

**Monroe – Paine Distinguished Lecture Series**

**Reynolds Alumni Center, University of Missouri**

**“Cultivating Agile and Adaptive Leaders”**

**BG Edward Cardon**

**19 October 2009**

**(Remarks as Prepared)**

Thank you for that warm reception and thank you, Deputy Chancellor Middleton for the kind introduction.

Distinguished guests, faculty and students of the Harry S. Truman School of Public Affairs, alumni, and friends of the University of Missouri, on behalf of LTG Caldwell, the Commander of the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, I thank you very much for this opportunity. I am honored to speak to this distinguished audience and share a few thoughts with you this morning on “Cultivating Agile and Adaptive Leaders”.

In recognition of the name-sake of this renowned lecture series, I'd like to start with a quote from Thomas Paine. As he wrote in *The American Crisis*, "I call not upon a few, but upon all: not on this state, but on every state: up and help us." This is a call to many throughout the colonies... a call to arms. His publication of *Common Sense* equally aroused a sense of patriotic fervor in a disparate population. Inside our Army today, we face a sort of call to arms – an intellectual and theoretical call to arms. The topic is, of course, leader development.

Why is leadership and leadership development so important... because upon taking the oath to become an Army leader, Soldiers, and Army civilians enter into a sacred agreement with the Nation and their subordinates. Our profession has real consequences in lives, blood and treasure – hence leadership is at the center of everything we do, and leader development is the essential component of daily life in the Army.

As you might imagine, cultivating leaders is the heart of what the Army does each day. We have a leadership manual simply entitled, *Army Leadership*, which guides our

efforts... it is the most downloaded Army manual by one or more orders of magnitude... with over 3 million downloads... this is even more than our counterinsurgency manual...

The good news for you is I am not going to cover this manual today, but I do encourage you to take a look at it, as it truly is the foundation for developing agile and adaptive leaders. Throughout this document, you'll find enduring themes such as the importance of values, character and ethics – all of which are central to sound leadership and inspired followership. Principles like these are the framework upon which we build leaders in our Army.

First, to address the importance of adaptation... why must we have adaptive leaders? I would like to start with some environmental observations to set the stage. Our Army Chief of Staff, General George Casey, describes some trends that will shape the future security environment... trends that will present both dilemmas and opportunities. You are familiar with most of these concepts... globalization, technology, population growth, resource demand, climate change, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and failing states. Each of these could have its own lecture, but taken together, one can draw a conclusion -- we live in an age of "the certainty of uncertainty."

And this certainty of uncertainty links to an entire body of knowledge surrounding chaos theory emergence, and complexity. A great model to show this uncertainty is weather forecasting, and for this area of the country, tornados. While we make strides in understanding tornados, can we really predict their occurrence or behavior all the time? Accurate weather forecasting is impossible... if we could predict the weather, we would save thousands of lives and millions of dollars in property losses. It is the same with the Army trying to forecast the future. With millions of permutations surrounding our security environment, the question we face is, how do we develop leaders to operate in this complex and uncertain world?

Next is the pace of change. I think back to 1988 when I was a company commander in Germany and we received our first computer with an entire megabyte of memory... I will never forget the Soldier that said... Sir, I am not sure we will be able to fill up an entire megabyte... and then look at us today. This pace is both evolutionary and revolutionary, generating both speed of transmission and ability to disperse across wider geographic and idealistic bands. This leads to another question: How do we develop leaders that are comfortable with this change... comfortable with being uncomfortable?

The world is becoming more competitive. Thomas Freidman captures this idea as part of his observations in the book, the Lexus and the Olive Tree. Competition is not limited to the big eat the small --, but the fast also eat the slow. While this competitiveness creates a culture of constant improvement, adaptation and innovation, it also creates

instability. A growing sense of persistent competition can also be described as the potential for persistent conflict – or at least persistent divergence. This implies we need leaders who learn faster, adapt faster than ever before. How do we develop these sorts of leaders?

There is growing decentralization. This is not only a function of the internet - which someone once described to me as being alone but connected to the world - but the idea of more freedom and autonomy at lower and lower levels. There is a book called *The Starfish and the Spider*. This has captured many of the security challenges we face. Remove the leader in a spider organization, or hierarchal organization – it collapses. Remove the leader in a starfish, or network organization, the organization further decentralizes – it morphs into a new system, causing an analyst a significant challenge to rapid understanding. Functioning in this high-stakes environment creates a leadership challenge that I think was well described by General McChrystal – it takes a network to defeat a network. How do we develop leaders who can operate in a very decentralized environment?

Finally, there is a significant increase and demand for greater human interaction. When I started my career in the Army we use to say we would bypass cities. Today we operate in the cities. This means we cannot operate around the people, we have to operate among the people. This places new demands on leaders such as cultural awareness, language, and communication skills. Another question: How do we develop leaders with these traits?

Our Army has faced these challenges and adapted throughout history... more recently from the Cold War, to the turbulent 1990s, to the wars and conflicts we face today. Yet, we also face a paradox... Any armed force is always in danger of fighting the last war. From Michael E. Raynor, author of *The Strategy Paradox* -- “The prerequisites of success today are the antecedents of failure tomorrow.” Moreover, over-preparedness for one possible contingency almost guarantees that they will be unprepared for all the other possibilities—a risky proposition in an era of uncertainty, rapid change, increased competition and decentralization.

Finally, we have changed our doctrine to account for full spectrum operations. This means we need to be able to do peacekeeping up through major combat operations. This requires agile leaders.

So far, I’ve tried to describe the environment, which demands agile, adaptive, and innovative leaders. And nothing causes people to adapt quicker than a threat to one’s own life and the lives of their friends. We see this manifested in our Army through our adaptation to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and other operations around the world. During an interview yesterday with an author writing about the United Kingdom’s

experience in Iraq, I reminded the author that the Iraq I saw in 2003 was very different in 2005 and was very different in 2007 and 2008. I have never been to Afghanistan but know it is the same – things change – our presence and the actions/reactions between combatants and the populations change the stage – change the environment. I often say I am no longer current in my understanding after only 48 hours of departure – that is the pace of change.

I had a senior leader once ask me if we can discern what the future environment would be like in 20 years so we could build a leader development program that will deliver those leaders. What is more likely, based on everything I have said so far, is that we will have no idea what the world will look like in 20 years and that any prediction would most likely be wrong. Therefore, what we really need are leaders that learn faster and adapt faster.

So what to do?

First, what did you do -- The Truman School of Public Affairs saw a need to grow and change in May 2001 after over 40 years as the Department of Public Administration. The University of Missouri Board of Curators wisely promulgated this opportunity....to boldly reevaluate decades of established and proven success....through recognition and acceptance of change.

This esteemed program recognizes that leaders of the future must have a vision of outreach... not only within our local, state, and national borders, but to the international community. Your program's bedrocks of education, research, and public service recognize the need to expand beyond the comforts of a classroom to the global interactions necessary in today's interconnected and complex world.

To be good practitioners of your craft you need to be immersed in different environments so experiences can be broadened, tools of the craft sharpened, and scholarly knowledge applied to real world situations and circumstances. Your experiences garnered from the Peace Corps, the State Department, consulates, embassies, or with international non-governmental organizations, not only foster these broadening experiences and self development, but offer reach back opportunities to students in the classroom and assist in keeping curriculum current and relevant.

It is no different with us...

At the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, it is our charter to wrestle with similar challenges and opportunities. It is our responsibility to oversee the development of all our Army Leaders... Officers, Warrant Officers, and Non-Commissioned Officers and Civilians.

The Combined Arms Center is known as the “Intellectual Center of the Army,” that supports field commanders with well-educated and well-trained leaders. Let’s consider that motto: why the “Intellectual Center of the Army”?

Our Army leaders today have lived in the most competitive environment possible – war zones. What we are doing is building on those experiences for the future... and to do that we need to understand what is really happening with Soldiers in the field: Soldiers in the far-off mountains of Afghanistan, the wind-swept deserts of Iraq, and in the darkened shadows where the enemy’s we’ll face tomorrow are lurking.

While I mentioned the Combined Arms Center Charter for leader development, for sure there are a number of different organizations that help us develop leaders. It takes the energy and collective effort of these, and others, to meet the challenges of building agile and adaptive leaders. I want to highlight a few...

The Center for Army Lessons Learned...known as CALL... collects and analyzes data from combat operations and training events, and produces lessons learned for our Army. CALL disseminates these lessons throughout the force using a variety of print and electronic media, including their web site. Its greatest contribution, however, is the change it made on the culture of our Army. It introduced the concept of After Action Reviews where we take a candid look at ourselves through a non-attribution lens. It increased the inquisitive nature of our leaders and has allowed the Army to learn and adapt faster... we ask ourselves what did we plan to have happen, what really happened, why, and how do we repeat things done well and avoid things done poorly.

The Center for Army Leadership (CAL) is our lead for leadership and leader development research, analysis, assessment and evaluation. In fact, CAL is the lead author for the manual on Army leadership. They coordinate, develop and manage the Army’s leader development initiatives. They oversee the integration and synchronization of Professional Military Education (PME) and the Civilian Education System (CES) to sustain excellence in growing Army leaders. We have led our efforts in developing a leader development strategy.

MG Gregg Martin is here from the Maneuver Support Center at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, one of the many schools and centers across the Army. He develops Soldiers and Leaders for the Corps of Engineers, Military Police, and the Chemical Corps. He does more than leader development, but want to point out that General Martin is one of the most innovative educators and trainers in our Army today...

Finally, the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) educates and develops our mid-grade leaders to operate in a full spectrum, multi-service, interagency/intergovernmental and multinational operations. It strives to accomplish a basic premise – we educate on “how to think” vice “what to think.”

If we are to learn faster and adapt faster, then we must operate in a competitive learning environment. We have to learn quicker and understand better – which means the complexity of today’s challenges and the uncertainties of tomorrow demands a much more comprehensive approach to leader development.

So what has changed in our approach... first we use to educate and train for rapid decision making. Today we need both rapid decision making and the need to operate in operations over extended time. As the nation’s campaign-capable force (which means we can deploy and stay for very long periods of time)... we are a force with this sort of staying power in both contested and uncontested environments. As a result, the Army must develop leaders to execute missions over extended campaigns. Campaigns mean time, time means change, and change requires leaders who can anticipate change, create opportunities, and manage transitions.

Let’s return to the discussion on decentralization – we have a shifting balance of tactical and operational art as both we and our adversaries decentralize, network, and operate among the people. This demands that we develop leaders who can lead increasingly decentralized organizations, who can understand complexity, and who can manage uncertainty. Trust becomes essential...

Finally we need leaders that can work with ill-structured, or highly complex problems. This requires leaders to develop the ability to understand and frame complex problems to complement our traditional Military Decision Making Process. This reinforces knowing *how* to think, not *what* to think. We call this ability to frame complex problems the methodology of Design - which provides leaders with a cognitive tool to frame and reframe problems as conditions change—a skill that is critical to anticipating and managing transitions over time, to adaptation, and to innovation. We must think before we plan. The synergy gained from the development of this methodology with the lessons we have learned from the current fight and our work on developing leaders for the future is both a daunting challenge, and an exciting opportunity. Design is the next step on a path to maturing our leaders for the complexities and uncertainties of operations in the 21st Century.

So how did we start working our future approaches: we started with outcomes...

We seek to develop leaders who are:

- Competent in their core proficiencies
- Broad enough to operate across the spectrum of conflict
- Able to operate in joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environments, and leverage other capabilities in achieving their objectives

- Capable of operating and providing advice at the national level
- Culturally astute and able to use this awareness and understanding in conducting operations
- Courageous enough to see and exploit opportunities in the challenges and complexities of the operational environment
- Grounded in Army values and the warrior ethos.

From these outcomes, we developed eight leader development **imperatives** to guide our policy and actions to develop leaders with the required qualities and enduring leader characteristics. These guiding principles remain constant and consistent across a lifetime of service.

Equal commitment by the institution, by leaders, and by individual members of the profession to life-long learning and development. Leaders will establish a climate that advances life-long learning and holds subordinates responsible for achieving their leader development objectives. Individuals will demonstrate commitment by establishing and achieving their individual leader development objectives.

Balanced commitment to Training, Education, and Experience pillars of development. Education and training create the context for developmental assignments to holistically develop leaders. Leaders will ensure their subordinates get the right mix of developmental opportunities at the right time. Individuals must identify and actively pursue specific training, education and experience goals.

Outcomes-based to prepare leaders for hybrid threats and full spectrum operations. The Army will use common scenarios for training and education based upon the operational environment as the integrating mechanism that ensures consistent outcomes. They are the measurable basis for achieving the leader attributes and competencies.

Achieve balance and predictability between personnel policies and professional military education and executable in support of Army Force requirements. This focus may expand or contract to accommodate conditions to deliver the right mix of leader development for each leader cohort.

Manage the military and civilian talent to benefit both the institution and the individual. Managing talent requires the recognition that knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences, develop at different rates. The Army needs and values a mix of generalists and specialists that collectively provide diverse talents to meet all of the Army's requirements for Full Spectrum Operations. The Army will develop an assessment process, and governance policy, that begins at pre-accession and continues throughout

a leader's career, which effectively identifies knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences against the required outcomes for advancement to facilitate the right talent at the right time and place.

Prepare our leaders by replicating the complexity of the contemporary operating environment in the classroom and at home station. When the operating force is rotating in and out of similar tactical and operational experiences, the pressure on training and education to provide corresponding experiences increases. This becomes even more important to leader development as conflict persists.

Produce leaders who are mentors and who are committed to developing their subordinates. The Operational Environment requires leaders to develop at a more rapid pace. Army doctrine and personnel policies require leaders to mentor, coach, and counsel subordinates. Senior leaders have a moral and ethical responsibility to develop subordinates while meeting both short and long term Army needs. Leaders will create the conditions for rapid development with consistent mentoring, coaching, and counseling. Individuals will be active in their developmental process by identifying specific personal strengths and weaknesses and areas in need of improvement.

Prepare select leaders for responsibility at the national level. The Army needs leaders at the strategic level who are high-level thinkers, accomplished warfighters, and geopolitical military experts.

We deliver these outcomes using a framework of education, training and experience.

We are equally mindful as we move forward that we cannot make the mistake of substituting or over emphasizing experience over education. Experience is critical, as long as it is the right experience, and our training is outstanding, as long as it is the right training. We want to identify the right problems to solve and ensure we have the right way to solve those problems. What prepares leaders to make decisions in a complex uncertain environment is the combination of education, training and experience ...the appropriate blend of all three is what gives us our greatest agility.

Let me say a little bit about each. Our challenge is create the best education experience possible – both education and training should mirror the complexity of operations on the ground. This means we need rigor in our programs. The requirement to prepare our young leaders for full spectrum operations in the contemporary operating environment has caused us to provide more education and higher learning levels earlier in the Army schools. Teaching critical thinking and problem solving, culture, campaign design, and other topics naturally adds rigor to the curriculum in comparison with educational outcomes that can be addressed with training. Training is critically important and the Army is the best in the world at it, but alone does not prepare leaders for the complexity of command today. Army education is now focused on how to think

about hard problems and not what to think where problems and solutions, though large, are generally known.

There will always be a friction in building a curriculum with the right balance between the enduring concepts of warfare and increased emphasis in areas that are “age” appropriate or specifically needed for any current fight. One guidepost to our continuum is that certain topics or areas are appropriate throughout an career and are things that must be taught/learned from accession onward. These are represented by the lifelong educational outcomes such as leadership and cultural studies. In the same vein, history will endure in the military throughout a career because it informs good decision making and critical thinking. These topics are foundational and apply across the operational environment and spectrum of conflict. Our second guidepost is recognizing that some topics are appropriate at specific points in an officer’s career, but not before. That is why our model depicts lifelong educational outcomes and timed educational outcomes. Along this same line of explanation our system allows education and training needs to be planned over the lifetime of a career, which can reduce but not eliminate this natural friction. Because each conflict has its own unique challenges, specific timely topics that are identified from the fight are reflected as the timed educational outcomes in our lifetime development model.

The final solution is a balance of military and civilian warrior-scholars appropriate for the educational objectives at each level. The Army is mindful of keeping this balance. These faculty members, military and civilian, must continue to serve in our schools to prepare our next generation of leaders and to study and write about the operational art. It is the Army’s schools and centers that are the stewards of the body of knowledge of the profession of Arms.

Let me say a little bit more about each.

**Education.** We must have a flexible and responsive education system that accurately reflects the environment today and an education system that prepares our leaders for the uncertainties of tomorrow. Education should emphasize how to think and not what to think. It must allow for creativity and break the mold thinking – we all know that 21st century problems cannot be solved by 20th century thinking. Education requires engaged learning that contributes to life-long learning skills grounded in critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making. Life-long learning inspires an inquisitive, bold, and courageous spirit. Like those pioneers who forged the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails from the banks of the Missouri River near Fort Leavenworth.

**Training.** Our training scenarios must introduce complexity and hybrid threat scenarios and present the challenge of extended campaign lengths. Hybrid threats

meaning combinations of insurgency one day, full scale attack the next day, and intermittent cyber attacks all focused on countering our advantages.

These types of scenarios prepare leaders for near term requirements and develop them for the uncertainties of the future. Training also provides leaders the opportunity to proactively recognize similarities between the current problem and their previous experience yet have the ability to identify distinguishing characteristics that make the problem unique, thereby enabling them to develop creative solutions.

**Experience.** Experience is the cumulative effect across multiple venues...education, opportunities, training events and exposure to new cultures and environments.

Experience, as we all know, goes beyond a specific deployment; it includes experience in the joint (meaning multi-service) and interagency communities, in academia, and in the private sector. We need to provide broadening experiences that many currently consider outside the normal career paths to further develop leaders. Broadening assignments offer leaders the opportunity to acquire professional experiences. When sharing those experiences, the resulting knowledge transfer serves as a powerful enabler of learning vital to leader development.

So what are some examples of how have we changed to cultivate agile and adaptive leaders?

I want to talk to you today about 3 significant changes:

- Integration of our interagency partners
- Importance of our international program
- New emphasis on operations in the Information Environment

Over the last 8 years of war, we have begun to recognize the importance of operating with a comprehensive, whole of government approach. Our leaders must understand that military force alone, although necessary, is not sufficient. Military power will win every battle and engagement, but alone it cannot win the peace.

Our Soldiers deployed around the world are working side by side daily with multiple agencies including, but not limited to, the United States Agency for International Development, Department of State, Department of Justice, and the Department of Treasury. Realizing that this interagency integration is imperative to our success is just the first step. We must now integrate this comprehensive approach in more than just our deployment experiences. We have to incorporate these agencies in our training and education.

This increased cooperation, coordination and collaboration is occurring right now at our training centers and educational institutions.

In July we had 4 Department of State Provincial Reconstruction Team members participating in a weeklong Combat Training Center exercise at Fort Irwin, CA with an Army Brigade. Just one month later we welcomed 15 interagency students from 8 different agencies to the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth; the largest number of interagency participants we have had to date.

This goes back to building a network to defeat a network, to extended campaigns, to operating among the people, to creating a learning environment to adapt faster, learn faster.

We have also realized that solutions cannot just be joint and interagency, but must also be multinational. Therefore, we have continued our integration of international partners in education and training.

In fact, at a ceremony in August we welcomed 67 additional international military students from 59 participating countries. This new class brings our total number of nations who have sent students to Fort Leavenworth to 113. Although this program is not new, we have added 15 countries to the CGSC "Family of Nations" over the last 10 years. Our international program would rival any public diplomacy program in the world. Simply put, this program builds life-long relationships and understanding. In practicality, it enables in a crisis for us to make the right phone call at the right time to the right person. Building these relationships enable connections that can often equal or exceed battalions of combat power with one phone call or hand-written note.

We are also integrating this new information environment into the education of our future leaders.

Returning now to Thomas Paine's message from The American Crisis- he ensured that information was delivered around the colonies to inspire and arouse a patriotic response... today's information is being pushed around the world in an instant. Technology has enabled individuals to use information faster and cheaper. As the operational environment becomes more complex, leaders at much lower levels must gain an appreciation for the operational level of conflict and how their actions fit in to the overall campaign plan... "The Big Picture".

To gain insights to these media impacts on military operations, our Combat Studies Institute hosted a Symposium for their release of "The US Army and the Media in Wartime: Historical Perspectives". Key note speakers John Burns from the New York Times, Ralph Peters from the New York Post, and several other independent journalists offered their personal perspectives and insights into the role technology will play in

future wartime journalism. Their perspectives and insights were timely because technology has democratized access to information and democratized dissemination of information.

Today, a YouTube posting, a Facebook message, a tweet, and/or a blog creates interaction. We gave our CAC Homepage an overhaul and saw the visitors jump from 24,000 to 514,000 in the last 2 years. We've seen increases in visits from the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Australia, and now the Pacific Rim. We have shared the Army story, provoked thought, and created discussion through our CAC YouTube site, CAC Facebook, CAC Twitter site, and over 40 CAC blog sites... all available through our homepage and accessible by anyone with an internet connection, not just people associated with the U.S. Government.

This has allowed us to be inclusive, transparent, and open. To enhance this interaction and increase understanding, each student at the Command and General Staff College must meet Information Engagement Requirements for graduation.

These requirements include writing a blog, conducting a media engagement, submitting a written work for publication, and conducting a community outreach event. These requirements may sound elementary, but it engages our mid and junior level leaders today – gets them thinking past doctrine and field manuals while laying the foundation of competence and increased confidence in the future. We believe, if you are competent and confident you will be a capable communicator of information.

Fostering successful organizational change often involves breaking down societal norms about long standing institutions. The Army is no different. I have no doubt that the Army getting involved in YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media was a bit surprising to many in the audience. Some may think the hierarchical organization of the Army hasn't always encouraged creative and critical thinking. In fact we are changing to and remain a reflection of our own society and the emerging global society.

Understanding how to operate successfully in this complex and ambiguous environment of the 21st Century is critical to the development of our leaders. This environment will require leveraging every element of our national power and includes cooperating, collaborating, and coordinating with non-government and international organizations.

As Secretary Gates said this past June at West Point, *“The Army has always needed agile and adaptive leaders with a broad perspective and range of skills. Now, in an era where we face full spectrum of conflict...we cannot succeed without military leaders who are just as full spectrum in their thinking.”*

General Casey, the Army Chief of Staff, once stated, "... leadership is of paramount importance, and land forces must continue to develop agile and adaptive leaders who can handle the challenges of full spectrum operations."

At the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, leader development is our number one priority. We have undertaken a very broad based and comprehensive reworking of the way we develop leaders across all ranks, including Department of the Army Civilians.

We owe it to our Nation to develop leaders of character and value... leaders who have the mental agility to anticipate and adapt to uncertain or changing situations... leaders who can integrate the tools of statecraft with our military forces, international partners, humanitarian organizations, and the private sector... leaders who can forge unity of effort among a very rich and diverse group of actors to shape a better future... a better tomorrow. Cultivating Agile and Adaptive Leaders is essential to meeting the challenges in this uncertain world.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak with you today. I'd really like to take some time and answer any questions you may have.