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President's Notes

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Clausewitz, the great Prussian strategist, noted that although war has its own "grammar," politics must ultimately provide its "logic." If the threat and use of force, the mobilization and engagement of armed men, proceed according to inner rules and constraints, the purpose of such forceful suasion ultimately arises from political values and objectives. Hence, the statesman must be fully conscious of the characteristics, potential, and limitations of the armed might at his disposal and the commander must understand the policy assumptions and ends that direct and justify military force.

From this perspective the study of war is more than the management of limited resources or the process by which these decisions are reached. It transcends the order of battle, the rules of engagement, and even grand strategic plans. The science and art of war is all of these—but more. At its foundation the analysis of war concerns the interrelationship between the national interest and the use of force, the linkage of policy and strategy. It comprehends the survival, integrity, and ends of the state itself. Concern for that critical problem undergirds the Strategy Department at the Naval War College and inspires the design of the policy and strategy program.

The animating spirit of our policy and strategy course is perhaps best grasped in the distinction between military training and military education.



York Times, the librarian of a New York college defined education as the transmission of information. He was in fact wide of the mark. Although education, like training, necessarily includes the acquisition of a great many details about particulars, its inner core is the development of judgment, the insight to pose the right questions, and the ability to devise methods to answer those questions. Training tends to be time sensitive, subject to sometimes rapid changes related to technical advances, the course of events, and the state of the art. Like all institutions in our technological society, the military demands constant training. But beyond such skills, our military professional needs to develop a quality of judgment and an ability to conceptualize that allow him to deal in a perceptive and detached way with a rapidly changing environment and set of problems. This is particularly true for those middle and upper range officers who will increasingly operate at the level where policy and strategy interact.

To meet the demands of such education, the Strategy Department of the Naval War College has attempted through a series of historical and contemporary case studies to provide models and to raise questions that will elucidate the interaction between policy

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and strategy. Fundamentally it is less concerned with transmitting information about past and present politico-strategic cases than with developing a more profound understanding of the policy-strategy process and equipping the military officer to deal with future contingencies whatever the details of the situation or crisis. It is for this reason that historical as well as contemporary cases are used—to allow some distance from the subject and hence a degree of perspective. Indeed the quality of one's analysis of contemporary cases probably depends on the range of models and the sense of objectivity that come from a broad-ranging consideration of cases outside one's immediate experience.

The cases thus cover problems and approaches from the classic study of Thucydides on the Peloponnesian War to the limited wars of Bismarck, the total conflicts of World Wars I and II, the struggles in Korea and Vietnam, the dilemmas of strategic deterrence, and the management of relations with contemporary allies and adversaries alike. As becomes quickly apparent to the student, a number of recurrent themes runs through the cases—the role of domestic and international factors in shaping the context both of policy and of strategy, the imbalance of objectives and means, civil-military relations, problems of uncertainty and risk, dilemmas imposed by limited resources and alliance management, the effect and influence of technology, and so forth.

The methodology by which these cases are approached may constitute the strongest aspect of the entire program both in depth and flexibility of analysis. The initial aspect of the method is the introduction to the case study each week by lectures first from the War College staff and second by a visiting guest scholar or practitioner, expert in the subject under consideration; secondly, the in-depth reading of leading and

seminal studies on the case study; thirdly, the preparation of analytical essays by the students that provides the basis for the seminar discussions, which constitute the fourth and most important aspects of the program. The seminars center on three or four essays and are integrated together by a civilian-military team.

As the historian of the U.S. Department of State recently commented, it is the team teaching approach in the Strategy Department that constitutes the most unique and educationally powerful aspect of the policy and strategy program. The department brings together in the classroom a noted visiting or resident scholar expert in foreign policy and strategic analysis and a skilled military practitioner attuned to the operational as well as analytical dimensions of military affairs. The team itself thus represents the interrelationship of political analysis and strategic planning that comprehends the very center of the course. In ways that were not fully understood when team teaching was first adopted, the conjunction of noted scholar and outstanding practitioner has provided the key to a depth of analysis and a flexibility of approach unequalled in any comparable program in the country.

The fifth aspect of the course centers on the midterm and final examinations. In keeping with the educational orientation of the college, the object of these exercises is not to provide an occasion to regurgitate information, but to stimulate conceptual thinking and judgment. Finally, and reinforcing this examination process, the students engage in a political-military simulation on a contemporary situation requiring attention to the full range of questions raised by the course.

Augustine noted in *The Confessions* that he understood "time" as long as no one asked him what it meant, but discovered he, in fact, did not

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understand the concept when he was asked to describe and analyze it. So it is with foreign policy and strategy. Many assume they understand their character and interrelations until they are pressed to explain them. Perhaps the first object of our policy and strategy program is that it reveals the dimensions of our ignorance and, as Socrates insisted, this is the beginning of wisdom. I am confident that the range of questions and the depth of analysis provided by this course of study is producing

military professionals whose perspective on policy and strategy has been broadened and whose analytical skills are sharper. The end result will not only advance their professional careers but benefit the nation which they serve.



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