



Creating the Future: Visioning, Alignment and Change in the Serbian Armed Forces

PROFESSOR BERNARD F. GRIFFARD AND COLONEL (RET.) JAMES W. SHUFELT, JR.

It became clear to me that at the age of 58 I would have to learn new tricks that were not taught in the military manuals or on the battlefield...I must become an expert in a whole new set of skills.

—General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, 1939-1945

In 1939, when he became the U.S. Army's 15th Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall realized that he was operating on a different level as he prepared the Army for possible entry into World War II. He was now a strategic leader and strategic leadership was *different*. In guiding the evolution of the poorly equipped 174,000 man Army of 1939 to the 8.3 million man well-led, modern Army of 1945;¹ General Marshall demonstrated the three critical skills of a strategic leader: the ability to create the future by providing the vision for long-term focus; managing the intricate processes necessary for change; and, building the teams and consensus required to accomplish the desired endstate.

Today, in the States of the former Yugoslavia, national security teams are wrestling with the challenges of parallel political and military transformations. With the dissolution of the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), military leadership and planning skills were dispersed among six sovereign entities. As a group, these countries have opted to align their futures with the West and the European Community. Whether NATO members, candidate members, or Partnership for Peace (PfP) participants, they have actively sought assistance with strategic planning and professional military education.

BUILDING A WINNING TEAM

With the elimination of conscription in December 2010 paving the way to the conversion of the Serbian Armed Forces (SAF) into an all-volunteer force of professional soldiers, the Republic of Serbia is a strong advocate for using international resources to further their planning and operational capabilities. According to Serbian Minister of Defense Dragan Šutanovac, it is in the mutual interest of NATO and Serbia to continue to strengthen their collaboration by taking full advantage of the PfP program. Minister Šutanovac emphasized that this ongoing collaboration over the past six years has helped the Serbian Armed Forces (SAF) become one of the most trusted institutions in the Republic.² The overall strategy employed to achieve this public esteem has two lines of effort (LOE). The first LOE is focused, as mentioned above, on employing the resources available through the PfP program, while the second LOE is internal and reflects an evolving Serbian professional military education program.



Serbian Minister of Defense
Dragan Šutanovac

1. WWII Multimedia Database, <http://www.worldwar2database.com/html/army.htm> (accessed December 23, 2010).

2. Dragan Šutanovac, "Captain of the Winning Team," Interview by Jelena Aleksic, CorD77 (December 2010), 10-13.

Colonel (Ret.) Griffard is a Professor of Strategic Logistics in the Operations and Gaming Division (OGD) of the Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL), U.S. Army War College (USAWC)

Colonel (Ret.) Shufelt is an Instructor, Command and Control Systems, Science and Technology Division, CSL, USAWC.

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Leveraging External Resources

An organization with a well educated and professional officer corps, the SAF is proactively learning how the United States and other NATO militaries address common resource, planning, and interagency issues so that they can modify best practices to fit the Serbian military culture. The U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) Theater Security Cooperation Plan and its employment of traveling contact teams (TCTs) provide key support to the SAF's efforts to rationalize their processes with NATO systems.

The U.S. Army War College Role. Partnering with USEUCOM on subjects touching on the high operational and strategic arenas, the U.S. Army War College (USAWC), Carlisle Barracks, PA, worked extensively with the SAF during 2010. Operating as TCTs, USAWC faculty addressed common transformational issues by conducting seminars and workshops on Joint and Interagency level topics such as Joint Staff Planning, Human Resource Management Systems, and Crisis and Contingency Response Planning. The latest SAF-USAWC collaboration addressed Strategic Leadership and was executed in Belgrade, December 6-10, 2010. TCT members Professor Bernard F. Griffard and Colonel (Retired) James W. Shufelt, from the USAWC's Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL), discussed the roles of strategic leaders and various roles of strategic leadership in the national defense planning process.



Prof. Griffard; Major General Dragan Kolundzija, SAF J3; and Colonel (Ret.) James Shufelt

STRATEGIC LEADERS AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Being a strategic leader is a major challenge and requires individuals to reassess their abilities and practices. In order to effectively execute their strategic assessment and advisory responsibilities, transformational military forces must define their strategic leadership positions and their relationships with the government's key decision makers. To assist the SAF in furthering their initiatives in these areas, the TCT used these issues as the focus points for the first day's sessions. Using U.S. models, the discussions first defined strategic leadership and the attributes required of a strategic leader. This information was reinforced by reviewing the existing U.S. processes that support the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in executing his statutory responsibilities.

What is Strategic Leadership?

Strategic leaders live in the three worlds of alignment, visioning, and change. They are responsible for ensuring sustainable competitive advantage by providing the effective long-term focus to align ends, ways, and means. At lower levels strategy can be dictated, but the strategic leader must achieve success by building teams and consensus. Using the U.S. Army's parameters for defining strategic leaders, the team was able to illustrate the key differentiators between leaders in strategic positions, those who plan and recommend; and strategic leaders, those who have the *responsibility* for large organizations and the *authority* to allocate resources. Such a distinction is considered so important by the U.S. Army, that it has identified these individuals by position.³



What is Strategic Leadership?

Executing Strategic Leadership.

Executing strategic leadership responsibilities requires some cultural adjustments. Its complexity removes practitioners from their comfort zone of face-to-face, hands-on leadership, and thrusts them into the realm of interagency processes. To illustrate this, the TCT used the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS), the process that enables the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), the U.S. military's senior strategic leader, to carry out assessment, advisory, directive, and execution responsibilities.

3. Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, "Strategic Leadership Primer, 3d Edition," USAWC Carlisle, PA 2010, p.3.

In operation, the JSPS reinforces the importance of the three critical skills employed by General Marshall. Tasked to conduct independent assessments; provide independent advice to the President (POTUS), Secretary of Defense (SECDEF), National Security Council, and Homeland Security Council; and to assist the POTUS and SECDEF in providing unified strategic direction to the Armed Forces, the CJCS leans on the institutionalized processes of the JSPS to ensure alignment, visioning and change are addressed at all critical nodes. The TCT walked the SAF participants through the JSPS process, emphasizing the importance of interagency consensus throughout. As it exists, the JSPS is not easily transferable to the Serbian Ministry of Defense (MoD) processes. To determine how the assess, advise, direct and execute functions are institutionalized within the SAF general staff processes, the planners participated in a *Role of Leadership in the Strategic Planning, Capabilities Assessment, and Oversight* practical exercise (PE).

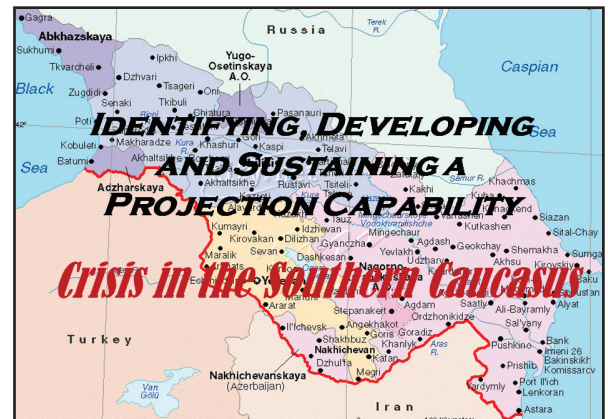


SAF planners address the issues in the JSPS practical exercise

Within the parameters of a USAWC developed scenario, the SAF planners identified and described the SAF joint assessment and strategic review processes, the formal and informal advice development system used by the Chief of the General Staff, and the methodology for the Chief of the General Staff to provide strategic direction. The size of the U.S. system requires complicated solutions. What the PE demonstrated was that Serbia employed a more direct and personal approach that proved effective given the comparatively smaller size of their military forces.

CAPABILITIES MANAGEMENT

In today's economic environment stewardship of scarce resources is a responsibility of all strategic leaders. To illustrate how the U.S. military's strategic leaders accomplish this stewardship the TCT reviewed the development, acquisition, and resourcing legs of the U.S. Department of Defense's capabilities management system. Though similar processes exist within the SAF and the Ministry of Defense (MoD), their senior defense leadership is very interested in identifying elements of the various U.S. strategic planning processes that might offer utility if incorporated into existing Serbian planning processes. To assist in this effort the TCT reviewed the U.S. Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System (PPBES), Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS), and the Defense Acquisition System (DAS) processes. Following these discussions, a PE, concerning a crisis in the South Caucasus region, was employed to reinforce the education objectives and allowed the participants to identify the development, acquisition, and resourcing requirements necessary to execute a hypothetical future scenario requiring deployment of Serbian forces for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations mission. The takeaway from the PE was, that although the U.S. systems are complex, the institutionalization of integrated, logical systems that facilitate, rather than hinder, the challenging process of defense transformation is required.



LEVERAGING INTERNAL RESOURCES: TIERED PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

The value placed by the SAF on professional military education (PME) in developing tomorrow's senior officers and updating today's leaders is a legacy of their JNA heritage. This internal LOE is seen as critical in developing the SAF's strategic leadership. At a sidebar meeting, Professor Griffard and Colonel (Ret.) Shufelt met with Serbian Defense College representatives. The Serbian educators reviewed their education structure and objectives, which roughly parallel the U.S. military education system, with one notable exception – Serbia is currently attempting to establish a senior-level defense education course that would target students at the General/Flag Officer and Senior Government Executive level. Their intent for this course is to offer a strategic level of leader education that involves senior participants from all elements of the Serbian government, facilitating improved interagency knowledge and

coordination. If successful, this initiative will institutionalize strategic leadership processes within their formal PME system. In addition, this course may offer insights to the U.S. Joint Professional Military Education system for future U.S. senior defense leader education course development and execution.

CREATING THE FUTURE

The States of the former Yugoslavia are transforming their shares of the JNA into effective military organizations that can respond to their separate national security requirements. As their forces achieve modernization milestones, the SAF and other Balkan countries will be called upon to increase their participation in UN, EU and NATO peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. As their operating environments expand, developing military strategic leaders who can successfully lead and manage change will become increasingly important. Meeting this strategic leader challenge will be difficult. Luckily, as pointed out by Defense Minister Šutanovac, they do not have to accomplish this



on their own. NATO's PfP and USEUCOM's strong military to military and TCT programs are available to provide resourcing, organizational, and equipping expertise to assist in the building of the future Balkan armed forces. As active participants in this effort, the USAWC faculty benefits from both the association with fellow military professionals, and the opportunity to remain current in their regional specialty areas.

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