

## MILITARY LEADERSHIP VISION

*Colonel Gheorghe CALOPĂREANU, PhD\**

***Abstract:** The actual study is aimed at defining the place and the role of the concepts of authority, management and leadership and their connexions within the recognized military strategic systems.*

*In addition to the above mentioned main objective, the following related aims will be achieved in the present work:*

- to analyze the command, management and leadership nexus;*
- to make suggestions for configuring an effective professional framework to address the armed forces leadership challenges and the visionary leader concept.*

*Eventually, the present study will emphasize the need for the military leaders to lead not only the members of the organization but the military organizations themselves.*

***Keywords:** leadership, institutional, management, authority, visionary.*

### **Introduction**

**T**he military institution is one of the organizations which, without ethos, ethics and culture, can't operate at the capacity requested by the existing society. The value of military organizations, generally commensurate by the degree to fulfill what, in military terms, we generally call "mission", is given by a complex which, along with the enunciated concepts, integrates the qualities of military leaders.

Organizational leadership is thus essential for the success of the military organization and represents the level at which leaders influence both the individuals and the purpose (mission) and effectiveness of the institution. This clearly demonstrates that institutional leaders have as main task to achieve visions of the military system capabilities, both with

---

\* „Carol I”. National Defense University.

identifying the need for changing in the system policy and organizational levels, required by the organization in order to maintain its relevance and viability.

Institutional leaders create visions, establish strategies and allocate resources to achieve them, which it often means changing something in the organizational culture or even by the implementation of some harsh or radical measures and changes.

### **Command and leadership**

The definition of leadership requires the leaders not only to achieve their missions, but also to help improving the missions received by the people around them. This is, among other things, to be constantly aware of the leader in connection with his responsibilities in relation to the institution for which he works and to remind the leader about the need to maintain at all times a professional level demonstrated over the one of the subordinates and to adopt an ethical attitude toward them in all circumstances. Ultimately, the success of the leader depends on the success of those who are coordinated by him, which reflects the interdependence of these elements of the system.

Institutional leadership challenges are enormous at all levels of the military organization and involve, first of all, the relation heads-subordinates from the conviction, motivation and leadership prospects of the latter, very often the first without having a direct daily contact.

This latter remark is not applicable to the small levels of the military organization, where the focus is on the control unit, a concept of military leadership that defines the existence of a leader-commander that is set accurately and that, hierarchically, reports and subordinates to a single hierarchical chief. This type of relationship ensures clarity and unity of effort, reduces or avoids possible misunderstandings regarding some specific orders and instructions and, last but not least, supports making decisions efficiently and on time.

The main advantage of this relationship is the direct strong link between a military leader, both with the people he leads and the echelon leader whose orders they are running. The leader in this posture is gaining respect and he is more believable. The leadership has, therefore, a positive and immediately psychological effect upon the ability, behaviour and

attitudes of the individual and groups, in particular in situations of high complexity, as the crises of all kinds.

At institutional level, the leadership aims less the unit of command and more the unit of purpose, which involves coordinating the joint efforts of individuals or groups to achieve the objectives (missions). At this level there is a complex of external factors, sometimes impossible to be controlled, that make difficult the decision-making process. The implementation of an acquisition programme for the military technique, for instance, can become real only by the employing of some specialized agencies and structures, such as the Ministry of Finance.

The institutional leaders should be good negotiators. They are the ones who, in order to achieve their objectives, are required to achieve the consensus with other involved organizations and an efficient horizontal cooperation.

The transition from the unit of command to the unit of purpose claims a philosophy that the institutional leaders must understand and apply it the concepts in all essential points of the process.

The success of the organization depends to a large extent on the quality of institutional leadership, on how it develops and maintains the available strategic and professional capabilities and creates favorable conditions to accomplish the strategic objectives. Created with accuracy, such a vision must be understood by all members of the organization, must be convincing, credible and motivating and, last but not least, it must be able to lead the organization members to the set goals.

A current issue of the leadership is the confusion regarding the concepts of “command”, “management” and “leadership”, which are often understood as synonymous and that they exclude each other and this fact creates difficulties in exercising an efficient leadership.

Of these three concepts, the command is the most comprehensive. A most supported formula (including NATO) defines command as the authority invested in a representative of the armed forces to direct, coordinate and control the structures and resources of all kinds and specific activities of the system to which it belongs. Each individual in such a position can exercise his authority in his own way, in relation to the existing circumstances and with his own experience and personality.

The study of personality is generally the attribute of psychology, which studies this concept for understanding the situational relationships.

The notion of personality, however, is, in equal measure, studied by people whose daily task is to prepare, motivate or lead some individuals or groups of individuals. Often, wanting to reveal the character or exceptional results of a person, people say about the individual that he is "a personality".

The character exists only in connection with the individual's behavior. From this perspective, it represents a pure theoretical construction and it cannot be simply observed or seen. The fact that it exists and manifests itself, only in relation to the human behavior, is an inexhaustible source in the analysis and drawing conclusions regarding the personality of the individual.

In the study of personality, psychology examines the common characteristics of the human brain, both with those qualities which distinguish the human individuals among them. For example, the psychology studies the general functions of emotions and the particular way in which an individual thinks in terms of the interaction of the two aspects of the human mind and not their isolation.

In essence, the act of command is the expression of the desire and determination of the military leader to realize the vision and/or to fulfill the mission established by the head of the hierarchy. This will focus the entire set of necessary activities of planning, targeting, resource allocation, control or coordination.

The act of command is a multidimensional<sup>1</sup> process where each important component, like authority, management and leadership, produces a specific effect. The three dimensions of the command interrelate and complement one another to create maximum efficiency in the act of command.

The first component, the authority, has a legal and constitutional nature and it is granted in all cases by a superior hierarchical entity. It gives the person who holds it the right to make decisions, to transmit and to impose his own will to the subordinates.

---

<sup>1</sup> Walker, Robert W., Editor, *Institutional leadership in the Canadian Forces: Contemporary Issues*, p. 102

Beyond this formal approach, however, we may say that, even though the authority is a powerful tool for commanders at all levels, its exercising exclusively on the basis of military grade or position occupied by them is not recommended in any situation. Such an exclusive attitude is most unlikely to lead to build some effective organizations, where the catchword is cohesion and, in the best case, it would only create the illusion of an efficient organization, but without having a support in reality.

The second component is management, which provides control over the organization, in order to increase the effectiveness of specific activities. The first aspect to be discussed when talking about management is unmistakable the allocation and control of the human, material and financial resources which are necessary to achieve the objectives or fulfill the tasks set out in the organisation. Management is based on formal organizational authority, and it is oriented towards achieving expected results by planning, organization, coordination and control actions. In other words, the management is mainly responsible for the effective and efficient deployment of all processes required by the operation of an organization.

Often, in order to achieve the set goals, the managers apply the principles of leadership, the third dimension of command, that side through which the human aspects of the command act are designed and which contributes to the success of organization by staff directing and motivating, equally with creating or, where appropriate, improving the conditions necessary for fulfill the missions.

Mainly, the leadership reflects the leader's ability to influence and determine the subordinated personnel to meet the objectives or missions that the organization accepts or requires imperatively in its conception and superior hierarchically entity.

The main features of the leadership - the ability to lead, motivate<sup>2</sup> or inspire - expressly manifests itself during the crisis, characterized by chaos, complexity and uncertainty, where orders and provisions given to the subordinates have reduced effects of unusual conditions -stress, tiredness, cold, etc. and for these reasons, the leadership is more important than the other components of the command, especially by the fact that it allows

---

<sup>2</sup> Williams, Dean, *Leadership Real. Oameni și organizații față în față cu marile lor provocări*, Editura Codecs, București 2007, p. 4

commanders and leaders at all levels to shape the environment or the system in which their subordinates operate and, ultimately, to influence in the desired sense their behavior and actions.

To avoid the confusion between the apparent sameness of the notions that explain the term „command” behaves discussions in at least two directions.

The first debate should be done on the topic of management-leadership<sup>3</sup> report. We outlined above the particular importance of the management, both for commanders and institutional leaders, and that it is an essential part of the command, and implicitly of the institutional leadership. However, management cannot substitute the leadership, it carries out specific functions in the command indicated above and, finally, it is the one which fills the leadership component of the command act process.

The second discussion is necessary to clarify the differences between leadership and command, terms that are often considered synonymous. In reality, the difference between them is fundamental; the leadership is only one component of the command. A simple analysis of the content of the notion of "command" reveals the importance of authority in relation to the leadership. A military commander does not become a very good leader simply by holding the authority with which he is formally invested. In order to be a successful leader, he needs human aspects already mentioned, and also the personal qualities and skills.

Unlike the authority, which operates only within a formal chain of command, the leadership does not depend on a formal authority to manifest itself and it is not bound by it in any way.

### **Visionary leader in military organization**

The ability to create visions is an essential trait required of a military leader in the effective management of a military organization.

Important organizational changes require the existence of visionary leaders at the institutions management. They must be able to form and maintain a new vision of the organization. At the same time, they must have the knowledge which is necessary for a creator process and discipline, the

---

<sup>3</sup> Kets de Vries, Manfred, *Leadership. Artă și măiestria de a conduce. De la paradigma clinică la pragmatismul schimbării*, Ediția II, Editura Codecs, București 2007, p. 217

power and the passion to keep his own vision throughout the entire process. At the same time, visionary leaders must lead the others in the manifestation of this vision.

Next, I will summarize the main features of a visionary leader.

The visionary leader is the "owner of the flame", capable of maximum concentration along the whole process of the organization, able to lead the organization to achieve visions and to create the necessary conditions for the manifestation of the creative spirit of the organization members for the free expression of the wanted vision. He is able to formulate and maintain a vision and, at the same time, to lead the organization towards its fulfillment. In turn, in order to achieve this thing in an efficient way, the members of the military organization must understand both the military implications and the level of effort that is required by the vision and also the commandant who will lead and manage them in the organization.

Visionary leaders are distinguished mainly by the fact that they transform the old mental maps or paradigms and create strategies that are not part of the conventional dower. They embody the balance between the right brain lobe functions (rational) and the left one (intuitive). Their thinking is broad and systemic, seeing the picture on the whole, the whole system.

The most successful visionary leaders take the energy at a higher level by offering a clear vision of what is possible. A visionary leader speaks well, but besides the fact that he speaks well and acts well, he can also create his own vision. As a vision to take form in today's world, the words are not enough. We need leadership and a real commitment.

A visionary leader is effectively showing his vision because he creates specific and achievable goals, initiates actions and ensures the participation of others.

The visionaries who successfully demonstrate their visions base their leadership on a positive inspiring image of the future as well as a clear sense of direction to arrive at the desired point. Efficient leaders give a consistent message through the embodiment of their vision. They always communicate you the vision to create a strong field that then transforms it into physical reality. Another important aspect, on which the visionary leader is based, is maintaining the vision. Continuity in leadership is essential in ensuring the success of the military organization by getting to his leader's vision. Only a

visionary leader who is present throughout the entire process can ensure the continuity of vision. Visionary leadership is based on the balance between the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical dimension. It requires essential values, a clear vision, strong relationships and innovative actions. When one or more of these dimensions is missing, the leadership cannot manifest a vision.

Establishing and maintaining good relations between members of the military organization represents the strength of the efficient visionary leaders. They embody a profound human individuals approach, considering them the most valuable property.

In contrast with the old management style, which tells people what to do and it dominates them, the leading visionaries embodies a receptive and dynamic energy. They know how to listen and learn from other opinions and know how to communicate.

Visionary leaders promote a partnership approach and create a common vision and understanding for other organizations too. They have a great respect towards others and carefully develop team spirit and team training. The most effective visionary leaders are responsive to the real needs of the people and develop participatory strategies for including people in achieving the purposes for which the existing organization.

**In conclusion**, the visionary leaders are creators of the new and they are working with imagination and with courage and they must represent the challenge that takes advantage of all that is best in people and unites them indestructibly around for the same purpose. They must look always forward, to be innovators and agents of change, who see the general picture and think strategically.

Every leader, at any level, can get to his inner resources in order to become a more efficient leader in military affairs and he must be willing to take and maintain initiative.

Between the military leader and members of the organization commanded by him, it should be a strong linking; true visionary leaders serve the good to the whole that gets together the members and the organization as an entity.





## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Walker, Robert W., Editor, *Institutional leadership in the Canadian Forces: Contemporary Issues*, Canadian Defense Academy Press, 2007.
- Kets de Vries, Manfred, *Leadership. Artă și măiestria de a conduce. De la paradigma clinică la pragmatismul schimbării*, Ediția a II-a, Editura Codecs, București, 2007.
- Williams, Dean, *Leadership Real. Oameni și organizații față în față cu marile lor provocări*, Editura Codecs, București, 2007.
- Dourado, Phil, dr. Blackburn, Phil, *Șapte secrete ale liderilor inspirați*, Editura Codex, 2006.

