

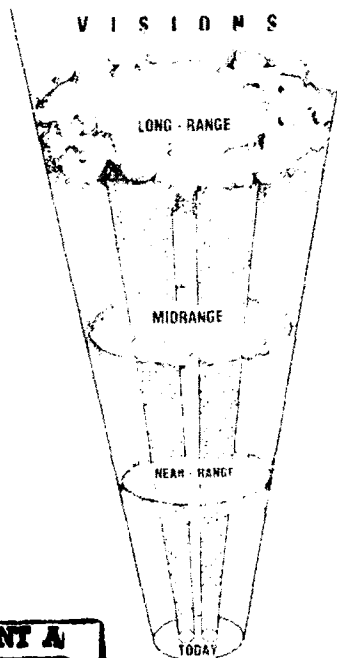
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## CREATING STRATEGIC VISIONS

by  
Charles W. Taylor



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# **CREATING STRATEGIC VISIONS**

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**October 15, 1990**

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## **COMMENTS**

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## FOREWORD

This futures study presents an analysis and discussion of a program used at the U.S. Army War College that supports and supplements the leadership course of the curriculum. The author describes the program as one that is designed to enable future executives to envision personal, organizational, and corporate strategic visions of near- to long-range futures.

Additionally, the author presents two executive tools that are useful for creating strategic visions. One tool helps potential leaders discover personal and organizational barriers and hindrances to creativity, visioning, and decision making. The other tool helps executives to create strategic visions by projecting their thoughts into the future within a theoretical framework called "The Cone of Plausibility."

This study, written by Charles W. Taylor, is published by the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, as a contribution to long-range planning, the future leaders of the U.S. military, and especially, the future Army.

*Paul G. Cerjan*

PAUL G. CERJAN  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Commandant



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

CHARLES W. TAYLOR, a faculty member of the U.S. Army War College, is a strategic futurist with the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI). His futures research extends over 25 years and includes major contributions in the form of narrative long-range forecasts as well as in methods and designs of forecasts for studies requested by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Department of the Army. He is the author of a number of futures studies including *The Technical Report to Forecast 90*; *A Concept of a Future Force*; *The Relationship of Forecasting to Long-Range Planning*; the *Pilot Delphi Project*, a forecast of strategic issues to the year 2030; *A World 2010: A Decline of Superpower Influence*; and *Alternative World Scenarios for Strategic Planning*. Mr. Taylor is the originator of the "Panel Consensus Technique," a widely recognized contribution to participative decision making, problem solving and forecasting. He is a member of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, World Future Society, Population Reference Bureau, Association of Electronic Defense, Military Operations Research Society, and The Planning Forum.

# CREATING STRATEGIC VISIONS<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction.

The United States Army War College (USAWC) prepares its students for positions of executive leadership in the defense community after graduation. Like private corporate industry and business executives, the future leaders of the military are expected to be oriented toward corporate futures. Hence, their decision making shares the need to achieve success for the future while dealing with the immediate complexities and interrelationships of a corporate world.

Corporate executive decisions, like equivalent military decisions, largely are based on the individual executive's own personal and empirical visions of the future; that is, on an intuitive knowing or sensing of what might lie ahead in the near-to long-range future. Some executives or leaders are able to create these visions; while others only see them through a glass darkly. Some are able to create even more extensive or strategic visions; while others can visualize the corporate environment in a global sense only with difficulty. Still others just cannot bring the big picture into a sharp image. The result is ineffective leadership. In the concluding paragraph of *Leaders*, Bennis and Nanus state:

The absence or ineffectiveness of leadership implies the absence of vision, a dreamless society, and this will result, at best, in the maintenance of the status quo, or, at worst, in the disintegration of our society because of lack of purpose and cohesion.<sup>2</sup>

If the military and the corporate world are to be successful in producing effective leaders for the future, then some *consideration and time* must be given to a program that attempts to help these potential leaders learn how to create strategic visions. In this paper, strategic visions are defined as intuitive, holistic views of plausible realities or futures. Essentially, they are planning scenarios that contextually include plausible corporate goals and sets of circumstances

involving things or people, which can be corporately shared and transformed for planning purposes. An assumption in designing a program for leaders is that this type of creativity can be taught, learned, and practiced by potential military and corporate leaders as an essential executive management tool.

This paper describes some of the concepts, theories, and practical applications of a program for creating strategic visions that are requisites for military and corporate leadership. Such a program was introduced several years ago as a 30-hour, graduate-level elective course<sup>3</sup> at the War College. Additionally, this paper introduces two new management tools, the "Barriers Pyramid"<sup>4</sup> and the "Cone of Plausibility,"<sup>5</sup> that assist future leaders in envisaging the future more clearly.

### **Objectives.**

There are three primary objectives of the program. They are:

- 1) to develop an awareness of internal and external hindrances or barriers to creating visions of the future;
- 2) to recognize the need for developing and sharing corporate strategic visions of the future and to instill a desire to create personal visions; and,
- 3) to offer a means or process that each executive can use throughout his or her career for creating strategic visions of the future.

In addition to helping potential leaders create future visions, the program design assists leaders in understanding strategic forecasting, its utility, and its relationship to long-range planning.

### **Envisioning the Future.**

The program is arranged so that instruction first centers on enabling future executives to envision how trends, events, and their consequences, over time, shape the environment of the

future. Then, instruction concentrates on helping them visualize how these interact to create alternative futures that influence the corporate environment. This is strategic thinking and the first step to creating strategic visions. Instruction also encourages the future leaders to recognize where their own personal preference adjustments will enable them to adapt to visioning. Throughout the program the integration of the communication skills, listening, speaking, and writing, helps the future leaders to visualize how their decisions are likely to influence the future.

To begin the enabling process or transition from today to the future each potential leader writes a short essay. The subject is a personal strategic vision of his or her career or family life projected 10 to 20 years into the future. This essay is indispensable for its revelation to the program facilitator of each future leader's foresight ability and how he or she is already managing the uncertainties of the future. Because of the increasing scarcity of factual data over time, the facilitator emphasizes the need for the consideration of alternative futures or visions, even in each leader's personal life. Most of the participants in this program are professionals, military or corporate officers, who have been accustomed to thinking about the future only in terms of just a few days, weeks, or months hence, such as the length of time needed for a campaign. They have little familiarity in dealing with the increasing fuzziness of the future and even less in developing multiple images of it.

### **Paradigms.**

During the initial days of the program, Joel Barker's video, *Discovering the Future*,<sup>6</sup> is shown to the future executives. This video is about paradigms or boundaries that circumscribe our behavior and the way we do things. Barker also discusses paradigm shifts in his video. Paradigm shifts occur when the boundaries, rules, and regulations change or no longer fit traditional situations. The shifts may force us to alter our values or the way we have always responded to the world around us. For example, environmental pollution has forced us into new patterns of waste disposal, such as recycling.



Another example, the turn toward free markets and democratization of the Soviet bloc, the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, and the apparent decrease in the Soviet threat have caused the U.S. leadership to reassess its military strategy. Since Barker believes that paradigm shifts literally drive our future, understanding his thesis is important to future leaders of the military, as well as to potential corporate executives.

Other lessons and activities during the remaining sessions of the program are designed to nurture the future leaders toward creating strategic visions. These sessions include additional discussions about other personal and organizational inhibitors of creative visioning that are beyond paradigm shifts (to be discussed later). They also include presentations made by successful writers of selected futures-oriented papers who encourage creative thinking, such as authors of military, Federal and State government, as well as corporate forecasting and long-range planning documents. Even more challenging are the televideo conference sessions between the future leaders and successful authors and experts; for example, between the War College, the Pentagon, and elsewhere. These conferences not only offer educational benefits, but also cost-saving advantages.

The program would not be complete without introducing the future leaders to some of the techniques used by futurists and planners. Two sessions are scheduled for orientation of forecasting methods and long-range planning techniques, while another session allows the leaders time to critique each others' 20-year projections of strategic trends. Before the end of the program each future leader prepares a term essay which describes his or her understanding of corporate strategic visions of the future; for example, strategic visions of the U.S. Army (Navy, Marine Corps, or Air Force) or U.S. National Security in the early decades of the 21st century. This term essay can serve as a learning measure of the program design and instruction methods. The program participants select two or three essays that they believe best represent visions of the

future for special public presentation; perhaps, before a corporate or academic board.

### **Characteristics of Potential Future Leaders.**

The common denominators that probably best describe the characteristics of potential future leaders are their abilities in innovativeness, creativity, and foresight or visioning. These special skills possibly can be detected and gauged early in their careers by training exercises or special testing instruments and later, by observation of their performance in positions of leadership. Opportunities, however, for expression of these common denominators are not always present and potential leaders with high abilities can be overlooked.

Given the identification of individuals with these talents, are such abilities innate or inbred? If they are either (or both) and have been masked by conformity, or buried by the mishmash of rules and regulations of society, can they be nurtured? Are there ways to revive the creativeness of youth—enough that grown men and women can envision knowable futures (let alone contrive visions of unknowable futures)? Can potential military or corporate leaders overcome personal barriers and adjust to the paradigm shifts that are confronting them? Are they all visionaries? What personal traits that are barriers must they be aware of, which must they adjust or change?

### **Preferences of the Future Leaders.**

Knowing the general preference characteristics of the potential future leaders is useful. Profiles derived from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)<sup>7</sup> provide each individual with his or her own preferences or traits for personal use. They also provide the program facilitators a better understanding of those preferences that might be involved as a help or hindrance to each future leader's learning experience. The type indicators, when used collectively for example, can help show something of each leader's potential for creativity and visioning.

The MBTI, based on psychological types, reports individual preferences on four scales in sets of two:

E, extroversion and I, introversion;  
S, sensing and N, intuition;  
T, thinking and F, feeling; and  
J, judgment and P, perception.

The "type" created by the MBTI is the combination and interaction of the four preferences as determined by each individual's responses to the MBTI questionnaire. There are 16 combinations. The predominant combination types of the Army War College future leaders, over an 8-year period (about 2,000 observations), are ISTJ<sup>8</sup> (average, 33 percent) and ESTJ (average, 23 percent).<sup>9</sup> These data are roughly comparable to corporate management.<sup>10</sup>

What does this mean in relationship to creating strategic visions? At a minimum, it means that over half of the future potential leaders very likely would have difficulty creating or would be unable to create 10-20 year projections of strategic visions of geopolitical world environments because of their predispositions and preferences. Beyond the paradigms and paradigm shifts, what are some of the personal and situational barriers that are likely to inhibit these future leaders from creating strategic visions?

### **The Barriers.**

The Barriers Pyramid<sup>11</sup> is a logical and dynamic means to demonstrate the impact of pervasive individual or organizational attitudes graphically (see Figure 1). The Pyramid is a visual display of personal and group mental dispositions—blocks, if you will—that tend to stand in the way of, or are barriers to visioning, creativity, problem solving, and decision making. The blocks epitomize resistance to change. One use of the Pyramid is to enable a group of individuals of a unit (e.g., an organization, a company, or family) to uncover basic inhibitors to rational thinking. Another use is to help each individual overcome his or her own personal barriers by recognition and awareness of them. This is accomplished

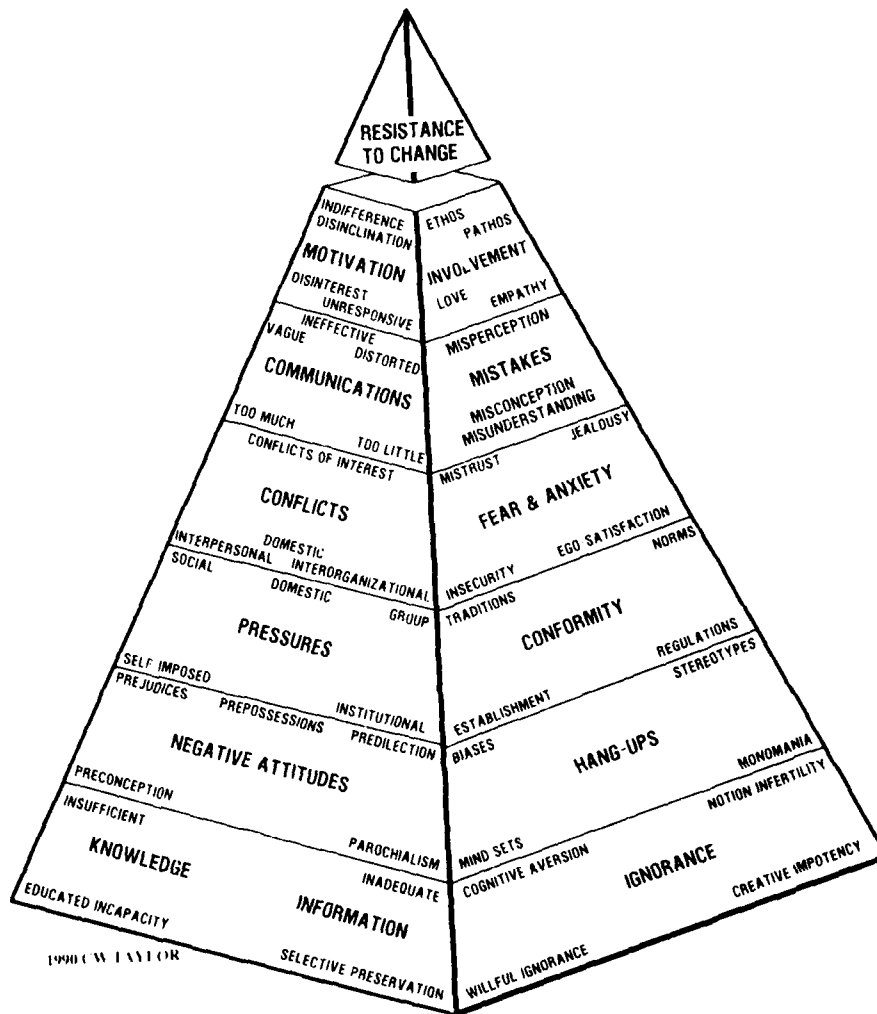


Figure 1. The Barriers Pyramid.

through group or individual exercises that encourage free and uninhibited discussion of the influence of all the barriers within the Pyramid, then rearranging the blocks according to their domination of the group or individual.

The Pyramid shown in Figure 1 is designed with the barriers arranged randomly in ascending categories as blocks in the Pyramid. Each category includes subsets of synonymous words or phrases that have slightly different meanings and implications. The barriers are those most commonly found in business, industry, academia, government, and in the personal lives of individuals. However, not all categories and their subset synonyms are fixed in position in the Pyramid, vertically or horizontally. There is no significance to abutting barriers, left to right or up and down, in Figure 1. Their order depends on the opinion an individual (or organization) has as to why he or she cannot be creative or innovative. The Barriers Pyramid can be built one block at a time and arranged in any ascending order. For example, one organization or individual may believe "Communications" to be a more dominant barrier than "Negative Attitudes," and change their positions within the pyramid.

The barriers at the base of the Pyramid are the strongest and most dominant ones that prevent change, inhibit decision making, and repress visioning. In Figure 1, "Knowledge and Information" and "Ignorance" fill these positions since they are the most common inhibitors that occur for individuals as well as organizations. The "Knowledge and Information" block has four subsets, each of which plays a negative role against visioning. "Insufficient" and "Inadequate" knowledge and information are self-explanatory as to why they are barriers. The other two subsets need explanation. "Educated Incapacity" is a concept credited to Herman Kahn<sup>12</sup> and implies a declining ability to use one's knowledge, in its broadest sense, to understand and solve real-world, practical problems as one's level of education increases. This exists as occupational incapacity as well. The subset "Selective Preservation" refers to those situations where individuals, disciplines, organizations, or industries, for example, have

become so entrenched in their specialized knowledge and its application in society that they selectively do all they can to preserve their existence and perpetuation. Featherbedding in the railroad industry is one example; preservation of arms industries in times of peace is another.

"Ignorance" is the absence of specific knowledge and information about something, such as the advantages of change. But, as can be observed in the subsets of the "Ignorance" barrier, it often serves as a crutch to avoid making change. Organizations, as well as individuals, knowingly will discourage innovativeness; they become creatively impotent and cannot envision the future. From some, one will hear, "Let's not leave the tried and the true." There comes a time in some people's lives when they become notionally infertile; they haven't the slightest idea in the world what lies ahead for them or their organization. One can move through the Pyramid from barrier to barrier and at some point, he or she will say, "That's my organization." "That's my boss." "That's the General, alright." "Hey, that's my wife (or husband)." Then a sudden revelation, "Oh, that's me." That person has achieved awareness of his or her personal barrier. Once this awareness has come about, it is unlikely to be forgotten. When decisions are made thereafter, each personal barrier will enter into the future leader's mind as he or she personally weighs the influence that barrier plays in the decision. Ridding oneself of a barrier, for example: "Hang-ups," is no easy task.

The military officers who attend the Army War College are no different than anyone else. They are confronted with these barriers daily, especially those on the right side of the Pyramid and, in particular, "Conformity" and its subsets: "Establishment," "Tradition," "Regulations," and "Norms." The category "Mistakes" is where barriers exist that inhibit good decision making because we do not see, listen, or read the right meanings. We so easily misperceive what is shown to us and misconceive or misunderstand what we hear and what we read. Another category that becomes an inhibitor or barrier to problem solving and visioning is "Involvement," that is, emotional entanglements where the subsets of "Ethos"

(beliefs, culture, principles, ethics, even ideology), "Pathos" (pity, sympathy), "Love" (friendship, affection, benevolence), and "Empathy" (caring, sensitivity, identification) come into stressful play.

At the apex of the Pyramid is the culmination of all of the categories and subsets, "Resistance to Change." Faced with just the inhibitors displayed in the Pyramid, is it any wonder that most people cannot create a vision of the future? What can be done to avoid these barriers? What do we do to enable future leaders to overcome these barriers?

### **Creative Illustrations.**

An intellectual exercise and learning principle from antiquity, which assists in the mastery of skills, is learning by example. This is not ignored in the "Creating Strategic Visions" program. Most of the examples used for the program at the War College are selected more for their relationship to military interests and their general acceptance in Defense circles than because they are especially creative or innovative.

Several different examples of futures studies and long-range plans from the open literature and proprietary sources, as well as from State and Federal Government, become required or optional readings. Where possible, the authors are invited to instruct the future executives personally on their methods and the substance of their projections (visions). The reasoning behind this is to spark creativeness as well as to encourage the future leader to emulate, in his or her writing, the style and methods used by successful authors. As indicated by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicators, however, most of the future leaders, military and corporate, are extremely skeptical of most people whose notions do not fall within their preconceived patterns or with folks who do not deal with real-time hard data. Subject matter examples, whether introduced by fellow officers, classmates or visiting instructors, that conflict with or appear to question the future leaders' reasoning, generally, are met as keen challenges. Such sessions of the program are broadening experiences for the future executives as well as for the visiting instructors.

To enrich the potential leaders' background in forecasting and visioning, the reading list for the program includes special writings about the future that have been accepted by academia, business, and government. Where these documents are not available, televideo conferences with the authors can usually be arranged. These conferences acquaint the future leaders with the utility of this form of communication and conferencing. They are used especially to bring the leaders into direct discussion and visual contact with authors and experts in futures and long-range planning. The final creative illustration is demonstrating the utility of a retreat facility, where the future leaders are relatively isolated from day-to-day routine. The value of a retreat environment is in small-group communication where it tends to release the tensions of barriers and paradigms, to broaden the future leaders' perspectives, and improve the future executives' respect for the creative ideas of others. A retreat facility and the atmosphere it creates are suitable also for the orientation part of the program that introduces the methods and techniques of forecasting and long-range planning.

### **Methods and Techniques.**

Teaching the details of methods and techniques is not the purpose of this program. The future military and corporate leaders, however, should be aware that forecasters and futurists do use methods and techniques for forecasting the future. Few of these, however, have the rigor of mathematical, statistical, or operations research analysis, principally because of the uncertainty of the future as well as the more judgmental ways involved in forecasting. At best, the future leaders need only to recognize the names and some of the terminology of the methods. They must also have some idea of the reliability of the methods in order to know how much they want the methods' forecasts to influence their decisions. There are also methods for predicting the future, but these are mostly mathematical, designed for short-range projections, and found in the hard sciences.

The future executives should be aware that creating a single vision of the future possibly can lead to misjudgments.



For this reason, the future leaders are encouraged to think in terms of the probability of more than one strategic vision, i.e., multiple or alternative visions of what the future might be like.

During the time allotted for methods, the potential leaders begin to recognize the interrelationship of trends and events, as well as the impact of the consequences of the trends and events on the shape of the future. They also discover that not only is there a need for a holistic view of the world, but also a real need for more than one view or scenario of the future. Emphasis is placed on group methods that demonstrate the benefits of cross-organizational and interdisciplinary participation to long-range planning. Finally, through the use of the interrelationships of the consequences of trends and events and a forecasting process (described below), the future leaders intellectually experience a moving into time and space to envisage and create a mental vision or scenario of the future.

This session of the program briefly discusses the following most popular methods used by futurists and planners. They are: Delphi, cross-impact analysis, trend analysis and scanning, and scenario development. Additionally, the process of the "Cone of Plausibility"<sup>13</sup> is used by the future executives as a guide for their mental excursions into the future.

### **The Cone of Plausibility.**

The "Cone of Plausibility" is a name for a theoretical process that can be used by one or more persons to project trends and events and their consequences holistically into the future. Use of the "Cone of Plausibility" permits a logical progression into time and the creation of alternative scenarios at preselected points or intervals called forecast or planning focus planes.

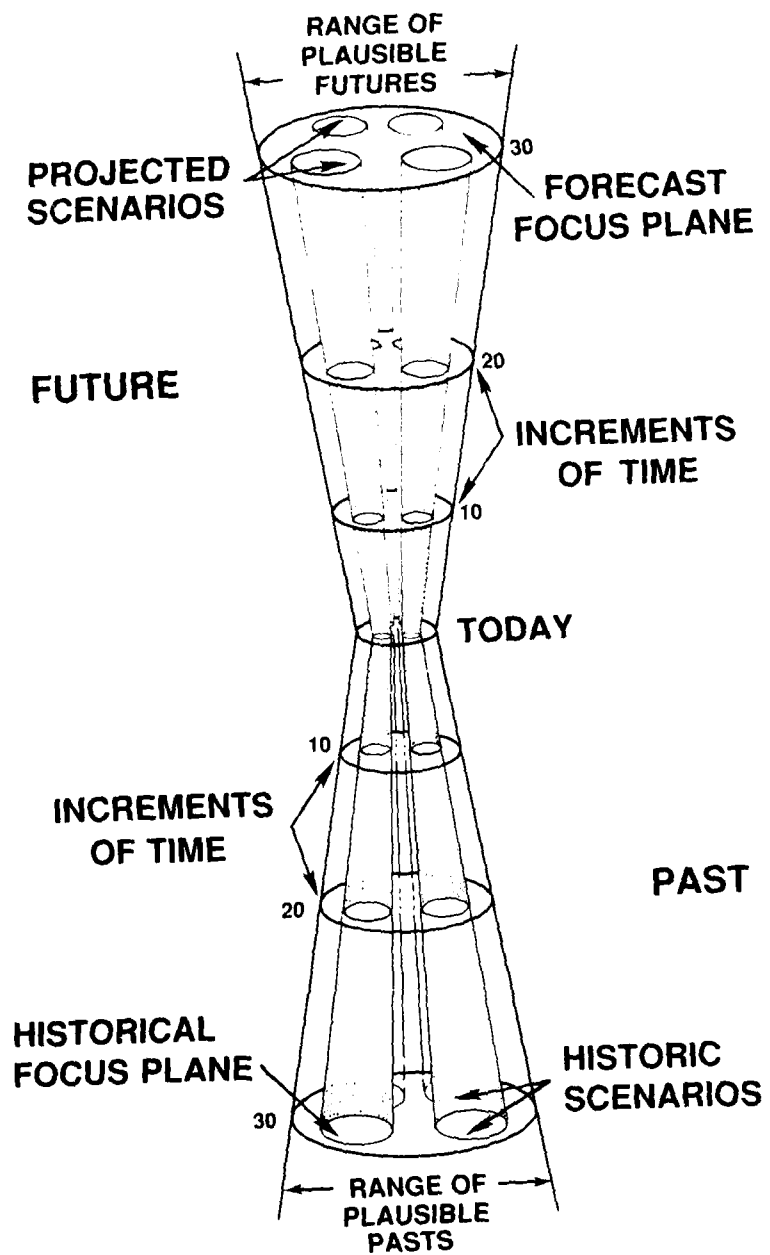
Future military and corporate leaders in the program can use the Cone to take their first steps toward creating strategic visions of the future. To become familiar with using the Cone, each future leader selects a trend from a list of current strategic trends that characterize corporate or national strategy. Over several weeks, he or she researches the trend subject, then

processes the trend through the "Cone of Plausibility" to a forecast focus plane 15 years hence. He or she does this by projecting the probability of sequential consequences along theoretical time lines into the future. The exercise ends with a presentation of trend projections by each potential leader that is critiqued by the other program participants as to depth of analysis, historical perspective, cross-impact, interrelationships, and holistic approach.

The notion behind the process is that trends can be traced along a continuum backward in time to their origin or forward with an audit trail of consequences along the way. (See Figure 2.) The influence trends have on the environment or society in which they exist can be observed along their path from origin to the present. Theoretically, at any focus plane—or relative period of time—within the Cone of Plausibility, the responses to and the consequences of trends and events create a vision or scenario of that environment.

The four environments depicted in the generic cone in Figure 3 are characterized by dominant or driver trends that are technological, political, economic, and sociological. Each of these four driver trends becomes a leading theme, creating different visions or scenarios of the future. Outside of the Cone are "wild card" events, which, if they occur, become the driver and overwhelm most visions or scenarios of the future. For a period of time, these disruptive, aberrant, anomalous, or catastrophic events can dominate nearly every other trend and destroy any interaction or mutual support existing among active trends.

The trends within the Cone are not straight line projections. There are interactions among trends where dominant trends alter the attitude of weaker trends. There are dichotomies, couplings, and fusions of trends as well as discontinuities where some trends gain or lose their impact or cease to exist. The movement of trends, theoretically, can be described as angular, curvilinear, or screw-shaped, but when considered altogether they form a smooth curve, i.e., a straight line. Their strength, dominance, and their place in the scheme of society,



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Figure 2. The Cone of Plausibility: Past and Future.

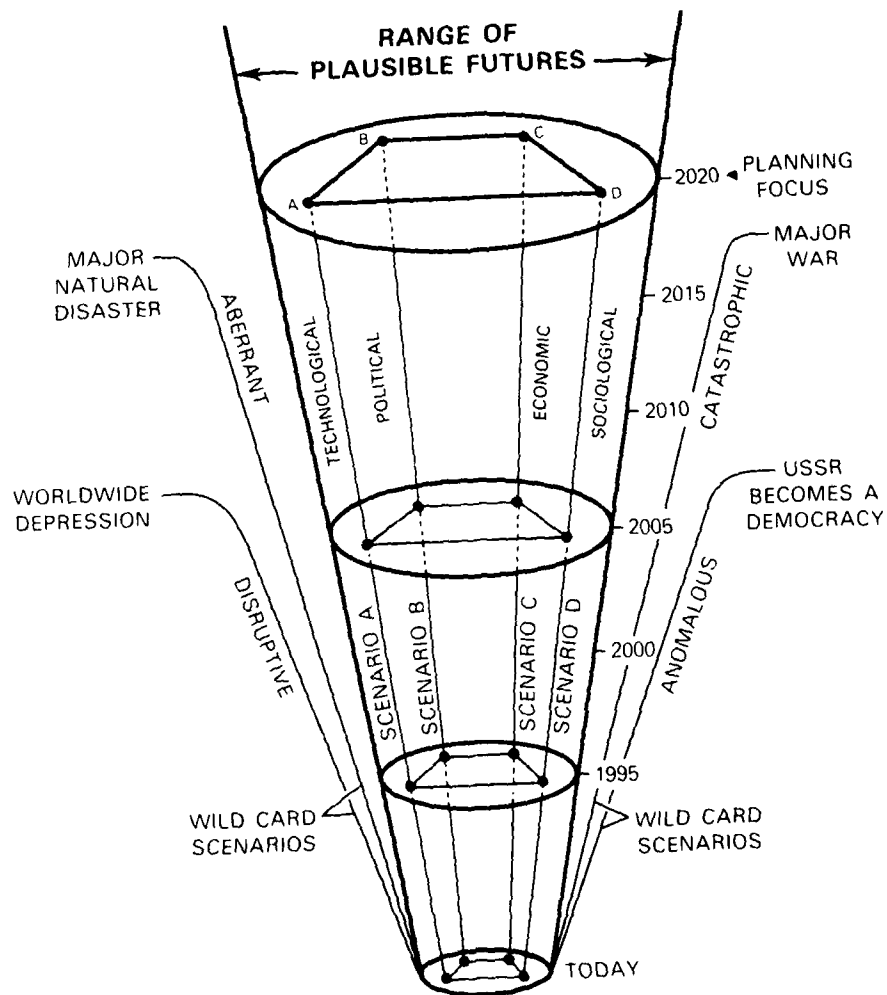


Figure 3. The Generic Cone of Plausibility.

in comparison to other trends, also can be established. Their probability of continuing to be a strong or weak influence in society can be deduced, as can their plausibility. The "Cone of Plausibility" offers a logical way to progress into the future when an individual or group confine their thoughts within the Cone. Moreover, it offers a systematic and incremental means to create several cross-related scenarios simultaneously at a chosen focus plane. The use of the Cone by future military and corporate leaders, during this program, gives them a tool to sort and choose their visions of the future, both personally or professionally.

### **Concluding the Program.**

The final hours of the program are devoted to oral synopses of each future leader's written essay of his or her strategic corporate vision(s) projected to the early decades of the 21st century. The other program participants, again, critique each briefing. They then go one step further; by consensus they select two or three essays that they believe best represent strategic visions of the future. The reward for the authors of the selected essays may be an opportunity to present their future visions as after dinner speakers to an audience of the other participants (and their spouses) or publication in a special edition of the corporate news letter. Such rewards are an acceptable preference of most of the program participants.

### **Discussion.**

This program is designed to instill thinking about the future. Readings, guest instructors, televideo conference presenters, and the order of the sessions and their subject matter are all part of a grand design to enable potential future leaders of the military or corporations to project their thoughts beyond today. It is designed to build a walking bridge across personal preferences, paradigms, and barriers so that the future leaders can create strategic visions of the future.

Determining the effectiveness of this approach is rather difficult. As in most teaching-learning situations, the success

often shows up long after the fact. Two ways to sense partial success are by preparation of assignments and by participation in program activities; both of which can be quantified. They are the participants' responsibilities, however, and in a program made up of executive-level adults who were selected to attend the program because of their potential leadership qualities, are not a problem. Thus, even partial success in preparation and participation cannot be used to measure the effectiveness of the program. Perhaps effectiveness can be gauged better by estimates of the achievement of program objectives.

The three primary objectives of the program are approached in a manner that respond to the average characteristics and personal preferences of the selected participants.

- The first objective is to develop an awareness of internal and external barriers to creating visions of the future. This objective is approached and met by identifying the paradigms and paradigm shifts that exist now and those that might exist in the future. Personal, corporate, and organizational barriers also are identified as to their influence on executive decision making and their hindrances to creative visioning. Finally, the significance of awareness of these barriers is that the awareness tends to become a permanent personal feature that conditions a pause-and-reflect response when contemplating subsequent decision making. This objective cannot be measured.
- The second objective is to recognize the need for corporate strategic visions of the future and to instill a desire to create personal visions. This two-part objective is met as follows. An essay of personal visions of the future is a program entrance requirement. After brief discussion of the essays during the first session, no additional program time is given to them. After helpful comments by the instructors are made in the margins, each essay is returned to its author.

Considerably more program time is devoted to recognizing the need for corporate strategic visions. This objective is met through televideo conferencing and exposure to other documented strategic forecasts and long-range plans, all of which, essentially, are strategic visions. These exercises give the future leadership an opportunity to observe the wide variation of future strategic world environments independently projected by others; for example, the U.S. Army and the other services or the corporate headquarters and its subsidiaries. Moreover, the conferences demonstrate that a combined effort appears to be necessary to develop a standardized set of alternative scenarios (corporate strategic visions, if you will) and that a systematic process by which the combined visions can be reassessed and updated periodically appears to be essential as well. As valid as these observations may be, and although they support an objective of the program, they are not sufficiently quantifiable to measure the effectiveness of this program.

- The third objective is to offer a process that each executive can use throughout his or her career for creating strategic visions. This objective is approached by instructing the future leadership about the forecasts and forecast methods of various agencies of the Federal and State Governments, the other armed services, and industry, and how they are going about creating strategic visions. Finally, the "Cone of Plausibility" is presented to the future leaders. The Cone offers a logical way to trace the consequences of dynamic trends and events through the passage of time enabling the future leaders to create strategic visions or planning scenarios. It is very likely that the future leadership who are exposed to the "Cone of Plausibility" will use it. It is also likely that they will remember their personal barriers and paradigms.

None of the objectives, however, offers an immediate or substantial criteria for determining the effectiveness of the

program. Comments from the participants after the program have indicated it requires and demands thinking, but thinking differently. Differently, because the program content challenges traditional and stagnant thinking and forces logical, progressive thinking about the future. The end of the program essay appears to be the only immediate tangible product to use to estimate effectiveness. The question might be asked, how many ISTJs and ESTJs did the program enable to overcome personal preferences and create strategic visions? If, for example, the program began with 56 percent of the leaders whose preferences, generally, were adverse to thinking futures and 66 percent of the final essays were judged to be acceptable as strategic visions, it is possible that the program had achieved some success.

A final question might be asked, in what ways can these personal judgments, or conceptual notions, of what the future will be like be measured to determine the effectiveness and success of the program? There are no right or wrong answers to projections of the future 15 to 20 years ahead since no one can predict the future accurately except by chance. One way might be to compare the general concepts in the entrance essays to those of the final essays. Do they show learning has taken place? Do they show an understanding of the use and concepts of the "Cone of Plausibility"? Perhaps a more acceptable way to measure the future leaders' visions would be to examine the logic he or she used to arrive at a future focus plane. Essays of strategic visions cannot be graded easily since there are no standards against which to compare them. The approach in this program is to use a consensus group decision that determined the standards (i.e., peer standards) against which the essays could be appraised. In the last session, the future leaders select the top three final essays.

### **Conclusions.**

There are three conclusions regarding the program, "Creating Strategic Visions." The first and most important is that the approach taken in this program enables potential future military and corporate leadership to create strategic visions



beyond personal, group, or corporate barriers. Second, the participating future leadership has derived long-term benefits through the understanding of the need for developing and sharing corporate strategic visions. Moreover, each future executive has taken away from the program a process that can be used in many situations to create near- to long-range strategic visions of the future. Lastly, the approach of this program and the concepts it discloses have a wide application as corporate management tools.

## ENDNOTES

1. This paper is based on a presentation to the World Future Society, Professional Members' Forum, Salzburg, Austria, June 4-6, 1990. It is also a discussion and analysis of an elective course offered to attendees of the U.S. Army War College.

2. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985, p. 228.

3. The first elective course, "Futures: Creating Strategic Visions," was offered at the U.S. Army War College in academic year 1989; Lieutenant Colonels John W. Hobrle, Douglas V. Johnson II, and Mr. Charles W. Taylor were the instructors.

4. Charles W. Taylor, *The Barriers Pyramid*, Unpublished Concept Paper, Carlisle, PA: 1975.

5. Taylor, *Alternative World Scenarios for Strategic Planning*. Revised edition, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1990, pp. 3-14.

6. Joel Arthur Barker, *Profiting from Paradigms: Discovering the Future*, videotape, 8300 Windbreak Trail, Lake Elmo, MN: Infinity Limited, Inc., 1988. Since 1988 Barker has produced a second videotape to the "Discovering the Future" series, *The Power of Vision*, 1990.

7. Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type: A Description of the Theory and Application of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1987. The U.S. Army War College students complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) during the first month of attendance at the College as a part of Course I, "Strategic Leadership."

8. Myers, *Introduction to Type*, pp. 7 and 20. Briefly, "An ISTJ is an introvert (I) who likes to process information of his or her inner world with

sensing (S), i.e., using the senses, who prefers to use thinking (T) to make decisions, and who mainly takes a structured, judging (J), attitude toward the outside world." When ISTJs "see that something has to be done, they accept the responsibility, often beyond the call of duty. . . . Even when dealing with crisis they look calm and composed. . . . [They] often choose careers where their talents for organization and accuracy are rewarded."

9. *Ibid.*, p. 10. Briefly, "An ESTJ, on the other hand, is an extrovert (E) who likes to process information in the here-and-now of the outer world with sensing (S), who prefers to use thinking (T) to make objective and logical decisions, and who mainly takes an orderly, judging (J), attitude toward the outer world." ESTJs "use their thinking to run as much of the world as may be theirs to run. . . . They like to organize facts . . . have little patience with confusion . . . . They think conduct should be run by logic . . . . They are more interested in seeing present realities than future possibilities." They often choose careers "where the results of their work are immediate, visible, and tangible."

10. Isabel Briggs Myers and Mary H. McCaulley, *A Guide to the Development and Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1985, pp. 90-91. Over 7,000 observations of nine samples of corporate managers by Myers and McCaulley show MBTI preferences of about 40 percent ESTJ and ISTJ.

11. Since its origination in 1975, "The Barriers Pyramid" has been used by the author for government and nongovernment workshops as a supplement to teaching decision making, problem solving, and creativity.

12. Herman Kahn, *The Coming Boom*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982, p. 188. See also Edith Weiner, "Six Principles for Revitalizing Your Planning," *Planning Review*, Vol. 18, No. 4, July/August 1990, pp.16-19.

13. Discussions and presentations of "The Cone of Plausibility" have been conducted by the author for the World Future Society Professional Forum, Salzburg, Austria, 1988; World Future Society, 6th Assembly General Assembly, Washington, D.C., 1989; in "Geopolitical Worlds: Circa 2015" for the 1990 Tech Base Seminar War Games, Bethesda, MD; the Third Federal Forecasters' Conference, Washington, D.C., 1990; and for other government and nongovernment fora.

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