

Understanding Strategic Thinking and Developing Strategic Thinkers

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U.S. Army War College Public Affairs Office

Army War College students participate in Capstone strategic decisionmaking exercise

The U.S. Army War College (USAWC) begins the academic year with a dedicated Strategic Thinking course, the first of six core courses that, along with electives, comprise the 10-month resident curriculum. The primary mission of the USAWC is to prepare students for the challenges of leadership at the strategic level, so it is appropriate to start the year with a course on the cognitive skills required for success at that level. However, for many newly arriving students, strategic thinking is a new and somewhat perplexing concept. They have been highly successful in their military careers to date, but most of their experience is at the tactical level of war. Success at the strategic level requires additional competencies and skills in order to navigate the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous landscape characteristic of the strategic environment.¹

The inherent complexity and ambiguity that exist at the strategic level are not solely a challenge for USAWC students. In a recent installment of the *Strategy for the Long Haul* series by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), authors Andrew Krepinevich and Barry Watts argue that the strategic competence of the U.S. national

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security establishment as a whole has been declining for some decades. In their opinion, this decline is fundamentally due to a lack of understanding at the national level of what strategy is:

Both public strategy documents from recent administrations and actual American strategic behavior suggest that U.S. political and military leaders have been increasingly inclined to equate strategy with listing desirable goals, as opposed to figuring out how to achieve them. As a practical matter, strategy is about making insightful choices of courses of action likely to achieve one's ultimate goals despite resource constraints, political considerations, bureaucratic resistance, the adversary's opposing efforts, and the intractable uncertainties as to how a chosen strategy may ultimately work out.²

CSBA is not the only organization to question U.S. strategic competence. Congressional committees, other think tank-commissioned studies, politicians, and academics have all recently made similar assessments.³ Whether or not the reader agrees with these assertions regarding U.S. strategic competence, few would disagree that the outcomes for many of the strategic decisions made over the past 50 years could have been improved if more up-front thought had been applied to the *ways* and *means* of strategy and not just the desired *ends*.⁴ In other words, a thorough understanding of strategic thinking and how to apply it to complex security issues is a prerequisite to better strategy-making. While this competency is clearly essential for the strategic leaders of the uniformed military, civilian Service secretariats, Department of Defense, and the rest of the national security establishment, it is not relevant solely for them. The staffs that support these strategic leaders, at

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least down to the lieutenant colonel/O-5 level, should also be able to think strategically in order to properly support their senior leaders.

While review of the strategic management literature identifies a clear consensus on the importance of strategic thinking, there is a wide variance of thought and opinion on how to conduct it (more on this below). Articles that contain a succinct discussion of strategic thinking and provide a coherent framework that might help budding national security professionals to understand what constitutes strategic thinking and how to go about improving it, both individually and within an organization, are difficult to find. This article attempts to address this vacuum by synthesizing the major schools of thought within a strategic thinking framework developed to help USAWC students better understand and employ this critical competency. The article begins with a brief discussion of the historical development behind the differing approaches to strategic thinking and a definition of strategic thinking. It then discusses the USAWC approach to teaching strategic thinking, to include the framework, within the curriculum.

Approaches

Authors from within the military and national security literature deal extensively with the theory of war, strategy development, and strategic execution (for example, Clausewitz, Jomini, B.H. Liddell Hart, Edward Luttwak). These materials clearly provide insights about strategic thinking in the broadest sense, but most authors do not delve into specific discussions of strategic thinking and its conduct. For that, one has to turn to the business literature where strategic thinking has received extensive coverage.

While strategic thinking is a well-established concept within the strategic management literature, there is not a consensus definition of it. The fact that there are many definitions does not indicate a debate about the validity or effectiveness of strategic thinking per se but is primarily due to the differing approaches in how to conduct strategic thinking within an organizational setting. Many schools of strategy-making have emerged over the years; indeed, Henry Mintzberg, an internationally renowned strategic management academic and author, has categorized 10 distinct strategy formulation schools.⁵ However, to simplify things, insight into the significant differences in these schools of thought can



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By the mid-1980s, this criticism of strategic planning reached a tipping point. Those who felt that the de rigueur analytical planning processes of the day were insufficient advocated a new approach. Mintzberg, the most prominent advocate of the view that strategic thinking relies more on creativity and intuition than it does on analysis (that it is more art than science), presented his argument in his seminal book and 1994 *Harvard Business Review* article, “The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning.” Mintzberg identified shortfalls with strategic planning and provided a stark diagnosis: strategic planning is *not* strategic thinking. Mintzberg held, “Strategic thinking . . . is about *synthesis*. It involves intuition and creativity. The outcome of strategic thinking is an integrated perspective of the enterprise, a not-too-precisely articulated vision of direction.” In Mintzberg’s view, strategic planning is a separate process from strategic thinking, one that should provide data and act as a catalyst for true strategic thinking but certainly not provide the “one right answer.” In fact, Mintzberg offered that strategic planning, when used improperly, would actually thwart true strategic thinking.¹⁰

A third approach to strategic thinking has emerged more recently. It removes the stark differentiation between the *strategy as science* and *strategy as art* camps by viewing strategic thinking as necessarily both art and science. As scholar Jeanne Liedtka of the Darden School of Business succinctly stated, “The literature draws a sharp dichotomy between the creative and analytic aspects of strategy-making, when both are clearly needed in any thoughtful strategy-making process.”¹¹ This view recognizes that while strategic planning is primarily analytical and strategic thinking clearly requires creativity and synthesis, creativity is not enough. Strategic thinking requires *both* critical and creative thinking to be effective. In order to think strategically, leaders and their staffs must develop innovative strategic options and then evaluate these ideas through effective critical thinking. Insights gained from this analysis of options can inform, in an iterative process, new idea generation. Once complete, the selected strategic options can be developed (and further analyzed) within formal strategic planning processes. This divergent and convergent thinking process is essential to effective strategy development; one without the other is insufficient.

be attained by referencing the historic debate about strategy itself: is strategy-making art, science, or a combination of both?⁶

Theorists who believe that the development of strategy is based more in fixed, analytical processes (science) necessarily view strategic thinking (or planning) in this light. This view was first brought to prominence by the “father of strategic management,”⁷ Igor Ansoff, in his seminal 1965 work *Corporate Strategy*, and later by Harvard professor Michael Porter with his “five forces

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and value chain” analyses.⁸ As the strategic planning school gained traction, many companies hired corporate planners who established formal long-range planning systems that functioned in a detailed and logical systematic process. Corporate leadership expected these processes to produce successful strategies, but organizational critics suspected that in most cases, the output was merely thick planning books and 5-year financial projections increasingly viewed as irrelevant by top managers.⁹

USAWC has traditionally taught this balanced approach to strategic thinking. However, while stressing that strategic thinking involves both analytic and creative thinking processes, these processes were generally given equal weight as to their importance to the strategic thinker. This author believes that both are indeed important but that creativity and the ability to use systems thinking to holistically assess all aspects of an organization's internal and external key factors are what truly empower effective strategic thinking. Critical thinking is perhaps the most important attribute for a military officer at all levels of the organization, but for the strategic thinker, it is in and of itself insufficient. Creativity and a systems approach, augmented by critical thinking, are the true province of strategic thinking. It is therefore fair to say that while the author recommends a balanced approach to strategic thinking, there is a subtle bias toward the importance of art in the execution. In a 1959 address to the Naval

War College, the eminent strategist Bernard Brodie captured this nuance quite well:

*let us remember that scientific method is useful and is being used in exploring alternative choices but not in making the final choice. The latter depends ultimately on good judgment, which is to say on the informed intuition of a person or of a group of persons who have been brought up in a particular indoctrination and whose approach to their work is fundamentally that of the artist, not of the scientist.*¹²

Strategic Thinking Defined

Strategic thinking is an intent-driven activity.¹³ It ultimately has the goal of facilitating good judgment to inform decisionmaking and the development of innovative strategies to align the organization's future direction with the expected environment. The intended outcome is to make the organization more competitive and successful. If you are thinking about

how to better posture your organization or nation to succeed in the future, then you are conducting strategic thinking. Two USAWC faculty members have formally defined *strategic thinking* as "the ability to make a creative and holistic synthesis of key factors affecting an organization and its environment in order to obtain sustainable competitive advantage and long-term success."¹⁴ Although this definition refers to an organization and its environment, it is no less true for a nation-state and the strategic environment in which it exists.

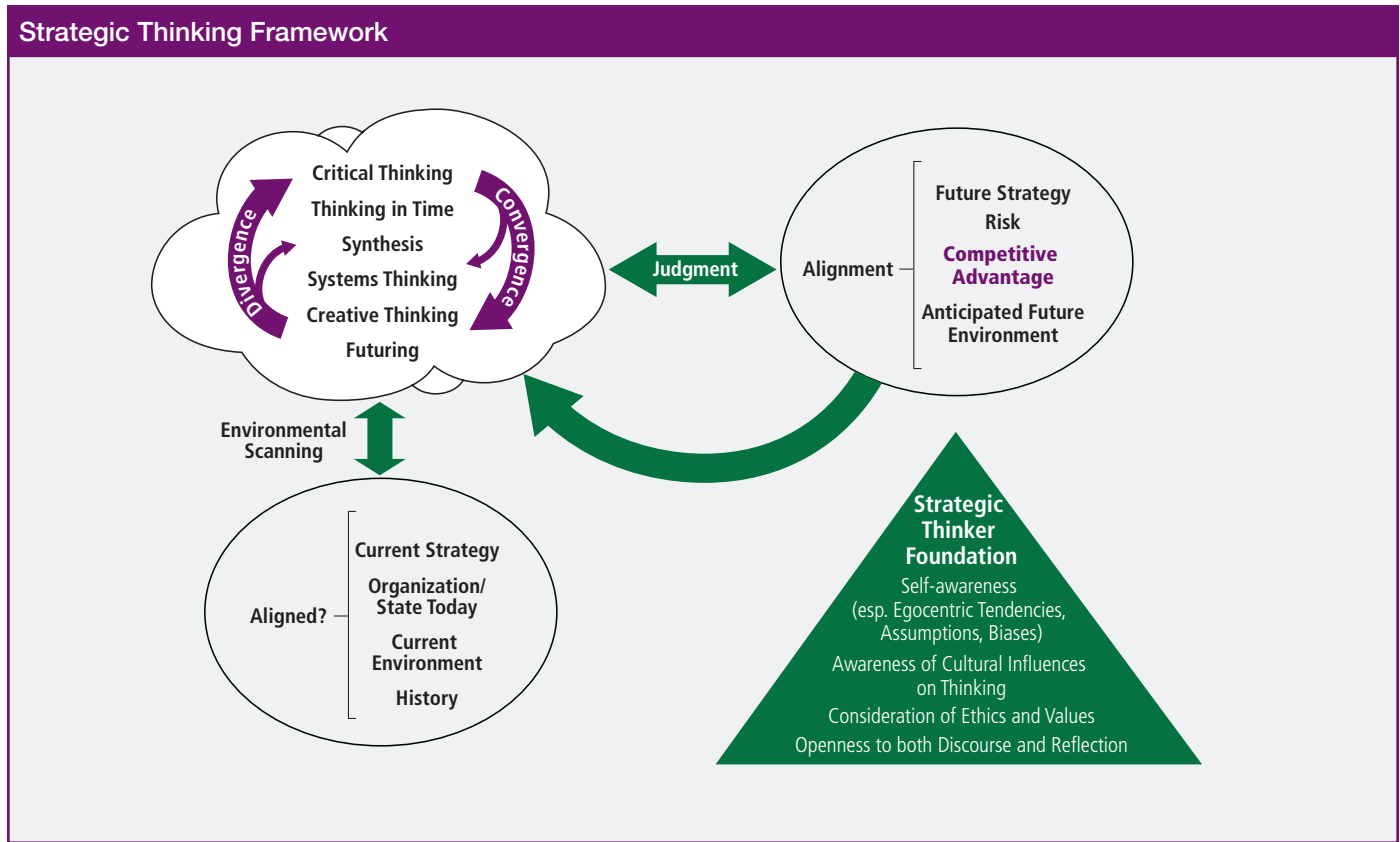
Skills

There are specific skills required to be a successful strategic thinker. Over the first 2 weeks of the academic year, USAWC students are presented with 10 discrete lessons that introduce these thinking skills as well as critical competencies such as self-awareness, openness to dialogue, and awareness of cultural influences that are necessary to be an effective strategic thinker (see table).

U.S. Army War College Strategic Thinking Course

Lesson	Focus	Description
Seminar learning	Competency (openness to dialogue)	Adult learning discussed; seminar learning environment for the year established
Course introduction	Overview/introduction to framework	Prominent strategic leader address to students; discussion of remarks and the Strategic Thinking Framework in seminar
Critical thinking	Thinking skill (analytic/convergent)	Gerras Critical Thinking Model (modified Paul and Elder model) discussed; application exercise
Creative thinking	Thinking skill (creative/divergent)	Allen faculty paper on creativity at the individual, group, and organizational levels discussed; application exercises
Self-awareness	Competency	Presentation on Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). MBTI, 360 assessments, and other self-awareness tools discussed in seminar
Systems thinking	Thinking skill (synthesis/holistic)	Open systems theory and Senge's <i>The Fifth Discipline</i> discussed; application exercise
Ethical reasoning	Thinking skill (analytic/convergent)	Ethical reasoning's relevance to the strategic leader, nature of ethical dilemmas, and major philosophical traditions discussed; a disciplined approach to ethical reasoning explored
Uses of history: Thinking in time	Thinking skill (analytic/convergent)	Historiography, uses of history, and Neustadt and May's <i>Thinking in Time</i> discussed
Cultural influences on thinking	Awareness of cultural influences Analytic Cultural Framework (analytic/convergent)	Lewis's <i>When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures</i> discussed; USAWC's Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy introduced
Application of strategic thinking to a wicked problem	Integrative exercise	Examination of a complex "wicked problem" (Israel-Palestine) using all thinking skills per the Strategic Thinking Framework in order to achieve a higher level of understanding of the issue

Note: To locate the faculty papers on critical and creative thinking by Dr. Steve Gerras and Chuck Allen, respectively, go to the USAWC DCLM Web site at <www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dclm/facultyPublications.cfm>. Ethics clearly can have a moral or emotional basis that would tend to defy an analytical label. However, USAWC teaches ethical reasoning skills that leverage an analytical methodology to inform and aid strategic thinking. It is on this basis that it is classified as a variant of critical thinking.



Strategic Thinking Framework

The Strategic Thinking Framework (see figure) shows how these various skills and competencies interrelate. It depicts the strategic thinking process and demonstrates the relationship between the past (history), present, and desired future direction (or vision) for the organization. True strategic thinking always involves thinking in time, as it seeks to answer the question: “Having seen the future that we want to create, what must we keep from our past, lose from the past, and create in our present, to get there?”¹⁵ It identifies the interplay between critical and creative thinking processes and the central role of systems thinking to produce synthesis and holistic appreciation of the key factors that influence an organization and its environment. It importantly highlights the ultimate intent of strategic thinking: the alignment of innovative new strategies to the anticipated environment in order to achieve competitive advantage. The framework rests on a foundation of key attributes or competencies needed by a strategic thinker.¹⁶

The process depicted in the Strategic Thinking Framework is not a linear one, but to better explain the framework, it is helpful to start with the Organization/State Today.

During a recent visit to the USAWC, a senior Army leader who also has extensive strategic leadership experience in the commercial sector offered that there is a central issue that all senior leaders (in both military and commercial domains) are always thinking about: Do I have my strategies right, and are they executable?¹⁷ Are the organization’s vision and the ends/ways/means devised to attain it aligned with the anticipated future environment? This is a critical question

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that strategic thinkers wrestle with on a continuing basis. In today’s more volatile and complex security environment, if an organization fails to ask this question and then adapt/transform itself as needed, it can quickly find itself poorly postured for continued success. As former Chief of Staff of the Army General Eric Shinseki was fond of saying, “If you don’t like change, you’re going to like irrelevance even less.”¹⁸

In order to contend with this question and develop insight into future direction, strategic thinking requires critical, creative, and systems thinking to be effective. The Strategic Thinking Framework depicts an iterative process of divergence and convergence, as creative thinking explores innovative new ideas, hypotheses, and potential opportunities, and critical thinking analyzes data to fuel creative thought and evaluates generated options to converge on the most promising opportunities. This dynamic is difficult, given an innate tension between these two thinking skills. As Liedtka observed, “Strategic thinking is both creative and critical. Figuring out how to accomplish both types of thinking simultaneously has long troubled cognitive psychologists, since it is necessary to *suspend* critical judgment in order to think more creatively.”¹⁹

While an individual may not be able to conduct critical and creative thinking simultaneously, an accomplished strategic thinker can rapidly move from one to the other as required. Use of analytical thinking skills provides insights and data that can be leveraged with creative thinking to aid in both problem identification and construction as well as the development of innovative ideas and hypotheses about the future direction of

the organization (as illustrated by Mintzberg's catalyst role discussed earlier). This idea generation must occur in an environment that is free from critical judgment or ridicule in order to foster the creative process. However, once hypotheses are generated, then convergent/critical thinking is needed to evaluate these new ideas. It is important to note that this is not done necessarily (or usually) in a linear fashion, but critical and creative thinking skills are exercised when appropriate throughout the learning process. This iterative process of divergent and convergent thinking is more likely to result in promising strategic options that can be further analyzed and developed within an organization's formal strategic planning processes.

Systems thinking is also central to the strategic thinking process and, like creative thinking, is a fundamentally different means of thinking than that used in traditional analytical processes. Russell Ackoff described this difference in his book *Creating the Corporate Future*:

Analysis looks into things; synthesis looks out of things. Machine-Age thinking was concerned only with the interactions of the parts of the thing to be explained; systems thinking is similarly concerned, but it is additionally occupied with the interactions of that thing with other things in its environment and with its environment itself.²⁰

The insights generated from iterations of creative and critical thinking are leveraged by systems thinking to inform the development of a holistic appreciation of the complex issues at hand. This holistic view aids in the identification of key linkages and factors that influence the organization and its external environment that must be considered in any future strategy development. Creative potential solutions and strategic options should be considered through this systems approach in order to better understand and predict intended as well as unintended effects and reactions. This holistic systems-level view of both an organization and its environment is critical to effective strategic thinking. Without a holistic appreciation of complex and ambiguous issues, potential second- and third-order effects of decisions may go unnoticed, and strategic leaders and their staffs are likely to become overwhelmed by complexity.

This iterative synthesis of insights, ideas, and identified key factors is used to develop improved judgment, which is a critical output of the strategic thinking process. This improved judgment will in turn inform the development of strategies within the organization's traditional strategic planning processes that align the organizational vision with the future environment, thus making the organization more competitive and successful in that future environment. These strategies then become the current strategy, and the cycle continues.

The feedback loop is a critically important piece of the Strategic Thinking Framework. Mintzberg has described strategy-making as both deliberate and emergent in nature; in other words, "strategies can form as well as be formulated."²¹ A learning organization should welcome emerging strategies that may develop slowly, frequently from the bottom up, as an important augment to the deliberate strategy-making process. Strategic thinkers should realize that they cannot possibly be smart enough to think through everything in advance, so their deliberate strategies will be incomplete (and perhaps flat-out wrong in some areas). Actual experience in implementing a strategy will spark new insights and lessons learned that should be taken advantage of by the organization's strategic thinkers. Liedtka refers to this as "intelligent opportunism," one of her five elements of strategic thinking, which "furthers intended strategy but that also leave[s] open the possibility of new strategies emerging."²² Military officers will be familiar with this concept as they reflect on the emergence of a counterinsurgency strategy over time during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

This feedback loop is more than just noting lessons learned. To be true strategic thinkers and to enable organizational learning, the insights generated from implementation of deliberate strategies and the success or failure of emergent strategies must be leveraged through a higher level learning process within the organization. Professor Loizos Heracleous addressed this critical point when he outlined differing viewpoints on the nature of strategic thinking and its relationship to different levels of learning by examining the contributions of four prominent academics.²³ While these viewpoints all use different terminology, the central concept for all four is the same: the difference between strategic thinking and typical strategic planning processes "involves thinking and acting within a certain set of assumptions and potential action alternatives; or challenging existing assumptions and action alternatives, potentially leading to new and more appropriate ones."²⁴ The latter involves true strategic thinking, and is facilitated through iterative divergent and convergent thinking and holistic, systems-level appreciation of key factors and linkages as described earlier.

The Strategic Thinking Framework may appear to suggest a sequential process, but this is not the author's intent, nor is it the case



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in practice. For example, the decisionmaking procedure used by President George W. Bush to develop the “surge” in Iraq shows how nonlinear and untidy these processes can be. President Bush gradually came to the realization that he needed to change his thinking on the conduct of the war after considering intelligence reports, the analysis of top aides and Cabinet members, and his theater and field commanders’ assessments of the declining situation in Iraq. He began a deliberate process to develop a new strategy that would turn things around. His vision or strategic intent was unwavering, as what he termed as “victory” in Iraq was the goal. The President sought out new ideas from wherever

Thinking Framework. The same is true for *cultural influences on thinking*, as culture is a strong determinant in the development of underlying assumptions, inferences, and points of view for the strategic thinker and others, both internal and external to the organization. Openness to *discourse and reflection* is necessary to ensure the strategic thinker is receiving relevant data, insights, and points of view on issues. A climate/culture (and leader) that encourages this open dialogue on issues is critical; otherwise, the staff will only feed information that confirms the leader’s existing views (and biases), resulting in suboptimal decisions. Finally, *ethics and values* must underpin the thinking and decisions of senior

Army, and especially as described in joint doctrine, has a narrower application focused at the operational and theater strategic levels of war, where it is used to apply critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe complex, ill-structured problems and develop approaches to solve them.²⁷

However, although strategic thinking and design are currently focused at different levels, the skills needed to execute both are, for all intents and purposes, the same. Officers who become familiar and comfortable with design thinking at the operational level should find the transition to strategic thinking at the institutional/strategic level easier. This may help to reverse CSBA’s purported decline in U.S. strategic competence (at least within the military), but only if the Services and DOD embrace these methods of thinking within their cultures. In order to effectively execute strategic thinking and design thinking across the Army, the culture must encourage open-minded leadership that is receptive to, and indeed actively encourages, ideas that stray from the current consensus. Leaders must be comfortable with, and encourage, subordinates who will challenge their assumptions and biases during the thinking and learning process. While General David Petraeus demonstrated this commitment within his command,²⁸ his example may be more aberration than the norm. It is beyond the scope of this article to address this further, but it is the author’s opinion that this cultural alignment is central to the successful establishment of better strategic thinking and design within the military as well as the rest of DOD.

self-awareness is necessary to ensure decisions are not biased by cognitive “blind spots” established due to a failure to examine all relevant points of view on an issue

he could get them, including going outside of traditional sources. Strategic reviews were conducted throughout the national security arena, including at think tanks, the National Security Council, and the Pentagon. Conflicting data, analysis, ideas, and recommendations came to the President and his staff through reports and formal meetings. Ultimately, after weighing all the evidence, the President made the decision to order the development of a counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq and increase force levels to adequately resource the strategy. Application of critical, creative, and systems thinking concepts was in evidence throughout. Nonetheless, strong points of view underpinned by unexamined assumptions and cognitive biases were also present and served to complicate strategic thinking regarding the issue.²⁵

The Strategic Thinker Foundation at the bottom of the framework is comprised of critical competencies that are prerequisites for becoming an effective strategic thinker. *Self-awareness*, particularly concerning one’s own assumptions, biases, and points of view, is necessary to ensure that decisions are not biased by cognitive “blind spots” established due to a failure to examine all relevant points of view on an issue. This is also an important component of critical thinking, but it is reinforced here because a lack of self-awareness will manifest itself in flawed thinking and decisionmaking throughout the Strategic

leaders within the military, as the military is a profession, and professions stand or fall based on the trust they engender with their client—in this case, the American people. A strong ethical component to the military’s expert knowledge is critical to sustaining this trust.²⁶

The organizational processes of environmental scanning and futuring and the concept of risk are depicted on the framework, but are not discussed in any detail during the Strategic Thinking course. They are instead covered within USAWC’s Strategic Leadership course and, in the case of risk, in other core course curriculum. While environmental scanning and futuring contribute to strategic thinking, and risk is integral to the calculated relationship of ends, ways, and means, their coverage during the course is not required for students to gain the necessary understanding of the framework and strategic thinking itself.

Linkages and Implications

There are clear parallels between strategic thinking and the emerging concept of design within Army problem-solving processes. However, strategic thinking and design are not synonymous. Strategic leaders at the institutional level of the Services and Department of Defense (DOD) are focused on strategic decisions impacting the budget, major acquisition programs, and policy issues that shape and impact the enterprise as a whole. Design, as currently implemented within the

Strategic thinking is a critical competency for senior leaders and their staffs. It is a purposeful, deliberate activity that seeks to generate innovative strategies and approaches to posture organizations for success in the complex and ambiguous strategic environment. The concept of strategic thinking was explained by presenting its history within the strategic management literature, and identifying three primary points of view organized across the strategy as art versus strategy as science debate. While both of these diametrically opposed viewpoints bring valid insights to the essence of strategic thinking, neither is sufficient in itself. The sound strategic thinker approaches the complex issues of the 21st century in a balanced manner, bringing both analysis and creative/intuitive processes to

bear. USAWC's Strategic Thinking curriculum was outlined, and serves as a means to develop strategic thinking skills that will continue to be honed throughout the academic year. The Strategic Thinking Framework further explains the components of strategic thinking and provides an approach to inform senior leader judgment. The goal is to develop strategies that align an organization's future direction (or vision) with the future environment to gain competitive advantage. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ Stephen J. Gerras, ed., "The Strategic Environment," in *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 3^d ed. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2010), 11–12.

² Andrew F. Krepinevich and Barry D. Watts, *Strategy for the Long Haul: Regaining Strategic Competence* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2009), vii–viii.

³ Frank G. Hoffman, "The Strategic Thinking Deficiency: Diagnosis and Cure," paper presented at the 2008 Joint Operations Symposium, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, June 4–5, 2008, available at <www.ndu.edu/inss/Symposia/joint2008/papers/Hoffman%20Paper_Panel%203.pdf>.

⁴ The decision to invade Iraq in 2003 is a recent pertinent example.

⁵ Henry Mintzberg and Joseph Lampel, "Reflecting on the Strategy Process," *Sloan Management Review* 40, no. 3 (Spring 1999), 21.

⁶ Some may claim that the division of strategic thinking schools into an art versus science scheme is an oversimplification of a rich and complex tapestry of competing thoughts. For the purposes of this article, however, it provides the right level of detail without being empirically incorrect.

⁷ The description of Ansoff as the "Father of Strategic Management" can be found in multiple sources, many of which attribute the phrase to Henry Mintzberg.

⁸ M.E. Porter outlined his five forces and value chain in *Competitive Strategy* (1980) and *Competitive Advantage* (1985) respectively. For more succinct discussions, see M.E. Porter, "How Competitive Forces Shape Strategy," *Harvard Business Review* (March–April 1979), 137–145; and M.E. Porter, "What Is Strategy?" *Harvard Business Review* (November–December 1996), 61–78.

⁹ M.E. Porter, "The State of Strategic Thinking," *The Economist* (May 23, 1987), 21.

¹⁰ Henry Mintzberg, "The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning," *Harvard Business Review* (January–February 1994), 108.

¹¹ Jeanne Liedtka, "Strategic Thinking: Can It Be Taught?" *Long Range Planning* 31, no. 1 (1998), 121. In this article, Liedtka provides five elements of

strategic thinking that demonstrate both analytical and creative processes: strategic thinking incorporates a systems perspective; it is intent-focused; involves thinking in time; is hypothesis-driven; and is intelligently opportunistic.

¹² Bernard Brodie, "Strategy as an Art and a Science," lecture to the Naval War College, September 18, 1958, *Naval War College Review* (Winter 1998).

¹³ See Liedtka, 122; and Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad, "Strategic Intent," *Harvard Business Review* (July–August 2005), 148.

¹⁴ Charles Allen and Stephen Gerras, "Developing Creative and Critical Thinkers," *Military Review* (November–December 2009), 77.

¹⁵ Liedtka, 123.

¹⁶ The Strategic Thinker Foundation is a more explicit variant of a previous Foundation ("Know Yourself, Know Others, and Reflect") found in an unpublished USAWC faculty paper by Dr. Richard Meinhart.

¹⁷ Army senior leader not identified due to the USAWC policy of nonattribution in effect during his visit. He said a second question is also central: "Am I growing the right kind of leaders for the future?"

¹⁸ Eric K. Shinseki, "Remarks at the AUSA ILW Army Medical Symposium, San Antonio, TX, July 22, 2009," linked from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Web site, available at <http://www1.va.gov/opa/speeches/2009/09_0722.asp>.

¹⁹ Liedtka, 124.

²⁰ Russell Ackoff, *Creating the Corporate Future* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1981), 17.

²¹ Henry Mintzberg, "Crafting Strategy," *Harvard Business Review* (July–August 1987), 68.

²² Liedtka, 123.

²³ Loizos Heracleous, "Strategic Thinking or Strategic Planning?" *Long Range Planning* 31, no. 3 (1998), 481–487.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 484.

²⁵ The author's very brief summation and analysis of events relayed in Bob Woodward's book on the subject. See Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006–2008* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008).

²⁶ Don M. Snider, *The Future of the Army Profession*, 2^d ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 385.

²⁷ Field Manual (FM) 5–0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, March 2010), 3–1. There is a design school within the 10 strategy formulation schools identified by Mintzberg, and design thinking can be used as a variant of strategic thinking. However, Joint Publication 5–0 defines *design* as an operational-level construct. The Army definition does not specify levels, but application to date has been at the operational/theater-strategic level (and FM 5–0 discusses the need for design at lower echelons as well).

²⁸ Renny McPherson, "The Next Petraeus," *Boston Globe*, September 26, 2010.



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*Chinese Military Transparency:
Evaluating the 2010 Defense White Paper*

On March 31, 2011, China released its seventh biennial defense white paper, *China's National Defense in 2010*. China began publishing defense white papers in 1998, partly to increase transparency and to alleviate regional concerns about its growing military capabilities. However, Phillip C. Saunders and Ross Rustici examine the 2010 paper in detail and find that it provides relatively little new data and even less information about Chinese military capabilities and modernization than previous editions. Consistent with past white papers, the 2010 paper offers no information about specific weapons systems or nuclear forces. Applying a methodology developed by the Institute for National Strategic Studies, the authors further find that the 2010 paper is less transparent than the 2008 edition and provides less information than defense white papers of other Asia-Pacific powers. Although Chinese military officers assert that increased transparency is intended to reassure neighbors about its benign intentions, the authors conclude that the 2010 Defense White Paper makes little progress toward that goal.



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