

Strategy Research Project

Building Leaders for the Application of Strategic Landpower

by

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United States Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2014

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 15-04-2014		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Building Leaders for the Application of Strategic Landpower				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Barry E. Daniels, Jr. United States Army				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. Steven Metz Strategic Studies Institute				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 5783					
14. ABSTRACT Recent conflicts illustrate that war remains a contest of wills between human adversaries. If influencing an opponent's will remains decisive, then the Army must develop leaders who understand the human dimension of war and are capable of thinking strategically. Given that the Army is moving toward a system of regional alignment focused on preventing conflict by influencing allies and partners, the Army needs to develop leaders who can develop subordinate leaders more effectively, understand complexity, operate among disparate cultures, and communicate persuasively. The Army should take steps to train good leaders to be good leader developers, enhance senior leaders' opportunity to gain understanding of complexity, improve cross-cultural skills, and improve communication skills to ensure that the Army is led by leaders who understand how to properly apply strategic landpower in the future.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Regional Alignment, Leader Development					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 31	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Building Leaders for the Application of Strategic Landpower

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Abstract

Title: Building Leaders for the Application of Strategic Landpower
Report Date: 15 April 2014
Page Count: 31
Word Count: 5783
Key Terms: Regional Alignment, Leader Development
Classification: Unclassified

Recent conflicts illustrate that war remains a contest of wills between human adversaries. If influencing an opponent's will remains decisive, then the Army must develop leaders who understand the human dimension of war and are capable of thinking strategically. Given that the Army is moving toward a system of regional alignment focused on preventing conflict by influencing allies and partners, the Army needs to develop leaders who can develop subordinate leaders more effectively, understand complexity, operate among disparate cultures, and communicate persuasively. The Army should take steps to train good leaders to be good leader developers, enhance senior leaders' opportunity to gain understanding of complexity, improve cross-cultural skills, and improve communication skills to ensure that the Army is led by leaders who understand how to properly apply strategic landpower in the future.

Building Leaders for the Application of Strategic Landpower

The United States Army faces the challenge of determining its role in the future security environment. With the war in Iraq concluded and the war in Afghanistan expected to end in late 2014, both American civilian leaders as well as the leaders of the Army have spent a great deal of time and intellectual energy to determine what that role will be. The question of how land forces are relevant to the contemporary security environment that the United States can expect to face remains unanswered. This question of relevance is age-old and has been asked throughout American history, especially after the conclusion of major wars. How we answer that question, and how we develop the strategic leaders for the Army of 2020 and beyond will determine how well the Army will fare in the early stages of the next conflict.

To prepare units for Operation Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, and Enduring Freedom, the Army employed the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model to create a system that produced brigades capable of conducting operations in both theaters. As those operations come to a close, the Army is moving to a system of regional alignment where units and headquarters are aligned to specific regions or Geographic Combatant Commands. Regionally aligning forces is the operating concept behind the Army's strategic application of landpower in the future. Given this, the U.S. Army should refine how it develops leaders with the necessary skills at the strategic level that best facilitates achieving the desired outcomes of regional alignment. Regional alignment is intended to keep the Army globally-engaged by providing landpower capabilities to Geographic Combatant Commanders. The skills required of strategic leaders employing regionally-aligned land forces will not differ significantly from those expected of today's strategic leaders. However, we can expect the emphasis

placed on some skills to change as we move further into the 21st century. Leaders of a regionally-aligned force that is intended to prevent conflict, shape the theater environment, and win decisively will have to understand complexity on a deeper level and possess the interpersonal skills to influence both allies and adversaries. But before we explore those skills further, we must understand what capabilities strategic landpower provides a combatant commander.

The Case for Strategic Landpower

American strategic thinking has been greatly influenced by theorists such as Carl von Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Antoine-Henri Jomini. The principal influence on American strategic thinking, though, has been Clausewitz, who gave us a definition of war to which we still hold. Clausewitz stated in his seminal work, *On War*, that war is a contest of wills and similar to a duel between opponents on a grand scale.¹ He also defines war as an extension of policy by other means.² Our Joint Force continues to hold to this common definition. Joint Publication – 1 defines war as "socially sanctioned violence to achieve a political purpose" and this largely stems from Clausewitz's observations.³ His definition of war is sufficiently broad and vague enough to properly capture the nature of war, even in the 21st century. The nature of war (the contest of wills for political ends) is not changing even as the character of war and warfare (*how* we fight the contest), is changing...and rapidly. Clausewitz argues that the nature of war is immutable. If it were to change, the result would no longer be defined as "war" but would rather be defined as something else. War always has been, and will continue to be, a contest of *human* wills regarding policy.

Given that humans exist on land, "landpower is particularly important because it puts U.S. forces in direct contact with those they seek to influence."⁴ In other words,

landpower, of all the domains, provides leaders with the best capability to influence the will of humans, both friendly and enemy. The Strategic Landpower White Paper states, “Inasmuch as humans reside on land and political authority is exercised from within that domain, the actions of other U.S. government agencies to apply political, informational, and economic power against the human objective also occur primarily on land.”⁵

Simply put, humans exist on land and employ their will primarily on land, whether using military power or other elements of national power. A scan of the changing strategic environment indicates that the United States will likely have to employ other elements of national power and non-DoD capabilities to achieve our political objectives. While not specifically describing the capabilities of landpower, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in an essay as she neared the end of her term,

It is no longer enough to be strong. Great powers also have to be savvy and persuasive. The test of our leadership going forward will be our ability to mobilize disparate people and nations to work together to solve common problems and advance shared values and aspirations. To do that, we need to expand our foreign policy toolbox, integrate every asset and partner, and fundamentally change the way we do business. I call this approach *smart power*.⁶

One could argue that landpower provides the foundation for smart power. Regional alignment, with its intent of developing deeper understanding of specific regions and of shaping the security environment, is the way the Army hopes to achieve this.

Regional Alignment

Under the regional alignment concept, tactical units and operational headquarters are aligned to specific Geographic Combatant Commands.⁷ This allows aligned units and headquarters to begin to develop relationships with other aligned U.S. military partners, interagency partners, and Special Operations Forces that may be already operating in the region. Should a conflict arise in the region, the aligned units

would be the first to deploy for a contingency operation. However, these units are not just intended to deploy in time of crisis. Perhaps more important to the strategic application of this concept, the units are expected to be available to the Combatant Commander to conduct theater security cooperation and other missions to shape the environment and ideally *prevent* conflict. In this capacity, they could serve to train the land forces of allies and partners around the globe. In fact, when answering a question regarding the relevance of the U.S. Army in the future, a senior defense policy expert at the Brookings Institution recently said that the United States should continue to maintain the best Army in the world so that the U.S. Army continues to be viewed as the "military-of-choice" to which other nations turn for military-to-military cooperation and training.⁸

Aligning units to specific regions sets the conditions for this and, as an added benefit, encourages leaders to maintain many of the skills developed over the last thirteen years of war. Commanders and staffs are expected to understand the environment in which their units could operate by studying the "culture, tribes, and conflict issues" and by "identifying emerging threats, strategies, tactics, and weapons."⁹ Aligned units would then begin to build relationships with regional partners, strengthen alliances, and shape conditions that potentially facilitate the accomplishment of U.S. security objectives.¹⁰

If in the future, landpower is required to control territory and populations, then regional alignment sets the conditions for that by allowing the U.S. to influence, support, or compel in order to prevent conflict by shaping the will of allies and adversaries.¹¹ The idea is that a regionally-engaged force can prevent conflict or terminate conflict if necessary, as well as enable, support, and empower the application of other elements

of national power such as diplomacy and economic development. Regional alignment keeps units engaged with real-world challenges that can affect the long-term interests of the United States and thus allows leaders to maintain human engagement skills learned during the tough experiences of the past 13 years.

The expectation of junior leaders to remain engaged with real-world challenges obviously has implications for how current strategic leaders develop strategic leaders for the future. While the Iraq and Afghan wars have stressed the force, they have left us with arguably the most combat-experienced force in U.S. history. We now have company and field grade leaders who have demonstrated that they can solve real-world, complex problems by gaining understanding of the environment and adapting more quickly than their enemies.

Of course it is from the cohort of today's junior leaders that tomorrow's future strategic leaders will emerge. While they have learned a great deal from their combat experiences, they largely have not learned how to develop *other* leaders. Yet the diverse nature of regional alignment will require these future leaders to possess *leader development skills*. Due to the limited number of leaders aligned toward a specific region, coupled with a drawdown in the Army force structure, we cannot expect to have the luxury of essentially following an attrition model of merely assigning leaders into positions, determining who does best, and promoting only them. Simply put, because we will have fewer leaders who will be focused on specific regions, we will need to be more effective at developing them at the unit level.

In order to achieve the desired outcomes of regional alignment, future strategic leaders must also master other skills. Conceptual leader competencies such as *critical-*

thinking, systems understanding, and vision creation become more significant as the security environment of the future becomes increasingly complex and the time to make decisions compresses due to near real-time transparency. Strategic leaders will need to continually assess the environment, challenge assumptions, understand how actions in one part of the system will affect other parts, and create a vision that inspires success.

Likewise, due to the expected increased focus on shaping human will, it is logical that future leaders will need to possess even stronger interpersonal skills than in the past. Successful strategic leaders have always required interpersonal skills to be successful but as landpower brings forces into direct contact with peoples and populations the United States most needs to influence, interpersonal skills will become paramount. Leaders will need to be able to operate across many different cultures, both national and organizational. This will require *cross-cultural competence*. We will need them to have effective cross-cultural skills when engaging with multi-national and host nation partners but also with representatives from unified action partners like the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and others. Similarly, strategic leaders will also need improved *communication skills* as they will have to communicate effectively and simultaneously to a variety of audiences with different messages. Tomorrow's leaders will have to influence internal audiences, partners, adversaries, and the international community at a level beyond what we expected in the recent past.

Developing Skills for Regional Alignment

In order to produce leaders who possess these skills, current Army leaders must first improve how they develop leaders today. Thirteen years of war has resulted in an experienced junior leader cohort and current strategic leaders should seize this

opportunity and leverage the competencies these junior leaders now possess. We must allow them a degree of autonomy to take initiative and trust them to perform their duties effectively. To encourage this, the Army has adopted the philosophy of *mission command*.

Mission command allows for individual initiative and facilitates organizational adaptation. Army Doctrinal Publication 6-0 defines mission command as, "the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations."¹²

Mission command also facilitates the creation of learning organizations where leader development is at the heart of everything the organization does. Commanders who practice the philosophy of mission command create learning organizations that are able to adapt to changing conditions rapidly. Developing learning organizations and a culture that rewards open dialogue and critical analysis is necessary if we expect to operate in the uncertain and ambiguous environment that most security experts expect. The 20th century methods of training leaders *what* to think, as opposed to educating them *how* to think, will not be sufficient in the future.

Consequently, leader development is often mentioned by senior Army leaders as the single top priority for our effort and resources. The 2009 U.S. Army TRADOC Leader Development Strategy for the 21st Century states, "We cannot wait to develop leaders capable of operating at the strategic level until they are about to be assigned there."¹³ Similarly, Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno recently said, "The one thing we all know is our ability to predict the future is not very good, and the best

way to overcome that is with leaders who are adaptive...".¹⁴ This difficulty in predicting the future, coupled with the American tendency to attempt to fight wars in exactly the way we prefer, creates a situation where we risk developing leaders with a relatively narrow set of skills. However, because we expect the future security environment to be more uncertain and dynamic, we will require leaders with a broader set of skills. Retired Lieutenant General David Barno writes in a Center for New American Security paper,

...future flag officers will need to be extraordinarily multitalented, highly adaptive and capable of managing immense strategic and institutional complexity. History shows that military leaders are unlikely to get the next war exactly right. Yet if these leaders can be educated to be adaptive in peace, they will be far better prepared than the enemy to recognize and correct inevitable mistakes when the next war erupts.¹⁵

Yet recent studies show that the current state of leader development in the U.S. Army is fairly poor. The 2011 Center for Army Leadership's Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) identified the skill of "Develop Others" as the lowest-rated competency of leaders for the fifth year in a row.¹⁶ The same survey also indicated that one fourth of those surveyed rated their units' priority on leader development activities as "low" or "very low".¹⁷ Senior Army leaders regularly state that leader development is the number one priority for subordinate commanders and leaders, yet the Army does not educate leaders on how to develop subordinate leaders. The implication is that leadership and leader development are synonymous and that is not the case. Being a good leader does not necessarily make one a good leader developer and the CASAL study supports that conclusion.

We can expect regional alignment to compound this problem as it will result in a force aligned to a diverse set of regions. We can expect different units to have very different missions which will require different skills that will need to be developed at the

tactical unit level in many cases. Operational and tactical leaders will need to possess different regionally-specific skills such as local cultural skills, language skills, task-specific skills, etc. Therefore, the burden of developing junior leaders of regionally-aligned forces with the right set of skills will fall to the unit commanders. In short, those good unit commanders must now also be good leader developers.

In order to best prepare commanders and other leaders to be leader development experts, the Army should develop a curriculum that teaches them *how* to develop leaders beyond periodic performance counseling. The Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS) contains a model that basically consists of three domains of development - operational (training), institutional (education), and self-developmental (experience).¹⁸ Obviously leader development and behavioral change is a long-term process that happens over the course of a career as the subject links developmental experiences in the context of a larger, continuous process. Officers learn new skills and information through training and experience, but real development occurs when the officer has time to reflect on that information, synthesize it, and produce new knowledge that is meaningful for future environments and assignments. Under the ALDS, the vast majority of that reflection and synthesis takes place in the institutional/educational side of the Army. Very little of it occurs in the operational unit for a variety of reasons.

One reason, especially in recent years, is that commanders have had little time to focus on leader development. They have usually been faced with an ARFORGEN timeline that allows them only a few months before the next deployment. If time is a commander's most valuable resource, then he or she will focus on what will generate results in the short-term. Consequently, commanders have emphasized *training* as

opposed to *education*. The focus has been on training the tasks that result in success during the next deployment, and rightfully so. Of course, this comes at the expense of long-term leader development. Even as we now have leaders with significant combat experience, we also have leaders who do not know how to develop leaders with a long-term focus in mind. The vast majority of commanders are not specifically educated on how to do this even though our senior leaders tell commanders that it is a top priority.

Therefore, it is left to each individual leader to develop a program, with little to no guidance on how to do this. A RAND Arroyo study of leader development programs found that there was "no set of activities they could characterize as a standard or typical leader development program."¹⁹ CASAL findings also reinforce this point suggesting that many commanders express difficulties in implementing leader development programs and struggle to prioritize and foster initiatives in their units.²⁰ Commanders typically conduct a Leader Professional Development (LPD) focused on training key leader tasks required in the short-term. However, with the operational tempo of the last thirteen years beginning to slow down, commanders will have the opportunity to develop LPD programs that allow for subordinates to ascertain the new information and skills they have observed, reflect and process that information, and create new knowledge that would be beneficial in both the short and long-term. In a research paper published in 2013, Colonel Douglas Crissman claims there is value in raising awareness and attempting to improve results by training and educating leaders on how to develop and implement such leader development programs.²¹ Crissman argues that "a more structured process could conceivably raise both leader confidence and the perceived effectiveness among subordinates" and the Army could do this by including leader

development instruction in existing Professional Military Education (PME) and pre-command courses.²² It appears that this could be a simple, relatively inexpensive solution that would fill an existing gap by teaching leaders *how* to develop other leaders.

Along with requiring leader development skills, we should expect that the uncertain and ambiguous operating environment will require the ability to think critically. If the desired outcome of regional alignment is to prevent conflict and proactively shape the operating environment, the Army must have leaders who can think strategically and holistically about very complex problems. Problems at the strategic level are far more intertwined and complex than those typically encountered at lower levels. These problems rarely have right or wrong answers and even when it appears that one aspect of the problem has been solved, it often causes an unexpected reaction in another part of the associated system. Often these strategic problems are so challenging that any partial solution results in a situation that is only slightly "less bad" than the status quo and the consequences of a mistake can be catastrophic. Senior leaders will need to possess sufficient understanding of complex systems to understand how inducing change in one part of the system may affect other parts of the system and thus create new problems.

Leaders must not only have sufficient knowledge of their portion of the defense/security enterprise but must also have an understanding of the various national, regional, and cultural systems with which they are interacting. For example, a leader whose headquarters is aligned to U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), must not only know what it means to become a Joint Task Force (JTF) headquarters and how that affects the U.S. Army and larger defense enterprise, but he or she must also

understand the various complex systems at play in the Maghreb, the African Union, the U.S. State Department, etc. Thus, as no two regions (and associated systems) are exactly alike, we should caution against relying too heavily on prescriptive approaches. We can expect overly-prescriptive approaches to fail because they offer correct solutions to the wrong problems. As Jeanne Liedtka says, "A strategic thinker is a learner vice a knower."²³

Similarly, U.S. Army War College professors Charles Allen and Stephen Gerras write, "Strategic thinking is the ability to make a creative and holistic synthesis of key factors affecting an organization and its environment in order to obtain sustainable competitive advantage and long-term success."²⁴ Thus, strategic thinkers are able to assess complex environments by first learning about them as thoroughly as possible. At the same time, their systems understanding will need to be deep enough to help them determine what new information they have learned is relevant to the problem and what information is not as relevant. Only then should leaders begin to direct the development of possible solutions.

Consequently, effective strategic leaders spend far more time analyzing the problem than leaders at lower organizational levels. Tools such as the operational design process and the Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy (ACFSP) provide methods for leaders to gain understanding of a complex problem or environment.²⁵ The application of landpower in the future calls for leaders to better understand the environments where we will operate and the cultures with which we will interact. When combined with an assessment of a country's elements of national power and potential strategic choices, use of the ACFSP results in what Dr. Adam Silverman

of the U.S. Army War College refers to as a Cultural Preparation of the Operational Environment.²⁶ The utility of such a tool is apparent as U.S. Army units and headquarters are increasingly aligned to global regions.

Future strategic leaders will need to be more adept at assessing cultures, but they must also gain understanding of how the Army itself operates as an enterprise, with its complex and interrelated systems. Leaders need to understand how their organization fits within the larger framework of the defense and international arena.²⁷ Yet how do rising leaders gain this appreciation for the Army as an enterprise? Retired Lieutenant General David Barno argues that the Army is not doing an adequate job of developing strategic-level leaders with the right skills to most effectively manage an enterprise as complex as the U.S. Army. Barno and the others argue,

...the United States faces an international security environment marked by increasing uncertainty and instability, even as U.S. defense resources face sustained downward pressure. The demand for effective military leadership that can maintain top-notch warfighting skills and make sound enterprise decisions will be unprecedented.²⁸

Barno goes on to state that the Army is not effectively developing general officers with enterprise (or systems understanding) skills. He claims that the upper ranks of the military are populated with flag officers who were successful because of their operational expertise but now find that they are not well-prepared for their new complex management responsibilities.²⁹ He argues that the military should develop a dual-track system for senior flag officers, designating officers as either on an *operational* track or an *enterprise* track and assign them to positions within that track that enhance those particular skills.³⁰ Similarly, the U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA) argues in a recent study that the Army should transform from a personnel system with a standard career path to one where officers are able to develop individual

career paths that foster the development of more diverse talents.³¹ The actions that Barno and OEMA propose would serve to develop strategic leaders who are better prepared with the specific skills they require at the enterprise level.

Barno also argues that the changes made in the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act that remove restrictions on retirement pay has incentivized more flag officers to serve longer careers. Today, three- and four-star officers often serve 40 years, allowing them to refine strategic leadership skills.³² However, both Barno's CNAS paper and the OEMA study argue that the specific assignment tour length for senior flag officers should be extended to allow for what was termed by behavioral scientists Chris Argyris and Donald Schon as "double-loop learning".³³ In essence, double-loop learning happens after organizational failure and when the leader has adequate time to reflect on underlying assumptions behind techniques, goals, and values.³⁴ The authors argue that true strategic change cannot occur when assignment tours are less than five years.

Similarly, Colarusso and Lyle compare assignment lengths in the corporate world with those of the U.S. Army and conclude that the average CEO, CFO, CIO, and Chief Human Resource Officer all serve longer tours than their Army counterparts. The authors argue that flag officer tour lengths, which can be as short as one to two years, do not allow enough time to anchor meaningful change. They write,

Many senior officers face a terrible conundrum – if they take the time to truly “visualize and understand,” they’ve often moved on before they can “decide and direct.” If they move rapidly to “decide and direct,” their actions may create unintended consequences because they failed to appropriately “visualize and understand.”³⁵

This creates obvious problems for leaders in a regionally-aligned force. It could conceivably take years to understand the complex environment of a region, let alone have the time to manage problems and observe attempted solutions. Lengthening

assignment tours, which is now possible given that senior flag officers can serve longer careers, will begin to solve this conundrum.

Of course, having strategic leaders who better understand complex systems does not guarantee success. Leaders must be able to effectively communicate their understanding and associated vision to a variety of audiences and stakeholders who often come from very different organizational and national cultures. Therefore, to be successful in operating among these different organizational and national cultures, senior leaders must possess a degree of *cross-cultural competence*. The advent of regional alignment only heightens this need. A 2007 Army Research Institute report defines cross-cultural competence as "the knowledge, skills, and affect/motivation that enable individuals to adapt effectively in cross-cultural environments."³⁶ The same study states that a core set of competencies, that can be taught and developed, enables adaptation to any culture. This raises the question of how the Army intentionally develops cross-cultural competence today.

Several cultural skills development programs exist at the tactical level as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and, of course, the cultural immersion experiences of those theaters themselves have served to educate thousands of potential future senior leaders. As the wars conclude, however, the ability to leverage this real-life laboratory ends while the need for cross-cultural skills remains the same or even increases with regional alignment.

So how can the Army continue to develop these skills in future leaders? Many behavioral scientists and other experts have stated in numerous studies that *broadening experiences* for junior officers are an effective way to develop intercultural skills and

adaptation. The Army defines broadening assignments as those "that develop a wider range of knowledge and skills, augment understanding of the full spectrum of Army missions, promote practical application of language training *or increase cross cultural exposure* (emphasis added by author), and expand officer awareness of other government agencies, units or environments."³⁷

One of the most effective broadening experiences is full-time attendance at top civilian graduate school or civilian agency internship. Attendance at a full-time graduate school, internship, or fellowship removes an officer from their comfort zone and forces them to operate in a culture very different than their own. Colonel Andrew Poznick writes,

Some equate the educational environment to that of a foreign country with a foreign culture, and understanding other points of view, customs, and cultures allows for an expanded view of the world. The more people experience expanding their world view, the more adaptable they will become.³⁸

The 2013 OEMA study contains a similar conclusion, stating that "civilian graduate education is a proven way to develop mental agility and adaptability."³⁹

Numerous studies have suggested this yet the number of Army officers attending civilian graduate school has dropped sharply over the years. The OEMA study shows that from 1995 to 2010, the number of brigadier generals possessing resident civilian graduate degrees fell from 60% to 38%. Of course, obtaining a resident degree takes a good deal of time and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have made finding that time rather difficult for an officer. Yet Colarusso and Lyle argue that the war does not wholly account for the drop in interest. They argue that the Army reduced opportunities for graduate education from around 6000 annual slots in the mid-1980s to less than 400 annually in 1995, well before 9/11.⁴⁰ With the projections of financial resources declining

in the future, the Army will be tempted to trim civilian graduate school and other broadening opportunities to save money, as it did in the 1980s and '90s. Yet, at the same time the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review suggests that future leaders will have to be more broadly educated than perhaps ever before. The QDR states,

We leverage U.S. leadership and capabilities to drive global cooperation on security challenges in the United Nations and other multilateral fora. In recent years alone, we have cooperated with European allies and partners on operations in Afghanistan and Libya and have joined forces with Asian allies and partners on regional security issues. These and other key networks of alliances and partnerships, many of which are with other leading global military powers, will undergird the ability of the United States to face future crises and contingencies.⁴¹

In other words, smart power and regional alignment will require a more broadly-educated leader. For the United States to rely on and leverage alliances and relationships, it will require leaders who can communicate effectively and achieve shared understanding across the different organizational and national cultures. Civilian graduate school would also foster the development of those communication skills. During a recent visit to Capitol Hill, several Congressional Professional Staff Members (PSMs) mentioned to a group of visiting U.S. Army War College students that senior Army leaders needed to build relationships with members of Congress and not avoid coming to Capitol Hill.⁴² Several PSMs mentioned that Army leaders were most effective when they invested time in building relationships prior to legally-mandated Congressional testimony. However one PSM, when asked to rate how well the Army was communicating its message for retaining force structure to Congress, replied that the Army was communicating fairly to poorly.⁴³ When pressed further, he mentioned how senior leaders lose credibility through the habit of only engaging members of Congress when prepared in advance with a complete set of well-rehearsed talking

points.⁴⁴ By choosing to communicate only through talking points, Army leaders appear stiff and put their credibility and authenticity at risk.

This ability to communicate effectively to multiple and disparate audiences is a fundamental skill for senior leaders. A leader can gain profound understanding of complex problems but if that leader is unable to effectively communicate solutions there is little hope of success. The U.S. Army War College Strategic Leadership Primer asserts, "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."⁴⁵

Both curricular and extra-curricular developmental opportunities at top civilian graduate schools, fellowships, and internships would go far in developing officers capable of successfully communicating and negotiating with our civilian leadership, as well as partners and allies, in an authentic manner. This experience begins to prepare officers for roles as senior leaders when they will be communicating with many different audiences, both internal and external to the Army. Senior Army leaders often find themselves having to communicate to Soldiers, Families, civilian leaders, other Service leaders, multinational partners and allies, and even enemy forces. Graduate degree programs in public administration, business administration, and other disciplines often place junior officers in situations where they participate in case studies, team projects, and a defense of a thesis or dissertation. These are all valuable experiences that teach lessons far beyond those gained from the actual academic subject matter. In many cases, it may be the first time that officers have had to negotiate and build consensus in an environment where the officer does not have legitimate authority. Because these

situations often force officers to learn how to communicate effectively with people from other organizational and even national cultures, officers who have completed these experiences often remark how they found themselves serving as a sort of ambassador for the Army. In other words, they learned to successfully influence the attitudes of people from other cultures, as well as shape their behavior and will.

Summary of Recommendations and Conclusion

War remains fundamentally a contest of human wills. Being as humans exist on the land, influencing will is best accomplished with land forces. By aligning forces to geographic regions, the Army hopes to prevent conflict by shaping the will of allies and potential adversaries. Future strategic leaders must be skilled at influencing will prior to a conflict but must also be skilled at adapting quickly to the emerging character of a war should one arise. Those leaders who can recognize the emerging character of the war first and adapt to it first will gain the competitive advantage. Future strategic leaders will need to be adaptive, agile, and able to think critically. They will also need to be able to form relationships and communicate effectively with people from various organizational and national cultures. The Army can refine its leader development strategy now in order to ensure that we have skilled leaders for the application of strategic landpower for the Army of 2025 and beyond.

The Army is beginning this transformation by fully embracing the philosophy of mission command. However, to best fully realize the potential of mission command, the Army should add a block of instruction during PME courses that educates commanders and leaders on *how* to develop their subordinate leaders through unit-level leader development programs. Additionally, by lengthening careers and assignment tours for general officers, the Army can ensure that it has the right leaders in place for the right

time who understand complex systems and are able to think critically. Lengthening careers allows for longer assignments at the four-star level and provides adequate time for double-loop learning. In essence, strategic leaders will have time to anchor change into the organizational culture.

Of course, leaders who understand complexity must also be able to interact effectively with, and communicate to, persons of various national and organizational cultures. By increasing broadening opportunities such as civilian graduate school, interagency fellowships, or internships for promising junior leaders, the Army can develop those cross-cultural and communication skills that enable a leader to be persuasive and influential. This investment in future leaders will help to ensure we have the right leaders to implement apply landpower through regional alignment and posture the force to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Endnotes

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