POPE JOHN PAUL II: INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY AND PARALLELISM TO STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

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This manuscript is an Invited Submission based upon
its uniqueness and interesting perspectives.

ABSTRACT

Strategic management objectively appeals to expertise from every sector of society. For example, a publication sponsored by the Drucker Institute cites the importance of an organizational practice associated with the governance of the Catholic Church. Religious issues here aside, the following study explores the legitimacy of that kind of correlation. It examines strategic management literature during the past decade and identifies several of the traits which most characterize the strategic management process. These traits are then analyzed by comparison to the series of addresses presented by Pope John Paul II to ambassadors and other representatives of the international diplomatic community during 2001. One recalls that there are some 172 diplomatic constituencies accredited to the Vatican. What the study makes apparent is that there is a high degree of parallelism between how the Pope encourages the application of principles and mechanisms relevant to international relations, and how strategic managers regularly advocate their vision for organizational efficiency and development. While the overlap may be surprising to some, its being a clearly demonstrated fact verifies the long-held academic belief that formal theory is capable of significant expansion well beyond the boundaries of its originating context.

INTRODUCTION

The Harvard Management Development Program, a project of the Graduate School of Education, seeks to familiarize university administrators with managerial expertise from diverse organizations. These include the non-profit sector, fund-raising specialists, CEOs of major corporations, religion-based enterprises and governmental agencies and interest groups. A fundamental theory of the curriculum is that strategic management efforts in a given context become vastly more successful when there is willingness to examine the competence exhibited by influential organizations of a sharply contrasting variety. As a participant in MDP-2002, I observed an

application of that theory during a session which discussed "High Performing Teams." To illustrate a distinct organizational approach, the guest presenter from Babson's College of Business referred to baseball teams ("loosely integrated confederations"), football (where "players perform in close proximity") and basketball (with "rapidly moving transitions….highly reciprocal"). From that perspective, we were invited to analyze "the nature….of task-related interaction among unit members" of a hypothetical commercial venture. The realm of sports enabled our discussion about the improvement of coordination within an international pharmaceutical firm (Bolman and Deal, 1997, 87-91).

The theme of this essay emerged in response to encouragement from the MDP directorship, and for which I am profoundly grateful. I had noticed that in one of our recommended readings, The Leader of the Future, there was an unexpected reference (F. Hasselbein et al., ed., 1996, 4). When speaking about how "a higher-order body should not assume responsibilities" which more properly belong to an organization's lower tier, the author, Charles Handy, states that this conviction - perhaps the most important one in strategic management - was directly borrowed from the Catholic Church's concept of subsidiarity. Essentially, the Church shares in the belief "that stealing people's responsibilities is wrong because it ultimately deskills them." Let the world of business be mindful, Handy asserts.

I found it remarkable that a thoroughly secular scholar would be so objectively broadminded that he could take what is arguably the politically incorrect step of appealing to a specific tenet of Catholicism. In support of the accuracy of Dr. Handy, I read with interest that Pope John Paul II once reminded the Ambassador of Mexico that in Mexico, indeed in all countries, "public institutions….should be connected in a way that respects….subsidiarity (May 18, 2001)." Thus, countries might avoid every vestige of intolerance, and thus they might empower individuals, communities and organizations to embrace that role to which they are entitled. Just as Charles Handy could translate ecclesial wisdom into managerial strategy, the Pope foresaw how political, social and commercial institutions could be positively impacted by that same wisdom. Consequently, a question arises. If one was to identify elements of strategic management proposed by the field's preeminent scholars, would they also find parallels with a system espoused by organized religion?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
- INSTITUTIONAL RELIGION QUESTION

The question is as least as substantial as that of devoting attention to the importance of spirituality for the holistic health of commercial enterprises. Strategic management bibliography abounds with explicit deference to the inclusion of spirituality; defining it to cover everything from a reliance upon God and religion to a shunning of God and religion (Bolman and Deal, ibid., 350-352). Preference seems to incline far more toward operational convenience than toward any

rigorous critique of what passes for a presumed safe haven. To put it plainly, whereas spirituality often denotes a refuge category, recourse to the potential contribution of religion, any religion, is hazardous for many academics. Religion ties in to the messy quagmire of discordant emotions, unresolved personal and familial issues and sundry hurts, anger and prejudices. The MDP professorate, like Handy, was able; however, to recognize that by the suspension of the pre-judgmental tendency to disdain a religious voice, simply because it is articulated by religion, a rich and serviceable intellectual legacy could evolve.

Convergence between Charles Handy and the Pope suggested a methodology by which to assess the theme of possible affinity between strategic management's academic deliberation and religion's praxis. To that end, writings by some fifty scholars were evaluated. Seven recurring characteristics of strategic management were thereby identified. And because Pope John Paul's address to the Mexican Ambassador was one of some fifty speeches which he delivers annually to diplomats, a single year offered a reasonable quantitative basis by which to determine comparison. Since that speech was delivered on May 18, 2001, the entirety of the Pope's diplomatic discourse to the international community during 2001 was selected.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: DEFINITIONS AND INITIAL PARALLELISM

Mary K. Coulter defines strategic management according to what may be termed a conventional rationale. She typifies scholars who invariably refer to strategic management as involving "a series of steps in which organizational members analyze the current situation, decide on strategies, put those strategies into action, and….modify/change strategies as needed (1997, 6)." Wheelen and Hunger concur. Their definition adds only that decisions are aimed at the "long-run performance of a corporation." And they emphasize that there must be a "monitoring….of external opportunities and threats in light of a corporation's strengths and weaknesses (2002, 2)."

But there are also authors who perceive strategic management to consist of more than such a rubric of sequential prerequisite steps. M. E. Porter insists that "strategy goes beyond….operating efficiency,….(and) prevalent management techniques….(are) not sufficient (1999, 356)." He prefers to speak of "positioning advantage." This seeks to have "all activities of the business….complement each other," and it means that trade-offs are inevitable. There is similarity to De Kluyver's adoption of Courtney's terms "strategic posture" and "strategic moves." The latter embraces traditional formulation strategies, rather reminiscent of Coulter, Wheelen and Hunger. However, the former refers to a "company's strategic intent." What is it that the company announces by way of its determination to consciously and conscientiously pursue (2000, 40)? Bourgeois et al. also appeal to this aspect of intent. But they hold that "strategies are rarely the product of a good plan or formal planning process." Instead, it is daily activities which force managers to respond to issues with "real time" decisions. And it is these decisions which "reveal patterns that are recognized as coherent strategies (with Duhaime and Stimpert, 1999, 12)."

Pope John Paul II, when receiving the Letters of Credence of Mrs. Hanna Suchocka, Ambassador of Poland (Dec. 3, 2001), indicated familiarity with the importance of process motivated by defined goals. She was welcomed as a person whose service was to be guided by openness; that of being a resident "intermediary between Poland and the Holy See." Her task commenced with a reiteration of "the essential elements of the current situation in (their) homeland." And it was 'decided' that a positive response to the "social and economic transformation" of Poland necessitated a reaffirmation of the fact that Poland, the Church and the world "are inseparably and reciprocally linked, interpenetrated and conditioned." In this, the Pope acknowledged that changed conditions mean new and unprecedented initiatives within the international community, especially assuming the form of collaboration. For example, nations may acquire strength as they enter into the European Union or as they extend the Atlantic Pact. Still, collectively they must admit those weaknesses manifest in "the distressing wars" which persist in the Persian Gulf, the Balkans and in Afghanistan, as well as in tensions besieging the Middle East and in the terrorism visited upon New York. The language and mindset exactly parallel those of Coulter, Wheelen and Hunger.

When Porter refers to the kind of 'intent' that amounts to "strategic posturing," there is, in fact, virtually no difference from the Pope's counsel to an assembly of the diplomatic corps on January 13, 2001. Having reminded delegates of such assorted "distrust, conflicts and vestiges of past crises" as seen in the two Koreas and in East Timor, he bade them to "know that another approach is possible." Corporately and individually, they could intend to construct a "radically different" world; one based upon a will "to know one another, to respect and help one another," in short, to behold in each person a "brother" and sister. And together, diplomats may esteem their age's "greatest conquests of science and technology;" while intending to actively prevent the limitations of "human life (from being) despised in the cruelest ways (No. 5)."

"Real time" strategic decisions, as understood by Bourgeois et al., daily confront diplomatic personnel. With the Ambassador of Finland, the Pope discussed Finland's admission to the European Union. That Union's plan "was not born by chance." Neither is living within such an association. There is a repetitive need for Union members to render decisions relative to maintaining freedom and fundamental human rights and dignity, along with the rejection of social manipulation and the promotion of ecumenical engagement (Dec. 6, 2001, No. 3-4).

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: SOME ESSENTIAL DESCRIPTIVE ELEMENTS

Strategic Management: Presumes Philosophical Reasoning

Makoto Kawada, commenting upon the surge in growth of strategic management accounting, states that underlying philosophical premises and analogies are crucial to comprehending the nexus between bureaucracy and the "division of labor." For example, prior to the Twentieth century the central influence derived from the Newtonian view of atomism. A unified

universe was less emphasized than the separateness of its components. Manufacturing industries followed suit. The 1980s saw a shift in perception, possibly attributable to Einstein's repudiation of time as absolute. Strategic management now "appreciated synthesis more than analysis (1995, 125)." Similarly, Wacker, Taylor and Means (2000, 234-235) invited companies to identify "who you are" by affinity to the self-knowledge philosophies of the Delphic oracle and Sun-tzu's Art of War. Steve Fuller interprets that query as having serious implications for the future of the social sciences, particularly when applied to corporations. The computer revolution, accompanied by an auxiliary debate about artificial intelligence, challenges "what philosophers call ontology, the essential nature of things." If computers truly 'think', then Darwinian-style scholars may be accurate in their doubt that "certain traits….are exclusively the property of a single species," including mankind (2002, 138)."

Philosophical constructs are unequivocally allied with strategic management processes. If, for example, one embraces reductionism, then that "approach reduces….change….to a nice, neat checklist of tasks." Ultimately, that philosophy and its corresponding expression lead to nothing more than skepticism and "a rationale for failure (Duck, 1998, 280-281)." That failure may be preempted where companies recall the American philosopher, John Dewey. For Dewey, the first step with problem solving is to ask what the problem actually is. Modern executives, states R. Sanders, respond by defining a problem as either a "dissatisfaction with administrative performance," or as born of tensions generated by expectations about the future. Sanders notes that the philosopher, William James, cautioned lest problems be defined by managers "according to their own interests (1999, 7-9)." Elsewhere, the philosophy of Seneca has been tied to confidence with regard to organizational leadership (Mische, 2001, 211); just as biology provides the trilobite as a metaphor for the "operating levels....in strategic renewal (Floyd and Wooldridge, 2000, 41)" and game theory/the Prisoners' Dilemma assist with the analysis of strategic interactions (Saloner, Shepard, Podolary, 2001, 405).

Core questions are the logical byproduct of discussion about the philosophical underpinnings of strategic management. Strategic planning has "at the heart of the matter" the need to reply to key questions. Some pertain to the "breadth, scope, and focus of…..business;" others to a determination about "what you will do or will not do," and still others about "whom you will serve in the marketplace." Questions stimulate organizations. For questions culminate in a realistic appraisal of company "competencies, strengths, capabilities, and infrastructure (Bradford, Duncan, Tarcy, 2000, 22)."

Philosophy and its systems are an indispensable aspect of the diplomatic discourse of Pope John Paul II. His every address shows the influence of scholastic philosophy, especially that of Augustine and Aquinas, as well as that of existentialism and phenomenology. And as with the alteration of trends in strategic management, the Vatican's involvement in diplomacy highlights the notions of variation and synthesis; what is pivotal to announcing the global import of international relations themes. For example, the Ambassador of Zambia heard the Pope depict the Church's role

as framed by a philosophy of communitarianism, humanitarianism and reciprocal responsibility. The Church's international activity is "to promote that solidarity which joins peoples in the bond of brotherhood." A Gospel-inspired world view rejects the reductionism disdained by the author, Duck. That world view, kindred to William James, decries any narrowly enumerated self-interest. Instead, the "Church will always be a willing partner in….making….solidarity a reality in the worldwide family of man (May 18, 2001, para.5-6)."

Reminiscent of Dewey and R. Sanders, the Pope explored the contemporary prevalence of conflict. He informed the Ambassador of Bangladesh that the problem of conflict "is not a matter of (nations) dispensing favors (to those requiring aid) but of recognizing the basic human right to a just share of resources." The achievement of peace presumes a philosophy of egalitarian justice (Dec. 6, 2001, para.3-4). Speaking to the Ambassador of Eritrea, the Pope stated that "a higher philosophy of progress is urgently needed." Such philosophy must not be restricted to materialism. Rather, it must foster "that true freedom for which all people have a deep and unfailing longing," and it must reinforce claims "to inalienable….rights and dignity (December 6, 2001, para. 4)." That philosophy's steady emphasis must be upon "the common good, with respect for one another." And it must constantly elect to support each country's legitimate civil laws (to Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Sept. 17, 2001, No. 3b).

The diplomacy of Pope John Paul II is also characterized by a philosophy of history. History is neither random nor governed by chance. Providential design trumps accidental event. In his address to the Ambassador of Mongolia, the Pope summarized nearly eight centuries of relations between the Mongolian state and the Holy See. That "long journey" was marked, not by a haphazard meandering through time, but by continuity, the constancy of "age-old connections (May 18, 2001, No. 2)."

The Pope has not hesitated to buttress his philosophical assertions with recourse to varied disciplines. For example, in remarks to the Ambassador of Austria, he referred to a sociological position that society should reflect an inherent diversity and pluralism. He appealed to botany for a metaphor. "A garden is in bloom when many flowers blossom together." Further, on the same occasion, when wanting to stress that his philosophical outlook on the family contains the element of socialization, the Pope drew upon an image from educational theory. "The family….is a school of social charity in miniature." He is in conformity with strategic management theorists. And, like them, he is attuned to the link between philosophical comprehension and probing questions directly derived from the same. Again, also to the Austrian Ambassador, the Pope spoke about obligations incumbent upon the international community. Members cannot be indifferent, for instance, to the plight of refugees, displaced persons, the disabled and the needy. Their predicament invites a rational reflection and collective introspection, a "listening to deeper, inner questions (Feb. 13, 2001, No. 6-7)."

Strategic Management: From Models to Methodology

George F. Monahan's research acquaints readers with the importance of 'models' in organizational thinking. A model is said to concretize a format by which "to solve managerial problems." Typologies include iconic (e.g. model airplanes), analog (e.g. graphs) and symbolic (e.g. Greek letters or mathematical formulas). Quoting John D. C. Little's concept of "design calculus," Monahan says that an efficient model should embody the features of: simplicity, robustness ("some predetermined range"), ease of control (not meant to produce just any answer desired), adaptivity (may be updated), completeness (allows for some subjective judgments) and facile communication (2000, 6-7).

Bernard H. Boar states that three primary steps comprise an effective "strategic planning model." These are assessment (a "thorough understanding of the business situation"), strategy (specifying objectives and supportive possibilities) and execution ("a process of….discovery and refinement"). (See Boar, 1994, 4.) Wheelen and Hunger (ibid., 9) designate assessment as environmental scanning; strategy as formulation and execution as implementation, evaluation and control. And they propose sub-models for each constitutive element. For example, the assessment or scanning factor may be accomplished by the well known SWOT analysis. "SWOT is an acronym" for a company's "particular Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats."

Strategic management models are regularly criticized and replaced. Hox and Wilde (2001, 7-12) prefer their Delta Model. They contend that contemporary business experiences transformation at so staggering a rate that previous models have "become either invalid or incomplete." Theirs is a model based upon the Internet and the "emergence of the networked economy." And always, "the driving force in strategy (is) bonding." Delta is depicted through a triangle. At the apex stands "System Lock-In (SLI)" and which includes "complementors" (another firm enhancing one's own product and portfolio). At the left of the base is "Total Customer Solutions" (TCS "strategy is love with our customers," not "war with our competitors."). To the right is "Best Product (BP)" positioning (despite "obsessive concern" with rivals).

Pope John Paul II's Address to the New Ambassador of Chile reflects the attributes of strategic management models conveyed by Boar, Wheelen and Hunger. The Pope advocated an 'assessment' of the ethical relativism, consumerism, poverty and "enormous inequalities" which must be confronted in order "to recover from the wounds that sap the strength of Chile's social growth." 'Strategy' means a distinct "effort to improve the quality of life and standard of living of Chileans." That 'objective' entails the 'supportiveness' of the Church and its promise of "loyal collaboration." And 'execution' includes the "recent deliberation of (Chile's) Supreme government and….legislative authority." The Pope urged that these deliberations continue to 'refine' and 'evaluate' key life issues; the death penalty, "indispensable respect for the life of every human being," "grounding in basic ethics," the ideals of Chilean national independence and Chile's involvement with international forums and organizations. 'Implementation' and 'control' are visible in Chile's latest peace accord

with Argentina, and in a 1999 agreement with Peru, "the Act for implementing the clauses of the Treaty of Lima of 1929 (June 18, 2001, No. 3-4)."

What of SWOT analysis? Is this model suggested in papal diplomacy? Yes. The Pope delineated 'strengths' in his message to the Ambassador of Mali. For example, Mali has demonstrated zeal for "the reduction of the proliferation of small weapons;" seen in its hosting a November 2000 meeting of the Organization for African Unity. And Mali has shown decisive strength by being "resolutely engaged in the process of building a democratic society." Weaknesses? Selfishness must still be fought. Economic and social imbalances must still be corrected, and trust is still absent in many sectors. Opportunities? Mali faces prospects for furthering "integral education;" of enabling Christian-Muslim dialogue; of resisting religious discrimination; of enlarging programs in health care and social assistance and in cooperating with the Pope's recommendation that "rich countries (help) the poorest ones by….setting up the appropriate structures for development and the means of formation." Threats? In summary, "there is no true peace without fairness, truth, justice and solidarity." And the major threat is the "failure (which) awaits every plan which would separate two indivisible and interdependent rights: the right to peace and the right to an integral development born of solidarity (Dec. 6, 2001, No. 2-4)." SWOT.

As with the Delta model substituted by Hox and Wilde, conventional models are constantly in need of revision. Methodologies are an answer to varied circumstances. "A constructive relationship," the Pope told the Ambassador of Turkey, demands "a healing of memories," the option to set aside "wounds of past grievances." An 'SLI' equivalent links the 'complementors' of those nations and cultures for which Turkey is an "important bridge….between East and West." The 'TCS' 'love of customers' parallels where Turkey refuses to consider its own minorities as 'competitors', and comes to "see no contradiction of any kind in being Catholic and Turkish." And 'Best Product'? For Turkey, it will flow from attitudes which run counter to when "the transcendent dimension vanishes from public life (Dec. 7, 2001, para. 3, 5-6, 9)."

On May 30, 2001, the Pope spoke with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the occasion of welcoming a symposium, "Children in Armed Conflicts." That address amounted to a synopsis of the totality of the Pope's diplomatic discourse. Though brief, the message embodied features noted by Little and Monahan. These include: simplicity (the symposium theme of "the sad plight of countless children who are victims of war"), robustness (agenda to instill "greater awareness" of those children's' problems), ease of control ("tribulations of so many….compel us to spare no effort to bring such conflicts….to an end"), adaptivity (the ongoing need to provide means "to ensure that children everywhere….(grow) up in peace and happiness"), completeness (the challenges face not only organizations and the international community, but also individuals) and ease of communication (such projects as this symposium being among normal UN resources).

Strategic Management: Issues - Their Identification, Evolution and Redefinition

The preceding section's analysis of models implies that models are irrelevant minus issues. Issues sustain a model's process. According to Frederick Betz, it is erroneous to conclude that the logic of strategic planning means spelling out the precise means and ends of known action. "Issues should be judged with reference to the real logic of strategic exploration;" refining perception, creating commitments and preparing for action (2001, 39).   And it is issues, when they are sufficiently contentious or crucial, which prompt companies to devise agreements.

Agreements have certain traits. Besides the obvious recital of benefits and compromise, issues for consensus also evoke "maximum conditions that have to be met….or maximums that can't be exceeded, or both." Clarity is; of course, critical. Another dimension of issue-related agreement pertains to "how the world works."   Stevenson and Cruikshank (1998, 149-154) argue that agreements do not require unanimity; they require a determination to blend an agreement into a party's particular context. For example, an enterprise may negotiate with its union to reduce the hours of available labor in several of its branches. The ostensible reason is due to economic hardship owing to a recession. At the negotiation table union and management agree. But their signatures upon a contractual document do not signal any convergence of their positions. Rather, management's stance indicates that the corporation is able to survive with an acceptable profit margin despite a temporary decline. The union's reasoning is that diminished employment is far better than no employment. The company endures with its agenda only partially scathed, so does the union. Agreement has a similar consequence for both parties, but not a similar meaning. Issues are interpreted and applied differently throughout their respective world.

Betz' regard for strategy's 'real logic' is paralleled in Pope John Paul's address to the Ambassador of Rwanda. The refining of perceptions is seen in the Pope's approval of Rwanda's "continuing efforts to restore national unity on the basis of a new Constitution." He endorses those social programs which are increasingly "aimed at restoring the rule of law, providing assistance to the surviving victims of the genocide and reintegrating the refugees." Creating commitments is also visible when the Pope explicitly calls for "the commitment of all Rwandans to social, political and moral renewal." To that end, he specifies the "hope that….Rwanda….will have the support of the international community." The desire is for expanded commitment, internally and externally. Preparation for action. For Rwanda, "national reconstruction" is said to be a "present work." The accent is upon the present tense in time and upon action during the present. Rwandans face "an important opportunity." They may not linger. Issues such as "the administration of justice" are in urgent need of "witness to the….greater power of good (Dec. 6, 2001, para. 2-3)."

And of agreements? On November 29, 1984, a Treaty of Peace and Friendship was concluded between Argentina and Chile. That treaty was the product of the Pope's intervention as mediator. Both nations were "on the brink of war as a result of the controversy that had come to a head in the Beagle Channel region." Here was an instance of diplomacy, somewhat reminiscent of

what the UN Charter anticipated in its famous Article 2, section 3 (the settlement of "international disputes by peaceful means"). When Argentina's President heard the Pope refer to the episode, he doubtless remembered how the 'world' of Argentinean society found in this Agreement a safeguard of interests (e.g. military, economic), possibly overlapping in some respects with those of Chile, but remaining particular to his own country and its government (April 5, 2001, No. 4-6).

When commenting upon the worth of information technology for business management, Christopher Sauer lists eight "Principles of the Incrementalist Approach (2000, 116-123)." The first item reads, "Make organizational change one step at a time." The last states, "Be opportunistic - look for opportunities after each step." The two capture the spirit of the series. Incrementalism ascribes merit to the undertaking of issues as "a sequence of small steps." These are said to herald a "combination of prudence and the evidence of successful practice." The incrementalist idea is exhibited in remarks made by the Pope during his very diplomatic "courtesy visit" to the President of Kazakhstan. The Pope asserted "that every nation has the right of its sovereignty….full expression as a political subject." Pope John Paul did not envisage an instantaneous realization of said expression. Instead, he acknowledged that "this sovereignty be long lasting, fruitful, ever fuller, embracing all the sectors of national life (Sept. 23, 2001, para. 3-4)." Definitely mindful of incrementalism. And it is accompanied by an opportunistic reminder. The President was told that Catholics in his country "are a restricted group, a minority….but (who) can and will contribute - to the best of their ability" to their nation's welfare and destiny. The message is candid and strategically poised. Cease the restrictions and a positive aftermath will certainly ensue.

Strategic management expertise frequently advises companies to permit "the management process to possess several interconnected top-level and base-level decision processes (Schneeweiss, 1999, 323)." In other words, issues are not the prerogative of any single organizational realm. The resolution of any problematic necessitates a multiplicity of input. To avoid a "drift off plan," monitoring devices must be "built into the planning stage (Burton, 1999, 14)." And there must be constant communication (Crainer, 1999, 210). Pope John Paul appears to concur. To the first Ambassador of the Republic of Georgia he described a concern for the "integral development of individuals and nations." No population constituency can be overlooked or discounted if there is ever to be a "strengthening (of) democratic principles." The protection of these principles seeks a vigilance against the residual import of the flawed ideologies of Communism, Fascism and unbridled materialism. The Pope renewed a pledge that the Church extend itself from the onset to be vigilant with Georgia, as with all nations, lest "freedom is eroded." In conclusion, the Pope requested that the channels of communication between Georgia's diplomatic mission and "the various offices of the Roman Curia" be in habitual contact (Dec. 6, 2001, para. 1, 3-4, 7).

Strategic Management: Compatibility with Change

Prior discussion indicated that strategic management is synonymous with dynamics of change. But this is not to say that CEOs invite and solicit that change. For example, living in Michigan I have no choice but to accept the transition from autumn to winter. Change is imposed upon me and I adjust. Nine winters after initial arrival and I still detest snow. The change has produced no discernible advantage. Change may just as well never happen. Bernard Boar (ibid., 2) declares that "most information technologists have never understood….that an art is practiced for the benefit of those for whom its services are intended, not for the benefit of the practitioner." Change, for Boar, means simply that an "organization must adapt to accommodate" its customers. Therefore, strategic managers do not resent change; they do not passively acquiesce to change. They select "what to change to." This compares precisely with a study of Fortune 500 companies conducted by Block and Boal. Their view is that several conclusions pertinent to change invariably emerge. For instance, (a) the relationship between resources is as "important in the determining of a competence" as are the resources themselves. (b) There is also the elevated degree of similarity in "the configuration associated with higher orientation to change and high performance." (c) And there is often the indication that "how resources are bundled" may exert difference "by competence level and/or performance level (1996, 166-167)."

Like these strategic management experts, Pope John Paul explored both the desirability of receptivity to change and change's rapport with basic resources. Addressing the Ambassador of Gambia, the Pope noted "the acute need for radical personal and social renewal." Pursuing that end sees a "road ahead (which) remains long and difficult. Bringing about the necessary changes will require great effort." But change is no vague abstraction. Change must lead to the obliteration of those very specific, numerous and grave "causes which give rise to and aggravate the many situations of injustice present in our world (May 18, 2001, para. 5)."

The Ambassador of Ireland and the Pope spoke about "rapid social and economic change" as having yielded many positive developments for Ireland. However, there is still "need to discuss these trends and changes" since they enable the blend of internal progress and national values. And the resources of Ireland are "more than the sum of its possessions and powers." It is allowance for the interplay of resources which bequeaths "a complete picture of the human person….(in) all the dimensions of (their) being." The successful realization of that 'picture' (high performance) obligates Ireland, especially Northern Ireland, to emphatically and persistently "renounce the use of arms and embrace the path of dialogue and peace (high orientation to change) (See Address, Sept. 7, 2001, para. 4, 9.)

Resources may be concentrated or bundled in such a way that a country might maximize its potential to coordinate national life "and constructive international relations." Those resources may include the geographic factor of border location; the locus of "an original, powerful culture forged

in the Christian faith," even the collective recall of having "been occupied or annexed" repeatedly (to the Ambassador of Armenia, Sept. 15, 2001, No. 3).

A survey of CEOs revealed that change is regularly deferred or denied for several reasons. The chief reason consists of a "failure to see the need." A "dislike for making tough decisions" ranks close behind (Fogg, 1999, 28-29). Executives may also be fooled into deducing that change must be dramatic. No. Invaluable change can be wrought by "just subtle shifts in thinking….tiny modifications (Kelly, 2001, XIV)." Meanwhile, because it is critical that change be directed by vision, the allure of distractions must be acknowledged. Vision must therefore be conveyed "with a breathtaking boldness." Still, vision is not to be equated with drama. And, as Al Coke states, "strategic goals must be a stretch, otherwise they defy the definition of strategic (2002, 116-119)."

The Pope informed the Ambassador of Estonia that in his country "the rights of individuals must be recognized and protected." Indecisiveness and procrastination are no longer appropriate. Political authority should assume the 'tough' stance of endeavoring "to provide whatever protection is needed." But tensions will not be resolved upon command. Quality change stems from a calm and steady negotiation. The establishment of "firm and fair democratic structures" follows a continuum, a step-by-step unfolding of Estonia's enriched tomorrow. Yet, Estonia cannot be "constrained by the desperate struggle to survive." She must resolutely proclaim her rights, promote her families and energetically "view the world in broader terms (May 18, 2001, para. 3, 6-7)."

Strategic Management: Quest for a New Paradigm

When a call for change is initiated throughout the strata of an organization, any previous strategic model is often rendered obsolete. Pervasive change presupposes at least an implicit advance to a new paradigm. The more explicit that the stages in such a transition become, the more the necessity to objectify the successor paradigm. It is permissible in such a process to seemingly infringe upon management's hegemony. "All relevant actors have to develop their interpretations, political positions, and interests in order to assist in transforming….the organization." Essentially, the antidote to "ambivalence towards renewal….combines an experimental approach that allows for trying out and reflecting upon a diversity of practices (Clausen and Olsen, 2000, 72)." However, while exactitude has its definite importance, precision must now concede to perspective. Perspective remains the preferred ground for strategic and practical decisions (Tyson, 1997, 201). The overall system thus inclines toward innovation. It is a new paradigm in which "policy instruments" should be articulated "in a global coherent framework." It is a new paradigm in which "peers and clients' views" are the twin polarities for monitoring. And it is a new paradigm in which evaluative results evoke the continual reframing of policy aims and administrative attitudes (Nauwelaers and Wintjes, 2002, 213).

The Knights and Dames of the Military Order of Malta have a lengthy history of involvement with the Church's charitable apostolate. On January 12, 2001, the Pope received the Letters of

Credence of the Order's Ambassador, A. L. Bartoli. On that occasion mention was made of the longstanding model which depicts the Order's dedication to the world's destitute (obsequium pauperum) and its fidelity to cooperation in fulfilling the Church's Gospel mandate (tuitio fidei). It is not an organizational model which is eligible for disqualification. But it does qualify for renewal and for paradigmatic diversity. The Pope bade that the Order's "constitutive Charter" respond to "a new creativity in charity, not only by ensuring that help is effective but also by 'getting close' to those who suffer, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating handout but as a sharing between brothers and sisters (No. 2b-c, 3a)." There is urge toward a 'new paradigm' by which to reinvigorate the Order's traditional values of mercy.

Perspective is critical to the Order's witness. The Pope noted how society's wealthy segment is still further endowed owing to the consequences of "impersonal mechanisms of great economic and technological changes." The Order must "continue to strive for a humanization and sharing of….resources…intended in equal measure for everyone (para. 3b)." The perspective is inherently and coherently global. And, as described by strategic management expertise, the realization of that perspective is not confined to the Order's executives. The Pope insisted that there be recognition of the "authentic service" of the Order's "many volunteers and workers (para. 1c)." It is these "hospitallers, men and women of faith," who exemplify how the Order proclaims that it is "generous and fearless in the defense of the causes and rights of the poor (para. 3b)."

S. Jonsson argues that a paradigmatic shift presumes reliance upon trust. Quest is not always invoked by strategic managers, possibly because "trusting a person….exposes oneself to risk." But it is "the extension of trust over time (which) gives….a group the energy to perform coordinated action without hierarchical control." Trust requires that organizational leanings toward disdain for the "individual circumstances or people involved" must be reversed. For it is upon trust that "lateral responsibility is built (in Pearson, 1999, 354)." And it is trust which augments a company's perceptions about reality. Richard A. D'Aveni states that "strategic supremacy is….about creating a social reality." That social reality is shared, not only by company members, but "among competitors within a competitive space." By influencing the perceptions of rivals, firms may "negotiate the borders of their spheres (2001, 10)." Yet, if a firm convinces a rival that it will adopt a particular stance, this amounts to a commitment in which the firm 'ties' its own hands. Caution must be exercised so that commitment not render damage to flexibility (Saloner et al., ibid., 421).

"The corrosive effects of distrust and pride" were mentioned by Pope John Paul in remarks to the Ambassador of Nepal. Trust, as the opposite of that distrust, is possible. But it is possible "only to the extent that humanity as a whole deserves its….calling to be one family." And it is possible only when "human rights" are understood to be "inscribed in the very nature of the person (where they) reflect the objective and inviolable demands of a universal moral law." This forms a trust which is not dependent upon institutional and political hierarchy. For human rights "precede laws and agreements, while determining their value and correctness." Comparable to Jonsson, the Pope asserted that when the rights of the person are "safeguarded….the social fabric (is) truly

strengthened, the priorities of individuals and nations (are) properly ordered, and the quality of international relations (is) improved." Perceptions, according to the Pope, can be altered and they can be reversed. The Nepalese are strongly aware of the world's "unspeakable suffering." And they, like many, may be tempted to despair. However, the cause of peace is able to neutralize contrary and competitive challenges. That cause may shape reality and allow "members of the human race (to) occupy their rightful place (May 18, 2001, para. 3-5)." As for a commitment so entrenched that it retaliates against flexibility, this may be what the Pope had in mind when addressing the Ambassador of Iraq. The Pope referred to "the embargo in your country (which) continues to claim victims." Any 'fixed' commitment to uphold that embargo means "that innocent people….pay consequences….being felt by those….weakest and most vulnerable (April 28, 2001, para. 1)."

Strategic Management: Collective Learning Made Possible

Jamison and Rohrocher (2001, 5) maintain that strategic management must preserve a concern for sustainable development. And that concern must take into account, not only value conflicts, but the effect of various "kinds of learning processes." These authors maintain that organizations, like the individuals who compose them, are capable of formal learning. Organizations acquire fresh insight, comprehension and practical ingenuity. Strategic managers are advised to be cognizant that their role includes the facilitation of learning-centered policies and endeavors. Among the learning gains identified from research of alliance and partnering, is that timing is critical for conceptualization. There are, for example, significant differences in whether an organization learns that "alliances….are tools or means to an end….(or) as ends in themselves." The research of Bierly and Kessler (1999, 318-319) suggests that "what you are doing;" the function learned in context, is more important for organizational well being "than who you are per se when considering partnership in the technology field." These authors contend that organizational learning validates the applicability of "environmental contingency theory." This theory "argues that an organization should seek to achieve a fit between its strategy and its task and institutional environment." It is this environment which teaches about evolving demands and constraints, and according to which firms increase their learning curve in terms of strategic compatibility.

In his remarks to Mrs. S. Chtioui, Ambassador of Tunisia, Pope John Paul spoke of Tunisia's "drive to building a supportive and fraternal nation." But should ignorance ever prevail, "violence and instability" will become the inevitable consequences. Tunisia; however, is a society equipped to learn, especially due to its "attachment to freedom of conscience" and its "generous tradition of hospitality." The preservation of that learning component; one which guarantees Tunisia's progressive future, means that Tunisia must expend "considerable effort….to give all…people access to knowledge (May 18, 2001, No. 2, 3b)."

The Pope directly mentioned "environment" when speaking to the Ambassador of Peru. Almost as if referring to Bierly and Kessler's "environmental contingency theory," the Pope saluted

Peruvians for legally recognizing what they have 'learned' throughout the centuries about the presence of the Church in their midst. The Constitution's self-improvement strategy for Peruvian society avows in Article 50 "that the Church has played an important role in the historical, cultural and moral formation of Peru (Feb. 16, No. 2a-3a)." Similarly, the 'timing' of Iran's participation in colloquia jointly sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Organization of Islamic Culture and Communications, signifies that, for Iran, it now "becomes less likely for cultural differences to be a source of misunderstanding….and the cause of conflicts and wars (to the Ambassador of Iran, Jan. 22, 2001, para. 4, 6)."

Stewart Brand, commenting upon vital lessons learned by strategic management, numbers among them the realization that organizational continuity, along with peace and prosperity, is indispensable for "environmental health (1999, 1:36)." Therefore, "strategic thinking" is a "structure of meaning," an expression of the continuity "of social cognitive action." What becomes implemented then "is the possible strategy….not the ideal one." Organizational learning is contained in "the desire to close the gap between the two (M. A. Hitt et al., 1998, 21, 24)." As the future unravels, core values will naturally alter. Taylor, Wacker and Means (1997, 73) believe that the next generation, whom they call "Millennialists", will be more attuned to "the assumption of personal responsibility" than its predecessor, Generation X. Millennial learning will probably yield an ethic which accents both possibility ("going to the edges and managing from there") and connectivity ("access to everything"). These twin points are evident in Kenneth J. Cook's attempt to train strategic managers in the formulation of mission statements. The mission statement's very purpose is to "help" parties (e.g. executives, employees, suppliers, customers) "to understand" the company's goals and focus (1995, 5-7). Strategic management is a stimulant for organizational learning.

The "structure of meaning" notion, visible in strategic management thought, is also conspicuous in Pope John Paul's address to the Ambassador of Guinea. While there is some degree of 'continuity' in "international cooperation," the "new problems posed by globalization" necessitate that nations "rethink" that cooperation. Because Guinea "has been confronted by serious problems of security," ideal strategy must certainly concede to possible strategy. What is possible, and "urgently necessary," is that "authentic peace be rapidly established in the region so that (displaced) peoples may at last return to their land and live there safely (May 18, 2001, No. 2, 3c)."

Strategic-style 'possibility' and 'connectivity' are discernible in remarks directed by the Pope to the Ambassador of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka, the Pope said, has recently known tragic "suffering and terrible loss of life." On behalf of ensuing generations, the 'possibility' is that "efforts (be) made to find…(an) equitable solution to the underlying causes." As the country consents "to engage in patient and persevering negotiating," what may transpire is a genuine 'connectivity', in as much as all "parties involved" may be inspired "to abandon the ways of violence (May 18, 2001, para. 4)."

By analogy to an organization's mission statement, a nation may also adopt a distinct, publicized mission-statement equivalent, its national agenda. Such is the case of South Africa.

Personal responsibility and understanding, precisely as discussed by Taylor et al. and Cook, are reflected in the Pope's plea "that the truth about the past should be known and responsibly laid where it is due." No South African stands immune from accountability. Further, citizens are to 'understand' "that the delicate process of building a just and harmonious multiracial society should go forward." And it is a process which can go forward. (See May 18, 2001, para. 3.)

Strategic Management: Action as Leadership and the Action of Leadership

Strategic management portrays leadership, not in any overly directive sense, but as primarily unitive. Company leaders are reasonably expected to determine what constitutes professional management and to institutionalize those practices most likely to bring it to fruition. They are to unify the organization's resources and clientele, processes and personnel.

What elements characterize leadership as favored by strategic managers? Stephen Haines includes four such elements, based upon research conducted in some 580 international companies. According to Haines (2000, 17-27):

(a)	Leadership motivates organizational loyalty on behalf of maintaining the overall agenda of corporate plans.
(b)	Leadership balances operational adjustability with "strategic consistency.
(c)	Leadership continually broadens and deepens the "range and depth of management practices.
(d)	Leadership is "willing to face up to the harsh realities of today's revolutionary" fluctuations.

To these may be added:

(e)	Leadership diligently preserves "the creation of shareholder value;" that is, the augmented sharing of assets, activities, benefits, knowledge, skills and image. In the words of Jenster and Hussey, leadership enhances the quality of foundations. And "foundations matter (2001, 271)."
(f)	Leadership cultivates the awareness that in trying to avoid one bias we may inadvertently cater to another. Indeed, there are instances when companies are guided to switch thinking "when there is no need to do so (Makridakis, Wheelwright, Hyndman, 1998, 496)."
(g)	Leadership distinguishes itself from "market share." That is to say that "the company with value leadership is the one whose ideology - or value proposition - holds the most sway with the hearts and minds of customers (D'Aveni, ibid., 38)."

Does the diplomacy of Pope John Paul II allow provision for leadership? And does that leadership compare with what has been shown by strategic management scholarship? To both

questions, the answer is in the affirmative. For example, the Pope twice refers to leadership in his address to the Ambassador of Brazil on April 7, 2001. It is said that "Brazil's leadership in the concert of Latin American nations" definitely motivates loyalty in an overall agenda which consists of "initiatives for promoting peace;" initiatives which have already "exercised a notable influence on the consolidation of democracy (No. 2b)." Brazilian leadership likewise reflects a strategic consistency in as much as the country's "priorities remain." Those priorities are mindful of such social aberrations as: "the drug trade, corruption at every (institutional) level, inequality among social groups and the irrational destruction of the environment (No. 2c, 5c)." And, similarly, Brazil's is comparable to an "influence" upon the broadening of the range of management practices, since the nation "reflect(s) a leadership that is….linked to (those) principles of justice and freedom that continually witness to….human dignity (No. 2b)." Those principles and that dignity are anything but inert. There is a 'range' that is ever in movement.

As for leadership able to confront revolutionary fluctuations, this might well apply to participants in the G8 Summit. The Pope sent a message to these diplomatic delegates, referring to them "as leaders of the eight most developed nations in the world." But their deliberations were not presumed to be a casual, theoretical exercise. Theirs would be "days of intense work." And representatives would have to show concern for all nations, without being "overwhelmed by the weight of the various issues involved," and with a willingness to struggle on behalf of "concrete solutions to the problems" escalating before them. (See Message, July 19, 2001, para. 1)."

The concept of shareholder value is conveyed in Pope John Paul's words to the Ambassador of Mauritius. Mauritius' 'shareholders' are its "diversity of ….cultures, beliefs, races and languages." Together, their pluralism can realistically "prefigure an international community which (is) a home for all peoples (Dec. 6, 2001, para. 2)."

In his address to the Ambassador of Bulgaria, one sees the Pope's counsel that bias be labeled. Bulgaria's is an "original culture." And while that culture admits past wrongs in its "path of truth;" making "amends for the …harm" denotes Bulgaria's "path of justice." Honesty and humility must replace bias and its distortion (Dec. 21, 2001, No. 3a).

When Pope John Paul reflected with the Ambassador of Lesotho upon how "many countries are striving to consolidate democracy at every level of public life," he embodied the ethos of value leadership. Lesotho's leadership endorses the aspirations of those within its boundaries and beyond, aspirations "to overcome resistance to the rule of law," aspirations to "touch people's (most profound) moral sense," and aspirations to "bolster security and foster economic growth" and prosperity (Dec. 6, 2001, para. 6-7).

CONCLUSION

Strategic management inquiry is frequently regarded as the almost exclusive prerogative of the business milieu. While commercial interests are strongly in evidence, this study proves that the

company setting is not the sole setting. Strategic management theory and techniques are equally applicable to the political arena. This is especially true where commerce and politics intersect. Mahon, Bigelow and Fahey (2001, 165-167) note that political interest groups are often either among the principal stakeholders or antagonists of corporations. Shell; for example, has come to realize that the intervention of Greenpeace can thwart the "best-laid plans" to erect "an oil platform in the deepest reaches of the North Sea." It is also known that the European Union has successfully curtailed the expansion of Coca-Cola, and that protectionist legislation has shielded the Japanese auto industry from foreign encroachment. For strategic managers, "becoming adept at political strategy is no longer a luxury: It is a survival skill." And it is especially important as companies become alert to the rise of environmental or biopolitics, and where the distinction is more and more blurred between public welfare and private values (Maynard and Mehrtens, 1993, 142-143).

The Best of Long Range Planning series, notably the volume entitled, Pergamon, (J. M. Bryson, ed., 1999), applies strategic management content to governments and to both public and non-profit organizations. The authors assert that strategic management may definitely be tailored to the purpose of these enterprises. Naturally, at times the interaction will resemble either strategic planning or comprehensive planning. But this usage of strategic management per se remains pertinent, especially because these governmental and other groups are becoming more and more "entrepreneurial and progressive in order….to fulfill their public mandates (idem, X-XII)." Indeed, Guisinger and Dicken (1994, 227) note "that states take on some of the characteristics of firms as they strive to develop strategies to create competitive advantage." The reverse is also true; organizations such as companies imitate governments to the extent that they comply with the rules and regulations by which these organizations are obligated (J..S. Harrison, 2002, 24-25). And then there is the hybrid situation where governments increasingly contract out for "services, but the state (is) held responsible for their quality (McRae, 1995, 193)." Peterson and Shackleton perceptively add that management deficit will probably occur; for example, in the European Union, unless its governance soon accommodates commerce's strategic management policies, principles and praxis (2002, 354).

Given that the general political domain validly incorporates strategic management's insights, then the next step, proving parallelism with Pope John Paul's diplomatic discourse, becomes accurate. In his role as the head of a sovereign state, Vatican City, the Pope is not only a religious authority, but behaves as do his secular counterparts. Diplomatic contact is a facet of his ordinary duties. Hence, it is fitting for the Pope to express how "the somber days of Hiroshima and Nagasaki….continue to haunt" the whole world; begging from it a "deep and active concern for the peace of Japanese society (to the Ambassador of Japan, Oct. 29, 2001, No. 2a)." It is equally fitting for him to strategically request that North East Africa's "different protagonists...extend….priority to negotiation" over violence (to the Ambassador of Djibouti, Dec. 6, 2001, No. 2b). Moreover, it is also fitting for the Pope to denounce strict utilitarianism as a dehumanization (to the Ambassador of the United States, Sept. 13, 2001, para. 5), and to confirm international law's conviction that

"private property….has a social function….the common purpose of goods (to the Secretary-General of the UN, June 25, 2001, para. 11)." The strategically-minded diplomacy of Pope John Paul II petitions the international community to be responsive, renewed and rededicated in the practicalities of its moral responsibility.

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Pope John Paul II: Diplomatic Discourse

All texts cited in this essay are available through the Vatican web site: www.vatican.va. See Pope John Paul II and the section for 'speeches'. These are submitted according to year and month. The following are listed in the order in which they appear in this essay.

They are 'Addresses' for 2001 as given to the:

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