



Oral History Interview

57th President of the United States Naval War College

RADM Shoshana S. Chatfield

Interview with Rear Admiral Shoshana S. Chatfield

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Prof. Hattendorf: Okay, well, just to start off, this is Professor John Hattendorf and Professor Mark Fiorey. We're interviewing Rear Admiral Shoshana Chatfield on her - in an oral history of her period as president of the Naval War College. We'll start off with a first question, and we'll alternate back and forth as to the questions. So, before you had any idea that you might come to the Naval War College, what did you know about the college?

RADM Chatfield: Thanks. I did want to come to the Naval War College. I saw it as a job that was attractive to me and that I felt matched very well with the things that I had invested in for myself. I had gone for a master's degree in the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard specifically because I wanted to study the material that I knew I could get there. And it's a combination of things. It's international relations, which I was attracted to since I was an undergrad. It was statecraft and economics and international law, things that maybe I didn't have a background in, but things that I was interested in.

That year, early in my career at the eight-year mark, changed my life. I had waited until the next time away from Operational Specialty, and I'd taught political science at the Air Force Academy. Having invested in my own education, having gone through some academic progression at Air Force Academy, those were things that I thought might lend me to a career in the future in higher education.

Then, I was also able to work on a doctorate, and just investing in understanding what types of research methodologies were out there that I could apply to the study of leadership, which was something that had really become an interest of mine since departing Harvard. That was, to me, a hobby and an activity that I thought would really carry me forward. So, when I became a flag officer, as I thought what it was that I actually bring to the Navy, I thought higher education, and my focus on that and my investment in that would be a perfect fit for the appropriate use of whatever talents I have to give at this level.

I was interested in coming on board to help in the mission of educating future leaders. What I didn't know as well was the college's mission on how it informs today's decision makers. And that was something that we actually added into our five-year strategy to be very distinct about that part of the college's mission, that we invest a lot of the resources that are here at the Naval War College from our faculty and the interaction of our faculty with our students to inform today's decision makers and to educate future leaders. I do think I might have invested more time

in understanding that side of the mission before I got here, but once I got here, I was really quite keen to make sure that we have that in the overall mission of the college as we stated in the strategic plan and to really highlight that, because so many of our resources are focused on doing that real-time research to give today's decision makers relevant information in a timely fashion to help them solve problems that they are concerned with every day.

Prof. Fiorey: Okay. Good afternoon, Admiral. What were your assignments before coming to the Naval War College? What were the major issues and events that you had to address in those assignments, and were there aspects in any of these positions that particularly helped prepare you for the assignment of being president of the Naval War College?

RADM Chatfield: I did have several assignments that really helped me to prepare for being here at the Naval War College. I talked about the paths, the pathways that I had in higher education, my own formation as a student, the degrees that I got in preparation for coming, but there were some practical tours that I had also.

The first was just giving time and spending time with Admiral Mike Mullen, the CNO. So, the Chief of Naval Operations had hired me to be his deputy executive assistant, and I really got to see a lot of his decision making at that level. He was a man who had surrounded himself with diverse thinkers, and he was always interested in hearing two or more sides of an argument. He was not interested in surrounding himself with people who would just give him feedback that he expected or wanted to hear. He definitely wanted to hear diverse viewpoints before choosing a course of action and going forward, so that was really important to me. He traveled very broadly. He had all kinds of engagements with Congress, with other leaders, and he went from the office of Chief of Naval Operations on to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. By then, he had already sent me off to Afghanistan, which I was grateful for.

I was a volunteer to go to Afghanistan and to perform in the role of provincial reconstruction team commander. That was an assignment that I felt really married well with the theory of international relations of government and of counterinsurgency operations, and the practice of being on the ground and working with the community. That was so important to me, first of all to be part of that effort, and second to have the trust of the Chief of Naval Operations, and then to work on building that trust with two district governors of Farah Province. To take a team, a joint team, of Army, Air Force, and Navy active duty, reservists, and Guards-people and to go forward on a mission on the ground in a combat environment and to train for that at Fort Bragg, to execute that mission, and then to return safely home with all hands. That was a really meaningful experience that I had, and I felt it prepared me very well to understand the blend of practitioner and academic in theory and practice, and so I thought that that prepared me very well for this assignment.

Lastly, just before coming to the Naval War College, I worked on Guam as the Joint Region Marianas Commander, and there were several missions out there on Guam. In fact, I guess as a joke, the team on Guam gave me a handcrafted four-hat hanging board, because I had four hats on Guam, and one of them was to be the senior military official for then-Admiral Harry Harris, and I was the senior military official to represent him to the government of Palau, the government of the Federated States of Micronesia, and to our own U.S. Commonwealth of

Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. Then, to understand how to do that blend of diplomacy and military representation in that arena, and to meet with presidents of countries and to hear from them what their expectations were about how the U.S. was fulfilling its obligations under the Compacts of Free Association, and then to work with them to have a really great training for our U.S. service members and for individuals in Palau and in Federated States of Micronesia, to service those two complementary priorities was very, very rewarding, but also, it was a growth experience for me. I think those were the things that really contributed most to giving me the experiences that I felt enhanced my role here as president of the Naval War College.

Prof. Fiorey: Thank you, ma'am.

Prof. Hattendorf: When and how did you learn that you would leave the Marianas and then come to be president of the War College?

RADM Chatfield: Well, it happened quite suddenly. To be honest, I really did think that I would retire after Marianas, and I had sort of negotiated my retirement date. But in the summer of 2019, I did receive a phone call from the Vice Chief of Naval Operations. The VCNO called and said, "I know you'd expressed interest in being the president of the Naval War College in the past, and the position has become available. Would you like to reconsider your upcoming retirement?"

Prof. Hattendorf: Sure.

RADM Chatfield: "And would you like to actually perform this mission?" And I thought, "Well, let me speak with my husband about this," because we had set a different trajectory. So, he gave me the weekend. I'm grateful for that. It was not the first time in my career that somebody gave me the weekend to think about something, and I was able to call him back after the weekend and say, "Yes, I'll take that position."

Prof. Hattendorf: Okay. Wow.

Prof. Fiorey: Ma'am, what were the circumstances that you stepped into as PNWC? What did you expect from the job? What was different from how it turned out? And in what ways did COVID present any unique challenges for the college, and what was your personal role in meeting those challenges?

RADM Chatfield: Well, that is a lot of steps in that question. I wish it were five separate questions. So, because the change of command had happened quite suddenly, I thought, "Well, let me go in with the experiences that I've had in command, and let me hear from people what is happening," and that's really, I think, an important decision to make. There were some ongoing investigations here at the Naval War College, but they weren't complete, and I knew they wouldn't be complete in any kind of timely fashion.

I'd done a little bit of research on this in the past and read a lot about organizational change, and in fact, I'd studied interim commanders in operational commands in the Navy. But this isn't an operational command. It was certainly not the kind that I had studied, and so those findings and recommendations that I had made would not necessarily be generalizable, and I knew that. So, I

thought, well, I had studied the experience of those commanding officers, and so I thought I would take a page out of that book in my approach and to go in without any preconceived ideas but to be very attentive to understanding what was happening and then starting to rebuild trust and confidence in the organization.

It was important to me not to bring the press into that. I thought there had been too much press already and that my role needed to be deemphasized, not overemphasized. And there had been quite a media bounce about my role as being the first woman coming in. I thought the Naval War College really needed to get back to normal so that people would regain their routine and their trust and confidence in the organization and in me. And so, that was my approach, and I began by making rounds to speak with groups and individuals to hear from them directly. There were some people who felt that their opinions should be elevated over other people's opinions, and I didn't really understand that approach, because I was very deliberate and intentional about giving access to lots of different people in this organization because I valued all of the opinions.

It's a large organization, there are a lot of offices, and very -- it wasn't even a year into my time here that we started to hear about the possibility of a pandemic. So, I arrived, came into work on August 1st, and those weeks are busy. The faculty is coming back, there's a cloister, there's a convocation, the classes are starting up, and getting out and about without doing it in disruptive fashion is a little bit challenging to get to all of the different discrete organizations and really talk to people. I do recall scheduling meetings with Chairs -- not with Chairs but through Chairs -- to get to departments and to really get out and sit with people and hear from them.

So, before the end of that first trimester, I really understood that the organization -- we needed some focus on business practices, to rebuild some of the business practices in a way that has served the United States Navy well over time, to focus on those elements of excellence. The second thing that I noticed was there was a number of investigations, small investigations, about security matters, and it wasn't just three or five, but it was more than ten, and then it was nearly fifteen, and I thought, "Okay, this is an indication of an underlying problem in the attention that's been placed here, the prioritization of figuring out which particular aspects of this organization need a really hard look and the best get-well plan."

I asked for an audit of our security department. This was, I thought, imperative. We run a really high-quality unclassified program here for our residential students. We run unclassified educational programs for our Distance Education students, but we rest on our reputation for wargaming in the classified realm, and I thought, "That's a no-fail for us." So, I asked the Inspector General of the Navy through his audit department to provide resources here for an audit of our security department, and that turned out to be something that revealed a sweeping need for additional attention and resources to be placed in the security department. That was one element that was timely. We were able to start it and to meet regularly with the security team to have some outside expertise to help us in the organizational aspects of that and to get that going, as it turns out, before COVID hit.

So, that was the arrival. That was what I did. I did make a report up to the Vice CNO and the CNO at an interval after my arrival to explain where I thought the organization was and what my priorities were to move forward, and they were happy to have received that report, but there

wasn't a lot of guidance given. The guidance was pretty direct and pretty specific. It was to keep the institution out of the papers and to stay on budget, so those were two things I felt I could do.

Prof. Fiorey: Thank you.

Prof. Hattendorf: In the process of adjusting to the job, did you get any useful advice from others, or how to approach the job from your predecessors, VCNO, CNO, or others?

RADM Chatfield: I mentioned what the advice was from the VCNO at the time. It was, like I said, very short and to the point. We did have -- this was something that Admiral Harley had suggested, and it was to have a Past Presidents' Day, and so we did invite past presidents here, because there was an exciting time in the fall of '19, and I say that with a heavy sigh.

It was an exciting time in the fall of '19, because the Secretary of the Navy, the Undersecretary of the Navy, and the previous VCNO had agreed on a course of action to invest in naval education. And they had gone through the process to hire a Chief Learning Officer. They had elevated the position of Chief Learning Officer. The Secretary of the Navy and the Undersecretary of the Navy had presented themselves at a forum, I think we held it at the Naval Institute Press facility, and we had sat around the table, and we had talked about the changes that were to come in education and the investments that were to be made in education. This had been a result of the Education for Seapower Study, and over the course of that year, we saw that there was a lot of work to be done, that there was a lot of work accomplished, that an education strategy was produced.

However, the Secretary of the Navy and the Undersecretary of the Navy behind him, and then three more acting Secretaries of the Navy came and went, and so by one year later, the commitment to education had changed. COVID had also created a big change in adding expense that hadn't been programmed, and so the money that had been promised had dried up. We went from how do we organize around looking forward to investing in the organization and running fast to achieve the goals that had been set by Secretary Spencer and then Secretary Modly. We actually spent a lot of time defending the position that we'd had previously about what we needed for the bare minimum. And that's a lot to handle and metabolize in the space of a year, to set the course for something that got reset, and then to spend a year really in a defensive position during COVID and coming out of COVID. And then we had a lot of changes to make because of COVID, because the requirement to keep the population here safe, to ensure the wellbeing of this institution and its blended population of community that on any given day might be 1200 or 1300 people circulating on the campus with a lot of crossover between the students, their children at home, their seminars, the electives that they take, the learning commons, all of that would've made this just a hotbed for infection.

So, in March of '20, we went remote, and then we worked on how do we really deliver something by the end of the academic year. And by the end of the academic year, we were keeping our population safe. We understood the risks. We were starting to look at how we would bring back classified research first, and we were able to grant degrees and diplomas. So, a lot to happen in one year. I know that seemed to wander a bit, but it was --

Prof. Hattendorf: It was a tough question, huh?

RADM Chatfield: -- a complex question.

Prof. Hattendorf: Just to carry on from that question, were there other challenges beyond COVID that arose in the spirit to – you wanted to deal with and in your presence?

RADM Chatfield: Yes. Unexpectedly, at the end of the first academic year, after listening to faculty, we had really understood that a survey was in order, just to really get at some questions that had kept coming up over and over and over again. And we wanted to get that survey out so that we would have some results back by the start of the next academic year. But as it turned out, the survey we sent out with a corrupted attachment, and that actually led to the loss of our provost. So, again, organizations really flourish when you have stability and direction at the top, a command team that's working hard together and on the same page, the same approach, and so we had a changeout in the command structure here.

I was fortunate to have a wonderful associate provost in the wings who had really a comprehensive knowledge of the Naval War College from his time as associate provost in as many years of teaching here. So, Professor Jay Hickey, Dr. Jay Hickey, stepped in as the interim provost and remained the interim provost until we hired Dr. Stephen Mariano.

Prof. Fiorey: You're the first PNWC to have an EdD. To what degree do you think it is important for the Navy to assign presidents here who have a Ph.D. or an EdD? In terms of performing a job, is having an EdD preferable to having a Ph.D. in your opinion?

RADM Chatfield: I think each president of the Naval War College has brought something, and I would say -- so, we've had two presidents with terminal degrees that I'm aware of, Admiral Kurth and myself. Admiral Kurth had a Ph.D. in, I believe, Russia Studies, and he also understood higher ed, and he also went to Congress and asked for the authority, finalized the request to Congress, and was able to obtain authority for granting the master's degree. That's important. But, you know, I don't know what he studied as part of his Ph.D. I know what Ph.D.'s comprise of. I have an EdD. That doesn't mean that I studied education, it meant that the degree that I got was through the education department at the University of San Diego, and the degree was on leadership. And I do know what I studied. And I think that that course of study did really prepare me for being the president of the Naval War College. But I think each time is different and what each president would bring would be different.

I brought with me my love for higher ed, my commitment to distance education. I know what it takes to get JPME Phase I by distance. I know what it takes to get a terminal degree by investing heavily in time after work and on weekends to get the core courses done so that I could complete the remainder of the degree by distance education. And so, I think people tend to fall back on their experiences. I loved my residential program at the Harvard Kennedy School. I loved my time in the classroom at University of San Diego, but I couldn't complete all of the courses before moving again and moving several times and holding many jobs by the time that I finished that terminal degree.

So no, I don't think every president of the Naval War College needs to have a terminal degree, but I think when somebody does, then it gives us a chance to have a focus on reaching students where they are and how they learn. And I think that that is very important for us moving forward, because this timeframe may cause students to be less available for education, especially in residence education. We have commitments in the world, and our most competitive officers may be challenged to get time away from their specialties to come to Newport, and so we have to be ready to provide that education where they are and how they're able to learn. Whether that's in a synchronous or asynchronous or hybrid environment, we've got to be ready, and we've got to invest time in our faculty to be very highly effective at delivering that education experience to our students, wherever they may be.

Prof. Fiorey: Thank you, ma'am.

Prof. Hattendorf: Thanks. Just to answer your question, Admiral Kurth's study was in Russian Studies at Harvard.

RADM Chatfield: Yeah.

Prof. Hattendorf: And then you had Kurth and Strasser and Stark who also had Ph.Ds. in international relations before they came here, I think, in that area.

Prof. Hattendorf: You're the first female and first helicopter pilot to serve as president of the Naval War College. In what ways do you think those aspects of your profession and personality have distinguished your presidency, and what is your perspective on being the first female president of the college?

RADM Chatfield: Well, I got the second part of that question. Would you say the first part again?

Prof. Hattendorf: Yeah, it's what ways do you think you're having these characteristics sort of formed your approach to the college or being president?

RADM Chatfield: Hmm. Well, the first thing about being a helicopter pilot is learning to understand the machine and the crew as a system. And so, when you operate a piece of equipment like that, and you study it intensively, that's only one part of being a helicopter pilot. Being able to manage the crew is a second part of being a helicopter pilot. And I'm fortunate to have had a lot of help in understanding crew resource management, which I think is something that I'll take away from my military experience as one of the most valuable experiences. So, being in a crewed aircraft, you're automatically focused on getting the most out of the team. No two pilots are the same, no two crew members are the same, and no two crews are the same.

I think you get a lot of people who think, "I can make this team the exact replica of another team I worked with." That's not possible. Every person and every team is different, and the best investment is on trying to get the most out of every team. So, I understand when people say, "Well, the team composition should look more like this or should look more like that." Well, we have a team composition that we have, and we have the talents and resources that we have, and

so let's focus on understanding how we get the most out of this team and these resources. That's important to me and, if we can, look at the best way to optimize and maximize this team and the resources that we have, and then we can take a look at are we fulfilling our mission that's provided to us from the Chief of Naval Operations in our mission, functions, and tasks. And if we can't, then we've got to be able to identify exactly where we're falling short and exactly what resources would allow us to accomplish that mission in a better way, and that's hard work. That's the organizational work. That's the management work that's important.

Now, we asked about qualifications of presidents of Naval War College previously, but I also think it is very important to have longer tenures of presidents of the Naval War College. So, we do have a way to compensate for a short-tenured president by having a longer-tenured provost. But a longer-tenured president will allow for that examination, the team, and the resources versus the mission, and then to chart a course to attain a different mission or more focus in one area. But in an academic institution with a long-range research agenda, it's challenging to make meaningful change repeatedly in a short-term mindset, and it takes a little while to understand the mission in a war college with many different departments with the talented faculty and staff that we have.

And so, I would say whatever the qualifications of the next or successive presidents of the Naval War College, just like stabilizing the resourcing of the institution, stabilizing the tenure of the president of the Naval War College would be extremely beneficial for the organization. To have some stability in the leadership team to be able to conceive of, generate buy-in, turn the USS Naval War College several degrees or even more, five to ten degrees, to fine tune those mission areas and the outputs, the significant outputs, that are being made when the Navy's mission or the nation needs it. Longer-term tenure, I would choose that over investing and always having a PNWC with a terminal degree.

Prof. Fiorey: As a female leader, have you felt that there are any particularly different issues that needed attention and resolution here at the college in comparison to other positions you have held?

RADM Chatfield: Yes. So, you had asked about earlier how I felt as the first woman to be the president of the Naval War College. I would say honored. Honored to have received the opportunity to lead at this level and to work with the team here, to have met the faculty, to have met the staff, to encounter the students here. It's a tremendous experience. I'll never forget it, to walk the hallways and to see the representations of other presidents who have served here and the things that they had focused their attention on, to sit at the same desk or live in the same house as Admiral Stockdale. It's incredibly inspirational to see the presentations that come back. We had Porter Halyburton here again this year, and to be part of that drumbeat, that rich drumbeat, that captures the Navy experience in the past and envisions and anticipates the future needs of the Navy, it's absolutely incredible.

What's missing, I think, for some people is the new vocabulary, because I do believe that people here are well intentioned, but I think that some people here ignore that there's a vocabulary that's sometimes best to leave in the past. And change is hard for some people. Some people succeeded with the vocabulary they had 30 years ago, and they haven't bothered to update it. I do think that

you have to update your vocabulary every once in a while, especially to acknowledge people, how they are, and to be appropriate in the way that you show respect between two individuals, and so I think that's important.

It's important for me when I meet people not to project on to them the way I was 30 years ago, but to see them as they are, to see who they want to be, to see what they value, and to help them succeed in becoming what they want to become. You know, we're here as educators, and educators are people who facilitate a journey. When I think about how I've been received, which is wonderfully, I was received wonderfully here. It was a community that was very supportive of me, and where there have been challenges, I attribute those first to vocabulary, and every once in a while, to another educational opportunity, because I was fortunate to have been the one selected to be the president of the Naval War College. It's quite a responsibility, and I took it very seriously, and so I'm willing to spend a little extra time and education on the rare occurrences that that's been needed.

Prof. Fiorey: Okay. Thank you.

Prof. Hattendorf: Your husband David played an important role and faced a challenge in becoming the first male spouse among a whole line of female spouses at official functions. I know you can't answer for him, but how would you characterize his contributions during your tenure here?

RADM Chatfield: Yeah. Well, I'm the lucky one. I met David as a Navy captain, and we were married in 2015. And we were already a team by then, a team who had navigated my tour as a captain, working at SHAPE for General Breedlove, and then [in the US military delegation to the NATO military committee] taking on a new challenge to be the deputy military representative to a military representative named [VADM] John Christenson, a former president of the Naval War College. And so, David met Teresa Christenson, and she's a wonderful mentor to him. When we found out we were coming to the Naval War College, he called her, and she said, "Oh, you've got to get involved with this spouses' program." I'm really, really delighted that David had a mentor, that it was somebody who'd been the spouse of a president of the Naval War College, and who really had given herself also to the international program.

So, where David's had the time, it was in supporting the international spouses in what was envisioned to be the lecture series for spouses. So, in '19 and '20, we had that lecture series, Issues in National Security, which was really designed for spouses to understand what their military member was being exposed to in the classroom, to give them an idea of these signature lectures. He had worked very hard to get benefits partners there so that people could interact with benefits partners in the local community, and he kept this long list of contacts, and he would make sure that somebody was there for each of the lectures. He came to all of the lectures and introduced them, and he was very supportive of the spouses of the international program, also of the cuisine nights. I've got to say, we didn't miss many.

So, having David really be attached to the college in that way, to support the Issues in National Security lecture series, to be available for these evening and weekend events that supported the college, I feel very lucky. It's oftentimes difficult to have two people in the household give that

much time to the college. But more importantly, when we went to remote work, and I thought about how it was going to affect families together, everybody at home all on top of each other, competing for bandwidth, I asked David to come on the screen with me when we gave our town halls, which he did for the first series of town halls. I remember Admiral Barrera reaching out to me after, saying, "Thank you, because we are families, and families of our Naval War College community are experiencing this together, and you represented that very well." So, I appreciated that at least one person in the Naval War College understood --

Prof. Hattendorf: Yeah.

RADM Chatfield: -- the message that I was trying to convey, which was, "We're all in it together, and we're all going to get through it together."

Prof. Hattendorf: Yeah. Thank you. Mark?

Prof. Fiorey: Ma'am, what in your opinion are the key relationships and understandings that are most important in NWC to nurture in the future internal to NWC, OpNav, CNO, Congress, DoD?

RADM Chatfield: First relationship is with our students, including our students as alumni, because we're a professional college. We teach at the graduate level, and our students are high-performing members of their service or their institution. So, it's important to me that what we're focusing on as learning outcomes are the things that are going to pay off for our alumni when they go back to their working environment, and education is an investment. It's not going to be everything is immediately directly return on investment, but these things that we are focusing on should have an outcome of improving the way that our alumni make meaning of the world, think through the challenges that they have to think through, get perspectives that they wouldn't necessarily bring in and of themselves, and solve really hard problems with the best possible set of resources that they can.

When I think about that relationship -- and we poll them a lot while they're here. We get feedback from them all the time. They express that they have enough opportunities to provide feedback. But the feedback's important to us, and so getting feedback from them, one, three, five years later, that's important for the college, future students understanding what they're grappling with before they come, right, before we've had a chance to affect the way they think about things. What are they struggling with in the fleet that they want to focus on, and are we in our faculty development or in our recruitment finding faculty that can provide an educational experience to move them along in those areas. That's important. The fleets, whether the fleet is a U.S. Navy fleet or the place where our graduates go, getting feedback from them about the people that come back to them. If they're coming to us and then going back to a staff assignment or a strategic assignment, do they have the background for that work? Were there takeaways meaningful enough to prepare them for that work? Those are relationships that are important.

So, we don't exist in a vacuum, and the relationships with our stakeholders and customers are very important. Of course, we have our governance through the Chief of Naval Operations, through the Secretary of the Navy, through the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Warfighting Development, even through the naval personnel command who are making our

military faculty and our military students available for assignment here. Those are all really, really important relationships.

There has been some change recently, because it was only four years ago that the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Warfighting Development was established, and a terms of reference was established for the N7. That's pretty phenomenal to see a three-star deputy CNO stood up on the OpNav staff. And then to watch that system of governance and requirements develop in support of our mission. That's been really fascinating to watch, a very important relationship to maintain.

Prof. Fiorey: Okay.

Prof. Hattendorf: As president, what were the engagements and events that you felt you were most personally interested in and invested in during your term here?

RADM Chatfield: First and foremost, getting a selfie with every international military student and embed who made a contribution to a cuisine night. That was a singular goal that I had, so I've got to have 200 photos on my iPhone of families who put on their national attire and developed their national cuisine and brought it in giant pans to share a moment of their national pride with us, because it's an honor to host them here at the Naval War College.

This time that we're in, in the global security environment where things are shifting loudly, moderately, and sometimes actually quite profoundly -- thinking about the investment of an international partner Navy to send one of their highest-performing officers for a year of education at the United States Naval War College is pretty phenomenal. And that's our obligation to face that opportunity with a great deal of respect and to be honored to be able to receive those international military students, to bring them in to our classrooms to interact with U.S. students, to gain a perspective about how they live in this world, because we're all in it together. We're going to have global security through a system that reinforces itself or a system that disrupts itself. So, I have been -- my approach here has been to focus on the international programs and in honoring those international military students.

I think secondly, I've really tried to place a focus on coming out of COVID with more tools than we went into COVID with. I'm generally wired to see opportunity, and I'm prepared to face challenges, but I'm wired to see opportunity, and COVID gave us a wonderful opportunity to double down for future success, because we have great educators here. And now we have great educators here with even more resources, methods, modes, and skills to connect with and reach students in a different way.

Those are two things. I think if you restate the question, I might be able to come up with one or a few more, but I think you asked where my area of focus has been or --

Prof. Hattendorf: Particular events or --

RADM Chatfield: Particular events.

Prof. Hattendorf: Yeah, events or engagements that the college is involved in, or activities that meant the most personally to you --

RADM Chatfield: Yeah.

Prof. Hattendorf: -- is really international.

RADM Chatfield: Yeah, international military students.

Prof. Hattendorf: And wargaming would be the other one?

RADM Chatfield: Yeah. But let me go back to these coming out of COVID, meeting the opportunity. I think you've probably heard me talk about in the past the fact that we have the ability for broader reach and greater networks and connections because of COVID. We could've come out of COVID with an idea that we come right back to in-person conferencing, and I've really placed a focus on always having a hybrid option. We should be focused on delivering our conferences to an in-person and to a remote audience. The reach, the broader reach, and the possibility for networks to people who we would not normally come into contact with, who might not understand the role of the Navy as a maritime nation, who might be interested in joining our team but didn't understand the vocabulary that we have about being a war college. That is so much more available to us now, and when we take advantage of it as we did for our -- it was a Stockton conference, and they said, "Oh, no, we've just got to have it in person. We know we'll have 200 individuals, and we're going to do it in person," and the president of the Naval War College said, "Well, we're going to do it hybrid," and they said, "Well, we'll lose the individuals that were going to come." They lost 20, who shifted to remote, but it saved several presenters who suddenly couldn't travel because of sickness, or family sickness, or some other reason, and they got 200 more attendees virtually. So, that conference accommodated more than 400 people which would not have had access to that rich body of discussion and access to that information because we did it in a hybrid way on purpose. So, events like that are very dear to me, because it's an example of what we can do when we think differently and when we focus on developing new skills and implementing them with intention.

So, back to events and things that happened during my time here: We had three -- four Deputy Chiefs of Naval Operations N7 for warfighting development, Admirals Stu Munsch, Lisa Franchetti, Jay Bynum, and Jeff Hughes. That's four. And the N7, they assessed that we were not being coordinated and intentional with our approach to research and analytics, and they developed a series of pillars that would each have a lead and then would coordinate the Navy analytic enterprise in a way that hadn't been done before. So, we took on the role of pillar lead for wargaming, and that's been a focus to understand not just the wargaming that's done here at the Naval War College but naval wargaming and how that fits in with other aspects of the analytic enterprise. That's something that I am proud of, because it was slow to get off the ground, so we volunteered to go first. We had an online summit, we invited all the players, we produced a report, we made a proposal for governance, and it's worked out very well for us, because we were not getting high-level prioritization for sponsors of war games when they would come to the Naval War College directly and ask for wargaming.

We've increased the schedule and timeline for war games, and we've prioritized the Navy's needs for war games that we run, and that was all available to us because we were able to coordinate members of the Navy wargaming family, we were able to propose and get governance, and we were able to receive three and four star prioritization for the games that were being requested. We also reintroduced a Title 10 war game for the CNO for the purpose of looking at the future Navy. Those were all things that had been done in the past but had fallen away, because the governance structure had changed because we'd had the Education for Seapower apparatus start up and then fail.

So, I do think that we've moved wargaming along in a period of time where wargaming had reached a peak in '19 in the globally integrated war game, which was a war game at the highest levels of classification with a very, very large audience, and then we were able to take that and move forward as the pillar lead and regain some structure in how we receive requests for, get prioritization for, and set the schedule for war gaming, so I am proud about that. And then we've had a wonderful, wonderful team in the wargaming department that has worked very hard on changing the organizational structure in wargaming to be ready for some of this change in the analytic enterprise. So, I think I'll just stop there on that question.

Prof. Hattendorf: And I'll maybe just ask one question to follow up on. You mentioned that an earlier plan for wider education of the Navy had failed.

RADM Chatfield: Mm-hmm.

Prof. Hattendorf: Is there a new approach coming up now, or where are we with that?

RADM Chatfield: Yeah, and "failed" might be too strong a word, because certainly certain elements of it were suspended, so the strategy was issued but not activated, and the Education for Seapower study itself was taken down from the repository of strategic documents for the Navy. Secretary Del Toro, when he came in, he appointed an education taskforce, and he asked them to validate it and advise him on other findings that they would make in a review of the Navy's education enterprise. I hesitate to use the words "Naval University System". The Naval University System was proposed in the Education for Seapower study. The title is carried forward, but it's not defined well.

So, we do use the term Naval University System, but the elements of the system are not identified yet, and so organizationally, it doesn't really exist. The Naval Education Enterprise does exist. The Naval University System, I think, is more aspirational and needs to have some structure and connective tissue applied to it to really be meaningful in terms that higher education would recognize.

Secretary Del Toro has done a lot for naval education as the Secretary of the Navy by placing his focus on it, by stabilizing the budget, by providing specific short-term and medium-term steps so far to be able to move the institutions of higher education or flagship institutions along awaiting a new strategy, which we expect to come out, I would say, this month, next month. We are close to an issuance of a naval education strategy again. So, there was one, I believe, in '20, and then that one was not implemented. This one, I suspect, will be implemented, and I really hope that if

the Naval University System concept survives that we actually agree to what the structure will consist of and what kinds of things we might be able to do together as a system of education institutions that might give us some efficiencies, might give us better access to data to understand our outcomes better. Those are the kinds of things that I hope that a Naval University System would do for the Navy.

Prof. Hattendorf: Thank you.

Prof. Fiorey: Admiral, toward the end of your term, you emphasized reorganization within the college. What led you to that conclusion, and what are your -- what's your primary emphasis on that?

RADM Chatfield: So, oftentimes in just looking at the organization, when you talk to people that are doing the work, and they're frustrated, that frustration normally comes from a process that has a barrier that they can't manage themselves or some workaround that keeps having to be done over and over and over again. And so, when I look at the things that are frustrating people, I noticed that there are gaps in accountability for servicing the population and servicing the outcome. My hope in adding these associate provost positions that we'll have accountability for the outcome and better support for the faculty and staff that are depending on resourcing and process to achieve outcomes. That is what we're hoping to accomplish with organizational restructuring.

Oftentimes also in organizations, you see a restructure happen to avoid looking at a problem. I think we've identified where our problems are. What we lack is that linkage, that accountability to the outcome and to servicing the population that's doing the work by channeling the resources, and that's what we're hoping to get after. It also helps us to access some of the best practices in higher education and some of our other Navy institutions of higher education who are organized a little bit differently than we have been, but to be able to achieve those outcomes with an accountable person driving each one.

Prof. Hattendorf: In hindsight, did you face challenges that you wish you had known about it in advance to be well prepared for? Obviously, COVID was one of those, but were there others?

RADM Chatfield: That's an interesting question. So, we had a great team. We had a great team that was able to manage a lot of uncertainty, and I do see an awful lot, not here at the Naval War College, but there's a lot of reviews of what happened, and I try to remember really with detail about what was happening and how it was manifesting itself at the time, what did we know.

COVID is probably the most obvious one. We knew that we were very close to one of the centers of pandemic activity that was the worst in the nation, New York City, and we saw New England infection rates climb above the national average, and we saw this corner of the United States heavily impacted. So, I do feel like we did the best we could, and I feel like through our threat working group, we had good communication during that time. We had town halls. I think the group that was developed to consider the threat, the mitigating actions, how we would interpret the Navy's guidance, because it was volumes and volumes of instructions and regulation and requests for waivers or deviations from regulation. It was workload intensive. So, here I sit

almost four years from arrival wishing that I had every instruction up to date at the Naval War College for turnover to my friend, Admiral Pete Garvin. I don't have it.

I did watch our military personnel department process thousands of waivers for travel for each person who arrived at and left the Naval War College. The workload was extraordinary. So, there are things that have delayed work that I would have loved to do instead to really get after the organizational and management processes that underpin this institution. We would've made progress in that area quicker without COVID, but we're on a good track, we're in a good place, and we did what we had to do. We did our best.

Prof. Fiorey: Another in-hindsight question: Are there any experiences, qualifications, or training that you wish you had had before taking the job as PNWC?

RADM Chatfield: Hmm. Well, I came in as a graduate of the Distance Education program. I can only envy my colleague and friend Vice-Admiral Jeff Hughes, because he was a graduate of the Distance Education program and the residential program, and he likes to put on a big smile and say -- and he was off cycle, so he got the summer in Newport. So, yeah, I wish I had that.

Prof. Fiorey: I had a couple students off cycle that say the same thing. They're very lucky and fortunate to be off cycle.

Prof. Hattendorf: What do you think is important for future presidents of the War College to take away from your own experience here in your term?

RADM Chatfield: Well, the first is to understand the academic calendar, because our faculty and staff have been incredibly responsive. They were responsive in '19, because we had a change of command when we weren't expecting one, and then they were responsive in '20 to shift to fully remote processes and instruction, and then in '21, there was a shift back. That's a lot of energy just in terms of managing daily work, learning new processes, making reports, just the day-to-day administration of being on staff or faculty here.

Now it's the end of '23, and the calendar's already set for AY '23-'24. That's quite a significant dedication of resources to a program that is set. So, the discretionary is really a small amount of capacity that remains, and that means to get ahead of AY '24-'25. Right? That's the thing that I think, if a person hasn't spent a lot of time in higher ed, then that academic year calendar which commits resources in the residential and distance education programs consumes a lot of the available capacity of the institution. What's available to shift to be agile, to be responsive, isn't in that big chunk, it's in what remains after that kind of gets fenced off. I think we can get better at looking at what the Navy needs, testing those things in the electives program, doing a curriculum review, incorporating new technologies, getting the right qualified support for faculty to make changes when changes are necessary. That's something that if you haven't been in higher ed, you might not naturally understand when that happens, and the institution can help out by getting ahead of that with when these decisions have to be made.

So, when the institution's on autopilot, the decision comes up, and if you've been here for a while, of course it came up last year around this time. It comes up this year around this time. But

if you're new, the implications of that decision and the timeline seem to be random, and I think that's where longer tenures for presidents of Naval War College can really give an advantage organizationally to the leadership team.

Prof. Fiorey: Final question: In what ways do you think that your experiences prepared you for your next assignment?

RADM Chatfield: Yeah. Well, again, I'll channel John Christenson, who was a deputy mil rep and served as mil rep. As an undergraduate at Boston University, I studied French language and literature and international relations with a focus on Western Europe. I served as the deputy mil rep. I've spent some time looking at public administration, international relations, political science, and then this big war college. So, I feel like academically and in practice, I have unique experiences that have prepared me very well to go off to be the military representative to the military committee.

General CQ Brown was recently nominated to be the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I did meet him when he was PACAF when I was out on Guam, and so I've been able to get to know him, minimally, but to have a professional relationship with him. If confirmed, he will be my boss, and I'm looking forward to that.

Prof. Fiorey: Thank you!

Prof. Hattendorf: Thank you, ma'am. If you have the time, I have two short questions. One is we're unusual here at the War College in having a collection of portraits of past presidents, and you recently had your portrait painted. Could you tell us about the portrait, and your relationship with the artist, and what sort of symbolism or special [inaudible]?

RADM Chatfield: Yeah. Well, again, an incredible honor for me was to have the Naval War College Foundation offer a gift to the Naval War College, which would be my portrait to hang in the gallery. Working with Professor Dave Kohnen, he contacted the provider and was able to get a portfolio of artists and their samples, and so I sat with Professor Kohnen, and he talked to me about his experience with previous PNWCs and the kinds of things that he understood from having some experience in art history and museums.

So, I went home, and I looked through that, and it was very important for me to be portrayed as I am and not to be -- I didn't want it to look like a picture, and I didn't want it to look artificial. I wanted it to really represent who I am, and so I wanted an artist that would capture [audio stops briefly 1:20:04] ...

...[summary of audio missing from recording from the memory of Shoshana Chatfield] my persona including flaws too. I was quite attracted to the work of one of the artists in the portfolio, Jie Ruan. I had originally intended to be in my summer whites instead of the choker whites, because I am far more comfortable in that uniform and because I had spent so much of my career on the west coast and Guam where that uniform is most often worn. Also, because the choker white uniform was not in a woman's sea bag until quite recently. Picking what objects to place in the portrait is also a heavy decision, I mean the portrait is going to endure for a long time. So, I

felt lucky to have the advice of the artist on this because I had wanted somehow to represent the shift to remote work that we did during COVID, but in practice, having an iPad screen in my hand or a screen behind me just wasn't presenting a very good visual for the long term—it wasn't evident.

The artist and I were both excited about my second idea, which was to highlight the impact of our college's international programs. I wanted to be surrounded by the flags of our international students with as much movement as possible in the portrait. These relationships are dynamic and important! What's most obvious now, but might not be remembered later is the symbolism of the Ukrainian Flag, representing our college's loss of Ukrainian students in AY 22-23 in both the Naval Command College and the Naval Staff College due to Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Ukraine has been an important part of our Naval War College community and we look forward to welcoming them back. You also see representation of flags from South American countries and Japan where David and I visited for a Regional Alumni events or had engagements by invitation. And since I previously served at SHAPE and in the US Delegation to the NATO Military Committee in Mons and Brussels, Belgium and was nominated to serve there again, Belgium anchors the piece in the background. As you look around our college you see the focus on partnerships everywhere, but we don't fly the flags of intergovernmental organizations or alliances. I believe in NATO, served in the International Security Assistance mission in Afghanistan, and during the time I was at Naval War College, the US reiterated our commitment to...

[audio resumes]

the NATO Alliance, and the NATO Alliance stated that the door is still open. And so, on my left side, we'll see the flag of Sweden, and the flag of Sweden actually in that portrait will signify that the door to NATO is open. So, that was what we came up with as a concept for the portrait, and that is what is in the portrait.

I was able to take a journey to [the artist's studio in] Montgomery, Alabama, and see that, and it was awesome to stand in the studio surrounded by these great other portraits and then to see the portrait --

Prof. Fiorey: Mm-hmm.

RADM Chatfield: -- he goes by Jay -- that Jay had actually painted of me. While we were there, my husband and I also went to see two just extraordinary museums that are new museums that are about peace and justice [the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice]. So, it was a great trip. We met the artist, and we also accessed a portion of the American story that is so important to truly understand and pay attention to.

Prof. Hattendorf: Thank you. The very final thing: Is there anything these questions didn't bring out or something more that you'd like to add on the record?

RADM Chatfield: Yeah, for the record. Naval War College is an extraordinary place. The mission here is as relevant today as it was the day that it got attached to the college, a place of

original research on all facets of war, statesmanship related to war, and the prevention of war. [“a place of original research on all questions relating to war and to statesmanship connected with war, or the prevention of war.” RADM Stephen B. Luce] We could really get behind that, right? And we've got a wonderful, vibrant community of people dedicated to that and students that are waiting to get in, competing to get in. It's really been an honor to be at the helm of this organization, to lead it through a challenging time and to look forward to always coming back here. The college came into my home. In '19, I came to the college, but in '20, the college came into my home. So, I'll always come home.

Prof. Fiorey: I've just got a quick closeout --

Prof. Hattendorf: Sure.

Prof. Fiorey: -- real quick. You're standing in front of your picture window looking at your front yard, Dewey Field and the Narragansett Bay. What comes to your mind?

RADM Chatfield: What comes to mind is that it's the second-best view I've ever had.

Prof. Hattendorf: Yeah.

RADM Chatfield: Which is a nod to Get Smart. I don't know if you're a fan.

Prof. Hattendorf: Oh, yeah.

RADM Chatfield: "It's the second-best view I've ever had," something Max would've said. But best view was off of the Nimitz House right out of that picture window --

Prof. Hattendorf: Mm-hmm.

RADM Chatfield: -- looking out on to the Philippine Sea to see where the Marines came ashore and came up, and then just to see those tropical sunsets every night. So, second-best view I've ever had, and this weekend has been fantastic, because, you know, they light the bridge up --

Prof. Fiorey: Yeah.

Prof. Hattendorf: Mm-hmm.

RADM Chatfield: -- red, white, and blue for Memorial Day, and so my husband and I were able to enjoy that, to think about what it was when Constitution was where they were putting students who were coming to Coasters Harbor Island to participate in training activities, to be right next door to Founders Hall, to think about how long this institution has stood as where people come to think through hard problems, to be able to go on to our own digital commons and to hear Nimitz talk about coming back here, to hear him address the students here and to say how important his distance education was, to say how the leaders for World War II had really thought through these challenges to have used wargaming to be exposed to every possible thing that could've happened, with the exception of the kamikaze, to have been here for just a smidgen of the time that the

College had been, pretty extraordinary. So, I guess it's not just the viewpoint out, it's kind of the gravity of the organization and what it means to the Navy, what it will continue to mean to the Navy, so I'm grateful to have been part of it.

Prof. Fiorey: Thank you, Admiral.

Prof. Hattendorf: Thank you, and thank you for your service here, and thank you for the opportunity to do this interview.

RADM Chatfield: Oh, thank you.

[End]