

The public safety leaders and the study of the future

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How Can the Public Safety Leaders Effectively Undertake the Study of the Future?

One quintessential aspect of the leadership in public safety organizations is that it is intricately connected to the immediate challenges and threats impacting the society at large. So the general mindset of the public safety leaders is primarily oriented towards allocating ideas and resources to issues that are more pressing and immediate. In that context, there is always a possibility that the evolution of leadership models in public safety setups my loose affiliation to the future needs and requirements. However, the thing that needs to be kept in mind is that the future needs do not arise in a vacuum, but do tend to have mild or salient correlations with the issues of the present.

Sadly there are some real life scenarios in the contemporary times, which may extend some relevant insights to the public safety leaders as to how to achieve a balance between the current and future needs. The 9/11 disaster is in itself a glaring example as to how the public safety leaders in the United States failed to interpret the developments taking place in the present, which lead to a leadership crisis in the future (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, 2004). 9/11 was not only a grave intelligence failure, but also a failure on the part of the public safety leaders to arrive at a prognosis of the future threats from the available facts, developments and intelligence inputs (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, 2004).

Going by the topic under consideration, the positive and heartening thing is that in the public safety scenarios, both the success and failure of the leadership models resorted to extend important and vital inputs regarding

the needs and requirements of the present are in a way also indicative of the future needs, provided the involved leadership does not fall a victim to a chronic tunnel vision (Storey, 2004, p. 9). In that context the public safety leaders always need to have their feet firmly fixed in the present, while having a vision that takes the future within its ambit. The current failures and mishaps not only furnish the requisite feedback for immediate improvements, but also yield an inventory as to the possible future challenges and requirements (Avolio, 2005, p. 79). So the public safety leaders should be really good at extrapolating the feedbacks of the present to predict the requirements of the future (Avolio, 2005, p. 79).

There is a dire tendency amongst the public safety leaders to allocate a greater proportion of the resources and manpower to the immediate scenarios. So the preparation for the future also needs ample commitment and dedication on the part of the top leadership (Fairholm, 1994, p. 15). It is only then that the lower level followers start putting the present and the future in a pragmatic and efficiency oriented perspective (Fairholm, 1994, p. 15).

To have a grip over the possible needs and capacities of the leaders of the future, the public safety leaders do require an ability to interpret the immediate trends. In the absence of this ability, the future is nothing but an unpredictable pie in the sky. The need is to grasp the connectivity that always exists between the present and the future.

References

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