

POINTER MONOGRAPH NO.4

Spirit
and **System**
Leadership Development
for a Third Generation SAF

LTC Chan Kim Yin • COL Sukhmohinder Singh
MAJ Regena Ramaya • Ms Lim Kwee Hoon

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SPIRIT AND SYSTEM: *Leadership Development for a Third Generation SAF*

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Foreword

As one looks at the SAF today, it is easy to overlook the fact that the SAF was created within a very short span of 40 years, and has evolved rapidly both in terms of its systems and structures to become a well-respected military force. The SAF today is also the result of its founding context – that of a small nation suddenly thrust into independence that decided quickly to adopt a National Service military system to provide some basic security in a complex and changing world.

I suppose that many of us, when we first heard announcements of the SAF’s transformation to a “3G force” last year, wondered privately if the transformation was driven more by technological or people imperatives. Throughout the 90s, many of us read about the “revolution in military affairs” that was being brought about by advent of new technologies. The very idea of “3G” is itself something that we associate with the latest in information-communications technology.

This Monograph, written by staff of the Centre of Leadership Development, attempts to present a historical perspective on the SAF’s thinking with regard to leadership and ethos. It also suggests a broader context of the SAF transformation – one that is tied to the maturing of our Nation, i.e., the post-independence generation – and the changing nature of the military profession.

Interestingly, the writers have tried to bring together some “people” issues that the SAF will have to confront as part of its transformation – issues of openness, learning, leadership, mastery, and professionalism – many of which relate to the culture of the SAF and Singapore. I hope that readers will reflect on these important people-challenges that the SAF and its leaders will have to grapple with.

I hope that you will find this *POINTER* Monograph interesting, not just for its useful historical overview of the Spirit and System of leadership development in the SAF, but also for the question of ethos and the military profession in the SAF – something that we need to confront as we build the 3G SAF.

LG NG YAT CHUNG
Chief Of Defence Force
Singapore Armed Forces

SPIRIT AND SYSTEM: *Leadership Development for a Third Generation SAF*



Introduction

“It’s a generational change to the post-independence generation. ...we need a fresh and bold approach. ...We can’t stand still because the world is changing, our people are changing and so must Singapore and the way we govern Singapore.”¹ Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, 2004.

The last 40 years witnessed the rapid growth of Singapore as a Nation. Paralleling this was the growth of the SAF as a military force. Today, Singapore is at a critical juncture of its development – the post-independence generation will have to begin to take charge of its destiny in an increasingly interconnected and globalised world – a world where societies are at different points of transition from the Agricultural or Industrial Age, to the Information Age.

Unlike the earlier generation of Singaporeans, post-independence Singaporeans do not have the experience or memories of colonisation or war to motivate their actions and choices. As a young Nation, Singapore also does not have a wealth of history, culture and tradition to guide the Nation forward. The current generation must therefore find something within themselves and constantly deal with tensions and make difficult choices to drive the Nation forward, amidst the challenges and opportunities in an increasingly interconnected world. This clarity of purpose and identity, and mastery of self and Nation will be crucial if Singapore is to make the leap from a good to great Nation.

Similarly, the SAF today finds itself at an important crossroad in its development as a military force. It can be said that if the First Generation (1G) SAF during the 60s and 70s largely inherited and adapted technologies, operating and organisational concepts from other military traditions, the Second Generation (2G) SAF during the 80s and 90s managed to effectively improve the borrowed technologies, operating and organisational concepts to better meet its needs.² The Third Generation (3G) SAF will need to create its own technologies, operating and organisational concepts in order to stay relevant in an increasingly complex security environment.³

The transformation from 2G to 3G SAF will require not only experimentation with new technologies and concepts but also a certain kind of leadership in the

SAF – one that is highly adaptive, innovative and able to cope well with uncertainty and change. Interestingly, these qualities have long been recognised as the qualities desired of modern military leadership because of what Clausewitz called the fog and friction of war. Yet, in their efforts to reduce the uncertainty in war, most military forces have a natural tendency to settle for organisational forms and practices that are systematic yet rigid and inflexible. Military leaders must therefore constantly deal with the tensions of flexibility versus discipline, empowerment versus control, and centralisation versus decentralisation in the organisation.

To cope with these tensions, SAF will need to anchor itself on the foundations of its purpose, Values and profession for these represent the military's *raison d'être*. It is also important to engage in a continuous process of shared visioning of the future – one that is not in any single individual's field of view, and one that must be collectively owned by all in the organisation.

In the last 4 years, the SAF engaged in various efforts in the domain of leadership development (LD) to prepare the organisation to stay relevant in a future-operating context to be shaped by concepts and new technological systems such as Integrated Knowledge Command and Control or IKC2.⁴ These strategic efforts included the introduction of Learning Organisation (LO) tools and practices that first began in the Army and then quickly proliferated to the Air Force and Navy, and, a review of leadership doctrine culminating in the promulgation of a new leadership framework, and efforts to enhance the LD system.⁵

In many ways, the new ideas including IKC2, the Capacity to Change (C2C), the new SAF Leadership Framework, and tools such as LO practices were developed independently within what was called a marketplace of ideas.⁶ Each was promulgated as a frame of reference or as a set of enablers to facilitate transformational discourse in the SAF.

This Monograph aims to help readers understand the issues involved in the SAF's transformation of LD. Leadership is defined in this Monograph to refer to the verb, the action of leading or influencing people, rather than the noun, i.e., a category of leaders defined by rank or appointment. The assumption is that a person may be appointed as a leader, or hold the rank of a leader, but may not necessarily demonstrate *leadership* in the sense of being able to influence people effectively.

We begin by tracing the evolution of LD in the SAF in terms of two domains which we call Spirit and System. Spirit refers to motivation or ethos of

military leadership in the SAF, including the purpose, values and principles that guide a leader's actions. It concerns the moral-ethical motivation for our leaders' actions – a sense of doing something because of values and purpose, rather than of external reasons, e.g., “the system”. On the other hand, System refers to the organisational structures such as concepts, frameworks, models, methods, procedures and policies or directives for leadership and LD.

In tracing the evolution of LD in the SAF, we note that if leadership and LD during the 1G SAF were more characterised by Spirit and Ethos, then leadership and LD during the 2G SAF is better characterised by the establishment and application of Systems and Structures. A suggestion is made that as the 2G SAF begins to transform itself into a 3G military force, there is a need to rebalance the attention given to the spiritual-ethical aspects of LD in the SAF – an issue of “professional mastery” at the individual and organisational levels. This rebalancing is necessary because the present 2G emphasis on Systems and Structure must not come at the expense of the Spirit needed to drive the Systems themselves.

Next, we attempt to describe the SAF's efforts in the past 4 years to put in place systems and practices that will enable the SAF to have a sustainable strategy for leadership and LD. These include the SAF's efforts to introduce LO tools and practices, which serve not only to build the SAF's capacity for organisational learning, but can also act as a cultural basis to shape the SAF into a professional, learning organisation. We also describe the efforts by the newly established Centre of Leadership Development (CLD) in SAFTI Military Institute (MI) that aim to enhance the System for LD in the SAF. In the past 4 years, CLD personnel have learned many lessons in the experiments to implement LO and to enhance the LD system. It is now clearer to us that the overall strategy to enhance LD in the SAF must depend on both system design, the motivation and Spirit of leaders themselves to engage in LD in the SAF. There is a need to reconsider the SAF's Spirit of LD within the larger context of the SAF's organisational transition from a modern, bureaucratic military to a postmodern, learning military force.

Nurturing the Spirit of SAF Leaders is one of the purposes of the efforts to transform the SAF into a learning organisation. The idea of the SAF as a LO must go beyond merely creating conditions for organisational learning – it must produce a corps of SAF Leaders that has the Spirit needed to drive LD in the SAF. To drive LD means to provide the fuel and energy to move the system forward. LD should ultimately be seen as part of a larger strategy for continuous organisational change and improvement. For this to happen, there is a need for collective, caring, and

courageous leadership. Leaders must understand the processes of professional and organisational mastery needed to drive the organisation forward in a sustainable manner, and those forces that inhibit dynamic change and growth, the latter would include natural tendencies to settle for stability, structural solutions, short term results, selfish-personal interests, etc.

Finally, the SAF's LO initiative and CLD's effort to enhance the LD structures are but "pieces of a larger puzzle" in need of a larger organisational strategy for LD – one that must involve not only the training system and institutions (e.g., SAFTI MI), but also the Defence Management (e.g., HR) and Defence Policy (e.g., National Education) structures, and more importantly, the SAF's Senior Leadership itself.



The Evolution Of Leadership Development In The SAF

Leadership is being able to influence and motivate one's peers and fellow soldiers – to imbue them with trust and confidence so that they will carry out a mission confidently and to their best ability. Leaders achieve this by demonstrating sound knowledge as well as abilities such as being able to communicate with their followers. Good leaders lead by example, personal presence and involvement. The defence of the nation can only be assured by commanders who are competent to lead. The SAF therefore demands the highest standards of leadership at all levels of command and expects them to lead, excel and inspire others to give their best to the nation. (Extracted from p. 7, *The SAF Core Values*, 1997).

“Leadership is vital to the SAF or for that matter, any organisation” – this is something said so often that it has become a cliché. For a relatively young military force like the SAF, the quality of its leaders and its LD process are not things that can be left to chance. Indeed, since its founding, the SAF has paid careful attention to the design and implementation of systems to better select, train and groom its leaders.

The effectiveness of years of investing in sound systems can be seen in the performance of the SAF in various international operations over the years. A recent example was our largest-ever, “Joint” performance in Operation Flying Eagle where over 1500 SAF personnel were deployed to provide humanitarian assistance to Tsunami-hit countries in January 2005. Speaking at the Committee for Supply Debate in April 2005, the Defence Minister Mr Teo Chee Hean emphasised the importance of system-level effectiveness in the SAF's approach:

“The SAF has designed the system to mobilise manpower, weapons, logistics supplies and civil resources at short notice... the SAF's work in Operation Flying Eagle demonstrated its operational readiness and its ability to respond effectively when the need arises. The sustained attention to operational readiness and capability development for the long term, the ongoing build-up of our network of defence relations – these must continue to be the focus of MINDEF and the SAF. ... We must always make sure that our investments in defence, our investments in the SAF, give us the capabilities to respond swiftly and decisively against any threat to Singapore's peace and security.”⁷
Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean, 2005.

Often unseen amidst the heavy focus on system-capability in the SAF is the question of Spirit – that is, the motivation and ethos of SAF leaders and soldiers and how these affect the SAF’s ability to accomplish its mission. What is the Spirit of the SAF? What is it that drives SAF leaders to ensure a high standard of professionalism in training and during operations?

To understand leadership and Spirit in the SAF, one can look back at the SAF’s history to piece together the factors that have shaped the SAF’s military culture and ethos. Understanding the evolution of our military culture can help clarify the basis for certain beliefs that may be important for the future development of the SAF. It will also be useful as we consider what aspects of our military culture are necessary or no longer relevant, as we transform ourselves into the 3rd Generation SAF.

Spirit and the 1G SAF

“On 1st June 1966, the first batch of officer cadets reported to SAFTI for training. These 300 men were selected from 2,500 applicants. All had volunteered; we had no National Service then. Like Singapore then, our armed forces were in their infancy. We had no tradition of military service, and those who joined the armed forces enjoyed few incentives or perks. But these men had the pioneering spirit. They savoured the sense of adventure that comes from being the first, of doing their best and blazing a trail for others to follow. They were training to be leaders of the men to defend our new republic.”⁸ Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, 1990.

It has been said that in order to understand the culture of an organisation, it is important to look back into history to appreciate the founding context of the organisation, especially the beliefs of the founding leaders.⁹ The above passage from the 1990 speech by then-PM Lee Kuan Yew reminds us that the context of the 1G SAF was markedly different from that facing the SAF today. In 1965, Singapore was particularly vulnerable, with a total defence capability consisting only of two battalions that were under-strength after the non-Singaporean men opted to stay with the Malaysian Armed Forces; a 5,000-men police force; an aging gunboat to guard its territorial waters; and not a single aircraft of its own to defend its skies. At that time, Singapore’s survival was still threatened by Indonesia’s *Konfrontasi*. Hence, when Singapore departed from Malaysia in 1965, then-PM Lee Kuan Yew declared that “The first thing to think of is physical survival”.¹⁰ A small team of civil servants, policemen, military personnel and civilians led by Dr Goh Keng Swee, was hastily assembled to form the nucleus of what was then called the Ministry of Interior and Defence (MID).

Being national leaders who had experienced colonial rule and the Second World War, both Mr Lee Kuan Yew and Dr Goh Keng Swee realised that Singapore could not count on anyone else to defend our Nation. They expected that it was a matter of time before the British would pull out its forces – which indeed happened in 1971 with its “East of Suez” policy. Hence, the urgent effort by the early Singapore Government to introduce National Service during the period from 1966 to 1967. In November 1966, Dr Goh Keng Swee hinted at the Government’s decision to adopt National Service when he announced that all new government and statutory board employees had to undergo military training. In February 1967, PM Lee announced the government’s intention to introduce National Service, and a “National Service (Amendment) Bill” was introduced in Parliament for debate in the same month. From 28 March to 18 April 67, some 9,000 eligible men were registered for National Service. By August 1967, the first batch of 900 men was enlisted to serve in the SAF.

A significant event that preceded the enlistment of the first batch of national servicemen in August 1967 was the promulgation of an SAF Code of Conduct (COC) and a public Declaration on 14 July 67 that spelled out the relationship between the SAF and Singapore society (See Box 1). During the Ceremony, thousands of copies of a red-bound codebook and posters were distributed to troops and the community. The COC emphasised the unique purpose and identity of the SAF: *“Members of the SAF have a unique role – they are not only the ever vigilant guardians of our nation but also required to be an example of good citizenship. The COC is the foundation of character, conduct and discipline required of every member of the SAF”*.

At a press interview given at the Ceremony, then-Defence Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee explained the rationale for the Code of Conduct on two bases: Professional efficiency and the need to clarify the relation between armed forces and society. Four years later on 1 July 1971, Dr Goh again stressed the importance of clarifying the relationship and distinction between the military profession and civil society at the Armed Forces Day Parade:

“...the status of the SAF in society has to be defined more clearly. A community of traders with no military tradition, which Singapore is, has little conception on the role of the military. Some businessmen are apt to regard soldiers as little better than jagas.¹¹ They know little about the motivations of the military profession. They know nothing about how a defence force operates. It is in the interest of the SAF to dispel this ignorance and to make itself better understood by the civilian population. ... a great deal remains to be done before the military profession can occupy the honoured position in society that it does in modern states.”¹²
Defence Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee, 1971.

Box 1

The SAF Code of Conduct (COC, July 1967)

The SAF Code of Conduct comprised six rules of conduct as summarised below:

- **We will always Honour our Nation. We will do everything to uphold it and nothing to disgrace it.**
- **At all times, we must bear in mind that we are protectors of our citizens.**
- **We are loyal to the armed forces, and we take pride in our unit, our uniform, our discipline, our work, our training and ourselves.**
- **We must be exemplary in our conduct. We respect others and by our conduct and bearing win the respect of others.**
- **We are courageous but not reckless. We are devoted to duty but not to ourselves.**
- **We guard our weapons as we guard secrets.**

The two bases for the Code of Conduct as explained by Dr Goh Keng Swee:

Professional efficiency: “The history of the more successful armies has shown that even though there is no written guide as to the behaviour and attitude of members of the army, there nevertheless exists a rigid and well-defined code of behaviour handed down from one generation of officers to another. We do not have a professional officer caste in Singapore and in fact in most modern democracies, the concept of a professional aristocratic hereditary group of officers has fallen into disrepute. ...Nor can we wait for a tradition to develop among our army officers in the way it did in Europe and elsewhere. This will not take decades but several generations. It is for this reason that the code spelt out in explicit terms for the guidance of the armed forces will be useful in establishing high standards of behaviour and thus ensure that a sense of dignity and purpose prevails throughout the Army”.

Relation between armed forces and society: “It is well known that Singapore is an open city, a free port and market place in which products from all countries of the world can enter freely and compete with each other. ...we are ... exposed to ideas from all over the world.At the same time, our society is in the course of transition. The young of today no longer accept all that their parents tell them. The parents themselves, if they are of the older generation, are probably in a bewildered state of mind, hardly able to comprehend twentieth century ideas and social forces. What is the right thing to do in these circumstances? Should we follow Mao Tse Tung’s famous dictum ‘Let a Hundred flowers bloom, a Hundred schools of thought contend?’ It is the function of the Government to govern and of leaders to provide leadership. When the hundred schools of thought contend, it is the duty of the Government and the leadership to support the school of thought that it believes to be in the long-term interest of the people. As regards the Armed Forces, because of this exposure to ideas and nations abroad, as well as antiquated prejudices handed down from within our own cultures, some very strange notions are being held by people not only outside the armed forces but also within them... In this situation, it is silly to do nothing in the hope that the matters will right themselves.”

Today, the SAF Code of Conduct is still introduced to SAF recruits in Basic Military Training. The 1997 SAF Core Values Handbook recognises the SAF Code of Conduct as one of several of the SAF’s “Individual Statements of Belief” or Manifestos. Specifically, the Code of Conduct serves to remind our servicemen of four of the seven SAF Core Values as follows: Loyalty to Country, Discipline, Professionalism and Ethics.

Without a strong military tradition or history of successful campaigns, the SAF decided that it should anchor itself on the unique *purpose* of the military, and the basics of the military *profession* – values and competence. This was captured in an internal speech given by then-Defence Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee at the Promotion Ceremony of a group of senior SAF Officers in 1972:

“...a military elite differs from other kinds of elite in a number of respects. First, their function in society is obviously different. Military elites are the ultimate guardians of the independence of sovereign states. They ensure the independence of nations by their ability to deter or resist military aggression and absorption by another sovereign state [i.e., “*purpose*”]. ...military elites in many countries and in other periods of history have been observed to share certain common values. These arise from the nature of their calling. Military elites place high regard on the nature of values such as honour, loyalty, physical courage, professional pride, distaste for luxury, contempt for wealth, liking for physical life and so on. ...Such values in military elites in general come about either as a result of successful military campaigns, or during periods of peace, are actively cultivated in the life of professional soldiers. You should take note of these values and try to foster them not only among yourselves but also to inculcate them in your junior officers. ...pride in your profession or in your unit or in yourself should not be a superficial one, like the pride of the peacock in its resplendent plumage. Rather, it should be the result of proven achievement, mastery over techniques and thorough knowledge of military subjects. In other words, pride in one’s profession should be the result of professional competence.” [note: italics added]¹³
Defence Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee, 1972.

In its search for a professional ethos and identity, the SAF soon realised that it could not simply rely on inherited traditions such as that of the British. An internal workplan speech made by Dr Goh described this realisation and a commitment to establish a uniquely-SAF ethos – one founded on the “profession of arms”:

“In the history of men, various armies at various times have adopted different methods of cultivating a high level of esprit de corps among its officer corps. In Singapore, we try to emulate the British and in this instance, with notable lack of success. The British Army, especially the infantry arm, cultivates pride, loyalty and comradeship among its officers within the framework of the regimental tradition. Officers derive inspiration from the history of the regiment which is physically embodied in the regimental colours emblazoned with its battle honours. In everyday work, an active social life centring around the regimental mess fosters camaraderie. We have tried to transplant these practices in our army. I have come to the conclusion that they do not work, and possibly cannot be made to work. Indeed, it would be astonishing if it were, otherwise, seeing that not only are our military systems different, but also that we are two different peoples, with different histories, customs, social values, individual

perceptions and group responses. We will have to find our own methods of fostering esprit in the officer corps, which will fit into our own social environment as well as our systems of military organisation. I do not believe that this can be achieved by resorting to gimmicks; it will be a long term and long haul effort over many years. Whatever methods that will ultimately evolve, the basic ingredient of military esprit de corps remains the same in all armies and through all ages. This is pride in one's calling – the profession of arms. Without such pride, it is not possible to develop a community spirit. But if esprit de corps were to be a reality and not a show-off, professional pride of this kind must rest on the solid base of professional competence.”¹⁴

The 1G SAF did possess a leadership ethos in spirit, but certainly not one that was formalised in doctrine. In a 1984 press interview following the SAF's release of a basic philosophy captured in a document called “*The SAF Declaration*”, then-Chief of General Staff, MG Winston Choo explained that although the SAF already had some basic understanding of the ideas like leadership-by-example, “this.... remained largely an unwritten understanding, passed on perhaps by word of mouth”.¹⁵ Given the presence of Israeli advisors in the training of the early batches of officer training, one can say that the Israeli military's “Leadership by Example” philosophy was the unwritten leadership doctrine that guided SAF leaders' thinking on “how to lead” in its First Generation. Early speeches by political leaders made reference to “Leadership by Example” as a philosophy desired of SAF leaders. For example, Mr Lim Kim San, the Defence Minister in 1970 stated the following in a speech at a commissioning parade: “...in our concept, to command is not only to order but to lead. To lead, by example, to show the way. To be there in front of your men”.¹⁶ Hence, it was only in 1984 that “Leadership-by-Example” (LBE) and “People-oriented Management” (POM) were formally adopted as the SAF's leadership and management philosophies respectively, as part of *The SAF Declaration* (See Box 2 and Figure 1).

To conclude, in what may be regarded as the SAF's First Generation of systems, concepts, and organisation, one can say that SAF military culture from the 1960s to the 1970s was largely influenced by the founding concerns of establishing a basic military capability for Singapore through National Service. In that context, culture was shaped via the direct influence of political leaders like Dr Goh Keng Swee, and in some ways inherited from the past British regimental practices and customs. The early foreign military advisors, especially those from Israel, probably influenced the SAF's dominant philosophy of leadership today, which is “Leadership by Example”. By the mid-70s, the SAF realised that it needed to formulate its own ethos and Spirit, rather than rely on the legacy of a British regimental tradition. The search for this Spirit culminated in an SAF Declaration

Box 2

1984 SAF Declaration and 1983 Personnel Management Philosophy

The *SAF Declaration* was approved by the Minister for Defence on 13 June 1984 and launched at an Officers' Promotion Ceremony on 29 June 1984. While the draft of the *SAF Declaration* was being finalised, then-Chief of General Staff MG Winston Choo explained at the MINDEF Workplan Seminar on 30 March 1984 that the intention was to devise a "corporate philosophy" for the SAF that was rooted in its ideological orientation and tenets. The purpose was to help guide the various sub-organisations and the people towards common goals and values that characterise their worth and success. The hope was that the Declaration would become a "reference document" for the SAF's beliefs and actions.

The final *SAF Declaration* was published in the local newspapers¹⁷, and in the July-September 1984 issue of *Pointer: Journal of the SAF*. (See Figure 1 for the complete text.)

The public promulgation of the *SAF Declaration* followed closely after a less publicised promulgation of a "Personnel Management Philosophy" (PMP) in 1983, which specifically endorsed leadership by example and people-oriented management as the SAF's leadership and management philosophies respectively.

The move to introduce the PMP did raise some initial concern both in public and within the SAF as to whether the SAF was "going soft". In response to a question asked in Parliament if the informal and "people oriented" management style adopted by the SAF would not result in a drop in disciplinary standards", the Minister of Defence replied, "A people oriented management style will not result in a drop in discipline. This is because the practice of people oriented management does not require any change to SAF disciplinary regulations or standards". He explained the need for the change as follows:

"The 'change' is necessary because the SAF has to evolve its own management style from the more traditional concepts built into Singaporean units at the time they were raised, i.e., before Independence. ...The SAF's management philosophy of people oriented management and leadership by example is intended to achieve this goal. The formal pronouncement of this management style at this time does not mean that this is a philosophy that has suddenly emerged. This management style has in fact been gradually evolving since 1966. Over this space of time, the SAF as a whole has become more convinced that the evolution has been in the right direction. We can now help to accelerate the process by having a more precise statement of what we intend to achieve and by using a more deliberate pace."

The SAF Declaration

- *The Singapore Armed Forces is the military arm in the Total Defence of Singapore. We work towards an operational readiness that can deter aggression and a military capability that can act decisively should deterrence fail. Alert and prepared, we ensure the security and survival of our nation.*
- *We derive our strength from all sectors of society. From our fellow citizens, we seek support and trust. To them, we pledge service and dedication. Together, we ensure that our nation continues to progress and prosper in peace.*
- *We train as a Unit, a Service and an Armed Force. We muster our collective strength and will to build a cohesive and effective fighting force. With the best possible equipment, and realistic demanding training, we strive to be always ready for our mission.*
- *We are committed to developing our people to their fullest potential. Money, materials, and machines are important in defence but they will be useless without the vital human element.*
- *We value our people. We look after them, and their families, so that they can give whole-hearted attention to their assigned duties.*
- *Our strength lies in the quality of our people. We expect our regulars, volunteers, NSMen, and NSF's always to do their best.*
- *Our regulars provide continuity and expertise as instructors, specialist staff officers and senior commanders. They are the backbone of the SAF, giving direction and stability, setting the lead in conduct and character, able to respond immediately in any emergency.*
- *Our NSMen are frontline soldiers, trained, equipped and ready to defend our homeland. Annual training is necessary to keep NSMen fighting fit. But time is limited. So commanders have to plan well. And NSMen have to perform well.*
- *Our full-time national servicemen train to be effective soldiers. They are young citizens learning to live and work together for the well-being of our nation. Neglect of training during full-time national service means much effort to make up in national service. An unfit and poorly trained soldier is a danger to himself and his comrades.*
- *We believe that sound leadership and good management will make the most of our limited manpower. Through people-oriented management, leadership by example, and discipline, we instil commitment and confidence, pride in service, and team spirit.*

We are the Singapore Armed Forces, first and foremost in the defence of Singapore.

Figure 1.

being made in 1984 where the SAF affirmed its commitment to leadership by example, and a people-oriented management philosophy.

Systems and the 2G SAF

The period of the SAF's history from the 80s through to the 90s may be described as the 2G SAF. If 1G SAF was characterised by a focus on Spirit, the 2G SAF seemed to focus on the development of Systems and Structures. The 80s and 90s was an era marked by efforts to restructure the SAF and to redesign and improve its technology for greater efficiency and effectiveness. Building on the basic organisation, technologies and concepts – many of which were inherited in the earlier years – the SAF worked to evolve its systems for command and control during the 80s and 90s, including an establishment of a Joint Staff and the creation of three separate Services in May 1975. The SAF also began to learn and adapt doctrines for its own context, for example, in its evolution of its own collective appreciation of situation process.

Influenced by “Human Relations” thinking in the behavioural-management sciences¹⁸, LD during 2G SAF focused on the establishment of Systems, including efforts to codify matters of Spirit. In a way, the 1980s marked the maturing of the SAF as an organisation, with the promulgation of an SAF Declaration in 1984, soon after the adoption of a People-oriented Management Philosophy in December 1983 (See Box 2). Related to the latter were significant changes made in personnel systems, for example, the SAF replaced its “Staff Appraisal Report” (SAR) in the late-80s with an “Annual Feedback Report” (AFR). The essence of the shift from the SAR to the AFR was change in the emphasis of the personnel management system from an evaluative, appraisal orientation to one of a developmental, feedback orientation. Today, many SAF human resource managers will agree that although the system and structures were readily changed – key to the feedback system working effectively was the Spirit of leaders in applying the tools and structures appropriately.

Things in the LD domain began to change further in the late-80s with the project initiated by then-PM Lee Kuan Yew for the SAF to create an “Institute of Excellence” – the present SAFTI MI. In 1987, a project team that was tasked to envision the “Institute of Excellence” proposed the need for an Officer Creed. Today, the SAF Officers' Creed is memorised and recited by all SAF officer cadets, and its essence is captured in the SAFTI MI's motto “To Lead, to Excel, to Overcome”. The following statement in the publication commemorating the establishment

of SAFTI MI attempts to articulate the vision that SAFTI MI would serve as the Spiritual Home of the Officer Corps in context of our national service army:

It is the task of the Officer Cadet School (OCS) at SAFTI to imbue in the ordinary Singaporean the spirit of military leadership. Ordinary because, unlike the officer training institutions in countries with regular armed forces where each officer candidate would be expected to have a predilection for the military, SAFTI's clientele are full-time national servicemen for whom, in the main, a military career is probably the last thing on their minds... The real task at SAFTI OCS is to ignite among national service officer cadets the spirit of competition from which leadership qualities can be discerned and nurtured... (Extracted from p. 107, *To Command: The SAFTI Military Institute*, 1994).

The project to envision SAFTI MI also mooted the idea for a common set of seven SAF Core Values – “so that those trained under the system would bear distinctive and positive attributes”.¹⁹ Although the values were intended to apply to all ranks in the SAF, a decision was made to gradually “cascade” the SAF Core Values down the ranks beginning with the promulgation of an Officer's Creed in 1990, to coincide with a fundamental change in the design of the officer cadet course to include tri-service, service and professional terms rather than the previous junior and senior terms. Please see *Appendix 1* for the SAF Core Values and Officer's Creed.

In the early 90s, OCS began to work with MINDEF Psychologists to develop an SAF model of leadership. A review of pre-90s OCS curriculum indicated that the leadership training in OCS was not systematic in that there was no common framework to integrate the lessons, practices and evaluations related to leadership. This led to the development of the Knowledge-Abilities-Qualities (KAQ) model of leadership that included the seven SAF Core Values as part of a list of 19 “Leadership Qualities” (See Box 3). The KAQ Model was developed based on a review of the leadership literature, the leadership models of other military forces, and a survey of over 1000 officers, warrant officers and specialists across the three Services.

In 1995, the KAQ Model was promulgated as part of a new and pioneering *SAF Leadership Handbook*, which was launched close to the inauguration of the new SAFTI MI in August 1995. In 1996, a decision was made to fully promulgate the SAF Core Values to all members of the SAF rather than to rely only on officers to cascade the values to their men. Hence, a booklet entitled, *The SAF Core Values: Our Common Identity* was published by SAFTI MI for distribution to all newly enlisted recruits in the SAF.

The K-A-Q Model of Leadership (1995)

The K-A-Q Model was developed by MINDEF Psychologists working with the Officer Cadet School in the early 1990s. To develop the model, the psychologists studied the leadership literature and models of other armed forces and academies such as the US Army's BE-KNOW-DO model, the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst (UK) model, and the Australian Defence Force models. A large-scale survey of SAF officers and WOSEs in the Army, Air Force and Navy was carried out to customise the model to the SAF's context to ensure relevance and acceptability. This model has been endorsed by all three Service HQs in 1994 after a trial implementation in OCS from 1992 to 1993.

In 1995, SAFTI MI published the first "SAF Leadership Handbook" that described the Knowledge-Abilities-Qualities or KAQ Model of Leadership. At that time, the KAQ Model was developed primarily for junior leaders. As articulated in the handbook, its purpose was to provide the SAF with "a model to strive towards, evaluate our own leadership and hence become more aware of the need for our leadership development".

The KAQ leadership model is basically a behavioural model. The KAQ leadership model was developed for the purpose of helping SAF commanders identify what "Knowledge", "Abilities" and "Qualities" are required of a good leader. Although the SAF Core Values were only promulgated SAF-wide in 1996, a decision was made to incorporate the seven SAF Core Values as part of the list of "Qualities" of leadership.



The 90s also witnessed the reorganisation of the NCO Corps into a Warrant Officer and Specialist Corps, and, the adoption of a “New Partnership” for military careers. Many of these efforts were driven by changes in the human resource system in the face of a competition for talent in the job market. To some extent, SAF officers started to show some concern that the adoption of market-based, commercial human resource practices and systems could threaten the professional Spirit and Ethos of the SAF. This concern was publicly expressed in the writings of two Service Chiefs who retired in the 1990s:

LG Winston W. L. Choo, Chief of Defence Force (1991): Throughout the ages, military service has always been regarded as a profession. As a calling which demands of its members specialised knowledge and skills, and intensive preparation.... What essentially legitimises the military as a profession is its embrace of, and commitment to, values and norms as typified in a sense of purpose that transcends individual self-interest in favour of a higher good. This higher good being, of course, the security and defence of the nation. Membership of this profession has always been associated with the noble virtues of self-sacrifice and dedication to duty, and a correspondingly lesser preoccupation with more self-centred concerns such as monetary rewards and personal glory. An occupation on the other hand is usually defined in terms of the marketplace. The term contains the notion of some sort of contract between the employer and the employee with the employee’s contractual obligations to his employer being counterbalanced by the monetary rewards, which he receives. Implicit in this notion is the priority of self-interest rather than that of the employing organisation.²⁰

BG Lim Neo Chian, Chief of Army (1993): I firmly believe that there are certain core values in the military and in the SAF which remain relevant and must be upheld and preserved if we are not to be unwittingly swept away by the forces taking place. We can, and should, adopt useful management concepts and practices and harness technology to make the SAF more potent and effective, but our foundation must rest firmly on a set of core martial values. In a sense, they provide the equivalent of a cultural ballast for the SAF amidst a turbulent sea of change. The SAF value system touches on the most basic issues of what our profession is all about. It provides us the sense of identity, a focal point for our aspiration and even inspiration. It is the software in us that drives our thought process. It determines the kind of judgement and decisions that we would make each time we are confronted with a problem. Values are therefore important because they influence behaviour. A person with a well-defined set of values would develop a clear orientation, and would channel his behaviour in that direction. Values provide the SAF, as a corporate institution, the common understanding of what is right and acceptable, shaping the behaviour of commanders and soldiers such that their decisions and actions are taken for the good of the nation and the SAF, and not in furtherance of personal or sectarian interests.²¹

Despite these concerns, the SAF went further to institute market-based considerations in the design of the military career. In 1998, MINDEF launched a new “manpower management programme” for the SAF that would allow officers to retire at about 40-45, giving them at least another 15 years to pursue a second career. This “New Partnership” introduced soon after the Asian economic crisis of 1998, was justified on the basis of “a constant healthy renewal of leadership at every level of the SAF”.²² It is useful to note that the 1998 economic crisis served as a wake up call for many Asian countries, including Singapore, to restructure their economies in the face of global competition. For many societies, the 1990s also marked the end of the Industrial Age and the beginnings of the Knowledge or Information Age – one that would demand dramatic shifts in the meaning of work, employment, trades and professions.

SAF Leadership Development Experiments beyond the 2G SAF

Since 2001, the SAF has initiated further efforts to enhance LD in the SAF through both Spirit and Systems. Today, the SAF is moving beyond the KAQ Model of Leadership to a new leadership framework called “SAF Leadership 24-7” (See Box 4). The framework identifies 4 major aspects of leadership to be attended to in the formal leadership training system. It also recognises the importance of the leadership context as part of leadership education. At the “base” of the new leadership framework is Mission, Purpose and Values. Collectively, these emphasise the importance of Spirit in the SAF Leader. Chan and Lew (2005) described how these four domains of LD in the framework were based on what was seen as four leadership research traditions in the behavioural sciences. *Appendix II* elaborates on the thinking behind the new framework.

When it was first conceptualised in 2002, the new SAF Leadership Framework aimed to update the SAF’s previous KAQ Model of Leadership promulgated only in 1995. The framework not only expanded the list of “ingredients” for effective leadership articulated in the previous KAQ model, it also emphasised the importance of the unique, “24-7” context in which SAF leaders have to lead. Much effort was made to operationalise the four ingredients or components of leadership identified in the framework. Specifically, in 2003, CLD in SAFTI MI developed a Leadership Competency Model (LCM) to operationalise the “competency” component of the framework. The LCM elaborated in *Appendix III*, improved on the KAQ model by articulating the new “abilities” or behavioural competencies and skills

Box 4

A New Leadership Framework: SAF Leadership 24-7

The circle and the triangle in Figure 1 provide a heuristic for thinking and talking about leadership in the SAF:

Triangle ('Building Blocks') The triangle provides a framework for specifying 'what SAF Leaders need' for effective leadership. The hierarchy of 'building blocks' says values must always form the basic foundation, upon which competencies and a full range of styles are best employed in leadership. The 'Self' (consisting of self-awareness, self-management and personal mastery) is most difficult to attain, and includes a good understanding of one's own values, competencies and styles. The hierarchy does not prescribe a sequence for development or imply that some 'building blocks' are more important than others.

Circle ('Leadership Context') The circle emphasises that SAF Leaders must influence people with a good understanding of the SAF's mission and purpose, the operating environment and desired outcomes. It is these three aspects of the 'leadership context' that shape the specific contents of the framework, i.e., the specific styles, competencies, and values desired in each Service or level of leadership in the SAF.

Circle and Triangle Together, the 'building blocks' (triangle) and 'leadership context' (circle) spell out the scope of concerns of LD system in the SAF. In other words, when we think of 'LD in the SAF', it includes education and training in the domain of values, competencies, styles and 'self'. All this must be done in cognisance of the mission and purpose of the SAF, the SAF's operating environment, and the desired outcomes.



at direct, organisational and strategic levels of leadership. It also introduced three new behavioural competency domains (i.e., conceptual, developmental, self) that went beyond the people/social and task/mission-related domains emphasised in the original 1995 KAQ model. The belief was that implementation of the LCM would result in greater emphasis in the SAF on skills such as decision-making, ethical reasoning, coaching, team building, organisation development, feedback, reflection, personal mastery and self-management that are vital in the 3G operating context.

Besides competencies, CLD also introduced the academically-recognised and empirically-based “Full Range of Leadership” model²³ as a tool to help leaders think of leadership styles in the SAF. CLD’s plan is to develop the domain of styles further by studying the different styles that matter at different levels of leadership. For example, we believe that it may be more important to train junior leaders to master the basics of people versus task-oriented styles, and in more transactional leadership behaviours that are more essential at their direct, face-to-face level of leadership. There is a need to research on the level of leadership for which change-oriented, transformational LD is most relevant. In the domain of “values”, CLD has started to explore various new approaches to values inculcation and ethics education as a basis for new thinking on how to enhance SAF leadership effectiveness in these domains. CLD also began efforts to operationalise the “self” domain by articulating some principles for dealing with this delicate component of leadership.

Looking ahead, more now needs to be done to articulate the “context” of leadership in the SAF – one that has both enduring and evolving facets, and, that requires careful appreciation of the past, present and future of the SAF. For example, our articulation of the new SAF Leadership Framework is based heavily on an assumption of leadership in hierarchical rather than flatter, networked organisational arrangements. Such hierarchical thinking on leadership may be relevant for the SAF today and the immediate future. However, there is a need for us to begin to appreciate the paradigm shift needed for leadership in a more networked, knowledge-based SAF of the future – a future that is closer than we think. Ensuring the relevance of leadership doctrine to the future military operating context will require different doctrine and experimentation agencies to work hand-in-hand. On its own, CLD is unable to ensure that leadership thinking is appropriate to the SAF’s future anticipated operating context.

Beyond the Framework, the SAF is also designing and implementing systems to help drive the LD processes and systems in the organisation. These include continuous, structured leadership coaching in both schools and units, and also the use of developmental assessments such as 360-degree feedback systems. Like

all HR systems, all of these LD systems can only work well if the Spirit to employ them is appropriate.

To date, a significant effort has been made to better integrate the “softer” behavioural leadership curriculum with the most technical, military vocational curriculum in SAF Schools. Curricula are being redesigned to ensure that leadership training is oriented toward preparing and inspiring SAF leaders for the future SAF context rather than just the present. The current training-oriented philosophy in our Schools is being enlarged to include development (which in CLD’s view includes inspiring, training and educating leaders) and building relationships. More importantly, our Schools are beginning to cater the time, resources and systemic structures to invest in instructor education and development to support LD. School instructors are being trained to use the new, doctrinal definition and framework for leadership, and the principles for leadership development as starting points to reframe their LD assumptions and practices that were acquired tacitly from personal experience and role modelling over the years.

CLD has also introduced a Model that summarises the key Components of an LD system, with principles to guide the design of LD in all Schools and Units. This Model is elaborated in *Appendix IV*. From these generic principles, it is possible to design an enriching developmental process for both SAFTI MI instructors and trainees, to support LD. For this approach to work, our Schools need to shift their thinking of LD from that of an isolated set of lessons or periods in a training curriculum, to a more process-oriented experiential approach. It is also vital that all School instructors experienced effective leadership and LD on the job, in order that they may be more effective at developing leadership among their trainees.

Besides the efforts to systematise LD described above, a more subtle initiative to change the culture of the SAF was initiated with the introduction of Learning Organisation (LO) principles and practices, beginning with the Army in 2000. The LO initiative has since spread to the rest of the SAF, with SAFTI MI adopting the practices across its courses in 2002. In the Foreword to a *Pointer Supplement* entitled: *Building a Learning Army*, then-COL Ravinder Singh, Assistant Chief of General Staff (Plans), articulated the impetus for the Army to become a learning organisation:

“As we embark on the 21st century, the environment continues to evolve rapidly in this knowledge age. The challenges facing the Army are multi-faceted and complex, and are rapidly evolving. The rapid and borderless flow of ideas, capital and technology in the knowledge-based economy coupled with an evolving global socio-political environment

is bringing change at an unprecedented rate. The Army must continue to be innovative and responsive to remain a credible and capable force for the 21st century.”²⁴

The introduction of LO into the SAF was not an easy or over-night affair. The initial reaction of many military leaders who were socialised on regimental tradition was that LO seemed to threaten military culture which was one based on personal example, action and discipline, rather than theories, conversations, and reflection. Some SAF leaders expressed genuine concerns that LO must not lead anyone in the SAF to think that it was becoming a democratic organisation. To moderate the extent and pace of the cultural change, an emphasis was placed on the relevance of LO principles and practices in service of more tangible goals such as organisational learning and knowledge building, rather than the more “spiritual” cultural change that LO would engender in the form of certain LO disciplines and practices.

Today, the cultural practices introduced as part of the LO initiative are slowly being assimilated into the culture of the SAF. These include simple practices such as group level “check-ins”, the practice of “deep listening”, “reflection” and “journaling”. LO tools such as “hierarchy of choices”²⁵, “Vision Deployment Matrix”²⁶ and “creative tension model” have been picked up by the SAF as practices in the form of habits rather than regimental demands.²⁷ As we suggest later, these simple cultural tools may form the seeds for the nurturing of the Spirit needed in a highly systems-oriented 2G SAF.

To summarise, LD during the 1G SAF mostly emphasised matters of Spirit, beginning with a politically-driven Code of Conduct, an attempt to retain British regimental traditions, followed by a conscious decision to shape our own military ethos, culminating in the formal adoption of a leadership-by-example philosophy. As described above, the first Defence Minister, Dr Goh Keng Swee, attempted to articulate the unique nature of the military profession in the SAF, in the context of a small state that had to rely on a national service system for its security. If the 1G SAF was characterised by a focus on Spirit, the 2G SAF seemed to focus on the development of Systems and Structures. To some extent, the 2G emphasis on systems and structures raised some concern among leaders in the SAF that market-driven practices would threaten the professional Spirit and Ethos in the SAF.

In the next section, we argue that there is now a critical need for the SAF to strengthen its Spirit as it looks ahead to its 3G existence. First, we present some scientific basis for the thinking that formal Systems and *Structures* can

threaten the Spirit. Then, we argue that it is in the nature of systems that they cannot survive or thrive without some spirit to “fuel” them. Finally, we suggest that any future effort to nurture the SAF’s Spirit must take place in recognition of the new security environment that will demand a renewed framing of the nature of the military profession in the post-independence-generation-led SAF.



The Challenge Of Leadership Development Amidst Transformation

Systems and Structures threaten the *Spirit*

In the early 1970s, psychologists observed an interesting phenomenon in that the use of rewards and incentives has an effect of decreasing intrinsic motivation.²⁸ Today, in the study of human motivation, numerous studies in the behavioural sciences have established that systemic structures, including the use of rewards, punishments, or assessments, can stifle intrinsic motivation (i.e., motivation to act because of an “intrinsic” interest in the activity), resulting in behaviour that is more extrinsically motivated (i.e., motivation to act because of a desire to seek reward or to avoid punishment).²⁹

When systems and structures drive action, over time, people stop thinking for themselves and a certain “mindlessness” sets in. This notion is supported by social cognitive studies that have established that there is a normal human preference and tendency to think by using heuristics that require less cognitive effort, rather than to engage in deliberate, effortful analysis. When it is primarily systems or structures that drive action, behaviour tends to become less ethical and more procedural or normative. That is, people act less on the basis of “what I ought to do”, but rather on the basis of “what I am told to do or what others are doing”.

In the domain of knowledge management, a basic principle of knowledge is that attempts to codify or to formalise tacit knowledge will result in a loss of meaning. No written account can fully capture the extent of meaning in a person’s actual experience. Neither can a written account fully capture the spirit of a person’s thoughts and experiences as well as a story that is told by the person in a face-to-face context. This is in a way similar thinking but from a different discipline that suggests that efforts to formalise or systematise can threaten the Spirit.

Finally, in systems theory, it is accepted that closed systems have negative entropy. Similarly, a basic assumption in the field of organisation development is that organisations that are closed will run themselves into a state of “dry rot”

without some Spirit or “intervention” to fuel them. Such thinking has a basis in the Second Law of Thermodynamics which states that the amount of random movement i.e., the entropy, can only increase in a closed system.³⁰ There is therefore a need for some external influence or energy to keep this randomness in some order. In this sense, efforts to create order in systems through structures or formalisation cannot be sustained without the introduction of some external energy. This notion is in fact as simple as to consider how a car cannot operate without fuel. In the same sense, no LD system can sustain itself without spirit.

Hence, having mastered the art of developing and implementing systems in its Second Generation, there is now a critical need for the SAF to strengthen its Spirit as it begins to transform to its 3G existence. In the next section, we suggest that the effort to strengthen the SAF’s Spirit must recognise the SAF’s new operating context that demands a renewed framing of the nature of the military profession in the post-independence-generation-led SAF.

Spirit and Ethos in the New Military Operating Environment

How should the SAF shape its Spirit or professional ethos in its Third Generation operating context? In our view, an adequate answer to this question requires a broader appreciation of the nature of organisational transformation facing professional military forces in general, including the SAF. One approach is to take a cue from shifting paradigms of military organisation in the field of military sociology.

In the 1970s and 80s, the dominant model for framing military organisation was the Institutional-Occupational (I-O) Model proposed by Charles Moskos in 1977.³¹ In this framing of military organisations, an institutional model of the military is one where individual interests are outweighed by a larger, collective good, where individuals see themselves as professionals separate from the rest of society, and, where sacrifice and commitment are expected from military personnel who are in turn viewed with respect by society. Unlike other workers, military personnel generally accept below-market wages and are not unionised. These “sacrifices” are in turn compensated-for by other non-cash benefits like housing, uniform, medical treatment, etc.

In a 1988 paper, Moskos emphasised that trust is placed in the ability of the institution to “take care of its own”. In contrast, the occupational model of the military is one that is determined by market forces, where pay commensurates

with skills, and where employees are involved in the determination of wages and employment conditions. Most significantly, the occupational model emphasises individualistic motivations rather than the good of the organisation.³² In some ways, one can see elements of the I-O thesis in the concerns expressed by the two SAF Service Chiefs cited in pages 26.

With the dramatic changes in military roles and the nature of conflict after the end of the Cold War, military sociologists shifted their discussions on the nature of military organisations and professions to contrast “modern” versus “postmodern” military.³³ In this view, the nature of organisation and profession found in modern military forces today can be traced from the time when the concept of *levee en masse* was adopted at the time of the French Revolution in 1793 to about the end of the 20th century with the end of the Cold War. A core characteristic of the modern military organisation is the idea of efficiency and stability. Interestingly, organisational theorists today attribute the Industrial-Age metaphor of “organisations as machines” to the advent of the modern military:

...the military ...since at least the time of Frederick the great of Prussia had emerged as a prototype of the mechanistic organisation. Frederick, who ruled from 1740 to 1786, inherited an army composed for the most part of criminals, paupers, foreign mercenaries, and unwilling conscripts – he was determined to change this and quickly set about making reforms. He borrowed much from the practice of Roman legions and the reformed European armies of the sixteenth century but also introduced numerous innovations of his own. ... Among these reforms were the introduction of ranks and uniforms, the extension and standardisation of regulations, increased specialisation of tasks, the use of standardised equipment, the creation of a command language, and systematic training that involved army drills. Frederick’s aim was to shape the army into an efficient mechanism operating through means of standardised parts. ...Many of these ideas and practices had great relevance for solving problems created by the development of factory systems of production and were adopted in a piecemeal fashion throughout the nineteenth century as entrepreneurs struggled to find organisational forms suited to machine technology. (Extracted from p. 15-16, Morgan, 1996, *Images of organisation*).

For many Western countries, the end of the Cold War marked the beginning of a security environment characterised by greater relative uncertainty, with the decline of inter-state wars and the rise of within-state civil wars, and between non-state and state actors. Many modern military forces found themselves ill-prepared for what was an expanded spectrum of operations beyond the conventional wars that they were organised and prepared to fight. Today, military forces are increasingly engaged in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations – missions that bring about new professional and ethical challenges. For example, in peacekeeping operations,

soldiers no longer have the singular clarity of purpose compared to when fighting in conventional state-to-state wars. Today, soldiers are also more frequently expected to operate with other military forces in multinational or coalition force contexts, sometimes under the command of military leaders from a different force with different traditions and beliefs.

The challenges facing military organisations also extend beyond the realm of conflict to include general changes in the nature of work and societies. “The substantial growth of global social organisations has altered the conditions under which modern-states can expect to exercise their power, maintain the loyalty of their citizens, or raise and deploy their military might”³⁴. In this context, military sociologists coined the term “postmodern military” to refer to a new form of military organisation characterised by five major changes:

One is the increasing interpenetrability of civilian and military spheres, both structurally and culturally. The second is the diminution of differences within the armed services based on branch of service, rank, and combat versus support roles. The third is the change in the military purpose from fighting wars to missions that would not be considered military in the traditional sense. The fourth change is that military forces are used more in international missions authorised (or at least legitimated) by entities beyond the nation state. A final change is the internationalisation of military forces themselves.” (Extracted from p. 2, Moskos, et al., 2000, *The Postmodern Military: Armed forces after the Cold War*).

In terms of organisational metaphors, the postmodern military can be described as one that is more “organic” than machine-like. Organisational theorists such as Morgan (1996) have noted that “mechanistic approaches to organisation work well only under conditions where machines work well: (a) when there is a straightforward task to perform; (b) when the environment is stable enough to ensure that the products produced will be appropriate; (c) when one wishes to produce exactly the same product time and again; (d) when the human “machine” parts are compliant and behave as they have been designed to do. In contrast, organic models of organisations are more able to adapt to changes and uncertainties in their environment.

Israeli military social scientists Shamir and Ben-Ari (1999) note: “Leadership in mechanistic organizations is contained within formal patterns of authority and is primarily based on the exercise of legitimate power... The military organization of the future is likely to be more ‘organic’ in nature. Organic organizations are characterized by a more flexible division of labor, decentralization of decision-

making, low reliance on formal authority and hierarchy and on rules and regulations to coordinate work, and greater reliance on non-restricted, two-way, informal communication and coordination systems.” Interestingly, these organic organizational characteristics are also those demanded by the more network-centric warfare enabled by IKC2 technologies in the 3G SAF.

The above discussion on the shifting paradigms of military organisation allows us to frame our thoughts on the nature of military professional ethos in the 3G SAF in terms of the framework shown in Figure 2. This framework juxtaposes the Institutional-Occupational dimension of military organisations drawn from military sociology, against the Mechanistic-Organic dimension derived from the generic study of organisations to produce four possible organisational forms with different cultures and ethos. These organisational forms are not intended to reflect the actual structure of the organisation. Instead, the framework is presented as a heuristic to facilitate reflection on the different cultures of military organisation in the context of environmental changes that demand greater agility, adaptability and market-based considerations to drive efficiency. One can think of the four organisational models in terms of mental models held by members of the organisation’s purpose and “how the organisation works”.

As described above, the essential cultural distinction between Institutional versus Occupational models is that of collective-interest or “service for the greater good” versus self-interest or “just a job” mentality. In this regard, our framework suggests that one can find two Occupational models of organisation – the entrepreneurial-mercenary model where the primary concern is to survive and thrive in a complex environment with self-interest being the main motivation; and, the industrial-age factory-worker model – where the primary concern is with meeting the assigned goals and targets to earn a decent wage to feed oneself and one’s family.

The two models on the Institutional or right-side of the framework can be described in terms of what military sociologists today refer to as the modern versus postmodern military.³⁵ The subtle distinction in the ethos of the two organisational forms lies in their perceptions of and responses to their external environment. What they have in common are the core characteristics of professions, including the idea of service to society based on a core expertise and competence, and, the responsibility to self-regulate standards through rigorous control of the socialisation, education and training processes, and management processes that promote desired or prevent undesired professional practices.

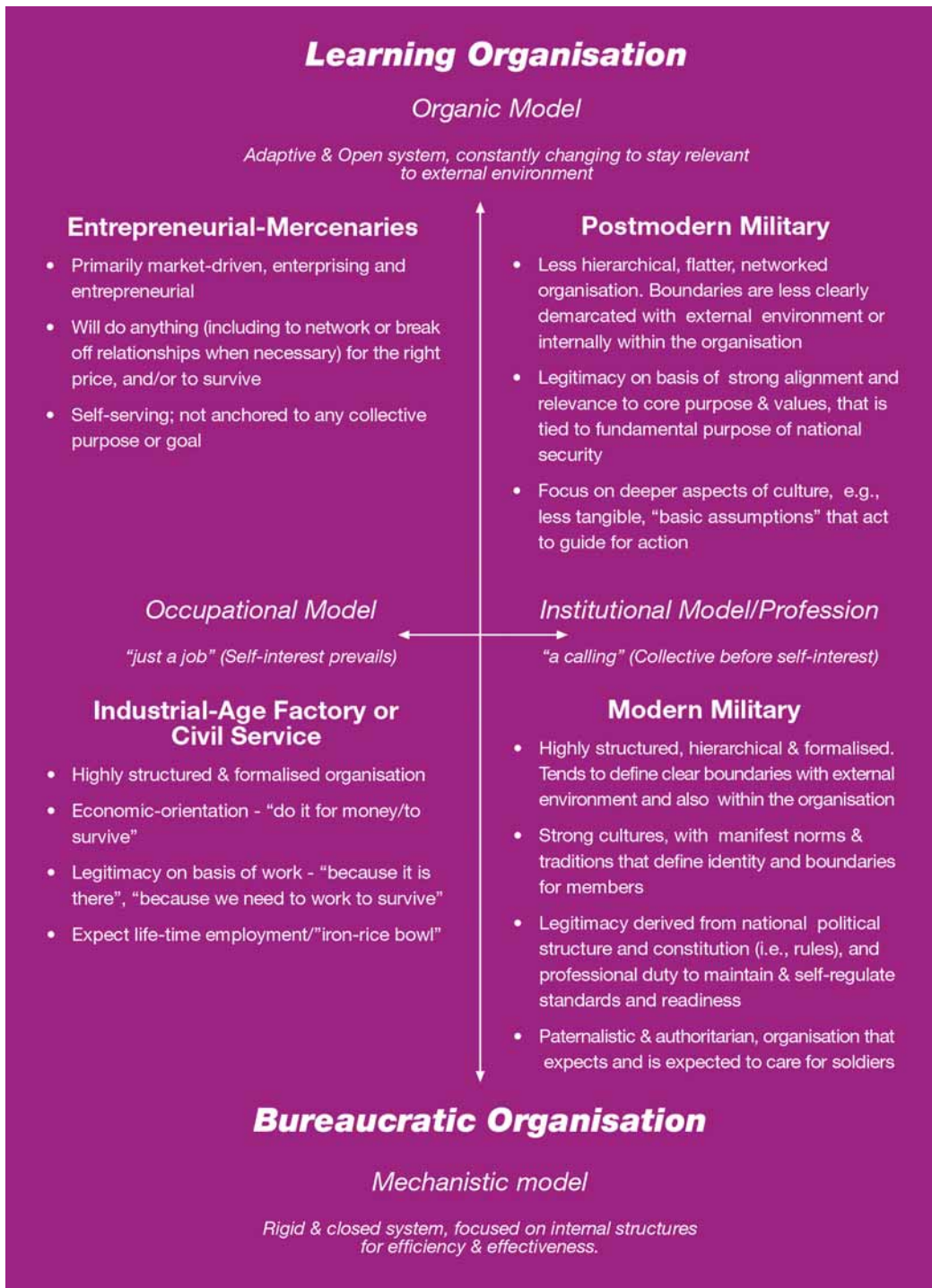


Figure 2. A Framework of Military Organisational Forms.

Today, most modern military forces are best described as professional bureaucracies; highly structured and formalised for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Members of such military forces develop strong professional cultures and traditions, and would use these and other mechanisms to define boundaries that demarcate their identity and distinctiveness both externally (e.g., difference between military versus civil society) and internally (e.g., the difference between ranks, especially the commissioned officer and non-commissioned officer corps). Most members derive their professional legitimacy from a hierarchy of power called the “chain of command” beginning with the national political structure and constitution and then, of course, the military leadership. The tendency is for responsibility to be centralised at the highest levels.

With the responsibility to self-regulate and to demarcate boundaries, a second-order characteristic of modern military forces is that they risk becoming inward looking and self-protective to the point of retaining personnel, doctrine, organisations or even equipment that may have become irrelevant or are non-performing. In certain extreme circumstances, some members or sub-groups of such professions may develop dysfunctional thinking that places the profession’s purpose and interest above that of society, resulting in *coup d’état* or incidences where they protect their fellow professionals even when mistakes are committed – a “dark side” of professional cohesion and pride.

In contrast, the postmodern military organisation is one that relies less on formal structures (e.g., rules, laws, ranks, uniforms) because it is more concerned with adapting to the environment rather than internal stability and efficiency. Postmodern military forces accept the reality of a “strategic corporal” and a “three block war”.³⁶ They accept that it is difficult to draw clear boundaries between the profession and the rest of society, and would find ways for the military to work closely with civilians, contractors and other professionals, including the media and non-governmental organisations, in operations.

Similarly, postmodern military forces would also seek to break down internal boundaries that accentuate differences within the organisation, and instead look for ways to be inclusive rather than exclusive in their treatment of personnel within the military. A good example of such a change was made by the Canadian Forces (CF) when it recently promulgated a “Profession of Arms” ethos³⁷ that explicitly recognised that all ranks in the CF are members of the military profession – a move that distanced itself from the view articulated by

Samuel Huntington in the 1950s that commissioned officers are the true military professionals because their commission is analogous to a licence to manage violence.

To ensure a high capacity to change and adapt to the environment, postmodern military forces rely less on organisational structures such as rank, rule, traditions, customs or employment contracts to guide members' actions. In such forces, the boundaries or parameters that guide members' actions are less tangible – existing in the form of fundamental shared values, common operating principles, a collective sense of purpose, vision, and intent. To operate on such bases requires active rather than passive leadership, transformational or values-based rather than transaction-based leadership.³⁸ Leadership must be proactive constantly engaging the hearts and minds of their soldiers and dealing with the tensions and contradictions that they face in a complex operating environment. Postmodern military leaders must ensure that soldiers understand the fundamentals of purpose and profession (including professional values and competence) as a basis for their choices and actions. Values and visions cannot merely exist as statements or posters that are “framed and hung on the wall” – rather, they must be internalised in all members of the organisation and able to fend off threats to the values (e.g., personal preferences, expedience, family needs, peer pressures, etc).

Nurturing the *Spirit*: Shared Vision, Openness and Professional Mastery

So, what kind of Spirit or Ethos will the SAF need as it transforms from a 2G to 3G existence? Should we in the SAF continue to frame our debate on the nature of the military profession and ethos in terms of the Institutional-Occupational model proposed by Charles Moskos? Or, should we consider the possibility of a more entrepreneurial culture in the SAF as suggested by the SAF's first *Pointer Monograph* entitled *Creating the Capacity to Change: Defence Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century*?

What does it mean to accept a more postmodern view of the military profession and culture in the SAF? Should we create and recognise two spaces in the SAF – an “Efficiency and Effectiveness” (E&E) space where martial discipline operates, and a C2C space where all are actively engaged in ensuring the relevance of the SAF, including conversations on the hard issues like the short career policy and the challenge of having to re-tool ourselves to ensure

our continued professional relevance? Should we also debate the room for heritage and tradition in the SAF, and to decide what customs and traditions to keep and what to discard?

We believe that these are all important questions that need to be addressed as part of the SAF's transformation to its 3G existence. We also believe that the framework presented above presents a starting point for deep conversations that are needed in the SAF as we reflect on the kind of Spirit or Ethos desired in the 3G SAF Leader. Examples of the kinds of deep conversation needed can begin with an appreciation of how other military forces are addressing the question of Spirit and Ethos in their transformation journeys. For example, as part of its transformation journey, the U.S. Army has decided to emphasise the *Warrior ethos*.³⁹ As we study this ethos, the important question is whether the individual members interpret or frame the *Warrior ethos* according to modern or postmodern military assumptions. It is also vital that we understand the societal and professional historical context in which their ethos works for them in the U.S., versus those societal and historical factors that would work for us in Singapore.

Similarly, we should also learn from the experience of the Canadian Forces as they have tried to review their professional ethos in the light of various "institutional failures" in the 1990s. We should, for example, study their reasons for abandoning Samuel Huntington's view that only commissioned officers are military professionals and their adoption of an inclusive definition of the Profession of Arms. In the course of studying their deliberations, we should surface many related issues that require deep conversations and clarification as the SAF attempts to shape its 3G Spirit and Ethos – for example, matters related to the nature and meaning of military discipline, rank, and hierarchy. These are matters that need to be carefully thought through and not merely given lip-service, or worse still, influenced by the unintended consequences of human-resource systems and practices.

Today, while many in the SAF view the SAF's LO initiative in terms of its promise for organisational learning and knowledge management in the SAF, we argue that the vision of the SAF as a LO is also a cultural mechanism to nurture the professional Spirit and Ethos needed in the SAF. SAF LO tools and ideas especially in the "Aspiration" leg of the "3-legged stool" metaphor should be used to support the deep conversations needed to clarify purpose, matters of relevance, and existing tensions for all in the SAF. It is useful to appreciate that Peter Senge's articulation of the LO (expanded and enhanced further by organisational theorists and consultants, Diane Cory and Daniel Kim) is one that meets the needs of the postmodern military, anchored

on professional values such as collective-interests as opposed to self-interests. Indeed, in his book entitled *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*, Peter Senge emphasises that shared visioning and openness are vital to changing an organisational culture from one that is centred on self-interest, to one that is more adaptive and learning-oriented:

Without a genuine sense of common vision and values, there is nothing to motivate people beyond self-interest. ...we can start building an organisational climate dominated by merit rather than politics – where doing what is right predominates over who wants what done. [Such a] climate also demands “openness” – both the norm of speaking openly and honestly about important issues and the capacity continually to challenge one’s own thinking. The first might be called participative openness, the second reflective openness. (Extracted from p. 274 Senge P.M. (1990), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*).

Finally, another useful concept to consider as the SAF forges ahead to transform its professional culture is the concept of professional mastery that the Australian Army has adapted from the LO literature and included in its warfighting doctrine:

Professional mastery integrates the components of fighting power. It is an expression of personal competence displayed by an individual’s ability to combine character, self-confidence, effective leadership, professional knowledge, professional military judgement and experience. It is measured by performance in battle and is a process of continual learning developed through education, training and experience. (Extracted from Australian Army *Land Warfare Doctrine 1: The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*, 2002).

Being a younger military force with less traditions and operational experience, we will need to complement individual-level professional mastery with a process of organisational mastery, which is in essence the spirit of a Learning Organisation – one where “people continually expand their capacities to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together”.⁴⁰ In this Spirit, the SAF will need to strengthen its ability to derive lessons from its own experience, and the experience of other forces in context. Our leaders must develop a strong capacity for critical thinking and reflection, in order that they challenge their own thinking and the SAF’s current thinking. In this context, Peter Senge emphasises that one must not mistake a state of participative openness – where people freely speak their mind – as a sufficient condition for learning: “Participative openness may lead to more ‘buy in’ on certain decisions, but by itself will rarely lead to better quality decisions because it does not influence

the thinking behind the decisions”.⁴¹ Participative openness, which leads people to speak out, needs to be accompanied with reflective openness, which concerns people looking inward to challenge their own thinking. Senge emphasises that the latter has to be based on skills of inquiry, reflection and dialogue, and “not just good intentions”.

The Leaders' Choice

What is supposed to drive change in a successful SAF – one that is not facing any serious threats? We are reminded by Mr Andrew Tan, a political scientist, that “military transformations seldom take place in a vacuum. They occur in periods of great chaos and uncertainty, often when the established order is on the verge of collapse. Thus for the Japanese, their humiliation at the hands of the West sparked the Meiji reform in the 19th century; for the Germans, it was their defeat in the First World War; and for the Americans, it was Vietnam and the Cold War”.⁴² We believe that the key to transforming the SAF today lies in finding and developing leaders who are able to operate well under changing circumstances, and, who are supported by an organisation that comprises people who possess a high level of personal mastery. Recently, PM Lee Hsien Loong shared his thoughts on the kind of visionary, inspiring and morally courageous leadership needed in the context of change and complexity:

“We are a small country. If other countries are like big oil tankers, Singapore is only a speed boat. We are more vulnerable at sea, but also more agile and better able to avoid hazards. We therefore must have able leaders to steer our speedboat. Whether in the political arena or in public administration, we need leaders who can articulate a compelling vision that will inspire Singaporeans and mobilise them to achieve their best for the country. We need leaders who will do what is right, and not necessarily what is popular. They must have the moral courage and integrity to acknowledge and correct past mistakes, and recognise when an existing policy has outlived its usefulness and must be discarded or changed”.⁴³

Having transformational leaders is only one condition for change. We believe that SAF Leaders will also need to leverage on the LD system to strengthen the personal mastery of all in the organisation. They must generate and manage a creative tension between the current reality and shared vision in the organisation, to help everyone realise that their current reality can be shaped by the creative tension especially if they have a clarity of values and a vision of a better future. Our Leaders must dispel the notion that they have the answers to all problems. Instead, they must strive to instil confidence throughout the organisation that “we can learn

whatever we need to learn in order to achieve the results we truly desire”.⁴⁴ For Peter Senge, the transformation to a LO boils down to the choices made by individuals in the organisations to act:

One of the paradoxes of leadership in learning organisations is that it is both collective and highly individual. Although the responsibilities of leadership are highly diffused among men and women throughout the organisation, the responsibilities come only as a result of individual choice. ...Only through choice does an individual come to be the steward of a larger vision. Only through choice does an individual come to practice the learning disciplines. Being in a supportive environment can help, but it does not obviate the need for choice. Learning organisations can only be built by individuals who put their life spirit into the task. It is our choices that focus that spirit.⁴⁵



Conclusion

Synergising *Spirit* and *System* for Leadership Development

We have tried in this Monograph to present a framing of the LD issues in the SAF in terms of two domains – Systems and Spirit. Systems refer to the doctrines, curricula, methods and tools that provide a common language and approach to drive the thinking on leadership and LD processes in SAF Units and Schools. Spirit refers to the ethos and motivation of SAF Leaders that drive their everyday actions in the SAF, and is a particularly important element of effective LD. We suggest that the LD system implemented without the right Spirit on the part of SAF Leaders will not work. Professional credibility and authority are vital aspects of LD. SAF Leaders must always “walk the talk” and anchor their actions and decisions on the values and purpose of the SAF.

As shown in Figure 3, the LD system in the SAF is designed to prepare SAF leaders with the leadership competencies, skills and values needed to influence people effectively in an expanded spectrum of operating contexts. Besides these operational outcomes, the SAF’s LD system also aims to produce leaders with LO capacities who are able to employ these skills and tools to nurture the Spirit of the SAF, which is in turn essential for driving the LD system.

SAF Leaders will need to use their LO skills and tools to engage one another and to facilitate deep conversations and reflect on matters related to the military profession, including the validity of our military doctrines and practices, the responsibilities and duties of the military vis-à-vis society, the role of the various Corps in the SAF – Officer, Warrant Officer, Specialist and non-uniformed Defence Executives. There is also a need for shared visioning of the SAF as a professional organisation – to constantly review the role, responsibility and position of the military in our Society and in our personal lives. By actively using the LO skills, we believe that both personal and organisational mastery will be strengthened in the SAF. Our leaders will possess greater capacity to adapt, and this will ensure that the SAF stays relevant in a changing security environment.

Finally, we believe that the SAF’s LD and LO initiatives can only be sustained if there is a broader strategy to synergise aspects of Spirit and System in the SAF – one that does not only depend on the efforts of CLD which primarily exists in

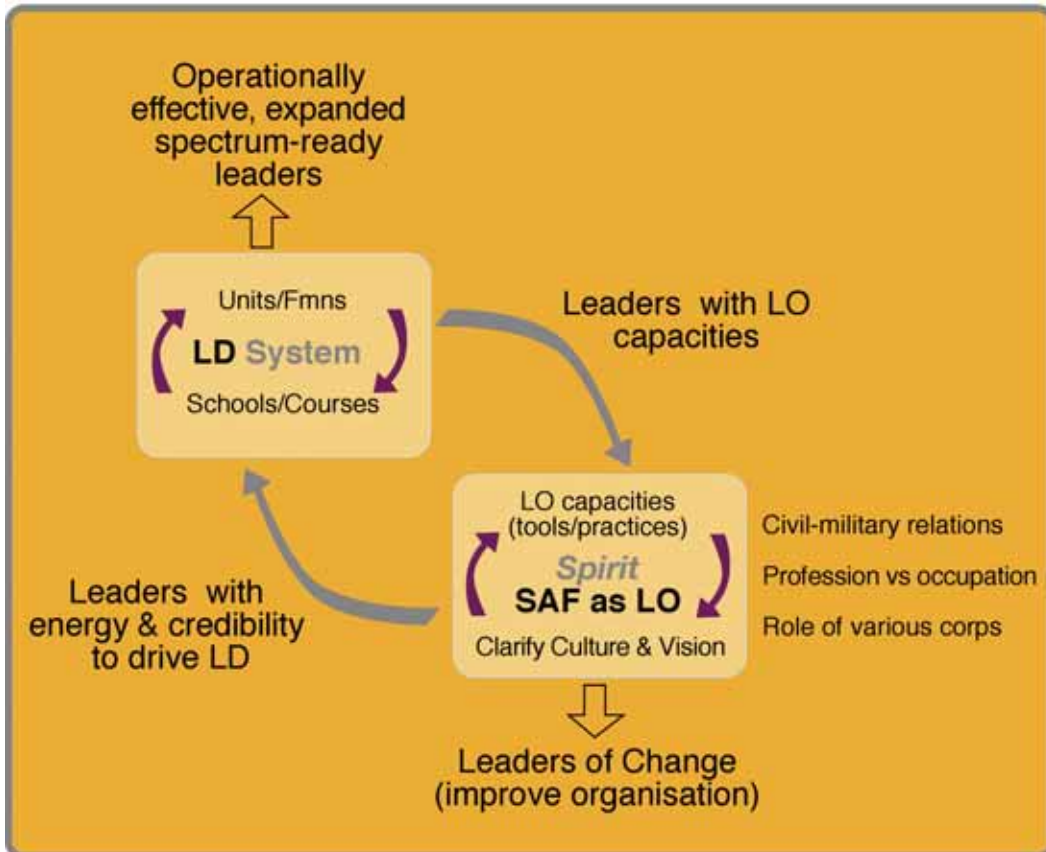


Figure 3. Synergising the Spirit and System of LD in the SAF.

the SAF’s training domain, but also includes agencies in the domains of policy (including “National Education”) and human resources (i.e., manpower policy and development). For example, it will be useful for CLD to coordinate with NEXUS, the national coordinating agency on National Education, to look at how SAF leaders are not only given an appreciation of the SAF’s mission and purpose at the early point of socialisation into military service, but also updated in their understanding of the security context of the SAF in a manner that is able to drive LD. The SAF’s mission and purpose must be articulated not only in terms of geopolitical dimensions but also brought to life in terms of the professional role and obligation of the military in Singapore. The deep conversations and reflections on the “nature of the military profession” facilitated by CLD and SAF Leaders must also be reconciled with strategic human resource policy and practices, in context of the SAF’s purpose and the changing nature of work and professions, so that trust is strengthened throughout the organisation. Finally, it is vital that MINDEF and SAF senior leaders role model the importance of having deep conversations on

professional issues that matter – when appropriate – and never allow the system to take over the role of leadership, especially in *Nurturing the Spirit*.

Final Remarks: The Broader Context of Transformation

With the end of the Cold War, many modern military forces are now faced with paradigmatic changes in the nature of conflict and world security, globalisation, weapon and information technologies. The SAF also recognised these changes and started a process of transformation not in terms of changes in warfighting concepts or technology, but more importantly, in terms of changes in the organisation and its culture. In some ways, given its short history, the transformation of the SAF is much more than just a “Revolution in Military Affairs” faced by other modern military forces. Our transformation is tied to the fact that Singapore is facing a generational change in its leaders – one where the post-independence generation is “Remaking Singapore” in the face of a new global environment.

These are indeed exciting times as the SAF takes its initial steps along a journey of transformation to its third Generation of concepts and systems. For all of the reasons that drive this transformation (e.g., new nature of conflict, changes in technology, changes in society, etc), some basic facts remain – war is a human endeavour that involves the emotional (e.g., anger, hate, frustration, etc) and not just the rational domain. It is because of the unique nature of war and human conflict that military forces are professional organisations that need to internally regulate themselves to ensure relevance to mission and purpose, and to constantly maintain the trust of the very society that it protects. The broader design of military LD must therefore include consideration of both elements of Spirit and System – these depend on each other and should be synergised for maximum effectiveness. We cannot simply assume that a leadership doctrine or training system is sufficient for developing the leaders needed in a professional organisation like the military.

We are the SAF – made in Singapore, and in service of Singapore. As we look ahead, we must consciously evolve our professional standards and thinking and ground these on our fundamental purpose and professional military values and competence. We must possess the capacity to innovate and adapt to the new security environment, yet never allow ourselves to become insular to the point of being irrelevant. We must learn from our own experiences, and validate our understanding of mission and methods against the experiences of other military forces – especially those with more operational exposure. While we do that, we must also be conscious of not accepting uncritically, or worse still – blindly, others’

models, concepts or doctrines, because what works for them in their context may not work for us in ours. It is in this regard that we need to pay greater attention to strengthening professional military education in the SAF. That education must be one where knowledge is carefully learned and appreciated in context, rather than adopted “wholesale”. In 1999, then-Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence RADM (NS) Teo Chee Hean gave the following advice to the teaching profession as his Ministry began their transformation journey:

“While we can look for good ideas, techniques and systems elsewhere, and seek to establish collaborations and exchanges, we should filter and extract lessons that are relevant to Singapore. The starting point is a sound understanding of our local context and the clarity of mind to distinguish the relevant from what may be less so. One unique circumstance that every successive generation of Singaporeans needs to understand is our journey to independence and the ideals and dreams that our founding generation strived for – in essence why we are what we are, and why it is worthwhile for us to continue to strive to seek our own path. We must also realise the limits that small size, small population and a lack of natural resources place on us. But at the same time we must know how to overcome these limitations and turn them into advantages. By internalising these basic factors, we acquire a realistic appreciation of the challenges and circumstances that we face and develop a well-founded confidence in our future.”⁴⁶
RADM (NS) Teo Chee Hean, 1999.

We believe that his advice is equally relevant to the SAF as it begins its transformation journey, and hope that the effort to transform LD in the SAF will be one that is always anchored to the fundamentals of purpose and profession in context of a changing world, and a changing Singapore.



Commentaries And Reflections

On Leaders and Followers – A Personal Reflection

By COL Tay Kian Seng

Commitment or Just Meeting Obligations

When a person answers a calling⁴⁷, he is making a commitment. He is committing himself to a worthy purpose and taking responsibility to pursue it. To him, he is doing what he feels is the best thing to do, in service to the purpose.

When a person answers an obligation, he is not making any commitment. He is willing himself into doing what he thinks certain others expect him to do so as not to disappoint those certain others. To him, he is doing what he thinks is the right thing to do, in service of the obligation. [note: the “certain others” mentioned could include a person, a group or an organisation].

Question 1: Which do you prefer: SAF leaders and soldiers who are committed to serve or just obligated to serve?

Question 2: In the SAF, which are you at work: Committed or obligated?

Question 3: For you personally, which is more meaningful: to be able to choose what you feel to do OR to do something because you are obligated to?

If you think you are a leader in the SAF, then your answers to the three questions above must inform your own theory of leadership, and consequently, your practice of leadership.

Of Committed, Obligated and Obliging Followers

Inspiring Committed Followers

A Committed Follower is committed to a worthy purpose and a desirable vision, not the leader. To get committed followers, the leader must inspire them with a meaningful purpose and a desirable future. To do so in an enduring and consistent manner, the leader must be authentic about his own commitment – he must himself be inspired by the same purpose.

In order for a leader to commit to a purpose, the purpose must be meaningful to him personally. In other words, the purpose must resonate with his personal beliefs and values. When the leader commits to a personally meaningful purpose, he is in effect making a choice to take responsibility for achieving it. Mobility to act then comes from within the leader to the extent that extrinsic motivators become unnecessary.

The same applies to inspiring committed followers. A leader must articulate a meaningful purpose that fits in with his followers' personal beliefs and values. For the SAF, it is my belief that its purpose resonates with most, if not all, Singaporeans. As such, the issue is not for SAF leaders to make their soldiers believe in the purpose or mission of the SAF. The challenge for SAF leaders is to demonstrate their commitment to the SAF purpose to their followers in quite tangible ways, authentically. When followers are able to sense their leaders' conviction, the license to lead then becomes truly valid.

However, to have committed followers, leaders must go another step. They must also ignite within their followers the mobility to act. This is where the power of vision comes into play. The key to accessing followers' total commitment lies in aligning purpose and vision. No matter how noble a purpose is it will remain void of life until a compelling, congruent vision attaches itself to it. There can be no intrinsic mobility to act until there is a compelling, congruent vision. Vision is the Spirit that brings life to Purpose. Building a shared vision anchored on a meaningful purpose is therefore a vital task of leaders. A shared vision is not a single vision. Rather, it is many personal visions overlapping to a large extent such that leader and followers are able to commit themselves individually to it, and take collective responsibility to get organised to create it.

Then there are the Obligated and Obliging Followers

An Obligated Follower acts out of obligation to others. Fulfilling an obligation is not making a commitment. He does what is expected of him by others so as not to disappoint them or to protect his own interests. In other words, an obligated follower can either be selfless or selfish. I call the selfless ones Obligated and those selfish ones, Obliging.

The selfless obligated follower acts out of loyalty to the System(s) that he views as providing patronage for his well-being and sense of self-worth. To him, he is doing what he thinks is the right thing to do (in service to the obligation). Indeed, to him, taking responsibility is about fulfilling obligations to others. In fact,

most of us are brought up with this understanding of responsibility. It is actually not a bad thing for the SAF, and I believe a good proportion of SAF personnel are selfless obligated followers. However, when a person answers an obligation, he is not making any commitment. The degree of engagement varies depending on how passionate he is over the task at hand. He is merely trying not to disappoint certain others. In fact, when those certain others do not reinforce or acknowledge the good acts of these selfless obligated followers, there is a risk that over time they might become selfish obliging followers as what they perceived as expectations at first become unappreciated and therefore unimportant or irrelevant acts. The irony is that often leaders take obligated followers for granted and, unbeknown to them, gradually engender dispassionate workplaces where indifference prevails as tasks and activities are performed mechanistically and good results are expected, but not celebrated.

The challenge for SAF leaders is not to erode the loyalty that selfless obligated followers already have towards the System. They can do so by consistently upholding the integrity of the System(s), always leading by example, recognising professional attitudes and behaviours, rewarding exemplary followers and celebrating successes, big and small. Nonetheless, the ultimate thing to do is to inspire them into committed followers.

The selfish obliging follower acts to take advantage of the System that he views as exploitative, and as taking advantage of him. He will act according to what he thinks is in his best interests. He is obligated to himself. He is the wrong sort of follower we want to have in the SAF. He has found that on balance it is more advantageous, in monetary and benefits terms, to remain in the SAF than to leave for another organisation. He is thus willing to accept the perceived less than ideal work environment in the SAF. He works for his promotions and salary upgrades and not for his leader or anyone else. He thinks he deserves better, given his perception of the “shit” he has to endure in the SAF, and thus he tends to be cynical and opportunistic. Unfortunately, it is not easy to tell the selfish obliging followers apart from the selfless obligated ones.

Leadership Development - Strengthening the Soul of SAF as an Institution

In our rank-conscious, hierarchical work environment, an obedient follower who gets the job done is a good follower. Whether or not he was selfless or selfish, it is really immaterial, at least at the local level. In fact, it is possible that some selfish obliging followers are actually super-achievers with outstanding performance track

record. They might even be assessed to have high potential. The trouble starts when a selfish obliging follower becomes a leader. That is when the implications could become significant beyond the local level. As leaders, they would likely destroy commitment and loyalty, and engender distrust and selfishness. They would create dispassionate workplaces, disillusion the committed and breed more selfish obliging followers in the process. If they continue to move up and occupy higher policy-making positions, the institutional soul of the SAF will be at greater risk of being contaminated, or worse, dissolved.

If the SAF could weed out selfish obliging followers and leaders before they could do greater harm, it would be best. However, given SAF's size and manpower constraints, I doubt it would be possible to prevent seepage. Our last line of defence is Leadership Development (LD). Besides developing critical leadership competencies and skills, a well-designed LD system could re-orient the targeted participants' life priorities by creating significant shifts in their beliefs and values, and better alignment between individual and organisational purposes, values and aspirations. Indeed, LD should be a platform for the SAF to socialise all future leaders to its desired organisational values and for them to participate in the ever-on-going process of building a shared vision.

In fact, not to invest in LD is leaving too much to chance. In today's talent-starved, market-competitive environment, LD is a necessary intervention to counteract the occupational forces unleashed by some of our necessarily more market-driven HR policies. In no small measure, the existence of selfish obliging followers is one of many manifestations of market-driven occupationalism, which has seeped into the Public Service, including the SAF, over the years. The rise of occupationalism within the SAF must be checked before the SAF loses its soul as an institution completely. In this respect, LD is a necessary investment to preserve and strengthen SAF's institutional soul.

All Followers Deserve Committed Leaders

I am sure there are many selfish obliging followers in our midst. And I am sure there are also many obligated followers – some perhaps more engaged than others. There is also no doubt in my mind that there are many committed followers across the SAF. But whatever the mix, all followers, regardless of genres or types, deserve committed leaders.

In the SAF, followers cannot choose their leader. And SAF leaders are also not given much latitude to pick their followers. So, if we could turn all potential

leaders into committed leaders, then we should. If we could enable committed leaders to inspire committed followers, then we should. After all, if we expect our followers to lay down their lives for the SAF, shouldn't they do so under the leadership of committed leaders?



Developing the Next Generation of Leaders for Creating SAF's Future

By Dr. Daniel H. Kim and Ms. Diane Cory

This monograph helps provide a historical context to understand why a renewed focus on leadership development may be of critical importance at this point in SAF's history. We concur with many, if not all, of the points discussed about the nature of the leadership challenge SAF faces today. As outsiders from the U.S. who have worked with the SAF over the past five years, we offer our perspective in service of SAF's aspiration to continually grow and learn to be more than they are today.

Leaders, Managers, and Operators

As highlighted in the monograph, there has been a different emphasis at each stage of SAF's development where each stage required different kinds of leadership. The issue is not one of whether one type of leadership is better than another, but rather which leadership type is most appropriate at each stage of development. From our perspective, we distinguish between three different types of leaders—transformational (leaders), transactional (managers), and operational (operators). Transformational leaders, i.e., leaders, are people who are able to sense what is needed to create the future that may be radically different from the current reality of the day, yet captures the hearts and imagination of all those who follow them. They are able to inspire high levels of commitment through their own personal passion and are resourceful in creating whatever is needed to establish the foundations on which to build the future. Clearly, there were such strong leaders that created the SAF virtually from scratch.

As many aspects of the vision take concrete form, its very success creates the need for more structures and systems to manage the growing complexity of the organisation. Somewhere along the way, the importance of good transactional leadership, i.e., managers, rises in importance. This is often the forte of the 2G.

They are able to bring predictability and stability into the organisation, attributes which are highly desirable in meeting the wide variety of needs of a diverse and growing organisation. And so, the 2G leaders of SAF have built on the strong foundations of the 1G and taken SAF to its current level of success.

To sustain future success, organisations need to have been developing their next generation of leaders while streamlining their operations with good managers. The danger at this point is that the organisation can fall into “maintenance” mode by engaging another generation of managers or go into “auto-pilot” mode by allowing operational leaders (i.e., operators) to assume the helm. Operators simply take over the running of something that has already been designed and created by someone else without a deep connection to the purpose, values, and vision that drove the first generation to create the entity. Though they may have heard about these things second hand, they generally do not have a direct feel for the heart and soul of the organisation.

So, instead of moving the organisation to higher levels of success by perpetuating a virtuous cycle of Leader-Manager-Leader-Manager-..., an organisation can succumb to a downward spiral of Leader-Manager-Operator-Operator-... After a couple generations of managers and/or operators, little spirit is left in the organisation. This may very well explain the high infant mortality rate of organisations where the average lifespan is only 40-50 years, which coincides with a time period that is just long enough for the first two generations of leaders to have departed from the scene. One view that seemed to resonate for people is an adage we created that states: We dream about effectiveness. We worship efficiency. We practice expediency. An organisation that is run by operators will tend to pursue expediency, which will have a very corrosive long-term effect on the organisation.

Our view is that the current emphasis on focusing on the spirit aspect of leadership is SAF’s way of addressing this danger by working to put itself on the Leader-Manager-Leader virtuous cycle. We view this as a good sign that augurs well for the future.

From Route of Advancement (ROA) to Route of Contribution (ROC)-focused

It is interesting to note the framework presented in the lead article regarding the four possible cultural assumptions that soldiers may hold, given the changing

organisational environments of different military forces. From our experience, we believe that one of the key challenges that the 3G SAF leaders must address is what we have encountered to be an ROA-focused culture that has been created by a lack of clear connection to a larger purpose, a “what’s-in-it-for-me” career emphasis, the shortened career time frame, and faster rotations. The 3G SAF leaders need to re-examine the current policies and infrastructures that tend to reinforce this ROA-focused culture by asking questions like “What does it look like to create an SAF where everyone views their rotations from a place of ‘What can I contribute to the current performance and the future capability of the SAF?’”, “What will it take to shift from an ROA-centric to a ROC-centric (Route of Contribution) culture?” Our belief is that it is possible to keep the current fast rotation cycles and have a ROC-centric SAF if the deeper work is done at the Purpose, Core Values, and Vision levels.

In developing its 3G leaders, what will be important in the months and years ahead is to go beyond the individual level of change to the infrastructure level to systemically support the shift from a ROA-centric to a ROC-centric culture. Although individual efforts are necessary to get things started in that direction, without changes in the SAF’s infrastructures, those efforts are not sufficient as people learn that it is too difficult to swim against the current for very long. Addressing the infrastructure issue will require a deep blending of both leader and manager strengths.

The SAF’s Leadership Development Opportunity

The leadership challenges of the SAF mirror the challenges of Singapore as a whole. By its very structure of National Service, the nation depends heavily on the SAF for developing the character of its future leaders. This presents a tremendous opportunity for the SAF to serve the country in a way that goes far beyond its stated mission of “operational readiness”. If the SAF can transform itself as the premier institution for developing leaders, not just among the select few scholars, but through the full range of regular officers and NSmen, then it will be able to truly deliver on its declaration of developing its people to their fullest potential. Then, in the third generation, the SAF will be serving the nation to an even greater measure than it has already done in the first two generations. As people begin to see their time with the SAF as a formative leadership development experience, it will have gone a long way towards achieving its vision of becoming a true Learning Organisation.

Cultural and Network Intelligences: The Twin Pillars in Leadership Development for the 21st Century Era of Global Business and Institutional Networks

by Prof. Ang Soon and Asst Prof. Ng Kok Yee

The SAF is at an exciting juncture of transforming itself to a cutting-edge, 3G military force. As the SAF charges towards this vision, an imperative for the organisation is to equip its people with the requisite leadership capacities. Leadership development (LD) – the theme of this monograph, is therefore a critical process that will propel SAF towards its goals. Through the vivid and insightful reflection of the SAF's journey to-date, the authors of this monograph have depicted how LD efforts in the SAF have evolved over the years as a result of the changing environment. More importantly, the authors have challenged the readers to think about that “certain kind of leadership” that is needed in today's environment – “one that is highly adaptive, innovative and able to cope well with uncertainty and change.” (para 1, p. 2).

In this commentary, we would like to expound further on what it takes for leaders to be effective in today's environment – marked by accelerated pace of change, increasing inter-connectivity and interdependence, as well as growing diversity amongst stakeholders. Against this backdrop, what are the hallmark qualities of an effective leader who can manage such complexities? Our research on leadership in the management domain has pointed to two key competencies for successful leadership in this environment – network intelligence and cultural intelligence.

In response to the opportunities of the global market, businesses worldwide are forming strategic alliances with rivals, suppliers and customers from different parts of the world. Similarly, in response to the global threat of terrorism since Sept 11th, there is an urge for military forces and relevant agencies across the world to work together to fight this war. Despite the fundamental difference in the motivation to network, the implications for leadership are the same. Leaders operating in this context need to possess network intelligence, which refers to the ability to detect and work with the structure of existing networks to form and sustain coalitional teams. Networks can be formed internally within the organisation, such as networks of individuals or departmental units, or externally with other organisations.

Network intelligence requires the leader to have a good mental map of existing networks, their configurations, goals, and resources. Without being cognizant of existing networks and their characteristics, the leader will not be able to strategically position him or herself in the network to contribute to, or leverage on the complementarities of the parties involved. Besides the knowledge component, the leader with network intelligence also needs to possess exceptional relational skills to manage the relationships in the network. Promoting trust and safety in the relationships is a key factor to ensuring timely access to accurate, high quality information. Without trust in the network, there is less honest and forthcoming information exchange amongst parties, leading to less knowledge sharing and creation, and thus, restricting the potential benefits offered by networks.

Going hand in hand with network intelligence is another form of capability – cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence refers to the ability of the individual to adapt effectively to the culture of different nations, organisations, and professions. Given that networks can consist of parties from other units from the organisation, or even other organisations from other countries, the ability to lead effectively in a setting comprising diverse and unfamiliar cultural values is important. Understanding and adapting to a different cultural context, be it national, organisational or professional, can be a challenge because we are guided by our own set of values to think and behave in a certain way. To embrace another person's way of thinking or behaving requires us to step out of the familiarity and safety of our comfort zone. As a result, many cross-cultural interactions fail as a result of a failure to understand, and to adapt to cultural differences.

Cultural intelligence consists of four components: knowledge, strategy, behavior, and motivation. Culturally intelligent leaders possess knowledge about how cultures differ in their values, and how such differences impact behavior. Having an accurate understanding removes wrong judgments often placed on people from a different cultural context, and enables the leader to foster a global and open mindset to learn from people of various cultures. However, since there is a limit to how much cultural knowledge one can learn, another important component of cultural intelligence is strategy – the ability to perceive, interpret and develop plans in an unfamiliar environment. Having such strategies allow the leader to size up the situation and discern the often subtle, yet important dynamics in the situation, followed by appropriate plans of actions to manage the situation.

In executing one's plans of actions, the culturally intelligent leaders need to have a range of behavioral skills which they can choose from and exhibit, as the situation calls for it. This is particularly important for managing interpersonal relations, where norms for interaction and leadership may be quite different. Finally, throughout the entire process, the leader must possess motivation - the desire and confidence to adapt to the different cultural context. Without motivation, the leader is likely to give up easily when faced with problems, or avoid cross-cultural situations in the future. Conversely, the motivated leader is more resilient to setbacks and challenges, and as a result, more likely to learn from the experiences to hone in his/her cross-cultural leadership skills.

In striving to become a 3G military force that is agile and adaptive, SAF must cultivate in its leaders the capacity to network (both internally and externally) and to manage complex relationships arising from diverse cultural contexts. The development of network and cultural intelligence requires the long-term commitment and resolve of both the organisation and its people. As LTC Chan and his colleagues aptly pointed out, both system and spirit are essential to LD in SAF. Any LD system implemented without the 'Spirit' will not sustain; conversely, LD with the 'Spirit' but not anchored on sound principles and rigorous research will be limited in its impact. For the SAF, this means investing in the research, development, and implementation of LD programs that will systematically and effectively hone in leaders' required competencies. For the leaders, this means cultivating an open mindset that is both forward- and outward-looking, a hunger for learning, and an adventurous spirit to experiment with new things.

In conclusion, we have enjoyed and benefited greatly from this monograph on the LD efforts in the SAF, and we applaud the SAF's goal and commitment to develop its leaders for today's global environment. We wish the SAF continued success in its journey toward a highly effective and reputed military force.



Reflections On Leadership

by COL Tan Chuan-Jin

My ideas and views on leadership are certainly not as comprehensive and well articulated as that laid out in the SAF Leadership Framework. Nonetheless, I hope, in this short note, to share my views on leadership and to draw on my personal experiences in my various command appointments.

When I was Commanding Officer of 3rd Guards, my Strategy Map for the Battalion showed values to be the bedrock of all we did and along with this, “Leadership” and “Developing Effective Leaders” formed the foundations. Indeed, as a Nation, and as an Armed Force, our greatest resource is our people. And the most important component of our people is our leaders.

Being effective and efficient managers do not qualify us as leaders. Neither does being a commander. Our ability to achieve the mission in itself is not sufficient evidence of being a leader.

We are leaders only if we,

- Inspire
- Provide Clarity and Direction
- Build Teams
- Develop New Leaders
- are Grounded in Values

Leaders inspire others to follow, to share in a vision and to strive forward together. How a leader does it depends on his style. Some do so because of their charisma, and others, because of their passion and conviction. Our ability to inspire is the effect that leads on to the desired outcomes. The means can be varied.

I am not sure if I was particularly inspirational in my various commands. But I do know that I often tried to do so by articulating and building up a shared vision of what we believed in and how we saw ourselves as we sought to realize that vision. Importantly, I felt that I had to relate what we did, and what we believed in to the larger frame of where we fitted into the SAF and even Singapore at large. I found this important not simply from the perspective of providing greater clarity and direction but to give meaning to what we do.

In the Battalion, it was critical to relate how our responsibilities as commanders led to the SAF’s larger objectives. As Commander of the Humanitarian Assistance Support Group during Operation Flying Eagle (OFE), it was vital that my commanders and staff understood the strategic imperatives so that we could fully appreciate the importance and enormity of our mission. In so doing, we could understand why certain decisions were taken and why operations were shaped in a particular way. This understanding provided clarity amidst uncertainties and competing demands. It served to reassure and build confidence. It also served to

inspire and motivate when people were able to see beyond the immediate goals, and, that higher objectives were being met.

In many ways, I see a leader helping to make sense, establish common understanding, forge a shared vision and provide directions. He builds processes and he leads the team to attain the desired outcomes. Having shared vision and perspectives are important because with greater “buy in”, inspiration will come from within the team, and not just the leader alone.

Clarity and direction also ensures that we do not waste precious time and resources wandering too far off the beaten path. It is very easy to get stuck at the “events level” and forget about the larger picture and what we were really trying to achieve. By establishing a clear train of thought, and using it as a guide and check, it allows us to stay focused on what is important and it shapes how we do things. While in the Battalion, once we were clear of our desire to build an operationally ready Battalion, we carried out more live firing exercises and FIBUA or “fighting in built-up area” training than were normally required. Given that our Battle Evaluation Exercise was conducted overseas, we were not being very “exam smart” by conducting FIBUA missions during our various build-up training. But we believed that it was the right emphasis and a correct thing to do. During OFE, there were multiple tasks that we could have carried out. However, with the understanding of our strategic and operational frame and parameters, we were able to ensure relevant application of capabilities and helped everyone to stay focused to achieve the desired effects.

Establishing shared vision and beliefs also helps guide how we manage moral dilemmas and challenges in day to day activities. This is important because values remain the cornerstone of the SAF.

Leaders need to be strong and decisive, but yet must be able to create an environment where people and the team can grow. Only then can leaders lay the foundations and create capacities for the future. A leader does this by building up the team and developing the next generation of leaders. He does this by deliberately giving space and time for others to grow and develop. This requires considerable time and effort. It requires much personal emotions and energy. It requires the leader to care enough. Developing the team would also ensure that one leverages on the collective will and wisdom of all.

When I was serving as a Commanding Officer, it was clear to me that my “legacy” would not be what my team and I achieved during the two years that I

was there. It was how the Battalion would look several years down the road during their ORNS period. It was how my commanders developed as leaders. Even in my present staff capacity as ACGS (Plans), my responsibilities extend to, apart from planning and growing the Army for the present and the future, whether I help develop my staff officers and branch heads so that they become more effective and better commanders and leaders on their own right.

Every activity, every crisis has the potential to be a learning experience. It is one thing to share about the concepts of leadership, values, etc. It is another to live through events and at the same time to learn from them actively. I try to make it a point to use events and activities to share on my thinking and rationale for dealing with them in particular ways. As an example, I made an error in judgement towards the end of OFE and on realizing it, I felt it important to share with my team on where and why I had erred and what it meant in terms of the way we approached things. That particular event served as a vehicle to teach and share. Often, such events can also serve as vehicles for a leader to examine how one's values are applied in complex and grey areas.

Because of the impact that leaders have, leaders must be strongly values-based so that the direction and character of the organisation and its people are on the right course. And particularly because we are in the military where we are responsible for both the taking of and preservation of lives, leaders must be strongly grounded on values. Our responsibilities are to safeguard our nation and our people. What we do and why we do what we do must be above our own self-serving ambitions and vanity.

We must strive to do the right things and do them right. I have found it useful to remind myself why I serve. Are we doing what we are doing because it would further our own cause or because we believe that this is good and right for the SAF and for our Nation?

However, it is also clear to me that things are never only in black and white. We often operate where there are various shades of gray. I am quite particular that where it can be misconstrued, I try and make it a point to explain to my team the reasons and rationale. It is not because I need to justify what I do but because as a leader, I am a role model and misperceptions of my actions can impact on those who serve with me. We cannot afford for our followers to become disillusioned and cynical because of misunderstandings. Apart from clarifying values in action, by having our own internal conversations and reflecting on our own thoughts and

actions, we are also helping to develop our people to be better leaders in their own right, and to calibrate their values-moral compass.

Conclusion

To me, leadership is more an art and less a science. What we seek to do through our leadership development efforts is to clarify and identify the essence of what leadership is about, its qualities etc. We seek to systemise the approach to leadership development and create the conditions for growing our leaders. Learning Organisation ideas such as visioning, and personal mastery are meant to play an important role in the process, and indeed, they have served to do that successfully.

However, without the heart, spirit and soul of leaders playing a part in this developmental process to inspire and breathe life into new leaders, it would be just a production line for effective and efficient managers and commanders. There will be those with innate natural qualities that will respond to these processes and become fine leaders in their own right. But developing leaders cannot be left to chance. Only when leaders themselves play an active role in this process, be it directly and indirectly, can the leadership development effort take flight. Only then can we grow generations of leaders to continue to safeguard and protect our nation.



SAF Leadership Development: An Initiative Whose Time Has Come

By COL Goh Teck Seng

I recall a recurring refrain in HRM (Human Resource Management) 101 in my third year at university that the least important word, insofar as bridging the affective divide in any collectivity of individuals was concerned, was the pronoun “I” and the most important word, the pronoun “we”. Yet in leadership development, the leader in the singular “I” needs to be given both accent and ascendancy over the collective “we”. Can the leader be the affective bridge if he is at once distinct and distinguished from the masses? The answer depends on how the leader in “I” defines himself, whether as the elitist, anointed chieftain on high horseback, or as the egalitarian steward of a following of men with whom he enjoys a social compact of mutual trust.

The military leader as “I” who sets himself apart from the collectivity and who exercises leadership by tyrannical authority or patronage is like a Shakespearean tragedy waiting to happen: in the typical Shakespearean play, one cannot be certain how precisely the plot will unfold, but one can almost certainly foretell the ominous end from the start. In the profession of arms unlike in the vocation of drama, such an ominous end invariably means defeat and death, not the pretence of defeat and death. Real-world actions, as opposed to the surreal world of drama, have live consequences. Leadership development is serious business.

Yet, effective leadership development does not occur by happenstance. It requires resource investment, leadership commitment but more critically, an organisation that is well shaken down. Indeed, a maturing SAF is a precondition for the current leadership development initiative whose time has come. For some time and despite our seriousness with leadership development, we have generally dealt with the subject as borrowed wisdom from others; and even where we do, we have not always transplanted the borrowed knowledge intelligently to the SAF context.

As a junior lieutenant in the mid-1980s, I remember being “conscripted” into a project team to study how “leadership by example” and “people-oriented management” might be introduced as part of a leadership development programme in the then Singapore Air Defence Artillery (SADA) formation. It was a project I took to with great enthusiasm, but which with professional maturity, I now view with a much more critical cast of mind. That our recommendations were callow was not the point; what was important was that the project team had served the instrumental purpose of advancing what in retrospect was a passing interest.

We have come a long way since. Leadership development, as we now know it, has begun to address leadership concerns facing the SAF in comprehensive and well-informed ways: it engages reality in totality and does not pick only the slice of reality it chooses to engage; it anchors leadership development on theories relevant to the SAF and no longer just transplants theories to the local context unthinkingly; but above all, leadership development in the SAF is conducted through a dialogue that engages all ranks and all service branches in an elaborate effort in vision-building and co-ownership.

Unlike in the previous decades of the 1G and 2G SAF, leadership development in an evolving 3G SAF is defined by a qualitatively different conversation on needs and priorities. If the arguments weigh up and the recommendations resonate, it is because the leadership development initiative now engages us at a deeper emotive

and intellectual level. The SAF, even if it cannot claim monopoly of wisdom on leadership development, can nevertheless now contribute meaningfully to the global discourse on leadership development in niche areas.

A key catalyst of change is the institutional focus on leadership development. The Centre for Leadership Development (CLD) within SAFTI MI has been the spearhead agency, shaping and modulating the programme as guided by top-down wisdom and as moved by bottom-up realities, but more fundamentally, CLD is motivated by its professional convictions of what ought to be the focus and content of leadership development for the SAF. CLD does not work in a vacuum: it draws intellectual sustenance from the research findings garnered through selective and SAF-wide surveys; and it harvests its network of linkages with its foreign counterparts for ideas. In the end, the SAF is the richer professionally for it.

The establishment of CLD itself reflects the organisational maturity of the SAF. Like stem cells that must evolve into functionally adapted cells as life develops, the SAF has found it necessary to become more functionally differentiated as it matures. Functional differentiation is a precondition for domain specialisation; and domain specialisation is needed in turn for knowledge creation. A SAF that maintains a general organisational format will always be a mile-long on the spectrum of knowledge domains it pursues but only an inch-deep on domain knowledge. That past leadership development initiatives have not endured is partly the result of weak institutionalisation that only a dedicated agency can correct. CLD has been a worthwhile investment and a demonstration of what is possible in the realm of knowledge creation if the SAF is committed to a cause. We should in the same vein look into establishing a Centre of Military Studies to deepen and advance the SAF's knowledge on emerging subject domains such as transformation, IKC2, effects-based operations and general strategising.

A knowledge eco-system is emerging within SAFTI MI in the domain of leadership development. A CLD, coupled strongly to SCSC, and operating symbiotically with us in shaping the curriculum, content and pedagogy on leadership development, has positioned SCSC as a key touchpoint on developing future SAF leaders. The revamped Command and Staff Course introduced this year elevates leadership development from a management-oriented subject to a discipline that is directed at operationalising the SAF leadership framework. At SCSC, participants are given instruction on leadership development as much as they are allowed space to reflect on their own leadership growth. Here, officers receive learned grounding on a "Human in Command" module, are exposed through case-studies to ethical

reasoning and are constantly reviewed for their performance on the essential dimensions of the SAF leadership competency model.

SCSC and CLD are partners-in-arms in advancing the SAF leadership development agenda. If transformation is about first changing mindsets, educational institutions are incubators of change to the extent that they address mental models. SCSC can transform mindsets and so open up new pathways to alternative futures through the officers we train. With leadership development now an integral part of the revamped course, SCSC is well-placed to play a strategic role in enabling the SAF's transformation by producing self-reflective and adaptive leaders for a 3G SAF.



Response & Concluding Remarks By Authors

Towards An Even More Values-Based 3G SAF

I see the potential and future of Singapore in terms of people – the quality and drive of our population, both local and foreigners. Our future will depend on how we nurture our people to achieve their full potential, the values they imbibe, their creativity and innovativeness, and most of all, their ability to change and adapt to new situations and evolving realities...⁴⁸ Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, 2005.

First, we wish to thank the commentators for sharing their views and reflection. We are happy that our lead article has served to provoke reflection on an important topic like leadership, professionalism and values in the SAF. In particular, we were struck by the range of perspectives generated among the commentators – from highly personal reflections by our military commanders on the nature of professional commitment and leadership in our military, to more consulting and academic calls for the SAF to take a broader, more future-oriented perspective to its Leadership Development (LD) efforts.

We had set out to provide readers with a historical perspective to understand the SAF's leadership development journey, which in our view reflected an evolution of the SAF's thinking on leadership and LD based on its changing circumstances. We also tried to suggest that the challenge facing the SAF as it transforms to a Third Generation force is more than one concerning a revolution in military affairs brought about by new technologies and changes in the nature of conflict. For the SAF, transformation also involves a maturing of our organisation and profession in context of our society that is itself at a turning point of its maturity. We hope that this message was adequately conveyed in the lead article.

We also hope that readers will find our “Spirit and System” perspective useful for them to better-appreciate the complexities of LD in the SAF. It is important to understand that LD in the SAF concerns matters of both Spirit and System – one cannot do without the other. With this perspective, we hope that SAF commanders understand their role in driving the LD system and in nurturing the Spirit of LD in the SAF, and how the Learning Organisation (LO) skills and tools imparted to

them in various SAF courses can help them develop their personal mastery and equip them with the skills.

Several readers wished that the lead article was more prescriptive of a position or view regarding the future of LD and Ethos in a 3G SAF. This was a deliberate omission on our part because we wanted the lead article to stimulate reflection in readers, without clouding their thoughts with our opinions and possible solutions on the “next challenge” of LD in the 3G SAF.

So what is our view of the challenge of LD in the 3G SAF? In the lead article, we suggested the need for SAF leaders to reflect, engage one another and to facilitate deep conversations on matters related to the military profession. We also see the need for SAF leaders and personnel to take their values-based functioning to a higher level, to transform the SAF into an even more values-based military organisation.

A New Approach to Values Inculcation

As mentioned in the lead article, the SAF Core Values were formally promulgated less than 10 years ago as a set of shared values for the 3 Services. Up to now, the focus of the SAF's Core Values programme has been to inculcate the Core Values by raising awareness, acceptance and application of the Core Values via both formal education and informal activities. Just as Singapore spent its first 40 years building a shared Singaporean identity, the first 10 years of the SAF Core Values programme has succeeded reasonably well in shaping a common identity across the 3 Services and across the ranks in the SAF. However, because the focus has been to promulgate the values, a prescriptive, “explaining” approach has been emphasised, supported by leadership role-modeling. We in CLD believe that an overly prescriptive approach may influence our people to act more on the basis of rules and guidelines, rather than to internalise the values as their own moral compass.

The 3G operating environment will call for SAF personnel at all levels to make judgements and choices with significant consequences without any clear right or wrong to guide decisions. Rules-based functioning will be of limited use in the more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous 3G operating context. SAF leaders and men will need to internalise the SAF Core Values, and apply them with a clear sense of purpose. For this purpose, the SAF will need a new approach that will help our people understand how the values equip them to better handle moral

and ethical dilemmas in modern military operations. To do this, CLD is currently working on the following concepts to help SAF leaders and soldiers better appreciate the role of values in the 3G SAF:

- **Values for “Anchored Adaptability”** Our leaders and men must learn to appreciate how the Core Values act as a basis for their adaptive, professional behaviour in a 3G operating environment. The SAF Core Values are those qualities that will distinguish them – not only from other military forces in multi-national or coalition operations – but also from terrorists who are highly adaptive but with different values. It is vital that SAF leaders and men understand why our Core Values are unique to the SAF. One useful exercise is for our leaders and men to study the values of other military forces and to ask ourselves why the SAF adopted this specific set of seven CORE values. This exercise will help us appreciate the unique context of our military profession and organisation in view of our national interest. We believe that it is when our leaders and soldiers anchor themselves well with a deep understanding of the Values that the values can serve as a basis for them to act and adapt in the more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous situations they will face in the 3G environment.

- **Values as “Cognitive Ammunition”** Although studies conducted in World Wars I & II validated the importance of the primary group over “ideological factors” in “buffering” soldiers against psychiatric breakdown in war, a recent study of U.S. soldiers in Operation Iraqi Freedom showed that ideological factors were equally important combat motivators when more educated and professionally-trained soldiers operated in a more complex, modern warfighting environment.⁴⁹ Ultimately, the fact remains that warfighting is a context that puts people in very challenging situations where they may turn back in the face of enemy fire, abandon a fellow comrade in the battlefield, or even lose control and fire indiscriminately at civilians. Much of the experience of both high and low intensity conflicts are also not one of continuous excitement but of extended periods of boredom and ambiguity.⁵⁰ In such contexts, the greatest threat to a soldier may be himself – his will and motivation to fight, and to do what is necessary or right. What is it that protects the soldiers from themselves? We believe that it is their professional military values. Having a strong set of professional, military values will provide the ammunition not only to protect our soldiers against the enemy which in modern asymmetric warfare will target their will to fight, but also against themselves.⁵¹

- **The Need to “Get Real” with Values⁵²** It has been said that the greatest threat to values-based functioning is hypocrisy. Leaders in the SAF will need to go

beyond just talking about values. They have to “live” them. To “live” the values means that all of us in the SAF – especially our leaders – need to “get real” with values. It is vital that our leaders know when simplistic, single-minded efforts to “put up a show”, to “be effective and efficient at all costs”, to “make things convenient” may derail the values-based functioning, which will result in the perception of hypocrisy.

Besides the above concepts to motivate values-based functioning, CLD also believes that the SAF will need a new approach to values education that builds on the existing emphases on explaining the SAF Core Values and role-modeling to include training in moral and ethical reasoning. In this approach, values inculcation must involve more than explaining the values. Instead, SAF personnel must be encouraged to make sense of the SAF Core Values in context of the SAF mission and purpose, and their personal values (see Figure 4). They will also need to understand how the threats to values-based functioning lie in competing factors such as peer pressure, time pressure, and their own personal values and preferences, e.g., for expedience, convenience, etc.

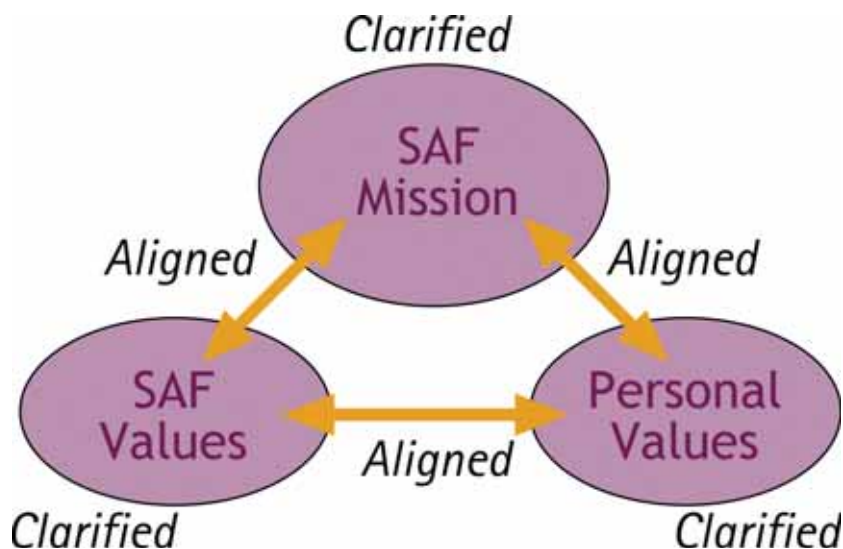


Figure 4. Values inculcation must involve clarifying and aligning the SAF Values with personal values, in context of the SAF mission and purpose.

Finally, the SAF will also need to equip all SAF personnel with ethical reasoning skills. This means that our soldiers must be prepared in difficult situations to step back and to identify values or principles that are most relevant to that particular

situation (e.g., in a peacekeeping mission), and know how to make choices and decisions on the basis of values in that context.

Conclusion: *Spirit & System... again*

As you read the above ideas for enhancing values inculcation in the SAF, we hope that you also reflected on the question of “Spirit” on making the ideas work in practice. The approach that we have proposed for values inculcation will require deep discussions and personal sharing of real-life ethical dilemmas, led by instructors or commanders who are able to bring in their personal experiences. Such open and reflective conversations will be needed to better prepare our personnel to make judgements and values-based choices in the context of the SAF mission.

Like all other LD efforts, the success of the above approach would ultimately depend on SAF’s overall organisational culture, its leaders’ personal example and their ability to “walk the talk”. More than any training course, policy document, or performance indicator, it is the leaders with the right Spirit of LD who will be most critical in the values internalisation process. These are factors that lie in the domain of Spirit rather than of Systems. To this end, we hope that all SAF Leaders will appreciate this challenge and work with CLD to systematically enhance LD in the SAF.



Appendices

APPENDIX I – THE SAF CORE VALUES AND OFFICER’S CREED

Background

The idea for a set of SAF Core Values was mooted in 1987 as part of a project to envision an “Institute of Excellence” that is the present SAFTI Military Institute. The idea was to identify a common set of seven SAF Core Values “so that those trained under the system would bear distinctive and positive attributes”. Although the Core Values were intended to apply to all ranks in the SAF, a decision was made to gradually “cascade” the SAF Core Values beginning with the promulgation of an Officers’ Creed in 1990.

It was only in 1996 that a decision was made to fully promulgate the SAF Core Values to all members of the SAF rather than to rely only on officers to cascade the values to their men. For this purpose, a booklet entitled: *The SAF Core Values: Our Common Identity* was published by SAFTI MI for distribution to all newly enlisted recruits in the SAF.

Purpose

As stated in the booklet, the SAF Core Values are meant to act as “the foundation upon which a quality armed forces is built”, and are expected to shape the SAF’s professional beliefs and attitude and determine how members of the SAF go about doing their task. “The SAF Core Values are synonymous with the SAF Character. When one thinks of the SAF and an SAF soldier, the qualities associated with its members should exemplify prominently the SAF Core Values”.⁵³ The SAF Core Values also serve to unify members of the SAF: “These values will ensure that there are certain character strengths which bind our people together in fulfilling our professional roles and duties, guiding us towards a common goal”.⁵⁴

The Seven SAF Core Values

The seven SAF Core Values are usually remembered in the SAF using the acronym L-L-D-P-F-E-C. The Core Values are as follows:

- **Loyalty to Country** is what commits us as citizens to protect and defend our nation. The nation represents our homeland, all is cherished by us, our

family and our way of life. We have a responsibility to protect the nation. Loyalty is vital for the SAF because its mission is to defend the nation and, if need be for us to sacrifice our lives for Singapore.

- **Leadership** is being able to influence and motivate one's peers and fellow soldiers – to imbue them with trust and confidence so that they will carry out a mission confidently and to their best ability. Leaders achieve this by demonstrating sound knowledge as well as abilities such as being able to communicate with their followers. Good leaders lead-by-example, personal presence and involvement. The defence of the nation can only be assured by commanders who are competent to lead, excel and inspire others to give their best to the nation.
- **Discipline** in the SAF is obedience of orders, and the timely and accurate execution of assigned tasks. This is achieved through tough training geared towards operational readiness and combat effectiveness. The essence of discipline is doing what we have to, even when it is difficult and painful, and doing it to the best of our abilities. Discipline means inner strength, self-control, mental stamina, physical toughness, and perseverance. A high standard of discipline must be maintained to train soldiers to withstand fear and tension. Disciplined soldiers can be depended on.
- **Professionalism** in the SAF is proficiency, and reliability in all we do. This would involve having a sound knowledge of what we have to do and doing it well. We know our roles and responsibilities, and carry them out well. Professionalism is a continual strive for excellence, which rejects complacency. In the SAF, it also incorporates and emphasises a sense of duty and service, which compels everyone to train hard and give their best. It is the sense of professionalism which binds the SAF together. As a team, we strive to excel in all we do; to serve with pride, honour and integrity.
- **Fighting spirit** is the tenacity to succeed in whatever we do. In the SAF particularly, it is marked by determination, aggressiveness and perseverance in the spirit of a fighting fit defence force. Fighting spirit makes us courageous, bold and decisive, with the necessary aggressiveness to engage decisively in a battle and quickly put an end to it. Fighting spirit is also the dedication, stamina and endurance which enables us to overcome obstacles and achieve our mission with continued will and motivation despite all odds.
- **Ethics** is exemplary conduct and moral strength. It enables us to know what is right from wrong, and to do the right thing both in peacetime and in war. It

includes a sense of loyalty and responsibility to one's peers, subordinates and leaders. It encompasses being honest and accurate in our reporting, having integrity in our dealing with others, and not misusing our position against anyone. Ethics will also ensure we do not act against our company and are loyal to its law and constitution. Such trustworthiness and uprightness of character must be unshakeable for the SAF.

- **Care for soldiers** is the genuine concern that we have for the well-being of our fellow soldiers and those in our command. This includes a personal touch, proper equipping, feeding, training and providing adequate rest both in peacetime and in war. It is training soldiers so well that they can protect themselves and survive in battle. This is the philosophy of more sweat in peacetime and less blood in war. Care is absolutely essential for cohesion, team spirit and ultimately combat effectiveness. Commanders who care for the training, morale and discipline of their troops can be sure they have a fighting fit force at hand. They can also be sure of their loyalty. Care for soldiers also extends to the families of soldiers.

The SAF Core Values Guide also spells out the relationship between the seven SAF Core Values and other statements of belief or “manifestoes” in the SAF, such as the Oath of Allegiance, the SAF Pledge, the Code of Conduct, and the SAF Declaration. Each of the manifestoes was developed for a specific context and target population. It is stated that the seven SAF Core Values manifest themselves in whole or in part in the various manifestoes as shown in the following table extracted from the SAF Core Values Guide.

Manifesto or Statement of Belief	Loyalty	Leadership	Discipline	Profession-alism	Fighting Spirit	Ethics	Care for Soldiers
Organisational Statement of Belief							
SAF Declaration	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
SAF Pledge	/			/	/	/	
Individual Statement of Belief							
Oath of Allegiance	/		/		/		
Code of Conduct	/		/	/		/	
Officers' Creed	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Oath of Command	/	/		/		/	/
Organisational Management Philosophy							
Personnel Management Philosophy				/			/
Mission, Demand Support Management Philosophy		/		/			/
Other Manifestoes							
KAQ Leadership Model	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Five National Education Messages	/				/		

Table extracted from the *SAF Core Values Handbook*, 1997.

SAF Officer's Creed

As mentioned, the SAF Officer's Creed was intended to act as a vehicle to facilitate the cascading of the SAF Core Values down the ranks. Hence, the Creed captures the seven SAF Core Values in its statements as follows:

I am an Officer of the Singapore Armed Forces.

My duty is to lead, to excel and to overcome.

I lead my men by example.

I answer for their training, morale and discipline.

I must excel in everything I do.

I serve with pride, honour and integrity.

I will overcome adversity with courage, fortitude and determination.

I dedicate my life to Singapore.

APPENDIX II – THE THINKING BEHIND THE “SAF LEADERSHIP 24-7” FRAMEWORK

Background

The new SAF Leadership Framework was developed and promulgated in 2004 as a result of changes in the people and mission context in the SAF. For systemic improvements, the SAF realised it needed a comprehensive framework to guide Leadership Development (LD) across its Schools and Units.

In formulating the new framework, previous perspectives, ideas and methods relating to leadership and management were examined. This included an evaluation of the 1995 Knowledge-Abilities-Qualities (KAQ) Leadership Model, as well as other implicit leadership philosophies dominant in the SAF, such as “leadership by example”. The review concluded that the original KAQ Model resembled a generic human resource “competency” framework that analyses jobs or roles of leaders according to the knowledge-skill-attitude (KSA) components. However, leadership competencies are but one component for describing leadership in the SAF. The other components of leadership include values, styles and the ‘self’ (e.g., self-awareness). There was thus a need to promulgate an enhanced leadership framework that, unlike the KAQ Model, would not be limited to the junior leadership only. The new framework should also provide some attention to the unique military, context in which SAF Leaders are expected to lead.

Two Initial Considerations

Definition of Leadership. Leadership is defined as a process of influencing people to accomplish the mission, inspiring their commitment, and improving the organisation. See Figure 5.



Figure 5.

Vision of the SAF leaders.

- The bedrock of SAF leadership lies in a strong foundation of values and ethics. SAF leaders possess a dynamic capacity for personal awareness, growth,

and flexibility as they employ a range of leadership competencies and styles to influence and inspire people to accomplish the mission, while building long-term commitment and also improving the organisation.

- As military leaders, SAF leaders influence people with a good understanding of SAF's mission and purpose, the SAF's operating environment and the desired outcomes of the SAF.
- All SAF leaders, NS or regular, officer or WO/Spec, are effective at influencing others with a wide range of styles and competencies. The moral basis for their leadership is derived from a strong sense of values. SAF leaders possess a high degree of self-awareness and management, and an understanding of the SAF's mission, operating context and desired outcomes.
- **A Leader in the SAF, A Leader Anywhere!**

Why “SAF Leadership 24-7”?

The argument for adopting a “24-hours, 7-days a week” leadership framework were as follows:

- **A heuristic.** The new framework emphasises that leadership training and development must always include TWO aspects – understanding of the leadership context, and, the FOUR domains of LD – namely, Values, Competencies, Styles, and the Self. Along with the 3 aspects of the leadership context, i.e., mission and purpose, operating environment, desired outcomes, the new Framework identifies a total of SEVEN components that should be covered as part of the SAF's total LD system, and that shape our Vision for the SAF Leader – “A Leader in the SAF.. A Leader Anywhere!”
- **A description of SAF Leadership.** Besides its heuristic value, the idea of 24/7 Leadership is also appropriate in the post-September 11th SAF where the security threats facing Singapore have expanded in scope and become more complex over the years. Today, it is no longer enough just to be operationally ready to fight conventional battles to safeguard Singapore's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Today, and more so than before, the SAF has troops operating 24-hours, 7-days a week at high alert against the threat of global terrorism, working alongside other security forces to safeguard our airport, sea-lanes and key installations. In the last 4 years, about 1,500 SAF soldiers, sailors and airmen have participated in Timor Leste and Iraq missions. Another 1,500 SAF personnel participated in the Tsunami Relief efforts in early 2005.

Operating under difficult conditions and facing real dangers and challenges, they served with great professionalism and did Singapore proud. Key to their success was the presence of effective leaders who understood the SAF’s mission and purpose, appreciated the operating environment, and achieved the desired outcomes. They were leaders who acted on the basis of the SAF Core Values, were competent and flexible in their leadership styles, and possessed the “meta-competency” skills of self-awareness, self-management and personal mastery.

How SAF Leadership 24-7 Framework Builds on the KAQ Model and the SAF Core Values

The enhanced framework for leadership in the SAF builds on the SAF’s prior emphasis on Core Values and the KAQ’s of leadership by identifying 4 levels that represent the ‘building blocks’ of leadership desired in the SAF. These are:

- Values (incorporating SAF Core Values)
- Competencies (enhanced KAQs)
- Style (e.g., transformational-transactional styles)
- Self-Awareness and Management

However, it is important to note that in the SAF Leadership Framework:

- ‘Values’ are now separated from ‘Leadership Qualities’
- ‘Knowledge of Self’ is now part of ‘Self-awareness, Self-Management and Personal Mastery’
- ‘Knowledge of Tasks/Responsibilities’ is now part of ‘Understanding the Mission and Purpose’
- ‘Knowledge of Followers’ is now part of ‘Understanding the Operating Environment’

Therefore, in the ‘Competencies’ component of the SAF Leadership Framework:

- ‘Knowledge’ refers specifically to ‘Vocational knowledge and skills’
- ‘Abilities’ refer to the ‘5 Competencies and 14 Skills’ described in this directive

- ‘Qualities’ refer to the original list of 12 ‘Leadership Qualities’ excluding the 7 Core Values that are now part of a different component of the Framework

This means that the idea of ‘KAQ’ is still relevant in the new SAF Leadership Framework, with the primary change taking place with the refinement of ‘Knowledge’ to mean specifically ‘Vocational Knowledge and Skills’, and the enlargement of the ‘Abilities’ from ‘Plan’, ‘Implement’, ‘Motivate’, ‘Communicate’ to ‘5 Competencies and 14 Skills’.

APPENDIX III – THE SAF LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY MODEL (LCM)

Introduction

The SAF LCM consists of five competency domains, of which four are ‘core competencies’ that directly affect leadership performance on the job, and the fifth competency domain is a ‘personal meta-competency’ required for leader adaptability and growth. The Table below shows the 5 competencies and 14 skills – all of which are common across the 3 Services of the SAF. Though common across the 3 Services, the 14 skills are differently described in terms of behavioural actions across the 3 Services at 3 conceptual levels of leadership in the organisation: the direct, organisational and strategic levels. These behavioural descriptors are intended to facilitate the assessment, observation, feedback and reflection on specific leadership competencies and skills in the SAF Schools and Units.

Competencies	“Core Competencies” (For Leader Performance)				“Meta-competency” (For Growth / Adaptability)
	Conceptual Thinking	Social	Mission	Developmental	Self
Skills	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

Definitions of the 5 Competencies and 14 Skills

Conceptual Thinking Competency Conceptual Thinking is the cognitive capacity to understand and respond to the complexities inherent in the SAF operating environment, including making sense of the moral and ethical dilemmas that may arise. This cognitive capacity of the SAF Leader allows him to scan the environment and make sense of the input, understand complex and divergent issues, and to interpret key messages and trends. He creates order out of chaos, solves problems and responds to challenges with innovative solutions. He may use past experiences, information from non-traditional fields and non-linear thinking to generate fresh perspectives and imaginative ways to succeed. Conceptual thinking consists of Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking and Ethical Reasoning skills. Each skill is further defined as follows:

- **Critical Thinking** Identifies, defines and solves problems by thinking analytically and logically, drawing on all data sources, knowledge and past experiences; appreciates the external environment, consequences and impact any decision may incur; strategic/systems thinker, links actions to a larger cause or purpose; develops long term strategic plans to shape the future.
- **Creative Thinking** Envisions the future state, thinks creatively in order to construct the new reality; finds innovative ways to resolve problems; brings about breakthrough in deadlock situations.
- **Ethical Reasoning** Develops a sound understanding of values and standards of ethical conduct in the SAF; engages in ethical thinking and reasoned argument about what is right and wrong; upholds and applies ethical reasoning principles and processes to all contexts, even in the face of adversity.

Social Competency This competency domain refers to the skills required to develop and maintain effective working relationships by showing consideration, concern and respect for others. The SAF Leader is a good listener, provides opportunities for others to give input, and conveys an understanding of the key points being communicated. His interactions with others are based on respect and an appreciation that people with varying backgrounds and viewpoints add value to the organisation. Through persuasion and assertiveness, he gains support for ideas and initiatives, and effectively influences peers and superiors. He communicates in a compelling and articulate manner that instils commitment, and adapts his communication to ensure that audiences understand his key messages. This competency consists of Interpersonal Effectiveness and Communicating to Influence, and are defined as follows:

- **Communicating to Influence** Communicates through effective techniques like active listening and interpretation of non-verbal cues. Taking onboard the views of superiors, peers and subordinates; chooses the appropriate message and medium of delivery; persuades, influences and collaborates effectively, with the ability to convince those over whom the individual does not hold command.
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness** Responsive to the needs of others; empathises with their worries and predicaments; recognises what drives and inspires them; builds and develops partnerships within and across Services and agencies.

Mission Competency The SAF Leader is a mission-focused individual. He understands the intent of the mission and efficiently plans to ensure a successful

outcome. He develops contingency plans to deal with potential negative outcomes. He is able to manage a number of crises simultaneously and remain focused in the face of multiple distractions. He copes well with ambiguity and makes decisions even when not all the facts are available. He leverages on technology to gain a decisive edge so that the mission can be achieved efficiently and effectively. This competency consists of Planning, Decision-making and Execution, and are defined as follows:

- **Planning** Focuses on the mission at all times. Understands the intent of the mission and prioritises based on urgency and importance. He sets goals and objectives; plans to ensure that these are executed in a timely manner; uses the appropriate planning process; leverages technology, knowledge and previous experiences in planning; adapts plans when necessary to achieve the desired outcome.
- **Decision-making** Knows when to use the art and science of decision-making to make choices and decisions when required. Leverages on past experiences and specialist knowledge of others to make sound decisions in the absence of information; remains rational and objective when making decisions. Acts decisively; is willing to make difficult decisions; will commit to bold actions to gain decisive advantage.
- **Execution** Leverages on technology, people and processes to enhance command and control; takes charge of the mission; senses the environment and responds to new developments; monitors, evaluates and assesses progress, adapts and implements contingency plans as required; decisive; ensures mission accomplishment.

Developmental Competency This competency is desired at 3 levels in the SAF Leader: individual, team and organisation. At the individual level, he develops his subordinates through effective coaching and mentoring. He develops team capacities by harnessing individual strengths and diversity of views to enhance the output of the team; he unifies the team by focusing on common goals, and clarifying roles, rules and relationships. At the organisational level, he provides the catalyst for change and champions change efforts. This competency consists of Developing People (individual), Developing Team and Improving Organisation. Their definitions are as follows:

- **Developing People** Demonstrates interest in the development of each individual under command; creates challenges through delegation and empowerment to ensure that everyone can reach their full potential; provides

feedback, coaching and counselling; recognises and rewards achievement; motivates and inspires subordinates to grow.

- **Developing Team** Creates a spirit of comradeship and trust within the team; ensures that team members are unified through the achievement of common goals; builds team morale and resolves conflict; ensures team learning.
- **Improving Organisation** Proactive in recognising the need to transform; creates the rationale for change; champions, manages and sees through the change efforts; sees beyond or beneath the ways things are conventionally done, and continually seeks ways to improve the organisation.

Self-Competency This competency refers to skills required to manage oneself and develop one's own capabilities. The SAF Leader possesses a dynamic capacity for self-awareness and self-management. He is self-motivated to learn and grow as a leader. He has high self-awareness and is able to leverage on his strengths and overcome his weaknesses to be more effective. The 3 main components are Self-awareness, Self-management and Personal Mastery. For this competency, the behaviour descriptors would be common across all 3 conceptual levels of leadership. The definitions are as follows:

- **Self-Awareness** Recognises one's own moods, emotions and drives, as well as their effect on others; demonstrates a deep understanding of one's strengths and limitations.
- **Self-Management** Controls one's own emotions and impulses; remains calm and composed under stress; maintains confidence in one's abilities and adopts a positive outlook; demonstrates cognitive-behavioural flexibility in adapting to ambiguous or changing situations.
- **Personal Mastery** Continually reflects and raises own consciousness by journaling personal beliefs/assumptions and current reality; engages in personal visioning and goal setting; leverages on own strengths and actively seeks out learning opportunities to develop; commits to continual personal growth and constantly seeks and values personal feedback.

Comparison with the KAQ “Abilities”

The original KAQ Model spelled out the following knowledge, abilities and qualities desired of SAF Leaders:

Knowledge	Abilities	Qualities	
Profession ('Vocational') Tasks and Responsibilities ('Mission and Purpose') Followers Self	Plan Implement Communicate Motivate	Loyalty to Country Leadership Discipline Professionalism Fighting Spirit Ethics Care for Soldiers Initiative	Initiative Sound judgement Physical fitness Approachability Stability under stress Self-confidence Fairness Openness to ideas Responsibility Courage Dedication Flexibility

From the list of “Abilities”, we observe that the original KAQ Model emphasised mainly task and people-oriented skills like ‘Plan’, ‘Implement’, ‘Communicate’ and ‘Motivate’. The new competency model specifically improves on the original KAQ by articulating three new behavioural competency domains (conceptual thinking, developmental, self) that go beyond the people/social and task/mission domains articulated in the original KAQ. The model also improves on the original KAQ Model by articulating leadership competencies and skills at direct, organisational and strategic levels of leadership. It is our belief that the SAF LCM will result in greater attention to leadership skills such as decision-making, ethical reasoning, coaching, team-building, organisational development, feedback, reflection, self-awareness, self-management and personal mastery in the future.

APPENDIX IV – A MODEL AND PRINCIPLES FOR SYSTEMATIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

While the new SAF Leadership Framework in Appendix II spells out the SAF’s doctrinal view on “what is leadership”, CLD has also identified a need for a set of principles to guide our thinking on “how to *develop* leadership”. To date, there has been a tendency in many SAF Schools to think of leadership development in terms of lessons and periods in a training curriculum. The academic literature however shows that it is useful to take a process view rather than a piecemeal approach to leadership development. For example, some of the key processes in LD are the experiential learning cycle⁵⁵ and social learning processes (eg, role modelling, learning by observation).⁵⁶ Recent scientific literature also shows that leadership development should also engage aspects of self-insight, eg, self-awareness, self-understanding, self-monitoring.⁵⁷

In 2001, the psychologists now present in CLD worked with the SAF Army Officer Advanced School to conduct preliminary trials of enhanced leadership development processes in its courses. These trials aimed to explore the effectiveness of various tools and processes, e.g., learning organisation principles and practices, team building for team learning, etc, in enhancing the leadership development experience of trainees. It was through these trials that the CLD has gained better understanding of the components and principles needed to guide leadership development processes in the SAF.

Key Components of a Leadership Development System

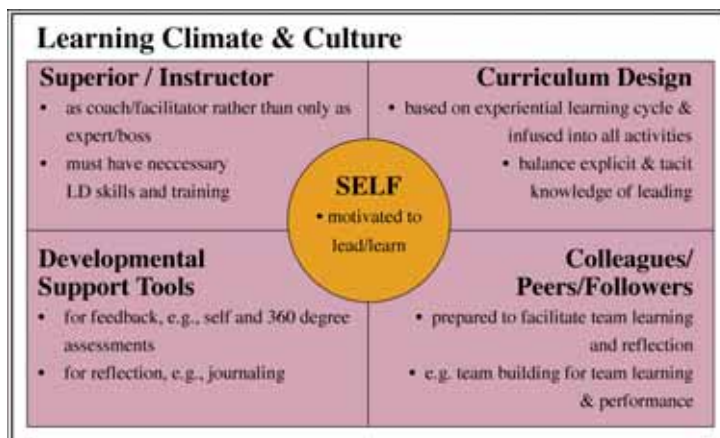


Figure 6. Components of a Leadership Development System.

Today, CLD advocates that all Schools and Units in the SAF should think of leadership development from a systems *process* perspective that involves the six components (see Figure 6) as follows:

- **Component 1: The Self** The Self is at the core of the leadership development. This component refers to the trainee's personal involvement in the developmental process. An important assumption in leadership development is that the trainee is motivated to lead and motivated to learn in the first place. Although selection procedures (e.g., "expressed interest") may be used to identify leadership trainees who are motivated to lead and to learn, these should be complemented by training processes that strengthen the trainees' personal commitment to improve themselves and to grow as a leader. It is vital that all leadership trainees take ownership of the developmental process, if they are to benefit from it.
- **Component 2: The Environment** This refers to immediate organisational culture and climate and the extent to which it is conducive for personal learning, growth and change. The ideal climate for leadership development is one that is not only "open", but one that has the capacities and disciplines for organisational learning. The learning climate should be grounded in a learning organisational culture - with personal and social practices and disciplines that facilitate individual, team and organisational-level learning, e.g., check-in/check-out, rules for quality conversations, deep listening, reflection, understanding the ladder of inference, etc.
- **Component 3: Superiors and Instructors who are Coaches and Facilitators** Superiors and instructors have direct influence over their trainees and subordinates, and therefore have natural impact on their leadership development. To date, the SAF has emphasised role modelling as a primary mechanism for superiors and instructors to influence their subordinates/trainees. While role modelling or learning by observation is effective, it is also a relatively passive method of leadership development, especially when it is at the level of behaviours rather than values or purpose. Superiors and leadership instructors need to actively role model values and a sense of purpose and commitment. They should also play the role of coaches and facilitators if they are to actively assist in the leadership development of their subordinates and trainees. For this to happen, all superiors and instructors must be equipped with the necessary skills and tools to coach and facilitate development, and for active (rather than passive) role modelling.

- **Component 4: Peers, Colleagues & Subordinates** Leadership is a social activity. Hence, besides individualised reflection and learning processes, leadership development is also more effective when there is team learning and feedback. Peers and subordinates can act as a “Hall of Mirrors” to facilitate leadership development among trainees and leaders on the job. For this to happen, it is necessary to facilitate team building for team learning in all learning syndicates in schools. Team building should also be introduced in units not only for team performance but also to encourage team learning of leadership and team processes.
- **Component 5: Curriculum Design** A key process in leadership development is the experiential learning cycle⁵⁸, which calls for leadership development to be infused into everyday life activities in our training schools and units, rather than as isolated events or activities. We should try as far as possible to design training curricula to connect abstract concepts with active experimentation, concrete experience, and reflective observation. We should also incorporate the Centre for Creative Leadership principles of challenge, assessments and support in the design of leadership development activities or curricula. Finally, leadership training should incorporate a balance of the explicit and the tacit knowledge of leadership in our military context.
- **Component 6: Developmental Tools & Procedures** Besides the social components (e.g., instructors or superiors, colleagues or peers) of the leadership development system, it is also necessary to design some basic tools and procedures to support leadership development. These would include psychological assessment tools to be used to provide feedback for the individual (e.g., self-assessments, peer appraisal, 360-degree feedback), as well as tools to facilitate team and personal reflection (e.g., personal journal, team journal). The “tools” can also include procedures that facilitate leadership or command effectiveness and development, for example, processes that facilitate the preparation for command and command transition, and the facilitation of learning through after action reviews, etc.



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Endnotes

- ¹ Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's National Day Rally 2004 Speech entitled "Our Future of Opportunity and Promise", Sunday 22 August 2004.
- ² The idea that the 2G SAF had to "borrow" doctrines and concepts was mentioned by then Chief of Defence MG Bey Soo Khiang in his Preface to the book "To Command", published in 1994 to commemorate the opening of the new SAFTI Military Institute. Then-MG Bey wrote: "... the organisation and technology of warfare have altered dramatically and the SAF officer of the 21st century will encounter the complexities of integrating men, technology and tactics in the fine art of war. To meet this challenge, we can no longer rely on borrowed doctrines and methods. We must develop home-grown doctrines and strategies suitable for our environment and compatible with locally-modified weapon systems and indigenous organisational structure".
- ³ The Concept of a "Third Generation SAF" was publicly introduced in a *Statement at the 2004 Budget Debate in the Singapore Parliament* by Minister for Defence, Teo Chee Hean on 15 March 2004.
- ⁴ See Lee et al. (2003). *Realising Integrated Knowledge-based Command and Control: Transforming the SAF. (Pointer Monograph No. 2).* SAFTI Military Institute, Singapore Armed Forces.
- ⁵ See *Pointer* Supplement entitled "Building a Learning Army" dated March 2001.
- ⁶ See C2C Monograph. Choy et al. (2002). *Creating the Capacity to Change: Defence Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century. (Pointer Monograph No. 1).* SAFTI Military Institute, Singapore Armed Forces.
- ⁷ Statement by Minister for Defence, Teo Chee Hean at the Committee of Supply Debate on 4 March 2005.
- ⁸ Speech by Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, at the SAFTI Military Institute Ground-Breaking Ceremony on 9 June 1990.
- ⁹ See Schein, E. H (1999). *Organizational culture and leadership*, Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- ¹⁰ See Lau, A. (1992) *National Service (Pointer Supplement)* Singapore Command and Staff College.
- ¹¹ Local slang for "security guard".
- ¹² Speech by Defence Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee at the Armed Forces Day Parade at the Jalan Besar Stadium on 1 July 1971.
- ¹³ Speech by Defence Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee at the Promotion Ceremony for Senior SAF Officers at MINDEF HQ on 2 May 1972.
- ¹⁴ Speech by Defence Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee on the Introduction of the MINDEF Workplan 1974/75 for the SAF at SCSC Auditorium on 7 March 1974.
- ¹⁵ P. 7, *The Sunday Monitor*, 1 July 1984.
- ¹⁶ Mr Lim Kim San, Minister for Defence, at the Commissioning Parade at SAFTI on 14 February 1970.
- ¹⁷ P. 7 *The Sunday Monitor*, 1 July 1984.
- ¹⁸ See Heng, F. (1987). Understanding People-Oriented Management by Francis, *Pointer: Journal of the SAF*, 13(4).
- ¹⁹ "Core Values for the SAF", an internal paper by SAF Joint Operations Department, dated 10 July 96.

- ²⁰ The Challenge of Leadership in the Military Profession, Address by the Chief of Defence Force, LG Winston W. L. Choo, at the Appointment Certificate Ceremony for OCC 3/91 on 27 Dec 91, published in *Pointer: Journal of the SAF*, 18(1), January 1992.
- ²¹ See Chief of Army, BG Lim Neo Chian, Developing An SAF Value System: A Personal Perspective. *Pointer: Journal of the SAF*, 19(3), July 93.
- ²² Defence and Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Tony Tan, reported in the *Business Times*, 13 January, 1998.
- ²³ See Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (1991). *The Full Range of Leadership Development: Basic and Advanced Manuals*. Binghamton, NY: Bass, Avolio and Associates. See also Bass, B. M. (1998). *Transformational Leadership: Industrial, Military and Educational Impact*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- ²⁴ Foreword, *Building a Learning Army, Pointer Supplement*, March 2001. SAFTI Military Institute.
- ²⁵ See Daniel H. Kim, (2002a), *Foresight as a Central Ethic of Leadership*, Greenleaf Centre for Servant Leadership Essay #8.
- ²⁶ See Daniel H. Kim, (2002b), *Organising for Learning*, Pegasus Communications, Waltham, MA.
- ²⁷ See Singh, 2001. The Challenge of Building and Leading a Learning Army for the New Millennium. *POINTER Supplement*, March 2001. SAFTI Military Institute.
- ²⁸ See Lepper, M.R. Greene, D., a Nisbett, R.E. (1973). Undermining children's intrinsic interest with extrinsic rewards. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 28, 129-137
- ²⁹ For overviews of theory and research in this domain, please see the following references by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002).
- ³⁰ The second law of thermodynamics states that thermal energy, or heat, is special among the types of energies. According to the kinetic theory, heat is due to the random movement of atoms and molecules. The second law states that the amount of random movement, i.e., the entropy, can only increase in a closed system. That is, we cannot put this randomness in order without some external influence. In this sense, if efforts to systematise or formalise were akin to putting order to randomness in organizations, then some external energy" is "keep the system alive.
- ³¹ See Charles, C. Moskos (1977), "From institution to occupation: Trends in military organization." *Armed Forces and Society* 4, 41-50. See also Moskos, Charles C., & Wood, Frank R. "The Military. More Than Just a Job?" Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's.
- ³² See Moskos, C.C., Wood, F.R. (eds., 1989) *The Military: More than just a job?* Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's.
- ³³ See Moskos, C.C., Williams, J.A., Segal, D.R. (eds., 2000). *The Postmodern Military: Armed forces after the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ³⁴ See p.4 Moskos C.C., Williams, J.A. New York: Oxford University Press Segal, D.R. (eds., 2000) *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War*.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Gen. Charles C. Krulak of the US Marine Corps first introduced the idea of a Three-Block War in a speech made in 1997 – the idea that soldiers may be confronted by the entire spectrum of tactical challenges in the span of a few hours and within the space of three contiguous city blocks. Gen. Krulak then introduced the idea of a strategic corporal in a Marine Corps Gazette article in 1998 – the idea that in modern military operations other than war, a small unit leaders' actions will influence not only the immediate tactical situation, but the operational and strategic levels as well.
- ³⁷ See Canadian Defence Leadership Institute (2003). *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*. Canadian Defence Academy. Publication available on-line at: <http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca>

- ³⁸ We use the term transformational leadership in the manner as articulated in the Full Range of Leadership Model by Bass and Avolio (1994; see also Bass, 1985). In this model, transformational leadership always *augments* transactional leadership and does not replace it.
- ³⁹ The U.S. Army “unveiled” a *Warrior ethos* exhibit at the Pentagon on 10 November 2004. The ethos says: “I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade”. See <http://www.army.mil/warriorethos/>.
- ⁴⁰ See p. 277 Senge, P.M. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline. The art and practice of the learning organisation*. London: Random House.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Tan, A. (2003). Military Transformation in a Changing Security Landscape: Implications for the SAF. *Pointer: Journal of the SAF*, 29(3)3. SAFTI Military Institute.
- ⁴³ Speech by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at The Commonwealth Association Of Public Administration And Management Biennial Conference 2004 on 24 Oct 2004.
- ⁴⁴ See p. 359 Senge, P.M. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline. The art and practice of the learning organisation*. London: Random House.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 360.
- ⁴⁶ Speech entitled “*Our Education: Rooted In Singapore But Open To The World*” by RADM Teo Chee Hean, Minister For Education And 2nd Minister For Defence at Harvard Club of Singapore Annual Dinner On 22 September 1999.
- ⁴⁷ Calling – an inner urging toward some profession or activity; vocation.
- ⁴⁸ Speech by Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong entitled “Global City of Opportunity”. Key-note Address at The Singapore Conference, 15 March 2005, London.
- ⁴⁹ See Leonard Wong, Thomas A. Kolditz, Raymond A. Millen, & Terrence M. Potter (2003). Why they fight: combat motivation in the Iraq war. Carlisle, PA Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. This report may be downloaded at the SSI website at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/>
- ⁵⁰ See Franklin D. Jones (1989). Chapter 3: Disorders of frustration and loneliness. In Franklin D. Jones, Linette R. Sparacino, Victoria L. Wilcox, Joseph M. Rothberg, & James W. Stokes, M.D. (Eds.), *War Psychiatry*. Washington DC: Office Of The Surgeon General, Borden Institute, Walter Reed Army Medical Center.
- ⁵¹ Interestingly, a study by Basoglu et al. reported in the November 1997 issue of *Psychological Medicine* looked at PTSD rates among torture victims in Turkey and found that rates were lower in those who became politically active in the aftermath of their experience -- suggesting that people who refuse to be passive victims may fare better after trauma.
- ⁵² The phrase “Get Real” is an American slang that means to “Be realistic, understand what’s going on”. (Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of Idioms* by Christine Ammer, 1997, Houghton Mifflin Company).
- ⁵³ p.i of *The SAF Core Values: Our Common Identity*.
- ⁵⁴ p.2 of *The SAF Core Values: Our Common Identity*.
- ⁵⁵ See Kolb, D. (1983). *Experiential learning : Experience is the source of learning and development*. Eaglewood Cliffs, NS : Prentice Hall.
- ⁵⁶ See Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- ⁵⁷ See London, M. (2002) *Leadership Developments : Paths to self-insight and professional growth*. Mahwah, NI : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- ⁵⁸ See Kolb, D. (1983). *Experiential learning : Experience is the source of learning and development*. Eaglewood Cliffs, NS : Prentice Hall.

Spirit versus System ... What does it take to drive leadership development in the SAF as it continually transforms itself to ensure relevance to the future?

In this monograph, staff of the SAF's recently established Centre for Leadership Development (CLD) in SAFTI Military Institute share their thoughts on the challenge of developing leaders systematically in the SAF.

A story is told of the SAF's efforts to shape its leadership thinking and ethos during its First and Second Generations. Readers are also updated on the many new leadership development ideas and experiments being implemented in the SAF as part of its transformation to a Third Generation or 3G military force. Finally, a perspective is presented on how the SAF's efforts to infuse learning organisation tools and practices are in fact a catalyst for nurturing the Spirit needed to drive its leadership development System. Senior officers from the three Services, academics and consultants also share their thoughts on the SAF's current and future leadership development efforts and challenges.

This Monograph is also published in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of SAFTI Military Institute. Founded in August 1995, SAFTI Military Institute is today transforming itself to better prepare SAF leaders at all levels for a Third Generation SAF context. The establishment of CLD, along with the enhancement of the leadership programmes across SAFTI MI courses is part of the SAF's overall transformation effort.

