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LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENT MODEL – COMPETENT, CONFIDENT AND AGILE

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Abstract: “Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership.”

Colin Powell

Key Words

Adapt: 1. to make suitable to the requirements or conditions; adjust or modify fittingly. 2. To adjust one’s self to different conditions or environments. To adapt easily to all circumstances (Random House Dictionary 2011).

Leadership: The process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization (*ADP 6-22, Army leadership Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 10 September*).

Mission Command: The exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of full spectrum operations. (*ADP 6-0, Mission command, Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 17 May 2012*)

Mission Orders: A technique for developing orders that emphasizes to subordinates the results to be attained, not how they are to achieve them. It provides maximum freedom of action in determining how to best accomplish assigned missions (*ADP 6-0, Mission command, Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 17 May 2012*).

Operational Adaptability: The ability to shape conditions and respond effectively to a changing operational environment with appropriate, flexible, and timely actions (*FM 3-0, Operations, 27 February 2008*).

1. Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century has been defined as the era of persistent conflict. The Operational Environment¹ the Army is likely to operate in will be affected by globalization, technological improvements, migration and demographical changes, urbanization, scarcity of resources, the physical environment, the threat of proliferation of WMDs and instable political entities.² The post-modern battlefield can be characterized as a war amongst the people, and asserts that this will significantly affect how force is being applied in the 21st century.

The future application of force is likely to take on six characteristics that differentiate the post-modern operational environment from that of the Cold War era. First, the ends for which force is being applied have changed. The military end state no longer constitutes a point where the overall political ambition has been reached; rather it is more likely to be

¹ Operational Environment is defined as: A composite of the conditions, circumstances and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander. U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), xvi.

² U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 1-1.

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defined as the conditions that need to exist in the operational environment, in which an outcome might be discussed and decided. Second, the war will be amongst the people and not on an isolated and sterile battlefield. Third, the conflicts will likely be protracted or even timeless. Fourth, the preservation of the force will be more important than achieving hard objectives. Fifth, the technological and organizational inventions of the industrial war will be brought into play in new and previously unimagined ways, rather than in their traditional application. Last, most belligerents in the conflicts of the 21st century will be non-state actors.³

2. A lead in

In this increasingly complex environment, the Army must train soldiers and units, and deploy them across the globe to execute Full Spectrum Operations.⁴ The fight amongst the people is the squad and platoon leaders' war. How these are trained and empowered will affect the strategic outcome of the application of force to a larger extent than in a conventional war.⁵ With all of the above in mind, the leadership challenges of the commanders appear increasingly complex and worthy of a thorough study.

And this is not about the broad concept of leadership, which can be defined as —the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization;⁶ instead, it is about direct leadership at the lower level in the Army.

Direct leadership is the level of leadership where the leader is close enough to affect the subordinates through one-on-one communication. Traditionally it is assessed that the highest level in the Army where direct leadership is applied is in the company. This is, of course, an imprecise statement, as the Chief of Staff in a Division staff exercises direct leadership on his staff members, or at least on his closest subordinates. The company, however, is the last level where the officer leads the unit through direct personal relations with the individual soldier; whereas from battalion command onwards, the officer leads units.

This becomes especially true in the post-modern operational environment of the operations in 2013 that are influenced by the concept of unified land operation with emphasis on Counterinsurgency (COIN) and Stability Operations. COIN operations and the description of COIN campaigns vary dramatically from the paradigm of the conventional and linear battles.

As the Army doctrine on operations, ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, and the ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership* doctrine describe concepts and procedures that depend on each other, the execution of operations might be alternated if the leadership that is applied differs severely from what doctrine prescribes.

One of the issues that must be addressed when analyzing the Army Leadership doctrine and its application is the hierarchy of doctrines. In the U.S. Army several doctrines address leadership and command. In viewing questions of command through the lenses of some of these other doctrines, it becomes evident that trends of leadership and command stem from more sources than only ADP 6-22.

³ Rupert Smith, *Utility of Force: The art of War in the Modern World*, New York: Random House Inc, 2008, 272-307.

⁴ Full Spectrum Operations is the Army's operational concept and the core of the Army Operations doctrine. It is defined as a combination of offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations simultaneously, as a part of an interdependent joint force to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, accepting prudent risk to create opportunities to achieve decisive results. FM 3-0, 3-1.

⁵ David Kilcullen, —Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-level Counterinsurgency, *Small Wars Journal* (2006): 3-4.

⁶ ADP 6-22, C1 Change No. 1 Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 10 September 2012, 1

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In the doctrine of Unified land operations, which was published in 2011 the leadership views of ADP 6-22 are reflected in the chapter on the Foundations of unified land operations as well as in Operations structure. Direct leadership at the lower grade level, however, is distinguished from leadership in general as it entails command authority. Command is exercised by commanders in the Armed Forces over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. It is lawfully vested in the respective command authority and it includes aspects like leadership, authority, responsibility and accountability.

A leadership function that holds primacy in ADP 3-0, Unified land operations, ADP 5-0⁷; *The Operations Process* and ADP 6-0⁸, *Mission Command* is the concept of mission command. Although it entails the word command this is more a leadership philosophy than a reflection of authority. Mission command is the philosophy of decentralized conduct of operations, where subordinates are given latitude to operate more independently than in traditional military structures. Mission command entails the explicit expressing of the commander's intent, which states the purpose of the task ahead and the conditions that are to be reached in order for a mission to be considered a success. This appears to be a function of operations, but in reality it is a way of exercising leadership in a unit.

3. The Leader Attributes and Core Leader Competencies

When applying the Army's core competencies, Army leaders are guided by the mission command philosophy—the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations. The ability of Army forces to combine its core competencies into a fluid mix of offensive, defensive, and stability operations depends on a philosophy of command that emphasizes broad mission-type orders, individual initiative within the commander's intent, and leaders who can anticipate and adapt quickly to changing conditions.⁹

Mission command cannot function if there is distrust between the commander and the subordinate leaders and soldiers. Likewise, mission command involves for the commander to accept more risk in the execution phase of operations. This might not be easy to carry through. Conversely, it is a discussion in itself, if or to what extent mission command is being executed at lower level, or if the direct style of leadership, which is normally linked to lower level command entails too much hands on leadership to be called mission command.

In the Army itself, reflections on the operational environment of the future and its impact on Army leadership are addressed in *A Leadership Development Strategy for the 21st Century*. This document is a response to TRADOC Pam 525-3-0, *The Army Capstone Concept 2016-2028*. In this strategy the Army advocates that leadership will adhere to three important domains:

a. The first domain is that, in the future, leaders must be trained to manage the transition from the challenge of massing forces in compressed time to the challenge of operational complexity in extended time frames.

b. The second domain is that the leaders must be capable of decentralized execution.

c. The third domain is that they must be capable of framing ill-structured problems.

To meet these challenges the leadership philosophies of mission command and operational design have been introduced to the force in Field Manual 1, *The Army*, ADP 3-0, and ADP5-0. Mission command is briefly mentioned in ADP 6-22, but not emphasized to the

⁷ Army Doctrine Publication No. 5-0, Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 17 May 2012

⁸ Army Doctrine Publication No. 6-0, Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 17 May 2012

⁹ Army Doctrine Publication No. 3-0 Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 10 October 2011,

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same extent or with the same prominence as in the other doctrines. Across the spectrum of manuals there seems to be a general consensus that the personal qualities of the commander are ultimately what makes a good or bad commander.

In total, the literature on direct leadership can be detected through the mentioned bibliography. It appears that the literature available to investigate the application of ADP 6-22 is sufficiently distinguishable to actually serve as supporting literature.

As a consequence of the analysis of the literature, it is viable to conclude that, although much has been written and studied on leadership in the U.S. Army, little has been written on the actual application of leadership of the lower level command. Consequently, it is viable to claim that there is a research gap in the realm of applied leadership.

Especially important is the apparent lack of convergence between the doctrine on army leadership and the other doctrines mentioned herein. They are focused on the overarching themes of mission command, decentralized execution, the importance of the changing operational environment.

The Core Leader Competencies in ADP 6-22 are derived directly from the doctrinal definition of leadership.

From this definition it is possible to extract three core tasks that describe what a leader does. These three tasks are:

- a. Leading people and organizations.
- b. Accomplishing missions.
- c. Developing organizations.

From this discussion the extended purpose or implied task can easily be identified as developing individuals as they are part of the organization, building teams and ensuring unity of effort within the unit. These overarching objectives apply to all leaders in the Army whether the team leader or the commanding general.

In ADP 6-22 these Core Leader Competencies have been reframed as: leads, develops and achieves. The single model organizes the disparate requirements and expectations of leaders at all levels of leadership. Figure 1¹⁰.

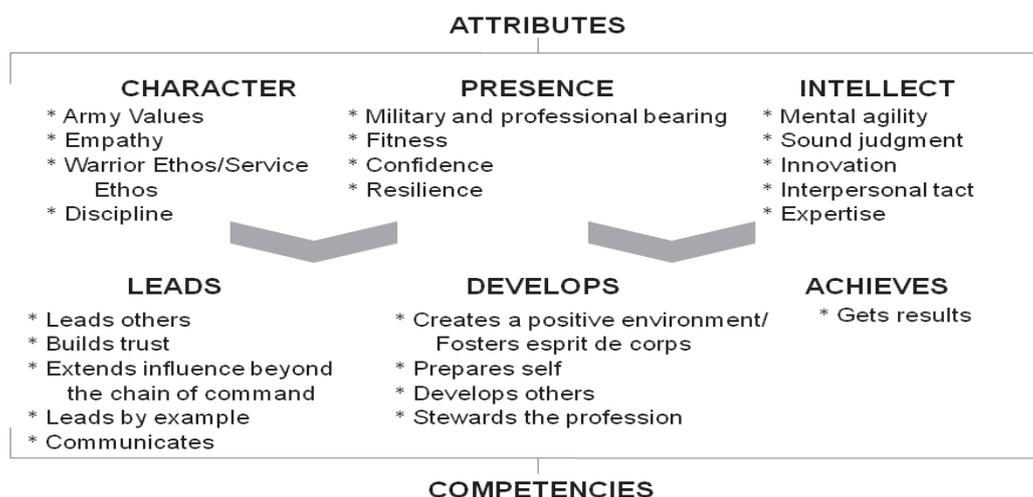


Figure 1. Army leadership requirements model.

Army leaders communicate task and purpose to their subordinates. This can be done either in the form of direct communication or by leading by example.

¹⁰ ADP 6-22, C1 Change No. 1 Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 10 September 2012, 5.

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Leaders foster teamwork, cohesion and loyalty. To achieve this, they must create a learning environment in their units. The environment will promote initiative from subordinate commanders and develop their leader skills, as well as core military proficiencies and interpersonal skills.

In order to accomplish all this, a leader must initially look inward and maintain both physical and mental well-being. Leaders constantly seek to expand their knowledge and proficiencies to include technical and tactical matters that affect the unit and the subordinates. By doing so, they set the standards by which the unit is run, and demonstrate the commitment that every Army leader needs in order to excel in this profession.

Army leaders achieve results. The results derive from the leader's ability to optimally lead and develop the organization and its individuals. In this process, the leader must organize, coordinate and prioritize activities.

As can be easily detected, there is a strong correlation between the Core Leader Competencies. An organization cannot prosper in the long run without proper leadership. The appropriate mix of vision, guidance and development is a prerequisite for any successful organization.

However for the direct leader the entire process becomes profoundly more up-close and personal. At the lower level, the results are more dependent on the leader's ability to exercise direct influence on the processes than is the case in larger organizations. The commander at a lower echelon, as a direct leader, should be in close proximity to any critical situation and should be able to exercise direct influence on the outcome.

The degree to which he needs to get involved is highly dependent on his ability to provide vision, task and purpose to his unit, and on how he has developed his team. The leaders' ability to exercise that direct influence on how missions are accomplished in their units is often described as the qualities a leader has as a person.

4. Conclusion

ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership* is well-written and encompasses almost all aspects of army life and leadership, it is, however, not descriptive enough to guide young leaders in how to translate principles into action. Focus on mission command as the overarching leadership philosophy in the Army and the identification of separate Leadership requirements models for the three levels of leadership might rectify this discrepancy.

The operational environment is highly complex and the actions taken by lower level leaders can have a more profoundly detrimental effect on the strategic level in the current fight than in most historical examples. Consequently, it is important to capture the experiences of the direct leaders in the 21st century and continually modernize the Leadership requirements model to guide the leaders of tomorrow's fight.

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- [8] Army Doctrine Publication No. 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 10 October 2011.
- [9] TRADOC Pam 525-3-0, *The Army Capstone Concept 2016-2028*. Department of the Army Headquarters, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, 19 December 2012.