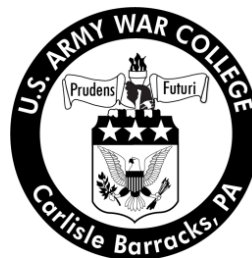


# Civilian Research Project USAWC Fellow

## Developing Senior Leaders' Family and Social Strength in the Operational Army

by

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Charles R. Owen, III  
United States Army



United States Army War College  
Class of 2013

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## **Abstract**

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This paper examines Army Leader development doctrine, guidance and foci seeking emphasis upon the Social and Family components of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness of senior leaders in the Operational Army. It explores recent focus by Army leadership upon the relationship between leader development and the strategic reset toward the Army 2020. The analysis also addresses the efficacy of concentrating leader development efforts within Operational formations, paradigm shifts in culture and philosophies of leader development, as well as challenges to overlooking the need to strengthen senior leaders Family and Social capabilities. Finally, it assesses attitudes, assumptions, and benefits of senior leader development in the Family and Social aptitudes.



## **Developing Senior Leaders' Family and Social Strength in the Operational Army**

. . . most leader development occurs during Operational assignments. In Operational assignments, leaders learn . . . to take risks and experiment with non-textbook solutions to problems . . . Operational assignments are the crucible of leader development.

---- Army Doctrine Publication 7-0, August 2012<sup>1</sup>

While the US Army leadership implements a strategic reset toward 2020, Leader Development remains a priority of the Army Secretary and Chief of Staff (CSA).<sup>2</sup> This includes sustaining, enabling and retaining adaptive and resilient leaders.<sup>3</sup> The comprehensive Soldier fitness and strength of our senior NCO and officer leaders, while usually assumed to be inherent, is nevertheless vital to enable and sustain if the Army is to retain their unprecedented combat experience and potential. Enabling their Family and Social strength via intentional, relevant, and restorative programs nests within the CSA's priority of leader development<sup>4</sup> and contributes to senior leaders developing the same in junior leaders. However, senior leaders do not always avail themselves of opportunities to improve their Family and Social strength or integrate the same into their command's leader development in the Operational Army. Family strength is defined as "being part of a Family unit that is safe, supportive and loving, and that provides the resources needed for all members to live in a healthy and secure environment" and Social strength as "developing and maintaining trusted, valued relationships and friendships that are personally fulfilling and foster good communication, including the ability to comfortably exchange ideas, views and experiences."<sup>5</sup>

Recent examples of senior level officer misconduct have led to a change in how higher-ranking flag officers will be evaluated, specifically focusing upon character and including peer and subordinate feedback. Equally to the point of this study, General

Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has initiated an effort to change senior officer development initiatives within the services.<sup>6\*</sup> However, beyond the ethics review and emphasis of the Chairman and other senior leaders concerned, questions remain about adequate embrace of the importance of total leader development. The Secretary of the Army, the Honorable John McHugh, implied as much in his Army Directive 2013-07 concerning Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (CSF2), stating, “The Army must embrace the concept of building and sustaining resilience as a fundamental part of our profession and as a key component of readiness. The personal engagement of all Army leaders, particularly senior leaders, is vital to achieving this needed culture change.”<sup>7</sup>

In light of and in line with the above call for a “needed cultural change,” there is a similar need for a paradigm shift to emphasize Family and Social strength in Senior Leader Development, specifically in the Operational Army. This paper contends that Operational force senior leaders and their command teams and formations are ideally suited for senior leader development in the realms of Family and Social strength. The focus of this effort is limited to Social and Family strength or resiliency for three reasons: The initial assessment that they are not clearly emphasized in senior leader development in the Operational Army, that Family and Social strength contribute directly to enhancing positive command climate, and that these strengths have already proven their strategic value to an Army in persistent combat. While acknowledging their interrelationship/ interdependency with the other components of Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (CSF2), Physical, Spiritual, and Emotional strengths, it is also necessary to narrow the focus to these components for this paper.

The Army's strategy in leader development is to address the development and retention of Soldiers as leaders across three domains of the Army: the Institutional, Operational, and Individual. These domains are complimentary and integrated but this paper will primarily address the Operational Army in this discussion. For clarity and emphasis, 'Operational Army' is used throughout this project to refer to Army formations, units or organizations as contrasted with the Institutional Army and Individual Soldier in the realm of training and Leader Development. It is also significant to note that in doctrine and the more recent guidance from Army leadership, there is not a clear articulation of what aspects of leader development, specifically concerning the five key functional areas (or Five Dimensions of Strength), are focused upon or emphasized in each domain. Further, the formal establishment of the CSF2 as a component of the Army's Ready and Resilient Campaign<sup>8</sup> and the assigning of roles and responsibilities to senior Army leaders to drive the Secretary's "culture change," demands a further and detailed delineation of tasks and emphasis. This articulation (both substantively and philosophically) is needed to guide this emphasis, both on Leader Development during the strategic reset and upon building an Army Strong Team of Soldiers, Families, DA Civilians and Senior Leaders.

This paper will briefly look at and evaluate senior Army leadership intent, Army leader development doctrine, assess the Family and Social components (or the lack thereof) of senior leader development, and make recommendations for leader development as the Army looks downrange to 2020. It is necessary to point out that a minor mal-adjustment in senior leader development may not impact much in the near term; however, in seven years it will matter what is decided, articulated, and

implemented now. Senior and strategic leaders “make Institutional investments with a long-term focus.”<sup>9</sup> These same senior leaders will recognize, value, and adjust development in order to prepare the future senior leaders of the Army “by personal example and critical resourcing decisions (to) sustain the culture and policies that encourage both the individual and the Army to learn and evolve.”<sup>10</sup>

## Leader Development

### Better Development of Leaders: A Priority

The ongoing paradigm shift(s) in Army leader development is focused upon developing the “whole man or woman” as a rounded and balanced professional and has become more central in importance through the crucible of the last eleven years of combat. A brief review of recent doctrinal updates, changes and leader’s statements will help frame and focus the discussion. Regarding leadership development adaptations, the CJCS observed that, “Aligning and connecting our leader-development programs and policies with our conceptual foundation and doctrinal changes such as mission command become the most critical adaptations we can make within our campaign of learning.”<sup>11</sup> It is this connecting of ideas that I assess is not complete in the realm of senior leader development in Family and Social strengths.

Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS), originally published in 2009 and subsequently updated, calls for four paradigm shifts to ensure “a balanced commitment to the three components of leader development: training, education, and experience,”<sup>12</sup> across the domains of the Operational, Institutional, and Individual (Soldier) Army. It identified critical leader attributes, a leader of character, presence, and of intellect, as well competencies of leaders who lead, develop, and achieve.<sup>13</sup> The 2010 ALDS expanded from the earlier established three core competencies, adding nine

imperatives, complete with objective statements.<sup>14</sup> Again, without specifying how, what, or when leaders will, this guidance implied that senior leaders will from their attributes (character, presence, and intellect), nevertheless lead and develop their subordinate leaders in all necessary competencies and strengths or domains. The Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) established five priorities, the last two of which are closely related and of particular interest. General Raymond T. Odierno has identified leader development as something, “. . . we do a great job of this already, but we will fine tune and adapt our leader development in order to better develop leaders at all levels that will thrive in complex environments. This is based on my thought that strong leaders, well-developed leaders can solve many problems that we face.”<sup>15</sup> In addition to and closely related to leader development is his priority to “. . . reinvigorate our commitment to the Profession of Arms.”<sup>16</sup> The CSA recognized the foundational nature of the Profession and in his articulation of a “cornerstone . . . founded on the bedrock of trust,” General Odierno linked the noble calling and the adaptation of Army leader development to doctrine.<sup>17</sup> This is another example of what General Dempsey articulates where the CSA is connecting ideas of the development of leaders whose strength is founded upon character and Army values, with Army leadership doctrine and the Profession of Arms. That same Army doctrine includes an emerging and increasingly focused attention on the importance of resiliency and the multiple components of strength that make and keep Soldiers strong.

It is not only unfortunate but true (and bears repeating) that some Army leaders including senior leaders, though high-performing, nevertheless lack emotional intelligence (EI) and sufficient self-awareness necessary to foster positive and dynamic

command climate, often leading to a toxic environment in Army formations and organizations. Emotional Intelligence, defined as “the ability that an effective leader harnesses to influence his subordinates and the climate of his organization in a positive manner.”<sup>18</sup> There is an apparent connection between EI and a leader’s requirement to connect or empathize with their Soldiers, peers, and subordinates, in order to foster greater development and esprit de corps.<sup>19</sup> According to the concept underlying the CSF2, it is similarly logical to connect Family and Social strength as a correlative if not causative influence on both individual Soldier strength and leader competencies in EI and empathy. Whether this was always true or became so (or more so) under the increasing stress of years of combat and high responsibilities is uncertain, but deserves greater research and attention. But this too may suggest the need for another paradigm shift in leader development: the consideration of how Family and Social strengths are connected to work relationships and leader effectiveness. In his 2007 Military Review article, then Major Abrahams brought to bear current research on EI and leadership theory, suggesting that these “softer skills” have influence in leader effectiveness.<sup>20</sup>

A connection between general emotional and relational intelligence, Family and Social strengths, and the reality of some senior leaders who do not practice the first principle of leader development, lead by example, in the dimensions of Family and Social strengths, suggests an under-addressed component of previous leader development. Army leaders, especially high-profile senior leaders, unable to add (or maintain) Family and Social strength to their comprehensive package (of character, as well as competence), potentially fall short of the fifth and integral priority of the CSA,

establishing trust as a first and foundational principle; their dysfunctional personal lives eventually undermine and cast doubt upon their reliability and trustworthiness.<sup>21</sup>

However, the opposite of the above observation is often true as well: that our senior leaders do have highly developed and resilient Family and Social strength, modeling this for their formations and leaders. In a later section under, “Recommendations,” I will address the potential benefits of surveying, to identify, assess and publish ‘best practices’ among these resilient commander and the fellow senior leaders. At this point it will suffice to observe that in identifying either the lack of consistency or lack of ‘connection,’ between requirements, Army leader intent, doctrine, and actual leader development practice, it is equally important to recognize that actual initiatives and examples already exist, offering opportunities to learn from and perpetuate these, ‘best practices.’

### Three Domains and Five Dimensions

Army Leadership is committed to leader development as an integrated effort that includes the entire spectrum of learning environments, from the formalized Institutional learning and training centers to informal self-development. Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) states that overall leader development is systematically accomplished across the integration of three domains: the Operational force (formations), the Institutional Army, and the individual.<sup>22</sup> Among the myriad subjects addressed in leader development from initial entry to Senior Service College level, concerns for and interests in building and preserving resiliency have increased dramatically in the last decade or more of combat. Secretary McHugh’s CSF2 directive on March 25, 2013, further emphasized the crucial role of CSF2 in the overall Army’s Ready and Resilient Campaign to develop healthy and psychologically strong Soldiers,

Families, Department of the Army (DA) civilians.<sup>23</sup> In his directive, Secretary McHugh called leaders at all levels, “particularly senior Army leaders,” to be personally engaged in the substantial initiatives directed, including all domains and especially directing Institutional implementation, much of which is in progress.<sup>24</sup>

At every senior level Institutional training and education center from the Senior Leader Course to the Army War College, Professional Military Education (PME) curriculum now includes extensive and expanding attention to CSF2. Since its inception and with this most recent directive, permanently and officially establishing CSF2, Army leadership is inculcating the five dimensions of strength: the Physical, Emotional, Social, Spiritual and Family, as key functional areas for strengthening health, resilience, and performance.<sup>25</sup> In particular, efforts at the Sergeant Major Course (SMC), Intermediate Leader Education (ILE), Pre-Command Course (PCC), and Army War College now include curriculum on the latest CSF2 initiatives preparing these senior leaders to implement these programs when they return to the Operational Army. Further, they are also given opportunities to improve their Family, Social strengths and emotional intelligence via self-assessment tools and seminars and retreats.<sup>26</sup> Complementing and maximizing both the introductory and refresher aspects of leader development provided to senior leaders in the Institutional domain are the initiatives to dramatically increase attention to CSF2 in the Operational Army domain. Plans call for establishing Master Resiliency Training Centers (MRTC) at major Army posts and the eventual assignment of MR Trainers (MRTs) throughout units to the company level.

Attention in this project focuses upon Leader Development, and primary emphasis is on senior leaders (E-7 to E-9, O-4 to O-6), concentrating on their Family



and Social strength dimensions in their Comprehensive Soldier Fitness. This focus is for two reasons. Senior leaders are regularly assumed to have obtained or mastered this strength/resiliency aspect of their personal-professional life, thus programs or systems have not previously attended to or applied to them.<sup>27</sup> It is as General George W. Casey emphasized in one of his strategic communications about the (then) CSF program being implemented in the Army, concern for resiliency: “focuses on prevention and on the enhancement of psychological strengths already present in our Soldiers.”<sup>28</sup> In addressing senior leader development in the Family and Social realms, the Army is focusing on resiliency present in Soldiers and their Families; even more to the point, senior leaders have these strengths, they live them every day and they expect themselves and each other to continue to do so. However, an almost tiring reference to toxic, moral, and ethical failures in recent years by senior military leaders reiterates the mistake this assumption is and will continue to be. Second, focus is upon senior leaders is important because they hold the key to at least three aspects of the strategic reset toward 2020: they are developing the future senior leaders of the Army<sup>29</sup>, are most influential in the retention of these proven leaders and they have the greatest credibility and traction to demonstrate, lead by example, and demonstrate Family and Social strength. Having observed some key aspects of the doctrinal basis of leader development, as well as recent and prescient guidance from the senior leaders of the Army and Department of Defense directing leadership development adaptation and improvements, the remaining analysis focuses on “connecting ideas” between senior leader development, Family and Social strengths, and the Operational Army.

#### Leader Development in the Operational Army

Army doctrine states that leader development occurs in the three domains of the Army and emphasizes that commanders are responsible for developing leaders<sup>30</sup>, as does the responsibility for the Ready and Resilient Army Campaign and its CSF2 initiatives. The opportunities to develop leaders' Family and Social strength within the Army formations, the Operational leg of the triad, are both proven and available for further exploitation. In focusing this study on assessing efforts at preserving, enhancing, and perpetuating the Family and Social strengths of leaders and especially senior leaders in the Operational domain, it is important to acknowledge the vital contributions of all domains, especially recognizing the complementary interplay between the Institutional, Operational, and Individual domains.

Since Family strength is "being part of a Family unit . . . that provides the resources needed for all members to live in a healthy and secure environment" and Social strength is "developing and maintaining trusted, valued relationships and friendships that . . . foster good communication, including the ability to comfortably exchange ideas, views and experiences," these competencies developed throughout leaders' careers have strategic import.<sup>31</sup> In developing these complementary faculties and relational functions of senior leaders, it is a key part of the long-term leadership vision to equate the growth of these competencies with preparing resilient leaders for the complex and ambiguous future. Further, developing senior leaders' Family and Social strength enhances their preparation for mentoring and retaining future leaders. By their very nature and expression, both positive Family and Social strength (resiliency) development contributes collective leader strength to organizations and the Army enterprise. For example, recent resiliency research (2011) indicates that growth in

Social strength increases individual capacities of the leaders and consequently their group's capacities to achieve.<sup>32</sup> The social science research also indicates that the dynamic synergy of the "collective" strengths (Social and Family resiliencies) emphasize group coordination, empathy, accomplishments and "collective outcomes (that) typically transcend those that would be obtained from more solitary activities."<sup>33</sup>

The principles outlined in Army doctrine assert that most substantial leader development occurs in formations (Army units), where leaders and senior leaders spend the majority of their career and " . . . they develop through challenging, unfamiliar experiences that require them to adapt theory to reality. . . .They learn to take risks and experiment with non-textbook solutions to problems. They learn what they do not know and fill the gaps through self-development."<sup>34</sup> The question of emphasis as well as substance must be explored and answered when applying the same observations and principles to the vital Family and Social strengths or skills necessary for senior leaders. If the crucible of leader development is in fact the Operational assignments where leaders and senior leaders experience the most challenges concerning maintaining healthy and strong Family and Social systems, then this environment is also the most promising location for significant growth and development. Also, if commanders and their senior command team are not only responsible for the development of their leaders, in every domain, but are the most qualified by experience, education, training, and vested interest, then they are equally the best qualified to fully develop these in themselves and their subordinates. Formation commanders and senior leaders either have or soon will have robust resources available in the installation MRTCs, resident MRTs, and organizationally assigned MRTs. They also have inherent or inside access

to their formations' leaders and Families, and are able to integrate development of these comprehensive and interdependent Family and Social strengths with the training and life cycle within their units.

However, the most recent guidance directed by the Secretary of the Army has the potential to be interpreted along old structures and cultural assumptions, assuming that the actual responsibilities for developing Family and Social strengths rests with Installations, the MRTCs, and organizationally assigned MRTs, thus missing a strategic opportunity and quantum shift in focus which could occur now, an opportunity "to experiment with non-textbook solutions."<sup>35</sup> When originally introduced by General Casey, he emphasized the same thrust and principles directed by Secretary McHugh in his March 2013 Directive: Operational commanders must own this initiative and bring about the needed culture change. "To be clear, CSF will serve as a catalyst for changing Army culture . . . Because the readiness of the force is an Operational Army issue, I have placed this program within the purview of the Army's Operational leadership. . . . I felt that we would receive the greatest traction if CSF became a command program sewn into the fabric of Army operations and leadership."<sup>36</sup> General Casey's vision included a direct correlation of why Army Operational leadership has to own CSF (now CSF2 as a part of the broader Ready and Resilient Campaign) and is nested in Secretary McHugh's acknowledgement of the need for senior leaders' involvement to press the cultural change ahead into the future. The thesis reiterates this with regard to leader development in Family and Social strength: These areas of leader development not only belong to Operational formations and organizations, but they will be the seedbed for changing the culture.<sup>37</sup>

## Recommendations

### Maximize Family & Social Development from Installation CSF2 Resources

While Forces Command, Installation Management Command, TRADOC, and Senior Commanders implement the Secretary's recent CSF2 guidance, Operational formation and organizational command teams should embrace and capitalize on present and future opportunities. The planned increases in structures and programs, and manning and expertise in CSF2 are to be utilized in a unit-centric approach.<sup>38</sup> Thus, leader development should be naturally and organically integrated within an overall plan to train Soldiers, ready Families, and build teams and positive command climates. Since the Operational domain (units, formations, organizations), is the primary location and culture where the most effective leader development occurs, this should be especially true in the realms of Family and Social strength. General Casey's guidance concerning CSF2 'belonging' to Operational command teams has equal application concerning leader development in Family and Social strength. Senior officers and Senior Enlisted Advisors (SEA) who mentor subordinates and peers, help the next generation of leaders learn to navigate the complexities of personal, professional, and social life demands. When demonstrating an integrative rather than a balancing philosophy, a more realistic and rewarding approach, leaders prepare Army future leaders to be more resilient. For members of the Profession of Arms, integrating their professional, Family, Social, as well as spiritual and emotional life rather than trying to 'balance' them as if they are competing, has greater promise for strength. Senior leaders who are mastering this themselves have much to offer a rising generation of leaders.<sup>39</sup>

### Apply Principles of Leader Development

Army formations, as the crucible for leader development, provide the most opportunities

for senior leaders mentoring, modeling, and holding one another accountable to the best practices of Family and Social strength. It is here, looking to a Commander and CSM who leads by example, develops subordinate leaders, and trains their leaders to know their subordinates and their families, that leaders will find the five dimensions of strength most challenged by the culture and stressors of Army life. It is also in this context that creative use of existing programs, concepts, and structures could be expanded for Family and Social strength development.

High performers and leaders are not necessarily the best future senior and strategic leaders<sup>40</sup> and assuming Family and Social strengths are comparable with their other clear competencies and accomplishments can be a mistake. They are resilient in some areas but this does not imply that they are impervious to the stressors and long-term effects of persistent conflict, and thus strong in all dimensions of strength. The Army has correctly assessed the focus should be upon prevention (of psychological and resiliency detractors) and preserving “the psychological strengths already present in our soldiers.”<sup>41</sup> They are resilient but have not arrived – psychological strength is learned, practiced,<sup>42</sup> relearned and refreshed via observation and reinforcement by mentors.

Many Army leaders and senior leaders are strong in Family and Social dimensions, are modeling these behaviors and strengths, and have robust leader development occurring in their formations. Therefore, there is also much benefit to surveying, identifying, assessing and publishing ‘best practices’ occurring among these resilient commanders and their fellow senior leaders. An example of gaining an understanding and way ahead from querying the field occurred from 2011 to 2012, when the Commander US SOCOM, initially Admiral Eric T. Olson followed by Admiral

William H. McRaven, initiated the Pressure on the Force (subsequently evolving to the Preservation of the Force and Families) Task Force (POTFF) to identify problems and symptoms, but also focused upon gaining an understanding of 'best practices' already in place in supporting servicemembers and their Families.<sup>43</sup> The POTFF best practices were then made known or available to the force at large, and were used to develop and fund aspects of those which could be similarly replicated in other formations. A similar approach initiated in the Army formations and among command teams will gain better situational awareness of what best practices are desirable to replicate and resource. The CSA has committed the Army to such a[tack or effort], promising to find the best programs for supporting Families and similarly eliminating redundant or less effective Family programs. So the precedence is in place to look for best practices, and apply the same approach and find the working leader development programs including Family and Social strengths, emerging or already in place.<sup>44</sup>

The challenge of constrained and competing resources is addressed by the issue of priority: leader development and retention of proven battle-hardened leaders rises to the top of Army leadership emphasis, casting a vision for the strategic reset toward the Army of 2020. It is the retention of human capital that is deemed most important in the recently released Army Capstone Concept.<sup>45</sup> Previous focus of resiliency training and the development of CSF2 have been on young Soldiers or junior leaders in concerns and programs to foster comprehensive strength. In the Operational Army, senior leaders have the most time and best environment to challenge, mentor, and model these desired strengths already present, necessary to preserve, and further develop.

Since the 2009 and subsequent Army Posture Statements, the now familiar slogan, “The strength of our Soldiers is our Families,” valuing the contribution of the Families to Soldier’s wellbeing, is reiterated as a strategic mainstay. With awareness that strong, resilient Families are essential to the Army,<sup>46</sup> the combination and holistic integration of all components of leaders’ strength will enable them to “be better prepared to meet ambiguous and unpredictable challenges and help restore balance to the Army.”<sup>47</sup> The Secretary’s March 2013 directive simply reiterates this importance.

Increasing and sustaining Army senior leaders’ Family and Social aptitude improves their resiliency, while also enhancing overall strength and leader competencies. A strategic application of this domain-integrated approach to leader development will save or concentrate resources by combining two of the three domains responsible: the Operational along with the Individual, Training alongside Experience. By capitalizing on this realm of leader development, senior leaders partner with and mentor the individual, responsible for guided self-development,<sup>48</sup> in the context of their formations, maximizing existing and emerging installation based resources.

Comprehensive resiliency of Soldiers is truly ‘comprehensive,’ in that each dimension (physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and Family) is coherent and necessary to the other for strengthening the warrior and Family. Via the well-researched efforts of the Army Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program and Directorate, Army leaders know well that the integrated and mutually enhancing aspects of every domain of a Soldiers’ life are required to move with strength and resiliency toward future strategic security challenges. Adaptive senior leaders, concerned with mentoring and retaining exemplary



leaders, model comprehensive strength, lead by example and show subordinates and peers a strong and positive example in maintaining important Family relationships.

### Challenges

Senior leaders with balance and strength across all realms of his or her life (comprehensive fitness) are nevertheless faced with challenges in developing these in peers and subordinates with “recommended but optional learning that will help keep you prepared for changing technical, functional, and leadership responsibilities throughout your career.”<sup>49</sup> Where, when and in what context do senior leaders further develop the resilience or psychological strength already resident within the majority of their subordinate and peer leaders? The challenges are at least three-fold, including assumptions, culture, and limited resources.

Senior leaders assume their fellow senior and subordinate leaders are resilient; further, because of this assumption, the past Army culture often focused upon young Soldiers’ resiliency and sustainment, and leaders have frequently opted-out of opportunities to build, sustain, and increase their Family and Social strengths. Command teams can eliminate this “opting out” and build cohesion by directing initiatives such as Strong Bonds and other relationship enhancement efforts to be nested in their Leader Development program. Already existing programs and funding streams (Strong Bond marriage and other deployment/redeployment training events) offer “new” or “untapped” starting points to adapt and innovate an approach previously under-utilized. When senior leaders own the programs within their formations, nest them within a comprehensive and integrated philosophy and approach to the care and feeding of the troops, what can be accomplished goes well beyond only improving a couples communication skills or increasing young Soldier’s’ decision-making process.

In an After Action Report (AAR) comment, evaluating a 3-day Father-Son Relationship Enhancement Program, a NCO senior leader said, “it was the best time I have ever had with my 12 year old son.”<sup>50</sup> This and similar comments, were common to hear in a series of events focused upon reuniting combat veterans with their children in a ‘relaxed’<sup>51</sup> recreational setting. This Army leader represents hundreds of All-Volunteer professionals with years of combat experience in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom/New Dawn, learning a key dimension of Social and Family strength: the human dimension of leader development takes time and commitment but the rewards are far-reaching. Further internal assessments by unit leaders from Master Sergeant up to Command Sergeants Major and Colonel recognized that beyond the clear benefit to individual Soldier and Family members, these programs were also beneficial to team-building and enhanced the mentoring of the unit’s senior leaders.

The culture of accomplished and self-sufficient leaders as well as latent attitudes concerning the place of the Family and Social as being limited to the private and personal lives of our leaders and Soldiers also must be overcome. Warriors and leaders of warriors are charged with and expected to exercise great initiative, problem solving and competence in their professional lives so the logical assumption is that this will be true in their Family and Social dimensions as well. But senior leaders charged with self-development in other areas can expand the developmental opportunities to include the Family and Social strengths of their leaders, knowing that those same can-do and competent attributes are available to enhance growth in these dimensions. Though the Family and Social strengths are frequently in the Individual domain of development, commanders nevertheless have a strategic opportunity to expand their vision and

program to include them. Senior leaders who wish to enhance their Family and Social aptitudes can be helped or facilitated in doing this by intentional inclusion of Family members in age and gender appropriate events. In addition to the Father-Son program mentioned above, a traditional Staff Ride focused upon both historical lessons-learned as well as relationship building exercises has a tertiary benefit of building Social resiliency and networking among unit leaders. The synergy mentioned earlier in a general sense is more specifically seen here: as senior leaders fulfill their developmental responsibility, they build team relationships, enhance Family bonds, increase Social capacity and increase cohesion across multiple spheres.

#### Areas for Further Attention

Additional research brings insight and understanding to generational differences in leadership development, expectations, and aspirations. Similar to General Dempsey's recognition that the educational system must move from a pedagogical model of "death by PowerPoint" and a "sage on the stage" to collaborative learning environment with a "guide on the side,"<sup>52</sup> younger, combat proven leaders may expect and require a different, more holistic approach to leader development. One challenge concerns the expectations of the so-called Gen-X and Gen-Y leaders, now entering the ranks of senior leader and soon strategic leaders. According to developing research, they have dramatically different expectations of how much time, energy and commitment they are willing to sacrifice to professional life, in contrast to their baby-boomer predecessors.<sup>53</sup> As the younger generations move into more senior positions their mentors must understand and apply these differences, if the Army is to retain their experience. It is also a hallmark of empathy and emotional intelligence on the part of the senior leaders to ask for feedback from these young senior leaders to develop the

same programs: What roles do they expect their formations leaders and systems to play in helping them navigate the unique challenges of maintaining healthy Family and Social relationships in the context of Army life?

Research in the important interplay between trust, values-based leadership, and work efficiencies also offer avenues for further Army benefit. Recent civilian social studies have focused upon the very topics of increased senior leadership attention and development; these studies offer cogent and timely resources, certainly in the institutional Army but even more immediately to Operational senior leaders. Attention to transformational leadership, mediating roles of trust, concern for different generational challenges among leaders, social identity complexities and other leadership development challenges are all addressed in well-designed and thought-out studies, now readily available for senior leader development benefit.<sup>54</sup>

#### Benefits of Operationally-Centric Leader Development and CSF2

Leadership development occurs most effectively in the Operational formations, where training, building cohesive teams, and mentoring occur in the “crucible” of Army life, so it is here that senior leaders best develop themselves and subordinates.<sup>55</sup> In areas concerning the integration of professional and personal priorities, important relationships and emotional health, both the challenges and opportunities to demonstrate and model this character is the most realistic. Thus, it is in the formations where funding, creativity, mentoring and team building are synergized. Specifically, in this era of fiscal austerity, unit developed and conducted intentional programs offer leaders the most efficient way to target leader development in the realms of Social and Family strength. Even more to the point, as commanders and command sergeants major mentor and direct the development of their leaders, they can simultaneously

strengthen families and build cohesion using intentional programs nested within existing concepts and structures.

For the development of adaptive and sophisticated leaders able to excel in future full spectrum operations, both doctrine and senior Army leaders' intent requires leaders adept at the human domain challenges anticipated across that spectrum.. Challenging events inclusive of entire unit leadership and Family members expand command teams' repertoire of mentoring and leader development opportunities. As Family and relational challenges are faced, Family and Social competencies are improved or added, and the Emotional Intelligence quotient of leaders increases.

There are additional benefits in the larger responsibilities of leading by example, setting a positive climate and perpetuating a culture of Army values and cohesion and trust. As subordinates and peers observe leaders investing time, effort and resources in Family and Social well-being, there is synergy and traction in building leadership teams. Further, senior leaders modeling adaptive and positive practices as well as overcoming stress and detractors from combat training and mission accomplishment, create a positive environment, foster esprit de corps and team-building and strike the balance between caring for people and mission accomplishment.<sup>56</sup>

### Conclusion

The latter discussion recommended that in the context of a well organized, intentional, and Family-inclusive philosophy and program, senior Army Operational leaders develop senior leaders in their formations in the realms of Social and Family strength. Thus nested in and modeling the Secretary's and CSA's intent of developing well-rounded and balanced leaders, command teams in the Operational Army are principally charged with taking the robust education their leaders receive and fully

developing them, including their Social and Family competencies, in the context of real Army life, with all its challenges, complexities, and rewards.

Senior leaders benefit themselves and their formations in their integration of Operational life with the development and sustaining of leaders in the Social and Family domains of their comprehensive fitness. When properly understood, developed, and conducted, leaders will view and use their Operational formations' culture and cycle of training, deploying, redeploying, and resetting, as the ideal crucible to build Family and Social strength among their fellow and future senior leaders. Partnering with robust and comprehensive initiatives implemented in the Institutional Army, as well as resources and systems at the installations, Operational senior leaders have the ideal scenario to maximize their own, their peers, and their subordinate leaders' strengths in these two realms of their comprehensive Soldier fitness.

In the context of their formations, the synergy of restoring and enhancing leaders' Family and Social bonds in concert with and alongside fellow unit members enables modeling and mentoring the adaptive traits and character required for future Army and Land Force full spectrum challenges. Approaching leader development, especially senior leaders and future senior leaders from a holistic and integrated point of view is certainly not new or innovative, but perhaps the necessity of seeing obvious opportunities within our formations requires fresh or refreshed vision. Finally, this research posits that appreciating the unique and efficacious nature of senior leaders modeling and mentoring Family and Social strength ensures an effective passing of the baton of values based leadership and the profession of arms.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication No. 7-0, August 23, 2012, [http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_a/pdf/adrp7\\_0.pdf](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adrp7_0.pdf) (accessed January 28, 2013), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond T. Odierno, United States Army, 2012. CSA Remarks at AUSA Eisenhower Luncheon, linked from *The United States Army Home Page* at “Article,” [http://www.army.mil/article/89823/October\\_23\\_2012\\_CSA\\_Remarks\\_at\\_AUSA\\_Eisenhower\\_Luncheon\\_As\\_Delivered/](http://www.army.mil/article/89823/October_23_2012_CSA_Remarks_at_AUSA_Eisenhower_Luncheon_As_Delivered/) (accessed April 11, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Raymond T. Odierno, United States Army, 2012. AUSA Special Report, “Odierno: Army has three principle roles-‘Prevent, Shape, Win,’ March 2012. <http://www.ausa.org/publications/ausanews/specialreports/2012/03/Pages/OdiernoArmyhasthreepriple roles-‘Prevent,Shape,Win’.aspx> (accessed April 11, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> -- Odierno, (accessed April 11, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> John McHugh, Secretary of the Army, “Army Directive 2013-07 (Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness CSF2 Program),” Washington, D.C., Department of the Army, March 25, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Thom Shanker, “Conduct at Issue as Military Officers Face a New Review,” *New York Times*, April 13, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> McHugh, Directive 2013-07, 2.

<sup>8</sup> McHugh, Directive 2013-7, 1.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership: Competent, Confident, and Agile*, Field Manual 6-22 (Washington, DC: U.S Department of the Army, October 12, 2006), 12-9.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid,12-9.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Dempsey, “Leader Development,” February 2011, linked from *The Association of the United States Army Home Page* at “Army Magazine,” [http://www.ausa.org/publications/armymagazine/archive/2011/2/Documents/Dempsey\\_0211.pdf](http://www.ausa.org/publications/armymagazine/archive/2011/2/Documents/Dempsey_0211.pdf) (accessed April 19, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> John M. McHugh and Raymond T. Odierno, *The Nation’s Force of Decisive Action, Fiscal Year 2012*, Posture Statement presented to Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess. (Washington: DC:US Department of the Army, 2012), Information Paper, “Army Leader Development Strategy for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Army (ALDS),” linked from *The United States Army Home Page* at “Information Papers,” [https://secureweb2.hqda.pentagon.mil/VDAS\\_ArmyPostureStatement/2012/InformationPapers/ViewPaper.aspx?id=306](https://secureweb2.hqda.pentagon.mil/VDAS_ArmyPostureStatement/2012/InformationPapers/ViewPaper.aspx?id=306) (accessed April 19, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Odierno, "Odierno: Army has three principle roles," (accessed April 11, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> David S. Abrahams, "Emotional Intelligence and Army Leadership: Give It to Me Straight!" *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (March-April 2007): 87.

<sup>19</sup> Joe Doty & Jeff Fenlason, "Narcissism and Toxic Leaders," *Military Review Online*, (January-February 2013): 55-60.

<sup>20</sup> Abrahams, "Emotional Intelligence. . ." *Military Review*, 90.

<sup>21</sup> Odierno, "Odierno: Army has three principle roles" (accessed April 11, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, ADP 7-0, 1.

<sup>23</sup> McHugh, Directive 2013-07, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Kim L. Summers, email message to author, April 9, 2013; Thomas W. Weafer, email message to author, April 10, 2013.

<sup>27</sup> As delineated above, this is no longer true in the Institutional Army, where robust programs are now in place at SLC, SMC, Leavenworth, and Carlisle. However, worthy of further analysis is weighing the balance of these programs between preparing senior leaders for the actual CSF2 implementation in their formations, their general situational awareness about the emerging installation-based CSF2 structures and programs, with their actual participation in the various opportunities themselves, for strengthening and restoring their own Family and Social Resiliency.

<sup>28</sup> George W. Casey, Jr., "Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, A Vision for Psychological Resilience in the U.S. Army," *American Psychologist Online* 66 (January 2011): 1.

<sup>29</sup> CSA General Odierno addressed this connection between Army leaders, retention, and the transition toward the future Army, when he discussed these issues at the 2012 AUSA Annual Conference. In a press conference held at the AUSA meeting, General Odierno articulated his expectation that many of the current leaders developed over the last 11 years of combat will volunteer to stay in the Army and form a cadre of leaders who will, "pull the Army into the future." Raymond T. Odierno, "Army Will Do its Job with Less, Secretary Says," linked from *the United States Army Home Page* at News Archive, [http://www.army.mil/article/89735/Army\\_will\\_do\\_its\\_job\\_with\\_less\\_secretary\\_says/](http://www.army.mil/article/89735/Army_will_do_its_job_with_less_secretary_says/) (accessed January 18, 2013).



<sup>30</sup> *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, ADP 7-0, 1.

<sup>31</sup> McHugh, Army Directive 2013-07, 2.

<sup>32</sup> John T. Cacioppo, Harry T. Reis, and Alex J. Zautra, "Social Resilience: The Value of Social Fitness With an Application to the Military," *American Psychologist Online* 66 (January 2011): 44, 46.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

<sup>34</sup> *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, ADP 7-0, 7.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>36</sup> Casey, *Comprehensive Soldier Fitness*, 2.

<sup>37</sup> While both Casey and McHugh raise this issue of culture change, it is most explicitly stated by General Casey's original introduction to the CSF: "To be clear, CSF will serve as a catalyst for changing Army culture—from a culture in which behavioral health was once stigmatized to a culture in which psychological fitness is recognized as every bit as important as physical fitness. . . . It is here—at the unit level—where we will have the greatest chance to attain a cultural change within the Army." Casey, CSF, 2.

<sup>38</sup> McHugh, Army Directive 2013-07, Enclosure 1, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Beyond the purview of this present study, but an informative array of social science studies are being conducted and reported which contribute to leadership development and social theory, specifically helping leaders understand the challenges of emerging next generation leaders.

- Lila L. Carden & Jamie L. Callahan, "Creating Leaders or Loyalists? Conflicting Identities in a Leadership Development Programme," *Human Resource Development International 10 Online*, no.2 (June 2007): 169-186.
- Sonia Roccas & Marilyn B. Brewer, "Social Identity Complexity," *Personality and Social Psychology Review 6 Online*, no. 2 (2002): 88-106.
- Meagan Johnson & Larry Johnson, *Generations Inc.: From Boomers to Linksters- Managing the Friction Between Generations at Work* (New York, NY: Amacom, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> Justin Menkes, "Narcissism: The Difference Between High Achievers and Leaders," *Harvard Business Review*, *HBR Blog Network Online* July 2012, [http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/07/narcissism\\_the\\_difference\\_betw.html](http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/07/narcissism_the_difference_betw.html) (accessed July 5, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> Casey, *Comprehensive Soldier Fitness*, 1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p 2.

<sup>43</sup> F.B. Zimmerman, "USSOCOM taking Care of the Force and Families to the Next Level," March 13, 2012, linked from *The United States Special Operations Command Home Page* at "News," <http://www.socom.mil/News/Pages/USSOCOMtakingcareoftheForceandFamilies-to-the-next-level.aspx> (accessed April 22, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Raymond T. Odierno, "Leadership Resolves to Find 'Right' Family Programs," linked from *the United States Army Home Page* at News Archive, <http://www.army.mil/article/90272> (accessed January 18, 2013).

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, US Army Training and Doctrine Command, *2012 Capstone Concept*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-0, (Fort Eustis, VA: December 19, 2012): p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> Peter Geren and George W. Casey, Jr., *A Statement on the Posture of the US Army: 2009*, Addenda A, Information Paper, "Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program," *The United States Army Home Page* <http://www.army.mil/aps/09/introduction.html> (accessed January 25 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Self-Development Handbook*, (Update, September 2012), [http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CAL/repository/SDev\\_Handbook20.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CAL/repository/SDev_Handbook20.pdf) (accessed January 30, 2013), ii.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Written comments provided to the author at the conclusion of a unit designed and sponsored event.

<sup>51</sup> Though hardly 'relaxed' from participants' standpoint: Family teams spent three days and nights engaged in competitive and team-building events over mountainous terrain, including in lakes and rivers.

<sup>52</sup> Dempsey, *Leader Development*, 27.

<sup>53</sup> Meagan Johnson & Larry Johnson, *Generations, Inc.: From Boomers to Linksters- Managing the Friction Between Generations at Work* (New York, NY: Amacom, 2010), 127.

<sup>54</sup> In addition to sources cited in endnote 39, the following type of studies hold promise: Angus Hooke, Alexander Newman, Qing Miao, Weichun Zhu, "Revisiting the Mediating Role of Trust in Transformational Leadership Effects: Do Different Types of Trust make a Difference?," *The Leadership Quarterly 24 Online*, (2013), 94-105.

<sup>55</sup> *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, ADP 7-0, 7.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, C1 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, September 10, 2012), 7-1.