

LEADERSHIP

“TO BE OR NOT TO BE”, THAT IS THE QUESTION! WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED ‘LEADERSHIP’? AS AN OLD SOLDIER I HAVE SEEN GOOD LEADERS, SATISFACTORY ONES, AND NOT SO HOT TYPES. I HAVE HAD EXPERIENCES AS A LEADER WITH MIXED RESULTS. MOST LEADERS, IN ANALYSIS, WOULD PROBABLY AGREE. WHAT ABOUT OUR PRESIDENT?

ONE HUNDRED DAYS AND COUNTING. SOME SAY HE SEEMS TO ALMOST WALK ON WATER, OTHERS WOULD SAY HE WILL BE TESTED, AS HE HAS, ON HIS ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL STRATEGY AS WELL AS HIS FIRST BRUSH WITH THE NEVER ENDING WAR NOW CENTERED ALONG THE BORDERS OF AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN. STILL, MANY SEE HIM AS THE CONSUMMATE CAMPAIGNER, ELOQUENT IN VOICE, PROFESSORIAL, AND ONE WHO APPEARS READY TO REACH OUT AND BE EVERYTHING TO EVERYBODY. THERE IS A TENDENCY, PERHAPS IN MANY LEADERS, TO ATTEMPT TOO MUCH, AND BECOME ENCHANTED WITH METHOD AND APPROACH. SUCCESS MAY BE RELATIVE.

GENERAL ALEXANDER VANDEGRIFT COMMANDED THE FIRST MARINE DIVISION AS IT EMBARKED ON THE INVASION OF GUADALCANAL REMINDING HIS MEN ‘THAT GOD FAVORS THE BOLD AND STRONG OF HEART’. HIS WAS A PERSONA OF A SCHOOL TEACHER BOTH IN MANNER AND PHYSIQUE, RATHER THAN A ROUGH, TOUGH MARINE. REVERED BY HIS TROOPS HE WAS RIGHT FOR THE MOMENT.....

PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER AND MS CARTER ARE REMEMBERED FOR THEIR WALK ALONG THE WASHINGTON AVENUES AFTER HIS INAUGURATION...TO ‘REACH OUT’ TO THE COMMON MAN AND WOMAN.....

AS PART OF A GRUELING OVERSEAS VISIT WITH WORLD LEADERS, AN ECONOMIC SUMMIT IN ENGLAND, A MEETING WITH THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND AND HER CONSORT, VISIT WITH THE SAUDI-ARABIAN KING, A TRIP TO TURKEY AND A SPEECH TO ITS PARLIAMENT, THEN A SURPRISE VISIT TO US TROOPS IN IRAQ REVEALED OUR PRESIDENT IN AURA

AND PERHAPS A LITTLE WONDER.....HIGHLIGHTED BY A FAILURE TO CURTSY BY MS OBAMA TO THE QUEEN AND AND AN APPARENT BOWING BY OBAMA TO SAUDI KING..... SOON AFTER ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR HILL AS A RIFLE COMPANY COMMANDER DURING THE KOREAN WAR, IN TOURING MY FRONTAGE I JOINED A YOUNG BLACK SOLDIER IN HIS RATHER LARGE DEFENSIVE POSITION(FOX HOLE)AND HELPED HIM DIG IT...

ALL OF THESE ELEMENTS COULD BE CONSTRUED AS PART OF THE PERSONA AND LEADERSHIP MANTLE OF EACH IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES. VANDEGRIFT'S WORDS WERE LATER USED IN LEADERSHIP CLASSES THROUGHOUT THE ARMED FORCES; CARTER'S DECISION TO WALK RATHER THAN RIDE PROVIDED SOME ACCOLADES BUT SOME MAY HAVE THOUGHT HE WAS GRANDSTANDING; OBAMA'S VISIT SEEM TO BE AN EXERCISE OPENING NEW VISTAS OF THE US IMAGE, OFFERING HOPE AND CHANGE. IT MAY HAVE BEEN ALL SHOW AND GLOW, LITTLE CHANGE. WHAT MAY BE LEFT WAS THE LACK OF RESPECT ON THE ONE HAND, AND KOWTOWING ON THE OTHER; THOUGH CARMICHAEL'S ATTEMPT TO 'IMPRESS THE YOUNG SOLDIER WAS WELL-INTENTIONED, IN RETROSPECT, IT WAS NOT THE PLACE FOR A COMMANDER; HE THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY.'

LEADERSHIP IS A MANY-SPLENDORED THING, OFTEN INFLUENCED BY BIRTH, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE. WE OF THE MILITARY REMIND THAT A COMMANDER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HIS UNIT DOES OR DOES NOT DO. THE CREDIT IS HIS AS WELL AS THE BLAME. TOO, A PRESIDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ACTIONS, RESULT AND CONSEQUENCE. SUCCESS IN THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGE SHIP CAPTAIN IN THE PIRATE EPISODE SHOWED LEADERSHIP. PIRATES LIKE TERRORISTS MUST BE TARGETED.

WE ALL MUST UNDERSTAND AS JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL SAID, "NO MAN CAN PRODUCE GREAT THINGS WHO IS NOT THOROUGHLY SINCERE IN DEALING WITH HIMSELF."

