

ORGANIZATION AND PEOPLE

11 September 1956

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COLONEL ECKLES: General Hollis and Gentlemen: The subject of our lecture this morning is "Organization and People." We are most fortunate in having Mr. William Oncken, Jr., as our speaker. He has had a broad background of experience in the field of personnel management, both in the Armed Forces and in industry. At this time he is the Director of Management Development for the New York Central System.

Bill, it is a real pleasure to welcome you back to this College for your third lecture and to present you to the Class of 1957.

MR. ONCKEN: Good morning. Our topic is "Organization and People." The very title itself implies that there is a difference between organization and people.

Most of us think of organization as something that you do when you are armed with a T-square, a pair of dividers, a large piece of paper, and a flat desk: you draw boxes. Then you connect them with horizontal and vertical lines. In these boxes you write functional statements, and then titles. Then toward the top you paste in the pictures of the "wheels." Finally you hang the product up on the wall to serve notice to all passers-by as to who is entitled to give orders to whom and about what. That is called an organization chart. It sets forth the chain of command.

Chains of command are easy to devise. They are easy to maintain. However, we know that chains of command by themselves accomplish nothing. There must be incumbents in these boxes. But these incumbents can accomplish nothing either unless through them runs a chain of understanding that corresponds to this chain of command. So we have to have two things--a chain of understanding and a chain of command, corresponding to the terms "organization" and "people" in our title.

Now, these two chains can exist independently of each other, as we are all aware. Every one of us, I am sure, has had the unhappy experience of being an element in a chain of command through which no chain of understanding ran whatsoever. About one year of that kind

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of existence will wind you up on a psychiatrist's couch. It's an impossible human existence. But it can occur.

Conversely, it is also possible to have a chain of understanding with no chain of command, as, for example, in an old ladies' sewing circle, where the chain of understanding develops very rapidly, but no chain of command is either desirable or necessary.

I think we will agree, then, that it is really not possible for any group of individuals to get together for any single coordinated purpose unless these two things exist in mutual support of each other-- a chain of command on the one hand and a supporting chain of understanding on the other that integrates the organization from top to bottom and bottom to top. With these two things we are in business.

Well, I think you will agree further that if I happen to be working for you (that puts you in a box and me in a box with a line in the chain of command connecting the two of us), we can become two well-forged links in such a chain of understanding only to the extent that we are speaking the same language.

Now, it is not too difficult to conceive in these days of an organization which is completely staffed by people who do speak different languages. The president might be a Chinaman, while the vice president might be a Finn, and the others a Pole, a Swede, a Canadian, a Frenchman and so on. You could probably staff a modest-sized organization with people who speak exclusively different languages.

if I were one of these and I spoke English and you were my boss and you spoke French, then when you would talk to me in French, I would have no choice but to listen in English. This would result in what we call "snafu," or what the textbook writers call an "administrative deadlock."

You can well imagine that, no matter how well that organization chart had been set out, no matter how well conceived the functional statements might have been, no matter how accurately, soundly, and validly the job descriptions may have been prepared, and no matter how fine a product a management-consulting firm might have made out of an organization and procedures manual, absolutely nothing would be accomplished by an organization of that kind. We would have to be speaking the same language, or abandon the project, as did the builders of the Tower of Babel.

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You may say: "Well, Bill, we don't really have any problem of that kind in the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, because we all speak English. Therefore your lecture is at an end. Thank you very much." But you're not going to get off that easy. I am under contract here to speak for 45 minutes, and we are going to make a lecture out of this thing, come hell or high water.

There are many languages running around in every organization that cause "snafu" or administrative deadlock. I think that you most certainly can recall having gone to work for a certain organization after you had been in a particular MOS or AFSC or Navy designator for a number of years. You had thought you were pretty competent and qualified in your professional specialty. But after you had been with this group of similarly qualified people for nine months, you came home to your wife haggard and said: "Honey, I have been in my MOS (or AFSC or designator) now for so many years; I had felt as if this would be my big real opportunity. But over the last nine months--these guys and I--we just don't talk the same language." And when you say that, what you are really saying is that your wheels are spinning.

So we are going to talk about this question of organization and people primarily from the standpoint of mission accomplishment and not from the standpoint of sweetness and light, human relations, and morale. As a matter of fact, I think that we have all been in organizations in which the morale had been low, sweetness and light had turned sour; but nevertheless we beat the hell out of the mission. I am sure that you have all been in outfits where the morale had been wonderful, sweetness and light had pervaded all the atmosphere of our activities, and nevertheless nothing happened. As a matter of fact, people had probably felt that this high-morale situation was a fine alternative to working.

Well, now, what are some of the languages that run around in an organization that contribute to administrative deadlock? I would like to suggest two of them; and, having done that, I will leave it to you to spin it on out from there as to the many other languages which you have found from your own experience can cause this condition.

The first of these I have on the blackboard on your right. This is the language of production and efficiency, or, as some people call it, the language of management. We have set down the keywords that go with this language, with which you are all familiar--planning,

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organizing, directing, coordinating, controlling. These are the things that my boss looks for when he looks at my job. He expects out of my job better planning, better organizing, better direction, better coordination, and better controlling. I know this because I have done a little research on my last four bosses and I have found that when they talk to me on official matters, they talk to me really about only these five things.

My boss may say to me: "Bill, if we had planned better, we wouldn't be where we are." Or he may say: "Bill, how about getting organized?" Or "Bill, a little improved supervision (direction) would go a long way" or "Bill, they're putting in for overtime over here, sitting on their hands over there. How about getting coordinated?" Or "Bill, you don't even seem to know what's going on in your own organization. How about getting control?"

They are not always that direct. They may beat around the bush. But no matter what my bosses say to me, I can file it in one of these five filing boxes; and, as far as I am concerned, it bores me to death. I've had this treatment now for 15 years. The college professors have been trying to beat it into my skull. It's in all the management textbooks. It's in my job description. I have one at New York Central, believe it or not. It says that Bill Oncken "plans, organizes, directs, coordinates, and controls the New York Central's Management Development Program." That's what it says. As I say, I am bored with this language. It doesn't "send" me. It puts me to sleep.

Now, you may say: "Bill, that's the wrong thing for you to say, for don't you realize that management is the great thing today? Don't you realize that the Armed Forces have discovered management by act of Congress? Don't you realize that we have at our installation, for example, a comptroller who reports for work now with his collar pinned around backward, who sprinkles holy water in the name of these sacred words upon all of the profane operating personnel who don't give a damn about them? Don't you realize that he has got these words hung up on his wall, suitably framed in black, and that he burns candles to them every night before he goes home and snuffs them out in the morning; and that every Friday afternoon he holds a confessional for recalcitrant operating people who desecrate these sacred terms? So therefore, Mr. Bill Oncken, you've got no right to stand up here and deal with these words in so cavalier a fashion."

Well, in self-defense I would like to say that I worship these words and revere them just the same as you do. I happen to be a Presbyterian myself. I am a member of the Board of Elders of our church. I support our church in every way I possibly can. We have a little black book that has the sacred words that go with our particular dogma. I believe in them and I support them. However, when I get to church on Sunday morning and I hear the preacher expounding on one of these concepts, I'm asleep in just about five minutes. Now, I don't mind if I go to sleep, but I want Mrs. Oncken to remain awake, because I think he has a very important message for her. But as far as I am concerned, I've had it.

Well, you may say to me: "Well, Bill, if these things put you to sleep, the things that your boss looks for when he looks at your job, then what on earth do you look for when you look at it?"

Well, the things that I look for I've got on the left-hand blackboard. As I read my job description, I read between the lines and I ask myself: "What are the opportunities in this job for Bill Oncken?" By that I mean that I want to be doing things that I can consider are significant and important.

You may reply and say: "Well, Bill, that's where you and I part company. I happen to be a selfless, faceless, anonymous, devoted, loyal public servant; and I care little whether what I do is of any significance or importance. If the Old Man wants it done I do it."

I would like to suggest to all of you that if the Army, for example, were populated with people who cared little whether what they were doing was of any significance or importance, then the Army as a whole would never do anything of significance or importance. I have many friends in the Air Force who believe that this accurately describes the history of the Army for the past hundred years. So the very fact that I want to be doing things that are significant and important is one of the priceless assets that the New York Central System has in me. The fact that you want that is one of the priceless assets that your particular service has in you. And, more to the point, the fact that your people want it is one of the priceless assets that you have within your own organization.

It is your own responsibility to yourself to encourage in your people this inherent desire to be doing things of significance and importance. But let us make sure that this desire is channeled along mission lines. Otherwise it will get dissipated in the local lodge, in civic

activities, and all the other kinds of activities that may unduly drain their creative energies at the expense of their jobs.

Now, the second thing that I look for in my job is this: I say, "Bill, what kind of recognition is there in this job for you?" That doesn't mean that I am looking for a file folder full of commendations, but it does mean this: that I want my personal dignity and integrity as an individual human being fully recognized in all of my dealings with my boss, my associates, and with the organization for which I work. Or, to put it another way, I will not be used as a doormat. And should I ever have the privilege of working for any of you gentlemen, I am serving notice on you right now that I will not be used as a doormat. The person who is to be the judge as to whether I am being used as a doormat is I, myself, for who could be in a better position to know whether he is being used as a doormat than the doormat itself? The people who are on it give little thought to it.

Thirdly, I want to belong. That doesn't mean that I am a joiner, but it does mean that I want to belong to any organization that I feel is going places and taking its people along with it.

Well, it so happens that the New York Central System is going places. There's only one way we can go. We cannot stay where we are and survive. The possibilities are enormous, however, and it is this fact that gives everyone in the company a feeling of having very bright prospects. The new leadership, in my own opinion, is a very inspiring and capable one.

The fourth thing that I want is security. That word has been used so many times in so many contexts that I'm going to have to define it this morning. You are entitled to your own definition, of course. However, I've got to build a lecture on a few definitions, and so my definition will obtain for the next 30 minutes. After that you may revert back to your own.

My definition of security is this: Security is the ability to plan ahead with confidence.

Now, there are two kinds of security. We have economic security, which is the ability to plan ahead with confidence in your financial affairs. I'm buying a television set, a home, an automobile, and a number of other things on "time." I like to be able to lean back when I go to bed at night and feel that some day these things will most certainly be mine. This is economic security.

It is not the size of my monthly paycheck that spells economic security. It is the inexorable regularity with which what pittance I do get comes in. I can plan ahead with just the same confidence on a predictable \$3,000 a year as I can on a predictable \$30,000. It's only the level on which I plan that is different. The regularity is the same.

The other kind of security is what we like to call emotional security. This is the ability to plan ahead with confidence in your relationships with your boss, with your associates, and with the organization for which you work.

For example, if you happen to be my boss and on important policy matters you blow hot on Monday, cold on Tuesday, lukewarm on Wednesday, sidewise on Thursday, and on Friday you raise hell with me because I'm not following the policy, it would be impossible for me to plan ahead with any degree of confidence in my dealings with you. I would have no emotional security. I would be breeding ulcers. Someone once said that ulcers result not from what you are eating but from what is eating you, and plenty would be eating me in those circumstances.

Now, when I "case" my job as to whether I want to stay in it or not, or "case" another job as to whether I would rather be in it or not, I add these five things--the four on the blackboard, with security in both its aspects. If the sum total meets or exceeds my minimum requirements, I am very much interested in my present job. If my present job fails to meet my minimum requirements, my radar will be up and I will be looking around for something else.

So let's take a look at these for just a moment. Let's do an analysis of these four things from the standpoint of the job that I have and the one that you have.

Now, these five things are not amenable to individual numerical measurement. I can't put down that at the New York Central I have 3.65 elements of "opportunity" available, because I don't regard opportunity as a slide rule-type of measurement. I feel it in my guts. I feel, for example, that coming down here to talk to you is a very great opportunity for me to be doing something that I think is significant and important. I hope you will agree that it has been. But from my standpoint that's the way I feel.

If my boss had told me: "Bill, you can't do it," it would have been a blow at my viscera. My intellect would have been unable to cope with this, because my desire to come down here would defy logical analysis, since I am convinced "I wanna."

Well, my opportunity "feel factor," in a great many things in my New York Central job, I feel right now exceeds my minimum requirement. So the "feel factor" that I get out of the opportunity in my present job we will call "feel factor A"--a qualitative measurement.

It also happens that I feel that I am certainly getting my share of what I want in the way of recognition. I also feel that the New York Central System is a really hot outfit to belong to right now. We'll put down "B" and "C" for these two, respectively.

As far as security is concerned--dollar security--I get a salary. I won't tell you what it is. When I used to make this talk in recent years I was working for the Department of the Army, I put my salary down here, because, as we all know, it was public property. But now we will call it "D."

Then we have the emotional security factor. That's "E."

I'm here to tell you that right now each one of these "feel factors" meets, and in fact exceeds, my minimum requirements. So when I look at my present job, it is entirely obvious that the sum total will meet my minimum requirements, the sum total being "F."

Well, some of you may balk and say: "Well, Bill, you can't add those things, because they do not have a common denominator. One of those things is money. The others are different things. You can't add potatoes, radios, and cars. They do not have a common denominator." But I would like to suggest that since I look for all of these things in my job, and since I get a kick out of these things when I do get them, and it hits me in my guts when I don't, it is clear that in reality, I do work for all of them. Thus even my paycheck is an emotional matter. When I saw my first paycheck after having reported for work for the Central I got a real charge in my viscera long before I spent a nickel of it. So, you see, the intangible factor is very important.

So we will call the "feel factor F," then, my total income, if you will agree that they are things of the same kind. And, in order that we don't confuse this with the usual concept of income--money income--we will call it "psychic income," which is derived from the Greek word "psyche," meaning "spirit or soul."

Now, some of you may say: "Well, Bill, all you are really saying is that money isn't everything; that people work for other things besides money. But I happen to be an old man, Bill. You are a young fellow. You haven't been around. In my experience it's the old green stuff that finally gets a man off his nether end and gets him upping. Don't you mislead these people."

Well, I could say in a very few minutes--I just looked at that clock. I have to be through at 9:30 come hell or high water--I could say this right now: that I could get a job swabbing floors. I qualify, because I've been married now for 15 years. Mrs. Oncken knows nothing about floor swabbing, but she knows a good deal about "directing" and "coordinating."

Well, what would I do? Well, I would "case" the job. Frankly, I would see no opportunity in such a job. There are many who do. In our democratic social system all forms of labor have equal dignity, and so I respect a man who sees it. I don't.

Secondly, there would be no recognition. My friends would ask me: "What are you doing now?" I would tell them; and, since they haven't heard about the equal dignity of labor, they are embarrassed for me. So my recognition would be zero.

Then, thirdly, I have no hankering to belong to the Floor Swabbers' Union, nor does Mrs. Oncken, to the Floor Swabbers' Ladies Aid Society for Betterment. And consequently there would be no belonging attraction either. Now, that's not because we are social snobs. It's simply because we are in a firmly fixed social rut. We're not going to change our social habits, no matter what.

Skipping the economic security factor, and going down to the emotional security factor, I am told that when floor swabbers get promoted to foreman, the authority goes to their head and they get drunk with power; I would be unable to please the old boy. My emotional security would be zero. So the question now is, Do I want the job?

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Well, I would take it all right provided that my minimum requirement of "F," which is the sum total income from that job, would be no less than what I am getting now. Since "A," "B," "C" and "E" would all be zero, "D" would have to be big enough so that when added to them it would yield an "F"--as big as the "F" I enjoy now. "D" for me would have to be \$75,000 a year after taxes, in order that my psychic income "F" is not reduced by the shift in jobs.

You say: "Well, Bill, how come you have to have that much more just because you are swabbing floors? What has created that sudden additional requirement?"

Well, let's take a flyer at the requirement. I am simply unable to live with a psychic income formula as far out of balance and in as great distortion as this is. So I'm going to use the extra cash to bring these things back into something that I can live with. So I'll take \$25,000 out of that and put a downpayment on a beautiful home in exclusive Westchester County. I live in Westchester County now, but not in the exclusive part. So as people walk by, one will say to the other: "Who just moved in there?" The other fellow says: "Why, don't you read the Sunday supplement? The Onckens, of course." Well, when that happens, brother, you've got recognition. So my recognition factor goes from zero up to "B," which is where I have to have it.

Now, you may say: "Yes, but Bill, you got that off the job." I don't care where I got it. I'm up 16 hours a day. If the job does not furnish it, then I must buy it. I've got to have it.

Again I'll take another \$25,000 and speculate in some very interesting real estate speculation opportunities I know about. A speculation opportunity for less than \$25,000 wouldn't interest me one bit. It's going to take \$25,000 to get my "opportunity feel factor" back up from zero to "A."

Well, that's going to take a lot of money. But that's what the money is for. The job doesn't give it, so I've got to buy it.

Now, under the "emotional security" heading, I will have a cocktail party at my home every Friday evening, and I will invite only New York's most notable people. They should question why a floor swabber is able to do this. But in these days you don't ask questions

like this; you just keep coming. I will invite my floor-swabber boss to come too. When he comes, he'll recognize the importance of remaining on my invitation list. This means he will want to be able to plan ahead with confidence in his dealings with me. He will obviously be smart enough to realize that to accomplish that, he will have to comport himself on the job in such a fashion that I can plan ahead with confidence in my dealings with him. And overnight he will have become a model supervisor and a model leader, exhibiting all of the leadership characteristics and never having had to go to school to learn them. I'll have my emotional security back up from zero to "E."

Then I will join an exclusive country club, become popular among its membership, and finally get appointed chairman of the committee on civic affairs. The mayor will make an utterance about me, which will be quoted in an editorial in the local paper, to this effect: "Bill Oncken, the great pillar of the community." And when you are a pillar of the community, you belong. My "feel factor" for belonging will be back up to "C" where I have to have it.

How much money have I got left in cold cash after spending it in this manner? I will have exactly my present annual salary. What do I do with it? The same things I do with what I get now. A little on the house, a little on the car, a little on clothing, a little on food, a little on the heat and light bills, and a little on everything else-- exactly the same budget I had before.

So, with you who insist that people work primarily for money, I will agree, but only in the cases of those unfortunates whose jobs yield nothing else.

But I have a job at the New York Central now that pays me \$75,000 a year in psychic income, of which I get a modest fraction in cash. The rest comes with the job.

Now, you may say to me: "Well, Bill, what's all this got to do with organization and people?" To answer that question I'll wind up with a story out of my own personal experience. I will make no apology for my frequent references to my own personal experiences, because they're the only kinds I have ever had. If I'd had some other kinds, this would have been a very interesting lecture indeed!

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The Navy discovered electricity in 1939. (I happen to be a Naval Reserve officer.) One of the things that we did with it was, we put public address (PA) systems in our larger ships. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, when our larger ships put to sea, we had a severe problem in the engineroom under battle conditions. The problem was that when all hell was breaking loose topside, morale was bad in the engineroom. Now, nobody in those days really knew what morale was; but whatever it is, they didn't have any of it in the engineroom when all hell was breaking loose topside.

Now, that would not have been an important matter except for one thing. There are occasions when the Old Man on the bridge wants an extra five knots out of the engines for tactical reasons. Now, an extra five knots means extra over and above the rated speed of the engines. On the control panel in the engineroom the manufacturer has stencilled the maximum rated speed of the engines. This is because the contract calls for that kind of capability out of the propulsion machinery. But any capable engineroom crew can milk an extra five or seven knots out of any engine, no matter what it says on the control panel.

But every officer knows that you cannot order that which does not officially exist. If it says on the control panel that the maximum rate is 30 knots, you cannot order 35. So in this particular instance the skipper, of course, knew this. But he had to have an extra five. He recalled what he had learned in Leadership 201 at the Naval Academy when he was a youngster: "You cannot command or order loyalty or devotion--the little bit extra--this is the task of leadership." So he decides to go about it in the nice, sweet, human relations fashion.

So he starts off and he talks to Charlie, the executive officer. He says, "Charlie, how's for an extra five?" Charlie's at the top of a long chain of command, so Charlie knows what to do. He's got an organization chart. He turns around to the engineering officer and says, "The Old Man wants an extra five." The engineering officer turns to the engineering warrant officer and says, "The Old Man wants an extra five." He turns to the chief petty officer, engineering, and says, "The Old Man wants an extra five." He turns to the first-class petty officer and says, "The Old Man wants an extra five." He turns to the second-class petty officer and says, "The Old Man wants an extra five." He turns to the third-class petty officer and says, "The Old Man wants an extra five." And he turns to the striker. The striker has his hand on the lever with which he can get the Old Man the extra five knots if he wants to. But he don't wanna.

So the striker then says to the third-class, "What the hell. Can't you read?" Well, he can read and he knows how to get it; but why should he argue with the striker? It's not his problem. The Old Man started this. Let him fiddle with it.

So he turns to the second-class and says, "Look, man, can't you read?" Well, he can read, he knows what to do, but he ain't going to argue with the guy. It's the Old Man's idea. Let him fiddle with it. So, "Can't you read?" "Can't you read?" comes all the way up the line.

Now, the executive officer can't very well say to the skipper, "Can't you read?" So he says, "Please, sir, have you not read the engine specifications?" The Old Man says, "Yes, sir, I have. But I also happen to know that battleship X, cruiser Y, and aircraft carrier Z have all been able to get an extra five knots. What is so different about us?"

Now, the exec knows what's so different, but he doesn't argue with the Old Man. They've got an action officer down here at the bottom of the totem pole who's supposed to do the staff work. So he says, "What's so different?" It goes all the way down the line until the third-class petty officer says to the striker, "What's so different?"

Well, the striker is ready for that one. He says, "Well, what's so different about us is that we've got boiler scale."

Well, the third-class knows how to lick boiler scale, but he doesn't argue with him. That's the Old Man's problem. So we have "We've got boiler scale" coming up the line until the executive officer says to the Old Man, "We've got boiler scale."

Now, unfortunately, the Old Man came up through the wrong MOS (Navy designator). He is not an ex-engineering officer. So he doesn't know boiler scale from anything else. He happens to be an ex-gunnery officer. He finds himself in the unhappy but familiar position of having become the prisoner of the specialist in the engineroom. He can't put in for a three-weeks course at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, where you find out about boiler scale, because he's got too much rank. He's caught.

Now, you will observe what's been going on here: The Old Man starts something; it goes on down the line; it hits bottom and bounces

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back up again and comes up to the top; it hits the top and goes back down again. People call this "communication up and down the line." That is what it is called. As a matter of fact, textbooks have even been written on how to improve this process!

But all the Old Man is trying to do is to establish a chain of understanding between him and this striker down here; and once he's got that, he won't have to worry about whether "communications" are going to work or not. You don't need a textbook and you don't need a program. It does it by itself. Just as the nervous system naturally works in the human body, communications will work if you have already established that chain of understanding.

Anyhow, the Old Man turns to the exec and says, "What's boiler scale?" Well, he knows, but he's not going to explain; so, "What's boiler scale?" goes all the way down the line. Finally it hits the striker, and the striker says: "What's this? You've been in the Navy for three years and you don't know what boiler scale is?" Well, he knows, but he doesn't argue. "You've been in the Navy and you don't know?" comes all the way up the line and it goes to the exec.

Now, the exec can't say to the captain, "You've been in the Navy for 30 years and you don't know?" So he says: "Sir, 'boiler scale' is a technical term that is fundamental to the engineering profession. You've got to have a degree and a license to really understand what it is. That is what we pay those fellows in the engineroom for--to know what it is. But I can tell you this, sir, as one layman to another, when you've got it, you've got it."

So the Old Man says: "Well, I think that our problem is not that we've got boiler scale. I think that our problem is that we've got bad morale. I want you to 'soup up' the morale in the engineroom." The exec says: "Is that an order?" The captain says: "That's an order." The exec turns around and walks away.

What would you do now? Would you generate some kind of "order of the day?" Would you harangue the troops over the PA system? Would you get a "happy hour" on a different basis than you had before? More shore leave? What would you do?

So he went to the library and looked for a book on morale, under "M." He found one. It was written by an erudite gentlemen with a

Ph. D. and an H₂SO₄. So he checked it out. Chapter one says: "You get good morale if working conditions are good." He thought over that one and said: "That can't be. After the first few rounds are fired, working conditions topside are all shot up. Below decks they are perfect. Nevertheless, morale is consistently high topside, where working conditions are lousy, and below decks, where they are good, morale is bad." So he throws out chapter one.

Chapter two says: "You get good morale if the organization is well lined out, so that everybody knows what everybody else is supposed to do, so you can coordinate and all of that." He says: "We can't depend on that one, because after the first few rounds are fired, the organization topside is shot up; below decks it's intact. Above decks when the organization is shot up, you fight the war on an ad hoc, revolving committee basis, which defies organizational analysis. Nevertheless morale is always high topside, terrible below decks." So he threw out chapter two.

Chapter three says: "You get good morale if you have standards of performance--where you have an appraisal system, where each man not only knows what's expected of him but also how well he's doing." He figured that out and said: "That can't be, because after the first few rounds are fired, the boys topside often do not know whether they're on the target, and if they're on, whether they're hitting what they're on. Below decks the fellows are watching gages and meters. They have green areas, yellow areas, and red areas. When the meters are reading green, you know you're doing all right. When it's on yellow, you want to watch them. When it's on red, things look bad. You know exactly what your appraisal system is. If you watch the meters, you know how you're doing. Nevertheless, morale always is high topside, terrible below decks."

I won't go through all the rest of the chapters. There's one, though, that fascinates me, and that is this: Someone made a study of what the optimum interval should be for coffee breaks for morale purposes, and I think it came out to be two and a half hours. The exec shook his head on that one and said: "It can't be, because topside the boys may be at their battle stations for hours on end without relief; but below decks the fellows have a coffee pot on every steam line. Nevertheless, morale is high topside under battle conditions and terrible below decks."

So he threw the book over the side, went back to the captain, and said: "Sir, I don't think this guy knows what he's talking about. Where do we go from here?" The captain said, "Well, we could talk to the chaplain."

Well, now, when we've got to go to the chaplain to get an extra five knots, we've had it. The chaplain says to the captain: "The trouble is, gentlemen, that you have not been down in the engine room in a long while and talked to the men face to face, man to man, and shoulder to shoulder. You go down and talk to the men. They'll respond." The captain says, "We'll try anything once."

So down the three officers went. The scuttlebutt went ahead of them, and when they arrived, the men were waiting for them. They were lined up on one side of the rail, and the three officers were on the other side of the rail. It looked for all the world like a labor-management bargaining session.

The captain had to say something. He had the leadership responsibility. So he said: "Men, you know what we want--an extra five knots." He said, "You know, I've got a few ideas about that. It seems to me that if we would just plan a little bit better, we could get that." He looked around. No sale.

So he persisted: "Men, don't you think we could be a little bit better organized for--" No, that wasn't it either.

Then, "A little improved supervision would--" No, that wasn't it.

Then, "Don't you think we could get the operation a little better coordinated?" No dice.

Then, "Don't you think we could get a little better control?" No, that wasn't it either.

So he turns to the chaplain. The chaplain picks up the ball and says: "Men, you know why we are here, why we are fighting. We are fighting for home and hearth, for God and country, for womanhood, for the flower of American youth, and for the four freedoms." Well, the men looked at him as if to say: "You can take that back to where you found it."

Now, that doesn't mean that they were not as sensitive to these things as you and I are. But it does mean this: that at this particular juncture, their job descriptions didn't say anything about what they were doing for womanhood, the home, and the hearth. Indeed, the management was trying to get an extra five knots by asking for it in

the language of production and efficiency. The men were obviously listening in the language of motivation. The captain was faced, therefore, with administrative deadlock or "snafu."

He recognized that. So as the three officers went back up the ladder, the captain said to the chaplain: "Chaplain, I have formulated the problem." The chaplain said, "What is it?" The captain says, "People are no damn good." The chaplain says, "Maybe that's correct, but it's not likely to lead us very far." The captain says, "Have you got one that will lead us farther?" The chaplain says: "Well, I think that the problem really is: People who wind up in the engineroom eventually become no damn good, and I'm going to find out why."

When the next battle engagement was over, the chaplain found himself in the messing compartment. The boys were coming down from topside. They were also coming up from below decks. The fellows from topside were engaged in competitive bragging about what they had just accomplished in the recent engagement. The fellows from below decks were saying nothing. They were occupying themselves overly with the intricacies of their bean soup.

Well, as this was going on, the chaplain made a few observations. He recognized that the men from below decks had nothing to say, because they hadn't done anything and had not participated in anything of significance and importance. For example, he observed: "The boys topside have more opportunity to be doing more things with more significance and more importance than they can possibly handle." Below decks, if you think that watching gages and meters and turning dials and pushing switches is doing something of significance or importance, then I want some of you Army and Air Force officers to do some tours of duty with me each year in an engineroom. It ain't there, especially recognition.

When the boys topside make a killing, the Old Man on the bridge looks over his shoulder and winks at the crew that did it. That's all they want. The Old Man knows it was they and not those fellows over there. There's your recognition. Below decks what recognition do you get for just doing what you are being paid for doing anyway? Your paycheck takes care of that. See what I mean? Topside the boys want recognition, and when they get into the messing compartment, they're comparing notes competitively.

There was also no emotional security below decks. The boys below decks could not plan confidently ahead in this life. They didn't know when a torpedo would come into the side or a bomb down the stack. As a matter of fact, watching the engine telegraph, very often under tough battle conditions they were ordered to go full speed ahead and full speed astern and reverse those orders four times in a minute. You know, when the guy on the bridge is doing that, he's lost his marbles. If he's lost his, what's keeping you from losing yours?

Topside the boys have got the blue sky above them. They know what's going on and even if there's only 50 seconds for all hands to plan ahead in this life, at least they can plan ahead for 50 seconds. They all have the same data available to them on an equal basis without discrimination. The boys below decks are being discriminated against from the "data" point of view.

The chaplain, of course, realized that you couldn't solve this problem by raising their pay. Pay wasn't exactly why they joined the Navy in the first place. In the second place, if you did raise it, they couldn't spend it during battle engagements; and that was where the problem was, not what they spent on liberty. So he went to the captain and said: "Sir, I have a suggestion. Let's take a microphone and plug it in up on the bridge. We'll get an enlisted man or an officer who's had sportscasting or newscasting experience and have him give a blow-by-blow description of the next battle engagement as it unfolds-- the position of our ship in the squadron, the squadron in the overall strategy, our progress, capabilities, limitations, and everything else." Top secret information, as a matter of fact.

The captain said, "We'll try anything once." So he did.

If they had had a manpower expert on board, they wouldn't have got away with it, because he would have asked some very searching questions right there. "Is this announcer going to furnish these men anything they need to know to do their work in the engineroom?" "No," the captain would have to say. "Is he going to tell them anything that they would need to know to qualify for advancement in rating?" "No." "Is he going to tell them anything they need to know for improved engineroom operation?" "No." "Is he going to tell them anything they need to know to further interpret their orders?" "No." It's obviously a boondoggle. "What you are going to tell these fellows is top secret information, isn't it?" "Yes." Then the devastating reply would be:

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"Information should be kept where it can be used--strategy and tactics on the bridge, engineering in the engineroom. Keep them separate, because we believe in the division of responsibility." And you can't answer that one.

Fortunately, the Old Man had no manpower-utilization expert on board, no staff advice to assist him. So he got this man up there doing his work at the microphone.

At the end of the next battle engagement the Old Man went to the microphone and said, "Lieutenant, give me that." He gave the men the box score on that engagement. When he was through, he said to the men: "Men, this box score is peanuts compared to what we could do if we could overtake a squadron to the west of us before dawn. But to get there before dawn, we've got to have an extra five knots. That is all."

Well, he got there before dawn, and they clobbered the daylights out of the enemy. When they were through, the Old Man went to the microphone and said: "Here's the box score; and, incidentally, I would like to add that if we hadn't had those extra five knots out of the engineroom, I would have had nothing to say at this time."

The chaplain beat the men to the messing compartment. The boys were coming down from topside, bragging competitively as before. The boys from below decks had their jaws squared and ready. One of them from the engineroom stands up, bangs his coffee mug on the table, and says, "Quiet, quiet, quiet." He got everybody so quiet that all you could hear were the bilge pumps and the engines. He says, "Did you fellows hear what the Old Man said?" No, they didn't hear him. "The Old Man said that if we hadn't given you that extra five knots, you fellows wouldn't have no conversation."

So one of the boys from topside said: "Well, what about that boiler scale you guys have been beefing about?" Someone from below said: "What's that? I can't hear you." He says, "The boiler scale." "Can't hear you." Finally they all rose up as one man from topside and said, "Boiler scale." "Oh," says the guy from below decks, "you see this rating patch we've got here on our sleeves? We got that from the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard Boiler School. That says that the Navy has licked boiler scale for the past 15 years. What are you talking about?"

So what had been a problem--boiler scale--has now become an opportunity to do something of significance and importance. What had

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been a problem--boiler scale--has now become an avenue toward recognition. What had been a problem--boiler scale--has now become an invitation to belong through participation. What had been a problem--boiler scale--now became an avenue toward emotional security, because the boys below decks had access to the same data that the boys topside did, and it wasn't too important how long you had to live just so long as the data on which you made your plans were the same as everybody else had.

So at the start, management tried to get the extra five by using the language that seems to be the only language it knows; but when it began to talk to the men in the language in which they were listening, then we had a chain of understanding, no communications problem, and the extra five were delivered forthwith.

Some of you may say: "Now, Bill, do you mean to tell me that every time I want performance out of my command, I've got to twist what I want around in the language in which the people are listening? If it is that, I have to get a Ph. D. in psychology before I qualify."

I would like to suggest to you that this is not necessary. Whenever we want out of our organization what people understand they are paid to do and are the conditions of their employment, we can order them to do it or fire them. Of course that's a theoretical result, that last part. But they can be ordered and disciplined. Anyone can get compliance.

But no one in this room has ever made a reputation, nor will he make one, by just getting compliance. It's the extra over and above mere compliance that has given you men the reputations that you now have; and it will continue to enhance your reputations in the future as military leaders. You already know how it's done.

So my lecture has told you nothing new. It's just a review of some aspects of the things that you have already done so well in the past and that account for the great success with which you have already carried out your tasks.

Thank you very much.

(12 Dec 1956--250)B/sgh