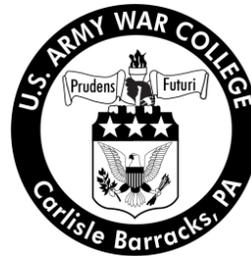


Trust in Senior Leaders: Implications for Mission Command and Professionalism

by

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United States Army War College
Class of 2014

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Senior leader misconduct in the U.S. Army erodes trust critical to inculcation of Mission Command and endangers its ability to act as a profession. I assert that the U.S. Army underestimates the impact of leader misconduct on internal trust in the force and external trust of the institution. In light of these challenges, the U.S. Army should conduct a psychological assessment and counseling at the Pre-Command Course for lieutenant colonels and colonels, to identify leaders at risk for future misconduct, including toxic leader behaviors. Leaders identified without prejudice, as “at risk,” would be counseled and assisted by an U.S. Army psychologist to identify mitigating measures to reduce chances of future misconduct. Reducing levels of leader misconduct would strengthen trust internally, within the U.S. Army, and externally, with civilian leaders, and the American public. As the U.S. Army navigates an era characterized by reduced budgets and evolving roles, the foundation of trust will be vital to the implementation of Mission Command and maintaining the U.S. Army as a profession. The U.S. Army would be able to do so only if it restores the confidence and trust within the force, with civilian leadership, and the American public.

Trust in Senior Leaders: Implications for Mission Command and Professionalism

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin E. Dempsey, stated in a White Paper in April 2012, “Our need to pursue, instill, and foster Mission Command is critical to our future success in defending the nation in an increasingly complex and uncertain operating environment.”¹ Mission command is also topic of increasing importance to the U.S. Army. Before General Dempsey’s white paper, the U.S. Army established the Mission Command Center of Excellence in 2010, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.² The U.S. Army’s Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) “established the Maneuver Center of Excellence to integrate Mission Command . . . at all levels of command, from U.S. Army service component commands to platoons.”³

Three attributes that enable Mission Command include *understanding, intent, and trust*.⁴ However, while the U.S. Army fully committed itself in implementing Mission Command, including changes in doctrine and training, it has not accounted for the impact of unethical leadership on the implementation across the force. The lack of individual psychological preparation for command contributes to conditions by which senior leaders assume command insufficiently prepared. Inability to identify and implement mitigating measures for behaviors such as toxic leadership, lack of integrity, lack of self-regulation, and work-life balance, lead to unacceptable levels of misconduct. These highly publicized scandals, has eroded trust within the U.S. Army and with external audiences, like Congress and the American public.

It is in the best interest of the U.S. Army to restore trust in the U.S. Army as an institution, and its leaders. U.S. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command*, states that the six principles of Mission Command are: “*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.*⁵ It is noteworthy that the first principle of Mission Command listed in ADP 6-0 emphasizes *mutual trust*. A former Director of the Maneuver Center of Excellence, Brigadier General Wayne Grigsby, reinforced this message repeatedly as Deputy Commanding General for Operations, in the 1st Armored Division, emphasizing during a brief to division leaders “the most important component in Mission Command is *mutual trust*.”⁶ TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-3, *The U.S. Army Functional Concept for Mission Command*, outlines four assumptions for implementation of Mission Command, including, “the future force will inculcate a climate of *mutual trust* and prudent risk taking.”⁷ In this paper, I will demonstrate the detrimental impact of senior leader misconduct on the U.S. Army, and offer recommendations regarding psychological assessment and counseling for lieutenant colonel and colonels assuming command positions. I will do so by presenting an overview of several forms of misconduct and their psychological underpinnings, the specific impacts on the profession of arms, and what the U.S. Army can do to proactively address them among a high payoff leader population.

Erosion of Trust in the Profession

The increase in high-profile leader misconduct across the Armed Forces, to include the U.S. Army, has negatively impacted the confidence in and trust of U.S. Army leaders. Recent cases such as the resignation of retired General David Petraeus as Central Intelligence Agency Director, for an illicit affair; the reduction in rank of General William “Kip” Ward to Lieutenant General--for misuse of government funds; or the shocking case of Brigadier General Jeff Sinclair, who was accused of sexual assault among other serious charges before negotiating a plea deal; are visible examples of leader misconduct that are corrosive to the institution.⁸

But these cases are far from isolated and the attention they have drawn presents a grave problem for the profession of arms. A Google search engine query of U.S. Army “Senior Leader Misconduct” netted no less than 214,000 results. According to statistics compiled by the Associated Press, at least 30% of military commanders fired over the past eight years were removed because of sexually related offenses and that “. . . ethical lapses are an escalating problem for the military’s leaders” in all services.⁹ Senior leader misconduct is not just sexual in nature as “within the past few years, the U.S. Army has relieved two brigade commanders and a general for alleged toxic--arguably narcissistic and abusive--behavior.”¹⁰ Another division commander who served in Iraq was forced into retirement after “an investigation of his leadership style and toxic command climate.”¹¹

An increasing number of officers at the lieutenant colonel and colonel level in battalion and brigade commands were relieved in recent years. According to one division commander, 11 battalion commanders were relieved in 2012 Army wide, up from an average of four a year. As of November 2012, 11 brigade commanders across the Army were relieved since 2009.¹² Some of these were highly publicized cases such as the court martial in 2012 of former 173d Airborne Brigade Commander, Colonel James Johnson, for “fraud, bigamy, and conduct unbecoming and officer and a gentleman.”¹³

Despite the continued support from the American people for the U.S. Army,¹⁴ the proliferation of misconduct cases is exacting a toll on opinions of decision makers and key public influencers in national security discourse. The U.S. Army risks a widening separation “between the civilians who control the military and the officers who lead it . . .

by an increasing belief that the officer corps fails to self-police the institution.”¹⁵ Senior leader misconduct in the U.S. Army amplifies “this perception by committing the very crimes they are charged with policing.”¹⁶ This erosion of public trust is detrimental for the U.S. Army if it is to remain a profession and “avoid costly and often rigid bureaucratic controls and excessive external monitoring.”¹⁷

In the fall and winter of 2013, this author encountered strong opinions and was engaged in unsolicited discussions with people outside the military, about their concerns of U.S. Army leader misconduct and other scandals. These memorable interactions included one with a state police commissioner and former military combat veteran, another with a powerful professional congressional staffer and U.S. Army reserve officer who works on Capitol Hill, and a university dean of arts and sciences from a prestigious public university. All three expressed dismay about the level of misconduct, especially those involving leaders, and all three cautioned that while the military was still held in high regard, in their opinion, public trust and confidence were eroding.

Other cases are not as widely publicized, but are just as damaging to the unit involved and contribute to the lack of confidence and trust in U.S. Army leadership. Consider the case of a battalion commander, who was dismissed during a deployment, for adultery, an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate, and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. The impact of his misconduct on his organization was compelling. The immediate impact was largely localized, but the incident reinforced existing perceptions of leaders with a sense of entitlement and that there was a double standard for officers and enlisted personnel. The impact on the officer was also significant, as it damaged his personal and professional reputation and credibility.¹⁸

The question that this vignette and the current state of affairs raise is whether or not this situation is preventable. Did the former battalion commander in question display identifiable emotional risk factors that were red flags for his misconduct? Did he understand the catastrophic ramifications of his behavior, if caught? In a conversation after his relief, he told the author that he was aware of the repercussions his conduct could have, but he failed to prevent himself from committing these acts. He also indicated that marital issues, suicidal thoughts, and the stress of a recent deployment to Afghanistan, contributed to his “vulnerable emotional state.”¹⁹

It is worthy to examine ways of identifying emotional indicators of future misconduct, and developing mitigating behaviors to pre-empt misconduct. This erosion of trust in U.S. Army leaders, whether a general officer or battalion commander, hinders the U.S. Army’s ability to inculcate Mission Command into the fabric and culture of the institution, as it navigates an uncertain future. It also further erodes the confidence and trust of the public in the U.S. Army as a respected profession. The battalion commander, relieved during deployment for immoral behavior, broke trust with his command and his Soldiers believed they could not trust him long before he was relieved.²⁰

Addressing this problem requires understanding the current expectations of senior leader conduct, and how these expectations have evolved over time. What were once acceptable character foibles of famous leaders in previous eras, such as General Grant’s alcoholism, or General MacArthur’s brusque and toxic leadership style, are no longer acceptable. This current doctrinal command leadership philosophy is encapsulated in the concept of *Mission Command*; that was introduced in the U.S. Army

in the 2000s. U.S. Army doctrine outlines the purpose of the U.S. Army, the importance of leaders and leadership, trust as a bed rock of leadership, and the characteristics of the U.S. Army as a profession. Mission command became the central tenet of the 2013 series of updated U.S. Army doctrine, surveyed in this section.

Mission Command in Doctrine

ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, states, “Mission Command is 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.”²¹ After defining Mission Command, the U.S. Army updated long-standing doctrinal and institutional constructs. The U.S. Army changed “the concept of Mission Command replacing battle command as an activity and Mission Command replacing command and control as a warfighting function.”²² In short, the U.S. Army updated and revised its doctrine to reflect the emphasis on General Dempsey’s priority of operating in “an increasingly complex and uncertain operating environment.”²³

The first opening paragraph of the first page of ADP 6-22, *Leadership*, states. “The U.S. Army exists to serve the American people, protect enduring national interests, and fulfill the nation’s military responsibilities. Fulfilling these purposes relies on leaders who embody *values-based leadership, impeccable character, and professional competence.*”²⁴ ADP 6-22’s Army Leadership Requirements Model outlines expectations that the Army wants leaders to meet (Figure 1). The U.S. Army Leadership

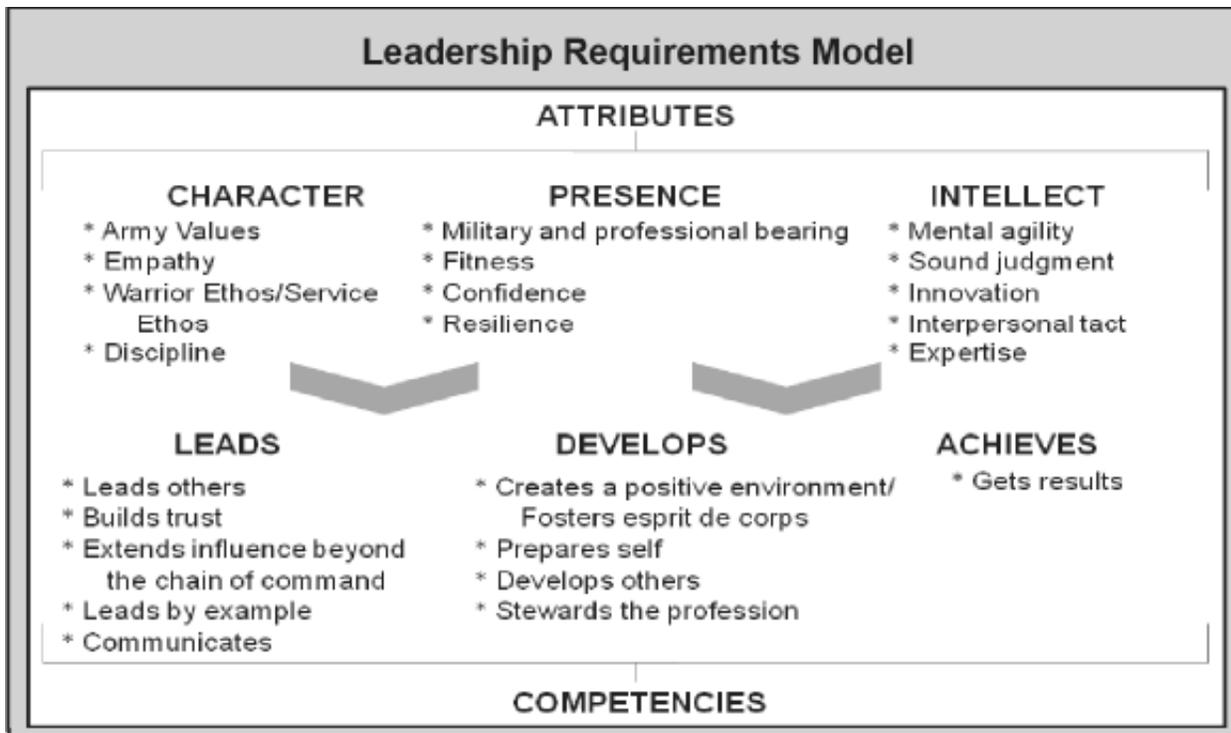


Figure 1. Leadership Requirements Model²⁵

Requirements Model has three attributes: *character*, *presence*, and *intellect*, which are characteristics internal to a leader. The Model also has three competencies: *leads*, *develops*, and *achieves*, which are groups of related actions the U.S. Army expects leaders to do.²⁶ The first of these, *leads*, includes *builds trust*, “which is an important competency to establish conditions of effective influence and for creating a positive environment.”²⁷

U.S. Army doctrine also addresses the role of trust for the U.S. Army as a profession. The U.S. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP)-1, *The Army*, states “a profession must earn and maintain trust of its clients through the effective and *ethical* application of its expertise.”²⁸ It adds “based on *trust* relations with clients, the clients must grant relative autonomy to the profession in the application of its art and expertise. They expect the profession to continuously exercise judgment as individual

professionals self-regulate the profession.”²⁹ ADRP-1 also describes the five essential characteristics of the U.S. Army profession: *trust, military expertise, honorable service, esprit de corps, and stewardship*.³⁰ It adds that professions that fail to meet expectations for effectiveness and ethical performance risk losing society’s trust and the esteemed status as a profession. If the profession loses trust or effectiveness, they are then controlled *more like a bureaucracy than a profession*.³¹

Misconduct by military leaders in positions of authority is antithetical to both the principles of Mission Command presented above, and the status of the U.S. Army as a profession. The doctrinal linkage among Mission Command, trust, and senior leader conduct is strong. U.S. Army doctrine clearly outlines individual expectations of its leaders. Leader misconduct runs counter to doctrine, U.S. Army values, and presents a threat to the institution’s ability to integrate fully Mission Command and to maintain its status as a profession.

Forms of Senior Leader Misconduct

It is important to recognize that not all leader misconduct stems from the same faults and contributing factors, nor have identical impacts on the leader or institution. This section will address the prevalent forms of misconduct seen in recent cases. These are toxic leadership, lack of integrity, and lack of self-regulation and work-life balance.

Toxic Leadership

Among the inhibitors to building trust is “toxic leadership.” The Army defines toxic leadership in its doctrine as “a combination of self-centered attitudes, motivations, and behaviors that have adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, and mission performance.”³² It adds that toxic leaders operate with a sense of self-worth and from acute self-interest.³³ While there are many definitions and descriptions of toxic leaders,

“ . . . it is their specific behaviors, especially their treatment and outlook of subordinates that make them toxic.”³⁴ In the 2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) respondents reported that “about 20% of superiors are viewed as demonstrating patterns of toxic behavior” while “83% of Army leaders indicate that they have observed one or more leaders demonstrate negative leadership types of behaviors in the past year . . .”³⁵ A 2010 TRADOC Leadership Lessons in Division Command study of leadership at the division level in deployed units reported that setting a “high ethical tone” was a behavior seen as of increasing importance in division commanders.³⁶ The report also indicates “decreasing tolerance among experienced subordinates--from Company to Division levels--for any leader seen as ‘poor’ . . . and no tolerance for the very few judged as clearly ‘toxic.’”³⁷ Also noteworthy was a “noticeable decline” in division command climates since 2004.³⁸

U.S. Army doctrine establishes that leaders at battalion level and above are stewards of the profession. “Institutional stewardship includes obligations for financial resources, acquisition, development of people, crisis leadership, roles and missions, senior team leadership actions we describe as ‘enterprise management’ . . .”³⁹ While implementation and practice of Mission Command doctrine is within the duty and responsibilities of U.S. Army “enterprise managers,” their own ethical lapses hinder acceptance of Mission Command. As U.S. Army officers rise in rank and position, their influence, both positive and negative, has “amplified impact” on the larger organization.⁴⁰ Misconduct at senior levels of an organization, to include the U.S. Army, is enabled by many factors including increased isolation, reduced oversight, and ethical fitness.⁴¹ It is not clear if the levels of leader misconduct is a result of the strains of over

12 years of continuous conflict or simply reflects declining morals among the general population.⁴² Years of high stress combat deployments and aggressive pre-deployment training cycles may have fostered bad behaviors normally suppressed, but, the effect on the force is the same: a loss in confidence in U.S. Army leadership. The same U.S. Army leadership attempting to change a mindset through the institutionalization of Mission Command, and who are responsible for rebuilding trust and confidence of civilian leaders and the American public.

Lack of Integrity

Leader or managerial misconduct is not just a problem in the U.S. Army, as noted by Harvard Business School Professor Emeritus, Michael Jensen. In a 2009 interview, he commented on the plummet in trust in the business community stating, “Out-of-integrity behavior has been pervasive, both on an organizational and an individual basis.”⁴³ A review of business and other organizational literature on behavior defines positive attributes of effective executive-level leaders. Morality refers in general to a society’s “standards of right and wrong. . . for individuals and groups . . . while ethics refers to the normative set of values that apply to all members of a group or organization.”⁴⁴ In sum, both morality and ethics relate to desirable versus undesirable behaviors and outcomes in individuals and leaders.⁴⁵ Integrity is also an integral component of desirable moral and ethical leader behaviors. “Integrity is important to individuals, groups, organizations and society because it creates workability. Without integrity, the workability of any object, system, person, group or organization declines; and as workability declines, the opportunity for performance declines.”⁴⁶ In other words, the leader attribute of integrity, and by extension trust, is required for a high level of performance. Business literature also recognizes the affects of behaviors, such as

integrity, in terms of honoring its word or commitment to internal and external audiences. An organization, whether in the business world or the U.S. Army, “Honors its word, internally, between members of an organization; and externally, between the organization those it deals with.”⁴⁷ For the U.S. Army, the internal audience is the entire force, and the external audience is civilian leadership and the American public. Internal and external perceptions of an organization’s ethical and moral behavior, and its commitment to integrity, including that of its leaders, is clearly applicable to both military and non-military organizations.

Lack of Self-Regulation and Work-Life Balance

A review of literature and articles on why otherwise competent and successful leaders fail, reveal some common threads worth examining in the context of U.S. Army senior leader misconduct. While some themes such as not developing a coherent management succession plan, or failing to adapt to an emerging industry trend, are more applicable to the technical and business world, there are other surprisingly relevant trends for U.S. Army leaders. Business executive and corporate management trainer Victor Lipman, states in a 2013 article in *Forbes* magazine, “3 Preventable Reasons While Talented Leaders Fail,” that leaders “do not moderate an exceptional work ethic.”⁴⁸ While a strong drive and work ethic may be required and beneficial for leaders on the rise in an organization, “a fine line can separate success and over stress.”⁴⁹ Lipman added “there’s only so long one can work 70 hour weeks--effectively. Ultimately one may become frayed . . . wound too tightly . . . family life and personal relationships may become unbalanced . . . all of which can distort sound decision making that are an executive’s strongest asset.”⁵⁰ While Lipman may be describing a hypothetical business executive, he very easily could be describing a U.S. Army senior

leader with chronic workaholic tendencies, aggravated by repeated deployments and continuous immersion in stressful environments, coupled with enormous responsibilities.

Mark Sanborn, a widely published author in the fields of leadership, management and teamwork refers to “warning signs” in his online article, “Why Leaders Fail.” Sanborn defines a warning sign of “poor self management” as “leaders who fail to take care of their physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs are headed for disaster.”⁵¹ Sanborn also identifies a warning sign of “ethics slip.” Sanborn states a leader’s credibility is the result of competence and character, and that “a discrepancy between these two aspects creates an integrity problem.”⁵² Sanborn asserts that “the highest principle of leadership is integrity,” and “when integrity ceases to be a leader’s top priority, that is when a leader steps onto the slippery slope of failure.”⁵³ Victor Lipman’s second reason why talented leaders fail is when some “subtly (and at times not so subtly) succumbs to the temptations of power.” Leaders that do not model ethical behavior, do not “play by the same rules” they expect others to adhere to, will lead to the predictable result of being noticed by others, which will erode respect that will be difficult to regain.⁵⁴ Depending on the level or act of leader temptation, it may also likely lead to the downfall of the leader, to their detriment and that of their organization. The common theme to these reasons of leader failure are related to erosion of moral, ethical, and integrity standards, and inability to *self-regulate* their behavior. Whether it is a public servant, a business executive, or a high profile Army leader, it is one thing to fail for lack of competence or skill; it is far more tragic “to fail for reasons that are entirely in one’s power to control.”⁵⁵

General Dempsey and the service chiefs are not blind to recent leader misconduct and the corrosive impact it has on the force and the public's trust in the Armed Forces as an institution. General Dempsey said he was "disturbed by the misconduct issues" and emphasized the value of character and added ". . . you can have someone who is intensely competent, who is steeped in the skills of the profession, but doesn't live a life of character."⁵⁶ In November 2012, then Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said. "When lapses occur, they have the potential to erode public confidence in our leadership . . . worse, they can be detrimental to the execution of our mission to defend the American people."⁵⁷ He also directed General Dempsey to conduct a review of ethics training for officers and to provide recommendations on "how to better foster a culture of value-based decision-making and stewardship among senior general and flag officers."⁵⁸ In addition to the directed review of ethics training, General Dempsey later proposed a "360-degree performance evaluation" as an assessment tool for leaders and directed the service chiefs to do so within their organizations.⁵⁹

Proposal: A "Model of Trust"

Given the current levels of U.S. Army senior leader misconduct and the ineffective, but well intentioned application of the multitude of assessment tools, I recommend adoption of a proposed "Model of Trust" with key indicators to enhance trust of internal and external audiences. The Model of Trust is a three-part framework: Field Observations, Moral Exemplar, and Professionalism of the Force (Figure 2).

Model of Trust

- *Leaders' Ability to Function as a Moral Exemplar in War and Peace*
- *Maintain Army as a Profession*
- *Mission Command Leadership*

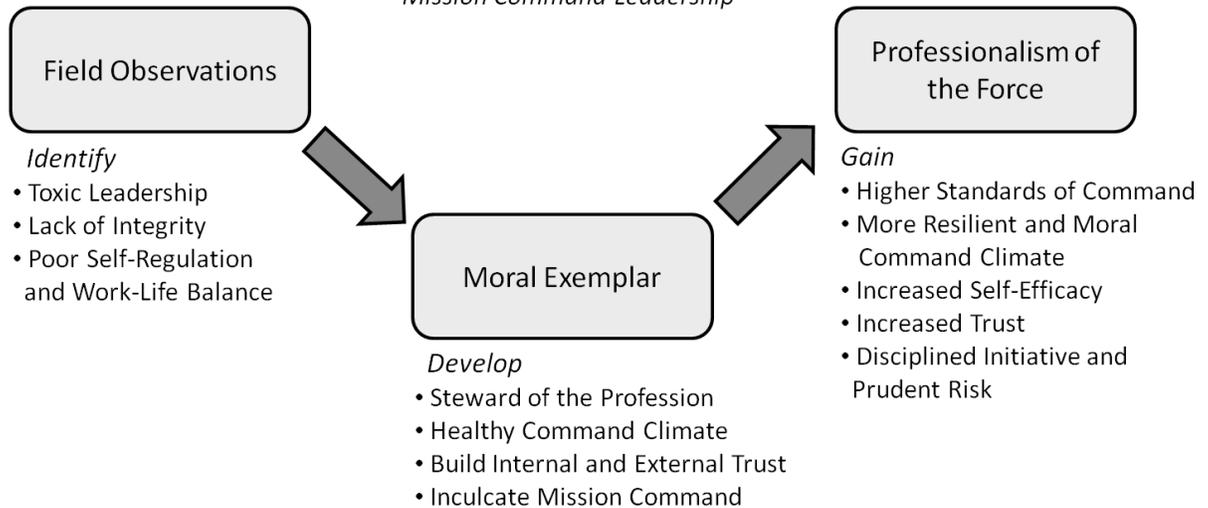


Figure 2. Model of Trust

Exercising the Model of Trust is to foster an environment in the U.S. Army that enables leaders to operate effectively as moral exemplars in wartime and peacetime environments, preserves the U.S. Army as a profession of arms, and to lead through an institution practice of Mission Command.

Field Observations

Field Observations are symptoms of the problems described above that are reported in the multitude of U.S. army assessment and survey tools. These symptoms are manifested by leaders that display toxic leadership, lack integrity, are poor self-regulators and lack work-life balance. U.S. Army leaders that knowingly or unknowingly demonstrate these destructive behaviors, hinder their ability to serve as effective moral exemplar leaders.

Existing Army Assessments and Feedback Mechanisms

Leader assessments and feedback programs are not new to the Army, but how effective are they at identifying and correcting toxic or ethically at risk senior leaders before the reach positions with “amplified impact”?⁶⁰ ADP 6-22 captures the importance of multi-source and assessment in our doctrine. “A spectrum of leaders and followers (superiors, subordinates, peers, and mentors) can observe and assess competencies demonstrated through leader behaviors.”⁶¹ The Army Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback 360-degree (MSAF 360) is administered from squad leader position to senior leader duty positions, to include lieutenant colonels and colonels at the center of the author’s recommendation. Additionally, all Soldiers participate annually in the Army’s Global Assessment Tools (GAT) to assess confidentially their physical and psychological health based the five dimensions of strength: social, emotional, spiritual, family and physical fitness. Soldiers also participate in and Periodic Health Assessments (PHA) to identify emotional and physical challenges and promote resiliency skills. Following deployments, all Soldiers participate in a Post-Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA), which is a comprehensive online health screening that examines for physical and behavioral health concerns associated with deployment, with triggers for a follow up in person consultation with a U.S. Army health care professional.

Most of these tools and indicators are reliant on the individual to act on and capitalize on them, or they can simply choose to ignore them without consequence.⁶² In recent years, officers selected for resident primary military education, command positions, and more recently, general officers, routinely participate in 360-degree assessments and personality type indicators. Anecdotal information indicates the existing general officer 360-degree assessment will be modified in attempts to better

identify future and current general officers with unethical or toxic behaviors. Despite these admirable efforts, “We continue to see that some senior leadership failures are at least indirectly attributable to an unwillingness or inability to act on feedback that identifies traits that are ‘derailers’ in strategic leaders.”⁶³

Moral Exemplar

Moral Exemplar is defined for the purpose of the Model of Trust as U.S. Army leaders’ ability to function as a role model for morality, and the profession of arms.⁶⁴ The U.S. Army expects its leaders to serve as moral exemplars in war and peace, to build healthy command climates, to build internal and external trust, and to inculcate Mission Command in the force. Leaders that do not perform as moral exemplars degrade the professionalism and effectiveness of the U.S. Army.

Moral Exemplar Development at the Pre-Command Course

The variety and number of surveys and assessments in use by the U.S. Army, from the pre-enlistment stage to general officer level, indicates the U.S. Army as an institution values the use of these tools as predictors of behavior and performance, and in some cases are attempts to modify future behaviors, in line with the U.S. Army’s Leadership Requirements Model, and to develop leaders. Clearly the existing self-assessment tools do not adequately identify senior leaders at risk for ethical misconduct, or the datum is not being used to the best possible extent.

I therefore propose that the U.S. Army implement a psychological counseling assessment and screening by a U.S. Army psychologist, for senior leaders at the Pre-Command Course (PCC) before assuming Centralized Selected List (CSL) leadership positions. The purpose of this is to identify leaders with emotional health issues, risk factors, or behaviors that may increase the chance of future moral or ethical lapses, or

likelihood to engage in toxic leader behaviors. In a confidential and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 protected counseling session with the officer, a U.S. Army psychologist would attempt to identify red flag indicators as a form of self-awareness of potential pitfalls, along with providing recommended mitigation measures such as mentors⁶⁵ I also propose that, if warranted, an officer could be allowed to decline or postpone command without prejudice, and offered appropriate follow-on counseling, as required. In the case of a self-generated request by an officer to defer voluntarily from a CSL command position, the final decision would have to be made by a general officer, after careful consultation with health care professionals, and the officer in question.

Current Pre-Command Course Methodology

The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center's School for Command Preparation administers the PCC for lieutenant colonel and colonels. Correspondence with Colonel Thomas Hollis, Director, School for Command Preparation, provided an overview of the current Army pre-command preparation for CSL leaders. "U.S. Army Command Team Preparation" is a four-phase program for lieutenant colonels and colonels and their command sergeants majors (CSMs).⁶⁶ Phase I and II of the PCC takes place at Fort Leavenworth, and is the responsibility of Colonel Hollis and his organization. Phase I is a two-week common core of instruction focused on the "Art of Command."⁶⁷ Phase II is a one to three-week, tailored program of instruction depending on the category of command an officer is slated for.⁶⁸ Phase III is attendance at a branch specific pre-command course at a U.S. Army Center of Excellence, focused on U.S. Army "Warfighting Function" competencies.⁶⁹ Phase IV is focused on the "Authority of Command" and is mandatory for leaders with special court martial convening

authorities, and is administered through attendance at the Senior Officer Legal Orientation Course in Charlottesville, Virginia.⁷⁰ During the author's correspondence with Colonel Hollis, he indicated the importance of command preparation to Army Chief of Staff, General Ray Odierno, and the continuous updating and fine-tuning of the program.⁷¹

Existing PCC Assessment Tools

Colonel Hollis elaborated on some specifics of Phase I activities for PCC attendees. PCC conducts Myers Brigg Type Indicator (MBTI), a conflict resolution tool called the Thomas-Killman Conflict Mode Instrument, and they review a recent MSAF 360. PCC also implemented a contract called True Growth, focused on "life-balance readiness" and it is facilitated by retired general officers and CSMs. In a 360-degree assessment type of procedure, surveys are filled out prior to PCC by attendees, superiors, peers, subordinates, and family members to provide feedback on the leader. True Growth coaches sit down one on one with the leader, for up to three hours, to discuss the surveys and techniques to achieve balance in their life. Colonel Hollis noted that they did not have a psychologist integrated into PCC nor were they reporters of red flag behavior. He added that the program was "designed to assist command teams with their individual identity and professional identity, and to attempt to determine if there are conflict or character miss-alignments desired in (U.S.) Army leaders."⁷² While the current PCC Phase I program is thorough and professionally executed, it is not clear it effectively reduces levels and instances of future senior leader misconduct and toxic behavior. There is opportunity to adjust PCC to better develop attendees as moral exemplars of the U.S. Army.

Professionalism of the Force

Professionalism of the Force is defined for the purpose of the Model of Trust as positive measures of effectiveness that result from U.S. Army leaders serving as moral exemplars. These predicted positive indicators can be measured through reduction in reports of relief of lieutenant colonel and colonel commanders; reduction in reported toxic and risk averse leaders, and increased trust in leaders, as identified in CASAL type studies. Other measures of effectiveness include reduced levels of stress and increased levels of self-efficacy in the force, as measured by the PHA, PDHRA, and GAT; along with increased levels of trust and initiative, as documented in command climate and other “health of the U.S. Army” surveys.

These measurable indicators would manifest themselves in positive outcomes with leaders serving as moral exemplars in war and peace, maintaining the U.S. Army as a profession, avoidance of behaviors detrimental to full integration of Mission Command in the force, and a U.S. Army that is trusted by its members, civilian leaders, and the American public. Framing the problem of senior leader misconduct through a Model of Trust will allow the U.S. Army to better understand the problem of misconduct and measure effectiveness of a solution.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command as Moral Exemplar of an Integrated Approach

There is precedence for a similar type of comprehensive assessment program in the Army special operations community. In 1999, during the author’s application process for selection into the 75th Ranger Regiment, as a captain, he was required to participate in a two week Ranger Assessment and Selection Program (RASP) before being formally accepted into the organization. The RASP curriculum focused on a series of physical and tactical training tests and tasks, in addition to teaching techniques and

procedures unique to the organization. Beyond the physical and tactical assessments, candidates were required to take an intelligence quotient test, a personality type indicator test, a 360-assessment, and a comprehensive written psychological assessment, followed by an in depth interview with a U.S. Army psychologist from the United States Special Operations Command (USASOC). The discussion with the USASOC psychologist touched on all aspects of written assessments with the purpose of determining suitability and compatibility for service in the Ranger Regiment. The USASOC psychologist, in coordination with non-commissioned officers (NCOs) that administered RASP, who observed candidates during the previous two weeks, presented the results of the interview along with the scores of the physical and tactical tests, to a board of officers and senior NCOs from the Ranger Regiment. After their review of the results, candidates were presented to the board of Ranger Regimental leaders who conducted their own interview, before deciding whether to accept an applicant for service into the organization. The Ranger Regiment's comprehensive assessment and selection program is an example of a successful program that incorporates the careful use of a U.S. Army psychologist, with the specific purpose of screening for suitability for service in a unique organization in the special operations community.

Currently, the U.S. Army carefully screens officers for senior leadership positions using centralized selection boards, performance reports, Inspector General and criminal background checks, but it does not adequately screen for emotional and ethical health. A psychological assessment and counseling program focused on senior leaders at the

lieutenant colonel and colonel level, before assuming command, may reduce rates of future ethical misconduct and increase internal and external trust in the U.S. Army.

Integration of a U.S. Army psychologist confidential counseling and assessment session into Phase I of PCC can be implemented via a pilot study at Fort Leavenworth. The Model of Trust framework would be applied to gauge the effectiveness of the author's PCC recommendation. Validation of the Model of Trust should be done through during command and post command surveys of the officer. The "captive audience" at PCC, focused on command preparation, is a compelling and appropriate opportunity to apply this effort that cannot be duplicated elsewhere in an upwardly mobile officer's career. If the assessment and counseling is deemed successful, it could be expanded with minimal effort, to CSM attendees as well, and in fact, they may demand it, though that is beyond the purpose and scope of this paper.

Conclusion

Application of an emotional and ethical health assessment would have to be synchronized in time before a senior leader assumes position and focus on a specific high pay off leader population. Assessment and counseling CSL command designated lieutenant colonels and colonels at Phase I of PCC, is currently the best time to do so. If an assessment and counseling program reduces the rates of ethical misconduct, and by extension, increases internal and external trust in the U.S. Army, it is certainly a worthy institutional investment of energy and resources. This type of program is also in the spirit of the division commander preparation recommendations in the 2010 Leadership Lessons at Division Command Level study. Recommendations include division commanders be provided with feedback and coaching on their effectiveness as senior leaders in addition to identifying important leader behaviors.⁷³ Based on positive

feedback from the Army's use of the MSAF 360, there are indicators an emotional health screening will be well received and useful to potential participants. "89% of participants concluded that the MSAF had at least a small positive impact on their leadership development and 72% reported a moderate or greater impact. 53% reported improvement to self awareness and 36% reported the results lasted more than a year."⁷⁴

A Phase I PCC comprehensive counseling program that utilizes existing self-assessment tools, and a new psychological counseling for emotional and ethical health, may be of great benefit to senior leaders and the U.S. Army as a profession. In a conversation with Doctor Tom Williams, Director, Senior Leader Development and Resiliency, at the U.S. Army War College, he indicated that an U.S. Army psychologist, like him, with access to an officer's MSAF 360, GAT, and MBTI, could assist in a confidential counseling session to identify possible red flag behaviors.⁷⁵ Doctor Williams further offered that a certified psychologist could assist a PCC attendee in developing guardrails that, if applied, may mitigate the likelihood of future moral or ethical lapses or toxic leader behaviors.⁷⁶

There are potential limitations of the author's recommendation, including accuracy of data inputted into the various assessments and surveys utilized in a PCC counseling session. Participants must also believe that willingness to engage in a candid assessment and counseling session with a psychologist will produce a positive outcome for the officer. A PCC attendee must also be able and willing to internalize the counseling and apply the recommended mitigation measures, or the effort will fail.

Finally, the U.S. Army must resource a trained and certified psychologist at PCC to administer the program in coordination with the existing command structure.

Going back to the case of the battalion commander relieved during deployment, if he had been offered counseling and been allowed to defer command, he would have gladly accepted that opportunity.⁷⁷ If the recommend Phase I PCC psychological assessment and counseling is deemed effective, it is likely worth a further study of similar methods to modify behavior earlier in an officer's career, perhaps prior to CSL command selection.

Strategic leaders “. . . have an ethical obligation to the health of our institutions.”⁷⁸ If senior leaders are to achieve General Dempsey's vision for implementation of Mission Command, they must identify the same senior leaders most at ethical risk for enabling failure to achieve that vision. Furthermore, if the U.S. Army is sincere in its desire to preserve the institution as a profession, it must rebuild trust internally and externally.

General Odierno has stated "I believe that multi-dimensional feedback is an important component to holistic leader development. By encouraging input from peers, subordinates and superiors alike, leaders can better "see themselves" and increase self awareness."⁷⁹ The U.S. Army War College issued text *The Future of the Army Profession*, states that “strategic leaders bear the burden . . . of maintaining the professional identity of the organization--they are stewards of the profession. Effectively imbuing these leaders . . . for nurturing and developing the profession itself is critical for progress in service to America's security.”⁸⁰ If the U.S. Army is serious about inculcating Mission Command into the force, while preserving the U.S. Army as a profession, it will

continue to look for methods such as my PCC recommendation, to reduce senior leader misconduct and develop leaders at all levels.

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