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LEADING PEOPLE IN TODAY'S MILITARY

A LOOK AT THE IMPACT OF CHANGING VALUES ON
SENIOR LEADERSHIP IN THE ARMED FORCES

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In the movie "Patton," George C. Scott's portrayal of the famous World War II General explores the struggles of a battlefield genius with the leadership requirements of a *new* military environment. In a faithful depiction of the real Patton, much of the frustration felt by Scott's character during the war was not caused by enemy forces but by the changing values of the larger American society -- manifest in new sensitivities and standards involving what constituted the appropriate use of language, means of discipline, and promulgation of harmonious relations with coalition partners. As hostilities came to a close, the values shift came to reflect itself in even more complex challenges to the General in areas involving civil administration and the role of the soldier as diplomat. Perhaps the contemporary military leader can empathize with General Patton's on-screen and real life struggle with these issues, and especially the everpresent media's capture of his lapses.

Today we are at the end of America's longest, albeit coldest, war. Our society is again dictating changes to its military, and presenting officers with new challenges -- some of which they may feel more comfortable addressing than others. For instance, traditional national values regarding our defense posture in peacetime are returning and directing a large reduction of forces. As a result of these historical beliefs about ourselves, the following developments within the Department of Defense may be observed.

As a country which views itself as a militia nation, the drawdown is resulting in a greater reliance on reserve and guard capabilities at the expense of a large standing Army and Air Force.

As a trading island nation, a significant, though substantially smaller, Navy will continue to provide sufficient force to project power.

As a nation fascinated by, and committed to, the promises of new technologies, the development of space and the maintenance of a qualitative edge will remain a significant portion of what will be a diminished Defense budget.

As a nation perceiving itself to have a special moral purpose, the restructuring of forces will allow for continued, although measured, peacekeeping roles and humanitarian missions.

While these directional headings involve varying degrees of change from where we are now, their consistency with traditional American values and historical patterns at least places the following of them within the range of that which is more or less familiar. Although distasteful to many servicemembers, and personally costly to others in terms of career, the Services have some experience on which to draw that is relevant to the accomplishment of downsizing, investment in research and development, and the performance of non-traditional roles.

In other areas, however, the shifting of societal values and cultural norms have presented challenges that many officers feel much less comfortable confronting. This transformation of values impacts on a variety of concerns ranging from hot button issues like homosexuality and the role of women, to changes in the work ethic and family life. It is the purpose of this article to assist military leaders in gaining an improved understanding of the accelerating pattern of changing values inside and outside the Armed Forces, the implication of these changes on individual and unit performance, and ways in which the officer corps might more effectively respond to both the opportunities as well as the challenges represented by these changes.

CHANGE AND FRAGMENTATION

In examining the principal causes of stress one encounters, no greater factor can be found than that of change. Whether it is the individual entering basic military training, moving to a new assignment, or considering retirement -- experts agree that the prospect of the unfamiliar is the most daunting. Stress inevitably decreases as one becomes more acquainted with the changes, *even if he or she dislikes the new routine or environment in which they find themselves*. It is natural then to understand the ambiguity with which many officers view the changing times in which we live. While no one regrets the demise of the Soviet Union as a global threat, there was a certain comfort with the known quantity represented by the confrontation of the two superpowers, and even in its resulting balance of terror. The *loss* of the Cold War, the easy identification of good guy and bad guy, of a familiar force structure and operational mode against an enemy whom we presumed to be a rational actor, causes uncertainty and therefore stress among some servicemembers. The impending review of roles and missions, the work of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, and the ongoing activity of the Selective Early Retirement Boards exacerbate these feelings of anxiety.

The thawing of the Cold War has unfrozen many currents of conflict in the world that, while remaining unresolved, had been kept dormant through bipolar competition and struggle. There has been an ensuing multiplication of irrational actors, a fragmentation of political interests, and a proliferation of weapons at the very same time that other parties have moved towards greater union and integration. The tragic irony, that the violence in the former Yugoslavia should be taking place on the same continent on which the European Union is developing, is not to be lost.

In a similar way, the heightened and less civil competition between interest groups and opposing political, social, religious, and ethnic forces within the United States has led to a fragmentation of values consensus at home. This "disuniting" of America, as Arthur Schlesinger has called it in his book of the same title, suggests a Balkanization of our country where people primarily identify themselves according to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or their affiliation with a single political issue rather than with the nation at large. In our efforts to remedy the false notions of a homogeneous melting pot, we seem to be celebrating our diversity at the expense of our commonness. What is most serious is not that there exist differences of opinion, there always have been such, but that there no longer seems to be a common framework for discussion, a shared perspective as to the process of working issues, the kind of civility that would suggest the existence of common core values at the forefront of national debate.

Indeed the inability to have reflectful dialogue, to get our arms around complex issues, has resulted in political discussions, campaigns and ad slogans that use high-impact images, nostalgia, sound bites, and bumper stickers that dull our palate with fast-food versions of truth. They offer up a McPatriotism insufficient to satisfy the appetites of many discussions before us today. True, the "language" of responsibility, work ethic, burden sharing, and even family values seems to be finding more usage by participants from all sides of the political arena. Yet the overuse of such terms simply reflects that they are, to many Americans today, only surface symbols, convenient to public posturing and the political correctness of both major parties, while frequently failing to reflect any deeper foundation of understanding.

Conventional wisdom, as it appears on college campuses today, is that there are no longer any absolutes, and that the word "moral" no longer serves as a useful frame of reference. James Davison Hunter of the University of Virginia observes "Intellectual standards of right and wrong, of the good society, or of end purposes, *telos*, are rare. In this post-modernism everything is treated as just a matter of preference. Moral questions are seen as nostalgic; the way to deal with them is to change the subject."¹

The implication of this fragmentation is serious for the American military. As the most egalitarian of the Services, the Army has often been at the forefront of wrestling with the dilemmas posed by the breakdown of a value consensus in society. As the most egalitarian of the services, the Army has historically been the place where many immigrants first began to think of themselves as Americans. It has always been a premier social laboratory for our country -- from the ethnically and religiously diverse Union Army led by Grant, to the racially integrated force grown through the 1950s, to the tentatively gender integrated force emerging today. But as S.L.A. Marshall relates, in his book Men Against Fire, such integration did not occur without a precondition on the part of the entering soldier, a disposition towards the common values created by the environment of the larger society from which he or she came. "He [the soldier] is what his home, his religion, his schooling, and the moral code and ideal of his society have made him. The Army cannot unmake him."²

If the raw instrument provided the military institution cannot be thoroughly remade, it should not be assumed that he or she cannot be restrung, more finely tuned, and enabled to produce a superior chord that is more in harmony with a deeper

understanding of what it means to be an American. General Walter Kerwin, USA, writes that "The values necessary to defend the society are often at odds with the values of the society itself." ³ There is much truth in the assertion that the values of individual Americans, emphasizing freedom and individualism, have always been somewhat at odds with martial codes of conduct. In the same way, the large standing peacetime military force of the past forty years is a historical aberration in an America more inclined to the tradition of the militia than a sizable professional force. Yet the disconnect between the fragmenting civilian society and its less determinant morality and the military with its structured hierarchy of values has probably never been greater.

The diminished involvement of public education in forming a value consensus for an educated citizenry has made it much more difficult for the military (the other great national institution contributing to large scale citizen formation) to do its job. One could add that the decline of religious training among young people aggravates this problem. While many clerics questioned President Eisenhower's endorsement of an essentially label or brand-free religion as a viable means for spiritual growth, few doubted it's role in cultivating a national populous whose majority was attuned to a common set of symbols and stories, as well as to the meaning of a shared history (both religious and secular.) For instance, contrary to the teachings of some school texts today, no one in a 1950s public school classroom was taught that the reason the Pilgrims came to America was for economic opportunity. Surely today a more common language, paradigm, or life model for young people can be created than MTV's Beavis and Butthead.

FROM CRISIS TO OPPORTUNITY

The ancient Chinese character for crisis, if seen in a different context, can also mean opportunity. In a similar light, the admission and acceptance of the fragmentation occurring in the population may direct us to consider means by which we may constructively assist the integration or unification of values both in the definition of the national interest and in the superior training and nurture of the individuals who enter the Armed Forces.

As the public looks toward regaining a sense of traditional values for the 90s, going back to the future as it were, it often looks towards the military for examples of how to make it work. A recent Washington Post poll revealed that the percentage of Americans expressing confidence in the military has soared to 85%, far surpassing that of every other institution in American society.⁴ David Gergen, just prior to moving to the job of White House Communications Director, wrote, "If our military is successful because it provides equal opportunity and achieves personal loyalty within the ranks, why can't our major companies?...Training, good management, discipline, community; these are values that should take root across the nation."⁵ In a more universal sense, British professor Martin Edmonds, in his book Armed Services and Society refers to Armed Forces in general as often being seen, and seeing themselves, as "the epitome of what society stands for, particularly in the sense of its traditional values."⁶

In the darker scenarios of human history, militaries have on occasion acted to take over civilian governments so as to "rescue" the society they represent from the chaos of that society's own fallen values. Many Latin American militaries have

historically seen themselves in the role of protecting society from its own excesses and weaknesses. In the wake of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's success in the recent Russian elections there is increased concern as to whether the Russian military could be persuaded to such intervention. Even in America such scenarios are explored in science fiction pieces such as Charles Dunlap's The Origin of the American Coup of 2012, and Robert Heinlein's classic work Starship Troopers.

In Heinlein's work, soon to be a major motion picture, only those who have served in the military and possess veteran status may vote and serve as citizens. The society he posits believes that only the values learned, lived, and fired in the crucible of combat, enable one to act unselfishly enough so as to properly execute the rights of franchise. In this regard Starship Troopers offers a worthy illustration of a central value, that of transcending self-centeredness, which is being eroded in society and this erosion portends a major challenge to the military which still greatly esteems it. This value exalts the virtues of self-denial, self-surrender, and self-sacrifice, qualities essential to the successful accomplishment of military missions. Arnold Toynbee wrote, "I am convinced that man's fundamental problem is his human egocentricity....All the great historic philosophies and religions have been concerned, first and foremost, with the overcoming of egocentricity."⁷

Outside this historic "mainstream" of religious traditions is an eclectic smorgasbord of beliefs and values that today flies under the broad heading of the New Age Movement. Gallup reports this Movement to be the fastest growing alternative belief system in the U.S. Its popular appeal is felt even within traditional religious groups as it blends pop psychology, self-improvement and religion into a life view that

regards the individual as the ultimate authority for his or her own value system. Totally antithetical to Toynbee's statement, such a belief is very much in sync with the moral relativism discussed earlier by the University of Virginia's James Davison Hunter. The philosophical underpinnings such beliefs offer to isolationism impact the national interest in determining national strategy, and it is highly questionable as to whether such self-serving ideals could sustain the esprit de corps essential to individual and unit performance within the Armed Forces. Army Lieutenant Colonel Robert Maginnis addresses New Age in some depth in his article entitled "A Chasm of Values" in Military Review and concludes "The New Age Movement ...will impact the values of future recruits."⁸

The "opportunity" presented by this "crisis" of faith is that today few traditional values are taken for granted, and thus for their genuine establishment in society and maintenance within the military we must plunge into the depths of their meaning and justifications in a way that is difficult to do when they are merely the accepted norms of the majority. In a similar way religion, when simply a function or observance of the majority and even more so when it is endorsed by the State, loses much of its dynamism and becomes little more than an outward act. The First Amendment prohibition against the Federal government's establishment of religion was, after all, for the protection of religion not the State. Thus today we are required to ask more profound questions because there are no longer easily arrived at norms of response. In that spirit, what is an American and what values support that definition?

A MATTER OF PROCESS

Fundamentally, we Americans are about "becoming." The American myths are

quintessentially about the journey towards something, into a future, away from a past, and enduring a restless impatience with the present. The Pilgrim, the Patriot of 1776, the Frontiersman, the Industrialist, the Astronaut, and virtually all the icons of American culture are about pushing out new frontiers, about exploring the unknown and building a new civilization. John Quincy Adams, writing to a German correspondent in 1820, responded to his inquiry as to what made for the success of immigrants in the New World by saying, "They must cast off the European skin, never to resume it. They must look forward to their posterity rather than backward to their ancestors."⁹

Concern for posterity should embody the unselfishness and self-sacrifice spoken of before, but it is also premised on a form of national polity that is in evolution as well. The Constitution is itself a process document, suggesting that its only claim to being a static work is in its establishment of the process by which the evolution will take place. Principles above and beyond the temporal forms in which we may express them call us to temper and channel our development in keeping with those founding values -- i.e. life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness -- but to never rest on the laurels of our present demonstration of them. A clear example would be the manner in which the understanding of equality has evolved, both in who it includes and what government's role is in enabling it. As it grew to include all white men, then various men of color and women; so it has also been manifest in increasing civil, economic, and social participation for the handicapped, the poor, the elderly, and others often finding full access to the opportunities and resources of our society frustrating to achieve. The valuing of the larger principle being explored, equality, may be evidenced in, but not limited to, the initiation of specific programs -- such as school busing and affirmative action. These programs reflect our best abilities to support the

greater realization of equal opportunity at a certain point in time, but the programs themselves may experience only a finite life as either superior means to enable equality are attained or the need for such remedies diminish.

The primal value orientation, that of becoming, of moving, of progressing, is not the domain of any one group of Americans. When Charles Fremont (known as the Pathfinder) first descended into California -- having traversed the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada mountain ranges -- he was moved to remark on the diverse character of his expedition as "guided by a civilized Indian, attended by two wild ones from the Sierra; a Chinook from the Columbia; and our mixture of American, French, German -- all armed; four or five languages heard at once...American, Spanish, and Indian dresses and equipment intermingled -- such was our composition." ¹⁰ Every immigrant to our shores, including the Native American, expressed appreciation of this value in their willingness to leave the old and familiar and journey towards the new and unknown.

In our popular culture, the icons from Elvis to Madonna are renowned for their dedication to pushing the envelope of what is socially acceptable in their time. While it is notable that the popularity of American performers such as this is international, the formation and export of such artists seem to be a rather distinctive American enterprise. In his article "Who and What is an American?", Lewis Lapham remarks that "The spirit of liberty is never far from anarchy....If America is about nothing else, it is about the invention of the self."¹¹ "My love of country follows from my love of its freedoms, not from my pride in its fleets or its armies or its gross national product. Construed as a means and not as an end, the Constitution stands as the premise for a

narrative rather than a plan for an invasion or a monument. The narrative was always plural. Not one story but many stories." 12

A CORE BELIEF

As has been mentioned, the variety and diversity of the stories that make up the American anthology need to be respected as being different, to make them less -- in attempting to achieve a mythical "melting pot" unity -- would serve neither reason nor relevance. Yet, as has also been discussed, there are common values as to what it means to be an American. These American values are not fixed as if in a certain style of traditional dress, food, music, or national religion, rather they are more like a checklist for a journey -- enumerating certain things that must be done for the trip but can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The values thus far discussed as formative of the American experience are a willingness to leave and to change in order to discover a new place (whether that "place" be geographic, economic, social, or spiritual), a respect for the freedom from government to do so (Tocqueville noted this 150 years ago), an unselfed concern for posterity and the future -- making things better for our children, and dedication to the equality of opportunity and the provision of a level playing field for all people.

To this list must be added one absolutely essential value -- integrity. For the purposes of this article integrity shall be defined as an honest self-knowledge, a dedicated striving to live in consonance with one's ideals, and a straightforwardness in respecting the rights and needs of others as being of equal importance with one's own. Dr. John Silber, President of Boston University, rightly states that for the soldier in particular, there can be no substitution for self-knowledge, the clear apprehension of

what it means to do one's duty and the internal cost associated with failing to do what one knows one should.¹³

Indeed when publishing its own compilation of core values in the Fall of 1993, the Air Force listed integrity first -- commenting that "it is the foundation value upon which all others are built."¹⁴ When the public perceives the absence of this trait in the civilian sector it is often concerned but frequently tends to reflect a "what do you expect" attitude. When the breach of integrity is perceived in the military the view is more likely despair and a sense of "we expected so much more." Given the higher expectations held for military leaders, it is incumbent upon us to possess a deeper understanding of how and why integrity is important -- not just that it is. Unless this is accomplished, the practice of integrity will suffer for the sake of the superficial roots it has in the hearts and minds of military leaders.

Unfortunately the discussion of integrity in the recently published Air Force Core Values handbook does little to deepen our understanding of this foundational value. Owing more to the shallow concepts of "pop" psychology than traditional understandings of the term, the best criteria the Air Force handbook can offer for whether or not a particular action should be taken is the asking of the question "Will it make me feel good about myself?"¹⁵ Perhaps the military leader who does wrong justifies his or her actions or at least rationalizes them, maybe he or she even "feels good" about themselves. How is integrity to be measured in such circumstances?

Based upon this "feel good" criteria, how is a commander to respond to a

servicemember going to war who says he or she no longer feels good about going? What kind of oath or pledge can be accepted if keeping it is based solely upon the subjective good feelings of the one making it. The whole premise reminds one of the "liberated" wedding ceremony when bride and groom pledge to keep each other "so long as the feelings last." As mentioned before genuine integrity requires a far more mature honesty and self knowledge, as well as a practiced discipline to live in singular accord with one's principles, than can ever be reflected in ethical criteria that is simply a mirror of one's own feelings. We can do a lot better in supporting such a core value in the military and our justification for it.

The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him, he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his country in the end.

General George C. Marshall 16

LEADING A NEW GENERATION

One place where the shifting of values, the search for consensus about core beliefs, and the standards for military behavior and conduct all meet is in the ongoing efforts of one generation to pass on its convictions to another. Every generation struggles with how to do this and agonizes over the inability of the "younger" generation to understand and appreciate that which the senior generation cherishes most. To a large degree values can't be taught, they must be learned. Usually this requires the laboratory of life experience, maturation, and at least some modicum of pain and hurt. Beyond the platitudes we profess, our real values are shown in how we choose to respond to suffering, injustice, and fear as we encounter them. True character education goes far beyond equipping people to *know* what is the right

thing to do, but moves toward enabling them to summon the courage and conviction to **do** what is right.

As recent honor violations at the Service Academies have reached alarming proportions (both in the number of students involved and the nature of some of the offenses) the Services have responded with new programs to try to address cadets who were raised in a society quite different from that of the Vietnam generation. Often referred to as Generation X, these young people were born between 1965 and 1975. Like the military, corporations and businesses are scrambling to get a handle on how to lead these workers, how to form and shape their ethic of work to the standards of Baby Boomer managers. An excellent resource for civilian and military leaders is the book Twentysomething: Managing & Motivating Today's New Work Force by consultants Lawrence J. Bradford and Claire Raines, (MasterMedia Limited, 1992.) While acknowledging that values are ultimately the choice of individuals, the following are identified by Bradford and Raines as core values for this generation:

Self-orientation. While social, the primary motivation for their decision making is "what's in it for me."

Cynicism. Almost half the generation fear that the best years of our nation are behind us and most think their lives will be harder than their parents.

Materialism. Viewing themselves as immediately marketable commodities, they expect top salaries and early access to power and status.

Extended Adolescence. Knowing how hard it is to achieve the American dream, they marry later, stay in college and live with their parents longer.

Quantity Time. Feeling themselves the children of absentee, workaholic parents, they may want surrogate parents (including

their leaders and managers) to spend time with them.

Fun. Work to live, don't live to work. Employment is a means of achieving a high quality of life and pursuing outside interests.

Slow Commitment. They are cautious in committing to other people and jobs.

Indifference to Authority. Just because you're the boss won't gain you their respect.¹⁷

Military leaders may find these observations relevant to some of the junior officers as well as NCOs whom they command. Certainly many critiques are heard today about the diminished willingness among many twentysomethings to do the things previous generations did to succeed in military service, such as volunteer for those extra duties that "get you noticed," or join the Officer's or NCO club, or accept the hardship assignment because it offers a promotable opportunity.

While it may be easy, even popular, to denigrate the twentysomethings as lacking in respect for authority, failing to be team players, not committed to the work ethic (at least "our" work ethic,) and impatient in expecting future rewards today -- this approach is not effective in leading them to the accomplishment of the mission. It is more productive to use their predispositions and inclinations as a basis for improving their performance and service to the unit. For instance, spending time getting to know them, encouraging mentoring relationships with oneself (as appropriate) or with other more senior leaders, and providing specific outlines of responsibilities, standards, communication paths, and advancement opportunities might prove to be very effective enablers.

Of course not all leadership issues are so specific to this generation, some are timeless and are aggravated by changes occurring at present within the Armed Forces. As an example, consider the impact of the increased ops tempo resulting from the drawdown on junior enlisted personnel who are married, and perhaps trying to hold a second job off-duty to make ends meet, and you have a formula for complex problems difficult for Commanders to work. The Summary (Vol. 1) of the DoD study of "Family Status and Initial Term of Service," published in December 1993, makes this point in indicating that "married members tend to have slightly fewer performance and behavior problems [than single members.] However, problems of married members tend to be much more complex and much more time-consuming for commanders, distracting those commanders from mission-oriented activities and leading to a perception that marital status has a significant impact on readiness. " 18

While a number of remedies are being worked within DoD -- such as more effective support mechanisms for married members and greater equity between pay and benefits given singles vis-a-vis marrieds -- the military leader is still left with the challenge of how to mitigate such problems within his or her own unit. While it is a given that the effective Commander must give time to this issue, if he or she will invest the time in preventative programs, considerably less overall time will be spent in crisis reaction down the road. As just one illustration, premarriage awareness programs, while once common overseas where intercultural relationships were a concern, are far less common today. Such programs could be more widely established in a variety of formats at both the base and unit level. Coordinated through a range of agencies on base and including peer couples and individuals sharing their experiences, these programs need to speak early -- before the chapel has been reserved for the wedding

-- to all junior servicemembers; with more specific counseling and education programs available once an individual even begins to contemplate a serious relationship. If the member has already become engaged, the likelihood of actually impacting the decision to marry is quite remote.

As with other leadership efforts, premarital programs should not attempt to impose values on attendees, but to foster critical thinking and to establish relationships, including mentoring ones, with presenting couples and individuals that might provide additional resources of guidance and support for attendees -- regardless of whether or not they decide to marry. Finally, whatever the Commander or unit leader can do to enhance single life in the base barracks or dorms -- like revising inspections policies, work details, and other inequities accorded single versus married members -- will likely help to ensure that escape from the dorms is not a contributing motive for marriage (a recommendation also made in the DoD study.)

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

This article has suggested a number of values that support the effective leading of people in today's military. These values have deep roots in the American experience, are still sustained and nurtured by the larger civilian society from which our servicemembers are drawn, and may be instilled within the core beliefs of the twentysomething generation. These beliefs are also remedial to the critical challenges of healthy family life that servicemembers have consistently rated as being the strongest single support/determiner of a successful military career.¹⁹

For the purposes of review, these values are:

Willingness to Change The quintessential American model of a leader is the explorer, the mover, not the maintainer of status quo.

Empowerment of Individuals The American story has been premised on the capacities of the individual to excel when freed from the strictures of excessive controls or patrimony. It balances opportunity with responsibility.

Transcendence of Self To offer a life of service as opposed to gratification is measured in the American tradition of volunteerism, concern for posterity, and sacrifice of life and limb for national cause. This also is what enables the virtue of loyalty to become more than a conformance to the expectations or intimidations of superiors and peers, and to be an internally realized and positively directed value.

Commitment to Equality The provision of a level playing field, of "justice for all," is central in one American story after another, evidenced in every image from the Western lawman clearing the town of bullying bad guys, to our intervention in other countries to dispose of international villains who prey on the weak and innocent.

Investment in People Successful leaders testify to the rewards to unit performance and mission effectiveness found in providing training opportunities, recognition, and appreciation to one's people. Beyond that, the investment of leaders in mentoring roles themselves, and the encouragement of it at all levels, can reap tremendous dividends, perhaps greater than in the private sector.

Integrity While unity of command is central on the battlefield, so is unity of character in leadership. Being true to one's professed beliefs, to not only knowing but doing that which is right, is essential. The inability to trust oneself, or to be thought untrustworthy by others, plays havoc with a unit's spirit, morale, and readiness to perform well in a crisis.

This last point, regarding the importance of trust, raises a useful illustration of

the relevance of these values or principles to, not only the leadership of people, but to more effective leadership in the addressing of issues at large. Consider the impact a deeper desire to be trustworthy would make in resolving issues as diverse as the responsibilities of the Joint Forces Air Commander (JFAC) and the acceptance of Quality as the basis of leadership in the Armed Forces.

VALUES FOR WARFIGHTING

Since the Gulf War, the discussion of whether the JFAC should have sole control of air assets, the manner in which Marine and Navy aircraft should be made available to the JFAC, who should have primary direction of and targeting for the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) and whether the Air Force has sufficient commitment to Close Air Support (CAS) have made for lively debate. While there are operational concerns to resolve, the fundamental obstacle in these discussions is the lack of trust among those concerned. Histories of Service rivalries, parochialism and different paradigms for the employment of air power all contribute to a suspicion as to each parties' motive and methods for using air assets. As in any marriage, if each partner feels themselves fully heard and understood, empathized with even if not fully agreed with, then while not all issues are immediately resolved the heat is removed from the discussion and progress can more easily be achieved. Indeed what progress has taken place on the JFAC issues would seem to be a result of the on-going confidence building resulting from increasingly tasking senior leaders to explore issues from other aspects than their own Service's perspective. Such knowledge of another's way of thinking and seeing the battlefield, mixed with practical application in exercises, training, and joint tours, results in enhanced trust and understanding. Further trust enhancement also requires humility, a willingness to move beyond the

lessons of one's own experience, and a critical rejection of Service zealotry.

A more difficult issue -- requiring still greater trust improvement -- is the implementation of "Quality" measures within the Department of Defense. The skepticism many leaders feel towards Quality proceeds from the one-sided way they often perceive it being applied. Speaking to company grade officers one discovers that many feel senior leaders use Quality concepts selectively and don't really buy into its premise of empowerment (remember these officers are primarily twentysome-things!)

When Malcolm Baldrige Award winning Federal Express tells its Quality story, a central theme is the covenant relationship and obligation their leaders incur in giving immediate feedback to any subordinate who forwards a suggestion or critique. Rarely have senior Quality advocates in the Armed Forces given this committed valuing of the worker the emphasis they give to problem solving or cost savings. The basis of such a commitment would be a vision of servant leadership. A vision of leading people in such a way that they knew the realization of their potential was a central goal of the organization. Workers should feel that they are not merely the means to the accomplishment of some end but that their well-being is a valued end in itself.

The warrior will naturally speculate as to how such a view could be sustained in battle, when military leaders must call upon individuals to become a means to an end, a possible sacrifice for the gain of what hopefully is some greater good. The superior warrior character will have nurtured the transcendence of self in his or her troops, fostering their commitment to the existence of purpose beyond the perpetuation of

one's own life, of there being some things worth dying for. The leader, with a firm foundation in sustainable values -- ones that work before, during, and after the battle -- will also have prepared to struggle with the decision of sending forces into harm's way and never believe that because it may be necessary it should be easy.

Examples abound of outstanding military leaders who credit moral courage as more important than the vacuous machismo that often passes for courage. One brilliant example is British Major General Jeremy Moore. In 1982, he was the most highly decorated soldier in the Royal Marines when his retirement was delayed so as to place him in command of British land forces in the Falkland Conflict. Keeping a Bible on his desk he always kept a copy of Shakespeare's sonnets in his field jacket, commenting that the sonnets gave him "ease of mind." Once housemaster of the Royal Marines School of Music, his attention to the nurture of his character, and the humanity of his combat troops paid off not only in a superb fighting force but in conduct becoming a leader of character. When some Argentine forces at one time raised a white flag and then opened fire on British troops, the response of the British forces upon taking the position was to demonstrate the most compassionate of care for the enemy, to feed and clothe them, and tend to their numerous needs. Such "ease of mind" in the face of betrayal requires a poise and a foundation for one's values that receives all too little discussion in professional military education.²⁰

"The profession of arms, to which you are now dedicated has certain unique characteristics. First of all you serve in a contract of unlimited liability; there is no limit of what may be asked of you. This unlimited liability stamps the military profession as largely unique. It has other characteristics: fortitude, integrity, honesty and personal loyalty. They are indispensable in the military profession.

A man can be in every way depraved and still be a brilliant mathematician. He can be false, fleeting, perjured and still a superb artist. No bad man can ever be a good soldier, because the qualities demanded of him for the effective discharge of his professional obligations demand the presence of these characteristics.”

Gen Sir John Hackett²¹

LEADING WITH VISION

Some elements of the U.S. military today are focusing on the technological possibilities of shaping the battlefield of tomorrow. In much the same way the promise of rocketry and atomic power were pursued at the end of the Second World War. To revisit the film that opened this article, George C. Scott's General Patton responded to these potential changes with the disdain of one who felt that the human element in warfare was being treated lightly in this pursuit, "Killing without heroics, nothing is glorified, nothing is reaffirmed...I'm glad I won't live to see it."²²

Writing to an audience already enmeshed in the techno-wonders and societal re-shaping they define as the Third Wave, futurists Alvin and Heidi Toffler, in their most recent book War and Anti-War, state that beyond the scientific capabilities of machines, computers, and satellites the real value prized by successful Third Wave militaries and companies is not physical assets, but "ideas, insights, and information in the heads of their employees...Thus capital itself is now increasingly based on intangibles." ²³

Indeed writing to commanders and senior military leaders on the subject of

values as they pertain to leading people in the today's military seems often to be an exercise in making intangibles tangible. Yet the impact of neglecting these oft-referred to *soft* subjects like values, ethics and character formation, in favor of discussions that are perceived to be more directly involved with "winning the war," is a mistake made at our own peril. In previous conflicts warriors, and especially prisoners of war, have frequently credited their firm foundation of beliefs and values with their emotional, mental, even physical survival. The testimonies of servicemembers, *and their spouses on the homefront*, such as those given by Admiral James Stockdale and his wife in their book Love and War, reveal that, as quoted from S. L. A. Marshall, these values were well developed in these individuals prior to their entering the armed forces. If, due to the different family, academic, religious, and civic structures of today these solid and enduring values are not well instilled in an individual prior to entering the Service, is it not incumbent on the military leadership to try to encourage their development?

This past year America sent young servicemembers to feed the hungry in Somalia and they became the targets of violence at the hands of the very people that they believed they were sent to help. Our young people were confused. Then our forces found themselves confronted by complex command structures and numerous limitations as to how they could respond to attacks. They were angry and sometimes afraid. While we learn the lessons from Somalia regarding command and control, tactics, the jurisdiction of the United Nations, and the politics -- domestic and international -- of peacekeeping, it is important that we also learn the need to prepare our future peacekeepers with the character training that enables them to approach their feelings, doubts, angers, and fears more effectively. While there is not an easy formula for instilling the values of restraint, patience, wisdom, good judgment, etc.,

there are processes for helping our servicemembers address better the issues that we know they are likely to confront.

Teaching classes and developing curriculums are not sufficient to address the larger value vacuum in military training and education today. What is required, beyond these basic responses, is the development of a military culture that faces these issues head on, that doesn't simply react to societal changes, but is proactive in thoughtfully dealing with these issues. Too often the response to a value or ethical crisis in the Department of Defense seems to be anger that the problem became public knowledge. Then it is approached in a manner designed to make it go away -- especially if it is receiving media attention. If it was a technical problem, while handling the necessary public relations issues, an effort would most likely be made to fix it. While issues dealing with values can't so easily be fixed as can a machine part, they could and should be worked with more vigor and vision than they are today.

On a strategic level, an understanding of values is an insight into humanity and thus an access to information and interpretation that senior military leaders need to have. It is probably an universal consensus that the number one story of recent years has been the collapse of communism and totalitarianism -- from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to the Philippines and Nicaragua. Consider that the number two story of the same period could well be that virtually all the "experts" missed forecasting story number one, they never saw it coming. Those who did foresee the events were ones whose perceptive abilities included sensitivities to the *intangibles*, to the artful, and to the intuitive dimensions of human experience. They could perceive the depth and relevance of religious faith, moral courage, and

yearnings for dignity and freedom that defy statistical quantification or satellite imagery. Senior military leaders, at least to a larger degree, need to cultivate this deeper awareness and vision for the sake of the nation...and themselves. In this period of accelerating change senior leaders have too often paid prices in their careers for their myopic understanding of public values, the currents of social movement, and what constitutes an acceptable definition of good judgment and leadership today.

Almost two thousand years ago the leader of a small company of social irregulars in the Middle East observed the preoccupation of many people of his day with symptoms rather than causes. He noted that the leaders of the time were so involved with the urgent that they often missed the important. In words that speak to us today, this carpenter from Nazareth told these leaders:

"You can discern the face of the sky, but can you not discern the signs of the times?"

The Gospel According to Matthew,
Chapter 16, Verse 3

Let this generation of military leaders not stumble in answering this question.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 "Moral Values Matter," The Christian Science Monitor, 8 December 1993, p. 22.
- 2 S.L.A. Marshall, Men Against Fire, (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1978), p. 78.
- 3 General Walter Kerwin, "The Values of Today's Army," Soldier, September 1978, p. 4.
- 4 Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Brant, "Vanguard of Social Change," Military Review, February 1993, p. 13.
- 5 "America's New Heroes," U.S. News and World Report, 11 February 1991, p. 76.
- 6 Martin Edmonds, Armed Services and Society, (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1988), p. 52.
- 7 Dr. James Toner, The Sword and the Cross, (Praeger, 1992), p. 113.
- 8 Lieutenant Colonel Robert Maginnis, "A Chasm of Values," Military Review, February 1993, p. 6.
- 9 Lewis H. Lapham, "Who and What is American?" Harper's Magazine, January 1992, p. 45.
- 10 Ibid., p. 45.
- 11 Ibid., p. 46.
- 12 Ibid., p. 48.
- 13 John Silber, Straight Shooting, (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p.258.
- 14 Foundations for Quality: Air Force Core Values, p.2.
- 15 Ibid., p. 9.
- 16 "The Bedrock of Our Profession," Army Pamphlet 600-68, (White Paper, 1986), p. 10.

- 17 Lawrence J. Bradford and Claire Raines, Twentysomething, as summarized in Soundview Executive Book Summaries, (Vol. 14, No. 5 (3 parts) Part 1, May 1992), p.2.
- 18 DoD study of "Family Status and Initial Term of Service", (Vol. 1 - Summary, December 1993), p. 14.
- 19 Ibid., p. 17.
- 20 "The Gentle General," Newsweek, 21 June 1982.
- 21 Officer's Christian Union, Military Leadership and Christian Faith. (Aldershot, Haunts, England), p. 4.
- 22 "Patton", Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation.
- 23 Alvin and Heidi Toffler, War and Anti-war, (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), p. 59.

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