



General David Petraeus, One of America's Greatest War Captains



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Abstract

General David Petraeus is known to be one of America's greatest war captains but this observation and rating as a leader can vary based on perspective. General Petraeus, from an elite political, non-military, or amongst high military ranks can be observed as an outstanding leader and surely meets many of the qualities of a leader. Based on my personal experience serving under General Petraeus, and the opinions of many service members that have also served under him, he may meet some of the criteria for an outstanding leader but certainly cannot be called a battle captain. Some of my personal observations and the research done in this project, may actually present the case where he can be cataloged as a coward and not a battle-hardened leader. Petraeus has used his ability to communicate and manipulate the media to portray the image of a battle leader when the troops that have served under his command will never agree with that assessment.



Discussion

General David Petraeus is unquestionably one of the greatest Generals in American history. His strategic approach to counterinsurgency is exemplary; Petraeus co-authored the *Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance*, which is the current model for top-level management of insurgencies utilized by military leaders around the world. General Petraeus meets many of the criteria of an outstanding leader. From his ability to deal with cultural differences, hard and soft power, and his skill to provide a clear strategic vision, makes him a high performer in terms of managing war. General Petraeus, however, falls short in a very unique category that is required for a military leader to call himself a leader in battle; Petraeus has never truly led troops into combat. The opinion of the battle-hardened, weathered, ground troop is essential for a leader to be called a battle leader. General David Petraeus is not really a war captain but an expert, high-performing, war administrator.

Conclusions

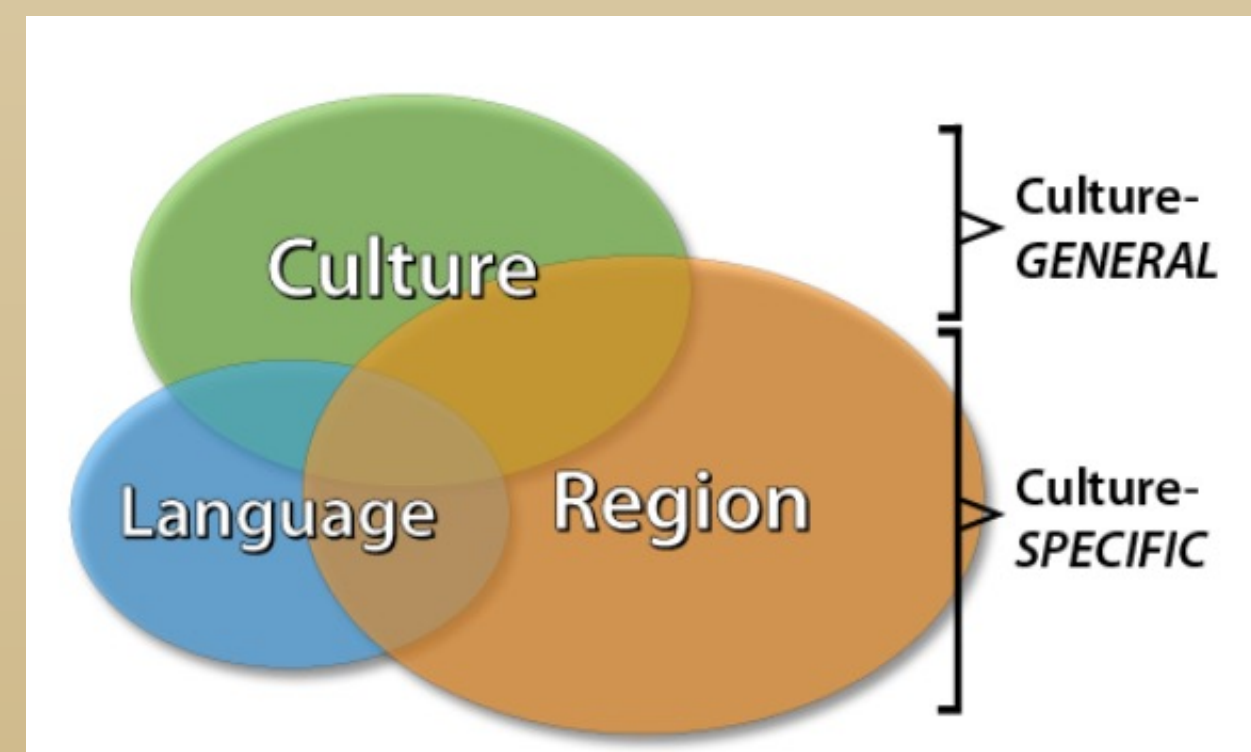
- Leadership assessment varies based on perspective
- War captain vs. war administrator
- Good leaders can come back from major mistakes

Methods

- Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance
- Smart power
- Ability to communicate
- Clear strategic visionary
- Observation

Results

- Strategic Communicator
- Cultural Differences Expert
- Non-Proven Battle Leader
- High-Achiever/High-Performer
- Average Moral Character



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