

## PANEL 1. Professional Military Education Approaches.

How is strategy taught at PME institutions and at what levels? What are the strengths and weaknesses of PME approaches to teaching strategy? Is there unique content that should be taught to officers? How does the presence of civilian students affect that? What challenges do you face when teaching strategy?

### Air Command and Staff

- Air University attempts to inculcate what it calls the Strategic Mindset. This is one that has moved from tactical excellence, focused on TTP's, to strategy. As longtime professor Carl Dolman has pointed out, strategy is NOT "big tactics." He says, "Victory defines tactics; it confounds strategy." (or, do tactics confound strategy???).
- Colin Gray's *Airpower for Strategic Effect* is useful here. "Everything is tactical in the doing" It relates to the subject of technological determinism (highlighted by recent Defense News comment by Gen Dave Goldfein that the side who will win the future war is the side with the best apps). There is a relevant Vandenberg speech to the Air War College in May 1953. He explains well the tensions in the minds of military leaders between tactical and strategic thinking.
- The syllabus consists of war theory, air power (air, space, and cyber operations), international studies (focused on DIME), and joint operations

### Naval War College

- At the Naval War College we read Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Thucydides, Mao, Mahan, then *apply* theories to historical case studies. Three speeches encapsulate the S&P approach: Stansfield Turner (failures are largely at the strategic level); Phil Crowl article (his objectives in setting up the course); Brad Lee (in Army War College — about teaching strategy).
- As first professor of strategy, Mahan's lectures formed the basis for *The Influence of Seapower upon History*. NWC still reads Mahan which makes us different than most programs. We teach the elements of seapower.
- For his major reforms at NWC Adm Stansfield Turner brainstormed with Bill Emerson (P-47 pilot, Yale lecturer, head of FDR library) Emerson's advice: begin with Clausewitz and Thucydides. Use Sicilian campaign as analogue for Vietnam. One set of goals was to instruct students that to study war is to keep in mind the higher aim — the overall national aim or political objective. War is more than warfare. ([Turner: Challenge, A New Approach to Professional Education](#))
- We use case studies to apply theory to war. We spend a lot of time on context. We assign roughly 600 pages per week for twelve weeks. Adding something means taking something out.

- The course highlights that war is interactive, and we must put ourselves in the shoes of the enemy. From Moltke to Joe Frasier, so to speak.. "No plan survives first contact with the enemy." "I had a plan until I got slugged in the face."
- The course consistently ranks as the most challenging and the most valued by students at the war college.

#### Marine Corps University

- The Marine Corps War College "McWar," is the newest, started in 1990, and so not burdened by a century of tradition. MA is Strategic Studies: modeled on JHU and Georgetown.
- The goal is to make critical and creative thinkers.
- The curriculum consists of diplomacy,/statecraft, economics, joint, leadership, national security, war/policy/strategy. It asks, what is strategy? —ends/ways/means. It provides a primer on strategic formulation including the NSS and frameworks to analyze. McWar has a very small student body, two vans, can fit in CJCS/SECDEF conference room

#### Army War College

- Army War College curriculum evolved considerably since the mid-1990s. It seeks to put students into the messy world of policymaking, using Clausewitz' analogy of two wrestlers.... Strategy is difficult because of the human factor. The method of teaching has changed from 50 minute blocks, which were challenging from a pedagogical standpoint, to larger/longer blocs with more interaction. There is a greater emphasis on written and oral skills. Also on asking the proper questions. All of these are skills they will need in later career.
- It was stated that strategy has its own language, vocabular, and grammar, but that there are big differences between General and Flag Officers and senior civilians, who generally do not speak this language or even know the logic and vocabulary. There was agreement in that new language does lead to new mindsets. "If you want to learn Spanish, think in Spanish."

## Q&A

- The wider problem is a challenge for the policy making community; that the PME institutions generally try to have students wrestle with the problems rather than provide the answer. At NWC we force them to develop a counterargument: argue against yourself. This develops a strategic mindset. ADM Turner's argument was that Vietnam-era officers were so inarticulate to civilians about strategy as to abdicate professional responsibility. Others claimed that the NWC team teaching method, of one civilian and one military moderator, helps bridge this gap in the classroom, as civilian instructors help ensure common language
- It was noted that other departments at NWC introduce a common language, to some extent, before they get to S&P. Also, the presence of inter-agency students is a plus at PME institutions.
- The value of programs such as the Secretary of the Navy Fellows Program that existed in the 1980s and brought in great or future-great scholars was highlighted. The loss of this program in particular has been addressed on several occasions and will be addressed again.
- Assessment tools were discussed briefly. This is a major topic at PME institutions due to increased interest and scrutiny at the regional accreditation institutions, with New England's possibly in the lead.
- The wide variety of graded events was discussed briefly – many different kinds of essays at the different PME institutions, at least. Worth further discussion.