

I am a California native who is a sophomore at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, majoring in International Studies with an emphasis on Russia and Eastern Europe, and a minor in Russian. My interest in world affairs and foreign language stem from my own 'international' background and growing up in a bilingual household. My father is from the island nation of Aruba and my mother from neighboring Curacao, both protectorates of Holland, but located at the southern-most tip of the Caribbean Basin, 16 miles from Venezuela. Growing up, I heard Dutch, English, and Spanish spoken in my home. Both my parents are American citizens by accident of birth: my dad's father was working in the Brooklyn Navy Yard helping out in the war effort as an Aruban/Dutch national. He was offered American citizenship by the U.S. government, and thus my father was born in Brooklyn, New York, but returned to the island where he spent much of his life. My mom's father, on the other hand, was an American citizen who went down to the Netherlands Antilles to marry and stayed, thus my mother was born and raised overseas and later relocated to California for her high school years. I spent many idyllic childhood years on Aruba's beautiful beaches, moving later to Miami, and eventually back to California for my high school years, just like my mother. It made me appreciate the differences as well as the similarities in places and people.

While my focus today may be world politics and national defense, the underpinning of the direction of all my interests has been and remains a love of history. When I was eight, I fell in love with military history, and I have pursued my passion ever since, finding that the study of history summoned me to seek the best in myself. It has been an avocation that began with an avid interest in the Civil War, visiting every battlefield, and has broadened over time to include world history as a result of my parents taking me to faraway places. When I first climbed Little Round Top at Gettysburg as a child, and years later looked out over the cliffs of Normandy at Pointe-du-Hoc, the strategies of our great military leaders captured my imagination. In those moments, history came alive for me, and I realized how much we can learn by studying the things we have fought for as a nation. It has provided a wellspring for my understanding of who we are as a legacy to help us face the challenges of our own time and has forged my love of country. My historical focus may have changed over time, but history continues to be the foundation of everything I do – and every week I have the opportunity to explain to the school kids I tutor in Memphis why they should care about it. When I tell them about the valor of Washington at Valley Forge, they always respond with enthusiasm – because when told with passion, there is no doubt that history is everybody's favorite subject.

My interest in our nation's security naturally flowed from this love of history and country. Intrinsic to a career in the defense of our nation is an understanding of our adversaries. My fascination with Russian history and the Napoleonic Wars was the initial catalyst for my interest in that country and for my innate love of the Russian language, concentrating my mind to choose a college with strong Russian and International Studies departments where I could study the language, history, and politics. Rhodes College afforded me the opportunity to make the most of this proclivity – in my freshman year I was able to study both Russian and Russian history after the Soviet Union under two great professors, one from Russia (Sasha Kostina) and

one from Bulgaria (Nuray Ibryamova). Their insight, from living under the former system, has been invaluable to my base of knowledge. When I was presented with an opportunity to study Russian in St. Petersburg last summer, I naturally jumped at the chance. Traveling with fellow Rhodes College students and my Russian professor to the Russian Federation was life-altering: it crystallized for me that I wanted my life's work to have something to do with the study and understanding of Russia, and that returning to study in the country was fundamental to that. It also gave me the confidence that I could become proficient in Russian, a very difficult language. This year, I have continued to increase my skill in the language and my coursework focused more on international politics as well as the bilateral relations between Russia and America and how it affects the future of the globe, studying under a pre-eminent scholar from the Marshall Center in Germany as well as the Defense Department, Dr. Andrew Michta. Dr. Michta's experience and intellect is non-pareil, and I am indeed lucky to have his guidance. It would be a realization of my life's ambition to follow in his career path, by continuing with my graduate studies at Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies, and begin my work as a military strategist or foreign policy analyst in the Defense Dept. with an expertise in Russia and Central/Eastern Europe.

Just as in international affairs, the idea of liaison-building is a cornerstone of many of the things I am involved with, both in and outside of my college life. I believe shared interests and bridge-building are the foundations for anything worth doing. Nominated as a member of the Rhodes College Search Advisory Council by another great professor, Dr. Kenneth Morrell, I am privileged to be able to forge partnerships between faculty and students in tackling the demands of the Great Books of the Western canon in the Rhodes curriculum. The Rhodes Search for Values Program, administered by Dr. Richard Dagger, is another major reason I came to Rhodes. Similarly, in my capacity as an International Peer Advisor, I have advanced the benefits of study abroad in countries like Russia. Not only can I share my own experience, but I learn from the experiences of others, essential to understanding the cultural nuances of any country. As a future Russian expert, especially in Russia's relationship to its successor states and its national aspirations, my career goal is informed by Thomas Jefferson's prescience when he wrote that vigilance is essential to keeping our democracy, an idea that still obtains. Today, as ever, the Kremlin asserts a privileged position in determining our nation's security choices. Moreover, the relationship between Russia and the United States is the pivotal structure upon which every other national and international challenge hinges. Russia remains the critical country to any plans concerning containing Iran's nuclear ambitions, for instance.

As a nascent foreign policy analyst, I understand that the national interest is that which we must have to survive as a nation. Some of those interests remain constant, some change over time. But the things we value as a nation do not. The central question today is: are we doing everything possible to preserve those values and ensure that we are making our country as safe as we can? It is that strategic rationale behind our foreign policy that I hope will be central to my future work in the field. I am part of what I hope will be the next "Greatest Generation," and the nation is depending on us. As long as Russia continues to assert its influence across the globe, I believe a career as a military strategist or a national security analyst will be critical in the struggle to avoid global conflicts. And as a student of history, politics and foreign policy, I

want to be on the frontlines of that effort. Winning this scholarship would help me realize that goal. I greatly value the Lint Center's recognition of me as well as the support and guidance its mentoring program will offer me. Thank you for your consideration of me.

"I request this Essay and Bio to be published on the Lint Center for National Security Studies, Inc. website with my name published." Jordan Harms