

UNDER THE SCRUTINY OF THE BALDRIGE NATIONAL QUALITY PROGRAM: CHARTING THE WAY AHEAD FOR INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND

BY

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ⁱ Installation Management Command Website, March 16, 2010, <http://www.imcom.army.mil/hq/about/history/>.

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The road ahead for IMCOM also involves adaptation to the evolving Army *enterprise* initiative. In addition to functional organization, decentralized execution, and continuous support to the Army Force Generation; IMCOM is projected to assume responsibility for the Services and Infrastructure Core Enterprise (SICE). For IMCOM to prosper, transformation change must enhance the command’s ability to fulfill its current mission and prove adequate for the expansive demands of the SICE. Comprehensive Strategic Planning and the application of the Baldrige findings will effectively chart a course for this future success.

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UNDER THE SCRUTINY OF THE BALDRIGE NATIONAL QUALITY PROGRAM: CHARTING THE WAY AHEAD FOR INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND

Introduction

From its activation in October 2006, Installation Management Command (IMCOM) has had the daunting task of maintaining the Army's 184 installations and caring for its magnificent Soldiers and families. A significant advance from the rudimentary beginnings of the Installation Management Agency (IMA), IMCOM was established to free Senior Commanders (SCs) from the responsibilities of managing installation infrastructure and providing services. The developing years for IMCOM ran concurrently with the Army's leading role in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Never in the Army's history, have Soldiers and families been placed on such a demanding treadmill of recurring deployments. The enormous cost of preparing units to wage the nation's wars has challenged the Army to meet the resource requirements pursuant to the IMCOM mission. The task of overseeing nearly two hundred separate and distinct locations under competing financial priorities has created an extraordinary challenge.

Our mission is to provide the Army the installation capabilities and services to support expeditionary operations in a time of persistent conflict, and to provide a quality of life for Soldiers and Families commensurate with their service.

---IMCOM Mission Statement

The March 2009 IMCOM Transformation White Paper references the strategic aim of Army Chief of Staff General George Casey to rebalance the Army by 2011 across four stated imperatives: *Sustain, Prepare, Reset, and Transform*. The document's subtitle, *The Enterprise Approach to Managing Installations in support of Institutional Adaptation and the Expeditionary Army* encapsulates the vision for IMCOM. The core responsibilities of maintaining installation infrastructure, delivering services to the force, and standardizing programs and services across the breadth of Army installations remain unchanged. The White Paper declares that transformation is the continued progression of IMCOM to "better align the institutional Army with the operational Army." In a

concerted effort to guide the force's transformation, the Army is reorganizing under the *enterprise* approach. An enterprise is defined as a "cohesive organization whose structure, governance systems, and culture support a common purpose."² Consistent with this approach, senior leaders across the Army have been instructed to embrace functional organization, decentralized execution, and prioritized support to the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model. The application of these principles to the enterprise initiative will be the foundation upon which IMCOM continues its evolution.³

When LTG Rick Lynch assumed command of IMCOM in November 2009, he did so with existing orders (2005 Base Realignment and Closure) to relocate the command to San Antonio, Texas, in 2010. He also received guidance from the Army Chief of Staff to continue preparations to accept subordinate commands under the enterprise construct. According to the March 2009 Army Institutional Adaptation briefing, LTG Lynch, as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM), should be prepared to accept command of the Services and Infrastructure Core Enterprise (SICE). This sizable undertaking would align Services and Infrastructure with the other core enterprises—*Human Capital*, *Materiel*, and *Readiness*—to rebalance the force and collectively improve efficiency and effectiveness across the Army.⁴



Figure 1. Service and Infrastructure Core Enterprise.

The challenges confronting IMCOM are formidable. The command must strive to provide Army families a quality of life commensurate with their extraordinary service during this time of war. The programs and services that enable this quality of life must be efficiently retooled under the founding principles of the enterprise initiative (functional organization, decentralized execution, support to ARFORGEN). As these programs and services are nested in effective systems and processes, the resultant organizational structure must then be expansive enough to accommodate the acceptance of subordinate commands.

This paper will assess the current strategic direction of IMCOM utilizing the 2009 Malcolm Baldrige Organizational Self-Assessment and the 2008 Draft IMCOM Strategic Plan. It will examine the present transformation efforts to streamline the organization, improve services to garrisons, and standardize these offerings across the breadth of Army installations. Through the Baldrige Assessment, this paper will evaluate the current effectiveness of IMCOM's transformation. Have the initial transformation changes enabled IMCOM to achieve greater organizational effectiveness? Will the transformation changes contribute to the future success of IMCOM as it prepares to evolve into a core enterprise? For IMCOM to prosper, transformation must enhance the command's ability to fulfill its current mission and prove beneficial to the expansive demands of the SICE.

Background

In December 2006, the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army directed a comprehensive Installation Management Study (IMS) under the leadership of Dr. Stephen D. Clement. Key amongst the IMS findings was a recommended reorganization to provide Region Directors with a Key Account Manager (KAM) capability. KAM is a business model made famous by companies such as Pepsi, IBM, Proctor and Gamble, and Kellogg. KAM was adopted to provide a personalized, focused method of distributing products and services to yield better support to garrison staffs. "Key Account Management is the process of building and maintaining long-term cooperative relationships between a Supplier (Region) and Key Customer (Garrison) that promotes a *win-win* scenario by ultimately providing the end-user or Customer (Soldiers, Family, and Tenant Organizations) with products and services."⁵ KAMs were designated

Region Installation Support Teams (RISTs) with the purpose of offering higher levels of customer satisfaction through improved responsiveness, low-level issue resolution, and familiarity. These servicing RISTs are standing up in the six Region Offices of IMCOM—Northeast, Southeast, West, Europe, Korea, and Pacific Region.

Another significant change derived from the Clement Study involved the relocation of special staff, or *functional area experts* (i.e., legal, Inspector General, information technology, safety, etc.). Staff personnel were relocated from the previous Region Offices (pre-IMS) to IMCOM Headquarters as Functional Support Teams (FSTs). FSTs are an apparent product of the *shared service activity* concept in the Clement Study. “Services are centralized to produce economies of scale and in the case of small specialized service functions to achieve operational synergies.” The activity would presumably offer greater functional competency, promulgate best practices across an organization, and serve as a hub for process continuous improvement initiatives.⁶

The IMCOM Transformation Implementation Guide further defined the role of FSTs. FSTs were developed to be an extension of the Core IMCOM Staff, and the entry point for Region and Garrison issues into IMCOM Headquarters. Aligned by regions, FST Chiefs share loyalty to both Region Directors and Core Staff Principals at IMCOM. The Implementation Guide openly addressed the likelihood of contradicting operating priorities, and several flowcharts help to differentiate between RIST and FST matters.⁷ . Typically, the day-to-day business will transpire between Garrison functional staff and FST members. Handling exceptions to this normal business relationship constitute *business rules*. Business rules redirect actions away from the FST and through the supporting RIST. Generally speaking, a business rule is invoked when an action has been specified as such by a Region Director; can be classified as cross-functional; or is of sufficient importance so as to attract General Officer, Senior Executive Service (SES), or Department of the Army attention.⁸ The current structures for RISTs and FSTs are depicted in the Figures 2 and 3.

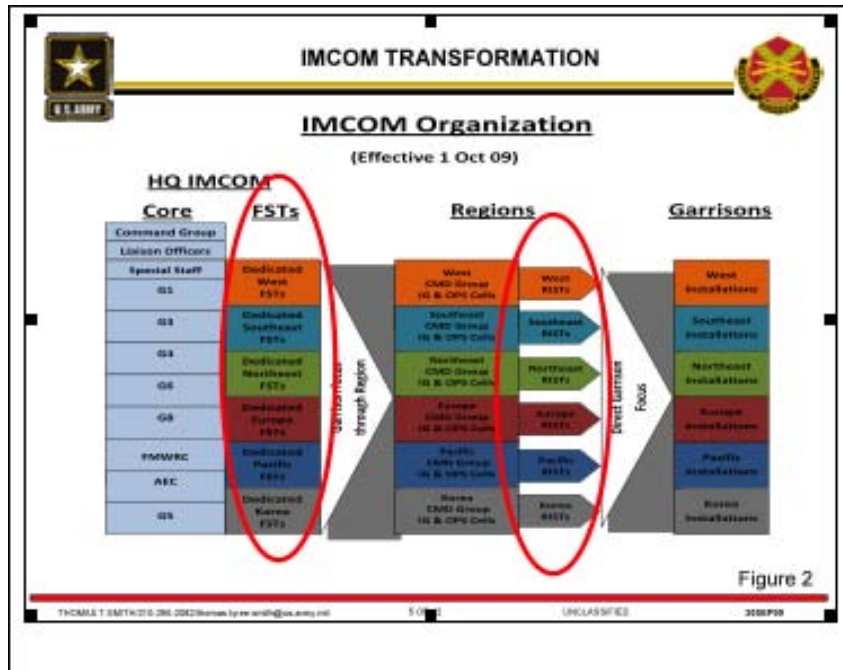


Figure 2. IMCOM Organization (1 October 2009).

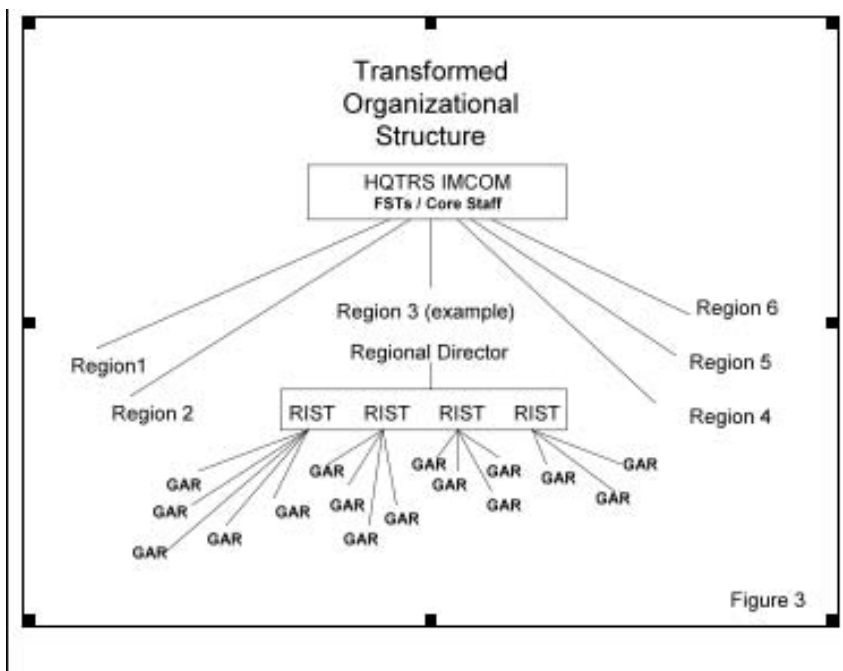


Figure 3. Transformed Organizational Structure.

The six Region Offices serve as IMCOM's management arm, mitigating the command's broad span of control. Under the transformed organizational structure, a Region Director leverages three to six RIST Chiefs to reduce the span of control over a Region's worth of garrisons. RISTs support between three to six garrisons, providing each personalized problem solving capability and advocacy to Region Directors. The reduced number of garrisons enables each RIST to acquire a comprehensive understanding of its *key customer* garrisons. Empowered with familiarity, RIST team members then have the ability to fully articulate the details of specific garrison issues to Region Directors.⁹

FSTs are considered extensions of the IMCOM Core Staff that provide enhanced problem solving expertise to Region Offices and Garrisons. Generally co-located with the IMCOM Core Staff, FSTs are intended to maintain a region and garrison focus while the Staff is focused on the enterprise at large. The FST reach back capability is intended to consolidate the regional perspective for the "core staff to facilitate enterprise-wide analysis and systemic problem resolution."¹⁰ In the view of senior Army leaders in 2006, the innovative suggestions from Dr. Clement and the proven success of KAM in commercial business were destined to provide IMCOM a better business model. Admittedly, the implementation of the RIST and FST remain a work in progress and their overall benefit to the Army remains to be seen. Given the continuing evolution that has defined installation management, how can leaders evaluate the success of IMCOM's transformation today?

Malcolm Baldrige Organizational Self Assessment

The Malcolm Baldrige Quality Program provides a framework to achieve performance excellence. The renowned Baldrige Assessment has been the product of continual refinement by the US Department of Commerce and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) since its inception in 1988. Already a familiar analysis tool across the IMCOM community, it has been the qualifying assessment for garrisons aspiring to be recognized as Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE). Within the Baldrige framework, there are seven criteria for analysis. These criteria include

leadership; strategic planning; customer focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management, and results.

The mastery and full development of these criteria into a meaningful business model have guided companies into higher levels of profitability and corporate success. The Baldrige honor has not been exclusively to “for profit” enterprises, as evidenced by the US Army’s Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center (ARDEC) award-winning distinction in 2007. In July 2009, IMCOM received a report on their annually administered Malcolm Baldrige Organizational Self Assessment (OSA). Included in the summary was feedback on the IMCOM Region and IMCOM Headquarters, both of which are germane to the assessment of FSTs and RISTs.

While IMCOM has made noticeable improvement in the OSA over the last three years, the Region Offices fell short in the criterion of Strategic Planning and Process Management. These scores were amongst the lowest in the Region and IMCOM Headquarters assessments. Sorting through the work-force comments, IMCOM is generally perceived as having a sound methodology for strategic planning. One employee (non-supervisor) answered the OSA query by listing the process steps:

1. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis,
2. Review higher HQ guidance,
3. Develop strategic goals and objectives,
4. Develop action plans,
5. Communicate action plans,
6. Monitor progress, and
7. Identify areas for improvement.¹¹

As is typically the case with an initiative or change, there is often friction. When asked about the conversion of action plans and deployment of those plans throughout the organization, one supervisor-manager recorded the sentiments of many saying:

More time is needed to staff with region and garrison level offices to ensure we're moving out smartly, and not placing undue burden on them. Unfortunately, we often don't have the time to do so, or senior leadership is directing we move out in a certain fashion and does not seem interested in feedback from the bottom up.¹²

The transformation of IMCOM must be the product of comprehensive strategic planning, deliberate implementation, and continuous evaluation and improvement. While the strategic planning process may be understood, there is the perception that the process has yet to be fully exercised.

Strategic Planning

In the fall of 2008, a draft Strategic Plan (2008–2012) was circulated across IMCOM. The document outlined IMCOM's role within the Army Framework to “provide the infrastructure and support to enable the force to fulfill its strategic roles and missions, and directly contributes to sustaining the All Volunteer Force.”¹³ The enduring IMCOM strategic objectives are to manage installations and facilities, enable the training of Soldiers and Adaptive Leaders with quality training facilities, sustain the All Volunteer Force by providing a high quality of life, and provide infrastructure and support to create *Flagships of Readiness*. Listed within the IMCOM internal goals and objectives is the goal to become a customer- focused streamlined organization. To attain that goal, the plan proposed four objectives that defined FST and RIST establishment:¹⁴

1. Define and continuously improve processes so that they are streamlined, standardized and repeatable across IMCOM.
2. Institutionalize knowledge management.
3. Gain efficiencies by streamlining organization structures and clarifying roles and responsibilities.
4. Build relationships of trust and confidence through open communication with all customers and stakeholders, internal and external.

Dr. Mark L. Blazey is a well-known advocate of the Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria and an active consultant to IMCOM. His book, *Insights to Performance Excellence*, provides further definition to the Baldrige criteria.

Strategic Planning consists of the planning process, and identification of goals (measurable outcome-oriented strategic objectives) and actions (activities with measures to monitor progress and completion) necessary to achieve success, and the deployment of those actions to align the work of the organization.¹⁵

The identification of “measurable outcome-oriented strategic objectives” is incompletely developed in the 2008 Draft Strategic Plan. As a noteworthy comparison, Fort Hood, Texas, has spent the last year circulating its acclaimed Campaign Plan (2009–2011) across the leadership of the Army. The III Corps Staff developed a comprehensive product derived largely from then Corps Commander LTG Lynch’s intent. LTG Lynch communicated the purpose and vision of his command and itemized the key tasks essential to mission accomplishment. Those key tasks became the basis for objectives, goals, and methods to achieve those goals and, of greatest importance, the metrics to quantify progress. The IMCOM draft strategic plan stopped well short of articulating how the organization would achieve its goals or how the organization would measure its progress.

A general understanding of the IMCOM vision existed in selected circles. An April 2009 IMCOM-West briefing under the leadership of Region Director Mr. J. Randall Robinson documented the understanding IMCOM West had as they embarked upon their 2008–2009 Rehearsal of Concept (ROC).¹⁶

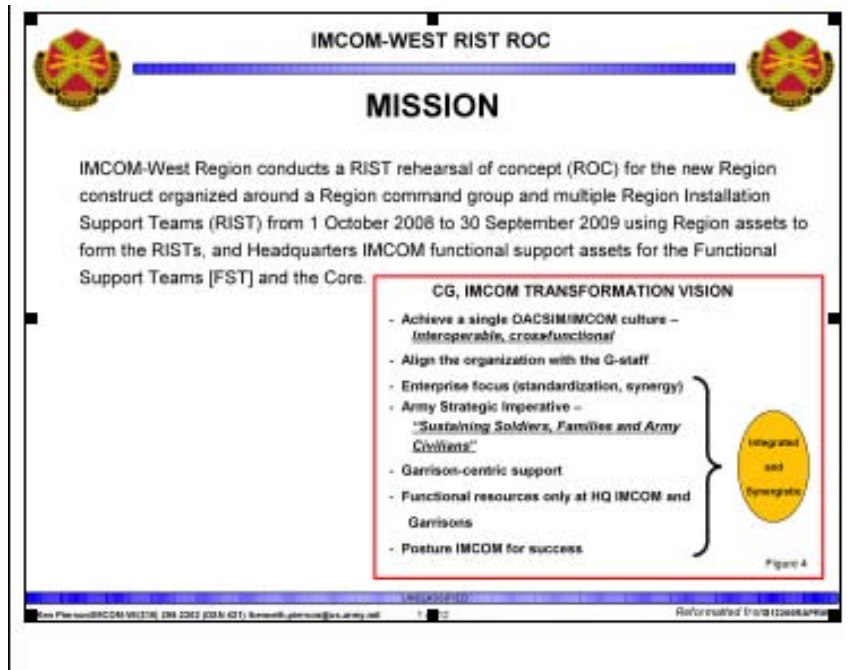


Figure 4. Commanding General IMCOM Transformation Vision (21 April 2009).

Mr. Robinson's grasp on the commander's vision was critical as it was his IMCOM-West office that executed the Rehearsal of Concept for IMCOM from October 2008 to September 2009. Vision is but one component however to the development of a fully articulated strategic plan. The 2008 Draft Strategic Plan never matured into a completed product.

In the context of the Baldrige Assessment, strategic planning is a two-component process composed of strategy development and strategy deployment. Strategy deployment is the transition from strategic objectives into action plans. These action plans must contribute to the alignment of processes and be consistent with vision, mission, and strategic objectives. Dr. Blazey summarized, "A well-deployed and understood strategic plan helps everyone in the organization distinguish between random acts of improvement and aligned improvement."¹⁷ IMCOM must strive to ensure transformation change is analogous to aligned improvement across the command.

Customer Focus

Another criterion from the Baldrige model that is relevant to the analysis of IMCOM is *customer focus*. Customer focus is an engagement strategy whereby an organization endeavors to develop a culture in which the voice of the customer directs organizational decisions. Together with *leadership* and *strategic planning*, these three criteria compose the *Driver Triad* within the Baldrige framework. The Driver Triad is so named because leadership, strategic planning, and customer focus collectively set the direction for any organization. The Triad shapes the motivation of the work force and provides focus for the completion of work.¹⁸ In the context of garrisons and IMCOM, the work is the provision of services and care of installations.

While the Baldrige assessment ranks customer focus amongst IMCOM's highest ratings, it is important that IMCOM regards customer focus as an area for continuous improvement. Who is regarded as the customer at IMCOM? A random polling of IMCOM workers might yield a few surprising answers. Most employees across IMCOM agree that Soldiers and Families are the customers and the *raison d'être* for this service-oriented organization. IMCOM employees wish to provide the Army Family a quality of life commensurate with their service to country. The garrison staffs of the Army, however, have the most direct impact on Soldiers and Families. The disparate nature of IMCOM, and the distinctive nature of its 184 garrisons, requires Garrison Commanders (GCs) to be the local executors of IMCOM's mission. IMCOM can best serve the Army Family when GCs and staffs are fully resourced by Region Offices.

Process Management

In the words of Dr. Blazey, "strategic planning helps provide a basis for aligning the organization's work processes with its strategic directions, thereby ensuring people and processes in different parts of the organization are not working at cross-purposes."¹⁹ Effective strategic planning can preclude current operational processes from impeding the accomplishment of the Army's future objectives. Process Management was another low point in the Baldrige organizational self-assessment for both IMCOM Headquarters and Region. Baldrige breaks this criterion into two components—work systems and work processes. The *work systems component* examines the internal processes an organization

uses to leverage its core competencies and provide value to the customer and organization success. The tabulated scores from the Baldrige OSA indicate that while work systems achieved less than half of the obtainable points, work processes registered an even lower score.

The *work process component* reviews how the organization “designs, implements, manages and improves its key work processes to deliver customer value and achieve organizational success and sustainability.” While seemingly subtle in its difference from the previous component, the process component is more inclusive in its evaluation of a mature organization or reorganized organization. In addition to analysis of the design, work process looks at day-to-day management of work and its ability to meet process requirements. Is the work process doing what it is intended to do? It also looks at how an organization minimizes the cost structure for its processes and the organization’s aptitude for continuous improvement in the wake of changing business needs and directions. As Dr. Blazey summarized, “these key work processes are critical to creating value for customers and achieving organizational success and long-term sustainability.”²⁰

While the Baldrige Assessment enjoys a tremendous reputation across corporate sectors, the OSA is admittedly prone to the same limitations as other surveys. Not all the data collected on the OSA is useable, some of it is extraneous. The value of the data is a function of the quality of the survey responses. If respondents are insincere in their participation, then the value of the self-assessment decreases sharply. If survey participants provide thoughtful responses to questions, then the assessment can be a legitimate tool for organizational improvement.

Anecdotally, one RIST Chief at the IMCOM Commander’s Conference indicated that it was her belief that the lack-luster administration of the OSA at IMCOM has diluted the power of the program. She explained that the model is intended to be utilized under certain parameters and that unfortunately employees do not fully understand the relevance of their input. It is possible that, respondents, on occasion, provide meaningless answers enabling them to quickly cycle through *the chore* of the two-hour OSA. Disingenuous participation erodes the value of the assessment. This limiting reality of the OSA however does not mean that the output should be completely dismissed. The real

tragedy as one senior government service employee explained, was the “absence of action following the release of the OSA findings.”

Nonetheless, sufficient data exists to identify general trends and perceptions. There is a reasonable amount of confidence in the organization’s (i.e., IMCOM’s) ability to design or identify basic work systems to deliver goods and services to customers. Employees and supervisors alike credited the organization with knowing how to competently deliver products and services to customers. Where their confidence waned, however, is in the organization’s ability to provide consistent outcome and achieve organizational success and sustainability. When asked if “the organization has effective systems to manage some of its internal work processes to ensure a consistent outcome,” an alarming 61% responded *no* and 36% believed only *sometimes/minimally*. When asked if systems are in place “to deliver customer value and achieve organizational success and sustainability,” the majority (63%) again expressed a lack of confidence.²¹ This weak vote of confidence is consistent with the opinions of senior civilian employees of IMCOM. Those who claim to be familiar with the Clement Study, also acknowledge that process management remains a work in progress.

The suitability of process management speaks directly to the effectiveness of the strategic plan. Judging by the OSA, there is a prevailing dissatisfaction with the current set of work processes. Modifications of work processes should be consistent with the organization’s strategic direction. Employees must understand the challenges of today and have a general understanding of the way ahead to align business practices with today and tomorrow. The introduction or retention of processes not aligned with the strategic objectives is disruptive to any organization. Comprehensive strategic planning can properly set the stage for aligned business practices. There must be an alignment of tasks, and consistency of purpose with what an organization is doing today, and what it will do in the future.

Concluding Recommendations

Develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Installation Management Command

IMCOM should seize this opportunity to fully develop their draft 2008 Strategic Plan and publish a completed plan in 2010. The organization must chart its course for the future by acknowledging the imperfections of the past and unique challenges of the future. IMCOM was created to relieve SCs of the responsibility of managing their installations while preparing for operational missions. To do this, IMCOM must do what LTG Robert Wilson prescribed to IMCOM West in 2009. Referencing the Commanding General's (CG's) transformation vision, IMCOM organizations must embrace the strategic imperative to *sustain Soldiers, Families and Army civilians through garrison-centric support* that leverages the *enterprise focus of standardization and synergy to posture IMCOM for success*. These enduring key tasks must be fully defined and continually reviewed. The draft 2008 Strategic Plan did not adequately define the supporting objectives, goals, and methods to achieve LTG Wilson's vision. A revised 2010 strategic plan should include the methodology to measure IMCOM's progress along its strategic path. Strategic Planning is about the identification of goals and actions to support strategic vision, and then equally important, the supporting systems to measure an organization's progress along its chosen azimuth.

The 2010 Strategic Plan must incorporate the intent of current CG, LTG Lynch, to ensure the document is grounded in today's key tasks and vision for the future. The change that is value added in the service of garrisons must ultimately prove suitable for the SICE. The confluence of past and present will develop a coherent plan that transitions key tasks into viable action plans. A 2010 Strategic Plan will provide IMCOM its road map for transformation. To communicate this change, IMCOM should also develop an accompanying strategic communication plan. This supporting effort is necessary to fully inculcate IMCOM's population with the current strategic direction and the milestones that will chart achievement. The campaign to educate is vital to the plan's effectiveness. Anecdotal evidence collected at the 2009 IMCOM Commander's Conference revealed that few fully understood the genesis behind the RIST and FST restructuring. The communication plan must address the *why* and *how* of what the organization is

attempting to achieve. To achieve the full yield of a revised strategic plan, the command must effectively communicate its intentions.

Consider Garrison Commanders among the Most Important Customers

The IMCOM Strategic Planning process should include GCs. They represent the professional garrison staffs, which take care of Soldiers and Families. Second only to SCs, GCs, are the most important customers. Enabling GCs to fully care for their respective populations is the critical task in the accomplishment of the IMCOM mission. While the IMCOM CG commits his full support to the SCs of the Army, it is the GC who is tasked with execution and delivery of services. A GC serves in the name of the SC for the betterment of the installation. GCs safeguard quality of life by providing for the population and maintaining the quality of an installation's infrastructure. The provision of programs and services to GCs by IMCOM is an enabling step towards taking care of Army Families. SCs manage quality of life on an installation with the same vigor they address operational readiness. IMCOM is the supporting headquarters in both endeavors. As the IMCOM Transformation Office cited in November 2009, it is all about providing "the installation capabilities and services to support expeditionary operations in a time of persistent conflict, and to provide a quality of life for Soldiers and Families commensurate with their service."²²

The importance of SCs and GCs to the IMCOM mission cannot be overstated. Truly, they are the individuals closest to the needs of the people. As such their input is critical to the legitimacy of the IMCOM strategic plan. Optimally, an IMCOM strategic plan would develop into an overarching plan cascading down into supporting strategic plans at each garrison. COL(R) Charles Allen addressed a GC's role at the strategic level in his article *Garrison Commanders: Leading at Several Levels*. COL Allen wrote that while IMCOM and its subordinate regions provide strategic direction, it is ultimately the responsibility of garrison commanders to develop the *how* in a supporting garrison strategy to achieve a desired end state within resource constraints. When GCs "provide vision, influence culture, establish policy and direction, allocate resources, and build teams and consensus" they are demonstrating strategic leadership.²³

A garrison strategic plan is the intersection of financial resources and strategic vision. Resources and supporting programs should stem from Region Offices, with Directors apportioning monies. SCs, supported by their staff and respective GC are responsible for developing the installation's strategic vision. Concurrently, the GC develops a supporting strategic plan to achieve the SC's vision. In close coordination with the SC's Staff, a GC implements change consistent with the SC's vision. A GC marshals financial resources and support from his Regional Director to meet the SC's intent. The Regional Director acts in accordance with the IMCOM CG's strategic intent and funding guidance to support the installation. This illustrated opportunity to buffer installation *wants* with IMCOM capabilities would be an invaluable step towards expectation management. Comprehensive strategic planning throughout IMCOM would unify the command in purpose and define the actionable intersection between SC vision and committed resources.

Dissolve Functional Support Teams and Empower Region Installation Support Teams

IMCOM's core mission is to oversee the infrastructure of the Army's garrisons and care for the Soldiers and families residing at those locations and the surrounding communities. As a result of the Clement Study, IMCOM introduced RISTs to provide for management and direct support of garrison staffs. FSTs were simultaneously introduced to provide an additional level of problem-solving expertise, primarily resident in IMCOM Headquarters. Both were billed as innovations to better service garrisons, however the necessity of both RISTs and FSTs is questionable.

At issue is the strikingly similar set of responsibilities for FST and RIST offices. It takes more than a cursory read of IMCOM documents to discern the difference between the functional responsibilities of FSTs versus RISTs. RISTs are the management arm for Region Offices, permitting Region Directors the ability to provide direct oversight and support to a set of garrisons. FSTs are in place to service Region Offices and are expected to attend to the routine business of garrisons. Daily business proceeds from garrisons to FSTs, unless the issue is significant enough to trigger a "business rule." In short, if an issue is likely to attract greater than normal visibility from general officers or senior executives, then it jumps track and is addressed in RIST channels.

The duties and responsibilities of FST and RIST are so subtly differentiated that they are arguably a duplication of effort. If the intention is to provide first-class service to GCs as the true providers to Army Families, then IMCOM should simplify the support to garrison staffs. The 2008 Draft Strategic Plan advocated processes that were “streamlined, standardized and repeatable across IMCOM.” The overlapping purview of FSTs and RISTs are incongruent with a streamlined approach. Business rules routinely reroute issues from the FST to the RIST. Business rules have become high visibility detour signs impeding issue resolution. FSTs have introduced an additional layer of bureaucracy to an already confusing process. If IMCOM is expected to evolve into a Core Enterprise, it must simplify its installation management processes to make room for the additional command and control challenges it will undoubtedly face. Equally important, SCs and their GCs deserve the very best in customer service.

IMCOM can streamline its approach by dissolving the FSTs. The personnel from the FSTs could be reassigned to Region Offices to increase the problem solving capability of their RISTs. Initially billed as an extension to the core staff, FSTs could alternatively be redistributed at IMCOM Headquarters to increase the capacity of the IMCOM core staff. IMCOM should begin evaluating the anticipated information requirements, process flow, and manning necessary to command and control the SICE. This preliminary “mission analysis” must be included in the strategic planning to fully understand the breadth of IMCOM’s future challenges. The command and control demands of the proposed SICE construct will undoubtedly stretch the limits of IMCOM’s span of control. Empowered Region Offices and RISTs could alleviate the load on IMCOM by assuming a greater level of responsibility for garrisons. Empowered Regions functioning within the IMCOM CG’s intent could permit the Core Staff of IMCOM to truly focus on the enterprise. The return of FST personnel to Region Offices could be an initial step towards that regional empowerment.

Embrace Key Account Management and Empower Region Directors

The Key Account Management concept is the ideal approach for a service-oriented organization seeking to meet the demands of uniquely different customers (garrisons). The division of labor within RISTs, and the assignment of garrisons to RISTs can be effectively accomplished. In the Southeast Region for example, garrisons with a US Forces (FORSCOM) SC are grouped together, as are those with a Training and Doctrine (TRADOC) SC and those with an Army Materiel Command (AMC) SC. This creates an information exchange and support opportunity across the IMCOM community previously unrealized. Garrison-specific support, coupled with effective information sharing between similar installations is value-added service to garrison staffs.

To fully leverage the KAM concept, IMCOM must review what additional steps might be taken to fully resource Region Offices and their RISTs to care for garrisons. Currently, the biggest challenge obstructing full implementation of RISTs is the availability of the right people. Jim Collins wrote an acclaimed book detailing the approach successful executives took to transform their organizations from “good to great.” The initial approach to success for great organizations was almost without exception the process of “getting the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus)” before determining where you drive it.²⁴ The search for RIST personnel is no different. Those aspirants matriculating from the IMCOM ranks have largely been functional specialists in their previous positions. Ironically, it is a search for generalists in a sea of specialists. Hired RIST personnel are now being trained by IMCOM to become generalists capable of tackling the multi-faceted work of garrison staffs. Capable, experienced individuals able to action the pressing issues of garrison staffs are difficult to locate. As of December 2009, IMCOM was only to fill approximately 70% of its RIST vacancies. Past the initial hiring and required RIST training, IMCOM should consider an assessment program to continually evaluate and improve the effectiveness of serving RISTs.

The challenging span of control now confronting IMCOM Headquarters will only become greater as the command moves closer to its enterprise destiny. To mitigate that strain on IMCOM Headquarters, Region Directors should be fully empowered to meet

the intent of the IMCOM CG. Full empowerment will provide the IMCOM CG the maneuver room to effectively command and control the future set of subordinate commands within the SICE. That empowerment is also a necessary prerequisite to meaningful dialogue with SCs. Region Directors must be seen as the true subordinate commanders to the IMCOM CG and colleagues of SCs. Currently, Region Directors are somewhat analogous in their authority to Mission Support Element (MSE) Directors at large installations. MSE Directors exist to run a large supporting staff tasked during deployments to backfill a Corps or Division Staff in times of deployment. Recent experience has shown however that these senior civilian directors are unable to assert the same decision making authority as general officers. Despite the well-communicated intent and operating parameters from Forces Command, the Army has resigned itself to providing general officers to oversee the MSE and sustain installation operations during deployments.

If Region Offices embrace the KAM concept, and RISTs are fully resourced to care for their assigned garrisons; perhaps it makes sense then to review the position authority of Region Directors. The continuing demands of ARFORGEN in this ninth year of prolonged conflict are exacerbated by shrinking budgetary constraints. The world of installation management has never been so challenging. Across the Army, GCs are making difficult budget decisions regarding Soldier and Family quality of life. Budgetary limitations directly impact the availability of programs and services to servicemen and women as well as other community members. SCs are entrusted with the difficult task of balancing ARFORGEN demands and sustaining the force's quality of life. It is uniquely an Army problem, understood best by the contemporary leaders of today's Army. As such, one could argue it might make sense to replace SESs Region Directors with General Officers.

SCs exercise command and control of their formations through deputy commanders. Management and coordination is routinely delegated to the brigadier generals of the Army. These are the individuals empowered to prioritize the stream of resources consistent with the SC's guidance. Similarly, Region Directors support SCs through direct support to GCs. The allocation of IMCOM resources to GCs enables garrison staffs to care for infrastructure and resident families. Both intermediaries act on

behalf of the SC to do what's right for units and Soldiers. Who better to wrestle with the unique contemporary challenges confronting SCs than recent brigade level commanders? If general officers replace SES directors, IMCOM could conceivably sit at the same decision making table with deputy and assistant commanders. This improved standing would have a discernable impact on SC decision-making. The complexity of IMCOM Korea has already led the Army to realize the benefits of one brigadier general Region Director.

Conclusion

The transformation of IMCOM represents an unprecedented degree of change for Army garrisons. The provision of service that extends from IMCOM Headquarters through empowered RISTs and into the hands of GCs must be a process of continuous improvement. A coherent strategic plan must definitively establish the charter for continued service to Soldiers and Families. That strategic plan must be of sufficient detail to measure IMCOM's transformation progress now and into the future as the command evolves into the SICE. GCs must emerge as the focal point of customer service across IMCOM. If garrison staffs are equipped with the right programs and support, then Soldiers and Families ultimately benefit. The quality of life for our servicemen and women must be preserved at a level commensurate with their extraordinary service. IMCOM's successful transformation can help ensure the future of the All Volunteer Force.

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