Management and Organizational Behavior

The case for this module calls for you to look at an exercise in "leadership" and then analyze it in terms of its context, its execution, and its consequences.  As we noted in the introduction to the module, leadership is not often considered to be a political problem, but it certainly makes sense to consider it in this context, since the political environment of the organization constitutes the critical background within which any leader's efforts must be conducted. Leadership is a political effort, and mobilizes in its service all the formal and informal resources available to those charged with it. For elaboration on these observations, please see:

Leadership and organizational politics. ALAGSE. <http://www.alagse.com/leadership/l3.php>

In order to place this within a larger political context, however, is most useful for you to start by reviewing this excellent summary of issues in organizational politics:

Wilf Ratzburg, Defining Organizational Politics [Obnotes.Htm: available at [http://web.archive.org/web/20080216010425/http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/1650/htmlpolitc01.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20080216010425/http%3A/www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/1650/htmlpolitc01.html)

You're going to need access to some of the vocabulary of leadership analysis, both for this case and for your future work.  The following is an adequate general summary, cast in a largely nonacademic frame but still reflecting the academic analysis of leadership. (The optional readings and supplementary material contain considerable additional supporting material on leadership analysis if you would like to dig further into this aspect of the case.)

Clark, D. (N.D.) Leadership Styles. <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leadstl.html>

Ronald Clement has written an interesting analysis of the relationship between power, leadership, and our new friend --- organizational culture. He describes three companies that all faced a need to change, and had to mobilize various kinds of power and leadership to do so.

Clement, RW (1994) Culture, leadership, and power: the keys to organizational change.  Business Horizons.  Retrieved May 16, 2010, from <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1038/is_n1_v37/ai_14922916/>

**Case Assignment**

Read the Clement article in light of the material that you have read on organizational leadership and politics, supplemented if you wish with material from the optional readings and perhaps the supplementary background as well, and even other outside reading you might find by yourself to be useful.  Then write a short paper describing ***how the exercise of leadership depends on undersanding the politics of the organization.***

**Case Assignment Expectations**

Your paper should be short (4-6 pages, not including cover sheet and references) and to the point.  You are expected to deal with these issues in an integrated fashion, rather than treating them as a series of individual questions to be answered one by one and left at that.   To help guide your thinking, however, you will need to consider issues such as:

* Summing up the key lessons of the Clement article in no more than 3-6 sentences.
* To what degree does Clement's analysis distinguish among the three companies?   Are there areas where you see his advice as the same across situations?
* Are there any differences in the time frames or other context features of the situations described that might affect your conclusions about the relationship of politics to leadership??
* Summarize your overall thoughts on the management of power in social relationships, the balance of personal vs. organizational responsibility for doing this management, and the relationship of this management (that is, politics) to leadership (please note -- there's no "one right answer" here, but when you've stated your conclusions, remember that you need to back up your argument with facts).
* What, if anything, does thinking about an "organization as a political system" add to what we have learned by thinking about an "organization as a machine", an "organization as an organism", an "organization as a brain", and an "organization as a culture"?

**You will be particularly assessed on:**

* Your ability to see what the module is all about -- the "big picture" is the political aspects of organizations-- and structure your paper accordingly.
* Your informed commentary and analysis -- this is as important as your summary of the material in the articles -- simply repeating what the articles say does not constitute an adequate paper.
* Your ability to apply the professional language and terminology of the underlying model -- in this case, organizational politics – correctly and helpfully.  **However interesting your paper about leadership, it's not going to be complete unless you also show that you can write about it in political terms.**
* Your ability to apply the language of the political metaphor effectively.
* Your effective and appropriate use of in-text citations to the assigned readings and other source material to support your arguments.