Mission Command: Challenges to Implementation and Institutionalization in the Army

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Mission Command: Challenges to Implementation and Institutionalization in the Army

> We are living the principles of mission command in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet these principles have not yet been made institutional in our doctrine and in our training. They do not pervade the force.

> —General Martin E. Dempsey[1]

Mission command is the philosophy of command that Army commanders and leaders must use to lead Soldiers and units in the 21st Century. While first conceptually introduced in 1982 with the publication of Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*, the U.S. Army did not officially adopt the new doctrinal term and evolved doctrinal concept of mission command until 2003 with the publication of FM 6-0, *Mission Command*.[2] Despite the fact that mission command has been officially integrated into its doctrine and vernacular for over a decade, the Army still has yet to completely implement and institutionalize it. Specifically, the Army has not yet fully assimilated the philosophy of mission command into its overarching culture, fostered widespread unit climates that engender it, incorporated it into its training methodologies, developed a personnel management system that encourages and rewards it, and employed it consistently in both deployed and garrison environments.[3]

The overarching reason for these challenges to the implementation and institutionalization of mission command is the Army's inadequate ability to create and sustain major change and truly transform over the past 10 years. Inextricably linked to this shortcoming are the Army's deep-seated and entrenched culture, its inconsistent unit climates, its hierarchical and rigid organizational structure, its intensely bureaucratic processes, its dated training approaches, and its suboptimal personnel management systems. The effective examination of this problem, therefore, requires the use of a

proven model for organizational change. As such, it is useful to apply Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change from his book, *Leading Change*, to better comprehend and analyze the Army's inability to wholly implement and institutionalize mission command.[4]

The purpose of this paper, then, is three-fold. First, it will attempt to define and describe mission command, explain its relevance in the current operational environment, review its origins, and depict its doctrinal and operational evolution. Second, primarily using Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change and supplemented by ideas from notable organizational theorists such as Senge, Hill, and Schein, this paper will endeavor to explain why challenges to the full implementation and institutionalization of mission command still exist. Lastly, once again using Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change, this paper will propose solutions and recommendations to Army senior leaders as to what should be done to overcome these challenges and, thereby, achieve full implementation and institutionalization.

<div align="center">What is Mission Command?</div>

Mission Command Defined and Described

Mission command is not a new concept for the U.S. Army. Traditionally, army commanders have used variants of two basic models of command: mission command and detailed command. While each concept has its utility, the basic nature of military operations and the trends of military history indicate that mission command is the optimal of the two.[5] Mission command has actually been the U.S. Army's preferred method for exercising command and control since 1982, with the publication of FM 100-5, *Operations*, and the concurrent introduction of AirLand Battle doctrine.[6]

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command*, defines mission command as "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."[7] Moreover, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*, defines mission command as "the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based upon mission-type orders."[8] This philosophy of command assists commanders in leveraging the human capacity to make independent decisions and then act on those decisions to develop the situation and achieve the intent of the commander as well as the desired end state. Mission command hinges on centralized intent and decentralized execution, through disciplined initiative, to achieve mission accomplishment. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0 captures the salient points of mission command best when it states,

> Mission command concentrates on the objective of an operation, not how to achieve it. Commanders provide subordinates with their intent, the purpose of the operation, the key tasks, the desired end state, and resources. Subordinates then exercise disciplined initiative to respond to unanticipated problems. Mission command is based on mutual trust and shared understanding and purpose. It demands every Soldier be prepared to assume responsibility, maintain unity of effort, take prudent action, and act resourcefully within the commander's intent.[9]

Mission command is much more than just the simple use of mission-type orders. Rather, comprehensive mission command doctrine encompasses three notions: the exercise of mission command, the mission command philosophy, and the mission command warfighting function.[10] First, the exercise of mission command denotes an all-encompassing concept that joins the mission command philosophy and the mission command warfighting function. This notion specifically relates to the actions that leaders take to implement mission command. Second, the mission command philosophy relates

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to commanders, aided by their staffs, using the principles of mission command to balance the art of command with the science of control. This second notion deals particularly with climate and cultural issues in that it is inextricably linked to an ideal shared belief among leaders and Soldiers that represent the empowerment assumptions of mission command. This is the main focus of this paper. Finally, the mission command warfighting function comprises the myriad tasks and a mission command system that support a commander's ability to exercise authority and direction.[11] This warfighting function assists commanders in integrating and synchronizing operations. In other words, this notion deals with the bureaucratic processes that support and facilitate the exercise of mission command by leaders.

Furthermore, commanders are steered by the following six principles when exercising mission command: build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide a clear commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risk.[12] First, mutual trust is collective confidence among commanders, subordinates, and partners. Successful commanders build unified teams through interpersonal relationships in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Second, commanders and their staffs work diligently to create and achieve a collective understanding of the operational environment, the purpose of and problems related to the operation, and methods for solving these problems. The effective creation of shared understanding leads to unity of effort and trust. Third, a well-formulated commander's intent clearly articulates the reason for the operation, as well as the desired end state. It also specifies the boundaries within which subordinates can exercise disciplined initiative to achieve unity of effort and mission accomplishment. Fourth, disciplined

initiative involves subordinate actions in the absence of orders, when current orders are no longer suitable to the situation or when unanticipated opportunities or threats surface. An effective commander's intent clearly describes the limits in which subordinates can exercise disciplined initiative. Fifth, mission orders are "directives that emphasize to subordinates the results to be attained, not how they are to achieve them." These types of orders strive to encourage individual initiative and provide subordinates with maximum freedom of action in achieving mission accomplishment. Lastly, accepting prudent risk entails commanders making decisions, due to the uncertainty of military operations, which result in a measured exposure to possible injury or loss. The key here, however, is that the commander determines that mission accomplishment is worth the potential cost or risk.[13]

Why Mission Command?

The latest evolution of the mission command philosophy is highly relevant and very applicable today for two primary reasons: the timeless nature of military operations and the current (and anticipated future) operational environment. The former relates to the age-old fact that military operations are complicated, human endeavors comprising contests of will and involving continuous and mutual adaptation by all participants.[14] The latter conveys the idea that Army forces now, and in the foreseeable future, will continue to conduct operations in complex, ever-changing, and uncertain environments.[15] It is worthwhile to explore these two issues in more depth to better set the stage for the need for the Army to create major change and transform.

Since antiquity, military operations have innately been human endeavors characterized by complexity, confusion, and adaptation. Carl von Clausewitz summarized war best when he stated, "No other human activity is so continuously or

universally bound up with chance."[16] Military operations involve back-and-forth

exchanges and interactions among all participants. For instance, the enemy is not an

inert or passive force. It has its own objectives and will seek to impose its will on friendly

forces while friendly forces strive to do the same to it. Moreover, the unpredictability of

human behavior also significantly affects the course and outcome of operations. The

impacts of this unpredictability apply equally to thinking and adaptive enemies, friendly

forces, and even civilian populations. The innumerable permutation of myriad human

factors that impact military operations result in friction, confusion, and unpredictable

outcomes. As a result, it is critical that Army commanders and subordinates learn and

grow from prior experiences, foresee change, and cultivate adaptability so that they are

able to conduct operations better than their opponents.[17] The full implementation and

institutionalization of mission command will facilitate this.

Additionally, Army forces will continue to conduct operations in complex, ever-

changing, and uncertain environments. The National Security Strategy, National

Defense Strategy, Defense Strategic Guidance, and National Military Strategy all

describe the future operational environment as exhibiting characteristics such as

volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, rising technological change, and interaction

with resolute and adapting adversaries.[18] This uncertainty and complexity, by its very

nature, requires forces that "can operate in a decentralized manner consistent with the

concept of mission command." Dispersed, networked, and highly adaptive enemies are

the norm in today's operational environment. This trend will continue into the

foreseeable future.[19]

In his mission command white paper, General Dempsey writes,

> Our fight against a decentralized enemy has driven home the necessity to decentralize our capabilities and distribute our operations. Smaller units enabled to conduct decentralized operations at the tactical level with operational/strategic implications will increasingly be the norm.[20]

He goes on to depict a future environment in which small, light, and agile forces operate in an atmosphere of increased ambiguity and difficulty that necessitates the autonomy of junior leaders to take action to develop the situation and take advantage of fleeting opportunities. Moreover, the current and emerging operational environment will inherently continue to decrease time available for decision making while simultaneously increasing in uncertainty and complexity. These conditions clearly do not mesh well with centralized decision making and tightly controlled unit operations.[21] General Dempsey also alludes to the implications of the implementation and institutionalization of mission command in his white paper when he argues, "Decentralization will occur beyond current comfort levels and habits of practice."[22] In light of all of this, the Army must strive to fully implement and institutionalize mission command to better enable commanders to exercise authority and direction over their forces, decentralize authority, foster initiative, and prevail and win in any environment.

This latest evolution of mission command, therefore, is different than previous ones. It requires not only significant changes in how commanders and leaders operate and communicate; but, more importantly, it necessitates changes in areas such as organizational culture, unit climate, hierarchical structure, operating procedures, training approaches, and personnel management systems.

Historical Origins of Mission Command

The most prominent present-day western armies have embraced the historical concept of *Auftragstaktik* (mission command) as a successful reaction to the challenges

ensuing from modern warfare.[23] The U.S. Army is no different. As previously mentioned mission command is an evolved concept and has been the Army's preferred style for exercising command since 1982. It traces its roots back to the aforementioned Prussian-German Army concept of *Auftragstaktik*, loosely translated to mean "mission-type tactics."[24] It is useful, then, to explore the origins of mission command in more depth to better serve as a backdrop for the forthcoming discussion on the Army's inability to fully implement and institutionalize it.

The origins of mission command are typically tracked back to the reforms introduced into the Prussian Army following its humbling defeat at Jena and Auerstädt in 1806. At that time, Prussian leaders determined that the inflexible and machine-like traditional army was unable to prevail against Napoleonic warfare; the enhanced size, composition, and tactics of more modern armies; and new technological advancements in warfare. *Auftragstaktik* emphasized decentralized leadership and embraced a philosophy that demanded and enabled initiative at all levels of command involved in actions on the battlefield.[25] This concept decreed that all German commissioned officers and noncommissioned officers were obligated to do anything that the situation required, within the parameters of the commander's intent, to accomplish the mission and achieve the desired end state.[26] Initiative, critical thinking, and innovation were paramount to this concept of command. The agent of change came in the form of Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder.

Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder did much to entrench mission command in the Prussian-German military culture during his tenure as the Prussian, and then German, Chief of Staff from 1857 to 1888. Moltke firmly believed that

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commanders should delineate mission objectives and desired end states, provide

resources, and then leave the rest to subordinate leaders. Junior leaders would, in turn,

use initiative, innovation, and determination to accomplish the desired objective within

the commander's intent. Subordinates were viewed as competent individuals who were

empowered and expected to make independent decisions. *Auftragstaktik*, therefore,

was not just a methodology for dispensing and distributing orders; rather, it was a type

of leadership and a philosophy for command.[27]

    Auftragstaktik was further embedded into the culture of the Prussian-German

Army through its total integration into doctrine, training, education, and daily practice.

Specifically, the establishment of the Prussian-German general staff charged solely with

war planning, research, and the education of officers did much to professionalize the

army and reinforce cultural underpinnings. Also, the founding of the *Kriegsakademie*, a

school for general staff officers, further cultivated an environment that favored mission

command. This prestigious school rapidly became the military intellectual center and

was charged with devising new ideas and then proliferating them throughout the army.[28]

    Moltke's revolutionary thoughts on military communications and orders also did a

great deal to enhance the concept of mission command. For instance, he directed that

concise and clear written orders be issued to corps and divisions but that battalions and

companies would only be issued verbal orders. Moltke also expounded on the benefits

of decentralized decision making, delegation of authority, and independent action based

on subordinate leader judgment, since the evolution of modern warfare at the time no

longer permitted commanders to see the entire battlefield, and implemented these

concepts deeply into training. Lastly, Moltke implemented an effective and innovative

personnel management system that, among other things, required officers to serve in other branches for a certain amount of time, expected officers to be able to accomplish the duties of their supervisors, and rewarded officers based on merit through performance and proven abilities.[29]

Clearly, *Auftragstaktik* became more than merely a method of command. Rather, it became a lifestyle of Prussian-German military officers for over one hundred years. This is an important distinction to note because it provides some significant insight into comprehending why the Army has encountered difficulties in its attempts to fully implement and institutionalize mission command.[30]

Evolution and Adoption of Mission Command in the U.S. Army

As previously mentioned, mission command is an evolved concept and has been the U.S. Army's preferred style for exercising command since 1982, with the publication of FM 100-5, *Operations*. However, the Army did not officially adopt the new doctrinal term and evolved doctrinal concept of mission command until 2003 with the publication of FM 6-0, *Mission Command*.[31] A brief examination of the evolution of mission command in Army doctrine, as well as a summary of the Army's first deliberate attempts to adopt mission command as a philosophy of command in the 1970s and 1980s, is beneficial, then, and provides some relevant background and valuable insights that will prove useful for later analysis.

The Army's first combined arms manuals, called Field Service Regulations (FSR), contained words, such as "freedom of action" and "initiative," that signaled the initial beginnings of the notion of mission command but did not dedicate a specific section to the topic nor emphasize it as a topic of any significance.[32] This was generally the case for all FSRs published from 1905 to 1941, a critical period in our nation's

history, which included World War I and the inter-war period. This is not surprising, however, considering that World War I largely evolved to static trench warfare that emphasized centralized control, concentration of forces, and the massing of firepower. Moreover, the inter-war period was generally characterized by a return to U.S. isolationism, so it is not surprising that army doctrine did not evolve, innovation was non-existent, and the Army did not really strive to prepare for the next conflict.

Subsequent manuals began to include more language associated with mission command. For example, various versions of FM 100-5, *Operations*, published between 1944 and 1954, included language related to the importance of initiative, innovation, mutual understanding, and decentralization, but once again failed to dedicate a specific section to mission command or to emphasize it as a topic of any significance.[33] The 1962 version of FM 100-5, *Operations*, was significant in that it included the first mention and description of mission-type orders. The 1968 version of FM 100-5 further reinforced the concept of mission orders.

Albeit a bit improved, it is still disconcerting to notice that, once again, during a critical time in our nation's history, which included World War II, the Korean War, and the initial years of the Vietnam War, that Army doctrine and practice still did not reflect a penchant for or emphasis on mission command as a philosophy of command. This is not completely unexpected, however, considering that World War II, despite its sheer magnitude and breadth, still fundamentally emphasized centralized control, concentration of forces, and the massing of firepower. Admittedly, there are some exceptions to this, such as the actions performed by U.S. paratroopers and glider troops following the airborne assaults preceding the Normandy invasion in June 1944. The

same could be generally said of the Korean War. Also, despite the dispersion of units and preponderance of small unit actions during the Vietnam War, one could argue that those operations were centrally controlled and relied heavily on the concentration of firepower only achieved through constant communications with and approvals from higher headquarters. As such, one can see why Army mission command doctrine and practice did not evolve extensively during this time.

The Army's first deliberate attempts to adopt mission command came in the 1970s and 1980s as part of multiple reforms resulting from the failures of the Vietnam War, a renewed focus on the Soviet threat, and the development of new, revolutionary doctrine.[34] Ironically enough, however, the 1976 version of FM 100-5 did much to revert the progression of the adoption of mission command as a philosophy of command. It emphasized centralized control of operations and concentration of fire and maneuver and only included one insignificant paragraph related to mission command.[35]

Fortunately, the publication of the 1982 version of FM 100-5 quickly reversed this negative momentum and finally brought with it a breakthrough in the evolution of mission command and other new doctrine. Specifically, this manual introduced the concept of AirLand Battle, which emphasized flexibility, mobility, and agility, as opposed to static attrition of the enemy, and also finally contained language encompassing all components of mission command (i.e. initiative, mission orders, commander's intent, and decentralization). The 1986 version of this doctrinal publication further reinforced the tenets of mission command and AirLand Battle and also included an emphasis on attacking the enemy's operational center of gravity by massing combat power against it. Moreover, the 1993 version of FM 100-5 was the first to include a formal definition of

commander's intent, yet another breakthrough in advancing the implementation of mission command as the Army's philosophy of command. However, despite these doctrinal advances, the Army was still unable to fully adopt and implement mission command due to its continued lack of clarity as to what it entailed and an entrenched culture that emphasized concentration of combat power, centralized control, and rigid procedures.[36]

The 2001 version of FM 100-5, *Operations*, was the first manual to discuss and define all critical elements of mission command.[37] However, despite the efforts of the authors, confusion over mission command was still rampant throughout the Army, as evidenced by the publication of a separate manual devoted solely to mission command just two years later.[38] Specifically, in 2003, FM 6-0, *Mission Command*, finally brought all mission command concepts, principles, and definitions together under the official doctrinal term of mission command.[39]

Since then, subsequent editions of ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, and ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command*, have not altered the basic ideas contained in the aforementioned FM 6-0. However, more than a decade later, the Army is still struggling with the concept of mission command. It is evident, then, that the Army's inability to accurately define mission command for almost one hundred years, embed it firmly in doctrine for over three decades, and formally adopt it into common practice in over a decade has significantly contributed to its inability to fully implement and institutionalize it.

Challenges to the Implementation and Institutionalization of Mission Command

Kotter's Eight-Stage Process for Creating Major Change, Senge, Hill, and Schein

Eitan Shamir suggested that "mission command is a complex, elusive, and multifaceted phenomenon, not easily quantified, measured, or institutionalized."[40] As

such, even though mission command has been formally integrated into its doctrine and vernacular, the U.S. Army still has yet to completely implement it and institutionalize it. The most significant obstacle confronting the Army in this endeavor is its inability to create major change and transform over the past 11 years. It is useful to apply Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change to better comprehend and analyze the Army's inability to wholly implement and institutionalize mission command.

In his book, *Leading Change*, Kotter offers a framework for creating major change in organizations. The model he proposes includes the following eight stages: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing more change, and anchoring new approaches in the culture.[41] It is evident that the Army has not yet completed all eight stages of this process. The good news, though, is that it has commenced some of these stages, but only to varying degrees of proficiency. Despite these efforts, however, the Army still has yet to complete the preponderance of all eight stages of Kotter's process for creating major change.

Kotter also posits that there are eight errors common to organizational change efforts and that each of these errors is inherently linked to each stage of his process for creating major change. Kotter's proposed common errors include: allowing too much complacency, failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition, underestimating the power of vision, undercommunicating the vision by a factor of 10 (or 100 or even 1,000), permitting obstacles to block the new vision, failing to create short-term wins, declaring victory too soon, and neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate

culture. In its attempts to institutionalize mission command, the Army has committed all eight errors to varying degrees, the worst of which have been the following five: allowing too much complacency, failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition, permitting obstacles to block the new vision, declaring victory too soon, and neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture.[42]

Kotter's models will be the primary conduit used to help to understand the challenges surrounding the implementation and institutionalization of mission command in the Army. However, this study will be supplemented by the hypotheses of three other noted organizational theorists, specifically Senge, Hill, and Schein. First, a perspective on organizational learning provided by Peter M. Senge in his book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*, aids in better understanding the challenges to the institutionalization of mission command. Senge proposes a framework of five disciplines of learning organizations.[43] While the Army exhibits characteristics of all five, one could argue that two of them present unique challenges. These two will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Second, a perspective on leading innovative organizations provided by Andrew Hill in his working paper, *The Shock of the New: Innovation in Military Organizations*, also assists in better understanding the challenges to the implementation and institutionalization of mission command in the Army. Hill writes "innovation is not a scientific or technical problem; it is an organizational challenge." He posits that this is primarily due to the fact that militaries are bureaucracies that rely heavily on the standardization of procedures, organizations, systems, equipment, and training. Therefore, any innovation must be incorporated into all components of the military

organization and culture before it becomes a success. Hill's paper concentrates on how

military organizations respond to new ideas by providing three questions that are helpful

in understanding why militaries accept some innovative ideas and reject others.[44] These

three questions will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Lastly, Edgar Schein's notions of organizational culture prove significant to the

examination of the problem of mission command. Schein defined culture as:

> A pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it
> solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has
> worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to
> new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to
> those problems.[45]

Schein's ideas are helpful for understanding the cultural challenges involved in the

Army's institutionalization and implementation of mission command for two reasons.

First, they account for the differences between the daily cultural expressions in

organizations and their formal policies and regulations. Second, they depict the critical

role of leaders in effecting cultural change.[46] Schein also posited that culture consists of

three unique levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying

assumptions.[47] A study of these levels will help to further analyze the main problem.

Stage 1: Establishing a Sense of Urgency

For an organization to successfully complete the first stage of Kotter's process

for creating major change, it must accomplish two things. Specifically, the organization

must fully examine the market and competitive realities and identify and discuss crises,

potential crises, or major opportunities. Kotter posited that creating a sense of urgency

is essential to attaining necessary cooperation. High levels of complacency result in a

general lack of effort and interest in change. Low levels of urgency create a situation

where it is challenging to form a group with enough power to guide change or convince critical persons to invest the time to create and communicate a vision for change.[48]

While the Army has initiated this stage of Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change, it requires improvement in this step and also has yet to fully complete it. One could argue that Army senior leaders have visibly attempted to establish a sense of urgency for the need to adopt of mission command as the Army's philosophy of command. Specifically, they did so by effectively examining the current operating environment (market) and current and potential future enemies, adversaries, and competitors (competitive realities). Additionally, the Army has strived to identify and define its strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats as they relate to the current operational environment, ongoing crises, and potential crises.[49] All of these efforts are quite evident in numerous strategic guidance documents, Department of the Army (DA) publications, professional journals, doctrinal publications, and think pieces.

However, in the process of attempting to complete this stage, the Army has committed one of Kotter's eight errors common to organizational change efforts: allowing too much complacency. One could argue that, over the past few years, the Army has resisted complacency in deployed environments, and even while at combat training centers, but has accepted complacency in garrison. In fact, it is evident that the Army suffers, to varying degrees, from all nine sources of complacency proposed by Kotter.[50] First, "The absence of a major and visible crisis" is manifested in the successful completion of the war in Iraq, the approaching completion of the war in Afghanistan, and the successful elimination of Osama Bin Laden, thereby leaving the Army with no pending crisis or existential threat. Second, "Too many visible resources" is

demonstrated in the large operating budgets and seemingly never-ending contingency funds that the Army has enjoyed over the past decade of war. Third and fourth, "Low overall performance standards" and "a lack of sufficient performance feedback from external sources" can readily be seen in such things as the exorbitantly high promotion selection rates for officers and noncommissioned officers during the past decade, as the Army rapidly grew in size, as well as pervasive, near-perfect unit certifications during pre-deployment training as the Army rotated forces to combat theaters in rapid and recurring fashion.

Fifth, "Organizational structures that focus employees on narrow functional goals" are revealed in the Army's hierarchical and compartmentalized structure, exacerbated by extremely high optempo, resulting in a situation in which small units are solely focused on their specific responsibilities and higher level headquarters staff sections remain focused on their particular cylinder of excellence rather than greater unit objectives. Sixth, an excellent example of "internal measurement systems that focus on the wrong performance indexes" is clearly evident in recent conflicts as Army units focused on the number of Iraqi and Afghan soldiers and police they were able to generate rather than their quality and capability. Seventh, a "low-candor, low-confrontation culture," despite some recent improvements, has been in place in the Army since its inception.

Eighth, a good illustration of the impact of "human nature with its capacity for denial" on complacency is the Army's ability to declare victory in the Iraq War despite multiple failures throughout the initial campaign and ensuing stability and counterinsurgency operations as well as the current state of affairs and ongoing

violence in Iraq today. Lastly, "Too much happy talk from senior management" is undeniably exhibited through the largely positive public opinion of the Army and the abundant praise by many senior civilian and military leaders for the amount of resilience, innovation, and success that the Army has demonstrated throughout more than a decade of war.[51]

All of these above-mentioned factors, coupled with an organizational culture that largely expects immediate compliance and loyalty, could possibly lead Army senior leaders to believe that the mere act of putting mission command into doctrine and then communicating a vision about it will result in its immediate acceptance, implementation, and institutionalization. Kotter actually posited that leaders many times overestimate how much they can force significant change on an organization and underestimate how much their own actions can reinforce the old way of doing things.[52] Further contributing to this general complacency is a feeling across the Army that it is good at what it does, has proven itself in combat during a decade of war, and is effectively executing mission command now.[53]

Stage 2: Creating the Guiding Coalition

To complete the second stage of Kotter's process for creating major change, an organization must accomplish two things. Specifically, the organization must form a group with enough power to lead the change and then get that group to work together as a team. Kotter posited that no single individual, not even a powerful senior leader, can independently accomplish all eight stages of the process for creating major change. Rather, what is needed is a powerful "guiding coalition" with the correct composition, level of trust, and common goal.[54]

While the Army has also initiated this stage of Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change, this step still requires significant improvement and completion. Specifically, Army senior leaders did create an initial guiding coalition, but it was not as extensive, organized, and deliberate as required for the order of magnitude needed to fully implement and institutionalize mission command. Once again, the efforts of this initial coalition are evident in numerous strategic guidance documents, DA publications, professional journals, and doctrinal publications.

However, in the process of trying to complete this stage, the Army has committed another of Kotter's eight errors common to organizational change efforts: failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition.[55] Specifically, one could argue that the Army formed only an ad hoc, loosely organized, and all-encompassing group of very senior strategic leaders (almost exclusively general officers) with really only marginal power to lead and effect any change. Additionally, although the intent and desire were surely present, the Army did not make a deliberate or organized effort to get the group to work together as a team to advance pervasive change throughout the Army. As such, despite the fact that at least a marginal and relatively weak coalition is in place at the senior operational and strategic levels of the Army, this guiding coalition does not effectively extend down to brigade, battalion, and company level commanders. Arguably, at the tactical level, the inculcation and employment of mission command is inconsistent and largely based on personal leadership styles, command philosophies, and unit climates. This vital link to the tactical level is undeniably critical to the full implementation and institutionalization of mission command throughout the Army.

Stage 3: Developing a Vision and Strategy

        Kotter's process for creating major change includes two things that an organization must accomplish during the third stage. Specifically, the organization must create a vision to help guide the change effort and develop strategies for realizing that vision. Kotter posited that a good vision is essential to change because it clarifies the overall direction for change, inspires people to move in the right direction, and helps synchronize the actions of different people in an amazingly rapid and effective way. He also suggested that effective visions must be imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible, and communicable.[56]

        While the Army has also made efforts to initiate this phase of Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change, it still requires significant improvement in terms of vision but only slight improvement in regards to strategy. First, while the Army has attempted to produce an overarching, clear, and unified vision for the implementation and institutionalization of mission command as the preferred philosophy of command in the Army, it has still been largely unsuccessful in this endeavor. The Army Mission Command Strategy states,

> The Army has not fully implemented MC [mission command] because there is not uniform understanding of MC doctrine across the Army. The Army needs a common understanding and a shared vision across the operational and institutional forces to provide unity of effort for implementing MC.[57]

Army efforts to date are evident in the various strategic guidance documents, DA publications, professional journals, doctrinal publications, and think pieces that describe the future of mission command. The Army also established the Mission Command Center of Excellence (MCCoE) to ensure Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel,

Leader Development, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF) integration, but this is still not enough to ensure full implementation.[58]

Second, while the Army should be applauded for its efforts to deliberately produce a relatively good strategy for the implementation of mission command across the force, the strategy does leave a lot to be desired. Specifically, while the document effectively describes reasons for mission command and related strategic end states and objectives, only one of the strategic end states focuses on Army leader comprehension and practice of mission command. Moreover, this portion, which is arguably the most vital to the successful implementation and institutionalization of mission command in the Army, is the shortest in length of the three strategic end states and only reiterates what is already stated in ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, and ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command*. Moreover, the bulk of the document contains complex task matrices, that present no real utility to tactical level leaders, and a lengthy list of mission command capability requirements, which, once again, prove to be useless in support of the tangible and immediate implementation of mission command in deployed and garrison environments.[59]

Also, the mission command strategy largely emphasizes the implementation of mission command in operational units in deployed and training environments, relegating the instruction of mission command to the institutional force and not discussing the application of mission command across the force in garrison environments.[60] This is particularly problematic given that some experts have noticed senior leaders are, more than ever before, disposed to empower subordinates in combat, but these same leaders have a propensity to micromanage subordinates in garrison.[61] Moreover, no doctrinal

publications, strategy documents, or think pieces reveal exactly how to implement

mission command across the operating force or generating/institutional force.[62]

Additionally, in the process of attempting to complete this stage, the Army has

committed yet another of Kotter's eight errors common to organizational change efforts:

underestimating the power of vision. It is useful to use Kotter's proposed characteristics

of an effective vision to understand and analyze the reasons for this. Specifically, one

could argue that the Army's current vision for mission command only fully exhibits two of

the six aforementioned characteristics of an effective vision. First, the Army's current

vision is "imaginable" in that it successfully expresses a picture of what the future will

look like. Most Army leaders generally understand the desired future. Second, the

Army's current vision is "flexible" in that it is broad enough to permit individual creativity

and substitute reactions given shifting conditions. By its very nature, mission command

emphasizes initiative, innovation, and independent action, so this characteristic is

inherently present.[63]

The remaining four characteristics are notably absent or somewhat lacking. First,

the Army's current vision is only marginally "desirable" despite popular thought. The

reason for this is simple. While this vision may appeal to the long-term interests of some

employees, customers, and other stakeholders due to its innovative, creative, and

independent nature, it will not appeal to others who fear that they will lose position

power, who embrace the hierarchical structure and bureaucratic processes of the Army,

and who are not comfortable with decentralized decision making and independent

action, particularly with subordinates in whom they lack confidence or do not trust.

Second, the Army's current vision is only slightly "feasible." While seemingly comprising

realistic and attainable goals, those goals will only be realized if Army organizational

structure, bureaucratic processes, culture, and policies change. If they do not, then the

mission command vision is not feasible. Third, the Army's current vision is not "focused"

in that, in its current form, it is not sufficiently well defined to effectively provide guidance

in decision making. Currently, there is no singular, authoritative, and clear Army vision

statement for mission command. Lastly, the Army's mission command vision is not

"communicable," as one could easily argue that it is not easy to communicate and could

not be effectively and fully described in five minutes or less. This deficiency is

compounded by the aforementioned lack of an agreed upon vision statement for

mission command.[64]

Furthermore, Senge's discipline of "building a shared vision" further illustrates the

challenges faced by the Army in developing a vision and strategy for mission command.

Specifically, "Building a shared vision" relates to the ability to achieve a common image

of the future that results in sincere commitment and acceptance rather than simple

obedience just because a supervisor or senior leader created it.[65] The problem this

presents is that, currently, the Army vision for mission command is not clearly

communicated to or fully embraced by leaders at all levels. One could argue that this is

primarily due to the fact that the concept of mission command still remains primarily

"doctrine-deep" and has yet to yield any significant corresponding changes in operating

procedures, reporting requirements, training approaches, and personnel systems.

Stage 4: Communicating the Change Vision

An organization in the fourth stage of Kotter's process for creating major change

must accomplish two things: use every medium possible to continuously communicate

the new vision and strategies and have the guiding coalition role model the behavior

expected of employees. Kotter posited that communicating the change vision is essential because the real power of a vision is unbridled only when most of those involved in an initiative or movement have a shared understanding of its goals and direction. He also suggested that failures to communicate vision are usually related to either limited intellectual capabilities among lower-level employees or a general human resistance to change, and, hence to the acceptance of information about change. Kotter also suggested that the key elements in the effective communication of vision are simplicity, metaphor/analogy/example, multiple forums, repetition, leadership by example, explanation of seeming inconsistencies, and give-and-take.[66]

While the Army has made some efforts to initiate this phase of Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change, these efforts must be improved to achieve full completion of this stage. Specifically, despite the fact that the Army has clearly started to communicate the change vision through various modes, it has yet to use every medium possible to constantly communicate the new vision and strategy for mission command. Examples of this can once again be seen in DA publications, the Army mission command strategy, journal articles, doctrinal publications, think pieces, and strategic leader engagements with various Army organizations and audiences.[67]

Also, the ability and success of the guiding coalition in role modeling the behavior expected of all commanders, leaders, and Soldiers has been largely inconsistent and further demonstrates that mission command is not fully understood and institutionalized. A prominent retired Army senior leader indicated that general officers are very slow to change stating that "The Army tends to be consensus-driven at the top. But when you roll a lot of changes at us, it takes a while. The young guys have to drive us to it."[68] One

could easily argue that some of the reasons for these inconsistencies are the varying requirements and procedures dictated by certain highly sensitive issues (i.e. sexual assault, sexual harassment, hazing, equal opportunity, and suicide), the operating environment (deployed, garrison, training, etc.), and the unique personalities and leadership styles of the Army's operational and tactical level commanders and leaders.

In the process of attempting to complete this stage, however, the Army has yet again committed another of Kotter's eight errors common to organizational change efforts: undercommunicating the vision by a factor of 10 (or 100 or even 1,000). It is useful to use Kotter's seven proposed key elements in the effective communication of vision to understand and analyze the reasons for this. Specifically, one could argue that the Army's current efforts to communicate its change vision for mission command partially exhibit two of the seven aforementioned key elements for effective communication. First, the Army's current communication of its change vision for mission command does exhibit "simplicity" in that most jargon and highly technical terms have been eliminated. Typically, the Army uses common language to describe the vision. Second, the Army uses "multiple forums" to communicate its change vision for mission command. Some examples include various meetings, conferences, doctrinal publications, journal articles, DA publications, and personal interaction.[69]

The remaining five characteristics are notably absent or severely lacking. First, the Army does a poor job of using "metaphor and analogy" to communicate the change vision for mission command. However, it is able to employ "examples" to a certain degree. One could argue that this is primarily the result of the Army's rigid accepted rules and methods of communication. Second, while the Army does use "repetition" in

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communicating the vision for mission command, the problem is that repeated messages are not consistent and not widely understood by both the deliverers and recipients. This could be related to the lack of a clear and concise vision statement for mission command, as well as ongoing and pervasive confusion over what mission command really is and what it seeks to achieve.

Third, the Army has struggled with "leadership by example," in that behavior from important people (i.e. senior leaders) is sometimes inconsistent with the change vision for mission command and subsequently obscures other forms of communication. As previously mentioned, these inconsistencies are likely the result of varying requirements and procedures due to certain sensitive issues, variations in the operational environment, and the unique and differing personalities and leadership styles of Army senior leaders. Fourth, and closely related to this, the Army has not been very effective in the "explanation of seeming inconsistencies." The Army's inability to address these inconsistencies serves only to undercut the legitimacy of change vision communication. Lastly, it is evident that the Army's hierarchical structure and culture have impeded its ability to optimally communicate the change vision for mission command through a "give-and-take" approach (two-way communication).[70]

Stage 5: Empowering Broad-Based Action

For an organization to successfully complete the fifth stage of Kotter's process for creating major change, it must accomplish three things. Specifically, the organization must eliminate obstacles, change systems or structures that undermine the change vision, and encourage risk-taking and non-traditional ideas, activities, and actions. Kotter theorized that initiatives and changes fail when employees, despite their belief in the new vision, feel powerless due to significant obstacles. Kotter also posited that

environmental change requires organizational change and offered the following four barriers to empowerment: structures, skills, systems, and supervisors. These obstacles can take the form of organizational structure, performance evaluation systems, and supervisors whose directives are contrary to the desired changes.[71]

The Army has not successfully initiated this phase of Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change. In his mission command white paper, General Dempsey states,

> Mission Command must be institutionalized and operationalized into all aspects of the joint force--our doctrine, our education, our training, and our manpower and personnel processes. It must pervade the force and drive leader development, organizational design and inform material acquisitions.[72]

One could argue that the Army has not yet effectively eliminated obstacles to mission command, has not made any significant changes to systems or structures that currently undermine the change vision, and has not sincerely encouraged risk-taking and non-traditional ideas, activities, and actions outside of combat settings.[73] For instance, some experts still argue that a daring, innovative officer cannot succeed in today's armed forces, in which only impeccable, conforming and politically correct behavior will guarantee success. Also, current systems used for such purposes as assessing unit readiness, tracking budget outlays, justifying purchases of supplies and services, just to name a few, continue to create an administrative nightmare that negatively impacts unit climate and trust.[74]

Moreover, it is clear that the Army has committed yet another of Kotter's eight errors common to organizational change efforts: permitting obstacles to block the new vision.[75] It is helpful to use Kotter's four proposed barriers to empowerment to understand and analyze the reasons for this. The Army has been largely unsuccessful

in removing any of these four barriers, and, as a result, has not effectively empowered broad-based action.

First, the Army's formal structures make it difficult for leaders and Soldiers to act. Obstacles such as hierarchical structure, intensive reporting requirements, micromanagement, endless policies and procedures, and rigid training methods remain in the way of fully institutionalizing mission command.[76] For instance, experts have reasoned that the degree of centralization in an organization is primarily a function of its formal structure design. Given its hierarchical structure, then, it is logical to reason that most Army leaders will not be easily swayed to delegate authority or decentralize operational and decision making approaches.[77] Also, it is evident that the past decade of war has driven the centralization of training and training resources, resulting in commanders mindlessly following cookie-cutter type training templates at the expense of commander judgment, training assessments, and training strategies.[78]

Second, Army supervisors frequently discourage actions aimed at implementing the new vision of mission command. For instance, the Army remains largely a risk-averse organization. It still does not truly reward or encourage non-traditional ideas and actions as much as it does traditionally accepted ones.[79]

Third, Army personnel management and information systems make it challenging to act. This certainly applies to the Army given the fact that it is a large, bureaucratic organization that dictates specific operational processes and reporting requirements, uses an evaluation system that does not always reward creative and innovative leaders, and employs a promotion system that, in recent years, has advanced most everyone to the next grade.[80] To further illustrate this, in the past several years, the Army has

retained officers by promoting them at near-100% selection rates, not mandating that they attend professional military education courses, and even enticing them, through monetary incentives, to stay in the Army.[81]

Fourth, varying mission command skills among Army leaders could also undermine change action. Leaders who are lacking in technical and tactical abilities or who are uncomfortable with decentralized decision making, distributed operations, and accepting prudent risk also create these obstacles. Illustrative of this, one renowned senior Army leader wrote, "The crux of the problem in our Army is that officers are not systematically taught how to cope with unstructured problems."[82] The Army's current professional military education system tries to balance knowledge with critical and creative thinking skills but fails to do so and subsequently yields officers who know what to think but not how to think.[83] The result is an Army of professionals who conform to a "method of central, hierarchical planning and tight control cycles ('red tape') that cause mistrust, while maintaining a centralized personnel system that causes undue competition between officers and noncommissioned officers, when trust is needed."[84] This type of environment does not facilitate or encourage mission command.

Furthermore, Hill's question, *"How does the innovation relate to the organizational concept of war?"* also predicts that the Army will experience challenges in the implementation of mission command, particularly as it relates to empowering broad-based action.[85] This question deals with how much an innovation reveals faults or shortcomings in the way a military currently executes combat and contingency operations. In this case, mission command is a significant departure from the way the Army has historically executed campaigns and combat operations. Specifically, in the

past, combat operations and campaigns have typically been closely controlled, orders were detailed, units were more concentrated, and commanders at all levels were closer to the action. Mission command, on the other hand, emphasizes decentralized control, more dispersed units, general mission-type orders, wide parameters in which leaders and their Soldiers operate, and implicit trust in subordinates.

One could argue, then, that mission command has, in fact, revealed several flaws in the Army's traditional concept of war through risk-taking, innovations, and non-traditional ideas, activities, and actions. This juxtaposition is illustrated by British Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster, attached to the Army in Iraqi, who noted,

> Whilst the US Army may espouse mission command, in Iraq it did not practice it . . . Commanders . . . rarely if ever questioned authority and were reluctant to deviate from precise instructions . . . Each commander had his own style, but if there were a common trend it was for micromanagement.[86]

Therefore, it is logical to conclude that the Army will continue to experience difficulties in institutionalizing mission command because military organizations tend to disregard innovations that reveal shortcomings in widely accepted beliefs, ideas, and concepts and subsequently put up barriers to empowerment to prevent them from taking hold.

Stage 6: Generating Short-Term Wins

To complete the sixth stage of Kotter's process for creating major change, an organization must accomplish three things. Specifically, the organization must plan for visible improvements in performance (wins), create those wins, and visibly recognize and reward people who make those wins possible. Kotter also theorized that short-term wins have three main characteristics: high visibility, lack of ambiguity, and clearly related to the change effort.[87]

The Army has not effectively initiated this phase of Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change. One could argue that the Army has not yet positively planned for visible improvements in performance, created any significant short term wins, or visibly recognized and rewarded people who make those wins possible. In fact, it is evident that the Army has once again committed one of Kotter's eight errors common to organizational change efforts: failing to create short-term wins.[88]

It is useful to use Kotter's proposed characteristics of short-term wins to better understand and analyze the reasons for this. First, for a short-term win to be effective, it must be visible in that a large amount of people can see for themselves that the result is legitimate. Second, it must be unambiguous and unmistakable. Third, it must be clearly related to the change effort. Based on these characteristics, then, one could argue that the only glimmer of success for the Army within this phase of the eight-stage process for creating major change has been the publication of mission command doctrine, the preparation of a mission command strategy, and the establishment of the MCCoE.

Outside of those accomplishments, the Army has done virtually nothing significant to plan for, create, and celebrate short-term wins. This is demonstrated in such areas as operational processes, performance evaluation methods, and institutional training, none of which change or evolve quickly. One example of a short-term win in this context could be a rapidly implemented new operations order format, which is abbreviated, moves the commander's intent from paragraph three to paragraph one, and makes the commander's intent a stand-alone paragraph. Another example could be the quick addition of a section to the officer evaluation report that specifically assesses an officer's ability to exercise the mission command philosophy of command at any

echelon. So, despite the fact that the institutionalization of mission command is underway, there are still no significant, programmed short-term wins designed to demonstrate improvements in performance.

Stage 7: Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

Kotter's process for creating major change includes three vital tasks that an organization must accomplish during the seventh stage. First, the organization must use increased legitimacy to change all systems, structures, and policies that do not fit together and do not fit the change vision. Second, the organization must hire, promote, and develop individuals who can implement the change vision. Third, the organization must refresh the change process with new projects, central messages, and change agents. Kotter also theorized that resistance to change never fully disintegrates and that "changing highly interdependent settings is extremely difficult because, ultimately, you have to change nearly everything."[89]

The Army has not yet initiated this phase of Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change. Even a cursory analysis of this issue reveals that the Army has yet to significantly change any systems, structures, or policies that do not fit together and do not fit the change vision for mission command; recruit, promote, and develop leaders who can implement the change vision; and refresh the mission command implementation and institutionalization process with new projects, themes, or agents of change. In fact, some Army leaders have even admitted that the Army is "not interested in rewarding agents of change."[90]

Also, the Army has yet to effectively use its limited short-term wins to produce any noteworthy or relevant changes to established processes, structures, or systems. While it has communicated its vision and strategy and published doctrine, it has not fully

incorporated mission command into institutional training, operational procedures, and personnel management systems such as accession programs, assignment processes, performance evaluation methods, and reward systems.[91] For instance, ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command*, emphasizes the importance of training by stating, "Because mission command decentralizes decision making authority and grants subordinates significant freedom of action, it demands more of commanders at all levels and requires rigorous training and education."[92] Also, the Army has not yet done anything significant to reinvigorate the change process through new themes, specific initiatives, or designated teams dedicated to the implementation and institutionalization of mission command.

Moreover, the Army only exhibits one of the five traits suggested by Kotter as being attributed to a stage-seven organization in a successful, significant change process. In particular, Army senior leaders do maintain emphasis on preserving clarity of shared purpose and a sense of urgency. However, the Army is not effecting more change, bringing in more people to assist in the change effort, reducing interdependencies, or effectively empowering or resourcing tactical level leaders to make progress in the implementation and institutionalization of mission command.[93]

Additionally, it is evident the Army has committed, albeit indirectly, another of Kotter's eight errors common to organizational change efforts: declaring victory too soon. Kotter hypothesized that any type of pre-mature victory celebration ceases all forward progress, at which time extremely strong cultural and traditional forces surface again and take over.[94] Since the Army has been at war for over a decade, there are an abundance of success stories that demonstrate effective mission command in action in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years. They are readily found in articles, professional

journals, and doctrinal vignettes; and one can easily deduce that they have contributed

to the false assumption that the Army has already institutionalized mission command.

To further illustrate this, Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, while

both initially lauded by experts for their demonstration of maneuver and mission

command in action, were later determined to have been largely unsuccessful in the

application of the latter.[95]

Furthermore, Hill's question, *"What is the competitive context for the innovation's*

emergence?" also predicts that the Army will continue to experience difficulties in the full

institutionalization of mission command, particularly as it relates to consolidating gains

and producing more change, for two primary reasons.[96] First, despite the fact that

mission command arose during a time of war, and is, therefore, more likely to be widely-

accepted and fully implemented, the fact that the Army has already successfully

completed the war in Iraq and will soon finish the war Afghanistan could likely result in

increased resistance. Specifically, as the Army continues to redeploy from combat,

reset itself in garrison, and train more for traditional and hybrid threats, there is a strong

possibility that the benefits and tenets of mission command will be forgotten by Army

leaders or even discarded, rather than further proliferated, and that a return to normalcy,

detailed command, and micro-management will ensue.[97] "We need to emphasize the

practice of this decentralization and empowerment in peacetime and garrison as well.

The tendency in garrison is toward greater centralization and control and less on trust

and empowerment."[98]

Secondly, as the war in Afghanistan continues to wind down, lessons learned

from the Iraq war are forgotten, and the Army continues to emphasize and train for more

traditional decisive action rotations at the combat training centers, there soon could be no effective formal means by which the Army will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of mission command. This could possibly be prevented if the Army implements requisite mission command evaluation standards and techniques for observer/controllers at the combat training centers, so that they are better equipped to evaluate these critical leadership skills. Currently, however, it can still be argued that, with no real means to measure the efficacy of mission command, leaders could indirectly abandon it and return to the traditional concept of detailed command.

Stage 8: Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

An organization in the eighth and final stage of Kotter's process for creating major change must accomplish three important tasks. First, the organization must improve performance through client- and productivity-oriented behavior, enhanced leadership, and more efficient management. Second, the organization must delineate the linkages between new behaviors and organizational success. Third, the organization must cultivate ways to ensure leadership development and succession. Kotter also theorized that anchoring change in a culture comes at the end of the change process, highly depends on successful results, requires intensive instruction and communication, sometimes necessitates the replacement of key people, and demands a deliberate plan for leader succession if cultural changes are to endure.[99]

The Army has not yet effectively initiated, nor completed, this phase of Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change, as it has not successfully anchored the approaches of mission command in its culture. Specifically, one could contend that, mission command currently remains only a process in the Army; it is not yet a culture or lifestyle as it was in the Prussian-German army of the 19th Century.[100] This is evident in

the continued reluctance by commanders to give up centralized control; the proliferation of advanced mission command warfighting function technologies which, ironically, increase the ability and propensity for some commanders to micromanage operations; and a culture that is still characterized by steep hierarchy, rigid processes and procedures, tight control, and risk aversion.[101] For example, due to technological advances, such as the Blackberry in a garrison environment and Blue Force Tracker in a deployed environment, most commanders expect their subordinate commanders to have full knowledge of information related to accidents, failures, and sometimes even routine operational matters immediately and at any given hour on any given day.

The *U.S. Army Functional Concept for Mission Command* states, "investment in developing a culture and command climate of mission command will better enable appropriate adaptation to any operational challenge."[102] First, an analysis of this issue reveals that the Army has only improved performance to a limited degree through changed and innovative behavior and improved leadership. This is evident particularly in deployed environments where the implementation of mission command is required due to the dispersion of forces and the volatility and uncertainty of the operational environment. However, evidence of similar improvements in performance in garrison environments is not readily available or demonstrable. Second, the Army has only been able to slightly delineate the linkages between new behaviors and organizational success. Once again, any positive gains here are typically related to deployed situations rather than garrison situations. Third, the Army has yet to develop effective ways to ensure that leadership development and succession systems are in place to ensure that desired cultural changes endure leadership transitions.

Here, the Army has committed yet another of Kotter's eight errors common to organizational change efforts: neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture. Kotter states that, "Change sticks only when it becomes 'the way we do things around here,' when it seeps into the very bloodstream of the work unit or corporate body."[103] This is not the case for mission command in the Army. Despite the fact that some senior Army leaders have communicated the vision for mission command, the Army has yet to demonstrate that it is embraced and anchored in its culture. For instance, to date, there have been no significant corresponding changes to operational processes and procedures, training approaches, organizational climates, or personnel management systems.[104]

Additionally, Senge's discipline of "mental models" further illustrates the challenges faced by the Army in developing a vision and strategy for mission command. According to Senge, "mental models" are extremely embedded suppositions, generalizations, or images that sway someone's understanding of the world and their actions. They can influence, not only a person's perception of themselves and others, but also what they believe to be generally acceptable at work.[105] To overcome biases and perceptions that result from this, Army leaders must focus inward to carefully examine their own mental models in an effort to determine their effects on their beliefs, thought processes, and actions. This is closely related to the concepts of self-awareness, primal leadership, and leading with emotional intelligence.[106] All of these things, combined with other factors such as common frames of reference, imprinting, and confirmation bias within Army leaders present significant challenges to the effective adoption of mission command.[107]

The issue is that the requisite type of self-awareness is more often achieved by senior strategic and operational-level leaders than by younger tactical-level leaders primarily due to the fact that these type of leadership skills are not deliberately developed until officers attend the U.S. Army War College or other equivalent senior service colleges. Some experts argue that, given the increased strategic nature of global Army operations and the challenging operational environment, this comes entirely too late.[108] However, it is these younger tactical-level leaders who are vital to the institutionalization of mission command across the Army. If they are not able to grasp their own mental models and overcome biases, then the inculcation of mission command will remain at risk. Essentially, the culturally entrenched mental models of senior tactical-level leaders could prevent the adoption of mission command since it is so divergent from the way things have typically been done.

Furthermore, Hill's question, *"How does the innovation align with the organizational concept of an ideal combatant?"* presents the Army with a unique challenge, particularly as it relates to anchoring new approaches in the culture, for several reasons.[109] First, the concept of mission command requires a divergent and creative shift in how leaders lead and Soldiers fight. For instance, the Army has traditionally valued leaders and Soldiers who are obedient, conform to standing operating procedures and tactics, and operate within well-defined parameters. However, the concept of mission command requires leaders and Soldiers to be agile, adaptive, innovative, and even disobedient at times. It also demands that they be able to operate with minimal guidance and supervision. This creates a dilemma for the Army in that two beliefs, one new and one old, are now in direct competition.

Stated another way, through the past decade of war, the Army has come to recognize the value and competitive advantage of agile, adaptive, and innovative leaders and Soldiers who can operate independently and with initiative. However, the culture of the Army still gravitates towards the traditional model of the combatant, namely leaders and Soldiers who are obedient, loyal, and conservative. One can see, then, how this juxtaposition of desired traits for a combatant impedes the inculcation of mission command.

Moreover, it is valuable to apply Schein's work on organizational culture to this analysis of the Army's progress in the final stage of Kotter's process for creating major change. Schein posited that culture consists of three unique levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions.[110] Artifacts are visible organizational structures and processes or what one sees, hears, and feels when first encountering the unfamiliar. Artifacts include such things as language, jargon, clothing, decorations, symbols, stories, ceremonies, and interactions. Espoused beliefs and values are open proclamations about how a group expects everyone to behave and what ought to be. Underlying assumptions are deeply held, subconscious beliefs about right and wrong. They are developed over time, often by attaining success in chaos, and taught through socialization processes.[111]

Culture, then, directs what people should pay attention to, its understanding, and the emotional reaction to it. However, since organizations are not always aware of their basic, underlying assumptions, it is often extremely problematic to contest them and generate widespread change. For instance, an Army basic assumption decreeing that subordinate leaders are incapable of autonomous decision making will be conveyed via

rigid control methods. Procedural modification will be inadequate if not accompanied by a parallel change of the basic underlying assumption.

As such, according to this model, the problems faced by the Army in attempting to implement and institutionalize mission command can be tracked back to espoused beliefs and values and underlying assumptions. As long as these levels stay uncontested, so will Army behavior. Therefore, if the Army truly desires to inculcate and institutionalize mission command, it will be necessary for it to fundamentally change the deepest and most difficult levels of culture to change. This challenge is amplified by the fact that the Army, like all military organizations, values traditions, allows its historical underpinnings to influence its modern philosophy, is fundamentally conservative, and is not inherently inclined to favor transformation.[112]

This is further illustrated by the notion that the Army faces difficulties in the implementation of mission command due to its prevailing legacy of a tayloristic approach to command. This approach had its origins during the interwar period, was solidified from World War II to the Cold War, and emphasizes traditionalism, loyalty, centralization, obedience, strict conformity to established procedures, mechanistic training and personnel management systems, and the control of war through efficient planning and execution processes. This managerial approach also emphasizes "detailed planning and quantitative analysis and aspires for maximum efficiency and certainty," all of which conflict with the principles of mission command.[113] Furthermore, as previously mentioned, unlike the Prussian-German army adoption of the *Auftragstaktik* philosophy of command, the U.S. Army has yet to make mission

command a "particular life style" of its officers.[114] Rather, the Army continues to cling to this managerial approach to leadership and command.[115]

 Recommended Solutions for Mission Command Implementation and Institutionalization

Based on the preceding analysis of the Army's challenges in fully implementing and institutionalizing mission command, it is apparent that the Army must generate shared understanding and create major change in multiple areas. First, as a critical foundation to this endeavor, the Army must achieve a clearly and widely understood and truly shared vision of the mission command philosophy of command, one that is embraced by all Army leaders at all levels. Second, and equally important, the Army must transform its organizational structure, operational processes and procedures, culture, organizational climates, training methodologies, and personnel management systems to better align them with the tenets of mission command. What follows is a discussion, once again using Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change as a framework, of proposed recommendations and solutions for Army senior leaders to enable the successful implementation and institutionalization of the mission command philosophy of command in the Army.

Stage 1: Establishing a Sense of Urgency

For an organization to successfully complete the first stage of Kotter's process for creating major change, it must examine the market and competitive realities and identify and discuss crises, potential crises, or major opportunities.[116] As such, while the Army has, in fact, attempted to establish a sense of urgency by examining the current operating environment (market) and enemies/adversaries (competitive realities), as well as striving to identify strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats as they relate to

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the current operational environment, ongoing crises, and potential crises, it must increase its efforts if it is to fully complete this stage.[117]

Kotter proposes nine ways to raise the urgency level within an organization. Given their corporate focus, not all nine apply to this particular problem, however, four of them do. First, the Army must find a method to "insist that more people be held accountable for broader measures of business performance." Here, the Army should develop a method of holding all strategic, organizational, and tactical level leaders (not just commanders) responsible for setting conditions that facilitate the adoption of mission command within their respective organizations. For instance, all leaders should be held responsible for unit climates, not just commanders. Second, the Army should consider using "consultants and other means to force more relevant data and honest discussion into management meetings."[118] Specifically, the Army should consider hiring an independent group, comprising civilians who specialize in organizational culture and change, to assist it in its efforts to raise urgency levels.[119]

Third, the Army must "stop management 'happy talk.'" The Army could effect this by including more candid discussions of its challenges in implementing mission command in professional journals and bulletins, official websites and blogs, collaboration centers, strategic communication messages, and senior leader engagements and speeches. Fourth, the Army must saturate the force with "information on future opportunities . . . the rewards for capitalizing on those opportunities . . . and the inability to pursue those opportunities."[120] In other words, a critical requirement of the change process is to effectively recognize and communicate displeasure with the current situation.[121] Here, the Army could, again, leverage professional journals, official

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websites, and senior leader engagements to proliferate data clearly illustrating the advantages and benefits of fully implementing mission command across the force in all environments. If the Army can accomplish these things, it will effectively establish a sense of urgency and complete the first stage of Kotter's model.

Stage 2: Creating the Guiding Coalition

An organization must form a group with enough power to lead the change and then get that group to work together as a team in order to successfully complete the second stage of Kotter's process for creating major change.[122] As such, while the Army has, indeed, created an initial guiding coalition, this coalition is not as extensive, organized, and deliberate as it needs to be to fully institutionalize mission command. Thus, the Army must increase its efforts in this area if it is to completely finish this stage.

Kotter offers three steps that must be accomplished to effectively build a coalition that can effect major change. First, the Army must find the right individuals. These people must have robust position power, comprehensive expertise, solid credibility, and superior leadership skills. These individuals should comprise prominent general officers and nominative-level command sergeants major that come from all branches of the Army and are currently assigned to both the operating force and the generating/institutional force both at the strategic and operational levels. Second, the Army must generate trust within this group through purposefully planned joint activities and ample communication. The Army could achieve this by conducting various teambuilding events and establishing recurring forums for internal and informal dialogue. Third, the Army must develop a common goal for the guiding coalition, one that is both intellectually and emotionally appealing.[123] In the end, "A key role of the leader is to sell the need for

change."[124] As such, the Chief of Staff of the Army, in cooperation with the members of the guiding coalition, must create this goal through consensus.

<u>Stage 3: Developing a Vision and Strategy</u>

For an organization to successfully complete the third stage of Kotter's process for creating major change, it must create a vision to help guide the change effort and develop strategies for realizing that vision.[125] As such, while the Army has attempted to produce an overarching vision and useful strategy for the implementation and institutionalization of mission command, it has still been largely unsuccessful in both endeavors. Consequently, the Army must redouble its efforts to reinvigorate and clarify the current vision and strategy for mission command if it is to fully complete this stage.

First, the Army must ultimately generate a meaningful, yet clear and concise, vision statement that exhibits all of Kotter's proposed traits of an effective vision: imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible, and communicable. As previously mentioned, the current Army vision for mission command is ambiguous at best and only exhibits three of these six traits. Furthermore, the Army would be wise to take heed of Kotter's framework for building an effective vision. Specifically, the Army must understand that this process will likely entail iterative drafts, requires the participation of the guiding coalition, demands significant teamwork and consensus, requires intellectual and emotional energy, will not be a simple process, should not include a rigid deadline for completion, and must result in a vision that is imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible, and communicable.[126]

Second, the Army should significantly enhance its formal strategy for mission command. Specifically, it must apply more emphasis to and expand the portion that seeks to enhance Army leader comprehension and practice of mission command. This

portion is, undeniably, the most vital to the successful implementation and

institutionalization of mission command in the Army. Also, the revised mission command

strategy must place more importance on the implementation of mission command in a

garrison environment, particularly since the war in Iraq is over, and the war in

Afghanistan is ending in 2014. Lastly, this enhanced mission command strategy should

advise and assist leaders at all levels in how to immediately implement mission

command within their formations, regardless of whether they are assigned to the

operating force or the generating/institutional force.

Stage 4: Communicating the Change Vision

An organization must use every medium possible to continuously communicate

the new vision and strategies and also have the guiding coalition role model the

behavior expected of employees in order to successfully complete the fourth stage of

Kotter's process for creating major change.[127] As previously mentioned, while the Army

has attempted to communicate the change vision through various modes, it has not

used every medium possible to communicate the new vision and strategy for mission

command, and it has not communicated it to all required audiences. Moreover, the

success of the current guiding coalition in role modeling desired mission command

behavior has been inconsistent. The Army must increase its efforts in these areas if it is

to completely finish this stage.

First, the Army must improve its ability to use every medium possible to

continuously communicate the new vision and strategy for mission command in an effort

to "saturate the market." It can effect this through the sustained use of professional

journals, updated doctrinal publications, additional think pieces, an updated and

enhanced mission command strategy document, other DA publications, official

websites, blogs, and social media outlets, recurring updates from the guiding coalition and the MCCoE, enhanced vignettes and success stories from the field, and increased personal engagement with leaders throughout the Army. Moreover, to ensure that this vision is firmly rooted and communicated across the force, senior Army leaders must generate multiple "junior" or "supporting" guiding coalitions at various locations across the operating and generating/institutional force and encourage participation by senior and mid-grade tactical-level leaders (colonel to captain and command sergeant major to first sergeant/master sergeant). These tactical-level members of the Army's "junior" or "supporting" guiding coalitions would then be entrusted to fully inculcate mission command within their formations where the rubber meets the road. In short, commanders and leaders at all levels must take it upon themselves to become personally involved in and to achieve unity of effort in implementing mission command across the Army.[128]

Second, the Army must find a way to ensure that all members of the guiding coalition consistently role model the behavior expected of leaders in terms of adhering to the mission command philosophy of command. The Army can accomplish this through the proper selection of members of the guiding coalition, removal of members from the guiding coalition if they fail to perform in accordance with expectations, performance evaluation methods specifically designed to assess guiding coalition members, enhanced education and training, and other incentives. Moreover, the Army must strive to explain any inconsistencies between current behavior and the desired end state for mission command and must also develop methods to inspire and effect

communication between the guiding coalition and strategic, operational, and tactical

echelons. While these are not easy tasks, they are essential to the change process.

<u>Stage 5: Empowering Broad-Based Action</u>

For an organization to successfully complete the fifth stage of Kotter's process

for creating major change, it must eliminate obstacles, change systems or structures

that undermine the change vision, and encourage risk-taking and non-traditional ideas,

activities, and actions.[129] The Army has yet to effectively accomplish these things

outside of combat settings and must improve in these areas if it is to fully complete this

stage and continue the change process.[130]

Kotter recommends five methods of empowering people to effect change that

can be readily applied in the Army. First, the Army should "communicate a sensible

vision to employees."[131] This paper has already delineated recommended methods for

accomplishing this.

Second, the Army must "make structures compatible with the vision."[132] Here, the

Army should conduct a thorough evaluation of organizational structures to ensure that

they are aligned with the vision for mission command. For instance, units and command

and staff positions supporting the mission command warfighting function should be

reviewed to ensure that personnel authorizations are up-to-date, germane, and

adequate.[133] The forthcoming reductions in the size of operational and strategic level

headquarters staffs are promising examples of this and a step in the right direction.

Moreover, one could argue that the Army should conduct a more overarching

evaluation of its hierarchical structure. Specifically, to truly inculcate mission command

and become more agile and adaptive, perhaps the Army should learn from large,

successful civilian organizations that espouse modern structures that are flatter and

more networked. These organizations are characterized by power and responsibility being thrust down to lower levels and employees who are empowered to make decisions, solve problems, and be innovative.[134] The advice of T.O. Jacobs in his book, *Strategic Leadership: The Competitive Edge*, seems particularly relevant here: "Keep your organization lean and mean--particularly the headquarters."[135] This is clearly fertile ground for the growing of mission command.

One could also contend that garrison unit operating facility designs should be evaluated and revised in accordance with the vision for mission command. For instance, these facilities should comprise fewer offices and cubicles and more large, open work areas designed to enhance collaboration, communication, and teamwork. In fact, research has shown that low performing organizations have office layouts, characterized by such things as less communal space, cramped offices, and compartmentalized work areas that degrade collaboration, interaction, workflow, communication, and teamwork.[136] Unfortunately, these kinds of layouts are typical of Army operating facilities. Perhaps the Army should learn a lesson from successful civilian companies.

Third, the Army must "provide the training that employees need."[137] If mission command is not taught in education and practiced in training, leaders will not exercise it in operations.[138] All leaders must be trained and educated in all facets of mission command, to include Army cultural implications, dealing with wicked problems, decentralized decision making, writing and understanding commander's intent, critical and creative thinking, communication, adaptability, visualizing/describing/directing, operating independently of higher headquarters, preparing mission-type orders, taking

prudent risk, and operating in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environments.[139] General Dempsey summarized this well by stating, "We must place students into situations of uncertainty and complexity where creativity, adaptability, critical thinking and independent, rapid decision making are essential elements."[140]

Training must place lower echelon units in uncertain and complex circumstances that force them to operate with degraded systems, under suboptimal conditions, and out of contact with their higher headquarters for extended periods of time so that they can exercise mission command, take risks, and be assessed on how well they achieve their higher commander's intent.[141] A simple way to achieve this effect is by removing senior officer and noncommissioned officer leaders at critical points during training, thereby having junior leaders assume control, and by avoiding choreographed scripts for collective training exercises.[142] Moreover, since a commander's staff plays such a vital role in the exercise of mission command, deliberately planned staff training, designed to ensure that staffs are skilled in staff procedures in uncertain and complex environments, must be an integral part of unit training plans rather than just an afterthought.[143]

There are various venues through which to train mission command. Key types of training exercises that support mission command include field training exercises, command post exercises, live fire exercises, and combat training center (CTC) rotations. Also, mission command training must be included in all professional military education programs.[144] This must be accomplished via both content and format. For example, classroom instruction should be converted into collaborative problem-solving exercises guided by facilitators, rather than instructors. Also, instructor-led

presentations employing slide shows should be replaced by interactive and virtual training methods.[145]

Furthermore, training must become more decentralized throughout the force. As such, the Army should move away from the past decade's reliance on pre-determined and regimented training templates to a more fluid and tailored training approach in which commanders provide intent, resources, priorities and desired end state for training and then allow subordinate commanders to develop and execute their own training plans within that intent based on specific unit strengths, weakness, and projected mission requirements.[146] In short, ownership of training must be returned to commanders, and training must focus on the results, not the process.[147] This will subsequently increase unit proficiency levels, improve subordinate leader development, and enhance mutual trust and understanding between commanders.

Fourth, the Army must seek to "align information and personnel systems to the vision."[148] Specifically, the Army should revise operational procedures and systems that are old, slow, and do not match the agility and decentralization of mission command. Just a few things that come to mind are detailed and lengthy operations orders, the orders process, the military decision making process, and detailed reporting procedures that nearly force micro-management at the tactical and operational levels.

The Army should also consider changing personnel systems so that promotions, selections, evaluations, awards, and assignments better support and reward initiative, agility, innovation, mutual trust, prudent risk-taking, and broadening assignments. For instance, promotion and command selection boards are potentially two of the most meaningful ways to indoctrinate mission command in the Army. Specifically, choosing

leaders for promotion and command who are effective in comprehending and applying the philosophy of mission command will be a crucial indicator of the institutionalization of mission command throughout the force.[149] To further illustrate this point, perhaps company command should not be universal. Rather, maybe selection for company command should be reserved only for those officers who have demonstrated that they have the potential to implement the mission command philosophy of command.[150]

Moreover, official evaluation programs such as officer and noncommissioned officer evaluation reports and the Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF/360) Program provide opportunities to bolster desired mission command activities and characteristics.[151] For example, officer evaluation reports should strive to assess an officer's ability to demonstrate and exercise the six previously mentioned principles of mission command, should include a modified version of the MSAF/360 (one in which leaders are not allowed to personally select which individuals will provide the feedback), and should also incorporate unit climate survey results.[152]

Lastly, the Army should "confront supervisors who undercut needed change."[153] To empower broad-based action, the Army must effectively deal with leaders who embrace operational and administrative systems that challenge mission command and resist risk-taking, innovation, and initiative. Also it must strengthen a climate and culture that inspires fresh ideas, is lenient of honest errors by hardworking persons, and engenders service to the Nation and the Army's Soldiers and Civilians.[154]

Stage 6: Generating Short-Term Wins

An organization must plan for visible improvements in performance (wins), create those wins, and visibly recognize and reward people who make those wins possible in order to successfully complete the sixth stage of Kotter's process for creating major

change.[155] One could claim that the Army has only marginally initiated this phase of Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change. The Army must improve in these areas if it is to completely finish this stage and continue the change process.

To generate short-term wins, the Army must plan for and create achievable tasks that demonstrate real progress towards the implementation and institutionalization of mission command.[156] In fact, the Army has already proven that it can do so relatively well. For example, the Army's ability to incorporate mission command into doctrine, publish a mission command strategy, and establish the MCCoE is a superb example of three visible short-term wins.

The Army must generate short-term wins in other areas of the DOTMLPF spectrum as well. In particular, the Army must rapidly modify training and leader development approaches and personnel management systems. For example, the Army should immediately incorporate more intensive mission command training into both institutional training and unit decisive action rotations at the CTCs. CTCs provide the Army's best and most intensive venue for developing adaptive leaders with the cerebral agility to effectively react to and act within the VUCA conditions of today's operational environment.[157] As such, mission command training must be a priority during all unit rotations. "Training must replicate the distributed, chaotic, and uncertain nature of the expected operational environment. It must force commanders, supported by their staffs, to receive and clearly express intent."[158]

The Army should also aggressively incorporate mission command into leader development efforts. This should include the enhancement and expansion of mission command instruction at battalion and brigade pre-command courses, such as the

Tactical Commander Development Course, and the addition of virtual mission command leader development forums. In short, training for mission command should enhance a commander's ability to operate in uncertain and chaotic situations and develop in him or her the moral courage to decide rapidly and act determinedly.[159]

Within the personnel domain, the Army should revise the evaluation systems for officers and noncommissioned officers to better assess and reward innovation, initiative, creativity, and risk taking. To date, there have been no significant changes in evaluation systems since the introduction of mission command as the preferred philosophy of command in the Army.[160] As previously mentioned, evaluations should also include a modified version of the MSAF/360 assessment tool to better evaluate leaders on their leadership styles, unit climates, and aptitude in exercising mission command.[161]

Stage 7: Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

For an organization to successfully complete the seventh stage of Kotter's process for creating major change, it must use increased legitimacy to change all systems, structures, and policies that do not fit together and do not fit the change vision; hire, promote, and develop individuals who can implement the change vision; and refresh the change process with new projects, central messages, and change agents.[162] The Army has not yet initiated this phase and must improve in these areas if it is to fully complete this stage and continue the change process.

First, the Army must significantly change systems, structures, and policies that do not fit the change vision for mission command. For instance, the Army must make it a priority to fully incorporate mission command into institutional training and operational procedures. Shamir posits that mission command relies primarily on the "standardization of outputs" and the "standardization of skills," stipulating that an

emphasis on desired output and requisite levels of technical and tactical expertise and professionalism will greatly facilitate mission command.[163] However, this is a fundamental shift from commonly accepted norms in the Army.

Second, the Army must select, promote, and develop leaders who can implement the change vision. Specifically, mission command requires leaders who are resolute, are tough enough to accept risk, readily accept full responsibility for their decisions and subsequent results (good or bad), share rewards with subordinates, and are tenacious. Personnel management systems for such things as accessions, assignments, performance evaluation, promotions, and selections must reward those officers and noncommissioned officers who demonstrate and live by the principles of mission command. Attracting, developing, and retaining leaders of solid character and bright intellect are critical to this endeavor.[164]

Also, "leader development efforts must create the climate for greater trust, and challenge leaders to the point of failure as a way to evaluate character, fortitude, and resiliency of personality in conditions of adversity."[165] The desired climate for mission command exhibits a universal sense of mission, a shared understanding of priorities, the acceptance of clear standards, the valuing of competence, a willingness to share information, and elation in teamwork.[166] Moreover, all leaders should counsel, teach, and mentor their subordinates to increase performance in and cultivate the tactical and technical knowledge, skills, and abilities required for mission command.[167] The Army must also find innovative ways to rejuvenate the mission command inculcation and institutionalization process with new projects, themes, or agents of change that speak to critical desired audiences.

Moreover, the Army must strive to exhibit all five traits suggested by Kotter as attributed to a successful stage-seven organization. In particular, Army senior leaders must continue to preserve the clarity of shared purpose and a sense of urgency. Concurrently, the Army must seek to effect exponential change, bring in more persons to assist in the change effort, decrease interdependencies, and empower and resource tactical-level leaders to make headway in the mission command change process.[168]

Stage 8: Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

An organization must improve performance through client- and productivity-oriented behavior, enhanced leadership, and more efficient management; delineate the linkages between new behaviors and organizational success; and cultivate ways to ensure leadership development and succession in order to successfully complete the final stage of Kotter's process for creating major change.[169] The Army must make significant strides in all three of these areas if it is to successfully anchor the approaches of mission command in its culture and finish this final stage.

First, the Army must improve performance through productivity-oriented behavior, enhanced leadership, and more efficient management. Using Hill's three previously mentioned questions, as well as his idea that "culture is a theory of what works," as a backdrop to a discussion of culture, it is evident that senior strategic leaders must work to evolve Army culture to better embrace mission command and, thereby, enhance organizational performance.[170] The latest evolution of mission command is still relatively new and has yet to be fully evaluated for its utility and effectiveness across all scenarios. Therefore, if the Army is to align mission command with the concept of the ideal combatant, model leader, and optimal productivity, it must continue to define the evolving desired characteristics and actions of leaders, Soldiers,

and organizations. It must also communicate that mission command does, in fact, solve a central Army problem by identifying a better approach to defeat emerging threats. Lastly, since combat operations are ending in Afghanistan, the Army must find an effective way to measure the efficacy of mission command in garrison and training environments. All of these things are vital to modifying Army culture as it relates to mission command.

Second, the Army must continue to develop and refine ways of communicating the connection between mission command-related actions and organizational success.[171] This will become increasingly difficult due to the end of the war in Iraq and the approaching end of the war in Afghanistan. As previously mentioned, in the coming years, success stories that originate from combat operations will no longer be abundant, and the Army will need to seek other ways to project the success of mission command in daily operations. Some possible ideas for this include the development of a mission command professional journal as well as standardized means for senior Army leaders to communicate success stories directly to all leaders in the Army.

Equally important, within the leader development arena, the Army must ensure the development and succession of leaders who embrace the mission command philosophy of command. Organizational change experts say that "managers must recognize the importance of redefining the organization's leadership requirements, then make the necessary investment in time and resources to translate that recognition into effective strategies for selecting and developing new kinds of leaders." Some desired traits for change-focused leaders include vision, handling complexity, operational understanding, veracity, flexibility, self-awareness, active learning, influencing without

authority, cultivating talent, and teamwork.[172] All of these characteristics are conducive to mission command.

Moreover, as previously mentioned during the discussion of Senge's framework of the five disciplines of learning organizations, to overcome the biases and perceptions that result from mental models and frames of references and subsequently modify Army culture, the Army should immediately seek to incorporate self-awareness training at all levels of the institutional training base, to include junior officers and noncommissioned officers.[173] Currently, self-awareness training is only provided at senior levels of professional military education such as pre-command courses and senior service colleges. The sooner junior leaders understand how mental models and frames of reference affect their beliefs, actions, and culture, the easier it will be to implement change, develop leaders who embrace mission command, and subsequently groom and develop them to succeed members of the guiding coalition and other strategic leaders.

Additionally, the Army should mandate broadening experiences/assignments for all officers for purpose of "immersing them in an environment where the comfortable hierarchy of the Army is removed, frames of reference are questioned, and assumptions are tested." An officer's career should progressively mature to include rising volumes of deliberate exposure to persons and ideas outside of his or her deep-seated frames of reference.[174] Only this will yield a senior leader who is a creative and critical thinker, is not afraid to question the norm, and is confident and capable when exercising disciplined initiative in a VUCA environment, all of which are required for successful implementation of the mission command philosophy of command. Also, "improving Army officers' strategic leadership skills should begin with accession and pre-

commissioning and continue through the general officer level."[175] General Dempsey summarized it best when he said, "The education of our officer corps--joint and service--must begin at the start of service to instill the cognitive capability to understand, to receive and express intent, to take decisive initiative within intent, and to trust."[176]

Lastly, any culture is embedded and reinforced by nine things: what leaders pay attention to, measure and control; leader reactions to critical incidents and organizational crises; deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching; criteria for allocation of rewards and status; organizational design and structure; organizational systems and procedures; design of physical space, facades, and buildings; stories about important people and events; and formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters.[177] As such, to effectively anchor mission command in the culture of the Army, it must ensure that these embedding and reinforcing mechanisms support and propagate the unified vision for mission command, demonstrate the desired traits of mission command in action, set the climate for mission command to flourish, and reward leaders who embrace and engender the mission command philosophy of command in garrison and while deployed.

Lastly, essential cultural requirements for mission command include: understanding, mutual trust, exceptional communication, a great value on learning, lenience for mistakes, an inclination for initiative, and a belief in the aptitude of subordinates to make sound decisions. A failure to instill these things will result in the continued inability of the Army to fully implement and institutionalize mission command. In short, the Army should recognize the value of the managerial and corporate approach

to command for its historical context; but now, in light of future challenges, it must reject it in favor of one that embraces and adopts the principles of mission command.[178]

Conclusion

"Mission command is a complex, elusive, and multifaceted phenomenon, not easily quantified, measured, or institutionalized."[179] Despite the fact that mission command has been officially integrated into its doctrine for over a decade, the Army still has yet to completely implement it and institutionalize it. The overarching reason for this is the Army's insufficient ability to create major change over the past several years. To effectively inculcate the mission command philosophy of command, the Army must change and transform on multiple fronts, to include its entrenched culture, its varying unit climates, its tiered organizational structure, its highly bureaucratic processes, and its outmoded training approaches and personnel management systems. By applying Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change, this paper endeavored to clarify why challenges to the implementation and institutionalization of mission command exist and offered several recommendations and solutions to Army senior leaders.

Responsibility for change implementation in the Army lies squarely on the shoulders of strategic leaders. Hill writes, "One of the greatest responsibilities of strategic military leadership is fostering a context in which good ideas have a chance to develop into effective means and methods of war."[180] The successful implementation and institutionalization of mission command in the U.S. Army wholly depends on this.

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