General Tony Zinni (Retired) *Leading the Charge*: August 13, 2009
Union League Club of Chicago

Summary by Eric S. Morse

It used to be that a young person could go to school, graduate, get a job and move up the ranks of an organization—all the while developing into a successful leader. The training method involved a simple input-output formula: creating a good man creates a good leader. This past paradigm no longer holds. Good people do not always make effective leaders. Today, public and private sector leadership polls show a dearth of leadership skills—no leader has achieved higher than a 50% approval rating. The question is: What is causing the lack of leadership today, and how can we train leaders for tomorrow?

General Tony Zinni addressed this issue in his new book, *Leading the Charge: Leadership Lessons from the Battlefield to the Boardroom*. The world of business and politics has changed since the end of the Cold War. Technology grew exponentially, globalization merged far off networks, and information became more readily available than ever. The problem is that leadership training did not change with the times. America's outdated leadership framework fails to take into account the new realities of the modern world; thus, public and private sector leaders cannot effectively lead their organizations at the highest levels of performance. New methods of teaching leadership and new understanding about how leaders should operate in a modern world are needed to develop America's future leaders.

General Zinni highlighted a number of principles that he believes contribute to creating effective leaders for the future. The qualities of effective, modern leaders include:

- Leaders understand the new world, including all of the diversity and technology that comes with it.
- Leaders are fully aware of who they are, including a deep, personal knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders have a strong sense of values and personal ethics.
- Leaders have a strong analytical ability. In an era of high technology and rapid information transfer, leaders must be able to quickly process the inundation and process the information in a quick, intuitive fashion.
- Leaders have the ability to think strategically. Too often, leaders are in a mode of constant communication but rarely take the time to think about planning for the long-term.
- Leaders fully understand their organization's complex processes and structures, and hold the ability to shape these to their will.
- Leaders think about the world and environment that they want to operate in, and then go about creating that environment.
- Leaders are great communicators.
- Leaders adapt quickly to the changing environments around them without becoming overly burdened with information overload.
- Leaders develop different and stronger decision-making skills than their predecessors.

- Leaders have the ability to make decisions during crisis and emergencies.

Whether these qualities are taught in our schools, our colleges, our military branches, or in our corporate offices, the effective education of our future leaders is vital if America is to remain competitive and secure in a rapidly changing world.