

# MILITARY LEADERSHIP: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

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*A decision-maker who has also assumed the role of leader, in the full sense of the word, understands that an organization is alive, breathing and truly developing because of its primary resource: human resources. An organization does not exist without human resources, it does not function and it does not develop without people, it cannot achieve its goals and mission without people. That way it is essential to manage the human resources from the tactical level as well as the strategic level and to develop leaders in accordance with a strategic outlook*

**Key words:** *decision-maker, leader, human resources management, strategic, defense*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The definition of an organisation derives from its own internal coherence, from structuring and systematisation, from the integrity of processes and process flows. And the fundamental guarantor of these attributes is none other than the leader of the organisation, the person who holds the position of ship commander and whose deep mission is the success of the organisation he leads, its performance and sustainable development, is safe navigation and the certainty of reaching destination regardless of the size of the waves and the storms encountered in its

path. The ship commander is a decision-maker, is a human who has the right competencies to lead, to manage and to administrate all the resources available in order to achieve the organisation goal.

The goal of defense resources management is to achieve an effective allocation of resources from defense field, in order to achieve the nation's national security objectives. The orientation and the management of all resources available towards the established direction, in order to achieve the assumed objectives is achieved by leaders across the full spectrum of decision-making areas.

## 2. THEORETICAL ASPECTS ABOUT LEADERSHIP

### 2.1. Roles of the military decision-maker

People are those who, based on their roles, interact so that the organisation works. For a pertinent organisation of the organisation/company/ministry, first all should be identified the roles that the people who maintain the organisation must assume. However, there are a series of difficulties in identifying roles, difficulties arising from the theoretical limits of explaining the emergence of roles in organisations, but also from the successive modification of the needs to assume roles; at this stage it is necessary to take into consideration and people's abilities to succeed in assuming the identified roles. When decision-makers have a good interpretation of roles, then their activities can be appropriate to the needs and can be functional for the organisation.

Thus, in the literature several approaches have been developed regarding the roles of the decision-maker and the main two directions are: manager/management and leader/leadership. There are theories that consider that decision-maker has and the role of administering of materials and money. And in the military field is define the commander role.

For instance, John Adair, a British academic, the author of the "first" leadership book, *Training for Leadership* (1968) who is internationally recognised as World's first Professor in Leadership Studies at the University of Surrey offers a different point of view regarding the issue of leaders/leadership and managers/management. After many analysis, he concluded that management and leadership are the 2 faces of a coin: the shape fashioned by the characteristic working situation of the group is the management or the leadership as a **role**; in the same time, leadership has another meaning as **attribute**, which is given by the functional skills.

Also, he consider that the most distinguishing quality of a leader is confidence, "*confidence in one's power, and if that confidence is great enough and strong enough it will inspire others, and they will believe in the leader as firmly as he believes in himself, perhaps more so.*" [1] The 17 qualities identified by J. Adair are: ability to make decisions, sense of duty, energy, calmness in crisis, humour, assurance (confidence), and sense of justice, ability to accept responsibility, determination, human element, example, initiative, physically fit, resolute courage, and pride in command, enthusiasm, and loyalty.

Later, because there are a lot of **qualities** needed, and in

certain situation some of them are not priority, he define courage as a representative quality, and some other generic attributes of leaders, such as: enthusiasm, integrity, toughness or 'demandingness', humanity, confidence, humility, and courage.

Also, J. Adair tried to find out what is the group or functional approach and he succeeded to identify three types of group needs. "They are:

1. *the need to achieve the common task;*
2. *the need to be held together or maintained as a working unity;*
3. *the needs which individuals bring into them by virtue of being embodied persons."* [1]

In order to accomplish the three domains of need, he presented the **functions of leadership**, such as: planning, initiating, controlling, supporting, informing and evaluating. Those functions answer to the questions "what you do", as a complement of the question "what you are" whose answer is given by the qualities. The author mention that "function refers to activity demanded by one's position, profession or the like; the proper or characteristic action of a person in a given role. That doesn't mean to say that the designated leader should perform all these functions himself or herself. Indeed the theory suggests that it is impossible. In groups of more than

*three or four people there are just too many actions classifiable under the functions that are The Group or Functional Approach required to meet the requirements of task, team and individual for any one person to do them. But the leader is accountable for the three circles. Taken together these functions constitute the generic role of leader."* [1]

The most widely accepted **functions of management** are given by Koontz and O'Donnel: Planning, Organising, Staffing, Directing and Controlling. Also, there are theories, which I agree, that consider Evaluating as important functions of management or others which include and Motivating as a management function.

Another point of view, given by John Kotter, a prominent professor and writer in the field of business leadership, finds the separate roles of manager and leader complimentary. While the leader sets the direction, vision, strategy and goals for the organisation, the manager executes a system of planning, budgeting and resource allocation to achieve those goals. "The role of the military staff officer is essentially the same as in business. Commander provides the vision and direction for the unit and the staff establishes a system of plans, allocates resources, and implements. The manager organises people for the task, the leader communicates the requirements and end state to the workforce." [11]

According to Daniel Goleman, an American psychologist who helped to develop emotional intelligence (EQ) concept, considers that EQ is essential for leadership. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, as well as recognize and influence the emotions of those around you. For leaders, having emotional intelligence is essential for success, because a leader who shouts at his team when he's under stress, has different results by a leader who stays in control, and calmly assesses the situation. *Leadership competencies, from the EQ approach are:*

- *self-awareness: emotional self-knowledge, correct self-assessment, self-confidence;*
- *self-management: self-control, transparency, adaptability, ambition, initiative, optimism;*
- *social awareness: empathy, organisational awareness, solicitude;*
- *relationship management: inspiration, influence, training of others, facilitating change, conflict management, team spirit and collaboration. [4]*

The systems approach, which I presented before, and the processual-organic theory can provide a research framework, which attempts to harmonise or unify knowledge in the field of leadership/management/commanding. Therefore, according

with the processual-organic paradigm "*decision-makers acts under the pressures which come from four types of roles:*

roles of managing the processes in organisations and the processes that regulate the relations between organisations in the social organisations that integrate them;

- *roles of managing people in obtaining the expected results through managerial decisions;*
- *leadership roles by acting in influencing people so as to adopt attitudes that decision makers consider favourable to them or the organisation;*
- *roles of evaluator of the situation in organisation in order to identify the needs for corrective interventions or strategic reconsiderations.[3]*

All these roles can be played by the same person at different times and in different situations at the same job, as a decision-maker, only if that person has **all the competences** necessary for each role.

From my point of view, a decision-maker as a manager must have the following competencies: foresight, planning, organization, coordination, control and evaluation, objective. The competencies of a leader are the competencies mentioned on manager, plus the following: vision, strategic thinking, inspires subordinates, autodidact,

self-critical, efficient communication, empathy, a developed self-control of one's emotions, guide people, delegate tasks in accordance with the skills and resources of those to whom they delegate, supports the development of one's own skills, recruits people of character and with real professional skills, develops an organizational culture based on real human and professional values, integrity, impartial, communicate, do not order, do not shout.

As we can see, the actions that should be performed while playing one role or another are different because they derive from different levels of competencies. So, when there is played the role of manager there are necessary a type of competences, especially oriented on the structural and functional area of the organisation, while the leadership role requires in addition, competences and skills oriented on the human, motivational side, which moves all the resources of the organisation.

In the military field, from my point of view, the role of commander, regardless of the level at which he is, tactically, operationally or strategically, it should include both the competencies specific to the role of manager and the competencies specific to the role of leader.

Therefore, if we want a military man or woman to occupy a leadership position, then that

military man/ woman must have a set of competencies specific to the leadership process; in order to obtain and act on these competencies, he or she needs to go through a continuous training process.

## **2.2. Training for leadership**

J. Adair proved, during the time, that leaders does not born and that leadership qualities can be taught. Therefore, he began to identify the qualities of a leader and after that he studied how these qualities can be developed. How can be developed? Through education and training. He moved forward and he defined seven key principles, such as:

- Training for leadership;
- Selection;
- Line managers as leadership mentors;
- The chance to lead;
- Education for leadership;
- A strategy for leadership development;
- The chief executive.

In the following I will detail only the first principle, because this principle contradicts the older assumptions about the fact that leadership is a native, born skill and cannot be learned.

In my opinion, nowadays, this is considerate an outdated thinking, because during the time, the academics proved that leadership can be learn, and they moved even forward and developed different types

of models of training leadership. One of them is presented by J. Adair as a key principle, training for leadership, which represents one of the basic pillars of a successful organisation.

He considers “wise organisations always saw themselves as a hierarchy of three leadership levels: team, operational and strategic. One level is not superior to another in importance – there is no class system. They are different in levels of responsibility but equal in value. Therefore in principle there is no reason why more money should be spent on one level than upon another. Money should flow to the point where it can be used most effectively.” [1]

Another rule which he mentions as mandatory for the effectiveness of the organisation and which I agree, is that in an organisation should never give to a person a team leadership role or position without training. After many researches he find out that younger persons are more likely to be nearer the team leadership end of the spectrum. The reason is that younger people are more opened to both the generic role of leader and the attributes that naturally associate with it. They are more likely to take their people as individuals, dealing with them face-to-face and getting their support. A special attention was put on individuals using their own initiative and ‘owning’ their own self-development.

J. Adair summarize the benefits of training for leadership, presenting a quote of Sir John Harvey-Jones: “How do you know you have won? When the energy is coming the other way and when your people are visibly growing individually and as a group.”[1]

### 3. AN ANALYSIS OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP AT STRATEGIC LEVEL FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

#### 3.1. Defense White Paper of Australia

In 2016 Defence White Paper from Australia are included follow interesting aspects related to leadership:

- at Chapter One: The Government’s Approach to Defence, in order to manage the strategic risk, it is written “Australia must play a leadership role in our immediate neighbourhood” [5]; therefore, they assumed, as a country the role of regional leader in that part of the world;
- at Chapter Two: Strategic Outlook, when are defined the six key drivers that will shape the development of Australia’s security environment until 2035, it is written: “The world will continue to look to the

*United States for leadership in global security affairs and to lead military coalitions that support international security and the rules-based global order* “ [5]; so, they are already used to make analysis starting from the drivers of the issue, from the leadership point of view, even if, at least in this context, the leadership concept is used with the meaning of power, competition and even intimidation;

- at Chapter Five: Positioning Defence for Tomorrow’s Challenges in order to define the international defence relationships, it is written: *“Australia has a long-standing defence cooperation program with **Thailand** in the fields of counter-terrorism, ..., aviation safety and airworthiness, law and **leadership**, and English language training ... Australia’s engagement with the Armed Forces of the **Philippines** and the Department of National Defense will focus on the fields of maritime security, counter-terrorism, law and **leadership**, airworthiness and logistics ... Australia will continue to contribute to the NATO train, advise and assist Resolute Support Mission in*

*key roles, including **providing training and mentoring to develop the future leadership of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy in Kabul**”* [5];

- at Chapter Six: People, it is written: *“Increased female participation in the Defence workforce, and in senior leadership, will continue to be a focus in order to broaden Defence’s access to the considerable skills and capabilities within the Australian community ... Defence must ensure that our Defence colleges and educational institutions are best equipped to develop the future leaders of the ADF. Specific priorities for the APS are to professionalise the workforce in roles that are critical to delivering and sustaining Defence’s capabilities, and to build greater **leadership capability** in the executive level workforce. At the same time, Defence must operate to the **highest ethical standards in leadership and management for all people in Defence**. This means acting with fairness and integrity, promoting diversity and*

*inclusion, and maintaining a zero tolerance stance towards unacceptable behaviour. The strength of **Defence's leadership model** and its ability to adapt and embrace a more diverse and inclusive culture will be critical to attracting and retaining the workforce it needs for the future ... Accountability for cultural reform will be required across all levels of **leadership** in Defence... The Government, in partnership with the community, will continue to support the ADF cadet program. This personal development **program for young people builds personal skills including leadership and teamwork**, and promotes Defence as a potential career pathway for its participants” [5]*

- at Chapter seven: Reform of Defence it is written: *“As Defence implements the First Principles Review, it will focus on **developing leadership, accountability and behaviours to drive organisational performance** ... The performance of Defence's senior leaders will be measured not only in terms of outcomes delivered but the **effectiveness of their leadership behaviours and***

***alignment with Defence's values.** A unified leadership team, willing to take individual accountability for improving organisational outcomes will be fundamental to Defence's success.” [1]*

As an intermediate conclusion, I could say that Australia has a leadership culture at strategic level, not only in the defence field which is very well detailed and in accordance with the newest theory about leadership.

### **3.2. Doctrine Smart Book of USA**

The Doctrine Smart Book from June 2020 is a concise collection of Army doctrine summaries that reflects current approved doctrine and is prepared by the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

From the beginning it can be observed the significance of leadership for the U.S. Army, because at the Contents, in Part One, are listed the combat power: Command and Control, Movement and Manoeuvre, Intelligence, Fires, Sustainment–Transportation and Ordnance, Sustainment–Quartermaster and Logistics, Sustainment–Personnel and Health Services Support, Sustainment–Force Health Sustainment, Protection, Information–Cyber and Electronic Warfare, **Leadership**, Space & Global Ballistic Missile Defense.

Therefore, for The U.S. Army, the leadership is a power, a combat power. So, they developed strategies, regulation, education and training in order to achieve this power of leadership:

- ADP 6-22 Army Leadership and the Profession;
- FM6-22 Leader Development;
- ATP 6-22.1 The Counselling Process;
- ATP 6-22.6 Army Team Building;
- ADRP 6-22. Army Leadership;
- ADRP 7-0. Training Units and Developing Leader;
- Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS).

### 3.3. Defense White Paper of Japan

In 2020 Defence of Japan White Paper it is included in Part Four: Core Elements Comprising Defence Capabilities, etc. at Chapter One: Human Resource Base that Sustains the Defense Capability is written:

- *“Retired uniformed SDF personnel have excellent abilities in planning, leadership, faculty, cooperativeness, and responsibility gained through their work performance, education and training. Furthermore, they have various qualifications and licenses acquired through*

*their duties and vocational training. Therefore, they are making positive contributions in a broad range of sectors, including manufacturing and service industries, as well as finance, insurance, real estate, and construction industries, in addition to the areas of disaster prevention and risk management at local governments” [6]*

- *“The MOD/SDF has been conducting a variety of initiatives in order to promote work-life balance and the further expansion of the recruitment and promotion of female personnel in a unified manner, such as formulating various plans that include three reforms: (1) working style reform; (2) reform to combine a successful career with childrearing and nursing care; and (3) reform for promoting active engagement of female personnel. In addition, the Committee to Promote Working Style Reform of the Internal Bureau Staff has been discussing and implementing initiatives to promote working style reform and reviewing the process of work under the leadership of the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense.”[6]*

- *“Since FY2017, the MOD/SDF has been implementing educational initiatives, such as message given by the MOD/SDF leaders, seminars, and lecture meetings aimed at raising awareness concerning working style reform and the concept of worklife balance”*[6]
- *“With the National Security Council (NSC) serving as the control tower, as well as with strong political leadership, the Government of Japan will implement national security policies in a more strategic and structured manner through a whole-government approach.”*[6]
- *“Japan has been strengthening its posture under the principle of civilian control of the military. Japan further needs to seamlessly deal with various situations in a coherent, whole-of-government manner by way of swift and pertinent decision-making under even stronger political leadership, which will be assisted by enhanced support mechanism.”*[6]

Analysing the document mentioned, I observed that the terms leader/leadership is used with the meaning of “in charge of” or “responsible for the”. Also, in the chapter Human Resource Base that

Sustains the Defense Capability detailed topics such recruitment, employment, daily education and training, measures aimed at ensuring effective use of human resources through effective use of human resources, improvement of living and work environment and treatment, dealing with retirement and re-employment of SDF personnel.

### 3.4. Defense White Paper of Romania

In the 2020 Defence Paper of Romania, we observe that it is also included one sub-chapter with Human Resources Management, but in Chapter Four: Defence Resources Integrated Management Policies. There is written:

- *“The establishment, development and maintenance of skills are carried out by the directors Major Programs, taking into account the specific requirements and actions comprising elements of doctrine, organisation, training, endowment, **leadership**, staff, infrastructure and interoperability, according to the law”* [11]
- *“The management of the military education system will follow the change of the training paradigm, by directing the resources towards the training and professional **development***

*of the leaders, fighters and specialists capable of acting on the continuous changes in the operational environment with the professional skills necessary to carry out missions now and in the future". [11]*

Regarding Human Resources Management, there are established the main objectives, such as:

- human resource planning in correlation with strategic objectives of defense;
- ensuring quality human resources;
- strengthening the status of military personnel;
- modernisation of the military education system;
- increasing quality of life of personnel.

Studying the document mentioned, I observed that when referring to the leadership process, the concept of manager/management is used more than the concept of leader / leadership.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Considering the importance of the leaders, as decision-makers, in defence resources management field, it is necessary and mandatory their continuous education and training, starting from the tactical level, till the strategic level. How can we do this? By including in HR planning, a leadership development program

starting from recruitment, continuing with the selection criteria (which should include the minimum skills necessary to train leaders), continuing with education and training specific to leadership (inclusion of leadership courses aimed at training and development of skills of leader); promotion to certain management positions only after completing the training stages and after an evaluation of the leadership competencies; granting compensations and benefits in accordance with the results of the application of leadership competencies.

What we have? In order to develop a functional program, I could say that we already have theoretical landmarks, we have access to successful models implemented at international partners, we have high-performing educational institutions, we have quality staff and we have and a few leaders, in the complete form of the word, with full set of competencies.

What we don't have? From my point of view, we don't have continuity and mandatory training, we do not have the assessment of leadership competencies before holding a leadership position and we do not have an implementation of compensations and benefits based on measurable results.

In this paper I did not intend to develop a leadership training and development program in the

Romanian Army, but I wanted to emphasise the correlation between leadership and performance of a system, and the need to reorient educational programs in leadership to interdisciplinary theories models and to align them with the existing models of leaders development in some partner states, so that the leadership becomes part of the culture of the Army.

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