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NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
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JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL



**THE DOD TWELVE WEEK MATERNITY LEAVE POLICY: A CASE STUDY
IN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING**

by

Denise Walker

Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army National Guard

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By

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Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army National Guard


A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes.

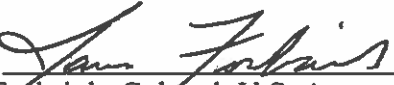
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Abstract

Defense Secretary Aston Carter established a Department of Defense (DoD) standard for maternity leave as a part of his “Force of the Future” initiative in January 2016. Across the DoD, women service members will receive 12 continuous weeks of fully paid maternity leave as the standard across the doubling the maternity leave offered to all service members from when Secretary Carter took office in 2015. This policy reflects the Defense Secretary’s desire to improve Department of Defense’s image as a progressive and family oriented organization. Unfortunately, it downplays the Department of Defense’s warfighting role and maintaining a level of personnel readiness for combat missions worldwide.

This is a case study in executive leadership and decision making, examining how a policy is generated, and how a well-intentioned leadership initiative results in potentially serious unintended consequences for the organization and how an executive mis-defines a problem, misunderstands the organization culture and its purpose, and is pulled by trends rather than by objective assessment. The problem was both mis-defined and misunderstood by Secretary Carter, resulting in a decision that led to policy that may do more harm than good to military mothers.

The impending clash between a social policy and overall force readiness is the consequences of an arbitrary policy that leaves the services with an impossible choice. On the face of it, the policy appears to be a good step towards caring for military mothers and parenting for service members, but in actuality it could harm the career progression of the service member and have significant effects on unit readiness.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced on January 28, 2016 “that women across the Department of Defense would now be eligible to take 12 weeks of fully paid maternity leave” as a part of his Force of the Future initiative.¹ The Force of the Future is a diverse group of initiatives “to maintain the Department of Defense’s competitive edge in bringing in top talent to serve in the military Services of the nation.”² Secretary Carter not only intended for these initiatives to improve the quality of life for military personnel, but also to make the Department of Defense a more desirable place of employment.³

For the Secretary of Defense, the generous standard of 12 weeks maternity leave was aimed at retaining and attracting talent in the military service. Carter told reporters at the Pentagon that the 12 week benefit doubled the amount of time for paid maternity leave that was authorized in previous years, “putting the Department of Defense (DoD) in the top tier of institutions nationwide.”⁴ Carter confidently asserted that this policy would have significant influence on decision-making for military family members.

By standardizing military maternity leave and instituting other changes in an effort to support military families and improve retention, Aston Carter signaled that the DoD was prepared to meet the challenges of attracting and retaining service members who placed an even higher priority on work-life balance than did previous generations.⁵ The Defense Secretary signaled his intent to improve the quality of life for military parents so they could better balance

1. Department of Defense, "Press Briefing By Secretary Carter on Force of The Future Reforms in The Pentagon," *Department of Defense News*, 28 January 2016, [http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsTranscripts/A TranscriptView Article-645952/departement-of-defense-press-briefing-bysecretary-carter-on-force](http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsTranscripts/A%20TranscriptViewArticle-645952/departement-of-defense-press-briefing-bysecretary-carter-on-force) (accessed January 24, 2018).

2. Department of Defense, "Press Briefing."

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Lisa Ferdinando, "Carter Announces 12 Weeks Paid Military Maternity Leave, Other Benefit," *Department of Defense News*, 28 January 2016, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/645958/carter-announces-12-weeks-paid-military-maternity-leave-other-benefits> (accessed January 24, 2018).

commitments they made to serve in uniform, while also assisting them in starting and supporting a family.

After reviewing numerous studies, reports, and input from the Services, Secretary Carter concluded that standardizing a twelve-week maternity leave policy for DoD “established the right balance between offering a highly competitive leave policy while maintaining the readiness of our total force.”⁶ The Secretary sought examples from the private sectors, such as Google and Facebook, and found that employees who were offered sufficient amount of maternity or parental leave resumed their jobs and made useful contributions. Such gestures from the employer resulted in more employee retention and employment duration, staying longer with the organization.⁷ Contrarily, most often servicewomen left the service either just before or when desiring to start a family, according to Carter. He cited a study on new mothers and infants that stressed the importance for new mothers to spend more time with their infants to improve recovery from pregnancy, as well as for improving breastfeeding, bonding, and contributing to the physical and psychological well-being of both mother and child.⁸

Secretary Carter highlighted that fifty-two percent of enlisted military members and seventy percent of officers were married; also that there were 84,000 dual-military families, across the Services meaning that both spouses are members of the Armed Forces.⁹ This maternity benefit would be offered to the over 214,000 women in uniform who comprise 15.8 percent of enlisted personnel and 17.6 percent of the officer corps.¹⁰ Carter was seeking to ease

6. Department of Defense, “Press Briefing by Secretary Carter.”

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, *Report to The Secretary of Defense: 2017 Annual Report*, (Arlington, VA, 2017), 182.

the stress on a military family facing a high operational tempo, while attempting to balance family and duty responsibilities.

Purpose:

The research question of this thesis is how does the application of executive leadership traits and characteristics, leadership principles, and executive decision making processes reflect on the outcomes of a policy implemented? With the announcement of this policy, the DoD intended to establish itself as the leading institution in the nation for maternity care. The main purpose of the policy seems to attempt to integrate family life, childbearing, and military service, in order to make them all more compatible. According to Secretary Carter, the policy has multiple benefits for military members, especially mothers. This case study will examine Carter's personal traits and characteristics as an executive leader, the key leadership principles applied, and the decision making process as it applied to the development of the maternity leave policy.

United States Code, Title 10 authorized the Secretary of Defense to establish policy for the use of accumulated leave, to include convalescent leave. Convalescent leave was defined as a period of authorized absence granted to Service members under medical care, which is part of the treatment prescribed for recuperation and convalescence. Maternity leave was categorized as convalescent leave for many years. The 12 weeks paid non-chargeable maternity leave is available to all service members across the DoD, subject to the conditions contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2017.

In the case of the new maternity leave policy an initial report from the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in The Services (DACOWITS) in 2017 reveals that unit size, and the

position of the pregnant service member made a difference.¹¹ Some participants of this report described how smaller units had more difficulty adapting when service members were on maternity leave; larger units that routinely rotated personnel, adapted relatively quickly.¹² Clearly, some units may be able to absorb the impact of a Service member taking maternity leave without the absence affecting readiness, whereas others may struggle. It was reported to be more difficult to cover absences for individuals in highly specialized positions. Other factors affecting maternity leave-related needs included the rank of Service members and leadership within the individual's unit. While the policy on surface certainly appeals to mother, it creates multiple problems for DoD as an organization.

Thesis

Secretary's Carter's rationale for the increase in the maternity leave was to retain skilled manpower and talent in the organization, ultimately framing this as a readiness issue. The personal traits and characteristics of an executive, the principles used and the decision making process used to develop a policy all reflect on the final outcome.

Does the approach of a person trying to solve the problem, implementing the policy reflect his leadership decision making skills? When Secretary Carter developed the standardized maternity leave policy, he required at the same time that the policy would not affect a service member's career, nor would it affect unit readiness. The DoD Directive-type Memorandum (DTM) 16-002, "DoD-Wide Changes to Maternity Leave" published on February 6, 2016, carries two significant requirements: commanders may not disapprove maternity leave. Maternity leave will be granted in all cases where eligible Service members apply for it. However, commanders and medical providers will continue to grant convalescent leave, based

11. Defense Advisory Committee on Women in The Services Report, 79.

12. Ibid, 80.

on the individual Service member's fitness for duty. This policy does not constrict convalescent leave in excess of 12 weeks, where a health professional or medical authority deems that such leave is warranted.¹³

Analysis

To assess this policy, it will be necessary to examine Secretary Carter's personal characteristics and traits, using Stephen J. Zaccaro, Cary Kemp, and Paige Bader study of leaders' traits and attributes, which considers traits that are inherited (distal) and those that can be developed over time, (proximal). Both distal and proximal traits are correlated with leader effectiveness, implying that while leaders can be born, they can also be made.¹⁴

Additionally, this study will review how Carter measured up in applying three specific leadership principles as he and his staff began working on the new maternity leave policy as a part of the Force of the Future Initiative. The first of the three will be an examination of Secretary Carter's emotional and social intelligence leadership competencies. Daniel Goleman explains that emotional and social intelligence (ESI) correlates to a person's abilities in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. These four components allow leaders to understand and manage social interactions (both their own and those with others).¹⁵ ESI is the ability to manage emotions effectively in ourselves and in our relationships.¹⁶

13. Department of Defense, *DoD-Wide Changes To Maternity Leave, Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) 16-002*, 5 February 2016, 2.

14. John Antonakis, Anna Cianciolo and Robert Sternberg, *The Nature of Leadership: Chapter 5 Leader Traits And Attributes*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004, 104.

15. Helen Attridge, Academy Of Leadership Coaching and NLP, "Why Leaders Need Emotional and Social Intelligence," Blog, 2018, <http://nlp-leadership-coaching.com/why-leaders-need-emotional-and-social-intelligence> (accessed January 24, 2018).

16. Daniel Goleman, "Emotional and Social Intelligence Leadership Competencies: An Overview," Key Step Media, <https://www.keystepmedia.com/emotional-social-intelligence-leadership-competencies> (accessed January 24, 2018).

Next was to determine if Carter's really understood DoD's organizational culture and if he was capable of motivating and inspiring his staff. Organizational culture includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, as well as the values that guide a member's behavior. Organizational culture is expressed in member's self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations, and is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time and are considered valid.¹⁷ The third review was of Carter's decision making process, which involved framing key strategic questions, making concrete choices; and communicating solutions.¹⁸ Organizational decisions may have wide-ranging consequences, especially if these decisions will touch on policy or processes.¹⁹

This case study reviews these personal traits and characteristics within the organization and the application of leadership principles and processes. Research primarily draws from business journals, Secretary Carter's policy, articles related to and leading up to the policy development and numerous speeches and writings about the Force of the Future and Secretary's Carter initiative, related to the maternity leave policy.

The development of the maternity policy reveals how both personal leadership flaws and limited and uneven application of the processes led to a troublesome maternity leave policy. On the face of it, the policy appears to be a good step towards caring for military mothers and parenting for service members, but in actuality, it could harm the career progression of the service member and have significant effects on unit readiness because it downplays its

17. "What Is Organizational Culture?" Gotham Culture Consulting, <https://gothamculture.com/what-is-organizational-culture-definition/> (accessed January 24, 2018).

18. Albert Enders, Andreas Koing and Jean-Louis Barsoux, "Stop Jumping To Solutions!" *MIT Sloan Management Review*, <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/stop-jumping-to-solutions/>(accessed January 24, 2018).

19. Sally Mounts, "Leadership," Auctus Consulting Group, <http://auctusconsultinggroup.-com/products-and-services/consulting/leadership> (accessed January 24, 2018).

warfighting role and maintaining a level of personnel readiness for combat missions worldwide.

The impending clash between a social policy and overall force readiness leaves the Services with an impossible choice. Twelve weeks of maternity leave will undoubtedly conflict with organizational readiness, a unit's warfighting mission, and career management.

This maternity leave policy, as part of Secretary Carter's "Force of the Future" initiative, appears arbitrary in its application and utility, and has inherent faults that need to be highlighted. Secretary Carter's intent to attract and retain women in service by inducing family-friendly steps fails to address how this leave could affect overall readiness at the lowest levels. This paper is a case study in how a policy is generated and how a well-intentioned leadership initiative results in potentially serious unintended consequences for the organization. Secretary Carter inaccurately defined and misunderstood the problem, resulting in a policy decision that may do more harm to than good for military mothers.

Chapter 2: DoD Maternity Policy Review

Under the amendments of the National Security Act of 1947, service secretaries administer their departments under the authority, control, and direction of the Secretary of Defense.¹ However, service secretaries were allowed to issue guidance to members under their commands as per the exigencies of service. On the subject of leave and liberty, for example, a service secretary could authorize commanders to grant a leave extension or additional convalescent leave beyond the DoD minimum of 30 days. Because there was no mention of a DoD separate category of maternity leave in the leave policies of until 2009, maternity leave was available or granted to servicewomen under the provision of convalescent leave. The 2009 National Defense Authorization Act recognized a special class of maternity convalescent leave allowing a maximum of six weeks. In June 2015, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus spearheaded the maternity leave discussion by announcing that “women in the Navy and Marines were entitled to 18 weeks postpartum maternity leave” as a way to encourage, attract and retain women in service, as well as improve readiness through higher retention rates.² The Army and Air Force, on the other hand, kept the standard six weeks of maternity leave.

In essence, Secretary Mabus was not creating a maternity leave policy, as such, but was considering it as a convalescent leave exceeding 30 days, which was within his delegated powers. It was this discrepancy between service policies that Secretary Carter encountered when he became the Secretary of Defense.

1. U.S. National Security Act, U.S. Statutes at Large, 61 STAT. 496 § (1947).

2. Ray Mabus, "SECNAV Announces New Maternity Leave Policy," *America's Navy*, July 2, 2015, http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=87987, (accessed January 24, 2018).

Changes in the Pregnancy and Maternity Leave from 1970 to 2015

Pregnancy was a matter of concern for the Army Nursing Corps in the 1970s. The military leaders during this time were of the view that female officers with infants or minors, could not handle both their military duties and their family obligations at the same time, and were therefore separated.³ Maternity leave then could only be granted on the recommendation of medical authorities based purely on the needs of the individual. If the command was satisfied that a particular female officer would be able to continue service after childbirth, she was extended a waiver to stay on duty. On the other hand, if the command concluded that an officer was unable to continue with both her service and her parental responsibilities, she was to be discharged from the service.⁴ In 1972, for example, a total of 35 female nurses requested a waiver due to pregnancy, but only 16 were retained in service.⁵

In 1976, the DoD allowed a total of ten weeks of convalescent leave for pregnant officers: four weeks before delivery and six weeks after delivery.⁶ In 1977, another change in the leave policy was relaxed; the start of the four week leave period would be based on the recommendation of medical authorities. Convalescent leave after delivery remained at six weeks without exception.⁷ In 1976, 71 Army nurses were pregnant at the same time, representing an accumulated period of pregnancy leave totaling 623 working days. This policy had an effect on the Army Medical Department's mission. The overall expansion of pregnancy leave created many complaints and lowered the morale of non-pregnant female officers and nurses who had to make up for personnel shortages. In addition, pregnant women still on active duty had numerous

3. Mary T Sarnecky, *A Contemporary History of The U.S. Army Nurse Corps*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 30.

4. Samecky, *A Contemporary History*, 31.

5. *Ibid*, 31.

6. *Ibid.*, 32.

7. *Ibid*, 32.

absences due to hospital appointments, morning sickness, and other health-related issues.⁸

Pregnant women, of course, could not be deployed, and were placed on limited duty. There were also instances where servicewomen were abusing the policy, seeking separation from the service after completing their post-partum leave. In some of these cases there was a perception that pregnancy was being used as an excuse to evade duties and assignments, or to enjoy the privileges of free leave before and after delivery. Some soldiers used convalescent leave to continue their education or other personal interests at the government's expense.⁹

In response, the DoD issued a directive to all the commanders that pregnant service members should be dealt with through normal leadership methods. In 1978, the DoD directed that pregnant females were not to be released from active duty until they had met their initial service obligation. The directive also contained counseling guidance for commanders, which required that pregnant service members reveal their plans for financially supporting a child and whether the individual was physically fit for continued service.¹⁰ In 1985, the DoD issued a leave policy, in which women were granted convalescent leave for up to six weeks after childbirth; that continued in 2009 in the category of a six-week maternity leave.¹¹

The Secretary of Defense Requires Uniformity

In 2015, the Secretary of Defense tasked the Acting Under Secretary of the Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Brad Carson, to study personnel policies.¹² One obvious personnel policy discrepancy was the lack of uniformity of the Services maternity policies. The Navy had

8. Ibid, 31.

9. Ibid, 31.

10. Ibid, 32.

11. Department of Defense, *DoD Leave and Liberty*, Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1327.6, (16 June 2009), 19.

12. Secretary, Department of Defense to Service Secretaries, "Force of the Future, Maintaining Our Competitive Edge" in Human Capital memorandum, 18 November 2015.

already extended the maternity leave from six weeks to 18 weeks by a provision of leave policy of 2009, while it remained at six weeks for the other services.¹³ The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 was one model for examination. The FMLA was developed as the federal standard for family leave, including parental leave, in the United States. Passage of the FMLA signaled the first time that the federal government endorsed “work-family policy” through legislation, allowing for twelve weeks of unpaid job protected maternity leave.¹⁴

As more women have joined the military and their roles have expanded, DoD maternity policy was certainly influenced by the Secretary of the Navy’s decision and as well as the 1993 FMLA. Calibrating the maternity leave policy with FMLA, the Defense Secretary adopted the 12 week period for maternity leave but modified it as paid non-chargeable leave.

Chapter three will explore leadership traits and characteristics, decision making principles and the decision making process. This will illustrate how this policy decision was made and the effects on of the policy on DoD as a complex organization.

13. Ray Mabus, "SECNAV Announces New Maternity Leave Policy"

14. Paul Richter and Gebe Martinez, "Clinton Signs Family Leave Bill into Law: Legislation: President Marks First Victory, Promises Mayors Funds For Head Start, Transportation Projects," *Los Angeles Times*, http://articles.latimes.com/1993-02-06/news/mn-1088_1_family-leave (accessed January 24, 2018).

Chapter 3: Executive Leadership

Leadership is a complex phenomenon and can be understood by examining a combination of various attributes, such as cognitive skills, motives, values, personality orientation, problem-solving skills, emotional and social intelligence, and some general and specific expertise. Leaders do not advance to executive levels by chance or luck; they usually have the right combination of experience and leadership traits to move into these higher positions. Undoubtedly some people are born leaders, while others may spend years developing their leadership skills. The quality of an organization, however, cannot rise above the quality of its leadership. The executive leader should be a good navigator who should be able to work efficiently and quickly through complex issues and solve problems, while understanding how decisions can shape and influence the organization. Leaders heading complex organizations should be an advocate for talent and should implement special efforts to attract and retain talent.

While, there are thousands of books, articles, and other literature written about the traits and characteristics of great leaders, the truth is that leaders come in many different variations and there is no one-size-fits-all formula. However, regardless of the leadership styles, most leaders share common traits and attributes that make them capable of doing the job. Traits are defined as the relatively stable and coherent integration of personality characteristics; certain traits are important predictors of leadership.¹ Effective leaders have a number of commendable leadership traits, and these traits are what sets them apart from other leaders and play a significant role in helping them climb up the career ladder.

1. John Antonakis, Anna Cianciolo and Robert Sternberg, "Leader Traits and Attributes" in *The Nature Of Leadership*: (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004), 102.

Leadership Traits

Effective leaders have in common a pattern of personal characteristics that support their ability to rally others toward a shared vision, according to trait leadership theory.² This theory considers traits that are inherited (distal) and those that can be developed over time, (proximal).³ Proximal characteristics are traits that are developed over time, like problem-solving skills and tacit knowledge, or the knowledge required for addressing a given set of conditions in an environment.⁴ Both distal and proximal traits are correlated with leader effectiveness, implying that while leaders can be born they can also be made.⁵ Leadership effectiveness is based on both proximal and distal traits. Proximal behaviors apply directly to the problem at hand as well as those that are not applied directly to a problem, distal behaviors, but are still important to the success of the leader.⁶

Many studies have found a strong link between the performance of leader and leadership potential at senior level with creative problem-solving skills.⁷ Problem-solving is considered to be one the strongest executive leadership predictors and often considered to be the most complex of all intellectual functions that a person can have.⁸ Problem-solving is defined as a higher order cognitive skill and it occurs in an organism if it does not know how to proceed from a given state to achieve a desired goal.⁹ Effective executive leaders have the inherent ability for understanding a problem and generating a solution. There are several types of problems that can

2. "Trait Approach Boundless Management," Courses.Lumenlearning.Com, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-management/chapter/trait-approach> (accessed January 24, 2018).

3. Ibid.

4. Antonakis, Cianciolo, and Sternberg, *Leaders Traits and Attributes*, 102.

5. Ibid., 104.

6. Stephen Zaccaro, "Trait-Based Perspectives Of Leadership," *American Psychologist* 62, no. 9 (2007): 6.

7. Antonakis, Cianciolo, and Sternberg, *Leaders Traits and Attributes*, 110.

8. "How to Solve Problems Like a Leader," Universalclass.Com, <https://www.universalclass.com/articles/business/leadership-skills/how-to-solve-problems-like-a-leader.htm> (accessed January 24, 2018).

9. Ibid.

be exceedingly difficult to solve, requiring both leader and problem solver skills to handle them.¹⁰

Problem-solving skills are associated with the proximal attributes of social skills, allowing a leader to use tacit knowledge.¹¹ Tacit knowledge is knowledge within the individual and originates from action, experience, and involvement in a specific context.¹² Tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in an individual's actions, experiences, and personal interactions, and because it resides within the mind and is hard to transfer.¹³

Distal traits are more dispositional; people are born with these traits, such as cognitive ability, personality, and moral values.¹⁴ A leader's cognitive capacities, personality, motives, and values are necessary, but are very much connected to the proximal traits as well. Distal traits are those that people used on an everyday basis. Charisma and self-confidence are examples of these traits. While these traits can always be worked on, they are what a person usually is comfortable using. One study has found that cognitive ability and decision-making ability are linked.¹⁵

Creative (or divergent) thinking has been rated as the key leadership trait for complex problem-solving in complex organizations.¹⁶ One study that included more than 700 Army officers on 16 leadership attributes found that creative thinking was one of the strongest

10. Charles D. Kerns, "Decisive Problem Solving: A Key Leadership Practice," *Journal Of Management Policy And Practice*, 17, no. 2 (2016): 66.

11. Stephen J. Zaccaro, Michael Mumford, Mary Connelly, Michelle Marks, and Janelle Gilbert, "Assessment of Leader Problem-Solving Capabilities," *The Leadership Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (2000): 42.

12. Zaccaro, Mumford, Connelly, Marks, and Gilbert, "Assessment", 46.

13. Ibid, 47.

14. Ibid, 47.

15. Jeffrey LePine, John Hollenbeck, Daniel Ilgen, and Jennifer Hedlund, "Effects of Individual Differences on The Performance of Hierarchical Decision-Making Teams: Much More Than G," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 82, no. 5 (1997): 58.

16. Michael D. Mumford, Stephen J. Zaccaro, Julie F. Johnson, Marisa Diana, Janelle A. Gilbert, and K. Victoria Threlfall, "Patterns Of Leader Characteristics," *The Leadership Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (2000): 116.

indicators and predictors of leadership achievement. There is strong evidence that suggests that metacognitive skills and cognitive complexity influence performance in the leadership process.¹⁷ Cognitive complexity plays a pivotal role in leadership performance for complex problem-solving in complex domains.¹⁸

Some leaders might have greater strengths in proximal attributes, while others may have stronger distal attributes. Effective executive leaders respond to problems and display an eagerness and desire to help others. These leaders create synergy by investing their efforts in the making others successful. Leadership attributes are both distal and proximal, which jointly influence executive leadership decision making. Both distal and proximal character traits are correlated with leader effectiveness, implying that while leaders can be born, they are also developed. The success of a leader hinges on strong leadership traits based on strong leadership attributes.¹⁹

Three leadership principles that executives of complex organizations should have are: emotional and social intelligence, executives must understand the organizational culture, and have the ability to inspire, and motivate their team. Emotional and Social Intelligence (ESI) correlates to a person's abilities in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.²⁰ ESI is the capacity of an individual to relate personal feelings to those of others and to manage emotions effectively. The four components of ESI (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) allows executive leaders to understand and manage social interactions and to better connect with their staff.²¹

17. Stephen J. Zaccaro and Zachary N.J. Horn, "Leadership Theory and Practice: Fostering an Effective Symbiosis," *The Leadership Quarterly* 14, no. 6 (2003): 810.

18. Antonakis, Cianciolo, and Sternberg, *Leaders Traits and Attributes*, 106.

19. *Ibid*, 108.

20. Helen Attridge, "Academy Of Leadership."

21. Daniel Goleman, "Emotional and Social Intelligence Leadership Competencies."

Leaders who are competent in self-awareness are aware of their own feelings and understand the impact they have on those around them.²² Self-management refers to the ability to remain in control of negative or impulsive feelings or behaviors. A person who masters self-management remains resolute in a stressful situation and leaders are clear and focused on accomplishing the task at hand. Social awareness is the ability to show empathy towards another person's emotions. An individual with social awareness is able to detect another's emotions and understand how they will influence a situation or concern. The fourth is relationship management, which is a key competency for leaders because it allows them to guide or handle another's emotions. Leaders who have a grasp on their emotions are seen as strong in both teamwork and conflict management. The leader's mood and how he or she influences the moods of others plays a significant role in any organization. Understanding the role of emotions in the workplace sets the best leaders apart from the rest, not just in tangibles such as better business results and the retention of talent, but also in the all-important intangibles, such as higher morale, motivation, and commitment. Research in the field of emotion has yielded keen insights into how the best leaders have found effective ways to understand and improve the way they handle their own and other people's emotions.²³

Organizational culture is everything in a complex organization and matters a great deal in determining the attitude and behavior in the organization. Organizational culture includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, as well as the values that guide member behavior, and is expressed in member self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations and is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and

22. Ibid.

23. Daniel Goleman, Richard E Boyatzis and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership*, (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 3.

unwritten rules that have been developed over time and are considered valid.²⁴ The core values of an organization begin with its leadership, which will then evolve to a leadership style.²⁵

Subordinates could be led by these values and the behavior of leaders, such that the behavior of both parties should become increasingly in line. When strong unified behavior, values, and beliefs have been developed, a strong organizational culture emerges. Leaders have to appreciate their function in maintaining an organization's culture. This, in return, ensures consistent behavior between members of the organization, reducing conflicts and creating a healthy working environment for employees.²⁶ Changes in line with the organizational culture are adopted more easily than those having conflicts with cultural values in an organization.²⁷ Effective executive leaders must always lead with the organizational culture in mind before implementing new policies. Those leaders who make transformations without keeping the cultural aspect in view, could fail drastically, therefore, changes should be rational, but should also have emotional appeal at the same time.²⁸ Additionally, an executive leader should be able to address the cultural issues before devising any changes and implementing them.

Motivating and inspiring is very important in the success of every organizational. Motivating is about moving people to act in a way that achieves specific goals in an organization. Inspiring is the ability to infuse energy, passion, commitment, and connection to

24. "What Is Organizational Culture?" Gotham Culture Consulting, <https://gothamculture.com/what-is-organizational-culture-definition/> (accessed January 24, 2018).

25. Yafang Tsai, "Relationship Between Organizational Culture, Leadership Behavior and Job Satisfaction," *BMC Health Services Research* 11, no. 1 (2011): 3.

26. Christine Kane-Urrabazo, "Management's Role in Shaping Organizational Culture," *Journal of Nursing Management* 14, no. 3 (2006): 190.

27. Carmine Gallo and Richard Branson, "The One Skill Leaders Need to Learn," *Forbes.Com*, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carminegallo/2011/06/29/richard-branson-the-one-skill-leaders-need-to-learn/#75339fa27d6e> (accessed January 24, 2018).

28. Micah Alpern and DeAnne Aguirre, "10 Principles of Leading Change Management," *Strategy + Business*, 2014, <https://www.strategy-business.com/article/00255?gko=9d35b> (accessed January 24, 2018).

an organization's mission and direction is essential in any growing company.²⁹ Leaders that inspire have the ability to guide individuals and groups towards a meaningful vision of excellence, and to bring out the best in others.³⁰ Leaders who have emotional and social intelligence also have the ability to motivate and inspire others and will create positive connections and increase their influence.

Leaders have a vital duty to identify their subordinate's motivational factors and implement them as a culture in the organization. When employees feel their leaders care about their personal happiness a sense of loyalty develops and that helps build employee buy-in to the vision of the company, to set higher goals that have a wave of positive energy behind it. Organizational culture and motivation have received an almost exhaustive attention in research studies.³¹ Motivation is the most powerful emotion that employees bring to work each day. The executive leader's commitment to motivating employees through shared vision and communication is the fundamental skill that great managers bring to the workplace.³²

Emotional and social intelligence, understanding the organizational culture and the ability inspire and motivate people are principles that are all interrelated and important to principles in a complex organization. An executive leader's emotional intelligence and the organization's culture have a strong positive correlation with the motivation of employees and their overall performance.³³

29. Gallo and Branson: The One Skill Leaders Need to Learn.

30. Marissa Levin, "Why Great Leaders (Like Richard Branson) Inspire Instead of Motivate," *Inc.Com*, <https://www.inc.com/marissa-levin/why-great-leaders-like-richard-branson-inspire-instead-of-motivate.html> (accessed January 24, 2018).

31. Thokozani Maseko, "Strong Vs Weak Organizational Culture: Assessing The Impact on Employee Motivation," *Arabian Journal Of Business And Management Review* 6, no. 1 (2017): 1.

32. Susan Heathfield, "Want To Know How Great Managers Motivate Their Employees at Work?" *The Balance Careers*, <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-great-managers-motivate-their-employees-1918772> (accessed January 24, 2018)

33. Thomas Sy, Susanna Tram and Linda A. O'Hara, "Relation of Employee and Manager Emotional Intelligence to Job Satisfaction and Performance," *Journal Of Vocational Behavior* 68, no. 3 (2006): 462.

Executive Decision Making Process

There are a number of principles for making effective decisions to achieve goals. Decisions must be purpose driven and inclusive and, should not affect the morale of employees or reduce the organization's operational efficacy. The executive leader should distribute responsibility for the sharing of ideas and should not discourage others from giving valuable input. The leader should be honest and open in sharing the information and make multiple pathways for problem-solving ideas. At the same time, a good leader should choose those pathways that provide, in case of failure, a safe way out.³⁴ Executives must clarify and determine their objectives, explore possible options, and evaluate which options are aligned with the best interest of the organization and the employees. Decision making at the executive level sets the course of the organization.

Decisions at the executive level must take culture into consideration. The best leaders know instinctively that effective decision-making can help an organization mesh its people and processes with the realities of the world outside the organization, providing the optimal results for customers and stakeholders.³⁵ The executive leader seeks to bring about changes that are beneficial both for the organization and its employees. Leaders do not make decisions in isolation, nor are the implications of their decisions inconsequential. Leaders make decisions with others (either for others, against others, or with others in mind) with the goal of changing that social context, ideally for the better, but often with the risk that their decisions may have negative effects or collateral implications. While leadership is a combination of many things, the

34. Jessica Leitch and Mark Dawson, "10 Principles of Strategic Leadership," *Strategy + Business*, <https://www.strategy-business.com/article/10-Principles-of-Strategic-Leadership?> (accessed January 24, 2018).

35. Sally Mounts, "Leadership," Auctus Consulting Group, <http://auctusconsultinggroup.-com/products-and-services/consulting/leadership> (accessed January 24, 2018).

characterization of particular leaders and their leadership effectiveness is often a reflection of the decisions that they have made or not made.³⁶

Three key principles in the decision-making process are: framing key strategic questions, making concrete choices; and communicating solutions.³⁷ Framing key strategic questions, should answer three questions: the first is what is the basic need (identifying the problem)?³⁸ It is important at this stage to focus on the need that is at the heart of the problem instead of jumping to a solution. Leaders are trained to be solution-finders and they are evaluated on the solutions they proposed, not the questions that they have asked.³⁹ Smart questions define problems well and lead to a clear vision of the issues involved. Leaders need to ask the right questions so that they tackle the right problems. The second question is: what is the desired outcome? Answering this question requires understanding the perspectives of customers and other beneficiaries. The third question is: who stands to benefit and why?⁴⁰ This allows leaders to identify all potential customers and stakeholders.

The next principle of decision making process is making concrete choices, where leaders visualizing options, criteria, and trade-offs of a decision.⁴¹ This step allows leaders to justify the need to solve the problem and evaluate the alignment with the organizations strategy as well as any benefit to the organization.⁴² The third principle of the process is to communicate the decision to key stakeholders. By engaging with others who have different perspectives, decision makers can root out biases and blind spots. Overconfidence bias can ignore obvious information,

36. University of Minnesota, *Principles of Management*, (Minneapolis, 2010), 468.

37. Enders, Konig, and Barsoux, "Stop Jumping to Solutions."

38. Dwayne Spradlin, "Are You Solving the Right Problem?," *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org/2012/09/are-you-solving-the-right-problem> (accessed January 24, 2018).

39. Enders, Konig, and Barsoux, "Stop Jumping to Solutions."

40. Dwayne Spradlin, "Are You Solving the Right Problem?"

41. Enders, Konig, and Barsoux, "Stop Jumping to Solutions."

42. Ibid.

while hindsight bias can cause decision makers to believe in their ability to predict events. Anchoring and framing biases show the importance of the way problems or alternatives are presented in influencing a decision.

Organizational decisions may have wide-ranging consequences, especially if these decisions will touch on policy or processes.⁴³ An executive leader must develop long-term actions to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, the executive leader must bring changes that are beneficial both for the organization and its employees. While an executive leader should be the guardian of enterprise and should be courageous in decision making, a driving change in a complex organization could poses a number of serious, complex problems.⁴⁴

An effective executive leader combines their personal traits and characteristics with executive leadership principles, and the decision making process to make effective decision for a complex organization while, paying attention to culture issues.

43. Sally Mounts, "Leadership."

44. Loren Appelbaum and Matthew Paese, "What Senior Leaders Do: The Nine Roles of Strategic Leadership," *Ddiworld.Com*, <https://www.ddiworld.com/resources/library/white-papers-monographs/what-senior-leaders-do> (accessed January 24, 2018).

Chapter 4: Maternity Policy and the Future Force Initiative

Overview of the Initiative

The 12-week maternity leave policy is part an outcome of the Force of the Future vision of Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, who initiated it in November 2015, just eight months after he was confirmed. The Force of the Future was intended to attract more talent to join the Armed Forces and retain qualified personnel through changing the ways of management.¹ Carter started his tenure in the DoD in 1981 and worked his way up through 11 Defense Secretaries before being confirmed as Defense Secretary in 2015.² Carter was the Deputy Secretary of Defense from 2011 to 2013, serving as DoD's chief operating officer, overseeing the department's annual budget and its over three million civilian and military personnel, steering defense strategy and budget issues through the turmoil of sequester, while seeking to ensure the future of the force and identifying institutional best practices.³ From 2009 to 2011, he served as Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (ATL) with responsibility for DoD's procurement reform and innovation agenda. He led the effort to procure the mine-resistant ambush protected (MRAP) vehicles. Carter earned a doctorate in 1979 in theoretical physics from the University of Oxford, where he also taught from 1977-1979 and was also a Rhodes Scholar.⁴ In addition to his government services, Carter served as a visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, and a lecturer at Stanford's Institute for International Studies, and he served as a Professor of Science and International Affairs and Chair of the International & Global Affairs faculty at Harvard's Kennedy School. Secretary

1. Secretary, Department of Defense to Service Secretaries.

2. Department of Defense, "Ashton B. Carter U.S. Department of Defense Biography View," Defense.Gov, <https://www.defense.gov/About/Biographies/Biography-View/Article/602689/ashton-b-carter> (accessed January 24, 2018).

3. Department of Defense, "Ashton B. Carter."

4. Ibid.

Carter is also the author or co-author of eleven books and more than one hundred articles on physics, technology, national security, and management.⁵

During his swearing-in, Secretary Carter, delivered these remarks regarding his vision:

As the 9/11 generation begins to leave our ranks, we also have the opportunity to attract gifted and idealistic future service members and civil servants, even as we honor the sacrifices of those who came before them. I have learned from my kids and from my students that every generation is different. This new one has no memory of the Cold War and dim memories even of 9/11. But they still are devoted to living lives of service and purpose. We must attract the finest among them. I will remember that on each of the 686 days between now and the end of President Obama's term in office.⁶

Carter clearly intended to reach out to a new generation in order to build a force the future.

Carter sought to attract new talent and recruit highly skilled people for the force in areas like cybersecurity, where DoD is in competition with corporate America.⁷ Carter acknowledged that the DoD is faced with the challenge that less than half of the 21 million Americans aged 17-21 cannot pass the entry exam, and only about a third of that population can meet the physical fitness and character standards to be eligible to join the military.⁸ Significantly, Carter indicated that he had only the remainder of the president's term, a total of 686 days, to accomplish anything in this regard.

In March 2015, Secretary Carter delivered a speech to his high school alma mater in Abington, Pennsylvania, that reiterated his vision for the Force of the Future. He repeated the point that as the 9/11 generation begins to leave the military ranks, the Defense Department must continue to bring in the best and most talented Americans from the next generation, whom he

5. Ibid.

6. Department of Defense, "Message from Secretary Ashton Carter to All Department of Defense Personnel," 2015, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech-View/Article/606645/message-from-secretary-ashton-carter-to-all-department-of-defense-personnel>, (accessed January 24, 2018).

7. Department of Defense, "Secretary Ashton Carter, "Building the 1st Link to the Force of The Future," 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsTranscripts>, (accessed January 24, 2018).

8. Carter, "Building the 1st Link."

described as “gifted and idealistic.” To achieve his goals, Carter noted that, “the Defense Department has to think hard about how to attract, inspire, and excite people like you.”⁹ Carter’s vision of a particular type of individual presupposed certain qualities, attitudes, interests, and characteristics that the DoD of the future would need. This statement about DoD finding the means to attract and excite young people formed the basis for what was to become the Force of the Future policy. Secretary Carter communicated the maternity leave initiative during a Pentagon Press Conference. Publicly announcing one of the most liberal maternity leave policies was a way for DoD to demonstrate its more family-friendly employment opportunities to female recruits. Other initiatives were announced on a road show in Afghanistan, at various military bases, at colleges and universities, and at structured group discussion to gain buy-in that would support the upcoming changes.

Shortly after this speech, he directed the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Brad Carson, to undertake a comprehensive review of the Department’s civilian and military personnel systems to be completed by December 2015.¹⁰ Carter tasked Carson with exploring ways to increase the DoD’s permeability to new people and ideas, both between its own internal components, as well as with the private sector. Carson was to find ways to improve DoD’s ability to attract new talent, recognizing that recruitment of a new generation of young people required new approaches. Carson was also to explore retention incentives needed to compete in a tightening labor market, as well as any current practices that needed adaptations to attract people who take a more transient approach to professional

9. Department of Defense, “Remarks by Secretary Carter on the Force of the Future to Students at Abington High School, Abington, PA.,” 2015, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/607029/>, (accessed January 24, 2018).

10. “Force of the Future, Maintaining Our Competitive Edge.”

advancement. According to Secretary's Carter's implementation memorandum, Mr. Carson and his staff conducted meetings with department, government, and private sector experts.¹¹

The Carson Report

Carson's personnel policy review focused on ways to recruit personnel with an emphasis on talent management and retention. The review occurred from April to August 2015, and included over 150 subject matter experts from Services, as well as scholars and researchers, additionally a research and writing team from the DoD Personnel and Readiness office reviewed more than 100 studies and commission reports related to civilian and military personnel management, talent management, and private sector human resources practices. Mr. Carson then delivered over 80 reform initiatives, some that expanded what the Services were already doing to modernize their personnel practices, but a number of others were new and complex, requiring additional review.¹²

Secretary Carter described these initiatives as "just the beginning of a broad-based effort to maintain the U.S. competitive edge in the military and civilian force."¹³ He then directed the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to oversee a principal-level working group to evaluate the initiatives to see if they would work for the DoD, with an emphasis on supporting overall readiness and maintaining an all-volunteer Joint Force. The first meeting of the implementation group was on October 9, 2015 and with subsequent meetings held twice a week, it worked through the 80 proposals and sub-proposals, in coordination with the three Services and four military departments. The implementation group recommended over 20 reform initiatives related to permeability, recruitment, and retention and

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid

13. Ibid.

on November 18, 2015, Secretary Carter approved 16 initiatives from the group and directed further study to be done on three additional initiatives relating to demographic trends and family issues in military recruiting.¹⁴ Over the next year, Secretary Carter announced his Six Links to the Force of the Future.

The Six Links to Force of the Future

Between November 2015 and November 2016, Secretary Carter presented six links to the Force of the Future Initiative. Carter announced the first link in a memo to all of the Armed Services on November 18, 2015 and highlighted them at a speech given at George Washington University on the same day. “By providing this additional peace of mind for our young service members, Secretary Carter stated, “we provide our force greater confidence about their future, while providing one more tool to make the military a more family-friendly employer; an employer that honors the desire of our men and women to commit themselves completely to their careers, or to serve courageously in combat, while preserving their ability to have children in the future.”¹⁵

The first link was a set of reforms focusing on permeability and ways to connect service members in more structured and career-advancing ways to creative industries and support a culture of innovation. These reforms and initiatives stretched across the technical, administrative, and operational facets of DoD, to connect DoD more thoroughly with industry, as well as establish professional opportunities and partnerships between DoD and private corporations. Some initiatives included a partnership with the innovative technology sector through the stand-up of the Defense Innovation Unit-Experimental which tapped into and leveraged the vibrant venture capital community by improving access of DoD personnel to the

14. Ibid.

15. Carter, “Building 1st Link.”

newest and most innovative information in their fields. Supporting “Lean-In Circles” across the DoD to stimulate new ideas for women in service and establishing an information exchange with the World Economic Forum.¹⁶

The second link to the Force of the Future was called the Strengthening Comprehensive Family Benefits initiatives. This link includes the 12 week maternity leave along with other family oriented initiatives. Secretary Carter stated in a press conference that the second link had the singular focus of strengthening the support DoD provided to military families to improve their quality of life. These reforms also focused on family issues that affected three critical areas for the force of the future: recruiting, retention, and career/talent management. Secretary Carter believed these initiatives would enable the Department to attract, incentivize, and retain the best talent today and in the future while improving overall mission effectiveness, and contributing to the strength and health of teams. In addition to the 12 weeks of maternity leave, the second link expanded paternity and adoption leave, increased the hours of child care centers, modified or established mothers’ rooms at each military installation, allowed service members to remain at a station of choice for family reasons, and last, provided egg and sperm cryopreservation.¹⁷

The third link of the Force of the Future initiative was intended to improve the Defense Officer Personnel Management (DOPMA) officer promotion system to better balance merit and seniority in the promotion system.¹⁸ This initiative required Congress to change the key provisions in the law, some proposed changes included: deferring promotion boards, expanding lateral entry, and granting the military Services the authority to commission a wider segment of

16. Ibid.

17. Ferdinando, "Carter Announces 12 Weeks Paid Maternity Leave."

18. Cheryl Pellerin, "Carter Unveils Next Wave of Force of the Future Initiatives," Department Of Defense, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/795625/carter-unveils-next-wave-of-force-of-the-future-initiatives/> (accessed January 24, 2018).

specialized outside talent with unique skills who could meet military standards, to help fill critical gaps in the force.¹⁹

The fourth link of the Force of the Future involved changes to recruitment and retention of DoD civilians. To encourage and incentivize public service by streamlining the path to DoD employment for the most talented men and women, Secretary Carter proposed three changes to current policies. The first changed on-campus direct hire authority. The second changed two-way talent exchange with the private sector. The third change included paid parental leave for DoD civilians.²⁰

The fifth link of the Force of the Future initiative was a series of a series of efforts aimed to ensure that the U.S. military maintained its ability to attract and retain the people it needed to remain the world's premier fighting force. This would be accomplished by enhancing DoD's geographic and demographic reach, by using the Joint Advertising Marketing Research and Studies program to strengthen outreach efforts to communicate the value of military service to potential recruits and their community at-large, and by expanding partnerships with community groups. The recruiting and retention effort reflected Secretary Carter's interest in improving how the value of military life is communicated to a broader range of audiences across the country. "If we are going to ensure we keep recruiting top talent", Secretary Carter said, "we have to help our fellow citizens get to know today's military, even if they don't have a parent, a neighbor, or a coach who served."²¹

As a part of the Force of the Future initiative, Carter announced the sixth link of the in November, 2016. This initiative was aimed to invigorate ROTC programs, by introducing

19. Cheryl Pellerin, "Carter Unveils Next Wave."

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

legislation designed to improve ROTC student access to financial aid, providing cadets more flexible scholarship payments and stipends, offering more graduate school scholarships, rewarding students for taking more rigorous academic courses, and expanding outreach to potential female and minority cadets in science, math and technology fields.²²

Certainly, Carter was seeking to push change rapidly as possible, looking to, as it appears to change the culture of DoD to fit a corporate model, seeking to be more like a progressive corporation. Although all six of Carter's links in his Force of the Future initiative deserve analysis and critiques, this paper will focus on the second link, strengthening comprehensive family benefits initiative. According to Directive Type Memorandum (DTM 16-002 announced by Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter on February 5, 2016.

Service members, irrespective of Military Department, who become pregnant After March 3, 2016, will be entitled only to the new, 12-week benefit of non-chargeable Maternity Leave. The new 12 week period of maternity leave will start immediately following a birth event or release from hospitalization following a birth event (whichever is later), be continuous, and accrue at a rate of 12-weeks for each birth event.²³

Commanders may not disapprove maternity leave. Maternity Leave will be granted in all cases where eligible Service members apply for it. However, unit commanders and medical providers will continue to grant convalescent leave based on the individual service member's fitness for duty; this policy does not constrict convalescent leave in excess of 12-weeks, where a health professional/medical authority deems that such leave is warranted.²⁴

In accordance with Section 704, Chapter 40, Title 10 United States Code, Defense Secretary is authorized to prescribe regulations of leave.²⁵ Therefore, the Secretary of Defense was empowered to regulate and prescribe sanction of leave to all the under commands of U.S. military. However, Section 521 of National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 withdrew this entitlement of Secretary of Defense, and a new statute has been passed as 10 USC,

22. Ibid.

23. Department of Defense, *DoD-Wide Changes To Maternity Leave*.

24. Ibid.

25. "U.S. National Defense Authorization Act of 2017," Public Law 114-328 § (2016).

704a, which prohibits sanction of any leave to members of the armed forces unless authorized by an Act of Congress.²⁶ Therefore, leave sanctioning authority of Secretary of Defense has been curtailed by this law, and any change in the maternity or parental leave can only be made by an Act of Congress. Now the Secretary of Defense will have to invoke another legislative approval if any change in the grant of leave to armed forces personnel is required.

26. Ibid.

Chapter 5: Critique of Secretary Defense as an Executive Leader and Decision-Maker

Does an analysis of Carter's personal traits, characteristics, decision making principles, and the decision making process reflect the outcome of the 12 weeks maternity leave policy? Has Carter's Force of the Future initiative, especially the maternity leave policy, prepared DoD to prepare for tomorrow's challenges? Secretary Carter became known for his savvy leadership of the largest organization in the world and for ensuring the Pentagon thought "outside its five-sided box."¹ The generous standard of 12 weeks maternity leave was aimed at retaining and attracting talent in the service, the Washington Speaker's Bureau credited Secretary Carter for leading the Pentagon to launch game-changing initiatives and embracing innovative practices to ensure "the Defense Department wins today's fights and prepares for tomorrow's challenges."²

Some of these initiatives were challenged by his staff, as well as members of Congress. Senator John McCain claimed that Carter aimed to make the military "more business-like." "The problem is that the military isn't a business," McCain argued, "lots of things that are good practice in the commercial world are either pointless or actively dangerous in the military."³ "We should not make changes to the military personnel system to meet the needs of individual members," he said, "but changes that will meet the needs of the Services." Very few businesses call on their employees to give up their lives if required to get the job done."⁴ Senator McCain added, that "many of these Force of the Future proposals appear to be solutions in search of a

1. Adam Bryant, "Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter on Leading Through Clarity and Conduct," *NYTimes.Com*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/20/business/secretary-of-defense-ashton-carter-corner-office.html> (accessed January 24, 2018).

2. Washington Speakers Bureau, "Ash Carter - Washington Speakers Bureau," *Washingtonspeakers.com*, <http://www.washingtonspeakers.com/speakers/speaker.cfm?SpeakerID> (accessed January 24, 2018).

3. Fergus Mason, "Is Ash Carter's Force of the Future Plan a Good One?," *US Patriot Tactical Blog*, <https://blog.uspatriottactical.com/is-ash-carters-force-of-the-future-plan-a-good-one> (accessed January 24, 2018).

4. Ibid.

problem,” he continued, “from my perspective, this initiative has been an outrageous waste of official time and resources during a period of severe fiscal constraints.”⁵

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS)

DACOWITS was established in 1951 with a mandate to provide the Secretary of Defense with independent advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to servicewomen in the Armed Forces of the United States.⁶ As a part of the 2017 report, the committee explored how the 12 week maternity leave policy affected individual’s service members and their units. Participants also noted several work-related factors that affected individuals’ leave-related needs and the impact of leave on units.⁷ Participants identified several personal and family factors that affected leave-related needs: however, had the flexibility to fill the gaps. Maternity and parental leave were more difficult to accommodate for units with a high operations tempo. Additionally, taking leave was more challenging for individuals and units preparing to deploy, engaging in training exercises, or during similarly critical times, such as when units embarked on high-priority missions.

Leadership Traits

An effective executive leader combines executive leader principles with distal and proximal traits to make effective decision for the organization by applying decision making processes to make change within an organizational culture. Carter’s experience and education contribute to his solid distal traits, such as cognitive ability, personality and moral values. Carter displayed strong cognitive ability, he was also well liked and respected within DoD, other

5. Ibid.

6. Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services.

7. Ibid.

decision makers in government, and in the academic community. Carter's experience speaks for itself, and there is no doubt he has strong moral values.

While Carter has strong distal traits, his proximal traits are not so strong. The proximal traits involve problem solving skills and tacit knowledge. Carter has displayed good problem solving skills throughout his tenure in the DoD, mainly with his rapid equipment fill of new armored trucks known as Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, or MRAPs, to Iraq and Afghanistan protect combat troops from roadside bombs, along with his Force of the Future initiative.⁸ During his tenure he also opened over 200,000 military occupations that were previously closed to women, and announced that transgender Americans may serve openly in the DoD.

Tacit knowledge is limited to what one learns from direct experience and is most useful in familiar situations. The world constantly presents new challenges, however, and tacit knowledge is not always seen as useful for dealing with new problems or abstraction. Tacit knowledge was applied in the development of the new maternity leave policy but did not accurately reflect the new circumstances of the new policy, nor did his tacit knowledge address the variety of circumstances for each service. The majority of Secretary Carter's experience was in a technical field, where the data he relied on did not have a relative social dimension, so it also limited Carter's ability to understanding the social implications of a particular policy. The Secretary of Defense failed to extract the actual data and true picture of facts about the issue at hand. This is the reason he decided on a twelve week maternity leave policy without factoring in overall readiness of each service. Did Secretary Carter rely too much on his tacit knowledge and

8. Dan Lamothe, "Top Generals James Mattis and John Allen Offer Praise for Ashton Carter," *Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2014/12/05/top-generals-james-mattis-and-john-allen-offer-praise-for-ashton-carter/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8a1dcfa8ea9f (accessed January 24, 2018).

distal traits as he launched the Force of the Future initiatives? This appears to be the case, as he demonstrated in his public speeches confidence that personnel policy indicative of transformations would automatically be easily embraced and implemented within the department.

The actual problem of military mothers and parents was not thoroughly examined. The Secretary of Defense perhaps failed to obtain a real picture of the facts and situation and could not draw a logical conclusion for an effective decision. The decision should have been made using an in-depth problem solving and analysis model in which representation of female service members should have been made mandatory, and they should have been the main stakeholders of this policy. Carter also failed to consider how the most affected group (servicewomen) would react to this change and how their behavior would affect their morale and consequences for the operational efficiency of the organization. Tacit knowledge alone can lead to poor problem framing.

The ability to motivate and inspire others, understand the organizational culture and possessing emotional and social intelligence (ESI) are three important principles of executive leadership in a complex environment. When examining these attributes in Secretary Carter, he has unmistakably demonstrated the ability to motivate and inspire others from his previous leadership roles in DoD. Despite his strong background in the world of technology and defense policy, Carter unequivocally emphasized that his top priority would be to recruit and retain talented young Americans into the Defense Department. In addition to the 12 week maternity leave policy for the Defense Department, Secretary Carter opened all combat positions to women that were previously closed, providing more than 200,000 opportunities for women.

Carter showed solid emotional intelligence, but he missed on social intelligence because he only saw part of the problem. Social intelligence is capacity of a leader to be socially aware and of possible reactions and responses of people in the organization they lead. Social Intelligence is about understanding the environment and having a positive influence. Carter could not recognize the core issues of servicewomen in the military. He was unable to recognize that a fast track change program under the Force of the Future could not serve the purpose of the evolutionary change in a complex organization, such as DoD. Leaders who lack social intelligence approach problems with linear vision, thus only seeing the problem that lies directly in front of them and blocking the possibilities that lie within the problem. His maternity leave policy did not factor in the social needs of the organization and how the policy may influence the units' missions. Leaders should know the expected outcome of the policy, and Carter failed to assess the potential damage to the force. He implemented a decision without seeing the repercussions. Such a long-term decision should have come through a broad spectrum of research that took longer than five months to compile. Additionally, the number of women in each Service should have been considered, along with the average age, ranks, and years in service of those servicewomen that become pregnant. These criteria have a unique effect impact on each Service.

As of July 2017, there were 214,548 women in the DoD, making up 16.13 percent of the entire military departments.⁹ The decision was made in total ignorance of the ground facts without involving social intelligence skills. The significant fact that more than half of the female service members are found in the Air Force and Navy was never raised. The impact on readiness

9. Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, 182.

for these Services would be significant, especially in the specific career fields where more women serve.

The Navy's approach to the parental accommodation policy regarding assignment, temporary duty, and deployment deferrals is particularly important due to the unique nature of the Navy's mission, which necessitates having sailors at sea for significant periods of time. Participation in sea duty, as opposed to shore duty, is also critical to upward progression for most sailors.¹⁰ The Navy's personnel policy for pregnant service members states that "a pregnant sailor may remain onboard a ship until the 20th week of pregnancy." The policy continues, "Service members discovered to be pregnant while underway/deployed should be transferred ashore as soon as possible given the constraints of the ship's location, current mission, next port call, health of the service member and/or unborn child(ren), etc." In application, the policy states that a pregnant service member cannot stay on board past the twentieth week of pregnancy without a waiver and can only remain on the ship until her twentieth week if a medical treatment facility capable of handling obstetrical emergencies is located within six hours of the ship.¹¹

Navy personnel who become pregnant can jeopardize their career progression while the Navy loses the services of a skilled sailor. An article published in 2016 in the *Washington Times* revealed that 16 of 100 women afloat are pregnant and were reassigned from ships to shore duty.¹² One Sailor reported, "A pregnancy takes you out of action for about two years."¹³ She

10. Sandra Jontz, "Navy Transfers Expectant Mothers From Ship to Shore to Finish Tour," *Stars And Stripes*, <http://www.stripes.com/news/navy-transfers-expectantmothers-fom-ship-to-shore-to-finish-tour-1.93246> (accessed January 24, 2018). Sandra Jontz, "Navy Transfers Expectant Mothers."

11. U.S. Navy, Office of the Chief of Navy Personnel, "MILPERSMAN 1306-1704 AVAILABILITY PROCESSING – CLASS "D" - NOMINATIONS," (Millington TN: Department of the Navy, Chief, Navy Personnel, 17 June 2013).

12. Sandra Jontz, "Navy Transfers Expectant Mothers."

13. Ibid.

continued, “In most cases there are no replacements, so everyone else has to work all that much harder and on small ships and submarines you really have a potential crew disaster.”¹⁴

Secretary Carter should have certainly understood the mission, and the effect his new policy ideas would have on the overall organization. The decision was made without consideration of the career fields across DoD, or consideration for overall readiness in units that are have a large population of women filling positions. The decision by Secretary Carter’s shows a lack of social intelligence skills as a leader.

Secretary Carter implemented changes in the Force of the Future initiative that are not beneficial for DoD or military personnel and does not mesh with the organizational culture of DoD and its warfighting mission. He did not lead with the military culture in mind when he approved the twelve week maternity leave policy. Carter failed to address the cultural issues of DoD as a warfighting organization. Military culture differs significantly from civilian cultures and workplace principles possesses a number of unique features where military personnel experience circumstances that differ from many civilians. Unlike civilian personnel, the military’s principal occupation is war fighting. Military service is often viewed as a calling, not simply as a job, or even a career. Only a select few can be expected to answer that call and the military asks much of both those who serve and their families. Military service provides a sense of meaning beyond what any corporate culture is capable of creating. Unlike a corporation, the military focuses on the mission, not profits; the goal is to defend the United States. Although Carter’s intent to recruit and retain personnel who wish to start a family, showed a desire to change he organization’s culture, he ignored the fact that work-life balance in the military will

14. Ibid.

never be the same as the civilian world. The 12 week maternity leave policy simply did not align with the organizational culture of DoD.

Executive Decision Making Process

Three principles in the decision-making process are framing key strategic questions, making concrete choices; and communicate solutions.¹⁵ There are a number of principles for making effective decisions to achieve goals. Carter failed at framing key strategic questions and formulation options and criteria from during his initial tasking to Acting Under Secretary Carson. Carter announced his vision for the Force of the Future as early as his confirmation ceremony. Weeks later, he charged Carson with examining the Department's civilian and military personnel practices and to identify creative and modern ways to upgrade department systems and processes.¹⁶ Certainly, Carter was aware that DoD systems and processes needed upgrading, but it appears that Carter had a pre-determined answer.

Secretary Carter's charge to Carson from the very beginning was to develop solutions to underlying problems that would prevent him from attracting this force of the future. There was no time dedicated to framing the decision, which is an important step in the decision making process and where problems often occur.¹⁷ Carson and his panel were give specific guidelines from Secretary Carter to work as quickly as possible, with a goal of completing their review no later than December 15, 2015.¹⁸ In just five months Carson and his team developed over 80 proposals to present to Secretary Carter. Carson and his team moved quickly from the problem to solutions. Carter and his team were unsuccessful at looking at the bigger problem, that his 12

15. Enders, Konig, and Barsoux, "Stop Jumping to Solutions."

16. Department of Defense, "Message from Secretary Ashton Carter."

17. Phil Jones, "The Six Step Decision Process: How Executive Teams Make Effective Decisions -," *Excitant*, <https://www.excitant.co.uk/decision-process-decision-awareness-making-decision-taking-acting-and-learning> (accessed January 24, 2018).

18. Department of Defense, "Message from Secretary Ashton Carter."

week maternity leave ignored the larger problem frame. Equal rights in maternity and paternity care should have been considered especially when it comes to caring for a child. As Carter himself noted, the number of couples living in dual-earner families had risen significantly and comprised the majority of two-parent families with children.¹⁹

If the goal is to recruit, retain, and promote the most talented women and, increasingly, young millennial men who want to be both dedicated to career and involved at home a better place to start would be to develop policies that recognize the modern reality that both men and women work and have families. One study showed that fathers are much more involved in child care than they were 50 years ago. In 2015, fathers reported spending, on average, seven hours a week on child care, almost triple the time they provided back in 1965.²⁰ This study also found that work-family balance was just as challenging for many working fathers of today as mothers.²¹ By not framing the problem and instead focusing on a solution, Carter demonstrated poor executive decision making and a flawed decision making process. Carter did not examine vital trade-offs that would have helped the executive leader to capture and discuss insights in a structured and integrated way. Only the top tiers of the Services were asked to brief the Acting Under Secretary or others involved in the Implementation group, as a result, personnel mostly affected by the maternity leave policy were not involved in the decision making process and therefore, the recommendations do not go deep into the core issues of personnel in the DoD. The initiative was announced, a directive was published, and Congress voted the changes into law before the Services could examine second and third order effects and provide any true insights.

19. Ibid.

20. Kim Parker and Gretchen Livingston, "7 Facts About American Dads," Pew Research Center, Last modified 2018, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/06/13/fathers-day-facts>, (accessed June 1, 2018).

21. Parker and Livingston, "7 Facts About American Dads."

An effective executive leader combines leadership principles, with distal and proximal traits, to make effective decisions for the organization by applying decision making processes necessary to change an organizational culture, paying attention to culture issues leading with culture in mind, and communicating a rational but also emotional appeal that resonates with the cultures. Many key principles of executive leadership and have been ignored in the announcement of new maternity leave policy. The decision was exclusive of its subjects; it could not serve its purpose. This policy works in the opposite direction of the initial intent of Force of Future. The decision lacks a basic level of wisdom because it was announced as a relaxed package for parenting and motherhood while in military service, but it has potentially made the parenting and motherhood more difficult. The decision is actually too rigid for servicewomen. It does not appear to address the potential serious emotional and psychological impact on the service members who are facing difficulty in coping with family and service obligations at the same time. It can be argued that the maternity leave policy is devoid of all characters of good decision-making ability and poor application leadership principles. The problem has been mis-defined a misunderstood by the Secretary of Defense. Above facts are enough to reveal that the decision is merely based on the shallow briefs of Service chiefs and military commanders and lack objectivity. The change cannot be justified by the decision maker. Therefore, its practicability is at risk. An effective leader always justifies a decision with logic and reason to remove the resistance in change.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Assessment of How Information Was Used in Decision Making

Carter implicitly recognized that his time as Secretary of Defense was limited to 686 days.¹ He made it clear that he sought to attract a post 9/11 generation to serve in the DoD. Carter's guidance to Undersecretary Carson was to review personnel policies for DoD civilians and members of the Armed Services. In addition, he directed Carson to look at innovative ways to attract new talent. The reform initiatives were shaped by Carter at the principal level working group to "maintain a competitive edge." This is interesting in that Carter focuses on competing with the private sector to retain and attract talent, but not maintaining a competitive edge in war fighting. By placing DoD on the same plane as private industry competing for the best and brightest, Carter signaled that DoD personnel policies should look more like current U.S. business personnel policies. The Future of the Force Initiative with its six links was heavily focused on people, especially women, (the first, second, and fifth links) and minorities (the fourth and fifth links). The third link is the only link that seemed to address DoD specific issues related to talent management. The other links represent progressive personnel policy actions very similar to some of the most up-to-date- personnel policies of high-profile corporations. Terms such as, "culture of innovation" found in link one, or "improving quality of life," found in link two, "strengthen outreach," in link five, and "recruiting top talent," in link six, reflects the commercial business profit mindset of a corporate culture.

Although Secretary Carter articulated what his vision was and moved expeditiously to accomplish his goal of building a "top tier institution" in a short amount of time, unfortunately, this revised form of maternity leave has a number of potentially serious repercussions for service

1. Carter, "Force of The Future Reforms in The Pentagon."

members. Secretary Carter believed that the second link to the Force of the Future would offer a comprehensive package of family benefits that would enable the DoD to attract, incentivize, and retain the best talent today and in the future while improving overall mission effectiveness. Two factors influenced any new initiatives related to maternity leave proposed by Carter. The first was the Secretary of the Navy had already implemented an 18-week maternity leave policy for Sailors and Marines. The second was the limited time Carter had in his position.

While Carter established initiatives to attract and retain a new generation of personnel, DoD is not Google or Facebook. The DoD is not a private firm: it is an organization where passion and devotion to the organization and the nation is all important. As an executive leader, Carter lacked social intelligence, had no true appreciation for DoD culture, demonstrated poor tacit knowledge, and failed to frame key strategic questions. As a result, the new maternity policy announced and approved in NDAA 2017 is one of the most problematic decisions ever made for women in the military service. Now women will be forced to choose between career progression and family obligations. The inequality between the parental leave accommodations provided to male and female service members has the potential of hurting the career progression of military mothers. Contributing to unit success and participation in deployments are important factors in both performance appraisals and promotions. Consequently, the disadvantages to service women's careers that are likely to result from such an imbalance in parental accommodations are yet to be revealed.

In chasing the best practices of corporate America, Carter lost sight of what needs to be done to address the very different, very real, needs of military families. It is noteworthy that the maternity leave policy as a result of a number of flaws in social intelligence and executive

decision making, Carter fails to appreciate the organizational culture most likely has brought about exactly the opposite of the intent of the Force of the Future initiative.

This maternity leave policy, as a component of Secretary Carter's Force of the Future, seems discretionary in its application and utility, and will create challenges for military mothers. Secretary Carter's plan to recruit and retain women in the service by initiating family-accommodating programs neglects to address how this leave could impact organizational readiness. This case study demonstrates how a policy is created and how a well-intended initiative brings about conceivably genuine unintended outcomes for the DoD. Secretary Carter mistakenly characterized and misconstrued the issue, resulting in a policy decision that may do more harm to than good for military mothers.

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