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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
AMSC 6 / CSEM 6

**The Importance of Vision
For Command at the Operational Level**

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Last Edition: 28th of October of 2003.

ABSTRACT.

This paper analyzes the concept of Vision and its importance for the commander at the operational level. There is an explanation of the Northouse Model contrasted with two historical examples to show some external and personal aspects involved in the formulation of the commander's Vision at the operational level. The conclusion is drawn that there are distinctive Vision development aspects surrounding a commander at the operational level. Also, Northouse Model should be complemented with further research on some aspects highlighted by analysis of the historical models.

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I. Introduction.

Where there is no prophetic Vision the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.

-NKJ Proverbs 29:18

How does one develop as a decision maker? Be around people making decisions.

-Dwight D Eisenhower

Always Implicitly Obey Orders.

-Horatio Nelson

This paper analyzes the concept of Vision and its importance for the commander at the operational level. The concept of Vision is vast and thus not possible to analyze thoroughly in a short paper like this. Rather, key Vision aspects from two historical models have been chosen and contrasted with Northouse Leadership model. The thesis is:

“Command at the Operational Level requires a Visionary leadership grounded on historical models that give examples of Vision development and empowerment through mentoring, aspects that actual theoretical models need to complement with further research”

The historical models chosen are Horatio Nelson and Dwight Eisenhower, both traditional, key leaders at the operational level although acting in

different time settings and with different resources, technology and organizational structures. There is an explanation of the Northouse Leadership Model and of three perspectives of leadership, as follows: the factors concerned with the performance of followers; the strategies used by the leaders to pursue their objectives; and, the actions of leaders involved in organizational change. The historical examples of Nelson and Eisenhower are analyzed on the theme of Vision, taking into account some external and personal aspects involved in the formulation of the commander's Vision at the operational level. Two sub themes on Vision were chosen: some aspects of Vision development and some social aspects that influence Visionary leaders. The Northouse Model and the historical approach are then contrasted, and the conclusion drawn that there is distinctive Visionary leadership aspects surrounding a commander at the operational level. These are not fully accounted for in the Northouse Model and thus it is recommended that it should be complemented with further research on some aspects highlighted by analysis of the historical models.

II. Command and Vision.¹

As a way to understand the context where command at the operational level is executed, it is important to note the concepts and guidance each government gives to its Armed Forces and in particular, in this context, those of Canada. The mission of the Canadian Forces (CF) is: "to defend Canada

and Canadian interests and Values, while contributing to international peace and security²". One of the Strategic Objectives, which support the mission of the CF is "to strengthen the Defence Team based on our Vision and Shared Values"³.

This is important to understand because the role of an operational commander is indeed unique. The activities conducted at this level permit the link of strategy and tactics to accomplish the objective, whether joint, combined or otherwise. And in this context, he needs to lead people in a direction he envisions as correct. No other person under his command has this task but him.

"Command may be defined as a function that has to be exercised, more or less continuously⁴" also "Command is a position of authority and responsibility to which military men and women are legally appointed⁵". An approach on leadership is that of "key components to the successful exercise of Command. Commanders are not leaders until their position has been ratified in the hearts and minds of those they command⁶". Viewing Leadership at a more holistic approach puts "Vision as the very core of Leadership⁷"

¹ Canadian Forces Operations, B-GG-005-004/AF-000, Chief of the Defence Staff, 2000, page 1-1 to 1-5.

² Ibid, page 1-1.

³ Ibid, page 1-1.

⁴ Martin van Creveld, Command in War, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1985, page 5

⁵ The Defence Leadership Center <https://da.mod.uk/DLC/Home/Research/def%20of%20CLM>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Bill Hybels, Courageous Leadership, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, page 31.

But, what Vision capabilities does a commander need to lead at the Operational Level?

The operational commander has to have leadership capabilities, which have Vision at their core. Putting Vision into practice is to prepare the conditions, and to describe and transmit to subordinate commanders the ways and means by which the military force will be applied. Also, "Commanders must be aware that their decisions will be influenced by such factors as national politics and international relations, factors that could well seem quite distant from the situation at hand."⁸ Communication is a critical element of this process of ensuring that the commander's Vision is aligned with or transmitted to others. Brig Gen Stanley Cherrie a US officer who spent 34 years in the Army, two Vietnam tours, and assistant commander of the first armored division that went into Bosnia in 1995 reminds us: "I'd like to mention some of the key characteristics of senior commanders with whom I have served. First, every one of these commanders, without exception, had Vision. They could all look at a complex problem and know intuitively, exactly what needed to be done and how to get from point A to point B. Sometimes this quality caused problems – for example, when the boss already knew what he wanted, but the staff came up with a different course of action"⁹.

⁸R. A Dallaire, (Lt. Gen.), *Command Experiences in Rwanda*, Edited by Carol McCann and Ross Pigeau, *The Human in Command*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York, 2000, page37

This paper will next consider some aspects of a leadership model, presented as an academic theory, and will then contrast this to historical examples of leaders whose Vision is generally considered to be an essential element of their success.

III. Transformational Leadership Model and Vision.

A. The Northouse Model for Transformational Leadership

In the last 20 years, there have been many studies in various civilian and government organizations that support the great effectiveness of transformational leadership. This model encourages leaders to generate motivation and commitment of subordinates such that they can contribute fully to organizational goals. The transformational leader moves the followers beyond self-interests and is charismatic, inspirational, intellectually stimulating, and individually considerate.¹⁰

According to Northouse, transformational leadership is a “process that changes and transforms individuals. It is concerned with emotions, values,

⁹ Stanley Cherrie (Brig Gen. (R)), *The Human in Command: A Personal View*, , Edited by Carol McCann and Ross Pigeau, *The Human in Command*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York, 2000, page19

¹⁰Bernard M Bass, “Transformational Leadership”, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Ass., 1998, page 3.

ethics, standards, and long term goals.¹¹ According to him, it satisfies the need of the followers and treats human beings as a whole.

This type of model is in line with the traditional military precept that emphasizes care for people as a critical priority of the commander. It is also in line with the hierarchy of the military ethos, mission, personnel, self.

Transformational leadership is the process whereby a person interacts with others to create a connection that will lift up the level of motivation and morality of the company as a whole. The types of people that reflect this type of leadership are strong role models for the beliefs and values they want their followers to adopt, they appear competent to their followers and articulate ideological goals. Leaders and followers work together to create a change that will take them towards common goals that everybody envisions.

In the transformational model, according to Bass¹², leaders serve as role models, mentors and coaches. There is a sense of purpose and feeling of family, and commitments are long-term issues. He also says that mutual interests are shared, as a sense of shared fate and the interdependence of leaders and followers. All this, of course, involves the concept of Vision that is also used in the operational art. Applying the elements of the

¹¹ Peter G. Northouse, "Leadership", London: Sage Publications, 2004, page169

¹² Bernard M Bass, "Transformational Leadership", New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Ass., 1998, page 65

model, will take us to view some aspects of how the Vision of a leader interacts with his environment to fulfill the purposes of his nation, military service or simply the people who follow him.

In addition to Bass's work there are two more lines of research. The Bennis and Nannus perspective that identifies four strategies used by leaders to transform organizations and the Tichy and Devanna perspective that show how leaders carry out the change process within the organizations. All three perspectives use the concept of Vision to explain Transformational leadership, which shall be called for this essays purpose the Northouse Model. The following describes the three perspectives of this model, the Bass Transformational Perspective, the Bennis and Nannus Perspective and the Tichy and DeVanna Perspective.

B. The Bass Transformational Perspective:

This perspective looks at leadership in relation to the followers and is concerned with developing subordinates to their highest potential. This type of leader has a set of values and ideals, which he encourages others to adopt and follow. He guides people to a higher common goal. This perspective employs the following four factors.

1. Idealized Influence

Leaders with idealized influence act as strong role models for followers. They identify with these leaders and they recognize them as such. Normally they have a high standard of moral and ethical conducts, i.e. followers count on them to do the right thing, they respect them deeply and place a great deal in trust in them. These Leaders provide their followers with a Vision and a sense of mission that make others want to follow them.

2. Inspirational Motivation

Leaders with inspirational motivation communicate high expectations to followers who are inspired and become committed to and part of the shared Vision. This inspiration enhances the team spirit of followers.

The means used by the leader are the use of symbols and emotional appeals to focus group member's efforts to achieve more than they would in their own self-interest.

3. Intellectual Stimulation

Leaders with intellectual stimulation inspire followers to be creative and innovative and stimulate followers to challenge their own beliefs and values, as well as those of the leader and the organization. They normally support followers as they try new approaches and as they try to develop innovative ways of dealing with organizational issues. The leader promotes initiative in followers in order to develop their own thinking and problem solving abilities.

4. Individualized Consideration

Leaders with individualized consideration provide a supportive environment to followers who feel their individual needs are cared for. They develop their followers through the delegation of tasks and acceptance of individual differences. Normally the leader encourages a two-way means of communication.

C. The Bennis and Nannus Perspective^{13,14}

This perspective looks at leadership in relation to how the individual leader is able to transform the organization he belongs to. This type of leader has skills and strategies for others to follow what he wants, to communicate these intentions, to position himself correctly and to empower his followers. This perspective has the following four Strategies.

1. The Vision Strategy

This type of leader has a clear understanding, a Vision; of how he wants his organization to look, once he has accomplished his goal. This leader has an attractive, realistic, and believable future goal. He has a Vision that motivates, benefits the organization as a whole, can be understood, and most of all is simple. As he communicates his Vision, he rouses a strong interest amongst his followers in the future of the organization. His clear Vision allows followers to appreciate how to fit in with the overall direction of the social environment to which all are subject. The leader empowers his followers to see themselves as part of a worthwhile enterprise and gain a sense of importance once engaged in a creative and purposeful venture.

¹³ Peter G. Northouse, "Leadership", : Sage Publications, London, 2004, page 180-181

¹⁴ Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, Leaders (The Strategies for Taking Charge), Harper & Row, New York, 1985.

The leader aligns the people towards the purpose of the organization.
“Leaders are only as powerful as the ideas they can communicate.”¹⁵

2. The Social Architect Strategy

Leaders in this strategy are social architects of their organizations. They transform its norms and values by communicating a direction understandable for their followers in their own language and culture. This type of leader is able to convince people to accept new ways of thinking and organization identity. The ways he may accomplish this depends on the nature of the organization. The method he uses is to formulate a new Vision, develop a commitment towards it and then institutionalize it within the organization.

3. The Trust Strategy

In this model the leader creates trust between him and followers and gives the organization a sense of self and unique identity. As he gives a clear direction, sticks to the principles he has formulated and positions the organization in relation to the environment it is subject to, the leader is trusted. He is trusted because he lives for the common Vision he has formulated to his followers.

¹⁵ Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders (The Strategies for Taking Charge)*, Harper & Row, New York, 1985, p.107

4. The Self-Leadership Strategy

The Bennis and Nanus research found out that above all, the leader is a person that takes time to learn. “They are perpetual learners and some, voracious readers¹⁶”. In this strategy leaders bring arguments into effective action through a creative way because they transmit a positive inner attitude that they build within themselves. As a leader knows his weaknesses, he understands his competence to change the organization towards his Vision. A positive leader has an impact on his followers creating confidence, high expectations and an emphasis on education.

D. The Tichy and DeVanna Perspective^{17,18}

This perspective looks at leadership in relation to how the individual leader is able to carry out the change process of his organization. The research conducted by Tichy and DeVanna entailed extensive interviews with leaders whose organizations had undergone substantial change. They accordingly characterized this process as a drama of the following three acts.

¹⁶ Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders (The Strategies for Taking Charge)*, Harper & Row, New York, 1985, p.188

¹⁷ Peter G. Northouse, “Leadership”, Sage Publications, London, 2004, page 181-182

¹⁸ Noel M. Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna, *Transformational Leadership*, John Wiley & Sons, 1986, page 117-148

1. Recognizing the need for change.

Because leaders are agents of change, it is their responsibility to point out the best way the organization may operate. In this situation, the leader uses techniques that allow his followers to realize existing problems within the organization and also encourages them to seek new solutions to the problem.

2. Formulating a Vision.

In this case, the Vision acts as a “conceptual road map for what the organization will be in the future¹⁹”. In large organizations the formulation of a Vision is more complicated than in small ones.

3. Institutionalizing change.

As leaders do this, they need to change structures. This requires forming new teams that will be compatible with the Vision. It is important to consider here that the Vision of this leader should always be within the capacity of his followers to understand and implement and of the people he is accountable for.

E. Capstone

Having explained Northouse Model, it is now appropriate to contrast the concepts of Vision stated above with some known historical models. Two

¹⁹ Noel M. Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna, *Transformational Leadership*, John Wiley & Sons, 1986, page 128

historical models have been chosen. At the tactical and operational level, and another at the strategic and operational level. These two models are well known examples on leadership.

IV. Historical Models and Vision.

To see if Northouse model is valid on the concepts of Vision development it will be contrasted with the following two historical model leaders. Nelson at the tactical and operational level, and Eisenhower at the operational and Strategic level. These historical models were successful Visionary leaders, in different time frames and level of command, thus it lets the Vision analysis independent of these issues.

A. Nelson at the Tactical and Operational Level

1. Historical Background²⁰

Horatio Nelson is one of the world's greatest naval heroes. His leadership legacy transcends most of the blue water navies. His name is renown for his exploits at the Battles of Cape St. Vincent (1797), the Nile (1798), and Copenhagen (1801), his legendary romance with Lady Emma Hamilton, and his victory and tragic death at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805).

²⁰ The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, 2001, <http://www.bartleby.com/65/ne/Nelson-H.html>



He entered the navy at the age of 12 and was a captain by 20; by which time he had seen service in the West Indies, in the Baltic, and in Canada. During these years he became friendly with the duke of Clarence (later William IV) and married (1787) a widow, Frances Nisbet, in the West Indies. That same year he returned to England and remained inactive at his hometown. There was no conflict thus the size of the navy was reduced and he, like many others, placed on half-pay.

In 1793 Great Britain entered the French Revolutionary Wars and Nelson was given command of the British ship *Agamemnon*. He served in the Mediterranean, fighting at Toulon and helping to capture Corsica. At Calvi he lost the sight in one eye. Under John Jervis, later Earl St. Vincent, he was largely responsible, acting boldly and without orders, for the victory over the Spanish off Cape St. Vincent (1797). He was made a Rear Admiral by seniority and was created a Knight of the Bath. In the unsuccessful British attempt (1797) to capture Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Nelson lost his right arm and was repatriated to England to recuperate.

Upon his return to service, he was sent on detached duty to find the French fleet. After a long pursuit this fleet was destroyed in 1798 at Aboukir bay in the Battle of the Nile. He was subsequently placed in command of a squadron assisting the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Here he fell in love with Emma, Lady Hamilton, the wife of the British ambassador, who became his mistress.

In 1800 he returned to England with the Hamilton's and soon separated (1801) from his wife. That same year, Lady Hamilton bore him a daughter, Horatia. Nelson forced his appointment as second in command, under Sir Hyde Parker, of the fleet sent against the armed neutrality of the Baltic powers. He defeated (1801) the Danes at Copenhagen, ignoring Parker's order to cease action by putting his telescope to his blind eye and saying that he could not see the signal. He was made a Viscount, returned to

England, and was given command of the Channel fleet to repel an expected French invasion. During the interlude of peace (1802–3), he lived in the country with the Hamilton's.

Upon the renewal of war (1803), Nelson was given command of the fleet in the Mediterranean and blockaded the French fleet at Toulon for 22 months. When the French finally escaped, he pursued their fleet across the Atlantic to the West Indies and back to Spain, where it took refuge with the Spanish fleet in Cadiz. On Oct. 21, 1805, these combined fleets ventured out of port, and found Nelson waiting for them off Cape Trafalgar. Here, he won his most spectacular victory and died in the action.

2. External Influences^{21,22}

Although Northouse notes that leaders act as strong models for followers, “providing them with a Vision and a sense of Mission²³”, nothing is said about Mentors. Puryear is more near to historical facts when he states that “officer careers develop through mentors²⁴” One of the decisive aspects of Nelson's life was his mother's brother, Maurice Suckling, who later became Comptroller of the Royal Navy. As a captain, he took young Horatio on board his ship, and was part of the board that promoted him to

²¹ Phil Grabsky, *The Great Commanders*, Boxtree Ltd, London, 1993, page 75-80

²² Jack Sweetman, *The Great Admirals: Command at Sea 1587-1945*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, page 193-

²³ Peter G. Northouse, “Leadership”, London: Sage Publications, 2004, page175

Lieutenant at a young age. As a result of Nelson's enthusiasm for the sea Suckling arranged for his transfer to a merchant ship heading to the West Indies. This experience gave Nelson an outsider's view of the Royal Navy, which proved invaluable over the years to come. He also learnt in these voyages the basic aspects of seamanship.

"Suckling's final act on behalf of Nelson was to ensure that upon returning to naval service his Captain in his new commission was a good man. He was more than that. Captain William Locker possessed, among many qualities, the zeal of a great fighter, and he, more than any other single person, stimulated in his pupil the natural resolution and fighting prowess that made the 'Hero'. When Nelson was the most famous admiral of the world, he wrote to his old master, 'I have been your scholar; it is you who taught me to board a Frenchman'.²⁵"

His battle skills were developed through years of learning. He was a long time student of the tactics of admiral Hood, who told Prince William Henry, later King William IV, that the young Nelson could give him as much information about Naval Tactics as any Captain of the Navy. Nelson was assigned to escort the King's son in the West Indies, where they became friends. Prince William recalled thus: " Captain Nelson...appeared to be the merest boy of a Captain I ever beheld...There was something

²⁴ Edgar F. Puryear, *American Generalship*, Presidio Press, Novato, USA, 2000, page

²⁵ Richard Hough, *The Great Admirals*, Esther Jager, London, 1977, page99

irresistible pleasing in his address and conversation; and an enthusiasm, when speaking on professional subjects, ...²⁶”

Although he was rebuked several times during his career for not following the rules and practices of the service, when the need arose, the Admiralty recognized Nelson’s talents and did not fail to make use of them. People like Earl Spencer first Lord of the Admiralty in Pitts time and who oversaw Nelson's promotion to the Mediterranean, Lord Barham and Lord St Vincent who gave him the command of the Mediterranean fleet before the battle of Trafalgar, supplied the great strategy that Nelson learnt during his career to implement his Vision.

The Bennis and Nannus perspective contends “the emergence of Vision originates from both the leader and the followers²⁷” but there seems no historical backing for this in the example of Nelson. In his case, what history seems to show is that mentors teach the Vision, and through years of experience the leader develops it. Such confidence had the superiors in Nelson that the order of the Admiralty to reinforce the Mediterranean (an action that ended with the Battle of Nile) came together with a letter from Lord Spencer for St Vincent. The letter added that if St Vincent did not command the expedition himself “I think it almost

²⁶ Phil Grabsky, *The Great Commanders*, Boxtree Ltd, London, 1993, page 79

²⁷ Peter G. Northouse, “Leadership”, London: Sage Publications, 2004, page 180

unnecessary to suggest to you the propriety of putting it under the command of Sir H. Nelson²⁸. Both men being Nelson's mentors.

Once the leader has the Vision developed by himself through his mentors, he teaches it to his followers. The battle tactics that Nelson and his captains used were not entirely new, although they were daring and did break the rules. On the quarterdeck of his ship *Vanguard* he had a "school of captains... he would fully develop to them his own ideas of the different and best modes of attacks, and such plans as he proposed to execute upon falling in with the enemy....., every one of his captains was most thoroughly acquainted; and upon surveying the situations of the Enemy they could ascertain with precision what were the ideas and intentions of their Commander, without the aid of any further instructions²⁹".

3. Personal Aspects

As Tichy and DeVanna point out, "truth, trust and respect" are essential in a respected Leader³⁰. But, to what degree does this demand "high standards of moral and ethical conduct³¹" as Northouse suggests? Nelson took great care of his crew; he never neglected their well-being nor their spiritual health. When he joined the *Vanguard* at Spithead one of his first acts was to request Bibles and prayer books. After victory at the battle of

²⁸ Jack Sweetman, *The Great Admirals: Command at Sea 1587-1945*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, page 204

²⁹ *Ibid.*, page 196-197

³⁰ Noel M. Tichy & Mary Anne Devanna, *Transformational Leadership*, John Wiley & Sons, 1986, p. 129

the Nile he had services of thanksgiving on board his ships. Before engaging the enemy at Trafalgar, he composed the prayer that highlights his Christianity, patriotism and duty:

“ May the Great God, whom I worship, grant to my Country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious Victory; and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after Victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet. For myself individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my country faithfully. To him, I resign myself and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen.”

This was his personal core belief, but there is no indication that his religious or moral basis played a vital role in the relationship with the men with whom he went to sea. Rather, examples of his care to mitigate the harshness of sea life contributed enormously toward people being loyal to him. They trusted him because he never claimed to be a better man than they, and he was fair and just.

The Leaders relationship with women is also not explained in Northouse model. Nelson left his wife in 1801. He wanted his own child somebody with whom to express his emotions, and to be treated like a Hero. Nobody else than Emma understood this internal ego Nelson had. She understood his weaknesses that were a complementary to her natural flattery. She was his confidant and before the Battle of Trafalgar he told her in a letter the reaction of his captains as he explained his plan: “ ... It was an electric shock. Some shed tears. All approved – it was new – it was singular – it

³¹ Peter G. Northouse, “Leadership”, London: Sage Publications, 2004, page 174

was simple!“ His emotional stability before the battle of Trafalgar was due to Emma. Although he was criticized and rejected socially by the aristocracy for this, the people loved their hero all the same. If we contrast this with Northouse model, much research is needed to assimilate what history teaches. The model over-states the importance of morality and ethics. On Nelson’s command aspect, he found it important that his officers acted with initiative and independence to achieve the goals of the fleet of which he was in charge. This he learnt through his career giving the example and being blessed in this aspect by his superiors. The Nelson touch was developed and encouraged by the admirals with Vision like St Vincent and his predecessors, and executed brilliantly by Nelson and his followers during the war against France and Spain. Even before Trafalgar, Captains like Cochrane on “The Gallant Speedy” engaged faster and bigger Spanish ships like the Gamo indicating the high standard of leadership skills in the Royal Navy at that time³².

We have seen some aspects of Nelson’s leadership Vision at the tactical and operational level. The following lines will show Eisenhower’s Vision at the operational and strategic level.

³² Robert Harvey, Cochrane: The Life and Exploits of a Fighting Captain, Carrol & Graf Publishers, 2000, New York, page 44-57

B. Eisenhower at the Strategic and Operational Level.

1. Historical Background³³

Dwight David Eisenhower served as an officer in the US Army and later as President of USA. He was born in Denison, Texas, on October 14th, 1890 and died in Washington, D.C., on March 28th, 1969. Dwight Eisenhower grew up in Abilene, Kansas. Between 1911 and 1915 he attended the West Point Military Academy. He was assigned training duties during WWI, so did not take part in military action in Europe. In 1925 he went to study at the Command and General Staff School in Leavenworth, Kansas, and later at the Army Staff College in Washington, D.C. He served seven years as a staff officer and principal assistant to MacArthur in Washington and Manila until 1940. He became Executive Officer of the 15th Infantry Regiment, and then Chief of Staff of the 3rd Division, and finally Chief of Staff of the 3rd Army. In 1942, the Army's Chief of Staff, George Marshal, appointed Eisenhower as Chief of Operations Division, and two months later sent him to London as Commander of US forces in Europe. Eisenhower took part in the discussions of the Combined Chiefs of Staff to determine how best to attack Germany, and he was given the command of Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa, which started on November 8th, 1942.

³³ The Juno Beach Center, Ontario, 2003, <http://www.junobeach.org/e/3/can-pep-usa-eisenhower-e.htm#null>



Followed by General H.D.G. Crerar, General Dwight D. Eisenhower inspecting the guard of honour of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division in Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands, November 29th, 1944

Then, in July 1943, Eisenhower led the invasion of Sicily. The ground forces involved in that operation included the US 7th Army and the British 8th Army, under General Bernard Montgomery. The 1st Canadian Infantry

Division was part of the 8th Army. Eisenhower then took command of the joint ground forces that landed in continental Italy and in December, he took over the supreme command of the forces that prepared the invasion of France.

As Commander of SHEAF (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force), Eisenhower had to combine Allied armies, navies and air forces to build the largest invading force ever assembled.

After the War, Eisenhower won an easy victory in presidential elections for 1953. He won a second term in 1956.

2. External Influences³⁴

As may be noted in the following, the development of Visionary leadership in Eisenhower followed similar lines as those with Horatio Nelson. On a Sunday afternoon in the autumn of 1919, Dwight Eisenhower was introduced to Brig. Gen Fox Conner, at a typical dinner hosted by George and Beatrice Patton and where conversation was the normal thing after food and drinks. Conner was Pershing's right hand man in the army. He had been the Chief of Operations of General Pershing's Army Expeditionary Force during the First World War. It was through Connor's initiative that Pershing launched the first American offensive at Saint-Mihiel in September 1918. Because he was the top strategist in the army,

³⁴ Carlo D'Este, *Eisenhower a Soldier's Life*, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York, 2002, page 161 to 174

his views were highly respected by young officers like Patton and Eisenhower. The war had recently ended, but Connor believed that the Treaty of Versailles would take the USA, with Britain and France as allies, against Germany. He was the sort of officer that bothered, showed interest and encouraged young officers in what they were doing, and as a result, had a great influence upon Eisenhower.

In 1922 Eisenhower served under Connor in Panama. They were neighbours, worked together, and visited each other frequently. Eisenhower revealed how he had lost interest in history at West Point, but Connor insisted that he study military history, and started him slowly with recommended historical books. The young Major digested the major themes of each text as they came, knowing that Connor would ask him about them. Connor's pedagogical technique was very Socratic and they had great discussions on many of the themes of war. This service with Fox Connor was to prepare Eisenhower for his role in Second World War. It was his greatest education in life; what he called his graduate school in military history. At the end of his service with Connor he had been obliged to read and absorb Clausewitz book *On War* three times, he also had discussed the various alternative approaches to command, to a commander such as that of Napoleon, Grant, or Robert E. Lee. He also learnt, first hand, of the problems and pressures of working together with allied forces. In instructing his pupil, Connor laid great stress on "the art of

persuasion” because he believed that in combined operations the forces of other nations had to be coordinated very closely, and this needed great persuasion on the part of the commander.

Many other officers influenced and forwarded Dwight Eisenhower’s military education and career, such as Douglas MacArthur, George Van Horn Moseley, Kenyon Joyce, and Walter Krueger. The most influential was Fox Connor who’s final advice was that he would do well to relate to George Catlett Marshall who had worked together with him as a staff officer in Europe. Marshall also became general Pershing’s aide de camp from 1919 to 1924 and in 1939 became chief of staff in Washington.

The point to take from this review is that Dwight Eisenhower was educated and instructed over many years on a clear Vision of what kind of war he was going to face, and was thus well prepared on how best he could conduct allied forces in a European Theatre against Germany, when the occasion arose.

As we compare the external factors that influenced Eisenhower’s Vision at the operational level, with the Northouse Model, one realizes that, although it may be assimilated to Idealized Influence or other factors, the model clearly needs to be amplified to incorporate the direct and persuasive influence of mentors on the development of a leader’s Vision.

The external factors that surround a leader during his career should not be underestimated, nor should the way in which the people who surround him contribute to his Vision. "Rare are the instances in which the officer rises to high command without the backing of someone in a position to influence the career³⁵". Also the following has to be taken in consideration:

"The Eisenhower career illustrates again that having the ability to lead is not enough; there must be an opportunity to demonstrate that ability and influential superior to observe it. A combination of sponsorship, luck, and years of preparation and hard work gave Eisenhower the chance for significant leadership, a chance of which he prove himself worthy³⁶"

3. Personal Aspects³⁷

The lack of reference to relationships, in particular with family, and for both Eisenhower and Nelson, with women, in the Northouse model, is clearly evident. In the early years of the Eisenhower's marriage, they lost their first son. Because of this, during their stay in Panama, the couple had a critical time in their relationship. They had a marital problem because they both turned their pain inward. The Eisenhower's never recovered from the death of their son. During the war, Eisenhower's only communication with his wife was by frequent correspondence. This enabled him to devote his

³⁵ Carlo D'Este, Eisenhower a Soldier's Life, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York, 2002, page 170

³⁶ Edgar F. Puryear, 19 Stars, A Study on Military Character and Leadership, Green Publishers, Orange, Virginia, 1994, page 169

³⁷ Carlo D'Este, Eisenhower a Soldier's Life, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York, 2002, page 325-327, 420

entire time to work. A circumstance that was not uncommon in their relationship.

Mimi Eisenhower had given him both the freedom and stability needed to be a fully dedicated officer since they got married. From the outset, she made it a point never to involve herself in her husband's businesses³⁸ She stayed in Washington while he was in London during the war. That Kay Summersby, his driver, was a valued and treasured company for Eisenhower during this period is beyond dispute, but there was never an affair between the two.

Eisenhower's main theme as a commander was Allied unity. The senior generals of both nations had divergent views that made him the source of unity, binding allies together. He looked for unity through relationships as important and friendly as Pug Ismay and Mountbatten. According to Ismay he was "tremendously alert..... no trace of conceit or pomposity. Frankness, sincerity and friendliness were written all over him... but he could be firm to the point of ruthlessness if the occasion demanded it³⁹". When time became bitter and allies squabbled, he became the voice of reason and conciliation. He was ethical, and if religious, he kept it to himself. The man was trusted for his frankness and sincerity, and the same was said of Horatio Nelson. No high standards of morality as

³⁸ Ibid, 2002, page 111

³⁹ Carlo D'Este, Eisenhower a Soldier's Life, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York, 2002, page 327

suggested by Northouse, but a normal man, whose followers saw him like one of them at war.

C. Some Thoughts

Having reviewed both historical models and the theoretical model, the intent now is to draw some thoughts on this analysis.

Some people think of Vision as an ideal that should be explained to others so as to convince them to do what the leader considers to be necessary. But, Visionary leaders don't simply think up a Vision so as to tell it to their followers. The long-term ideal or Vision that leaders come up with always derives from their teachers or mentors, their followers and long meditation of their own ideas throughout their careers. This is the case of Eisenhower with Fox Connor and Nelson with William Locker. Both had a primary influence as mentors of them. They also had several superiors that educated them in a Vision and took care that they were placed in the right place at the right time, in order to be able to bring it to some realization. Tradition in the military puts forward "the time honoured military ethos of: my mission, my personnel, myself"⁴⁰. The importance of time devoted to "myself" and mentoring from their superiors, so that the leader may be able to formulate or create a particular Vision of his own, is sometimes

⁴⁰R. A. Dallaire, (Lt. Gen.), *Command Experiences in Rwanda*, Edited by Carol McCann and Ross Pigeau, *The Human in Command*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York, 2000, page37

overlooked, notwithstanding its importance. These Leaders also devoted time to formulate their own ideas and time to impregnate their followers with them.

If we apply Bass's transformational Perspective to these historical facts, it is interesting to note that the Visionary is a follower before he becomes a leader. That is, he learns the skills for the future with leaders who impart an idealized influence, an inspirational motivation, an intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. Thus, he learns his Vision from others before he develops his own. The Northouse model does not include this view, and perhaps it would be worthwhile to have further research conducted into this aspect of Vision development.

All the aspects mentioned in the Bennis and Nanus perspective are present in the lives of Eisenhower and Nelson, Thus in these cases history validates the perspective

With the Tichy and DeVanna perspective the three-act drama does not seem to be present. Rather than recognizing the need for change Nelson and Eisenhower were chosen, and they seized the moment.

Both historical characters had a relationship with women with whom they could confide their feelings and thoughts and at the same time be treated like great men and heroes. In the case of Nelson, it was Emma to whom he wrote letters continually and who he loved. For Eisenhower it was his

wife who he loved and to whom he wrote letters, who he trusted and to whom he was loyal. However, there was also the presence of Kay Summersby, his driver, who was a great confidante. These women not just brought affection but stability and they spiritually supported their leader when encouragement was needed.

Both leaders were brought up in a Christian environment. They both held firm to a faith in God one way or the other, but Nelson, being the son of a parson, expressed it more openly than did Eisenhower. Regardless of this faith, the reason people followed these great men was more an aspect of their being just and good to them, and identifying themselves with their followers, rather than being religious and with a demonstrated set of personal ethics. Religion may have helped them to be good and just, but it was not a main factor. This suggests that perhaps the social standard of a group is more important for Visionary leadership. Adopting these social rules and applying them justly in their favour is more important for their followers.

Both leaders thought it was important to have unity of command, and that the followers had to act in accordance with their directives but with initiative. Nelson promoted it through the meetings on board the Vanguard, Eisenhower through diplomacy. In both cases, this had to be done through face-to-face meetings so as to transmit trust. In both cases

signals or communication systems were unnecessary at their level, once the battle or the operation was ongoing. Thus Visionary leadership seems to transcend time and technological factors.

V. Conclusion.

In examining the development and conduct of Gen Dwight Eisenhower and Admiral Lord Nelson this paper has shown the existence and employment of Vision in leadership. It has also shown the relationship between Vision at the strategic level and its formulation by a commander at the operational level. These qualities have been contrasted with Northouse model concluding that:

When leaders of an institution or organization work and lead with selflessness, they are able to educate subordinates on their selfless Vision. These new leaders, if they learn and mature the Vision during their career, are posted and protected at the levels necessary to develop into commanders at the operational level.

The Visionary leader needs a parallel life in which he can develop and reflect. He needs an inner life and a sentimental life. In the case of both, Eisenhower and Nelson, women played an important role in their life as a leader, mainly as an encouragement during difficult times. This important aspect of the role of a companion in the leader's life is absent in the Northouse model.

Both of the leaders promoted unity of command and initiative by meeting with and encouraging subordinates face to face, so as to transmit trust. When all their subordinates were impregnated with what had to be done, no further instructions were needed during the battle or operation, thus rendering communications systems unnecessary at this stage. Visionary leadership seems to transcend time and technological factors.

The reason men follow an operational commander is because of competence and that he identifies with his followers, and because he is good and just. This suggests that perhaps the social standard of a group is more important for a Visionary leader than imposing his own ethical standards.

The Northouse model includes many aspects of Visionary leadership present in the historical model. However, some of them are absent, such as Vision development and empowerment through the influence of mentors. Rather than recognizing the need for change, Nelson and Eisenhower were chosen, and they sized the moment. The transformational Leadership Model should be complemented with further research on some aspects highlighted by the analysis of the historical models.

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