

Chapter 7

Strategic Leadership

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. In this position I am a political soldier and will have to put my training in rapping-out orders and making snap decisions on the back burner, and have to learn the arts of persuasion and guile. I must become an expert in a whole new set of skills.

General of the Army George C. Marshall

7-1. Strategic leaders are the Army's highest-level thinkers, warfighters, and political-military experts. Some work in an institutional setting within the United States; others work in strategic regions around the world. They simultaneously sustain the Army's culture, envision the future, convey that vision to a wide audience, and personally lead change. Strategic leaders look at the environment outside the Army today to understand the context for the institution's future role. They also use their knowledge of the current force to anchor their vision in reality. This chapter outlines strategic leadership for audiences other than the general officers and Senior Executive Service DA civilians who actually lead there. Those who support strategic leaders need to understand the distinct environment in which these leaders work and the special considerations it requires.

7-2. Strategic leadership requires significantly different techniques in both scope and skill from direct and organizational leadership. In an environment of extreme uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, and volatility, strategic leaders think in multiple time domains and operate flexibly to manage change. Moreover, strategic leaders often interact with other leaders over whom they have minimal authority.

7-3. Strategic leaders are not only experts in their own domain—warfighting and leading large military organizations—but also are astute in the departmental and political environments of the nation's decision-making process. They're expected to deal competently with the public sector, the executive branch, and the legislature. The complex national security

environment requires an in-depth knowledge of the political, economic, informational, and military elements of national power as well as the interrelationship among them. In short, strategic leaders not only know themselves and their own organizations but also understand a host of different players, rules, and conditions.

7-4. Because strategic leaders implement the National Military Strategy, they deal with the elements that shape that strategy. The most important of these are Presidential Decision Memorandums, Department of State Policies, the will of the American people, US national security interests, and the collective strategies—theater and functional—of the combatant commanders (CINCs). Strategic leaders operate in intricate networks of competing

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