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PROPOSAL FOR EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY (IC)

In the civilian sector, major reform of the standard hierarchical management structure and command and control leadership style began in the late 1980s. An increased number of customers requiring smaller more tailored orders replaced standardized products, which caused product lifecycles to grow shorter and revealed an urgent need for flexibility. Traditional layered management hierarchies were cumbersome with too many checks and controls, which resulted in a stove pipe of production at the management levels. From 2001 - 2005 downsizing and additional restructuring to meet customer needs further refined and streamlined companies and reduced inefficiencies. These changes resulted in companies with leaner, flatter, decentralized leadership structures and styles more capable of responding to dynamic environments. Many of the observations from the early civilian sector may also apply to the leadership environment in the intelligence community.

Analysis of the current leadership environment in the IC, supported by the results of a survey given to a cross section of Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA) employees, indicates the IC leadership structure is hierarchical / top down management in which the dominant leadership style is task-oriented, command and control. A task-oriented command and control leadership style is characterized by a primary focus on getting the job done, which at times can be autocratic. Task-oriented leaders actively define the work and the roles required, put support structures in place, plan, organize, and monitor employees and their projects; yet, these leaders do not prioritize the well-being of their teams and therefore have problems motivating and retaining staff (Mind tools, 2010). This task-oriented command and control leadership style is pervasive throughout the Department of Defense (DOD) and is applied at all levels of leadership from executive down to lower level employees.

Another common leadership style used throughout the DOD is transactional leadership. Transactional leadership is a component of many different leadership styles and typically balances the negatives of task oriented command and control. In the most basic form of transactional leadership, employees perform prescribed tasks in exchange for benefits and rewards based on their performance. As a government employee, better than average intrinsic benefits such as job security and service to country coupled with extrinsic benefits such as pay, time off, bonuses, and competitive benefit packages compensate for many of the negatives of a task oriented command and control leadership style. This balance may help with retention, but not necessarily with improving overall performance. Employee loyalty motivated by benefits only provides retention incentives on a basic level and typically will not inspire loyalty as strong as that which is ingrained by a trusting work environment that provides flexibility and opportunity to innovate and make a difference. This more empowering atmosphere of flexibility and innovation is seen at top performing companies like Google and Patagonia. Most agree that the government as a whole, and more specifically the DOD, lags the civilian sector in implementing change in all areas ranging from technological advancements to effective business models as seen in world class companies today. IC organizations are not corporations nor are they military units, yet they have similarities to both and require a tailored look at how they can reduce significant leadership challenges within the DOD hierarchical structure and achieve results in line with their capabilities. Critical overarching characteristics of the IC, which make it unique and compatible for servant and transformational leadership styles are: the culture of service; the intrinsic value of providing support to military forces; employment of a high percentage of experienced, educated, professional, and capable personnel; and a community focus on integrity and honor. No single leadership style or combination of leadership styles will work the same for all companies and organizations. Effective leadership requires a tailored application based on the mission, motivations, traits, abilities and environment of a given workplace. Applying transformational and servant based leadership principles within the IC may be an answer to improved performance, innovation, job satisfaction and retention throughout the community.

Proposal

Improved performance, innovation, job satisfaction and retention throughout the IC can be attained through the application of transformational and servant based leadership principles. The work environment of the civilian analyst within the IC is distinct from any other civilian or military workforce in the United States. Due to the sensitive nature of what intelligence professionals do, it is determined, prior to issuing a security clearance that each employee in the IC has the highest level of honor and integrity. Any indicators to the contrary preclude one from working within the IC, so it is assessed that employees within the IC have a high degree of honor and integrity. Additionally, most civilian analysts within the IC have advanced degrees, are working on advanced degrees or have comparable work experience. These individuals have shown their ability to think critically and creatively and to manage their time in relation to work requirements. Finally, most civilian analysts working in the government have displayed a desire to serve a purpose greater than themselves. Extrinsic rewards of government service are good; however, they do not compete with the rewards of some of their non-government counterparts. As such, it is determined that many civilian analysts in the intelligence community find the intrinsic value of greater service a benefit to their position in the workforce.

The challenge here is how to most effectively lead a workforce that has the highest standards of integrity, proven track records of creativity and critical thinking skills, an uncommon depth of education and experience and a proven ability to remain on task to accomplish goals. The proposal to maximize the potential of this workforce is to reform leadership within the community to minimize the use of command and control leadership styles in favor of a combination of transformational and servant based leadership styles. This reform will give this well developed, well educated intellectual workforce the flexibility they need to perform to their full potential, maximizing on their innovation, enthusiasm and experience.

Servant Based Leadership

The term "Servant-Leadership" was first coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in a 1970 essay entitled *The Servants Leader*. Greenleaf was born in Terre Haute, Indiana and graduated from

Carleton College in Minnesota. Following graduation he went to work for AT&T in their New York headquarters where he spent the next 40 years working in the area of management research, development and education. In 1964 he retired from AT&T and began his second career, which lasted 25 years, consulting institutions such as MIT, The American Foundation for Management Research, and the Lilly Endowment Inc. In 1964 Greenleaf founded the Center for applied Ethics renamed the Robert K. Greenleaf Center in 1985. Greenleaf died in 1990 (Spears 1995). Since Greenleaf's initial definition several academics and experts have embraced the concept due to its pragmatic credibility, yet no empirical operationalization exists (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Most scholarly research according to Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) has focused on similar topics including leader member exchange (LMX: Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), altruism (Grier & Burke, 1992; Kanungo & Conger, 1993), self sacrifice (Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1998), Charismatic (Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Webber, 1947) and authentic (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Price, 1947).

Greenleaf's (1970) essay, "*The Servants Leader"* first described this new leadership theory:

The servant-leader *is* servant first… It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first; perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions…The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

Stephen R. Covey (2002), who wrote the forward to Greenleaf's and Larry C. Spears latest update to the 1977 book "*Servant leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*" stated concerning how to develop powerful enduring organizations through servant based leadership:

The deepest part of human nature is that which urges people-each one of us- to rise above our present circumstances and to transcend our common nature. If you can appeal to it, you tap into a whole new source of human motivation…The only way to achieve this is through the empowerment of people. The only way to empower people is through high trust cultures

turning bosses in to into servants and coaches, and structures and systems into nurturing institutionalized servant processes.

Factors considered and how they apply to the IC:

In this section we will explore five factors Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) identified as specific to servant based leadership and how they apply to the IC environment, they include: altruistic calling**,** emotional healing**,** wisdom**,** persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship.

- Altruistic calling: Primary motivation or desire is to serve and make a difference for the benefit of others. A leader with an altruistic calling is satisfied working hard to meet the needs of others (Barbuto & Wheeler 2006). It can be argued that leaders and employees within the DOD and more specifically IC whether they were prior military or not see themselves as servants to our country or military forces and appreciate the intrinsic value this service provides. Further, it is likely that altruistic calling is a prominent factor for employees and leaders when making decisions to work for the government. Given this attribute employees and leaders of the IC likely have a greater capacity to lead using altruistic calling.
- Emotional healing: Empathetic and an excellent listener who is committed and skilled in helping individuals recover from traumatic events. Leaders with the emotional healing characteristic create a safe environment for employees to discuss personal and professional issues (Barbuto & Wheeler 2006). A capacity for leadership through emotional healing is likely higher in the DOD as a whole due to awareness of and for many prior service members direct experience with significant traumatic events. This awareness or experience does not necessarily translate to an ability to lead with this characteristic, but it does provide the framework to empathize with followers. Find reference
- Wisdom: For the purpose of this paper the leadership characteristic of wisdom is understood as a combination of awareness of surroundings and anticipation of consequences (Kant, 1978; Plato, 1945). A wise leader balances the perfect and the practical adding the height of knowledge and utility. (Barbuto & Wheeler 2006) IC

professionals as a whole have core components of wisdom through significant and wide-ranging experience base (prior military service) and education. As with emotional healing this ground work for wise leadership does not guarantee a wise leader but it does increase the likelihood or capacity for leading with wisdom.

- Persuasive mapping: Is the extent leaders' use sound reasoning and mental framework. Leaders that display pervasive mapping have vision or are capable of understanding greater possibilities with a clear articulation of those ideas. They are also persuasive and compel others to execute. (Barbuto & Wheeler 2006) IC professionals do not necessarily have an advantage in this leadership characteristic other than being more experienced, diverse and educated, prerequisites of sound reasoning, vision and articulation.
- Organizational stewardship: The extent a leader engenders and prepares an organization to serve society through community outreach, development and programs. A leader with this characteristic works to develop a community spirit, fosters value in leaving an organization better than it was found and prepares the workforce to leave a positive legacy (Barbuto & Wheeler 2006). Once again, the service environment in the IC and DOD as a whole has already established much of the ground work in our current leaders for this characteristic to be fully established.

Transformational Leadership

The term transformational leadership was originally introduced by J.V. Downton in Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in a Revolutionary Process (1973). The concept of transformational leadership was introduced 5-years later by James MacGregor Burns in his book Leadership (1978). Burns described transformational leadership as a process in which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (p. 20). The inclusion of ethics and morals into Burns' considerations of leadership had never been included into leadership theory prior to this and earned Burns considerable recognition. In 1978, Bernard Bass, a student of Burns introduced an alternative approach to transformational leadership that identified three methods by which leaders can transform followers; increase awareness of task importance and value; focus on organizational goals vice self interests; and activate higher order needs (transformationalleadership.net). Ultimately, both Burns and Bass

identify transformational leadership as a means by which leaders inspire followers to support organizational goals; the difference in the two versions being that Burns indicated this process is inextricably linked to morals and ethics and Bass believed the process to be strictly amoral.

Factors considered and how they apply to the IC: Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration

- Idealized influence: A leader's ability to work with followers to develop a shared vision that encompasses many of the moral and ethical beliefs of the group as a whole. The same leader's willingness to take risks with the followers in pursuit of the shared vision. Truly transformational leaders are role models to their followers and earn the greatest respect and admiration through their devotion to the wellness of the group and their dedication to achieving the vision. Idealized influence will benefit the Intelligence Community on multiple levels. Initially, this leadership quality demands that leaders of an organization fully understand and believe in the overall mission of that organization. Idealized influence will not occur if a leader isn't passionate about the shared vision. Fostering idealized influence in core leaders of the IC will promote a strong focus and direction throughout. Additionally, the development of a vision that is aligned with the moral and ethical beliefs of the employees within the IC will establish an intrinsic reward system that will inspire loyalty and increased retention rates. Finally, including IC employees in a shared vision for their organization – soliciting their personal input and feedback as the vision is being developed will establish a sense of ownership among the lowest level employees within each organization.
- Inspirational motivation: Idealized influence and inspirational motivation are usually combined to form charismatic-inspirational leadership (Bass, 1998). Inspirational motivation occurs when a leader is able to challenge their followers while maintaining a positive outlook and enthusiasm for the mission. The transformational leader builds relationships with followers through interactive communication, which forms a cultural bond between the two participants and leads to a shifting of values by both parties toward common ground or organizational goal (Stone, Russell, Patterson, 2003). This development of cultural bonds while focusing on well defined expectations, clear vision, and challenging work will improve the focus and rigor of the analysis being produced within each

organization of the IC. Employees who feel a cultural bond with their leadership will feel more compelled to push themselves harder to strengthen that bond even further while continuing to strengthen feelings of loyalty and ownership within the organization as a whole.

- Intellectual stimulation: Intellectual stimulation is already a large part of an intelligence analyst's daily work; however, taken in the context of transformational leadership, it can be brought to a more productive, innovative level. A transformational leader encourages intellectual stimulation "by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways" (Avolio and Bass, 2002). This is the aspect of intellectual stimulation which is already prevalent in the IC. The area that can be worked on though, is encouragement of creativity from all analysts. Innovation and creative thinking are not usually priorities within IC organizations. More often than not, there tasks are assigned, assessments are standardized and analytic standards are met. There is little room for creativity in the process. If leaders make some room to allow analysts creative freedom throughout their work day, they will likely find an increase in willingness to work self-directed products and they may even find improved quality of effort across all analytical endeavors.
- Individualized consideration: Individualized consideration occurs when a leader steps into the role of mentor or coach. They focus on developing the followers strengths and weaknesses to create a more competent and confident employee. This relationship dovetails on the cultural bond that is developed during inspirational motivation and can empower a follower to reach levels of proficiency and efficiency within their organization that they otherwise would not have realized. The IC already has programs in place to coach and mentor employees. The initiative is effective and helps IC organizations identify employees strengths and where they can most effectively contribute to the mission of the community. Emerging leaders can be identified early through individualized consideration, as can subject matter experts as well as unenthusiastic employees who may need additional consideration to bring to their maximum level of effectiveness. Overall, individualized

consideration takes time, but is worth the effort when the productivity of the workforce as a whole increases and retention rates improve.

Integrating Styles: Servant Based Transformational Leadership

It is critical that both styles be considered, as transformational leadership strives to achieve sustained high performance towards organizational goals in the short to midterm, and servant based leadership strives for the health of the workforce providing mid to long-term sustainability. Both servant based and transformational leadership styles have applicability within the IC, from new analysts generally needing more direction and charismatic motivation, up to highly experienced senior analysts needing a trusting empowered environment for innovation. It is clear that moving away from a task oriented command and control top down leadership style can have a positive impact on the IC now just as it has for large, successful corporations in the last 30 years. As Generation Y employees, requiring flexibility coupled with challenging engaging work, enter the workforce in larger numbers the need for this change will be significant as we try to keep up with increasingly turbulent work environments of change. For the best of the best such as Google and Patagonia, mixing key characteristics of transformational and servant based leadership has achieved extraordinary profits and extreme employee satisfaction. These companies have provided the model of the future sustained high performance workforce. Considering these highly successful companies, how their workforces relate to the workforce of the IC, and how their implementation of servant based transformational leadership styles have resulted in their success will provide a picture of the potential this leadership style may hold for the IC.

Case Study #1: Patagonia

Patagonia's mission statement, *build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis,* gives a clear picture of what values are upheld within the company. Their mission statement alone inspires commitment to excellence and environmental responsibility, and with the commitment of a

truly servant based, transformational leadership style, has launched the company to maintained success.

Much like the intelligence community, Patagonia is an organization committed to a mission greater than its self. They attract individuals who have a sense of duty to the environment. Their employees are passionate about what they do and they are experienced in the outdoor, environmental niche. To excel at Patagonia, an employee has to be committed to the cause as much as they are to the product.

To empower their employees to maintain dedication to the environment and to their role within the organization, Patagonia's approach to leadership clearly reflects many of the basic factors that comprise servant based and transformational leadership styles and is largely responsible for the company's success. Their commitment to the environment is highlighted in their initiative that allows employees to take paid time off to support an environmental cause. They also donate a percentage of their profits to environmental non-profit organizations. Employees who feel an altruistic calling are drawn to Patagonia. Patagonia also fosters a sense of family and trust by allowing their employees to work flexible schedules, providing onsite child care services and allowing work share arrangements. The results of Patagonia's transformational / servant based approach to leadership – less than 4% employee turnover rate per year and more than 9,000 applications to fill the spots that do open up. Rated as one of Fortune's top U.S. companies to work for, Patagonia's unique style of leadership has earned the company much recognition.

Case Study #2: Google

Google's mission statement, *to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful,* clearly defines to customers and employees, what Google is all about. Google's unique approach to leadership has also earned them a *Fortune* rating of top U.S companies to work for. As is seen with Patagonia, Google has identified ways to provide their employees with all of the support and flexibility possible in order to free them up to create and innovate.

Google employees set their own schedules within their teams. The main Google campus offers employees everything from an onsite doctor to child care to free lunches and dinners. All of this is done to establish an environment where the only thing employees need to focus on is their work. Google even has an onsite masseuse to help employees relax during the day.
The result of the investment that Google makes into "serving" their employees is continual innovation and continual dominance in cyberspace. Google continues to develop new, cutting edge software every year and their employees continue to look forward to going to work, where they know they will be taken care of while they do what they do best – innovate.
Finally, a visual aid into leadership styles and effectiveness that considers concern for people and production is the *Leadership Grid* below created by Robert R. Blake and Anne Adams McCanse (1991).

Conclusion

Dr. J. Howard Baker (2001) in his article "*Is Servant Leadership Part of Your Worldview?"* conveys that leadership models can be viewed along a continuum. One end is the Hierarchical or top down command and control leadership with powerful decision makers at the top. The other end of the continuum is the servant leadership transformational models where people are treated with respect in an egalitarian manner. He further states that the mission will determine where on the continuum the most effective leadership model will be. For example the Hierarchical or top down command and control model is very effective for stopping or destroying something, or conquering an enemy at war. In contrast, the servant based approach will be appropriate for a more static organization dedicated to service where creative solutions are key and the empowerment, growth and maturing of individuals to that end is vital.
Overall, this paper proposed that improved performance, innovation, job satisfaction and retention throughout the IC community can be attained through the application of transformational and servant based leadership principles. Servant based leadership and transformational leadership are not suited for every organization and there is not one style that fits all situations. To understand the most effective leadership style one must take in to consideration his or her own personality and strengths. The abilities and experience level of the

team members, the type of work (i.e. consistent or requiring innovation and creativity.) and the overall culture of the organization (changing or stable). Transformational leadership focuses on the organizational outcomes and motivates through charisma. Servant based leadership focuses on the employees and motivates through service. One is not better than the other but both are essential to understand and be able to apply for the situation that fits. It is clear that the characteristics of the civilian IC workforce are suited well for both of these styles and their successful implementation and resulting leader follower trust will clearly have long term positive effects on performance, innovation, job satisfaction and retention.

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