STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRIMER 3rd Edition

Department of Command, Leadership, and Management
United States Army War College

2010

Department of Command, Leadership and Management
United States Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

3rd Edition edited by

Colonel (Ret) Stephen J. Gerras, Ph.D.

Professor of Behavioral Sciences

This Primer is the result of several years of research by the faculty of the Department of Command, Leadership, and Management. Please forward comments to Dr. Steve Gerras, Box 406 (phone: 717-245-3571).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE TO 3rd EDITION

The original edition of the Strategic Leadership Primer, published in 1998, served the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) well as a basic overview of Strategic Leadership. Written by Dr. Rod Magee with the assistance of several other faculty members, it was intended as an orientation reading for students arriving at the USAWC whose backgrounds were primarily in the tactical and operational field environment. The Primer was useful because there was no other adequate work that described and defined strategic leadership in terms that could be understood and applied by USAWC students.

A 2nd edition was published in 2004 and edited by Colonel (Ret) Steve Shambach. This 3rd edition updates significant portions of the Primer, especially Chapters 1, 2, and 3 and also adds a chapter on decision making (Chapter 5). It is not that the nature of strategic leadership has changed drastically, rather this edition preserves the salient features of the original editions. It is updated with contemporary literature and examples to sustain the Primer's relevance.

The editor acknowledges the tremendous contributions of Colonel Murf Clark and Professor Charles Allen, along with editing assistance from Commander Traci Keegan and Dr. Richard Meinhart, while also acknowledging previous edition contributions from Dr. Lenny Wong, Dr. Craig Bullis, and Colonel (Ret) George Reed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> *It became clear to me that at the age of 58 I would have to learn new tricks that were not taught in the military manuals or on the battlefield. In this position I am a political soldier and will have to put my training in rapping-out orders and making snap decisions on the back burner, and have to learn the arts of persuasion and guile. I must become an expert in a whole new set of skills.*
>
> George C. Marshall

General Marshall is alleged to have made this observation as he reflected upon his early years as Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) in the beginning months of World War II. Marshall apparently believed his previous education, training, and experience had not adequately prepared him for high-level leadership.[1] As the CSA, his success depended upon his ability to persuade influential people and organizations, both in and out of government, to employ their efforts on behalf of his vision of a winning wartime strategy and to mobilize the Army to make that strategy a reality. General Marshall's particular insights in this matter support the belief that beyond the direct and organizational levels is a third level of leadership: the strategic level. This Primer is intended to set the stage for a greater understanding and more in-depth study of leadership at the strategic level—the context, challenges, characteristics, and requirements of strategic leadership. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of strategic leadership.

General Marshall seems to have intuitively understood that the development of a national strategy and the force structure to execute that strategy required a complex decision making structure at the national and even international levels. As CSA, Marshall collaborated with civilian leaders to develop a vast industrial war machine and coordinated among the allied nations to ensure unity of effort. Since Marshall's time as CSA, the political complexity of these national and international decision making structures has continued to grow. Therefore, to be effective in today's strategic arena, senior military leaders and their staffs must understand the Nation's strategic vision and how strategy is formulated. As well, they must appreciate the environment and multiple cultures in which they will operate, the competencies they must develop, and the tasks they must perform. Bringing the sum of their intellect and experience to bear, they must conceive a positive vision of the future and work towards those stated ends by developing policies and strategies that allow the clear articulation of the corresponding ways and means. In short, strategic leaders must succeed in an environment marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA).

Though the lines between these levels sometimes blur, we distinguish the strategic level of leadership from the tactical and operational levels in order to better understand the unique roles and responsibilities of today's senior leaders. At the turn of the 21st Century, discussions about the realities of military conflict in the Information Age have addressed the concept of the "Strategic Corporal," claiming that the mandates of strategic leadership now have the potential to extend to the lowest levels of military organizations—asserting that the most junior member's actions can have strategic impact and implications. This Primer asserts that this is very different from *exercising* strategic leadership yet, more than ever, every level of the organization must appreciate its responsibilities, functions and impacts at the strategic level. To accommodate this multi-level awareness requirement, strategic leaders have a responsibility to spread knowledge and values throughout their organizations by clearly communicating a vision, shaping climate, influencing culture, coaching, mentoring, teaching, and exemplifying appropriate behaviors.

So what is strategic leadership? The USAWC has traditionally defined strategic leadership as:

> *The process used by a leader to affect the achievement of a desirable and clearly understood vision by influencing the organizational culture, allocating resources, directing through policy and directive, and building consensus within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global environment which is marked by opportunities and threats.*

Differing slightly from the USAWC version, in 2008 CSA General George Casey asserted:

> Strategic leaders guide the achievement of their organizational *vision* within a larger enterprise by directing policy and strategy, building consensus, acquiring and allocating resources, influencing organizational culture, and shaping complex and ambiguous external environments. They *lead* by example to build effective organizations, grow the next generation of leaders, energize subordinates, seek opportunities to advance organizational goals, and balance personal and professional demands.[2]

Providing another perspective, Rich Hughes and Katherine Beatty from the Center for Creative Leadership asserted that:

> Individuals and teams enact strategic leadership when they think, act, and influence in ways that promote the sustainable competitive advantage of the organization.[3]

An informal synthesis of these definitions may offer some common characteristics of strategic leadership. First, strategic leadership often involves a comprehensive assessment and interpretation of the external environment which, if interpreted effectively, is eventually aligned to the organization's vision. Second, although strategic leaders lead at the enterprise

level and have great autonomy, they oftentimes need to build consensus across a wide range of stakeholders to properly make and execute decisions. Third, aligning their organization with a rapidly changing environment implies that strategic leadership is about leading and managing change to include the need to build a strategy and to align the resources and priorities to realize their vision. In short, strategic leadership focuses on alignment, visioning, and change.

ALIGNMENT

Strategic leaders most often operate at the enterprise level where various organizational sub-systems converge to support the common purpose. Subsequently, it is at this level where strategic leaders have decision making authority and influence over key organizational drivers such as strategy, structure, technology, and people. Military leaders often attribute the title "strategic leader" to individuals who are, in fact, "leaders at the strategic level" as opposed to "strategic leaders." The Joint Staff J-5 is clearly an important policy and planning leader at the strategic level. At the same time, however, the J-5 has only marginal influence on the military enterprise. The J-5 can't change promotion policies, pick the next group of four-star generals, or make key decisions on weapons and technology procurements. The J-5 makes recommendations to strategic leaders and surely needs to be able to view through the lens of a strategic leader, but he does not wear the mantle of "strategic leader" as intended in this Primer. This distinction is important when describing the strategic leader requirement to provide *alignment*.

Strategic leadership requires strategic leaders to initiate processes that ensure their organization scans the environment to maintain an awareness of societal, international, technological, demographic, and economic developments. Chapter 2 discusses elements of the relevant external environment for military leaders. The primary role in this environmental scanning process for the strategic leader is to interpret the scanned data to determine the organization's response. For example, if the CSA learns from the general in charge of Accessions Command that high-school recruits don't have the requisite math skills to operate many of the Army's high-tech systems, the Chief needs to interpret this data and then explain to relevant stakeholders what this observation means to the Army and the nation. He then needs to solicit ideas from his senior civilian and military leaders for taking action, decide a course for the organization, and influence external decision makers to collaborate on solutions.

On a holistic level, the interpretation of environmental scanning in a VUCA world ought to lead to the creation of a vision that is *aligned* with a best estimate of the future environment. The organization's vision represents an idealized representation of what the organization should strive to become. The subsequently developed strategy, however, should explicitly *align* ends (objectives), ways (concepts and methods), and means (resources) to ensure the organization's resources are committed in a manner that allow the organization to succeed in its current and future environments—in short—to enact the vision. Strategic leaders must therefore ensure that they *align* the vision with their interpretation of the changing

environment, and that the organization's strategy is *aligned* with this vision. Similarly, the structure, culture, personnel policies, and technology also need to be *aligned* with the vision and strategy in order to achieve the vision and maintain competitive advantage. Alignment needs to be both vertical — the lowest levels of the organization understand and accept the big picture, and horizontal — each of the stovepipes that come together at the strategic level are in sync.

As an example, early in Operation Iraqi Freedom Army leadership realized its vision and strategy required a decentralized, deployable, and agile force structure to meet the heavy demands of the contemporary operating environment. The CSA concluded that the Army's division-centric structure was out of *alignment* with this requirement and therefore directed a rapid re-structuring to a brigade-centric Army. This restructuring exemplifies how a strategic leader *aligns* organizational structure with mission requirements to realize a vision. Similarly, in 2009, the Army concluded its culture was not *aligned* to address two major health issues affecting soldiers deployed in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, specifically post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI). Aspects of Army culture reinforced long-held negative stereotypes about Soldiers who reported non-visible health issues like PTSD and MTBI. Given the impact and frequency of PTSD and MTBI in the wartime Army, Army leadership created a strategic communications plan to attempt to *align* Army culture to deal appropriately with these common wartime health issues.

The preceding paragraphs frequently referred to terms we often think of as civilian management terms. Military officers routinely frown when leadership conversations turn to a discussion of terms like core competencies, enterprise leadership, and competitive advantage. As strategic leaders, however, these terms are part of the vernacular. Of the three, the one most often denigrated as a "corporate" term (and therefore not viewed as applicable to the military) is competitive advantage. In a section on alignment it is prudent to attempt to change this negative reaction. Scholars of strategic leadership have argued that the primary focus of strategy, and hence strategic leaders, is to achieve sustainable competitive advantage for their organization—the focus is on winning now AND in the long term.

Ironically, one must wonder why the term "competitive advantage" would receive pushback from a warfighting organization. Clearly all the military services desire to achieve a vision, especially in terms of strategy, technology, structure, and culture, that positions the Services to defeat America's current and future potential foes. In short, they want competitive advantage. Unfortunately, the relationship between competitive advantage, the corporate world, and the military usually drives the discourse to an analysis of the competition over resources between each of the military Services plus other federal agencies. This discussion is sometimes uncomfortable for military leaders, but it needs to occur.

Commercial and government organizations compete in different ways, but they all are in competition with some other entity.[4] The primary difference is that the governmental agency provides services to a broad client base (e.g., citizens) and in fact competes for resources by contending with other government agencies that seek to provide a specific service or perform a given function. Commercial organizations seek to dominate markets and build market share by price competition, product differentiation and quality, or even monopoly formation that simply excludes competitors. Governmental agencies compete against other agencies in more limited and nuanced ways. For instance, they seek monopoly status by exclusive ownership of a mission. Agencies also attempt to broaden their population served to build a larger, long-term client base. They (or stakeholder lobbies) build relationships with the legislative authorizers and appropriators in Congress to guarantee agency programs are funded in the future. Anyone who does not think the discussion within the Department of Defense (DOD) over cyberspace isn't about competitive advantage for each of the military services does not understand the subtleties of strategic leadership. This competitive advantage focuses on potential enemies, but also on the allocation of resources to fight the cyber war. Although the strategies are different between commercial and government entities, at the end of the day both seek competitive advantage to ensure the continued flow of resources. These resources, in most cases, are generally limited and therefore, to some extent, create a zero-sum competition.

VISIONING

The preceding section introduced the importance of the concept of alignment, which ensures sustainable competitive advantage. Despite its importance, however, most strategic leadership scholars, and strategic leaders themselves, cite the ability to develop and articulate a compelling *vision* as the most important task of strategic leadership. Chapter 3 covers this topic in detail and emphasizes that: (1) the *visioning* process is a team sport; the strategic leader alone cannot create and communicate an organizational *vision*, (2) communicating a *vision* takes a great deal of effort. Strategic leaders must often repeat a clear and concise message many times, in many places, to ensure the *vision* cascades down through the organization, and (3) actions speak louder than words. Most observers will quickly detect when the espoused *vision* is not aligned with enacted values and priorities, thereby decreasing the chances of achieving the *vision*.

CHANGE

Many well-written books describe how to lead an organization through *change*. John Kotter's *Leading Change* stands out as one of the best of the genre.[5] Kotter pointed out that individual or organizational *change* at its most basic involves three processes: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. The unfreezing step requires that stakeholders and participants view the current situation as unsuitable. The *change* step focuses on enacting changes within various components of the enterprise, to include structure, strategy, people, technology, or

culture. The refreezing step attempts to make those changes a permanent aspect of the organization. Chapter 6 of this primer discusses managing *change* as a strategic leader task. Suffice it to say that if the environment is *changing* at a faster and faster rate, then strategic leaders need to build organizations that can *change* even faster to align with the environment. For example, the 1950s-era General Motors bureaucratic model, rooted in inertia-plagued hierarchies, is probably in the distant past for most public and private sector organizations.

THE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

Top leaders of any organization, including staff members, share the responsibility of strategic leadership. *Realistically, only one or two percent of the members of an organization will ever attain strategic leadership rank or position, but, anyone working directly for a strategic leader should be well-versed in strategic thinking concepts in order to adequately support and advise the leader.* Effective strategic decision making and leadership *cannot* reside merely in one leader. The changing external environment and the complexity of large organizations create a situation where the leader at the top of the organizational hierarchy cannot possibly lead the organization without receiving help in information gathering, assessment, and knowledge management. Effective leadership depends on the interactions amongst the leader, those being led or influenced (both in and out of the organization) and the situation or circumstances facing the organization. The complexity of these relationships and interactions determine the effectiveness of strategic leaders and their teams. Therefore, this Primer focuses on the concept of strategic leadership, rather than the strategic leader alone.

While the need exists for senior officers to transition to the strategic level of leadership, the leadership skills and qualities developed at the direct and organizational levels remain invaluable. The strategic leader must still exercise direct leadership of his subordinate commanders and staff. At the same time, the strategic leader must manage and lead a very large and complex organization, represent the organization to the external environment, and wield influence to shape the external environment to help the organization accomplish its vision and purpose. More so than at any other level of leadership, strategic leadership requires proactive consensus building and collaboration with other organizations, agencies and nations. At the same time, though the primary focus turns outward, the leader must also tend to the internal organizational environment. Excessive focus inside or outside the organization will detract from organizational success and perhaps even viability. The keys to a successful transition to strategic leadership are an appreciation for the dramatic increase in scope of leadership responsibilities, an understanding of the unique nature of these increased responsibilities, and the dedication of effort necessary to understand and influence the complex and dynamic environment in which these leadership responsibilities reside. Beyond understanding this strategic environment, strategic leaders and their staffs must exercise strategic leadership competencies to achieve their vision within that volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment. Leadership expert John Gardner asserted:

> *...the hierarchical position of leaders within their own system is of limited value, because some of the most critically important tasks require lateral leadership---boundary-crossing leadership—involving groups over whom they have no control. They must exercise leader like influence beyond the system over which they preside.* ***They must do what they can to lead without authority.***[6] *(bold added for emphasis)*

STEWARDSHIP

Finally, professional ethics play a foundational role in the effectiveness of strategic leaders. All professions share some common traits, among them a shared value system, a contribution to society, a specialized jurisdiction, and an internal, self-policing mechanism. At the strategic level of leadership, these qualities manifest themselves most distinctly in the requirement for a responsible use of power.

For example, effective strategic leaders and their teams are cognizant of the amplified impact of their decisions. Whether they are conducting a war, developing a strategy, or investing in military capabilities, they appreciate the gravity of their office. Almost by definition, effective strategic leaders take an expansive view of their stewardship responsibilities toward the long term health of the institution. They exercise a wariness of their natural tendency to act in their self-interest and build a small cadre of advisors or accountability partners to protect themselves from personal mistakes that can affect the entire organization. The strategic leader who conducts himself with a selfless professional ethic builds public trust, and in the process accumulates a reservoir of moral authority that serves both his office and the institution well.

SUMMARY

Strategic leadership is generally a team sport that requires a strategic leader-led visioning process to create the alignment between the organization's strengths and weaknesses and the anticipated demands of the future external environment. Strategic leaders understand the importance of vertical and horizontal alignment, ensuring the vision and strategy of the organization align with the processes, structures, culture, and technology of the organization. Finally, strategic leaders are the change agents that enact the constant realignments required in the 21st century's VUCA environment.

ENDNOTES

1. Marshall was promoted from Brigadier General directly to General on September 1, 1939, so his experience is atypical, but still well illustrates the different skills and perspectives needed by the most senior leaders.

2. General Casey presentation to the USAWC, September 22, 2008. Cited with permission of Office of Chief of Staff.

3. Richard L. Hughes and Katherine C Beatty, *Becoming a Strategic Leader* (San Francisco: Wiley and Sons, 2005): p. 9.

4. See T.O. Jacobs, *Strategic Leadership: The Competitive Edge* (unpublished manuscript, 2002): p. 10 for a more detailed comparison of civilian and government organizations.

5. John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996).

6. John Gardner, *On Leadership* (New York: The Free Press, 1990): p. 98.

CHAPTER 2

THE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ENVIRONMENT[1]

I don't think I am exaggerating when I say that we face the most daunting strategic environment in generations.[1]

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 2009

These times are, one might say, ordinary times, a slice of life like any other. Who can bear to hear this, or who will consider it? Are we not especially significant because our century is – our century and its nuclear bombs, its unique and unprecedented Holocaust, its serial exterminations and refugee populations, our century and its warming, its silicon chips, men on the moon, and spliced genes? No, we are not and it is not.[2]

Annie Dillard, *The Wreck of Time; Taking Our Century's Measure*

A human being is not one thing among others; things determine each other, but man is ultimately self-determining. What he becomes—within limits of endowment and environment—he has made out of himself. In the concentration camp, we watched and witnessed some of our comrades behave like swine while others behaved like saints. Man has both potentials within himself; while one is actualized depends on ***decisions*** *but not on* ***conditions***.[3] (bold emphasis added)

Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

Carlisle, PA May, 2010. Twitter limits the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—and everyone else—to 140 characters per tweet, and he tweets once or more almost daily.[4] 400 million people have established accounts on Facebook.[5] Worldwide, approximately 33 million people are living with HIV.[6] Mandatory entitlement programs account for over $2 trillion of the $3.55 trillion 2010 Federal Budget and the Office of Management and Budget estimates that the percentage of the national debt held by the public will increase from 58.7% to 67.2% in the next 10 years.[7] Personal bankruptcies have doubled in the U.S. in the last 20 years, and quadrupled between 1980 and 2000.[8] The U.S. military budget dwarfs the defense budget of China by a multiple of at *least* four (depending on how one calculates).[9] [10] [11]

---

[1] This chapter was significantly updated for the 3rd edition by Colonel Murf Clark.

Which of these facts is relevant to a military leader?

For the first time in its history, in 2009, the NFL issued guidelines for players suffering concussions.[12] The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that between now and 2030 the percentage of electricity the world gets from nuclear power will decrease from 15 to 12 percent.[13] The fastest growing population segment in most industrialized countries is centenarians.[14]

Should you care?

A recent *Harvard Business Review* article recommended asking questions that challenge the status quo in your organization "at least 10 times each day."[15]

Is that a good idea for leaders in the U.S. military? Do you spend time considering what constitutes "the status quo in your organization?"

Senator Kirk, who in September 2009 replaced longtime Senator Edward Kennedy on the Senate Armed Services Committee, questioned Chairman Mullen in the wake of the president's December 1, 2009 announcement of a troop surge for Afghanistan.[16]

Do you know what they said? Should such testimony influence your thinking?

Amidst much clamor about "unprecedented change" brought on by the Information Age, *Foreign Policy* magazine quotes an economist who believes the continued proliferation of the plain old TV has much more potential to change the world than the internet and wireless technology.[17] Despite claims about the overwhelming technology leaps being made by India and China, internet penetration in those countries (7% and 29% of total population, respectively) remains far below North America (74%) and most other western democracies.[18]

What knowledge can leaders derive from this information and how can they manage the gathering, sorting, and assessing of that knowledge in order to better understand the environment in which they must make decisions and lead large organizations into the future?

Many of the facts in the previous paragraphs will be outdated or less relevant by the time of publication; that fact alone further illustrates the challenge of environmental scanning and strategic decision making in the Information Age. Because of the multiplicity of factors and influences at play and the long lead times required for change in large organizations, strategic leadership requires a much broader skill set than leadership practiced at lower levels. Strategic decision making is extremely difficult, requiring exhaustive research, analysis, collaboration, and compromise to reach the best possible solutions to problems. Even highly experienced leaders—especially highly experienced leaders—may be tempted to substitute "educated guessing" or "intuition" for sound processes of information gathering, assessment, and risk management. Resource constraints and political considerations may

interfere. The competitive environment demands that organizations assume risk. In *Strategic Leadership; The Competitive Edge*, T. Owen Jacobs describes the external environment as filled with Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity; hence, the acronym, "VUCA." That the environment of the Information Age is fraught with VUCA does little to excuse irresponsibility, carelessness, or a lack of rigor when attempting to understand the environment, anticipate change, and manage risk. 21st Century leaders must approach this challenge with intelligence, energy, and urgency, confident that these realities and complexities can as easily be transformed into a competitive advantage when turned against the enemies of our nation.

Given the extent of their responsibilities and the expanding effects of their decisions, strategic leaders must consider a vast array of facts, influences, and participants. To say they must consider *all* things may be only a slight exaggeration. Therein lies the rub. With limited time and finite knowledge, effective leaders must literally decide how to decide. That is, they must determine which elements of their environment are most important to a particular situation or decision and then focus their attention and efforts there.

Strategic leaders and strategists must attempt to understand, interpret, and master the VUCA environment. Jacobs suggests leaders cannot attain complete knowledge about the many factors governing strategic decisions. Nonetheless, leadership requires that decisions be made. To answer the challenge of VUCA, we must first understand the basic implications of its constituent terms.

Volatility: the rate of change of the environment. Volatility in the Information Age means even the most current data may not provide an adequate context for decision making. Beyond an ability to accurately assess the current environment, leaders must *anticipate* rapid change and do their best to predict what may happen within the time scope of a project, program, or operation. Volatility in the environment coupled with the extended timelines of modern acquisition programs creates a special challenge for strategic leaders and their advisors.

Uncertainty: the inability to know everything about a situation and the difficulty of predicting the nature and effect of change (the nexus of uncertainty and volatility.) Uncertainty often delays decision-making processes and increases the likelihood of vastly divergent opinions about the future. It drives the need for intelligent risk management and hedging strategies.

Complexity: the difficulty of understanding the interactions of multiple parts or factors and of predicting the primary and subsequent effects of changing one or more factors in a highly interdependent system or even system of systems. Complexity differs from uncertainty; though it may be possible to predict immediate outcomes of single interactions within a broader web, the non-linear branches and sequels multiply so quickly—and double back on previous connections—so as to overwhelm most assessment processes. Complexity

could be said to *create* uncertainty because of the sheer volume of possible interactions and outcomes.

Ambiguity: describes a specific type of uncertainty that results from differences in interpretation when contextual clues are insufficient to clarify meaning. Ironically, "ambiguous" is an ambiguous term, whose definition changes subtly depending on the context of its usage. For our purposes here, it refers to the difficulty of interpreting meaning when context is blurred by factors such as cultural blindness, cognitive bias, or limited perspective. At the strategic level, leaders can often legitimately interpret events in more than one way and the likelihood of misinterpretation is high.

VUCA environments and large organizations. Large, complex organizations consist of intricate networks of staff, functional, and operating components. To achieve organizational goals, these components must function together and interact with external entities that are equally as complex. A strategic leader not only leads the organization, but must also represent his or her organization during the necessary interactions with a maze of other entities that constitute the organization's *external* environment. Strategic leaders must *shape* the form and direction of their organizations and *influence* external actors toward accomplishment of objectives. Within the VUCA environment, tasks must be accomplished collaboratively rather than through individual effort. Seldom does a single leader possess sufficient knowledge to adequately develop the organizational vision; strategic leaders must develop the ability to collaborate, cooperate, and compromise to influence external agencies. Outside the organization, when rank and position become less compelling, leaders must employ tact, persuasion, and sound argumentation.

Thus, the strategic leadership environment consists of both internal and external complexities that directly and indirectly affect the resourcing, structuring, and operational performance of the organization. The dynamics of a changing threat, the changes in international coalitions, the shifting of public attitudes, the rapid advances in technology, the election of new governments, the fluctuation of national budgets, the evolution of new missions, and changing demographics all increase the challenges of strategic leadership. Strategic leaders must monitor and understand the crosscurrents of the organization's external environment, staying alert for opportunities to implement constructive changes.

Savvy leaders broaden their environmental scan by developing a network of knowledgeable associates in external agencies. Optimally, a strategic leader's staff would develop similar contacts at the working level to assure that this multiplicity of networks runs like a root system throughout the external environment. Timely receipt of relevant information greatly aids decision making and action taking. Leaders armed with current information and context can more effectively persuade partners, educate stakeholders, and influence key decision makers. In undertaking such consensus building, the strategic leader must be willing to compromise as necessary. Partial achievement of organizational objectives is clearly preferable to failure and may set the conditions for further progress.

The aspects and elements of the external environment that historically have the greatest impact upon the Army as an institution include: threats, international alliances, national cultures, the military-industrial complex, public opinion, federal budget, technology, federal government, private organizations and internal environment. Successful strategic leaders develop a sophisticated understanding of each aspect and apply this knowledge to develop visions for their organizations and to influence the external environment to set conditions for success. Advisors to strategic leaders should also understand these elements and monitor them while helping to guide the organization through this ever-changing environment.

THREATS

Obviously, of all the variables in the external environment, those most relevant to the U.S. Army are threats to national security and our vital national interests. Since 9/11, there has been a dramatic increase in regional conflicts, civil wars, insurgencies, terrorist activities, weapons proliferation, and drug trafficking. Regional instabilities that threaten our national interests or threaten the lives of our citizens living abroad may require us to employ military forces in a variety of hostile and non-hostile circumstances, either unilaterally, multilaterally, or within the United Nations framework. Because of multiple regional instabilities in the post-9/11 environment, leaders and planners face the difficult task of predicting when, where, and how our forces may need to respond. Strategic leaders must ensure their organizations remain ready to respond to worldwide challenges across the full range of military operations as part of a joint and/or combined force.

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCES

Operating effectively in the international environment demands an understanding of the various political, economic, and cultural factors that influence decision making in other countries. Combined operations in alliance or coalition circumstances, or under the auspices of the United Nations, are commonplace. The current influence of radical religious groups, transnational threats, and non-state actors further complicates the ability to form strategic alliances. As such, strategic leaders must determine who may share common interests in addressing an international threat, what alliances and relationships exist among and between involved factions, and what the political and diplomatic dynamics of the situation may be both internationally and domestically. Strategic leaders must also be aware that the successful conduct of combined operations requires a particular sensitivity to the impact the deployment of U.S. forces may have on the laws, traditions, and customs of a host country.

NATIONAL CULTURE

While our military maintains the uniqueness and value of its own culture, it remains a subculture within a broader and even more powerful national and societal culture. It must

shape and define itself within the limits of that dominant culture. The military services can and should mirror the highest ideals of our society and set standards of conduct that require the total dedication and commitment of those who serve in their ranks, but, to best defend the nation, they must always be a part of our social fabric. An Army that reflects the beliefs and values of American society will more easily maintain the respect and trust of that society. On the other hand, events such as the mistreatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib in 2004 and scandals at our military academies can quickly erode the confidence of Americans and the international community in the Army's ideals and conduct.

THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

When he retired from public service at the end of his presidency, General Eisenhower coined a new term as he warned the nation of a powerful new force in our lives—the "military-industrial complex."

> *This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence — economic, political, even spiritual — is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals so that security and liberty may prosper together.*[19]
>
> President Dwight D. Eisenhower
> Farewell Address to the Nation, January 17, 1961

Almost 50 years later, the military-industrial complex is alive and well, providing state-of-the-art capabilities as well as significant political, financial, and ethical challenges. Information sharing between industry partners and senior military officials leads to mutual understanding and increases the likelihood of finding the best solutions to technical problems, but simultaneously creates the potential for conflict of interest and real or perceived unethical and illegal dealings. A few well-known cases highlight the potential for corruption in an industry that deals in terms of billions of dollars. A recent controversy ponders the role of retired senior military leaders working with both defense contractors and their former services and questions the propriety of this potential conflict of interest or unfair advantage to the defense firms by whom they are employed or contracted. While most actions of these influential leaders remain clearly within the letter of current law,

prominent political voices have wondered aloud if those laws are too tolerant of behavior we might reasonably judge as beyond "the proper meshing" of industry and the military.

PUBLIC OPINION

Strategic leaders must examine how their anticipated decisions and actions may be perceived and received by the public, advocacy groups, and elements of society likely to be affected, to include their own organizations, and the media. Most reputable media outlets attempt to provide a balanced view of the military as an institution. In turn, the taxpaying public and public officials have a legitimate right to information, as long as it does not compromise the security of operations and plans. Strategic leaders should work with the media and consider how best to provide information for mutual benefit. The media can rapidly and dramatically affect world opinion, policy, and ultimately strategy.

Strategic leaders must be skilled in information operations and strategic communications. They must proactively work to inform both foreign and domestic audiences concerning the Armed Services as organizations and about the missions they perform. Strategic leaders should use all available means to tell their story and articulate organizational purpose and action to a world-wide audience. Over the last 60 years, public support has become an increasingly vital ingredient in successful military operations. In addition, leaders should quickly inform civilian leadership and the public when problems arise. Transparency and timeliness help maintain the credibility enjoyed by the military profession. The American people do not expect a perfect military. They do expect military leaders to deal with problems, take care of their sons and daughters, and defend our nation.

FEDERAL BUDGET

The dynamics of the federal budgeting process strongly influence decision making at the strategic level. Competition for finite resources demands clear justification and strict accountability. Interest on the national debt, entitlement programs, and the budgetary desires of each department of government constrain the federal budget. The DOD develops far more requirements than the federal budget can meet. Within the DOD planning, programming, budgeting and execution (PPBE) process, the Executive and Legislative Branches expect strategic leaders to set priorities, advocate for the most important requirements, and provide candid assessments of the risks and consequences of various programming and budgeting alternatives. To be effective in this national system of resource allocation, strategic leaders must thoroughly understand the PPBE process, the role of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Congressional Authorization and Appropriation Process.

TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS

> *U.S. forces must leverage information technology and innovative network-centric concepts of operations to develop increasingly capable joint forces. New information and communications technologies hold promise for networking highly distributed joint and multinational forces.*[20]
>
> Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

Across the range of military operations, technological developments have enhanced the capabilities of the Army by giving our forces significant advantages in networking, command and control, situational awareness, and overall combat power. The technological revolution in warfare has dramatically increased the tempo of operations, the rapidity of maneuver, the precision of firepower, the processing of critical information, and the complexities of command. Technology has also enhanced the ability of the Army to function in a joint, interagency, and multi-national operational environment. Strategic leaders must have a broad understanding of relevant technologies and how advancements in each of these technologies can be incorporated into Army organizations, doctrine, and equipment to permit continued advancements in combat effectiveness and efficiency.

However, new technology cuts two ways. With increased capability also come new and different vulnerabilities. The asymmetric nature of future warfare requires the leader to understand not only the capabilities of new technologies, but also its inherent vulnerabilities. Such vulnerabilities can and will be exploited by any determined adversary.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Because the military answers to civilian government control, strategic leaders must engage with numerous executive, legislative, and judicial organizations and agencies. The military plays a key advisory role in the development of the national security strategy, the national military strategy, and legislation affecting the administration of the Armed Forces. Within the parameters of such directives and laws, strategic leaders develop the necessary strategies, plans, and policies to support and implement President, Secretary of Defense, and Congressional intent.

Strategic leaders frequently provide counsel to civilian executive authorities and routinely testify before congressional committees and subcommittees. Federal Courts occasionally review certain decisions, bringing the judiciary branch into play as well. Additionally, top military leaders must positively influence the interagency process. In order to succeed in these duties, they must cultivate relationships, collaborate effectively with outside agencies, and foster a spirit of cooperation despite differing priorities.

PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

Many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Private and Volunteer Organizations (PVOs) perform important functions in the contemporary operating environment and therefore influence strategy development and policy. Strategic leaders frequently interact with representatives of these organizations and must ensure that such interactions remain within the parameters of policy guidance and ethical conduct. The manner in which the military's strategic leaders leverage and aid these organizations can spell the difference between success and failure.

THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

In many ways the internal environments of the Army and the national military structure are just as complex and demanding as the external environment. It would be impractical to describe all the organizations, systems, and subsystems that exist at the strategic level within and among the Services, the combatant commands, international commands, the Joint Staff, and the Department of Defense. Nor is it practical in this short review to describe the multitude of interlocking relationships, lines of communication, and operating dynamics. Suffice it to say that the strategic leader must interact within this complex internal arena to realize the organizational vision.

SUMMARY

Strategic leadership transcends the organization by orchestrating internal events and exerting personal and organizational influence on the external environment to achieve an organizational vision. Unfortunately, the internal and external environments are volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. Consequently, the strategic leader must scan many aspects of the environment, assess their observations, and discern how best to influence events for the benefit of the organization. Furthermore, they must continuously apply themselves to building consensus among key stakeholders. Those elements within the environment that have characteristically had the greatest impact on the Army include: the threat, international alliances, our national culture, the military-industrial complex, public opinion, the federal budgeting process, technology, our national system of government, private organizations, and the internal organization of our Services and the Department of Defense. To be successful, the strategic leader must remain a perpetual student of the environment and remain constantly engaged in the process of adapting to that environment.

ENDNOTES

1. Michele Flournoy, "Department of Defense Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy." *USDP Remarks for USAF Senior Leader Orientation Course* (August 14, 2009). http://policy.defense.gov/ (accessed May 4, 2010).

2. Annie Dillard, "The Wreck of Time; Taking Our Century's Measure." *Harper's Magazine* (January 1998): pp. 51-56.

3. Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959): pp. 119-120.

4. Michael Mullen, Adm, *"on my way to the AOR with USO troop, including actor james gandolfini, tony sirico, rose mcgowan, and superbowl champion jon stinchcomb."* March 29, 2010. http://www.twitter.com/thejointstaff (accessed March 29, 2010).

5. Facebook Press Room. "Facebook Corporate Website." *Facebook.* March 29, 2010. http://facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics (accessed March 29, 2010).

6. Centers for Disease Control. "Working Together to Advance America's Commitment to Combat Global HIV/AIDs." *CDC.* March 29, 2010. http://www.cdc.gov/Features/WorldAIDSDay2009 (accessed March 29, 2010).

7. Office of Management and Budget. "Budget Summary, Table S-1, "Budget Totals". *Office of Management and Budget.* January 4, 2010. http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Overview/BudgetSummary (accessed January 4, 2010).

8. American Bankruptcy Institute. "Interactive Charts." *American Bankruptcy Institute.* May 7, 2010. http://www.abiworld.org/bkstats/historical.html (accessed May 7, 2010).

9. Anup Shah, "World Military Spending." *Global Issues; Social, Political, Economic, and Environmental Issues that Affect Us All.* September 13, 2009. http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending#InContextUSMilitarySpending VersusRestoftheWorld (accessed May 7, 2010).

10. Michael Wines and Jonathan Ansfield. "The New York Times Online." *Asia Pacific.* March 4, 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/05/world/asia/05china.html (accessed May 7, 2010).

11. Office of the Secretary of Defense. *Military Power of the People's Republic of China.* Annual Report to Congress, Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2009.

12. Alan Schwarz, *N.F L. Issues New Guidelines on Concussions.* December 2, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/03/sports/football/03concussion (accessed May 7, 2010).

13. U.S. Energy Information Administration. "International Energy Outlook 2009." *Independent Statistics and Analysis.* May 27, 2009. http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/ieo/highlights.html, Fig. 6 (accessed May 7, 2010).

14. The Associated Press. "NYDailyNews.com." *Daily News,* July 21, 2009. http://www.nydailynews.com/lifestyle/2009/07/21/2009-07-21_more_people_are_living_past_100 _years_old.html (accessed May 7, 2010).

15. Hal B. Gregersen, Jeffrey H. Dyer, and Clayton M. Christensen. "The Innovator's DNA." *Harvard Business Review*, December 2009.

16. Senate Armed Services Committee. *Hearing to Receive Testimony on Afghanistan.* Hearing Transcript, Washington, DC: U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, 2009.

17. Charles Kenny, "Revolution in a Box. "*Foreign Policy.* November/December 2009. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/10/19/revolution_in_a_box?page=full (accessed May 7, 2010).

18. Internet World Stats. "Usage and Population Statistics." *Asia and North America Internet Penetration.* 2007, 2009.

19. Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Farewell Address by President Dwight D. Eisenhower." *Final TV Talk.* Washington, DC: Eisenhower Library, National Archives and Records Administration, January 17, 1961.

20. Donald H. Rumsfeld, *NetCentric Warfare; Creating a Decisive Warfighting Advantage.* Pamphlet, Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, Director, Force Transformation, 2003.

CHAPTER 3

VISION

Of the three strategic leader tasks presented in Chapter 1, alignment, vision, and change, arguably the most important is for the leaders to develop and promulgate a vision for the organization.[I] Chapter 2 covered the strategic environment in detail and demonstrated the challenges for leaders operating in an environment characterized by VUCA. To be successful strategic leaders, however, requires the development of a set of competencies that enable them to effectively navigate the strategic environment and through their influence promulgate a vision. They must be agile enough to learn from the past, adapt to current circumstances, and anticipate the future from trends and potentialities.[1] Leaders should establish clarity of purpose for themselves and their organization and have the ability to communicate with internal and external constituents.[2] The preceding skills are necessary and invaluable in developing and sharing the vision for an enterprise.[3]

Like the concept of leadership, the construct of vision can be conceived at overlapping levels yet still linked to specific goals. At the individual level, there is a personal vision (e.g., "be a millionaire by age 30"). More common treatments of vision are at the organizational and institutional levels (e.g., "be a Fortune 100 company" or "the most prestigious institution for the education of strategic leaders").[4] More difficult to attain are the visions at the civic, governmental and societal levels (e.g., "best community—America's Hometown" or "beacon of freedom for the world"). Having coherence in visions such that the lower levels are nested within those visions at higher levels may preclude goal conflicts and cognitive dissonance among members.

DEFINITION AND IMPORTANCE OF VISION

The concept of vision has become so familiar within academic, government, defense, and corporate circles that it is sometimes dismissed or derided as "oh, that vision thing!"[5] As the various definitions are examined, however, some common characteristics and trends emerge. The term "vision" suggests that a core element is a *visual image*—a mental picture of what the future enterprise or environment will look like. The concept also implies a longer time horizon. This time horizon tends to be middle to long-term in nature (five to twenty years).

Definitions of vision are as numerous and varied as those for leadership. Our USAWC vision statement meshes well with the definitions by John Kotter, "…a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future"[6] and Peter Senge, "…a shared picture of the future we seek to create" and "…pictures… that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance."[7]

[I.] This chapter was significantly updated for the 3rd edition by Professor Charles Allen.

Practically, visions should be clear and concise, communicate a sense of purpose—the raison d'être, and be shared with others. When enterprise members perceive it as worth the effort, the vision creates energy, commitment, and belonging. When shared by all participants, the vision can bring people to significant achievements.

So defined, vision transcends all levels of an organization. The importance of vision is demonstrated through many facets. It provides a sense of identity for individuals and members of organizations. An effective and enduring vision becomes part of the culture that dictates how people behave and serves as a motivating influence on their actions. Visions compel and guide. For senior leaders, visions serve as touchstones as well as aligning mechanisms for decisions and actions. For strategic leaders, a vision is important for spanning organizational boundaries. A statement of vision not only directs internal members, but is useful in influencing and garnering support from external stakeholders by building consensus and providing access to otherwise unavailable resources as well.

Vision provides a sense of ultimate purpose, direction, and motivation for all members and activities within an enterprise. It provides an overarching concept that serves to initiate and then specify goals, plans, and programs. The process of developing the vision offers a means of analyzing and understanding the pressures and exigencies of the external environment. The vision helps to identify what in the environment is important, what requires action, and what action should be taken. It also establishes and reinforces the basic values of the enterprise and of its leaders.

Visions are intended to be enduring. During the process of environmental scanning and organizational diagnosis, however, it may become apparent that the vision has become out of focus or irrelevant. The visioning process allows leaders and their enterprises to define the vision, to rediscover and affirm the vision during times of stress and turbulence, or to adjust and adapt the vision to better align the enterprise with its environment. Consider the following visions and statements from across an array of domains (national, societal, and corporate).

> *We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*
>
> Declaration of Independence

> *When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*[8]
>
> Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

To enable people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential.[9]

Microsoft

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.[10]

Google

Saving people money to help them live better.[11]

Walmart

Should visions be sacrosanct and unchanging? No, visions help leaders and enterprises sustain relevancy in changing environments. What if Steve Jobs and Apple Computer, Inc. stayed the course with its 1976 vision of "An *Apple* on every Desk"?[12] Recognizing and seizing opportunities, "that vision thing" changed for Apple to "make a contribution to the world by making tools for the mind that advance humankind."[13] This mindset led to the now-ubiquitous iTunes, iPods, iPhones, and the iPad.

STRATEGIC LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

Are vision statements useful for leading organizations? Do they enable strategic leaders to develop and communicate a compelling, understandable strategic direction for the organization? An effective vision is a means of focusing effort and progressing toward a desired future—what ought to be. While the vision is an image of a future state, it is also the result of a process that an enterprise leader can use to guide future development. An effective vision also requires an implementing strategy or plan to enable its attainment—how to get there.

Creating the vision is a collaborative effort that begins with strategic leaders. Their competency, coupled with the authority of position, bestow upon strategic leaders the unique responsibility and opportunity to establish long-term strategic intent and direction. A strategic vision, properly articulated, can be compelling and enduring.

Defining the vision is the first step in the development of strategies and plans for change. Once the vision is expressed, then the methods and resources to achieve it should be identified. Visioning is an inherently creative process that may come from years of experience or deep study through education (Note that the Google founders were 23 years old when it was initially released in 1996.) The process brings together known information and new ideas, integrates these ideas with prospective technologies and future organizational requirements, and blends them into an innovative approach to realize the potential of its

people. Through visioning, leaders forecast the future based on environmental conditions and trends to seek opportunities and identify competitors and threats. Leaders then develop the image of the desired "what ought to be" for the enterprise, positioning it for success in the future environment. Leaders build upon the visions of others that have gone before them.

If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants.[14]

Sir Isaac Newton

CREATING THE VISION

A vision should be the product of a dynamic, logical, and collective organizational process. Vision is often attributed only to leaders because of their critical role in developing, articulating, and directing it. Effective visions however, are rarely the result of leaders creating visions in isolation. Visions do not reside only in leaders; rather, visions are developed as a collaborative effort, with leaders performing the critical role of integrating and guiding the process. Though far from simple, the visioning process consists primarily of examining the external environment, projecting likely future states, and developing a desired end state. In this task, leaders are assisted by the efforts of key members of the enterprise: deputies, chiefs of staff, subordinate leaders, and advisors. Visioning may be an informal process; however, at higher levels of organization, temporary or permanent specialized staffs—"think tanks" or "futures groups"—often assist leaders in this complex task.

The visioning process begins with a comprehensive assessment of the environment, the organization's history, mission, and trends as well as an understanding of competitors, to determine which are most likely to be dominant in determining the future of the enterprise—to discern opportunities and threats to its relevancy. The process should also incorporate an internal assessment of the organization to determine its strengths and weaknesses. From the examination of the environment and the enterprise, leaders project into the future and develop likely alternative future states. They must assess the future environment and state of the organization as objectively and realistically as possible. Creating a vision involves intuition based in judgment gained through experience. Experience in analyzing, integrating, and synthesizing information equips leaders with "frames of reference"—the ability to perceive new information, relationships, and possibilities. Although the collaboration with others internal and external to the enterprise is important, it is the leader whose experience, values, frames of reference, and role contribute most to the creation of the vision.

Complex visions captured in a few words, a sentence, or a paragraph can inspire and guide a large organization even without the direct presence of the leader. A brief vision statement can convey a conceptual image broad and powerful enough to give authority and

offer utility over a more detailed, but less easily remembered, presentation of the vision. The vision statement should be flexible enough to accommodate a range of plausible futures and contain values that make it worthy of the effort required to achieve it. For example, this statement was made about the European Recovery Plan, better known as the Marshall Plan.

> *Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist.*[15]
>
> George C. Marshall, Secretary of State

Drawing from experience and knowledge, leaders apply judgment to create and decide upon the vision to pursue. As the U.S. Army struggled with defining its role with the disintegration of the Soviet Union threat in the 1990s and facing the 21st century as a new era of conflict, its senior leaders offered the following statements. We see a consistent theme in the purpose of the Army and should also discern its institutional responses to environmental conditions before and after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

> *The Army's fundamental purpose is to fight and win the Nation's War by establishing conditions for lasting peace through land force dominance. This dominance is established through integration of the complementary capabilities of all the services.*[16]
>
> *FM 100-1 The Army, June 14, 1994*

> *The Army's nonnegotiable contract with the American people is to fight and win our Nation's wars. Our unique contribution to national security is prompt, sustained land dominance across the range of military operations and spectrum of conflict. The Army provides the land force dominance essential to shaping the international security environment.*
>
> *FM 1 The Army*, June 14, 2001

U.S. Army Vision

> *Our Army is serving a Nation at war. This war requires that all elements of our national power be applied in a broad, unyielding, and relentless campaign... This*

is not business as usual... The Army's Way Ahead…explores how we will obtain a more relevant and ready campaign-quality Army with a Joint and Expeditionary Mindset.[17]

General Peter J. Schoomaker, CSA, 2004

The Army will remain America's principal land force, organized, trained, and equipped for prompt and sustained combat or operations on land to defeat enemy land forces and to seize, hold, and defend land areas, and provide forces for long term area security operations abroad, including initial establishment of military government pending transfer of this responsibility to other authorities.[18]

Army Capstone Concept, 2009

Once a desired future state and resulting vision are developed, strategic leaders create a pathway to the future by means of strategy and plans. They develop ends (objectives), ways (concepts and methods), and means (resources) to achieve the vision. Explicitly defined objectives make vision attainment recognizable when it comes to fruition. Definable objectives also provide a method of measuring and evaluating progress toward achieving the vision. Thus said, visions serve another purpose—that of accountability. There is an inherent accountability of the leader to the enterprise members and external stakeholders to ensure that the leader's actions are consistent with the espoused vision. The vision is also a means of holding enterprise members accountable so that the organizational structures and processes, as well as their behaviors, remain in alignment with the vision.

SUMMARY

Vision is a leader-focused activity that gives a sense of identity, purpose, direction, and energy. This process exists at many levels and in every type of organization; its content is the desired future of the organization. For that reason, vision adds value by providing the means for the enterprise to anticipate and move toward the future. Visions generally increase in complexity and extend in the time horizon at successively higher levels of organization. Strategic vision establishes the priority for influence and the allocation of resources.

This chapter has provided several perspectives on visions and the visioning process. It should be clear that there is no "cookie cutter" solution or best template for creating and implementing a vision. It is important for future strategic leaders to consider several techniques and to pursue the technique that fits the context of the enterprise and its environment.

Leaders at every level of organizations must be effective custodians, developers, and articulators of their vision. In the military context, whether advisors to senior and strategic leaders or members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, leaders guide the definition of the desired endstate for U.S. national security. Arguably, only strategic leaders possess the decision authority, perspective, position, and experience to derive a vision from assessment of the environment, understanding of personal and professional values, and appreciation of the potential of the enterprise. Leaders are also responsible for the continual evaluation and refinement of the vision in response to internal and external changes. The measure of effectiveness of the vision is both objective and subjective—the degree to which the enterprise accomplishes its mission and maintains its relevancy in the present and in the future aligned with its environment.

ENDNOTES

1. This framework of Learn, Adapt, and Anticipate is modified from the work of Eliot Cohen, and John Gooch. *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War.* (New York: The Free Press, 1990).

2. Bob Johansen, *Get There Early: Sensing the Future to Compete in the Present* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2007): pp. 45-68. He turned the VUCA acronym on its head with these proposed strategic leadership skills.

3. Johansen's model of VUCA does not include the additional "C" for communication.

4. *U. S. Army War College Strategic Plan* (Carlisle, PA: USAWC, February 1, 2005): p. 5.

5. Attributed to Governor George W. Bush in 1987. See Robert Ajemian. "Where is the Real George Bush?" *Time*, January 26, 1987; http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,963342-2,00.html.

6. John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1998): p. 68.

7. Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency.1990): p. 9.

8. Martin L. King, Jr., "I have a Dream Speech," (Washington, DC, August 28, 1963); http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html.

9. See http://www.microsoft.com/enable/microsoft/mission.aspx.

10. See http://www.google.com/corporate/.

11. See http://walmartstores.com/AboutUs/8123.aspx.

12. Steve Ditlea, "An Apple on every desk: How Apple Computer has inaugurated the workplace of the future," *Inc.,* http://www.inc.com/magazine/19811001/2033.html (accessed December 10, 2009).

13. See http://macdailynews.com/index.php/weblog/comments/22817/.

14. Isaac Newton, "Letter to Robert Hooke," (February 5, 1676); http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing_on_the_shoulders_of_giants.

15. "Remarks of Secretary of State George C. Marshall at the Harvard University Commence Exercises, (June 5, 1947); http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/marshall/pam-sp.htm.

16. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-1 (FM 100-1) The Army* (Washington, DC; Department of the Army, June 14, 1994): p. 2.

17. U.S. Army Strategic Communications (Pentagon, Washington, DC: December 11, 2003): http://www.army.mil/thewayahead/, (accessed February 6, 2004).

18. Department of the Army. *The Army Capstone Concept Operational Adaptability: Operating under Conditions of Uncertainty and Complexity in an Era of Persistent Conflict 2016-2018* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, December 21, 2009): p. 9.

CHAPTER 4

STRATEGIC LEADER COMPETENCIES

Competencies are the knowledge, skills, attributes, and capacities that enable a leader to perform his required tasks. Although competencies are often related to natural traits and abilities, what typically distinguishes a competency from a trait is the understanding that competencies can be developed and significantly improved for most individuals. A competency can be improved through education, but most often is developed by reflective experience. Strategic leader competencies are often no different than the same abilities required to be a leader at any level. However, some strategic leader competencies are qualitatively different and new. For instance, strategic leaders not only need to have the skills required to lead and take care of their subordinates, they also need to able to envision long range future requirements and to apply integrative thinking skills.

The major categories of leadership competencies can be grouped as conceptual, technical, and interpersonal. Strategic conceptual competencies include the thinking skills needed to understand and deal with the complex and ambiguous strategic world. Technical competencies include knowledge of external political, economic, and cultural systems that impact the organization. Interpersonal competencies include consensus building, both internal and external to the organization, and the capacity to communicate effectively. For a more detailed examination of senior leader competencies see Appendix A.

CONCEPTUAL COMPETENCIES

Strategic leaders require the capacity to deal with extraordinary complexity. Theirs is an environment of difficult, competing issues, few of which have clear solutions and all of which pose risks or challenges. Many issues have more than one feasible solution, but no one solution may be totally acceptable, while all incur costs. It is important to understand such issues fundamentally and accurately to determine the underlying threads that may connect apparently unrelated issues and to chart actions that will have the best long-term outcomes. In doing so, an understanding of second- and third-order effects is necessary to resist actions that may appear reasonable in the short run but are detrimental in the long term. Strategic conceptual competencies include frame of reference development, problem management, and envisioning the future.

Frame of Reference Development. Every leader builds a complex knowledge structure over time from schooling, personal experience, and self-study. For the strategic leader, this knowledge structure is a "map" of the strategic world; it is a dynamic representation of the significant factors in the strategic environment with cause-and-effect interrelationships. A frame of reference acts as a basis of observation and judgment.

Three attributes are essential for building a good frame of reference. First, the leader must be open to new experiences and input from others including subordinates and peers. Second, the leader must be reflective, and not afraid to rethink past experiences and learn from them. Third, he must be comfortable with abstracts and concepts common in the strategic environment.

A frame of reference cannot be taught by conventional classroom methods. It is developed by the individual over time as he reflects and makes sense of new knowledge and experiences. Frames of reference form as leaders progress from the direct through the organizational to the strategic levels of leadership. Individual initiative is important to developing a broad frame of reference. Consequently, part of becoming a strategic leader is approaching this mental activity as intrinsically interesting and rewarding. In the following vignette General Lynch explains the value of a fighting level frame of reference that characterized then Colin Powell's service as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

> *One of your greatest challenges in the Pentagon is trying to explain to other people the problems down at the fighting level. So many of those guys started out as vice presidents and worked their way up. They never had an appreciation of what goes on down there at the lowest level. Powell had the advantage of going up through those levels. For the younger leaders in Vietnam, there was a tremendous moral and ethical challenge that was never faced by the commanders in World War II. When a guy is steeped in the moral and ethical issues down at the fighting level he's more inclined to back off from gross solutions and try to equate what they are saying to how difficult it would be to implement it down where he remembers it. Powell was the first Chairman who had that experience and was able to carry it up through the ranks.*[1]
>
> General Mike Lynch, U.S. Army (Ret)

Much like the intelligence analyst, the strategic leader, equipped with a well developed frame of reference, templates events that may have no discernable pattern to his subordinates. He is more able to understand the true situation and, most importantly, know where these events are likely to lead if no intervention occurs. Such leaders are uniquely equipped to deal with events having complex causes and to envision creative solutions. This enables timely and proactive decision making.

A well-developed frame of reference also gives the strategic leader a thorough understanding of organizational subsystems. This understanding enables visualizing the interactive dynamics of the total system. Appreciation for these interdependencies helps to ensure that decisions taken in one area will not have an unanticipated adverse impact in others. Without this capacity, changes in policy, regulation, or action may indirectly produce other changes that are neither anticipated nor desired.

Problem Management. Management of strategic problems deals with issues that are competing, that have manifold implications which are often difficult to understand completely, and that have potentially catastrophic outcomes if not resolved carefully. There are no "right" answers. Many issues are not so much a choice between "right and wrong" as a choice between "right and right." Strategic leaders must be able to think families of issues through as systems so that decisions move the problem as a whole toward resolution. This involves applying past experiences, identifying and creating patterns, discarding non useable data, understanding second- and third-order effects, maintaining flexibility, and knowing what is an acceptable outcome for the system as a whole. It also involves working and thinking interactively and not solving problems individually.

Problem management and decision making are two distinct activities. The first involves managing the problems towards the desired outcome—making adjustments, modifying the initial approach, and discarding alternatives that inhibit progress. Many of the most significant problems at the strategic level require this approach because simple and direct alternative courses of action do not exist. The second involves developing alternative courses of action, assessing probability of success, and pursuing the selected course of action. *This differentiation between problem management and decision making is a major element in the transition from direct to more indirect leadership.* Most past training and work experiences at the direct level are based on developing short-term solutions and deciding on relatively well-structured problems by choosing among alternative courses of action. Long-term, ill-defined problems for which it is difficult to envision desired outcomes are not frequently encountered at lower levels. These are the problems, however, that strategic leaders frequently encounter.

Strategic leadership requires a refined ability to recognize and avoid irrelevant and marginal issues. An important ability in working strategic issues is to see beyond the immediately obvious information received and to know what information is missing. This includes recognizing multiple paths to the same goal, understanding the opportunity costs for each path, and foreseeing the indirect effects of each.

Additionally, acceptance of some degree of risk is essential. Strategic issues are generally ill-defined, and most information available is ambiguous and incomplete. Most possible courses of action have such complex second- and third-order effects that a completely accurate prediction of their outcomes is not possible. This necessitates committing to decisions and operating effectively under conditions of uncertainty. In the face of risk, the ability to recognize and seize opportunities is evident most clearly in the effectiveness with which the strategic leader identifies relevant information, understands the significance of projects or activities of others, and discards distracters.

Envisioning the Future. The capability to formulate and articulate strategic aims and key concepts is perhaps the strategic leader's most significant capacity, the application of which was discussed in Chapter 3, Vision. He must lead the organization in the development

of strategic plans to address mid- and long-term programs designed to achieve the strategic aims. This demands an understanding of the interaction of ends, ways, and means as they interact to form a strategy. A staff of strategists may develop and refine the strategy, but the strategic leader provides the direction, the concept, and the focus.

A senior leader must not only have the ability to envision the future, but must also work proactively to shape the future environment to enhance goal attainment. At the strategic level, goals may be far-reaching and should be formulated to accommodate contingencies that reflect the organization's relationship to a changing environment. This requires the thinking and processing of information creatively outside the established boundaries. It is an ability to see the organization and environment not as it is but rather as it ought to be.

TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

Strategic leader technical competencies differ significantly from those skills required at the direct or organizational level. While the technical skills used at lower levels are important elements of the strategic leader's frame of reference, they usually are not directly relevant to the specific tasks required at the higher level. At the strategic level, technical competencies include an understanding of organizational systems, an appreciation of functional relationships outside the organization, and knowledge of the broader political and social systems within which the organization operates. Success at the strategic level is a matter of continuous learning as exemplified by George Washington.

> *The crucial military difference (apart from levels of innate ability) between Washington and the commanders who opposed him was that they were sure they knew all the answers, while Washington tried every day and every hour to learn.*[2]
>
> James Thomas Flexner

Systems Understanding. At the organizational level, leaders understand how their organizations operate and how to foster conditions that enable them to be more effective. At the strategic level there is decreased concentration on internal process and system integration and increased concentration on how the organization fits within the total DOD framework and into the broader international arena. Organizational systems at these levels have complex inter-relationships, and strategic leaders may have numerous reporting and coordinating relationships. Thus the leader must understand the separate roles he plays, the boundaries of these roles, their demands and constraints, and the expectations of other departments and agencies.

Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multinational (JIIM) Relationships. National force projection necessitates an understanding and integration of joint and combined operations. Different nations have different operating practices and principles

which impact operations of a combined force. Similarly, each Service has developed a different culture, vocabulary, and expectation for its members. Strategic leaders must know how to operate in a multicultural environment to gain the full understanding and commitment of their subordinates.

Political and Social Competence. The ability to participate effectively in the interagency process inherent in national security policy formulation and execution is fundamental. Just as important is the capacity for interacting with the legislative branch. It is necessary to have this political and social competence to advise in developing the policy, preparing the strategy, and working to secure adequate resources to implement the strategy. Leaders at the strategic level function as members of the policy formulation team, helping to determine national interests and objectives. They present a balanced argument of national security requirements, benefits, costs, and risks.

INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES

Strategic leader interpersonal competencies include the ability to build consensus within the organization, the ability to negotiate with external agencies or organizations in an attempt to shape or influence the external environment, and the ability to communicate internally and externally. While these are not the only three interpersonal competencies needed by strategic leaders, they are the most important when leading organizations at the highest levels.

Consensus Building. In contrast with organizational-level leaders, strategic leaders devote far more of their time dealing with outside organizations and with leaders of other Services or nations. Consensus on an issue is necessary if coordinated and effective action is to be taken. Consensus building is a complicated process based on effective reasoning, logic, and negotiation which may take place over an extended period. Consensus is not unanimous agreement. It is more about what all parties can live with than what any one party would prefer. It is arriving at a decision that results in the absence of sabotage or interference in an activity while allowing some amount of time for the issue to resolve itself. It requires involving all stakeholders, encouraging input, making problems visible and resolving them, and making decisions collaboratively. Even when consensus is achieved, the leader and organization must continuously work to ensure that "apparent" consensus bears out in the actions of the consensus stakeholders. Strategic leaders must be persuasive yet willing to compromise when necessary. Consensus building is different from directing or commanding. While strategic leaders, like organizational leaders, may issue direct orders, such orders have less force in the complex strategic world. In working with peers, it is imperative to reach consensus. Peers will not respond to orders. In essence, the process of consensus building ensures that effective reasoning has taken place and that contentious issues have been resolved which gains commitment to long term goals that likely extend well into the future.

The hindsight of the historian can only reinforce Washington's conviction that the crucial battles of the war were in the arenas of public opinion. There can be no doubt that the British were totally outclassed in the warfare for the minds of men. It was in those mental arenas that the civilian-soldier George Washington shone the brightest. He kept forever in mind, as more radical statesmen of either the right or the left could not do, that the fundamental objective was not to foster division but to increase unity.[3]

James Thomas Flexner

Negotiation. As stated earlier, many relationships at the strategic level are lateral and without clear subordination. In many of these relationships strategic leaders must rely heavily on negotiating skills. Successful negotiation requires a range of interpersonal skills. Perhaps the most important is the ability to stand firm on nonnegotiable points while simultaneously communicating respect for other participants. Personal attributes underlying this ability require skills in listening, in diagnosing unspoken agendas, and the capacity to detach oneself personally from the negotiation process. The essence of successful negotiating is communicating a clear position on an issue while still conveying willingness to compromise.

Communication. Internal to the organization, strategic leaders communicate through a variety of direct and indirect means. Their actions and statements are always carefully analyzed. Observers are keenly sensitive to nuances of meaning. Effective communication within the organization is important to changing, or even maintaining, direction or policy. If change is desired, large organizations can be steered on a new course only very deliberately because of their inertia. When leaders attempt change through policy, regulation, or vision, their communications are interpreted at every level. Thus, care in choice of words is essential to ensuring the desired message is received.

External to the organization, strategic leaders communicate with Congress, government agencies, national political leaders, and their constituents. This is accomplished through a variety of means. Through writing, meetings, interviews for news media, or through public speaking engagements, strategic leaders communicate for the organization. This requires clarity of thought, direction, and process. Possessing these communicative attributes, coupled with a high degree of persuasiveness, provides the leader with the necessary tools to build support, build consensus, and negotiate successfully. Communicating in a brief, clear, and persuasive manner--a considerable challenge when dealing in a vague, uncertain environment--is a competency strategic leaders must master. General Powell had the ability to effectively communicate to external audiences as illustrated below.

Of more immediate concern to General Powell, however, was mounting press and congressional pressure for a 'peace dividend.' The Chairman wished to counter criticism that the Department's planning ignored changes in the world. Determined to convince the American people and the Congress of the need for continued U.S. engagement worldwide, General Powell had already begun publicly to articulate his strategic vision.[4]

Lorna S. Jaffe

SUMMARY

Strategic leader competencies fall under three broad categories: conceptual, technical, and interpersonal. These competencies are supported by a broad and rich frame of reference developed throughout the leader's life that enables the leader to deal with tremendously complex issues and events. Although theoretical and historical readings can make salient the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to any strategic leader competency, most often these competencies will be developed through hands-on experiences, especially if linked to some sort of candid feedback mechanism. Future strategic leaders should balance identified weaknesses with challenging jobs and opportunities in order to stretch and develop current skills.

ENDNOTES

1. General Mike Lynch in Howard Means, *Colin Powell: Soldier/Statesman – Statesman/Soldier* (New York: Knopf, 1992): p. 266.

2. James Thomas Flexner, *George Washington in the American Revolution (1775-1875)* (Boston: Little Brown, 1968): p. 535.

3. Ibid., p. 534.

4. Lorna S. Jaffe, *The Development of the Base Force 1989-1992* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1993): p. 28.

CHAPTER 5

STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING PARADIGMS:

A PRIMER FOR SENIOR LEADERS[1]

The goal for the year at the USAWC is to prepare our students to be strategic leaders or to serve as effective advisers to the senior leadership of our military and this Nation. Nobel Laureate, Elihu Root, the Secretary of War in 1901, challenged our institution to study the three great problems of "national defense, military science and responsible command."[1] This means that our graduates are part of the system that determines and reaffirms the values and the security interests of our Nation. This system formulates policies and spawns the series of strategic documents beginning with the National Security Strategy of the U.S., and supported by the Quadrennial Defense Review, the National Defense Strategy and the National Military Strategy generated within the DOD. As members of the profession of arms sworn to protect and defend against all enemies, our graduates must be experts in the development of plans and the employment of military forces in the execution of our national policies. The USAWC's primary mission is to help students gain an appreciation of the challenges of strategic decision making by incorporating into its curriculum lessons relating to the theory and practice of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation. The curriculum does so by providing an overlay of historical case studies to make real the complexity involved in strategic decision making.

STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING

Strategic Change

There are several strategic decisions that involved change in the U.S. Army in the second half of the 20th century. After the conclusion of World War II, the U.S. Army roles and missions were explicitly stated in the National Security Act of 1947. These established its jurisdiction vis-à-vis the other services.[2] In the 1950's, the Army sought to redefine itself to accommodate the defense priorities of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. At issue during the Eisenhower Administration was the contentious restructuring of the force for the nuclear era.[3] Later, the Vietnam War necessitated a change in Army doctrine and force structure to deal with the environment of unconventional war. In the 1970's and 80's, the Army again redefined itself to face the Soviet threat in Western Europe as it learned to operate with the all-recruited and professionalized "all-volunteer" force. Each of these periods required strategic decisions reached by senior leadership and implemented using a framework that is today referred to as Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leader

[1] This chapter is a reprint of an unpublished manuscript by Professor Charles Allen and Dr. Breena Coates (2009).

Development, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF). Our Army, as part of the national defense establishment, is always faced with strategic decisions on how to develop and position our forces for success in the joint operating environment (JOE) and for the future.

In each case, Army leadership was engaged and defined the purpose of the organization, establishing the vision, and developing supporting strategies to achieve it—deciding what to do, when, and how. Accordingly, strategic decisions are made by the members of the organization who have the ultimate responsibility to ensure fulfillment of its purpose and who accept the consequences when it does not. For the U.S. military, strategic decisions are made by the civilian Secretary of Defense, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs, and Combatant Commanders, all of whom bear responsibility to the Chief Executive, Congress, and ultimately to the American people. Decisions about the Army involve other organizations and agencies that clearly have a stake in what the Army does, and how it goes about doing it. The nature of the contemporary operating environment (COE) necessitates consideration of capabilities possessed by JIIM and non-governmental actors. Thus, strategic decision makers may be significantly influenced by stakeholders outside of the organization.

The Ontology of Strategic Decision Making

Strategic decisions are non-routine and involve both the art of leadership and the science of management. Making routine decisions of how to efficiently manage resources according to established procedures and clearly understood objectives is the technical work of management. Routine decisions are normally the purview of supervisors and middle-level managers that have the requisite authority and responsibility to take action. However, non-routine decisions require what Harvard Professor Ron Heifetz refers to as "adaptive work" where senior leadership must consider the broader implications of the situation, take an active role in defining the problem, creatively explore potential solutions, and apply judgments as to what *should* be done.[4] The USAWC definition of Strategic Leadership as the process of influence for "achievement of a desirable and clearly understood vision by influencing the organizational culture, allocating resources, directing through policy and directive, and building consensus,"[5] implicitly requires the capacity for strategic decision making.

The Complexity of Strategic Decision Making

Strategic decisions entail "ill-structured,"[6] "messy" or "wicked problems" that do not have quick, easy solutions.[7] H.L. Mencken's quip is amusing and accurate, "there is always a well-known solution to every human problem—neat, plausible, and wrong."[8] This concept, known as the Error of the Third Kind, describes how complex problems are often addressed with a correct solution to the wrong problem.[9] At the strategic level, the scope of decision making is different than at other levels within a military organization—tactical

and operational—which have established and accepted procedures that are normative and prescriptive. Tactical convoy movements of an infantry platoon can be reduced to several definable parameters—number of vehicles, rate of march, interval between vehicles, number of refuel and rest stops, etc., so that the platoon leader can arrive at the "right" solution to get the unit to a desired location. At the operational level, movements from a staging area for multiple brigade combat teams along parallel routes may be more complicated, but use the same parameters to determine a "best" way to deploy combat forces into an area of operation in accordance with a well-prescribed movement table. However, the strategic level decision on the number of brigade combat teams that the Army will field as part of its Transformation to the Modular Force involves innumerable interdependent activities within the DOTMLPF framework. Such a decision is inherently more complex and "ill-structured" in pursuit of the objective to provide relevant landpower forces to combatant commanders for future battlefields.

At the strategic level, the national defense establishment and its members must interact across diverse environmental domains and are required to demonstrate effectiveness in the eyes of multiple constituents. Strategic decision making occurs at a key nexus of that interaction, culminating from decision criteria associated with dynamic, nonlinear, highly interconnected, and interdependent relationships. The power to make strategic decisions is usually dispersed over a number of constituencies. The purpose of this chapter is to show commonly used decision paradigms while highlighting their particular strengths and weaknesses as appropriate. Making sense of strategic decisions requires adding a set of mental models distinct from the traditional military decision making models. The decision theories presented provide leaders with an understanding of the major forms of decision making used in complex environments. These models are more than abstract conceptualizations; they provide frameworks by which to analyze past strategic practices and develop new ones. The models are generally categorized as either prescriptive or descriptive. As the term implies, the prescriptive model suggests methods and processes that should be used in order to make better decisions. This type of model is seen as a matter of choice by decision makers (e.g., the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP)). In contrast, descriptive models attempt to detail the process of how decisions are actually made.

THE BASIC DECISION MAKING PARADIGMS

There are many models of decision making useful for strategists in conceptualizing decisions. Some of the most well known that are of value for USAWC students are:

1) Rational Model, 2) Bounded-Rationality Model, 3) Incremental Model, 4) Mixed-Scanning Model, 5) Polis Model, 6) Garbage Can Model, 7) Bargaining Model, 8) Participative Model. Other decision making models that have foundations in microeconomic theory, such as the public-choice model, the prospect model, etc., relate more closely to the civilian, non-military sector and thus are not addressed here.

Rational Decision Making: This approach, also known as "the rational-comprehensive" model, borrows from economic theory and has the goal of maximizing efficiency by picking the best alternative based on specific criteria. Congruent with the MDMP, it is often described as a six-step process:

1. Define goals
2. Identify alternatives
3. Calculate the consequences
4. Decide the most favorable using a calculated ratio of benefits to costs
5. Monitor implementation
6. Begin again

The rational approach is very attractive and easy to embrace with its simplicity. The formulation intuitively seems to make sense. It provides a structured way to address a problem and arrive at a solution. The approach may appear to impose certainty and clarity. However, it is best suited for simple, well-structured problems. The rational decision making process depends on clear statements of goals accepted by those seeking to address problematic conditions. It works well on technical issues when goals are precisely defined and there is general agreement on measures for analysis and selection criteria. NASA uses the rational approach because engineering parameters and procedures tend to be less ambiguous. The use of this approach is much more difficult and problematic for defense organizations whose goals are constantly a matter of debate in a political system designed to balance federal power between three branches of government.

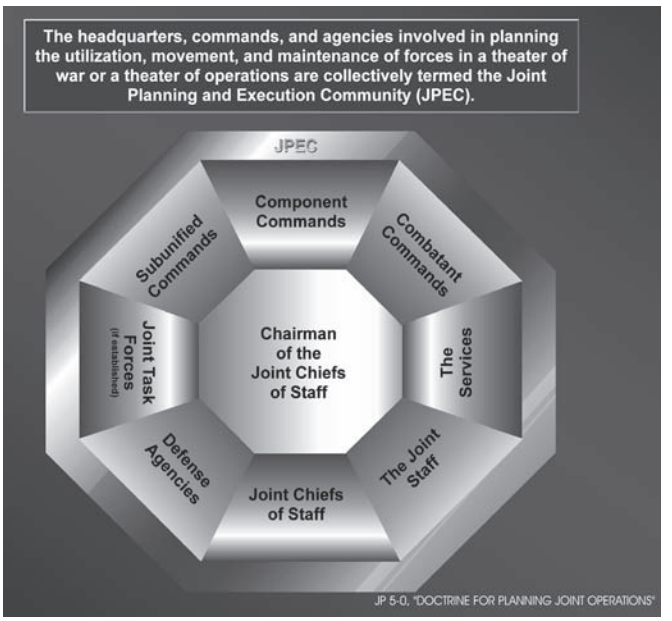

Figure 1. The Joint Planning and Execution Community[10]

Although the rational approach of the MDMP is embraced by our military culture, many factors prevent its strict adherence as a prescriptive process. We see the challenge presented by the rational approach when our military leaders seek clear expressions of desired end-states as a precursor to developing military strategy and operational plans (e.g., Weinberg-Powell doctrine as implemented in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm). Using the context of the Joint Planning and Execution Community shown in Figure 1, it is arguably difficult to have each sub-community agree on the common goals to be achieved. The nature of the problems and the complexity of the environment would generate an unmanageable number of possible alternatives to consider. The uncertainty and ambiguity of the environment would also undermine any confidence in determining consequences if a particular alternative were selected. Those consequences, either in the attainment of stated goals or commensurate benefits and costs, assume causality between selected courses of actions and subsequent results. While military leaders prefer clear expressions of end states and objectives, ambiguity is valuable in a political environment. The desire for clearly delineated goals and objectives are rarely to be found and even when they are stated publicly, they are often subject to change. Hence, the rational decision making approach is not sufficient to explain the real-world decisions made at the operational and strategic level.

The Behavioral Model (Bounded Rationality): The most important critique of the rational approach comes from the work of Nobel Laureate, Herbert Simon, who presented the concept of "bounded rationality."[11] This theory holds that:

1. Humans are intellectually ill-equipped to make cognitively rational decisions because they can only process a few bits of data at a time.

2. Comprehensive analysis is impossible due to limitations on the availability of information, time, and expertise.

3. Individuals cannot imagine every possible solution to a problem, and therefore not all possible alternatives are considered or analyzed.

The practical application of the rational MDMP has decision makers simplifying the problem set and restricting themselves to a few major alternatives. This happens in the face of time constraints and the limitations of people. In practice, decision makers identify a limited number of decision making criteria and subsequently examine a limited range of alternatives that have worked before or are easy to develop. Alternative selection tends to stop at the first alternative that sufficiently addresses the problem at hand. Given the lack of perfect information to make the decision and the impossibility of optimization in the problem-setting, Simon argued that decision makers "*satisfice*." That is to say that people do not optimize decisions, but actually seek to find a solution that is minimally sufficient and satisfactory—one that is "good enough" to meet minimum established criteria. The conclusion of Operation Desert Storm in 1991, short of an invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, could be viewed as a satisficed decision that was good enough at the time.

This model often has an implicit choice variant where, although multiple alternatives are presented, there is a clear favorite that will likely be selected so decision criteria are skewed to support the choice. Those military planners and operators who have been involved with MDMP can recount the development of the obligatory three courses of action and the "objective weighting" that resulted in selection of the staff favorite course of action (i.e., the one that the commander would approve).

Incremental Model: Charles Lindblom also rejected the rational-comprehensive model and presented an alternative "incremental" approach to decision making. In his now famous paper, "The Science of Muddling Through,"[12] Lindblom saw that most policy decisions are made in small analytical increments in response to events and circumstances where the decision maker's analysis is focused on familiar, better-known experiences. This significantly reduces the number of decision factors and alternatives available. "Disjointed" incrementalism, argued Lindblom, is really how problems are solved over time, in piecemeal, rather than in comprehensive, fashion. Relatively small or incremental policy changes tend to be the norm because of the need for consensus among the interested parties and negotiation efforts are directed to what can be achieved. Unfortunately, the attainment of short-term solutions may be at the expense of more important and far-reaching goals. Incrementalism is not inherently undesirable since small changes from the resulting decisions are more subject to correction if they produce unfavorable outcomes. The theory of incrementalism explains how the process of decision making is slowed down, and organizations avoid making big mistakes that could be costly militarily, financially and politically. However, focusing on smaller problems and failure to confront the larger issues may result in "kicking the can down the road" to deal with later when the situation may be more complex and dangerous. Furthermore, the incremental model may slowly move the organization away from the original espoused goals. If the organization is faced with an environment that has changed significantly, the incremental approach is unlikely to result in the necessary amount of change to guarantee organizational survival.[13]

The incremental model has the following characteristics:

1. Only a few options and means are considered
2. Decisions are the product of negotiated settlements
3. Changes are made gradually over time
4. Decisions tend to be made reactively
5. Political considerations are important in determining outcomes

The incremental approach to decision making is reflective of the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Executing (PPBE) process used in the military. The greatest predetermining factor for any year's budget is the prior year's budget. Anything more than incremental change is unlikely when it comes to the budgetary process. An item might be submitted and approved in the Program Objective Memorandum (POM), and might be incrementally added to by using the Supplemental Budget to gain more resources for it. Alternatively, a program might be incrementally developed in the POM over several years. Several of our

Department of the Army (DA) weapons systems programs (e.g., Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the Remotely Piloted Vehicle, and the Future Combat System could be viewed using the incremental model). In the case of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the original espoused goals were incrementally contradicted over time.[14]

Lindblom conceded shortcomings of the incremental approach including: fragmentation of decisions, arbitrary exclusions, and decision makers may overlook excellent policies not suggested by the chain of successive policy steps. Yehezkel Dror offered other critiques of incrementalism. It may not suffice to meet real growing demands; it may miss the mark entirely; it lacks responsiveness to large-scale needs; it makes acceptable the forces that tend toward inertia; it maintains the status quo, and, it lacks innovativeness.[15] The result may be a failure to confront major issues. The danger is that the situation may become more complex and tenuous.

Mixed Scanning Model: This is a hybrid, or compromise, paradigm derived from rational and incremental decision making theories. It is drawn from the work of sociologist Amitai Etzioni[16] who suggested its use in seeking policy solutions to short-term, but urgent, needs. It is, in effect, a concept that can be described as "splitting the difference" between the models. Etzioni likens the concept to a photographer working with two cameras. A broad-angled camera quickly pans through the entire environment—which is the rational approach. Another camera "would zero in on those areas revealed by the first camera to require more detailed examination."[17] Janis and Mann[18] call this the *quasi-satisficing* approach. For example, the U.S. National Security Advisor to the President in suggesting a policy decision on terrorist camps in Pakistan, might superficially scan all recent developments, which is the comprehensive approach. He might then focus on the issues that have come up since the last scan, which is the incremental approach.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, given a strategic problem, such as providing advice to the Secretaries of Defense and State on whether the U.S. should assist Israel in its ongoing conflict with Hamas, would plausibly review the chessboard[19] of options: military support; political and diplomatic support; watch-and-wait, or some other strategy. He might then choose a particular approach. Having done so, he and his team would go back to examining, in detail, the options within the chosen subset. When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his advisors scanned the available options for the U.S. prior to involvement in World War II, they were utilizing the rational approach. When it became clear that the preferred option was involvement in the war, FDR and advisors then scanned pertinent decisions required for U.S. involvement. In turn, this scan generated the strategy for entry into the war.

Etzioni criticized both approaches as being insufficient. He observed that on the one hand, calling the rational approach unrealistic and arguing that a full examination

of all pertinent choices is impractical and, on the other hand, that incrementalism did not distinguish between core and peripheral issues.

Polis Model: Another scholar critical about the rational and the incremental models is Deborah Stone, who offered another perspective of public policy making—the Polis model of a political community.[20] Stone presented opposing viewpoints of the market (a rational model for political decision making) and the polis (how political decisions really happen). She argued the polis perspective is more descriptive of the way decisions are really made by comparing the theoretical political environments of the market and the polis and considering the goals of the respective communities. How problems are defined in the market versus the polis is a function of symbolism, causes, and interests that influence how problems are addressed. Decisions are made and solutions (policy-strategies) are formed with inducements, rules, rights, and powers as the driving forces. In sum, the polis model assumes inconsistencies in life where the political community is able to deal with less than comprehensive information and less than reliable information. Stone's model has the following characteristics: [21]

1. State goals ambiguously and keep some secret.
2. Be prepared to shift and redefine goals as the political situation dictates.
3. Keep undesirable alternatives off the agenda by not mentioning them.
4. Make your preferred alternative appear to be the only feasible one.
5. Focus on one part of the causal chain and ignore politically difficult ones.
6. Use rhetorical devices to blend alternatives to prevent strong opposition.
7. Selectively project consequences that make your decision look the best.
8. Choose the action that hurts powerful constituents the least, but portray your decision as creating the maximum social good.

The Polis Model can be applied to the decision making process of President Lyndon Johnson for the Vietnam War. As H.R. McMaster recounts in his book, *Dereliction of Duty,* Johnson's goals for the conflict were not clearly stated nor shared with the U.S. Congress.[22] With support of Secretary of Defense McNamara, the president co-opted the Joints Chiefs of Staff to gain their silence as he pushed for his Great Society agenda at the expense of recommended force levels for operations in Vietnam.

Garbage Can Model: Cohen, March, and Olsen developed the notion that decisions are made based on chance and unsystematic interactions of actors and opportunities, and the current availability of resources.[23] This model, based on the theory of organizational anarchy, posits the notion that organizations have inconsistent and ill-defined preferences, and operate on the basis of trial and error; that stakeholders only partially understand the processes; and that decision-makers often act whimsically and impulsively. Within this framework, March and his colleagues theorized that organizations produce many solutions

for which there are no immediate problems, and these are dumped in a holding can—the garbage can. Problems needing solutions will arise in the future and a search through the garbage might yield a solution. In this sense, the garbage can is really an "opportunity" can. The mix of opportunities lying in waiting are based on the organization's current and past environmental realities. The garbage can's relevance depends on how quickly these cans get filled and also how quickly the garbage cans are discarded. While the garbage can presents opportunities for addressing the important problems, it has the threat of unsystematic rationality.

Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf used the garbage can model to explain decision making of the 1983 Grenada Rescue Operation.[24] VADM Metcalf was the commander of the joint U.S. forces, CJTF 120, for Operation Urgent Fury, who in his reflections commented, "It is clear that many decisions just 'happened'."[25] While the goals of the invasion were clearly established and communicated, the command and staff structure was cobbled together with available forces from all Services (an existing solution used to solve the emergent problem). The paper organization of CJTF 120 was fleshed out by re-directing personnel—a notable case was taking the Army liaison officer, Major General Norm Schwarzkopf, and naming him the deputy commander. While the operation was a success, several problems with intelligence, communications, and coordination (resulting in fratricide) among the joint forces led to congressional investigations. The review of Operation Urgent Fury contributed to the enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (GNA). GNA established authorities for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, revised military command structures, and instituted requirements for joint training. In sum, the non-rationality of the decision making process led to legislation to provide more structure and control.

Bargaining Model: Bargaining reflects a decision making process both between individuals within an organization and between organizations through their representatives. This perspective requires an understanding of the principles of negotiation. The essence of decision making of groups involves tradeoffs between constituents that may have competing interests and agendas. In seeking to identify common interests and mutual benefit for the involved parties, some concessions may be made, but the resulting decision should produce a condition that is acceptable to either side. Here the anchoring and adjustment bias inhibits substantial movement from the status quo so it is unlikely to have drastic change in policy or strategy embraced by the group.

The bargaining approach is common in government, but does have a number of advantages and weaknesses.[26] It may be effective for addressing and presenting issues while serving as the catalyst for getting multiple perspectives before the decision making body. However, this approach may not result in the best alternative for a given situation since political consensus sometimes results in the lowest common denominator—achieving

a decision that all will accept. Consequently, it may lead to an equitable distribution of power and benefit that may be inherently less effective than a contested decision.

Kettl and Fesler provide us with an example as they deconstruct the U.S. decisions during the Cuban Missile Crisis.[27] Based on Graham Allison's classic study, *The Essence of Decision,* the example demonstrates the bargaining among the key Kennedy Administration advisers ranging from the senior military officials, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Director, Central Intelligence Agency and others under the leadership of the Attorney General, Robert Kennedy.[28] The Cuban Missile Crisis was a high-stakes and time-sensitive event with potentially catastrophic consequences for failure. The key players within the Kennedy Administration had distinctly opposing views on the goals to be achieved and what should be done (e.g., General LeMay's insistence on confronting the Soviet Union with direct military strikes) in an environment of uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. The final U.S. actions were derived from reaching consensus through several iterations of discussions with the advisers.

Bargaining is a process that gives each participant a voice in the proceedings. While it may not be the case where a simple majority wins, it can be fraught with contention and can be time-consuming in the attempt to resolve points of disagreement. In this form of decision making, the needs of the most powerful parties are more likely to be met, but the larger interests of the aggregate may not be addressed. Limiting the number of people involved in making decisions presents is own paradoxes. Smaller numbers of participants may be able to reach decisions more quickly by excluding less powerful members, but may not have the requisite diversity of thought and experience to formulate better decisions. The potential for better decisions increases when the participant pool is larger even though achieving agreement may be more difficult.

Participative Decision Making Model: The participative decision making perspective is an expansion of the bargaining approach and attempts to include all those directly affected by the decision. It is the most democratic form of decision making where there is an opportunity to provide input and influence. However, there is an important distinction between "consultation" and "shared decision making power."[29] Providing the opportunity to voice an opinion is not the same as giving power to make the decision. We commonly see this approach as one that calls for "consultation and stakeholder analysis" and that places emphasis on meeting with "constituents and clientele" to discern the key issues for consideration before decisions are reached. While these efforts may be largely symbolic, such stakeholder groups can wield significant power and present obstacles if not appropriately included in the decision process. These groups may have their own agenda and interests to protect, hence raising concerns about the degree to which they truly represent the goodwill of the greater community. To address this concern, advisory groups are often sought to represent all views of the community in a grass roots fashion.[30]

Participative decision making takes place in the United Nations, NATO, and other world bodies.

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process had obvious implications for the members of the Joint Planning and Execution Community. Decisions made by the Services responsible to provide the Title 10 functions of training and sustaining fielded forces have a significant impact on the Combatant Commands (CoComs) that have the mission to execute the national military strategy, joint plans, and operations. The BRAC decisions recommended by the Army in such areas as realignment of operational forces of the Active Army at installations DOD-wide, return of overseas units back to the continental U.S., and consolidation of headquarters and other activities in Joint or multifunctional installations have obvious implications for warfighting commands.[31] To gain input from the military departments on areas of common interest, Joint Cross Service Groups were formed and provided input to the Army infrastructure analysis for the BRAC deliberations. Once the DOD BRAC report was submitted to the executive branch, members of the Presidential BRAC commission visited installations recommended for closure to hear from those impacted by such decisions.

Participative decision making is slow and expensive. While it is an effective means to collect information, the amount and unorganized nature of the information is a problem in its own right that has to be addressed. The quality of the decision in this approach often depends on the expertise and commitment of the participants. There are a number of important factors that can influence the quality of participative decision making. The participants should strive to subordinate self-interest in pursuit of common goals. There should be an appropriate level of representation from the stakeholders and those groups should have enough power to influence the outcome.[32]

CONCLUSION

Each decision paradigm presented here provides a method to analyze problems that our USAWC graduates will face as they move into higher levels of command. It is evident that each paradigm has its opportunities and challenges. The advantages and disadvantages will manifest themselves in varying degrees and in different contexts. As they sit at the decision making table, our graduates will be able to recognize and analyze the paradigmatic limitations and strengths as they are being discussed in strategy planning. They will also know that while we aspire to be rational in our choices of action, we are limited in our cognitive ability to comprehensively develop and assess alternatives. Additionally, we have innate biases and use heuristics that effect how we process and use information. Since implementing decisions generally requires the involvement of others, it is necessary to include them in the process of identifying key issues and determining potential solutions. The environment and context of the problem should influence the extent of inclusion

and collaboration. In such cases, either the bargaining or participative decision making approach may be more appropriate to establish common interests and produce agreement as to what should be done and how. The Kettl and Fesler conclusion that no single approach offers a best solution to all the problems of making decisions captures the central theme to the USAWC perspective on decision making.[33] Having a variety of decision tools in our kitbags helps us identify the appropriate approach to individual problem sets.

ENDNOTES

1. This quote from Elihu Root is the guiding principle that establishes the USAWC core curriculum and is cited in the USAWC command briefing.

2. The discussion of jurisdictions for military profession is included in Don M. Snider, "The U.S. Army as Profession" in Don M. Snider (ed) *The Future of the Army Profession* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005): pp. 17-21.

3. A.J. Bacevich and Lawrence F. Kaplan, "Generals Versus The President: Eisenhower and the Army, 1953 – 1955, A Case in Civil Military Relations (CS 0697-02)," (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University: National Security Studies, 1997).

4. Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994): pp. 23-26.

5. Stephen Shambach (ed) *Strategic Leadership Primer* (Carlisle, PA: USAWC, 2004): p. 5.

6. Ian Mitroff and Francisco Sagasti, "Epistemology as a General Systems Theory: An Approach to the Design of Complex Decision-Making Experiments," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences,* 3 (1973): pp.117-34.

7. The term is more commonplace and was introduced in H. Rittel and M. Webber. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Sciences* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company, Inc., Vol. 4, 1973): pp. 155-169.

8. Henry Louis Mencken, *Prejudices: Second Series, 1920*, http://www.phnet.fi/public/mamaa1/mencken.htm and *US editor (1880 - 1956)* http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/282.html (November 12, 2006).

9. Howard Raiffa, *Decision Analysis* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1968).

10. This figure is included in a slide presentation found at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jrm/plan4.ppt. The concept of Joint Planning and Execution is detailed in "Chapter I Principles and Concepts" *Joint Publication 5-0 Joint Operation Planning*. Figure I-3 provides an illustration of the Joint Planning and Execution Community.

11. Herbert A. Simon, *Models of Man* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1957).

12. Charles Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through" *Public Administration Review* (Spring, 1959): pp.79-88.

13. Ibid.

14. For an amusing treatment of the evolution of the Bradley Fighing Vehicle from an infantry troop transport to an imposing combat system see the HBO film, "The Pentagon Wars" 1998 directed by Richard Benjamin.

15. Yehezkel Dror, "Muddling Through –"Science' or Inertia?" *Public Administration Review* (1964): pp. 153-177.

16. Amatai Etzioni, "A Third Approach of Decision-Making," *Public Administration Review* (1967): pp. 385-392. Amatai Etzioni, "Mixed Scanning Revisited," *Public Administration Review* (1986): pp. 8-14.

17. Etzioni (1967).

18. Irving Janis and Leon Mann, *Decision-Making* (New York: The Free Press, 1977).

19. Paul A. Haynes, "Towards a Concept of Monitoring," *Town Planning Review* (1974): pp. 8-14.

20. Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decisionmaking* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, Inc., 2002).

21. Ibid.

22. H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the lies that led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998).

23. Michael Cohen, James March and Johan Olsen, "The Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17(1), (1972): pp. 1-25.

24. Joseph Metcalf, "Decisionmaking and the Grenada Rescue Operation" in J. G. March and R. Weissinger-Baylon (eds). *Ambiguity and command; Organizational perspectives on military decisionmaking* (Marshfield, Massachusetts: Pitman Publishing, 1986): pp. 277-297.

25. Ibid., p. 277.

26. Ibid., pp 240-242

27. Donald Kettl and James Fesler, *The Politics of the Administrative Process* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005): pp. 238-240.

28. Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

29. Ibid., p. 242.

30. Ibid., p. 244.

31. Craig College and William Tarantino, Leading Change within the Army BRAC 2005 Process. Paper presented at Defense Analysis Seminar, Seoul Korea (April 2006): p. 8.

32. Kettl and Fesler, p. 247.

33. Ibid., p. 251.

CHAPTER 6

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TASKS

The pressure to respond to the challenges of the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous nature of the environment tends to focus strategic leaders' attention on tasks associated with the present. However, if strategic leaders become enmeshed in short-term requirements, they cannot focus on the mid- and long-term tasks that only they have the authority to perform. Strategic leaders must concentrate their efforts on long-term tasks while simultaneously addressing short-term requirements in the context of the organization's long-term direction.

Below is a discussion of key strategic leadership tasks. No single leader performs all the tasks associated with strategic-level leadership without the assistance of members of the senior leadership team. Key strategic leadership tasks include the following major areas of responsibility:

- Provide vision.
- Shape culture.
- Build and shape joint, interagency, multinational and intra-agency relationships.
- Build and shape national-level relationships.
- Represent the organization.
- Lead and manage change.

PROVIDE VISION

As detailed in Chapter 3, a primary task required of strategic leaders is to create a vision for their organizations. The vision, which sets the tone for the future of the organization, is the first step in the development of plans and strategies for change. For a military organization, creation of the vision should include determining future required operating capability by considering developing concepts for the future nature of war, emerging threat capabilities and intentions, and advances in technology.

The strategic leader's vision sets the long-term direction for an organization. The solutions to short-term requirements should be consistent with the articulated vision. A strategic leader must institutionalize a strategy to implement the vision, including the selection and

mentoring of subordinate leaders to carry on that strategic vision. Other key strategic leadership vision tasks are related to communicating, developing, and implementing that vision.

SHAPE CULTURE

The strategic leader must take steps to shape the organization's culture in a manner that supports and helps to communicate the vision. Tasks within this area include:

- Ensuring that organizational culture is aligned with the future demands of the environment yet also built on values deemed essential by the leaders and members of the organization.

- Ensuring the organization's values are rooted in aligned underlying assumptions that position the organization to maintain competitive advantage in the future.

- Ensuring that stated values, as related to the strategic vision, are communicated throughout the organization and are internalized by its members.

- Building consensus within the organization to gain support for goals and objectives that support and achieve the vision.

BUILD AND SHAPE JOINT, INTERAGENCY, MULTI-NATIONAL AND INTRA-AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

Strategic leaders develop and manage joint and combined lateral relationships with strategic leaders of other Services, other countries, and government agencies in both peace and war. Major tasks include:

- Creating understanding and acceptance of organizational goals and national objectives and, in turn, understanding goals and objectives of other national forces.

- Creating consensus required to enable joint and combined action to be undertaken in pursuit of shared goals and objectives.

- Maintaining the knowledge and resource base that the organization requires to envision future desired outcomes and negotiating to make them happen.

Strategic leaders must actively participate in the development and sustainment of coalitions and alliances that are central to national strategy. Operating effectively in the multinational environment requires an international perspective. This task requires the strategic leader to understand the political, economic, and social factors of other countries.

Managing the organization to achieve joint obligations is also a major task. Fulfillment of this task requires the strategic leader's commitment to joint doctrine and joint operations. The strategic leader must view the organization from a joint perspective and design internal policy and organizational structure to meet joint requirements.

Strategic leaders must also articulate the roles and missions of the organization as they apply to the joint arena. This task requires an appreciation for the roles and missions of other Services and an understanding of their goals and objectives. The organization must be designed, equipped, trained, and maintained at a state of readiness that allows it to participate fully in joint and combined operations. This means that strategic leaders must understand and be sensitive to the cultures within which their fellow strategic leaders operate.

Because the future portends increased emphasis on joint and combined operations in peace and war, the strategic leader's vision should identify and develop the organization's role in those arenas. Developing and sustaining coalitions, managing the organization to achieve joint obligations, and appreciating the roles and missions of other organizations in the joint arena are tasks that assist in implementing and achieving the strategic vision.

BUILD AND SHAPE NATIONAL-LEVEL RELATIONSHIPS

> *The Congress shall have Power To ... provide for the common Defense...of the United States; ...To raise and support Armies,...To provide and maintain a Navy; To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.*
>
> U.S. Const, Article I, Section 8

Managing relationships between the organization as a component of the nation's total defense force and the overarching national policy apparatus is a major responsibility of strategic leaders. They use their national and international frames of reference to influence opinion and build consensus for organizational roles, missions, and objectives. They garner the support of diverse players to enable the vision to be achieved.

Requirements in this area include:

- Providing advice and counsel in national policy formulation.
- Interpreting national policy guidelines and directions.
- Planning for the development and sustainment of the military capability required to implement national policy in the joint, combined, and interagency arenas.

- Articulating the organization's requirements for resources and capabilities.

- Developing competitive strategies.

- Bridging the gap between political decisions made as part of the national security decision process and the individuals that ultimately carry out those decisions.

Strategic leaders are responsible to ensure that the leadership of the organization understands national security policy. To accomplish this task, they formulate organizational programs and policy directives that accurately interpret and reflect national security objectives. These programs and directives prepare the organization to respond to all security requirements in either peace or war.

REPRESENT THE ORGANIZATION

The strategic leader represents the organization in its relationships with the larger society. These responsibilities include:

- Regularly communicating with elements of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches.

- Acting as a spokesperson for the organization with other Federal agencies, the media, influential people at the national level, and the public at large.

- Building and maintaining a network of information sources that can be used to understand and influence the environment.

To accomplish these tasks, strategic leaders' frames of reference must include a thorough understanding of our national culture, values, interests and the political, economic, and military elements of national power. Strategic leaders must also be experts in the processes and procedures for developing national security objectives, national military strategy, and for the development, deployment, and use of the nation's military forces.

An understanding of current and projected national and international situations is necessary for credibility in testimony to Congress and for interactions with executives of other federal and state agencies, business leaders, the media, and others who influence national attitudes toward the military. An awareness of the outlook, values, and priorities of political leaders and those who influence public opinion requires an understanding of American society. This perspective is necessary not only for public representation, but also for shaping the culture and values of the organization as an integral part of the total society.

No organization operates in a vacuum. To achieve the organizational short-term objectives and to implement the long-term vision, strategic leaders must understand how the organization fits into the national security framework. They must also build consensus within that framework. The best method to achieve consensus in a multifaceted, pluralistic system is through networking. Informal contacts with knowledgeable, influential people holding key positions in other organizations and agencies assist in gathering the diverse support that allows the organization's vision to be achieved. Integrity and the power of personality are keys to accomplishing this consensus-building task. Strategic leaders who have the ability to persuade others, who know how and when to compromise without abandoning principles, and who gain and maintain the trust of other influential decision-makers will go a long way toward achieving the organization's objectives.

MANAGE CHANGE

Strategic leaders proactively manage change through the processes associated with embedding their vision within the organization and shaping organizational culture to support the vision. Achieving the vision requires change to bridge the gap between the present and the future. External environmental factors, such as the changing nature of military threats, adjustments to national military strategy, legislation affecting DOD, changes in international alliances, and budget considerations generate the need for change within the organization. Internally, improvements in warfighting doctrine, equipment modernization, resource adjustments resulting from technology advancements, and other factors also drive organizational change. These factors and changes may be so extensive that they periodically require that the strategic vision be revised.

> *I have conceived of many plans, but I was never free to execute one of them. For all that I held the rudder, and with a strong hand, the waves were always a good deal stronger.*[1]
>
> Napoleon Bonaparte

DOD, Joint Staff, and Service-unique strategic-level planning systems provide strategic leaders the processes to manage change in the environment of strategic leadership. Decisions made within the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS); the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES); the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) process; and the Services' systems integration processes provide purpose and direction to lower levels of the organization. Management of change at the strategic level includes the following:

- Identifying the necessary force capabilities to accomplish the national military strategy.

- Identifying and assigning strategic and operational roles and missions, including priorities for allocating resources.

- Preparing strategies and plans for the use of military forces across the operational continuum in the unified, joint, combined, and interagency arenas.

- Developing and improving operating doctrine and the associated training methodologies to support the doctrine.

- Understanding and planning for second- and third-order effects of actions to implement change.

- Maintaining effective leader development and other human resources programs.

Decision-making at the strategic level almost always requires major resource commitments that cannot easily be reversed. Continual analysis of requirements, capabilities, and risks associated with capability shortfalls is essential to the decision making process. Strategic leaders rely on timely, accurate feedback to prevent making decisions based on incomplete or inadequate information. Systems must be designed to be top-driven and bottom-fed. Purpose, direction, and motivation are provided from the top, while information and recommendations flow upward from within the organization.

The management of change demands that strategic leaders focus primarily on future mid- and long-range issues while dealing with current short-term requirements. This means that strategic leaders must empower subordinate echelons to implement strategies and policies within the established framework. Effective, systematic feedback is essential to provide strategic leaders with information on which to judge the progress and ultimate results of desired changes within the organization.

Empowering subordinate leaders in this fashion helps to perpetuate and achieve the strategic vision. Because short-term solutions should be consistent with the long-term vision, subordinates must understand and internalize the vision to implement strategies and policies. Because the tenure of any individual strategic leader is limited, subordinate leaders must be selected, mentored, and educated to carry on the vision. The history of the United States Army has been built from great leaders who produced great subordinates. One of these leaders was TRADOC Commander in the mid-1970s, General William E. DePuy. Biographer Henry Gole asserted:

> *Bill DePuy found the men who would help him in what he called "my life's work": a thorough reform of the Army, a task he set for himself. And he seeded the system with talented people who would directly succeed him and others who would succeed them to direct the Army a dozen years and even two decades after his retirement.*[2]

SUMMARY

Strategic leaders have the challenge and responsibility to lead large, complex organizations which change very slowly, with great expenditure of energy. The tasks required to meet this challenge begin with the strategic leader providing a vision to the organization. With this vision and well-articulated organizational values, strategic leaders then influence and shape their organization's culture. They also lead the organization on a daily basis, ensuring it meets all requirements in the unified, joint, combined, and interagency arenas. This task requires strategic leaders to deal with short-term challenges, including operational contingencies, consistent with mid- and long-term objectives. They also manage the organization's relationships with national-level agencies and organizations, representing the organization before Congress, the media, and other influential opinion groups. The objective is to gain consensus among these various groups and organizations in support of the roles and missions, goals, and objectives of the organization. Such consensus is essential to achieving the organization's vision in the strategic environment. Finally, by facilitating the management of change, strategic leaders guide the organization today while molding it to meet tomorrow's challenges.

ENDNOTES

1. Will Durant and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Napoleon* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1975): p. 241.

2. Henry G. Gole, *General William E. DePuy: Preparing the Army for Modern War* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2008): p. 296.

CHAPTER 7

THE STRATEGIC LEADER AND THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF COMBAT

The trained American possesses qualities that are almost unique. Because of his initiative and resourcefulness, his adaptability to change and his readiness to resort to the expedient, he becomes, when he has attained a proficiency in all the normal techniques of battle, a formidable soldier. Yet even he has his limits; the presentation of his individual and collective strength is one of the greatest responsibilities of leadership.[1]

General Dwight D. Eisenhower

No matter how involved strategic leaders may become in working to further their vision for the Army, they must always be mindful that they are leaders of an organization whose fundamental purpose is to protect our national interests and that often involves committing personnel to the violence of battle. The phenomenon of human combat is like no other activity in which mankind engages. Within the crucible of armed conflict, those who participate are dramatically affected by the fear of death or maiming, the trauma of participating in and witnessing violent death and destruction, the grief from the loss of comrades, and the deprivation of even the simplest of life's needs.

The psychological impact of battle and the prospect of future battle have a tremendous influence upon the performance of individuals and of the units in which they are members. Individuals and units can minimize the adverse effects of facing and participating in sustained combat by being properly conditioned, supported, and trained. Unfortunately, the costs of creating and sustaining the institutional processes necessary to conserve the psychological capacity of our Army to function effectively in battle often have little perceived value in the day-to-day administration and training of the force in peacetime. Thus, it is essential that strategic leaders have an appreciation for the human dimension of combat, so that they will stop external and internal influences from constricting those policies and associated resources dedicated to enhancing the psychological staying power of our Army in battle. Too often, and with the best of intensions, this psychological staying power is undermined in the quest for administrative efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and peacetime mission focus.

It was clear to me after my time in Iraq that we're going to be at this for a while; and (that) the human mind and body weren't made to deal with repeated combat deployments…As we're getting some of the young Soldiers from society, we're finding that some of the things they may see in deployments or overseas

assignments are pretty traumatic. I think we have to train them to be prepared for that.[2]

General George W. Casey,
CSA

A fundamental understanding of this human dimension can only be achieved through personal study and contemplation. Although such appreciation and understanding can result from personal combat experience, there is no level of personal experience that cannot be significantly reinforced with an analysis of the experiences of others.

Strategic leaders such as Generals Eisenhower and Arnold possessed no personal experience in the human dimension of combat before they assumed significant strategic leader responsibilities at the outset of World War II. Yet both of these distinguished strategic leaders had by that time achieved an understanding of this dimension of warfare through years of reading and reflecting upon the commentaries of those who wrote of such experiences. Every decision that these two strategic leaders made was only after consideration of the consequences of the decision on the soldiers and airmen who bore the brunt of battle. Each of these leaders understood the human dynamics of combat and its relationship to the psychological staying power of the forces they led.

Achieving an understanding of the human dimension of combat is a continuing professional commitment of any Army leader, but most especially the leader at the strategic level. It is a subject area that is as rich and as complex as any quest for an understanding of human nature. As such, it encompasses such diverse topics as: the value system of a society and its military; how individual values are influenced or changed; the psychological and physical manifestations of combat stress; the influences of training and conditioning to prevent or ameliorate the stress of combat; the dynamics of unit performance and cohesion; and numerous other related topics.

In the best of all worlds, leaders will achieve the strategic level without personal experience in the human dimension of combat. After ten years of conflict in the Middle East this lofty goal is clearly not realistic now or in the foreseeable future. Regardless of whether they've personally experienced the stress of combat, strategic leaders must possess a fundamental appreciation for this dimension of warfare for the very reason that our Army must always be prepared to commit its forces to combat to protect our nation's interests. Every decision that Army strategic leaders make, now or in the future, must be made with consideration of the impact of that decision on the psychological staying power of our soldiers and units in battle. To permit our Army to lessen the proper focus on psychological readiness for sustained combat is to break faith with those soldiers who will commit themselves in current and future conflicts.

ENDNOTES

1. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe, Garden City* (New Jersey: Doubleday, 1948): p. 453.

2. Army News Service, "General Casey Lauds 'Comprehensive Soldier Fitness' Progress," (April 13, 2010), http://www.armywell-being.org.

APPENDIX A

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES[I]

On December 21, 2001, the CSA tasked the USAWC to identify the strategic leader skill sets for officers required in the post-September 11th environment. A research group of four students and a faculty advisor completed the following report after extensive research and analysis. Research visits conducted by the team included the Center for Army Leadership, the Objective Force Task Force office, the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, U.S. Army Cadet Command, the U.S. Military Academy, Training and Doctrine Command headquarters and schools, and the leader development offices in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1 and G-3. Additionally, the group consulted with leader development experts in organizations such as the Center for Creative Leadership, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and Strategic Leadership Solutions.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

The search for strategic leader competencies (knowledge, skills, attributes, and abilities) is a natural progression of the research in the field of leadership. In the late 1980s, some social science researchers began to question whether leadership actually made a difference in organizations while others suggested that perhaps the study of leadership had reached its nadir. Rather than disappearing, however, the study of leadership took on new energy with an emphasis on leadership of organizations, rather than the traditional leadership approaches that focused on face-to-face interaction at lower levels. Studies of transformational leadership, organizational culture, visionary leadership, organizational change, and charismatic leaders re-invigorated the field of leadership. Thus, the notion of strategic leadership was introduced. While lists of leadership competencies were very popular in the 1980s, the most recent literature distills strategic leadership to a few key skills and competencies, or a process.

In 1991, the USAWC hosted a conference on the fledgling field of strategic leadership. At that conference, strategic leadership aspects were based on Jaques's Stratified Systems Theory (SST). SST essentially argues that there are critical tasks that must be performed by leaders in effective organizations. At each higher level in an organization, these tasks become increasingly complex and qualitatively different. Consequently, leaders at the strategic level must have higher levels of cognitive complexity– the ability to deal with

---

I. This appendix is a reprint of the Strategic Studies Institute Publication by Dr. Leonard Wong, Dr. Stephen Gerras, COL William Kidd, COL Robert Pricone, and COL Richard Swengros, *Strategic Leadership Competencies*, September 2003, available at: http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=382

abstract, longer timeframe concepts. The influence of SST on the USAWC (and Army) is evident with the emphasis on cognitive complexity that permeates much of the strategic leadership instruction.

In its Strategic Leadership Primer, 1998 Edition, the USAWC provided a list of strategic leader competencies using the Be, Know, Do typology. The list is comprehensive and appears to capture every possible aspect of leadership.

BE (Disposition - values, attributes):

- The Values Champion- the standard bearer; beyond reproach
- Master of the Strategic Art- ends, ways, means
- Quintessential Student of History
- Comfortable with Complexity
- High Personal Stamina- physical, mental, stress management
- Skilled Diplomat
- Possesses Intellectual Sophistication- alternative frames of reference, pattern recognition, and able to see 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-order effects

KNOW (Disposition - skills):

Conceptual

- Envisioning - anticipating the future, proactive thinking - practices critical, creative, reflective thinking
- Frame of Reference Development - including systems understanding, scanning, pattern recognition
- Problem Management - competing issues, no right answers, ability to recognize and ignore irrelevant issues
- Critical Self-Examination
- Critical, Reflective Thought
- Effective within Environment of Complexity
- Skillful Formulation of Ends, Ways, Means

Interpersonal

- Communication- to a much broader audience; negotiations, consensus- building across a variety of stakeholders; systems knowledge; sophisticated persuasion skills
- Inspires Others to Act
- Organizational Representation - to internal and external audiences/stakeholders
- Skillful Coordination of Ends, Ways, Means
- Master of Command and Peer Leadership

Technical

- Systems Understanding - political, economic, cultural, logistical, force management, and joint/combined interrelationships, etc.
- Recognizes and Understands Interdependencies - systems, decisions, organizations, etc.
- Information-age Technological Awareness - next generation awareness, sophisticated time/space selection
- Skillful Application of Ends, Ways, Means

DO (Action - influencing, operating, and improving):

- Provide for the Future - visioning (long-term focus, time span, perspective)
- Initiate of Policy and Directive
- Shape the Culture - Values-based organization, leverage diversity, understanding and accepting differences, multiple perspectives
- Teach and Mentor the Strategic Art
- Manage Joint/Combined and Interagency Relationships
- Manage National-Level Relationships
- Represent the Organization
- Leverage Technology
- Lead and Manage Change - creating and building "learning organizations"
- Build Teams and Consensus at Strategic Level (can't dictate action at this level) -co-opting, coalition building, negotiating, etc.
- Practice the Strategic Art - allocates resources; develops and executes strategic plans derived from the inter-agency process

Similarly, in FM 22-100, Army Leadership, the Army's doctrinal leadership manual, the skills and actions required of strategic leaders are a cumulative list of forty-one competencies addressing the direct, organizational, and strategic levels. Twenty-one competencies are provided for the strategic level alone:

FM 22-100, Army Leadership
Strategic Level Skills and Actions

- Communicating
- Using dialogue
- Negotiating
- Achieving consensus
- Building staffs

- Envisioning
- Developing frames of reference
- Strategic art
- Motivating
- Leveraging technology
- Executing
- Communicating a vision
- Decision making
- Leading change
- Strategic planning
- Learning
- Strategic assessing
- Translating political goals into military objectives
- Building
- Dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity

In one sense, the USAWC and FM 22-100 lists of strategic leader competencies are too comprehensive. At the individual level, it is difficult to assess one's leadership ability when the lists suggest that a strategic leader must be, know, and do just about everything. At the institutional level, the lack of parsimony makes it difficult to focus an institution's attention and resources on leader development when such a broad array of competencies is advocated. Hence, the task of identifying the competencies of future strategic leaders becomes one of reducing the lists to a few metacompetencies that will prove useful in: a) directing leader development efforts in the process of producing leaders with strategic leader capability, and b) facilitating self-assessment by officers of their strategic leader capability.

Looking across the existing literature on strategic leadership, the current lists of Army strategic leader competencies, and the environment of the future force, six metacompetencies were derived: identity, mental agility, cross-cultural savvy, interpersonal maturity, world-class warrior, and professional astuteness. Before addressing each metacompetency, it should be noted that concentrating on just six metacompetencies does provide focus, but there are some associated disadvantages. First, some skills and abilities are not explicitly described by a metacompetency label. For example, strategic leaders need to be politically savvy – knowing when to compromise, understanding that many strategic decisions are not black and white, and knowing what is best in the long run for the Nation and the Army. This ability is captured in the professional astuteness metacompetency description, but is not obvious in the words professional astuteness. Understanding the meaning and intent behind each metacompetency is much more important than creating a catchy mnemonic containing the first letter of each of the six labels. Similarly, the metacompetency labels may be misinterpreted if separated from their descriptions. For example, cross-cultural savvy includes the ability to work across organizational boundaries, but the metacompetency can be narrowly misinterpreted to refer to working only across national boundaries. In other words, the six metacompetency labels were not developed as a stand-alone list.

The concepts behind the labels, not the labels themselves, are the focal points for leader development and assessment.

The following section describes each of the six metacompetencies. This report is not intended to be an exhaustive explanation of strategic leadership – the civilian literature does that adequately. It is also not intended as a blueprint to overhaul the Army's entire leader development system. Instead, this report contrasts the future environment with the current status of strategic leader development and suggests some aiming points for leader development efforts.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP METACOMPETENCIES

Identity. This metacompetency is derived from the work of Douglas Hall who heavily influenced the conclusions of the Army Training and Leader Development Panel-Officer (ATLD Panel). According to Hall, identity is "the ability to gather self-feedback, to form accurate self-perceptions, and to change one's self-concept as appropriate."[1]

The ATLD Panel describes self-awareness, and describes it as the ability to understand how to assess abilities, know strengths and weaknesses in the operational environment, and learn how to correct those weaknesses. The metacompetency of identity moves beyond simply knowing one's strengths and weaknesses as connoted by self-awareness. It includes the understanding of one's self-concept as an officer in the Army. Identity also includes an understanding of one's values and how they match up to the values of the Army. Identity implies maturation beyond self-awareness as officers come to an understanding of who they are, not just how well they do things.

Identity, as opposed to self-awareness, also brings in aspects of development over a career. As senior leaders gain responsibility, they focus less on their own contributions and more on the accomplishments of others. The metacompetency of identity acknowledges that as an officer develops strategic leadership capability, his role extends beyond personal contributions and shifts to serving as a catalyst for success for subordinates.

Mental agility. In addition to self-awareness, the ATLD Panel report recommends that the Army focus on developing the enduring competency of adaptability that includes the predisposition and readiness to scan and recognize changes in the environment; to determine what is new and what must be learned to be effective; and the willingness to modify to a given situation. Mental agility builds on the ability to scan and adjust learning based on the environment, and brings aspects of cognitive complexity, improvisation, and lightness found in the strategic leadership literature. Strategic leaders operate in an environment of ambiguity and uncertainty. Typical strategic situations lack structure, are open to varying interpretations, and potentially pertinent information is often far flung, elusive, cryptic, or even contradictory. Mentally agile strategic leaders possess the requisite cognitive skills

to navigate in this milieu and be adaptable enough to alter their actions and those of their organizations to function in this complex environment.

From a cognitive perspective, strategic leaders must learn how to scan the environment, understand their world from a systems perspective, and eventually envision different futures and directions for their organization. Scanning involves a constant search for information that affects current assumptions, along with the future of the organization. Officers with mentally agility search for more information and spend more time interpreting it. They also analyze large amounts of sometimes conflicting information and try to understand why things happen and identify possible courses of action to affect events. Mentally agile leaders know which factors really matter in the big picture; they identify root causes quickly, display a keen sense of priority, relevance and significance, and integrate information from a variety of sources while detecting trends, associations, and cause-effect relationships. Just as important, mentally agile leaders translate complex situations into simple, meaningful explanations that others can grasp.

Mentally agile leaders efficiently gather and process relevant information in order to process it from a systems perspective and then envision feasible futures within increasingly longer time horizons. From a systems perspective, they challenge assumptions, facilitate constructive dissent, and analyze second- and third-order consequences of their decisions. Mentally agile leaders are comfortable making important decisions with only part of the information available. More importantly, they know when to act and when to experiment to validate beliefs or assumptions. Once mentally agile strategic leaders have scanned the environment, processed information from a systems perspective, and envisioned the future effect of that information on the organization, they then adapt and implement learning mechanisms to alter the processes, structure, and behaviors of their organization to accommodate their envisioned future.

Cross-cultural savvy. With the increasing frequency of coalition warfare and an emphasis on theater security cooperation, the necessity for cross-cultural savvy is obvious. The Army's future leaders clearly need to be well versed in interacting with cultures outside the U.S. borders. Cross-cultural savvy, however, refers to more than just the ability to work with non-U.S. militaries. The metacompetency, cross-cultural savvy, includes the ability to understand cultures beyond one's organizational, economic, religious, societal, geographical, and political boundaries. A strategic leader with crosscultural savvy is comfortable interacting with and leading joint, international, interagency, or inter-organizational entities. Future strategic leaders must be able to work with a diverse group of people and organizations ranging from 24-year-old congressional staffers, to Northern Alliance warlords, to representatives from non-governmental organizations.

While cross-cultural skills have been desirable in the past, they will be even more critical for future strategic leaders due to several factors. First, globalization has vastly increased interaction with other nations. Second, the global war on terrorism is illustrating that the

Army must coordinate closely with other services, agencies, and organizations in the new national security environment. Third, the Army has traditionally been accused of being somewhat inept in its dealings with Congress and the media. As societal exposure to the military decreases, it becomes increasingly important for Army officers to tell the Army story to those outside the Army culture. Finally, although the U.S. remains the world's only superpower, unilateral military action is becoming less common. Coalitions will continue to be vital to the security strategy.

Cross-cultural savvy implies that an officer can see perspectives outside his or her own boundaries. It does not imply, however, that the officer abandons the Army or U.S. culture in pursuit of a relativistic worldview. Instead, the future strategic leader is grounded in National and Army values, but is also able to anticipate and understand the values, assumptions, and norms of other groups, organizations, and nations.

Interpersonal maturity. Many of the interpersonal skills required of strategic leaders are basically the same attributes used at the organizational level applied at a higher level. For example, much like a junior leader, strategic leaders are expected to display compassion when dealing with subordinates on sensitive issues. However, there are several interpersonal skills that, although based on direct and organizational leadership characteristics, are qualitatively different at the strategic level. Strategic leaders must possess an interpersonal maturity that goes beyond face-to-face leadership. Strategic leaders devote far more of their time dealing with outside organizations and leaders of other services, agencies, and nations. The power relationship between the strategic leader and individuals from these entities is markedly different than the power relationship typically experienced at the direct and organizational level.

Several interpersonal skills become very important at this level. Most important among these is empowerment. Strategic leaders need to share power with their subordinates, peers, and constituents. They must have the willingness and ability to involve others and elicit their participation based on the subordinate's knowledge and skills because tasks will be too complex and information too widely distributed for leaders to solve problems on their own. An interpersonally mature strategic leader needs to be persuasive and rely less on fiat, asking others to join in rather than telling them. Empowerment implies that the leader is a good listener; leadership at the strategic level is as much collaboration as it is authoritative leadership. Interpersonal maturity implies that strategic leaders do not feel compelled to do all the talking and resist imposing a solution on others. Because of the unique power relationships, the skills of consensus building and negotiation rise to the top of a strategic leader's interpersonal maturity. Consensus building is a complicated process based on effective reasoning and logic that may take place over an extended period. Peers, outside agencies, foreign governments, and other services will not necessarily respond to orders. In essence, the process of consensus building is insurance that effective reasoning has taken place and that contentious issues have been resolved. As part of this process, or even separate, strategic leaders will find that they need to understand the art of negotiation.

Again, because many relationships at the strategic level are lateral and without clear subordination, leaders will find themselves in difficult situations where success rests in their ability to negotiate an agreeable solution.

Interpersonal maturity also includes the ability of officers to analyze, challenge, and change an organization's culture to align it with the ever changing outside environment. Strategic leaders must therefore have skills in analyzing cultural assumptions, identifying functional and dysfunctional assumptions, and evolving processes that enlarge the culture by building on its strengths and functional elements. Strategic leaders then need to proactively manage change through the processes associated with embedding their vision within the organization and shaping organizational culture to support the vision. Noel Tichy posits, "As long as a culture fits the external environment, it succeeds, but when the external realities change, the culture has to change as well…at certain critical stages, radical cultural shifts are needed, and without leadership, they just don't happen."[2]

Lastly, strategic leaders must have the interpersonal maturity to take responsibility for the development of the Army's future strategic leaders. Therefore, strategic leaders need to teach, coach, and mentor, while creating an environment where other leaders may do the same. Interpersonal maturity includes the ability to ensure leader development does not get neglected in the pursuit of everyday mission accomplishment.

World-class warrior. This is the simplest and most understandable of the six strategic leadership metacompetencies. As a world-class warrior, strategic leaders move beyond tactical and operational competence in the employment of the future force. They understand the entire spectrum of operations at the strategic level to include theater strategy; campaign strategy; joint, interagency, and multinational operations; and the use of all the elements of national power and technology in the execution of national security strategy.

Professional astuteness. In their comprehensive study of the Army profession, Don Snider and Gayle Watkins arrive at an important conclusion concerning the current officer corps:

> *The Army's bureaucratic nature outweighs and compromises its professional nature. This is true in practice, but, of greater importance, it is regarded as true in the minds of the officer corps. Officers do not share a common understanding of the Army profession, and many of them accept the pervasiveness of bureaucratic norms and behaviors as natural and appropriate.*[3]

Strategic leaders who are professionally astute understand that they are no longer merely members of a profession, but leaders in the profession as the Army serves the Nation. They see the need to develop the future leaders of the profession, work with stakeholders, and communicate this responsibility to future leaders of the profession. In his recent book, Good to Great, Jim Collins talks about Level 5 leaders–leaders who can transform a

company. He writes, "Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious-but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves."[4] In contrast, Level 4 leaders are often effective and charismatic, yet the company falls apart after they leave since Level 4 leaders put their personal success and egos ahead of institutional success.

The future force will need strategic leaders who are Level 5 leaders – leaders who take responsibility for the Army as a profession. Leaders with professional astuteness get the mission accomplished, but they also have the insight to do what is best for the profession and Nation. This may include having political savvy, knowing when to compromise, or understanding the many constituents that the Army serves. Additionally, strategic leaders with professional astuteness seek to ensure the officer corps maintains its expertise in national defense as well as adhering to a professional ethic. Professional astuteness is a strategic leadership competency that insures that the Army deliberately takes the steps to insure the Army remains a profession, not merely a job, organization, bureaucracy, or occupation.

CONCLUSIONS

In both the civilian and military literature, there is a plethora of material discussing strategic leadership and strategic leader competencies. Part of the difficulty encountered by anyone desiring to adjust leader development or education efforts is the broad array of competencies presented in the literature. This section combines what is known about strategic leadership competencies and integrates it with the characteristics of the officer corps and the future force environment. The result is a list of six metacompetencies for strategic leadership.

ENDNOTES

1. Douglas T. Hall, *Careers In and Out of Organizations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2002): p. 161.

2. Noel M. Tichy, *The Leadership Engine* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1997): p. 26.

3. Gayle L. Watkins and Don M. Snider, "Project Conclusions," in Don M. Snider, Gayle L. Watkins, and Lloyd J. Matthews, ed., *The Future of the Army Profession* (Boston: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2002): p. 537.

4. Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2001): p. 21.

United States Army War College
Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013-5050