CENTER for STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Issue Paper

Center for Strategic Leadership,
U.S. Army War College

February 2003
Volume 02-03

Strategic Leaders Adapting to the Future Environment: Department of State Senior Leader Workshop

By Colonel Bill Wimbish

"People are the most important part of any organization.... At the end of the day, leadership is getting people to use their talents to support your shared objective."

Colin Powell, Secretary of State

Competent, innovative and effective leadership is absolutely essential to the success of any organization; especially during times of great uncertainty and transformation. In order to effectively implement, manage and lead change, strategic leaders must possess and use certain core competencies and skill sets. The new millennium has brought new changes and complexity to the international security environment at an unprecedented rate. To meet these future challenges, the Department of State (DOS), like the Department of Defense and others, continues to plan for and implement significant institutional and cultural changes in order to effectively achieve the Nation's foreign policy goals on tomorrow's strategic landscape.

On 2 February 2003, 22 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries and key Senior Executives from across the Department, gathered at the United States Army War College's (USAWC) Center for Strategic Leadership to discuss strategic leadership and organizational change. The three-day workshop, cosponsored by the USAWC and the Foreign Institute (FSI), was the third in a series of collegial partnership events between the U.S. Army and Department of State.

Purpose

The purpose of the workshop was to provide participants an opportunity to first review and examine current strategic leadership theories and concepts and how the Army develops and trains its officer corps for future strategic leadership roles. Second, the workshop was to provide a forum to share and discuss old and new

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED
FEB 2003	**N/A**	**-**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **Strategic Leaders Adapting to the Future Environment: Department of State Senior Leader Workshop**	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER 5b. GRANT NUMBER 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER 5e. TASK NUMBER 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **Center for Strategic Leadership 650 Wright Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013-5049**	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
The original document contains color images.

14. ABSTRACT

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			
unclassified	**unclassified**	**unclassified**	**UU**	**4**	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39-18

organizational and cultural challenges affecting the State Department and to develop or refine current action plans for the future. Last, but most important, the event was intended to elicit commitment to improvements in the work place that better allow civil service and foreign service staffs to practice effective leadership behaviors.

Workshop highlights included a battle staff ride of the Gettysburg battlefield directed by Professor Len Fullenkamp, USAWC and plenary opening remarks by Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. On subsequent days, the faculty of the USAWC's Department of Command Leadership and Management (DCLM) led and facilitated five plenary and two break-out sessions. Topics included U.S. Army Strategic Leader Development, Professionalism, Organizational Culture, Critical and Creative Thinking and Managing and Leading Change. Following the plenary sessions, the participants broke into four facilitated work groups. Each work group was assigned two of Secretary Powell's eight leadership principles and tasked to evaluate how effective the Department has been in implementing each and then to develop recommendations on how and what is needed to improve and facilitate their integration into the work place. Each group briefed their findings and recommendations to the Under Secretary of State for Management, the Honorable Grant Green during the final plenary session before the workshop adjourned.

Turning Leadership Principles into Action

1. "Dare to be a skunk at the picnic." The first group assessment was that openness to timely and constructive dissent was still a challenge at most levels. Although the current administration expanded the inner circle and encouraged frankness, it continues to lack momentum because of lingering institutional/cultural bias against risk taking, instances of autocratic personal leader styles and time management challenges. Dissent was generally accepted at the lower levels and more within functional bureaus but discouraged at the senior levels and within regional bureaus. The group stated it was the responsibility of all leaders to foster frank, open communications without endangering managerial or subordinate positions. They further recommended that leaders should organize time in order to allow dialogue of a position or course of action with subordinates; a "last look" before executing.

2. "Open your door and encourage subordinates to come in with their ideas and opinions." The group concluded that most of the same cultural and institutional challenges assessed in the first principle apply to the second as well. They recommended that all leaders establish and maintain an "open door" so subordinates can pass on new ideas. This would encourage more creativity and initiative. They suggested that senior executives should visit the workplace routinely and ask for suggestions in order to build an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. The group also recommended that the Department develop and institute a formal process of communication and feedback to encourage new and unique ideas.

3. "Create an environment where the best, the brightest and the most creative are attracted, retained and unleashed." The second group's view was that the prestige of the Department of State was now attracting the best and brightest. The Department's culture values individual accomplishments and is extremely competitive. However, they also noted that the culture sometimes emphasizes "product over people." Long-term career development is often sacrificed for the short term "here and now" crisis. In the past, this caused some disenchantment and frustration. It was the group consensus that senior leaders have to take time to build a solid "bench," e.g., teach, coach and mentor the next generation of leaders. It was their opinion that allowing subordinates to pursue formal career training and education and rotate assignments within and between bureaus was absolutely essential to retention and leader development. They recommended that the Department personnel and training organizations establish and track mandatory training gates. The system should also allow, encourage and budget for additional elective training and professional development. They also recommended that the Department examine and review the current appraisal, selection and promotion processes to insure that merit, accountability, potential, and objective measurement are recognized as the key ingredients to success.

4. "Challenge people to reinvent their jobs." Although the Department's culture values individual creativity, the group believed that it is often stifled by lack of leader creativity. They suggested that leaders need to learn to leverage special expertise and talent. They recommended that senior bureau leadership offer additional opportunities for self-improvement, cross training and teaming with other organizations to enhance knowledge and develop new skills that subordinates can use to enhance performance and improve productivity.

5. "Perpetual optimism is a multiplier." The third group's assessment was that the Department generally promoted and perpetuated optimism within its ranks. They felt optimism was also directly affected by morale and morale was gauged on how people feel about their self worth and the value of their contributions to the Department. Their perception was that the Department and the bureaus needed to improve efforts to communicate and recognize the accomplishments of it work force. They recommended that the Department improve public relations and media efforts to focus more on "telling the story" and capturing individual and organizational accomplishments. They suggested that simplifying the formal awards process and encouraging leaders to develop and use more informal recognition methods would also be key to improving morale. The group further recommended that a Departmental "Center for Lessons Learned" be established to capture and recognize innovation and improve organizational learning.

6. "In crisis, occasionally stop and step away and work actively to shape the crisis and create success." The group concluded that Department leaders, especially in the regional bureaus, generally tend not to step away but to stay fully and personally immersed in a crisis situation. This was considered a positive trait; however, the group noted that leaders often made decisions without sufficient analysis and supporting information. The group recommended that bureaus review their contingency plans, procedural instructions and guidance, establish "ad hoc" or standing crisis action teams and provide a system to quickly access experienced subject matter experts. Providing these additional assets and detail would allow the leader and team time to "step back." They also recommended that the Department develop a formal "Crisis Action Planning and Execution" training and simulations program to provide the necessary leader tools and training for crisis.

7. "Demand excellence from people but also insist that they have lives outside the office." The fourth group noted that the old model or cultural norm of working long hours equating to quality of work is still prevalent in the Department. The group further noted that a leader's inability to plan and delegate tasks and in some cases, lack of man power and outdated and misaligned organizational structure (task to position ratio) contributed to longer hours and impeded individual and group productivity, sometimes leading to "burn out and bitterness." Inadequate information technology (computers/networking) to access information while away or at home further added to the problem. The group suggested that senior leadership within the bureaus personally set the standard by going home at a "decent hour." They also emphasized that certain training (planning and task management /delegation) be mandatory before assuming posts and positions involving supervisory duties. They recommended that the bureaus review current organizational structure and examine the validity of work requirement statements and realign the scope of work and workload if required. The group further recommended that the Department needed to explore information technologies that will improve remote access to email and work applications.

8. "Get people to use their full talents to support your shared objectives." The group noted that although the work force is extremely talented, disciplined and hard working, full potential has not been achieved. Lack of focus, the reluctance to delegate responsibility and inadequate long range planning were seen as limiting

factors. They recommended that bureau senior leadership establish clear vision statements, achievable goals and measurable objectives for their organizations, then aggressively communicate them verbally and in written form to all subordinates, using Mission Performance Plans, Bureau Performance Plans and work requirement statements. In order to elicit support, commitment and ownership of the latter, the group recommended that senior leaders delegate more responsibility to subordinates leaders and give them the latitude to take action and make decisions in developing and achieving stated organizational goals and objectives.

Conclusion

The workshop provided the participants with a valuable opportunity to review and discuss strategic leadership concepts, issues and challenges. It also provided an extremely useful forum for the Department of State to share ideas, discuss organizational issues and make recommendations on how to improve the organization in the future. It is now up to the senior leadership to effect necessary change in order to achieve the Department's vision. "Change is a journey not an end state."

* * * * *

This publication and other CSL publications can be found online at http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usacsl/index.asp.

* * * * *

The views expressed in this report are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect official policy or position of the United States Army War College, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or any other Department or Agency within the U.S. Government. Further, these views do not reflect uniform agreement among exercise participants. This report is cleared for public release; distribution is unlimited.

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE
Center for Strategic Leadership
650 Wright Avenue
Carlisle, PA 17103-5049

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

STRATEGIC LEADERS
ADAPTING TO THE
FUTURE ENVIRONMENT