

CIF Structure and Activities

Each annual CIF program includes the following phases:

- Curriculum development: CNS experts work with experienced high school teachers to create objectives, benchmarks, and suggested learning activities
- Teacher preparation: CNS researchers and teachers present the curriculum to participating high school teachers at a workshop held at CNS in Monterey
- Student research: Students conduct directed research, design original projects, and submit their projects for evaluation
- Final projects: Students from selected schools present their original research and creative works at an international student-teacher conference
- Program evaluation: CIF attaches great importance to program evaluation and has a formal outside review process in place for further improvement of the program.



Students from Zelenogorsk, Russia presenting at the CIF Spring 2012 Conference held as a side event to the NPT PrepCom in Vienna, Austria.

Santa Catalina School discusses cyber terrorism and nuclear security.



Students from Tsinghua High School in Beijing, China present in Monterey, CA.



Students from Novouralsk, Russia discuss nuclear power plant accidents and threats of nuclear terrorism.

For More Information, Contact:

Masako Toki, CNS Education Project Manager

Phone: +1-831-647-3580

Fax: +1-831-647-3519

Email: masako.toki@miis.edu

Project website: <http://sites.miis.edu/criticalissuesforum/>

This year's CIF Program is supported by grants from the US-Japan Foundation and Chapman Foundation.

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The Critical Issues Forum

A High School Outreach Program to Promote Nonproliferation and Disarmament Education

<http://blogs.miis.edu/criticalissuesforum>



Spring 2012 Conference Participants at the Vienna International Centre

James Martin Center
for
Nonproliferation Studies



Monterey Institute
of International Studies
A Graduate School of Middlebury College

Program Overview



Participants from Franklin High School, Elk Grove, CA with Ronald Sturm, Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Masako Toki, CNS Education Project Manager.

The Critical Issues Forum (CIF) is a unique project-based education program designed to promote awareness of nonproliferation and international security issues and the development of critical thinking skills among high school students in the United States, Japan, Russia and other countries. Coordinated by the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), CIF provides students with instruction and guidance in research methodologies, including brainstorming, content evaluation, information synthesis, and writing to help them develop critical thinking skills and promote cooperation among participating schools. It has proven effective in empowering young people, including many at-risk students, to develop informed opinions and think critically about Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), terrorism, and other crucial international issues of the 21st century.

History of CIF

The 2002 United Nations Study concluded that the proliferation and potential use of WMD poses increasingly serious security threats. However, most high school students remain poorly informed on these topics. The UN study endorsed the CNS approach to nonproliferation education: “Teach students



Participants from the US, Japan and Russia at the spring 2013 conference in Monterey, CA.

how to think, not *what* to think.” In response to this need, CNS developed the Critical Issues Forum (CIF), a unique international program to enrich high school education. Since CNS began the CIF program in 1997, hundreds of high school students around the world have been involved. Starting with high schools in the United States and Russia, students from China, and Japan have joined the project. The spring 2012 CIF conference was held in Vienna, Austria, as a side event of the NPT PrepCom. In 2013, CIF engaged Japanese high schools from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Drawing upon the knowledge and experience of technical and policy experts at CNS and experienced high school educators, the CIF develops curricula, methods, and resources for students to conduct directed research on topics related to WMD destruction (nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons) and ballistic missiles.

Each academic year, CIF selects a topic taking into consideration current global nonproliferation-related events. Recent project topics include:

- 2007-2008: Nuclear Renaissance: Benefits and Risks
- 2008-2009: Nuclear Disarmament: Challenges, Opportunities and Next Steps.
- 2009-2010: Nuclear Nonproliferation: Global Opportunities and Regional Challenges
- 2010-2011: Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East
- 2011-2012: Nuclear Safety and Security
- 2012-2013: Toward a World without Nuclear Weapons; Progress, Prospects, and Challenges



CNS Director, Dr. William Potter welcomes participants (middle), followed by IAEA Director General, Yukiya Amano's keynote address sharing his enthusiasm for nonproliferation education (left). CNS Education Project Manager, Masako Toki (right).



Students from Hiroshima present their schools disarmament education materials to US high school students.