

# POINTER

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# POINTER

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### **QUOTABLE QUOTES**

# Editorial

We are pleased to feature in this third issue of *POINTER* for 2013 a commentary written by LG (Ret) Winston Choo on his personal insights of his years in the army and of National Service (NS). LG (Ret) Choo emphasises the importance of NS with his final comment, *“Singapore is what it is today because our fathers, brothers, uncles and cousins served NS. Every generation has to step up to do their duty. Old soldiers like me have done our turn; now it’s up to the next generation to carry on this duty.”*

As Minister of Defence, Dr Ng Eng Hen stated in his speech at the Committee of Supply Debate 2013, *“We in this house appreciate the commitment of our NSmen and the sacrifices they make. All of us recognise that if we do not defend Singapore ourselves, no one else will. Each of us has to uphold our duty to serve NS.”* We would like to pay tribute to all National Servicemen who have contributed so much to our nation’s defence.

This issue of *POINTER* covers a wide variety of topics, ranging from a discussion on a philosophy of command, to how to engage our servicemen, to innovative leadership, as well as an examination of the merits of outsourcing in the SAF.

In his article, “Philosophy of Command,” BG Yeo See Peng, Commander, 6<sup>th</sup> Division (6 Div) shares tenets of his command philosophy, which has served as a guide in his leadership of 6 Div. Using classical command examples from history, he hopes to share this philosophy and its applications in practical operational circumstances with a wider audience. BG Yeo concludes that it is important to adapt and develop one’s own style and philosophy in command.

In the article “Reclaiming Engagement in the SAF: Building Strong Relationships and Honest Communication,” MAJ Lawrence Leong stresses that the SAF should define the concept of “engagement” and then explain how it can be properly implemented by “commanders at every level.” MAJ Leong explains

that since the concept of “Engagement” was first introduced by then-Chief of Defence Force, LG (Ret) Desmond Kuek as one of his visions for the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), the concept has been used interchangeably to mean various terms such as commitment to defense, unit cohesion, morale levels and inspiring leadership. In his article, MAJ Leong explores two ideas of engagement—working relationships and communication. He then further discusses some of the measures that can be taken by both the individual and the organisation to advance engagement in the SAF.

“A Swift and Decisive Victory: The Strategic Implications of What Victory Means” is written by CPT Chong Shi Hao. In this article, CPT Chong discusses what victory means in our mission statement, *“The mission of MINDEF and the Singapore Armed Forces is to enhance Singapore’s peace and security through deterrence and diplomacy, and should these fail, to secure a swift and decisive victory over the aggressor.”* According to CPT Chong, the mission statement serves as a guide for SAF’s defence policy and its transformation efforts. He stresses that it is important to be clear about what this “victory” entails. The adjectives “swift and decisive” help to further illuminate the nature of this victory. CPT Chong also aims to add clarity to what this victory should be, in the light of recent events and the evolution of modern warfare.

MAJ Mohamed Rizal’s article on “Achieving Competitive Advantage Through Outsourcing in the SAF” examines the benefits and risks of outsourcing for the SAF. MAJ Mohamed gives a detailed summary of the benefits and risks as well as provides some case studies of how outsourcing has influenced the supply chain industry. He highlights the motivations behind outsourcing, which are cost-driven, strategy-driven and politically driven and warns of the many significant risks resulting from outsourcing, if not properly managed. MAJ Mohamed feels that there is a need for the SAF to review in detail the actual

extent of outsourcing benefits and risks periodically. Analysing the risks, benefits and strategic issues will help SAF leaders reap the full potential of outsourcing in the supply chain industry.

CPT Bertram Ang's article on "Innovative Leadership – A Case Study of Tal Afar and Implications for the SAF" discusses the significance of adaptive leadership in the SAF and its importance to the Generation Y soldiers in its ranks, defined by him as junior leaders who have the ability to bring the culture of creativity and innovation into battlefield situations. CPT Ang concludes that it is imperative for leaders in the SAF modify their mindset towards Generation Y servicemen in order to meet our needs for the future. He feels that Generation Y soldiers can help the SAF to cement itself as a Third Generation force with their huge potential in creativity and innovation.

In "Thinking Paternalism: Benefits for the Third Generation SAF in Management and Leadership," CPT Gabriel Choy takes a critical look at the idea of Libertarian Paternalism. According to CPT Choy, Libertarian Paternalism was originally intended as a paradigm shift in thinking for political philosophy and public-policy making, among others. He explores this concept and discusses the potential it holds for

the Third Generation SAF. He evaluates Libertarian Paternalism as a political-philosophical idea and follows up by explaining the rationale for its introduction into the SAF. He presents two particular manifestations of Libertarian Paternalism in action—both in management and leadership—and ends off with the hope that the idea will catch on and truly benefit the organization.

Finally, in "Ethical Conduct in the Future of Unmanned Warfare," CPT Daxson Yap Chin Teck discusses how unmanned combat systems will be the next leap in military technology, promising greater lethality at a lower human cost. CPT Yap argues that as the SAF moves to develop and deploy unmanned systems, it is timely to examine the ethical implications that will arise from the advent of unmanned warfare. This is a critical issue to explore for the SAF because the rapid pace of technological development has outstripped the evolution of the laws which govern armed conflict. He warns that if the issue is left unaddressed at the organizational level, the propensity for unethical and therefore unlawful conduct in war is high, and Singapore cannot afford such mistakes.

**The *POINTER* Editorial Team**



# National Service: A Waste of Time?

by LG (Ret) Winston Choo

*August marks the 46th anniversary of national service. Winston Choo, the first and longest-serving Chief of the Singapore Armed Forces (1974-1992), shares his personal insights of his years in the army and of national service.*

*This article was first published in The Straits Times on 24 August 2013.*

## INTRODUCTION

On 9 August 2013, thousands of Singaporeans celebrated our nation's 48<sup>th</sup> birthday. What many may not know, however, is that August also marks the month that the first batch of 9,000 young men were enlisted for compulsory national service in 1967.

This first batch led the way. Now, 46 years later, more than 900,000 Singaporeans have served and played their part in defending our home.

When I joined the military in 1959, the Singapore Armed Forces did not exist. Even Singapore did not exist then as an independent nation.

## CITY BOYS CAN FIGHT TOO

After I was commissioned as an officer in 1961, I was in the 1st Battalion Singapore Infantry Regiment (1 SIR), who were all career soldiers.

In 1963, then-Indonesian president Sukarno launched the *Konfrontasi* or Confrontation campaign to oppose the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, which merged Singapore, Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak.

When the Confrontation broke out, we were sent to Sebatik Island south of Sabah—the northern half was under Malaysia, the southern half was under Indonesia. We were there conducting operations for

about seven months. Our role was to patrol the border areas and ensure that there were no intrusions by infiltrators into Sabah.

We went there expecting to take fire, expecting to fight. We didn't have any experience then and, of course, there was some degree of apprehension that we could lose our lives.

We had a real enemy across the border, and it is only natural that any person would feel fear. We were all carrying loaded weapons and you don't carry loaded weapons unless you expect to use them.

When you go into an operational zone, you must go in with the expectation that this danger might happen. There was always this sense that we could be shot at.

But if you train your people well and motivate them well, they will fight, and fight well. We knew that it was professionally and operationally expected of us to fight.

I remember that when we first arrived, the talk within the Brigade—we had a Malaysian Brigade Commander—was, “these Singaporeans cannot fight. They are city boys.”

As it turned out, we could. There was shooting and mortar fire, and we continued with our operations. Our soldiers performed their tasks courageously and did

not turn tail and run. Fortunately, those of us in 1 SIR didn't suffer any casualties, though our brothers from 2 SIR did in Kota Tinggi.

We executed our duties as professionals and we showed the rest that we were capable of fighting alongside the best of them.

But that was just the first battle that we had to fight.

## BECOMING INDEPENDENT

Two years later in 1965, Singapore separated from Malaysia. We were in camp when they said that then-Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was going to make a statement, so we turned on the radio. His voice broke because he was very emotional—I will never forget his voice when he announced the Separation.

At the time, we had a mixture of Singaporean, Malaysian and British soldiers in my battalion. Nobody showed a lot of emotion, but the funny thing was that the British officers were the ones who cheered, whereas the rest of us were more subdued. Because I think to us, the repercussions and implications were tremendous.

I was just a young captain then, but what struck me was the importance of having the military capability to ensure Singapore's sovereignty. We were all concerned about the future, about what was going to happen to Singapore. It became evidently clear to me that unless we had a strong military, we were not going to survive.

We had two army battalions then. In 1 SIR, three-quarters were Singaporeans, one-quarter Malaysians. The ratio in 2 SIR was almost 50-50. We realised we would only have one and one quarter of a battalion after the Malaysians left.

And even after independence, the presence of the Malaysian Armed Forces in Singapore was still overwhelming. A battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment continued to occupy Temasek Camp at Holland Road. They refused to vacate the battalion camp, and 2 SIR, which had returned from Sabah, had to live in tents at

Farrer Park. It took them quite some time before they pulled out and 2 SIR went back to Temasek Camp.

Any thinking Singaporean, especially those involved in the military, would realise how naked we were as a small country.

When the time came for us to build the Singapore Armed Forces, there was no doubt among us about the need to have our own defence capability.

## TAKING CHARGE OF OUR OWN

I had been under the command of the British, then the Malaysians, and finally we Singaporeans were in charge. It was as though I had been in three different armies, but I never changed my cap badge or my uniform. To me, I was always just a part of the Singapore Infantry Regiment.

Everything that I had gone through made me appreciate Singapore's independence even more. We were now the owners of our own destiny. Vital to that was the capability to look after ourselves and be responsible for our own defence.

At the time, the Vietnam War was raging and the American forces were pulling out, so there was a heightened sense of the need for security and defence.

It was a continuous stretch of events—the Confrontation, the breakaway from Malaysia, the Communist threat during the Vietnam War, and the withdrawal of British troops from Singapore and the region—that made us aware of our vulnerability and the need to be strong.

We could only have a capable armed force through National Service (NS). Singapore could not, and still cannot, afford to raise and maintain a non-conscript armed force of sufficient strength without bankrupting our economic workforce.

When NS was introduced in 1967, it was not a popular move. The Chinese had a saying, "Good sons don't become soldiers." Our leaders, led by Mr Lee Kuan Yew and then-defence minister the late Dr Goh Keng Swee, went out of the way to emphasise the importance of NS.



There were send-off parties in every constituency, where all the young men who were supposed to go do NS attended dinners with their Members of Parliament, and were given gifts and some small mementos as a gesture of appreciation.

When we first started NS, of course there was a lot of mystique and doubt as a result of rumours and lack of awareness. I think the youth of today and the average Singaporean parent now have very good knowledge of what to expect. These days, parents are encouraged to visit Pulau Tekong and the Basic Military Training graduation parade has become more visible to the public—they hold it at the Marina Bay Floating Platform, where parents and other Singaporeans can see them and take pride in them.

## THEN AND NOW

It took us a long time and a lot of effort to get NS fully accepted as a way of life, as something every son of Singapore should be doing.

Now, every young man expects that, after he finishes his ITE, polytechnic or A levels, he has to do his NS. It is something which everyone today accepts as a given, a fact of life. That much has changed over time.

Of course, you find a lot of fathers today who say: “Wah, your NS so easy, so soft.” I don’t believe that. I have never looked upon life as being “so easy now,” or thought that NSmen today are sacrificing less than what NSmen of yesteryear have sacrificed.

Training is still tough, and life is still difficult. It is still a big sacrifice to do NS, perhaps even more so today. Maybe the treatment was a bit crude and rough before, whereas now it’s more refined. That doesn’t mean it’s softer or more lax.

If you look at the NS soldiers of those days, many of them were not very well educated and didn’t even have ‘O’ levels.

We have a different calibre of people coming in now—the younger generation are better educated, and can meet the same training requirements more efficiently and effectively.

The need for and importance of NS will always be there, but the type of people who come into NS will change over time. The SAF must be dynamic and continue to adjust the way they train soldiers.

## NEW CENTURY, NEW CHALLENGES

In some ways, the challenge for MINDEF and the SAF today is greater than it was for us then. When we broke away from the Federation and had to form our own armed forces, our vulnerability was very evident. My generation understood this very clearly.

How are we going to put this message across to today’s Singaporeans?

It can be a difficult thing for people to connect with, but we cannot take for granted that the peace we have today will always be there. If we are not prepared to fight, how can we expect anyone else to come and do it for us?

In a way, half our battle is already won because so many Singaporeans today have served NS. The people I meet, especially the fellows who served with me in the SAF, always recall fondly what they did when they were in NS.

Not everybody has had a good NS experience. But even so, I think if you ask those who have gone through life after serving NS, very few would say in retrospect that they have not benefited from NS.

Singapore is what it is today because our fathers, brothers, uncles and cousins served NS. Every generation has to step up to do their duty. Old soldiers like me have done our turn; now it’s up to the next generation to carry on this duty. 🇸🇬

**LG (Ret) Winston Choo** was the first and longest-serving Chief of the Singapore Armed Forces (1974-1992). He left the military after a distinguished 33-year career, and has since held several diplomatic appointments and served on the boards of various companies. He is currently chairman of Metro Holdings’ Board of Directors and Non-Resident Ambassador to Israel.

# Philosophy of Command: Ten Classical Examples

by BG Yeo See Peng

## Abstract:

Through this essay, BG Yeo See Peng, Commander 6<sup>th</sup> Division (6 Div) shares the ten tenets of his command philosophy which has served as a guide in his leadership of 6 Div. Using classical command examples in history, he hopes to share this philosophy and its applications in practical operational circumstances with a wider audience. In command, it is important to adapt and develop one's own style and philosophy, because in the words of Field Marshall Slim: "command is a completely personal thing ... because no imitation was ever a masterpiece."

*Keywords: Philosophy of Command; 6<sup>th</sup> Division; Professional Excellence; Leadership*

## INTRODUCTION

*"Command is that mixture of example, persuasion, and compulsion by which you get men to do what you want them to do, even if they don't want to do it themselves. If you ask me really to define it, I should say, "Command is the projection of personality—and like all true art, and command is an art, it is exercised by each man in his own way."*<sup>1</sup>

– Field Marshal Sir William Slim

On 18 July 2011, five months after I had taken over command of the 6<sup>th</sup> Singapore Division (6 Div), I published my Command Philosophy. I sent the philosophy to all captains and company sergeant Majors within my Division. The purpose was to inform them about the rationale behind my command decisions and actions. I directed them to communicate it to every commander and man in their units. Since then, the philosophy has served well as a platform to discuss command and leadership issues between my commanders, men and myself. It has also been a good reference to align commandship within my division.

There are ten tenets in my philosophy of command, they are as follows:

- Be mission-focused
- Know the intention of your higher commands,

and be aware of the tasks of your adjacent units

- "Know thy enemy, know thyself," and know your soldiers well
- Mission, demand, support
- Lead by example
- Achieve professional excellence—both technically and tactically
- Care for your soldiers, but be strict with them
- Learn as you lead, and lead as you learn
- Always try your best, to do the best, in order to achieve the best
- Together, strive towards the shared vision

The aim of this essay is to share my command philosophy to a wider audience, and more importantly, to use classical command examples to illustrate the essence of the various tenets.<sup>2</sup> This is to provide the readers practical implementations of the philosophy, so that it can be more easily understood.

## BE MISSION-FOCUSED

*Whatever you and your soldiers do, always keep the focus on the Mission—the bottom line—something that you have to deliver. For 6 Div, our Mission is:*

*In War, 6 Div's mission is to plan and conduct operations as part of our Army's mission to secure a swift and decisive victory.*

*In Peace, 6 Div/Combined Arms Training Centre's (CATC) mission is to maintain the Combined Arms Division (CAD) at a high state of operational readiness for a spectrum of operations, and to train and develop competent brigades, as part of our Army's efforts to deter aggression.*

### General Eisenhower and Operation Overlord

In February 1944, General Eisenhower was designated as Commander of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF). His command was given the mission to lead the Allied invasion of Western Europe—code-named *Operation Overlord*—with the target date being the first week of June 1944. The purpose was clearly to initiate the Allied grand plan to defeat the Germans in Western Europe.

At the Trident Conference, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill agreed on a major cross-channel invasion of Europe in 1944. A gigantic amphibious operation from southern England to France, with nearly three million men, was planned. About a third of these were combatants (a total of 45 divisions), another third was logistics and administrative support forces, and the last third were supporting naval and air forces. After all possible landing sites were considered, the area east of the Cotentin Peninsula of Normandy was selected.

On the German side, Hitler's "Atlantic Wall" stretched from the North Sea coast to Brittany's Atlantic nose and thence southward to the Spanish border—a network of permanent fortifications laced by strong points and field positions, protected by mine fields and underwater obstacles. With the Luftwaffe already swept from the sky by Allied air forces, and no naval defenses except light torpedo craft and submarines, the German situation was precarious, but far from hopeless. Thus, General Eisenhower's focus was to break through this "Atlantic Wall."

On D Day, 6 June 1944, preceded by the airborne drops—two United States (US) divisions on the west and one British division on the east—the greatest

amphibious assault yet known to history began landing on the Normandy coast with complete tactical surprise. Some 4,000 ships and landing craft carried 176,000 troops and their materiel. Escorting the armada were 600 warships. The Allied air forces had earlier drenched the terrain with bombs, while 7,000 fighters and fighter-bombers continued to comb the area. By nightfall, five divisions were ashore and a comfortable toe-hold had been obtained at all beaches except Omaha.

Hitler's fixation that another Allied attack would come from the *Pas de Calais* area hampered Rundstedt and Rommel in their defensive strategy. Reinforcements came in bits and pieces, and part of the Panzer (tank) strength was frittered away in piecemeal counterattacks. However, the *bocage* (checkerboard of small fields boxed by deep hedgerows) reduced the Allied advance to a crawl. Nevertheless, by the end of July 1944, with the Allied crossing lanes in the Channel established, the port of Cherbourg captured, Caen and St. Lo secured by Montgomery and Bradley respectively, the first phase of the Allied invasion—the mission of Operation Overlord—had been achieved by General Eisenhower and his Command. Throughout the more than one year of planning, preparation, especially the execution of the operation, General Eisenhower's focus was constantly and firmly on the mission of establishing the beachhead for the Allied breakout of the forces to defeat the Germans in the European continent. This was especially necessary given the vast time and space involved, the huge resources required, and the great challenges posed by the Germans. *Focus on the mission* was indeed a key success factor in this instance.

### KNOW THE INTENTION OF YOUR HIGHER COMMANDS, AND BE AWARE OF THE TASKS OF YOUR ADJACENT UNITS

*Knowing your higher commands' intent (two levels up) is very important. This is to ensure that you do not deliver something that your bosses do not want. Be aware of*

*what your buddies are doing can aid teamwork. Always seek ways to make the team stronger and more cohesive.*

### General Moltke and the Prussian Army

In 1857, Helmolt von Moltke was given the post of Chief of the Prussian General Staff, Prussian Army, a position he held over the next 30 years. He would go on to evolve the strategic and tactical methods of the Prussian Army, building up the Prussian General Staff which would go on to be the model for all modern armies. He would also go on to instill the principles of *Auftragstaktik*, whereby subordinates were to act within the guidelines of the superior's intent.

*"Diverse are the situations under which an officer has to act on the basis of his own view of the situation. It would be wrong if he had to wait for orders at times when no orders can be given. But most productive are his actions when he acts within the framework of his senior commander's intent."*<sup>3</sup>

– Field Marshall Helmolt von Moltke

Around 1810, after the battle of Jena where Napoleon achieved a sensational victory over the Prussians, the Prussian generals Scharnhorst and Gneisenau came to the conclusion that the commanders behind the battlefield, due to the "fog of war," were unable to obtain an accurate view of what was really happening at the front amidst chaos of combat. Those who knew what was actually happening were the subordinate commanders and officers in the field.

As a battle was always plagued by uncertainties and characterized by unforeseen situations, the Prussian generals tried to find a concept of planning, and a system of command, that would ensure flexibility. This system would ensure that commanders in the field reacted quickly to the situation at hand and take the initiative *independently and without first consulting higher command* to exploit an unexpected favorable situation or respond immediately to an unfavorable development. The result of this requirement was the *Auftragstaktik*.<sup>4</sup>

Applying *Auftragstaktik* meant that the supreme commander would formulate the broad goals for the officers in the field and that he gave a relatively large amount of latitude in the manner they were to be achieved. In other words, the goals were known, what had to be achieved was known, but *how* they should be achieved was left to the subordinate commanders.

Although it took close to a century for the principles to be deeply embedded in the Prussian General Staff and its soldiers, the actions of the German Army during World War I and II (WWI and WWII), in particular, the actions to capture the Belgian fortress of Eben Emael in 1940, were testament to *Auftragstaktik* and its value in ensuring that soldiers across all levels of command acted in accordance with their superior's intent.<sup>5</sup>

Knowing the intention of higher command was the foundation of the tactics of *Auftragstaktik*, the official doctrine of the Prussian/German Army since the nineteenth century. This is also the basis of Maneuver Warfare, adopted by many modern armed forces, including the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). However, in the case of the SAF, we emphasize "two levels up," i.e. the battalion commander needs to be clear about the *intentions* of both the brigade and division commanders. In addition, it is also very important for him to know the tasks of his adjacent units, i.e. that of his fellow battalion commanders. Only with this twin sets of knowledge would he and his command be able to execute their mission well.

### "KNOW THY ENEMY, KNOW THYSELF" AND KNOW YOUR SOLDIERS WELL

*Sun Tzu says that you need to know who are against you in peace, and who are opposing you in war. He also says that you need to know yourself well, both strengths and weaknesses. In addition, you also have to know your soldiers well, how to employ and deploy them effectively.*

### Liu Bei and Romance of the Three Kingdoms

In the Eastern world, the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*San Guo Yan Yi*) is a classic piece of military literature, an episodic novel of great length and complexity. It is a story of a divided China at the end of the 3rd Century AD, as the Han Dynasty neared its end and war raged over whether to save or replace it. Liu Bei became the leader of the Shu Kingdom, and he had to counter the Wei and Wu Kingdoms led by Cao Cao and Sun Quan respectively, as each leader sought to unify China and form their own empire. Of note was Liu Bei's relationship with his subordinates, namely Zhuge Liang, his trusted advisor, prime minister and military strategist, and his five Tiger Generals, namely, Zhang Fei, Guan Yu, Zhao Yun, Ma Chao and Huang Zhong.

In the early days leading to the fall of the Han Dynasty and the creation of the three kingdoms, Cao Cao was prime minister and sought to unify China again, under the pretext of re-establishing the dynasty for the emperor. It was during this period that Liu Bei began to gain prominence. Liu Bei inspired loyalty from all that knew and followed him. It first started with the oath of brotherhood at the peach garden, a symbol of loyalty between Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei. He was loved and supported by his subordinates, not only because he recognized their talents, strengths and weaknesses, but also because he showed them respect and cherished them. He did not adopt a top-down approach and adopted a consultative approach with regards to decision making, always keeping his subordinates counsels as part of the decision-making process. He knew that by himself, he could not defeat Cao Cao and that he needed a strong command team, led by able generals such as Guan Yu and Zhang Fei. He would go on to persuade Zhuge Liang and three other generals to aid him in governing the Shu Kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

Liu Bei understood the strengths and weaknesses of all his generals. He knew that Guan Yu and Zhang Fei were extremely loyal to him, and were fierce fighters

who were able to command their troops in battle as they led by example. With the installation of Zhuge Liang as his military counsel and Prime Minister, Liu Bei was able to leverage on his wisdom. Despite wielding less power than Sun Quan and Cao Cao prior to the Battle of the Red Cliffs, he eventually went on to consolidate his empire and even managed to form a temporary alliance with Sun Quan to defeat Cao Cao, despite the combined allies being outnumbered by Cao Cao's army.<sup>7</sup>

As advocated by Sun Tzu, Liu Bei was focused on his two enemies of Cao Cao and Sun Quan. At different times, he even worked for and with the latter two. In this sense, Liu Bei knew his enemies well. Conversely, did Liu Bei know himself well? In a sense, the answer is yes. He knew his strengths and weaknesses. He knew that for him to defeat his enemies, he needed the wise counsel of Zhuge Liang, as well as the military prowess of the Five Tigers. More importantly, he knew that for him to rule well he needed to maintain loyalty and integrity. Finally, it is the knowledge of his soldiers that made Liu Bei a great leader. He not only knew their strengths and weaknesses, he even cared for their well-being and families. This was why he was a respected commander by both his soldiers and the people that he ruled. There is therefore much that we could learn from Liu Bei in this respect.

### MISSION, DEMAND, SUPPORT

*When managing your sub-units, give them clear missions and command planning guidance (CPG). Tell your soldiers clearly what your demands and expectations are. Provide them with generous support and assistance. Communicate, communicate, communicate; so that there is no chance for any misconception and misunderstanding.*

### Field Marshall Slim and Defeat into Victory

In 1956, Field Marshall Slim published his famous book, *Defeat into Victory*, recounting his command experience in Burma during WWII and how he turned defeat of his 14th Army into victory *vis-à-vis* the



Japanese. The retreat from Burma in the first few months of 1942 and the disasters in the Arakan had been a massive defeat for the 14<sup>th</sup> Army. When Slim was appointed to the command of 14<sup>th</sup> Army in October 1943, one of his first tasks was to decide on the *mission* for his army. He had decided that it would be “to turn his army’s defeat into victory against the mighty Japanese.” In 1943, the future of India and the liberation of the occupied territories were at stake. This was subsequently articulated clearly down the chain of command in the form of his CPG.

In terms of *demand*, the main problem was to dispel the legend of Japanese invincibility. Slim decided to build up the 14<sup>th</sup> Army’s confidence starting at the lowest level. At first, the focus was on patrolling, the basis of all minor tactics. Patrolling would assert presence, maintain control and establish relationships with the locals. As a result, self-confidence among the troops and local confidence in the 14<sup>th</sup> Army were both enhanced. Next, Slim demanded a series of well-prepared offensive operations, using battalions against Japanese platoons, and brigades against companies. Slim’s demands and his troops’ actions created the mental foundation that the Japanese could be defeated, and the “superman” myth was destroyed.

In terms of *support*, Slim made a practice of visiting units to speak to the officers and men from the bonnet of his jeep. He also found that in the harsh jungle of Burma, what really interested his men were the “material things.” For instance, Slim focused on making his men feel that they belonged to a worthwhile and efficient organization. As the lines of communication were improved, rations became more varied and the unpalatable and unpopular soya bean ceased to

be the staple diet. By supporting them generously in the physical domain, it would then be both safe and suitable to move on to the moral and spiritual motivation, which was essential to defeating the mighty Japanese. Slim also regarded keeping his men informed of what was happening as essential support.

14<sup>th</sup> Army knew that it was at the bottom of the priority list because victory had to be assured in Europe first. But, in the unfamiliar surroundings, it triumphed. Rangoon fell three days before the end of the war in Europe. A clear mission, decisive demand, and generous support had been the important factors in turning defeat into victory for the 14<sup>th</sup> Army, and the key to that success was Field Marshall Slim.

## LEAD BY EXAMPLE

*Show your soldiers the right ways to do things. Never ask your men to do what you yourself could not or would not do. Leaders make the difference, for there are no bad soldiers, only bad leaders.*

## Alexander the Great and his Leadership

Alexander the Great, the King of Macedonia and conqueror of the Persian Empire, is considered one of the greatest military leaders of all time. When

Alexander began his campaign, the ruling power of the day was the Persian Empire. It controlled a huge area of land and as a result of the many cities it controlled, had a massive army. The two sides finally met

in the massive Battle of Issus. Alexander and his men were at a huge disadvantage from a numbers perspective. However, Alexander was a general with a keen understanding of motivation, who understood the enormous advantage of leading by example. His men admired him as he was a soldier, just like

*His men admired him as he was a soldier, just like them—a better soldier in fact. None could say that any endeavor was too dangerous or demanding, especially if the king himself was doing it.*



them—a better soldier in fact. None could say that any endeavor was too dangerous or demanding, especially if the king himself was doing it. He exercised with his people regularly. Also, despite being a successful king, he dressed like an ordinary citizen.

*“There is no part of my body, but my back, which has not a scar; not a weapon a man may grasp or fling the mark of which I do not carry upon me. I have sword cuts from close fight; arrows have pierced me, missiles from catapults bruised my flesh; again and again I have been struck by stones or clubs—and all for your sakes: for your glory and gain.”<sup>8</sup>*

– Alexander the Great

Beyond the battlefield, Alexander spent a significant amount of time with commanders and soldiers of all ranks. He visited his soldiers regularly in their working areas and talked to them, to get a first-hand opinion of his people’s state of mind, to continue to inspire and build rapport. Although he kept a fine distinction between superior and subordinate, he advocated communication, to foster trust and collaboration.<sup>9</sup>

Alexander consistently led by example. For instance, as the Macedonians were marching toward the region of Gazaba, they experienced torrential rain, lightning and thunder on the third day of their advance. The men could feel their hands beginning to freeze. Exhausted, they broke formation, to guard themselves against the weather. The soldiers were beginning to freeze to death. Alexander was seen continuously walking around, helping soldiers on the ground and encouraging them to fight against the cold. It inspired them to make an effort to keep moving to maintain their body temperature and they went on to cut trees to make fires and build shelters which eventually and gradually warmed their bodies and prevented further casualties. This incident caused the death of 2,000 soldiers, but the number could have been more if not for Alexander.<sup>10</sup> Here, Alexander *led by example* again, and he never

asked his men to do anything he himself could not and would not do.

## ACHIEVE PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE – BOTH TECHNICALLY AND TACTICALLY

*Know your core business deeply, and apply the knowledge expertly. Provide a safe and secure environment for your soldiers to train and operate, and always seek to do the right things right.*

### Napoleon and the Art of War

*“Read again and again the campaigns of Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, Eugene, and Frederick. Model yourself upon them. This is the only means of becoming a great captain and of acquiring the secret of the art of war ...”<sup>11</sup>*

– Napoleon Bonaparte

Napoleon was one of the greatest military minds in the art of warfare. He expanded the conquests of France from her revolutionary borders to that of an Empire that stretched from Spain to the steppes of Russia. Napoleon’s genius lay not in revolutionizing of warfare itself, but in the refinement of existing means. He knew his core business well and was able to apply the knowledge expertly, and went on to refine the tenets of warfare to allow him to gain an advantage over his opponents. Napoleon established himself as a great leader of men during the revolutionary period with the siege of Toulon and his triumphs in Italy in 1796. These talents were refined and reached their height during the battles of Ulm, Austerlitz and Jena in the period of 1805-1806.

In tactical organization Napoleon widely introduced the use of the *corps d’avant-garde* or *corps d’armée*. In effect the corps was a miniature army comprised of infantry, artillery, and cavalry numbering anywhere from ten to thirty thousand men, similar to the concept of combined arms division in our current system. Each of these self-contained *corps d’armée* was capable of holding off greatly superior forces for several hours until help arrived. As a consequence, it allowed an army made up of various corps to move in

widely separate units.<sup>12</sup> This allowed greater mobility, confused the enemy, and eased the burden of logistics. As a general rule, Napoleon dispersed his corps on the march so that they were in mutually supporting positions and able to come to the aid of each other in the event of concentration for battle or to ward off superior forces. This emphasized Napoleon's dictum of "march divided, fight united."<sup>13</sup>

*Napoleon dispersed his corps on the march so that they were in mutually supporting positions and able to come to the aid of each other in the event of concentration for battle or to ward off superior forces.*

The most outstanding feature of the Napoleonic system of warfare was undoubtedly its flexibility and limitless variation. The insistence on speed and mobility was the basic feature of his campaigns from Italy in 1796 to Waterloo in 1815. It was this emphasis on speed and mobility that also contributed greatly to the confusion and unsettling of his opponents. This was epitomized in the first Italian campaign, when General Algeria's corps marched 50 miles in 36 hours. In 1805 Napoleon moved the whole of the Grand Army, 210,000 men, from its camps at Boulogne to the Rhine. From the Rhine he marched to the Danube and then the outskirts of Ulm in 17 days. Marshal Soult's corps covered 275 miles during a period of 22 days. At Austerlitz, Davout drove his corps 140 kilometers in 48 hours to join the battle and gain a decisive result in favor of the French. Historians including David Chandler regard Napoleon's fusion of battle with maneuver in this way as Napoleon's "greatest contribution to the art of war."<sup>14</sup>

Napoleon, through his famous art of war, had achieved excellence—both technically and tactically. He knew his core business of warfare deeply, and applied the military knowledge innovatively and

expertly. Although not all military strategists would agree that Napoleon did everything right, most of them would agree that in terms of military strategy, he always sought to do the right things right.

### **CARE FOR YOUR SOLDIERS, BUT BE STRICT WITH THEM**

*Always consider the welfare of your soldiers. Train them well so that they can look after themselves and each other in the face of danger. To lead is to serve. Educate, and if necessary, punish them, so that they would learn the lessons in peace, rather than in war. To serve is to lead.*

### **Field Marshal Montgomery and his Command of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army**

Like a classical British officer, Field Marshal Montgomery was cold on the outside but warm in the inside. Outwardly, he was very hard in discipline and strict with his units and soldiers. But inwardly, he always had the morale and welfare of his outfit and men close to his heart; and therefore really cared for his soldiers.

When Montgomery took over the 8<sup>th</sup> Army, he found "the [8<sup>th</sup>] Army was reduced to bits and pieces, and oppressed by a sense of bafflement and uncertainty."<sup>15</sup> In addition, his adversary Rommel had acquired a formidable reputation. Montgomery faced a dilemma. He could not defeat Rommel unless he could restore the morale and welfare of 8th Army, but 8th Army's morale and welfare could not be restored until he could beat Rommel. In the opinion of Professor E. T. Williams, later Montgomery's Head of Intelligence, the new 8<sup>th</sup> Army Commander brought three qualities with him: (1) a flair for creating enthusiasm, (2) an aptitude for analyzing the situation thoroughly and dispassionately, and (3) the ability to reach a decision. Montgomery maintained that if a commander could gain the confidence and trust of his men, and they felt their best interests were safe in his hands, then he had in his possession a priceless asset and the greatest achievements became possible.

Immediately, Montgomery decided to adopt the following tough and strict policies:

- No further withdrawal.
- Divisions would fight as formations of all arms.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Army would build up its strength into a properly balanced force.
- A powerful mobile reserve of three armored divisions and one infantry division would be built up.
- If Rommel attacked at the next full moon, he would be allowed to destroy himself against a system of well dug-in anti-tank guns and hulled-down tanks.
- The army headquarters was to move from its dismal and uncomfortable location at the east end of the Ruweisat Ridge to Burg-el-Arab on the coast.
- Orders were not to be a basis for discussion; they were to be obeyed.
- There would be no more failures.

The effect of his new policies was electrifying, although not always popular. The proof of the pudding was the successful defensive battle of Alam Haifa, which restored the 8<sup>th</sup> Army's confidence. The victory also allowed Montgomery to divert resources to enhance the care and welfare of his soldiers. All these prepared the way for the famous battle of El Alamein. Although the latter did not go according to plan, the 8<sup>th</sup> Army had sufficient confidence to persevere and win. Throughout this journey, Montgomery's concept of command was based on the need to *care* for his soldiers, but be strict with them.

## LEARN AS YOU LEAD, AND LEAD AS YOU LEARN

*Be humble and curious. Learn from the past, learn from others, and learn beyond your domain. Be daring and innovative. Lead into the future, lead the rest, and lead beyond your command.*

### General Patton and his Leadership

In WWII, General George Patton was the general deemed most dangerous by the German High Command. He was a figure so important that the Allies used his name as a diversion, sending out a message on the active radio network outside *Pas de Calais*, letting slip

that Patton would command the Allied forces landing along the Atlantic Wall. General Patton was a great *learner and leader*. He read extensively throughout his career, and would often recall the works of Napoleon, Sherman, Robert E. Lee, quoting at length from the Bible, Homer's *Iliad* and other classics.<sup>16</sup> He showed his great leadership in the Battle of the Bulge. He had prepared his entire career for this campaign through his study of history and of great commanders. His intense study of history and his astute use of talent around him enabled him to become a master of the operational art.

*"My military reactions are correct. Many people do not agree with me ... they are wrong ... I've been studying war for 40 odd years and my decisions are based on knowledge, experience, and training."<sup>17</sup>*

– General George Patton

Patton summarized his beliefs across three basic tenets—inspiration, knowledge and mass. He noted that Napoleon won many battles when outnumbered, but he never lost a battle in which he possessed numerically superior forces. Patton considered Napoleon the epitome of military ability and as such comprehensively studied his career battles.<sup>18</sup> Patton firmly believed that certain lopsided victories of Caesar, Napoleon, and Grant were the primary result of "spiritual" inspiration and motivation, and the secondary result of mental ability. Patton explained that there was a distinction between mental ability and the execution of battle plans. He commented that "Hooker's plan at Chancellorsville was masterly; its execution cost him the battle."

Patton's tactical victories in WWII were characterized by wide flanking maneuver tactics. His march across France was certainly influenced by the conquests of Caesar in Gaul and Napoleon in Italy.<sup>19</sup> Throughout his campaign in WWII, Patton abided by his tenets of inspiration, knowledge and mass. In Sicily, he was forced to utilize mass as a last resort because maneuver was not producing desirable results. On the other hand, he inspired his troops

and utilized superior knowledge to outmaneuver his opponents in his famous march across France. Patton, like Jackson, only resorted to mass when faced by an equally knowledgeable and inspired commander.

All in all, throughout his military command, Patton continuously learned as he led. In fact, whenever he was not fighting battles, he would be leading his staff on rides based on famous battles in the past. He continuously led as he learned, he applied what he had read in his battles, in the most convicted and decisive manner.

### **ALWAYS TRY YOUR BEST, TO DO THE BEST, IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE BEST**

*Always put in your best efforts; and it is not what you do, but how you do that matters. Aim high to achieve high; and always hope for the best, but prepared for the worst. Leverage on your IQ, EQ, AQ (Adversity Quotient) and CQ (Creative Quotient) to achieve the best outcome. And, “never, never, never give in.”*

### **Hannibal and his Best**

Hannibal was born in 247 BC in North Africa. Polybius and Livy, whose histories of Rome are the main Latin sources regarding his life, claimed that Hannibal's father, the great Carthaginian general Hamilcar, brought his son to Spain at a young age. Hamilcar died in 229 BC and was succeeded by his son-in-law Hasdrubal, who made the young Hannibal an officer in the Carthaginian army. In 221 BC, Hasdrubal was assassinated, and the army unanimously chose the 26-year-old Hannibal to command Carthage's empire in Spain. Hannibal swiftly consolidated control in the region from the seaport base of Cartagena. It was in his subsequent fight with the mighty Roman Empire that saw Hannibal at his best, especially in the Battle of Cannae.

Hannibal knew that the Romans had control over the seas. He thus derived an *intelligent* and bold plan to take a large army overland from Spain, through southern Gaul across the Alps to the Po Valley. He sent

agents to secure allies in Transalpine and Cisalpine Gaul, thus assuring a line of communications back to Spain and a secure advance base in Northern Italy. He also worked hard to gain an ally in Philip V of Macedonia to force Rome to fight along two fronts. In June 218 BC, he marched a 90,000 strong army across the Pyrenees.<sup>20</sup> The Alpine passes were heavy in snow by the time Hannibal's forces reached it in October. Many of his men and animals perished in the harsh climate, but out of loyalty to their leader, they persevered. They reached Po Valley with 20,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry and a few elephants. He marched into Central Italy, defeating the Romans at Trebia, Lake Trasimene and eventually the famous Battle of Cannae.<sup>21</sup> This was a great example of the *adversity quotient*. Additionally, Hannibal made unprecedented use of elephants to carry the heavy equipment across the daunting terrain of the Alps. He entered Gaul with about 80 elephants. This was *creativity*.

In 216 BC, the Romans had managed to gather an army of eight Roman and eight allied legions (80,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry) under the leadership of Aemilius Paulus and Terentius Varro. Hannibal, who had about 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry, sought favorable conditions as he knew that he was disadvantaged in numbers. To force favorable conditions, he made a night march to Cannae, captured a Roman supply depot and gained possession of the grain, which was valuable to the Romans. Both sides set up camp along the Aufidus River.<sup>22</sup> On 2 August 216 BC, Hannibal, knowing that Varro was in command, deliberately positioned himself with the stream on his flank to prevent the Roman envelopment. Varro sought to crush Hannibal by virtue of numbers. Hannibal drew in the heavy mass of Romans through the middle of his formation, under the cover of preliminary skirmishing of light infantry troops, and then signaled his veteran African infantry wings to advance, wheeling inward, and subsequently unleashing the heavy Carthaginian cavalry led by his brother Hasdrubal at the rear of the Roman line. Cries of victory turned to screams of consternation. 60,000

Romans lay dead on the field, with Paulus dead and Varro among the fugitives, while Hannibal only lost 6,000 men.<sup>23</sup> This was Hannibal at his best.

## TOGETHER, STRIVE TOWARDS THE SHARED VISION

*Have a shared vision, and together with your soldiers strive towards it. For 6 Div, our shared vision is:*

### ***A Combined Arms Division of Excellence***

*WE are always operationally ready and capable of achieving mission success.*

*WE are the center of excellence for brigade training.*

*WE strive to achieve the highest standards in all fields of endeavors.*

*WE are a competent, confident, committed and cohesive Cobra Family.*

*And*

*YOU Make the difference!*

### **Mao Zedong and the Long March**

Mao Zedong and his fellow Chinese Communists had a shared vision to, by means of an arduous trek, outmaneuver and outlast the Chinese Nationalists under the command of Chiang Kai-shek. With soldiers of the Red Army, Mao and the Communists strove towards their shared vision. 370 days and 6,000 miles later, they managed to achieve it. The Long March by the Red Army is an epic feat of great importance in the history of modern China. It established the Red Army as a formidable force and helped the Chinese Communist Revolution

survive a major crisis and enter a new period of development. The Red Army were able to come in contact with the masses, the very people they were championing Communism for, and win their sympathy and cooperation.

In 1928, the Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai-shek began a full scale offensive against Mao and the Communists, who were forced to seek shelter in the mountainous regions of Jiangxi. The Communists held firm and expanded their territories over Fujian, Hunan, Kwantung and Hubei provinces. However In 1930, Chiang Kai-Shek began to launch successive offensives against the Communists, suffering very heavy losses in April 1933. On his fifth major offensive, the Kuomintang was advised by the German General Hans von Seeckt not to launch a full frontal attack on Jiangxi. Instead 500,000 Kuomintang troops surrounded Jiangxi in an attempt to starve out the Communists.<sup>24</sup>

Within 12 months, Mao had lost 50% of the territory the Communists had controlled in 1933 and 60,000 Communist soldier killed. This forced the Communists to leave Jiangxi to take shelter in Shanxi province. The historical Long March started on 16 October 1934 and ended on 20 October 1935. The Red Army struggled for 370 days and covered 6,000 miles on foot. Throughout this period, the Red Army had to fight

*The Long March seemed an impossible feat, but to preserve their ideology and way of life, Mao and his soldiers strived against all odds to achieve the seemingly impossible shared vision, and defeat the Kuomintang.*

15 serious battles and 300 skirmishes, passing through 12 provinces. All equipment was carried by different means of transportation.<sup>25</sup> The Red Army had to cross the Snowy Mountains, some of the highest mountains in the world, and the Chinese grassland, which

was an area of deep marshes and claimed hundreds of lives.



The Long March is considered one of the greatest physical feats of the 20th Century. During this tough period, the Red Army gained the support of the masses. When those who survived the march reached Yunnan, they combined with the Communist troops there to form a fighting strength of 80,000 and established a strong base of operations. The Long March seemed an impossible feat, but to preserve their ideology and way of life, Mao and his soldiers strived against all odds to achieve the seemingly impossible shared vision, and defeat the Kuomintang.

## CONCLUSION

My philosophy of command has served to illuminate my command of 6 Div. It has served as a guide for my subordinates' decisions and actions in their respective units. Together, we strive to make 6 Div a CAD of Excellence. Through this essay, I hope to share my command philosophy with a wider audience in the SAF. I hope to use the various classical examples of past commanders to illustrate the essence of the ten tenets of my philosophy of command, and how to apply them in practical operational circumstances. Finally, I would like to end this essay by reiterating what Field Marshall Slim liked to remind all commanders: "command is a completely personal thing ... because no imitation was ever a masterpiece."<sup>26</sup> So, read this essay, think about the ten tenets of command, assimilate what you need and like, and develop your own style and philosophy of command. This is my intellectual advice and gift to you—the present and future commanders of the SAF.

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## ENDNOTES

1. Field Marshal Sir William Slim, "Higher Command in War" (Kermit Roosevelt Lecture, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1952).
2. I am very fortunate and glad that in the research for the relevant classical examples, I had the assistance of the very capable officer of CPT Mohammad Helmi, previously an Officer Commanding in my Division.
3. Frederick Ernest Whitton, *Moltke* (Freeport, New York: Constable & Company Ltd, 1921).
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**BG Yeo See Peng** was until recently (August 2013) the Commander of Singapore 6th Division. He was awarded the SAF Overseas Training Award (Academic) in 1985, with which he attained a Bachelor of Arts (Second Class Honours (Upper)) in Politics and Economics at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom (UK), in 1988. He subsequently attained a Master of Arts from the University of Oxford, UK, in 1994. In 1996, he obtained a Master of Military Studies from Marine Corps University, United States (US). In 2002, he was awarded the SAF Postgraduate Scholarship and obtained an MPA from Harvard University, US, in 2003.

# Reclaiming Engagement in the SAF: Building Strong Relationships and Honest Communication

by MAJ Lawrence Leong

## Abstract:

The concept of “Engagement” in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) came to the fore in 2007 when then-Chief of Defence Force, LG Desmond Kuek, espoused it as one of his visions for the SAF. Since then, “engagement” has become a cornerstone of the respective SAF services’ human resource constructs. It is imperative that the SAF re-focuses on what engagement means, enumerates what it hopes to achieve via this construct and explain how it can be correctly implemented by “commanders at every level.” “Engagement” should include concepts such as commitment to defence, unit cohesion, morale levels, superior-subordinate interaction and inspiring leadership.

*Keywords: Engagement; Superior-Subordinate Relations; Human Resource; Leadership*

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of “Engagement” in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) came to the fore in 2007 when then-Chief of Defence Force, LG Desmond Kuek, espoused it as one of his visions for the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). He wanted “commanders at every level ... to engage their servicemen intellectually, emotionally and professionally, so that ultimately our people understand the purpose, feel that they belong, and know what and how to achieve mission success.”<sup>1</sup> Since then, “engagement” has become a cornerstone of the respective SAF services’ human resource (HR) constructs.<sup>2</sup> Over time, “engagement” was used to describe either HR outcomes such as increased productivity, HR processes such as creating a positive workspace or specific HR initiatives such as commanders’ dialogues. Like the term “command and control” in military parlance,<sup>3</sup> the term “engagement” has been interchangeably used to mean seemingly similar but in reality quite different concepts. Such concepts include commitment to defence, unit cohesion, morale levels, superior-subordinate interaction and inspiring leadership. It is imperative that the SAF refocuses on what engagement means, enumerates what it hopes to achieve via this construct and explain how it can be correctly implemented by “commanders at every level.”



*Commander Engaging His Subordinates During Exercise Panzer Strike 2013*

In this article, a definition of engagement will be put forth that will help the SAF achieve its objectives. Two ideas of engagement—working relationships and communication—will subsequently be explored. It will then be argued that amongst the methods used to deepen engagement, the employee’s working relationship with his or her direct superior plays the most critical role. Following the positive establishment of such a working relationship, honest communication is next needed to cement this relationship. Lastly, the essay will explore some measures that can be undertaken by both the individual and the organization to advance engagement in the SAF.

## DEFINING ENGAGEMENT

In attempting to create a working definition of engagement, two factors were considered. Firstly, engagement is, at its root, a psychological concept. Thus, any definition will need to encompass cognitive and emotive processes, and behavioral outcomes.<sup>4</sup> This psychological dimension also underscores the fact that engagement starts with an individual but ultimately requires the meeting of two minds. Secondly, the well-known adage of “winning hearts and minds” is used as a guideline. The familiarity of this phrase would facilitate recollection of the essence behind the definition of engagement. “Heart” refers to the intangible emotional and inter-personal dimension of engagement. “Mind” refers to structured processes and procedures that further engagement and also points to the measurable behavioral outcomes that engagement can create. With these two factors in mind, a resultant definition of engagement can be “a cognitive and emotive connection an employee has with workplace elements that results in measurable and voluntary increase in work productivity.”

## WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE’S MANAGER: THE CRITICAL DRIVER OF ENGAGEMENT

An employee’s personal working relationship with his or her direct manager is the most important factor in furthering engagement. This is an important assertion given that no less than 26 separate factors, identified by major research studies, are responsible for driving engagement.<sup>5</sup> However, there are several reasons why one’s relationship with one’s direct boss plays the critical role. The significance of human relationships in general will first be explored. The significance of human relationships is deeply embedded in human evolution.<sup>6</sup> Teamwork and mutual understanding were essential survival tools for early humans. This called for humans to understand one another’s motivations and interests. John Medina called this the “Theory of Mind.”<sup>7</sup> This need to

understand others in turn stimulated the human learning process. Over time, our ability to learn became inextricably linked to our relationships with other people.<sup>8</sup> Learning not only increases productivity but also increases perception of self-worth. Hence, the ability to learn is fundamentally linked to engagement drivers such as job performance, personal development and working well with colleagues. In essence, relationships at work affect the ability to learn, which in turn has ramifications for one’s level of engagement.

Secondly, of all the relationships at work, the relationship with one’s immediate superior is the most significant. Various HR think-tanks and academics have concluded that “the relationship that an individual has with his or her manager is the strongest influencer of his or her engagement.”<sup>9</sup> This is because direct superiors make decisions that have the most direct impact on their subordinates. They are also the most direct source of performance feedback. In

addition, Medina argues that the greatest source of work stress comes from having no control over one’s performance.<sup>10</sup> Thus, immediate superiors have an immediate impact on whether their subordinates can exert control over their performance. Furthermore, direct bosses are usually the first in line to bridge the gap between the employee and the organization. Therefore, one’s direct superior is the single most important factor in facilitating one’s cognitive and emotive connection with the workplace.

## CEMENTING THE RELATIONSHIP: HONEST COMMUNICATION

Once a good working relationship has been established between direct superior and subordinate, honest communication helps to strengthen it and allows further engagement to take place. An analogy would be to equate a good working relationship to a well-built expressway, while communication is the truck that transports goods from point to point. It is a widely-held belief that effective communication, getting the message across efficiently, is the key to

*This psychological dimension also underscores the fact that engagement starts with an individual but ultimately requires the meeting of two minds.*

building good relationships. However, it is *honest* communication—getting the right message across—that is more important. It is akin to having a good quality truck that hardly breaks down. Honest communication usually begins with the superior in the form of frank performance appraisal, quality feedback, forthright analysis of organizational problems and admission of mistakes. This is usually reciprocated by the subordinate by sharing openly on obstacles faced at work and at home, level of motivation, direction of superiors and clarity of organizational vision. Honesty is characterized by such openness.

Honest communication is a more sophisticated form of effective communication where more emphasis is placed on the content of the message rather than how it is transmitted. The preliminary result of honest communication is the establishment of “psychological safety.” This means being able to express one’s true self without negative consequences to self-image, status or career.<sup>11</sup> With psychological safety, the desired end-product, trust, is built. Trust facilitates the establishment of further engagement drivers. Such a driver can be seen in Christine Doyle’s theory of work motivation.<sup>12</sup> Doyle argues that one’s self-concept shapes one’s work identity, which in turn determines the level of motivation. For example, if one’s self-conception is that of a sociable person, one’s work identity will most likely be that of a good team player. With trust in the direct superior-subordinate relationship, the superior will not only be able to quickly discover this work identity of the subordinate, but also understand its origins and utilize it for the good of the individual and the organization.

Trust created by honest communication will also strengthen the direct superior-subordinate working relationship. It is important to note that trust then begets trust. Similarly, mistrust breeds mistrust. This can be seen in the Pygmalion Effect, postulated by Shawn Achor. A superior who believes his or her subordinates are lazy and untrustworthy usually ends

up creating employees with such characteristics even though such characteristics were not originally present.<sup>13</sup> In other words, employees end up like how their employers envisage them to be. Therefore, trust also serves to cement the most important relationship one can have at work—with one’s direct boss.

## GOOD RELATIONSHIPS BUILT ON TRUST: START TODAY

For engagement practitioners in the SAF, deepening engagement in the workplace starts, first and foremost, with the individual soldier. Creating a good immediate superior-subordinate relationship requires more than having the occasional cigarette or coffee together. It also goes beyond conducting the routine interview session with virtually no guidelines to properly advance engagement. One way forward is to have a framework that can facilitate the building of a good superior-subordinate relationship. One proposal is the “4S” framework (Table 1).

Apart from a set of guidelines specifically for the immediate superior-subordinate relationship, it would also be useful to adopt a broader perspective in terms of a collection of such relationships in the workplace. For newly posted superiors especially, there is a need to adopt a strategy that can create a conducive environment for such relationships to grow and deepen; to “shape the battlefield” in military parlance. Often, trust is built when two persons interact with a high degree of openness, maturity and empathy. Thus, superiors tend to build relationships first with subordinates who are able to interact with them in this manner. However, it might be useful to first target good working relationships with the “connectors” and the “salesmen” in the workplace.<sup>14</sup> Connectors are people who know lots of people and have a knack for making friends and acquaintances. Salesmen are people who can pass messages along convincingly and persuade other people. By first properly engaging these people, the superior is able to effectively send out the message to the rest of his or her direct subordinates that “I am interested in building a genuine working

*Trust created by honest communication will also strengthen the direct superior-subordinate working relationship.*

No.	Category	Description
01	Service Rendered	<p>What are the contributions of this serviceman to the unit/organization, both primary and secondary?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superiors should help their servicemen, including NSFs, see how their work connects to the larger picture.</li> <li>• By understanding the subordinate's work in its entirety, the superior will be able to provide accurate work appraisal, and guidance in how performance in the various work-areas can be improved.</li> </ul>
02	Social Support	<p>What are the key sources of emotional and personal support the serviceman receives both at home and at work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These sources can range from the subordinate's family members, a clique of friends, a colleague or a type of activity that the serviceman derives joy from.</li> <li>• It is important to know these sources of support well as it will give better insight into the psyche of the serviceman. It will also allow the superior to understand what drives the serviceman's motivation at work.</li> </ul>
03	Strengths and Weaknesses	<p>What are the strengths and weaknesses of the serviceman both at work and at home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oftentimes, when one speaks of strengths and weaknesses, it is framed in the context of the target person's work performance. However, it is also important to look at other areas of a serviceman's life. Most significantly, the superior should seek to understand the serviceman's definition of "strength" and "weakness" on his or her own terms and not pre-judge. This will facilitate the building of trust and understanding.</li> <li>• For example, serviceman who spends most of his time at home may seem to be a good husband. But he may deem it a weakness as he sees himself being controlled too much by his wife.</li> </ul>
04	Success in the Future?	<p>What are the plans to position this serviceman for success?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a direct superior, there must always be plans to develop one's subordinates that are aligned to personal aspirations and organizational needs.</li> <li>• More importantly, these plans must be communicated honestly with the serviceman with his or her feedback sought.</li> <li>• These plans must be constantly reviewed and updated.</li> </ul>

Table 1: The "4S" Framework



relationship with you; I am concerned about your performance and problems, both here and at home; and I want to help you succeed.” Once enough connectors and salesmen are brought onboard, a tipping point can be reached such that there is widespread belief in the good intent of the superior. This will set the stage for good immediate superior-subordinate relationships to be built.

Lastly, from the larger SAF perspective, there is a need to ensure that people put in positions of authority and leadership can be good “engagers.” Good engagement practitioners first need to have a high level of emotional intelligence and emotional competence.<sup>15</sup> This is the ability to identify, assess and regulate the emotions of oneself and others. It is also about being adept at handling inter-personal relationships. For example, without empathy, a superior would not be able to sense other people’s feelings and perspectives. The superior would find it difficult to take an active interest in the subordinate’s concerns.<sup>16</sup> It is recommended that potential candidates for officer and warrant officer ranks possess a basic level of emotional competence. In addition, they should be equipped with the full-range of soft skills that will lead to high emotional competence early in their careers.

*By first properly engaging these people, the superior is able to effectively send out the message to the rest of his or her direct subordinates that “I am interested in building a genuine working relationship with you; I am concerned about your performance and problems, both here and at home; and I want to help you succeed.”*

The SAF also needs to explore ways to reward superiors who are good “engagers.” This is because establishing good personal relationships at work and

honest communication is a time-consuming process; some servicemen may need frequent attention over a period of time. In other words, engagement efforts may not produce immediate results. These results are also not as directly measurable as other conventional work pursuits. Furthermore, efforts expended may sometimes not be recognized at all. For example, a direct superior may devote much time and energy to help a soldier with problems perform at the average level of the soldier’s peers. However, the fact that this soldier performs only averagely draws very little attention to the engagement efforts of his direct boss.<sup>17</sup> One way to reward good “engagers” is to tie organizational climate surveys more closely to the work performance of these leaders. These surveys can also be tailored such that the results will reveal the extent of engagement at every level down to the last soldier, and not just at the unit level. Another measure can be to create more detailed interview templates which are based on the “4S” model above, that a leader needs to use for pre-identified subordinates. These interview records would then have to be regularly reviewed by a higher authority.

## CONCLUSION

To ensure that engagement is properly executed, the focus must first be on the relationship between direct superior and subordinate. Subsequently, honest communication, carried out in a structured manner, can serve to cement this relationship through the establishment of trust. It is then important for the organization to support and incentivize the engagement process.

Setting the engagement agenda in the SAF right has never been so important. A 2009 report by the Defence Psychology Department revealed that Gen Y (those born between 1977 and 1994) are articulate and idealistic. They want a good work-life balance and look forward to interesting work and development opportunities. Most importantly, they expect inspiring leadership. A robust engagement framework for such Gen Y servicemen is no longer a good-to-have but a necessity. In addition, engagement is a virtuous



process that also grooms and develops the engagement practitioner. This will contribute to the future success of SAF leaders within and outside the organization. It is hoped that this article will become a springboard for the issue of engagement to be given greater thought and discussion—it is imperative that engagement be strengthened in the SAF. 🌐

## ENDNOTES

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13. Geraldine Ling, "Engaging Employees: How Supervisors Can Show Better Support," *Odyssey E-newsletter* 16, (Civil Service College: Centre for Organization Development, 2012).
14. Ibid.
15. Daniel Goleman, *Working With Emotional Intelligence* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), 24-27.
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17. Unfortunately, if the soldier continues to perform poorly, it will certainly reflect badly on his or her direct superior.



**MAJ Lawrence Leong** currently serves in the Naval Diving Unit. MAJ Leong is a recipient of the SAF Academic Training Award (Overseas). He holds a Bachelors of Arts (First Class Honors) in History and International Relations, and a Master of Science (Distinction) in History of International Relations from the London School of Economics, United Kingdom.

# A Swift and Decisive Victory: The Strategic Implications of What Victory Means

by CPT Chong Shi Hao

## Abstract:

The development of the Third Generation Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) has been for the primary purpose of deterring a potential adversary and achieving victory if war does break out. This mission statement serves as a guide for the SAF's defense policy and also its transformation efforts. It is important to be clear about what this "victory" entails. The adjectives "swift and decisive" help to further illuminate the nature of this victory that we seek to obtain. This article aims to add clarity to what this victory should look like, in the light of recent events and the evolution of modern warfare.

*Keywords: Fourth Generation Warfare; New Media; Third Generation SAF; Total Defence*

## INTRODUCTION

*"The mission of MINDEF and the Singapore Armed Forces is to enhance Singapore's peace and security through deterrence and diplomacy, and should these fail, to secure a swift and decisive victory over the aggressor."*

The development of the Third Generation Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) has been for the primary purpose of deterring a potential adversary and achieving victory if war does break out. This mission statement serves as a guide for the SAF's defence policy and also its transformation efforts. It is important to be clear about what this "victory" entails. The adjectives "swift and decisive" help to further illuminate the nature of this victory that we seek to obtain. As Clausewitz puts succinctly, "no one starts a war or rather no one in his senses ought to do so without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."

This article aims to add clarity to what this victory should look like, in the light of recent events and the evolution of modern warfare. It aims to help us be clear about the victory we want to achieve (What is winning?). The definition of the victory SAF aims to accomplish has to be re-examined within the context

of today's debate over the future of war. The texture and nature of this victory have obvious implications for our conduct of war—strategy, operations and tactics (How to win?)—and also how we tailor the future transformation of the SAF to meet what this victory requires (How we prepare ourselves to win?). The main thesis is that as warfare evolves, our notion of victory must adapt accordingly. Most importantly, a victory has to create the right conditions that will engender enduring peace and a positive strategic outcome. Indeed, what matters then is the strategic outcome, a victory that is not just an operational and tactical one but also goes beyond the battlefield. This is exemplified by the conversation between Colonel Harry Summers and a North Vietnamese officer, as COL Summers commented, "[t]he United States (US) had won all the battles," to which the North Vietnamese replied, "That may be so, but it is also irrelevant."<sup>1</sup>

Victory is perceived subjectively rather than objectively based on tangible measures. This perception is in turn shaped by traditional media and, more importantly now, the new social media. Being able to manage social tools such as Twitter, Facebook and Youtube is crucial to shaping regional and international perceptions of victory. Rupert Smith likened conducting military operations to being "on a

stage, in an amphitheatre or Roman arena.”<sup>2</sup> He argues that the media must be an integral part of planning, because it is the audience who decides whether the overall show is a success.

Our conduct of war will have to address this.

This article will first discuss the socio-political context and developments in which SAF may fight. This affects the definition of victory. It will then be applied to our conduct of war in the pursuit of this victory.

## TODAY’S CONTEXT

*“We are not likely to get the future right. We just need to make sure we don’t get it too wrong.”*

– General James Mattis, USMC, Joint Forces Command<sup>3</sup>

The nature of war has remained fundamentally unchanged throughout history, although the waging of warfare has evolved concomitantly with society and changing technology.<sup>4</sup> This is also why we find the writings of Sun Tzu and Clausewitz so abiding and applicable even after so many years. Warfare has developed from the Napoleonic legions to static trench warfare to today’s precision and network-centric warfare. War is a strategic concept while warfare is a tactical concept.<sup>5</sup> The way we conduct warfare must meet the purposes of the war we plan to win. The kind of victory and how we should seek it has to be adapted to new circumstances.

## Hybrid vs. Fourth Generation Warfare

The current debate especially, among US scholars and military practitioners, remains a US-centric view of future threats. However, there are some insights that can be gleaned. Fourth-Generation Warfare (4GW), according to Lind, is a return to warfare before nation-states existed as political entities that fought each other.<sup>6</sup> There were religious, cultural, linguistic and racial groups, not just nation-states. 4GW practitioners choose targets with a mental and moral impact on the political will of their enemies in order

to induce them to give up their strategic goals. They concentrate on crafting a persuasive message, rather than destroy the material power of their enemy.

*Most importantly, a victory has to create the right conditions that will engender enduring peace and a positive strategic outcome.*

Hybrid warfare, whose main advocator is Hoffman, argues that war is moving towards a convergence of categories,<sup>7</sup> a blurring of neat distinctions between conventional and irregular, combat actions

and nation-building, terrorism and sabotage by commandos or paramilitaries. Furthermore, hybrid war can be conducted by states as well as non-state actors that share the same strategic interests, making a war against them complex and intractable.<sup>8</sup> It becomes both an advantage for the country who can wage asymmetric and conventional warfare simultaneously, through the use of their uniformed soldiers and civilian-dressed irregulars. The problem Hoffman raised was that armies tend to settle for elegant categories of threats and fail to acknowledge the complex “blending of threats that could exist.”<sup>9</sup>

While the SAF has adopted the Full Spectrum Operations concept, with different Services fulfilling certain operations, we need to acknowledge the possibility that in theatre we have to perform the whole gamut of missions simultaneously. This entails having flexible mindsets on what we are supposed to do and possessing adaptable skills. Colin Gray warns that the danger for defence policymakers is developing solutions for challenges they prefer and find easy to solve, rather than what their adversaries are most likely to do.<sup>10</sup> Assuming that our potential adversary will always fight conventionally is an assumption we need to be wary of. Knowing this, our adversary can exploit racial, religious and linguistic fissures to their full advantage, requiring us to prepare for a form of “hybrid war where adversaries attempt to simultaneously employ traditional, disruptive, catastrophic and/or irregular capabilities to attain their objectives.”<sup>11</sup>

## Humanization of Warfare

Societies around the world are generally becoming post-modern in culture, attitudes and values. Singapore is no exception in today's global village. Postmodernism has led to a more humane society with a greater emphasis on individual rights, autonomy, diversity and a reduced emphasis on authority.<sup>12</sup> The older generation often criticize the Army as having gone "soft"; rather, we have actually become more humane in our training.

Postmodernism has changed society's view of war. Today's public demands a more stringent use of force by their armed forces and is wary of sending soldiers into harm's way.<sup>13</sup> Christopher Coker argues that the accumulated impact is the humanization of warfare.<sup>14</sup> Greater individualism and greater importance attached to humanity in war (evidenced by the dramatic decrease in the cost of human lives today) have made it the duty of generals to keep their soldiers alive for as long as possible. He argues that "the modern battlefield has no place for the 'bloody boots on the ground realists who insist you cannot win without planting the flag on enemy turf while wading in the blood of your comrades.'"<sup>15</sup>

*While the SAF has adopted the Full Spectrum Operations concept, with different Services fulfilling certain operations, we need to acknowledge the possibility that in theatre we have to perform the whole gamut of missions simultaneously.*

What then is the implication of this process? A military is not divorced from society but shares its attitudes. The fear is that the concern for human lives, itself a laudable thing, can become so overwhelming that force protection becomes emphasised over the aggressive tactics required for mission success. Part of the solution has been the increasing reliance on technology to deliver the goods (such as unmanned robots and precision guided munitions). The revulsion

felt towards excessive loss of human lives is valid, and it is the commanders' responsibility to use economy of force to achieve their mission. However, casualty aversion can become a problem. In the Bosnian war, the senior officers saw casualties as an indicator of the operation's failure and as a result, made force protection an imperative over restoring peace in the region. In the end, war criminals were not pursued, community building projects stalled and patrols were cancelled because all these entailed sending in foot soldiers and endangering their lives.<sup>16</sup> Casualty aversion also underpins the desire of politicians to set timelines and formulate exit strategies, which can imperil the success of a mission.

## Industrial Society vs. Information Society

Many parts of the world are progressing from an industrial to a networked or information society. An information society is one in which the production, diffusion and consumption of information dominates the cultural, economic and political spheres of life in the country.<sup>17</sup> This shift from the tangible to the intangible forms the basis of economic and socio-political life and has pronounced repercussions on how victory is sought. In a state-to-state war, the Clausewitzian center of gravity may no longer be the material basis of the country, i.e. the capital cities and the industries, as was the case in the two world wars. The center has shifted to the information sphere—the media, the hearts and minds of the populace. No doubt it will still be critical to target the infrastructure of the enemy, but they are less strategic in achieving victory when compared to having influence in the information domain.

One noteworthy aspect of this is the powerful use of social media tools by citizens around the world to amplify their efforts in opposing the state. The proliferation of image capturing devices empowers every person into becoming a potential security risk, intelligence gatherer and journalist. Everyone with a camera phone is able to capture and upload information to the internet and circulate it instantaneously throughout the world via online social networks

such as Facebook and Twitter. This poses immense challenges for governments. Recent examples testify to the impact of social media. The Iranian opposition managed to capture the world's attention by using mobile phones to record atrocities committed by the Basiji paramilitaries and the Republican Guard units. The most notable is the shooting of Neda Agha-Soltan, whose "martyrdom" for the opposition's cause was mobilized as a powerful rallying symbol for the Green movement. These were then widely circulated on the Internet and provoked a global outcry against the Iranian establishment. Therefore, ethical misconduct, human rights abuses and atrocities will destroy any prospect of strategic victory even if the enemy is defeated.

### Swift and Decisive?

The US forces achieved a swift and decisive win over the conventional Iraqi Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This win was proclaimed by then-President George Bush, who landed on *USS Kittyhawk* declaring "mission accomplished." Retrospectively, no one today will still claim that it was victory, for a bloody insurgency ensued and more US servicemen were killed after that declaration on 1 May 2003 than during the initial advance.<sup>18</sup> The Iraq war hence elicit two cautionary notes for any leadership:<sup>19</sup> one can "win the war but lose the peace," and how one wins the war can determine whether one wins the peace.



President George Bush declaring "Mission Accomplished" on board *USS Kittyhawk*

Both hybrid warfare and 4GW unanimously agree that future wars will be slow, lengthy and cumbersome, as opposed to clinical like Operation Desert Storm.<sup>20</sup> One main reason for this is the post-conflict obligation imposed on the victor to rebuild a war-torn area lest it becomes the breeding ground for future troublemakers. Humanization of warfare has made it incumbent on the occupier to rebuild what they have destroyed so that the civilians can maintain their basic right to a decent living.

The concept of swift and decisive wars might be anachronistic, if not an anomaly, in history. Indeed, "statistically, this heuristic notion is clearly an anomaly, and historically, it may be nothing more than a grossly simplified recollection of some of those wars that disproportionately shape our understanding of the term."<sup>21</sup> Immediate examples would be World War Two and the first Gulf War. Therefore, we can aim for a swift end to the war, but not victory. For the victory to be decisive, it has to meet two conditions, according to Michael Howard, "first, the defeated people must accept the fact of defeat and realize there is no chance of reversing the verdict in the foreseeable future, whether by military revival, skilful diplomacy or international propaganda. Second, they must become reconciled to their defeat by being treated as partners in operating the new international order."<sup>22</sup>

### VICTORY IN TODAY'S CONTEXT

Victory has become a shorthand and catch-all term for many scholars and policymakers in describing positive outcomes in war.<sup>23</sup> This becomes problematic when we begin to confuse operational and tactical success with a victory that can serve the country's interests. It is more than just defeating our adversary on the battlefield. Not being clear about the kind of victory we want will result in catastrophic consequences for the country. The key point here is that we need to do more than win the battles the SAF potentially has to fight.

### What is Victory?

*"It is no doubt a good thing to conquer on the field of battle ... it needs greater wisdom and great skill to make use of victory."*

– Polybius<sup>24</sup>



Victory in war is not winning, to put it simply. Victory is based on an assessment and not a fact.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, there is a subjective element to it that depends on the perception of various factors, such as the domestic and adversary's population, international and regional political leadership and community.<sup>26</sup> Naturally, this still has to be buttressed by winning battles, which is objective because it involves pitting material against material—soldiers, platforms, firepower. Clausewitz said victory is tripartite and consist of three elements namely 1) the enemy's loss of material strength 2) his loss of morale and 3) his open admission of the above by giving up his intentions.<sup>27</sup>

We can envisage victory as a continuum or sliding scale of outcomes, rather than as a simplistic binary of victory and defeat.<sup>28</sup> The second way is to dissect victory into various levels—tactical, operational and strategic—or, as Martel prefers, tactical, political-military, and grand strategic. In his encapsulation, tactical success refers to what the military achieves on the battlefield while political-military encompass the change in the adversary's political behavior caused by the cumulative effect of many tactical wins. The last is a victory of "such magnitude that it leads to a profound reordering in the strategic foundations of international politics," when the "ideological and moral values of a society" are destroyed and "the foundations of the enemy state" are re-established.<sup>29</sup>

Bartholomees prescribes a more toned down version of strategic victory (perhaps less grand compared to Martel's), saying that "strategic victory in war is a positive assessment of the postwar political situation in terms of achievement and decisiveness that is acknowledged, sustainable, and resolves underlying political issues."<sup>30</sup>

### The Victory SAF Should Aim For

Based on the discussion so far, this is what our victory should look like:

1. The victory we should aim for should be akin to Martel's political-military level and Bartholomees' definition of the strategic victory. There must be tactical and operational success, which predicates on more tangible metrics of amount of enemy

territory seized, number of casualties and their loss of equipment. These are military objectives that underlay the foundation of victory.

2. Because of the information society we reside in, we need to manage interpretations of our war effort in order to generate victory. This pertains to perspective, and we need target domestic and regional populations, as well as international political leaders through careful utilization of different media channels. This is also the cognitive domain of war.
3. Humanization of warfare prohibits indiscriminate destruction of civilian lives and property. The war has to be ethical and right. This is the moral domain of war.
4. The peace that comes with the end of hostilities must be enduring and allow the successful rebuilding of affected areas. A picture of stability and hope is necessary for victory to be perceived.
5. We need to translate this victory into long-term political gains for the country.

## THE CONDUCT OF WAR

As Rupert Smith argues in his seminal book *The Utility of Force*, wars can no longer be won through the application of pure military force.<sup>31</sup> We as soldiers who stand at the tip of the spear have to conduct the war in a manner that does not subvert the prospects of lasting peace.<sup>32</sup>

### Tactical

As Lasica argues, "The hybrid warrior seeks to quickly convert their tactical success and their enemy's mistakes into strategic effects through deliberate exploitation of the cognitive and moral domains. Hybrid war is a strategy and a tactic, a form of war and warfare."<sup>33</sup> Online social media has become a powerful platform for citizen journalism in the current information society. One should expect this in any area of operations we are in. Soldiers need to be aware that the aggregation of their individual actions can have an impact on the perception of how the war has been fought. Disparate acts of inhumanity and



atrocities recorded by civilians with camera mobile phones and propagated on viral social networks abroad will paint a negative picture of our operations. This will taint whatever success we have in operations and affect the sense of victory.

Much thus depends on the values of our individual soldiers. Their ethical conduct in war towards enemy combatants and civilians will contribute to the sense of victory, especially so when viewed by the international community. On the contrary, tactical mistakes such as the air strike ordered by a German officer that killed 142 civilians in Afghanistan will certainly be exploited.<sup>34</sup>

### Operational

Our conduct of media operations will be as crucial as our execution of battles on the ground. The media front will consist of traditional mediums and the new media—Twitter, Facebook and Youtube. The same point made above can in turn be used against the enemy. Their mistakes and misconduct, if filmed, can be used against them. We should not leave the framing of our war effort to chance. We should set the structure, tone and plot of the ongoing narrative in the public sphere, local and international. For example, Al-Jazeera's focus on broadcasting visceral images of suffering Iraqis and Palestinians decisively shape the public opinion of the Arab world, framing the message of a medieval Crusade against the Muslim world. A narrative that paints our operations in a negative light will not help us in achieving a decisive victory. The challenge would be crafting a calibrated message that does not seem like propaganda and yet nuanced enough to persuade others to be on our side. Indeed, the media is itself a weapon we must wield to our advantage.

An example of an operational failure would be the raid by the Israeli commandos on a flotilla bound for Gaza.<sup>35</sup> The ostensible aim of the convoy was to bring aid

to Gaza, but it really was trying to focus international attention on the Israeli blockade. The Israelis launched an assault on it, oblivious to the filming of its actions by an Al-Jazeera crew on board the ship. It did not matter that the crew on board used violence first. What the world saw was Israel's willingness to confront the flotilla with disproportionate force, regardless of its purpose. This incident showed how the international public opinion was shaped by media and strengthened the hands of the activists. It also demonstrated the Israeli failure to understand the larger, perhaps strategic context of the operation.

Stability operations involving rebuilding war torn rear areas should start immediately as the front line advances. This should take a leaf from the US experience in Iraq. We can leverage on the strong inter-agency collaboration honed over the years through the organization of National Day Parades, Youth Olympics, etc., working with civilian agencies and international non-governmental organisations to quickly bring aid, funds and material to rebuild areas that have been destroyed, as and when they are stabilised. The faster a semblance of stability can be established, the more difficult it will be for insurgents to take advantage and mount asymmetric warfare. Rebuilding should be carried concomitantly as war proceeds, though it is acknowledged that it will be a huge strain on finite resources. This can be mitigated by quickly roping in international aid agencies to facilitate recovery processes in rear areas. If swift stability can be brought to the affected civilian populace, it may also break their will to oppose our aims and bring about a sustained eventual victory. This is necessary to create enduring peace. Indeed, rebuilding is our onus and unavoidable responsibility if victory is our aim.

### Strategic – Creating the Right Political Conditions

Firstly, battlefield success alone does not determine the outcome of wars, but provides political opportunities for the victors.<sup>36</sup> Military operations

must be tempered with political tolerance and moderation so as to make such a victory acceptable to the defeated. The waging of the war must take place in tandem with strict political control in order to create the conditions for lasting peace, as aforementioned. To win, one achieves his immediate political goals, but to be victorious one must resolve all underlying issues such as the motivations and the catalyst that led to war in the first place.<sup>37</sup> We need to know what the political goals are and the military objectives must serve these goals.<sup>38</sup> However, the political goals cannot be too clearly defined, and must be achievable, realistic and leave enough ambiguity and broadness to accept a range of end states at the end of the war. Being able to openly declare how we have achieved our goals is vital to the collective sense of victory.

We also need to understand the enemy's theory of victory, so as not to play into his hands. For example, Hezbollah in its 2006 conflict with Israel could claim victory merely by surviving the Israeli onslaught,<sup>39</sup> whereas the Israelis sought to recover their kidnapped soldiers, destroy Hezbollah and kill its leader Hassan Nasrallah. The IDF failed in all three aims.<sup>40</sup> It was over-ambitious and thus set itself up for failure. Nasrallah certainly underestimated Israel's vehement response but turned the situation around by the skilful manipulation of the media.

Furthermore, the defeated must accept the verdict as cooperation from them is necessary for success to be exploited.<sup>41</sup> World War II can be argued to be the continuation of the disastrous handling of the First War's aftermath by the allies at Versailles as the German people did not internalize their defeat and perceived the loss as a betrayal by their political leaders. Thus, open admission of defeat, as stated in Clausewitz's trinity of victory, cannot be limited only to the politicians but must be an admission by the people as well.

If peace is the desired outcome and war is the aberration, then victory should lead to an enduring peaceful state. We ought to ask ourselves what are our post-conflict obligations. Should we be able to bring a swift end to hostilities, our active participation in post-war rebuilding will be crucial in securing our long term political interests in having a friendly and prosperous friend. The temporal impermanence of victory needs to be considered as it can be squandered away.

## CONCLUSION

We are in good stead to tackle these developments. Our five aspects of Total Defence is prescient and far-sighted (Military, civil, economic, social and psychological).<sup>42</sup> They create a bulwark against a coherent and multi-prong hybrid attack. Hypothetically, the adversary can commit terrorist attacks on our home soil while a larger scale war is fought on another front, in an attempt to erode the will of the population to fight. He could also sow discord among racial and religious groups to compound the effect. This is where social and psychological defence play a crucial role in warding off such attacks.

We will continue to train soldiers to have well-anchored values and commanders who are adaptive and flexible should remain as a key focus. They also have to be resilient to endure and face the uncertainties of the future battlefield.<sup>43</sup> They will face greater scrutiny on the battlefield as a result of the all-pervasive influence of traditional and new media. The emphasis on individual leadership becomes salient, as small units become more dispersed in urban fighting environments.

Indeed, changing technology and socio-political developments drive the way wars are fought and won. Hybridization and humanization of warfare affect how we conduct war. Information societies have shifted the Clausewitzian centre of gravity from the tangible to the immaterial, especially with the advent of social media. The cognitive and moral domains of

war have superseded the importance of the tangible and material metrics that used to dominate military calculations. These developments implore us to re-examine our notions of victory, given its place in SAF's mission statement. A swift and decisive success on the battlefield have to be capitalised to translate to a victory in a political and strategic sense. This is especially important for the post-combat phase, as perception of victory often depends on what happens in the aftermath. Ultimately, this hard earned victory should lead to enduring peace and not a transient one. 🌐

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**CPT Chong Shi Hao** is an Armor Infantry Officer by vocation and is currently a Company Second-in-Command in 42 SAR. He is a recipient of the SAF Overseas Scholarship. He holds a Master of Arts in Near and Middle Eastern Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Geography from University College London.

# Achieving Competitive Advantage Through Outsourcing in the SAF

by MAJ Mohamed Rizal

## Abstract:

Increasing global cooperation, vertical disintegration and a focus on core activities have led to the notion that firms are links in a networked supply chain. The emergence of outsourcing in the supply chain to gain competitive advantage has been rampant and more significant in today's business. The motivations behind outsourcing are: cost-driven, strategy-driven, and politically-driven but there may be many significant risks resulting from outsourcing if it is not properly managed.

*Keywords: Networked Supply Chain; Outsourcing; Risks & Benefits*

## INTRODUCTION TO SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Increasing global co-operation, vertical disintegration and a focus on core activities have led to the notion that firms are links in a networked supply chain. This strategic viewpoint has created the challenge of coordinating effectively the entire supply chain, from upstream to downstream activities.<sup>1</sup> While supply chains have existed for a long time, the notion of their competitive advantage, and consequently supply chain management (SCM), is constantly evolving across many disciplines such as purchasing and supply, logistics and transportation, marketing, organisational dynamics, information management, strategic management, and operations management. The emergence of outsourcing in the supply chain to gain competitive advantage has been rampant and increasingly significant in today's business. In a recent extensive outsourcing effort by the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), private companies could take over the planning of training programmes, arranging of ammunition inventory and keeping count of test scores. Their duties include running the administrative services of the training management offices in 15 army training institutes, reviewing the curriculum in the army's training school and managing the army's training areas island-wide.

## ROLES OF OUTSOURCING IN THE SAF'S SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Outsourcing is a major element in business strategy which is practised by both private and public organisations. It is much more common to outsource today as compared to a few decades ago. Outsourcing results in the supply chain function being performed by a third party. The decision to outsource is based on the growth in the supply chain surplus provided by the third party and the increase in risk incurred by using a third party. A firm should outsource if the growth in surplus is large with a small increase in risk. The motivations behind outsourcing are: cost-driven, strategy-driven, and politically-driven. Outsourcing non-core functions has enabled the SAF to focus on operational skills training and free up its combat-fit servicemen to focus on combat training. SAF initiates this supply chain practice so as to achieve a larger benefit, especially when national service stints are now shorter and enlistment rates start to fall in the coming years. Outsourcing has saved the SAF millions of dollars a year and is a key cost-saving measure.<sup>2</sup> However, there are many significant risks resulting from outsourcing if it is not properly managed.

## The Drivers of Outsourcing (Cost, Strategy, Politics)

The drivers for outsourcing are cost, strategy and politics. The first two commonly drive outsourcing



by private industry while the political agendas often drive outsourcing by public organisations. In some cases, outsourcing may be initiated by all three elements at the same time.

Of all three elements, cost savings has always been the most popular reason for outsourcing today, especially in the SAF. In order to achieve competitive advantage, managers have to look into how to cut the cost of capital expenditure, such as having less infrastructure and support systems. Strategic management has emphasised that cost advantage is the primary basis for competitive advantage. The development of large corporations today is dominated by the quest for economies of scale. Companies are now forced to think more broadly and radically about cost efficiency. The challenges of operating efficiently and having better cost control are not an easy task for managers. Staying lean will mean having less employees while operating at the same level, which has a significant impact on morale. There is increasing evidence that cost savings have been overestimated and costs are sometimes higher after outsourcing.<sup>3</sup> Outsourcing may result in low morale, high absenteeism, lower productivity, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

More recently, the main drivers for outsourcing appear to be shifting from cost to strategic issues such as core competence and flexibility.<sup>5</sup> In order to establish a competitive advantage over rivals, a firm must refocus the allocation of resources to its core competencies and align its strategies to its internal resources and capabilities. When the external environment is subjected to rapid change, internal resources and capabilities must be managed tactically. Such outsourcing of non-core services to civilians is a common practice for advanced militaries. Other considerations to outsource are restructuring, rapid organisational growth, changing technology, and the

need for greater flexibility to manage demand swings. In the scope of product and services, outsourcing is a great tool for firms to react quickly to customer requirements. Firm also share risks with suppliers when they outsource, resulting in a partnership which enables all parties involved or “virtual organisation” to compete strategically.

Politically-driven outsourcing moves may be more social than economic decisions. A good example of politically-driven outsourcing is in the health and medical service industries. The service by the public laboratory is not given based on market demands or profitability but for the general well being of citizens. It is social hygiene needs which drive outsourcing. Government employees work for the public and keep their

*In a recent extensive outsourcing effort by the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), private companies could take over the planning of training programmes, arranging of ammunition inventory and keeping count of test scores.*

interests primary. In contrast, private organizations are in the business of treating patients for a fee and are driven by cost and strategy. Both services may appear to be identical, but the products may be very different. Industry performs a service to make money whereas the public organisation attempts to ensure general well being; a different goal and mission. Other factors that may drive outsourcing by public organisations are that they are sometimes perceived as inefficient and bureaucratic—political candidates may promote outsourcing ideas, particularly at election time, to demonstrate their willingness to make positive changes in the district. Once laws are enacted, the public organisation has no choice but comply. In such situations the outsourcing drivers are the governing laws and executive orders, another recognised reason for outsourcing by public organisations.<sup>6</sup> Better accountability and divesting of troublesome functions are other major reasons to outsource. Outsourcing by public organisations may be initiated for different reasons to those from private industry. While the reasons may be different, the desired benefits are often similar.

### The Benefits of Outsourcing

The primary benefit of outsourcing is lowering cost by reducing capital expenditure and maximizing revenue. Other benefits vary from reduced capital infusion, transferring fixed cost to variable, quality improvement, increased speed, greater flexibility, access to latest technology and infrastructure, access to skills and talent, augmented staff, increased focus on core functions, getting rid of problem functions, copying competitors, reducing politic pressures or scrutiny, legal compliance and better accountability and management. Outsourcing also allows organisations to concentrate on their core businesses and gives access to specialized skills and services. The non-core business functions will be performed efficiently by their outsourcing partner, while their

core functions can be efficiently carried out in-house, “thereby you can achieve overall efficiency and see an increase in your profits. Some examples of outsourced services include call centre, data entry services and engineering services, healthcare services, financial services, software development, research and analysis services, photo editing services, creative services and web-analytics services.”<sup>7</sup> The benefits of outsourcing are shown below in Table 1.

Outsourcing is a strategic tool which helps to eliminate the trouble of hiring and firing personnel as this is passed on to an external provider with whom one can work out a deal based on a certain output quantity/quality, a certain number of hours or any other type of commitment. In addition, it helps to save

No.	Benefits	Remarks
01	Cost Savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost difference in salaries, benefits, and operational expenses between most Western countries and offshore destinations like India, China, and the Philippines (cost-effective services).</li> <li>• Access to high-quality services cost-effectively.</li> <li>• Access to similar services with the same level of quality at much lower cost.</li> <li>• Increases in profits, productivity, level of quality, business value and business performance.</li> <li>• Removes the burden of changing or maintaining infrastructure.</li> <li>• Saves cost on investing in expensive software and technologies.</li> </ul>
02	Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits from expert and skilled services.</li> <li>• Gain more knowledge in other non-core functions areas such as in web designing and materials development.</li> <li>• Concentrates core business.</li> <li>• Diverts secondary processes to a specialised external provider.</li> <li>• Enables clients to cross-leverage skills and expertise across industry verticals and technologies to achieve greater efficiency and quality levels in the outsourced process.</li> </ul>
03	Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a channel through which business can find available high-level expertise at affordable rates.</li> </ul>
04	Flexible Capacity Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables companies to flexibly manage capacity and staff.</li> </ul>
05	Time Zone Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to cover time-zones that are not covered by domestic operation (time zone advantage).</li> <li>• Setting up a 24/7/365 operation is generally easier offshore.</li> <li>• Outsourcing partner can complete critical work and send it in the next day.</li> <li>• Off-shoring destinations like the Philippines generally have a workforce that is more willing to work non-regular office hours.</li> </ul>

Table 1: Benefits of Outsourcing

on training costs, because organisations do not have to invest in manpower. The benefits of outsourcing can give an organisation a cutting-edge in the worldwide market, “countries such as United States (US), United Kingdom, Norway and Australia amongst others can benefit by outsourcing. The economy of these countries has increased tremendously after outsourcing. In the US, after the outsourcing boom, the economy has increased, jobs have increased and the wages of American workers have increased.”<sup>8</sup>

The Risks of Outsourcing

The risk associated with outsourcing is largely caused by the lack of guiding methodology for managers to manage and supervise outsourced functions. The potential risks of outsourcing are: unrealized savings with a potential for increased costs, employee morale problems, overdependence on a supplier, ineffective contracts, lost of corporate knowledge and future opportunities, loss of internal capability and growth

in third-party power, leakage of sensitive data and information, and dissatisfied customers.<sup>9</sup> The risks of outsourcing are shown below in Table 2.

The initial step in setting an outsourcing solution always starts with properly analyzing your requirements and seeing how the benefits of outsourcing can be maximized and the drawbacks can be minimized. Overcoming drawbacks will rely on identifying the right business processes for outsourcing, finding the best outsourcing provider, and setting up a good structure for offshore operation. Managers can tackle these issues by doing their risk assessment, forecasts and planning more stringently. Managers must also understand that outsourcing fails because of inadequate requirements definition, a poor contract, lack of guidance in planning or managing an outsourcing initiative, or because of poor supplier relations. The SAF is well aware of this problem and is also cautious over the potential dangers of breach of

No.	Risks	Remarks
01	Management & Control Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of face-to-face communication.</li><li>• Managing and effectively controlling an offshore operation is difficult due to the geographical distances, time-zone differences.</li></ul>
02	Failure to Deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unreliable third party may be unable to deliver a certain quantity/quality of deliverables on time.</li><li>• Regardless of the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) you have in place, the third party may breach the agreements.</li></ul>
03	Exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential dangers of breach of confidentiality, malicious use of system access, and other vulnerabilities in your organisation.</li><li>• Outsourcing the operating system may expose organization’s core business model.</li></ul>
04	Negative Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The general public opinion is still that off-shoring eliminates domestic jobs.</li><li>• Internal and external customers might not appreciate the fact that you are off-shoring certain business processes especially if that means that you are terminating a part of your domestic operation.</li></ul>
05	Company Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lowers values in terms of personnel, in-house knowledge, and infrastructure.</li><li>• Internal strategies may be lost when some functions are outsourced.</li><li>• Lowers productivity or efficiency in some functions.</li><li>• Widens learning gaps or knowledge base which may preclude organisation from future opportunities.</li></ul>

Table 2: Risks of Outsourcing

confidentiality, malicious use of system access, and other vulnerabilities in areas of national security.

### Successful Outsourcing Strategy

Jérôme Barthélemy noted that “while outsourcing is a powerful tool to cut costs, improve performance, and refocus on the core business, outsourcing initiatives often fall short of management’s expectations.”<sup>10</sup> Managers have to consider some of the issues highlighted by Jérôme Barthélemy before deciding to outsource so as to avoid the common pitfalls of outsourcing. He also added that “outsourcing failures are rarely reported because firms are reluctant to publicise them.”<sup>11</sup> Hence, organisations also have to study from other firms with good records of outsourcing efforts and “best practices.” By applying the techniques correctly, managers can reap the full benefits of outsourcing in a supply chain management context. Failed outsourcing efforts as highlighted by Jérôme Barthélemy are shown in Table 3.

## CASE STUDIES OF HOW OUTSOURCING HAS INFLUENCED SUPPLY CHAIN INDUSTRY

### Fujitsu Drives Outsourcing for Toyota (IT Industry)

The Toyota Motor Corporation is the third largest automaker in the world and produces a full range of models, from mini-vehicles to large trucks. Global sales of its Toyota and Lexus brands, combined with those of Daihatsu and Hino, totalled 5.94 million units in CY2001. As of March 2002, besides its 12 own plants in Japan, Toyota has 54 manufacturing companies in 27 countries/locations which produce Lexus and Toyota brand vehicles and components, employing 246,700 people worldwide (on a consolidated basis), and marketing vehicles in more than 160 countries. Toyota Australia is one of these companies.<sup>12</sup>

As a medium-sized organisation, Toyota Australia was not justified in investing too much on manpower to support major IT activity. The decision to outsource was to stay flexible and take advantage of the latest developments in technology. An outsourcing contract signed between Toyota Australia and Fujitsu in 1997 resulted in 77 Toyota IT staff transferring to Fujitsu as full-time employees. In late 1997, Fujitsu has

managed Toyota’s mainframe and midrange data centre services, including the operation of a Fujitsu M780/20 mainframe. Toyota moved its legacy applications to a SAP/3 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform some years ago, and Fujitsu has the service support contract for these SAP operations. Fujitsu manages Toyota’s IBM AS/400 midrange machines, and it also supports the car manufacturer’s Parts Application Management System (PAMS) application. Fujitsu is now working with Toyota as IT manager to improve not only IT services, but also to assist Toyota to use IT as an enabler in improving its many business services.<sup>13</sup>

*When the external environment is subjected to rapid change, internal resources and capabilities must be managed tactically.*

The partnership has allowed Toyota Australia to focus on their core business and gain knowledge in other non-core functions areas such as the latest hardware and software. This has ensured that Toyota’s IT infrastructure is managed by Fujitsu professionals trained in the latest technology. Fujitsu’s global IT experience provides Toyota the IT capability, capacity and coverage they need to achieve and sustain competitive advantage in today’s rapidly changing business marketplace. Toyota Australia was able to increase profits, productivity, quality level, business value and performance. Having outsourced its day-to-day IT management and supporting functions to Fujitsu, Toyota can concentrate its energy on future strategies for systems without worrying about operational issues.

The caveat in this case study is that both companies have to maintain a healthy relationship and regular communication so as to avoid management and control problems. Toyota must accept the hidden outsourcing management costs and monitor the agreement to ensure that Fujitsu fulfill their contractual obligations. Bargaining with Fujitsu and sanctioning them when they do not perform according to the contract is necessary when unforeseen circumstances arise.

No.	Risks	Remarks
01	Outsourcing Activities that Should Not have been Outsourced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine activities to be performed by a third party.</li> <li>• Understand where the firm's competitive advantage comes from.</li> <li>• Core activities should not be outsourced because firms risk losing competitive advantage and becoming "hollow corporations."</li> </ul>
02	Selecting the Wrong Vendor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use both hard and soft qualification processes for vendor selection (good track records).</li> <li>• Hard qualifications assess the ability of vendors to provide low-cost and state-of-the-art solutions.</li> <li>• Important criteria may also include business experience and financial strength.</li> <li>• Soft qualifications focus on a good cultural fit, commitment to continuous improvement, flexibility, and development of long-term relationships.</li> </ul>
03	Writing a Poor Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify pitfalls in partnership management (trust-based relationships).</li> <li>• A good contract is essential to outsourcing success because the contract helps establish a balance of power between the client and the vendor.</li> <li>• Invest more time on the contract negotiation and ensure that the partnership relationships with the vendor are being monitored.</li> <li>• Drafting a good contract is always important because it allows partners to set expectations and to commit themselves in the short-term.</li> </ul>
04	Overlooking Personnel Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage employee morale and mindset.</li> <li>• Firms that contemplate outsourcing must face two interrelated personnel issues.</li> <li>• First, key employees must be retained and motivated.</li> <li>• A second personnel issue is that the commitment of employees transferred to the vendor must also be secured.</li> </ul>
05	Losing Control Over the Outsourced Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If poor performance can be attributed to poor management, outsourcing is not necessarily the right solution.</li> <li>• When an activity is outsourced, it is crucial to retain a small group of managers to handle the vendor.</li> <li>• These managers must be able to develop the strategy of the outsourced activity and keep it in alignment with the overall corporate strategy.</li> <li>• Vendor management and technical skills must be periodically evaluated in technological development areas so as to avoid outsourcing failure.</li> </ul>
06	Overlooking the Hidden Costs of Outsourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Companies often overlook costs that can seriously threaten the viability of outsourcing efforts.</li> <li>• Transaction cost economics (TCE) suggests two main types of outsourcing hidden costs.</li> <li>• First, outsourcing vendor search and contracting costs.</li> <li>• Second, outsourcing management costs: monitoring the agreement to ensure that vendors fulfill their contractual obligations, bargaining with vendors and sanctioning them when they do not perform according to the contract when unforeseen circumstances arise.</li> </ul>
07	Failing To Plan An Exit Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many managers are reluctant to anticipate the end of an outsourcing contract and often fail to plan an exit strategy (i.e. vendor switch or reintegration of an outsourced activity).</li> <li>• Managing at one end is long-term relationship where investments specific to the relationships have been made by one or both partners.</li> <li>• At the other end are market relationships where the client has a choice of many vendors and the ability to switch vendors with little cost and inconvenience.</li> </ul>

Table 3: The Seven Deadly Sins of Outsourcing



Another factor Toyota Australia has to consider is planning for an exit strategy. Toyota Australia must establish for itself a choice of alternative vendors and the ability to switch vendors with little cost and inconvenience.

### Dell Outsources to Keep Value-Added Jobs At Home (IT Industry)

At Dell, the trend is to outsource overseas and keep some of its offshore call centre operations in the US. According to a recent study by the University of California-Berkeley, more and more white-collar jobs are being outsourced overseas, especially to India. The effect of this trend could be the loss of as many as 14 million service jobs in the US. Jobs remaining in the US could be subject to pressure to lower wages, and the jobs that leave may slow the nation's job growth or generate losses in related activities. While *The Outsourcing Institute's Sixth Annual Index*

concludes that saving money is not as likely a reason to outsource as it was in the past, sending critical functions overseas is still mostly about saving money as shown in Table 4 below.

The table shows the average wage for telephone operators in the US is \$12.57 per hour while their counterparts in India are paid less than a \$1 an hour. Payroll clerks in the US are paid, on average, \$15.17 per hour compared with between \$1.50 and \$2 per hour in India. The pay differential for upscale financial jobs is equally huge. For example, accountants in the US are paid, on average, \$23.35 per hour compared with a range of \$6 to \$15 for their India-based peers. The disparity is even greater for financial researcher/analysts. Jobs most vulnerable to the new wave of outsourcing include medical transcriptions services, stock market research for financial firms, customer service call centres, legal online database research, payroll and other "back office" activities.<sup>15</sup>

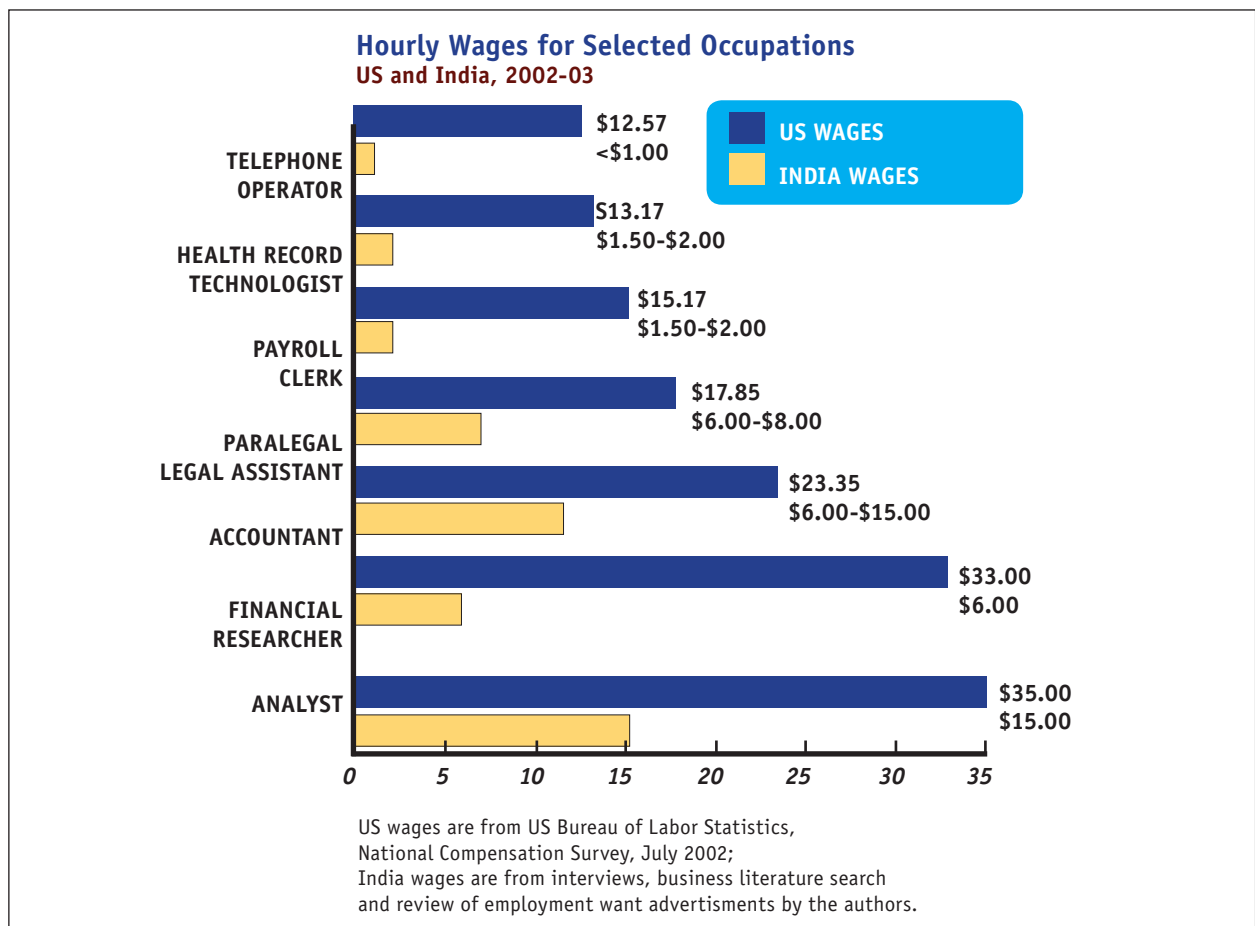


Table 4: US Wages vs India Wages<sup>14</sup>

The management problem for Dell is apparent: they may lose control over the outsource activity as their positions feature vulnerability-producing attributes such as a lack of face-to-face customer service, work processes that enable telecommuting and internet work, high wage differentials between countries, a high information content, low social networking requirements, and low set-up costs. It is crucial for Dell to retain a small group of managers to handle the operations overseas, develop strategy and keep alignment with the overall Dell corporate strategy. There is also a need for vendor management and technical skills to be periodically evaluated in areas of technical developments so as to avoid outsourcing failure.

Cost-driven outsourcing in India is popular due to its population's widespread use of English, institutional similarities with the US in its legal system, wide wage differentials with the US, and its large numbers of science and engineering graduates. In the current trend to outsource, value-added jobs are kept at home in order to achieve a competitive advantage and stay lean. Dell benefits from expert and skilled service at a lower cost and is able to entrust distracting secondary processes to specialised external provider. This allows the company to focus on maintaining their operations. Another benefit in outsourcing to India is the time-zone advantage, which allows Dell to complete crucial work and send it immediately the next working day.

### Outsourcing Benefits in Various Business Sectors

There are different benefits and risks involved in outsourcing in the call-centre, supermarket and automotive industries and the SAF. Although the four businesses are different in nature, the reasons to outsource for these companies are similar, which is cost and strategic considerations. Core competence is a strategic factor that has attracted all these organisations to outsource in today's rapidly changing business marketplace so as to sustain a competitive advantage, increase profits, productivity, quality

level, business value and performance. Lack of internal human resources compels organisations like the SAF to make strategic decisions on how to shuffle, align and re-locate their workforce. The cost-saving on human resource allows all organisations to reduce their capital expenditure and maximize revenue. More importantly, organizations exposed to the latest technology can improve their products and stay competitive.

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For example, in the automotive industry, keeping up with the technology in audio equipment can be an expensive operation. The non-core business functions can be performed efficiently by the outsourcing partner, while the core functions can be efficiently carried out in-house. Therefore, it is better to outsource to a well-known audio company so that they can save on the indirect cost of maintaining infrastructure and support systems, which may result in a more nimble and efficient organisation. However, outsourcing may have an impact on the quality of an organisation's products and services. This may have a major effect on the organisation's reputation and directly impact profits and business. Outsourcing to a credible third party with business experience and financial strength is important for managers because internal strategies may be lost during the process. Organisations may also lose customers and opportunities, which indirectly affects employee morale. There are also the hidden outsourcing management costs and the need to monitor the agreement to ensure that vendors fulfill their contractual obligations.

Another factor to consider is flexibility in operations, resources and other strategic elements. Long contracts outsourced in a limited market have sometimes resulted in a loss of flexibility. Supply chain managers must have flexibility and ensure that there are plenty of vendors available so that they can switch vendors with little cost and inconvenience. For the case of supermarkets, they must have numerous product choices to meet consumer demands. If a particular product they have is bad, they must have the flexibility to replace that particular product with another brand. For example, the recent case of unsafe dairy products in China has caused some supermarkets to lose their business overnight. This is a classic example of the need for private and public organisations to switch vendors immediately in an emergency. Therefore, flexibility in vendor selection and planning for an exit strategy are important factors for managers seeking to attain business advantage.

### The Issue of Technological Dependency in the SAF

Outsourcing in the SAF over recent years has led the organization to clearly define their core competencies in the business of war craft. As such, core competencies must be managed by a critical mass of expertise and be kept in-house so as to sharpen the organization's combative edge and long-term competitiveness. The increased reliance upon suppliers for critical support functions involves risks, as discussed in previous case studies. Therefore, there is a need to review in detail the actual extent of outsourcing benefits and risks periodically. One critical issue that impacts core competencies is that of technological dependency. During actual conflicts, the reliance on technology as a platform for critical decision-making can lead to problems of indecisiveness, inertia and loss of faith when things go wrong.<sup>16</sup> The challenges faced during system failure will invariably mean going back-to-basics or substituting rudimentary approaches for achieving the same net effect and goals. Therefore, the SAF must develop greater mental preparedness and technical expertise in overcoming the problems. The

use of training technologies to enhance traditional operational training must focus on failure and stress management in operator training so as to ensure optimal combat performance in the event of system failure. One major concern that persists is the resilience of SAF damage control capabilities in responding effectively during failure or crisis. Resilience means retaining core competencies in well-trained personnel who can quickly, creatively and decisively bridge any hardware breakdown.

### CONCLUSION

Outsourcing involves the partnership of client and provider. In larger and more complex outsourcing constructions, there may be multiple providers taking on different parts of the project. Organisations today are doing more outsourcing because managers are in desperate need of information in an organised form that will help them identify opportunities, challenges and decision factors relating to outsourcing. Outsourcing results in integration, complexity and also innovation. Although the drivers for outsourcing are primarily cost, strategy and politics, there are other factors that managers should consider such as function, specificity, structure, internal and external environments and business environments. Analyzing the risks, benefits and strategic issues will help SAF leaders reap the full potential of outsourcing in the supply chain industry. 🌐

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**MAJ Mohamed Rizal** is an Infantry Officer and currently Training Officer of BMTC School 1. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Management of Logistics from the National University of Dublin, Ireland.

# Innovative Leadership – A Case Study of Tal Afar and Implications for the SAF

by CPT Bertram Ang

## Abstract:

The significance of adaptive leadership in the military has never been more important, with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan heralding the rise of asymmetric warfare and proving the tenacity and adaptability of insurgents and Taliban alike. As modern battlefields get increasingly uncertain, complex and competitive, future military leaders must develop innovative leadership; not just an ability to adapt but also to learn faster, understand better and adapt quicker than their enemies. This form of leadership, developed in the “crucible” of Iraq, is clearly one that not only requires the ability to react to change, but also the creativity to arrive at original solutions to similarly novel and complex challenges on the battlefield.

*Keywords: Generation Y; Innovative Leadership; Modern Warfare; Military Planning*

## INTRODUCTION

Much ink has been used in the continuing discourse on the importance of military leadership. Even more blood has been spilled proving it. Indeed, the significance of adaptive leadership in the military in particular has never been more important, with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan heralding the rise of asymmetric warfare and proving the tenacity and adaptability of insurgents and Taliban alike. As the Army Leader Development Strategy of the United States (US) indicates unequivocally, the future battlefields will be “even more uncertain, complex and competitive as hybrid threats challenge us across the full spectrum of operations.”<sup>1</sup> This requires future military leaders to not only be adaptive, but also to “learn faster, understand better, and adapt more rapidly” than their enemies.<sup>2</sup>

During the war in Iraq, the experience of full-spectrum operations that ranged from conventional military assaults to civilian reconstruction helped shape innovative traits in many officers. According to Dr. Leonard Wong, a researcher in the US military, Operation Iraqi Freedom served as a “serendipitous crucible experience” that gave many leaders, in particular junior officers, the opportunity to acquire

“adaptive capacity.”<sup>3</sup> As Wong stated after citing multiple interviews with officers, while leaders were “always accustomed to sudden change,” the environment in Iraq was still vastly different. Wong attributed this to a higher impact of “unpredictability,” which in turn forced officers to literally “anticipate change at any moment.”<sup>4</sup> American officers in Iraq found that on top of anticipating change, they had to “rely on their own judgment and ingenuity” to create solutions and achieve mission success in the highly unpredictable environment.<sup>5</sup>

This form of leadership that was developed in the “crucible” of Iraq was clearly one that not only required the ability to react to changes, but also the creativity to arrive at original solutions to similarly novel and complex challenges on the battlefield. Thus, unlike “adaptive leadership,” which merely calls for the refinement of one’s approach to changing circumstances, the “innovative leadership” described in this article requires greater ingenuity and resourcefulness in conceiving new solutions to multifaceted problems. Extrapolating from Stephen Rosen’s definition of military innovation, an innovative leader must not only be one who can adapt to changing circumstances on the battlefield, but also more importantly, introduce “a new way



of war,” involving *new* operational procedures” and “changes in critical tasks” if necessary.<sup>6</sup> This requires such leaders to possess a high degree of discernment in understanding and accepting the risks involved in the alteration of standard operating procedures to a set of untested and untried routines during wartime, and having the courage to carry them out.

It is apparent that innovative leadership is not only uncommon but also difficult to cultivate by virtue of its quality, and undeniable challenges still exist in nurturing and engaging the above traits in military leaders today.<sup>7</sup> Yet, the case study examined in this paper reveals the necessity of such leadership during wartime. By examining the specific profile of an individual commander whose innovative leadership influenced the outcome of the war in Iraq, this article aims to show how such leadership can and should be exercised on the battlefield, and the pivotal role that it plays. Furthermore, given the sheer importance of innovative leadership to the battlefield as seen in the case study, this article argues that not only should such leadership be nurtured and engaged in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), but also more importantly, that the SAF is actually well-placed to do so given the influx of Generation Y soldiers entering service.

## INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP IN TAL AFAR

During the war in Iraq, the US was forced to completely overhaul their strategic approach to the war when it became apparent that the level of violence was worsening. The pivotal event that led to this conclusion was the bombing of the Shiite al-Askari mosque in February 2006, which led in turn to greater carnage as Shia militia struck back at Sunni perpetrators aided by Al-Qaeda in Iraq.<sup>8</sup> This pessimistic but accurate assessment of the war was cemented when the Iraq Study Group, a ten member bipartisan panel commissioned by President Bush, grimly concluded that the circumstances in Iraq were “grave and deteriorating,” further recommending

that the US should begin pulling out by the first quarter of 2008.<sup>9</sup> The increasing bloodshed not only highlighted the failure of the long-stated “light footprint” strategy that advocated “force protection,” but also paved the way for a change in strategy in Iraq. The concept and execution of a new strategy in Iraq was not the result of an arbitrary course of action by the military establishment and the Bush Administration, but the result of a long and deliberate process involving both civilian and military elements.<sup>10</sup> The culmination of this process

*During the war in Iraq, the experience of full-spectrum operations that ranged from conventional military assaults to civilian reconstruction helped shape innovative traits in many officers.*

was the conception and execution of the surge in 2007. While the surge resulted in a significant increase in troops, it advocated the implementation of a new strategy—“clear, hold, build.” This strategy was to prove instrumental in decreasing the overall level of violence in Iraq

over the next few years, achieving success where the “light footprint” strategy had not.

The roots of the surge strategy can be traced to the city of Tal Afar, and the novel tactics of the then-Colonel H. R. McMaster. While McMaster cannot be considered a junior leader, his experience in the city of Tal Afar in 2005 is representative of the myriad innovative solutions that junior leaders conceived during the war in Iraq. His original approach in the city of Tal Afar would lead directly to the concept and execution of “clear-hold-build” as part of the surge strategy, ultimately resulting in a dramatic turnaround of the dire situation in Iraq. Furthermore, *FM 3-24*, the new manual on counterinsurgency created in 2006, advocated “clear-hold-build” as one of its recommended counterinsurgency approaches, while recommending less force protection in an affirmation of McMaster’s tactics.<sup>11</sup> Thus, McMaster’s innovative leadership not only resulted in the implementation of an overall strategic approach that effectively turned the tide of the war in favor of the US, but also established a new counterinsurgency doctrine for the US Army and Marine Corps.

Colonel McMaster exemplified innovative leadership in two ways. First, he recognized the disconnect between the counterinsurgency strategy adopted by Coalition forces and the desired result of decreasing violence. He was arguably the first commander in Iraq to utilize an approach that essentially contradicted the sanctioned “light footprint” strategy. While on hindsight the latter was a failed strategy that represented the unsuccessful attempts of Coalition forces to decrease the level of violence in Iraq, the concept was a valid one that had its roots in the famous counterinsurgency tenet attributed to T. E. Lawrence. The statement, that it was “better they do it imperfectly with their own hands than you do it perfectly with your own,” was often cited by General George Casey as the fundamental reason for adopting a posture of force protection and letting the Iraqis take charge.<sup>12</sup> Deviating from this original plan required strong and sound discernment. Second, upon recognising the ineffectiveness of the “light footprint” strategy, McMaster acted on his own observations to create a completely new tactical approach of “clear, hold, build” for his area of operations. This decision called for incisive judgment and ingenuity, and importantly, the courage to implement it in the battlefield.

*The concept and execution of a new strategy in Iraq was not the result of an arbitrary course of action by the military establishment and the Bush Administration, but the result of a long and deliberate process involving both civilian and military elements.*

McMaster’s tactics were completely different from the sanctioned “light footprint” approach. Instead of utilising indiscriminate and overwhelming force, he used a slow and deliberate approach to cut off and destroy the insurgents. He prevented Tal Afar from being infiltrated by external influences by using his soldiers as a border patrol, thereby removing the threat of insurgent supplies and reinforcements from

Syria. Then, he eliminated safe havens for insurgents on the outskirts of Tal Afar, setting up patrol bases for Iraqi forces in their place. McMaster also recognised the importance of Iraqi tribal politics, and duly reached out to the outlying tribes as he cleared the outskirts of Tal Afar in a bid to win their favor. As mentioned, this was perhaps the first time such tactics had been employed in Iraq, especially compared to the indiscriminate demolition of Fallujah just the previous November. As a result of McMaster’s deliberate approach to weed out insurgents, most civilians within the city had already left for a camp prepared for them in order to minimize civilian casualties. As better intelligence came in after the initial attack, coalition troops were able to conduct precise offensive operations to capture and kill insurgents.<sup>13</sup>

Once major combat operations had ceased, McMaster chose to send his troops out into the city to “hold” it and secure the population, instead of following standard procedure of pulling out to Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). He implemented a new tactic of setting up thirty combat outposts manned by both US and Iraqi troops that gave them an unobstructed view of major roads. This discouraged the planting of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) by insurgents, and the well-linked outposts gave McMaster the ability to respond quickly and unpredictably to insurgent attacks.

Interestingly, even before being deployed to Tal Afar, McMaster had trained his troops differently from other outfits, choosing to build cultural sensitivity as part of their preparations. He ordered his soldiers to treat their prisoners professionally, banning the use of the derogatory term “haji” among his men. He also ensured that at least 10 percent of his soldiers learned conversational Arabic in preparation for close interaction with the Iraqis.<sup>14</sup> This was to prove useful in the third phase of McMaster’s operations, which involved the rebuilding of infrastructure and the reestablishment of public services, in a bid to gain the people’s trust. In the same vein, McMaster’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment was the only unit to have



*US M1A2 Abrams main battle tanks patrolling the streets of Tal Afar*

a feedback system polling detainees to find out how well they were treated. In a bid to set the city on a path to reconciliation, McMaster apologized to Sunni tribal leaders with ties to the insurgency for the ways US forces had erred previously.<sup>15</sup> This was in stark contrast with the brutal tactics adopted by some outfits, including the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, which not only conducted mass, indiscriminate detentions but routinely conducted brutal abuse of detainees.<sup>16</sup> These indiscriminate detentions not only failed to produce significant gains in the capture of anti-coalition forces or in the seizure of illegal weapons, but also fueled resentment among the humiliated Iraqis and ironically resulted in the creation of more insurgents.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, McMaster's innovative leadership played a pivotal role from the beginning of the campaign in Tal Afar to its end. His approach towards training was completely original. Having observed prior tactics adopted by US forces and their negative results, he chose an original approach of imbuing his men with a willingness to listen and have respect for the

Iraqis instead. Instead of adopting tried and tested tactics that worked efficiently in driving out insurgents from cities, McMaster adopted a slower, more effective approach. He recognised that the problem of the entrenched insurgency was actually rooted in the "light footprint" strategy that moved coalition forces out of towns and cities they had secured, leaving the same areas vulnerable to returning insurgents. McMaster therefore created a new concept of "combat outposts" that allowed him to maintain a 24/7 presence in Tal Afar, preventing the re-entry of insurgents and gaining the trust of the civilian population by using the same troops to aid in reconstruction. This was a huge risk because it exposed coalition troops and left them more vulnerable without the protection of FOBs. Finally, McMaster recognised the importance of reconciliation, choosing to see beyond the fact that individual Sunni and Shiite tribes were engaging and inflicting casualties on American soldiers and reaching out to them. On top of the "clear, hold, build" approach, the new tactic of establishing tribal relationships

would also be incorporated into the surge strategy of 2007, and would play an important role in Ramadi province.

McMaster would eventually hand over Tal Afar to then-Colonel Sean MacFarland and the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team from the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division. This gave MacFarland the opportunity to observe firsthand McMaster's innovative leadership and tactical approach. When MacFarland and his men redeployed to Ramadi Province in late 2006, he not only applied the "clear, hold, build" approach that he had observed to be so effective, but he also expanded reconciliatory efforts after experiencing what McMaster had done previously in Tal Afar.<sup>18</sup> MacFarland's efforts at distinguishing between "reconcilable" and "irreconcilable" insurgents were to profoundly impact the mental models of General David Petraeus and his deputy, General Raymond Odierno. When they visited Ramadi in late 2006 just prior to taking over command in Iraq, both would discover valuable lessons to apply as part of the surge strategy. Odierno would later build on MacFarland's tactics in Ramadi, especially his decision to stay in the city with "a significant amount of force" instead of pulling back to FOBs, while Petraeus would learn that a key mechanism to secure the population was to identify and separate "irreconcilables" from the population.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the innovative leadership that McMaster displayed was to have profound ramifications not only for other areas such as Ramadi, but also for the war in Iraq as a whole. The most significant element of innovative leadership seen here is that McMaster inspired other leaders to expand on his original approach, multiplying the positive effects of his tactics.

McMaster's experience was not unique. As mentioned, many junior leaders underwent trials that required them to adapt and create new approaches to their respective battlefield situations. General David Petraeus himself noted that many of the successes in Iraq could be attributed to "leaders—especially young leaders—who have risen to the occasion," demonstrating "enormous initiative, innovativeness, determination and courage."<sup>20</sup> The innovative spirit among the junior officer corps is best exemplified by the initiative of platoon leaders

and company commanders in creating the online web forums *platoonleader.army.mil* and *companycommand.army.mil*. These websites were popular forums that served as repositories of knowledge and experience among the junior officer corps. Many of the novel and creative small-scale solutions that individual platoon and company commanders derived were disseminated through similar mediums during the Iraq War.<sup>21</sup> Like the impact that McMaster's tactics in Tal Afar had at the larger strategic level, these online mediums were used in "closing the gap between the institutional army and the operational army." This was done by giving "doctrine writers" access to the online mediums and opportunities to connect directly with the junior commanders by embedding in their units.<sup>22</sup> From the above, we can see that innovation is frequently driven from the bottom-up, because junior commanders on the ground often have insightful perspectives gleaned from their experiences.

## INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE SAF AND GENERATION Y

Having established the paramount importance of innovative leadership on the battlefield at all levels, how do we then translate the lessons learned by the US in Iraq to the context of the SAF? It is my belief that the SAF is in fact well-positioned to further cultivate innovative leadership and culture with the influx of Generation Y soldiers in its ranks—junior leaders who have the ability to bring the culture of creativity and innovation into battlefield situations. Generation Y has indeed been noted to possess innovative traits, qualities vital in a commander on the modern day battlefield. Yet, much has also been said about the apparent inability of Generation Y soldiers to follow orders without questioning them, as well as their lack of tolerance for general regimentation and discipline. Discipline, conformity and regimentation are elements of any professional armed forces that are as indispensable as innovativeness and creativity in the battlefield, but may oftentimes seem to contradict each other. Are these mutually exclusive or can they complement each other to produce a formidable SAF that is relevant, ready and decisive?



Competencies	Core Competencies (For Leader Performance)				Meta-Competency (For Growth/Adaptability)
Skills	Conceptual Thinking	Social	Mission	Developmental	Self
	Critical Thinking	Communicating to Influence	Planning	Developing People	Self Awareness
	Creative Thinking	Interpersonal Effectiveness	Decision Making	Developing Team	Self Management
	Ethical Reasoning		Execution	Improving Organisation	Personal Mastery

Table 1: Reproduced from *POINTER Monograph No.4, Spirit and System, Leadership Development for a Third Generation SAF*

I would suggest that the current Leadership Competency Model (LCM) used by the SAF validates Generation Y as a cohort of leaders who are imbued with the necessary leadership qualities to aid in the important task of renewing the SAF as an organisation. As shown above, I find that the qualities of an ideal SAF leader as espoused by the SAF are reflective of many of the traits of Generation Y soldiers.

The SAF LCM consists of five competency domains. Four are considered “core competencies” that directly affect leadership performance, and there is a fifth “meta-competency” that is required for leader adaptability and growth.<sup>23</sup> Under the umbrella of the “Conceptual Thinking Competency,” an ideal leader in the SAF has the cognitive capacity that “solves problems and responds to challenges with innovative solutions,” using “past experiences, information from non-traditional fields and non-linear thinking to generate fresh perspectives and imaginative ways to succeed.”<sup>24</sup> In particular, the skills of critical thinking and creative thinking motivate the ideal SAF leader to envision a future state, think “creatively ... to construct the *new* reality” and “bring about breakthrough.”<sup>25</sup> Similarly, “Mission Competency” requires adapting plans when necessary, leveraging “technology, knowledge and previous experiences in planning.”<sup>26</sup> When combined with “Social Competency,” such a leader will be able to gain “support for ideas and initiatives,” thereby influencing others around them.<sup>27</sup> The ideal SAF leader is able to provide an important catalyst for renewal and change within the organisation by harnessing the capacities of individuals in his team, a crucial

part of the “Developmental Competency.” Last but not least, such a leader must “possess a dynamic capacity for self-awareness and self-management,” an ability that requires constant personal feedback from others around him or her.<sup>28</sup>

When comparing the desired traits of a SAF leader with that of generally accepted characteristics of a Generation Y soldier, it is clear that there are few, if any differences. First, Generation Y soldiers are seen as “techno-savvy.”<sup>29</sup> Leveraging on technology along the way would therefore be a welcome prospect. Second, Generation Y soldiers prefer an environment that values their “innovation and creativity,”<sup>30</sup> especially one that has a “flatter” hierarchy that focuses on constructing “new realities.” This can only be a boon to an organization that constantly seeks positive renewal and change. Third, Generation Y soldiers desire constant feedback.<sup>31</sup> Far from being disdainful of authority and having a misplaced conviction of their own abilities, they do in fact welcome constant appraisal of their performance not only from their peers but also from their elders or superiors.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Generation Y soldiers do in fact possess many of the traits that make up an ideal SAF leader as advocated by the LCM.

The SAF LCM is subscribed to by all SAF leaders, whether Generation X or Y. The question is, why are Generation Y soldiers perceived as a challenge rather than a boon by their Generation X superiors? I find that the biggest factor is most likely the preference of Generation Y for flatter hierarchies. As soldiers, this may translate into the constant questioning of



instructions that often rankles older commanders. This seeming inability to follow orders without question appears to present a disciplinary issue that may have serious ramifications on the battlefield.

I present two challenges to this mindset. First, this particular trait of Generation Y soldiers does not necessarily have to translate to a blatant challenge of authority, and can instead lead us to question old paradigms and mental models to promote organisational learning.<sup>33</sup> As seen from the case study of Tal Afar, today's battlefields are such that we can no longer analyse doctrine, strategy and tactics with the luxury of time and space. Untested changes that will be the fulcrum on which victory and defeat rest must be made on the battlefield. Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, two prominent organisational theorists, attribute organisational learning to "double-loop learning," which only occurs with the modification of organisational norms and with the creation of "new strategies of performance."<sup>34</sup> This can only happen when mental models are *questioned* and revised. However, for this to happen, commanders must adopt a different mindset towards Generation Y and understand the basis for their questions rather than assuming the worst. Commanders must create such opportunities for their subordinates to do so without fear of being seen as a malcontent.

Second, discipline in the armed forces and innovativeness are not mutually exclusive. Discipline in the SAF is defined as the "obedience of orders, and the timely and accurate execution of assigned tasks." Discipline means that as professional soldiers, we do what we have to despite the difficulties and challenges involved, and to the "best of our abilities." The "perseverance," "inner strength," and "physical toughness" needed to be disciplined soldiers are in fact the qualities that the SAF develops in its soldiers through rigorous training.<sup>35</sup> This does not contradict the development or expression of innovativeness.

The SAF must recognise the opportunity that Generation Y presents. These soldiers embody many of the qualities set out in the LCM, and can help the SAF cement itself as the 3G force that we envision ourselves to be. Rather than incorrectly viewing Generation Y as one incapable of following orders, we must recognise the huge potential that lies in their creativity and innovativeness. Given the importance

of innovative leadership in the battlefields of today and of the foreseeable future, we cannot afford to permit disillusionment and discontent to fester within the ranks of our junior leaders and soldiers, allowing their abilities to be lost to the organisation. The hard lessons learned by the

US in Iraq over the period of several years and at the cost of thousands of lives constitute a price that the SAF cannot afford to pay given our manpower and geographical constraints.

Thus, while most literature today speaks of changing organizations to meet the needs of the new generation, it is imperative that leaders in the SAF modify their mindsets towards Generation Y soldiers to meet *our* own needs for the future. Instead of unrealistically expecting Generation Y servicemen to conform to our expectations of unquestioning obedience, we must recognize their qualities and adapt to them—or fail to do so to our own detriment. 🌐

*However, for this to happen, commanders must adopt a different mindset towards Generation Y and understand the basis for their questions rather than assuming the worst.*

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**CPT Bertram Ang** is a Naval Officer and currently serves as the Navigation Officer of *RSS Victory* (MCV). CPT Ang is a President's Scholar and SAF Overseas Scholar. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Economics, with Honors in International Security Studies, from Stanford University in 2010.

# Thinking Libertarian Paternalism: Benefits for the Third Generation SAF in Management and Leadership

by CPT Gabriel Choy Weijie

## Abstract:

The idea of Libertarian Paternalism first came out in *Nudge* by the authors Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein. It was originally intended as a paradigm shift in thinking for political philosophy and public policy making, among others. This article intends to draw attention to this big idea and illustrate the similarly huge potential it holds for the Third Generation Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). The article starts by elucidating Libertarian Paternalism as a political-philosophical idea and follows up by explaining the rationale for its introduction into the SAF. It presents two particular manifestations of Libertarian Paternalism in action—both in management and leadership—and ends off with the hope that the idea will catch on and truly benefit the organization.

*Keywords: Paternalism; Individual Liberty; Peer Pressure; Human Resource Management*

## INTRODUCTION

### What is Libertarian Paternalism?

Libertarian Paternalism as an idea appears oxymoronic at first glance. For most people, the two root concepts of libertarianism and paternalism conveys almost opposite intuitions. It is therefore of fundamental importance that we clarify definitions before we proceed. This will enable us to better appreciate its relevance to the Third Generation Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) when we delve deeper into the topic later in the article.

## LIBERTARIANISM VERSUS PATERNALISM

### What is Libertarianism?

Libertarianism is a particular form of political philosophy. Generally speaking, political philosophy concerns itself with analysing how political systems and societies ought to be organised. Issues of whether governments ought to exist, what governments can do to their citizens, the rights of the citizenry, who should rule, etc. all belong to the realm of political philosophy. Big concepts like *anarchy*, *democracy*, *dictatorship*, *communism* all express particular value judgments on how our political systems ought to be run, and are therefore different forms of political philosophy.

One of the most famous libertarian political philosophers of modern times, Professor Robert Nozick, wrote in the preface to his book, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974) that “individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights).”<sup>1</sup>

The root word of libertarianism is liberty. It is therefore not surprising that libertarianism is first and foremost a concept about individual liberty. When one speaks about liberty, or freedom, one usually associates them with rights. A person is free if his rights (to certain actions) are not compromised. For example, I may say that I am free if no one violates my right to vote.

Professor Michael J. Sandel sums up the primary concern with individual liberty for libertarians best in his book, *Justice: What's The Right Thing To Do?*, in that their central claim is that each of us has a fundamental right to liberty—the right to do whatever we want with the things we own, provided we respect other people's rights to do the same.”<sup>2</sup>

In summary, if I am a libertarian, my central concern is that people's rights are respected, and their individual liberty is protected. Examining what

these rights are would require another article, but it will suffice here to note that such rights generally include the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of religious practice, the right to vote, the right to life, the right to possession of private property, etc.

### What is Paternalism?

Paternalism on the other hand has considerably less coverage as a particular form of political philosophy. Generally speaking, it has acquired a relatively sinister reputation. The objective in this section is to delve deeper into what paternalism really is, and remove any value judgments that could sub-consciously affect our perspective.

The root word of paternalism is paternal, which in turn is defined to be “of, or pertaining to, a father.” It may have its roots in Eastern thinking. The latter half of an abridged ancient Confucian teaching goes, “修身, 齐家, 治国, 平天下” (*xiu shen, qi jia, zi guo, ping tian xia*). A translation which hopefully does it justice is as follows: “In order for one to rule the world well, one ought to govern one’s country well. In order for one to govern one’s country well, one ought to keep his own family affairs in good order. In order for one to keep his own family affairs in good order, one ought to first achieve personal mastery.”

The basic idea is that there are parallels between the management of self, of family, and of the state. This relationship between family and state is actually not unique to Eastern thinking. Aristotle wrote in the *Politics*, “the government of a household is a monarchy, since every house is governed by a single ruler.”<sup>3</sup>

The rough idea is as follows: The state is modeled upon the family unit. The head of the family is the father. It follows therefore, that since the head of the state is the government (or king), the latter ought to behave in a manner characteristic of a father to his citizens.

When we hear the term paternal, we think of strictness, superior knowledge, and genuine concern for welfare. A father knows better and always wants the best for his child. A paternalistic government is therefore similar—by virtue of its belief in its own superior knowledge (of what is good for its people), it prescribes its policies on its people (whether they like it or not) due to its genuine wish that the people benefit from it.

*With a greater emphasis on respecting the liberty of others, we may actually enhance individual job performance. This is precisely the reason why there is a need for an alternative perspective on the link between respecting individual liberty and the armed forces.*

To summarise therefore, if I am paternalistic, I believe that I both know better and want better. I think and act like how a traditional father would with regards to bringing up his child.

### What is Libertarian Paternalism?

It is therefore (hopefully) obvious by now as to why the concept of Libertarian Paternalism can be viewed as oxymoronic. A libertarian is concerned first and foremost with individual liberty. A paternalist, on the other hand, has no qualms with disrespecting individual liberty and acts as he sees fit. If I am a libertarian who believes in the right to be protected from bodily harm, I am surely inconsistent (in principle at least) when I, as a father, cane my child so as to educate him about the wrongness in stealing (for example).

Nevertheless, whilst both forms of political philosophy are genuinely different in nature and focus, I would like to draw attention to the particular tenets of each which form the core of Libertarian

Paternalism. When I speak of Libertarian Paternalism, I refer specifically to the non-liberty-violating part of libertarianism and the know-better-and-want-better-for-my-people part of paternalism.

So, what is actually Libertarian Paternalism? Can it actually work? I will use the classic example from *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness* to better elucidate this big idea.<sup>4</sup>



The above picture shows a typical urinal in the Amsterdam Airport toilets. If you look carefully, you may notice a sticker of a fake fly in the urinal. Statistics tell us that putting the fake fly in the urinals reduces spillage by 80 percent. In terms of achieving results, it is an extraordinary success.

Putting the fake fly in the urinal is a classic act of Libertarian Paternalism. As a designer of such a urinal, I am being paternalistic—I want the men who use the urinals to act in a manner that is better for everyone, i.e. to aim properly into the urinal when they use them. I want this for the good for everyone—the cleaners who clean the toilets can do less, the men who use the toilets can have a cleaner environment in which to relieve themselves, etc.

I am also being libertarian because I do not interfere with the individual liberty of anyone, at least not in the manner that they genuinely care about. Unlike using fines and punishment, I do not (at least in the traditional sense of the word) force anyone to do anything against their individual

wishes. These men still possess the right (if you like) to urinate aimlessly (pardon the pun). However, by designing the urinal such, I exploit the sub-conscious desire of (most) men to target the fly when urinating, and therefore achieve the results I desire.

The idea of Libertarian Paternalism is so powerful because I achieve the result I desire whilst keeping everyone happy. It is a win-win situation for all, and by virtue of it being win-win, there is no need to constantly deal with unhappy people who may thereafter hinder me from achieving the results I so desire.

## WHY LIBERTARIAN PATERNALISM?

In this section, we clarify the relevance of Libertarian Paternalism to the SAF. I argue that it has implications both in the way we think about leadership and management in the SAF. I will also argue that thinking Libertarian Paternalism has immense benefits for the organization, especially in the modern globalized world we live in.

### Individual Liberty and the Armed Forces – The Traditional View

When we speak of individual liberty and the Armed Forces, we tend to think along this line—the SAF exists to protect the sovereignty of our land, and hence by extension, the individual liberty of our people. There is also an implicitly accepted irony—one regarded as inevitable—namely that soldiers have to sacrifice their liberty so as to protect the same liberty in times of war.

As soldiers, we are expected to sacrifice certain rights in order to protect our homeland. In times of war, we do not enjoy the right to life—at least not in the international arena. Countries are justified by the rules of war to use force and kill if necessary. Also, in times of peace, we have to follow the orders of our commanders to the very word, whether we agree with it or otherwise. One may not avoid turn up for in-camp training (ICT) if he does not feel like doing so; skipping ICT would result in a formal punishment for being Absent Without Official Leave (AWOL). In other words, a soldier has no true individual liberty



to speak of, at least not in the sense that he may truly care about.

The irony is deemed inevitable because discipline and regimentation is of the utmost importance in the armed forces. A military with no discipline possesses no ability to fight effectively and therefore would certainly fail in its mission to protect the sovereignty of its land. So the traditional argument goes.

### Individual Liberty and Motivation – Why an Alternative View

I have briefly outlined the traditional view to liberty in the SAF. My aim here is to propose an alternative.

The issue of new media is a good starting point. The example here would hopefully show how respecting one's individual liberty can be part of a better solution to certain problems. It is an issue up for debate whether we should ban our servicemen from talking about their work—especially the negative aspects—on Facebook, where millions of people can read and comment on their views. It is the view of this author that we should not ban this practice precisely for the reason that banning it will not solve the fundamental problem of having unhappy servicemen at work. Even if we do, these servicemen would find other alternative means to air their views in public—on forums, through friends, etc., and we would be faced with ultimately the same phenomenon in a different form. The fundamental problem remains unsolved.

It is obvious from this example that a ban would be a violation of individual liberty. It should also be obvious that such a solution will not be enough.

When one speaks of “enough,” it is *vis-à-vis* the satisfaction of one's aims. In this example of a Facebook ban, a solution that is enough is one that would stop the publishing of negative comments in public totally. Thus defined, a ban is “not enough” because the bad comments will eventually emerge elsewhere in the public domain. A policy that aims at finding out why these servicemen are unhappy—and

then to address their concerns accordingly—would, if successful, be “enough.” By not violating any individual liberty, we ensure that the problem does not emerge elsewhere in a different form.

Note again that I am not arguing that any policy that does not violate individual liberty would *inherently* be better than one that does. I am, however, arguing that, by virtue of the simple tenet of human nature—people do not like to have their own liberty trampled upon—it is *instrumentally* better to respect the liberty of our servicemen in our polices. It is only when one does what one truly wants to do (and therefore believes in it), and not when forced, that one does truly well.<sup>5</sup> With a greater emphasis on respecting the liberty of others, we may actually enhance individual job performance. This is precisely the reason why there is a need for an alternative perspective on the link between respecting individual liberty and the armed forces.

### Individual Liberty and the Third Generation SAF

I argue here that respecting individual liberty is all the more important for the Third Generation SAF.

We live in a modern world of globalization. Our servicemen are now all highly-educated individuals with free and easy access to the internet. Being highly-educated, they have no qualms and problems with seeking alternative forms of employment outside the SAF. Having free and easy access to the internet, they have the latest world news at their hands as well as the ability to freely air their own views (and to hear the views of others). Being also relatively wealthier, they now possess the financial muscle to travel more widely. What all these mean is that the typical SAF serviceman is now wealthier, more knowledgeable, more opinionated and more employment mobile.<sup>6</sup>

It then logically follows, therefore, that these servicemen are less likely to put up with a world where their individual liberty is constantly violated, especially in matters that they care deeply about. In cases of human resource retention at least, a continued lack of consideration of individual liberty may not be the wisest way forward.

The Third Generation SAF is also one that asks more of each individual soldier. Everyone is a crucial piece of the whole, and each soldier is given more responsibility (and the skills) to carry out their tasks to complete the entire mission. The reason for this is multifold—our soldiers are now more educated and hence would be able to carry out more complex tasks individually;<sup>7</sup> an increased emphasis on technology makes our jobs more capital-intensive rather than labor-intensive;<sup>8</sup> a drop in retention and recruitment numbers due to demographic phenomena, resulting in a renewed need for less people to now do more in order to meet mission requirements.

With more responsibility to be placed on each soldier, it is all the more important that each individual soldier does his job well. The motivated soldier—one who believes in the task he is given, and one who truly wants to achieve it—is much more likely than one who is forced by his superior via military orders to achieve mission success.<sup>9</sup>

It is therefore imperative that the SAF starts examining this issue more vigorously. There are potential benefits to be reaped in terms of recruitment, retention and enhancing job performance. Simply depending on military orders may not be enough. We will need to get people to “buy-in” more, and that can only start by appreciating and respecting what matters to them, individual liberty being one of many.

### Why Paternalism?

The above three sections address the issue of why libertarianism ought to be examined with greater rigor in the SAF. In particular, I have argued that an increased respect for individual liberty—all the more required in the times we live in now—benefits the organization.

This section, on the other hand, examines the question of paternalism. The basic answer is that the SAF has a given mission to achieve. We are to deter potential aggressors, and in the event that deterrence fails, to achieve a swift and decisive victory. The mission can be in no doubt, and therefore, like-it-or-not, our soldiers must be commanded in the pursuit of mission success.

The SAF ought to be paternalistic about its mission, but it can be libertarian in how it decides to achieve it. The author argues that being libertarian, in certain specific contexts later expounded upon in the article, increases the potential for mission success.

This also answers why the approach is libertarian paternalism, and not paternalistic libertarianism. Fundamentally, SAF commanders, or any other leaders in armed forces, have to be paternalistic. By virtue

*The SAF ought to be paternalistic about its mission, but it can be libertarian in how it decides to achieve it. The author argues that being libertarian, in certain specific contexts later expounded upon in the article, increases the potential for mission success.*

of the fact that they command troops and are leaders of men, they simply have to know (and to want) better. They, however, need not be “dictatorial” in their style of leadership or management. They can be libertarian, in that they show more respect for the individual liberty of their troops in their approach. This author has argued that such a style reaps benefits on many different

levels, individual job performance being one of the most important.

Table 1 below provides a better understanding of the interaction between Libertarianism and Paternalism.

### HOW TO THINK LIBERTARIAN PATERNALISM IN THE SAF?

In this final section, I devote my attention to outlining certain fields in the SAF that could benefit from thinking Libertarian Paternalism. My focus

will be ultimately on management and leadership. By showing two particular examples of Libertarian Paternalism in action, I hope to draw attention to the potential benefits from implementing such a philosophy in thinking.

Decentralization in itself is really an act of Libertarian Paternalism. When I decentralise, I allow my subordinates decision rights. They thus have the individual liberty to do what they want to do. But I retain the right to decentralise, i.e. I can

LIBERTARIANISM		PATERNALISM	
		NO	YES
	NO	N/A	"Old-School" <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get things done</li><li>• Possible unhappiness</li><li>• Possibly no ownership</li><li>• "I say, you do"</li></ul>
	YES	"Chaos" <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Things not done</li><li>• Anything goes</li><li>• No leadership</li><li>• E.g. Unplanned decentralization</li></ul>	"New-School" <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get things done <i>well</i></li><li>• Creates "buy-in"</li><li>• Shared ownership</li><li>• E.g. Planned decentralisation</li></ul>

Table 1: Interaction between Libertarianism and Paternalism

Management: Decentralization and Human Resource Allocation

When we speak about decentralization, we tend to think that it is a wholly management issue. In some sense it is. In the management literature,<sup>10</sup> the decision to decentralize can be a science. There is a need to examine the requirement for speed in response times (be it for a firm or an individual platoon), the capability of lower-level people (in particular the leaders) especially in decision-making, the need for centralised, coordinated action (for example a concentrated attack on a particular position), among others.

In the military context, the decision to decentralise or otherwise is really a matter of command and control. When a commander decentralises much of the decision rights, what he is really doing is to allow his subordinates to make the relevant decisions. He nevertheless retains the responsibility for their actions in himself.<sup>11</sup>

choose who to decentralize to. Therefore, my choice to decentralise (or otherwise), and if I do, who to decentralize to—is a paternalistic action.

Decentralization, when conducted properly, does wonders. When our soldiers are given more room for individual thought in their actions, they tend to be more motivated to do their best because more ownership is now given. They wish for the success of the mission more because of the independent part they are now playing. They now own their mission.

In the complex, uncertain, and dynamic environment of warfare, it is to be wondered if the overall commander back in HQ can make the best decisions to deal with whatever is happening on the ground. It can be argued that the man on the ground, if armed with the proper considerations from higher HQ, may be in a better position to make the decision.<sup>12</sup> In fact, it has been argued that the decentralized decision-making culture of the German Army, termed *Auftragstaktik*, was one of the reasons leading to its initial successes in World War II.<sup>13</sup>

As such, thinking Libertarian Paternalism in the form of decentralisation can reap immense benefits. Indeed, one of the reasons attributed to Nelson's spectacular victory at the Battle of Trafalgar was his ability to decentralize (libertarian act) whilst ensuring his intentions were made clear in his orders (paternalistic act). I quote one of Nelson's messages to his subordinates, highlighting the paternalism and libertarianism (respectively): "I send you my Plan of Attack, as far as a man dare venture to guess at the uncertain position the Enemy may be found in. But, my dear friend, it is to place you perfectly at ease *respecting my intentions* and to *give full scope to your judgment* for carrying them into effect."<sup>14</sup>

Sound human resource allocation can further fortify the benefits reaped from decentralization. The act of human resource allocation can then also be seen as the paternalistic part of the decision, whereas the subsequent act of decentralisation can now be viewed as the libertarian part.

In order for the right decisions to be made when I decentralise, I have to make sure I have the right people making the decisions. One way is to only allow the people I trust to make the decisions—this refers to the above-mentioned choice of who to decentralize to. The other way is to put quality people in the positions where decentralized decision rights will be given. This refers to the choice of sound human resource allocation. Both are manifestations of paternalism.

### Leadership: Culture, Peer Pressure and Team-Building

Whilst human resource allocation and decentralisation are chiefly management concepts, it can be shown that it is possible to think Libertarian Paternalism with regards to leadership.

Dealing with culture is one of the fundamental challenges of leadership. Individuals are generally affected by the culture of the unit they join, this phenomenon being more commonly known as peer pressure. In order to achieve good performance, a unit certainly gains a head start by having good culture. Whilst it is generally hard to pin down good culture, one can loosely define it as the existence of good habits and practices. A good leader would therefore start his work by fostering good culture, or eradicating bad culture.

It is the belief of this author that peer pressure is a more effective system of reward and punishment than the traditional approach. When one joins a unit blessed with good culture, one cannot help but pull up one's socks in order to keep up with the performance of his fellow soldiers. One possibly risks being looked down upon, or ostracised, if one alone tarnishes the good name of the unit. Such peer pressure is likely to encourage one to work harder, as compared to being punished by the commander. It is also less likely to result in resentment, as the individual is not directly subject to the whim of a single person.

It should hopefully be obvious by now how fostering good culture as a means of peer pressure is actually Libertarian Paternalism in action. The leader (or commander) is being paternalistic in his decision to foster a good culture or eradicate a bad culture. He is however being libertarian, in allowing the system to correct bad behavior by the subtle process of peer pressure. He does not step in via traditional punishment, and hence does not violate any individual liberty (at least in the sense people see and care about most).

## *It should hopefully be obvious by now how fostering good culture as a means of peer pressure is actually Libertarian Paternalism in action.*

A unit's culture, on the other hand, is mainly defined by its people. Good culture exists because of a majority of good people and vice versa. Culture tends to persist because people do not change in droves. This has implications on team-building and the fostering of good culture and eradication of bad culture. When one wishes to correct bad culture, which usually results due to bad people, there would be a need to purge large numbers of these people. When one wishes to foster good culture, there would be a need to bring in large numbers of good-quality people (and not just a few). It is only after this paternalistic act of human resource management that peer pressure can then work its course to preserve good behavior in a libertarian manner.

This idea of culture as a system of informal punishment devices—hence shaping human behavior—has its academic roots in the game theory modeling of human interaction.<sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In the realm of political philosophy and/or public-policy making, the big idea of Libertarian Paternalism has shown itself to be somewhat of a positive paradigm shift in thinking.<sup>16</sup> It is the hope of this author that by this essay, enough attention has been drawn to the similarly huge potential this big idea holds for the Third Generation SAF. Two specific examples have been chosen to illustrate how thinking Libertarian Paternalism can benefit the organization in both the management and leadership fields. Hopefully, more positive examples would appear in the near future to prove the benefits presently hypothesized in this article. 🌐

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**CPT Gabriel Choy** is a Naval Officer by training and is currently the Navigation Officer of *RSS Formidable*. A recipient of the SAF Overseas Scholarship in 2007, CPT Choy holds a Bachelor of Science in Philosophy and Economics, and a Master of Science in Management and Economics, from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

# Ethical Conduct in the Future of Unmanned Warfare

by CPT Daxson Yap Chin Teck

## Abstract:

Unmanned combat systems seem to be the next leap in military technology, promising greater lethality at a lower human cost. However, these systems are qualitatively different from earlier military advances such as the bow-and-arrow, gunpowder or even aircraft because in addition to increasing the physical or moral distance at which killing takes place in war, they replace rather than augment functions that are performed by human beings. As the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) moves to develop and deploy unmanned systems, it is timely to examine the ethical implications that will arise from the advent of unmanned warfare. This is a critical issue to explore for the SAF because the rapidity of technological development has outstripped the evolution of the laws which govern armed conflict.

*Keywords: Unmanned Technologies; Ethical Implications; Moral Conduct; Information Management and Accountability*

## INTRODUCTION

Unmanned combat systems seem to be the next leap in military technology, promising greater lethality at a lower human cost. However, these systems are qualitatively different from earlier military advances such as the bow-and-arrow, gunpowder or even aircraft because in addition to increasing the physical or moral distance at which killing takes place in war, they replace rather than augment functions that are performed by human beings. As the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) moves to develop and deploy unmanned systems, it is timely to examine the ethical implications that will arise from the advent of unmanned warfare. This is a critical issue to explore for the SAF because the rapidity of technological development has outstripped the evolution of the laws which govern armed conflict—there is no mention of unmanned systems in the United Nations Charter.<sup>1</sup> If left unaddressed at the organizational level, the propensity for unethical and therefore unlawful conduct in war is high and Singapore cannot afford such mistakes.

Despite our reputation as a country that punches above its weight, Singapore's dependence on international goodwill (in the form of trade and investment) means that we are obliged, probably more

than most countries, to obey international laws and conventions in order to remain relevant. Moreover, as a country with one of the lowest Total Fertility Rates in the world,<sup>2</sup> the SAF is compelled to incorporate unmanned systems and technologies as a demographic necessity and therefore we cannot escape their implications. Therefore, this article intends to first lay out the necessity of ethical conduct in war, establish the trajectory of unmanned combat systems, and in so doing discuss the implications to the SAF using the Just War framework.

## THE NECESSITY OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN WAR

In upholding the death sentence for General Yamashita, General MacArthur wrote:

"The soldier, be he friend or foe, is charged with the protection of the weak and unarmed. It is the very essence and reason for his being. When he violates this sacred trust, he not only profanes his entire cult but threatens the very fabric of international society. ... This officer, of proven field merit, entrusted with high command involving authority adequate to responsibility, has failed this irrevocable standard; has failed his duty to his troops, to his country, to his enemy, to mankind; has failed utterly his soldier faith.

The transgressions resulting therefrom as revealed by the trial are a blot upon the military profession, a stain upon civilization and constitute a memory of shame and dishonor that can never be forgotten.”<sup>3</sup>

There is a nobility in warfare that is expected of civilized peoples. The brutality and human cost of war has resulted in the Geneva and Hague Conventions that spell out the rules that govern warfare, the concept of war crimes and in spirit exemplifies how the protection of the “weak and unarmed” is the “very essence and reason for [the soldier’s] being.” While some countries can decide that such a perspective is unacceptable, the realist answer for small nations such as Singapore is that it must accept these rules of warfare and abide by them if it desires to be a member of the international community. The SAF’s overseas

deployments in combat zones can be seen in the light of Singapore earning its membership in this global humanity.

Post-conflict, the survival of the state of Singapore depends crucially on our ability to restart the economy and the speed at which we re-establish

our land, air and sea links with the rest of the world. To do that, we need to remain full, respected members of the international community. Therefore, it is paramount that we retain this global citizenship by complying fully with the letter and spirit of

international law. In particular, as we incorporate unmanned systems and increase the reliance on Decision Support Systems (DSS) to accelerate our war-fighting cycle, it is important that we remain cognisant of the requirements of international and human rights law. If we can demonstrate our intention

*Moreover, as a country with one of the lowest Total Fertility Rates in the world, the SAF is compelled to incorporate unmanned systems and technologies as a demographic necessity and therefore we cannot escape their implications.*



MQ-9 Reaper in flight

to err on the side of caution and fulfill the criteria of Just War,<sup>4</sup> then the SAF will retain the moral high ground and win legitimacy in an era where being perceived as “just” is strategic victory.

## THE TRAJECTORY OF UNMANNED TECHNOLOGIES

The SAF currently employs unmanned technologies in areas which extend the capabilities of human operators. For instance, the use of unmanned technologies in surveillance operations extend the range and acuity of human reconnaissance scouts and removes the risk to human life versus manned surveillance aircraft. The SAF even has prototypes in the use of unmanned ground vehicles for patrol, and resupply missions.<sup>5</sup> These are “dull, dirty, dangerous and demanding” combat scenarios which typically incur a high casualty rate and the inherent risk is near-impossible to mitigate tactically.<sup>6</sup>

These types of “remote-control[led]” unmanned surveillance systems are currently the dominant type out there and their presence is uncontroversial. The true issues arise when unmanned combat systems—that is unmanned systems with the ability to kill—are operated with reduced or even no involvement by the man-in-the-loop. This relates to the other two basic command modes; semi-autonomous and autonomous. Fully-autonomous systems operate through a series of programs and algorithms without human intervention. An autonomous robot possesses the ability to make its own decisions consistent with its mission without requiring direct human authorisation, including the decision to use lethal force.<sup>7</sup> The last mode is semi-autonomous. Semi-autonomous operation allows a robot to operate without human intervention until certain critical decision points that mandate human judgment are reached. These are then diverted to the control of the operator. The robot would act as an extension of a human soldier under the direct authority of a human, including the authority over the use of lethal force.

The use of autonomous or even semi-autonomous unmanned combat systems is a qualitative difference from the SAF’s current unmanned operations. The reduced involvement of human judgment has significant ramifications for the morality of the actions undertaken by the system’s inherent logic. In *I, Robot*,

famed science fiction writer Isaac Asimov lays down three rules that all “robots” must obey:

*Law Number 1: A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.*

*Law Number 2: A robot must obey orders given to it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.*

*Law Number 3: A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.*

– Isaac Asimov, “Three Laws of Robotics,” 1942

Yet the unmanned combat systems, or “robots,” of today have already broken a portion of Asimov’s First Law.<sup>8</sup> The technology required for artificial intelligence to distinguish a small boy playing with a toy gun from an adult carrying a fully loaded AK-47 automatic assault rifle is beyond current capabilities,<sup>9</sup> but more importantly is an ethical dilemma that technology may not be able to solve.

## CAN THE SAF CHOOSE NOT TO ADOPT AUTONOMOUS UNMANNED COMBAT SYSTEMS?

Given these concerns about the ethical implications of such systems, there is the option of choosing not to adopt such technologies. However, the technology has been adopted at extraordinary speed worldwide. In 2003, the year the American-led coalition defeated Saddam Hussein’s armed forces, America’s military logged a total of roughly 35,000 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) flight-hours in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2009, the tally reached 800,000 hours.<sup>10</sup> Even this larger figure is an underestimate, because it does not include the flights of small drones, which have proliferated rapidly in recent years. Global sales of UAVs in 2010 were expected to exceed \$4.7 billion, and America is estimated to account for 60% of that total. For its part, America’s Department of Defense says it will spend more than \$22 billion to develop, buy and operate drones between 2007 and 2013. Following the United States (US), Israel ranks second while Germany and Italy are roughly matched for third. Britain, France, Russia and Spain are not far behind, and, say some experts, so is China.<sup>11</sup>

In total, more than three dozen countries operate UAVs, including Belarus, Colombia, Sri Lanka and Georgia. Some analysts say Georgian armed forces, equipped with Israeli drones, outperformed Russia in aerial intelligence during their brief war in August 2008. Therefore, the adoption of unmanned technologies is not an option for the SAF. These semi-autonomous or fully autonomous systems offer a combat edge that is irresistible. They can process information more quickly, do tedious analysis of large data sets instantaneously and dramatically accelerate the engagement cycle. If available, any military would be foolhardy to reject the ability to “get inside” the enemy’s Observation, Orientation, Decision and Action (OODA) loop, particularly the SAF.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, the demographics of Singapore mean that the SAF must find ways to retain our combat edge while gradually decreasing the amount of people that we employ. This means that we must be active adopters of technology in all aspects to increase productivity and as a force multiplier. In addition, the evolution of the threat environment to include high-end fighters and precision stand-off munitions means that the SAF has to react more quickly and further compress the engagement cycle. This necessarily involves compressing the decision cycle, which cannot be done without some form of automation and DSS. The trend is clear—warfare will evolve and autonomous systems will ultimately be fielded in its conduct.

### JUST WAR THEORY – JUS AD BELLUM (LAW OF WAR)

The eventual fielding of such autonomous systems means that the SAF has to carefully consider how unmanned systems fit into the Just War framework. The first set of criteria, *Jus ad Bellum*, relates to the right to wage war. This criteria has been grounds for contention because of the “flexibility” of the principle of just cause.

Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 demonstrated the execution of Just War under the United Nations Charter, when the US led an invasion of Iraq in the search for weapons of mass destruction. This invasion

*Therefore, the adoption of unmanned technologies is not an option for the SAF. These semi-autonomous or fully autonomous systems offer a combat edge that is irresistible.*

was not sanctioned by the United Nations because there was no provision in the UN Charter for a pre-emptive attack in self-defence. In retrospect, this example demonstrates how easily nations can justify war under *Jus ad Bellum* and proceed against international opinion

if they have the means to.<sup>13</sup> It can also be argued that the US was willing to sanction war on a second front because it believed in part that it could achieve military victory in Iraq without a significant loss of lives.

In a more contemporary instance, the use of drone aircraft to bomb Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders in Pakistan shows clearly the way that unmanned systems make it much easier for governments to justify lethal force when their soldiers’ lives are not put at risk.<sup>14</sup> The drone strikes started under President Bush and, controlled by satellite link from CIA headquarters in Virginia, have been expanded by President Obama and praised by both parties in Congress as a potent weapon against terrorism that puts no American lives at risk. Some legal scholars have questioned the legitimacy under international law of killings by a civilian agency in a country which the US is not officially at war with. In reducing the human cost of war, unmanned combat systems may therefore make the decision to use war as a solution to intractable problems easier. While it is not currently part of the threat environment, it would be prudent for the SAF to consider the impact of either our adversaries or our own forces using unmanned combat systems to deliver lethal force in the transition to hot war.

Of course, it seems silly to suggest that reducing friendly casualties is a dangerous thing for a military. After all, the whole purpose of advancements in



technology or the use of shrewd military strategy is to defeat the enemy and reduce your own losses. The employment of standoff munitions or unmanned combat systems can be seen as a mere extension of this motivation. However, as technology continues to improve unmanned systems, it is imperative to remember that giving a machine the complete authority to eliminate human life significantly changes the foundations of our existence.<sup>15</sup> Unmanned combat systems that operate autonomously are prone to change the way one rationalises the justification for going to war and how one defines its success in war. Ethical decision making within a machine is only as good as the human who programs it and the state of technology that exists at the time. Therefore, the humans behind the technology are ethically liable. This means that for the SAF, it is important to be extremely careful when designing and using such systems.

An interesting thought experiment would be to imagine if the parties in a conflict were equipped en masse with unmanned systems. Does that reduce the costs of war to a mere financial calculation and in so doing increase the prospects of war? What is perhaps more troubling is that if the costs of force-on-force warfare become merely financial, then in order to break the enemy's will to fight, will unmanned systems be used on targets that incur a human cost?

## **JUST WAR THEORY – JUS IN BELLO (LAW IN WAR)**

The second set of criteria is *Jus in Bello* which refers to the principles that direct how combatants should act. The principle of Distinction refers to the need to differentiate between combatants and non-combatants and is meant to protect non-combatants in the battlefield. Conduct should also be governed by the principle of Proportionality which states that an attack cannot be launched on a military objective in the knowledge that the incidental civilian injuries would be clearly excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage. The last principle of Military Necessity refers to the use of minimum force

against military targets and is meant to limit excessive and unnecessary death and destruction.

The first implication of unmanned systems on ethical conduct in war is that removing humans from the battlefield may change the way society perceives war. While using unmanned systems suits the intent of minimizing your own casualties, it desensitizes society to the human deaths of the enemy. The US drone war against Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders in Pakistan has already caused civilian casualties numbered in the hundreds and yet there is domestic support for such a program and little remorse for the innocent lives that it has cost.<sup>16</sup> The US may be able to withstand the criticism but Singapore and its small, open economy cannot bear the marginalisation that will arise if it is accused of committing war crimes.

At the level of the soldiers who operate such systems, the compression of the kill chain and the removal of the “moral buffer” combine to remove the conscious weight of the decision to end another human being's life. The policy implication is then that the SAF needs to be cognisant of this impact on the decision that its soldier-operators will face. In an increasingly digitized environment, human life is reduced to a number of pixels and it becomes more difficult to ensure that there is an ethical basis for decision making—did we exhaust all efforts to ensure that we are targeting combatants, and are we using an appropriate amount of lethal force? This translates to the need to study thoroughly the way that the man-in-the-loop makes the decisions and not have the algorithm control the operator.

What is interesting is the potential for unmanned technologies to improve ethical conduct in war. Often in a shoot-or-hold-fire scenario, the soldier has to make a split second decision in order to preserve his own life. For unmanned systems, this self preservation is not required and therefore the actions made can be much more conservative, allowing the man-in-the-loop more time to decide whether the “villager” in his gun sights is an innocent bystander or a combatant. There is no need for a “shoot first, ask-questions later” approach.<sup>17</sup> The unmanned system also has the potential to apply Rules of Engagement (ROEs)

faultlessly as their judgment will not be clouded by emotion (fear, anger), fatigue, personal biases or what is termed as “scenario fulfillment” where, under stress, humans are vulnerable to use new information in ways that fit pre-existing belief patterns.<sup>18</sup>

Beyond these “human failings” that such unmanned systems will not face, these systems are likely to be equipped with sensors that are better suited for battlefield observation than humans currently possess. Furthermore, they are able to integrate information from multiple sources and formulate responses far more quickly,<sup>19</sup> and may even act as a ethical watchdog across the battlefield for infractions.<sup>20</sup>

### JUST WAR THEORY – JUS POST BELLUM (LAW AFTER WAR)

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq vividly underline the importance of considering how wars are ended justly. In fact, the theory of Justice after War, or *Jus post Bellum*, can be seen in the Spring of 2002 when it became clear that the US did not have a complete plan for post-conflict rehabilitation in Afghanistan. The idea of a victor’s justice, in that the occupying force can dictate the terms of settlement, is rendered moot when the international community demands fairness and transparency. This is relevant because Singapore does not have the weight to dictate any form of agreement and in any sort of post-conflict negotiation will surely include the United Nations as a neutral mediator and adjudicator. Therefore it is critical that the SAF’s actions and policies reflect these strategic objectives.

*Unmanned combat systems that operate autonomously are prone to change the way one rationalizes the justification for going to war and how one defines its success in war.*

The use of unmanned combat systems in operations means the collection and analysis of more data which can be used to hold decision makers accountable

for the operations that they sanction. In an age of a pervasive mass media, it is therefore important to place more emphasis on information management and accountability in the use of semi-autonomous or fully-autonomous unmanned systems. At the initial stage of capability development, the SAF should build in mechanisms to ensure that the design of intelligent behaviors only provide responses within rigorously defined ethical boundaries.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the assignment of responsibility must be clear and explicit for all concerned parties regarding the deployment of a machine with lethal potential on its mission.<sup>22</sup>

If we can consistently display the principles of *Jus in Bello* during the conflict, and post conflict prove that these considerations were built into the structure and systems of war-fighting, then at the very least we have retained an ability to quickly reestablish links with the rest of the world.

### CONCLUSION

The fielding of increasingly autonomous unmanned systems is inevitable given the operational benefits that it offers and the demographic situation that we find ourselves in. It would therefore be prudent for the SAF to consider holistically, from the justification of war, to its conduct and finally its resolution, the potential benefits and pitfalls of such technologies on the ethical dimension of warfare. This is crucial as upholding internationally recognised codes of ethics in war relates directly to the survival of Singapore as a state post-conflict. 🌐

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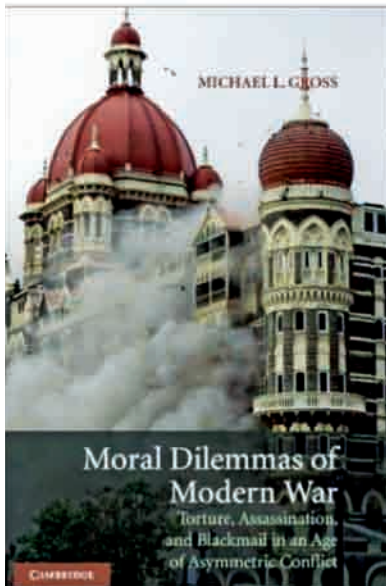
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**CPT Daxson Yap** is currently a staff officer in the Force Transformation Office, Joint Plans and Transformation Department. An Air Warfare Officer (GBAD) by vocation, he previously served in 165 SQN and 18 DA Bn. CPT Daxson holds a Bachelor of Science (First Class Honors) in Mathematics and Economics from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a Master of Arts in Statistics from Columbia University, United States of America. CPT Daxson is a recipient of the SAF Overseas Scholarship.

## Book Review



**Michael L. Gross, *Moral Dilemmas of Modern War: Torture, Assassination, and Blackmail in an Age of Asymmetric Conflict*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 321 pages.**

by **Wang Jia Xing**

It has been seventy years since the Second World War, yet according to Michael L. Gross, the United States (US) and some of its allies continue to “blatantly employ unlawful means of warfare.”<sup>1</sup> Torture, assassination, blackmail and hostage-taking have been constantly carried out in asymmetric warfare. Forces smaller in numbers and less well-equipped with weapons and funds are unable to respond in kind and often have to resort to such actions to gain a foothold in combat by obtaining information and instigating fear and panic. Whether prompted by necessity or the urge for vendetta, these actions carry with them a certain breach of morality that is prohibited by the protocols of the Geneva Convention, which advocates certain forms of humanitarianism in times of conflict. In modern warfare, where insurgency, terrorism, rogue nations and guerrilla warfare mean that the line between soldiers, armed combatants and

non-combatants is becoming ever so fine, Gross brings us through a concise summary of the various points of views to re-evaluate “the principle of noncombatant immunity, adjust the standards of proportionality and redefine the limits of unnecessary suffering and superfluous injury.”<sup>2</sup>

Gross’s aim to dissect war as “a trying and paradoxical business” revolves around the reconciliation of “the right to wage war ... and the duty to protect combatants from unnecessary injury and non-combatants from direct harm.”<sup>3</sup> This is further exacerbated by the “lack of uniforms” on modern battlefields which essentially requires accurate determination of motives and actions before the method of disabling the combatant can be decided on.<sup>4</sup> Direct or indirect participation, which differs from full-fledged combatant status, requires a different form of retaliation according to humanitarian law. Both the law of armed conflict



and international humanitarian law apply to civilian combatants, thus they cannot claim complete immunity but neither should they be accountable to the same level as combatants. Gross believes that in asymmetric warfare, both sides “reinstate the vulnerability of a wide range of citizens who take part in fighting,” while making sure this does not include citizens who are non-combatants.<sup>5</sup> In conclusion, while participants of wars must try their best to conform to the changing criteria of proportionality, they must also realise that many more civilians “suffer unnecessary and gratuitous harm that stems from unfeasible military operations, operational errors, and misguided attempts to demoralise.”<sup>6</sup>

Another issue Gross discusses in this book is the moral aversion of harming people in certain ways that entails unnecessary, excessive or prolonged pain. Regardless of intent, there is a point where we decide that any action is “no way to treat a dog, much less a human being.”<sup>7</sup> There is a significant difference in killing with a straight-edged bayonet as compared to one with a serrated edge, or with bacteria *vis-à-vis* bullets. Insofar as disabling the enemy is concerned, amidst the horrors of the war, a soldier made blind or deformed by chemical warfare or a soldier with a gaping wound in his chest has suffered an inhuman

wound. As such, weapons such as “explosion and hollow-point bullets, explosives containing clear glass or other undetectable fragments (which surgeons cannot easily see when treating a wound), poison weapons, asphyxiating gas, serrated bayonets, barbed lances and blinding lasers” are banned weapons today.<sup>8</sup> While Gross believes that we should look beyond the suffering caused by such actions to the damage that is required to disable a combatant, he believes that some measures must be undertaken to prevent suffering from being overly vicious and incurable. Hence through mutual self-interest, soldiers on the battlefield should no longer undergo dishonorable treatment or abuse, as using weapons without a recognised and proved treatment denies soldiers a fair fight by undermining morale and preventing soldiers from returning to the battlefield.

The key issue discussed by Gross pertains to the dilemmas of assassination and torture, which are controversial and widely considered immoral and taboo. Assassination can be seen as extrajudicial killing or as subtle and accurate elimination of grave, military targets. History can attest to the fact that it is a pragmatic “smart” weapon but for “some reasons that are difficult to articulate, assassination ... seems to violate a deep-seated

and inviolable norm.”<sup>9</sup> Torture, by definition, speaks for itself, but may prove the lesser evil in the “face of murderous terrorism.”<sup>10</sup> As aforementioned, the main purpose of torture is information gathering for the purpose of sabotage, as a countermeasure or to prevent deaths. These include information regarding battle plans, key military installations that are off-the-grid or locations where terrorist organizations may hold civilian hostages. As the title suggests, assassination and torture seem to go hand in hand, with both actions giving a decisive advantage to the party that carries them out successfully. However upon closer examination, Gross points out that assassination is more justifiable than torture as it is the best way for the “stronger” side in asymmetric warfare to restore “a certain level of equilibrium.” Being unable to establish affiliation based on lists of names and the lack of insignia or uniform, assassination provides a way to disable enemy operatives or leaders with minimum collateral damage. Torture, as observed by Daniel Statman, confers doubtful moral benefits while posing great moral danger. While torture suspects may “provide information about ticking bombs or hostile acts that saves many innocent lives ... the information they provide is often incomplete and obtainable by less-controversial means of questioning.”<sup>11</sup> Only by abandoning torture can democracies of the

world truly condemn terrorism and repressive regimes, extend protection to non-combatants during wartimes and intervene on behalf of those suffering torture or genocide under despotic leaders.

In conclusion, asymmetric warfare is an arena where two sides, with a significant disparity in technology levels and manpower, fight while undermining many of the conventions of war that the international community has cultivated assiduously. The myriad of changes in asymmetric warfare, in its tactics and weaponry, do not offer either side overwhelmingly brutal methods to crush its adversary; instead, “targeted killing, nonlethal warfare, strikes on associated targets, and humanitarian intervention labor under evolving restrictions that continue to safeguard noncombatant immunity, contain disproportionate harm, and limit unnecessary suffering.”<sup>12</sup> Even terrorism must confront the concepts of military necessity and humanitarianism resulting in a certain level of parity between the weaker and stronger sides. As such, while their weapons differ, the two sides in an asymmetric conflict have similar targets and may strike at associated targets and “modify the principle of proportionality to meet field conditions.”<sup>13</sup> Deciding whether certain actions should be morally acceptable, navigating the straits between military necessity and humanitarian imperatives

while avoiding the pitfall of the slippery slope is the work of applied ethics during war.

This book is well-written with most of its examples based on wars involving the US. Many of the moral issues discussed date back to the Second World War, thus requiring some historical knowledge on the part of the reader. Most of the issues discussed remain relevant and readers will find the debate informative, enriching and fulfilling. 🌐

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# General George Smith Patton

by **Nicholas Han**



## INTRODUCTION

Noted by the German High Command as the “most modern general” and the “best commander of armored and infantry troops,” General George Smith Patton Jr. was widely known for commanding the Seventh United States Army and the Third United States Army. The first officer assigned to the Tank Corps in World War I (WWI), Patton and his army liberated France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Bavaria, Austria and Czechoslovakia.<sup>1</sup>

## EARLY LIFE

George Smith Patton Jr. was born on 11 November 1885 in San Gabriel, California.<sup>2</sup> He suffered from dyslexia as a child, thus his parents tutored him until he was 11 years old.<sup>3</sup> His family background contained many ancestors who had fought in the Revolutionary War, the Mexican War and the Civil War.<sup>4</sup> He was determined to follow in his their footsteps, attending the Virginia Military Institute in 1904 after high school and then the United States (US) Military Academy at West Point, graduating on 11 June 1909.<sup>5</sup> He received a commission in the 15th Cavalry Regiment.<sup>6</sup> In 1910, Patton married his childhood friend Beatrice Ayer.<sup>7</sup>

Patton participated in the first ever modern pentathlon at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics.<sup>8</sup> He managed to achieve third place in the footrace and fourth place in fencing, skills which allowed him to be selected for the pentathlon,

placing him overall fifth and also the top non-Swedish finisher.<sup>9</sup> Patton then headed to Saumur, France and improved his fencing techniques under the guidance of a French “master of arms,” Adjutant Charles Clery.<sup>10</sup> With his newly gained knowledge, he designed a new sword, the Model 1913 Cavalry Saber, and redesigned saber combat doctrine for the US Cavalry.<sup>11</sup> He became the first Army officer to receive the title “Master of the Sword” for being the top instructor in the school where he was both a student and a teacher, the Mounted Service School in Kansas.<sup>12</sup>

Patton graduated in June 1915. His next task was to follow the 15<sup>th</sup> Cavalry to the Philippines, however he believed it would stifle his career, hence he went to Washington, D.C. and persuaded influential friends to reassign him to the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at Fort Bliss, Texas, predicting that the instability in Mexico would lead to a civil war.<sup>13</sup> Patton was chosen for the 1916 Summer Olympics, but it was cancelled due to WWI.<sup>14</sup>

With the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry based in Sierra Blanca, Patton decided to wear his Colt .45 pistol in his belt instead of a holster. Suffering an accidental discharge one night in a saloon, he changed it to a Single Action Army revolver with an ivory handle.<sup>15</sup>

In his interview to aid expedition commander General John J. Pershing, he was asked,

"many other boys want to go. Why should I choose you?" Patton's response was "Because I'm better than those other boys."<sup>16</sup> With the 13<sup>th</sup> Calvary Regiment, Patton helped in the hunt for Pancho Villa and his men. His first combat experience was on 14 May 1916. He and his team caught Villa's men off guard during a foraging expedition, killing Julio Cardenas and two of his guards.<sup>17</sup> Patton gained Pershing's appreciation and became known to the media as a "bandit killer."<sup>18</sup> He was promoted to first lieutenant on 23 May 1916,<sup>19</sup> and stayed in Mexico for the year, returning permanently in February 1917.<sup>20</sup>

## WORLD WAR I

At onset of WWI, Pershing became commander of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) and Patton was able to join him in Europe with a promotion to captain.<sup>21</sup> Patton took charge of supervising the American soldiers in Paris until September where he was assigned as post adjutant in headquarters.<sup>22</sup>

Patton's interest in tanks led to him being tasked to form the AEF Light Tank School in November 1917.<sup>23</sup> He went to the French Army's tank training school at Champlieu near Orrouy, where he took the Renault FT *char d'assaut* light tank for a test run.<sup>24</sup> While there, Patton also invested time to understand the manufacturing of

tanks in a Renault factory. He took in the first ten tanks at the Tank School at Langres, Haute-Marne department, driving seven of the ten out of the train.<sup>25</sup> In 1918 Patton was promoted to major early in January and lieutenant colonel in April, attending the course in the Army General Staff College in Langres.<sup>26</sup>

Patton was tasked the logistics of US First Provisional Tank Brigade in August 1918, that being part of Colonel Samuel Rockenbach's Tank Corps of the First United States Army.<sup>27</sup> He also commanded the FT tanks at the Battle of Saint-Mihiel on 12 September 1918, leading from the front for most of their advance. Patton walked ahead of the tanks into Essey village while it was still under German control, and rode on top of the tank during the advance into Pannes in hopes of inspiring his men.<sup>28</sup>

The tank brigade was shifted to support the Meuse-Argonne Offensive on 26 September 1918, personally led by Patton in bad visibility as they went 5 miles into German lines.<sup>29</sup> He was injured in the left thigh while leading an attack near the town of Cheppy,<sup>30</sup> saved by Private First Class Joe Angelo, who was later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.<sup>31</sup> While recovering, Patton was promoted to colonel in the Tank Corps of the US National Army and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal

and later the Purple Heart after it was created in 1932.<sup>32</sup>

## WORLD WAR II

By 1938, Patton was promoted to colonel in the regular Army, eligible for command of a regiment.<sup>33</sup> The US military was mobilised after the outbreak of World War II (WWII), and he did his part as an umpire in maneuvers in 1940 until he met Adna R. Chafee, Jr., where they discussed the formation of an armored force.<sup>34</sup> Chafee became commander of the force and formed the US First Armored Division, US Second Armored Division and the first combined arms doctrine.<sup>35</sup> Patton became commander in charge of training for the Second Armored Brigade, Second Armored Division.<sup>36</sup> Patton was promoted to brigadier general on 2 October 1940, major general on 4 April 1941 and made division commander of the Second Armored Division.<sup>37</sup> Becoming the most prominent figure in US armor doctrine by staging a mass exercise in December 1940, he also qualified for a pilot's license in order to oversee vehicle movement with a bird's eye view.<sup>38</sup>

In 1943, Patton used commendable offensive and defensive strategy to lead the Seventh US Army to victory during the invasion of Sicily.<sup>39</sup> On D-Day in 1944, after Normandy was invaded, President Eisenhower granted him command of the Third US Army.<sup>40</sup> Patton's natural predisposition for offensive advancement was characterized

in a 1944 press conference, where he responded to a question on whether the Third Army's rapid offensive across France should be slowed to reduce the number of US casualties. His reply was "whenever you slow anything down, you waste human lives."<sup>41</sup> He gained nicknames such as "Old Blood and Guts" and "The Old Man."<sup>42</sup>

In 1945, Patton's Third army were able to cross the Rhine and attack the heart of Germany, gaining 10,000 miles of enemy territory in the span of ten days, liberating Germany from the Nazis.<sup>43</sup> Appalled at the Holocaust, Patton personally made German civilians and troops visit concentration camps such as Buchenwald.<sup>44</sup>

## POSTWAR

Patton returned to the US in glory. However in a fatal motor accident near Mannheim, Germany, he fractured his neck on 9 December 1945 and died at the hospital in Heidelberg 12 days later.<sup>45</sup>

Although possessing great personality, motivational leadership and success as a commander, Patton had made diplomatic missteps, creating a controversial image. A key aspect of his ability to inspire his troops was through his verbal skills.<sup>46</sup> Historian Terry Brighton concluded that Patton was "arrogant, publicity-seeking and personally flawed, but ... among the greatest generals of the war."<sup>47</sup> His cultivated image of a highly

polished helmet, riding pants, high cavalry boots and a flashy ivory-handled Smith & Wesson Model 27 .357 Magnum was a deliberate one, aimed at inspiring his troops with his personality and charisma.<sup>48</sup> 🌐

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## Quotable Quotes

*A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a moulder of consensus.*

– Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), clergyman, activist and leader

*It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.*

– Nelson Mandela (b. 1918), revolutionary, politician and president

*Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care.*

*Either case is a failure of leadership.*

– Colin Powell (b. 1937), statesman and retired four-star general

*Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results not attributes.*

– Peter Drucker (1909-2005), management consultant, educator and author

*A creative man is motivated by the desire to achieve, not by the desire to beat others.*

– Ayn Rand (1905-1982), novelist, playwright and screenwriter

*The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential ... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.*

– Confucius (550-479 BC), teacher, editor, politician and philosopher

*Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.*

– Helen Keller (1880-1968), author, political activist and lecturer

*Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.*

– Winston Churchill (1874-1965), politician and prime minister

*In order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure.*

– Bill Cosby (b. 1937), comedian, author, musician and activist

*A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him.*

– David Brinkley (1920-2003), newscaster

*I don't measure a man's success by how high he climbs but how high he bounces when he hits bottom.*

– George S. Patton (1885-1945), American general

*Let him who would enjoy a good future waste none of his present.*

– Roger Babson (1875-1967), entrepreneur and business theorist

*Patience and time do more than strength or passion.*

– Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695), fabulist and poet

*A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.*

– John C. Maxwell (b. 1947), Christian author, speaker and pastor

*Leadership is a privilege to better the lives of others.*

*It is not an opportunity to satisfy personal greed.*

– Mwai Kibaki (b. 1931), Kenyan politician

*Leadership to me means duty, honor, country.*

*It means character, and it means listening from time to time.*

– George W. Bush (b. 1946), American politician, businessman and president

*One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before  
it becomes an emergency.*

– Arnold H. Glasow (1905-1998), author

*Humility is a great quality of leadership which derives respect and not just fear or hatred.*

– Yousef Munayyer, writer and political analyst

*Character matters; leadership descends from character.*

– Rush Limbaugh (b. 1951), talk show host and political commentator

*A leader is one who, out of madness or goodness, volunteers to take upon  
himself the woe of the people. There are few men so foolish,  
hence the erratic quality of leadership in the world.*

– John Updike (1932-2009), novelist, poet, short story writer and art critic

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For example:

Tim Huxley, *Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore* (St Leonard, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 4.

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Edward Timperlake, William C. Triplett and William II Triplet, *Red Dragon Rising: Communist China's Military Threat to America* (Columbia: Regnery Publishing, 1999), 34.

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Chan Kim Yin and Psalm Lew, "The Challenge of Systematic Leadership Development in the SAF," *POINTER* 30, no. 4 (2005): 39-50.

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For example:

David Boey, "Old Soldiers Still Have Something to Teach," *The Straits Times*, 28 September 2004, 12.

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International Committee of the Red Cross, "Direct participation in hostilities," 31 December 2005, <http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/participation-hostilities-ihl-311205>.

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Singapore 638364  
Tel: **6799 7755**  
Fax: **6799 7071**  
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