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Kuznetsov Naval Academy Game '13

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Report on the 2013 NWC-KNA War Game

Conducted at the United States Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island

16-20 September 2013



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2013 NWC-KNA War Game

Game Report

Executive Summary

The 2013 NWC-KNA War Game was conducted at the Naval War College in Newport, RI from 16-20 September, 2013. The game was the fifth in the series of annual war games that had been conceived during talks between the President of the Naval War College and Chief of the Kuznetsov Naval Academy in 2005. The war game series began in 2006, continued in 2007, but was interrupted until 2011, when the game series returned to the Newport, RI location. Following a successful 2011 restart of the war game series, the Kuznetsov Naval Academy hosted the 2012 game at its campus located in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

The war games were originally envisioned as one element in a comprehensive program of college-to-college engagement activities between NWC and KNA. Since the resumption of the war game series in 2011 the NWC-KNA relationship has continued to grow and prosper. The objectives of the 2013 war game were to:

- Promote awareness, open dialogue and mutual trust through the development of a common understanding of planning and conducting maritime operations.
- Advance each college's understanding of operational level planning as part of a combined staff in direct support of bilateral naval operations.
- Explore opportunities to conduct follow-on maritime security cooperation events in other operational areas.

The war game itself was an operational planning exercise. Six senior US and Russian naval officers were assigned positions within a planning organization formed to assist a combined US-Russian maritime task force directed to conduct operations to protect strategic sea lines of communications and gas and oil platform infrastructure from regional terrorist threats. The game took place in a fictional geographic and political setting.

Players were assigned to one of six functional cells: Command cell, Operations cell, Intelligence cell, Legal cell, Logistics cell, and Future Plans cell. Cells conducted operational planning tasks which included identifying specified and implied tasks, mission analysis, command and control development, risk analysis, and preparing a Course of Action (COA) brief and sketch.

While the operational planning exercise was the primary focus, significant effort was devoted to activities designed to enhance the relationship between the two institutions. Key engagement activities included professional development and cultural engagement activities. KNA participants were hosted by the NWC President aboard his Admiral's barge for a tour of Newport's historical harbor followed by dinner at his Flag Quarters. KNA members were also given private tours of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, the USS Constitution in Boston Harbor and a guided tour of Bunker Hill.

The three primary war game objectives were achieved as the operational planning exercise was completed as scheduled, initial plans for the 2014 game were discussed, and fruitful discussions concerning possible future faculty exchanges were held.

2013 NWC-KNA War Game

Game Report

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1. Introduction

- Title: NWC-KNA War Game 2013
- Game Execution Dates: 16-20 September 2013 at the United States Naval War College in Newport, RI
- Sponsors: President, Naval War College and Chief, Kuznetsov Naval Academy.
- Game Director: CDR Kevin Gillam, USN. The Game Director provided overall direction for the war game; ensured all NWC-KNA War Game 2013 objectives were met, and resolved matters on game policy and design.
- Game Team Members:
 - Game Designer: LCDR Larry Johnson, USN
 - Game Developer: CDR Jeff Uhde, USN and LCDR Nick Miller, USN (Assistant)
 - Logistics/Administrative Lead: CDR Keith Powell, USN
- Intelligence Lead: Mr. Gary McKenna, ONI-DET (Newport). The Intelligence Lead was a key member of the Game Design Team and developed and presented the base scenario, the Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Environment brief and the daily situation updates.
- Support Team Leader/Enlisted Coordinator. QM3 Springer and OS2 Williams, USN. Assisted the Game Director in planning, coordinating and directing the necessary support for the game.
- Legal Support: LtCol Tim Kelly, USMC, NWC International Law Department (ILD). ILD provided legal and Rules of Engagement (ROE) support throughout game design, preparation and execution process.

2. Participants

The following personnel participated in the war game:

- Command Cell
 - US: Colonel Michael Saleh (Cell Lead)
 - Russia: Captain First Rank Alexander Prokaev
 - Facilitator: Captain William Lawler
- Operations Cell
 - Russia: Captain First Rank Mikhail Voloskov (Cell Lead)
 - US: Captain Edward D'Angelo
 - Facilitator: Mr. Doug Ducharme
- Future Plans Cell
 - US: Captain Mathew Ovios (Cell Lead)
 - Russia: Colonel Andrey Maliy
 - Facilitator: Mr. Jeffrey Landsman
- Logistics Cell
 - Russia: Colonel Andrey Brekhov (Cell Lead)
 - US: Lieutenant Commander Onofrio Margioni

- Facilitator: Lieutenant Commander Lawrence Johnson
- Intelligence Cell
 - Russia: Captain First Rank Oleg Tambovtsev (Cell Lead)
 - US: Commander Edwardo Recavarren
 - Facilitator: Mr. Gary McKenna
- Legal/ROE Cell
 - US: Captain Gordon Modarai (Cell Lead)
 - Russia: Captain First Rank German Sudakov
 - Facilitator: Major Timothy Kelly

**Note: Each cell also had an interpreter assigned for the planning sessions. In addition to translating during planning discussions, the interpreters translated numerous game products both prior to and during gameplay.*

3. Purpose

The 2013 NWC-KNA War Game was the fifth event in a series of college-to-college contact events agreed to during talks that occurred between the President of the U.S. Naval War College and the Chief of Kuznetsov Naval Academy in 2004 and 2005.

At the conclusion of the second round of talks, on 19 October 2005, then President of NWC, RADM Jacob L. Shuford, and then Chief of KNA, VADM Yuriy N. Sysuev, signed a Memorandum of Talks agreement which envisioned a growing relationship between the two institutions which would include combined war games, faculty and student exchanges, and establishment of combined working groups.

In accordance with the talks, NWC hosted the inaugural NWC-KNA War Game at Newport in August, 2006. A second game was conducted at KNA in November, 2007. In the midst of planning the third game in 2008 the series was interrupted and efforts to resume the series were unsuccessful until 2011. The 2013 NWC-KNA war game held in Newport, RI built on the successes of the two most recent editions of the war game completed in 2011 and 2012.

4. Game Objectives

The NWC-KNA 2013 War Game carried with it the following standing objectives from the previously NWC hosted game:

- Promote awareness, open dialogue and mutual trust through the development of a common understanding of planning and conducting maritime operations.
- Advance each college's level of understanding of operational level planning as part of a combined staff in direct support of bilateral naval operations.
- Explore opportunities to conduct follow-on maritime security cooperation events in other operational areas.

The operational planning exercise objectives for the 2013 game were to assign players to positions in a US-Russian combined planning organization. The purpose of the planning team was to assist a US-Russian naval task force assigned to defend strategic sea lines of

communications and gas and oil platform infrastructure from regional terrorist threats in a fictional geographic and political setting.

While the war game remained the primary focus of the September 2013 edition of the game, activities designed to build the relationship between the two institutions, a priority since the return of the game in 2011, continued to be a high priority.

5. Game Design

To meet the game objectives, game activities were developed in three broad areas that corresponded to the game objectives: enhancing the college-to-college relationship; expanding the college-to-college relationship; and the war game itself.

A total of fifty two hours were scheduled during the game week (Monday-Saturday). These hours were allocated by objective as follows:

1. Enhancing the NWC-KNA relationship: **18.5 hours (35%)**
 - PNWC barge run (2 hours)
 - Hosted lunches (5.5 hours)
 - Cultural Tours (8 hours)
 - Hosted Dinner at PNWC flag quarters (3 hours)
2. Expanding the NWC-KNA relationship: **5.5 hours (11%)**
 - PME briefs and tours/discussions (2 hours)
 - NWC tour of facilities/discussions (1.5 hours)
 - Discuss expansion of college-to-college engagement with Faculty exchanges (1 hour)
 - Preparatory planning for the 2014 war game (1 hour)
3. War Game: **28 hours (54%)**
 - Day 1 Briefs (6.5 hours)
 - JIPOE, Situation Updates, Commander's Guidance (4 hours)
 - Planning Sessions (12 hours)
 - Planning out-briefs to commanders (2 hours)
 - Media Brief and interviews (2.5 hours)
 - Plenary Session operational planning discussion (1 hour)

Despite significant effort being devoted to enhancing and expanding the college-to-college relationship, the primary activity of the week remained the war game.

As in the earlier games of the series, the 2013 war game was a planning exercise intended to advance players' understanding of operational planning.

- **Game Design Features**

- The game was a one-and-a-half sided game (Blue Cell and White Cell)
 - Blue Cell was organized as a combined USN-RFN Maritime Planning Group (MPG)
 - White Cell portrayed higher and lower echelon commands, Red forces, and Civilians
- The game utilized a fictitious geography and scenario oriented around tropical island nations and a nearby international strait in which scenario events occurred.
- The game explored several important operational issues, including Rules of Engagement (ROE), Command and Control (C2), Logistics (LOG), and Strategic Communications. These topics were discussed and agreed upon during the planning conferences that preceded the game.
- **Game Play**
 - Planning was conducted at the operational level. The control group represented subordinate and higher commands. Higher authority made decisions above the player level, and facilitators addressed issues at the tactical level.
 - The game was conducted in four main planning sessions termed as “moves.” Each move was preceded by a scenario brief or update presented by the Control Cell. Following the update the Maritime Planning Group Commander and Deputy Commander presented their Commander’s Guidance to the players. After receiving the Commanders’ Guidance, the Cells synchronized efforts, conducted risk analysis, developed Command and Control architectures, developed ROE and generated COAs for each functional area.
 - Planning activities conducted during each move were tailored to the scenario phase being portrayed in that move. The players had a limited planning period of approximately 2 hours to develop their deliverables.
 - At the end of each planning period, players presented their plan to the Command Group for review and discussion.
 - Pre-constructed move templates, a map of the geographic area, and a “Synchronization Matrix” (for moves One and Four) for each of the five functional cells were provided on a web-based planning tool (Web Tool) for each move. The players in each cell submitted required inputs into the move templates as well as producing a functional course of action sketch for each move. The player inputs submitted into the Web Tool for each move automatically generated a presentation from which each cell briefed their functional plans to the Commander for feedback and final confirmation.

6. Game Results

The 2013 NWC-KNA war game was successful in advancing the player’s understanding of operational level planning, establishing trust and strengthening the relationship between the two institutions.

Each side's willingness to engage in a collaborative manner to work through the U.S. planning process and develop suitable, feasible and acceptable COAs and functional support plans contributed to the success of the game. Some specific insights and observations from the game follow:

- While the 2013 NWC-KNA War game used the USN Planning Process to enable game play, in the real world, there would be two separate processes which would add friction. In an actual operation a blended planning process combining elements of US and RFN processes might be more effective and should be considered for future game design.
- ROE and other legal issues require detailed planning and discussion. Russian operational planners have limited experience with ROE development and other legal issues.
- Planning is commander driven. Early issuance of initial commander's intent with a defined end state helped players maintain focus throughout the game despite changes to the scenario situation.
- Logistics considerations must be incorporated into planning at every level and phase.
- Planners must understand that approval authority for various courses of action would have to go up two separate military and national channels when new missions arise.
- In a real-world combined operation, command and control (C2) issues would be complex. Issues to be addressed include communications between Russian and U.S. units; possible C2 options for combined task forces, task groups and task elements; the political implications that arise from different command structures; and how to address the seniority of platform commanders.

7. Next Event / 2014 War Game

The 2014 NWC-KNA War Game is tentatively scheduled for November 2014 at KNA in St. Petersburg, Russia. The game will be preceded by an Initial Planning Conference tentatively scheduled in Naples, Italy in April, 2014 and a Final Planning Conference in Newport, RI in late June, 2014.