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JUNE 1982

EDUCATION OF MILITARY STRATEGISTS

by

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

EDUCATION OF MILITARY STRATEGISTS



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INTRODUCTION

Military strategy translates national policy into military power when the use of force or the threat of force is required. The world in the year 2000 and beyond will undoubtedly be quite different from the world we live in today and, very likely, more complex. The problem of translating national policy into military strategy will be increasingly more difficult and require careful consideration of domestic and global issues. This requires specialized education and experience for development of strategists.

The world continues to shrink in international dimension due to transportation, communication and technological advances, and the problems that were once considered remote, or someone else's concern, will almost certainly be our concern. The issues of the day, including national security, will be complex, ambivalent, and highly charged. The strategist who must find answers to a myriad of military problems must consider a broad range of nonmilitary factors. The national security of the United States depends on it.

National security involves the integration of domestic and foreign policies. These policies, in turn, require consideration of many factors: economic, political, military, psychological, moral, technological, and social. Each of these factors offers its own parameters and is inexorably related to the others to some degree. It is in this complex milieu that the military strategist must function. The military strategist must consider the resources of the nation, including its armed forces, in a geopolitical sense, to the end that national interests can be effectively promoted and secured.

This study involves national military strategy and the development of military officers as strategists. The effective military strategist in the year 2000 must be more than a military specialist. He must possess the insight and breadth

of knowledge to integrate all aspects of national power. He must have the perspective and depth of understanding to find feasible solutions to intricate problems. He must be an optimist, a futurist, and an innovator all rolled into one.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to propose a program for developing military strategists for the Army, a Strategist Program. The Strategist Program should identify officers with the requisite education and background, and develop their ability to formulate and integrate military strategy. It is not within the purview of this study to determine the Army's need for strategists. The authors' intention is to highlight the problem and recommend an educational program for strategists.

DEFINITIONS

At the outset of this study, certain definitions are provided: (1) a Military Strategist,¹ and (2) a Strategist Program. These definitions serve only as a guide for this study and do not necessarily constitute official Army definitions.

Military Strategist--An individual, qualified by aptitude, experience, and education in strategy formulation and articulation, who understands the interrelationships of the international environment, national power, national resources, national security, military and national strategies; is knowledgeable in the role of military forces in support of national objectives and policies; and understands the process of strategy formulation used both by the United States and our potential adversaries.

Strategist Program--An established program that: (1) identifies Majors, Lieutenant Colonels, and Colonels whose experience and education indicate an ability or potential to perform in strategic planning and operations positions; (2) provides educational opportunities to broaden individual knowledge and perspective in strategy related disciplines, including graduate level education, individual research, and internships; and (3) insures that strategists are assigned duties in authorized positions on Army, Joint, or Combined Staffs, or in other appropriate agencies and activities.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Strategy is not something developed by the neophyte in a few spare hours. Few people possess, by virtue of background and education, the requisite skills. Strategic planning requires a type of creativity and mind set not normally found in the average military officer. The education and experience required of strategists take the proper environment and time to develop.

Prior to World War II, military strategy was almost solely a military domain. Intellectuals and academics spent little time probing the various aspects of war, or planning for war. War was considered an irrational act and counter to the spirit of intellectual excellence and outside the realm of academic pursuit. Military strategy was developed by men like Clausewitz, Jomini, Corbett, Mahan, Douhet, and Liddell Hart, men of broad perspective. There were others, less well known men, who were very capable military strategists. These men developed and planned military strategy without achieving special notoriety, some with brilliant success.

Following World War II, the interest of civilians in military affairs developed rapidly. This was brought about by the emergence of the United States as a world power, and also by the complex international conditions that existed at the time.

The involvement of intellectuals in military affairs was the result of changes in the nature of warfare and world politics.²

The new world order created problems far beyond the traditional area of military expertise. Military strategy was no longer the sole domain of the military; it became a shared responsibility with civilian strategists. In fact, the case can be made that in the past 20 years, military strategy has been more influenced by civilian thought than by military. One need only recall the impact that McNamara and Kissinger have had in molding US foreign policy and military strategy. Why has the military not had a greater role in this arena?

The Chief of Staff of the Army, General E. C. Meyer, has commented on numerous occasions that "the Army lacks qualified strategists," people capable of developing innovative strategies, strategic plans, and viable alternatives. It would appear that the Army's approach to developing strategists is merely a matter of assigning staff officers to positions calling for strategists. Generally these officers lack the education and experience to be totally effective strategists and planners. The Army has spent a great deal of time and money developing operators, but precious little developing strategists.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones, advocates "the development of a corps of strategic military thinkers." He goes on to say that there is a need for great strategists and the current system doesn't develop them. He further stated: "Since fresh approaches to strategy tend to threaten an institution's interests and self-image, it is often more comfortable to look to the past than to seek new ways to meet the challenges of the future."³ Clearly, the Chairman sees the need to develop a professional group of military strategists.

The Army may possess the best leadership, the most modern equipment, and a futuristic force structure, but if it doesn't have top-level strategists to plan for their use, these resources could be squandered in the pursuit of nonessential military and political objectives. The Army has often been accused of planning for the last war. It would be frivolous to think that yesterday's answers will solve tomorrow's problems. They will not. The vital interests of the United States depend on our ability to look into the future, anticipate the problems, and plan accordingly.

In December 1964, LTC (later MG) John T. Carley, wrote a memorandum to the Chief of Staff of the Army. The memorandum outlined his proposal to "place the Army in the forefront in the field of strategic thinking."⁴ It was a well thought out paper that combined historical perspective with current Army needs for strategists. Carley proposed a modest, practical program to train strategists. His

proposal was that five (or some such number) promising officers be placed on a one year sabbatical leave each year for the purpose of studying military strategy and those peripheral subjects which influence strategic thought. The proposal was turned down by the Army Staff and the Army War College for reasons difficult to ascertain. Possibly, the idea of placing five officers on a one year sabbatical for the purpose of studying military strategy was considered extravagant or reflected poorly on the Army school system to produce strategists. Whatever the reasons, the absence of foresight has cost the Army dearly today.

In 1973 General Abrams recognized that we do not really have a way to train strategists. With this in mind, he directed the establishment of an initial, low-key Strategist Program. In January 1974, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Deputy Director of Plans, ODCSOPS, and the Director of Officer Personnel, USAMILPERCEN. The purpose of the memorandum was to "establish policies, procedures, and responsibilities governing the professional development and management for officers whose career patterns are weighted with strategic planning and operations assignments."⁵ The objective of the program was to provide the Army with senior officers who were qualified for assignment to key strategic planning positions. This marked the beginning of a program to develop strategists.

In December 1979, the Director of Strategy, Plans, and Policy, ODCSOPS, wrote in a memorandum to the Director of Training, ODCSOPS, that "our current programs do not train strategists, but an officer who has been exposed to an area of expertise."⁶ The memorandum went on to point out that C&GSC is key to the process of developing strategists because it combines early selection of potential strategists with initial development in the field of strategy. A three month add-on course to C&GSC was recommended that would develop "a common conceptual framework

of ideas through the study of history and the theory of strategic thought." The add-on program was never implemented.

The current curriculum at C&GSC only partially supports the development of strategists. To be recommended to MILPERCEN for the awarding of an Additional Skill Identifier (ASI) 6Z, the student must successfully complete the regular course, write a paper relating to strategy, and take four Individual Development Courses related to strategy. This is not a great foundation, but it does provide a certain amount of background.

The USAWC curriculum contains two major parts related to strategy. They are Part I, the National Environment and the Evolution of Military Strategy, and Part II, the International Environment, US Strategy, and Supporting Programs. Students also participate in war game exercises involving national and military strategy. In addition, electives are offered in strategy and related subjects. However, the AWC merely introduces students to the field of strategy, develops the historical perspective of certain strategists, and offers some exposure to strategic requirements.

Today, the Strategist Program is not meeting the Army's needs. This fact is recognized by many within the Army, to include some of our senior officers. Then why has the situation continued to exist? Why hasn't the Army developed a viable program for strategists?

These questions elicit no simple answers. Part of the answer may be found in a memorandum from an Officer/Instructor in the Department of Joint Combined Operations, C&GSC, to his Department Chief. The memorandum (a trip report, dated September 1981) describes a visit by the author to the Strategy, Policy, and Plans Directorate, ODCSOPS. The purpose of the trip was to discuss the Army's Strategist Program and the role C&GSC plays in it. The author came away from the meeting somewhat dismayed at the lack of understanding and interest the DCSOPS personnel

showed in the C&GSC Strategist Program. He felt that this program was one of many that was pushed aside in the day-to-day press of business. He concluded his report with the following:

I left the DCSOPS with a sense of frustration. There seemed to be little interest in the subject I was dealing with or at best maybe there was interest, but there was little time to discuss it. A couple of the lieutenant colonels who worked there (this may be a snap judgment), did not seem to care at all about either the Strategist Program or what we were teaching and whatever impact it might have on the preparation of officers to assume jobs at the higher-level staff.⁷

Other problems exist. There is a difference of opinion between C&GSC and ODCSOPS as to what should be taught in the Strategist Program. It appears that ODCSOPS does not necessarily agree with the current C&GSC curriculum and the way it is being taught. It appears that the question of curriculum is a TRADOC responsibility, yet specific guidance on the scope of a curriculum in strategy has not existed.

The requirement to train strategists has been recognized for a long time. The current Army program to train strategists is not working. One reason that it is not working stems from a lack of central direction. ODCSOPS is responsible to identify the Army's requirements for strategists, ODCSPER is responsible for managing the assignment of officers with a 6Z ASI, C&GSC is responsible for identification of potential strategists and their early schooling, TRADOC is responsible for determining what strategists need to know (curriculum requirements), and the AWC is charged with providing senior field grade officers with an appreciation of strategic considerations. The pieces are there, but no one is pulling them together. Someone needs to be put in charge!

Let us leave for a moment the problem of strategists and examine the scope of strategic concepts. By examining concepts of military strategy, we can then develop an educational program for strategists.

SCOPE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES

The most important credential for the Army strategist is a comprehensive knowledge of concepts and theories of military strategy and the ability to apply them to national and world situations. The development of military strategists, competent in the use of strategic concepts, is a long and systematic process discussed in the following section of this paper. Modern concepts close the gaps between national policy, military strategy, and tactical aspects of conflict or prevention of conflict. The gaps must be closed both vertically and horizontally, first by concepts and then by practical application by strategists.

Throughout history and extending to the eve of World War I, military power and therefore military strategy were focused primarily on the fighting man and the land and sea that provided support. Technological advances applied to warfare, during World War II, added to the complexity of both military and political strategy. The continued renaissance following World War II in terms of scientific discovery, technological achievement, enhanced communications and transportation, and development of nuclear powers has further impacted on concepts of military strategy. Modern concepts of military strategy must, therefore, consider a spectrum of national and internationally related topics rather than solely the fighting man and the land, air or sea where he fights.

Military strategic concepts are as important in prevention of conflict as they are to the conduct of a conflict. Truly, the finest hour of the military strategist is a long period of peace, during which strategists excel and generally receive little credit for their successful plans. Prevention of conflict and the comprehensive national strategy involved is a primary challenge for strategists. There are at least three distinct, although interrelated, types of military strategy: national military strategy, coordinative military strategy, and operational military strategy which are relevant to both conflict and prevention of conflict.⁸

A precise concept of military conflict or even clear concepts of military strategy have eluded this country in spite of great advances in other areas. It is essential that we develop concepts of strategy and conflict if we are to develop successful military strategists. Historians, politicians, and military thinkers may claim that modern warfare or the prevention of war is too complex to be expressed in a few words. Nevertheless, it is the apparent complexity that dictates we must have coherent concepts upon which to base comprehensive plans to achieve national political goals. It is the essence of science and academics to reduce complexity to fundamental concepts, thereby, allowing solution of complex problems in a systematic way.

The value of studying classical strategists such as Clausewitz, Jomini, Corbett, Mahan, or Douhet is that they lived during a time when conflict was less complex and the clear concepts they developed form a basis for strategy today.

The great student of war, Carl von Clausewitz, stated: "War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of policy carried out by other means."⁹ Although Clausewitz did not directly refer to deterrence, he clearly discussed the value of politics and other pressures to maintain peace.

Nations go to war to satisfy national policy when other means fail. Once national policy is determined, national strategy is formulated to achieve an objective. This implies a significant influence of the civil branch over the military, an influence clearly established in the US Constitution and accepted by the armed forces as the ascendancy of the political objective.

The development of modern strategic concepts was clearly stated by T. Harry Williams:¹⁰

During the second half of the nineteenth century, a new concept of strategy began to take form in the United States and Europe. Society was becoming more complex, and so were ideas of warfare. Consequently, strategy acquired a broader definition. It became less

military. It came to involve a combination of factors--political, economic, psychological, and technological--and to involve in its formulation and direction a variety of individuals, civilians as well as military men.

Military strategists of the future will consider a wide variety of factors, military and nonmilitary, to achieve the goals for which they are planning. A comprehensive knowledge of concepts of strategy is essential in order to develop the most efficient coordinated plan to achieve national objectives. The military strategist must have more than a conceptual knowledge of national and military strategy, he or she must have a "world view" along with an appreciation of operational art and logistics.

There are many concepts that the successful military strategist must understand and a complete listing is not the intent of this discussion. The following are some additional concepts that should be considered within the general scope of a strategist's education:

1. Ascendancy of the political objective relative to all military efforts.
2. Integration of political policy and military strategy, and coordination between elements of power.
3. Political military interaction in nuclear conflict.
4. Spectrum of conflict and conflict termination. This includes crisis management.
5. Integration of air, land, and sea forces.
6. Levels of military strategy.
 - a. National military strategy.
 - b. Coordinative military strategy.
 - c. Operational military strategy.
7. Principles of war related to strategy.

The successful military strategist must first have the interest, capability, and dedication to understand strategy in the broadest terms and then through academic pursuits and experience at various levels of military strategy and operations, have developed the tools of his trade so that he can practice what he has learned.

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGISTS

The strategic foundation of national strategy, elements of power, geopolitics, and military strategy must be presented conceptually to be understood. Development of a military strategist requires a qualified individual, a sound educational process, and practical experience.

John Collins compared personal qualities of five innovative strategists and found that individuality was common to all. Therefore "dissimilarity was their most common characteristic."¹¹

There were important characteristics found in common for the five strategists compared by Collins.¹² They generally were:

Brainy	Rational	Skeptical	Patient
Scholarly	Analytical	Open-Minded	Self-Confident
Inquisitive	Imaginative	Objective	Articulate

These characteristics are important considerations in selection of officers for education in strategy and also high-level strategy assignments.

A unique type of individual is required to be an outstanding strategist. He or she generally possesses most of the above common characteristics, views the world with a broad perspective, has operational and staff military experience, and devotes time to self-education and reflection. Throughout history strategic theorists almost invariably have enjoyed two decisive assets: time to think and an environment conducive to creativity.¹³ Clausewitz, Jomini, Mahan, and others produced their greatest works during periods of stability in an environment undisturbed by daily distractions.

Time is required to develop strategists. Their skills are developed and refined over years, both formally and informally. However, the first step in the process is the identification and selection of individuals with the proper aptitude, motivation, and ability. Once selected, their education process can begin.

C&GSC

Leavenworth offers the first opportunity to identify potential strategists. C&GSC students are at the mid-point in professional development. They are selected based on merit and are career oriented. There are bound to be a number of students with an inclination toward strategic studies, and others who could be persuaded to pursue such interests, particularly if career development for strategists is enhanced.

Selection of potential strategists would be based on examinations, reports, faculty observations, and personal interviews. Those students who show promise could be encouraged to enroll in the special education program for strategists. Based on the student's academic performance and faculty evaluation, a determination would be made regarding a recommendation for placement in the 6Z program.

To further enhance the educational opportunities for 6Z personnel, an add-on course could be developed. The course would compliment and add to the existing curriculum. This add-on course would be for 6Z designees, particularly those being assigned to 6Z positions following C&GSC.

The curriculum for strategists at C&GSC would be developed by an Ad Hoc Committee representing DCSOPS, DCSPER, TRADOC, USAWC, and C&GSC. TRADOC should provide the committee chairman. The curriculum should provide an historical perspective of strategy and strategic thought, the evolution of strategy in an evolving world, contemporary and future strategic considerations and issues, and practical exercises such as war games and political-military simulations. Melded into the curriculum should be the future international social, political, economic, and

military factors that the United States will be confronting. Again, these factors may be uncertain and will require some crystal ball gazing to postulate.

Once an individual enters the 62 program, his or her career should be closely monitored. Branch assignments should be balanced with strategy assignments. In some cases, individuals will not pan out as strategists, necessitating their being transferred out of the program. This should be accomplished without prejudice to the individual or his career.

Following C&GSC, many of the 62 should be assigned to strategist positions. This introductory assignment will give them the practical experience of getting acquainted with the world of strategy and of developing individual skills.

SABBATICAL

At some point in the strategist's career, he or she needs to "get away from the trees and view the forest." Strategic planners, in the Pentagon and elsewhere, have little time for reflection and innovative thought, at least in the abstract sense. They are concerned with the pressing problem of the day, and meeting the next suspense date. There is no opportunity to sit back and reflect on long-range issues and problems. As Dr. Henry A. Kissinger once pointed out, "Senior officials are chronically overburdened by the urgent, very often at the expense of the important."¹⁴

The authors of this study, in agreement with LTC Carley's 1964 memorandum, propose a one-year sabbatical for selected officers who show unusual promise. This would be a totally unstructured program providing the selectees the opportunity to study military strategy or some related subject which influences strategic thinking. The sabbatical could be conducted at a service school, civilian university, a military institution (Strategic Studies Institute), a private institution (RAND Corporation, Research Analysis Corporation, the Brookings Institute, etc.), in a foreign country, or at some other acceptable location. This would be a "no strings attached" sabbatical. No requirement would be placed on the selectees other than the pursuit

of knowledge in the field of strategic analysis. As LTC Carley suggested: "The graduates of this program ultimately should be assigned to key planning jobs on the Army and Joint Staffs and at the War Colleges."

SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE

Not everyone will have a one year sabbatical. However, those officers selected to attend a Senior Service College (SSC) have a unique opportunity to hone their skills in military strategy. The year at a SSC allows time to delve into areas of special strategic interest and to conduct indepth research. As an alternative, the strategist could receive credit for SSC as an Army Research Associate. The research would be done in a strategy related field at an agreed location.

The Army Research Associate program might be expanded for certain individuals to include graduate level work leading to a doctor of philosophy (Ph.D) degree in a strategy related discipline. Such a program would not only improve the quality of strategists, it would enhance the program both within and outside the Army. If the Army is serious about competing in the strategy arena, it is going to have to establish credibility with members of government and the civilian sector.

Another opportunity for officers to study military strategy is participation in the Army Fellow Program at the Strategic Studies Institute. Through this program officers would have the opportunity to work with recognized military strategists and planners on current strategic concepts and matters of relevance to the Army leadership.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

There are other opportunities for strategists to expand their thinking. Participation in study groups, international panels, special projects, and other forums provide the stimuli the strategist needs and is seeking. Strategists

benefit tremendously from the exchange of ideas and their participation in these types of endeavors should be encouraged.

Following a sabbatical or graduation from a SSC, the strategist is ready to make a major contribution to his chosen field. From this point on the results of the Strategist Program should begin to pay real dividends and the Army can look forward to having competent people in the field of military strategy. The program may not produce a Clausewitz or Jomini, but it should produce sound thinkers who can articulate their points of view.

CONCLUSIONS

If the Army is to attain a measure of prominence in the field of strategy, it must first develop competent strategists. These must be talented individuals who can compete on an even basis with people in government and the academic sector. In fact, the Army should provide the lead in the field of military strategy, after all, it's our profession.

To succeed will require the commitment of resources--time, people, and money. There are no shortcuts; there are no "quick fix" solutions. What is needed is a firm commitment.

The payoff will not be in the short run; it may not be for 5, 10, or even 15 years. But properly structured and managed, a Strategist Program could have far-reaching, long-term results. The Army, and the entire military establishment, needs desperately to find a solution to the strategist problem.

There are other issues of this program that are not discussed here: personnel selection, career development, funding, program structure, and others. These issues should be addressed by an Ad Hoc Committee who would take a total look at the program. Again, the purpose of this paper was to identify some problems that exist today and recommend some solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The deficiency of qualified strategists can only be resolved by a determined, long-term commitment on the Army's part. This would involve establishing the priority and providing the resources for developing a comprehensive Strategist Program. In no other way can the Army reasonably expect to move into the forefront of strategic planning. With this in mind, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Clear strategic concepts that support a US theory of war must be developed to assist military strategists and also to form the basis for a strategist program.
2. The CSA should direct that the Strategist Program receive a high priority. He should further direct that the Strategist Program be the sole responsibility of the DA DCSOPS, as opposed to a combined responsibility. Furthermore the ODCSOPS would program and budget the funds necessary to support the program.
3. The CSA should convene an Ad Hoc Committee, representing all agencies concerned, to: review the current Strategist Program; determine the type of formal and informal programs needed to develop strategists; review the academic curriculum at C&GSC and the AWC available to strategists, and make appropriate recommendations; review the procedure for selecting potential strategists; recommend a method of selection for those who should be provided a year sabbatical; investigate a possible internship program at an established "think tank;" assess resources required to support the program; establish a formal mechanism to monitor the program; and develop other agenda items as may be appropriate.
4. The ODCSOPS should conduct an annual review of the Strategist Program and provide the CSA a written report of findings.

5. The CSA should designate an appropriate number of high level 62 positions to be filled with officers at the 07 level. One of these positions should be at the Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks. The prerequisites are: quality OMPF, graduate of an educational program in strategy, SSC graduate, and a demonstrated aptitude for strategy.

ENDNOTES

1. US Department of the Army (USAMILPERCEN, DAPC-OPD-PD), Memorandum of Understanding, dated 25 January 1974, subject: Development of Army Strategists.
2. Gene M. Lyons and Louis Morton, Schools for Strategy, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1965, p. 3.
3. Richard Halloran, "Retiring Chief Speaks Out on Military Council," New York Times, February 25, 1982.
4. LTC John T. Carley, USA, Memorandum to the Chief of Staff, US Army, "The Development of Army Expertise in the Field of Strategic Analysis," dated 18 December 1964.
5. US Department of the Army, Memorandum of Understanding.
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