



MILITARY LEADERS AND THE MISSION COMMAND APPROACH

Andrea SZABÓ SZABÓNÉ

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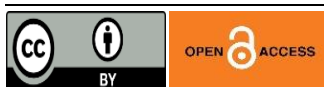
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ABSTRACT

Adequate responses – both from individuals and from organizations – to the increasingly complex challenges of the 21st century presuppose a combination of such leadership competencies that are essential for effective and successful mission accomplishment in the changing security and operational environment. Creating the network environment that characterizes today's operations (also at the tactical leadership level) increases the commander's responsibility. The increasingly complex operational environment demands that decentralization be emphasized in the decision-making process and in the conduct of operations. Furthermore, the fleeting opportunities in emerging tactical situations also require quick reactions and timely and correct decisions of small unit leaders. The paper provides a short, summary analysis of mission command and of those leadership competencies, capabilities and skills that are necessary for the mission command approach)

KEYWORDS

mission command, competency, leadership, changing security and operational environment



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INTRODUCTION

The new challenges arising from a comprehensive interpretation of security and the quick responses to be given to them, the transformation of warfare, the spread of multi-domain warfare, the rapid development of information technology and the all-encompassing digitalization require a specific approach to command and battle management, and so does the terrain, too, which has become a glass table due to the effectiveness of reconnaissance tools, thus it necessitates the dispersal and splitting of one's own forces before their deployment in order to protect them.

The challenges emerging in our world – which is characterized by increased speed, interdependence and the incredibly fast-paced and intensive change of technology occurring on an unimaginable scale – demand continuous adaptability of every organization, which naturally also entails the transformation of the approach to leadership. In the age of digital,

decentralized communication networks, cooperation and problem-solving must take place in real time with the highest possible efficiency, in an innovative way. In an environment characterized by accelerated operational tempo, the complexity of emerging situations, grey-zone hybrid conflicts, increased data volumes and the spread of artificial intelligence, military leaders are expected to be able to immediately adapt to the changed circumstances.

From the aspect of mission accomplishment based on allied multinational cooperation, it is also necessary to work out, deepen and continuously develop a mission command approach and mindset. Nowadays, the role of the time factor and the immediate adaptation to increasingly fast-paced changes have become important, so the usual methods and management schemes are no longer able to provide solutions in every case. The mission command approach can be an excellent tool for increasing efficiency, maximizing success and utilizing the full spectrum of abilities and skills.

From the point of view of this approach to command, too, the leader's person is of crucial importance. The selection of a leader with appropriate competencies is not only important for the individual professional development of a given person but is also an excellent tool for maintaining and increasing the efficiency of the human resource management process and organizational activity. This is especially true of the representatives of armed forces and law enforcement organizations, since the person wearing the uniform embodies the organization, the organizational attitude and values. This is particularly true in leadership positions, as in this case, beyond setting a personal example and the personal character traits, another important aspect is to preserve and deepen the motivation of one's colleagues.

1 THE MILITARY APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

There are several attempts at defining the concept of leadership in the literature, so the definition of this concept is not uniform. Due to length constraints, this study does not aim at analyzing each definition; however, it is by all means important to present some ideas related to the military interpretation.

We can consider as default the definition of command according to which it is "the responsibility assigned to a person for the purpose of controlling, leading, coordinating and supervising the armed forces". (Berkáné Danesch – M. Szabó – Mező, 2015, p. 699.) According to General Bernard Law Montgomery, "Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence." (Montgomery, 1996) In connection with the definition of military leadership, János Csengeri also highlights the fact of influence exerted in the interest of mission accomplishment and the existence of changing circumstances: "Military leadership is a social activity with unique features, during which the head of a military organization, the commander, influences his

subordinates to perform organizational tasks assigned by the superior in order to achieve a goal, under the appropriate conditions, but, potentially, also in their absence, even in complicated (dangerous) circumstances.” (Csengeri, 2014, p. 84.)

This process of influencing can be implemented in several ways. “The commander solves the influencing process based on his own leadership skills: his faith, values, knowledge and morals, character, skills and professional competency”. (Pintér – Nagy, 1997, p.74.) Consequently, there is continuous interaction between leaders and their subordinates, which – in my opinion and experience – is subjective. Although military hierarchical dependencies (the chain of command) require objectivity, I think that if a commander is unable to view his subordinate with confidence, or if a subordinate does not accept the commander, this also affects the effectiveness of cooperation.

We should make a distinction between the terms “management leading” and “leadership” as well as between “manager” and “leader”. Leadership is actually an element of a leader’s activity that focuses primarily on the human factor, the personal relationships between leader and subordinate: it is how the members of an organization are influenced in the interest of achieving common goals. (Bakacsi, 2004) By contrast, management is a leader’s manifestation in connection with which the responsibility and authority of the given person are limited, and the focus is on the most effective realization of the goals. (Czuprák – Kovács, 2017) Consequently, the leaders’ personality and charisma play an outstanding role in leadership activities, which inspires their colleagues. Leaders seek and give responses to the challenges of the environment by focusing on new things and unconventional solutions to problems: they have a vision of the future; they are motivated by development. Leaders think in cooperation and empower their subordinates within pre-defined limits in order to achieve the goals as effectively as possible. By contrast, manager-stye leaders prefer stability, smooth operation of the organization, best practices and the single best solution; they lay down rules and control their colleagues. Unlike in the case of leaders, it is not their personality that dominates, but their authority).

2 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MISSION COMMAND

We can consider mission command as leadership based on the division of legal powers, which takes place between commanders and their subordinates for attaining a clearly defined objective, with a definite intent, within a defined framework of authority and with a defined area of responsibility, while at the same time by providing the conditions and resources necessary to achieve that objective.

According to Péter Lippai, “mission command can be interpreted as a human-centered leadership philosophy where, in addition to defining the goal to be achieved, the superior puts constraints on the method of execution only to the minimum extent necessary for coordination. This fact gives subordinates a great deal of autonomy previously

unimaginable in our armed forces, which, when coupled with the provision of conditions for execution, can greatly increase the success of mission accomplishment in the rapidly changing circumstances that are characteristic of modern warfare. (Lippai, 2009, p. 31.) A paper co-authored by Zoltán Bárány and Péter Lippai also confirms this definition: “The essence of mission command as a style of military leadership is that only a framework-like goal is defined for subordinates during the tasking, but not the path leading to it.” (Bárány – Lippai, 2009, p. 18.) However, the delegation of the right to make decisions presupposes maximum trust: “The unity of command depends on the commander. If he can bring subordinate commanders, chiefs and leaders to his side, then the command will be united.” (Takács, 2016, p. 79.) The approach and method that presupposes the existence of trust also presupposes freedom of action taken to achieve the goal, close cooperation as well as independent initiative and proactivity. (Jobbágy – Czeglédi, 2016)

In my view, mission command can be interpreted as a kind of approach. It is a complexity built on the unity of the leader’s mindset and leadership competencies, which also functions as ongoing interaction between the leader and the subordinates based on a common understanding, as well as an approach generating professional development that also influences the level of the individual and that of the organization, and at once as a warfighting function. An important feature of mission command is that the decisions are made by those who are best placed to make them at any given moment, having detailed information about the given situation and change. (MCDC, 2020)

In an environment defined by uncertain and unpredictable circumstances changing at an accelerated pace (VUCA¹) that is particularly characteristic of our time, an adaptive, cooperation-based, decentralized mode of command is much more capable of supporting the effective realization of the superior’s intent than a centralized command approach based on formalities that pushes individual motivation and initiative to the background while not giving immediate responses to quick changes.

The so-called OODA loop² can significantly support the success of the mission command approach. This method, which is also an approach, is “a kind of cyclical decision-making mechanism in which the decision-maker assesses and evaluates the situation, makes a decision quickly, and then acts accordingly. Its basic premise is that one should not fear uncertainty and should always make decisions and take action according to the current situation.” (Porkoláb, 2017)

¹ VUCA: volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous.

² OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act): multi-step decision-making process or approach. The method was developed by Colonel John Boyd (1927-1997), a former pilot. The original name of the method was OODA loop, which refers to the continuous cycle of the mechanism.)

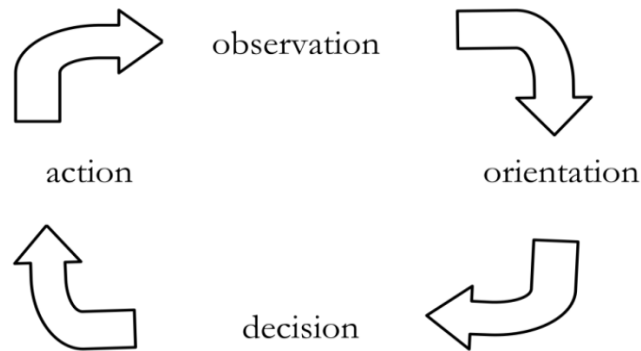


Figure 2: Flowchart of the OODA Loop method

Source: Boyd, 2021

The assessment and observation of the situation based on a continuous flow of systematized information and trend analysis are important in the course of the mechanism. This is followed by questioning and rebuilding current paradigms and models. All this allows one to assess the situation in a new light. This process of orientation does not focus on the final result, but rather on the given current, momentary state. This is followed by the most optimal decision made on the basis of information available at the given moment, which – due to the dynamically changing environment – naturally includes the possibility of mistakes and failures as well. The correctness of the decision can be tested in action: after the decision is made, immediate action is required. After taking action, we can get feedback on which (sub)elements work and which need to be changed. In this way, this mechanism results in a kind of learning process, which leads not only to the development of the individual's abilities and competencies, but also to the deepening of the adaptability, cohesion and professional knowledge base of the organization.

3 INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO MISSION COMMAND: AUFTRAGSTAKTIK, MISSION COMMAND

Many militaries around the world have raised the basic principles of mission command to a doctrinal level. At any rate, one thing is common to them: the basis of today's approach is Auftragstaktik, a leadership philosophy and warfighting function based on centuries of experience, continuous education and preparation, and systematic training.

This classic version of mission command dates back to the 19th-century Prussian army: its first written records can be traced back to General Scharnhorst³, who drew his conclusions from the lessons learned in the French Revolutionary Wars. (Lippai, 2009, p. 38.) Considering himself a follower of Clausewitz, General Moltke saw⁴ Auftragstaktik as the fundamental leadership philosophy of the German military: delegated independent

³ Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst (1756–1813) was a Prussian general, military writer and thinker.

⁴ Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke (1800–1891) was a Prussian Field Marshal and Chief of Staff of the Royal Prussian Army from 1858 to 1871.

decisions and initiatives were encouraged at all levels of command. (Jobbágy – Czeglédi, 2016, p. 91.) Based on continuous practice, these principles completely permeated every segment of military education, training and preparation, supporting the consistent transmission of values and patterns of behavior.

In connection with the Bundeswehr, the German military which was reorganized after World War II, but which inherited the historical practice of Auftragstaktik and treated it as a priority, mention must be made of the concept of Innere Führung. On the one hand, Innere Führung, as a formal principle, clearly delimits the framework of the military leaders' activities and authority in detail, and on the other hand, as a kind of internal order and norm, it regulates the soldiers' (uniformed citizens') conduct and contact in all areas and systems of relationships.

It simultaneously strengthens the sense of responsibility and duty, emphasizes the importance of cooperation and the sense of belonging, deepens discipline and professionalism. As the main element of leadership, it fixes a positive attitude towards people (trust, transmission of values, communication), mission command towards subordinates (camaraderie, knowledge of subordinates, cooperation), as well as accurate knowledge of the subordinates' abilities (helping cohesion, setting an example, self-criticism). (Szabó, 1997)

With regard to the United States of America, one can find mission command to be primarily related to unified land operations. The first written traces of this philosophy of leadership and warfighting function go back more than a century: a Field Service Regulation issued in 1905 laid down the subordinates' freedom of decision and action insofar as it was justified by changed circumstances within the framework of the commander's intent. (Clinton, 2013, p. 42.) Having come a long way of development, mission command has eventually become a land forces doctrine by virtue of being included in an US Army Doctrine Publication in 2003. (Ancker, 2013) This document contains four important elements for the successful implementation of mission command, in addition to the fundamentally required mutual trust and common understanding between the commander and the subordinates: the commander's intent, the subordinates' initiative, the way of executing the mission order and the allocation of resources. It is no accident that in the latest 2019 edition of the doctrine, the chapter on the principles of mission command has General George Patton's words as its motto and explanation: "Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." In this spirit, the document already expands on the core elements of mission command: "Build cohesive teams through mutual trust; create shared understanding; provide a clear commander's intent; exercise disciplined initiative; use mission orders; accept prudent risk".

Mission command is primarily a leadership philosophy, an approach to leadership that encourages the subordinates' initiative in order to achieve the leaders' intents, and at

the same time requires leaders to share only the essential information with subordinates about the methods needed to achieve the objective. (Finney-Klug, 2016) Concepts such as agility, initiative, intent, empowerment and adaptability all point to the condition of decentralization, but the most important keyword is trust: both in routine practice and on combat operations conducted in real-life situations, all of the desired effects are possible with trust. Trust can be developed over time both on the part of the commander and on the part of subordinates. (Guthrie, 2012, p. 26.)

The leadership philosophy of the Dutch armed forces is also based on the principle of mission command, which requires uniform leadership principles and a clear chain of command at all levels of command. The doctrine on the principles of command and control clearly states that the basic condition for this type of leadership is a clear definition of tasks, authorities and responsibilities. Military operations are increasingly taking place in an unstable, unpredictable, chaotically uncertain and particularly rapidly changing environment, so every situation is unique and requires immediate and adequate response and adaptation. Consequently, efficiency can be increased if the commanders at all levels of command are allowed to decide for themselves how they can best accomplish their mission under the given circumstances. The doctrine highlights the importance of decentralization, which is also important because it makes clear that, in the changed circumstances, decisions that are most appropriate for the objectives are best taken at the lower level of command directly involved in the operation. Thanks to the decentralized approach to command, subordinates feel engaged and thereby motivated. Another advantage is that there is only a limited amount of basic information flowing down and up along the chain of command: local commanders involved in the mission make decisions based on the most up-to-date information. As a general rule, the more uncertain the circumstances, the lower the level of decision-making. Another fundamental thesis is the indivisibility of responsibility: the delegation of authorities does not mean that the commander is absolved of all personal responsibility: he remains responsible for his own actions and those of his subordinates. Tempo plays an equally important role at all levels of command, as a high tempo will help disrupt the enemy's cycle of decision-making and action as well as his cohesion, and hinder his response; at the same time, the cohesion of one's own unit, the routine gained through continuous training and preparation, the mutual knowledge of the commander's and his subordinates' thinking and the mutual trust between them support successful mission accomplishment and the timely making of decisions to a great extent.

The Australian Army Land Warfare Doctrine defines mission command as "a philosophy of command and a system for conducting operations in which subordinates are given a clear indication by a superior of his intentions. The result required, the task, the resources and any constraints are clearly enunciated; however, subordinates are allowed the freedom to decide how to achieve the required result." One of the prerequisites for mission command success is a uniform, "relevant doctrine. The purpose of the doctrine is to provide guidance for intelligent application, not dogma for automatic response" in all

situations. Reliability also plays a key role: subordinate commanders “must regard their superior’s intentions as fundamental guidance and make the attainment of such guidance the underlying purpose of every action.” The “unbroken chain of mutual trust and respect between commanders at all levels” includes not only that “the superior must have the courage to foster their subordinates’ initiative”, but also the possibility of continuous improvement with regard to the errors made. Clear commander’s intent, the constant exchange of information and cooperation-based communication strengthen unit cohesion and the subordinates’ trust that are indispensable for making the necessary decisions independently. In a rapidly changing operational environment, “the consequences of delay through hesitation and indecision, or time wasting by seeking confirmation, may be more dangerous than a flawed but timely decision based on the best assessment of incomplete information.”

3 MILITARY LEADERS’ COMPETENCIES

The commanders, leaders at the helm of military organizations lead these organizations within a framework defined by the law and superiors, and their service authority covers all operational areas of the military organizations led by them: they bear full responsibility for the combat readiness of the military organizations, for the preparation and training of personnel, for ensuring the functioning, for the personnel’s discipline, for the effective activities and financial management of the military organizations subordinate to them, for carrying out the superiors’ orders and for compliance with legal norms.

Competency is a word of Latin origin: it means aptitude and skillfulness. David McClelland⁵, whose name is associated with the foundation of competency theories, in addition to defining the features connected with achievement, also assessed the mindsets and behaviors associated with successful performance that are in a causal relationship with it. (Bolgár, 2017, p. 128.). By competency we mean “those basic, defining personal qualities and traits that are causally related to performance rated as excellent or at least above average in relation to a given job, based on a predetermined level of criteria.” (Bolgár, 2014, p. 128.). Another definition states: “Competency is the ability and willingness of the individual to transform his knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudinal characteristics into successful problem-solving action”. (Bolgár, 2014, p. 129.) It is important to formulate competencies clearly and distinctly, since the desired pattern of behavior can only be achieved through unambiguous communication.

MoD Decree No. 10/2015 on medical, mental and physical fitness for military service and on the medical review procedure lays down the requirements for general psychological status according to three decisive criteria. The relevant regulations distinguish seven

⁵ David Clarence McClelland (1917-1998) was an American psychologist, his Human Motivation Theory is one of the best-known psychological models of human needs, especially in business life and in relation to organizations.

personality characteristics in terms of personality traits: balance of emotional and impulsive life, stress tolerance, frustration tolerance, self-control, adequate behavior, self-confidence and self-knowledge. When determining the intelligence level (IQ), the focus is on measuring general intelligence (logical, combinatoric, problem-solving skills), memory and communication skills. In terms of sensorimotor and perceptual performance, the measurement points are general attentional performance, perception, stimulus discrimination, reaction time and movement coordination. Based on the job map, the job requirements – beyond the aspects of general psychological fitness – fix the set of abilities, skills and personality traits required to perform the given job (e.g. tanker, artilleryman, field chaplain etc.). Personality traits are already discussed in more detail and nuance. The requirements include, among others, psychomotor tempo, adaptability, commitment, rule consciousness and initiative. In terms of the intelligence level, logic, information processing, creativity and flexibility are among the expectations. Requirements for sensorimotor performance and perceptual performance include, for example, spatial orientation, tolerance for monotony, concentration of attention and accuracy. The decree lays down specific requirements for those serving in areas of operations, taking into account the specific nature of their service. The requirements for firefighters and those performing general foreign service are set out separately in the job descriptions.

The relevant legislation also defines military leadership requirements. Beyond general psychological fitness, an effective military leader at a given level must possess the following skills, abilities and personality characteristics necessary for command:

Tab 1: Skills, abilities and personality characteristics required for command

Personality characteristics	Intelligence level	Leadership and organizational skills
Networking skills	Logic	Planning and organizational skills
Initiative	Creativity	Decision-making skills
Cooperative skills	Insight	Problem-solving skills
Reliability		Information management
Empathy		Strategic thinking
Morality		Team-building skills
Level of aspiration		Management skills
Flexibility		Motivating ability

Psychomotor tempo		Communication skills
Independence		Skill to endure criticism
Commitment		Intellectual efficiency
Rule consciousness		Mental load capacity

Source: table edited by the author

The creation of a network environment typical of today's military operations – including the tactical command level – increases the commanders' responsibility. Decentralization needs to receive greater focus in the context of an increasingly complex operational environment, in decision-making procedure and in operational command, and the right decision made at the right time depending on the small unit commanders' reaction is also important in consideration of the intensively increasing significance of emerging tactical situations. With regard to general competencies, it is important for military leaders to easily and quickly understand the context of the operational situation and the factors influencing it. It is indispensable that they have the initiative and act in the situation they familiarize themselves with in such a way that they can continuously influence events and constantly adapt to changing circumstances. By achieving tactical goals, they are able to support the implementation of objectives on the operational and strategic levels, while at the same time they are able to harmonize their own activities with continuous changes. In addition, they are able to build teams and team cohesion and to motivate their subordinates.

Highlighting the responses to be given to challenges generated by the rapidly changing security environment and focusing on the characteristics of today's operational environment, Gábor Boldizsár concludes that "the subordinate military organization or formation is usually at a great distance from the sending commander, so continuous guidance and decision support can be difficult or not provided at all. The commander must be able to make ad hoc decisions on the spot on the basis of well-developed, well-established orders, directives and guidelines." (Boldizsár, 2014, pp. 33-34.)

To ensure rapid and flexible responses to challenges that are adapted to changes in warfare, the ideal military leader:

- "Effectively applies the professional knowledge of its branch of service in practice;
- is open-minded across the full spectrum of operations, able to think outside the box and break with familiar stereotypes;
- adapts to new challenges, is able to act as both leader and cooperator during network operation;

- is able to track rapid changes individually and implement organizational adaptation at the institutional level as well;
- is able to perform the same role in an international environment as in the national position;
- courageous and determined: able to recognize and exploit opportunities in complex operational environments;
- is innovative and adaptive at both his/her own and lower levels of command;
- is a master of operational art even in multi-domain environments;
- is able to assert national interests at the strategic level;
- has a high level of cultural awareness and language proficiency.” (Takács – Szabóné Szabó – Töll, 2021, pp. 37–38.)

According to General Schwarzkopf,⁶ “Leadership is a potent combination [and coeffect] of strategy and character”, but the totality of personality traits, charisma, is much more important than strategy. We can learn more from negative leadership practice than from the positive one, as it shows us how not to lead people. In his view, the ability to control and the related competency are of paramount importance. (Kruse, 2012)

According to ⁷Gen. Stanley McChrystal, “leaders are empathetic”: they have the ability to understand, empathize and communicate effectively with those they lead. In his opinion, “they need not agree or share the same background or status in society as their followers, but they understand their hopes, fears”, plans, strengths and weaknesses. “Leadership is not popularity,” especially not in the military hierarchy: “For soldiers, the choice between popularity and effectiveness is ultimately no choice at all. Soldiers want to win; their survival depends upon it”. Military “leaders are genuine”. In his experience, subordinates would tolerate a commander’s being less of a leader than he hoped to be, but they would not forgive him being less than he claimed to be. “Simple honesty matters.” The general points out that intellect or charisma play a significant role in leadership, but “neither are required nor enough” for someone to become a good leader. “Physical appearance, poise, and outward self-confidence can be confused with leadership – for a time.” In his opinion and experience, the emphasis is much more on the extent a given leader can recognize his strengths and weaknesses, how well he can use them to his advantage, how effectively he can exploit and utilize them, to what extent he has a real self-image, self-esteem, self-confidence and determination.

⁶ Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr. (1934-2012) was an American general. From 1988 to 1991, he commanded the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), and then served as commander-in-chief of the coalition forces during the Gulf War.

⁷ General Stanley McChrystal (1954–) retired as commander of U.S. and NATO forces of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) fighting in Afghanistan

Genuineness and self-discipline are essential for a leader. “Leaders walk a fine line between self-confidence and humility.” In his view, “soldiers want leaders who are sure of their ability to lead the team to success but humble enough to recognize their limitations. [...] It [i]s better to admit ignorance or fear than to display false knowledge or bravado. And candidly admitting doubts or difficulties is key to building confidence. But expressing doubts and confidence is a delicate balance. When things look their worst, followers look to the leader for reassurance that they can and will succeed”, as well as for calm assessment of the situation and guidance. “Leaders are human.” They have their own emotions, no matter how much they strive for objectivity. However, really good military leaders constantly strive “to be the best humans they could be.” As well as to admit and take responsibility for their mistakes, because mistakes are part of the process and progress of learning.

3 MILITARY LEADERS AND THE MISSION COMMAND APPROACH

In my judgment and experience, the effectiveness of performing the tasks of an organizational unit depends to a significant extent on the leader’s person, personality, leadership competences and human qualities, thus on his/her leadership style and approach. If they do not have an internal need for a different approach to command, leaders socialized in an environment dominated by a “detailed command” approach find it more difficult to identify with and genuinely represent an entirely different approach. However, changed circumstances, hybrid warfare, the use of highly mobile forces in a rapidly changing environment, the availability of real-time information, and even the demographic specifics of the personnel should encourage leaders at all levels of command to face this challenge.

It is important to emphasize that mutual trust and respect, effective in both directions, are indispensable for success: superiors know the subordinates’ abilities, training level, their professional and human characteristics, strengths and limitations and energy reserves, while subordinates are able to think with their superiors’ heads and identify with their intentions in the interest of attaining a common objective.

Respect should in no way be based on coercion, because that would result in fear, low efficiency and loss of trust. The humanity of leadership must play a decisive role in this approach to command: commanders consider their subordinates as partners and involve them in decision-making by utilizing and exploiting their professional qualities and skills in the right sense, thereby strengthening the soundness of their own decisions and raising the likelihood of successful mission accomplishment and task execution. This also presupposes that commanders maintain a continuous dialogue with their subordinate colleagues; however, this communication can only be effective if it supports initiative, new and unconventional proposals for solutions formulated to achieve organizational goals, and does so without retaliation. As a result of this method, the subordinates’ motivation, their attachment to the organization and their identification with the organizational goals and

tasks continue to deepen, as do the team spirit, camaraderie and loyalty. All this exerts a fundamentally positive effect on the retaining power of the organization.

The flow of information, as part of communication and as a clear and unambiguous expression of the commander's intent, should be multidirectional as a means of achieving a common understanding of the task: all organizational elements involved in the implementation of the task, working in cooperation and continuously interacting with each other, must have the basic information necessary for the achievement of the set objectives.

Leaders with a mission command approach respect their subordinates' human rights and do not humiliate them, but rather inspires them, while representing and conveying values through personal example. In my opinion, genuineness is of key importance in all manifestations of a leader, including outwards appearance and conduct, external and internal communication, decision-making processes and the system of relationships with subordinates. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account an aspect of the human factor, namely the fact that leaders, too, are human: although they are the ones who obviously bear responsibility, in certain situations, by exercising self-criticism they do not undermine their authority, but may even increase their genuineness. The mission command approach requires awareness and deep self-knowledge of commanders: they must be clear on their strengths and weaknesses, but nevertheless must possess the ability of self-reflection.

I consider it important to experience the successes achieved together, as well as continuous feedback from leaders to subordinates, both in terms of confirmation and criticism. However, the possibility of mistakes should not be overrated: mistakes and conflicts should be part of organizational learning and training, and as such, they should serve as opportunities for development. It is the leader's responsibility to establish and operate an organization that is based on the lessons learned and is capable of continuously adopting new knowledge and methods.

CONCLUSION

With regard to the responses to increased risks and challenges related to the complex, comprehensive interpretation of security, the abilities to adapt and to react immediately to changing situations play a key role, which presupposes independence, creativity, proactivity, flexibility, initiative and an approach based on a decentralized decision-making process that is open to new methods and solutions at all levels of command.

Of course, just like the change of the entire organizational culture, the transformation of the command approach cannot take place overnight: change presupposes a conscious organizational learning process building from the foundations; the basic pillars of this complex process are quality education, preparation and professional training that are

provided in support of deepening value-based, healthy self-confidence, independent thinking and initiative, as well as the continuous development of leadership competencies and the objective implementation of leader selection based on real-world performance and evaluation.

In my view, mission command points beyond the successful execution of a given task: it provides commanders with a tool and thus an opportunity that, in addition to efficiency, is suitable for building coherent communities and teams that are deeply committed to common values and the common mission, are coherent, and prioritize cooperation and common principles as well as organizational identity.

Mission command can be the key to success, but it is important to emphasize that it is effective only if the conditions discussed earlier are simultaneously ensured, if the subordinates' freedom of thought and decision does not jeopardize the commander's intent, if autonomy does not mean a self-serving attitude and if freedom of initiative does not amount to its uncontrollability. The change of attitude, and thus mission command can be successful only if leaders can identify with it at all levels of command, and there is no inner resistance based on the fear of deviation from the usual, of leaving the comfort zone, or of one's own incompetence.

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LtCol Andrea Szabóné Szabó, PhD Student

Doctoral School of Military Science,
 Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training, National University of Public Service,
 Hungária krt. 9-11.
 H-1101 Budapest, Hungary
 e-mail: andrea.szabo@hm.gov.hu
 ORCID: 0000-0001-7787-3238