

Leader Development in a Transforming Army

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We are working on producing leaders for change, not just leaders who are doctrinally capable and competent leaders for warfighting, but leaders also for all kinds of missions that we are asked to be able to do today across the full spectrum.

— The Honorable Louis Caldera
Secretary of the Army

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY Louis Caldera has underscored the requirement to develop competent and capable leaders. Today, the Army focuses on transforming a brigade organization for more rapid deployment. While the US Army remains trained and ready for decisive combat in potential major theaters of war (MTW), complex and diverse worldwide environments from warfighting in smaller scale contingencies (SSC) to humanitarian assistance require improved strategic responsiveness. The capability to deploy American soldiers—rapidly—is essential for shaping these types of national, international and global situations. That agility is more a function of leadership than technology.

And so, as the Army transforms brigade-size formations and realizes near-term strategic responsiveness, leader development will remain fundamental. Companion principles of teamwork, discipline and American warrior ethos also hone the Army's core competency—keeping “its soldiers, and those who support them, prepared to conduct prompt and sustained operations throughout the entire spectrum of military operations in any environment that requires land-force capabilities.”¹ To remain ready for those contingencies the Army is committed to developing people.

Successful transformation of the Army depends on developing innovative leaders for its new organizations and equipment. The Army's leadership doctrine provides fundamental principles to advance leader development in the uncertain environments ahead. Army modernization and experimentation have highlighted several avenues for particular emphasis. Improved analog and digital command and control (C²) systems improve decision making through enhanced situational understanding. However, regardless of the environment or the technology, mental agility—the ability to maintain the initiative in these complex and ambiguous situations—is key to balancing and synchronizing all

six Army imperatives—quality people, training, force mix, doctrine, modern equipment and leader development.

Adaptive Leaders for the Transforming Army

Adaptive leaders are innovative and display initiative with prudent risktaking—training and education must enable them to exploit information-age situational understanding and become agents of change. The leadership framework of Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Army Leadership*, describes characteristics of adaptive leaders. The proven tenets of a clearly understood mission and higher commander's intent energize the union of adaptive decision making and leadership. Whether for a small unit leader in an urban alleyway fight or for a senior leader assessing an operation's civil-military impact, the leadership framework of values, attributes, skills and actions remains the foundation of all leadership and leader development action.

Leader development presumes mid- and long-term commitments to improving leader qualities by merging the influences of many factors—military and civil education, self-study, experiences, feedback, reflecting, coaching and mentoring. The Army's leader development model, described in DA Pamphlet 350-58, *Leader Development for America's Army*, includes operational assignments, institutional education and training, and self-development.³ The goal of leader development at all levels is to ensure that the Army nurtures adaptive leaders of character and competence prepared to lead across a full spectrum of operational environments.

Leaders and soldiers in the 21st century must master information-age technology, for much of the operational environment will be digitized. Simultaneously, leaders must be able to operate using analog or hybrid (analog/digital) command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C⁴ISR) systems. Building such soldiers and leaders requires a learning organization with new models that span the institutional and educational base, unit operational readiness programs and professional self-development.

As the Army transforms into a more strategically responsive land force, success still depends on leaders, soldiers and cohesive teams. Information-age

technologies, enhanced logistics and improved force projection means will support, but not replace, leaders. Just as leaders must adapt to ambiguous and changing situations, soldiers must perform in new multifunctional roles, and teams must rapidly integrate and synchronize skills, knowledge and attributes into mission-tailored capabilities. But as always, superior leaders distinguish exceptional units. Those effective, adaptive leaders within teams possess the foundational characteristics outlined in FM 22-100—values, attributes, skills and actions.⁴

Values are the core of everything the Army is and does, providing a sense of purpose, the moral and legal basis for action and means to resolve leadership and decision-making ambiguities. Army leaders establish an environment in which quality people do what is correct, leaders and soldiers treat others as they would want to be treated themselves and all team members have the opportunity to develop their full potential as professionals.

Among Army leaders' qualities, mental agility especially enhances the physical agility of current and future systems, platforms and organizations. Progressive research and development provide enhanced ways and means to man and lead the Army in the early 21st century.

Leaders must possess the interpersonal skills necessary to develop and sustain high-performance combined arms teams, as well as work with other services and nations during mission accomplishment. Complex, ambiguous operating environments demand leaders with fine-tuned conceptual skills for rapid information filtering, analysis and decision making. These teams may routinely deploy as part of a coalition to locations with immature transportation and logistic infrastructures and uncertain political situations—conditions requiring high levels of innovation and cultural awareness. Digital and improved analog C⁴ISR systems and cutting-edge weapon systems will increase technical knowledge requirements for all members of the team. Within the tactical dimension, leaders have a significant readiness challenge—prepare to deploy on short notice, operate in any environment and fight as a combined arms team at *company* level.

Leader Training in Brigade Combat Teams

Tasks, conditions and standards outline near-term success in leader training. Common training tasks, soldiers' manuals and standing operating procedures assist commanders and other leaders in assessing subordinate leaders' performance and poten-

tial. Required competencies provide a focus for professional self-development, institutional curricula and unit readiness programs. Those benchmarks will still apply in brigade combat teams.

The four doctrinal leader competencies are conceptual, interpersonal, technical and tactical skills. Using this leadership aptitude and knowledge, an evolving combined arms training strategy (CATS) for the brigade will incorporate leader and team performance indicators with task-condition-standard criteria to assess and evaluate proficiency. FM 22-100 lists and defines these leader performance areas.⁵ Practical applications by the brigade and supporting Army and joint experiments will more precisely measure leader performance and effectiveness.

Well-designed leader training scenarios include all four leader competencies—development of leader and team tasks, conditions and standards. Mission sets range a full spectrum of traditional environments and, more important in evolving global military responsibilities, vexing issues of asymmetric, nontraditional threats. Flexible conditions place leaders and teams in quickly changing situations using variables in areas such as friendly forces; enemy capabilities; geography and weather limitations; time; and larger civil, political and military considerations that affect rules of engagement. A menu of complex vignettes allows for flexible tactical situations at each echelon of leader and team during training events. Event-based programs within the brigade CATS offer multidimensional operational architecture, leader roles and new multifunctional responsibilities. As battle-focused training doctrine emphasizes, proven methodologies such as training support packages (TSP); mission training plans (MTP); and evolutionary tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) are foundational.

Battle focus recognizes the critical linkage between collective mission essential tasks and individual leader tasks. Battle tasks clearly state the essential tasks for teams and reinforce the requirement to employ a team of teams. But analyzing battle tasks also identifies sets of critical leader tasks within each team function. Different direct, organizational and strategic leadership principles accent the multidimensional fabric of the brigade's mission essential task list (METL) and its application of TTP. Established initial operational capabilities, priorities of effort and common training tasks for brigade combat team elements guide which leader development competencies to insert into particular mission training sets.

Developing the TSP-MTP-TTP structure requires a statement of situational conditions for multiple operational environments. Near-term capabilities recognize assigned mission priorities, readily available equipment, materiel and interim weapon system capabilities for achieving mission readiness. Once realized, those capabilities will evolve into the eventual objective design and team capability that lie beyond near-term practicality. Amid changing hardware and conditions, being able to rapidly deploy and employ land forces within specified timelines remains an overarching measure of leader—as well as organizational—effectiveness.

The ongoing development of a mission support training facility (MTSF) promises embedded multifunctional capabilities and subject matter expertise for seamless training, mission rehearsal, operational support and mission execution. Digital systems allow access to knowledge networks of the global information environment, the full suite of Army and joint simulations and linkage to operational C⁴ISR systems. Distance learning and embedded simulations improve the ability to train habitually associated leaders and units at multiple locations. Leader and team development programs are competency-based with information-age technology to optimize institutional information, share expert knowledge and insight and capture operational lessons. Brigade leader programs, tailored to specific unit mission sets, meet the needs of active and reserve component leaders, soldiers and teams. Leaders who build and maintain a learning climate reinforce organizational and individual improvement, strengthen teamwork and breed success.

Developing Leaders— A Long-Term Imperative

Commanders' efforts to fortify the organizational pillar must complement efforts in the institution and self-development pillars to produce leaders with the tactical skills necessary for the full spectrum of military operations. The Army's leader development model must keep pace with dynamic requirements to educate and train high-quality leaders. Learning models, educational approaches and operational experiences combine effects to prepare leaders for increasing demands.

Information-age technologies quickly break down the traditional image of separate yet mutually supporting leader development pillars. Personal computers, faster worldwide web connections, video-teleconferencing and other interactive multimedia opportunities fuse leader development pillars into an

integral network of networks.

To develop leaders, mental flexibility and conceptual skills for dynamic operations, the organization must foster a lifetime-learner environment that exploits distance learning, knowledge networks and continuing education. Correspondingly shortened leader developmental timelines require precisely defined, demanding self-development processes, improved learning from operational experience and adaptive, competency-based institutional learning centers for all Army leaders—officer, warrant officer, noncommissioned officer, soldier and civilian.

Clear implications arise for the Army's institutional education system, training within operational assignments and self-development programs. Together, pillars must produce leaders who can translate patterns and trends that emerge from diverse operational variables and perceive the second- and third-order effects on accomplishing mission and intent. Whether tasks are simple or complex, speed and precision mark critical aspects of maintaining the initiative as conditions change. This understanding of the operational environment and the pace of changes require adaptive abilities at the individual leader level as well as the leadership to channel team effort into a coherent multiecheloned combined arms action plan. These integrated actions nevertheless require a commander-centric battle focus—concentrating leader and team resources to meet a commander's critical information and intelligence needs, and focusing collective combat power on commander-directed essential tasks.

Reliable tools must be developed to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of leaders and rapid teambuilding. Automated assessment tools such as the 360-degree assessment (by seniors, peers and subordinates) give commanders the capability to evaluate an organizational climate quickly and accurately, boost personal and subordinate performance and improve group dynamics. Some assessment tools will continually evolve as commanders implement varied command climate instruments or techniques to identify, assess, evaluate and enhance adaptive leadership, multifunctional performance and team success.

Proven leadership techniques and procedures are less likely to change—effective coaching; establishing a mentoring system among peers, superiors and subordinates; and empowered self-development when progressive evaluations demonstrate a true learning organization.

Together, these initiatives show that leader development is a long-term process of continually im-

proving performance rather than a finite endpoint. As information-age technologies reshape concepts for learning, leaders must exploit knowledge networks, distance learning and embedded simulations. Formal schooling will retain its importance during a leader's career; however, information-age learning will shift more to unit settings, in garrison and field, with intensive mentoring by leaders and experts. Candid, critical exchanges among peers, subordinates and superiors indicate a command climate open to progress and learning.

Propelling the Transformation

How do we proceed? Success involves developing soldier- and leader-oriented systems that enhance individual performance, increase unit readiness and improve force effectiveness. We must have leaders whose mental agility matches future system capabilities and the evolving demands of doctrine, organizations and materiel. Four measures will lead the advance:

- Continued experimentation and behavioral studies will help articulate actions to develop critical skills, knowledge and attributes (SKAs). Leadership doctrine in FM 22-100 provides a universal framework for further defining critical SKAs and improving initiative, judgement and decision making.
- A strategy to balance and synchronize the readiness domains of training, leader development and soldiers with the domains of doctrine, organization and materiel.
- An adaptive learning model to train and educate leaders, soldiers and teams in ambiguous and complex settings. Such a learning model would focus on conceptual and interpersonal skills, as well as technical proficiency and tactical expertise, using complex and rapidly changing variables, digital and analog C² enablers and a wide range of mission sets. Information-age simulation technology embedded in unit equipment and systems also promotes feedback from coaches and mentors.

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- Army modernization programs that resource the research, development and experimentation of their human dimension initiatives. Resource priorities must balance advances in doctrine, force mix, modern equipment, training, leader development and quality people issues.

The Human Dimension and Readiness

Transforming the Army requires leveraging the human dimension of information-age C². In a learning organization, leaders and soldiers achieve situational understanding and develop the mental agility to match the physical agility of current organizations and materiel. Learning prepares them for the expanded capabilities of pending organizational designs and weapon systems. Forming strategically responsive brigade organizations is fundamental to Army transformation. However, by adjusting policies and programs based on senior leader guidance, practical experience and thoughtful insight, the Army will also deliver professionals with the caliber and character required to lead cohesive high-performance teams.

Today the Army is trained, ready and looking to the future. The vision of the future, propelled by the requirements of ever-increasing challenges in a complex 21st-century world, center on improved readiness, strategic responsiveness and the essential value of quality soldiers, leaders and teams. These multifunctional soldiers, adaptive leaders and multidimensional teams of teams will excel at embracing the human dimension of change while sustaining information superiority and maneuver dominance, overmatching any adversary in combat power and ensuring a premier trained and ready force well into the 21st century. **MR**

1. *The Army Plan for Fiscal Year 2000-2015* (Washington, DC.: Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army, 24 Mar 98), v.

2. US Army Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office [GPO], August 1999).

3. Department of the Army Pamphlet 350-58, *Leader Development for America's Army* (Washington, DC: Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, 13 October 1994).

4. FM 22-100.

5. *Ibid.*, Appendix B, "Performance Indicators."

6. *Ibid.*

