

**IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY
FOR EFFECTIVE COMMAND CLIMATE:
A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE**

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PREFACE

The U.S. Army War College provides an excellent environment for selected military officers and government civilians to reflect and use their career experience to explore a wide range of strategic issues. To assure that the research developed by Army War College students is available to army and Department of Defense leaders, the Strategic Studies Institute publishes selected papers in its Carlisle Papers in Security Strategy Series.

Colonel Steven M. Jones, the author of this Carlisle Paper and member of the Class of 2003, explores the nature of command climate in the U.S. Army, its antecedents, and its consequences. He then proposes strategic remedies relating to unit climate assessment, leader development, performance appraisal, and accountability systems.

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ABSTRACT

Beyond new organizations and technologies, the Army Transformation process and end-state will entail a new cultural mindset. More than ever before, organizational (command) climate will become an increasingly significant prerequisite for unit effectiveness and combat readiness. Today's organizational- and individual-level systems, however, are insufficient to ensure that positive command climate is universally established and sustained across the U.S. Army. While many Army units enjoy positive command climate, too many do not. Several adverse trends in command climate have persisted in the Army for nearly 30 years, perhaps because, in practice, the officer culture emphasizes short-term mission accomplishment more than long-term organizational growth, or because Army systems reinforce individual performance rather than organizational effectiveness. Either emphasis, if true, detracts from combat readiness. Compounding the problem, Army leaders are not taught how to assess or improve command climate nor rewarded when they do so. Army organizations, officers, and soldiers deserve better. Cultural norms and counterproductive evaluation, leader development, and accountability systems are at the root of the U.S. Army's problems regarding organizational (command) climate. Absent a shift in cultural emphasis and adjustment of systems to reinforce the change, command climate will continue to suffer; and unit effectiveness, morale and trust, retention, and commitment will continue to be significantly degraded. This monograph explores the nature of command climate in the U.S. Army, its antecedents, and its consequences. Remedies relating to unit climate assessment, leader development, performance appraisal, and accountability systems are proposed.

IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EFFECTIVE COMMAND CLIMATE: A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

Who, 30 years ago, could have imagined the extraordinary impact that the revolution in technology would have on our lives? Our commercial and military societies have demanded increased speed and effectiveness (and lethality, in the case of the military) from technology, and all expectations have been exceeded. Hardware as ordinary as today's home computer or advanced as an F-16 fighter jet, each with virtually perfect efficiency, extend human potential beyond measure.

In spite of the amazing advances in technology, however, organizations continue to be plagued by ineffectiveness caused by flawed human (group) processes. Notwithstanding, the human dimension, not technology, remains the decisive element in most commercial and military activities. Judgment, creativity, and the synergy of teams remain a distinctly human phenomenon. In the context of warfighting potential, U.S. Army doctrine (Field Manual [FM] 3-0, *Operations*) equates military readiness to the combination of well-trained soldiers, adaptive leaders, and "versatile, agile, and lethal formations."¹ There has always been a clear recognition among Army leaders that absent effective group performance, the U.S. Army can neither deter nor win America's wars.

In the past 30 years, the transformation of the Army into a better trained, highly disciplined, and more capable organization has been dramatic. Investments in technology and in assessing and training quality people have paid off tremendously. Without a doubt, the U.S. Army's transition to an all-volunteer force in the 1970s, the measured progress in racial and gender integration in the 1980s, and the extensive values-inculcation in the 1990s (to name just a few examples) have significantly improved professionalism and warfighting capabilities. That said, Army organizations in 2003 "are not nearly as uniformly effective as they can and must be."² Many of the organizational climate issues that constrained the Army in the 70s, 80s, and 90s continue to plague today's Army. To the extent that organizational climate is causally related to effectiveness, organizational and individual process interventions may prove useful, especially in the context of the dramatic Army Transformation just getting underway.

In spite of all the attention being paid to technology, the success of Army Transformation for the 21st century almost entirely depends upon the adaptability and effectiveness of the human component of Army organizations. As former Secretary of the Army Thomas White stated: "Hardware is the easy part. The hard part is the intellectual and cultural changes and training needed before the hardware shows up."³ The Army Modernization Plan 2002, however, provides little substance concerning the human-centric organizational systems and foundations in command climate that are prerequisites for unit effectiveness.⁴ The White Paper titled "Objective Force in 2015" goes only slightly further in outlining a vision of (rather than the means of producing) "leaders [who] provide a command climate that supports initiative, innovation, and risk-taking"⁵ as a fundamental concept of the transformed Army.

The question that must be addressed by the Army is: How do we achieve the level of organizational effectiveness required for the transformed Army—units that learn and improve continually, and inspire growth, innovation, and risk-taking among members? "Real change takes real change,"⁶ according to former Chief of Staff of the Army General Gordon Sullivan in his book, *Hope is Not a Method*. Although he was referring to the cultural ramifications of the massive Army drawdown in the mid-1990s, General Sullivan just as easily could have been addressing the dilemma now facing the Army as it transforms itself for the 21st century: "The leader must change the critical processes within the organization if he wishes to effect true change. Working upon the margins, in increments, will not effect substantive and enduring transformation."⁷ From what we know about Army Transformation, it will entail a dramatic change in mindset. This change can be expected to result in new ways of thinking that will very much affect soldiers as well as the organizations they are a part of. Consequently, while positive command

climate will increasingly become a prerequisite for the transformed force, it will prevail only if adequately measured and reinforced. Armywide transformation of command climate in organizations demands more focus on leader development and improved accountability mechanisms.

Far from being simply a conceptual consideration, enhancing unit effectiveness is a practical necessity. In the future, as the Army moves away from an individual replacement system toward lengthened command tours and increased tour stability, considerably more emphasis will need to be placed on building effective units which are going to stay together longer. Peaking organizational capabilities solely for a National Training Center rotation or an extended deployment, only to (virtually) disband the unit following the major target event, will not suffice in the future. Vacillating within a *band of excellence* will be increasingly recognized in the future as counterproductive to sustaining effective organizational (command) climate. The Army needs units that grow continuously, not just during peak periods—units that incrementally improve over the long term to build and sustain trust, cohesion, and increased readiness. Army Transformation demands more effective organizations, and more fully adaptive and innovative leaders who exercise battle command by “understand[ing] the distinction between the art and science and integrat[ing] people and technology in a synergistic fashion.”⁸

This paper begins by examining the literature regarding organizational (command) climate and its central role in influencing effectiveness and productivity. Thereafter, existing climate monitoring systems will be assessed, as will several long-standing climate problems that have plagued the Army. The research findings and conclusions of several former Army War College students are also explored, adding valuable insight and depth from seasoned practitioners about this contemporary issue. To get at the roots of current climate problems, systems inadequacies and ramifications will be analyzed. This paper concludes by proposing recommendations at the unit and the individual levels to adjust systems and sustain requisite improvements in organizational climates across the Army.

BACKGROUND

The organizational foundation for achieving group effectiveness in the Army is command climate. In the words of Lieutenant General Walter Ulmer, U.S. Army Ret., “Our major difficulties emerge not from the character flaws of policymakers, but from a lack of adequate conceptual bases for . . . creating and sustaining a proper climate within our commands.”⁹ Said another way, “To be successful, team members must understand each other better, and must be willing to address problems by entertaining different perspectives.”¹⁰ Management must be aware that organizational climate (specifically, perceived rewards and care for subordinates) impacts employee attitudes and behavior.¹¹

Obviously, there is a collective element associated with the *organizational* (or command) climate construct. Anyone with even minimal experience in an organization, however, recognizes that the leader (as an individual) also exercises considerable influence on organizational climate. Organizational, or Unit, Climate Assessment and Individual Leader Assessment (at least those aspects of leader assessment associated with climate) are closely related, but distinctly different. Similarly, unit and individual level leader development processes and interventions differ, but are not mutually exclusive. No analysis nor set of recommendations addressing one aspect but not the other would be complete. Hence, in this paper both the unit level and individual leader level of organizational climate, as well as the interactions between the two, will be examined before recommendations and conclusions are set forth.

The Organizational Impact of Climate.

The association between organizational climate (also referred to as unit climate and command climate interchangeably throughout this paper to accommodate its military application) and effectiveness is

well established in the literature and in practice. Most climate theorists agree that “perceptions (of an organization’s members) significantly influence organizational outcomes and individual behaviors, such as productivity, performance, satisfaction, and personal growth.”¹² A healthy organizational climate enhances development of individual leadership, and successful leadership contributes to the robustness of the organizational climate.¹³ In 1988, Schneider and Reutsh defined organizational-specific climate as being closely related to manager-employee interactions, performance, and effectiveness.¹⁴ Others have defined climate as “a reflection of how organizational members feel about organizational factors such as job performance expectations, fairness of rewards and punishment, flow of communication, and example set by the organization’s leaders.”¹⁵ Organizations exist only if they create interdependency among individuals to produce or accomplish something. Climate is the critical link between the individual and the organization that ultimately shapes the effectiveness of the organizational processes and the quality of the organization’s accomplishments.¹⁶

Climate is a complex construct composed of perceptions about organizational structure, communications, allocation of responsibilities, rewards, risk-taking, warmth and support, performance standards, acknowledgement of conflicts, and identification,¹⁷ demonstrating a strong correlation with job satisfaction ($r=.61$).¹⁸ Taken together, these factors accounted for 53 percent of the variance in measuring climate when examined across several law enforcement organizations.¹⁹ At issue is “the creation and influence of social contexts in organizations.”²⁰ Climate is the unspoken foundation by which team members interact with one another. The organizational factors, their antecedents, and their consequences as derived from an extensive literature review are provided at Figure 1.

The link between quality of climate and unit productivity “has been affirmed in commercial and military settings.”²¹ In a study of 40 companies in two industries, the relationship demonstrated between climate and productivity was very strong ($r=.71$).²² According to *Fortune* magazine, key priorities of the best companies are teamwork, customer focus, fair treatment of employees, initiative, and innovation.²³ “Most admired companies appear to be more successful at breathing life into culture, not just a few lines in the company handbook.”²⁴ In contrast, prevailing priorities and attitudes in average companies are found to be: “minimizing risk, respecting chain of command, supporting the boss, and making budget.”²⁵ The difference between striving for ideals in top quality organizations versus avoiding blame in average companies cannot help affecting an organization’s level of achievement.

Findings in military settings are similar. “The ultimate criterion of any Army unit’s readiness is its performance in combat.”²⁶ In spite of the absence of available data associating climate and effectiveness in combat, there is sufficient generalizable evidence from quasi-combat situations. A study conducted in 2000 at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) revealed moderate and significant relationships ($r=.35$) between platoon climate and how well platoons performed in tactical operations.²⁷ In a 2001 study conducted among nearly 2,000 officers from all three Australian defense services, strong associations were found between organizational climate on one hand, and unit performance, organizational climate, and job satisfaction on the other, as well as a clear difference in climate between high and low quality leaders in highly demanding environments.²⁸ Taken together, these findings illustrate that climate, organizational effectiveness, member satisfaction, and leadership are closely interrelated. As a component of climate, there is clear evidence that “the leadership process is a key contributor to organizational effectiveness and morale.”²⁹

There is additional support for the importance of organizational climate in military settings. In the 1960s, a Navy study of climate demonstrated that ships with functional command climate performed better in tactical exercises.³⁰ More recently, data from 138 junior officers in the 24th Infantry Division in 1999-2000 suggested that command climate was and continues to be the most significant variable in officer retention. The Division’s report concluded, in part, that “the most important part of the climate is to empower junior officers to lead and challenge their soldiers. Commanders who did so retained more junior officers.”³¹ At the organizational level, the evidence is clear that positive

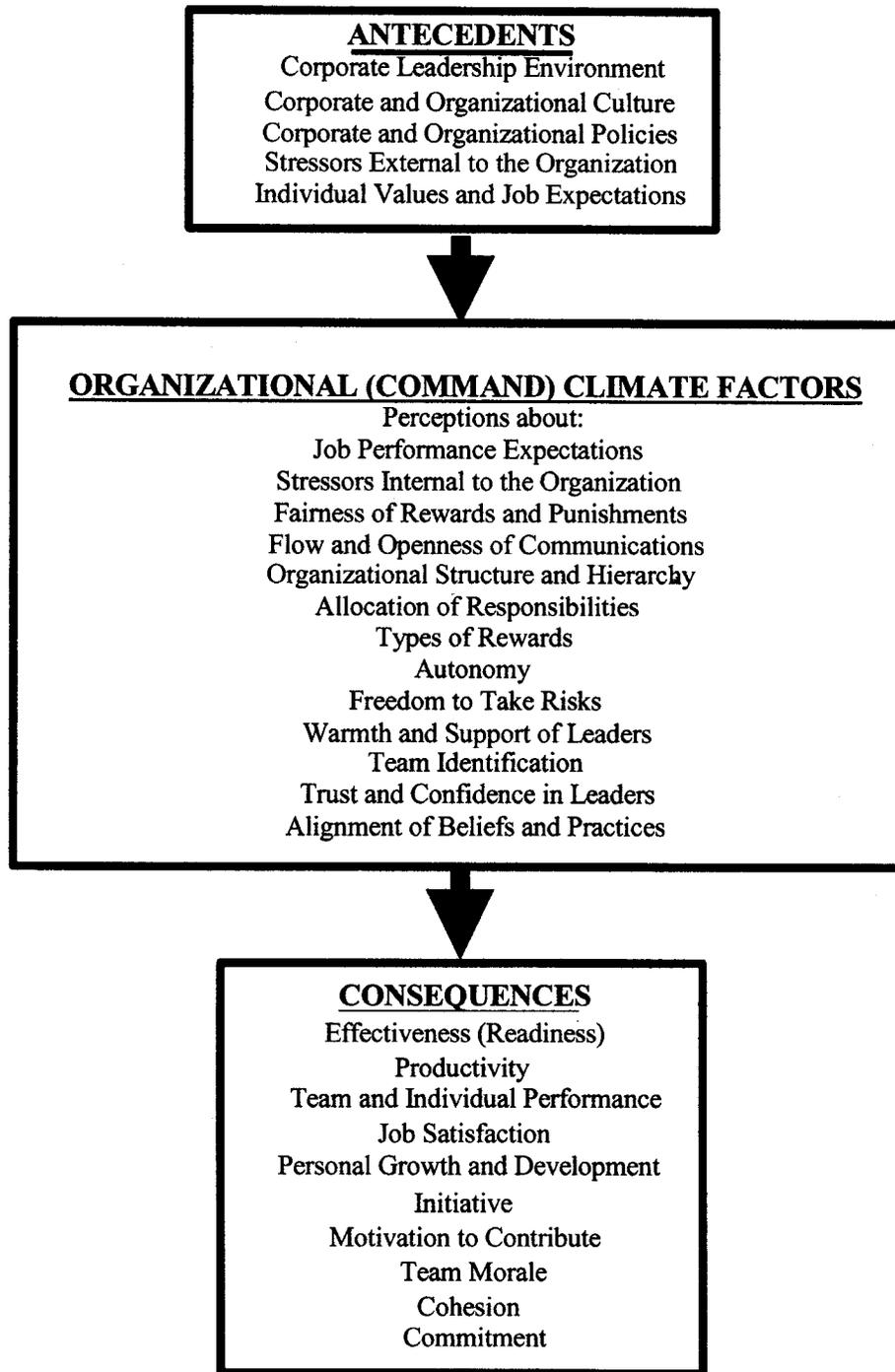


Figure 1. Factors Associated with Organizational Climate.

command climates “act as a magnet that attracts and holds on to spirited employees who are motivated and committed.”³² At the individual level, “the key to the climate is leadership in general, and senior leadership in particular. The impact of senior leaders depends on conscious, knowledgeable efforts to share and nourish a command climate suited to the relevant organizational level.”³³

A Leader's Impact on Climate.

A leader's behaviors relating to the climate factors outlined in Figure 1 directly affect organizational effectiveness.³⁴ To the extent these leader behaviors meet or exceed member needs and expectations, members will be more satisfied. Not surprisingly, the relationship between member satisfaction and the overall performance of the leader has been found to be strong ($r=.69$).³⁵ Undoubtedly, the leader plays an important part in establishing and nourishing the organization's climate. "Climate is a short-term phenomenon created by current leadership. The most important determinant of climate is the behavior of the leaders. A persistently negative climate erodes the trust and confidence of the members and adversely affects the organization's readiness and effectiveness."³⁶ When the professed principles of leaders do not align with their actual practices, trust and confidence are degraded, and overall organizational effectiveness is compromised.

Perceived trustworthiness of the leader is a major part of the command climate. Trust is an essential component for imposing change.³⁷ As was hypothesized in the Joint Readiness Training Center study, trust becomes essential to unit success, particularly in combat, which requires a special spirit and bond among members if they are to be willing to make a self-sacrifice for the benefit of the unit and its mission.³⁸ Under trustworthy leadership, the mission of the organization is pursued collectively so that the combined resources of the people working in the organization are greater than the sum of the individual parts.³⁹

"The highest form of discipline is the willing obedience of subordinates who trust their leaders, understand and believe in the mission's purpose, value the team and their place in it, and have the will to see the mission through."⁴⁰ However, only one-third of the officers and enlisted service members surveyed in the "Military Culture in the 21st century" study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in 1998-1999 agreed with the statement: "In my Service, an atmosphere of trust exists between leaders and their subordinates."⁴¹

In her book, *Toxic Leaders* (1996), Marcia Whicker describes three types of leaders—Trustworthy, Transitional, and Toxic—and the organizational consequences of each.⁴² Trustworthy leaders are good and moral leaders who put the goals of the organization and well-being of their followers first. Transitional leaders are described as self-absorbed and egotistical leaders who are neither uplifting in their long-term impact on others nor purposefully malicious toward them. Instead, Transitional leaders are focused on the approval of others and concerned with their personal role as leaders. Toxic leaders are maladjusted and malcontent, even malicious. These leaders succeed by tearing others down. According to the author, Toxic leaders find glory in turf protection, fighting, and controlling rather than uplifting followers. Transitional and Toxic leaders, especially, are often guilty of ingratiation. The Army needs fewer of these types of leaders. They will act differently around their bosses so they can facilitate positive assessments of their performance and behavior.⁴³

The Interaction of Leader and Organization.

Nick Jans conceptually relates a similar leader dynamic (in terms of individual performance appraisal) to organizational effectiveness in a four-quadrant model (See Figure 2).⁴⁴

In the model, Jans reveals the organizational conundrum that the Army finds itself in today whereby individual performance appraisal is placed ahead of organizational effectiveness. The Army has clearly defined performance indicators and effectively identifies leaders who are good performers. Good performers, however, may not be good leaders. Most soldiers would agree that performers who accomplish the mission at the expense of their people are not good leaders. Similarly, performers who alter their image to gain favor from the boss while demeaning colleagues or subordinates are not good leaders. Good performers who are not good leaders are not likely to build effective organizations,

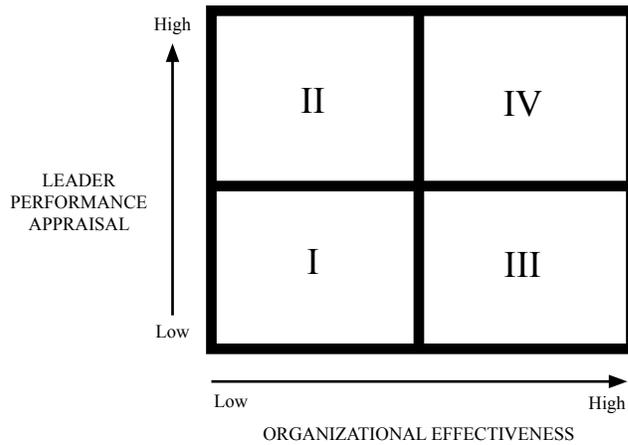


Figure 2. Leadership, Appraisal, and Organizational Effectiveness.

nor inspire the level of unit readiness required for combat. In these instances, good performers are rewarded with positive performance appraisals, but are responsible for creating abysmal organizational climates.

The Quadrant I organization in Jans’s model illustrates the unhealthy combination of a poor individual leader (perhaps a Transitional or Toxic leader) or command team performance with low scores on the organization’s command climate surveys. A Quadrant I organization is not the kind of organization any of us would want to be in, and yet, according to the 2002 Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) Study results, some of these organizations exist in the Army today.⁴⁵ Fortunately, the Army chain of command, in conjunction with other readiness oversight mechanisms, most often is quick to identify and deal with the problems facing Quadrant I organizations.

The current career and performance appraisal system in the Army, however, fosters many organizations which operate in Quadrant II. The leader seems to shine in the context of short-term performance indicators, but the organization secretly suffers from serious shortcomings; the leader is a good performer who is, in fact, actually a poor leader. In this case, effective leadership of the organization is lacking. “Impression management (with superiors) is rewarded, and advancement of an individual (Transitional) leader occurs at the exhaustion of units.”⁴⁶ The leader is often rewarded as a top performer in spite of being responsible for serious organizational problems. Combat readiness in these types of units is highly suspect and fragile. New organizational systems are needed to identify and remedy these conditions. Extensive employment of Command Climate Surveys or feedback about the leader from insiders would readily expose this type of leader and organization, and discourage rather than reward the ineffective, destructive leadership that is at the root of the organization’s problems.

Quadrant III of Jans’s model illustrates units that perform well in spite of poor leadership. Climate is effective because the quality of the leadership within (as opposed to at the top of) the organization outweighs individual leader weakness. In this case, positive command climate is sustained by other leaders within the organization. Quadrant III offers an example of leaders the Army would not want to advance in spite of the organization’s success. At issue for the Army is whether the leader’s rating officials are sufficiently able to differentiate the basis for the organization’s success. Too often, the

Army appraisal and selection systems fail to screen out these weak leaders.

Quadrant IV reflects a combination of strong individual leadership and the right organizational climate—the desired state. Fortunately, such a state often exists in the Army, but it is “frequently in spite of rather than because of the career system.”⁴⁷ Leaders must be held accountable for their performance, not just as individuals but also for the effectiveness of their organizations. Measuring organizational climate, and reinforcing long-term organizational constructs in the individual performance appraisal system, will improve organizational effectiveness.

Developing Climate-Savvy Leaders.

Since the leader is central to effective command climate, improvements in the Leader Development System are necessary. Aside from reviewing the Army regulations prescribing that a climate survey be conducted within 90 days of assuming company-level command, the Officer Education System does little to systematically train today’s Army leaders about how to measure and shape command climate. A common perception among experienced Army officers is that too many leaders are short-term focused and exhibit wanton disregard for what makes an organization effective.⁴⁸ Leadership must be seen as a role rather than a position. Often, a subordinate with unique experience or expertise can significantly benefit the organization if afforded the opportunity to lead. Sharing the leadership role will likely promote rather than detract from a leader’s authority. Leaders need to come down from atop the organizational pyramid.⁴⁹ As an organizational leader, ensuring that subordinate leaders practice what is preached in this regard is key to shaping climate.⁵⁰ The Leader Development System must further emphasize institutional and operational means for shaping organizational climate.

Leader development presumes mid- and long-term commitments to improving leader qualities by merging influences of many factors: military and civil education, self-study, experiences, feedback, reflecting, coaching, and mentoring.⁵¹ According to the Army Modernization Plan 2002, learning organizations will provide standards, tools for assessment, feedback, and self-development that will promote leader development. The “Objective Force” White Paper describes the U.S. Army in 2015 as having “implemented an assessment and feedback process at all levels of leadership that is conducive to experiential learning.”⁵² There is no time to lose—as Brigadier General John Gardner (TRADOC) recently noted—today’s lieutenants in the first Stryker Brigade Combat Team will command battalions in the Objective Force in 2015!⁵³ Ensuring the Leader Development System reinforces rather than detracts from organizational efficiency will be an aspect of the analysis and strategic remedies proposed in this paper.

COMMAND CLIMATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Having defined command climate and confirmed its impact on effectiveness and the central role leaders play in shaping organizational effectiveness, we shall now turn our attention to the manner in which command climate is measured. Lieutenant General Theodore Stroup, U.S. Army Ret., a former Army G-1, compares the process of measuring a leader’s skill and determining a unit’s climate to an iceberg: “It’s easy to see what floats above the water and to miss the true scope of what lies below.”⁵⁴ Measuring climate constructs is difficult. Beyond that, however, is the need to differentiate and address separately unit climate and individual leader assessments.

Unit Climate Assessment.

Recognizing that command climate is central to organizational effectiveness, the Army has long endeavored to identify and employ effective measures. That said, organizational climate is a relatively

modern psychosocial construct. As recently as 1986, commercial industry developed and began using the Organizational Climate Index Survey (OCIS). The OCIS was the earliest attempt to combine a wide array of disassociated climate instruments in use at the time. It focused on job definition and meaningfulness, communications among leaders and workers, management practices (leadership behaviors), and motivation and morale.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, following 4 years of intensive scientific research by the Army Research Institute (ARI), the Army simultaneously developed the "Unit Climate Profile (UCP)," publishing it as the Department of Army (DA) Pamphlet 600-69.⁵⁶ In the Pamphlet, ARI acknowledges that "commanders who have an accurate awareness of the perceptions and views of the soldiers in their units possess a definite leadership advantage."⁵⁷ The UCP's 82 questions measure the leadership's accessibility (in the context of "an open-door policy" to see the commander rather than what is recognized today as engaging in open dialogue), innovation, feedback, risk-taking, and trust. In the UCP, commitment is addressed in terms of retention rather than in the psychological sense of loyalty. Advancement and promotion are referred to in the context of equal opportunity and fairness rather than clarity of expectations, accomplishment, or potential for increased responsibility. While there are three questions about officer and noncommissioned officer leaders in the unit, the single question in the UCP about the commander is: "As a leader, how is your unit commander?"⁵⁸ The 1986 Army Pamphlet 600-69 remains a current Army document.

Leaders, more than their subordinates, are invested in and responsible for factors relating to the organization's climate. It is not surprising to learn that leaders tend to perceive the climate more favorably than it is.⁵⁹ Consequently, there is significant value in gaining feedback and different points of view from others about such a human-centric construct as command climate. Several organizational instruments assessing climate provide insight from multiple perspectives:

The Army "Command Climate Survey (CCS)." This update to the UCP appeared in 1998. In just 10 minutes and 24 questions, this instrument addresses several important perceptual aspects of the organization: teamwork, leader care and example, openness of dialogue between seniors and subordinates, meaningfulness of work, fairness, adequacy of facilities and equipment, training adequacy, social environment, stress, exit interest, sexual harassment, rewards and recognition, mission clarity, and priority.⁶⁰ Additional constructs may be added, on a case by case basis, such as: internal and external tasking predictability, learning opportunities, morale, and extent of mission distractions.

Army Regulation 600-20, dated May 13, 2002, prescribes that the CCS be conducted within 90 days of a leader's assumption of company command (and annually, thereafter) to help assess a variety of climate issues including unit readiness, racial and sexual harassment, leadership, cohesion, and morale.⁶¹ By regulation, results are anonymous and confidential. They are "intended for the company commander only, and are not to be reported up the Chain of Command."⁶²

The ARI and Center for Army Leadership have developed the CCS in both automated and paper/pencil formats; a Commander's Training Module is available to help commanders conduct the survey, interpret the results, develop action plans, and conduct feedback sessions.⁶³ Likewise, the Army G-1 website provides an automated CCS, and additional instruments used in the civilian sector to whoever desires their use.⁶⁴ An analysis of the CCS questions, however, reveals that the CCS does not measure trust, loyalty, commitment, teamwork, professional job satisfaction, or perceived alignment of proclaimed beliefs and actual practices, all of which have been demonstrated to contribute significantly to organizational climate (See Figure 1). About 30 percent of the automated CCS relates to perceptions about racial and gender equality.

According to ARI's internet-based training module, the anonymous and confidential CCS instrument provides "a unique wide-angle view of key factors affecting the unit's state of readiness."⁶⁵ It measures "what soldiers think and believe which affects their behaviors."⁶⁶ To the extent that a leader cares about what his subordinates think and feel, the CCS is a useful tool for gaining insight.

Whether the leader has the motivation and skill to capitalize upon that insight to bring about needed organizational and personal change strikes at the heart of the issue for Army Transformation.

The "Military Equal Opportunity Survey of Climate (MEOSC)." Founded in 1971, the Defense Race Relations Institute (DRRI) (now known as the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, or DEOMI) was conceived to address "the fact that most persons entering the Armed Forces have insufficient knowledge and appreciation of the culture, experience, and sensitivities of other races to function well in a multi-racial environment."⁶⁷ The Military Equal Opportunity Survey of Climate (MEOSC) was developed in 1971 to assist commands in assessing organizational climate, particularly regarding racial matters.

The Army's racial and gender diversity programs are a practical necessity for organizations. Work force harmony, trust, and teamwork are related strongly to organizational factors such as effectiveness and productivity. The MEOSC assesses several workforce factors. Analysis since 1994 reveals moderate and significant correlations between effectiveness on one hand, and satisfaction ($r=.46$) and commitment ($r=.25$) on the other.⁶⁸ Intercorrelations of effectiveness and organizational effect (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, cohesion, and organizational trust) reflect moderate and significant correlations ranging from $r=.47$ to $r=.61$.⁶⁹

The current MEOSC, Version 3.1 developed in 1994, contains 124 questions, takes about 55 minutes to complete, and is not down-loadable from the Internet (although a down-loadable form may be used to order the MEOSC in hard copy form from DEOMI). The MEOSC may be used to comply with the AR 600-20 climate assessment requirements.

The "Ethical Climate Assessment Survey (ECAS)." Another somewhat similar, but rarely employed instrument is the Ethical Climate Assessment Survey (ECAS) described in FM 22-100.⁷⁰ This relatively new instrument focuses on behaviors associated with ethical conduct. The ECAS is a good tool for assessing the degree to which organizational beliefs match organizational practices (and perceptual realities) from an ethical perspective. While the ECAS may be used as a simple and anonymous survey instrument, many leaders have found it useful for facilitating open discussion about expectations of conduct or ethical matters affecting the command. Like the MEOSC, the ECAS has only a limited scope and utility relative to the numerous factors affecting command climate.

Individual Leader Assessment.

Since organizational climate is shaped so strongly by the leader, it is also necessary to examine the measures used for individual performance appraisal. Leadership theorist Bernard Bass has suggested that "history has shown that an officer's ability to create mutual respect, teamwork, and unit cohesion in his unit is critical to successful performance in combat."⁷¹ In a dramatic contrast to the previous definitions of leadership, recently published Army leadership doctrine (FM 22-100) emphasizes the significant limitations of *operating* in the short term at the expense of *improving* for the long term.⁷² "Developing the next generation of leaders is arguably the most important legacy that senior leaders leave to the Army—we talk it, but don't do it."⁷³ Leadership is now defined as having both a mission accomplishment (*operating*) and organizational growth (*improving*) component. Mission accomplishment generally correlates with short-term, easily defined goals and objectives, whereas organizational growth typically entails long-term investment and is difficult to measure. Assessment of leadership effectiveness must combine insights to both *operating* and *improving* skills. Because humans (and commissioned officers are no exception) are conditioned to repeat those behaviors they get rewarded for doing, assessment of leadership effectiveness must align with both the *operating* and *improving* priorities.

The Officer Evaluation Report (OER, DA Form 67-9) is the Army's principal instrument for leader assessment for commissioned officers. The OER assesses an officer's performance and potential to

successfully perform increased responsibilities. The OER mechanism is just one aspect of a broader evaluation and development system. Performance appraisals, annotated on an OER at least annually, have lasting implications for an officer's career and promotion potential. In the U.S. Army, there are no performance-based pay raises or bonuses, and very few awards to recognize effective performance. While most officers recognize the value of serving in a leadership position as sufficient reward in itself, only the OER documents the appraisal of their performance. Notwithstanding the intrinsic rewards enjoyed by leaders, the OER serves as a powerful, extrinsic reward for a leader's performance. At issue is the scope of the dimensions assessed by the OER, and whether the desirable leader behaviors are being systematically reinforced.

The OER is directly associated with the Army's doctrinal constructs defining leadership effectiveness: 21 values, attributes, skills, and actions.⁷⁴ In purely quantitative terms, the OER is biased toward assessing mission accomplishment as opposed to long-term organizational development. Thirteen assessment points address mission (operating): Attributes (Mental, Physical, Emotional), Skills (Conceptual, Interpersonal, Technical, Tactical), and Actions (Communicating, Decision-Making, Motivating, Planning, Executing, Assessing). In contrast, only three assessment points relate to the long-term (improving) development of organizations: Developing (Invests adequate time and effort to develop individual subordinates as leaders); Building (Spends time and resources improving teams, groups, and units; fosters ethical climate); and Learning (Seeks self-improvement and organizational growth; envisioning, adapting, and leading change). Note that quantity of time expended, not quality of performance, is the unit of measure for *Developing* and *Building*. Even in regard to the *Learning dimension*, a demonstrated motivation to improve rather than achieving results is the basis for assessment. Further, narrative assessments on OERs almost exclusively favor mission-accomplishment achievements; anything else would be counter-normative and potentially even harmful to an officer's career. In practical terms, most Army officers perceive that the three assessments related to long-term organizational development receive little, if any, attention from raters relative to the 13 (short-term mission accomplishment) dimensions.⁷⁵ It is likely that the salience of organizationally-related constructs has a culturally-induced, motivational component. Equally likely, it entails an informational component, as well. Chain of command emphasis and tools providing informational insight about organizational factors are needed to increase the attention paid to the organizationally relevant leadership dimensions.

The alarming absence of quality-based standards for developing organizations is inconsistent with the Army's current and future requirements. One senior Army officer recently concluded: "The OER simply does not provide the Army an evaluation of an officer's ability to lead a unit or organization in a way that fosters cohesion, teamwork, and long-term health of the unit."⁷⁶ Nor do the Officer Education and Leader Development systems teach the leader how to measure or shape these constructs: "The Army needs to broaden its understanding of successful leadership from one that focuses almost entirely upon mission accomplishment, to one that includes long-term organizational health of the unit and its personnel alongside of mission accomplishment."⁷⁷

Another issue with the OER is the limited perspectives taken into account when assessing leadership effectiveness. "The picture of the whole person is only obtainable if all perspectives are taken."⁷⁸ Yet, in accord with the current Officer Evaluation System, "only two people make all the key recommendations to higher headquarters concerning the future of our Officer Corps."⁷⁹ Unfortunately, realities conspire to cause the rater to provide input based on distant observation, and the senior rater to view the evaluation as a staffing action.⁸⁰ This situation may have been made even worse by recently imposed requirements for senior raters to manage subordinate appraisals in a normative system whereby the number of above average ratings are constrained to less than 50 percent of the overall number of ratings issued.

Studies show that less than 25 percent of the individual's work or management effectiveness is observed by the leader's boss (rater).⁸¹ One-on-one contact between raters and their subordinate leaders is measurable in just minutes per day, considering the Army's emphasis on decentralized execution, the excessive number of meetings, and a variety of other requirements that remove leaders from being on-site. *Management by walking around* provides raters some indication of what is going on within the subordinate units of their command, but what really happens beyond the rater's direct purview? Few raters would be pleased to know that their subordinate leaders were producing outstanding results at the expense of their people, but recent evidence suggests it is frequently the case: "Too many officers run their units, their people (and sometimes themselves) into the ground in the pursuit of short-term mission success."⁸² Said another way, it is "eas[y] to fool the boss. [Leaders can] fool some of the people, some of the time. The view you get depends on where you sit."⁸³

The Center for Creative Leadership has found that "there is no way to verify the presence or absence of some crucial leader behaviors other than to query the followers."⁸⁴ When assessing command climate, ground-truth within a unit must be informed by input from members of that unit. Most often, feedback from unit members is positive and constructive. Several studies addressing subordinate feedback have concluded that such feedback, in fact, often counters biases that raters exhibit such as "challenging the status quo, independent decisionmaking, and risk-taking [which] are positively rated by subordinates and negatively rated by superiors."⁸⁵ The Army does not have a system whereby subordinates and peers can participate in the growth of senior military leaders. Reflecting on this missed opportunity for developing effective leaders and organizations, one practitioner poignantly remarked that "a wealth of information is passing us by."⁸⁶ It is an inefficiency the Army can ill afford.

Disturbing Trends in Command Climate.

Countless studies of military professionalism, leader development, and the state of the Army culture have been conducted during the past 30 years. Among the most prominent are *The Study of Military Professionalism* and the *Leadership for the 1970s* studies conducted by the Army War College in 1970; the Continental Army Command (CONARC) *Leadership Board* study in 1971 (sampling more than 30,000 officers and soldiers); the *1985 Professional Development of Officers Study*, or PDOS (14,000 company and field-grade Officers; 285 general officers); the 2000 *Army Training and Leader Development Panel: Officer Study Report to the Army* (ATLDP, sampling the views of more than 13,500 officers, enlisted soldiers, and spouses); and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) *American Military Culture in the Twenty-first Century* study in 2000. The 1970 Study of Military Professionalism revealed a number of disturbing and (what have become) long-standing trends in command climate:

The existing climate includes persistent overtones of selfish behavior that places personal success ahead of the good of the Service; looking upward to please superiors instead of looking downward to fulfill legitimate needs of subordinates; pre-occupation with attainment of trivial short-term objectives; incomplete communication between junior and senior officers which leave the senior uninformed and the junior feeling unimportant.⁸⁷

In the words of one respondent at the time, "the Battalion Commander frequently fools the boss, but rarely fools his peers or his subordinates."⁸⁸

Considerable attention has been given to the disturbing state of organizational climate in the Army as revealed by the year 2000 ATLDP findings: Army practices out of balance with beliefs, compromising unit readiness and leader growth;⁸⁹ junior officers not receiving adequate leader development experience;⁹⁰ insufficient opportunities to learn; pervasive micro-management found to be a part of Army culture;⁹¹ and the considerable communications gap between baby boomers and younger

generations, resulting in a dramatic increase in captains leaving the Army.⁹² The ATLDP concluded, in part, that there is a lack of trust between junior and senior officers because of a strong perception by junior leaders that their senior leaders want to be “invulnerable to criticism and therefore use micro-management to block opportunities for subordinates to learn through leadership experiences.”⁹³ Innovation, risk-taking, and leader development, all essential elements of Army Transformation, cannot thrive in such a climate.

Other troubling indications reinforce the ATLDP findings. A recent survey of Command and General Staff Officer Course majors suggests a widespread erosion of trust between junior and senior officers. And if declining captain retention rates were not discouraging enough, there is an unprecedented rate of lieutenant colonels and colonels declining opportunities to command battalions and brigades.⁹⁴ Technology is not driving out many of the Army’s best and brightest; organizational climate is. Assessing and fixing command climate are a strategic imperative.

On the eve of Army Transformation, the present state of the command climate in too many Army units is cause for concern. Perhaps even more troubling, however, are the pervasive trends in the Army’s organizational climate that have remained virtually unchanged since the 1970s: absence of effective dialogue and openness up and down the chain of command; incomplete leader appraisal in the officer evaluation system; frustration about mission priorities, pace, and stress; inadequate readiness measures, low morale, and an over-emphasis on short-term results at the expense of longer-term outcomes.⁹⁵

Coaching, mentoring, empowering, tolerance of mistakes, providing constructive feedback, and leading by example are universally accepted principles of effective leadership at all levels of the Army. Yet, the ATLDP evidence is clear that, in general, many Army leaders do not follow these principles. Former Chief of Staff of the Army General Dennis Reimer “sounded the ‘zero-defects’ alarm in 1996, but little to nothing has changed.”⁹⁶

Thirty years of organizational feedback have revealed two additional truisms about Army leaders: peers, subordinates, and superiors often perceive leader competencies and effectiveness differently, and a leader’s self-delusion about his effectiveness is commonplace.⁹⁷

The adverse trends seen in organizational climate over the past 30 years are not the result of inattention. On the contrary, the Army leadership has endeavored on a number of fronts to positively mold leaders and heal ailing organizational climates: behaviorally-based performance appraisal of leaders, standards-based training, performance and developmental counseling, equal opportunity and command climate surveys, and aggressive leader development initiatives are but a few examples. The question is not why actions have not been taken to curb command climate lapses, but rather why these well-intentioned initiatives have not taken root in the Army culture, and more to the point, what can be done to effectively overcome the climate shortcomings?

WHY EXISTING PROCESSES NEED IMPROVEMENT

In many ways, the Army has been out front in recognizing the value of measuring organizational climate. The Army determined in the 1970s that insights about command climate could promote team effectiveness. As a consequence, measures were developed to assess the constructs that shape command climate. The CCS has been disseminated throughout the Army, and its use prescribed at the company level on an annual basis. Notwithstanding, command climate problems definitely persist. Most likely, the causes relate to leader biases, failure to incorporate follower input, inadequate and inappropriate reinforcement, and the absence of sufficient accountability when the need for change is identified.

Systems-wide shortcomings, dysfunctional cultural norms, and biased leader perceptions account for why command climate measures have failed. At the organizational level, hierarchical barriers, less

than fully effective measurement, and inadequate accountability and rewards have interacted with individual leader level factors such as perceptual biases and fear of eroding leader authority to short-change organizations. Measuring managerial effectiveness, examining decisionmaking processes, seeking information from team members, and building trust among the people in the organization are critical to an organization's long-term survival. Leaders who adapt their behavior to conform to the expectations of their subordinates and superiors can respond to the complexity and dynamic pace of organizations.⁹⁸

Organizational Level Shortcomings.

Hierarchical Barriers. In spite of the inherent value of multiple perspectives and feedback, perceptions about the potentially adverse impact of follower feedback on command authority have, in large measure, blocked the introduction of formal subordinate feedback systems and open dialogue in organizations.⁹⁹ There is "an implicit ingredient of military culture [relating to] respect for authority and immediate, unquestioning obedience to others that causes some leaders to react viscerally to anything that challenges these core values."¹⁰⁰ Such a sentiment, according to some practitioners, is indicative of "a weak leader who would have nothing if he did not have the power of position and legal authority."¹⁰¹ Leaders whose authority rests on the position they hold are ruling, not leading.

Some leaders have doubts about open dialogue with subordinates. "Hierarchy is antithetical to dialogue, and it's difficult to escape hierarchy in organizations."¹⁰² Some senior leaders fear that participative leadership will lead to erosion of the chain of command. Others think that acknowledging leader shortcomings within view of subordinates is risky. "Concern regarding inappropriate democratization of the armed forces cannot be an excuse for avoiding the development of a reliable system for measuring and enhancing leadership,"¹⁰³ according to General Ulmer. Leaders must want the benefits of dialogue more than the security of their rank and position. "Different views have increased value as a means toward discovering a new view."¹⁰⁴ Participation in decisionmaking by junior officers not only allows them to become part of the solution to problems, but also presents opportunities to develop their own leadership and managerial skills.¹⁰⁵ Senior leaders should recognize open dialogue as a vehicle for developing trust within the team. "We all face a learning challenge—to continually expand our awareness and understanding, and to see more and more of our connectedness to the world around us."¹⁰⁶ Interestingly, Army Operations doctrine (FM 3-0) already endorses collaborative exchange with others as a means for enhancing visualization of battlespace.¹⁰⁷ The Army's recognition that visualization of a *physical reality* (battlespace) is enhanced by multiple perspectives argues for enhancing visualization of the considerably more ambiguous *social reality* that leaders face—their units. Undoubtedly, views from differing perspectives provide a valuable means for solving problems, understanding and building trust, and developing subordinates' innovation and risk-taking skills.

Need for More Effective Measurement. The persistence of command climate problems is due, in part, to insufficiently effective measurement. The perception of many practitioners is that "the Army doesn't measure the process of leader development and the effectiveness of its organizations. Instead, [the Army] concentrates solely on evaluating the product on whether the mission gets accomplished."¹⁰⁸ While trends in productivity provide some indications about climate, so many additional factors affect productivity that climate alone is not a reliable measure. Focusing solely on the bottom line is also short-sighted. The Army needs to consider defining, assessing, and reporting organizational effectiveness in terms of mission accomplishment (reliability, quality, efficiency, etc.) and organizational growth (team cohesion, trust in leadership, morale, and commitment, etc.).¹⁰⁹ In the strategic remedies being proposed, we shall revisit the weakness that the CCS assesses only some components of organizational effectiveness.

Establishing the proper measures alone, however, will not be adequate to reverse the adverse trends seen in command climate. Systems reinforcing appropriate behaviors are also needed at the organizational and individual levels to achieve and sustain organizational growth as an Army priority.

Individual Level Failure Factors.

Leader Self-Awareness. The nature of perceptions about leader behavior is a “function of the perceptual vantage point in regard to changing status quo and empowerment.”¹¹⁰ Like all perceptions, impressions and attributions of leader behavior are frequently varied. While supervisors have traditionally been believed to be the most objective, they have been found not to be.¹¹¹ Similarly, studies indicate that leaders demonstrate a particular blind spot (themselves) when identifying areas needing change within an organization. According to a researcher assessing health organizations, it is the CEO who is “unwilling to address himself as the problem; everyone knows it (except the CEO), and the employees are talking behind his back.”¹¹² It is difficult to look critically at one’s own behavior; leaders typically do not take time nor have the ability to be introspective. Unfortunately, by not being so, they often undermine their own initiatives.¹¹³

Humans have bias, most strongly devoted to esteem-maintenance and ego-enhancement. Bias represents a perceptual difference in perspective between self and others, influenced by differential information, motive, and perceptual schemas.¹¹⁴ As a direct consequence of the bias, a “leader’s self-perception is often not congruent with ratings from either followers or peers.”¹¹⁵ The leader could enhance his effectiveness by “opening himself to self- (and other) examination, learning, and then working to remove the barriers that may be limiting his growth and performance.”¹¹⁶ Said another way, “a leader must be self-aware; that is, knowing self and how to lead self so he can know and therefore lead others.”¹¹⁷

Because leadership represents a highly dynamic and complex social phenomenon, the leader’s self-awareness is essential. Follower perceptions about a leader, valid or invalid, often play a greater role than objective reality in enabling (or blocking) a leader’s effectiveness. A leader’s actual honesty, for example, is of little relevance if subordinates think the leader to be a liar. Consequently, organizational member feedback is useful to a leader for self-regulation of behavior and adaptation to one’s environment. “Feedback (particularly from peers and subordinates) is becoming one of the most important resources concerning job-related performance.”¹¹⁸ For the leader, especially, unit member feedback “has a competence-creating function and provides information for environmental mastery.”¹¹⁹

Environmental mastery implies achieving an equilibrium between the expectations and practices for the leader and the led, and enhances the level of mutual trust that underwrites positive command climate and unit effectiveness. In practice, “the better a commander knows his subordinates, the more he will trust them . . . and their judgment. Trust will come only by spending time with the people who will, essentially, be operating in the field on his behalf.”¹²⁰ The essence of leadership is what occurs within the hearts and minds of followers. Followers and peers often know much about the leader that superiors do not know.¹²¹ To achieve maximum effectiveness, command climate systems must fully engage all members of the organization to obtain feedback about the leader and the organization as a whole.

A useful recent addition to the list of essential leader traits is “SAw,” or self-awareness, defined as the ability to assess abilities and determine strengths and weaknesses in an operational environment, and learn how to sustain strengths and correct weaknesses. The ATLDP reaffirmed leader SAw and adaptability as the Army’s enduring strategy-based competencies for the 21st century.¹²² Adaptability is defined as willingness to incorporate needed changes, including the learning necessary to be

effective.

SAw has been found to be both a personality trait and skill.¹²³ High SAw represents a high correlation between self-understanding and others' perceptions of an one's traits and behaviors. Regrettably, SAw is found in only a minority of leaders.¹²⁴ Naturally high SAw is found in typically high-performers who have an accurate self-image regarding their own competency and performance dimensions. Low-SA w leaders, on the other hand, are more likely to ignore or discount feedback from others, suffer career derailment, and have negative attitudes toward work.¹²⁵ Leaders improve their SAw level by learning and applying SAw-relevant skills, and by taking advantage of feedback from peers, subordinates, supervisors, spouses, etc. Leaders should seek to be as self-aware as possible to promote their own effectiveness as well as that of their organizations. Knowing where one stands, and where one wants to take the organization, provides the only rational basis for leading change. As William Steele and Robert Walters aptly declared, "Adaptability without self-awareness is irrationally changing for change's sake, not understanding the relationship between abilities, duties and the environment."¹²⁶

Need for Improving Reinforcement (Reward). Doing what is rewarded, a conditioned response, is among the most powerful of human motivations. Command climate problems persist, in part, because the Army is reinforcing leaders for doing the wrong things. As we have seen, the emphasis placed on a leader's ability to develop an effective organization and to create and sustain a healthy unit pales by comparison to the priority placed on assessing his or her individual performance in terms of mission accomplishment.¹²⁷ People who rise to high levels are often extremely achievement-oriented, very forceful, and highly demanding. Executives can often get outstanding results in the short run by sacrificing the organization's ability to maintain high performance in the long run.¹²⁸ Perhaps worse, "the cross currents of personnel changes ameliorate the effects of poor leadership—the body of soldiers disheartened by a poor leader is itself in such a state of flux, and the leader himself changes so often, that even the best senior leaders find it hard to spot (destructive) trends of any kind."¹²⁹

Absent positive or negative reinforcement from superiors, leaders rarely have the motivation to "understand and commit to personal leadership change."¹³⁰ Our performance appraisal system focuses on here-and-now competencies, individual skills and training proficiency, not organizational development aptitude. Developmental aptitude is necessary so leaders can attend to new organizational priorities and ensure the long-term health and vitality of the organization.¹³¹ A leader's developmental aptitude is measured best by those being developed, and best revealed by the overall effectiveness of the organization. Creating and sustaining a highly adaptable organization are just one example: "A well-developed workforce does not react to change—it creates change."¹³² Leader Development via diverse types of training and experiences is essential for enabling the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to present and future challenges. The Army's Leader Development System must further address the active enrichment of organizations.

At present, the Officer Evaluation Report (OER) and its accompanying OER Support Form are the primary tools for reinforcing desired leader behaviors. Together, these forms guide development and appraisal of officers according to performance goals established by the rated officer and his or her supervisor. Regrettably, OER assessments provide a skewed and incomplete picture of leadership ability and potential, and consequently reward behaviors that do not put organizational effectiveness first. In the long term, the OER System results in the selection and ascension of leaders who do not place organizational effectiveness first. These phenomena contribute significantly to the Army's current command climate challenges.

The OER makes "no mention of the command climate created by the rated officer. Senior Raters receive little, if any, feedback on the command climate created by the rated officer and therefore seldom make it part of the evaluation report."¹³³ Moreover, "the current Officer Evaluation System focuses on and rewards immediate goals."¹³⁴ Given that the Army's definition of leadership addresses two components (*operating*/mission accomplishment, and *improving*/organizational growth), improving

organizations needs to be at least equally emphasized in practice. Because short-term outcomes are disproportionately valued and reinforced, other important organizational factors relating to institutional culture and command climate are ignored.¹³⁵ The issue for the Army is straightforward: Enforce the leadership standard that has been defined in Army Leadership doctrine.

The Interaction of Leader and Organization.

Leader Development System Shortcomings. Leader development “presumes mid- and long-term commitment to improving leader qualities by merging the influences of many factors: military and civilian education, self-study, experience, feedback, reinforcement, coaching, mentoring.”¹³⁶ There is much training and emphasis regarding leadership, but no leader development training specifically about how to promote organizational effectiveness, or even the criteria most appropriate for evaluating effectiveness. The ramifications of this void are significant. According to Major General John Faith, U.S. Army Ret., a full one-third of today’s leaders do not sufficiently trust, and hence empower, their subordinates.¹³⁷ The results of the ATLDP support this conclusion.¹³⁸ Such an absence of trust results in the over-management of subordinates, “a failure far from obvious to their bosses as the unit produces the desired near-term results.”¹³⁹ According to General Wesley Clark, U.S. Army Ret., senior leaders have “gone too far in over-planning, over-prescribing, and over-controlling.”¹⁴⁰ Given the misconstrued basis for interpreting the unit’s effectiveness, leaders and their bosses mistakenly reward and reinforce “zero-defects” leadership.

Organizations and subordinates are not sufficiently studied in the Officer Education System. While the Officer Leader Development System offers an extensive education, it “fails to teach officers on the basic counseling skills so necessary in our Army.”¹⁴¹ Not knowing how to counsel effectively, and therefore not being comfortable with the counseling process, have resulted in a cultural aversion to counseling, dialoguing, and developing. Absent the much needed open dialogue in an organization, the practical benefits relating to the development of leaders and increased effectiveness of organizations are lost, at all levels. Open communication between raters and subordinate leaders “humanizes the environment . . . and functions as a mechanism for integrating [leaders] into the corporate structure and culture.”¹⁴² Dialogue and feedback serve to increase the skills and effectiveness of both the rater and the subordinate leader, which in combination directly contribute to a more positive command climate, increased productivity, and a reduction in turnover.

The Army puts a premium on operational experience, as well it should. Learning by doing is a hallmark of the military profession. A leader’s operational experience, however, is largely created and shaped by his or her superior. Getting the job done without effective coaching is not only a missed opportunity for the individuals involved, but a significant impediment to organizational climate and growth. There is insufficient feedback from higher to lower and lower to higher. Open dialogue is necessary for the growth of individuals and the organization as a whole, but it takes courage. “Providing honest feedback is hard,”¹⁴³ said General Reimer recently. “Only by developing a plan for achieving and sustaining behavior change is learning enhanced.”¹⁴⁴ Supervisors must provide feedback, coach when opportunities present themselves, and provide a measure of accountability for change.

The goal of effective coaching is “identify[ing] convergences and divergences, or agreements and disagreements, on job performance.”¹⁴⁵ Armed with insight from multiple sources, a coach works with the leader to close the gaps between what is being provided by the leader, and what is valued and expected by the members of the organization. Leaders often lose sight of what is effective and do not take time or effort to reflect on the impact of their own actions. Coaching from peers and superiors helps leaders decode information received from multiple sources. Coaching bypasses biases relating to a leader’s perceptual filters and helps interpret feedback from others that may be “overly cautious and

soft-pedaled due to the leader's role and status."¹⁴⁶ Coaching is neither evaluative nor punitive; it is developmental. This is not to say that there is no accountability for achieving developmental objectives. Like other objectives, leaders are expected to demonstrate specific achievement of developmental goals. Leaders that do not develop, in spite of coaching, are not the leaders the Army needs.

Leaders, themselves, also have a large role in guiding their own professional development. Self-development is poorly operationalized in the Army. It is far more than prescribed reading lists and access to Internet resources, or even responding to coaching as described above. Self-development is focused on personal growth recognized to be relevant by the individual learner, guided by an effective coach, and energized by a system of accountability that motivates growth and learning. For the leader at the helm of an organization, self-development includes looking inward at his behaviors, and focusing on ways he can improve the climate of the organization.

Insufficient Accountability. Certainly, different perceptions of a leader result from the different schemas and information available to the individuals viewing him or her.¹⁴⁷ Addressing the expectations of organizational members typically leads the organization to be more effective and productive. Getting the needed insight from constituents is part of the challenge; making required changes is the other part. Since subordinates cannot hold the leader accountable for making needed adjustments, and superiors do not have all the information, systems are needed to reinforce appropriate organizational changes.

"If you want to get serious about management effectiveness, you have to measure it and hold people accountable."¹⁴⁸ Likewise, rewarding outstanding performance in shaping command climate is the fastest and surest way to promote it throughout all organizations. Actions, be they reward or punishment, speak louder than words. In a developmental-only process (as with the current Army CCS system), the leader owns the information with little or no accountability requirement for action, and little change occurs.¹⁴⁹ Accountability provides the motivation for change.

IMPLICATIONS OF FAILING TO FOCUS ENOUGH ON THE ORGANIZATION

Insufficiently Effective Organizations.

At this point, one might argue that there is ample evidence the U.S. Army is the best in the world, and most of its leaders and organizations are *reasonably effective*. Notwithstanding, reasonably effective leaders and organizations will not meet the needs of the future force and are not adequate to support Army Transformation. How will the Army create and sustain innovation and risk-taking in organizations plagued by micro-management and poor command climate? How will organizations, which have suppressed their problems and peaked for relatively short-term deployments, perform when members remain together for considerably longer periods? What about the ability of the Army to transform culturally into a more highly adaptive *learning organization*? The persistence of serious climate problems today and throughout the past 30 years demonstrates convincingly that the organizational mindset and ability to retain aggressive, innovative junior leaders are in jeopardy. The implications of today's organizational climate problems are extensive. Left unresolved, they will significantly hinder Army Transformation, currently the single most-important strategic objective of the first part of the 21st century.

Consider the dramatic and positive cultural impact that After-Action Reviews (AARs) have had on the Army since 1980 when they were first introduced. According to Lieutenant General Frederic Brown at the time, "There is no precedent for exposing a unit chain of command to a no-holds barred battle against OPFOR where a leader's failure is evident in exquisite detail to his subordinates. No Army—including the Israeli Army—has dared to do this."¹⁵⁰ General Sullivan reflected similarly: "There was a lot of resistance, but we had to do it because in higher performing organizations, the parts are supposed to talk to one another."¹⁵¹ In spite of the huge operational gains associated with the use of

AARs for collective training, we have failed to develop processes that provide leaders with the same brutally honest assessments, resulting in those leaders and their organizations being disadvantaged. If the Army was truly a *learning organization*, individuals would welcome the opportunity to receive and grow from feedback, and systems would be in place to facilitate it.

FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* (August 1999), suggests that “the excessive emphasis on current operations at the expense of improving actions will threaten the future of the Army.”¹⁵² This issue was described previously in the context of individual level factors; however, short- versus long-term emphasis also has dramatic impact on organizations. Rewarding only the bottom line is having unintended consequences. Said one savvy CEO, “We don’t want [leaders] to improve the bottom line, and collect bonuses for doing so, while discouraging, misusing, or burning out the talented people who produced those results.”¹⁵³ In many respects, this sentiment echoes the tension between *doing things right* according to rules and procedures (management) and *doing the right things* in concert with the needs of personnel (leadership).

In spite of the Army’s expressed definition of effective leadership, Army systems reward leaders more on management success than leadership; more on individual skills than organizational effectiveness. As discussed in depth earlier, the leader appraisal system (Officer Evaluation System, OES) emphasizes mission accomplishment rather than effectiveness, cohesion, and adaptability. OES places almost no weight on developing subordinate leaders, creating effective and cohesive teams, or inspiring momentum for achieving high goals. Leaders focusing on what they perceive to be important to their superiors often do not attain maximum self-development, sufficiently develop subordinates, or create a better organization. “The focus on individual performance appraisal does not allow the Army to identify problem areas in time to intervene. Consequently, the long-term damage to people and [organizational] effectiveness goes unnoticed.”¹⁵⁴

Measuring organizational climate serves as a predictor of upcoming production trends.¹⁵⁵ Getting a sense of what the workforce is feeling allows the leader to assume the initiative in heading off problems before they develop. Climate dimensions relating to work pressure, autonomy, peer cohesion, and supervisor support have been demonstrated to be correlated with perceived worker stress, which leads to withdrawal behaviors (absence, turnover, and injury).¹⁵⁶ “Feedback from peers and subordinates is important because it comes from the individuals who have by far the most contact with us.”¹⁵⁷ The Army’s senior leadership would be wise to systematize organizational dialogue as a means for enhancing effectiveness: “The primary goal of feedback is development. Open communication fosters trust and teamwork which generally lead to empowerment and productivity.”¹⁵⁸

Missed Opportunities to Develop Army Leaders.

The virtually exclusive focus of the OER and Army culture on short-term mission accomplishment has resulted in too little emphasis on developing effective organizations. There may be instances where such a priority may be justifiable, but not as a rule. Leader development has suffered because getting the job done has generally been accomplished at the expense of developing the long-term effectiveness made possible through investments in junior officers and the organization.¹⁵⁹ The Army culture proudly embodies a *Can Do* spirit. Getting results, however the job gets done (albeit ethically, of course), has become paramount. When accomplishing the mission, is it not better in the long term to lead the entire team rather than just a few members of the team?¹⁶⁰ Are not the individual team members as well as the organization better-served when mission accomplishment reflects the achievement of all rather than of a few? Would not raters prefer having subordinate leaders who lead the whole team when opportunities allow for doing so? Growing an organization and the members within it means that merely accomplishing the mission is not enough. Army leadership doctrine emphasizes this point, but

too often in practice its significance falls on deaf ears. Even for the raters who recognize the value of truly effective leadership, there are insufficient means for them to assess whether such valued practices are in effect. Sadly, even when organizational practices are ideal, insufficient systems have adverse consequences. Left unrecognized or unrewarded, even the most solid organizational practices may be expected to dissipate.

While it is important to develop all leaders for the immediate benefit of Army organizations, it is especially important to develop those with the most talent who will be selected for advancement and challenged by additional management complexity and responsibility.¹⁶¹ There is no evidence that leaders, in general or as individuals, are being systematically developed by their supervisors. The “senior-ranking population is clearly not the only one suited to identify superb leaders.”¹⁶² Top-down appraisal and selection ignore the perspectives of peers who would serve alongside the selectees in combat, as well as the perspectives of key subordinates whom they would lead on a daily basis and who would be charged with carrying out their decisions and directives.¹⁶³ “Army officers must exhibit more important attributes than just merely keeping the boss happy”;¹⁶⁴ multi-rater feedback provides the means to ensure they do.

Results from the ATLDP indicate the need for continued emphasis on prescribed training and leader development principles including *Know Yourself*: “The relationship between self-awareness (SAw) and adaptability is symbiotic.”¹⁶⁵ The greater the SAw gained, the more adaptive the leader. Commitment to lifelong learning can narrow the knowledge gaps in education and operational experience.

The “TOP 50” companies in the Fortune 1000 have many features in common. One such feature is that they all actively pool and share knowledge within the organization, not only for the betterment of the company (e.g., AARs), but also for the betterment of the individual.¹⁶⁶ At every turn, top companies create learning opportunities through personal and leader development programs. One CEO commented, “We’re a better company because we identify and reward what superiors simply can’t perceive.”¹⁶⁷ Another CEO was more direct: “There is too much careerism. We counter it with peer and subordinate feedback.”¹⁶⁸

Leaders need to identify their personal development needs. The best sources of information needed to do so are: obtaining feedback from others, using models of good practice, and completing self-analysis questionnaires.¹⁶⁹ Systematic and anonymous feedback from others provides otherwise unrecognized perspectives. So much of what we understand about leadership we learn from our leader models—what they do, what they measure and inspect, what questions they ask. Inferences from these models of leadership promote the development of the next generation of leaders. Self-analysis questionnaires provide an added insight about blind spots and relative weaknesses.

The mere practice of seeking and incorporating subordinate feedback promotes individual self-worth and organizational buy-in. Seeing how one’s input leads to organizational growth fosters his or her increased engagement, commitment, and innovation.¹⁷⁰ Subordinates who are not permitted to provide input often lose confidence in themselves and their leaders, and grow anxious about the value of their contributions to the organization. Absent recognition of their value to the team, subordinate commitment wanes.

Inconsistency with Stated Beliefs.

Few things drain the energy of organizational members more than the failure of organizational practices to match the organization’s proclaimed beliefs. Certainly at the collective level, the practice of doing After-Action Reviews matches the organizational priority and belief that organizations benefit from maximizing unit learning and growth, no matter how painful the feedback. At the individual level, however, there is no analogy. If the Army is truly a learning organization, it must place a similar spotlight on individual leaders to improve organizational climate.

Inconsistency between stated beliefs and practices breeds distrust and skepticism among organizational members. Unfortunately, in addition to the example cited above, many of the Army's mismatches relate directly to leader development. Strong evidence suggests, for example, that supervisors actually punish out-of-the-box thinking, innovation, and empowerment while verbally advocating the same.¹⁷¹ Likewise, micro-management practices are highly inconsistent with rhetoric emphasizing risk-taking and innovation. Beliefs and practices must be aligned, and leader/soldier expectations satisfied if organizational climate is to thrive. If implemented, multi-rater feedback would be expected to contribute to aligning the Army Leader Development System (OES) and performance appraisal system (OER) with our Army's stated objective of being a learning organization: one that harnesses the experience of its people and organization to improve the way it does business. Multi-rater feedback is a powerful means for linking individual level leader development with the organization to foster more effective units and reinforce the U.S. Army as truly a learning organization.

The Army contends that the leadership trusts subordinate officers and noncommissioned officers, yet we do not enable them to help grow and select the most effective leaders.¹⁷² Without question, subordinates and peers have insights that raters and leaders themselves lack. Those unique perspectives must be tapped to further the development of leaders and Army organizations: "Only the led know for certain the leader's moral courage, consideration for others, and commitment to unit above self. If we prize these values, some sort of input from subordinates is required."¹⁷³ Clearly, the inconsistency between stated Army beliefs and practices in regard to these important climate factors is inconsistent with transformational objectives. These differences must be reconciled to enable command climate to flourish.

What is needed is a full recognition of the importance of both individual and organizational learning. "Effective leaders [do] things to develop skills and increase the knowledge gained from experience, in success and failure. They recognize the necessity of continually gathering information . . . they encourage subordinate [leaders] to set longer time horizons."¹⁷⁴ Effective leaders continually assess and improve their organizations. They put the organization ahead of themselves.

Strategic Remedies.

That which is not inspected, is neglected.

Classic Military Proverb

Recently retired Chief of Staff of the Army General Eric Shinseki stated in his vision that "the development of bold, innovative leaders of character and competence is fundamental to long-term health of the Army organization."¹⁷⁵ Likewise, former Chief of Staff of the Army General Reimer recently said, "Leadership is the key to the future";¹⁷⁶ however, new mindsets in organizational climate must be accompanied by appropriate systems that reinforce them. "Results [i.e., mission accomplishment] are not enough! We need to hold leaders accountable for how they get results. We must find ways to hold leaders accountable for developing, inspiring, and empowering the people who produce those bottom-line results, as well as for the results themselves."¹⁷⁷

Vision theorists say,

The new vision requires a dramatic letting-go of the conventional values that ossified the old top-down hierarchy. It will demand far more leadership quality than ever before. It calls for full and daily communication between managers and workers in a work culture that fosters trust, learning, participation, and dignity, and it depends on leaders who are committed to it.¹⁷⁸

The need for change to achieve the desired transformational end-state is clear—the question is, how to achieve it.

As one considers the direction and range of systems needed to facilitate a distinct shift in organizational climate, former Army Chief of Staff General Sullivan’s blueprint for downsizing the Army in the early 1990s is instructive (See Figure 3).¹⁷⁹

1. Change is Hard Work.
2. Leadership Begins with Values.
3. The Intellectual Leads the Physical.
4. Real Change Takes Real Change.
5. Leadership is a Team Sport.
6. Expect to Be Surprised.
7. Today Competes with Tomorrow.
8. Better is Better.
9. Focus on the Future.
10. Learn from Doing.
11. Grow People.

Figure 3. Eleven Rules for Guiding Change.

Six of General Sullivan’s rules are especially relevant in providing the architecture needed to create the sea-change in culture and mechanisms for Army Transformation in the 21st century.

Rule 1. Change Is Hard Work. Leading change requires leaders to do two jobs at once—accomplishing today’s missions, and developing tomorrow’s organizations. Army Transformation entails the requirement for a qualitatively more effective organization.

Rule 4. Real Change Takes Real Change. The leader must set conditions for, and change the critical processes within an organization to effect true change. It can be painful and it takes time.

Rule 5. Leadership Is A Team Sport. Effective leaders invest time and energy to engage all members of a team synergistically. Army Transformation will demand teamwork. Beyond increased output, teamwork inspires subordinates with a sense of commitment to the organization that fuels innovation and the momentum for transformation.

Rule 9. Focus On The Future. From an organizational perspective, the leader is the only team member focusing on the future. Subordinates have confidence in leaders who know where the organization is headed. The leader must inspire commitment to a positive and provocative vision of the future.

Rule 10. Learn From Doing. A learning organization—one that looks inward as well as outward to learn and grow—is critical to transformation.

Rule 11. Grow People. Creative, confident, and committed people enable organizations to successfully transform. People are rewarded in order to promote the growth necessary to achieve the established vision.

General Sullivan’s prescription represents an organizational development strategy. As a discipline, organizational development is the planned process for changing an organization so as to be more effective in accomplishing its desired goals. Such development is focused not on personal growth of individuals within the organization, but rather on developing structures, systems, and processes within organizations to improve effectiveness.¹⁸⁰ The Army pursued an elaborate Organizational Effectiveness (OE) program with vigor in the 1970s and 1980s, and it enjoyed considerable success according to Colonel William Barko, a former certified OE trainer.¹⁸¹ In spite of popularity among many U.S. Army leaders who believed OE to be successful (improving communications, climate, and

overall organizational effectiveness), the program's image as a counter-cultural fad was difficult to overcome. Absent a demonstration of quantifiable impact and measurable benefits, the OE program was unsustainable and died. Putting organizations first again is long past due.

The solution begins with an appreciation of the embedding (creating change) and reinforcing (sustaining change) mechanics of shaping a group climate.¹⁸² Relevant embedding mechanisms include: attention to what leaders measure and control, deliberate role modeling and coaching, and the application of consistent criteria for allocating rewards and status, as well for recruitment, selection, and promotion. To sustain the changes injected into the culture, reinforcing mechanisms include establishing organizational systems and procedures for accountability, and broadly disseminating consistent statements of philosophy, creeds, and charters. Change is sustained only as long as embedding and reinforcing mechanisms are introduced. During the past 30 years, several well-intentioned strategies to positively shape organizational climate in the Army were doomed to fail, and ultimately did fail because reinforcing mechanisms were absent. In contrast, the strategic remedies proposed in this paper provide embedding and reinforcing mechanisms for the organization and individual level factors affecting organizational climate.

Transformation of the Army to the Objective Force of 2015 will involve changes in the way the Army handles (beyond managing) people. "Fine-tuning the evolving processes, determining how soldiers are adapting to the changing environment, and ensuring the appropriate cultural transformation will require a continuous feedback loop."¹⁸³

Climate management will be a key enabler to "improve the collective effectiveness, provide the opportunity for members to realize their potential, and develop their individual skills and performance."¹⁸⁴

Nick Jans proposes a useful model of organizational effectiveness that integrates the roles of the leader and organization in accounting for climate (See Figure 4).¹⁸⁵ This model follows from the four-quadrant model of organizational effectiveness presented in the background section of this paper (Figure 1). Modified here slightly to incorporate additional insights emerging from this research, Jans's model illustrates a process whereby individual performance appraisal reinforces rather than detracts from the organization. Not addressed by Jans's model, however, is the need for continuous feedback from the organization, and accountability for change when organizational climate, performance, or morale are ascertained to be substandard. The strategic remedies proposed in this paper provide for the essential feedback and accountability mechanisms that are relevant at the individual and organizational levels.

Organizationally-focused Interventions.

Update Command Climate Survey Metrics. Good surveys "provide data that are quantifiable, valid, reliable, objective, comparable, replicable, generalizable, and capable of indicating trends."¹⁸⁶ "They are the principal method of obtaining reliable data regarding climate."¹⁸⁷ Widely-used climate instruments that assess respect, trust, team morale, opportunity to participate in decisionmaking, cohesiveness, innovation, risk-taking, and care for people frequently account for as much as 53 percent of the variance in predicting effectiveness.¹⁸⁸ Command climate surveys also create awareness. Merely measuring certain facets of the organization alerts all members to the values and constructs that are important. Most often, those aspects of the command that are not measured will receive little or no attention. Beyond immediate impact on organizational effectiveness, such salience also contributes to the development of values and priorities held by the next generation of leaders.

The personnel portion of Army Transformation puts strong emphasis on leveraging technology and using the Internet for personnel business practices. As soon as soldiers gain full access to the Internet and routinely use the Army portal, the Army easily will be able to increase its ability to conduct

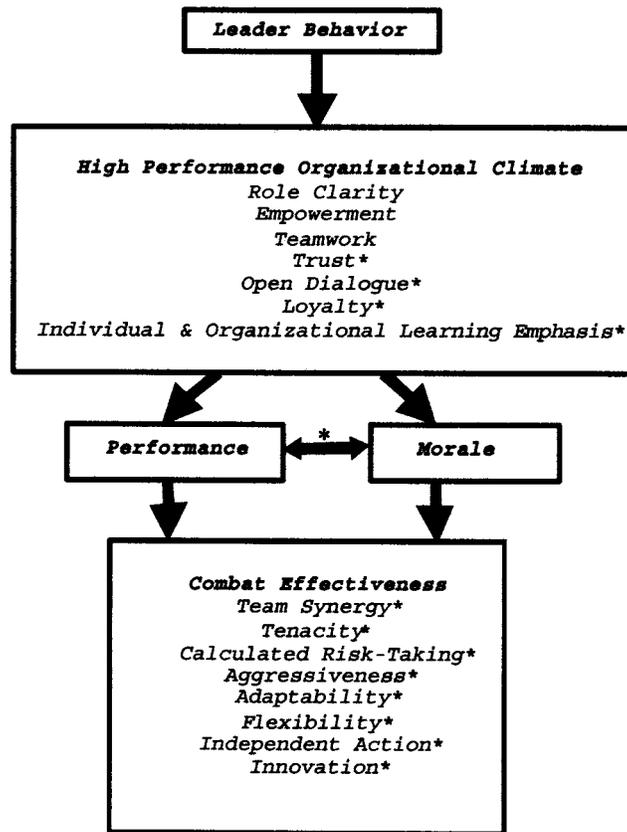


Figure 4. Model of Organizational Effectiveness.

surveys.¹⁸⁹ Relative to the climate instruments commercially available and in use today, the Command Climate Surveys in use by the Army G-1, Army Research Institute, and Department of the Army Inspector General are reasonably adequate in scope except, as discussed earlier, for not addressing organizational trust, loyalty, commitment, openness, cooperation, teamwork, and professional satisfaction.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, the CCS should incorporate measures that address values and beliefs (as distinguished from practices); latitude and power to use authority to operate within the scope of one's duties; the organization's measurement and feedback mechanisms to monitor health of the team; developmental opportunities; pace and stress; humor; extent to which family needs are attended to; and sensitivity to personal needs. These important climate constructs are not being measured by the instruments used in the Army today, yet they are essential aspects of an effective command climate.

While the MEOSC has value in assessing racial and gender fairness issues, it is of questionable value as a climate instrument because its scope is insufficient to address the broader organizational constructs. As a consequence, it should be offered as a supplement rather than as an alternative to the CCS.

With regard to the frequency and levels of application for the Command Climate Survey (CCS), AR 600-20 should be amended to prescribe the completion of a CCS within 90 days of a new commander's arrival and annually thereafter, at all levels of the Army from company to MACOM. From a practical standpoint, surveys should be assigned randomly and confidentially to a representative sample one and two levels below the surveying headquarters (e.g., Corps headquarters would survey a representative sample of officers and soldiers assigned to division and brigade level command sections and staffs). Survey results should go to the organization's commander, as is currently the case, but

followed up by a prescribed Action Plan developed with the assistance of a commander's designated outside-the-chain coach (to enable evaluation-free, i.e., nonthreatening, feedback), and then approved by the commander's rater. Such a procedure ensures appropriate, well-considered actions will be taken to address climate shortcomings and promote organizational effectiveness.

The 2000 CSIS Study Report called for development of organizational climate surveys that would become part of the Unit Status Reporting (USR) system.¹⁹¹ Elevating organizational climate to a level at least on par with materiel readiness is long overdue. Such surveys would provide the Army's senior leaders insight to which units "reward competence, set clear priorities, allow free flow of information, inspire trust, support learning, and stimulate motivation and versatility."¹⁹² Implementing command climate feedback into the unit readiness report is entirely consistent with embedding important organizational constructs and reinforcing desired leader development priorities.

Leader-focused Interventions.

Reassess and Expand OER Constructs. In general, "the Army needs to focus leadership performance feedback on climate in the unit, on performance of its component teams and the leadership group, and less on the observed performance of the individual leader."¹⁹³ The OER system serves several important purposes, namely, evaluation and development. OERs are essential tools for selection boards, which clearly indicate that "the OER is giving them what they need to sort through a very high quantity of officers and select those with the greatest potential."¹⁹⁴ "Yet, OERs are important not only for the function they serve on boards, but also for the behavior they engender in the officer corps."¹⁹⁵ Appraisal and development are both important facets of the OER system; both need to be maximized to create better leaders and stronger organizations.

The extent to which leader appraisal and leader development systems affect command climate and organizational effectiveness is in question. One problem is that the OER is insufficiently precise to discriminate except in the most egregious instances of poor leadership. According to the experiences of General Faith, senior officers serving on selection boards are compelled to apply their own scales of values to weigh overly-inflated, and therefore nondiscriminating, evaluation reports.¹⁹⁶ This challenge has been somewhat mitigated by the forced distribution system, but not entirely. Personal performance must never be made superior in importance to unit performance and effectiveness, and yet that is precisely the result of the current OER system. To reinforce the climate that is essential in a learning organization, such desiderata as making the organization better, morale, team aggressiveness, consideration of others, and commitment to unit above self must also be addressed. *Building* must become at least as important as *operating*, and trusting, dialoguing, team-building, and caring and taking care of people and families must become a part of individual performance assessment. Adding these dimensions to the OER will almost certainly embed and reinforce them within the values of the Army officer corps.

When it comes to climate, Army senior leaders will need to refocus on long-term goals and look beyond the traditional readiness statistics to assess qualitative, less easily measured factors.¹⁹⁷ Additional consideration should be given to incorporating peer and subordinate input in OERs, although that argument will not be made here. I am satisfied that raters and senior raters, made aware of CCS results and resulting Action Plans, will be able to ascertain individual leader performance and potential more completely. To the extent that organizational factors and insights are made a priority for inclusion in every leader's evaluation, cultural change toward creating and sustaining more effective organizations is certain.

The absence of prescribed development for all officers, instead of simply the most junior ones, cannot be justified. Leader development is a means for influencing leadership, which affects

organizational climate. Developing officers who are attentive and responsive to organizational factors will promote improved climate across the Army. The current OER system prescribes the employment of a Developmental Support Form (DA Form 68-9-1a) for all lieutenants and junior warrant officers. This is consistent with the nature of a learning organization. The OER Developmental Support Form system should be immediately expanded and prescribed for use by all officers, warrant officer to lieutenant general. No officer is beyond development; to suggest otherwise flies in the face of our cultural belief in the Army as a learning organization.

Coaching provides the means for modulating 360-degree feedback to modify behavior. "Professionals have coaches. Amateurs do not."¹⁹⁸ Army leaders are professionals, and coaches are indeed needed and appropriate. Perhaps most appealing, there is no need to hire outside consultants to be coaches. The Army's commitment to leader development has ensured that an ample supply of coaches is immediately available and accessible. Beyond merely talking about it, effective coaching must be made a cultural cornerstone and practical reality.

As Colonel Jon Moilanen observes in a recent *Military Review* article, "Leaders mentoring leaders in a clearly defined manner, and complementary coaching of soldiers and teams, reinforces learning and motivation to adapt. Direct and recurring advice and council among leaders reinforces adaptive behaviors."¹⁹⁹ Coaching has been demonstrated to contribute quantifiably to organizational productivity (up 53 percent), retention (up 39 percent), and job satisfaction (up 61 percent) according to 100 executives from Fortune 1000 companies.²⁰⁰ Not surprisingly, history illustrates that General George Patton, among others, took his obligation to mentor junior officers very seriously, and did so aggressively and continuously throughout his career.²⁰¹

The ATLDP reveals that the Army is doing an especially poor job dialoguing with, counseling, and coaching junior officers. "One of the reasons that senior officers may not be doing it is that they don't really know how to properly do it."²⁰² It is for this reason, and because leader development applies at every level, that coaching must be modeled beginning with those at the very top of the Army organization. "Transformation requires enormous amounts of energy. One of the catalysts to generate this energy is the leader who must model required new behaviors."²⁰³ Coaching, really coaching and developing subordinate leaders, is one of the new behaviors most essential to successfully transform command climate across the Army.

Coaches assist leaders by "tailoring learning activities to address specific developmental needs, and increase the likelihood for success in a way that classroom education cannot."²⁰⁴ Feedback alone, however, will not be sufficient unless it is accompanied by formalized action planning to ensure that needed changes take place.

Creating Mutually-Reinforcing Systems.

The failure to integrate organizational and individual level systems was quite possibly the root explanation for why several well-intentioned efforts over the past 30 years have fallen short in improving organizational climate. The remedies just proposed will, by themselves, yield little or no result if feedback and accountability at both the organizational and individual levels are not fully integrated. Hence, prescribing 360-degree feedback and associated action planning are essential systems-integration mechanisms.

Use 360-degree Feedback to Improve Organizations and Leaders. The effective basis for performance appraisal and/or leader development greatly depends upon the position of the perceiver. The extent to which leaders fulfill expectations varies with rater priorities, exposure frequency, and cognitive processes.²⁰⁵ Consequently, for both performance appraisal and leader development, a 360-degree multi-rater approach is needed. A multisource appraisal and feedback system effectively links

organizational and individual leader factors in effecting a positive organizational climate.

Multisource feedback has evolved over the past 2 decades primarily as a developmental tool—"a means to help people build new skills and overcome weakness."²⁰⁶ Regrettably, the empirical support for its organizational impact has lagged considerably behind.²⁰⁷ That said, recipients, as well as organizational members who have provided feedback, believe "multiple sources are better than an individual one when it comes to assessing behavior."²⁰⁸ Research indicates that construct validity among peers is greater than it is within the leader himself. Empirically, peer evaluations, more than leader self-reports, have been found to be the most predictive of subsequent job advancement.²⁰⁹

No less than 60 percent of the Fortune 500 companies use multi-rater feedback mechanisms for development (and/or appraisal) of leaders.²¹⁰ In an extensive survey of 47 leading global corporations and 26 academic institutions, 76 percent said 360-degree feedback programs were likely to be used extensively in the year ahead, for building competencies in management and leading organizational change. According to a number of industrial leaders, 360-degree feedback is *the tool of choice*.²¹¹

The general trend in executive practices is toward greater learner involvement in real problems and in their own organizations.²¹² Among other things, 360-degree feedback provides a "vehicle to explore [the progress of] strategic initiatives, furthers the organization's change agenda, and fosters increased cohesion among team members."²¹³ This tool helps executives gain insight into performance competencies by showing them how their peers, subordinates, and superiors perceive them. It "assists leaders in contemplating what is working, needs to change, and compares core practices and behaviors with expectations."²¹⁴

The best way to determine how members of an organization perceive the leader and his competence is to ask them directly.²¹⁵ Leader development certainly does not stop at the company or even battalion levels. In fact, a very good argument could be made that the value of feedback increases at higher levels due to increasingly ambiguous and complex challenges and skill requirements. Hence, the value of multi-rater feedback applies to, and must be instituted at, all levels of the Army organization. Implementing multi-rater feedback makes the subordinates and peers all the more astute in observing leadership styles and behaviors.²¹⁶ Dissonance in such an open environment results in personal and organizational pressures that actually facilitate growth and motivation for change. Increases in organizational trust resulting from 360-degree feedback have been demonstrated as leading to desired changes in leader behavior.²¹⁷

In teams where learning is emphasized as a priority, peers value the participation and competence of colleagues.²¹⁸ When scientifically examined, peer demographics were not found to introduce any systematic bias into the peer evaluation process—not age, own performance level (Grade Point Average), work or supervisor experience, marital status, etc.²¹⁹ Jealousy or mal-intent did not emerge in peer evaluations of colleagues. There was, however, a trend suggesting peer ratings of leaders are significantly lower than leaders' ratings of themselves. This discrepancy confirms the overwhelming evidence that leaders tend to perceive themselves more favorably than peers.²²⁰ Using peer feedback to bypass a leader's perceptual filters provides significant and unique insights of value to a leader's development.

Likewise, subordinates appreciate leaders who provide feedback regarding performance, who communicate expectations, and who engage subordinates in the planning process. The 360-degree feedback mechanism, in conjunction with a Command Climate Survey, facilitates the full involvement of subordinates in the progress the organization is making. Further, these instruments promote clarification of leader expectations and a means for directly engaging subordinates in the growth of the unit.

A recent example of employing effective multi-rater feedback is that described by Brigadier General Edward Harrington, Director of the Defense Contract Management Agency: "We wanted to

identify where significant change was called for, set up a process to structure the changes, and then lay out detailed plans to exploit these opportunities. We used 360-degree [feedback] because without a true team effort . . . facing the future would be even tougher than it already was. The results revealed a need for significant redesign and change in the ways we were organized, operating, and managing things."²²¹ In following up by an action plan to ensure that agreed-upon changes were carried out, General Harrington illustrates that this team is a learning organization.

Other examples of 360-degree assessment being used in a military context include the entire Special Forces community and the Ranger Battalions,²²² ROTC and the service academies, Combined Arms Staff and Service School (CAS3), Warrant Officer Staff College, and a number of the basic branch officer courses. While no known data has been published demonstrating its usefulness in a military context, investigations by the Center for Army Leadership in 1998 support its use in Army organizations.²²³ More recent examinations of 360-degree feedback in a military context by Dr. Owen Jacobs of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces suggest that all who use it like it a lot.²²⁴ Lieutenant General John M. LeMoyne, the Army G-1, acknowledged the potential benefit of 360-degree feedback, but added that implementing it would require a reallocation of resources that is not possible at this time.²²⁵ The 360-degree apparatus may have been cumbersome and too expensive in the past, but it does not seem to be so today. The Internet and commercial, low-cost software make 360-degree instruments readily available, affordable, and in wide use throughout the civilian sector. While some skepticism is likely and must be overcome prior to implementation, the actual mechanics of implementing a 360-degree feedback system are relatively straightforward and not time-consuming. According to General Reimer, "Moving the Officer Corps to 360-degree feedback is a good thing—certainly, developmental feedback is needed. Using it might avoid some leadership disasters in the future."²²⁶

The power of a 360-degree perspective comes from "the continuous feedback of observers who have a context within which to identify what people do well and what they need to improve on."²²⁷ Leaders especially (and all people in general) want to be liked and to be right; to know where they stand in ambiguous social environments.²²⁸ The 360-degree feedback mechanism provides the means to obtain such useful information. Of those who have used 360-degree feedback, 75 percent judge it to be successful. Moreover, 92 percent found it useful, claiming "it helps initiate a new form of dialogue by focusing on facets of performance otherwise neglected in traditional boss/subordinate interactions and appraisals."²²⁹ Social information swirls around within organizations. Frequently, members of the unit know things that the leader does not. The 360-degree feedback mechanism provides leaders an ear to what's on the minds of their soldiers, and a basis for intervening to make the organization more effective.

Implementing a 360-degree system signals a "culture change of information sharing that is equally dramatic as the practical benefits."²³⁰ It prompts a change in people's mindset, day-to-day behavior, and growth at individual, organizational, and Army levels. Such a culture change requires that multi-rater feedback be viewed as a process rather than as an event—a process aimed at increasing and improving critical competencies and behaviors rather than a single event providing a snapshot of performance.²³¹

Prescribe Action Plans. "There must be an absolute commitment to hold leaders at all levels accountable for the extent to which they are creating the kind of culture and work environment that the Army believes is essential."²³² Action planning to resolve individual and organizational shortcomings enhances accountability for change in a *learning organization*.

The Army Leader Development System requires precisely defined, tailored, and demanding self-development activities, and improved learning from operational experiences.²³³ Mentoring of subordinate leaders by coaches provides "a continuum of improved performance, rather than a finite end point."²³⁴ Building and sustaining a unit learning environment that reinforces continual organizational and individual improvement are fundamental to transforming the Army into a learning

organization.

Recommendations Restated in Order of Priority.

1. Improve accountability. Shortcomings identified in the results of the CCS (organizational) and 360-degree feedback (leader-specific) must be attended to by the chain of command by prescribing formal action planning for both mechanisms, and establishing a nonevaluative (nonthreatening) “coaching mechanism” for reinforcement. Likewise, to promote organizational climate as a valued component of readiness, successes in changing command climate must be celebrated and rewarded in units, at all levels throughout the Army.

2. Make Organizational Climate Reportable as a Readiness Factor. Develop and incorporate a clear summary metric addressing the “health” of organizational climate into the Unit Status Report. Doing so will provide senior leaders insight about team effectiveness, an essential readiness component. Possible yes-or-no queries might be like the following: Organizational climate (as measured during the most recent CCS or 360-degree assessment) contributes to unit readiness and effectiveness (Yes/No); Unit rewards competence (Yes/No); Unit sets clear and appropriate priorities (Yes/No); Unit promotes open dialogue and free flow of information throughout the organization (Yes/No); Unit inspires trust, supports learning and risk-taking, and stimulates motivation and innovation (Yes/No).

3. Prescribe 360-degree Assessment. Organizational members’ feedback about the leader will directly inform needed changes in leadership, and indirectly contribute to command climate, effectiveness, and combat readiness. All 360-degree assessments should be employed on an annual basis, at all levels from company to MACOM, and at an interval approximately 6 months from the organization’s CCS so that the actions associated with each mechanism complement one another. Because implementation of 360-degree assessment is a delicate task in any organization, careful consideration, planning, and oversight will be required initially and for several iterations, so as to ensure that positive outcomes prevail.

4. Modify the current Officer Evaluation Report. The OER must be adapted to assess more organizationally-relevant constructs, such as inspiring loyalty to the unit, improving the organizational facilities and systems, morale and teamwork, unit responsiveness and adaptability, cohesion, family outreach, care for the welfare of soldiers, and commitment to unit above self. In appraising an individual leader, raters and senior raters should be directed to include generalized data relating to 360-degree feedback and the CCSs, as well as the outcome of actions taken by the leader to overcome real or perceived shortcomings.

5. Amend the Command Climate Survey (CCS). Modify the CCS (see Figure 5 for sample survey items) to also address: commitment, trust, team morale, receptiveness to new ideas, cohesiveness, innovation and risk-taking, sensitivity to people and their families, values and beliefs versus practices, autonomy, developmental opportunities, feedback mechanisms, and values, pace, and stress. Prescribe that the CCS be used at all levels, company to MACOM, within the first 90 days of a new commander’s assignment and on an annual basis thereafter.

6. Prescribe Coaching. To facilitate development of Action Plans (noted in Restated Recommendation #1), an Army-wide process for coaching is needed that allows a non-chain of command coach (who is equal in rank and experience to the rater) to assist the subordinate leader in interpreting survey results and 360-degree feedback, and developing an appropriate action plan. Thereafter, the subordinate leader should be required to present a summary of the feedback results and proposed action plan to his or her rater. Such a mechanism provides the subordinate leader with nonevaluative and experienced coaching, facilitates organizational and leader development, and enables the chain of command to reinforce and assess corrective actions for the good of the organization, the leader, and the Army.

- I trust my leaders to do the right thing.
- I am committed to the NCOs in my unit chain of command.
- I am committed to the officers in my unit chain of command.
- The morale of my unit is where it needs to be, to be effective in combat.
- I'm satisfied that I'm given a say in the things that directly effect my quality of life.
- Our team is tight (cohesive).
- I feel free to voice concerns to my chain of command.
- I'm satisfied that my chain of command will hear me out about concerns I have.
- People in my unit work well together.
- I can depend on the members of my unit to look out for me.
- My leaders expect me to use my initiative to solve problems.
- Leaders in my unit are sensitive to the needs of my family.
- I like my job.
- I know what is expected of me in doing my job.
- There is a good match between what the commander says and how we operate.
- In my unit, an atmosphere of trust exists between leaders and subordinates.
- Leaders in my unit are sensitive about my needs, on and off duty.

Figure 5. Proposed Additions to the CCS.

7. Prescribe Formal Development for All Officers. Improving leadership will indirectly enhance organizational climate. Capitalizing on a system that already exists by using the OER Developmental Support Form (DA Form 68-9-1a) for all commissioned ranks up to and including the grade of lieutenant general. Developing subordinate leaders will reinforce the transformation of individuals and organizations and of the coaches and those who are coached, and will provide modeling for future generations of leaders.

8. Discontinue the MEOSC as a Command Climate Instrument. The MEOSC (and ECAS) lacks sufficient scope to qualify as an adequate alternative to the CCS. Amend AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, so as to eliminate the MEOSC as a command climate instrument. Retain and use the MEOSC as a supplemental climate survey to investigate diversity-related issues (and the ECAS to investigate ethical-related issues), on a case-by-case basis only.

CONCLUSIONS

Transformation of the U.S. Army in the 21st century cannot occur without a command climate that ensures Army organizations are as effective as they can be. Effective command climate will not take root until effective measures and accountability are imposed. Much attention has been drawn to the need for a cultural transformation to facilitate the Army's transformation; however, it is merely rhetoric if real change does not transform the mindset of leaders at every level.

More than ever before, the Army needs to train the soldier, develop the leader, and build the team—now. The essential dynamic of combat power will be competent, confident leaders and soldiers operating in cohesive and highly effective teams. Preparing to fight the network-centric wars of this century will be easy relative to the real leadership challenge of developing soldiers and officers “who not only can adapt month to month to different cultures but also can continually adjust and readjust their reflexes.”²³⁵

Without a doubt, the perception of climates within organizations is essential to understanding team members' job satisfaction, which leads to learning and development, and affects commitment and retention. “If senior leaders begin to focus more on the welfare of their own organizations, a whole host

of desirable behaviors [will] result.”²³⁶ The officer corps must be driven to truly establish the Army as a learning organization, and in doing so reprioritize self, superiors, subordinates, and unit.

As noted recently in the 2001 CSIS Report, Army transformation depends on leaders who will develop organizational and command climates that encourage loyalty, initiative, and risk-taking. Senior leaders who model transformational behaviors and create the conditions to foster a learning organization represent only the first part of the change mandate. Equally important are the adjustments to strategic systems which are needed to reinforce change: adjusting the focus of performance appraisals to put organizations first; expanding the levels of organizations routinely using climate surveys; establishing coaching as a means for safely interpreting feedback and developing response measures; imposing requirements for action planning to ensure accountability for change; and renewing emphasis on leader development for all ranks.

As former Secretary of the Army White appropriately emphasized, Army transformation will entail getting the most from people and organizations through a new cultural mindset. True to Secretary White’s vision, the proposed systems adjustments combined with effective leadership will directly contribute to successfully enabling Army transformation in the 21st century.

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