symposium, 28 April 2017. Photo Credit: Carl Cox, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*

Like last year, when we first launched the JSAMAPS, the purpose of this student-led, inter-academy program was fourfold. First, the symposium enabled military service academy cadets and midshipmen to have advanced discussions about the causes, contexts and consequences of atrocity, atrocity prevention, as well as post-atrocity justice and reconciliation with experts in the field. Second, it allowed cadets and midshipmen the opportunity to present research they conducted on the Holocaust and other genocides. Third, it encouraged the students, who will be among the first tasked with responding to future atrocities as military officers, to draw lessons from the past and learn about recent studies by peers that could lead to creative means of prevention. Fourth, it provided cadets and midshipmen with an unparalleled leadership and organizational opportunities.

The service academy participants toured the exhibits at the Holocaust Museum, and discussed the museum's history and Federal Government approaches public education about genocide and mass atrocity with museum scholars. They were also joined by experts in the field of genocide and atrocity

prevention from inside and outside the United States government. Former Office of the Secretary of Defense Senior Advisor on Atrocity Prevention and Response Charles Brown spoke to cadets about the evolution of US government thinking about atrocity prevention efforts. An interagency panel of experts from the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and USAID offered realistic assessments and practical advice as to how, as future U.S. officers, the cadets and midshipmen could continue to be engaged with atrocity issues. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) provided a personalized video welcome to the service academy students, in which he expressed admiration for their interest in preventing atrocity, and encouraged the students to allow their passions to guide them throughout their careers.

After hearing from the Center for the Prevention of Genocide's Research Director Lawrence Wocher about on-going and prospective mass atrocity-related projects, teams of cadets from West Point and Air Force unveiled their initial Early Warning mobile application prototypes. These teams, who had been working closely with Microsoft, its mobile application affiliate Xamarin, and the Center for the Prevention of Genocide over the course of the year, developed very different and promising apps. These prototypes, which will be further developed over the next two years, promise to help advance non-classified efforts to predict and prevent future mass atrocities.



JSAMAPS participants wait to question atrocity prevention experts from the Departments of Defense, State, and USAID.

The JSAMAPS, in only its second year, produced great enthusiasm among the cadet and midshipmen who participated. An annual event, the 2018 iteration will occur on 20-21 April 2018.



Air Force Cadets (L-r) Shane Culver, Noelle Noudewo, and Damian Bordenave present their version of the Mass Atrocity Early Warning Mobile Application, which they designed with assistance from Microsoft and Xamarin, arranged by West Point's Center for the Prevention of Genocide