Challenges of Military Leadership in Contemporary Expeditionary Operations

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1. Introduction

Historically, the term expeditionary operations referred to missions assigned to military groupings sent overseas. Today, this expression bears a more specific meaning since, when mounted as peace support operations, such missions have become the most important means for the international community to intervene in conflict-ridden areas (Ben-Ari/Michael/Kellen 2009). Their primary aim is creating change in such areas by reducing the level of violence and addressing its deep roots to end conflict. Indeed, since the end of the Cold War most conflicts around the world are intra-state ones that occur in weakened or failed states where political systems no longer function. These are often states where local politics takes place under the patronage or backing of different militias serving a diversity of interests, including economic ones (Kaldor 2001). In such situations, conflict often escalates and local violence travels across state borders to endanger regional or even global stability and security. In such contexts, change implies transforming local social, economic and political orders. As Cronin (2008: 1) elaborates, these conflicts are all profoundly political, intensely local, and protracted. Thus expeditionary operations take place in circumstances necessitating a constructive melding of military, political, and diplomatic means to achieve stability and are not winnable in the traditional sense.

A number of studies I published with Boas Shamir over the past decade (Shamir/Ben-Ari 1999; 2000; 2009) charted out how key developments in the armed forces of the industrial democracies raise acute challenges for military leaders. In this article I cite and build on these texts to offer a framework for understanding the challenges facing military leaders in contemporary expeditionary missions. Specifically, I seek to chart out some of the consequences of such operations for the core values and the mindset of military leaders. By mindset I refer to the assumptions and interpretive frames by which such leaders make sense of and act upon reality. My approach emanates from an analysis of the conflicts that the armed forces participate in during expeditionary missions and especially their social and cultural contexts. I will focus on such changes as the reduced legitimacy for the use of armed force, exposure to a ‘global regime of surveillance’ (comprised of the media, human rights movements or international judicial bodies), and participation of military units in a variety of inter-organizational frameworks.

I argue that the suitable model for understanding contemporary armed forces should not be based on a linear progression of different types of militaries, but a cumulative one in which new tasks, environments and potential enemies have been added to previous ones. Thus the focus on expeditionary missions and their environments implicates a model of soldiering that is cumulative rather than linearly transformative: in other words, this model underscores the co-existence of older, more conventional values and orientations alongside (and not necessarily being replaced with) newer emphases. To echo the title of a recent volume about US Army leadership (Leonard et al. 2006), I refer to something old and something new. Accordingly, there is a need here for added leadership capabilities and capacities as well as the more conventional ones. There will
continue to be the need for military leaders who have at least the psychological and physical levels of their subordinates along with initiative and courage. But such leaders will also need many new capacities, such as: the ability to be in charge of organic structures and loosely-coupled systems; use changed bases of power, building consensus in addition to formal authority, for example; lead under constantly shifting contingencies, boundary-spanning across national and organizational boundaries; and provide guidance in ideologically and politically fraught circumstances.

2. A Cumulative Model of Conflicts in Expeditionary Missions

Arguably one of the most well known analyses of conflicts since the end of the Cold War is Smith and Bet-El’s (2005) volume positing a move from industrial (or conventional) war to war amongst the people. Their argument is that while industrial war was based on such assumptions as clear differentiation between front and rear, combat between regulars, linear military organization and decisive battles, the logic of war amongst the people is non-linear, complex, over hearts and minds, and is about creating conditions for political solutions. Within such circumstances, military forces and especially leaders are charged with such tasks as mediation, diplomatic maneuvering, political missions (monitoring democratic elections or protecting an elected government) or state-building. But such contentions need to be balanced by considerations of other issues:

New (and Old) Wars: First, we need to understand the emergence of new forms of conflict alongside the continued persistence of older, more conventional patterns (Gray 2005; Schurman 2010). By this contention I refer to more than that war amongst the people has become the dominant one. Rather, I contend that today’s conflicts have become what Hoffman (2007) calls “complex irregular warfare” or “hybrid wars”, combining differing elements – such as conventional, irregular, or disruptive warfare – in ways that blur their purportedly discrete nature. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan or the Second Lebanon War waged by Israel in the summer of 2006 are fitting examples. Second, such conflicts may have different timelines; sometimes there is need for rapid intervention while at others they necessitate long processes of trust building or reconciliation. And third, while victory is the achieved state in older wars, in many of the newer conflicts there is no decisive victory, nor is it the aim of the mission (Osinga/Lindley-French 2010).

Fourth, the new conflicts are very often dispersed, ambiguous, blurred, fuzzy and unpredictably fluid (Ben-Ari/Michael/Kellen 2009). They are dispersed in place and time because it has become unclear where front and rear are (long-range weapons easily cross national borders) and who are the warriors on the battlefield and who are the supporters at home (Münkler 2005: 12). Moreover, because they are political, they are often ambiguous and uncertain because political objectives are frequently just that, vague and indecisive (Cronin 2008: 2). These conflicts are blurred because their boundaries are unclear: war as politically motivated violence between states often cannot be separated from economic, ethnic, or criminal issues (Kaldor 2001). Indeed the boundaries between insurgency, terrorism and war are blurred (Osinga/Lindley-French 2010). In fact in many arenas, there is a spillover between civil wars and other kinds of conflict that are closely interwoven with what Nordstrom (2004) calls the shadows of war: the war economies, gun-running or blood diamonds. They are fuzzy because many new arenas are characterized by unclear definitions of friend and foe, the existence of many enemies, and the saturation of
the battlefield with a variety of innocents, unknowns, or neutrals (Battistelli/Ammendola/Galantino 1997). Finally, many contemporary conflicts are fluid in that within one arena different kinds of struggles may often combine or transform into each other (for example, peaceful demonstrations, violent protests, terror attacks, small-scale fighting or open combat).

**Comprehensive Operations and Legitimacy:** A variety of terms have been used to characterize the new expeditionary missions: comprehensive, multiple-principle guided or whole-of-government. These are characterized by the existence of multi-dimensional problems (e.g. security, failed public system), paradox (simultaneous existence of inconsistent states), and stakeholders within and outside a theater having diverse and contractor logics (van Fenema/Soeters/Beeres 2010b: 256). Indeed, because they are based on combinations of defense, diplomacy and development such conflicts acutely raise questions of legitimacy (Ducheine/van der Meulen/Moelker 2010). More broadly, as Dandeker (1998: 35) suggests, in late modernity, accompanying a greater questioning of the legitimacy of a unilateral use of military force to resolve international disputes, there is an amplified focus on humanitarian concerns and human rights wedded to the concept of security. Hence in the last twenty years this development has led to the emergence of a militarized humanitarianism or civilian surge centered on a combination of contradictory orientations – towards armed force and towards improving the welfare of humankind.

Two interrelated problems arise within such situations. First, the move to collective security necessitates persuading home constituencies about the necessity of using armed forces in expeditionary missions outside national borders. The lack of clear criteria for victory or the move towards achieving success in ambiguous political goals (nation-building or stability) in such missions intensifies these circumstances (Osinga/Lindley-French 2010). Thus one can often encounter a situation in which there is often strong public support of soldiers and sympathy that does not necessarily translate into lasting support for expeditionary missions (Ducheine/van der Meulen/Moelker 2010: 34). Second, as King (2010) observes, while the internationalization of military missions has a long history as a feature of operations, since the end of the Cold War, issues centered on legitimacy and legality are focused on the dense international relations at the tactical level (especially in Europe) through multinational formations. From our perspective, military leaders are now increasingly examining the moral implications of their actions and the political boundaries within which they operate. And as a result military commanders must create internal credibility for their actions among troops and act within highly charged environments in order to establish external legitimacy.

**Media Wars and Competing Authority Structures:** Current-day conflicts are also managed and fought through the media, the internet and the stage of (national and global) public opinion (Bet El 2009). Today, the media is integral to the strategic level of conflict since the military and political levels must be able to produce a convincing narrative to the wider public. This development is intensified by numerous technological innovations allowing instantaneous reporting and the fact that many armed conflicts have become global media events. Compounding all of this is, of course, as Osinga and Lindley-French (2010; Cronin 2006) state, the arrival of social media and real time digital imagery, making the connection between popular perception and the physical battlefield more immediate and volatile. This situation is made more complex by the emergence of a broader confrontational approach between the media and the military (Peri 2000: 192). Thus while many
commanders expect the media to be ‘objective’, i.e. rally to their cause, the media’s intention is to convey, within strict time limits, the most compelling narrative it can find. In many military operations, this potential clash is intensified by the greater independence of the media than in the past and the dispersed nature of conflict in which the media may be anywhere (Moskos 2000b: 9–13). What emerges is a set of relations marked by tension and (mutual) dependence between communities of practitioners.

One consequence of this development involves competing authority structures to the military. As the Cindy Sheehan case in the United States shows, parents may actively involve the media in recruiting support for their political causes. The upshot of this situation is that military leaders now constantly engage in ‘public relations’ and risk over-investing time and energy in justifying their actions at the expense of other duties. And because the manner by which leaders face civilian populations and the media is closely observed by their subordinates, internal leadership has come to depend on successful external leadership, on the ability to perform the spokesperson role, gaining respect and influence in wider circles.

Global Surveillance: A final development that undergirds all of the other features of expeditionary missions centers on what Shaw (2005: 75f.) terms “global surveillance”, the growing transparency of contemporary armed forces to external agents such as political leaders, the media (local and global), the judiciary, pressure groups, or international non-state institutions such as the Red Cross, Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International (Burk 1998; Dandeker 1998: 34). The wider import of this situation, to follow Ducheine/van der Meulen/Moelker (2010: 35) is that national and global civil societies have grown in their supervisory and information gathering capacity (what is called horizontal surveillance). Within such circumstances in which military leaders may have relatively little control over media coverage and the reports of external movements and organizations, commanders find it difficult to hide the consequences of military actions. This surveillance has been accompanied by the growth of international law governing military activity (Merry 2001). Thus, as in many of the armed forces of the industrial democracies, one finds an increasing ‘juridification’ of the military sphere (Rubin 2002). In more concrete terms, over the past two decades the relatively autonomous sphere of the military has increasingly come under judicial overview.

3. Organizational Fusions, Amalgamations and Cooperation

The features of the circumstances within which current-day expeditionary forces operate that I have described above have led both to the use of older organizational forms by the armed forces and to the development of a host of new ones. Let me briefly outline the latter kind.

Loose Coalitions; Temporary Frameworks: An increasing number of operations are now performed within complex organizational frameworks that involve interlinkages between different armed forces – as in the coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan – but no less importantly between the military and other bodies involved with livelihood, economic development or governance (including social movements, NGOs, voluntary associations, the police or judicial bodies) (Shamir/Ben-Ari 2009). A case in point is the diverse components of counterinsurgency operations: dismounted infantry, human intelligence, language specialists, military police, civil affairs, engineers, medical and logistics units, legal affairs...
or contractors (Lacquement 2010: 24). While the logic in such structures is one of ‘mix and match’ according to the needs of each mission, the wider implication is the necessity for greater flexibility on the part of the military and the ability of leaders to bond such diverse elements together.

Yet, such cooperation necessitates working across different mindsets and values, modes of communication and thought, or interests and practices, since each organizational actor has its own viewpoints and internal agenda. Tresch (2007: 35) persuasively argues that despite variations between them, military cultures around the world (and especially in alliances like NATO) have strong commonalities facilitating working together. These commonalities center on such characteristics as a focus on collective violence, necessitating close coordination, strong hierarchies, clear chains of command, readiness of soldiers to put their lives and bodies at risk, or the importance of morale and cohesion. The relative straightforwardness with which different armed forces work together, however, has inevitably raised special questions about cooperation with civilians, because expeditionary missions are multi-dimensional entities composed of diverse organizations (again, such as state bodies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations or private companies).

Moreover, these inter-organizational frameworks are often loose, temporary structures marked by unclear division of labor and authority and are political arenas through which constituent actors promote and advance their own ends (Winslow 2002). Thus, for instance, many contemporary operations may involve significant numbers of civilians to handle political and developmental tasks and police to handle security tasks. What has emerged is an ever greater need for coordination and cooperation in inter-agency, inter-ministerial or indeed, inter-governmental projects (Center for International Cooperation 2006). But such projects involve more than the establishment of partnerships or increasing organizational complexity, for they necessitate militaries becoming open systems, capable of being aligned in loose, modular forms of temporary frameworks. Indeed, the move in many missions has been towards designing and creating special mission-specific, flexible composition task forces and not fixed readiness units. In such situations, military leaders may find themselves not only in leadership roles, but in peer or subordinate roles (de Waard/Kramer 2010). Hence commanders will sometimes take orders from members of other forces or from civilians not of their own nationality.

**Hyphenated Roles:** Four decades ago Janowitz (1971) saw in the move of the militaries of the industrial democracies to a constabulary role an addition of new roles to conventional ones (leading to debates about the tensions between the warrior ethos and the worldview of policemen). Developing Janowitz’ ideas about the soldier-policeperson, Moskos’ (2000a: 19) later included the soldier-diplomat, soldier-statesman, and soldier-scholar as part of the array of hyphenated roles that contemporary officers need to master. But given today’s expeditionary missions, we could easily add soldier-media expert, soldier-social scientist, soldier-social worker, or (indeed) soldier-nation-builder. Finally, to follow Haltiner (2005) we can also propose the soldier-consultant, soldier-relief worker or soldier- alderman. Hyphenated roles imply two kinds of issues. The first involves role-tensions or inconsistencies between the stipulations of different components of expected behavior. The second involves the kinds of training and promotion structures that will be established within the armed forces to encourage cultivation of different kinds of officers.
Amalgamated Organizational Forms: Many new missions are now characterized by new amalgamated, organizational forms that combine (within one framework-for-action) diverging structures and modes of operation. For example, Last (2009) has suggested that in peace-support operations, it would be useful to stop differentiating between the police and the military as separate entities. At one level, his point refers to hybrid corps such as the French gendarmerie that could perhaps be better adapted to missions of stabilization than conventional forces. But at a second level, his suggestion seems to center on forms that blend organizations together. Thus, rather than talking about military police, we should take military policing seriously, as a set of activities that blend the logics of action of different organizations. The advantage of such organizational hybrids is that they combine organized violence with keeping law and order to provide a means to answer the complexity of many new missions. Along these lines, hybrid organizational forms comprise measures the military uses to manage its relations with groups in the civilian environment and whose values, needs, and identities may contradict its own.

Take for instance, CIMIC officers as intermediaries or boundary-spanning roles connecting military and civilian entities (Ben-Ari/Michael/Kellen 2009). Conceptually, CIMIC officers embody an extension of the military into civilian society and an extension of civilian society into the military. The organizational advantage of such forms lies in their ability to perceive the needs and views of civilian groups and render them into concrete suggestions that commanders and troops can take into consideration. Within the military, however, CIMIC officers sometimes form a sort of pressure group pressing for civilian interests. More widely, members of CIMIC units (and other liaison officers) are part of the new relations between the armed forces and various entities centered on humanitarian issues. In other words, they are between and betwixt the military and its environment, but they are also part of practices that are not fully military or fully civilian. While providing advantages, from an organizational point of view, the problem is that elements of the armed forces continue to be military units, but they are changed by their very relationships with others. The difficulty, in other words, centers on how amalgamated forms collaborate with external bodies but retain their independent identity as military units.

Privatization: The last feature entails the privatization of security that is the result of a variety of causes: the spread of neo-liberal ideas and a far greater acceptance of privatizing state services than in the past; greater pressure placed on the armed forces by politicians for more efficient, less expensive forces and more outsourcing; the heightened risk aversion of publics in which fighting by proxy is an advantage; and the ready availability of discharged military personnel after the end of the Cold War (Perlo-Freeman/Skons 2008). Against this background, it seems only rational for states to privatize security and for private groups to supplant a dearth of governmental forces with private ones (Mandel 2001: 132). Indeed, the scale and geographical breadth of contemporary private security companies in today’s world is impressive (Jäger/Kümmel 2007). Within this context, Kinsey (2009) contends, private security forces have moved beyond traditional administrative and logistical support roles both to the battlefield and to related roles, such as defensive guarding, security sector-reform, or disarming. Politically, for the industrial democracies the advantage of using such forces lies in averting casualties among their forces and overcoming many of the problems of accountability to wider publics and constituencies (Mandel 2001: 132).
Thus, as observers have noted, the problem with privatizing security is the weakening of the state’s monopoly over the means of violence (see, e.g., Mandel 2001: 129f.) and the potential lack of oversight and the accompanying susceptibility to corruption. Moreover, Kinsey (2009) cautions that private security companies lack the legitimacy of state actors and are more likely to be perceived by local populations as neocolonialist agents. Thus private security companies have become a major actor in conflicted areas and with which senior military commanders must deal as partners in missions, subcontractors for military tasks, and as entities that can (sometimes) be only weakly controlled. Indeed, as Cancian (2008) puts it succinctly contractors have become new elements of force structure.

4. And Military Leadership?

A number of ideas surface from the analysis (see also Shamir/Ben-Ari 1999). First, present-day militaries have increasingly become open systems as the result of the blurring of front and rear, participation in military and non-military missions, heightened role of the media, and a plethora of channels of interaction between the army and wider publics. Second, to a much greater extent than before military leaders now face problems of credibility and legitimacy due to wider changes in cultural attitudes to the use of force, increased involvement in (sometimes contested) peace support operations, or participation in multicultural and multilingual frameworks. Third, the rapid introduction of new technologies, performance of various tasks under different conditions, and within ad-hoc frameworks all create demands for flexible, innovative, and adaptable military forces. This point implies that present-day militaries have developed new forms of cooperation and collaboration with components drawn from a variety of forces or external organizational entities, each with its own doctrines, traditions, self-images and modes of operation. Indeed, given the fast pace of environmental and technological change around the globe, along with new opportunities created by advanced technology, militaries have become flexible organizations characterized by the dropping of many internal and external boundaries. These boundaryless organizations (Davis 1995) contain less fixed structures and more temporary systems, whose elements, both people and technologies, are assembled and disassembled according to the shifting needs of specific projects.

For military leaders at a variety of levels the implication of these developments is that of letting go of images of total control and becoming used to organizational life that is more ambivalent and pluralistic than in the past (van Fenema/Soeters/Beeres 2010a; 2010b). But the problem is that modern armed forces are probably the prototype of mechanistic, bureaucratic organizations marked by a fixed division of labor, hierarchical authority, standardization of operations, and reliance on precise regulations for achieving regularity, reliability and efficiency (Shamir/Ben-Ari 2000). Leadership in such organizations depends on formal patterns of authority and the exercise of legitimate power. Yet, as we saw, contemporary militaries are much more organic, and characterized by a flexible division of labor, decentralized decision-making, low reliance on formal hierarchy and greater use of informal communication between the ranks. To be sure, such organizations, as scholars have shown, are better adapted to environments with high turbulence and to non-routine tasks (Burns/Stalker 1961). But, as a consequence of the move to organic structures, military commanders often find themselves...
‘in charge’ of units not permanently under their authority or even of civilians in various roles.

Within these circumstances, leadership (not only mere management) becomes imperative. While mechanistic organizations are characterized by clearly defined roles and authority, organic ones are characterized by high role-ambiguity and shifting relationships that may develop unpredictably. It is for these reasons that calls have been made about the necessity of creating greater flexibility among leaders of the armed forces. For example, much has been made of the ambidexterity (Soeters 2008) or omni-competence needed by present day militaries and their commanders; that is, to put this point by way of the example of expeditionary missions, their ability to move physically, operationally and psychologically between peace-keeping, counter-insurgency or nation-building.

Such situations further intensify the importance of leaders as the centers of gravity of such frameworks. Hence, in organic structures leaders will have to reduce their dependence on position power (i.e., on formal rank and authority). To put this point by way of example, an officer dealing with civilian bodies can no longer rely on rank or on leadership cultivated within units, but rather on consensus-building and persuasion. Even information-based power (derived from access to exclusive knowledge) may be reduced due to the dispersion of information afforded by new technologies. The importance of personal bases of power increases under these conditions (Shamir/Ben-Ari 2009). In addition, the difficulties of leading organic systems are compounded by rapid changes in the contingencies facing military leaders. For instance, the term ‘Three-Block Warfare’ (coined by a former commander of the US Marines) characterizes circumstances where troops are engaged (within one small area) in a spectrum of operations from humanitarian missions, policing-type operations, through peacekeeping and peace enforcement-type actions to full-blown combat (Burgess 2003). For leaders a crucial issue thus involves navigating smooth transitions between situations – each of which necessitates a different mindset – through making sure that the implications of their decisions are transmitted all the way down to the ordinary soldier.

In this respect, a primary task of leaders is to provide the mental models and frames to coordinate the behavior of organizational members (Shamir 1997). Framing refers to leaders’ influence on meanings given to events by other people in ways that motivate, reinforce collective ties, and direct collective action. Yet, framing extends beyond the needs for regulation or coordination (complex as they may be) to more basic issues of purpose and meaning. In view of the greater openness of the armed forces to civilian considerations, the challenge of framing unit missions with reference to shared values and identities becomes increasingly difficult (Shamir/Ben-Ari 2000). Within military units this move entails what King (2010: 48) calls the creation of an operational community of officers that are squarely rooted within their national armed forces but can easily cooperate with peer officers from other nations. NATO has been doing this but now it is crucial to enlarge this community beyond previous boundaries and especially to embrace civilian organizations.

In recent decades the scholarly literature on organizational leadership has emphasized ‘transformational’, ‘visionary’, or ‘charismatic’ leadership. These theories acknowledge the role of leaders as providers of meaning for organizational members, and emphasize leader behaviors as role-modeling or articulating a value-based vision for the organization. As such they may be highly relevant to the military context (Bass 1996). However, they do not deal specifically with leaders in inter-organizational and cross-cultural frameworks or with the political, moral, and cognitive complexity facing mili-
military leaders in expeditionary missions. Complementing these works, more recent studies have suggested such concepts as distributed leadership or leadership in complexity, that focus on organizational adaptation to ever changing, multifaceted, and intricate environments (Bennet/Wise/Wood/Harvey 2003). The basic idea, grounded in complexity theory and specifically in a concept of organizations as complex adaptive systems (Paparone et al. 2008), is of a model of leadership in contexts of dynamically changing networks of informally interacting actors and forces. Leadership does not merely comprise the effects of influential acts of individuals, but rather is embedded in a complex interplay of interacting forces. Leadership, according to this view, emerges in circumstances marked by uncertainty and is predicated on the ability to foster and cultivate the adaptive capacities of organization to complex environments (Shamir/Ben-Ari 2009; Uhl-Bien/Russ/McKelvey 2007).

In all, recent processual approaches see leadership as involving sense-making and direction-giving, view leaders as identified on the basis of their relationship to others (Bolden 2004: 13) and as guiding the adaptive capacities of the organizations they head. Within this view, the “interact, not the act, becomes the basic building block of organizational leadership” (Ogawa/Bossett 1995: 50). This kind of view suggests more than that the boundary-spanning components of leaders’ roles such as liaison, negotiation, and management of conflict (van Fleet/Yukl 1986) become much more important. For instance, in peacekeeping operations mediation and negotiation are evident within and between combatants, civilians, government officials, and representatives of NGOs. The more general point is that military leaders can no longer depend only on authority, professional expertise or tactical ability. They need to be aware of and familiar with the norms and mores of the environment within which they operate. In other words, such leaders need to adopt new mindsets along with older, more traditional ones.

5. From Career Ladders to Career Journeys

Let me now suggest a number of more practical implications of my analysis. Given the limits of this article, however, I will focus on only a few pertinent issues (for more specific proposals see Shamir/Ben-Ari 1999; 2009).

Returning to ‘General-ship’: The key conclusion from my analysis is the need to return to the perhaps hackneyed image of military leaders as generals. By generals I do not refer to specific positions in military hierarchies but to the idea that military leaders need to be individuals both with knowledge and skills related to wide ranging dimensions and the ability to provide direction in a large variety of circumstances. In the scholarly literature, part of this conceptualization refers to developing contingency-free leadership. Thus because military leaders need to deal with frequently changing circumstances and there are limits to which people can change their personal leading styles, there is a need for leaders who can transcend contingencies and maintain their leadership in dramatically different situations. Writing about leadership in the 21st century over a decade ago, House (1995: 413) made a distinction between “supervisory leadership” which is intended to provide guidance, support and corrective feedback for the day-to-day activities of unit members, and “general leadership”, intended to give more stable purpose and meaning to collectivities and their activities. Contingency theories of
leadership, which caution against one ‘best’ leadership style, may apply primarily to what House calls supervisory leadership.

If general leadership is more contingency-free, then military leadership education should emphasize such leadership. Soeters (2008: 121f.) further explains that such general leadership – what he calls ambidexterity – is important today in military missions because one cannot plan for any specific set of contingencies (he, too, contrasts it to contextual ambidexterity rooted in the contingencies of specific situations). To guide the development of general leadership, House (1995) suggests behaviors that may be contingency-free: articulation and presentation of a vision; passion and self-sacrifice; confidence, determination and persistence; expectations of and confidence in followers; developmental orientation toward subordinates; role modeling; and the demonstration of integrity. Several current leadership development programs address themselves primarily to these aspects, and may be used as bases for creating appropriate frameworks within the army.

New Skills and Capacities: But the emphasis on contingency-free leadership needs to be balanced with developing new concrete abilities. The practical implication of this point is that during their careers, military leaders will need to add or further hone new capacities to the older ones cultivated within the armed forces. First, the interest in working teams in industry and business circles is pertinent to the military. Changes in military tasks and in relationships with other organizations increase the probability that military leaders will have to operate in teams with varying levels of member homogeneity and temporal stability. The military leader of the future has to learn how to be both a good team member and a good team leader. They will have to develop interaction facilitation skills, and learn how to participate in and lead group oriented decision processes. These skills and behaviors are currently underdeveloped among military leaders, especially with regard to the facilitation of teamwork among physically distant team members using the new communication technologies.

Second, while there have been significant advances in preparing military leaders for the communication, mediation, conflict resolution and persuasion needed for performing ‘civilian’ tasks and operating within inter-organizational frameworks, more work needs to be done. For instance, these skills will have to be developed through new types of training and exercises. Today, even where joint exercises do take place, they are usually restricted to ‘proper’ military operations. Broadening them further and further to include other types of missions (peace keeping, for example) will provide opportunities for the exercising and developing boundary-spanning skills among military leaders.

Third, the invasion of the media into military situations, and the need to face and deal with civilian audiences, may require some preparation of all military leaders. Of particular importance is education in the ground rules and principles of operation of the media, and their main institutions and structure. In addition, teaching military officers how to avoid some of the ‘traps’ and risks that may arise from high exposure and the inherent contradictions between military and public relations considerations may also be necessary. Bases for this aspect of military leadership education can already be found in academic and non-academic programs and courses in mass communication and journalism.

Fourth, in many of today’s missions, military leaders find themselves in controversial circumstances where they are called upon to operate on morally uncertain grounds and face ethical dilemmas. Consequently, military leaders need to be better educated in ap-
proaching and resolving ethical dilemmas. While current officer training programs include ethical education, we believe the range of issues and dilemmas covered by this education should be broadened to reflect the changes discussed in this article. These would include, for instance, issues involved in fighting guerilla groups who dress as civilians, conduct their operations from within civilian centers and use civilians as sources of supply (van Baarda/Verweij 2006).

**Careers and Promotion:** Changing conceptions of military leadership necessitate rethinking current organizational and institutional arrangements by which leaders are selected, promoted and educated. These arrangements will need to prepare individuals who are culturally sensitive, capable of working in teams, grappling with moral quandaries, and constantly adapting to shifting assignments, circumstances and new (sometimes ad-hoc) organizational frameworks. Thus, for example, militaries will need to select for collaborative personalities, flexibility, innovative thinking, willingness to listen and mutual respect (Cronin 2008: 5).

More broadly, to follow Sherman et al. (1999) there is a need to move from the concept of career ladders – with assumptions about clear steps – to that of career journeys – emphasizing on the move (and not only the destination) and supporting stints in many more and diverse organizations. And, as Leonard and associates (2006: XVI) emphasize, future leaders will need more preparation and more experience. In a study of the US armed forces, Salconi and his colleagues (2010) emphasize the crucial importance of key experiences in the development of strategic military leaders such as educational experiences, joint billets, international exposure, or holding senior-staff positions. One of their interesting conclusions is that the career paths (or journeys) of the most successful of such leaders have been anomalous, diverging from service norms or the prescribed steps up the career ladder. Consequently they (Salconi et al. 2010: 83) prescribe intentionally creating an opportunity space for leaders to develop and foster their skills, necessitating changes in institutional expectations about, for example, interactions between subcomponents of security systems and supporting the out of the mainstream preferences by officers for postings.

Practically, the idea would be to design reward structures that encourage unique career paths that develop, at once, the more conventional military mindset and capacities and ways of thinking, abilities and experiences that are necessary for identifying and solving new problems. In other words, meeting the challenges facing military leadership today requires a cumulation of mindsets: diverse experiences, exposure to other cultures and organizations and learning to work in inter-organizational frameworks. These requirements can be encountered through developing and implementing career paths including rotation among various units and assignments in other countries and other organizations. While some armed forces already view rotation, developmental experiences, self-learning and graduate programs at universities as ways to supplement officer training, many officers still spend their entire career within military institutions. We argue for thinking about careers that include not only sabbaticals and temporary assignments to civilian agencies, but also alternating spells in and out of the armed forces. For this to happen, personnel policies will have to change, and even more importantly, current definitions of status, success and promotion will have to be re-examined (Leonard et al. 2006).
Training and Education: For all of the changes that are prescribed here it is crucial to emphasize yet again, that many existing aspects of traditional leadership development and training remain valid because of continuity in many of the tasks militaries are called upon to undertake; for example, the continued ability to cultivate troop morale and motivation and to lead in highly tense situations even in new expeditionary missions. Alongside such traditional emphases are other needs. First, there is a necessity to develop culturally sensitive leaders with a degree of awareness of ways of life, mores and world-views of unfamiliar populations. What is of significance here is acquiring a generalized appreciation of cultural variety rather than particular expressions in a certain culture. Second is the augmentation of technical skills with more social scientific or humanistic knowledge. The past decade has been marked by many missions explicitly aimed at nation- and state-building which often are conducted in situations of ongoing conflict (East Timor, Haiti, Kuwait, Somalia, Iraq, or Afghanistan). Given that the academic disciplines within which education in military institutions has been rooted are overwhelmingly political science, international relations, and security and conflict scholarship, it is not surprising that military leaders often conceptualize such complex processes as state-building in terms of security. But if one wants to understand the broader social context of expeditionary operations, it is crucial to bring in knowledge rooted in political-economy, anthropology and sociology. One example is European military academies that have moved from a stress on military skills towards a broader education in the behavioral sciences, what Haltiner (2005) calls the move from a “Sparta” to an “Athens” model.

6. Conclusion

The development of expeditionary missions carried out by the armed forces of the industrial democracies to increasingly include important nation and state-building components poses serious challenges for military leaders. Yet this development does not spell a neat move from older to newer capabilities necessitated of military leaders. Rather, as I have been arguing, a more pertinent model is cumulative: to the older mindset and associated capacities of commanders are added new ones. In other words, while I have shown that many military institutions are now undergoing changes, I would dispute approaches that contend that a new type of military leadership is now emerging. Rather, I propose that the most fruitful way to understand contemporary developments is through a model of an expansion, a growing complexity of assignments and exigencies, and not a simple pattern of replacement of older missions and capacities by newer ones. A direct implication of this situation is that the mindset of current-day military leadership is increasingly characterized by internal tensions, contradictory demands, and multifaceted responsibilities.

The emergent model of military leaders centers on increased abilities to handle ambiguous situations and clashing role-demands, and competence to perform integrative functions, offer answers to why questions, and maintain unit members’ internalized commitment, all under conditions of decreasing support from traditional authority structures or unified military cultures. In other words, on top of traditional actions that military leaders must be good at – such as defining roles, standardizing, simplifying, making-decisions, commanding and controlling or planning – following Paparone et al. (2008) we think it useful to add another list of traits such as building relationships, complicating, diversifying, sense-making, learning, improvising or managing loosely-
coupled systems. These new skills required of military commanders are similar to some of the faculties managers of multinational corporations must master: negotiation, liaison, persuasion and teamwork. In addition, a main challenge facing military leaders is how to integrate units and forces under conditions of loosely-coupled structures, diverse cultures, temporary membership, and technologies that increase the distance between leaders and unit members.

From the perspective of this volume as a whole, the implication of my analysis is that the mindsets of military leaders in general and those leading expeditionary missions in particular need to embrace greater complexity. If by mindset we refer to a set of assumptions and ways of understanding the world around us, then leaders commanding and directing expeditionary missions in the contemporary world are in the midst of adjoining new assumptions and more complicated ways of understanding the world to older ones. It is this richer mindset that will underlie the more specific abilities and attitudes of such leaders mentioned by other contributors to this volume (Haaland, Shields).

7. References


Identity, Identity Shifts and Identity Politics: The German Soldier Facing a Pre-/Post-Westphalian World Risk Society, Ambitious National Politics, an Ambivalent Home Society and a Military under Stress*

Gerhard Kümmel

1. Introduction

In 1965, i.e. at a time that was to be shaped by the Vietnam War, the Scottish folk-singer Donovan, the British response to Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, sang a song about the *Universal Soldier*. With this song Donovan not only became Number One in the British charts; it also became a worldwide hit. Originally written and sung by the First-Nations-Canadian singer Buffy Sainte-Marie and adapted in a somewhat modified version for a German audience by the German singer Juliane Werding, the song was meant to be a protest, a critique, a statement against war and for peace. His lyrics describe the universal soldier in the following way (Donovan 1965):

“He’s five foot-two, and he’s six feet-four,
He fights with missiles and with spears.
He’s all of thirty-one, and he’s only seventeen,
Been a soldier for a thousand years.

He’s a Catholic, a Hindu, an Atheist, a Jain,
A Buddhist and a Baptist and a Jew.
And he knows he shouldn’t kill,
And he knows he always will,
Kill you for me my friend and me for you.

And he’s fighting for Canada,
He’s fighting for France,
He’s fighting for the USA,
And he’s fighting for the Russians,
And he’s fighting for Japan,
And he thinks we’ll put an end to war this way.

And he’s fighting for Democracy,
He’s fighting for the Reds,
He says it’s for the peace of all.
He’s the one who must decide,
Who’s to live and who’s to die,
And he never sees the writing on the wall.

But without him,
How would Hitler have condemned them at Dachau?
Without him Caesar would have stood alone,
He’s the one who gives his body

As a weapon of the war,
And without him all this killing can’t go on.
He’s the Universal Soldier and he really is to blame,
His orders come from far away no more,
They come from here and there and you and me,
And brothers can’t you see,
This is not the way we put the end to war.”

* This article reflects the personal opinion of the author. It is based on Kümmel (2010).