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Report

Leadership and Mission Command in Future Operational Environment

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Abstract- Army Leadership has an indisputable significance in the success of armies and certainly, the states. The core mechanism that supports the army is its leaders. Since winning or preventing wars has become a phenomenon, the discussions bring the intriguing issue of leadership competencies an army has to evaluate to better build its decision making structure, and the mission command in which leaders have to consider the factors that they come across in new battle scenarios. Considering the era that the battlefield technology has reached, the responsibility of the army leader is increased and the competencies that he or she has to possess have become a complex issue. With the concept of mission command and possible scenarios in which leaders have to weigh both the political and economic conditions of an environment; the knowledge, talent, experience and education come forth as the prerequisites. In one of the workshops that The International Conference on Military and Security Studies has organized, *Leadership and Mission Command*, the leadership features of the officers who are going to serve in unconventional warfare, and the challenges of mission command are discussed in order to lay out the possible solutions to the difficulties that armies may face in future operational areas. The outputs, lessons taken from the experiences, different views and presentations of the participants during the workshop are presented below.

Keywords- Leadership, Mission Command, Leadership competencies, Future operational environment.

1. Introduction

Future operational environment is as complex and chaotic as for the most nations in the world in terms of managing conflicts. Urban Warfare, counterinsurgency (COIN), counter-terrorism, stability operations, peacekeeping and peace-support operation, cyber warfare, proliferation of WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) and terrorism with various kinds will be the challenges for the nations to encounter in the near future. So with this transition, an army will have to apply different kinds of tactics on the field and use effective leadership in various fields.

In this increasingly complex, ever changing and uncertain operating environment, mission command and effective leadership seem to be the best practices to maintain relative advantage.

To discuss the challenging factors about these practices, a workshop, *Leadership and Mission Command*, was established in the International Conference on Military and Security Studies (ICMSS-2015) on 10-11 March 2015. During the conference there were three other workshops which were about Decision Making and Artificial Intelligence; Knowledge Development, and Knowledge Management and Information Systems. The conference hosted many military and civilian participants from 18 different countries which were officers, academics, economists, and strategists.

2. Participants and Content of the Workshop

The aim of the *Leadership and Mission Command* workshop was to discuss the problematic areas that leaders come across in this new operational environment, and to visualize mission command to

understand it better in the way of succeeding on the battlefield.

During the workshop, topics such as effective leadership and mission command, challenges in mission command, leadership of future environment, servant leadership, situational awareness in mission command, mission command in counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, and leadership issue in peace operations were discussed and presenters were given questions to best benefit from the presenters' studies.

With the aim of finding answers to the spaces emerged from the ambiguous future environment, the workshop had studies and discussions on four basic tracks. In the first track, participants had expressed their views and experiences on the principles of mission command which are building cohesive teams through mutual trust, creating shared understanding, providing a clear commander's intent, exercising disciplined initiative, using mission orders, and accepting prudent risk (U.S. Army, 2012). In the second track, the group discussed the applications of mission command that take place in COIN environments, urban operations, peace keeping operations and crisis leadership. The other track, characteristics of mission command, was also discussed during the presentations and with the questions. The subtopics were: trust & shared values, cross-cultural understanding, transformational leadership, servant & subordinate oriented leadership, senior leader competencies, and innovation, intuition, creativity. And in the last track, future security environment, trust & mutual understanding, cultural change, risk aversion, and the implementation of mission command (strategic-tactical) are analyzed with brainstorming.

The workshop consisted of 20 participants from 4 countries as follows:

Job Role	Number of Participants
War College Students	11
Lecturers	5
Researchers	-
University Students	-
International Attendees	4 (2 USA, 1 Italy, 1 England)
Total	20

During the workshop, 14 articles were held with the titles below by the participants:

Articles Submitted to WS-4	
1	Challenges for Effective Application of Leadership and Mission Command in Today's and Future Security Environment (Yalçinkaya, Hayran, Uygun, 2015).
2	Coping with the Complicated Security Challenge: Trust and Shared Understanding for Effective Communication (Tayanç, Ünal, Baltacıoğlu, Tuna, 2015).
3	Assessment of Military Leadership in a Peace Operation: The EUFOR Case and its Capacity Building Role (Sığrı, 2015).
4	Leadership in Future Operational Environment (Şimşek, 2015).
5	An Assessment of Army Leadership and Senior Officer Competencies (Aybar, 2015).
6	Fighting in Mega Cities: A Proposed Model for Companies to Implement Mission Command (Eryılmaz, 2015).
7	Developing Transformational Leaders by Mission Command for the Future Security Environment (Özdemirci, Alp, 2015).
8	On the Way to Achieving and Realizing Mission Command: Encouraging Leaders for Accepting Prudent Risk Through the Lens of Prospect Theory (Hayran, Karaman, 2015).
9	Servant Leadership in Mission Command: Devoted Command (Uygun, 2015).
10	A Leadership Approach in the Perspective of Mission Command: Subordinate-Oriented Approach (Bingül, 2015).
11	Leadership and Mission Command in COIN Operations (Yalçinkaya, 2015).

3. Assessment of Mission Command with a Future Lens

As proved in current operations that are applied in different parts of the world, today's and future security environment promise no peace for militaries. Since security environment seems to be chaotic and intriguing, getting ready for the future starting from today against perplexing adversaries is a challenge for most armed forces. During these challenges, mission command's principles will guide armies even in the most difficult conditions.

One important factor leaders need for mission command to be effective is communication that is formed between the leader and the subordinate. This communication should include horizontal and vertical

feedback. With this feedback, both sides can be aware of the details of the situation easily and so succeed the battle. It has an important role in order to build a mutual trust and shared understanding because interactive communication is based on a qualified feedback chain.

Continuing communication deepens trust, clarifies commander's intent for the mission, establishes mutual trust between the army personnel, causes synergy with the help of exchanging ideas, and paves the way for subordinates to use initiative when they are given a decentralized type mission. Thus, one of the most important inner factors for success in mission command, trust, is achieved in all levels of military organization.

Another important point in mission command is the willingness of higher commanders to push as many capabilities as possible down to their subordinates, since today's operations tend to have a joint structure and are operated in a decentralized way. In the conditions that units come across, the leaders have to act flexible enough to respond to the various different tactical or operational situations that they come across. It is indispensable for leaders to apply mission command because in most types of operations, initiative will be a prerequisite to success the mission.

Command and control in COIN is more difficult than any conventional military operation because, in most cases, there is a need for very close coordination between police, military forces and local indigenous forces in terms of execution of operations and intelligence. This requirement demands a non-traditional command relationship for military forces. Thus, at the tactical level, the delegation of authorities by operational-level commanders must be determined carefully. The understanding of the operational-level theatre wide plan and the operational intent of the operational-level commander are vital for the execution. Unconventional type of operations signals the importance of mission command in battlefield.

On the other hand, the change in environment is also an important factor in today's world. With the developing cities and increasing population, the probability of crisis has increased. In a crisis situation, it is a need to have a leader more than a manager. It's leader's responsibility to consider all possibilities and make plans so that crisis is overcome and measures are taken to prevent recurring. Developing the leadership skills and qualities will reduce the emotional impact of the crisis and during this phase, communication, vision and values, and caring relationships are the key elements.

In parallel with the mission command concept, in the transformational leadership theory, leaders are thought to empower subordinates, to experience field drills, war games more frequently, to improve their divergent and non-linear thinking abilities, to brainstorm innovative ideas, and use creativity. These competencies all go under the concept of mission command.

4. Future Problems, Outcomes about Leadership and Mission Command Effectiveness

The main problems that are discussed mostly about leadership and mission command are as follows: micromanagement tendency among military leaders; misconception of mission command; organizational resistance to mission command philosophy and application of mission command; differences between peacetime management and wartime leadership. Apart from what mission command is, it is also studied to find answers for how to implement mission command in battlefield.

The other useful aspects and ways of improving leadership and mission command are as follows:

- In the education of the leaders, we should benefit from the experiences of the national or international forces in the operations like NATO experienced.
- The armies have to use behavioral scientists as well as leaders from all ranks to produce a model that lays out the stages a leader should pass one by one.
- According to the list of competencies drawn out, a new form of career system should be developed for senior leaders. One example can be to increase the number of operation experiences-in joint or multidimensional arenas-of leaders starting from the earlier times in their careers.
- As many people expect the leaders to emerge in the time of chaos, the armies do not have that luxury to do so. An applicable talent management system can help to better fill the future leadership positions effectively providing all the jobs necessary to develop the armies and be effective in future warfare.
- Although the mission command philosophy is understood well by military leaders, we need to embody, convert, and apply it in a concrete manner in daily military actions. Because there are especially problems with implementing mission command in some areas such as misconception of mission command, micromanagement tendency among military leaders, resistance to change both organizationally and personally, aligning DOTMLPF (doctrine, organizational structures, training, materiel, leadership and education,

personnel, and facilities) (U.S. Army, 2013) with mission command and leadership styles compatible with mission command. Without overcoming these challenges, the mission command and the desired leadership that militaries require will be unattainable.

- While giving initiative to lower level-commanders and executioners, higher-level commanders should be careful about the micromanagement trap, which will undermine the whole effort to succeed. Leadership characteristics of all level commanders are also a decisive factor in COIN.
- Taking into the consideration that the main purpose of both military and political COIN operations is winning the hearts and minds of the population, from the lowest level to the highest echelon, the efforts of all personnel are unique to reach the end result. Leadership and mission command are the force enablers, which must be carefully planned and executed to achieve success.
- For the future operational environment, military leaders should have sophisticated understanding in culture, foreign language and geopolitics and they should be able to operate in joint and multinational operations. Leaders should be competent enough to operate in broad spectrum of tasks and skilled in fast decision-making, stress management, adaptability, versatility, situational awareness, cultural knowledge, creativity and communication.
- In crisis situations, leaders should plan, prepare and practice for the worst situations and should benefit from the opportunities. The right person should be assigned to the right positions.
- Considering the war in mega cities, Situational awareness is a crucial factor to defeat enemy. At tactical level, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and quad copters can be helpful to implement the principles of mission command in urban operations. Using UAVs and quad copters at tactical level can diminish the complexity of an urban area substantially.
- There is also another aspect for mission command, subordinate-oriented approach, which brings charismatic power, the ability of communication and trust as the core issues to employ leadership effectively when needed. Giving the subordinates deserved value and analyzing their nature which is common point of three variables in the functional definition; the military leaders will both practice the principles of mission command and solve the system's chronic problems with the determined traits consisting of charisma, ability of communication and trust.

5. Conclusion

What future will bring is an intriguing matter in leadership issues. Since the environment around us is changing day by day, one does not have to be so smart to foresee the type of situations future leaders will come across in their military lives. As a common guess, it is probable that these leaders will not only take part in traditional and conventional combats, but also in other kinds of tasks that include peace support operations, humanitarian assistance, urban warfare, logistics or cyber warfare. Apart from the unpredictability of the situations, leaders may also face differences in culture where they have to use their knowledge and experience. Future will need leaders who can connect political goals to military means, who can weigh the advantages and disadvantages of a decision, who can take ideas from subordinates, and who is trained for the worst environment. The leaders who have the exact competencies and who can integrate mission command effectively will be the ones who will succeed on the battle field.

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