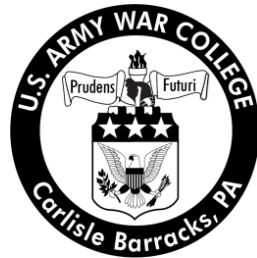


Strategy Research Project

Critical Choice--What is Best?

by

Colonel Douglas Ray Campbell
United States Army



United States Army War College
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Colonel Douglas Ray Campbell
United States Army

Dr. Andrew A. Hill
Department of Command, Leadership, and Management
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Abstract

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The Army trains its leaders how to think, not what to think. Yet, the Army also puts limits on thinking such as intent within mission command. Leaders make choices and issue their own intent and orders, as they understand the commander's intent and orders. In addition, the Army puts moral limits in place to guide thought and behavior. Within these limits, choice would seem to be clear and simple. Yet, a leader with the freedom to think, judge, and act will likely view what is best differently than his boss. This paper offers Critical Choice as a means for leaders to choose what is Best. The Critical Choice process provides a "clear, rational, open-minded, and informed" way to choose Best. Best is an informed, reasoned choice a leader can live with.

Critical Choice--What is Best?

A basic premise in the Army is that a Soldier will follow orders. In fact, the Army expects all its Soldiers, leaders and subordinates, to follow orders. Following orders is vital to good order and discipline. Following provides certainty, instills confidence, builds trust, and fosters teamwork. At the same time, the Army trains Soldiers to be leaders who adapt to change, are agile, and are creative and critical thinkers. Leaders with these skills can confront uncertainty, act on intent, and make sound decisions. Leading and following are fundamental concepts and desired skills in the Army.

Leading and following are also an essential part of mission command.¹ Army doctrine states that successful mission command "relies on leaders who act decisively, within the intent and purpose of superior leaders, and in the best interest of the organization."² Hence, a commander must give clear intent and proper orders to follow. Subordinate leaders must do likewise. Through shared understanding and purpose, leaders act within disciplined initiative to adapt and act to meet intent. Through training and education, a commander expects his subordinate leaders to act in a predictable way. By following mission command principles, leaders earn trust and "the latitude to accomplish assigned tasks in a manner that best fits the situation."³ So, if the intent, orders, and situation are clear to a leader, his or her view of "best" will likely match what the commander wants. While that may be ideal, intent, orders, and situation can be unclear too. When this is true, a leader's action may not align with the commander's intent. The difference between intent and the leader's view of what is "best" represents a gap. This gap may cause tension or conflict. The size of the gap depends on many factors that affect a leader's skill to find and choose what is "best."

The idea behind mission command for effective land operations is to reduce the gap. However, leaders make decisions outside of land operations, formal intent, and mission orders each day. They face complex situations in diverse contexts. In these cases, leaders must still act in the "best" interest of their organization - be it the unit, the command, the Army, or the country. As such, policy, guidance, regulations, or rules equate to the intent and orders of mission command. The goal is the same--align action with intent for what is "best." The results should be the same too. Actions should align with intent when all factors are clear. If unclear, the gap between intent and action may result in conflict or tension. In any case, a leader must make a critical choice to do what is "best."

What is "best"? "Best" is a reasoned decision from sound judgment informed by intent and limiting factors. For the purpose of this paper, Best is the choice a leader can live with no matter the consequences. This paper will focus on unclear choices that affect the gap between stated intent and a leader's actions. It looks at the factors that inform judgment and limit choice. This paper presents the "Critical Choice" framework within which a leader may make a sound decision and live with it. This paper offers a means for a leader to think about her actions and choices. This paper frames the choice of Best from a leader's perspective. The term "leader" refers to all Soldiers who serve as leaders in the Army at any level and at any time. "Boss" refers to a leader's supervisor, commander, or superior.

Clear and Unclear

A leader faces one of two types of choice: clear and unclear. A clear choice is one a leader sees as fitting the intent, mission, and situation. When this is true, a leader will likely choose a course of action that aligns (disciplined initiative) with what the boss

expects. Many decisions are clear--do what is right or not do what is wrong. A clear choice may be to obey legal, moral, and safe orders. Illegal, immoral, or unsafe orders seem a clear choice not to follow. If a leader has committed to doing what is right, it makes sense that she has also committed not to do what is wrong. Even Army doctrine instructs leaders to "deviate from orders . . . when they are unlawful, risk the lives of Soldiers, or when orders no longer fit the situation."⁴ In either case, a choice is clear because intent and other factors align with the leader's view of Best. Army leaders are skilled and able to make these choices.

However, many choices are not clear. Choosing Best when the choice is unclear is a challenge for a leader. An unclear choice means intent and Best do not align. There is a gap. Intent refers to what the boss or organization wants to happen. The term denotes expectation. Intent, for the purpose of this paper, ranges from a broad description of what should happen within mission orders to the rules within a regulation. It also includes policy and guidance within which a leader should act. In simple terms, it is "what should happen." Dictionary.com defines a gap as the "difference or disparity in attitudes, perceptions, character, or development, or a lack of confidence or understanding, perceived as creating a problem."⁵ An unclear choice is the result of the gap between intent and Best. An "Intent Gap" means a leader's view of what is Best does not align with intent in some way. An Intent Gap presents tension for the leader and may influence his choice. For example, consider a matter a boss deems as routine, while a leader sees it as urgent. The Intent Gap is the sense of urgency. The boss is content to let the matter be for now, while the leader wants to take care of it now. If the leader chooses to do so without the boss, he may not be able to achieve the best

outcome. The boss may also see this as an act of insubordination. To avoid conflict, the leader can close the gap and do what the boss wants. If a leader sees this as Best, he will be content to live with his choice.

Unclear choices become more complex and critical as intent conflicts with other factors. These factors are often limits within intent. Tension arises as factors meant to clarify choice actually have the opposite effect. Limits include the situation, values, oaths, or consequences. As an example, an Intent Gap may arise when intent does not align with the situation. Consider the number of training tasks a leader must do each year. These may include unit, post, or Army requirements that add up to an unrealistic number of tasks a leader cannot complete given her work and family schedule and duties. The intent, from unit policy to Army regulation, is to do all tasks. All tasks are important in some way. However, the leader cannot do all tasks given the situation--the demands of her present assignment and family life. In this case, the intent (training requirements) conflicts with the situation, which is more current and relevant to the leader. The choice a leader makes to train all, part, or none of the tasks rests on her view of the situation and possible consequences.

No matter the complexity, unclear choices will involve an Intent Gap of some kind. The gap determines how hard a choice may be. If the gap is small, a leader may be able to resolve it easily. If the gap is larger, he may have more difficulty closing the gap to meet intent. If the leader can reduce the gap, he can likely ease tension and avoid conflict. If not, the leader must determine how much of a gap he can bear. Limits to intent may mitigate Intent Gaps. Limits are boundaries that help the leader frame and

manage gaps between intent and Best--guideposts for shaping choice, good behavior, and character.

Limits to Choice

Organizations and leaders put limits in place to shape outcomes. For example, intent is a limit within mission command. "The commander's intent defines the limits within which subordinates may exercise initiative."⁶ Besides intent, other limits may also include situation, values, oaths, and consequences. Each informs a leader as to what is Best. The extent and application of each depends on the leader.

Intent is at the heart of mission command. It "defines the limits"⁷ for leaders. Intent is not a list of things to do or step-by-step directions for how to do something. In a sense, it is "thinking inside the box." In this case, the "box" is the commander's vision of the end state. Intent is a description of a desired end state and a broad statement of how the commander wants to achieve it. A leader may do whatever is necessary to accomplish the mission if she stays in the "box."

The situation provides context within which to frame a choice. A situation entails many things, but a leader should always be mindful of time and point of view. In terms of time, a leader deals with timing and amount of time. Conditions change. A situation at the time of intent often changes by the time a leader needs to choose or act. A leader must also be aware of how much time he has before he must act. Another aspect is point of view. Even if a boss and leader understand each other, they do not necessarily share the same point of view. Knowing points of view may differ is a key factor that may affect and limit a leader's choice.

The values of a leader may be the most important limit for her to choose Best. A leader's values guide her moral and ethical choices. Army Doctrine Reference

Publication (ADRP) 6-22, Army Leadership states, "Values and beliefs are central to character."⁸ A leader should recognize values as a source of great influence because of how it shapes her point of view and perspective of things. A leader may have more than one set of values (e.g., personal and organizational). By the time a leader joins the Army, she will likely have a set of values to guide her. A leader's personal values may be rooted in her upbringing, religion, etc. Personal values "are deep-seated personal beliefs that shape a person's behavior."⁹ These are important, but organizations, like the Army, often have their own set of values for their members to follow.

Olison states, "Values define the acceptable standards that govern the behavior of an individual or organization. Without organizational values, individuals would pursue behaviors that are in line with their own individual beliefs. This may lead to behaviors that an organization does not wish to encourage."¹⁰ The Army Values¹¹ define the culture of the Army and how an Army leader should think, act, and live. They are limits "of acceptable behavior" and determine "how to approach problems, make judgments, determine right from wrong, and establish proper priorities."¹² The Army recognizes that people entering the Army "bring certain values and attributes, such as family-ingrained values."¹³ Yet, the Army expects a leader to live by the Army Values when it states,

Army professionals enter the Army with personal values developed in childhood and nurtured over years of personal experience. By taking an oath to serve the Nation and the institution, an Army professional agrees to live and act by a new set of values--Army Values. The Army Values consist of the principles, standards, and qualities considered essential for successful Army leaders. They are fundamental to . . . the right decision in any situation.¹⁴

The Army is clear about its values and expects a leader to live and uphold the Army Values. Personal and organizational values limit what a leader is willing to do in a moral and ethical sense. Values influence how leaders determine what is Best.

An oath is an obligation to act in a certain way. It is a voluntary commitment to do something--a binding promise. For instance, when an officer takes an oath, he raises his hand to swear "true faith and allegiance." The oath does not entail obedience without thought or principle. However, the oath makes obedience and loyalty the default decision of subordinates. By oath, a leader willingly puts boundaries in place that affect his choices. The Oath of Enlistment and Oath of Office are pledges that bind and limit how an Army leader should act and behave. When making a choice of what is Best, a leader must account for his oaths.

Since consequences may limit a leader's choice, leaders should consider the possible outcome of their choices.¹⁵ Every decision has a consequence--the "effect, result, or outcome"¹⁶ of any choice. It can be good or bad, large or small, short-lived or long lasting, and so forth. Nathan Collier adds that a "good decision can have either a good or a bad outcome . . . a bad decision . . . can still have a good outcome."¹⁷ In addition, a good outcome for one leader may be bad for another. An outcome may be immediate, long-term, or both. In terms of choice, the effects will be both. A choice can also have far-reaching effects. As for consequences, there is no way to tell for sure what each will be or become. Once a leader makes a choice, the outcome will affect her choices that follow. A leader must use good judgment when she weighs the effects of her choice because it will likely affect others. Therefore, how a leader views a consequence should be a limiting factor of choice.

Perhaps a leader may view limits as a restriction of what he can do. However, limits can guide "good" behavior and build character, both of which are good and desirable. Intent, situation, values, oaths, and consequences can be good, but at least

are necessary limits to choose what is Best. Moreover, a leader should consider other factors that are relevant. Such factors may include facts, assumptions, and the opinion of others to help inform what is Best. Critical choices are rarely simple and require more effort than just choosing between good and bad or right and wrong. The process of choosing can be complex. How does a leader decide?

Critical Choice

In choosing Best, there are many ways to think through a matter and make a choice. Problem solving and decision-making are each processes to make a choice. Robert Harris views decision-making as "the study of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of the decision maker."¹⁸ Critical Choice is a process to acquire, assess, and use information to reduce uncertainty and doubt to choose Best. Decision-making is a recursive process. As such, it is iterative.¹⁹ That is not to say the process will always lead to a clear choice. However, it is a means to make a reasoned and informed choice with sound judgment.

Critical Choice is an extension of critical thinking. Dictionary.com defines critical thinking as "disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence."²⁰ The site adds that the term "critical" involves "skillful judgment as to truth, merit, etc."²¹ However, there is more to critical thinking than a simple dictionary definition. Dr. Stephen J. Gerras sees critical thinking is a means to give "purposeful, reflective, and careful evaluation of information."²² He adds, "Critical thinking is about improving one's judgment."²³ Critical thinking is not always about making a decision. Its purpose may be to gain greater insight in a matter or subject. While it can be a means to make a decision, the main purpose is to improve judgment.

There is no universal process for either decision-making or critical thinking. Yet, both processes share common factors that are close enough to combine. "Critical Choice" is a means to make a purposeful decision when a gap exists between intent and what a leader deems is Best. In this case, the purpose is to inform sound judgment and choose what is Best. Critical Choice is also recursive. A leader should review each part repeatedly until she determines and accepts Best. A leader can and should approach her choice of Best in a "clear, rational, open-minded, and informed"²⁴ way. Critical Choice reflects the "decisive importance with respect to the outcome."²⁵ Choosing Best can be complex and have great implications such that Critical Choice makes good sense. Critical Choice is a five-part process of issue, informing, options, assessment, and choice.

Issue

The first thing for a leader to consider is whether there is an issue or choice to make. This is the reason for Critical Choice in the first place. A clear choice needs no more thought by the definition of "clear" above. However, an unclear choice requires a critical look to at least find Best; clarity if possible. A leader must determine if the issue is worth his effort. He may not get to the best choice until thinking through the process, but may decide upfront there can or should be something better. He may ask himself if it matters. If it does not, then there should be no effort and the choice becomes clear to leave the matter alone. Yet, if it does matter, he takes the next step toward making the Best choice.

Informing

Informing amounts to considering what is important, worthwhile, and useful to the leader and the issue. The amount of information can be overwhelming. A leader must

be careful to consider only what is useful. A leader examines factors that bear on the issue. These include such things as facts, assumptions, points of view, and the limits within which she has to choose. The leader must decide what she needs and how to get it. Informed with these things, she begins to form options.

Options

Options are the portfolio of choices available. Developing options involves sorting through and making sense of all things in the informing stage. Options are possible decisions a leader could live with. A leader tempers each option with reason and judgment based on what he knows through informing. Options should be distinct and have meaning as alternatives. The number of options is not as important as having options. Options give a leader something to assess.

Assessment

Assessment is a means to evaluate, weigh, and compare options. A leader should at least assess the potential risk, tension, conflict, and consequence that may be part of his ultimate choice. At this stage, if a leader is not ready to choose, she may return to informing and relook or adjust her options. If so, another assessment is necessary. Assessment must continue until the leader is ready to choose or must make a choice. Key questions at this point of the process may be: "Is there a best?", "What is best?", or "Does it matter?" There may not be a clear answer despite the course of informing, weighing options, and assessing. Perhaps there is nothing better than the status quo. Even if the result is to do nothing, going through the process can settle the leader's mind. If a leader is still uncertain, she should return to the informing stage to relook intent, limits, and other factors. In turn, she may consider other options that bring her back to the assess stage.

Choice

When the time is right, the fifth and final part of the process is to choose. The right time comes when a leader can accept and live with the choice he makes. In his heart and mind, his choice is Best.

Figure 1 depicts the process of Critical Choice. The start point is an unclear choice. A leader works through the informing, options, and assessment stages until she can see what is Best. She chooses and acts on her choice when she can accept and live it. If she is still unsure after making an assessment, she returns to the informing stage to rethink. She repeats this cycle until she chooses Best. Figure 1 shows this as a linear process (flow chart) to form a mental picture of the process.

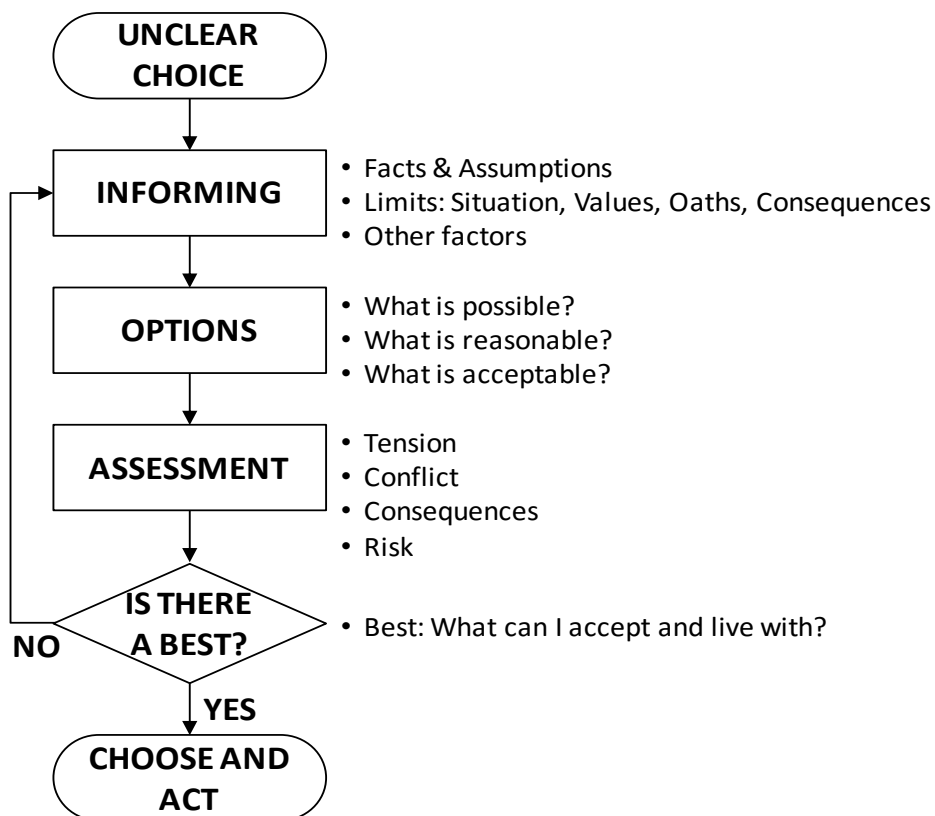


Figure 1. Critical Choice

Another way to picture the cycle of informing, options, and assessment is in Figure 2. Here, the three stages interact like the graphical depiction of an atom. This shows that the relationship between the three stages is not always linear. As ADRP 6-22 suggests, leaders must often "juggle facts, questionable data, and intuitive feelings to arrive at a quality decision."²⁶ In Figure 2, each stage informs choice through constant interaction. Within each stage are other internal interactions. The dashed callout in Figure 2 shows the orbiting interactions of limits that are part of the informing stage.

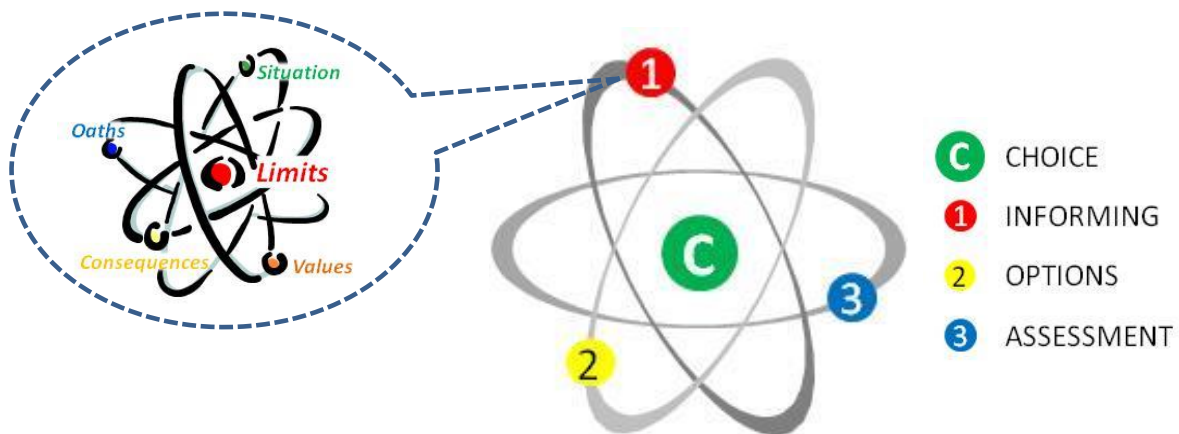


Figure 2. Interactions

Consider the process of Critical Choice in a scenario. In this situation, a leader from one of the brigade's subordinate battalions reports for duty as the Brigade Staff Duty Officer (SDO). One of the SDO's tasks during his tour of duty is to inspect one of three battalion motor pools and check that all vehicles are locked and secure. The SDO decides to check his battalion's motor pool. As he inspects the vehicles, he finds that several are unsecure. He notifies his battalion to secure the vehicles. Later, before his duty ends, the SDO returns to the motor pool to recheck the vehicles. He finds that the same vehicles remained unsecure. He notifies the battalion again with the assurance

the vehicles will be secured. At the end of his duty, the SDO begins to complete his duty log. The Brigade SDO instructions direct SDOs to record any violations to Brigade policy in their duty log. Unsecured vehicles are a violation to policy. The SDO wonders whether to report the violations he found in his battalion's motor pool. Does he report the violations and expose his battalion?

The choice for the SDO in this case is unclear to him. He knows that according to brigade policy (intent), he should record the violations he found in his battalion's motor pool. Yet, he feels that he should be loyal to his unit and not report the violations. He reasons that the vehicles are secure by now and no one else knows about the violations anyway. He has a conflict between his sense of duty and loyalty. If he chooses duty over loyalty, the Intent Gap is small and the choice to record the violation is clear. Yet, if loyalty to his unit comes first, the gap between duty and loyalty creates tension and conflict for the leader relative to intent.

He considers the situation using the Critical Choice process. The Intent Gap is a result of conflict between his value limits of duty and loyalty. In addition, considering limits during informing, he finds a conflict within the value of loyalty. Should he be loyal first to his brigade or battalion? He also thinks about the consequences. What would be the outcome if he reports the violations? What would be the outcome for him if he does or not? The issue for the SDO is whether to report the violations. He considers the intent and the values of duty and loyalty (informing) with the possible consequences (limits). He forms three possible options: 1) do nothing, 2) record the violations and tell his battalion chain of command, 3) not record the violations and tell his battalion. He assesses each option weighing the values in conflict and the consequences. He judges

each option and the consequences against intent and his values and oath as an officer. His values and oaths inform his judgment, which contributes to an ability to determine possible courses of action and decide what action to take.²⁷ If a consequence aligns with his values, he will likely accept it (clear). He makes a choice. What is Best in this case? What is Best depends on the leader.²⁸

This example reveals another significant factor that leaders need to consider--a hierarchy of values. Our values exist in a hierarchy. When they conflict, we tend to choose the higher one. In this case, duty and loyalty conflicted. Even within the seven Army Values, a leader may have to rank order each at some point to make a choice. Which value takes precedent? The SDO also felt tension within one value when he had to consider whether loyalty to the brigade or his battalion came first. The first sentence defining the Army Value of loyalty states a Soldier will "bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and other Soldiers."²⁹ What does a leader do when any one of the values appears to conflict with another? In a similar case, Milburn believes there are times when "a military officer is not only justified but also obligated to disobey a legal order."³⁰ He sees the tipping point between the "customary obligation to obey and his moral obligation to dissent."³¹ For Milburn, an officer must choose one of two obligations. A leader may consider the obligations in this example as the value of "duty" or "integrity."

A leader with more than one set of values is apt to face a similar conflict. Consider the potential clash of personal values and the Army Values. Which take precedent? Deep-rooted personal values may be most important to a leader. To the Army, a leader should put Army Values ahead of personal ones based on the oath she

took to join the Army. ADRP 6-22 states an "officer's responsibility as a public servant is first to the nation, then to the Army, and then to the unit and Soldiers."³² It adds,

Personal values inevitably extend beyond the Army Values, including such things as political, cultural, or religious beliefs. However, as an Army leader and a person of integrity, these values should reinforce, not contradict, the Army Values. Conflicts between personal and Army Values should be resolved before a leader can expect to become a morally complete Army leader.³³

The message from this statement is that the Army Values come ahead of all others for an Army leader. That is what the Army expects.³⁴ Therefore, living the Army Values is also an obligation (oath). However, leaders must be aware that personal values and the Army Values may conflict. When this happens, it is not an easy choice.

In addition, the hierarchy of values is not static. A leader cannot assume that living the Army Values is enough. At times, she will have to put one value ahead of another due to the situation. As an example, for one choice, she may put duty ahead of loyalty while at another time put loyalty first. Changing the order does not mean she cannot decide, but does mean factors change from issue to issue. She must be aware that values are not equal at all times.

Limits exist in a hierarchy too. What does a leader put first: values, oaths, or consequences? Decisions of this kind involve moral and ethical dilemmas, which are not easy to sort out. Army leadership doctrine reminds leaders that ethical choices "may be between right and wrong, shades of gray, or two rights. Some problems center on an issue requiring special considerations of what is most ethical."³⁵ A leader should use various perspectives to think about ethical concerns. When doing so, a leader considers virtues such as courage, justice, and compassion, and the consequences of choice on whatever produces the greatest good for the greatest number.³⁶ The hierarchy of values

or limits means that a leader needs to be aware that what is Best now may not be Best the next time. He will have to proceed through the Critical Choice process again and again. However, with Critical Choice, a leader can make and live with his Best choice.

Summary

The Army trains its leaders how to think, not what to think. Yet, the Army also puts limits on thinking such as intent within mission command. Leaders make choices and issue their own intent and orders, as they understand the commander's intent and orders (disciplined initiative). In addition, the Army puts moral limits in place to guide thought and behavior. According to Army doctrine, the Army Values are essential "principles, standards, and qualities"³⁷ to make sound decisions. In this sense, values inform judgment. Within these limits, choice would seem to be clear and simple. Yet, a leader with the freedom to think, judge, and act will likely view what is best differently than his boss. An Intent Gap may occur even within the limits set to minimize a gap. The smaller the gap, the clearer the choice. Unclear choices involve larger gaps that require a critical choice. This paper offers Critical Choice as a means for a leader to choose what is Best. From the time a leader determines there is a choice to make until he makes it, he considers key factors, such as values, and forms options to assess. During the informing, options, and assess phases, a leader must cope with the tension and conflict posed by competing values and other factors. A hierarchy of values or other factors is a challenging, yet necessary aspect of choice and to choose what is Best. A leader then makes a Best choice. Best is an informed, reasoned choice a leader can live with.

Recommendations

As the Army trains its leaders how to think, it must cope with the natural tensions that will arise while choosing what is Best. Two tensions deserve attention. The first involves the concept of critical thinking. Do leaders know how to think critically or how to recognize it? What is the Army's definition? Another factor is that critical thought may take the leader outside of the limits mission command allows. One example of this is the Intent Gap. Leaders should be aware of the gap and think about how to deal with it. Second, tension will occur when values compete within a hierarchy. For example, does or should a leader place personal values ahead of the Army Values? Should an Army leader put Army Values first in a Joint environment? How does a leader separate values within a set of values such as loyalty? These questions arise from tension due to hierarchy. Other tensions may also arise from the many factors that are common to complex matters. However, in terms of choosing Best, the following recommendations will focus on the concept of critical thought and a hierarchy of values.

The Army Leader Development Strategy states that leaders must "be able to think critically."³⁸ What is critical thinking? How does a leader do it? There are many ways to define and practice critical thinking. However, the Army does not espouse any in particular. ADRP 6-22, Army Leadership, refers to a leader as a critical thinker 16 times.³⁹ However, it states that critical thinking is "no longer a formally defined term."⁴⁰ The manual's section on Mental Agility includes aspects of critical thinking, but gives it short shrift.⁴¹ Simply stating that a leader should be a critical thinker will not make it so. Without defining what critical thinking is, how do leaders know they are doing it? The Army can shape understanding and expectation by defining the term and giving leaders a clearer sense of how to think critically. By comparison, leadership is a common term

with many meanings and descriptions in and out of the Army. Yet, rather than simply stating that leaders should exhibit good leadership, Army doctrine defines and describes the term for leaders to learn, practice, and model. The Army does not necessarily need a manual of critical thinking. However, it should at least define the term so leaders can learn, practice, and model critical thinking.

Understanding the concept of critical thinking is important for a leader to be aware of Intent Gaps. Consider mission command and the concept of disciplined initiative. In this case, a commander expects a subordinate leader to act within her intent to do what is best for the organization. However, a critical thinker may find that Best lies outside the limits imposed by intent. Otherwise, the leader may not have the choice of what is Best. The Army needs to allow leaders to think critically and apply good judgment. As such, Army doctrine should define critical thinking and acknowledge the tension that may arise due to a leader's choice.

The hierarchy of values reveals another form of tension. Personal values and the Army Values may conflict in the heart and mind of a leader. When this happens, what should a leader do? Army doctrine states, "By taking an oath to serve the Nation and the institution, an Army professional agrees to live and act by a new set of values--Army Values."⁴² While this may be true, some will still find it hard to put aside personal values in favor of the Army Values. How will a leader cope with a situation like this? As well, what about the priority for a leader who serves in a Joint assignment or operation? For this reason, Army doctrine should be more forthright about a hierarchy of values. Doctrine should address how a critical thinker can and should respond to the urge to subordinate Army Values.

A hierarchy of values may also arise within a set of values like the Army Values. The example above looked at the dilemma faced by the Brigade SDO. Army doctrine should not rank order the Army Values. Yet, it could present case studies and offer guidelines for leaders to ponder. Doctrine can inform leaders how to think through issues that involve tension from a hierarchy of values. The above recommendations serve to identify a start point. Adjusting Army doctrine is an important and necessary first step to inform both the institutional domain that trains and educates leaders and leaders who self develop.

Conclusion

Choosing what is Best is a Critical Choice for a leader. A leader who can accept and adapt to change, be agile, and think and judge with reason can define and choose what is Best. Mission command aims at an ideal of well-aligned intent and outcome where commander and leader think and view things alike. Thus, the ideal outcome would be for a leader to do what is best--a best that matches what his boss wants. Is this the right ideal? Perhaps instead, it is a boss who accepts the choice of an agile, adaptive, and thoughtful leader who chooses Best.

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Department of the Army, *Mission Command*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, May 2012), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 2-11.

³ *Ibid.*, 1-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2-19.

⁵ Dictionary.com, "Gap," <http://dictionary.reference.com/> (accessed February 13, 2014).

⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *Mission Command*, ADP 6-0, 4.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, August 2012), 3-6.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Frederick Olison, *Building and Understanding Trust Relationships* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2012), 16.

¹¹ Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.

¹² U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, ADRP 6-22, 11-6.

¹³ Ibid., 3-1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 5-2.

¹⁶ Dictionary.com, "Consequence," <http://dictionary.reference.com/> (accessed February 13, 2014).

¹⁷ Nathan S. Collier, "The Importance of Being a Good Follower," *NSCBlog*, 1, <http://www.nscblog.com/miscellaneous/the-importance-of-being-a-good-follower/> (accessed October 25, 2013).

¹⁸ Robert Harris, "Introduction to Decision Making, Parts 1 &2," June 9, 2013, 1, <http://virtualsalt.com/crebook5.htm> (accessed January 18, 2014).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Dictionary.com, "Critical Thinking," <http://dictionary.reference.com/> (accessed January 18, 2014).

²¹ Dictionary.com, "Critical," <http://dictionary.reference.com/> (accessed February 15, 2014).

²² Stephen J. Gerras, "Thinking Critically about Critical Thinking: A Fundamental Guide for Strategic Leaders," in *Planner's Handbook for Operations Design*, Version 1.0 (Suffolk, VA: Joint Staff, J-7, October 7, 2011), C-3.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Dictionary.com, "Critical."

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, ADRP 6-22, 5-2.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Perhaps the SDO learns that next time he should inspect another battalion's motor pool.

²⁹ *Army Values Home Page*, <http://www.army.mil/values/index.html> (accessed January 11, 2014).

³⁰ Andrew R. Milburn, "Breaking Ranks - Dissent and the Military Professional," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 59 (4th Quarter 2010): 101.

³¹ Ibid.

³² U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, ADRP 6-22, 2-1.

³³ Ibid., 3-3.

³⁴ Ibid., 3-1.

³⁵ Ibid., 3-7.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 3-1.

³⁸ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2013), <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/CAL/repository/ALDS5June%202013Record.pdf> (accessed January 18, 2014), 3.

³⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, ADRP 6-22.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Introductory Table-2. Modified Army terms, vi.

⁴¹ Ibid., 5-1.

⁴² U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, ADRP 6-22, 3-1.