

**Strategic Leadership:
A Recommendation for Identifying and Developing the
United States Army's Future Strategic Leaders**

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“Furthermore, in contrast to World War I when the War College closed its doors from 1917 to 1919, and again in World War II when General Marshall closed the Army War College in 1940 and they did not reopen again until 1950, we have maintained and grown our leader education program. We remain committed to it.”

*- General Peter J. Schoomaker
Chief of Staff, Army*

Remarks to the 2005 Association of the United States Army Eisenhower Luncheon

Executive Summary

The army's current model for identifying and developing its strategic leaders occurs far too late in an officer's career progression, thus limiting the benefit the officer, the army, the nation and most importantly the soldiers receive in return. The army can improve on its strategic leader development by implementing a program which identifies a pool of officer candidates earlier in their careers with the requisite performance, skills and cognitive capabilities to deal with the complexities of future strategic decision making. In order to better prepare the next generation of future army strategic leaders, the army must be able to identify a pool of officers early in their careers who demonstrate the desired characteristics and potential for continued service as future strategic military leaders, given that the army's current best predictor of future performance is current performance.

The United States Army War College defines a strategic leader as a leader who is an expert, not only in his own domain of war fighting and leading large military organizations, but also in the bureaucratic and political environment of the nation's decision making process. This domain includes a detailed knowledge of, as well as the interrelationship among economics, geopolitics, military and information.¹ The strategic leader understands strategic art, which is the skillful formulation, coordination, and application of ends, ways, and means to promote and defend the national interests.² The strategic leader provides the organization's strategic vision and focus, inspires others to think and act, and coordinates ends, ways, and means.³

This paper proposes three approaches to the early identification and development of the army's future strategic leaders. The approaches range from the very broad to the very selective. The approaches

¹ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg iii.

² United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg 1.

³ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg 2.

are: 1) the mass Intermediate Level Education strategic leader education approach, 2) the implementation of the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program and 3) the Army Strategic Leader Development Program approach.

The six criteria used to evaluate the three approaches, and their associated weights are: 1) cultural acceptability (10%), 2) peer acceptability (5%), 3) ease of implementation (5%), 4) cost (10%), 5) provides exposure to strategic leaders and decision makers (30%), and 6) percentage of target population who become strategic leaders (40%). In comparing the three approaches against the criteria and weights, the second approach, the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program is the clear choice.

The Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program is a four - year program which focuses on only those officers with the most potential for service and success as future army strategic leaders. Army strategic leaders are defined as those colonels and general officers who lead in the strategic environment and those subordinate officers who affect the decisions made by those holding strategic decision – making positions. During the first year of the program, the officer will be required to attend Intermediate Level Education at either a sister service or joint staff college in order to focus on interagency, international, joint, and combined warfare - sharpening the tool sets needed for war in the 21st century. The second year of the program is spent in graduate school resulting in a master's level degree in strategy, national security studies or foreign affairs from a highly reputable university such as Georgetown University or the George Washington University, due to close proximity and access to the nation's strategic leaders,. The candidate's capstone or thesis paper will address a strategic issue currently being faced by one of the services, combatant commands or the national command authority. The third year of the program consists of a one year tour of duty in an executive office of the joint, OSD or army staff where the candidate could observe senior military strategic officers operate and make decisions at the highest strategic level. This year would provide an appreciation of the strategic environment, specifically the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) environment that exists at the strategic level and the recognition that problems at the strategic level are complex and difficult. The final year of the program consists of a one year tour of duty in the executive office of another government agency such as the Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice or the

Central Intelligence Agency. Through exposing officers with high potential to the executive leadership of other government agencies, they will better be prepared to deal with other branches and organizations of the government when they are strategic leaders and have to make decisions impacting other parts of the government and the nation as a whole.

By implementing the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program to identify and develop its future strategic leaders, the United States Army ensures that its “bench” is always full of officers who have been appropriately selected, trained and developed to fill its future strategic leader requirements. It will also be able to reduce the number of “developing” jobs required of its strategic leaders, enabling earlier assignment to positions of greater responsibility and influence and therefore longer utilization.

“When we prepare our Soldiers for combat, we need to facilitate a third American trait: a culture of innovation. As leaders, we shape behavior. We must continue to challenge old ways of thinking and remove obstacles to innovation.”

*- General Peter J. Schoomaker
Chief of Staff, Army*

Introduction

The War on Terror is a different kind of war. Lessons learned in combat have resulted in many leadership lessons learned and changes being implemented at the lowest levels of military leadership education, to include revision of basic training for enlisted soldiers, changes in programs of instruction for non commissioned officer education programs, and the implementation of the Basic Officer Leadership Course for newly commissioned officers. Recently, there has also been much attention given to the development of adaptive and creative leaders, from the fire team to the battalion task force levels. Despite these initiatives, little has been done to identify and develop the future colonels and general officers, those who will be the strategic leaders of the United States Army.

The Long War, what was previously referred to as the War on Terror, requires strategic leaders who are able to effectively deal with the complexities of the war, and make sound decisions which affect organizations other than their own. The contemporary operating environment requires the strategic leader to be able to make decisions in a realm which is a combination of the national security, domestic, international and military environments.⁴ It requires leaders who are adept at leading large, complex organizations while concurrently dealing with the issues of globalization and the twenty four hour news cycle. The ambiguity and uncertainty of terrorism, of future adversaries, and of catastrophic future threat models, requires military leaders with a broad range of experience and understanding. This includes not only joint military experience, but experience in dealing with other nations and allies, governmental agencies and the other branches of the United States government. They must be capable of decision making in the strategic realm.

Problem Statement

Currently, the United States Army does not *officially* begin training and preparing its officers for strategic leadership responsibilities until they enter one of the Senior Service Colleges, those being the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, the National War College or any one of the individual Service

⁴ Crupi, James, Presentation to the February, 2006 Army Strategic Leadership Development Course, Austin, Texas.

colleges or fellowship opportunities offered in lieu of Senior Service College. Upon completion of Senior Service College and post Senior Service College assignment, those selected for promotion to general officer continue to be trained as strategic leaders through required army programs such as the Army Strategic Leader Development Program, the Brigadier General Training Course, and joint programs such as the Joint Flag Officer War fighting Course, the Joint Force Land Component Commander's Course, the CAPSTONE course for new general officers, and PINNACLE, for three star joint task force commanders.

Essentially, all strategic level training and development is conducted late in an army officer's career because earlier training focuses on branch specific tasks and battalion, brigade and division level operations. By waiting until so late in an officer's career to start training and educating on the principles of strategic leadership, the army is spending vast amounts of resources for a very limited return in terms of officer utilization. Specifically, the average time in service for an officer who is promoted to colonel is approximately twenty one years in service; this is normally during or just after attendance at a Senior Service College. The average time in service for an officer selected for promotion to brigadier general was twenty five years for the period of Fiscal Year 2000 to Fiscal Year 2006. The average time in service of a general officer retiring during the same time period was just over thirty two years. (Figure 1) Given the above facts, after training, the army and the nation are getting only ten to twelve years of service from its strategic leaders.

Year/Time	FY 06	FY 05	FY 04	FY 03	FY 02	FY 01	FY 00	Average
Average Time In Service Upon Promotion to BG (Years)		25.75	25.17	24.92	24.83	25.08	24.75	25.08
Average Time In Service Upon Retirement (Years)	31.89	32.56	33.26	33.68	Data Unavailable			32.85
Average Amount of Time Served as a General Officer (Years)								7.7

(Figure 1)⁵

In order to better prepare the next generation of strategic leaders, the army must be able to identify a pool of officers who demonstrate the desired characteristics and potential for service as strategic-level military leaders. This is even more critical now, since the congress changed the mandated retirement age for general officers to sixty - eight years of age at the request of the Secretary of Defense. The effects of this change are already being felt throughout the ranks of the army officer corps. In Fiscal

⁵ Data compiled from the General Officer Management Office website, www.army.mil/gomo/, accessed January, 2006.

Year 2004, prior to the passing of the new legislation, forty five officers were selected for promotion to brigadier general. In Fiscal Year 2005 after the implementation of the new retirement age, there were only thirty one brigadier general nominees. This reduction in retirements and promotions may result in slower promotions for all of the officers in the below ranks, as there are fewer openings and opportunities for promotion.

This paper will discuss methods for identifying and developing the active army's future strategic leaders. It is important, however, to note that strategic leaders are not just general officers, nor are all general officers strategic leaders. Strategic leaders for the purposes of this document include those colonels and general officers who lead in the strategic environment, and those subordinate officers who affect the decisions made by those holding strategic decision - making positions.

Strategic Leadership Defined

In its leadership doctrine, the army identifies three distinct levels of leadership; direct leadership, organizational leadership and strategic leadership.⁶ (Figure 2) Each level has different foci and levels of responsibility. Direct leadership involves individual and small group-oriented tasks and is predominantly exercised through interpersonal skills and by directly influencing others. Organizational leadership focuses on organizational systems and processes and concerns policymaking and the providing of organizational direction. Strategic leadership deals with global, regional and national perspectives and is a function of culture, values and purpose.

To divide leadership into those three levels is instructive but it is critical to recognize that in today's operating environment, army officers operate, at various times, at all three levels. For example, a company commander in Iraq may be conducting operations at the tactical level which have strategic effects. Not only is the army leadership model arranged in three levels, but its accompanying leader development model is depicted by three distinct pillars: institutional, operational assignments and self development initiatives.

Formal leadership education represents the institutional pillar, in the case of strategic leadership, the Senior Service College. Operational assignments are those in which an officer gains experience and

⁶ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg iv.

exercises leadership at the varying levels of the army, for example jobs that develop strategic leadership skills such as division operations officer positions. The third pillar in this model is self - development initiative or the officer's self improvement through observing others or conducting independent study or reading, for example reading the selections from the Chief of Staff, Army reading list. The army's current leadership development model is a career-long, progressive, sequential and interconnected process.⁷ This paper will demonstrate that the process can be accelerated and does not have to be sequential for those officers who demonstrate the capacity and potential to be future strategic leaders.

The Army Leadership Framework



(Figure 2)⁸

The current and future operating environments require junior officers to operate across the spectrum of all three levels of operations; (tactical, operational and strategic) and all three levels of leadership; (direct, organizational and strategic). While their position and level of experience may dictate that officers spend more time and energy in one domain, situations always arise forcing them to operate in others. For example, many more junior officers are now being required to work on strategic level staffs

⁷ McGuire, Mark, "Senior Officers and Strategic Leader Development", *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter, 2001-02, National Defense University.

⁸ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004.

such as those of the combatant commands and the multiple joint task forces which have been established for command and control flexibility in the Long War, some of which are temporary and have been stood up to execute the Long War.

Junior officers must understand the implications when operating in the strategic realm in order to conduct responsible and timely analysis and make sound policy recommendations to senior decision-makers. In today's contemporary operating environment, junior officers need early exposure to strategic level staffs and other government agencies to ensure they develop into strategic leaders who are not only experts in their field but also in the bureaucratic and political environment in which strategic leaders operate.⁹

It is feasible to identify the officers who demonstrate the desired characteristics and potential to be future strategic military leaders, but it is critical to remember that they must live through the experience.¹⁰ No matter how bright an officer may be or how strong his or her future may look, he must "live through the experience" in order to be that future strategic leader. An officer must have the requisite experience and job history in order to become a strategic leader in the army; experiences and jobs in command and staff positions of increasing responsibility in the army and the joint environment. Similar to the chief executive officer with years of experience and social learning enabling he or she to lead at the highest levels, the army is not going to select a thirty year old captain to be a division commander just because he displays the characteristics desirable in a division commander; he must have experience in the levels between his current position and that of a division commander. There is some risk involved in identifying the future pool of strategic leaders; specifically, some of those identified will not continue through the system to reach the level of strategic leader. An officer may fail at any given level of the organization for a number of reasons, to include poor performance or personality flaws. However, by identifying a pool of candidates, through investing in developing their strategic leader skills, the organization will be building its bench of most capable leaders who are prepared to serve at the highest levels of the army.

⁹ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg 6.

¹⁰ Interview with COL(R) Michael Shaler, 1 February 2006.

The United States Army War College (USAWC), in its Strategic Leadership Primer defines strategic leadership as follows: “Strategic leadership is the process used by a leader to affect the achievement of a desirable and clearly understood vision by influencing the organizational culture, allocating resources, directing through policy and directive, and building consensus within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global environment which is marked by opportunities and threats.”¹¹ It is an environment where one has to lead indirectly.

The Primer further identifies some of the key capabilities desired of a strategic leader. One is he or she must be an expert, not only in his own domain of war fighting and leading large military organizations, but also in the bureaucratic and political environment of the nation’s decision making process. This domain includes a detailed knowledge of, as well as the interrelationship among economics, geopolitics, military and information.¹² The strategic leader must understand strategic art, which is the skillful formulation, coordination, and application of ends, ways, and means to promote and defend the national interests.¹³ In leading a strategic level organization, it is the responsibility of the leader to provide the organization’s strategic vision and focus, inspire others to think and act, and coordinate ends, ways, and means.¹⁴

In order to successfully lead at the strategic level, the leader must recognize that strategic leadership is a shared responsibility within an organization to include the staff and decision makers. The reality is that only one or two percent will ever attain strategic leadership rank or position; those colonels and generals who hold strategic-level leadership positions. But, anyone in a staff position working for a strategic leader should be well-trained in the art of strategic leadership or they cannot adequately support the leader. Effective strategic leadership cannot reside merely in the person of one leader. Effective

¹¹ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg 5.

¹² United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg iii.

¹³ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg 1.

¹⁴ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg 2.

leadership is a function of the interaction of the leader, those being led or influenced, and the situation or circumstances facing the organization.¹⁵

It is critical therefore that officers at every level of the organization understand and appreciate the difficulty of strategic leadership and its responsibilities, functions and impacts on the organization.¹⁶ It is also critical that current and future strategic leaders and their staff officers are intellectually curious and demonstrate a tolerance for ambiguity in the ever-changing realities, challenges and dangers of the 21st Century.¹⁷

Key Strategic Leader Competencies

The USAWC identifies four key competencies common to all strategic leaders: self awareness, adaptability, expertise across the full spectrum of operations, and interpersonal skills.¹⁸ It is critical in any strategic leader development program to develop these four competencies

Self awareness is the understanding of where the leader and the organization fit into the greater strategic context. It also includes the impact of the leader's personal style on others and the ability of the leader to lead competently across all cultures.

Adaptability refers to the ability of the strategic leader operate in a volatile and complex current operating environment while maintaining the mental agility to deal with an ambiguous future operating environment.

The strategic leader must be an expert across the entire spectrum of operations to include joint, interagency and multinational operations. The strategic leader must be able to form coalitions from a diverse group of organizations under their direction and control.

Finally, the strategic leader must have strong interpersonal skills. Those interpersonal skills include the ability to build teams not only vertically but also horizontally with other organizations. Though the coach of his own team, the strategic leader must also perform as a team member.

¹⁵ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg 2.

¹⁶ United States Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership and Management, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 2nd Edition, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2004, pg 3.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ MG Huntoon, David, *Strategic Leadership* presentation to the Army Strategic Leadership Development Course, Austin, Texas, February, 2006.

It should be noted that further research continues in the field of strategic leadership and the competencies required of strategic leaders. A group of researchers at the Army War College have identified six other “metacompetencies” desired in strategic leaders.¹⁹ Those metacompetencies are identity, mental agility, cross-cultural savvy, interpersonal maturity, world-class warrior, and professional astuteness.²⁰ The authors identify those competencies as being necessary for future army strategic leaders at the rank of colonel and above. If these metacompetencies are required to lead at the strategic level, it only makes sense to start preparing officers to operate at that level, instilling these metacompetencies, well before the officer reaches that level.

Complexities of Leading a Strategic Organization

Since it is possible to identify the pool of potential future strategic leaders of the army, the military and the National Command Authority, it is essential to address the attributes which must be developed in those individuals. Leaders at all levels have critical tasks which must be accomplished, but at each higher level in an organization, these tasks become increasingly complex and qualitatively different. Leaders at the strategic level must be capable of exercising and operating at higher levels of cognitive complexity, that is, the ability to deal with abstract concepts with long timeframes and 3rd order effects.

The quality of strategic leadership is critical to the success of large organizations. Eliot Jacques and Steve Clement in their book, *Executive Leadership*, state that the unique significance of competence in role in managerial leadership shows that by far the most important factor in the successful functioning of any company is the match between the level of capability of the corporate CEO and secondarily, of the CEO's subordinate executive vice-presidents and the level of work called for in the CEO's role.²¹ This concept is especially critical in an organization such as the army. As the lives of soldiers and the future of the nation are at stake, and the army must have a bench of competent leaders prepared to move into strategic-level positions.

Jacques and Clement also address the importance of identifying potential leaders of an organization, as there are no commonly available principles for filling managerial and subordinate roles. The result is that organizations normally have too many layers, and election, appointment and promotion

¹⁹ Gerras, Stephen, Kidd, William, Pricone, Robert, Swengros, Richard, Wong, Leonard. *Strategic Leadership Competencies*. September, 2003.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

processes are so full of shortcomings that it is by luck rather than by design that we get optimum manager-subordinate role relationships with incumbents of the right levels of competence.²² It is critical that the army refine its deliberate process of identifying a pool of future strategic leader candidates and spend the resources to develop them and prepare them fully for their future leadership positions.

In identifying a pool of potential future strategic leaders, it is important to develop not only the leadership abilities of the candidates, but their cognitive leadership capabilities as well. In their research Jacques and Clement have discovered that high level leadership is not connected with personality make-up, but with managerial competence based upon cognitive capability, values, knowledge and wisdom (so long as there are no seriously deleterious personality characteristics), which are all used in a requisite organization such as the army with requisite procedures.²³ They have found no evidence of any particularly consistent personality qualities that stand out as true for most if not all of history's great leaders, but they have found cognitive ability to be a consistent quality.²⁴

The ability to deal with cognitively complex situations is critical to the success of the strategic leader, and thus the organization. Effective strategic leaders are successful only when they operate one category higher in cognitive complexity than their subordinates. By understanding this, the army can lay a foundation for the early identification of high-potential managerial leaders and for the development of a sound corporate talent pool.²⁵

It is important to assess a candidate's current actual capability. More important is his or her current potential capability, which is the maximum level at which a person could currently work given the optimum opportunities and conditions provided that their work is of deep inherent value for the individual, even though he or she has not had past opportunity to acquire the necessary skilled knowledge. Once the current potential capability is identified, the army must develop the necessary skills and knowledge in the candidates in order to develop a greater future potential capability.

Future capability is defined as the maximum level at which a candidate will be capable of working in five, ten or twenty years into the future. In addition to future capability, the candidate must demonstrate

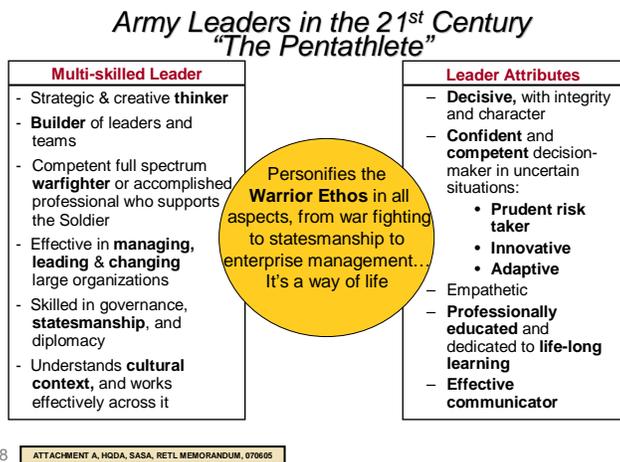
²² Ibid.

²³ Jacques, Elliott and Clement, Stephen D., *Executive Leadership: A Practical Guide to Managing Complexity*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA, 1994.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

the intrinsic motivation and desire to succeed at the highest levels of the organization. By maximizing the future strategic leader’s potential capability, the army ensures quality strategic leadership is available in the future capable of dealing with cognitively complex situations and ambiguity.²⁶ Jacques and Clement found through their research that the greater a person’s cognitive power, the greater is the mass of information that can be coped with. They also found that the greater the leader’s cognitive power, the longer is that person’s working time outreach or time horizon.²⁷ If the army expects to be able to develop future “Pentathlete” strategic leaders, those who are able to adapt to multiple roles and situations, it must identify those leaders early on and invest in developing their leadership skills, cognitive abilities and experiences. (Figure 3) This will require the army to accelerate or modify its “Pentathlete Ramp” or career path for those individuals who are selected and identified to have the potential and capability to become the nation’s future military strategic leaders.



(Figure 3)²⁸

Key Individuals and Institutions

The army is responsible for the identification, training, education, equipping, selecting and promotion of its officers. But there are multiple other institutions and individuals who have a vested interest in ensuring the United States Army is able to identify and develop professional successful future

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Review of Training, Education, and Assignments for Leaders (RETAL) briefing, Deputy Chief of Staff G-3/5/7.

strategic leaders. Those institutions include the Department of Defense, the army officer corps the congress, other government agencies and the nation. Each of the institutions will be discussed below.

The United States Army is responsible for waging and winning the nation's wars and conducting other missions as required. As such, it is critical that the army is able to identify, develop and promote only the best and most capable to be its future strategic leaders. The army requires the most capable strategic leaders it can produce, as the decisions made by those future strategic leaders impact not only the soldiers in the army but the future of the nation as well. Any and all future strategic leaders must not only be adept at leading and decision-making within the army, but must also be equally effective in interfacing with other agencies to solve complex interagency problems and situations involving other branches of the government, and even other nations.

The Department of Defense, as the department responsible for resourcing and executing the National Defense and Military Strategies, requires leaders who are capable and adept at leading large complex organizations. It requires strategic leaders who are capable of leading not only army land forces, but the forces of the other services and nations. Such positions include the combatant commands, army land force component commands and the joint staff. The Department of Defense is also responsible for recommending and nominating officers for promotion to the President and the congress.

The United States Army officer corps is the group responsible for training and leading the Soldiers of the United States in preparing the army for its wartime duties. As such the officer corps values and demands competence amongst its ranks. It expects individuals to be selected and promoted who are most qualified and prepared.

The congress is responsible for the authorization and allocation of fiscal resources to the government, specifically to the Department of Defense and to the army for purposes of this paper. The congress, specifically the senate, has the additional responsibility of confirming the nomination of all officers in the United States Army for promotion, regardless of rank. Therefore, the congress expects that those officers who are nominated for promotion, especially those for positions of strategic responsibility, are fully prepared to fulfill the requirements of the office for which they have been nominated.

There are also other government agencies that are affected by the strategic leaders of the military. Agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency, USAID and the Department of State interact

with the Department of Defense and the United States Army on a day to day basis. As such, they require interaction with leaders who understand the capabilities of individual government agencies and who recognize the effects of military policy on the operations of other government agencies and how those agencies can help or hinder military operations. The military strategic leader must be able to develop synergy for combined unity of effort.

The nation is the institution that we all hold most dear. Every military officer takes an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States upon initial commissioning and promotion to each subsequent pay grade. The citizens and taxpayers of the nation expect their tax dollars to be maximized and used properly. They expect that the United States Army is identifying, selecting and promoting those leaders who are fully prepared and qualified to lead the nation's army into the future, protect the nation's interests and prepared to meet the nations call to duty, whatever the mission.

Identification and Analysis of Alternatives

This paper offers three distinct alternatives to identify and develop future strategic leaders for the United States Army and the nation. They range from the very broad to the very narrow. It is important to note that it is possible to wash out or fail in each alternative or later on in an officer's career. Participation in none of the alternatives guarantees success at the individual or organization level. Each is discussed in the sections that follow.

Intermediate Level Education (ILE) Approach

Alternative one is the "mass approach" to developing future strategic leaders, so there is no defined selection method in this approach. In this approach, it is recommended that strategic level leadership training be integrated earlier into the officer education system. Currently, only the United States Military Academy offers any formal education on strategic leadership prior to attendance at a senior service college. This alternative will be referred to later as the ILE approach.

In this alternative, all active component army Operational Career Field Officers (OPCF) would be introduced to strategic leadership theory and application during pre – commissioning training at all of the commissioning sources and the Captain's Career Course and would be offered a more detailed course in theory, vision, art and application during the Intermediate Level Education Course at Fort Leavenworth. Additionally, each officer would be required to complete written exams on the application of the strategic

leadership instruction received and would be required to complete a project focused on a strategic issue faced by the army.

In this alternative, the institutional learning would be managed by the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and would be funded via the army's Trainees, Transients, Holders and Students (TTHS) accounts as other army professional development and education programs are currently.

This alternative maximizes the targeted audience, but dilutes the level of strategic level instruction and development received by the candidates. This alternative also requires the army to seek out and provide exceptionally trained and educated faculty members to provide quality instruction and feedback to students.

Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program (JOSLDP) Approach

Alternative two is a more narrow approach to selecting and developing the army's future strategic leaders. This alternative modifies the current Joint Chiefs of Staff/ Office of the Secretary of Defense Internship program and modifies it to become Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program. This alternative will be referred to later in this document as the JOSLDP approach.

The Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program would be a centrally-selected program which would accept a number of senior captains (20-30 per year) who demonstrate the capacity for future strategic leadership. Selection would be conducted by a board comprised of members from the Department of the Army Staff and Human Resources Command and chaired by the Director of the Army Staff, who would ultimately approve all of the selections. Human Resources Command would conduct a pre – screen of the candidates prior to decision by the Director of the Army Staff. Selection would be based upon past performance in leadership positions such as company command and in combat operations, recommendation by senior leaders, and potential for future strategic leadership capacity.

The Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program would be a four-year program beginning with required completion of Intermediate Level Education at either a sister service or joint staff college in order to focus on interagency, international, joint, and combined warfare - sharpening the tool sets needed for war in the 21st century.

The second year of the program is spent in graduate school resulting in a master's level degree in strategy, national security studies or foreign affairs from a highly reputable university such as Georgetown University or the George Washington University, due to close proximity and access to the nation's strategic leaders, in order to provide theoretical background, building on the pre-commissioning, Captain's Career Course and ILE work. These degree programs most closely address the issues and organizations with which a future strategic leader will have to interact. The candidate's capstone or thesis paper would have to address a strategic issue currently being faced by one of the services, combatant commands or the national command authority.

The third year of the program, the social learning year (technically, the observe and imitate year), would consist of a one year tour of duty in an executive office of the joint, OSD or army staff where the candidate could observe senior military officers (strategic leaders) operate and make decisions at the national-strategic level. During this phase of the program, the selected officers would gain an appreciation of the practice of skill sets, complexities, considerations and long term visions required of strategic leaders. This year would provide an appreciation of the strategic environment, specifically the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) environment that exists at the strategic level and the recognition that problems at the strategic level are complex and difficult.

The final year of the program would consist of a one year tour of duty in the executive office of another government agency such as the Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice or the Central Intelligence Agency. (See Figure 4) By exposing officers with high potential to the executive leadership of other government agencies, they will be better prepared to interface with other branches and organizations of the government when they are strategic leaders and have to make decisions impacting other parts of the government, congress and the nation as a whole.

Year/Duty Location	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
	Attendance at ILE at a Sister Service or Joint Staff College	Earn Graduate Degree in Strategy, National Security Studies or Foreign Service	Intern in Executive Office in OSD/ Joint or Army Staffs	Intern in Executive Office of Other Government Agency

(Figure 4)

During the final phase of the program, the officer will be required to complete a statement on what he or she gleaned from the program and how he or she intends to continue his or her strategic leadership development, to be submitted to the Director of the Army Staff's office.

Throughout the entire four year program, the selectees will participate in forum and seminars with business, government and military strategic leaders. These forum will provide the selected officers the opportunity to explore strategic leadership as it applies to entities such as business and academia.

This program would be managed by the "special" assignments officer in the Director of the Army Staff's office as are other critical assignments within the army staff. The graduate program would be funded by the Advanced Civil Schooling section of Human Resources Command, with the remaining two years of the program being funded by the agencies to which the junior officers are assigned. Completion of the entire program would be mandated, as only those with the highest potential for strategic leadership would be selected.

Army Strategic Leadership Development Program (ASLDP) Approach

The third alternative develops and conducts an Army Strategic Leader Development Program (ASLDP) for officers with high potential for future service as strategic leaders. It is also a centrally selected program using current army selection board methodology, with selection being reserved for those officers who are selected below the zone (BZ), or early, for promotion to the ranks of major and/or lieutenant colonel. This approach will be referred to in this document as the ASLDP Approach.

All officers selected BZ would participate in this program. So, if an officer is selected early for promotion to major or lieutenant colonel, they are selected for ASLDP. Early selection for both ranks is not necessary, but is likely an additional indicator of senior leader potential. Once selected early for promotion and enrolled in the program, the officers would be required to attend an ASLDP session similar to the program currently being conducted by the Officer of the Chief of Staff, Army for general officers.

ASLDP should be conducted three times per year for those selected below the zone, similar to the program conducted for general officers. ASLDP would be a two - week session conducted three times per fiscal year to ensure the entire target audience is reached. The ASLDP would occur at an "off site", non-military location. The first week of the program would consist of formal strategic leadership training, to include theory and application. The second week of the course would be spent conducting

corporate visits in order to gain a better understanding of strategic leadership in the business realm, reviewing strategic leadership case studies, and participating in panel discussions and sessions with strategic leaders from corporate America, the non – profit sector, the government and the military.

Those selected early for promotion to major would attend ASLDP prior to attending ILE at a sister service or joint staff college to complement the focus on interagency, international, joint, and combined warfare - sharpening the tool sets needed for war in the 21st Century. Those selected early for promotion to lieutenant colonel would attend ASLDP prior to assuming battalion command.

As part of the ASLDP, an alumni course would be conducted annually to build on the basic course for those who continue to stay on the “early” promotion track. This would consist of more panel discussions and sessions with strategic leaders, in addition to breakout group exercises requiring students to solve complex issues.

The ASLDP program would be managed by the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3, Leader Development Division and would be funded “temporary duty and return,” thus reducing the burden on the army’s TTHS account.

An area common to all three alternatives is the concept of accelerated promotions. Once an officer is identified as having performed in an outstanding manner and possessing the requisite skills and cognitive abilities to be a future strategic leader, these officers should be accelerated as quickly as possible through the promotion system in order for the army and the nation to gain maximum benefit from their leadership abilities. For example, if an officer is an outstanding performer as a battalion task force commander and is fully prepared to lead and command at the brigade level, why not pull him or her out of battalion command at the twelve or eighteen month mark; send the officer to senior service college and move immediately into brigade command. An officer of such a high caliber would have a greater impact on a larger organization if this were possible. As was stated previously in this document, an officer may wash out of any of the proposed approaches and it is imperative to remember, that though an officer is selected for attendance for a program, he must live through the experience, that being their operational and staff assignments.

Evaluation Criteria

Six criteria have been chosen to evaluate each of the three proposed alternatives. Those criteria are cultural acceptability, peer acceptability, ease of implementation, cost, provides exposure to strategic leaders and decision makers, and the historical percentage of each target population who become future strategic leaders. Each will be discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

In order to succeed, a program must be acceptable to the culture in which it will operate. In this case, *cultural acceptability* is defined as the ability of the army's current strategic leadership and subordinate members to accept an officer who has participated in a strategic development program. In an organization such as the United States Army, which still values the traditions upon which it was originally founded, the culture is very resistant to any change. For example, many senior leaders and officers are resistant to changing a selection and education process which they feel they mastered, and so obviously works as far as they are concerned.

Peer acceptability is also a critical evaluation criterion. Any officer who participates in one of the above alternatives must be accepted by his or her peers. Any selected approach must not give the impression that the army is developing a formal system of "have's and have not's." Officers who participate in the selected alternative must not be ostracized by their peers, and must be fully integrated and accepted into their peer communities.

The army is at war, and as a result is very busy and focused in many different directions. These range from fighting the Long War to recruiting, training, equipping and educating soldiers. As a result, any recommended program should be highly effective but also should be relatively *easy to implement*, thus reducing the disruption on the rest of the service's activities and functions.

Cost must be taken into consideration for any selected alternative. Given that resources are scarce, any chosen alternative should seek to reduce the costs associated with it. By minimizing the costs of the selected alternative, the army will be able to reduce the fiscal resistance to identifying and developing its future strategic leaders.

In order to achieve the desired effects, the chosen program must *expose its participants to current strategic leaders and the strategic leadership and decision making process*. By providing such exposure, the program potentially reduces the requirement for developmental strategic leadership

positions later in the officer's career. This would include the exposure of the officer to strategic leaders of not only the military realm but to that of other government organizations.

An important evaluation criterion is the *historical percentage of the target population who actually do become strategic leaders*. In order to gain long-term acceptability and credibility, the accepted alternative must prove that it has a high rate of success in producing the army's strategic leaders. This criterion is evaluated using programs which most closely reflect the nature of each approach.

In weighting the criteria, all of the weights represent a percentage of one hundred. The criteria are weighted as follows: *cultural acceptability* (10%), *peer acceptability* (5%), *ease of implementation* (5%), *cost* (10%), *provides exposure to strategic leaders and decision makers*, (30%), and *percentage of target population who become strategic leaders* (40%).

Approach Analysis

In the below table, (Figure 5), which depicts the numerical analysis and recommendation of each approach, the approaches are rated between one and three, with one being the most preferred approach and three being the least preferred, and multiplied by weight of each criteria to produce an individual score. The approach with the lowest total score is the recommended approach. In the below sections, each criterion will be applied to each approach

<u>Criteria/Alternative</u>	<u>Cultural Acceptability</u> <u>(10%)</u>	<u>Peer Acceptability</u> <u>(5%)</u>	<u>Ease of Implementation</u> <u>(5%)</u>	<u>Cost</u> <u>(10%)</u>	<u>Provides Exposure to Strategic Leaders and the Decision Making Process</u> <u>(30%)</u>	<u>% of Target Population Who Become Strategic Leaders</u> <u>(40%)</u>	<u>Total Score</u>
ILE Approach	.10	.05	.05	.10	.90	1.20	2.40
JOSLDP Approach	.20	.10	.10	.30	.30	.40	1.40
ASLDP Approach	.30	.15	.15	.20	.60	.80	2.20

(Figure 5)

Regarding *cultural acceptability*, the ILE approach is the clear winner. This is because the army culture in general is less receptive to small groups receiving what is perceived to be preferential

treatment. There is a strong sensitivity to the notion of “have’s and have not’s” and elitism. By exposing all ILE students to strategic theory, vision, art and application there is no perceived special group. The drawback to this is it is impossible to ensure a high level of strategic leadership training and development and much more difficult to identify the future strategic leaders, since the instruction is conducted in a mass student environment and therefore does not target a select population.

Regarding *peer acceptability*, the ILE approach is also the preferred approach. By not segregating a segment of the population in a special program, there is no chance of creating animosity towards the target population.

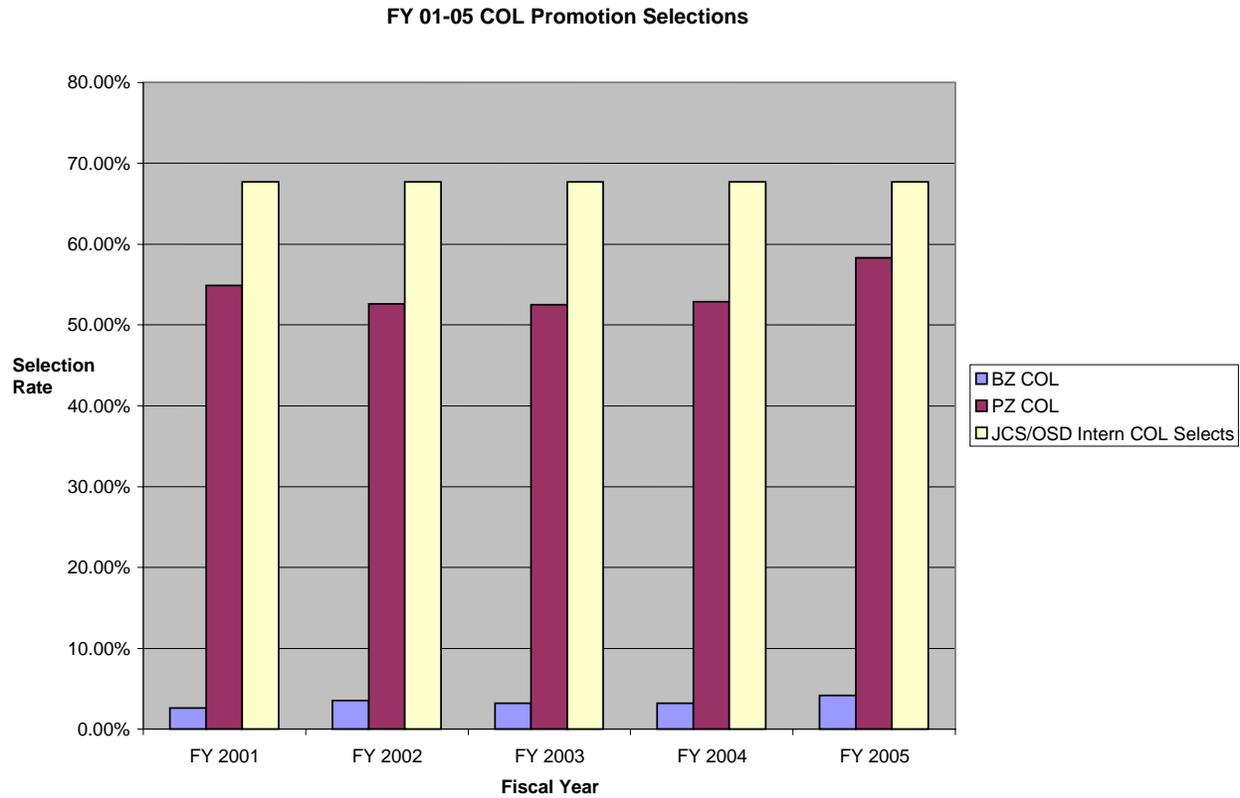
The ILE approach also stands out as the preferred method when considering *ease of implementation*. This is true as ILE is all ready a standing officer education program, and as such it would be very easy to require all students to receive a specific block of training on strategic leadership theories and principles. There is no requirement to start a new program, but only modify the program of instruction or curriculum by adding the strategic leadership courses to the leadership module.

Cost is also an advantage for the ILE approach. The only additional costs associated with this approach would be the requirement to hire faculty qualified to teach strategic leadership to the students at Fort Leavenworth if not already present within the current faculty. Both the JOSLDP and ASLDP approaches would require a significant investment in resources to modify or change.

In considering which approach best *provides exposure to strategic leaders and decision makers*, the advantage clearly lies with the JOSLDP approach. The JOSLDP approach would place officers in duty positions during the program where they would be able to observe, first hand, strategic leaders not only in the military but in other government agencies as well. The officers would be exposed to the day – to – day operations of a current strategic leader, and be able to observe the complexities associated with leading a strategic level organization and the associated decision making processes.

In analyzing the *historical percentage of program participants who become strategic leaders*, which is the most heavily weighted criterion, the clear standout is the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program. The program most closely related to the JOSLDP program, the Joint Staff/ Office of the Secretary of Defense Intern Program, has a very high success rate for selecting, producing and developing officers of the highest caliber. Historically, over ninety - five percent of the operational career

field officers in any given JS/OSD cohort group go on to become battalion commanders, and over sixty - seven percent are promoted to the rank of colonel compared to the overall active army percentage of fifty - two to fifty - eight percent



(Figure 6)²⁹

Based upon this analysis, the recommended approach for identifying and developing the Army's future strategic leaders is to implement the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program (JOSLDP) approach.

²⁹ Data compiled from United States Army Human Resources Command, Distribution Division, 20 April 2006.

“Leader training has also seen dramatic changes based on the new strategic environment and lessons learned. The Center for Army Lessons Learned cataloged over 6,200 lessons since 2001 and has produced over 381 publications. Based on these lessons, a revamped Officer Basic Training Course will be implemented at Fort Benning and Fort Sill in June 2006.”

*- General Peter J. Schoomaker
Chief of Staff, Army*

Remarks to the 2005 Association of the United States Army Eisenhower Luncheon

Recommended Approach

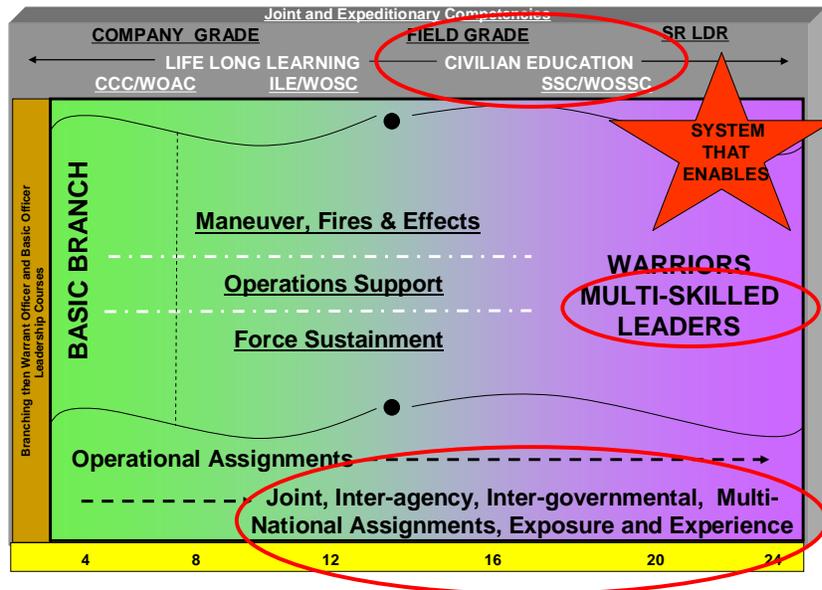
Based upon the analysis and comparison conducted in section four of this document, the recommended approach for identifying and developing the army’s future strategic leaders is to implement the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program (JOSLDP) approach.

By implementing this approach, the United States Army is able to identify a core group of candidates to develop as its future strategic leaders. Since the group is relatively small, the candidates will be able to receive much more individualized attention, instruction, mentoring and development.

This approach also clearly supports the army’s current initiative to expand Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) Development Opportunities for officers at all levels. This approach will produce leaders who have spent a year working not only at the strategic level of the military structure, but also a year working outside of the Department of Defense and in other government agencies thus preparing those officers for future interaction with other government agencies which is key in exercising synchronization in the National Security Strategy. This approach also clearly meets the requirements of the Officer Personnel Management System Model as depicted in Figure 7. The officers selected for this program will however be far ahead of their peers as they will participate in civilian education and JIIM assignments much earlier in their careers, and will be able to assume greater responsibilities and contribute as multi - skilled strategic leaders much earlier in their careers.

Additionally, it is recommended that Training and Doctrine Command initiate the instruction of the principles of strategic leadership and decision making to the students in the pre – commissioning programs, the Captain’s Career Course and the Intermediate Level Education course in order to ensure they are fully prepared to function as members of strategic level staffs when required.

Officer Personnel Management System Model



(Figure 7)³⁰

Implementation Strategy

Although, the bedrock for the implementation of the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program has been in place for many years in the form of the Joint Chiefs of Staff/ Office of the Secretary of Defense Intern program, there is still much coordination that must be conducted in order to establish an effective program to identify and develop future strategic leaders. There are several steps to this process which will be described below. But most important, this process will require a change in culture within the army. Specific actions will have to be taken to ensure cultural acceptability of such a program.

The army must first establish a selection process and board to select the officers for the JOSLDP. Selection should be conducted by a board made up of members from the Army Staff and Human Resources Command and chaired by the Director of the Army Staff. Selection should be based upon past performance in positions of leadership, potential for future strategic leadership capacity and academic performance.

It is recommended that the officers being recommended for the JOSLDP program by their chain of command provide the following items in their application packets for review by the selection board: an

³⁰ OPMS Model Slide, Leader Development Division, United States Army Human Resources Command.

official Officer Record Brief, a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation, a leader self assessment statement outlining what qualities a candidate brings to the program, and a personal statement on interest in the program. Additionally, candidates must have a timeline that supports participation in the entire program even if selected early for promotion to major; otherwise they should not be considered nor accepted into the program as they will not benefit from the entire process. It is critical that acceptance into the program be weighted heavily on performance and potential for future leadership capacity, not on past academic performance as this will counter the purpose of the program.

The army must also enter into an agreement with army recognized top tier private and public schools such as Georgetown University and the George Washington University in order to meet the educational requirement of the JOSLDP program. The army should support the establishment of one year Master's level degrees in public policy, national security, foreign affairs or strategy at these schools. In order to garner support from these schools the army should be prepared to commit to twenty five seats per year and should be prepared, if required, to invite the other services to participate in the educational programs.

In order to reallocate positions from the former JCS/OSD Intern Program, the army will have to enter into new memoranda of understanding with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Office of Secretary of Defense. Specifically, the army will have to ensure it identifies all of the positions open to the JOSLDP officers on the army staff and balance that requirement with those of the JCS and OSD since the program will be limited to twenty five officers per year; the previous JCS/OSD Intern Program sent twenty officers per year just to the JCS and OSD staffs. It is critical to only place the officers in positions where they will be able to observe current strategic leaders and the strategic leadership process; position such as assistant executive officers, special assistants, or aides-de-camp.

The army will also have to enter into an annual agreement with other government agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State, Department of Justice, United States Agency for International Development and the Department of Treasury in order to ensure a robust program exists to expose selected officers to the strategic leaders and processes of the other government agencies.

Finally, the army will have to ensure it procures at a minimum, twenty five seats per year at the sister service staff and joint staff colleges in order to ensure a truly joint educational experience. Those

sister service and joint staff colleges include the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, the Naval Command and Staff College in Newport, the Marine Command and Staff College at Quantico Marine Base and the Joint Advanced War fighting Course at the Joint Forces Staff College. The army should also consider attendance at an international staff college, such as the British Staff College, equivalent to attending a sister service staff college.

The Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program would formally be evaluated in five year intervals, (necessary in order to allow the first group of selectees to complete the program). Evaluation would be conducted by the Director of the Army Staff's office. Evaluation methods should include comprehensive surveys of each officer at the start and end of each phase of the program. Additionally, academic advisors at the selected universities, and executives on the joint, army and interagency staffs should be interviewed to ensure the army is selecting the best officers for the program and to ensure the program grows and develops as the relationships between the organizations further develop.

Additionally, each officer should be annually monitored to see if the officers selected continue to excel and meet the end state of the program which is to develop a pool of successful officers who have the requisite skills and characteristics to be the future strategic leaders of the army and the military. Specific monitoring criteria include evaluation performance, appropriate assignment selection, selection for promotion and selection for higher command. If any deficiencies are noted in any area, the program should be able to adjust its criteria to ensure success.

By selecting appropriate officers for the program, coordinating with all of the interested stakeholders and by continuously evaluating the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program, the army will ensure its bench is always full of officers who have the requisite education, training and experience to fulfill the role of future strategic leader.

“In addition to brilliant tool sets, we need leaders with open minds. This may be the greatest challenge of all. One of the worst aspects of the military mind is its tendency to operate like a light switch-either fully on or fully off. The ability to operate like a rheostat, to see the world in shades of gray, is so often a stretch for the military mind. For some number of our best young officers, a different approach may be warranted. We should consider starting with a cadre of our finest youngest officers, just as they are completing their apprenticeship years, around the five-year point of their service.”

*- Vice Admiral Stavridis
Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense*

Conclusion

By implementing the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program as a model for the identification and development of future army strategic leaders, the United States Army can ensure it has the strategic leaders with the skill sets required to win the Long War. These are senior leaders who are able to operate in the current while thinking about the future; leaders who are change agents; leaders who challenge assumptions and the status quo; leaders who are able to master the art of relationship building; who capitalize on global opportunities; and leaders who are able to see through the fog of ideas.

The Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program will develop leaders with a broad set of knowledge and education, skilled in theory and application and a range of experience in the military realm as well as in the international and interagency realm. Most importantly, this program will produce leaders who can serve in senior leader positions characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty of terrorism, future adversaries, future operating environments and who are well versed in the capabilities and limitations of the other branches of the United States government and are capable of leading and decision making in the strategic operating environment.

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Fiscal Year 2003 United States Army Officer Rank Active Component Population³¹

FY 2003 Active Component Officer Corps by Pay Grade, Service, and Gender

GENDER	PAY GRADE										TOTAL	
	O1	O2	O3	O4	O5	O6	O7	O8	O9	O10		Unknown
ARMY												
Males	6,978	5,445	21,017	12,053	7,742	3,289	149	108	41	9	0	56,831
Females	1,820	1,521	4,249	1,994	1,098	428	9	3	0	0	0	11,122
Total	8,798	6,966	25,266	14,047	8,840	3,717	158	111	41	9	0	67,953

- Colonels and General Officers make up only 6% of the total officer population.

³¹ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness, Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2003 website, www.defenselink.mil/prhome/poprep2003/index.html, accessed 21 March 2006.

Fiscal Years 2001 – 2005 Colonel Promotion Selection Rates (FY 01 – 05)³²

	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05
BZ COL	2.6%	3.5%	3.2%	3.2%	4.2%
PZ COL	54.9%	52.6%	52.5%	52.9%	58.3%
BZ COL CMD					
PZ COL CMD					

JCS/OSD intern COL Selects	67.7%
JCS/OSD intern COL CMD	

³² United States Army Human Resources Command, Distribution Division, 20 April 2006.