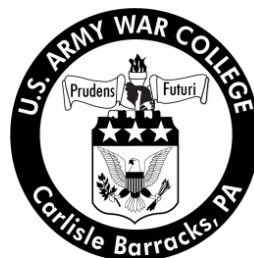


Strategy Research Project

Building Strategic Leaders in the Officer Core from Day One

by

Colonel Sean F. Mullen
United States Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2013

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

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Given today's strategic environment and the demand for specific skills and competencies necessary to be an effective officer, the Army must make changes to certain aspects of its current officer training and education strategy, in order to streamline the process and focus on the development of its junior leaders earlier in their career. The benefits of doing this will not only produce a better prepared officer who is more effective in the current operating environment, but it will produce an officer who possesses the necessary skills to be further developed over the span of their career as they prepare to become a future strategic leader in the Army of 2030.

Building Strategic Leaders in the Officer Core from Day One

Given today's strategic environment and the demand for specific skills and competencies necessary to be an effective officer, the Army must make changes to certain aspects of its current officer training and education strategy, in order to streamline the process and focus on the development of its junior leaders earlier in their career. The benefits of doing this will not only produce a better prepared officer who is more effective in the current operating environment, but it will produce an officer who possesses the necessary skills to be further developed over the span of their career as they prepare to become a future strategic leader in the Army of 2030.

The 38th Chief of Staff of The United States Army, General Raymond T. Odierno, stated in his priorities to the force, that the Army needs to "Adapt leader development to meet our future security challenges in an increasingly uncertain and complex strategic environment." ¹ As the Army's operational environment changes, and it continues to invest in the development of the future force of the Army of 2020 as part of Joint Force of 2020, the culture and structure of the way the institution educates and develops its future strategic leaders must also rapidly adapt in order to keep pace with the current and future challenges. To accomplish this, the Army must make adjustments to its' current educational strategy and simultaneously develop new, creative ways to develop both cadets and officers throughout their time of service to become strategic thinkers earlier in their careers. Failure to adapt and change the current system, will only continue to prolong the need for specific skill sets needed to be an effective strategic thinking officer, and more importantly it will fail to capitalize on the current existing opportunities, in an environment where time and resources are limited.

An examination of these issues begins by first understanding the environment the current company grade officers are operating in, and the traits the Army's leadership desires its current and future strategic leaders to possess. This paper will then provide an overview of the current officer professional education levels as directed by the Chairman of The Joint Chiefs of Staff to establish the educational background. This paper will also examine the Army's educational system and the challenges related to the current cadet and officer professional development and education process, and examine key aspects in the current education model, and identify issues that are preventing the Army from achieving its objectives in a more efficient and effective manner. Finally, this paper will provide recommendations that will assist in the development of a strategy that will make adjustments to the current officer development model and present ways to achieve the desired strategic end state during a time of budgetary constraints.

The Environment

Since the attacks against the United States of America on September 11, 2001 and the beginning of the global war on terrorism, the Army has been forced to continually adapt in response to the complexity of the modern world. The last eleven years of war have shown the United States Army that the planning and execution of military operations in the twenty-first century is one of the most challenging and complex issues faced by leaders at every level. The environment today and in the future consists of a wide variety of political situations and wars or battles that will potentially be waged against state and non-state actors, conventional forces, terrorist organizations, guerrilla forces, extremist groups, transnational crime organizations or syndicates and criminal states. The act of war itself will not only consist of traditional force on force

engagements, but also of engagements which can be carried out utilizing biological, information technology and cyber attacks. Simultaneously, the military leaders of today are faced with the challenges presented by “humanitarian, disaster relief, and support and reconstruction operations,” which require “increased coordination / integration with a range of civilian organizations, both domestic and international.”² As a result, the complexity of the modern world not only presents a significant threat to the political situation and a nation’s security, but also places a tremendous burden on the strategic leaders faced with developing plans and solutions to address these challenges, and to the junior leaders who are responsible for implementing them.

As a result, warfare, strategic decisions and the development and execution of plans and operations in the twenty-first century, requires the development of trained leaders at all levels who can operate in the joint environment, possess certain competencies, have an understanding of relevant strategies and theories, and understand how to make strategic decisions, and advise those making them. These leaders also have to have the ability to adapt and understand an environment characterized with volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA), in order to apply effective and relevant solutions to extremely complex problems. The modern day strategic decision makers and the individuals operating at the tactical and operational level have to not only be cognizant of the policies, strategies and plans they create and develop, but more importantly be aware of the impact their solutions have around the world once they are implemented.³

In the strategic guidance that was issued to the Department of Defense in January 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta stated that, “we are shaping a Joint

Force for the future that will be smaller and leaner, but will be agile, flexible, ready, and technologically advanced.”⁴ As a result, the Army is confronted with the challenge of determining the best way to develop its present and future strategic leaders at all levels in an effective and efficient manner during a time of fiscal restraint and force reductions.

Over the next five years, the Department of Defense plans on saving \$259 billion dollars with a projected path of saving \$487 billion dollars over the next ten years, which will significantly affect all of the armed services. Under the current fiscal 2013 budget priorities, the United States Army will not only experience decreases in the budget, but will also be required to decrease its current force size of 562,000 active-duty service members to a force consisting of 490,000 active-duty service members during the next five years.⁵ These recent trends of having to prepare to operate in a constrained budgetary environment, along with the projected reduction in the size of the United States Army, will require leadership at all levels to develop innovative ways to train and educate the force in order to maximize the funds that are currently available.

These times of uncertainty mixed with the fiscal restraints, provide a unique opportunity for the United States Army to make changes and adjustments to how it traditionally educates its officer corps in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and align the strategy with the modern environment. During the next five years of the draw down, the Army’s leadership has a unique opportunity to develop and implement a new adaptive education system that will save time, capitalize on available training opportunities, and maximize existing programs. By accomplishing this, the Army will develop its future strategic leaders earlier in their career, which will be beneficial for the Army of 2030 and beyond.

Today's Junior Leader

During the last eleven years, the junior company grade officers of the United States Army have been operating in a very complex environment and have been solving complex problems at the tactical and operational level since the day they were commissioned, arrived at their first duty assignment, and deployed overseas in support of the global war on terror. During their initial stages of their career, these officers deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan and found themselves leading soldiers and operating out of remote outposts or forward operating bases, often away from the locations of their higher chain of command. These officers were often immediately faced with not only the tactical scenario and dealing with an insurgency, but simultaneously they had to learn how to function in an environment that required a cultural understanding of the people, religion and the language. These officers had to have an understanding of how to address situations that involved tribal competition and rivalries between different ethnic groups, and had to learn how to influence the people and interface and develop different levels of local government. The leaders during this time also had to adapt and learn how to conduct operations in the joint environment, operate as a member of a coalition, and learn how to conduct civilian-military operations. As a result, these junior officers were forced to adapt very rapidly, learn through their mistakes and successes, and rely on the training they had received during their post commissioning and pre-deployment time in order to prepare to operate in an environment that consisted of complex problems that often could not be solved by the tactical solution.⁶

As a result of the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Army has learned many valuable lessons and overtime has recognized the need to develop its leaders cognitive

skills and more importantly specific skill sets that will not only enable the junior leader, but also the senior leader throughout their career. The Army has realized the need to have leaders at all levels that are able to operate in the joint environment, are proficient in a language, understand culture, are regional experts, and know how to think creatively and critically. The Army has also recognized that the development of these competencies and skills is a process that takes a significant amount of time, and cannot specifically be developed and sustained during periods of short duration or exposure. Despite the recognition of these needs, the Army's professional education system and model has been slow to adapt in order to meet the requirements of the leadership and the needs of the force.

What the Army Leadership Wants

Given the current environment, it is first important to understand what the Army's past and present senior leadership want in regard to the future strategic leader's capabilities and competencies. The United States Army War College, Strategic Leadership Primer defines competencies as "the knowledge, skills, attributes, and capacities that enable a leader to perform his required tasks."⁷ These competencies allow the modern day strategic leader to address complex problems, develop creative solutions, and further their individual development through education, experience and practical application, resulting in a more developed and skilled strategic leader. This document further categorizes strategic leader competencies into three distinct groups; conceptual ("thinking skills"), technical ("political, economic, and cultural systems") and interpersonal ("consensus building, negotiations and communication").⁸

According to General Martin E. Dempsey the importance of developing and teaching leaders how to think at the strategic level is imperative. He explains how

today's military leaders are very successful at the tactical and operational level and to some degree at the strategic level. At the same time, the United States Army as an institution does not adequately "prepare leaders for responsibility at the national level," and how "to be ready to add to the knowledge, skills, and attributes of our brilliant tactical leaders and prepare them to operate at the strategic level."⁹ General Dempsey further states that future strategic leaders must have a "variety of experiences at the tactical and operational level," and they must have "an educational foundation that enables creative and critical thinking,"¹⁰ He also states that they must be "inquisitive," "capable of developing solutions," and "open minded,"¹¹ which all support the importance of the conceptual competency.

Finally, one of the most critical competencies that a strategic leader needs to possess is the ability to adapt to the situation and to understand the complex environment in which they operate, even if all the information or facts are incomplete. General Martin E. Dempsey states that Army leaders must not only possess the three leadership attributes of: "Character, Presence, and Intellect,"¹² but he also states that today's Army strategic leader "must be comfortable with ambiguity and able to provide advice and make decisions with less not more information."¹³

The strategic leaders address the VUCA environment by relying on their vast array of knowledge, education and experience, as well as their willingness to listen to their subordinates and be open to new ideas, solutions and inputs from their entire team. They incorporate their ability to manage problems, as well as their expertise in consensus building, negotiation and communication skills. In summary, the Army wants the twenty-first century strategic leader to be skilled in the conceptual and interpersonal

competencies, and according to General Dempsey be “inquisitive,” “open-minded,” “think critically,” “be capable of developing creative solutions to complex problems,” and “be comfortable with ambiguity and able to provide advice and make decisions with less not more information.”¹⁴ In the end, if the strategic leader is to possess these competencies and attributes, they must have the essential tools to be an efficient and effective decision maker and advisor at the strategic level, and more importantly they have to develop these skills over the earlier decades of their career, verses the last five to ten years of their career.

What the Army Needs

To effectively operate in the current and future environment and provide the present and future leaders of the Army the time to develop their cognitive skills over the duration of their career, the Department of Defense and the Army will need to adjust their current education strategy and process. This will require adjustments to the current strategy and the development of a new strategy in order to address the specific skills that are needed to accomplish this objective. The previous eleven years of war have shown the Army that it will not operate alone on the battlefield, and that leaders at all levels have to be able to understand and “work in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) environment.”¹⁵ The experience gained during this time frame has also identified the need for leaders to be skilled in the areas of regional expertise, cultural awareness, and to be able to communicate through the knowledge and proficiency of a foreign language, as well as the need to be able to think critically and creatively. As a result, these skill sets are not just specific to the current conflicts, but are skills that can be applied to any present or future conflict, provided they are taught to the leader. They are also skills that are very difficult to develop and

require a significant amount of time in order to build proficiency, which is very difficult to find in the current military education process once an individual is commissioned.

The Current Officer Professional Education Process

Professional military education is directed and executed in accordance with The Chairman of The Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI 1800.01D). In this directive, “the policies, procedures, objectives, and responsibilities for officer professional military education (PME) and joint officer professional military education (JPME)” are outlined in accordance with the “CJCS authority from title 10, USC, section 153(a)(5)(C).”¹⁶ In this document the professional military education (PME) continuum is outlined in the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP), and it states that there are five specific levels of military education that align with the sequential progression of an officer’s career,¹⁷ four of which will be focused on in this paper.¹⁸

The first level of military education is Precommissioning, which is where officers receive their initial military education at an institution, university, or college resulting in being commissioned in a specific service upon meeting the graduation requirements. An officer also receives an introduction to JPME during this time, which exposes the future officer to the “U.S. defense structure, roles and missions of other Military Services, the combatant command structure, and the nature of American military power and joint warfare.”¹⁹ The second education level is the Primary level, which occurs when an officer is between the rank of Second Lieutenant and Captain and occurs during their “Branch, warfare, or staff specialty schools” and “Primary PME Courses”. During this time, the education process is focused on “preparing junior officers to serve in their assigned branch, warfare, or staff specialty” and learning about “the tactical level of war.” Officers also receive JPME during this level of their education and learn about the

“fundamentals of joint warfare, JTF organization and the combatant command structure.”²⁰ The third educational level is called the Intermediate level and is where an officer receives schooling during the time that they are a Major. This normally occurs at one of the “Service Intermediate PME Institutions,” and is where officers build upon their previous knowledge and “expand their understanding of joint force deployment and employment at the operational and tactical levels of war.” During this level officers also receive JPME Phase I, and learn about “how combatant commanders, Joint Staff, and Department of Defense use the instruments of national power to develop and carry out national military strategy.”²¹ The fourth level is called the Senior level of education, and normally an officer will attend this at one of the “Senior Service PME Institutions” when they are a Lieutenant Colonel or a Colonel. During this level of education, the officer learns how to serve in “positions of strategic leadership and advisement.” The education at this level also “focuses on national security strategy, theater strategy, and campaigning, joint planning processes and systems, and joint interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational capabilities and integration.” Upon completion of this level of education, officers receive credit for JPME Phase II.²² The final level of the PME continuum is the General / Flag Officer Level, and an officer receives this level of education when they are of the appropriate rank. This level of the continuum is designed to “prepare senior officers of the U.S. Armed Forces for high-level joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational responsibilities.”²³

The Officer Education System (OES) as outlined in Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, states that the strategic objective of the Army’s program “is to provide an education and training system operationally relevant to the current environment, but

structured to support the future environment by producing more capable, adaptable and confident leaders through continuous investment.”²⁴ In order to understand how the system is designed to work, it is first important to understand where the Army receives its officers from, as the individuals being educated and trained to be the future leaders of the force, are some of the most athletic, talented and competitive students in the nation. As a result, the Army is investing a substantial amount of money in the development of these future officers by providing them quality educational opportunities at the nation’s military academy and top universities and colleges across the country.

The United States Army relies on “three primary sources” of commissioning in order to build its Officer Corps and meet the requirements of the force.²⁵ The first is the United States Military Academy (USMA) which is located at West Point, New York, and is congressionally mandated to produce twenty percent of the active duty officers commissioned each year into the United States Army.²⁶ The second is the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) which has “273 host programs with more than 1,100 partnership and affiliated schools across the country,” and is responsible for producing sixty percent of the commissioned officers annually.²⁷ The third source of commissioning is the Officer Candidate School (OCS) located at Fort Benning, Georgia,²⁸ which is responsible for commissioning the remaining twenty percent, and provides enlisted soldiers the opportunity to earn a commission as an officer.²⁹ These three commissioning sources all have the same objective of educating and producing new officers, but each one has a different way of accomplishing it, and a different assessment process for the targeted population that they are recruiting.³⁰

The United States Military Academy (USMA) competes nationally for the county's brightest and most talented individuals. The Academy annually screens between 11,000-12,000 applicants for approximately 1,300-1400 seats and the opportunity to receive a four year fully funded education valued at approximately \$300,000 per individual, totaling approximately \$390- \$420 million dollars depending on the size of the class.³¹ The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) also competes nationally for the country's best and brightest individuals from across the nation, providing students the opportunity to compete for four, three and two year scholarships valued up to \$250,000 which can be utilized at over 1100 affiliated universities and colleges. The application and vetting process for these scholarship recipients is a little different from the United States Military Academy, as students have to be accepted to either the university or college they desire to attend, and also have to be accepted to the Reserve Officers' Training Corps as either a scholarship or non-scholarship participant.³² An example of the magnitude of the number of recipients of scholarships is provided in the following data. In 2010, the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corp awarded 2,579 future officers who will graduate and be commissioned in 2014, individual four-year scholarships worth almost \$51.2 million dollars.³³ The Officer Candidate School (OCS) is designed to find the best and brightest talent already within the Army's enlisted ranks and provide these individuals an opportunity to become an officer. This program is also designed to provide personnel who already have a college degree an opportunity to enlist in the Army with an option to attend OCS.³⁴

Precommissioning

During the pre-commissioning education years at both the United States Military Academy and the universities and colleges where individuals are participating in

Reserve Officer Training Corps programs, cadets are focused on earning their undergraduate degree. Simultaneously cadets have to balance the requirements to meet the Army's directed common core training in order to meet the pre-requisites required for commissioning that have been established and outlined in an approved curriculum and Program Of Instruction (POI).³⁵ During this time cadets also are introduced to the Army, and receive Basic Officer Leadership Course Phase I training, which establishes the "foundation of common core skills, knowledge, and attributes desired for all newly commissioned lieutenants."³⁶

The Precommissioning level of the PME continuum is where the Department of Defense and the Army need to reexamine their policies and education strategies in order to provide the necessary skill sets and competencies for the current and future force. Currently the pre-commissioning level does a sufficient job of producing competent, well educated, and capable officers who have attained an undergraduate degree and are ready to progress through the development pipeline. The program, however, does not specify what disciplines the cadets have to study and what core classes or competencies they must develop in order to meet the future needs of the Army. Presently, the Army does not stipulate or mandate what discipline an individual studies in order to graduate, only that the individual meets the graduation requirements of the institution they are attending in order to be awarded a baccalaureate degree, and that they met all the military prerequisites as outlined in the Program of Instruction (POI) for precommissioning. As a result, the Army commissions officers with a variety of disciplines such as humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, formal sciences, and professions and applied sciences.

Although the Army is creating a well rounded force that is diverse in its educational background, it is not necessarily creating an officer corps that has specific skill sets and knowledge in specific disciplines in order to meet the current and future requirements of the force. During the precommissioning phase, the Army needs to specify what disciplines should be studied. In this way, the Army would have an opportunity to realign the educational process of its officer corps every four years in order to ensure the right range of knowledge is attained and developed, by proportionally requiring students of certain year groups to study specific academic disciplines in order to meet the future requirements of the force.

Under the current process, the Army is missing out on an opportunity to fix some of the known skill deficits and needed requirements necessary to address the current and future environment through the educational development phase of eighty percent of the officer corps that is commissioned annually. This is especially apparent when the Army is paying for the cost of the education, as it does for the cadets attending The United States Military Academy (USMA), as well as those individuals that are receiving four year Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) scholarships, where the total investment total is almost \$442 million dollars over a four year period to educate this population of the force. These numbers do not account for the separate amounts of money the Army awards to its other cadets through its three and two year Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) scholarships.

Another area where the Precommissioning level does not facilitate the needs of the Department of Defense and the Army is in regard to foreign languages. In January 2005, the Department of Defense developed a Defense Language Transformation

Roadmap after realizing there was a shortage of linguists and regional experts during military operations after September 11, 2001, and recognized that “Language skill and regional expertise have not been regarded as warfighting skills.”³⁷ One of the goals during the transformation was to “Create foundational language and cultural expertise in the officer, civilian, and enlisted ranks for both Active and Reserve Components.”³⁸ In October 2005, (later revised in May 2010), the Department of Defense issued a directive that communicated the Department of Defense policy, which stated that “Foreign language and regional expertise be considered critical competencies essential to DOD mission and shall be managed to maximize the accession, development, maintenance, enhancement and employment of these critical skills appropriate to the Department of Defense’s mission needs.”³⁹ This document further stated that “Military units deploying to, or in transit through foreign territories shall be equipped, to the greatest extent practicable, with an appropriate capability to communicate in the languages of the territories of deployment or transit.”⁴⁰

Despite the publication of this directive, the services and specifically, the Army have not altered the current commissioning standards to assist in solving the identified language shortage. Presently the Army does not require every officer who is commissioned to study a foreign language and be proficient at a certain speaking level with that foreign language in order to be commissioned. The United States Military Academy requires that all cadets take a foreign language and receive a passing grade in two, three or four semesters depending on the cadets major, and up to eight semesters if an individual is a language major.⁴¹ Many of the undergraduate degrees attained by the Reserve Officer Training Corps individuals who attend civilian

institutions require a minimum of two semesters of a language, and some majors do not require any language courses at all. Currently, depending on where an individual attends school and what their selected discipline is, determines if a language is a prerequisite core course required for graduation. As a result, an individual attending a civilian college or university may take one to four semesters of a language if required, or potentially none at all if it is not a prerequisite to earning their degree. The language they study also may not be one of the languages identified by the Department of Defense on its annual Strategic Language List, resulting in the skill not meeting the needs of the force. This shortfall in the Precommissioning level is not only a missed opportunity to develop the fundamental skills for the Army's future officers and strategic leaders, but also a missed opportunity to assist in fixing a Department of Defense shortage, which is especially critical during contingency deployments and joint, coalition and multinational assignments.

The January 2005 Department of Defense, Defense Language Transformation Roadmap also recognized a shortage of "regional expertise," and "cultural expertise" and the need to develop this in the officer corps.⁴² The Department of Defense directive defined regional expertise, as a "Graduate level education or 40 semester hours of study focusing on but not limited to the political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic factors of a foreign country or specific global region through an accredited educational institution."⁴³ In 2007 during the Department of Defense regional and cultural capabilities summit, guidance was issued for the building of a "Regional and Cultural Strategic Plan," that stated the plan must "Build or expand career and learning paths that include language, regional and cultural skills as core competencies for

officers, enlisted members, reserves, Service academy students, and civilian employees.”⁴⁴ This guidance further stated the need to “Enhance Professional and Military Education and training from small unit to joint levels to transform language, regional and cultural competencies to a capabilities-based approach.”⁴⁵

Under the current system, the Army does not require future officers to study a specific region or learn about a specific culture, which according to the Defense Language Institute is directly related to language as, “Language acquisition is dependent on how well one understands the culture, religion, belief and value systems, economic strata, and geopolitical climate of a particular nation.”⁴⁶ Due to the extensive amount of educational time required to learn about a specific region and its culture, the Precommissioning level presents an opportunity to begin the development of these individual skills and competencies as part of the academic curriculum. This is especially critical as the Army begins to regionally align forces to support specific theaters, because the demand for regional experts can be expected to increase.

Another area where the Precommissioning level is not meeting the needs of the Army is in the way it is educating young officers how to conduct operations in the joint environment, operate as a member of a coalition, and learn how to conduct civilian-military operations. The junior officers of the Army today are immediately exposed to the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational environment, which is a totally different experience than the senior leadership of the Army had when they were junior officers. When Brigadier General Carter Ham was a Joint Task Force commander in Mosul, Iraq in 2005, he stated during an interview, “When I joined the Army, you seldom even saw a member of another service,”..... “Now I have platoons go out and

they may have a Navy SEAL with them, an Air Force forward air controller and Marine air providing air cover. And the young lieutenants and sergeants think that's normal."⁴⁷

As a result, the Joint Professional Military Education development of these individuals needs to begin earlier, in order for them to have a better understanding of joint operations, how to operate as a member of a coalition, and how to conduct civilian-military operations. Presently a cadet only receives a basic introduction to JPME during this level of their education and learns about the "U.S. defense structure, roles and missions of other Military Services, the combatant command structure, and the nature of American military power and joint warfare."⁴⁸ In order to increase the knowledge of the future officer who will operate in the joint environments, cadets should also learn about the "fundamentals of joint warfare, JTF organization and the combatant command structure,"⁴⁹ which under the present system is not taught to Army officers until after they are commissioned and attend BOLC Phase II and Phase III during the Primary level of the PME Continuum. This is an area where the Army needs to assume risk, streamline the process, and expose students to this level of training. After all, the Army is paying for a four year education for selected individuals "due to their demonstrated intelligence, leadership potential, and high aptitude for learning,"⁵⁰ so they should be capable of learning it.

During the Precommissioning level, the Army needs to focus on the development of the future officer's conceptual competencies and simultaneously develop their interpersonal competencies (consensus building, negotiation, and communication) which are all necessary to be an effective leader at every level. Moreover, these are skills that take a significant amount of time to develop. General Dempsey states that

“Successful strategic leaders will require interpersonal skill and maturity. They must be team builders, negotiators, mentors, and leaders who empower others.”⁵¹ As a result, if the objective is to develop these competencies over time, the education and learning of these skills has to start in the early development stages of the officer.

The Army’s current junior leadership operating on the battlefield is faced with issues at the tactical and operational level that require some of the same conceptual and interpersonal skills as the senior leaders operating at the strategic level. Today’s junior leaders are having to negotiate, effectively communicate and build consensus on the battlefield, as well as understand how to address situations that involved tribal competition and rivalries between different ethnic groups, and influence people and develop different levels of local government. The only difference in the skills levels required between the junior leaders and strategic leaders is the separation of the levels of war, complexity, and maturity of the actor, because the majority of the issues strategic leaders address are at the national level, involve external organizations, or involve the key leadership or senior representatives of other countries.⁵²

A junior leader needs to develop their consensus building and negotiation skills as early as possible during their educational process, because these skills require an extensive amount of time in order to develop proficiency, and are skills that are necessary in the current operating environment. Junior leaders need to be educated in order to understand that consensus does not necessarily mean everyone agrees with the outcome, and that it involves a process of accommodation so that everyone wins something. Consensus building is not the process of the majority rules the decision, but it is the process of being inclusive of all parties involved, and listening to each individual

view point, negotiating and resolving grievances or disputed issues, and then making a collaborative decision. In order to be effective at this process leaders at every level must possess the ability to apply logical reasoning, and the willingness to give a little or compromise something in order to gain in the long term. Consensus building involves the skills of being a good negotiator, and the ability to communicate effectively to ensure all stakeholders provide input and understand the context of the issues at stake.⁵³

As briefly mentioned above, the ability to negotiate is extremely important to consensus building, but is also a key attribute to being an effective junior level leader as well as a strategic leader. Today's leaders have to be skilled at the art of negotiating and have the ability to form personal relationships. A leader has to have the ability to understand the issue at hand, show a willingness to listen, see the other person's perspective, and has to have "the ability to stand firm on nonnegotiable points while simultaneously communicating respect for other participants."⁵⁴ The junior and strategic leader's ability to communicate a point of view or desired outcome clearly and concisely, while ensuring their message is understood without offending anyone is the key to a successful negotiation.⁵⁵ In order to become a proficient negotiator it requires extensive training, and this needs to begin during the Precommissioning level of the education continuum.

Primary Level

Once an officer is commissioned in the United States Army, the individual begins their Primary level of Professional Military Education (PME), and will spend the first ten years of service in this level of the PME Continuum, until they become a field grade officer. During these years an officer predominately learns about the tactical level of war. FM 3-0 defines this as, "Tactical commanders focus primarily on employing

combined arms within an area of operations,”⁵⁶ and further states the focus is on battles, engagements and individual, small unit and crew actions at the tactical level.⁵⁷ Utilizing the elements depicted in the operational design, officers at the tactical level primarily focus on tasks and objectives.⁵⁸ As a result, company grade officers master the tactical level of war during this level of the continuum and are then ready to progress to the next higher rank and become field grade officers.

The Army’s education at the company grade level generally occurs during the first five years of an officer’s career, and is focused first on developing technical and tactical skills as well as the individual leadership competencies required for success. During initial training immediately after commissioning, the focus is on individual leader development, where the purpose “is to produce agile and adaptive expeditionary leaders who are knowledgeable and experienced enough to confidently conduct operations.”⁵⁹ Officer’s begins their company grade professional training by attending their initial entry level training, which consists of attending the Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC) Phase II and Phase III. During this training, officers develop their individual leadership and build the foundation for their technical skills, as well as their tactical skills in order to become effective small unit leaders. During BOLC II and III, the Army focuses on problem solving at the tactical level, and builds and develops leaders that are ready and prepared to conduct kinetic operations.⁶⁰ An officer also receives additional introductory level JPME during this level of their education, and learns about the “fundamentals of joint warfare, JTF organization and the combatant command structure.”⁶¹ Since BOLC’s current training curriculum is tactically focused, it does not development an officer’s critical thinking capabilities, conceptual competencies or

simultaneously develop their interpersonal competencies. The training during this time does not develop or build upon an officers language abilities or proficiency, as a previous foundation has also not been established during the Precommissioning level of the PME continuum. Officers also do not develop the core competencies necessary to develop their specific regional and cultural skills and expertise, which are paramount skills that are necessary to be successful in the current and future operating environment.

As officers progress in rank, they next attend the Captains Career Course for approximately six months, where they learn the necessary skills required to be successful as future battalion and brigade staff officers, and are prepared to become future commanders at the company grade level.⁶² The training under the current education model however does not adequately prepare individuals to serve as company grade officers at the division and corps level, or to operate as a staff officer in the joint operating environment. An example of this in today's operating environment, is captains are serving on many of the Combatant Commands staffs, and according to "The Joint Staff Officer Project" conducted by the Joint Staff J-7 / Joint Training Division in 2008 which looked at the Combatant Commands officer distribution, "Of the 3,896 approved, authorized billets, 49.3% are in the grades O-4 and below – the least career-experienced personnel on the staff, least likely to have served in a previous joint assignment or staff officer assignment, and with the least amount of training time in the military and education programs."⁶³ As a result, the Department of Defense and the Army needs to look at how they can provide the proper level of JPME earlier in an

officer's career, in order to better prepare the individual to support the commanders and meet the requirements and the demands of the force.

During the Captains Career Course, the current training model does not develop an officer's critical thinking capabilities, conceptual competencies and simultaneously develop their interpersonal competencies. Similar to the outcome of BOLC, the course also lacks language proficiency and sustainment training, as there is not an initial educational foundation that has been previously established to expand upon. The current curriculum does not further develop an officer's regional and cultural skills to assist in developing regional experts, which are necessary at every staff level, and are needed to successfully operate in the current and future environment. The current system also does not award college level credits for the core classes and elective classes officers are receiving, and does not have a Cooperative Degree Program in order for officers to earn credits which could be applied toward earning their Masters degree. As a result, upon completion of the Captains Career Course, the Professional Military Education at the company grade officer level is complete,⁶⁴ but an officer is only partially prepared for their future assignments and the demands that the current operating environment will place upon them. The officers also have not earned any graduate level credits after participating in an academic environment for a six month period.

Intermediate Level

At approximately the tenth or eleventh year of service an officer in the United States Army becomes a field-grade officer and begins to enter the Intermediate level of the PME continuum. During this time, an individual continues to focus on the tactical level of war, but also begins to learn about and eventually masters the operational level

of war. FM 3-0 defines this as “Operational-level commanders typically orchestrate the activities of military and other governmental organizations across large areas.”⁶⁵ The document states that during this time, commanders are focused on the execution of campaigns and major operations that utilize tactical forces to achieve operational and strategic objectives and end states.⁶⁶ Utilizing the elements depicted in the operational design, officers at the operational level focus on “Objectives, Conditions and Military End States.”⁶⁷

During this time, new field grade officers attend the Intermediate Level Education course (ILE), which is the first course that focuses on developing officers “to be successful at more senior levels,” and is designed to “prepare new field-grade officers for the next 10 years of service.”⁶⁸ While attending this eleven month course, “leaders are prepared to expand their scope of responsibilities through educational experiences that foster advanced critical thinking, adaptability, agility, and problem solving skills.”⁶⁹ This is accomplished through seven blocks of instruction that make up the core curriculum. These blocks are, Foundations, Strategic Studies, Operational Studies, Army Operations, Managing Army Change, Rise of the Western way of War, and Leadership: Forging Success in Uncertain Times.⁷⁰ During this course, officers are also introduced to Joint Professional Military Education Level I for the first time in their careers and begin to understand and learn about Joint operations.⁷¹ An officer during this time is also afforded the opportunity to earn a Master’s degree in Military Arts and Science through a military program, or earn a civilian Master’s degree through Cooperative Degree Programs that award college credits for an individual attending the Intermediate Level Education course, and simultaneously taking courses through the

selected academic institutions who will award the degrees.⁷² To accomplish this, the officer has to not only manage the course load of the military curriculum for ILE, but has to take night classes or weekend classes independently to meet the requirements of the partnered universities and colleges if participating in the program. As a result, many officers choose to participate in these volunteer programs, in order to earn their Masters degree upon completion of attending ILE.

The intermediate level of education is successful in preparing new field grade officers to work at various staff levels throughout the Army, but it does not provide training for language proficiency or sustainment because no initial educational foundation has been previously established at either the Precommissioning or the Primary level. Although the course incorporates some regional studies, it does not further develop an officer's regional and cultural expertise, which is necessary to serve at every staff level and also to be successful in the current operating environment. The course does teach students how to "Understand critical thinking methodology" and "Think critically,"⁷³ but it is lacking in the development of an individual's technical and interpersonal competencies which are critical in preparing individuals to perform at the strategic level. The current ILE graduation standards also do not require that every officer earn a Masters degree, despite the programs being readily available. The lack of this requirement fails to further develop an individual's critical thinking and is a missed opportunity to further educate the officer corps. The course also does not adequately prepare Majors and future Lieutenant Colonel's to operate in the current joint operating environment, as the JPME I the officers are receiving is not the right level of education

individuals need to be successful at the strategic level if assigned to a Combatant Command Headquarters.

In “The Joint Staff Officer Project” conducted by the Joint Staff J-7 / Joint Training Division in 2008, it stated “Since 43 % of authorized joint staff billets are O-4 or below, officers filling those positions are normally coming directly from tactical military assignments with no involvement in strategic planning or thinking levels required at a Combatant Command.”⁷⁴ This report further stated that “Most staff officers felt their inexperience in a strategic environment limited their writing abilities,” and they “recognized a need to analyze and synthesize large amounts of information into a concise, brief format for senior level review.”⁷⁵ This document also addressed the need to have staff officers who have received JPME II training prior to being assigned to a Combatant Command. The data in the study showed that out of the 3,986 company through field grade level officers authorized staff billets at the Combatant Command Headquarters, 1,918 were of the grade of O-3 and O-4.⁷⁶ Of the 557 individuals of these grades who responded to the questions pertaining to having already completed JPME II training, only 100 of the individuals had done so.⁷⁷ As a result, the Department of Defense and the Army need to look at ways to adjust the current level of training in order to align the education levels with the force requirements.

Senior Level

The final step in the Professional Military Education of field-grade officers is accomplished by attending the Senior Service College (SSC). This is normally done between the ninetieth and twenty-second year of service, and under the PME continuum, it is the first time in an officer’s career that they are being educated and prepared “to assume strategic leadership responsibilities in military or national security

organizations.”⁷⁸ The education at this level “focuses on national security strategy, theater strategy, and campaigning, joint planning processes and systems, and joint interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational capabilities and integration.”⁷⁹ Upon completion of this level of education, Army officers have been educated on “the development and employment of land power,” understand critical thinking and have learned “to research and publish on national security and military strategy,” and are able to “engage in activities that support the Army’s strategic communication efforts.”⁸⁰ Officers also receive credit for Joint Professional Military Education Level II training and earn a Masters of Strategic Studies Degree upon graduation.⁸¹

The current SSC curriculum provides an excellent level of education and is more than adequate to achieve the stated goals. The challenge is the education received during this level of the PME curriculum is too late in an officer’s career, because many of the students are learning how to operate at the strategic level for the first time, but would have significantly benefited from this level of education earlier. Significant numbers of the student population have also been directly involved in the tactical and operational level of war either in Iraq or Afghanistan during the last eleven years, and consequently have not been exposed to strategic issues. Granted they have become experts at the tactical and operational level, but could have significantly benefited from receiving a portion of this level of education earlier in their career, specifically the JPME Level II education which is part of the curriculum.

In “The Joint Staff Officer Project” conducted by the Joint Staff J-7 / Joint Training Division in 2008, the study showed that the Combatant Command Headquarters were authorized 1,974 billets in the grade of O-5 thru O-6, which accounts for 51% of their

assigned strength.⁸² Of the 594 individuals of these grades who responded to the questions about having already completed JPME II training, only 196 of the individuals had already received this training.⁸³ Consequently, the senior population of the Combatant Commanders staffs, who are responsible for providing recommendations and advice the strategic leaders, have not received the proper education to assist them in doing so.

During the academic year at the SSC, an officer earns a Master's degree in Strategic Studies, but the college does not provide students with an opportunity to earn academic credit hours towards a military or civilian Doctorate degree through Cooperative Degree Programs. As a result, many officers are earning a second Master's degree, instead of conducting postgraduate work to progress to the next level of the advanced education spectrum. A Doctorate program is not only critical to an individual's professional development, but also to the institution, as the incorporation of this process would provide further incentives to the officer corps, and benefit individuals as they prepare to be future strategic leaders.

The Way Ahead

In order to develop the current junior leaders of the Army today and properly prepare them to be the future strategic leaders of the Army in 2030, a change must occur in the current education process. The Department of Defense and the Army need to recognize the value of training the institution's junior leaders earlier in order to adapt and align the education system with the current and future operating environment. To achieve this, the Army must make changes to streamline certain aspects of its current officer training and education process. The following recommendations present a way to adjust the current system the Army utilizes to educate its future and current officer

corps. These recommendations outline adjustments that provide the Army the flexibility to utilize a phased approach in order to allow for modifications and adjustments as lessons are learned. The recommendations are developed in a manner to adjust the current Professional Military Education continuum, allowing for cadets and officers to receive training earlier in their careers in order to make them more effective leaders, while simultaneously opening up opportunities earlier in their careers for further educational development. Finally, these recommendations are all directly related to existing courses and curriculums, incentive programs, and promotion eligibility under the current Army system, in order to achieve the desired objectives.

The Precommissioning level of the PME continuum is where the foundation of the officer corps begins, and where the Army invests a substantial amount of money in educating and developing the future leaders of the force. Understanding that change cannot always take place in a timely manner and affect the entire population of the force at one time, this author recommends utilizing the population of cadets at the United States Military Academy and the Reserve Officer Training Corps four year scholarship recipients as the basis to initiate change during this level of the continuum. Through the utilization of this portion of the population, the Army would be able to affect the largest number of personnel being educated in the officer commissioning programs, and who have the greatest amount of time available. The benefits and the results achieved would also provide the largest return on a reoccurring investment that the Army has already committed money towards. The Army would also be able to monitor a specific portion of the population in order to determine if changes are effective and efficiencies are being gained, with the flexibility to adjust as needed.

During the undergraduate education process the Army has the opportunity to direct what majors and disciplines cadets specifically study, in order to create an officer corps that has specific skill sets and knowledge in specific disciplines in order to meet the current and future requirements of the force. To affectively accomplish this, a detailed analysis would be required for the future commissioning year groups requirements as they are aligned with the projected future needs of the Army. The analysis would allow the Army to forecast its needs based upon historical commissioning data, and would provide the flexibility to realign the educational process of the officer corps every four years based upon future projections. This methodology would also provide the Army the opportunity to reevaluate the system every two years based upon the majority of the first two years of most core curriculums being somewhat universal across the spectrum of disciplines. The adaptation of directing specific disciplines of study, would assure the right range of knowledge is attained and developed across the officer corps, and would reduce the amount of officers who have studied the same disciplines, by proportionally requiring students of certain year groups to study specific academic disciplines in order to meet the future requirements of the force.

The Army needs to look at adjusting its current strategy and educational requirements in order to incorporate the mandatory development of language skills. Based upon the importance and need for having a language skill at every level of leadership in the Army today, and the significant amount of time that is required to develop these skills and become proficient, the Army needs to change its current commissioning requirements and incorporate language as a prerequisite. To

accomplish this, the Army should require every officer attending the United States Military Academy or receiving a four year ROTC scholarship to have at a minimum of four semesters of a foreign language in order to be commissioned. The language they study would have to be one of the languages identified by the Department of Defense on their annual Strategic Language List, to ensure the language they are studying is in accordance with the requirements of the force. This change would capitalize on the time available to an undergraduate student, and build the initial foundation for the continued development of language skills and proficiency throughout the rest of the officer's career. Having officers with a level of language proficiency, would also allow the Army to develop groups of officers with similar languages in order to build a strategic skill set within the Army's force structure.

As the Army begins to regionally align forces for future deployments in support of specific theaters, the demand for languages and regional experts will also increase. In order to address this issue, the Army needs to require cadets to take specific elective courses during their four year undergraduate period that will build the initial foundation necessary to becoming regional and cultural experts. The Department of Defense directive defined regional expertise, as a "Graduate level education or 40 semester hours of study focusing on but not limited to the political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic factors of a foreign country or specific global region through an accredited educational institution."⁸⁴ In order to initiate the process of developing individuals to meet these requirements in both the Precommissioning levels and later levels of their Professional Military Education, the Army needs to require future officers to study a minimum of twenty semester hours on specified regions in order to learn

about a specific culture, which directly ties to the language they are studying. The regions of study should all be aligned with the current regions assigned to the combatant commanders, and should support the focus areas of the future force. This process will not only enhance the individuals skill sets and abilities, but will also assist in diminishing a portion of the extensive amount of time required to meet the prerequisites to become a regional expert, and will assist the officer in both their initial and future assignments.

To reinforce the development of the political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic language requirements during the Precommissioning level of the continuum, cadets should participate in multiple events through-out their summers in order to expose them to a variety of cultural and educational experiences and also develop their abilities to think critically and creatively. To accomplish this, the Army should look at opportunities to have cadets directly participate with units or cadre who are in training exercises at both the National Training Center, Joint Readiness Training Center, Joint Multinational Readiness center or various other pre-deployment exercises in order to observe or experience firsthand the challenges leadership at all levels have with the cultural environment and the complexities on the battlefield.

Cadets should also participate in established internships with both public and private industries and Department of Defense, Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development. In an article by Charles Westerberg and Carol Wickersham in April 2011, they stated that the “Benefits to interns may include academic credit, salaries, benefits, practice in disciplinary skills, material for disciplinary reflection, exposure to the habits of professional practice, increased self-awareness, the

opportunity to exercise civic responsibility, expansion of social and professional networks, and résumé building.”⁸⁵ These programs would all need to be supervised and coordinated through the Army to ensure the internships are aligned with the disciplines the cadets are studying.

As Ambassador Janet Sanderson states, “there is always something about a student that suggests that this internship will be a good fit for them. They may have some particular expertise that they can contribute or a particular motivation that coincides with the assignment they are chosen for. Their internship should complement their education.”⁸⁶ Understanding that cadets have to participate in certain military requirements during certain summers such as specialty skills schools, the Cadet Troop Leader Training Program, and the Leader Development and Assessment Course between a cadets junior and senior year, the Army needs to look at other civilian and military opportunities in order to allow cadets to further develop these creative skills.

Once the Precommissioning level is completed, the newly commissioned Army officer will spend the first ten years of service in the Primary level of the PME Continuum. Under the current model, officers focus on learning their skills at the tactical level and primarily focus on how to solve problems. They attend the Basic Officer Leadership Course Phase II and III, and then might attend some specialty schools before reporting to their first duty assignment. During BOLC II and III, the Army needs to expand upon the earlier development of the officer’s critical thinking capabilities learned during the Precommissioning level rather than just focusing on problem solving as it relates to tactical scenarios. To accomplish this, additional core classes and exercises

directly related to furthering the development of an individual's critical thinking skills would need to be added to the curriculum.

During this time the Army also needs to continue an individual's language development and training, and the goal of the Army should be to require officers to have a level of speaking proficiency before they can be promoted to the rank of captain. This process should include an initial incentive bonus upon doing so, as well as mandating that individuals retain their proficiency through the already established incentive of the monthly Foreign Language Proficiency Pay currently in existence. By establishing a requirement similar to the graduation requirement of four semesters of language, officers will have to continue to progress along the spectrum in order to be promoted, which will not only increase the proficiency of languages across the force, but will also ensure that the development of these perishable skills is maintained, tracked and aligned with future assignments.

During this level of the continuum, the Army needs to require that junior officers complete the remaining 20 semester hours required to becoming a regional expert. This training could be achieved through courses taught as part of the course curriculum at BOLC Phase II and III, as well as online or through training and partnerships through the local colleges and universities in the vicinity of service installations and bases. The completion of the regional studies process with a specified region of expertise would also be a prerequisite for promotion to captain.

When an officer is a senior First Lieutenant or has been promoted to Captain, they attend the Captains Career Course. Based off the previous eleven years of combat, the Army's young officers have been operating in the JIIM environment much

earlier in their careers. During this level of their PME, the Army should incorporate JPME I into the curriculum. Presently this level of training is received at the Intermediate PME level, which is too late in the career progression of an officer. Officers during this time are already conducting operations in the joint environment as a Lieutenant and a Captain, and are often working with Combined Joint Task Forces or Multinational Corps when forward deployed during contingency operations. More importantly, company grade staff officers are also serving at the Brigade Combat Team, Division, Corps, or Combatant Command level, where their effectiveness and efficiency would be improved if they have already received JPME I. By completing this training earlier in an officer's career development through incorporating JPME I into the Captains Career Course, all company grade officers would receive this training, resulting in an increase in the amount of officers available across the Army and the Department of Defense to serve in future joint assignments earlier in their career.

In order to develop officer's critical thinking skills and promote the skills developed from attaining a graduate degree, the Army needs to look at ways to provide graduate level credit for courses during BOLC II and III as well as the Captains Career Course. If critical thinking core classes and exercises, JPME I, language training and twenty hours or regional studies are all added during this level of the PME continuum, this training should count towards credit hours necessary towards earning a master's degree. Presently the Army is able to align core courses towards a master degree during the ILE course, and students are able to attain a masters degree in less than one year through the Cooperative Degree Programs which is subsidized through tuition assistance to the individual by the Army. The Army needs to adapt a similar program

earlier in the PME continuum, which begins by building credit hours during BOLC II and III, and ends with students finishing their degree as part of the graduation requirements of their Intermediate Level Education. Having graduate level courses and awarding graduate degree credit hours, will not only further develop the officers individual critical thinking skills, but it will also provide the Army with a better educated force, and open up opportunities later in an individual's career to receive another masters degree, participate in fellowships, or possibly attend a doctorate degree program.

During an officer's tenth or eleventh year of service, they become a field-grade officer and begin to enter the Intermediate level of the PME continuum. During this timeframe, they attend the Intermediate Level Education course, which prepares them to work at various staff levels throughout the next ten years of their career. Based on the analysis above, officers need to continue to develop their language and regional studies proficiency and sustainment training during this timeframe as well as further develop and refine their critical thinking skills during this time through a focused effort in the curriculum at ILE. The regional studies portion of ILE should build upon the earlier levels of individual expertise that were recommended in the Precommissioning and primary level of PME, in order to further develop experts that can be of benefit to the force as field grade officers. The Army also needs to teach JPME II during this level of the PME continuum, in order to develop field grade officers earlier in their careers and meet the demands and requirements for qualified people to serve in support of the Combatant Commanders and other staff positions at the strategic level. The Army also needs to change the graduation requirements of ILE, so all students have to graduate with a Masters Degree through either the military or Cooperative Degree Programs

currently available. This requirement of having a Masters degree, should also be a prerequisite for being promoted to the grade of O-5, provided you have been afforded the opportunity to attend ILE. By doing this the Army will develop an officers individual critical thinking skills, develop a better educated officer corps, and also develop the necessary skills and competencies necessary to work at the strategic level. This process will also provide a basis of knowledge for further development as an officer progresses during the second ten years of their career, and will set the conditions to focus further individual development as a strategic leader when attending the Senior level of the PME continuum.

A senior field grade officer attends the fourth level in the Professional Military Education between their ninetieth and twenty-second year of service. This level of the PME continuum should be the polishing level or the pinnacle level for the future strategic leaders of the Army. As previously stated, the current SSC curriculum provides an excellent framework and level of education for future leaders; it is just being received too late in an individual's career. The Army needs to adjust the current educational timeline, so officers receive the material presented during this level of education between their sixteenth and eighteenth year of service. Through the process of developing officers earlier in their conceptual, technical and interpersonal competencies, and by educating officers progressively throughout their careers on language, regional studies, culture, and JPME, during attendance at the SSC earlier, there would already be an established foundation or basis of senior level knowledge to build upon. This would allow the college and the faculty to focus on further developing the student's knowledge regarding national security issues and strategy, theater

strategy and campaigning, and national policy. Receiving this education earlier, would also provide an opportunity to learn how to better operate as a member of a coalition at the higher echelon, and to become more proficient at conducting and planning civilian-military operations as well as joint planning and joint interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational integration. Finally this would also provide an opportunity to further develop individual critical skills and competencies through Cooperative degree Programs and the initiation of military or civilian Doctorate degrees.

General Raymond T. Odierno, stated in his priorities to the force, that the Army needs to “Adapt leader development to meet our future security challenges in an increasingly uncertain and complex strategic environment.”⁸⁷ These times of uncertainty mixed with the fiscal restraints, provide a unique opportunity for the Department of Defense and the United States Army to make changes and adjustments to how it traditionally educates its officer corps in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and align a strategy with the modern environment.

This paper presents a way to better develop strategic leaders, and recommends changes to certain aspects of the current Professional Military Education continuum and the current officer training and education strategy in order to develop junior leaders earlier in their career. The changes focus on building the foundation from the ground up, which begins during the Precommissioning Level of the education continuum and provides officers an opportunity for further development throughout their career. The ideas presented for the development of a new strategy incorporate educational opportunities that capitalize on already existing programs during a time of budgetary constraints, and focuses on the development of trained leaders at all levels that can

operate in the joint environment, and who possess conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills. The recommendations focus on developing future strategic leaders who are regional experts, cultural specialists, and are able to communicate through the knowledge and proficiency of a foreign language. The recommendations also focus on developing future strategic leaders earlier in their careers who have an understanding of how to operate in a JIIM environment, understand relevant strategies and theories, and understand how to make strategic decisions, and advise those making them.

In a time of uncertainty and an environment where time and resources are limited, the benefits of changing the current Professional Military Education continuum will produce a better prepared junior officer who is more effective in the current operating environment. The changes will also produce an officer who possesses the necessary skills and competencies, which can be further developed over the span of their career as they prepare to become a future strategic leader in the Army of 2030.

Endnotes

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⁷ Strategic Leadership Primer, 3rd edition, ed Stephan J. Gerras, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, United States Army War College, 2010), 28.

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¹⁰ Ibid., 26.

¹¹ Ibid., 25

¹² General Martin E. Dempsey, "Developing Strategic Leaders," in United States Army War College "Strategic Thinking," (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, United States Army War College, August 2012), 25.

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¹⁴ Ibid., 25.

¹⁵ "Introduction," Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), News Letter, *JLIM Training*, no. 11-20 (March 2011), 1.

¹⁶ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Officer Professional Military Education (OPMEP), Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Instruction* (CJCSI) 1800.01D, (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 15 July 2009), 1.

¹⁷ Ibid., A-A-2.

¹⁸ The Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP), defines five different levels of the professional military education continuum. They are Precommissioning, Primary, Intermediate, Senior and General and Flag officer level education. This paper focuses on the first four levels of the continuum, and how they pertain to an officer's career through the field grade level. The education of the General and Flag officers will not be addressed during this analysis. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Officer Professional Military Education (OPMEP), Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Instruction* (CJCSI) 1800.01D, (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 15 July 2009), A-A-2.

¹⁹ Ibid., A-A-2 — A-A-6.

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