US Army Corps of Engineers
Water Resources Support Center
Institute for Water Resources

WHEN PEOPLE COMPLAIN

Using Communication, Negotiation and Problem Solving to Resolve Complaints

June 1991

IWR Report 91-R-4

Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188
Exp. Date: Jun 30, 1986

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
Unclassified

1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS

2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY

2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE

3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT
Unclassified/Unlimited

4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)
IWR Report 91-R-4

5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)

6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION
US Army Corps of Engineers
Institute for Water Resources

6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)
CEWRC-IWR

7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION

6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)
7701 Telegraph Road
Casey Building
Ft. Belvoir, VA 22060-5586

7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)

8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)

9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)

10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS

PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.

11. TITLE (Include Security Classification)
When People Complain Using Communication, Negotiation and Problem Solving to Resolve Complaints

12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S)
Aggens, Lorenz W.

13a. TYPE OF REPORT
Final

13b. TIME COVERED
FROM _____ TO _____

14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day)
1991/June

15. PAGE COUNT
117

16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION

17. COSATI CODES

FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP

18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)
Complaint Mangement Program, complaint behavior, problem solving, conflict management, communications

19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)

This hankbook sets forth the principles that have been found to be effective in the arenas of environmental conflict management, and customer service complaint management. At the end of some chapters there are more detailed exercises or case studies for classroom or study group use. The basic premise of this text is that effective communication makes learning and teaching possible, and opens the door to cooperative problem solving. If such mutual learning and teaching does not remove or lessen the actual causes of citizen annoyance, it can nevertheless lead to the enchancement of USAREUR relationships with citizens, and the enchancement of their satisfaction with USAREUR procedures used in reponse to complaints.

20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT
☒ UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☐ SAME AS RPT. ☐ DTIC USERS

21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
Unclassified

22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL
Mark Dunning, Ph.D.

22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code)
(703) 355-3090

22c. OFFICE SYMBOL
CEWRC-IWR

DD FORM 1473, 84 MAR

83 APR edition may be used until exhausted.
All other editions are obsolete.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE
Unclassified

WHEN PEOPLE COMPLAIN

Using Communication, Negotiation and Problem Solving to Resolve Complaints

Produced for:

Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Engineer
U.S. Army, Europe, and Seventh Army

June 1991

IWR Report 91-R-4

FOREWORD

This handbook is for use by U.S. Army personnel with responsibility for handling environmental and noise complaints in Germany. As used in this handbook, complaint management refers to the application of strategies, complaint handling systems and skills to increase the level of German citizen satisfaction with the U.S. Army presence in their communities.

The development of such strategies, systems and skills to effectively deal with complaints is the second of a two part initiative by the U.S. Army - Europe (USAREUR) to deal with the collision of U.S. military and German civilian interests. The first USAREUR initiative provides for the assessment of military noise sources and impacts, and an exploration of the measures that can be undertaken to prevent or mitigate these impacts. Reports[1] on these studies can help the interested reader understand the means of reducing sound levels at their source, or protecting people from military sounds with structural or institutional actions.

This handbook sets forth the principles that have been found to be effective in the arenas of environmental conflict management, and customer service complaint management. At the end of some chapters there are more detailed exercises or case studies for classroom or study group use.

Citations for publications, studies, and ideas identified by a superscript numeral — like this[0] can be found in the *References* section at the end of the text.

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Institute for Water Resources

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The creation of this handbook in Complaint Management and its companion training program reflects the initiative, support, and ideas of a number of the USAREUR staff who have first-hand experience in this work.

Special thanks is due to Phil Huber, formerly of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Engineering, HQUSAREUR, for his efforts in applying the principles of conflict resolution and problem solving to the management of environmental issues in USAREUR. The success of these efforts led to the initiation of this project.

Lieselotte Kahn, Benton G. Moeller, and Chris Holshek of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Host Nations Activities, sponsored the further application of conflict resolution and problem solving principles to the complaint management process.

The help of many USAREUR field personnel who contributed their time and experience in the development of this Handbook is also gratefully acknowledged.

This handbook was written by Lorenz W. Aggens; INVOLVE: Lorenz Aggens and Associates; Wilmette, Illinois, in consultation with Dr. C. Mark Dunning; Institute for Water Resources; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Foreword iii

Acknowledgments v

Table Of Contents vii

I Introduction 1-1

II Complaint Management Program 2-1

III Understanding Complaint Behavior 3-1

IV Complaint Management: The Basic Principles 4-1

V Complaint Management: Program Elements 5-1

VI Communications 6-1

VII Conflict Management 7-1

VIII Problem Solving 8-1

References REF-1

Appendix A: Model Standard Operating Procedures For Complaint Management A-1

Appendix B: Complaint Worksheet And Instructions B-1

Appendix C: Complaint Handling Functions C-1

I - INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The United States is one of several nations providing armed forces to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Maintaining readiness requires frequent and realistic training. Military noise and other environmental problems were discounted by military personnel, and tolerated by the German citizen, as unfortunate by-products and necessary risks that went with the job. Germans understood, or were told that it was not in their best interest to complain, about these annoyances that were directly related to their national security. Among those who did not feel a national security risk, it was felt that there could be a personal, economic risk if military noise and environmental complaints resulted in a reduction in the military presence in their community.

In recent years, however, as the population of citizens who have never experienced a national security threat has increased, the level of acceptance of military noise and environmental degradation has decreased. Recent studies suggest a growing intolerance among German citizens and communities for pollution associated with Army activities. Litigation, political pressure, citizen opposition and controversy associated with this growing intolerance are seen to pose threats for the Army's ability to train and maintain readiness.

Now, as fences and walls between East and West are breached, even greater changes in attitudes about national security and military readiness can be expected. In the new political environment, effective complaint management is a matter of critical importance to mission maintenance. Complaints, if ignored or mismanaged, can contribute to the sorts of pressures that pose serious threats to the USREUR's ability to continue to train and operate as its mission requires.

As a result of the increased necessity for effective complaint management, USAREUR has taken the following actions:

- Studies have been conducted to develop a better understanding of the ways in which military noise can be reduced. The findings and recommendations of these studies are reported in other resource documents.[1]
- A strategy and supporting policy is being developed so that USAREUR staff can present a consistent approach to the handling of noise complaints.
- Resource materials and training have been created to help staff increase their skills in handling complaints and managing controversy, effectively. Chapters III through VIII of this handbook are aimed at that goal.

B. OVERVIEW OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook, and its companion course in noise and environmental complaint management, identifies strategies, systems, and skills to increase the level of German citizen satisfaction with the U.S. Army presence in their communities. Chapter II presents the reasons for having a Complaint Management Program, and how such programs are used in private industry and in other government agencies. Chapter III explores the question of why people complain in order to develop a better understanding of how complaints can be more effectively addressed. Chapters IV and V present the basic elements of a complaint management program.

Three chapters of this handbook are devoted to the principles and thought processes upon which staff skills in effective complaint handling can be developed. These chapters cover COMMUNICATION (Chapter VI), CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (Chapter VII), and PROBLEM SOLVING (Chapter VIII). These, and other chapters, include exercises that can be used in the training program; by a complaint management unit pursuing its own study and skill development program; or by individuals who are using this text for independent study.

The basic premise of this text is that effective communication makes learning and teaching possible, and opens the door to cooperative problem solving. If such mutual learning and teaching does not remove or lessen the actual causes of citizen annoyance, it can nevertheless lead to the enhancement of USAREUR relationships with citizens, and the enhancement of their satisfaction with USAREUR procedures used in response to complaints.

II - COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM — WHY IS IT NEEDED?

The term" Complaint Management Program" refers to the policies, procedures, and techniques that will be applied within USAREUR when citizen complaints about military activities are received.

The objective of these policies, procedures, and techniques is to ensure that the following actions take place:

- Information on the citizen complaint will be documented and analyzed to identify the causes of citizen annoyance.
- This information will be communicated to appropriate staff to determine if some mission-consistent action can be taken to reduce or eliminate the cause of the complaint.
- Where remedies cannot be found, staff will interact with annoyed citizens in ways that demonstrate that citizen complaints have been taken seriously, and that efforts have been made to respect their values and interests.
- Records of the causes of citizen annoyance, reflected by their complaints, and the actions taken to respond to these complaints, will be maintained and reviewed with all incoming staff with responsibility for conducting military activities so that actions taken to resolve or manage noise and environmental problems will be continued.

It must certainly occur to many who have been handling complaints about U.S. Army activities in Germany that complaints have been effectively managed for many years without such a program. This is true. In fact, the complaint management actions established by this program probably will not differ significantly from the effective complaint management activities already being taken in several USAREUR units.

It is also likely that an effective complaint management program will increase the number of complaints received. What then, are the pay-offs of the implementation of such a program?

In fact, there are two pay-offs for effective complaint management.

1. By making it easy for people to complain, and by documenting and analyzing those complaints, USAREUR can learn a lot about its relations with its host communities and citizens. Working with this information, and with the people whose satisfaction is at risk, USAREUR may find ways to increase its acceptance and service in a time in which historical values about military security are likely to diminish.

2. By building effective complaint handling procedures and developing relationship-building communications, USAREUR can create more positive feelings about the U.S. military presence in Germany. Good will may not solve the problems that trigger the complaints, but it will decrease the need to escalate a localized dissatisfaction to conflict that is argued in larger institutional and political arenas.

These pay-offs may be clarified by citing some of the actions that are being taken by private sector organizations to effectively manage complaints about their products and services. It may not be stretching imagination beyond the realities of present day European politics to ask you to picture German citizens as the customers for U.S. military services.

B. COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS IN BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT

In the past ten years, and especially in the last two or three years, there has been an explosion of interest in complaint management by private sector companies. Government agencies are now

following these examples. Many research studies have been conducted on complaint behavior and institutional responses to complaints. Some of the findings of these studies are summarized below:[3]

- Dissatisfied complainants tell twice as many people about their bad experience, compared to the word-of-mouth communications by complainants who are satisfied or who have had a positive interaction with a complaint manager.
- Where dollar values can be calculated for customer satisfaction and repeat business, complaint handling departments often show that they are significant profit centers — returning more money to the company than it costs to handle complaints.
- More than half of businesses surveyed report that the telephone is the way that the majority of their complaints are received. More than 40% of these businesses publish toll free numbers to encourage customer complaints or comments.
- Nearly 90% of businesses maintain records of consumer complaints, more than three-quarters of these businesses use statistical analyses of complaints in policy decisions about their products and services.
- Seventy percent of the surveyed businesses give communication skill training to the staff who handle complaints.

Among the policy implications of the report to the Office of Consumer Affairs, two strategies stand out:

1. Complaints should be proactively solicited from dissatisfied customers.

2. Complaint handling practices that maximize customer satisfaction should be adopted.

It can also be inferred from the report that effective complaint management requires a third strategy:

3. Complaint data should be recorded, analyzed, and used in decisions the organization makes about its business policies and practices.

The literature of customer service and complaint management has many examples of commitment and innovation by private sector and government organizations. The amount of resources, effort, and emphasis that some well-known corporations place on developing customer satisfaction through effective complaint handling is impressive - even astonishing.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Wall Street Journal October 6, 1989

"Companies increasingly are finding that bad service costs customers. Seven of ten customers who switch from one company to a competitor cite poor service — not price or quality — as the reason."

"In a recent survey (), 86% of 611 'Fortune 500' senior executives polled named 'quality of customer service' as 'extremely important' to their company, and a higher priority than 10 other items, including productivity and company reputation. That is up from 68% who cited customer service as 'extremely important' in 1986 ()."

"Companies also are trying to wrest customer service from low-level, untrained personnel. In Philadelphia, Fidelity Bank raised the average annual salary of its 100 customer service representatives 58% to $19,000 and authorized them to resolve problems involving sums up to $1,000; before, they had to get a supervisor's approval to resolve any problem involving money. A survey taken after Fidelity made that change and centralized its customer service operation found over 90% of customers would recommend the bank to a friend, up from 65% previously."

"Many companies struggle with service because they haven't effectively tracked customer satisfaction. Traditional market research departments which gather information on trends, demographics, or market segments, didn't determine whether customers actually got what they wanted. 'A printout will tell you what color customers are buying, but not what color they asked for that you didn't have,' says an official of () a specialty retailer."

- General Electric aggressively advertises its toll free, 24 hour a day, seven days a week, customer contact unit, the "GE Answer Center". In 1985, the Center received approximately 2.6 million calls. Only 5% of the calls were complaints; the remainder were requests for service or help with problems. The customer contact agents receive five weeks of training for their work. GE brings 90% of all calls to closure on the first call.
- Polaroid operates a toll free telephone contact service — the Customer Resource Center — that handles as many as 1,500 calls a day. Ten percent of these calls are complaints. The Center and five field offices are staffed by 40 to 50 people. The 800 number is embossed on all Polaroid cameras and printed in bold type on its other products. Senior corporate management receives a frequent analysis of complaint data to use in correcting and preventing future problems.
- General Motors has toll free telephone numbers that can be used to reach its automotive Divisions. In 1985, the Buick Division logged more than 250,000 calls — most of them were requests for information. Telephone complaint handlers are trained in how to talk with angry people. Among other things, they try to keep the complainant on the line to give them time to "ventilate" their anger as well as to give information about their complaint. Computer links to dealers near the complainer forward complaint data even while the dissatisfied person is on the line.

Many agencies of the Federal government have major complaint management responsibilities. Most of these units function as pass-through handlers of complaints, or receive complaints in the course of performing regulatory functions. Examples are the Environmental Protection Agency's action on complaints about toxic and hazardous waste handling by local industries or waste haulers; and the Department of Labor's documentation and follow up on unfair labor practices or discrimination.

The Department of Transportation's Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers an Auto Safety Hotline that collects information on automobile safety problems. The Auto Safety Hotline has a staff of 13 people who handle an average of 20,000 complaints each month.

The Department of Defense has a complaint handling unit that receives approximately 180 complaints each month about dissatisfaction with the service or products of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. This Customer Relations Office has the equivalent of 4.5 full time staff to deal with letters and calls about its more than 200 Exchanges, worldwide. Seventy percent of the complaints are received by telephone call. Congressional inquiries are handled within 48 hours; all others are responded to within seven working days.

The most common complaint management actions taken by government agencies may be those of commercial airports. Many airports were opened before travel by air became the norm, rather than the exception. The advent of the commercial jet, added to air traffic never anticipated by airport and community planners, brought aircraft noise and high levels of annoyance into the lives of millions of people. Most major airports now have staff whose responsibility is to receive, document, and respond to aircraft noise complaints. At O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, for example, more than 12,000 complaints are received annually. These complaints are computer analyzed to give operations managers information about noise annoyance by any combination of these variables: time of day, day of week, month of year, community of complaint origin, type of aircraft involved, type of disturbance, type of operation, activity disrupted, and number of times the same person has complained.

C. IMPLICATIONS FOR USAREUR

Studies of complaint behavior and private sector trends in complaint management lead to these conclusions about a USAREUR Complaint Management Program:

- USAREUR hears from only a small percentage of the people who are dissatisfied with

the effects of the U.S. military presence in their communities. The people that are heard from are those who feel the negative effects on their lives have been large, and they are often very angry. To improve its understanding of the problems Germans have with U.S. Forces, USAREUR should adopt a proactive program to increase its complaint-related communications with German citizens and public officials.

- USAREUR should give serious consideration to the complaint data it collects, using this information to continuously assess the effect of its mission requirements on local quality of life, and to eliminate or reduce the sources of annoyance and dissatisfaction when those mission requirements permit.
- USAREUR should provide guidance and training to staff with complaint management responsibility so that they can increase citizen satisfaction with the procedures used, and the relationships experienced in interaction with U.S. Forces.

EXERCISE

HAVE YOU EVER MADE A FORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT SOMETHING — HAVE YOU WRITTEN A LETTER, CALLED, OR PERSONALLY CONFRONTED AN ORGANIZATION ABOUT A PRODUCT OR SERVICE?

> If you have NOT made such a complaint, but can think of something that really annoyed or dissatisfied you, why did you NOT complain?

> What did you do to deal with your annoyance, anger, or dissatisfaction — (how many people did you tell about your experience?)

> If you DID make a complaint, what happened?

» Were you treated fairly, and courteously?

» Do you think your concerns changed the way that organization offers its products or services?

» If you have a choice, would you do business with that organization again?

III - UNDERSTANDING COMPLAINT BEHAVIOR

A. INTRODUCTION

In the first two sections of this handbook two important factors have been identified that relate directly to a USAREUR Complaint Management Program.

1. Noise is the environmental problem of greatest concern to German citizens, and U.S. military activities in Germany are a significant ingredient in the noise problem.

2. Only a relatively small proportion of people who are dissatisfied, annoyed, or angered by a negative condition or experience in their lives, actually take action to complain about it.

This section of the handbook explores some of the factors that contribute to individual annoyance, and the conditions that impel some people to take complaint action. Understanding annoyance and complaint behavior will help complaint managers as the principles of conflict management, problem solving, and high stress communications are presented in the following sections of this book.

This examination of complaint behavior will focus on noise as an environmental hazard and source of annoyance that may result in complaints. Many of the social and psychological factors that relate to noise annoyance and to complaint behavior can be assumed as factors that apply to the other actions of the U.S. Army that impact German citizens and communities. Where these other, non-noise actions, have a specific importance in complaint management, they will be identified.

B. GENERAL CONCEPTS

"Noise" is a term that is laden with subjective feelings and values, as well as decibels. While it is true that, for most people, there is a direct relationship between sound volume, or decibel level, and the feelings that cause them to label loud sounds as "noise", it is also true that the term "noise" defines a very wide range of sounds that have an adverse, unpleasant, disruptive, or annoying effect. Some sounds that are not loud — that may, in fact, be quite soft in terms of decibel measures — can be very annoying.

The point to remember is that the measured level of a sound and the effect of that sound on a person is not necessarily directly related — at least insofar as that person's response to the sound is concerned. Moreover, individuals may respond to the same sound in quite different ways. One person may be highly annoyed by the sound, and call it "noise", while another person may only be moderately disturbed by the same sound. A third person might be surprised that anyone is even slightly disturbed, and ask: "What noise?"

HOW LOUD IS A DECIBEL?

Sound is measured in units called decibels (dB).

Constant exposure to sounds above 70 dB is considered to be harmful to hearing.

Here are some familiar sounds — and their decibel levels:

SOURCE	dB LEVEL
Air raid (storm) siren	130
Jet at take off	120
Amplified rock music	110
(Loud) Motorcycle	95
(Loud) Power lawn mower	90
Heavy traffic	80
(Loud) Vacuum Cleaner	75
Normal conversation	60
Rainfall	50
Soft Whisper	30

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Physical harm and damage can result from very loud sound, from long exposure to loud sound, and from certain frequencies, or the pitch of the sound. An opera singer's voice may not be very loud or long lasting, but at a specific pitch it may shatter a glass. Aside from the harm and damage that may be caused from sound, there are other immediate effects of some sounds that cause it to be called "noise." Among the most common of these are the disturbance of sleep and concentration, interference with communication — hearing or being heard, and the physical reactions when startled by an unexpected sound or noise.

After this immediate effect comes the delayed reaction of annoyance. Annoyance may lead to either reflexive actions or considered actions to protect against the harm or annoyance of the noise, or to lessen or eliminate the experiencing of the noise in the future. These may include actions to modify the annoyed person's behavior or environment (moving away from the source of the noise, or closing a window or door to make a barrier to the sound), or actions to deal with the noise at its source (turning the volume down, or asking others to do so).

Complaining about noise is an example of an action to deal with the source of annoyance. But, as has been previously noted, not everyone who is annoyed by noise complains about it. Relatively few people who are annoyed by noise, and potentially put in harm's way by it, complain about noise. For this reason, complaints must be considered a very poor indicator of the degree to which people are annoyed, and possibly harmed, by military noise.

It is very important to understand the difference between noise annoyance and noise complaints. The following paragraphs describe some of the factors that contribute to noise annoyance, and what it is that causes some people to complain about their annoyance while others, who are equally or even more annoyed, take no complaint action.

IT LEAVES A RINGING IN THEIR EARS

(Hell's Bells?)

"Church Bells Inspire A Lawsuit

Associated Press: Nashville — A new church chime that rings and plays hymns during the day frightens dogs and birds and wakes small children from their naps, says a neighborhood group that has filed suit to silence the electronic bells. 'It's like having a grand-father clock with monster speakers put in the middle of your home without your permission,' said (a spokesman for the group).

(The Spokesman) said Monday that three couples filed the lawsuit after trying to negotiate with (the church) for two months. The bells chime each day until early evening. They strike the hour six times a day and play hymns three times.

'We could raise the volume a lot higher, but were respecting the neighbors,' said Rev. (churchman), pastor at (the church). 'We did respect the neighbor who goes to bed early, and we quit striking the hour at 7 p.m.'"

*****

A wealthy parishioner of a Catholic church left money to the church in his will — for the purchase and installation of real bells to replace the electronic bells that had been used for years. With much fanfare, the real bells were installed and readied for their first use.

When the signal was given, the bells pealed — and throughout the church neighborhood, people came out of their houses to find out what was going on. The bells are very loud — much louder than the electronic bells they replace. And the volume cannot be turned down on the real bells.

A debate has simmered ever since the real bells were installed. It's not exactly a Catholic versus Protestant debate, according to church officials. But, they admit, most of the complaints seem to come from people who are not affiliated with that particular Catholic church.

The argument that, when you buy a house within sight of a church bell tower you ought to expect to hear bells, did not work very well, and it has been quietly dropped. Some people wish that is what would happen to the bells.

C. FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ANNOYANCE WITH NOISE

Again, as a general rule, the louder the sound, the more it is likely to be a source of annoyance to people, and be labeled "noise." But, what are the factors that cause other, lesser sounds, to be annoying?

The research of Fields and Hall[4] on the "Community Effects of Noise" identifies six factors related to personal attitudes and feelings that contribute to raised levels of noise annoyance:

1. Fearfulness: People seem to be more annoyed by noise that they associate with possible danger or harm. The sound of military aircraft flying over a community may not be loud enough to cause annoyance, but the vivid TV images of destruction and death caused by the crash of a jet into a row of homes can cause annoyance over the anxiety and fear that it could happen again.

2. Preventability: When noise seems unnecessary, or when there would appear to be actions that could be taken to reduce noise, annoyance increases. Annoyance is made even greater when little or nothing is done to actually prevent preventable noise, or when noise makers refuse to acknowledge responsibility or apologize for preventable noise.

3. Noise Sensitivity: Some people are more sensitive to the intrusion of sound than other people. A person who values quiet and tranquility, or whose baseline for what constitutes noise was set in a quiet community, will have a low tolerance for noise and a low annoyance threshold.

4. Neighborhood Evaluation: When people have little difficulty in finding faults and problems in their neighborhood — when they are already annoyed by things other than noise — it is a small and easy step for them to be disturbed and offended by noise at levels that may not annoy people who feel good about their neighborhood.

5. Health Effects: When people think that the noise they hear may have a negative health effect — like causing a hearing loss, or inducing nervousness and irritability — their annoyance increases. Health effects can result from noise. Annoyance is related to the perception that this might happen, rather than to any evidence that the health is, in fact, being affected.

6. Non-noise Impacts: If the source of the noise seems to be related to other negative impacts on people or their community, annoyance increases. Air pollution from idling truck engines makes the sound of these engines annoying. The noise of a military convoy can be more annoying to the person who is stuck in the traffic jam caused by the convoy.

There are other factors that can turn relatively low levels of noise into highly annoying noise. Some sounds have tonal qualities that make them very intrusive. For example, the sound of chalk or a fingernail being scraped on a blackboard can cause a sharp reaction and annoyance if repeated. The screech of steel wheels at a curve in steel rails can be more than just intolerably loud. The wail of a siren (or someone else's baby) can be penetrating and arouse the attention as well as the annoyance of those nearby. Annoyance with noise can also be related to personally held values. The sound of a chain saw in a forest can be music to the ears of a lumberman, while that same sound is a cacophony that pains the environmentalist. While studies conflict over the effect of economic connections to noise sources — the sounds of the factory in a mill town, for example — there is evidence that patriotic values can lessen annoyance with very noisy sound sources. For example, levels of annoyance with Concorde jet noise at Heathrow Airport were found to be associated with patriotic attitudes about the British role in Concorde development (Fields and Hall)[4].

Closely related to values and preventability in the creation of noise annoyance is the factor of "appropriateness", which often has a cultural ba-

sis. Most Americans do not find the sound of a lawn mower on a Sunday afternoon to be inappropriate (although somewhat intrusive if it is not cutting your grass). But this sound is considered to be very inappropriate and annoying to most Germans. Noise during a funeral, or during "quiet hours"; a loud party that goes on beyond 10 P.M.; or a radio or tape being played on a boom box in a public place — are examples of noise that fail the test of appropriateness, and create noise annoyance.

It must also be noted that preventable noise is sometimes made purposely to annoy. It can be used in one-sided humor; to flaunt differences in culture, status, and rules; and as a weapon to "get even". When noise is used in this manner, annoyance is compounded, and conflict escalation begins.

D. FACTORS THAT TURN NOISE ANNOYANCE INTO NOISE COMPLAINTS

The "Community Effects of Noise" study (Fields and Hall)[4] identifies six conditions or factors that affect citizen action to reduce or eliminate noise through individual or group complaints:

1. Dissatisfaction with existing noise conditions: Complaints about noise are generally the result of repeated annoyance events, or a continuing noise annoyance, rather than a single noise event. The decision to complain about noise requires the growth of dissatisfaction to the point where the person annoyed by noise decides that tolerance is no longer an option.

2. Identifiable object or authority: Complaints are usually aimed at a specific annoying noise source, or at someone who, it is believed, could "do something" to lessen or stop the noise. It is hard to find a focus for a complaint about highway noise. In contrast, it is easy to find an object or authority at which to aim an airfield noise complaint.

3. Belief that individual or group action can lead to change: People who have been effective in influencing the world around them — or who feel they could do this — feel that complaints make a difference in the way things turn out. People who have not been able to make changes through personal communication with identifiable authority eventually give up trying — or resort to collective action with others. Because personal efficacy is often related to higher levels of education, income, and social status, noise complaints correlate more closely with these factors than with high levels of measured noise.

4. Awareness of the means for making a complaint: People who do not know how to make a complaint usually do not go to the trouble to find out how to do this. When the mechanisms and processes for making a noise complaint are made known, the num-

GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF THINGS

Sometimes, with no measurable increase in military activities or noise levels, Army complaint managers notice an increase in the number of complaints about noise. In some of these cases, effective complaint managers have been able to identify other causes of annoyance that have apparently lowered people's tolerance of noise (or other problems) and resulted in the increase in complaints. It takes effective communication to get to the bottom of things, like this:

Installation safety and legal officers recommended the closing of public access to a road that cut across the installation. When this was done, some people who had been able to drive a relatively short and direct route into town now found that they had to drive all the way around the installation to get to town. Noise complaints from people living in this sector increased suddenly.

When posted Government land was declared "closed" to hunters just before deer hunting season opened, noise complaints soared. When these lands were reopened for hunting — and promises were made that this would be the case during the next deer hunting season — noise complaints dropped to levels below what they had been before the closing.

ber of complaints increases. But the number of complaints is not a good indicator of the magnitude of the noise annoyance problem. The absence of complaints cannot be a sign of effective noise management if the noise complaint filing process is obscure.

5. Introduction of a new focal point for action: When new equipment or procedures are introduced, or there are other changes that might affect the noise environment, people will be stimulated by these events and changes to initiate or renew noise complaints. The equipment or procedures do not need to be proven more noisy to stimulate complaints.

6. Social and political structure facilitates public action: Noise annoyance creates noise complaints when there is effective communication and interaction in a cohesive community, and when the political system permits and fosters individual and group critique. Military noise complaint management programs are probably a low priority among the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact.

Fields and Hall[4] also identify common characteristics of people who make noise complaints. Although complainers are willing to invest more personal effort than others in the community who were equally annoyed, they are not unusual members of the community insofar as their sensitivity to noise is concerned. They do not have psychological problems that impel them to complain. Their willingness to act is related to their greater ability to describe their problems and their greater confidence in dealing with authorities.

Anyone who has dealt with someone annoyed enough to complain about noise, or any other problem, can certify that these interactions are marked by high levels of feeling and emotion on the part of the person who is doing the complaining. The complainer usually feels a sense of righteous indignation, and as communication develops, there is a tendency for more colorful verbs and adjectives to be used to match these feelings and drive home the point.

In these stressful moments it is difficult for the complaint manager to avoid the use of defensive communications that further jeopardize the relationship. It is for this reason that special communication skills, more often acquired through training than through experience, are needed. It is also difficult to avoid the value laden conflicts over what "should" or "ought" to be done. Understanding the principles of conflict management and cooperative problem solving can help the complaint manager in these situations. These topics will be presented in other sections of this handbook.

E. IMPLICATIONS FOR USAREUR

Although there are other, larger political agendas that motivate some German citizens to complain

HOW WE REACT TO NOISE

Reactions to a temporary threat, such as a sudden, loud noise:

- **Adrenaline flows into bloodstream**
- **Heart rate increase**
- **Blood pressure rises**
- **Muscles tense**

Reactions to constant threat, such as a prolonged noise:

- **Chronic hypertension**
- **Headaches**
- **Depression**
- **Anxiety**
- **Nightmares**

Source: Roosevelt Hospital — New York City

*****

"Children who lived near (the flight path of a busy airport) did markedly poorer than others on solving jigsaw puzzles — and perhaps more significantly — they gave up much more easily."

Source: "Noise: The Invisible Risk"

about military noise, the people who handle these complaints as installation or Host Nation representatives report that most complaints are related, genuinely and specifically, to personal noise annoyance. As demands for German national sovereignty increase, and the perceived need for U.S. military deterrence in Europe decreases, the willingness to accept noise annoyance as the cost of national security will diminish. Noise complaints will certainly increase if U.S. Army training and readiness missions are continued at their present level.

Effective noise complaint management strategies and systems, and knowledgeable and skilled staff are needed to develop and maintain the levels of citizen satisfaction and community relations that will support a continued U.S. Army mission in Europe. However, the summary findings of the Fields and Hall study[4] of noise annoyance and complaint management seem particularly applicable to the activities of USAREUR. These findings are as follows:

"Though a variety of steps may enable the policy maker to reduce complaints against noise, the noise annoyance research has not discovered any step that might be taken to reduce the annoyance with persistent noise sources except that of reducing noise levels." (emphasis added)

Reducing the number of complaints is NOT the goal of a USAREUR Complaint Management Program. It IS the goal of a program to use complaint data to try, within mission limits, to reduce the annoyance felt by those people who complain about noise and other environmental problems — and by the many more people who are annoyed, but who do not complain.

It is also the goal of a Complaint Management Program to handle the complaints of annoyed people in ways that will prevent their irritation from increasing because of inappropriate procedures or insensitive communication and interaction. It is in the interest of the Army that these efforts be made to eliminate procedural and relationship dissatisfaction and, by doing so to lessen the need for complaints to be escalated into political conflict that can threaten the USAREUR mission.

EXERCISE

THINK ABOUT TIMES WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN ANNOYED BY SOUNDS THAT HAVE INTERFERED WITH YOU AS YOU HAVE TRIED TO SLEEP, RELAX, CONCENTRATE, READ, WRITE, COMMUNICATE, OR ENJOY YOURSELF.

> What are some very soft sounds that have been noise to you?

> What was the context in which those sounds were heard that made them annoying, and therefore noise, to you?

> Was there anything different about your physical or your psychological makeup at the time that made noise out of a sound that normally would have left you not annoyed?

> What are some very loud sounds that you do not consider to be noise?

> What is it that makes these noisy sounds acceptable to you?

IV - COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT: THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

A. INTRODUCTION

At the core of an effective Complaint Management Program is a principle that is basic to almost every arena of human interaction — including managing conflict, negotiating, supervising, teaching, parenting, buying and selling, curing, loving, and even leading an Army. To begin an understanding of this principle it might be helpful to think about a time when something happened to you that made you feel angry, frustrated, unfairly treated, confused, discounted, or a hundred other bad things. It could have been a memo from the boss about your performance, or some organizational change. Maybe it was a notice from your bank, credit card company, or landlord about a financial oversight or delinquency.

All of these situations involve a direct or indirect interaction with other people, some of them acting in roles that reflect organizational or personal knowledge, authority, responsibility, or power. All of these interactions need next steps in the continuing negotiation for satisfaction in our

THEY GOT WHAT THEY WANTED, BUT THEY'RE MORE ANGRY THAN EVER

The residents of a small, rural community adjacent to an Army installation (in the USA) were really annoyed. It wasn't the noise as much as it was being scared half to death by the two, high performance Air Force jets that practically took down your television antennas on their twice-a-month fly-over after a practice bombing and strafing run at the Fort.

If people could have been warned when this would happen, they probably would have gone out in the street with their kids to watch. It was quite a show for those who got to see it. But mostly, the jets just appeared at tree top level on an otherwise quiet day, and left people with their adrenaline pumping, heart rate and blood pressure way up, and muscles all tense and wanting to pound on something (all known reactions to sudden, loud sounds).

Conitinued...

So these folks took out their energies by complaining. They complained, with no avail, to the installation PAO, to the Chief of Staff, to the Commanding General. They complained, to no avail, to their state and federal representatives, and to the President of the United States. They even tried to get the Federal Aviation Administration to take over the grass airstrip at the edge of town and declare the Air Force jets in violation of regulated airspace — to no avail.

It looked as though these people were destined to fall as sudden, cardiac victims of the "startle effect", as the experts called what they were complaining about. But then, something unexpected happened.

One day, when the jets paid their startling visit, there happened to be a wildlife biologist from the Fish and Wildlife Service in town. He had been making a study of the Woodland Stork in the swamp behind town that was a "wildlife refuge" on the map. When he heard that this was not the first, nor was it likely to be the last time that the jets flew over town — and the wildlife refuge — he said, "We'll see about that!"

It turns out that the Woodland Stork (or whatever it was) was an Endangered Species that was to be protected by federal law. The law said that whenever there was a question about the survival of the species, the species was required to WIN over whatever it was that was endangering it. In this case, the biologist contended, the noise of the jets might happen just as a pair of Storks were thinking about breeding — and that would be the end of that romance — and just maybe, the species.

So the jets were ordered to go somewhere else, and they have. The people have what they wanted to get — quiet, or at least Freedom from Startle. But are they ever mad! The way they see it, it wasn't the people that got taken into consideration by the government, it was a Stork in the woods. And that leaves them feeling pretty annoyed with the whole process, and the people that ran it. Their muscles are all tense again. Watch out!

lives. Our lives are filled with the need to respond to proposals, contracts, treaties, promises, pacts, vows, regulations, and complaints that arise out of our interaction with people.

B. THE NEED TO DEFINE AND DEVELOP SATISFACTION

The degree to which we move ahead with these interactions — implementing, fulfilling, maintaining, or abiding by our part in them — depends upon the degree to which we feel satisfied by what is happening. That satisfaction has three components (Figure 1).[5]

1. Substantive Satisfaction

   We need to see that progress is being made toward the realization of our interests and needs; that our concerns are being cared about; that our problems are being solved; that our values are being honored. While we seek to maximize these substantive satisfactions, we are aware that other people have different and sometimes conflicting goals. Therefore, we recognize the need to negotiate our substantive satisfactions with others, and prepare to settle on options that may not give us the exact amount of satisfaction that we want.

   Complaints to USAREUR about military noise or other environmental issues have often been countered by the argument that concessions cannot be made with the national security mission of U.S. Forces. Except for locally negotiated operational agreements that may, or may not, be honored by subsequent Community Commanders, this argument has prevailed in most cases. This has often left the German citizen or community substantively dissatisfied.

2. Procedural Satisfaction

   Because we rarely can get the exact amount of substantive satisfaction that we want without the costs of competition, or give others the exact amount or action that they want without the costs of accommodation, we need to work on increasing the amount of satisfaction that can be obtained from the way that things are done. Procedures that seem fair and honest, can in some measure compensate for the satisfaction we fail to get in substance in our interaction with others. For example, when an election is conducted without fraud or duress it is our satisfaction with election procedures that will help us to accept the defeat of our favored candidate or proposition. If that procedural satisfaction is absent, citizen often seek to overturn election results — violently, if necessary.

   If German citizens achieve little or no substantive satisfaction in their complaints about U.S. military activities procedures used to handle and consider complaints which are visible, open and fair can give these citizens the satisfaction they need to prevent their concerns from being escalated to higher political levels.

3. Relationship Satisfaction

   It also helps us to accept decisions that provide less than full substantive satisfaction, if we come out of our interactions with others feeling OK about ourselves and about them. Relationship satisfaction does not mean that we have to be friends with everyone with whom we negotiate life's substance. But it does mean that the way in which we were treated, and the way in which we treated others, helped us and them to maintain self-esteem and self-confidence.

   Relationship satisfaction might be called psychological satisfaction to more clearly distinguish it from procedural satisfaction. Procedural satisfaction can be objectively defined and measured; psychological satisfaction is subjective, and therefore, harder to define and measure. But calling it "psychological" we may infer that actions taken to develop this satisfaction are only therapy for, or manipulation of, complainers. The purpose is far from this. The end product of relationship satisfaction is the feeling that we have respected, and have been respected;

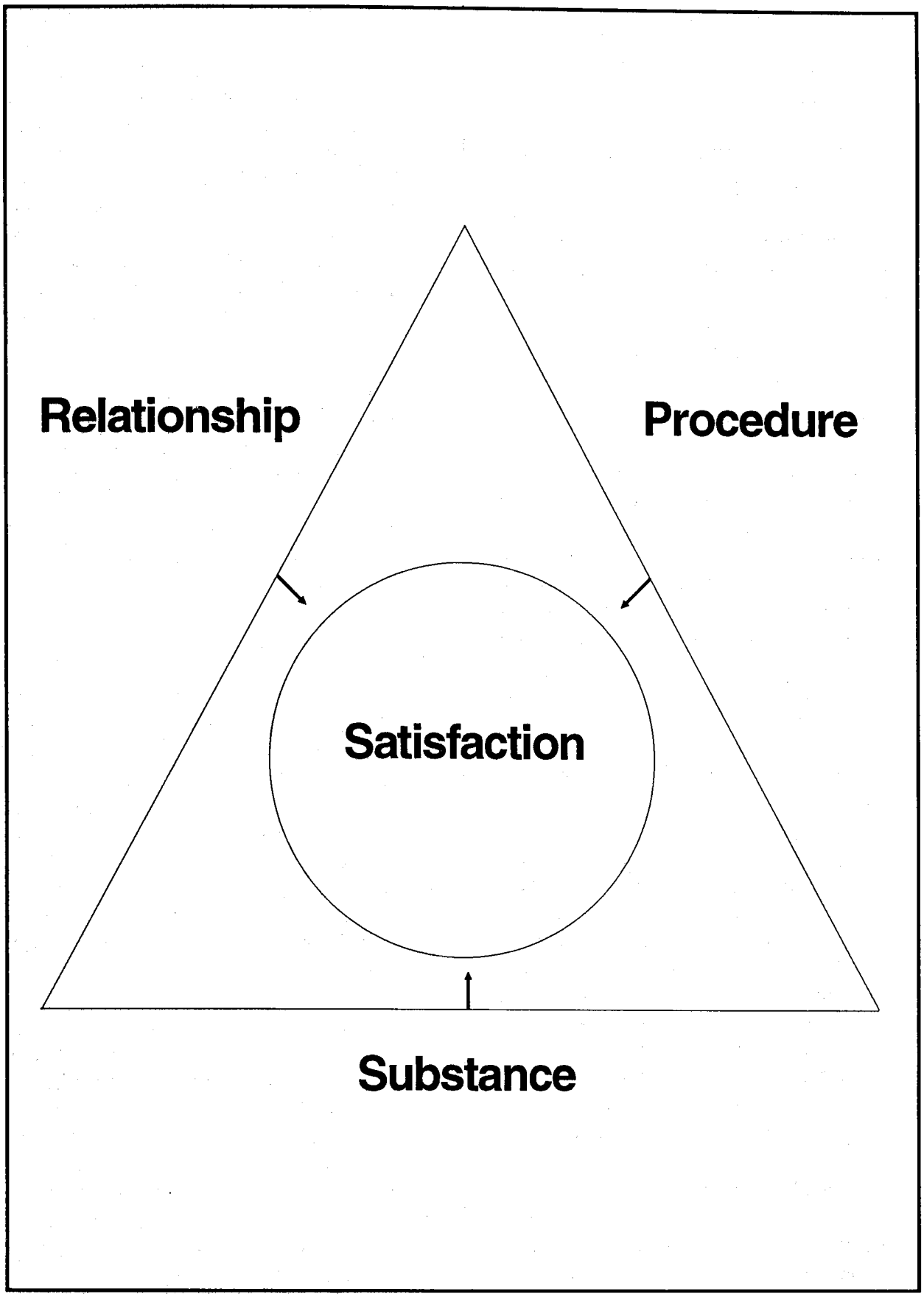

Figure #1 - The Components of Satisfaction

that we have accepted (not agreed), and have been accepted.

In complaint management, relationship satisfaction means that, whatever the substantive outcome, and whatever the procedures were that were used, both the USAREUR staff and the German citizen can feel that they have been engaged in useful communication; that neither has discounted the interests of the other.

C. IMPLICATIONS FOR USAREUR

Actions attentive to substantive, procedural, and relationship satisfaction can be taken by the Army that can prevent and reduce annoyance and citizen complaints.

1. Preventing Citizen Complaints

It is an assumption of this handbook that U.S. military personnel will be taking every technically feasible action to reduce the magnitude and the frequency of noise and environmental problems caused by their equipment and operations. In addition, it is assumed that a systematic recording and analysis of complaints will have a feedback to USAREUR operating units so that corrective action can be taken where problems are identified, and where mission requirements permit. Other publications in support of this Complaint Management Program detail the opportunities and the technical means for prevention, corrections, or mitigation of noise and environmental problems at their source.[1]

There are other, non-technical actions that can be used to lessen annoyance of German citizens with U.S. military activities. Preventative actions, such as those below, should be given emphasis at all levels of command.

a. Learning about, understanding, and accepting German norms and values need to be an important part of the indoctrination of all U.S. military and civilian personnel. Earlier chapters have pointed out that population density in Germany leaves little room for day-to-day living activities, let alone military operations, that do not take neighborliness into consideration. Americans need to understand and accept the Germans' feelings about the natural environment; about privacy and quiet; and about the importance of special times set aside for relaxation, family activities, and religious observance.

b. Avoiding annoying and complaint-triggering actions and behaviors need to be a continuing part of the planning of operating units. This thought process should extend into the off-duty and off-installation activities of all personnel. Complaints have been triggered by military convoys operating on the Autobahn on German holidays; by Little League ball games on Sundays; by maneuvers in prime recreation areas; by loud music from "boom boxes" carried by soldiers on and off duty; by helicopter dust on wash day; and by many other actions that could be better planned, or avoided entirely.

Many of the citizen annoyances that lead to complaints can be prevented with increased communication and coordination among USAREUR units, and between military commanders and Host Nation coordinators.

2. Reducing Citizen Complaints

Where substantive satisfaction cannot be increased by reducing or eliminating the source of noise or environmental annoyance, it may be possible to modify German citizen attitudes about the activities that create these problems. Both in the United States and in the foreign arenas where U.S. military activities take place, it has been found that citizen annoyance with these activities decreases when there is a clearer understanding of the purpose of the activity, and of the efforts

being made to lessen negative impacts of the activity.

Public affairs activities, such as open houses and tours of military facilities, have helped in areas where there are general complaints about U.S. actions. The effectiveness of public information seems to increase where these efforts focus on specific problem equipment and operations. Advance warning of activities that might cause annoyance seems to lessen, rather than increase, the filing of complaints — especially when people who are likely to be annoyed are specifically notified, and told when the annoying activity is scheduled to begin and end.

When this kind of planning is evident and clearly takes community impacts into consideration, it is possible for people to schedule their own activities to lessen their annoyance, or to work with military communities to better coordinate the scheduling of necessary military activities and sensitive community events.

Many of the actions that can be taken to prevent or lessen annoyance and reduce citizen complaints contribute to procedural and relationship satisfaction as well as to substantive satisfaction. And even though efforts to increase procedural and relationship satisfaction may appear to be compensations for the inability to deal with the substance of noise and environmental problems, unexpected substantive satisfactions may occur as the affected citizen sees, hears, or feels events differently.

D. SUMMARY

An effective Complaint Management Program is intended to improve communication with German citizens and public officials. It is sensitive to the interrelation of substantive procedural and relationship satisfaction, and to the possibilities for trading off among them to reduce citizen annoyance and complaints. Complaint management policies, procedures and techniques build on this principle can protect the Army's interests.

EXERCISE

THINK ABOUT NOISE OR ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLAINTS THAT YOU OR SOMEONE ON THE USAREUR STAFF HAS RECEIVED IN THE PAST. CHOOSE ONE THAT DID NOT TURN OUT WELL — WHERE THE DISSATISFACTION OF THE CITIZEN OR PUBLIC OFFICIAL CONTINUED AFTER FINAL USAREUR ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN.

> Was there anything that was done that caused procedural dissatisfaction?

> What could be done to increase procedural satisfaction in a future complaint management of this kind?

> Was there anything that was done that caused relationship dissatisfaction?

> What could be done to increase relationship satisfaction in a future complaint management of this kind?

EXERCISE

REMEMBER A COMPLAINT THAT YOU MADE TO SOME ORGANIZATION ABOUT ITS PRODUCTS OR SERVICES. YOUR EXPERIENCE MAY HAVE BEEN GOOD, OR IT MAY HAVE BEEN BAD.

> If you were generally satisfied with the experience, was there something that was done that increased your procedural satisfaction or your relationship satisfaction?

> If you were dissatisfied with the experience, was there something that contributed to your procedural dissatisfaction or your relationship dissatisfaction, or was your dissatisfaction entirely substantive in nature?

> Can you think of a complaint management experience that you or someone else has had (either as a complainer, or as a complaint manager) that ended with the complainer substantively satisfied, but nevertheless, dissatisfied because of procedural or relationship problems?

EXERCISE

A U.S. COMMUNITY COMMANDER SAID, "MOST OF THE COMPLAINTS WE GET ARE THE RESULT OF OUR DOING DUMB THINGS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH OUR MISSION CAPABILITY."

> Recall and list some of the complaints that you have had to deal with, or that you have heard about, that are the result of U.S. Forces or U.S. military or civilian personnel doing unnecessary, avoidable, or "dumb" things.

> What are some examples of smart things that have been done that have taken German norms and values, or community needs into consideration — while preserving U.S. military mission capability?

V - COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT: PROGRAM ELEMENTS

A. INTRODUCTION

The story is told of a factory that was having financial troubles because the product it made was not as good as the product of a competitor. There seemed to be little question that what was needed was increased quality. To fix this problem, the factory managers decided that all machine operators should be sent to training programs in quality control, and that each operator's performance should be recorded and reported. This was done. Quality did not improve significantly.

Upon further study of the quality control problem, operators reported that many of the machines were older by far than the people that worked them, and that it was very hard to maintain quality control calibrations and setting on the machines. Machines were repaired and replaced. Quality did not improve significantly.

The foremen were then called in and asked what should be done. They reported that their workers did not feel that quality was as important to management as low cost and fast delivery, and that foremen were required to penalize poor performance rather than reward good performance among machine operators. They recommended that top management come down "on the floor" of the factory and talk directly to the workers about the importance of quality, and that recognition of high performance be a top management responsibility. This was done. Quality increased dramatically.

B. THE ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The quick, intuitive reaction may be to attribute the change in quality to top management emphasis and positive reinforcement. However, studies in organizational effectiveness — measured in quality, or cost, or delivery, responsiveness, or whatever terms — increasingly indicate that management emphasis and recognition is only a part of what is needed. In fact, if any of the three elements reflected in the story of the factory was missing, organizational effectiveness — quality in the case of the factory — would not have increased. The three elements are:

- STAFF Skills
- Effective SYSTEMS
- Organizational STRATEGY

The STRATEGIC Element of Complaint Management

Private Sector Perspective

When J.W. Marriott, Jr. was President of the Marriott Hotel chain, he read every one of approximately 30,000 customer letters that were received in a year's time. Now, as Chairman of the Board of Marriott, he still reads about 10% of the customer letters, and 2% of the approximately 750,000 comment cards received each year.[1]

Fidelity Bank President Rosemarie Greco reads all letters sent to the President by customers of the bank, which includes 124 anch banks in Philadelphia. She reads summaries of all other complaints.[1]

A senior Vice President of Delta Airlines calls all customers who write complaint letters about service problems.[1]

1. Fortune Magazine; "How To Handle Customer's Gripes"; 10/24/88.

These three critical elements are an intentional part of the design for increasing the effectiveness of the USAREUR Complaint Management program:

1. The STRATEGIC Element for Program Effectiveness

   A strategy for effective complaint management — just as for quality products and services — requires top management emphasis,

resource support, and recognition of positive results. More than directives and slogans, the critical element of strategy requires the leadership of command example. This strategic initiative must

be clearly and repeatedly stated, made understandable by actions as well as words, and reinforced by word and deed at every level of command.

Strategic emphasis requires more than a policy statement. It requires that the actions of every person with command authority or program responsibility — from CINC, to Community Commander, to the Duty Officer, to the Platoon Leader — from Host Nation Director, to Airfield Operations Officer, to Public Affairs Secretary — be consciously focused on the goals of effective complaint management.

Putting complaint management at a level of strategic emphasis also requires that this strategy be congruent with each and all of the strategies that define the other activities of USAREUR. There cannot be a strategy for complaint management that is at odds with the strategy that winds the spring for the Training Office, or the Office of the Judge Advocate General. Meshing these strategies is not easy work, or work that, once done, is permanent. All activities will require a high level of communication among their operating units to coordinate strategies.

2. The SYSTEM Element for Program Effectiveness

The systems that are used to help staff implement the Complaint Management Program must be designed to serve both the person who is annoyed enough to complain, and the people who initially handle and later manage that complaint. The systems must be "friendly" as well as theoretically effective.

The systems must invite use because they are seen by both the staff and the complainer as tools that move them toward problem solving and a change in the conditions that have caused the annoyance and the complaint. If that is not the result, the systems should at least contribute to the development of procedural and relationship satisfaction.

Because there is a wide variety of military activities that cause noise and environmental annoyance and complaints — some of them unique to a single military community — each complaint management unit needs to design its own systems for recording, analyzing, and following up on complaints. A complaint recording procedure/SOP and data form to help serve as models are offered in Appendices A and B.

The SYSTEM Element of Complaint Management

Private Sector Perspective

When Coca Cola company introduced "new Coke", many people tried to call the company to complain. To facilitate this, the company installed a toll-free telephone number (1-800-GET-COKE). Complaints rose from 400 per day, to 12,000 per day — and on the day that the "old Coke" was returned to the market, 18,000 people called the company. Coca-Cola reports that customer loyalty is higher today than it was before they introduced "new Coke" — and the hot-line.[1]

American Express reports that it costs them five to ten times more money to handle a complaint with a letter, than to talk to the person on the telephone — and the telephone call builds greater customer satisfaction. Some experts believe that a company has a 30% greater chance of retaining customer loyalty from a telephone response, than from a letter response.[1]

Half of all companies with more than $10 million in sales have 1-800 telephone numbers for customers to use if they have a complaint.

1. Fortune Magazine; "How To Handle Customer's Gripes"; 10/24/88.

Other systems to assist complaint management through the possible reduction in German citizen annoyance may also be needed such as:

- The prompt indoctrination of incoming military and civilian personnel concerning

complaint management strategies, policies, principles, and procedures.

- The coordination of German community events and citizen plans with schedules for U.S. military activities.
- The briefing of new military Community Commanders and newly elected or appointed German public officials about problem solving processes and past agreements.
- The maintenance of records of agreement between U.S. Forces and German communities and individuals.
- The creation of greater public awareness of the purpose of U.S. military activities, and the actions being taken to reduce, mitigate, or eliminate sources of noise and environmental annoyance.

To help complaint managers in the development of effective systems, a study of complaint handling methods was commissioned by the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs. The research program examined the systems and procedures used by the complaint units of more than 300 private and government organizations that provide or regulate consumer products and services.[7]

The study's report lists 19 complaint handling functions that were found to be common to the most effective complaint handling programs. These functions are organized in six "key sets" within two principal groups, as follows:

OPERATIONS FUNCTIONS

INPUT
- Screening
- Logging
- Classification

RESPONSE
- Response Investigation
- Response Formulation
- Response Production

OUTPUT
- Distribution
- Storage and Retrieval

SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

CONTROL
- Internal Follow-up
- Referral Follow-up

MANAGEMENT
- Statistical Generation
- Policy Analysis
- Input into Policy
- Evaluation
- Planning
- Accountability
- Incentives
- Staff Selection and Training

PUBLIC AWARENESS
- Creation of Public Awareness

This organizing scheme was offered for the consideration of Federal government agencies who have complaint handling responsibility. It is gaining credence as more and more agencies of U.S. government are making complaint management a strategic priority.

Appendix C contains a brief summary of the role that each of these functions play in insuring the effectiveness of the SYSTEMS element of a Complaint Management Program. This information should be taken into consideration, along with the model Standard Operating Procedure at Appendix C, to design the SYSTEMS that will best serve individual programs.

3. The STAFF Element for Program Effectiveness

The selection and training of staff who can and will use the effective and "friendly" systems to implement the Complaint Management strategy is equal in importance to the creation of the strategy and the development of the systems. But because this handbook and its companion training program are intended for this staff development purpose, the remaining chapters will focus on the STAFF element.

USAREUR personnel who find themselves with complaint management duties are more likely to have these jobs because they are the "goes-with" of other responsibilities — like Public Affairs, or Airfield Operations. At least initially, complaint managers will not have been specifically selected for this work. But, in the most effective of public and private sector complaint management organizations, careful selection of personnel is a primary ingredient of success.

The STAFF Element of Complaint Management

Private Sector Perspective

Procter and Gamble complaint handlers get four to five weeks of classroom work in complaint handling and problem solving.[1]

Johnson and Johnson (Tylenol and other home health products) gives 300 hours of training to the information specialists that staff its 1-800 customer service specialists.[1]

Toyota ranks its customer service representatives on their courtesy in telephone and personal contacts with customers.[1]

General Electric customer service representatives are evaluated on their attitude and the quality of service they give.[1]

Digital Equipment Company's customer service office is in Colorado Srpings. Telephone service representatives sit at desks with windows overlooking the Rockie Mountains. Managers have offices without windows.[1]

1. Fortune Magazine; "How To Handle Customer's Gripes"; 10/24/88.

Careful staff selection will identify people who, as a matter of personal values and style, give other people large measures of relationship satisfaction, easily and naturally. Effective staff selection will also identify complaint managers who have a high willingness to accept divergent values and strong emotions in other people. These staff will acquire, with enthusiasm, the people skills of high stress communication, problem solving, and conflict management.

This does not mean that staff who self-evaluate themselves as being different from this model complaint manager should drop out of complaint management work. For almost everyone, the requisite skills of communication, problem solving, and conflict management can be learned, and tolerance can be developed for in-coming complaints that seem illogical, irrational, and badly motivated. Few people, even among the best of complaint managers, get up in the morning looking forward to another day as a target for people who are annoyed or angry.

It should also be said that there are some people who perform valuable and skilled services with dedication and excellence, but who should not be placed in the job of dealing with angry and emotional people. It should never be held against them that they cannot do the work of complaint management without making the annoyance of others worse. It should be to the credit of anyone who knows enough about himself or herself to ask others to do this work. That, in itself, is an important form of staff selection.

C. IMPLICATIONS FOR USAREUR

The important work of developing procedural and relationship satisfaction during the search for substantive relief from noise and environmental problems, requires STRATEGIC emphasis and recognition at all levels of responsibility. It requires the development of SYSTEMS that are user-friendly and provide for data analysis, upward reporting and organizational change. Finally, STAFF trained in people skills are needed to implement the program.

USAREUR is developing a Complaint Management Program to be made operational throughout the command. The policy that is being promulgated clarifies this direction and establishes it as a STRATEGIC priority. This policy will be revised and updated as conditions and experience warrant.

SYSTEMS for the implementation of a Complaint Management Program have been suggested, and examples or information for the development of some system elements have been included in Appendix A and B of this handbook. USAREUR staff will be given latitude to develop the system elements they feel will be needed to meet the performance requirements for a Complaint Management Program.

The balance of this handbook describes STAFF skills that are critical in the work of building procedural and relationship satisfaction with German citizens and communities, and in the communication, education, and problem solving efforts that may discover ways to prevent or reduce noise and environmental problems.

TIME OUT — WHEN IT'S NEEDED

After the Installation Commander asked for more detailed record-keeping on the noise complaints coming in to the Fort, a pattern began to appear.

A lot of the mission at this Fort was to provide for Army Reserve training, and this meant that weekends were the times when things really got fired up and noisy. So it was not surprise that noise complaints showed a peak during this time. The map spotting the home location of each person making a complaint did not show any pattern, and this was surprising.

The training areas had very limited, and intensively used firing ranges, and people lived all around the perimeter of the Fort. It seemed logical to assume that there would be clusters of complaints in the built up areas closest to the firing points and the impact areas. That was not the case. In fact, some of the complaints were coming from pretty far away from these noisy areas.

The pattern that did emerge was in the TIME of the complaints. There was a big surge of complaints right after 12:30 on Sunday afternoons. These peaks were not related to any particularly noisy activity. As a matter of fact, there was something of a lull in training between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. as the training units were pulled in for lunch, one at a time. Something was happening that caused higher levels of annoyance, and complaints, right around this time.

Continued ...

When the complaint manager started interviewing complainers about what it was that had been interfered with or interrupted by the training noise, rather than what had caused the noise, he found the 12:30 connection. Twelve thirty, give or take a few minutes, was about the time that people got home from Sunday church services — it was their first chance to get on the 'phone and call up the Army to complain about the noise they had been acutely aware of during the moments of quiet and prayer during the service. These were times that the ministers worked hard at making into tranquil and contemplative times. What was almost disregarded background noise at other times, became very apparent, and annoying foreground noise. In some cases, the minister's open frustrations about this caused congregations to act as units — far flung on the noise dot map, but united in annoyance.

The solution? Feed everybody at the same time — 11:00 to 12:00. Use field kitchens and rations instead of the mess hall, and get it all over with in a "time out" from training, carefully scheduled to coincide with Sunday services — and at the same time, make feeding the troops more like it would really be if this was "for real" instead of just weekend training.

EXERCISE

THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU HAD AN UNSATISFACTORY EXPERIENCE WITH SOME ORGANIZATION (PERHAPS YOUR OWN ORGANIZATION). YOU CAN PROBABLY TELL MANY STORIES ABOUT THE TROUBLES YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN PLANNING TRAVEL, AND CARRYING IT OUT (OR IN GETTING REIMBURSED FOR IT) IF SOME OTHER EXAMPLE DOES NOT COME TO MIND.

> Were your problems cause by a lack of skill or caring on the part of a STAFF element?

> Was the staff willing to be helpful, but was hampered by a SYSTEM deficiency?

> Could you detect a lack of STRATEGIC emphasis in the actions of the staff, or the functioning of the SYSTEMS?

PERHAPS A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE COMES TO MIND.

> Can you identify the way in which the elements of STRATEGY, SYSTEMS, and STAFF worked together to increase your substantive procedural, and/or relationship satisfaction?

EXERCISE

IF YOU WERE A CITIZEN ANNOYED BY U.S. MILITARY ACTIVITIES THAT CREATED NOISE OR OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS, AND IF YOU WERE MOTIVATED TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THIS TO A USAREUR UNIT — SAY, THE ONE YOU REALLY WORK FOR — WHAT GRADE (*) DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD GIVE USAREUR ON THESE COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT ELEMENTS:

> Organizational STRATEGY: _____

> Supporting SYSTEMS: _____

> Implementing STAFF: _____

(*)

5 = Outstanding

4 = Excellent

3 = Good

2 = Fair

1 = Poor

0 = Terrible

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS NEEDED IN YOUR COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT UNIT TO RAISE ELEMENTS RATED "O"-"3" TO AT LEAST A "4" (Excellent)?

VI - COMMUNICATION

A. INTRODUCTION

This section of the handbook, and its parallel training program, will help staff understand the principles of high stress/high risk communication and the skills they will need to develop to be effective complaint management communicators.

B. WHAT PEOPLE WHO COMPLAIN WANT TO ACCOMPLISH

Effective complaint management communication is difficult because there seem to be several things that people hope to accomplish when they find someone to whom they can complain.[8] Persons who are annoyed and angry want:

- To be taken seriously
- To be treated with respect
- To get immediate action
- To receive compensation for damage or inconvenience
- To know that those responsible will be reprimanded
- To make sure the problem will never happen again
- To be listened to

When USAREUR military activities are the subject of a complaint, it will be very hard for you, the complaint manager, to provide immediate action, compensation, evidence of reprimand, or guarantees about the future. But you can listen to the person with the complaint, take their concerns seriously, and treat them with respect.

C. COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS

A person who complains is someone who has become especially annoyed by the noise or environmental impacts of U.S. military activities. This means that the person has probably had a number of his or her emotions triggered by what is perceived to be a damage, a threat, or an insult to something highly valued.

Emotional people are unlikely to be sensitive to the feelings of the person to whom they are complaining. In fact, they may have built up their own feelings through rehearsals of what they want to say or, if the complaint is written, the less colorful verbs and adjectives may have been edited out in favor of words that get attention by stinging.

The reaction you may have is to discount the complaint as being illogical, irrational, badly motivated, and lacking in verifiable substance. But those stinging words do have an effect. What happens when any of us are confronted with threats, but our response is limited to words, is that we tend to use one or more of these "high risk responses".[9]

1. ORDERING, DEMANDING: "You must...," "You have to..."
2. WARNING, THREATENING: "You had better..," "If you don't, then..."
3. ADMONISHING, MORALIZING: "You should..," "You're responsible..."
4. PERSUADING, ARGUING: "Do you realize..," "The facts show that..."
5. ADVISING, GIVING ANSWERS: "Why don't you..," "Let me suggest..."
6. CRITICIZING, DISAGREEING: "You are not..," "You should not..."
7. PRAISING, AGREEING: "I approve of..," "You were right when..."
8. REASSURING, SYMPATHIZING: "Don't worry..," "You'll feel better.."
9. INTERPRETING, DIAGNOSING: "Your problem is..," "You need to..."
10. PROBING, QUESTIONING: "Why..," "Who..," "What..," "When..."
11. DIVERTING, AVOIDING: "Let's discuss it later..," "Can't be helped"
12. KIDDING, USING SARCASM: "When did you last read a newspaper?"

Use of such responses can convey a lack of acceptance of the complainer's feelings and the values upon which they are based. The result can be to increase the defensiveness or aggressiveness of the person who is complaining (the "fight" response), or an unwillingness to continue the conversation (the "flight" response).

Obviously, communication breaks down when both sides want to either stand and fight, or quit talking. It is up to the effective complaint manager to avoid these high risk responses to incoming "stingers" and by doing this to develop and enhance relationship satisfaction.

A PAY-OFF FOR LISTENING

One of the neighbors of a major Army installation had a reputation among training and public affairs personnel as a Hell-raising troublemaker. She complained regularly, loudly, and with much feeling, about the intensive training activities that was the mission of the installation.

No one wanted to take her complaint calls. No amount of public information about the importance of the training to national security seemed to impress her. Because of her insistent complaining, many of the installation staff had labeled her as "anti-military", and possibly "unpatriotic".

As staff changed, warnings about Maude (we'll call her) were passed on to the newcomers who quickly adopted the defensive communication styles of their predecessors. Maude often found that appropriate targets for her complaints were "...not here right now." In fact, one day, no one seemed to be there.

Maude persisted. Finally, she was connected with the Range Control Officer — Henry (let's call him). Henry was was someone Maude had never talked to before. He was pretty harassed without Maude being on the 'phone. Every training unit and wing seemed to want to impact something on the same place at the same time. But he took Maude's call — and got an earful without hearing protection.

But Henry, who had a houseful of his own and some adopted kids, was a natural-born "Active Listener". He had to be. So he just let Maude go on and on for a while, and when she came up for air, he observed (he reports): "You sound real angry 'cause we have to make so much noise over here."

Continued...

Henry reports that Maude stopped short in her usual tirade and said: "No, it's not the noise! It's all the shaking — and the fact that you never do it on the same day, or at the same time! Now I've got another ruined cake in the oven. Seems like every time I decide to bake, you decide to bomb. It's just not fair!"

Well, the way things are now, Maude and Henry are on a first name basis, and she calls him first thing every week. He tells her when the planes are coming in for bombing practice, and when the heavy artillery is going to be firing. Maude plans her baking around that information. It turns out that she's pretty strong for national security, and all that that requires.

Henry even called Maude one day — to apologize when some visiting VIPs required an unscheduled bombing demonstration. Soon, Training and PAO will have forgotten who Maude is — until Henry retires.

D. INCREASING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS: LISTENING AND ACCEPTING

The problem that arises in the search for increasing communication effectiveness is that the "high-risk" responses — sometimes called "the dirty dozen" — cover almost all of the responses that are conventional, and even normal. There is, in fact, nothing wrong with using these responses when there is little or no stress that needs to be dealt with, or when there is a solid relationship to build upon. A "bull session" among good friends, for example, will contain many of the "high-risk" responses.

There is another response that can be used when there is stress and the preservation or enhancement of relationship is important. This is listening. Listening infers that the communication is verbal, not written, in form. But the principles that support listening as a relationship-building response in stressful verbal communications also apply when sensitive, relationship-building

responses are needed to address a written complaint.

1. Why Listening Builds Relationship[10]

Each person has a unique and distinctive set of values, experiences, training and upbringing that shape that person's reactions to life's events. The emotional realities for one person are unlike the emotional realities for any other person. What makes emotional sense to one person may not make sense to another. There is no standard by which a "proper" emotional reaction can be judged.

Many communication problems occur when one person tries to impose his or her emotional reality upon another person. If you accept the premise that each person has a separate set of realities that are the basis for that person's emotions, then effective communication is the process in which people try to understand and accept one another's emotion-forming realities.

If someone is upset, it does little good to tell them not to be. They already are. In fact, when feelings are resisted, when people are told they should not have that feeling, then they will usually feel obliged to defend or justify the feeling. Rather than cause the feeling to change, the feeling is strengthened, and the person feels obliged to prove they have a right to their feelings.

When feelings are accepted, there is no need for the person to defend or justify them. They may elaborate on their feelings, or move on to another feeling — but they do not have to hang on to their original feeling, recycling it with increasing stridency in efforts to be taken seriously. Effective listening occurs when a person knows that his or her message, including its feelings and emotional realities, has been accepted — not necessarily agreed with — just accepted. Relationship satisfaction grows out of acceptance.

2. The Listening Process

In its simplest form, listening requires only the attentive presence of someone — a receiver — to whom a message can be sent.

This, of course, is not possible when the message is being sent by telephone — most of which is the case in many complaint handling situations. Attentiveness that contributes to procedural and relationship satisfaction grows when you give undivided attention to another person in one-on-one communication. A complainer's annoyance can be compounded if other business or telephone calls are allowed to intrude upon the listening process. If a telephone complaint is received at a time when you have other pressing business and do not have the time to listen attentively, it contributes to procedural and relationship satisfaction if you tell the caller something like this:

> "I am concerned about the problem that you are reporting, and I really want to hear all about it — but right now I can't give you the time I think your call deserves. Is there some time this afternoon or this evening when I can call you and have you explain the problem to me?"

3. Active Listening

Effective listening often requires more than an attentive message receiver. Active listener participation in the communication can confirm to the sender that his or her message has not only been accepted, but is clearly understood as well. Understanding involves an interpretation of the emotions and feelings in the message, as well as technical content.

High stress messages, like complaints, will probably contain both the technical content of the complaint and the feelings that the complainer has about a noise or environmental problem. But some complaints will be almost entirely technical content, seemingly without emotion or feeling; while other complaints may be so filled with feelings that any technical content is hidden or omitted.

The mistake that many listeners make is to discount the feeling part of a high stress message. This is especially true of listeners who have highly technical backgrounds. They tend to use the "high-risk response" of probing and questioning in search of the facts that they believe are the most critical ingredients of good communication. Feelings are facts for the people that are annoyed and angry with the way they are being treated.

Active Listening honors these feelings. By providing a way for pent up emotions to be vented, as well as accepted, Active Listening can clear the way for a complaint manager who needs to find whatever technical content there may be behind the annoyance and anger. It may take a lot of Active Listening of these feelings before a complainer is emotionally ready to go into the structured questioning required for data collection.

Here are some examples of noise complaints that show different mixes of technical content and feelings:

Complaint A:

At 6:30 this Sunday morning, a helicopter was started at the airfield that is on the north border of my property. My wife and I were awakened by this noise which continued for thirty minutes. During this time, there was a strong smell of exhaust and fuel. At 7:00, the helicopter took off and it passed directly over my house. It shook my roof, rattled windows, and set the dog to whining. The helicopter had one blade and was shaped like a pear. It was so close that I could clearly read the markings on it. This is the third Sunday in a row that a helicopter has been started and has taken off at these times. This is a great disturbance to the Sunday morning peace of our neighborhood, especially those who wish to be in church. Please make this stop so that we do not have to advance our grievance to higher levels of authority.

Complaint B:

This is really too much! Sundays are days that are for rest and meditation. For several Sundays, very early in the morning, we have been rudely awakened by the noise of your helicopters. They are allowed to run for a long time before anyone uses them, and this is not only noisy, but it pollutes the air as well. It is sickening and probably dangerous to our health as well as to our peace of mind. When the helicopters finally take off, they must aim at my house. They pass directly overhead, so close that it must be against the law. All of my neighbors are very angry about the noise and smell. Even the pets are afraid of the noise. If this keeps up, we will have to ask our local officials to formally protest this abuse of our community environment and our religious beliefs. You should be more considerate of us!

Complaint C:

If you people don't stop making noise on Sunday mornings, we will make many problems for you. You make our community intolerable with nerve-wracking noise and probably poisonous fumes. There is no question but that you are ruining our minds, our health, and our real estate values. Even the dogs are made sick and worthless. We are made to wake up when we should be sleeping. Those of us who wish to commune with their God are unable to do so because of your shameful treatment of our religious values, not to mention our homes and our children. Every Sunday, we are made to remember that we are an oppressed people who have no rights when it comes to your warmongering. But mark my word, we have many friends in high places. You will hear from them if you do not immediately stop your noise making.

Obviously, Complaint A is high in technical content and low in emotional content. Complaint C offers almost no technical information, but it is heavy with feelings. Complaint B has a mixture of content and feelings.

The challenge is to build procedural and relationship satisfaction with each of the three persons making these complaints. The skill required is Active Listening.

4. Constructing an Active Listening Response

The challenge of Active Listening is to be so attentive a listener that you will be able to describe the feelings you heard, and paraphrase or reframe the technical content when the complainer finishes his or her message (or pauses for more air). You will be trying to develop a "yesable" Active Listening response — one that the complainer might acknowledge with statements like these: "Yes that's right" or, "You got that right" or, "You'd better believe it!"

The question is often asked: Doesn't Active Listening just encourage the person to go on complaining? The answer is YES — and that is exactly what effective complaint management is all about. It is getting annoyed and angry people to stay on the line — to keep talking — or to switch from a typewriter to the telephone or a personal visit. It is getting people to understand that their feelings are understood and accepted so that the communications about conflict management and problem solving can begin.

Active Listening responses may miss the accurate capture of a fact, or the acceptable interpretation of a feeling. And that is OK — because it gives the complainer a chance to restate a fact or feeling, to correct or expand upon what has been said so that it is more clearly understood. The procedural and relationship satisfaction that is developed by Active Listening may come as much from the struggle to get it right as from getting it right the first time.

A simple sentence can serve as the basic model for an Active Listening response. When both feelings and content are expressed, it can look something like this:

YOU ARE (feeling word) BECAUSE (content or problem).

Other words can be used in place of BECAUSE, such as ABOUT, WHEN, or THAT. The sentence can be reversed, putting the content phrase first, followed by the description of feelings, like this:

WHEN (content or problem), YOU ARE (feeling word).

When you are uncertain about the feelings that are being expressed, you may want to start the Active Listening Response in a tentative or testing way, like this: YOU SEEM (feeling word) THAT. . . or, IT APPEARS THAT YOU ARE (feeling word). . .

Notice that the word "feel" is not a feeling word. The response, "YOU FEEL THAT WE SHOULD NOT DO THIS," does not describe any feeling that the complainer might have. You could just as well have said, "YOU THINK THAT WE SHOULD NOT DO THIS," or, "YOU BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD NOT DO THIS."

When there is no feeling expressed, do not make up feeling words to fill in the blank in the Active Listening model. Just skip over this part, as in the sentences above, or with a statement like, "IT SEEMS TO YOU THAT..." But when feelings are evident, try to find the words that best describe the emotion being expressed. You may discover that you have a very limited, tip-of-your-tongue vocabulary of feeling words.

5. Finding Feeling Words

Many people developing Active Listening skill have trouble finding appropriate words to describe the range of feelings expressed by people who are annoyed and angry. "Annoyed" and "angry" are two words that come easily to mind — along with "concerned" and "frustrated". And then the words seem to thin out.

The reason for this is that, for many people, advice and even rewards in life have come from "keeping the lid on" personal feelings. As children, students, soldiers, and professional men and women, many of the messages we received from our parents, teachers, leaders, and role models was that it was not OK to talk about feelings.

A page of feeling words (from the thousands of feeling words that must exist) is presented at the end of this chapter as a help to those in need.

6. Listening For Content[11]

Good communication requires more than acceptance of feelings or empathy for another person. An effective listener must also have an accurate understanding of the content or substantive message that is contained in a complaint. Giving accurate feedback of the content may eliminate unnecessary conflict due to misinformation or misperceptions.

Sometimes the content of a complaint is harder to understand than are the emotions and feelings. The complaint manager may be hit with a long list of problems and grievances that have no apparent structure. Major issues may be sandwiched between minor problems. Or, the concerns may be vaguely stated, or imply a knowledge of the issues that the complaint manager may not have.

There are several content feedback techniques that may be used to clarify content of a message for both the listener and the speaker. The most common feedback techniques involves simple paraphrasing — restating the content using different words — and summarizing — condensing the content elements into fewer words. Other feedback techniques "reframe" the content of the message, putting it in a different form, and making it more manageable in size or scope. Reframing can also increase the acceptability of the content by toning down or omitting the words that sting.

Such reframing content feedback techniques include:

- ☐ Ordering: The Active Listener sorts the content elements into a logical sequence based on such things as importance, size, timing, and amount.
- ☐ Grouping: The Active Listener organizes the content elements according to common ideas and issues, like aircraft noise, vehicle noise, installation noise.
- ☐ Fractionating: The Active Listener breaks a large and complex problem or idea into smaller parts that can be more easily understood and managed (or ordered or grouped).
- ☐ Expanding: The Active Listener expands or elaborates an issue or idea that is stated in generalized terms ("the noise problem") and offers it for verification for accuracy.
- ☐ Generalizing: The Active Listener identifies the general issues or ideas, omitting the details that expand or elaborate and may confuse this general theme.

Whenever reframing techniques are used, it is important for the listener to press the sender for some signal that a "yesable response" has been constructed: "Yes, that's exactly the way it is — and. "

7. "Yes, but" — Concerns about Active Listening

■ When I accept what other people are saying about their feelings or their problems, won't I be agreeing with them?

Active Listening responses do not offer evaluations or solutions, and they do not commit you to any action. Active Listening responses only summarize or reframe what has been said, and describe feelings when they are present — accepting, but neither agreeing nor disagreeing, with the content or the feelings.

For example: Complaint: "You keep telling us that noise studies will be made, and that new training methods are being developed. But nothing happens. It's just as noisy now as it was ever was."

Active Listening response: "It sounds as though you are pretty fed up with the progress we are making."

Complainer response: "That's right. We don't know how to make our own future plans. It would be helpful to know if and when there will be changes."

The Active Listening response did not agree that noise studies had been delayed, or that training methods had not been introduced.

The response only restated what the complaint had revealed about content and feelings. Contrast the Active Listening response with this statement of agreement:

Agreement response: "You're right. Nothing much has been done, and it's still pretty noisy."

Complainer response: "So what are you going to do? How can we trust what you say?"

- Won't it seem as though I am evading the issues, or stalling for time when I give an Active Listening response to someone who has made a complaint?

  Active listening is not intended to be the only response you give. In fact, you can and will use "high risk responses" in many of your exchanges during a complaint communication. If you have information that can be related to the content of the complaint, and the authority to release this information, do it. Getting accurate, substantive responses to the issues is what the complainer really wants — even if this response does not resolve those issues.

  Active Listening is effective and appropriate in these situations:

  - When you are confused about the content of a complaint, Active Listening gives you a way to check out what you think the other person is saying.
  - When feelings are high and emotions are rising, Active Listening gives people evidence that their feelings are being heard and accepted.
  - When a person keeps repeating the same point, it is a sign that person still does not believe that his or her message has gotten through. Active Listening shows that the point has been understood and accepted.
  - When you want to summarize what has been said when several people are talking, Active Listening is the way to check out what you have heard and get confirmation from the group.
  - When you want to give strong evidence that you are taking the complaint seriously and treating the complainer with respect, Active Listening is appropriate.

- It doesn't feel right when I use Active Listening it feels "fake", and not like what I would really be saying.

  Active Listening is a new form of communication for most people and, like anything new, it takes practice before it feels right. The more it is used, the more natural and comfortable it will seem.

  You will find that you can "loosen up" the one sentence, fill-in-the-blanks model and structure Active Listening responses that fit into your style of talking and relating to people. But just reading about and thinking about Active Listening does not give you the skill any more than reading and thinking about tennis makes you a tennis player.

  Practice Active Listening whenever you can — in restaurants, in taxi cabs, at the ticket counter. Don't wait until you really need the skill to get practice with it. An easy way to practice Active Listening is to use it when someone has good feelings about something. "I guess you're pretty proud that the report you wrote made it all the way to the top."

- Isn't Active Listening just therapy for people with lots of feelings? Won't they see through it, and resent it?

  Therapists are very good at Active Listening. But they use it because it greatly increases their ability to understand what people think and feel. This is a step in the problem solving process of therapy. Complaint management's goal is to greatly increase USAREUR's ability to understand what people think and feel as a step in the environmental and mission maintenance problem solving process.

  No matter how good you are with the skill of Active Listening, it will feel awkward to you, and it will be seen through and resented by complainers if you really do not care about listening to, understanding, and accepting the things that concern, frustrate, disappoint, confuse, and anger them.

E. INCREASING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS: GETTING YOUR POINT ACROSS

The time comes in the handling of almost every complaint when, as the complaint manager, you need to be heard. You need to break in on the monologue being delivered to you to get clarification on some issue. Or, you need make a suggestion for handling the complaint that will speed things up, or increase procedural satisfaction. There may be times when what you really want to say is: Please, for Heaven's sake, just be quiet for a minute and let me help you, if I can!"

There are ways of sending messages to other people that are "high-risk" insofar as procedural and relationship satisfaction are concerned, just as there are the "high-risk" ways of responding to others. There is a low-risk way of sending messages that is a big help in getting your message through to other people when emotions and feelings — yours and theirs — may interfere with communication. Let's look at both the "high-risk" and the more effective way of getting your point across.

1. High Risk Message Sending

   Earlier in this chapter it was noted that, in high stress situations, like complaint management, there is a temptation to communicate with others in ways that are instinctive and part of our survival mechanisms of "fight or flight". We tend to be either offensive or defensive, framing our own messages or our responses to others in terms that seem designed to irritate and ignore other people's feelings and needs. Through offensive and defensive communication, we decrease our willingness to accept others and are, in turn, made less acceptable to them.

   A closer examination of the "dirty-dozen" responses to incoming, high stress messages leads to the conclusion that they can be grouped in three "high-risk" categories: evaluations of the other person; solutions sent to the other person; and indirect statements that obscure what is really intended. These three categories also apply when we examine the typical, instinctive ways in which we try to send our own messages to others.

   - Evaluations: We say, "You don't have the knowledge...", or "You don't care...", or "You are illogical and irrational...", or "You have ulterior motives...", or "You are inconsiderate and rude..."

     Evaluations, even under the best of circumstances, cause people to raise their defenses. Relationship is the first victim of messages that start out this way. It may be true, but it does not get through when we say: "It's really your fault that there is this noise problem. We have been on alert and training here for 40 years. You let them build these houses all around the Kaserne. You made the mistake, not us."

   - Solutions: We say, "You should do this...", and "You should do that...", or "The way to solve this problem is to...", or "The only thing that we can do is..."

     The solutions that come first to mind are those that take care of our interests and needs. These rarely solve the problems that other people have, especially when their problem is with the way we take care of our interests and needs. Therefore, the people to whom a solution message is sent go on the defensive the minute they even think they hear a solution coming their way.

   - Indirect Messages: We say, "Oh, never mind...", or "It would be nice if some people did their share of the work," or "Read my lips...", or "Don't you know it's Sunday?"

     Indirect messages do not build procedural and relationship satisfaction. When they are used in ways that are sarcastic or are a "put-down" of other people, they damage relationships.

2. Using Congruent Sending to Get Your Point Across

Congruent Sending[12] is the name used to describe a way of increasing the chances of being heard and understood in high stress situations. It is a close relative of Active Listening because it requires you to identify the feelings, as well as the content, of the communication. It is called Congruent Sending because there needs to be a match, or congruency, between the words that you use, and the actual feelings and realities that you are experiencing that make you want to send the message.

Congruent messages put the focus on the sender, not the receiver. The "high-risk" messages sent as evaluation, solutions, and indirect statements put the focus on the receiver by starting out with the word "You". These "high-risk" messages are often called "You Messages."

In contrast, congruent messages start with the word "I", and are therefore called "I Messages" in some communication texts. The important principle is that the sender clearly takes ownership and responsibility for the feelings in the situation described. The model sentence structure for Congruent Sending looks like this:

I AM (feeling word) ABOUT (description of the problem).

Other words can be substituted for ABOUT, such as BECAUSE, WHEN, THAT — and the sentence can be reversed to put the problem description first, followed by the feeling word and the important ownership word "I".

Congruent Sending can also be used to deal with a problem in which the complaint manager hears his explanations of a noise abatement program being twisted and purposely misused by citizens who may be trying to have damaging statements planted for media use.

Congruent Sending statement: "I am worried that I am not being clear in my explanations of this program, and that inaccurate statements will be reported to the community."

It is also appropriate for the sender to make a suggestion that will change the condition, although this goes beyond the simple congruent message:

Suggestion for Change: "I would appreciate it if I could ask several people here to restate, in your own words, each of the main ideas of the program after I review them again."

Finally, because this suggestion is a form of solution, however congruently sent, it is a good idea to check out the suggestion to see if it is acceptable to other people:

Check out for Acceptance: "Does anyone have objections to this idea, or a better way to do this?" or, "How does that sound to you?"

The Congruent Sending message is complete at the end of the first of these three, linked statements. But people often have the need to do more than simply state their feelings and their perception of the problem. When this happens to you, use the Suggestion for Change and the Check out for Acceptance after opening with the Congruent Sending message

Here are some other Congruent Sending message examples:

Instead of: "It's time for us to get the meeting started again!"

Say: "I would like to get the meeting started again!"

Instead of: "If we keeping going off on tangents we won't get this meeting finished on time."

Say: "I am worried that if we don't stick with our agenda, we won't be able to finish on time."

Instead of: "Let's have a little order here. Everyone can't talk at the same time. We will have to go back to recognizing only those people who have their hands raised."

Say: "I am having trouble hearing when everyone talks at the same time, and I'm worried that something important won't get heard. I would appreciate it if those who want to say something would signal that by raising a hand. Can everyone agree with that?"

Yes, it often takes more words to send a congruent message. But the extra effort is well compensated by the increase in relationship satisfaction among those with whom you are trying to communicate.

F. THE PROBLEM OF QUESTIONS

As a complaint manager asked to gather and record complaint data systematically, you might wonder why this is required when asking questions is one of the "high-risk" modes of communication. What is it that is wrong with asking questions?

First of all, let it be clear that you are not being asked to stop using questions, and the other "high risk" listening responses and sending messages. You will have to use them at times. When you do, you should remember that they can jeopardize relationship satisfaction — especially if the relationship is under stress to start with. Use the "high-risk" modes with care, and if you feel the relationship slipping, switch to Active Listening and Congruent Sending whenever possible.

Now, about questions and the suggested Complaint Worksheet. There are a lot of questions on the worksheet, but only a few of them need to be asked directly. The others can be filled in, if necessary, from what you learned in a low-risk, open-ended conversation with the person who is making the complaint. If the relationship seems solid, there is no reason why you cannot ask specific questions.

But because questioning seems so important to complaint management, you should keep this in mind: the problem with questioning as an interview or information gathering technique is that, as soon as a question is asked, the control of the communication goes to the person asking the questions. The person being interviewed loses control for all practical purposes, and the person being questioned feels that loss of control. They do not know where things are going. Consciously or subconsciously, they guard their answers so that they do not find themselves boxed in or trapped by something they said earlier.

Information gathered by using Congruent Sending and Active Listening leaves people feeling more psychologically satisfied than when the same information is gathered using questions. It may take a little longer, and the information may not click right into place, but again, the procedural and relationship payoff is worth the effort.

Here is an example of how Active Listening and Congruent Sending might be used to begin an information gathering interview with Citizen B, who made the complaint described earlier:

Complaint Manager: It's pretty clear that the sound that our helicopters make on Sunday mornings is very annoying to you and your neighbors.

Citizen B: You'd better believe it! Sunday is for sleeping late, and having a nice breakfast with the family, and then going to church. And all the time, you hear this deep, throbbing sound. It wakes you up, and then it's with you all morning.

CM: You just can't get away from it . . .

CIT: Right. Oh, there are times when one of the helicopters flies off somewhere and the noise stops, for a while. But you don't notice that. What you are aware of is when another one starts up.

CM: So the noise you hear comes and goes — it's not continuous — but it grinds on you nonetheless.

CIT: You got that right! I guess that what makes it so annoying is that it seems so unnecessary. If they started one up and then flew it away, you could understand that. But they just let them sit there, roaring away, using up good fuel for nothing, and polluting the air for no good reason. You'd think that you guys could get your act together — put

together a schedule so that you didn't start up the engines until the people were ready to fly.

CM: You and your neighbors find it hard to understand why we let the helicopters warm up for so long before we let them take off.

CIT: Yes. And what really gets to you is that some of them — the ones that look like a big grasshopper with a glass head — have this high pitched whine. It drives the dogs crazy. Mine hides under the bed. I just wonder what that kind of noise is doing to my kids.

CM: It's not only confusing when you don't know what's happening, but it has you worried too when you think that some of our equipment pose a special risk to your family.

CIT: That sure crosses my mind on Sunday mornings.

CM: It would be very helpful to me if I had some more specific information about this problem. It puts me in an awkward position to try to go to the airfield Operations Officer and not have facts to use as we look for ways for us to do what we have to do, without causing you this Sunday morning problem. For example, it would help a lot if I knew what kinds of equipment seemed most annoying to you, how often this equipment appeared to be in use, and for how long, and whether the problem was there on other days of the week, or just on Sundays.

CIT: Well, I can answer some of those questions for you, but I'd have to start keeping records to answer some of the others. I'd be glad to do that if it would help you to do something about the problem.

CM: That would be helpful — and I'd really appreciate it. In the meantime, I would like to do two things. First of all, I would like to go over this form that we use to try to identify and analyze noise problems. We can see how many of the questions can be answered right now. Then, I would like to find a time when you and some of you neighbors could come over to the airfield to see what is going on. I'm concerned about suggesting a Sunday, but seeing that is the day when the problems occur . . .

... and so on. In the case of Citizen B, Active Listening, and then some Congruent sending will make it possible to get into some serious, direct questioning from the Complaint Worksheet, with little concern that the relationship will be damaged by this questioning. But if the complaint manager had launched right into the worksheet questions without building up a reserve of relationship, interview might have gone something like this:

Complaint Manager: We have received your letter of complaint and a file has been started on you. You may want to make note of your identification number in case you want to contact us again. It is 89-1234. I have a number of questions that I need to ask you ...

Citizen B: Wait a minute! What's this business of starting a file on me, and giving me an identification number? I don't like it when your government starts a file on me. What's that got to do with making it quiet around here?

CM: Sir, we need an ID number so you can be entered into our computer, and found later.

CIT: I would prefer to use my name. Many of us have bad feelings about the use of identification numbers. And you will have no trouble finding me. I still ask, what has all this to do with making it quiet around here?

CM: It will speed things up if you let me ask the questions. I have 26 of them, and I need...

CIT: Twenty-six questions! I see no reason for this kind of interrogation. The problem is very simple. Your helicopters ruin our Sunday rest and our family and church activities.

CM: Is Sunday the date of the incident you wish to report?

CIT: Not just Sunday, but Sundays — every Sunday.

CM: But it happened this past Sunday, right? I have to have dates to put in our computer — and the time, too.

CIT: For time, write down "all day."

CM: Your letter said it was Sunday mornings. Can you be specific about the time of this incident? I need data to feed our computer.

CIT: Feed the computer? My data? I've told you all the data I have. It is Sundays — several Sundays — many Sundays. Mostly it is in the morning of Sundays. Sometimes it is all day on Sunday. It probably happens during the week too, but no one is home on week days. The dog has been wetting under the bed when we are gone. This is new. It probably means that the noise happens then too.

CM: The dog wets under the bed? This is ridiculous. There is no place where I can enter that kind of data...

CIT: So there is specific information required by your form to feed your computers, and you are going to fill in that information about me? Is that right?

CM: Sir, that's not the way it is. I can't answer that question.

CIT: You can ask me questions, but I can't ask you questions. Is that the way it is? I demand an answer to my question!

CM: You're not cooperating. If you would cooperate, maybe we could find out what is going on here.

CIT: If you would listen instead of asking dumb questions, you would by now know what is going on here. I have an idea. Why don't you come to my house next Sunday morning — say at 6:30 — and have some kaffee and stoellen with my wife and me. Then, we can meet some of the neighbors and go on a little tour so you can find out what is going on here, fill out your form, feed your computer, and maybe change things so the dog doesn't wet under the bed anymore. Maybe if I invite my friend who is in the Bundestag, you will bring your General. This will be a fine Sunday morning!

CM: (to himself) Ho boy!

Obviously, a farfetched turn of events. Or is it? Remember that, among the many people who are annoyed by military noise and environmental problems, those who come forward with complaints are those who have the sense of personal efficacy that enables them to deal confidently with authorities.

Building relationships is the communication goal of USAREUR strategies, systems, and staff skills. Active Listening and Congruent Sending, used when appropriate in high stress interactions, will help USAREUR staff increase its complaint management effectiveness, and reach this goal.

A LITTLE BIT OF (relationship) MAKES THE (annoyance) GO DOWN

In recent years, all U.S. military installations have been required to measure the noise they make, and draw maps showing noise hazard zones that neighboring communities should consider in planning for the development or redevelopment of land in these zones. This is the "Installation Compatible Use Zone" or ICUZ program.

National Guard as well as regular Army installations have conducted these ICUZ programs. To help in this work, both the Army and the National Guard have used "outside" technicians and consultants. Some of these outsiders have observed that for comparable levels of military noise and other disturbing activity, the National Guard gets significantly less complaints from its neighbors, compared to neighbor complaints about regular Army operations.

National Guard complaint managers offer this explanation. They contend that, unlike regular Army personnel who are in their duty stations for only a few years, and who often live on-post before being replaced by a new person, the people who staff National Guard installations are usually permanent residents in the neighboring communities. Most of them hold civilian jobs in these communities, and they are part of the civic and social life there.

Continued...

One National Guard complaint manager observed that many of the people who call him about noise problems contact him at home, and call him by his first name. He says, "They aren't really complaining. They just want to know what's going on, and when it's going to end."

Another National Guard commander noted that formal noise complaints from one community rose steadily, from "almost none", to "many", when the Range Control Sergeant moved to another part of town to get a larger house for his growing family. "When the Sergeant moved, the noise we make became an anonymous thing to people who had been able to chat about it with the man who made it as he walked home every night", the commander concluded.

*****

A regular Army installation that had noticeable success in complaint management can correlate that period of relative tranquility (in spite of high levels of noise) with the tour of duty of a Commanding General who was known as the person who (1) had personally called upon some of the citizens who were persistent in their complaints; (2) had his staff (and sometime he himself) go on local television to announce when and why particularly annoying military activities were scheduled to begin and end; and (3) had been the local area winner in the "Betty Crocker Cook-off" competition. In developing personal relationship, this General seemed to have been "a natural".

EXERCISE

SAMPLE LIST OF FEELINGS

A scan of the dictionary under the letter "A" reveals more than 125 familiar words that can be associated with feelings. In addition to the tip-of-the-tongue words ANGRY, ANNOYED, and ANXIOUS, there are other useful words, such as: ABANDONED, ABASHED, ABRADED, ABUSED, ACCEPTED, ACCOSTED, ACQUITTED, ADAMANT, ADRIFT, ADVENTUROUS, AFFECTED, AFFIRMED, AFFRONTED, AFRAID, AGGRAVATED, AGGRIEVED, AGHAST, ALARMED, ALIENATED, AMAZED, AMBIVALENT, AMBUSHED, AMICABLE, AMUSED, ANGUISHED, ANTAGONIZED, APATHETIC, APPALLED, APPRECIATED, APPREHENSIVE, APPROVED, ARGUMENTATIVE, ARMED, AROUSED, ASSAULTED, ASSURED, ASTONISHED, ASTOUNDED, ATTACKED, AUTONOMOUS, AVERAGED, AVERSE, AVOIDED, and AWFUL.

Here are some more feeling words from among the thousands that are listed, or that can be constructed to describe human emotions:

CONCERNED	ENTHUSIASTIC	UNCOMFORTABLE	DESPERATE
PUZZLED	CONFUSED	THREATENED	DISTURBED
STYMIED	REJECTED	FRUSTRATED	HURT
IN A BIND	DISCOURAGED	DELIGHTED	OVERWHELMED
INFURIATED	BELITTLED	SURPRISED	RIPPED OFF
PATRONIZED	SCARED	BETRAYED	PUT DOWN
TERRIFIED	CORNERED	UNDERSTOOD	UPSET
JOYFUL	TURNED OFF	UNCERTAIN	DISAPPOINTED
PLEASED	IMPORTANT	HOPEFUL	GUILTY
UNCOMFORTABLE	RESENTFUL	TURNED ON	GREAT
BLAMED	MISUNDERSTOOD	CONTENT	IRRITATED
ON THE SPOT	SHAMED	ISOLATED	UNIMPORTANT
DEFENSIVE	LEFT OUT	HOPELESS	DISCOUNTED
RELIEVED	ENCOURAGED	EMBARRASSED	CARED FOR
CONFIDENT	PROUD	ENVIOUS	CONSIDERED
UP TIGHT	DISSATISFIED	INTRUDED UPON	WANTED
WORRIED	UNFAIRED AGAINST	INTIMIDATED	IGNORED

EXERCISE

NOT LISTENING EXERCISE

Angry Citizen

You have come to the end of your endurance with the military activities of the U.S. Forces in Germany. The range of things that you feel are insults and damages to the things you value is astonishing. The time has come to do something about it. Your self esteem is at stake.

Yesterday afternoon, it took you two hours longer than it should have, to return home from a holiday weekend in the country. Traffic was backed up on the Autobahn for miles, and the cause was a slow moving convoy of Army trucks that never should have been allowed on any road during the holiday.

And you holiday hiking trip in the Forest Preserve was ruined by the fact that there were soldiers and tanks everywhere in the woods. Your favorite overlook had been taken over by a group of laughing, swearing soldiers with paint on their faces. They said they were on a training exercise, but who ever heard of disciplined soldiers sitting around all day listening to tape recorded rock and roll music? It is a travesty!

Then, last night, the music from the NCO Club at the garrison went on until well after midnight, and soldiers returning to their barracks after a night on the town were shouting and disorderly. When your neighbor, Frau Schmidt, complained to a group that was cheering on two soldiers who were fighting in her front rose garden, they said things to her about her age, her sex, and her nationality that were unbelievable and infuriating. Their entire unit should be punished for this terrible behavior. But when you followed these ruffians to the gate and pointed them out to the guard on duty there, she told you that she did not see them doing anything wrong — that they were just having a good time — and that, if you were having a problem, you should take it up with someone in the "PAO Office" in the morning.

This morning, it was the helicopters again. They finally took off, five of them, at seven o'clock — after almost 30 minutes of "warming up". Although their airfield is almost a kilometer away from your house, they are only at tree top height when they pass overhead, as they always do. The whacking noise they make is enough to make the dishes on the shelf rattle. Tante Anna called a few minutes later from the other side of town, near the Air Base. She said she was frightened that the fast jets that were taking off and landing in formation, would crash into her house — like the pictures of the last accident that she saw on television. How she can stand the noise, you do not know. You can sometimes hear it all the way across town.

Now, you are again at the Guard House. You have been waiting for thirty minutes for someone from the PAO Office to come to the gate to escort you to wherever it is that you can file your many complaints. You tried all morning to telephone this Office, but no number for them could be found. Someone has now showed up and asks: "What can I do for you?" Such insolence! What can they do, indeed! You'll tell them! Right now!

EXERCISE

NOT LISTENING EXERCISE

PAO Civilian Staff Member

Talk about Bedlam and Chaos! No place or condition could come close to being what the Public Affairs Office is like today. Life is too short to put up with the kind of nonsense and abuse that gets dumped on people like you by both the public and the "green suits" — not to mention the people over at the Maneuver Rights and Host Nation offices who seem to think they have no responsibility for keeping the lid on things.

At 0800, the General's Aide showed up personally to bring your boss, the PAO, over to a special Commanders' meeting that had been called — probably to chew everyone out about what must have been a bang-up weekend. The complaints are stacked up knee deep, and cover everything there is that can be complained about. Maneuvers, convoys, drunken behavior, clashes between citizens and soldiers, helicopters, jets, boom boxes, you name it, and today, we've got it.

As she left, the PAO dumped all of her crises on you, and, until she gets back (if she gets back) you are IT — the single lightning rod for everything that has the word "public," or "citizen," or "problem" attached to it. Not the least of your impossible list of chores are these things:

- You have to have a speech written for the Colonel's noon speech to the Rotary Club. It is supposed to be on "The Mission of NATO in a Changing Europe." You have only the notes you took on a TV program last night, before you were called in to deal with "a problem" that was created when the Colonel failed to show up for the Little League awards banquet. It seems that he got stuck in a German holiday traffic jam.

- You have to have a draft letter on the General's desk in 20 minutes that will be an official response to the Lord Mayor's complaint about the Little League playoffs that were held last Sunday morning and afternoon. The cheering and a horn-honking cavalcade were protested to the Lord Mayor by the Clergyman's Association.

- The TV stations have been on the 'phone since daylight wanting to know why they are being kept from filming the efforts to free the tank that got wedged between two buildings while attempting an unauthorized short cut through a village during the weekend maneuvers. They say that all they have is air views of a gridlock that spreads out from the village for several kilometers in all directions.

Then there are the plain vanilla complaints that have to be investigated, documented, and answered. One of them involves someone who is down at the main gate, demanding to see the PAO. The guards there say that you have get there "on the double" to get this angry person off their backs. As you head for the gate, you remember this is the morning you promised to take an hour off to go watch one of your children in a school play.

EXERCISE

IDENTIFYING FEELINGS AND CONTENT

For each of the following statements, identify the feelings of the sender, and paraphrase, summarize, or reframe the content of the message.

1. You can't let them run tanks through these woods! This is The Wilhelm Wald! It's one of the last stands of virgin Black Fir in this part of the world, and it is the habitat of the Stag. Do you have any idea what these things mean to the people of this country?

   FEELINGS: _____

   CONTENT: _____

   _____

2. I guess it doesn't make any difference what we think or say. We've been telling you for years about the noise your helicopters and aircraft make, and how it disturbs our way of life. Each time there is a new commander, we have to start all over. It doesn't seem to matter to any of them. Over and over again we hear: "These are the sounds of freedom." Then they go home to their freedom.

   FEELINGS: _____

   CONTENT: _____

   _____

3. When your tanks and tracked vehicles come out of the fields and onto our roads, they leave mud all over the place. It makes driving very slippery, and in wet weather, our cars get covered with dirt. You promised that you would either clean your tracks, or clean our roads, but you don't do either of those things. Someone is going to skid and get hurt or killed because of this. We demand that you keep your word.

   FEELINGS: _____

   CONTENT: _____

   _____

4. I appreciate the prompt and courteous response you gave me when I complained about the noise.

   FEELINGS: _____

   CONTENT: _____

   _____

EXERCISE

CONSTRUCTING ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSES

For each of the statements that follow, identify the sender's feelings and the content of the message. Then write an Active Listening response that follows this model:

YOU ARE (feeling word) BECAUSE* (content or problem)

* you may use other words here, like WHEN, THAT, ABOUT

When you have done this, give the Active Listening response orally to the others in your group — but deliver it in a more conversational style.

For example, in Situation #3 on the preceding page, the feelings and content might have been these: "irritation," and "mud on the road and on our cars"; and, "worry," and "someone might get hurt." The double Active Listening response, adhering strictly to the model above, would be like this:

YOU ARE IRRITATED ABOUT THE MUD ON THE ROAD AND ON YOUR CARS AND YOU ARE WORRIED THAT SOMEONE MIGHT GET HURT.

When you actually give this response, you might loosen it up and say it in a more conversational way, like this:

YOU SEEM PRETTY IRRITATED ABOUT THE MUD THAT GETS ON THE ROAD, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT GETS YOUR CAR DIRTY IN WET WEATHER — AND IT WORRIES YOU THAT SOMEONE MIGHT SKID ON THE MUD AND GET HURT.

Now, develop Active Listening responses for these statements, and share your responses with the others in your group.

5. I'd like to get some facts into this discussion. About one-third of the people in this area work for the U.S. Army, or run businesses in which soldiers are major customers. I am one of those businessmen, and I have this to say: If you people keep complaining about the noise, and the Army starts giving in to those who say there should be less military activity here, you will have only yourselves to blame when many of us are unemployed and some are homeless and starving!

ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSE: _____

_____

_____

_____

6. I don't want to sound like I don't care about peace and our national security, but things ARE changing, and some of your military activities seem less necessary to us than they seem to you. It is especially annoying when these activities take place at night, or on our holidays.

ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSE: _____

_____

_____

7. It's not just the noise at night — it's the flashes and the flares that make it like a continuous lightning storm. It wakes my children and frightens them. They cry. Can't you do something about that?

ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSE: _____

_____

_____

8. We used to do our work in this factory by hand — with machine tools and operators. Now, many things are electronic, and we have some things done by robotics. The vibrations of your tanks, trucks, and firing sometimes cause our sensitive equipment to lose calibration, and your own electronics cause power drains and surges that ruin our programs. We must object to these effects on our economy.

ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSE: _____

_____

_____

9. Enough is enough! For more than thirty years you have been setting yourself apart from the laws and customs of our country. It's time you behaved like the guest you are now supposed to be!

ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSE: _____

_____

_____

10. It's not just the noise from the helicopters and the jets (that sometimes crash too), and the motor pools that roar and smell up the air, and the tanks that clank through our towns and tear up our fields and roads, and the canons that not only steal the night, but stir bad memories among those of us who are old. It's also the shameless way your soldiers behave. They march to obscene chants, and shout when they are exercised. They do not know their place when they come into town on leave. They do not know their limit when they drink beer. They speak badly to our women. And with the so-called "boom boxes" they cannot be without, they show that they have no culture. My cousin in East Germany says the Russian soldiers have discipline and do not create these bad impressions and feelings among the people. We do not want the Russians, but I think we do not want the Americans either. Now, what are you going to do about this? And, by the way, the Kaserne needs a new sewage treatment plant. The smell is unbelievable!

ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSE: _____

_____

_____

11. I give up!

ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSE: _____

_____

_____

12. Why don't you paint numbers on your planes and tanks and trucks that people can read from a distance? That way, we could tell you who it is that is making noise and causing other problems. Then, you could punish the people who are responsible.

ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSE: _____

_____

_____

EXERCISE

BUILDING ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

You will not feel comfortable using Active Listening until you begin to integrate it into your communication style and habits. Even then, most people who find Active Listening to be comfortable and helpful report that they are conscious of its use — it is not something that many people can do with unconscious competence. One of the best places to begin the acquisition of Active Listening skills is through practice with several other people who can observe and coach, or react and critique one another.

This is an exercise to give you high intensity practice in Active Listening. The exercise does NOT attempt to model a real conversation or interaction that you might have with other people using Active Listening. Football linemen practice blocking for hours to develop skill. This does not look like or feel like a real football game. Golfers hit dozens of golf balls with a five iron at a driving range to develop their skill with this club. It does not look like or feel like a real golf game. And so it is with this Active Listening practice. It does not look like, sound like, or feel like a real conversation.

Each person in your small group will have a chance to be an Active Listener, and an Observer. Each person will have several chances to be a Sender of messages that should be short and filled with feeling. The several Senders in the group will bombard the Active Listener with one-liners for _ minutes. The subject for these one-liners will be chosen by the person who is doing the listening. It should be a subject that the Active Listener might have trouble just listening to, without getting involved in an argument or using the "dirty dozen" high-risk responses. The task is to communicate acceptance and understanding, not agreement or disagreement.

After each one-liner, the Senders should give the Active Listener a chance to respond. If the Active Listening response is on target, the person who originated that one-liner should signal that the response was "yesable" by saying YES, or RIGHT, or THAT'S IT, or OK. If the Active Listening response was <u>not</u> "yesable", its Sender should say so, and require the Active Listener to try again. The object is to give the Active Listener as many chances to practice this skill as possible in the time allowed.

At the end of _ minutes of practice, the Observer-(Timekeeper) should call STOP, and begin the _ minute period of feedback, following these steps in rapid succession:

1. Observer asks Active Listener how he or she felt during the practice, what was done well, and what could have been done better.
2. Observer identifies specific Active Listening responses that he or she felt were done well. Skip those that might have been done better.
3. Senders try to recall specific Active Listening responses that would have given them relationship satisfaction. Skip those done poorly.

EXERCISE

BUILDING ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS (continued)

Concentrate on the positive results of the practice, and the feelings that effective Active Listening can build. At the end of the _ minute feedback session, move on to another round of practice with someone else stepping up to the Active Listener role, and another person taking on the Observer (Timekeeper) role.

Signal the Instructor if you need help

NOTE: The Active Listener can choose any topic that might involve a high level of feeling — real or role-played — among the Senders. Senders may want to reflect opinions and positions that differ from those they would take in a real discussion of the chosen topic. This helps the Sender keep their messages short and intense. People who send their real feelings and opinions often use up valuable practice time developing the rationale for their positions. Don't do this. Practice listening, not sending.

Here are some subjects from which the Active Listeners might choose if some other "hot" topic does not come to mind:

GUN CONTROL (or ASSAULT RIFLE OWNERSHIP)

SEX EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS

MANDATORY, RANDOM DRUG TESTING OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

SCHOOLING FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE THE A.I.D.S. VIRUS

GENERATING ELECTRICITY WITH NUCLEAR ENERGY

LIMITING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' USE OF GREENHOUSE GASES

COMBAT ASSIGNMENTS FOR WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES

ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR COLLEGE ATHLETES

ABORTION

USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS TO PROVIDE SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

LAWS REQUIRING ONLY ENGLISH TO BE USED IN U.S. SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT

Remember, the object of this exercise is to give the Active Listener practice with high stress/high risk communications. Put a lot of feeling into your real or role-played one-liners on these subject — but use most of the time making the Active Listener prove that he or she IS listening.

EXERCISE

BUILDING CONGRUENT SENDING SKILLS

Many people find Congruent Sending easier to do than Active Listening. This seems to be because, in Congruent Sending, you have more time to think about what you are going to say — you do not have to react to what someone else is saying, on-the-spot. But practice is necessary in the development of Congruent Sending skill. For some people, the big step is in taking ownership for feelings, and then sharing those feelings with others.

In this exercise, several topics are identified for your small group to use in developing Congruent Sending messages, following this model:

I AM (feeling word) ABOUT* (description of situation)

*NOTE: You can use other words here, like BECAUSE, WHEN, or THAT

As with Active Listening, when the message is finally sent to others, it can be put in a more conversational, less stilted style. However, this exercise is not designed to model a real conversation with others. It is designed to force practice with Congruent Sending (and incidentally, with Active Listening too).

Everyone in the small group should take a minute or two to assess his or her own opinion and feelings about the topic announced for Round 1 of the practice. Then, each person should take a turn sending a congruent message about the topic — with this Ground Rule: each person (except the first one to send a message) must give a "yes-able" Active Listening response to the previous person's congruent message before sending his or her own congruent message.

When each person in the group has delivered a Congruent Sending message, and if no one wants to send an additional message, the exercise should be repeated using the topic for Round 2 — and finally, Round 3.

Here are the topics for each of the Congruent Sending practice rounds:

Round 1: What I think, and how I feel about —
Active Listening and Congruent Sending.

Round 2: What I think, and how I feel about —
the USAREUR Complaint Management strategy and
the suggested system for recording complaints.

Round 3: What I think, and how I feel about —
the prospects for change in German citizen
attitudes about USAREUR activities.

VII - UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING CONFLICT

A. INTRODUCTION

It would be a relatively easy job to be a complaint manager if all that was required was to listen to people who were annoyed and to correct the problems that were reported. If substantive satisfaction could be found for every complaint, procedural and relationship satisfaction would almost surely follow.

But the reality of the Army's mission requirements will not allow USAREUR complaint managers to simply wave a magic wand of substantive satisfaction and correct every condition that causes annoyance and complaints. What will be possible for complaint managers is the documentation of annoyance, the reduction of its causes wherever mission-consistent action can be taken, and the protection of procedural and relationship satisfaction where substantive action cannot be taken. Doing so will require complaint managers to increase their understanding of conflicts that occurs whenever people with different realities interact. It will also require complaint managers to increase their skills in the processes of conflict management. These processes include COMMUNICATION, which is necessary for the learning and teaching needed to engage in PROBLEM SOLVING.

Communication for learning and teaching was the subject of the preceding chapter; problem solving will be explored in the following chapter. This chapter develops an understanding of conflict management principles[12] that can be used to sharpen the focus of communication for learning and teaching, and to set the goals for problem solving.

B. ATTITUDES ABOUT CONFLICT

What comes to mind when you think of the word "conflict"? Probably words like fight, struggle, pain, harm, win, lose, war. Conflict is often defined as competition over mutually incompatible goals or the control of resources. Its resolution is often believed to be achieved by damaging, or beating one or more of the parties involved. The results of conflict resolved in this way are often negative for one or more of the involved parties — or sometimes, for everyone. We are all painfully aware of the human, organizational, and social costs of protracted conflict.

However, conflict can have positive results. Conflict can be used to right wrongs and produce new and more satisfying standards, institutions, and patterns of relationship. Conflict, in fact, is an essential and desirable component of a free society. How can these two components or characteristics of conflict — the destructive and the productive elements — be reconciled?

Part of the answer is in our attitudes and behaviors toward conflict. Conflict is not inherently bad; it is our attitudes about conflict and how we fight out our differences that is the problem. We have the capacity to influence whether the outcome of conflict will be productive or destructive by how we view conflict, and by the means we use to resolve our differences and move from conflict to cooperation.

Conflict generally involves a collision of differences of reality and need between two or more people. Since people differ from one another, we all are potentially in conflict. Most of the time this conflict is latent. When we become aware of these differences and they cause a problem in the attainment of our interests or the honoring of our values, conflict becomes real. Frequently, it is competition or change which sparks this awareness.

The conflicts arising from the awareness of different interests and values often threaten the participants in the dispute who, in turn, adopt defensive behaviors to protect themselves. These self protective behaviors can cause unproductive conflict which is characterized by poor communication, the stereotyping of people as "bad" or "good", and escalating emotions.

Unproductive conflict behaviors are based on these attitudes and assumptions:

- Someone must win, and someone must lose.
- Each person believes that he or she has a non-negotiable stake in the outcome.
- Honor or personal integrity must be defended.
- The other person is totally wrong — illogical, irrational, and badly motivated.

Productive conflict is characterized by another set of attitudes:

- No one person has a monopoly on the truth, or knows all the answers.
- There is probably more than one satisfactory solution to the problem.
- Satisfaction of one's own interests does not require the sacrifice of another person's interests.
- The results of conflict can be beneficial to all parties.

The principles and skills of conflict management do not lead to conflict avoidance. They are used to turn conflict into opportunities for cooperative problem solving that will produce high quality outcomes for the individuals and organizations that are involved.

C. CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Most disputes are caused by several factors:

- Relationship problems
- Data or information difficulties
- Competing interests
- Structural tensions
- Differing values.

A closer look at these causes of conflict will help conflict managers, and complaint managers, to break down a dispute and decide where the most productive, or the easiest place is to begin to communicate, learn and teach, and problem solve.

1. Relationship Conflict:

   Relationship conflict often results from the expression of strong emotions, misperceptions, stereotyping, poor communication, or patterns of repetitive negative behavior. The resulting disputes often are unnecessary in that they are not based on substantive disagreements. A focus on maintaining or building positive relationships — good feelings, accurate and positive perceptions, productive communications — can significantly lessen the possibility of unnecessary relationship conflict.

   In complaint management, attention to relationship begins with the first person who is contacted by a citizen or public official who is annoyed with U.S. Forces activities. The skill most required at this critical point of first contact is the ability to communicate well — especially to listen.

2. Data Conflict:

   Data conflict results from a lack of information, misinformation, different interpretations of data, and different views about the relevance of specific data. A frequent cause of controversy is the failure to exchange information that is necessary for a full understanding of the issues.

   Some data conflict is unavoidable because of genuine disagreements over what information is needed, or because of conflicting opinions about what information is important to resolving the conflict. Disputing parties often have different standards for evaluating information, and they often believe that other parties are manipulating information to create an advantage.

   In USAREUR complaint management, data conflicts can occur over such things as the amount of noise or environmental impact that was created by a U.S. Forces activity; the identification of the units or personnel involved; or the nature of previous agreements that, it is claimed, have been breached.

NOISE IS SOUND I DON'T VALUE

There is a man (we'll call him Mr. Hale) who lives at the intersection of two helicopter flyways. One of these is the route used by Army helicopters transporting VIP staff from their Headquarters to an airport where executive jet aircraft can land and take off. The other route is used by Coast Guard helicopters flying from their airfield to a control point from which they are vectored for small craft emergency and rescue work on one of the Great Lakes.

On a summer weekend, when there are a lot of people boating near this urban shoreline, there are many more Coast Guard helicopters flying rescue missions over Mr. Hale's home than there are Army helicopters flying senior officers over his head. To the untrained eye and ear, both the Army and the Coast Guard helicopters look the same, and sound the same. The sound of these helicopters is very loud.

The loud sound of the olive colored Army helicopters causes Mr. Hale to shake his fist them and exclaim something like: "There they go again, disturbing the peace and wasting all that taxpayer money flying Generals to places they probably don't need to go. If they do need to get there, they ought to take the bus or a cab like the rest of us. What makes them so special? It's really quite intolerable!"

When the white helicopter with the red stripe flies overhead, more often, and just as loud sounding, Mr. Hale has been heard to say, "I hope they get there on time — 'hammer down' boys!" Mr. Hale does not own a boat himself, and to the argument that the Coast Guard is using taxpayer's money to rescue people who are wealthy enough to afford expensive boats, and imprudent in their use, he replies, "Well, that's their job."

*****

A National Guard installation that provides ranges for tank and artillery training has received a steady flow of complaints for several years (to which the installation commander responds personally). Complaints about military noise and the presence of these troops in the community declined sharply when the National Guard began using its fire fighting equipment to provide "back up" (and sometimes first-to-arrive) fire protection to its rural neighbors, and emergency medical service along an adjoining Interstate Highway.

3. Structural Conflict

Structural conflict is caused by patterns of human relationship. This type of dispute may be the result of the distribution or concentration of authority and power; an unequal control of resources; geographic relationships; time; organizational structures; and legal constraints.

Some structural causes of conflict are, or they appear to be, things over which conflict managers have little control. But often, structural conflicts are caused by the processes and procedures that are used to deal with the conflict — they create procedural dissatisfaction.

In complaint management, the way in which a complaint is handled can create, or prevent, structural conflict. The systems and procedures used in gathering specific information can be structural causes of data and relationship conflict. The centralization of authority in a military organization can cause time delays and multiple referrals of a complaint.

The inability of a citizen or public official to get attention to his or her complaint without bureaucratic frustration may be one of the biggest problems for USAREUR staff to solve in creating an effective Complaint Management Program.

4. Interest Conflict:

Conflict also develops over seemingly incompatible interests. Interests are needs or tangible results that a party must have satisfied as an outcome of a dispute for the settlement to be satisfactory and durable. Interests can be substantive in nature; they may refer to the process by which a settlement is reached; or they can refer to the relationship and psychological needs of the people in the conflict.

In USAREUR complaint management, interests can be varied and complex — especially at this time of changing realities and expectations in Germany and Europe. There

are legitimate interests that relate to the substance of German relationships with NATO pacts and forces; the procedures for insuring national defense in an apparently less hostile environment; and the psychological need for increased national autonomy.

These latter procedural, relationship, and psychological interests may be as much at the root of complaints about U.S. Forces activities as are the substantive interests of quiet, clean air and water, and troop behaviors that respect community norms and values. The interests of USAREUR must also be accounted for in managing conflict and complaints. U.S. interests are also multiple and complex, involving procedural and psychological factors as well as the stated substantive interest: "protecting mission capability."

Understanding interests is a critical skill of effective complaint managers. Section of this Chapter will highlight interests as the foundation for cooperative problem solving.

5. Values Conflict:[13]

Values conflict develops when disputants have different criteria for evaluating conflict outcomes, have different life styles or goals, or hold different ideologies and religious beliefs. Values are often the foundation for the interests that may be the more visible conflict. Some theorists hold that all conflict is, at its roots, a conflict of values.

Values affect our relationships. We quickly evaluate people as being GOOD or BAD; EASY or DIFFICULT to deal with; RIGHT or WRONG; PROPERLY or IMPROPERLY motivated. Sometimes we do this within moments on the basis of how people look, what they wear, or how they conduct themselves. And as we do this, other people probably are making the same value judgments about us.

Values are one of the critical elements in the communication of "individual realities" and the feelings and emotions that arise when our values are put at risk. Values are involved in what we accept and what we reject in the data and information that is a source of conflict. "Hard data" that seems so logical and rational to one person, can seem quite illogical and irrational to another person — the difference being the degree to which they "value" the data, or the way in which their values color the importance and interpretation of "facts."

The vast array of interests that we hold, protect, and seek to advance, are clearly a product of the system of values in our selves, our organizations, our neighborhoods, and our nations. Certainly, the different experiences and environments in which German citizens and USAREUR military and civilian personnel have been raised must be deeply involved in the way each assesses personal annoyance, formulates or receives a complaint, and seeks to communicate and manage conflict.

D. CONFLICT ESCALATION

If they are not managed, conflicts frequently escalate and may become uncontrollable and destructive. While some escalation may be necessary to make a problem visible to all the parties involved, people in disputes should be concerned with preventing unnecessary and unproductive conflict, and with de-escalating situations that impede effective resolution.

Unmanaged conflicts tend to follow a general pattern of escalating intensity, time, involvement, and costs.

1. Precipitating event: This is an event which focuses attention on the conflict and raises awareness that a problem exists. The precipitating event might be the one-too-many take-offs of a helicopter, or the disruption of a holiday outing in the country by maneuvering troops.

2. Dispute definition: The parties involved define the problem, determine what is at stake, and consider outcomes. Often, this is done individually — which

frequently results in misperceptions, stereotyping, and misguided action. Dispute definition may take the form of a resolve to complain personally to the Community Commander, or to the Lord Mayor, in order to restore the conditions that a person values — to protect valued interests from what appears to be thoughtless and uncaring U.S. Forces.

3. Dispute expansion: As the primary parties interact with others, the boundaries and issues of the dispute, the parties involved, and the emotional levels of the participation change. Feelings based on past dealings with the other parties emerge. People form alliances and coalitions. New issues are introduced.

   Dispute expansion can occur when an annoyed person finds a neighbor who was also annoyed. A petition is circulated. A letter of complaint is sent to USAREUR, or to local officials, on behalf of a neighborhood, rather than an individual. A Council is formed and named. Contributions to support political action are gathered.

4. Polarization and stereotyping: Each group in the growing dispute defines its position sharply, emphasizing differences between its own interests and the perceived interests of others. There is no "middle ground", and people are either "with us, or against us." Stereotyping reinforces the polarization by projecting exaggerated negative images of adversaries based on traits which lend themselves to labeling.

   In the complaint management environment, polarization and stereotyping behavior can take place among USAREUR staff as well as among or German citizens and officials.

5. Destructive conflict behavior: In the final stage of conflict escalation, the dispute holds center stage and is the focus of nearly all activity. Relationships are ruptured. Non-dispute related production comes to a halt. Parties refuse to communicate with one another or, if they do, they engage in vicious arguments. Each side seeks resolution by absolute victory over the other.

   At this point, the costs to the disputants themselves are very high and often expand and impact indirectly involved third parties or neighboring publics. Direct action is often taken by one or more of the parties to either try to win in the dispute, or, at least, to demonstrate their resolve and the means they are willing to employ to achieve their desired end state conditions.

At this final stage of conflict escalation, resolution is beyond simple complaint management. Effective complaint management is intended to prevent not only this stage of conflict, but all the stages that precede it and turn dissatisfaction and annoyance into problems that can be solved rather than contests to be won.

E. IDENTIFYING INTERESTS, POSITIONS, AND ISSUES

A key to understanding conflict management principles is the clarification of the terms INTERESTS, POSITIONS, and ISSUES, and knowing when and how to use these terms and the things they stand for in the communication and problem solving processes of conflict management.

1. Interests are the specific needs, conditions, or gains that a person or group has that must be met if any agreement is to be considered satisfactory. Interests may involve the substance, or content that is the subject of the conflict, or the interests may be related to specific procedural concerns or relationship needs. Interests are revealed in response to the question: WHY do you need this to happen?

   In USAREUR complaint management, environmental interests may be for quiet communities, cleaner air and water, less disruption of civilian activities. Interests discovered in answer to the question: WHY? may reveal procedural needs concerning the communication channels among military and civilian leaders, or relationship and psychological interests related to issues of

governance and autonomy, as well as personal self esteem.

2. Positions are statements that are made by a party to a dispute that show how that person or group thinks the conflict should be resolved. A position is the solution favored and proposed by the party because of a belief that it the best way for a particular interest to be realized. Positions are made in response to the question: HOW do you think this should be resolved?

   USAREUR complaint managers are likely hear more of the positions or solutions that an annoyed person advocates, than the interests that person wants to protect or advance. A position might sound like this: "Stop all take-offs and landings after 1900 hours", or, "You should never hold maneuvers or allow convoys on the roads on German holidays", or, "Baseball games on Sundays have nothing to do with your NATO mission!"

3. Issues are the statements that clarify what the parties in a conflict disagree about. Issue statements, when completely elaborated, describe the interests (not positions) that create the conflict and that must be addressed in any agreement. Issues are stated in response to the question: WHAT is the problem?

   It is important for USAREUR complaint managers to be specific in stating issues, including a description of the interests that are at stake on both sides of the problem. This will help everyone involved to understand the need for cooperative problem solving. Stated this way, a USAREUR complaint issue might be: "...the need to maintain pilot's night flying skills and, at the same time, protect the residents near the airfield from aircraft noise that disturbs their sleep."

There is no way to predict or control how problems, issues and positions will be stated in a conflict. Often, disputing parties plunge right in to presenting and debating their respective positions. They may not be clear about what the issues really are because neither side has learned from, or taught the other, about its interests.

Sometimes there is an effort made to define the issues, but this may fail to clarify the conflict if the parties define the problems in terms of favored solutions.

The key to effective conflict management is to get the people who are in conflict to start learning and teaching each other about their interests. Then, issues will become clear, and positions can be stated that reflect solutions that test the degree to which all parties' interests can be met, rather than being solutions that meet only the interests of one party.

The communication skills of Active Listening and Congruent Sending grow in importance and comfort when they are used to move people in conflict to discussions and new understandings of their interests — procedural and relationship, or psychological, as well as substantive. And when parties in a conflict situation can talk about WHY they need to have something happen or turn out in a particular way, as well as HOW they think that might be done, the problem solving process becomes much easier.

F. INTEREST-BASED vs. POSITION-BASED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Understanding the difference between INTERESTS and POSITIONS is critical to the work of complaint management as well as to conflict management. To distinguish these two methods of communicating about conflict, the terms "Interest-Based Conflict Management" and "Position-Based" Conflict Management have been coined.

The conflict manager or complaint manager who seeks to develop new understandings, mitigating actions, or resolution of a dispute may choose from a number of techniques ranging from the improvement of communication, the conciliation of relationships, and the facilitation of problem solving, to negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation.

In each of these techniques, the two most common approaches are based upon either the clarification of interests, or the bargaining of positions. In this exploration, taken from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers training manual for the executive "Alternative Dispute Resolution" program[13] the technique discussed is negotiation (or bargaining), but the approach applies to other

techniques, including communication and problem solving, just as well.

1. What is Position-Based Bargaining?

   Positional bargaining is a negotiation strategy in which a series of positions are selected by a negotiator, ordered sequentially according to preferred outcomes, and presented to another party in an effort to reach agreement.

   The first, or opening position, represents that maximum gain hoped for or expected in the negotiations. Each subsequent position demands less of an opponent and results in fewer benefits for the person advocating it.

   Agreement is reached when the negotiators' positions converge and they reach an acceptable settlement range.

2. What is Interest-Based Bargaining?

   Interest-based bargaining involves parties in a collaborative effort to jointly meet each other's needs and satisfy mutual interests. Rather than moving from positions, to counter positions, to a compromise settlement, negotiators pursue a joint problem solving approach and attempt to identify interests prior to examining specific solutions.

   After interests are identified, negotiators jointly search for a variety of alternatives that might satisfy all interests, rather than argue for any single position. The parties select a solution from these mutually agreed options.

   This approach to negotiation is sometimes called "integrated bargaining" because of its emphasis on cooperation, meeting mutual needs, and the efforts by the parties to expand the bargaining options so that a wiser decision, with more benefits to all, can be achieved.

Naturally, all negotiations involve some positional bargaining and some interest-based bargaining, but each negotiation may be characterized by a predominance of one approach or the other. Negotiators who take a positional bargaining approach will generally use interest-based bargaining only during the final stages of negotiations. When interest-based bargaining is used throughout negotiations it often produces wiser decisions in a shorter amount of time with less need for adversarial behavior.

G. CONFLICT OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES

In the previous paragraphs, reference was made to several results, or outcomes that a party in a conflict might want to achieve. Knowing what outcome is preferred, it is then possible to select the conflict management strategy that is likely to produce that outcome, the technique (conciliation, negotiation, facilitated problem solving, litigation, etc.) that might be employed to implement the strategy, and the approach (position-based or interest-based) for communicating with other parties.

1. Possible Outcomes of a Dispute:

   The diagram on the next page (Figure 2) shows five end state conditions, or outcomes of a dispute. Party A's satisfaction is plotted on the vertical axis of the diagram and ranges from LOW ("loses") to HIGH ("wins"). Party B's satisfaction, described in these same terms, is plotted on the horizontal axis.

<u>WIN/LOSE</u> outcomes occur in the upper left hand, and lower right hand corners of this chart. The difference is in who wins — A, or B. WIN/LOSE outcomes are most common when:

- One party has overwhelming power and does not need the cooperation of another to win.
- Future relationships are not of great concern.
- The stakes for winning are high, and a party cannot cooperate or compromise without losing everything.

<u>LOSE/LOSE</u> outcomes are shown in the lower left corner of the chart. This results when parties are not able to come to an agreement. The LOSE/LOSE outcomes occur when:

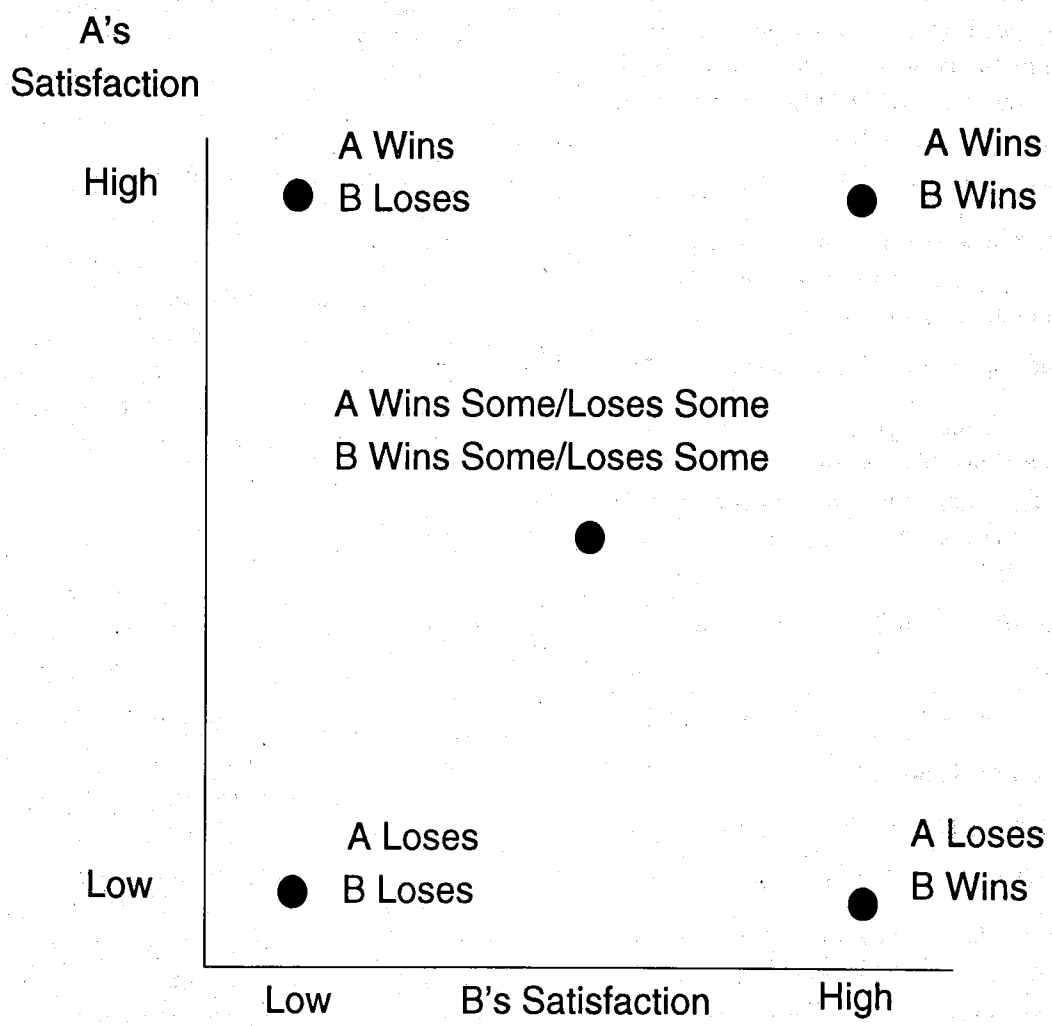

Figure #1. Possible Dispute Outcomes

- Neither party has enough power to force the issue.
- There is a lack of trust, poor communication, excessive emotions, or an inadequate resolution process.
- The stakes for winning are low, and neither party cares about the dispute.

WINS-SOME/LOSES-SOME or half-win/half-lose outcomes are represented in the center of the chart. This result is obtained when all parties give up some of there goals in order to obtain others. The outcome of WINS-SOME/LOSES SOME is likely to occur when:

- Neither party has the power to totally win.
- The future positive relationship of the disputants is important, but they do not trust each other enough to work together.
- The stakes for winning are moderately high.

WIN/WIN outcomes occur in the upper right corner of the chart. This result is reached when all parties feel their interests have been met. WIN/WIN outcomes occur when these conditions are found:

- Both parties are not engaged in a power struggle.
- A future positive relationship is important.

possible outcomes chart here

- The stakes are high for producing a solution.
- Both parties are assertive problem solvers.

Usually, the product in each of these outcomes is an agreement between disputants that satisfies at least some of their interests. This may be true even when both parties appear to "lose".

In complaint management, the product that is needed may be substantive — to avoid a claim, litigation, or political pressure; to get agreement on the time, place, and duration of a maneuver; to develop a Standard Operating Procedure to govern airfield operations.

The outcome may also be procedural — gaining agreement on what measures will be used to objectively assess noise impacts; or developing a forum for the discussion of future relationships.

Sometimes the product will be about relationship itself, or about psychological satisfaction — how to maintain the authority and self esteem of a local official who agrees to USAREUR mission requirements instead of pressing a constituent complaint on to higher political authority; how to let all parties "save face" when the product for each is only "half-win".

Each of the outcomes described on the preceding pages results from a particular conflict management STRATEGY that establishes the attitudes and behaviors that will be used in working for that outcome.

2. Conflict Management Strategies

The diagram on the following page (Figure 3) gives names to the conflict management strategies that lead to the outcomes previously described. Note that although the coordinates of the "Conflict Management Strategies" diagram are the same as those used in the diagram of "Possible Dispute Outcomes", the perspective is now from the point of view of Party A only — the strategy names are those that would be used by A to describe its conflict management intentions.

COMPETITION — the way to WIN/LOSE settlements. In some situations, a party's interests are so narrow that they can be met by only a few solutions, none of which are acceptable to the other parties involved. The party may choose to compete for the outcome and to strive for a WIN/LOSE settlement, especially when that party believes that it has more power than its opponent. Competitive strategies include litigation, arbitration, referral to a higher authority for decision, or executive decree.

When USAREUR chooses a strategy of COMPETITION, it is because it believes that mission capability will be irreparably and permanently decreased if the "annoying" activity of U.S. Forces is stopped, decreased, or modified in any way, and that this present interest is more important that future relationships.

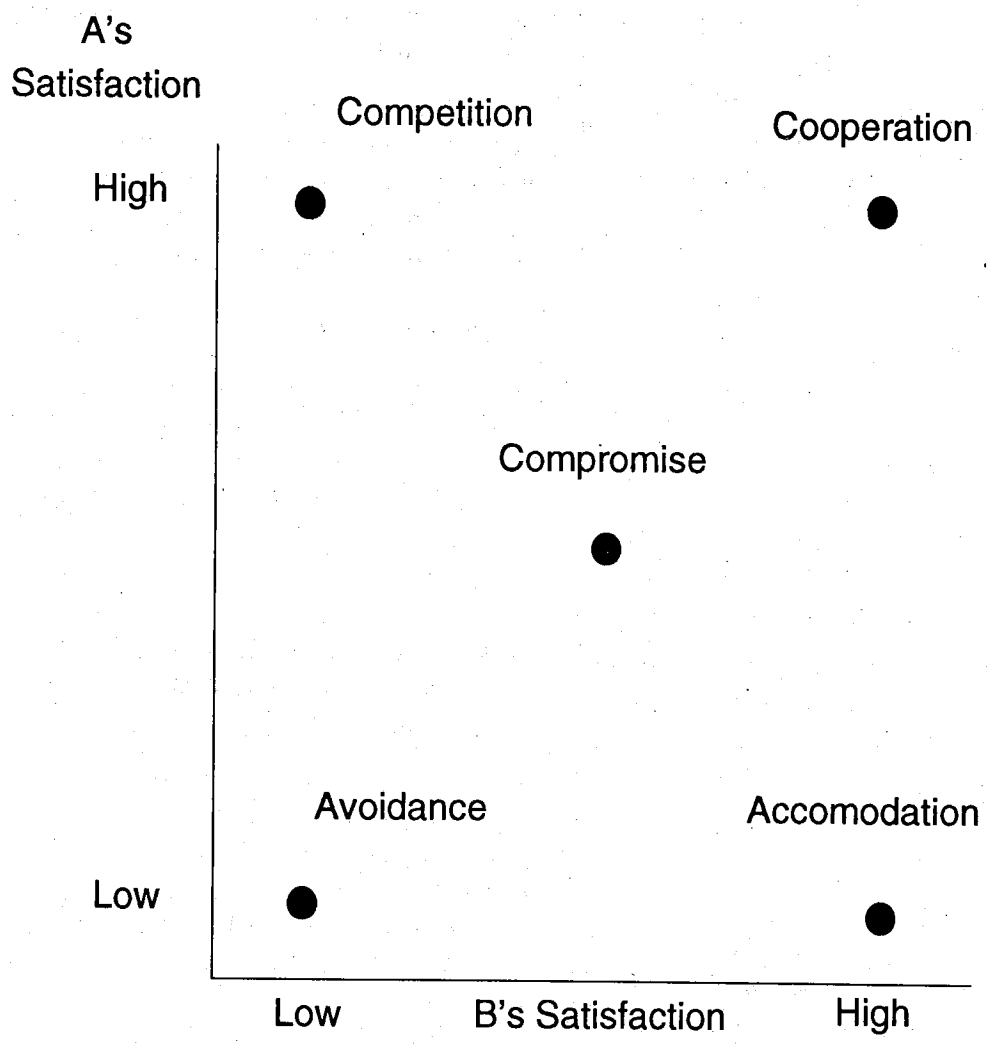

Figure #2. Conflict Management Strategies

ACCOMMODATION — giving in to the other's interests. Accommodation occurs when one party gives in to the interests of another at the expense of its own needs. Accommodative strategy is pursued when the sacrifice of some interests is required to maintain a positive relationship, when it is desirable to demonstrate or foster cooperation, or when interests are extremely interdependent.

When USAREUR chooses a strategy of ACCOMMODATION, it is because the "annoying" activity of U.S. Forces is not related to mission capability, or that this capability is not as important to long range USAREUR interests as is the maintenance of good relationships with German citizens and officials.

AVOIDANCE — the strategy of disengagement. Conflict avoidance can be both productive and unproductive in the settlement of disputes. People avoid conflict for a variety of reasons — fear, lack of knowledge of other conflict management processes, absence of inter-dependent interests, indifference to the issues in the dispute, or belief that agreement is not possible.

When USAREUR chooses a strategy of AVOIDANCE, it may be to avoid being drawn into a conflict situation; to try to manage the problem without making its actions public; or to maintain a less that optimum status quo when the issues involved are relatively unimportant to all parties.

COMPROMISE — dividing up the pie. Compromise is achieved through bargaining or negotiation. This strategy is selected when the parties recognize they do not have sufficient power or sources to compete to win, or when they do not perceive the possibility of a WIN/WIN situation that will meet their needs.

When USAREUR chooses a strategy of COMPROMISE, it will be because giving up some of its interests is what is needed in order to get the other parties to accept their diminished interests without appealing to higher political authority.

COOPERATION — meeting the needs of all parties. Cooperative problem solving is less familiar to most people than competing to win, or bargaining and negotiating a compromise. However, with the rise of collaborative management techniques and new organizational development approaches in industry, this strategy has become a more common method for the management of conflict.

In contrast to positional bargaining and negotiation, where the outcome is seen as the division of a fixed set of resources, cooperative problem solving seeks to enlarge the range of alternatives, or "increase the pie" so that all the parties' needs are met.

When USAREUR chooses the strategy of COOPERATION, it is because it believes that there may be solutions to the problems created by U.S. Forces activities, but that finding these solutions will require the creative energy of all parties.

H. SUMMARY

In this chapter, attitudes about conflict and the common sources of conflict have been identified. The important definitions of INTERESTS, POSITIONS, and ISSUES have been given, along with descriptions of the Interest-Based and Position-Based approaches to conflict management. Finally, the five most common outcomes of a conflict have been reviewed, and their corresponding conflict management strategies have been described.

With this understanding of conflict and the principles of conflict management, USAREUR complaint manager should be in an improved position to focus communications with annoyed citizens and public officials on the learning and teaching that must be done to initiate problem solving processes.

Keeping in mind the limits and constraints that mission requirements place upon the conflict management process, it is nevertheless appropriate for the complaint manager to understand the processes by which substantive agreements on complaints may be reached through cooperative, interest-based, facilitated problem solving — which is the subject of the next chapter.

EXERCISE

THINGS THAT HELP IN RESOLVING OR MANAGING CONFLICT

THINK OF A CONFLICT THAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED IN YOUR WORK THAT WAS SETTLED WITH RELATIVELY HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION FOR ALL OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED.

> Try to identify what things were done by some or all of the participants that contributed to the development of the productive settlement.

> What could have happened that would have resulted in there being no settlement of the conflict, or a settlement that would have been less satisfying to some or all of the people that were involved?

EXERCISE

HOW ATTITUDES AFFECT CONFLICT BEHAVIOR

THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU HAVE WORKED WITH IN USAREUR COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT — ON THE USAREUR STAFF, AMONG THE MILITARY OPERATING UNITS, AND IN THE GERMAN COMMUNITIES.

> Try to find words to characterize the attitudes those people had — both positive and negative — about the people on the "other side" in the conflict.

> List these words on two separate sheets of paper — one for POSITIVE attitudes, and one for NEGATIVE attitudes.

> For each of these lists, describe the kinds of behaviors that people used, and the procedures and relationships that resulted from these behaviors.

NOTE: See pages 7-3 and 7-4 for information on attitudes about conflict.

EXERCISE

IDENTIFYING CAUSES OF CONFLICT

(part 1: Relationship, Data, Structure)

THINK ABOUT SOME OF THE NOISE AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLAINTS AND CONFLICTS YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED. TRY TO FIND EXAMPLES IN WHICH CONFLICT WAS CAUSED BY ONE OR MORE OF THESE THINGS:

> Present or past RELATIONSHIP problems.

> DATA or information differences and interpretations.

> STRUCTURAL tensions or complexities

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE TO REMOVE (RESOLVE) OR LESSEN (MANAGE) THESE SOURCES OF CONFLICT?

NOTE: See pages 7-4 through 7-7 for information on causes of conflict.

EXERCISE

CAUSES OF CONFLICT

(part 2: Interests)

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INTERESTS OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN A USAREUR NOISE OR ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT?

> The military Company or Battalion Commander whose troops created the problem during routine field training — the Commander has three months to go on his tour in Germany.

> The Community Commander whose installation is used by many units for field training — the Commander has three years to go on his tour in Germany.

> The citizen who is annoyed by noise from an airfield and who has written a complaint letter to USAREUR Headquarters — see "Complaint A" on page 6-6 of this handbook.

> The Mayor of the town who was sent a copy of the complaint letter by the annoyed citizen, with a request that the Mayor meet with the citizen and some of his neighbors.

> The Public Affairs Officer for the installation who has been asked to respond to the citizen's letter, and to brief the Community Commander on the actions he should take regarding the Company/Battalion Commander, and the Mayor.

> The Host Nation representative for the District who has been asked by Headquarters to arrange a meeting with the Mayor and the annoyed citizen to try to resolve or manage the conflict.

NOTE: Do not think about what these people should do or say — just try to identify what the INTERESTS are that each person has that he or she will be trying to defend or advance in whatever interaction follows.

NOTE: See pages 7-6, 7-10, and 7-12 for information on Interests.

EXERCISE

CAUSES OF CONFLICT

(part 3: Values)

THINK OF THE INTERESTS YOU HAVE THAT AFFECT YOUR ATTITUDE AND YOUR BEHAVIOR TOWARD YOUR WORK, THE OTHER PEOPLE WITH WHOM YOU

> Make a list of the Interests that you will be trying to advance or protect in your interactions with other people.

> For each Interest that you identified, try to think of the word or phrase that describes the VALUES that you have that create this Interest, and impel you to act on it.

NOTE: See pages 7-7 and 7-8 for information on Values.

EXERCISE

IDENTIFYING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MOST COMMONLY EMPLOYED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES WHEN YOUR UNIT HAS BEEN REQUIRED TO DEAL WITH A CONFLICT BETWEEN USAREUR AND GERMAN CITIZENS OR LEADERS?

> Competition

> Accommodation

> Avoidance

> Compromise

> Cooperation

CAN YOU THINK OF AN EXAMPLE OF COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT ACTION FOR EACH OF THESE FIVE STRATEGIES? (Note: Sometimes it is necessary to shift from one strategy to another as conflict management proceeds, but you do not engage in more than one strategy at a time.)

DOES YOUR COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT UNIT TRY TO PREDICT WHAT OUTCOME OF A CONFLICT IS (a) MOST DESIRABLE, AND (b) MOST LIKELY BEFORE YOU DECIDE WHAT TO DO?

NOTE: See page 7-13 for information on Outcomes, and page 7-16 for information on Strategies.

VIII - PROBLEM SOLVING

A. INTRODUCTION

The two previous chapters aimed at establishing the importance of developing relationship satisfaction through effective COMMUNICATION, and the need for building procedural satisfaction through effective CONFLICT MANAGEMENT. Understanding the principles of communication and conflict management, and developing skills in these processes, is essential work for the USAREUR complaint manager.

When the opportunity to talk and be heard is clear and trusted, and the processes are available for teaching and learning about interests and values, the two important prerequisites of complaint resolution are in place — communication, and education. When the principles and skills of PROBLEM SOLVING are added, the chance for substantive satisfaction is made possible.

USAREUR mission requirements may make it impossible for the changes to be made that annoyed citizens and public officials suggest — or demand. In these cases, the importance of using effective complaint management principles and skills to build relationship and procedural satisfaction has been stressed.

But there may be substantive solutions that are different than those proposed by annoyed and angry complainers, or envisioned by military leaders who feel trapped between mission responsibility and their concern for environmental protection. The search for ways to meet the needs, advance the interests, and honor the values of everyone involved in an issue surfaced by the complaint management process is the purpose of problem solving.[14]

B. CONDITIONS NEEDED TO SUPPORT COOPERATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

There are several prerequisites that need to be met before cooperative problem solving can take place. The first condition is that the people involved in the problem must agree to meet with one another. This condition presupposes that individuals and groups are not so hostile to one another that they would not agree to talk. These parties must have enough trust in one another's sincerity in approaching the problem solving process that they will be willing to work together.

Another prerequisite is that no one party can feel that it has sufficient power to unilaterally determine the outcome of the problem solving process, and impose this solution on others. When there is a party that believes that its interests are paramount and can be made to prevail over the interests of others, there is little incentive for them to participate in a cooperative problem solving process — and other parties may choose, or be forced to compete to win as well.

An important prerequisite for the cooperative problem solving process is that all of the parties with an interest in meeting and working together believe that the USAREUR staff who facilitate this process are capable of acting fairly and impartially.

USAREUR complaint managers will quickly recognize that these conditions cannot be met for many complaint situations. Getting people "to the (problem solving) table" is one of the most complex and vexing challenges of complaint and conflict managers. For some people, self-image, reputation, and career seem more related to being a winning competitor, than an effective cooperator.

However, there are examples among USAREUR complaint management units where cooperative problem solving activities have been organized, and solutions have been found to problems that go unresolved in other USAREUR areas. In some of these efforts, the cooperative problem solving has been undertaken with an existing community organization, or one that has been formed by citizens or public officials for this purpose. In other cases, the cooperative effort involved groups of citizens whose were

organized for that specific purpose by USAREUR staff.

C. PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

The cooperative problem solving process is aimed at increasing the ability of people who recognize that they have interests that are at risk, damaged, or unfulfilled because of the interests of others, to work together to develop ways to satisfy these interests or needs. There are several principles that characterize this approach to problem solving.

1. Belief in the value of PARTICIPATION:

   This principle is derived from an assumption undergirding the democratic process — that people should have the right, and they do have the responsibility, to manage their own affairs. From this assumption, a number of implications follow:

   - When people feel a sense of genuine participation in the decision making process — when they feel that their participation can make a difference in the outcome of a decision — they are more likely to become sincerely and cooperatively involved in that process.
   - When people feel that, because of their participation, they have some control over the process that generates solutions, they are more likely to be willing to consider and evaluate proposed solutions in a serious and responsible manner.

2. Belief in the value of PROCESS:

   This principle, though supported by research in the field of group dynamics, is more a matter of faith, feeling, or experience for most people. It is directly related to the need everyone has for procedural satisfaction — that the way in which something is decided is often as important as what is decided. Those who value PROCESS understand or feel:

   - When people feel that the process for reaching a decision has been fair — that their views have been considered and have had a chance to influence the outcome — they are far more committed to implementing the solution that have been developed, even when it is not their preferred solution.
   - When people can see that a fair and systematic thought process and clear procedures have been used to create, organize, and evaluate information and ideas, they have a better sense of progress and direction, and a willingness to "let go" of the need to gather more and more data to support their interests before a decision is made.

3. Belief that effective and durable solutions result when people help one another to protect or advance individual INTERESTS. This principle is based on the ideas of interest-based conflict management presented in Chapter VII. This principle holds that people and organizations act in ways that protect and advance their interests and values. It is natural for them to enter into situations in which interests and values conflict with an attitude and strategy that aims at insuring that the outcome of the conflict is a "win" for their side.

   Experience has taught most people that, while it may be possible to dominate the decision making process and ensure that a favored interest is honored at the expense of other interests, this approach is generally not effective and does not produce durable results.

   - People who feel their interests have not been met have many ways to obtain the power to redress their grievances, including the use of the courts, the press, and civil disobedience.
   - People who feel their interests have not been met can fail to implement their part of imposed solutions, or upset a solution by withholding full cooperation — or even by malicious compliance with the solution's terms.

- People who feel their interests have not been met in one problem situation can withhold their cooperation in another situation where they cannot be dominated or overcome.

By definition, the cooperative problem solving process is not an arena for competition. In addition (and surprising to some people), it is not a process used in a search for "common ground". The cooperative problem solving process is an effort by people who believe that individual or group interests are separate realities that are to be accepted (neither agreed with nor disagreed with), and that no one solution is likely to honor these multiple interests.

Instead, the cooperative problem solving process uses the creative synergy of all participants to find the several solution ingredients that advance or protect individual interests, and tailor an agreement or plan that is a group product rather than a surviving solution picked from among competing options.

It does not always work out this way. There is no guarantee that cooperative problem solving will succeed. It is not easy work. But cooperative problem solving does increase the chances of success — and even when the best effort only results in a compromise, the procedural and relationship satisfactions that have been developed often make it possible for people to continue to work in good faith and spirit on other problems.

D. THE COOPERATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

In the following description of the procedures and participant roles for cooperative problem solving, the environment that is portrayed is one in which a group of people have gathered to deal with a conflict of USAREUR military activity interests, and German community or neighborhood interests — a cooperative problem solving meeting. The point should be made that cooperative problem solving can take place between as few as two people, and it can be done over the telephone, or by mail (though personal contact greatly improves and speeds the communication, and the teaching and learning processes).

The assumption in these descriptions is that a group has gathered for the specific purpose of trying to solve some problem. This means that, for USAREUR staff participants, the decision has been made that some change in the activities or operations of U.S. Forces is possible — that whatever the problem is, its cause is not so constrained by mission requirements that discussion and negotiation is impossible. Both USAREUR and community leaders see that there is an interdependency of interests that makes cooperative problem solving possible, and necessary.

While the problem solving meeting does not require that participants are friendly, or that they are unpolarized in the positions they initially advocate (see Chapter 7), it is unlikely that cooperative problem solving will take place in a meeting with people who are gathered because of active hostility to U.S. Forces activities or presence in Germany. It is easier to picture cooperative problem solving taking place at a meeting called by USAREUR staff to deal with a specific problem, than to picture it taking place at a meeting at which USAREUR staff presence was demanded by people intent upon taking and strengthening public positions.

E. USAREUR STAFF ROLES IN A COOPERATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING MEETING

One of the significant characteristics of a cooperative problem solving meeting is the identification, and separation, of three USAREUR staff roles. These are (1) the Facilitator, (2) the Technical and/or Policy Representative of USAREUR — hereinafter "USAREUR Representative", and (3) the Recorder.

1. The Facilitator

   The Facilitator's job is to ensure that the way the meeting is conducted is consistent with the basic principles that undergird the cooperative problem solving process. The Facilitator plays a lead role — but the Facilitator is not the leader of the group. The success of the meeting is not the responsibility of the

Facilitator; the Facilitator's job is to help the group to have success.

The Facilitator does not evaluate the substance or content of the group's work, or coach group members as they develop content. The Facilitator does coach the group on meeting process and procedures, making suggestions that may help the group to create, organize, and evaluate information, opinion, and ideas.

The Facilitator, free of meeting content and decision making responsibility, is able to concentrate on group process and sense procedural and relationship needs of the group. During a cooperative problem solving meeting, a Facilitator might do these things:

- help the group establish an agenda; agree on a meeting process; set time limits and ground rules
- have participants identify themselves; suggest and model a communications environment that helps group members overcome any reservation they may have about participating
- call attention to group progress and accomplishment; note when the group appears to be getting off track, or hung up on some point or issue
- acknowledge and summarize group member's contributions; make sure that everyone who wants to say something gets a fair share of meeting time
- help the group to accept feelings and emotions by using listening skills to accept and interpret them
- identify points of dissension; sense tension among group members; urge members to focus their comments on the problems and issues rather than on other members
- check for understanding on key points; call attention to emerging themes; ensure that agreements are clearly worded and accurately recorded
- help the group to identify objective ways to evaluate ideas and move toward consensus or closure

Although it is helpful if the Facilitator has some knowledge of methods and procedures that can help the group to create, organize, evaluate, and make decisions about data and ideas, it is more important for the Facilitator to be the impartial servant of the group, helping the group to help itself over the hard places. In doing this, experienced Facilitators make

frequent use of the Active Listening and Congruent Sending communication skills. Figure 4 shows a Facilitator working in a problem solving meeting.

It may be helpful in thinking about what Facilitators do, to identify what Facilitators should NOT do.

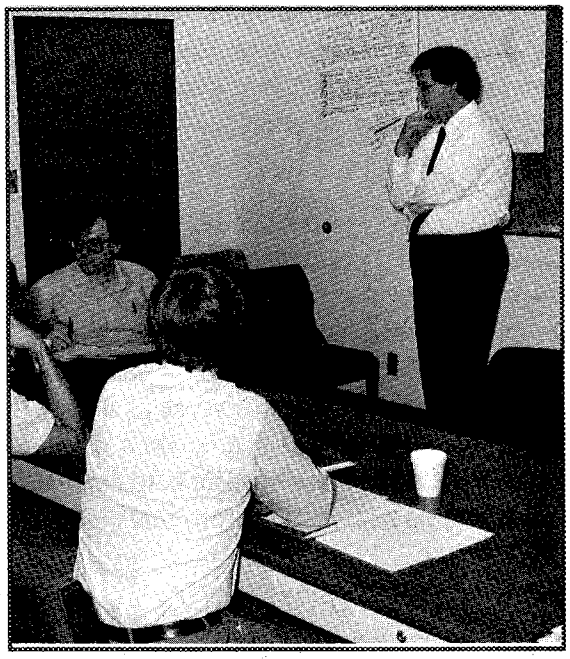

Figure #4 - The Facilitator

- Facilitators should not make content or substantive suggestions to the group, advance an idea or position, express a personal or organizational interest, advocate what some group member has proposed, or argue with a group member.
- Facilitators should not press the group to make a decision that the group is not ready to make, or make decisions for the group — even on matters of group process.
- Facilitators should not insist that a specific procedure be used by the group;

they do not need to be "in charge" or "in control" of the group to be effective.

- Facilitators should not talk too much; they should help the group get on with problem solving.

It has been stated several times, that a critical element and a precondition for cooperative problem solving is the credibility of the Facilitator's assertion that he or she is impartial and working to help the group. In gaining the trust of the citizens and community leaders in this kind of meeting, the relationship between the Facilitator and the USAREUR Representative becomes one of great importance.

It is the presence of the USAREUR Representative in a problem solving meeting that makes it possible for the Facilitator to be impartial, and to do that job effectively. At best, the Facilitator will have to overcome the understandable skepticism of group members when he or she defines the Facilitator's job, and claims to be impartial. The cooperative problem solving meeting cannot go more than a few minutes without the roles of the USAREUR Facilitator, and the USAREUR Representative being clearly explained

And more than explanation will be needed. The meeting cannot proceed until group members have been given a chance to discuss the proposition that a meeting Facilitator be used, and that this person come from the ranks of USAREUR staff. In Federal agency use of the facilitated meeting process in the United States, an "outside" Facilitator is sometimes used. This can be a hired professional, or a person who does not have an interest in the substance of the decisions that come out of the meeting. It is possible that the Facilitator role could be assumed by someone from the German community as well, if the group concurs.

If the problem solving group does not agree to the use of a Facilitator, the problem the group must solve first is how the meeting should be conducted. Facilitation of meetings is a new idea to many people outside of the United States. Skepticism should be expected. The problem solving process, if it proceeds at all, may have to use the services of someone outside USAREUR to be the "leader", or "chairman", or "moderator" who will "run the meeting."

Facilitator impartiality, credibility, and acceptance is made even more difficult to obtain when the USAREUR Representative is obviously a person who out-ranks the Facilitator. When this condition exists, it must be a matter of clear understanding — first between the Facilitator and the USAREUR Representative, and then between the USAREUR Representative and other group members — that the Facilitator will be expected to treat the USAREUR Representative in exactly the same way that other participants are treated.

<u>If this relationship between the Facilitator and the USAREUR Representative cannot be honestly and comfortably made within USAREUR, it would be better to forget about trying the facilitated, cooperative problem solving process</u>.

If the Facilitator is a mid-level civilian staff member, and the USAREUR Representative is a Colonel or General Officer — and there is any hint to other participants that there will a "head-rolling" or "performance review" meeting back at the office when this problem solving meeting is over — the credibility of the process will be destroyed; structural conflict will be introduced; and the hard work that has developed enough relationship and procedural satisfaction to get things this far will be lost.

This does not mean that the USAREUR Representative has be equal or lower in rank than the Facilitator. USAREUR can be represented at this meeting by the Community Commander or even a higher authority. As long as the expectations of other participants are accurate and realistic about how the final

decisions will be made, and the Facilitator is given believable freedom to treat all participants equally, the rank of the USAREUR Representative is not an issue.

2. The USAREUR Representative:

USAREUR interests are at stake in any cooperative problem solving effort that is the result of the Complaint Management Program. Someone reflecting the USAREUR interests will be an important participant in any of these meetings. It may require more than one person to adequately present these interests.

From the standpoint of German citizen or community interests, it would be ideal if the USAREUR Representative could make binding policy decisions — right there, on-the-spot, in the meeting. That way, solutions could be evaluated during the meeting and no time would be lost while an organizational review was made of the meeting's impact on USAREUR interests and positions.

It may not be possible to have a USAREUR policy Representative at every problem solving meeting, but it will be necessary to have someone participating who can at least speak on the technical and administrative points of USAREUR interests. This job cannot be done by the Facilitator.

Conversely, the person who will represent USAREUR interests cannot be an effective Facilitator — in that meeting. The Facilitator must be impartial insofar as content is concerned. But an effective problem solving process requires USAREUR interests to be presented assertively, and argued persuasively.

If the USAREUR Representative is not a person who can make final decisions during the meeting, this fact must also be part of the expectations of other participants. If there are several USAREUR staff at the meeting, someone of this staff should be identified as the substantive leader for USAREUR, and the staff should discipline itself to this leadership.

3. The Recorder

The visible record of individual comments and ideas is an important part of an effective meeting — for these reasons:

- It helps the group to focus its energy.
- It helps to keep participants from repeating things that have been said before.
- It is a powerful symbol of acceptance of an individual whose contributions might otherwise be discounted or overlooked by the group.
- It develops both group procedural satisfaction and the personal, psychological satisfaction of individual members of the group.

Participants should be urged to monitor what the Recorder IS writing, and ask for corrections to be made when their point is improperly recorded. The Recorder may ask for the meeting process to be slowed down, or for some idea to be restated so that it can be accurately heard and recorded. When the pace of the meeting is slow enough, the Recorder should try to use the same words

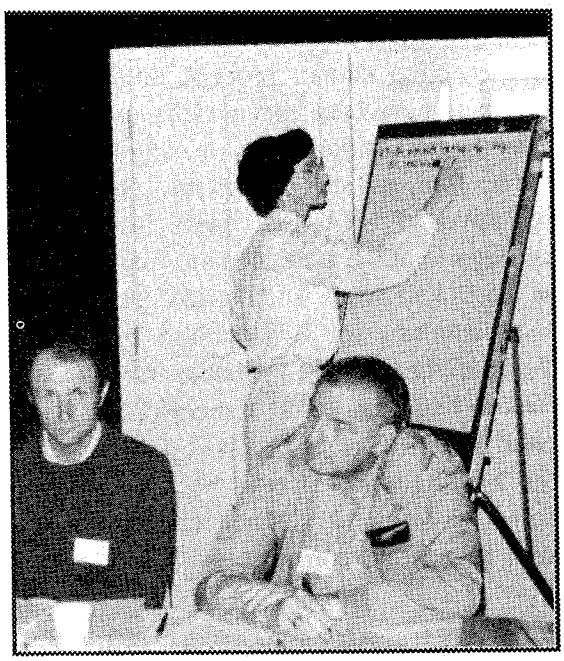

Figure #5 - The Recorder

that a group member uses when recording that person's idea or concern. Figure 5 shows a Recorder at work in a problem solving meeting.

F. STEPS IN THE COOPERATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS:

There are many books and training programs on the problem solving processes.

When processes are compared, most of them have a common sequence of steps — the differences being in how finely the steps are subdivided, or how coarsely they are aggregated. When people who have never read a book or attended a training program on problem solving are asked to identify the steps they think should be included in a problem solving process, they quickly develop something like this list:

Step 1: Identify the problem — some people separate the listing of symptoms and causes.

Step 2: Develop a list of solutions — some make an inventory of resources at this point, some do not.

Step 3: Evaluate the solutions — some separate the analysis from the evaluation to distinguish objective from subjective judgments.

Step 4: Pick one solution to implement — a variety of separate steps can be found to do this job.

Step 5: Develop an implementation plan — most agree that a plan is needed that tells who, does what, when, where, and how.

1. **Identify the Problem**
2. **Develop a list of Solution Ingredients**
3. **Evaluate the Solutions**
4. **Pick one Solution to Implement**
5. **Develop an Implementation Plan**
6. **Monitor the Solution**

Figure #6 - The Interest-Based Problem Solving Process

Step 6: Monitor the solution — most agree that this follow-up is necessary, but some omit it.

Here is a way of integrating INTERESTS into the 6-step problem solving process identified above (Figure 6):

Step 1: Identify the Problem

It was noted in the chapter on communications that people often identify problems in terms of a preconceived or favorite solution. The example used there, and in the description of the position-based approach to conflict management, dealt with sex education in the schools. Here is a different example:

"The problem we have with the Army in our community is that you schedule Little League baseball games on Sunday, and you let the soldiers living off-post cut their grass on Sunday. That's the problem!"

The interest-based approach to this step tries to identify the problem in terms of unfulfilled or endangered interests. Example:

"The problem is that Sunday is supposed to be a day of rest and meditation. That is not possible in our community because of the way U.S. families schedule their recreation and chores. That's the problem!"

People do not naturally talk in terms of interests. They will not automatically understand the need

to do this — or be able to do this simply because the Facilitator suggests this approach to problem identification.

Identifying problems in terms of unfulfilled or endangered interests is usually the Facilitator's job, and this requires the use of Active Listening and Congruent Sending communication skills. The job is to reframe what the group members initially present in response to the question: "What is the problem?" Doing a good job of turning participants' opening positions into descriptions of their underlying interests makes subsequent steps in cooperative problem solving easier.

Step 2: Develop a List of Solution Ingredients

This apparently easy step is made difficult and complicated when each group member, in turn, tries to solve the whole problem (or at least the part in which they have a stake) in one, completely packaged solution statement. Having staked their own, or their group's, honor and reputation to the comprehensive solution they have authored, people become inflexible and non-negotiable about how the problem should be solved, rejecting other people's completely packaged ideas.

In the interest-based approach to this step, participants are asked to develop a list of separate and smaller ideas, each of which appears to fulfill one of the interests identified in Step 1. The list should accept conflicting solution ingredients as long as each of them fulfills or protects a specific interest.

Group members should be encouraged to suggest several solution ingredients for their own and for other people's interests. "Brainstorming", and other processes that enhance creativity and innovation, can be used to enrich the list of solution ingredients. In the interest of creating a long list of solution ingredients, group members should be asked to suppress, for now, the natural inclination to combine items on the list or to declare any item as unworthy of further group consideration.

Step 3: Evaluate the Solutions

At this point in a conventional problem solving process, the participant is faced with only a few, relatively large, completely packaged alternatives — each of which can be associated with its author and any associated interest group. Evaluation in this conventional process can turn to positional bargaining, with each of the "sides" finding reasons to strengthen and defend its own position, or solution package, and to attack the positions authored and defended by others. Objective evaluation of the alternative solutions becomes very difficult.

In the interest-based approach there can be a long list of relatively small, or at least discrete, solution ingredients. Each of these solution ingredients can be evaluated in terms of its ability to satisfy the interest with which it has been associated. There may be several solution ingredients listed for each interest. Those solution ingredients that undermine or harm one interest, even as they satisfy another, are dropped.

If an identified interest stands without an acceptable solution ingredient, the creative energy of the entire group is called upon to think of ways that this interest can be advanced or protected.

Although it may be more difficult to keep track of who authored what solution ingredients — especially when an ingredient is the product of group innovation — attacks on certain solution ingredients may still be launched because of the author's personality or affiliations, rather than because the ingredient lacks merit.

However, in contrast to the evaluation of major solution packages in the conventional problem solving process, people find less need to launch preemptive attacks on individual interest-based solution ingredients. No single solution ingredient poses the risk to their interests that they may feel when they face only the all-or-nothing-at-all prospects of major solution packages.

Step 4: Pick One Solution to Implement

As in conventional problem solving, the end product of cooperative interest-based problem solving needs to be a single set of solutions that

can be implemented. But, in the interest-based approach, there is no list of packaged solutions from which to choose. Instead, the group must now tailor one or more solution packages from the solution ingredients that satisfy group members' interests.

Follow-up studies on the implementation of solutions show that when the solution is something that was built by the group from among interest-based ingredients, instead of being the survivor in a position-based compromise, the commitment to implementation increases, and conflict aftermath decreases.

This is consistent with the basic principle described earlier in this chapter — that participation fosters ownership in the process and commitment to its products. At the end of Step 4 it may be possible for participants to say: "I like what we did!"

Step 5: Develop an Implementation Plan

The work of identifying who does what, when, where, and how is similar in both conventional and interest-based problem solving. But, because the process described here is a more cooperative effort that develops higher levels of commitment to a tailored solution, it is usually easier to find people willing to continue that cooperation into the implementation program.

As the detailed work of developing and implementation plan unfolds, it is sometimes the case that other interests are found — interests that were not apparent at a more generalized level of problem solving. It may also be that implementation requires the help of people who are not a part of the cooperative problem solving group, and the interests of these new people must be assessed. Sometimes, the process has to recycle back to Step 1 at this point.

Step 6: Monitor the Solution

In the interest-based approach, the data base of interests to be advanced or protected makes it possible to do small scale monitoring of the effectiveness of the tailored solution package. Because the impact of a lapse in implementation, or a miscalculation in evaluating the consequences of a solution ingredient is usually small, it seems to be easier for people to talk about these problems.

Blame cannot be assigned to people whose solution-authorship was faulty when the solution is a group-tailored product. Everyone has a stake in any interest that continues to go unfulfilled or endangered. Recycling a portion of an interest-based solution for further cooperative problem solving is a small job compared to starting all over again with a comprehensive solution package that has failed because of one of its parts.

G. SUMMARY

The facilitated, interest-based, cooperative problem solving process is more than a complaint management tool. Because only a few of the people who are annoyed by USAREUR activities finally complain about noise and environmental problems, complaints must be regarded as symptoms of more widespread annoyance and frustration that is being experienced by German citizens.

Cooperative problem solving to the search for ways to fulfill the USAREUR mission is more than a socially friendly act between military and civilian neighbors. It can become one of the primary ways in which the U.S. Army can work to assure its continued acceptance and support by German citizens and officials.

REFERENCES: Text Notes

1. Reports on military noise assessment, measurement, and mitigation include these documents and, by inclusion, the references cited by their authors:

   A. Dunning, C. Mark, and Darrell G. Nolton; "Development of a Noise Management Program for Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe — a Strawman Report"; Institute for Water Resources; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Fort Belvoir, Virginia 22060; September, 1988 (draft) and April, 1989 (final).

   B. Institute for Noise Research (Duesseldorf, Federal Republic of Germany) and Planning and Management Consultants, Ltd. (Carbondale, Illinois, U.S.A); "The Noise Situation in Germany"; Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Host Nation Activities; Headquarters, USAREUR; September, 1988.

   C. Planning and Management Consultants, Ltd.; "Examination of Noise Management Approaches in the United States"; Institute for Water Resources; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Fort Belvoir, Virginia 22060; December, 1988.

   D. Planning and Management Consultants, Ltd.; "A Noise Management Handbook for USAREUR Noise Management Program"; Institute for Water Resources; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Fort Belvoir, Virginia 22060; October, 1989.

2. Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Host Nations Affairs; "The Community Commanders Smart Book on Host Nation Relations (First Draft).

3. Technical Assistance Research Programs Institute; "Consumer Complaint Handling in America: An Update Study"; United States Office of Consumer Affairs; Washington, D.C.; March, 1986

4. Fields, James M., and Frederick L. Hall; "Community Effects of Noise"; in Nelson, P.M.; Transportation Noise; Butterworths, Ltd.; Cambridge, Great Britain; 1987.

5. The concept and importance of developing procedural and relationship (or psychological) satisfaction in addition to substantive satisfaction in dispute resolution was brought to the attention of the handbook authors at different times by these people:

   - Dr. Susan Carpenter; (formerly with ACCORD Associates); Washington, D.C.
   - Dr. Christopher Moore; C.D.R. Associates; Boulder, Colorado.
   - William Lincoln; National Center Associates; Tacoma, Washington.

   From them, the idea of procedural, relationship (psychological) and substantive satisfaction has spread into the work of other trainers and practitioners, and it can be found as a thought process in staff development programs in problem solving, communication, supervision, leadership, human resource management, and public involvement — as well as in programs for negotiation and mediation training.

6. The Complaint Management Program elements of Strategy, Systems, and Staffing have been adapted from two sources.

   - These three elements were identified as categories for the identification and solution of organizational problems by Dr. Frank Leonard, Harvard University.
   - The same three elements are an organizing theme in Service America by Karl Albrecht and Ron Zemke: Dow Jones-Irwin; Homewood, Illinois 60430; 1985.

7. Technical Assistance Research Programs Institute (TARP); "Consumer Complaint Handling in America: An Update Study, Part I"; United States Office of Consumer Affairs for the Consumer Affairs Council; Washington, D.C.; September, 1985.

8. Morgan, Rebecca L.; Calming Upset Customers; Crisp Publications; Los Altos, California 94022; 1989.

9. The concept of "high risk responses" to messages with high levels of emotion or feeling has been an important ingredient of more than 15 years of training program presentations to many Federal agencies of the United States government. It was first presented in the context of public involvement training for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by Synergy Consultation Services. Dr. James L. Creighton, founder of Synergy, was the author of the training program use of the "high risk responses" as a means of introducing Active Listening and Congruent Sending skills.

   These 12 responses also appear in the work of several other authors in the field of communication. Most well known among these is Dr. Thomas Gordon, whose book, Parent Effectiveness Training (as well as several other books based on the some communication concept) describes these responses as the "dirty dozen." The listening skills presented by Drs. Creighton and Gordon (and others) are foundation skills in such professions as Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Counseling, and in this context, they are often attributed to Dr. Carl Rogers, whose first reported use of the skills was in 1940.

10. Creighton, James L.; "Citizen Participation (and) Public Involvement Skills Workbook"; Synergy Consultation Services; Cupertino, California 95014; 1972.

11. The concept of reframing is widely used by mediators, negotiators, and others involved in conflict management and problem solving. Reframing concepts upon which this handbook is based can be found in the training manuals prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by Dr. Christopher Moore, then associated with ACCORD Associates of Boulder, Colorado (see reference 12).

12. The handbook materials on conflict management have been quoted or adapted from several sources:

   - Negotiating, Bargaining, and Dispute Resolution: This training manual was first published in 1983 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Its principal author has been Dr. Christopher Moore, Partner of C.D.R. Associates; Boulder, Colorado. The text also acknowledges the contributions to its development of Colonel (Retired) James W.R. Adams, William F. Lincoln, Dr. Jerome Delli Priscoli, Dr. James Creighton, Dr. William D. Coplin, Dr. Donald J. McMaster, and Dr. Michael K. O'Leary.

   - Alternative Dispute Resolution: This training manual is a derivative of the manual cited immediately above. It is used in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conflict management training for senior civilian and military leaders. The publication was initiated by Lester Edelman, Chief Counsel of the Corps of Engineers. Its authors include William Lincoln, and Drs. Christopher Moore, Jerome Delli Priscoli, and James Creighton.

   - Installation Compatible Use Zone Training Manual: This text was developed for use in training programs for the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command whose installation commanders are required to develop noise sensitive land use plans with the local officials and citizens of adjoining communities. This text was written by Dr. James Creighton, and revised by Lorenz Aggens.

   - National Guard ICUZ Training Manual: The requirement to involve local citizens and public officials in efforts to develop military noise sensitive land use plans was extended to include National Guard mobilization sites. This training manual, based on the TRADOC ICUZ program referenced above, was written by Lorenz Aggens (L. Aggens and Associates) and

Dr. John Singley (Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

- Action Leadership; Life Cycle Project Management; Human Resource Management (leadership elements): Each of these manuals for Corps of Engineers staff development programs includes conflict management elements that were adapted by Lorenz Aggens from the publications referenced above, and from other materials developed by Mr. Aggens for his training programs in public involvement, group dynamics, supervision, and leadership.

13. The use of Values as a basis for understanding the causes of conflict and the principles of conflict management was originally presented in the public involvement training programs and manuals (Reference 10 — James Creighton). It was incorporated as a key element in the training programs in conflict management and human resource management (Reference 12 — Moore and Aggens).

14. Significant portions of this Chapter have been adapted from Collaborative Problem Solving for Installation Planning and Decision Making; Report 86-R-6; Institute for Water Resources; Fort Belvoir, VA 1986, by C. Mark Dunning.

REFERENCES: Books and Reports

Chess, Caron; Encouraging Effective Risk Communication in Government: Suggestions for Agency Management; Environmental Communication Research Program; Rutgers University; New Brunswick, New Jersey; December, 1987.

Creighton, James with Jerome Delli Priscoli and C. Mark Dunning; Public Involvement Techniques: A Reader of Ten Years Experience at the Institute For Water Resources; Report 82-R-1; Institute for Water Resources; Fort Belvoir, VA; 1983.

Dunning, C. Mark; Collaborative Problem Solving for Installation Planning and Decision Making; Report 86-R-6; Institute for Water Resources; Fort Belvoir, VA; 1986.

Elgin, Suzette Haden; The Gentle Art of Verbal Self Defense; Dorset Press; New York, New York; 1987.

Fisher, Roger and William Ury; Getting To Yes; Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company; Boston Massachusetts; 1981.

Gordon, Thomas; Leadership Effectiveness Training; Wyden Books; New York, New York; 1978.

Katz, Neil and John W. Lawyer; Communication and Conflict Management Skills For Personal and Professional Effectiveness; Henneberry Hill Publishing Company; Dubuque, IA; 1986.

Levitt, Theodore; Industrial Purchasing Behavior: A Study of Communication Effects; Division of Research; Graduate School of Business Administration; Harvard University; Boston, Massachusetts; 1965.

Sandman, Peter M.; Hazard Versus Outrage; Symposium on Science Communication; Annenberg School of Communications; University of Southern California; Los Angeles, California; December, 1988.

Technical Assistance Research Programs Institute (TARP); Complaint Handling Practices of Business, State/Local Government, and Private Voluntary Agencies — Part II of Consumer Affairs in America: An Update Study; Consumer Affairs Council; United States Office of Consumer Affairs; March, 1986.

Technical Assistance Research Programs Institute (TARP); The Assessment of Complaint Handling Practices in the Federal Establishment — Part III of Consumer Affairs in America: An Update Study; Consumer Affairs Council; United States Office of Consumer Affairs; February, 1986.

REFERENCES: Articles

Cancian, Maj. Mark F. (USMCR); "Whose Base Is It Anyway?"; National Security Program; John F. Kennedy School of Government; Harvard University; (publisher unknown).

Dunning, C. Mark and Claudia Rogers; "Corps of Engineers: Keeping Customers Happy"; Program Manager; Defense Systems Management College; Fort Belvoir, VA; November-December, 1989.

Eschenbarger, William; "Hell's Decibels"; Chicago Tribune Magazine; November 12, 1989.

Farnell, Claes; "Increasing the Organizational Influence of Corporate Consumer Affairs Departments"; The Journal of Consumer Affairs; Volume 15, Number 2; Winter, 1981.

Farnell, Claes and Birger Wernerfelt; "Defensive Marketing Strategy by Customer Complaint Management"; Journal of Marketing Research; Volume XXIV November, 1987.

Farnell, Claes and Birger Wernerfelt; "Managing Complaints"; Institute of Management Sciences; Providence, Rhode Island; and Incentive Magazine; September, 1988.

Giebel, Lt.Col. J.F.; "Handling Noise Complaints"; Air Staff RNLAF; Binckhorstlaan 135; 2516 BA The Hague; The Netherlands; (publisher unknown).

Goodman, John; "The Nature of Consumer Satisfaction"; Quality Progress; American Society for Quality Control; Volume XXII, Number 2; February, 1989.

Johnson, Raymond and Larry Petrovic; "Accounting for Risk Perceptions"; Health Physics Society Newsletter; April, 1989

Markham, James; "Over the Screeching Jets, Germans Cry 'Enough'"; The New York Times; August 10, 1988.

Richins, Marsha L. and Bronislaw J. VerHage; "Cross Cultural Differences in Consumer Attitudes and Their Implications for Complaint Management"; International Journal of Research in Marketing; Elsevier Science Publishers B.V.; (North Holland); 1985.

Sandman, Peter M.; "Risk Communication: Facing Public Outrage"; Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Journal; November 1987.

_____; "How to Handle Customer's Gripes"; Fortune Magazine; October 24, 1988.

REFERENCES: Interviews with USAREUR Staff

Hans-Joachim Bauer; Public Affairs Office; Taylor Barracks

Peter Dressler; Public Affairs Office; Heidelberg MILCOM

Phil Huber; Office of Deputy Chief of Staff for Engineers, HQUSAREUR

Benton G. Moeller; Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Host Nations Activities; HQ USAREUR

Lieselotte Kahn; Assistant U.S. Forces Liaison Officer (Rheinland Pfalz and Saarland); Mainz.

Hans-Joachim Koenig; Public Affairs Office; Baumholder MILCOM

Hermann Maurer; PAO/Political Advisor; Wiesbaden MILCOM

Klaus Murman; Airfield Manager; Coleman Army Airfield

Larry Rosenberg; Public Affairs Office; Mainz MILCOM

Doris Scott; Public Affairs Office; Mannheim MILCOM

Jay Stotzky; Airfield Manager; Hanau Army Airfield

Lenka Warner; Public Affairs Office; Taylor Barracks

RESOURCES: Interviews with Others

Richard Carlson; Carlson-Nathonson Group; Evanston, Illinois

James McGuire; Center for Public Dispute Resolution; Department of the Public Advocate; State of New Jersey; Trenton, New Jersey

Fred Pelzman; Public Affairs Office; Federal Aviation Administration; Washinton, D.C.

Al Perry; Perry Communications; Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Nancy VanDuyne; Air Transport Association; Washinton, D.C.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Model Complaint Management Standard Operating Procedures

This Appendix contains instructions, procedures, roles, and responsibilities that can be used to develope local complaint management procedures.

SUBJECT: Complaint Management Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Reference.

   USAREUR Supplement to AR200-1 (Chapter 7).

2. Purpose.

   This SOP is published to standardize all procedures and policies pertaining to complaint management at (name of MILCOM or unit).

3. Responsibilities.

   a. Community Commander (CC).

      (1) Responsible for the overall supervision and enforcement of the contents of this SOP.

   b. MILCOM Public Affairs Officer (PAO).

      (1) Administers and coordinates Complaint Management Program.

      (2) Maintains Complaint Log.

      (3) Investigates circumstances of complaints, and makes recommendations for addressing complaint issues.

      (4) Prepares complaint response letters.

      (5) Prepares complaint analyses as required by the CC.

   c. Unit Commander

      (1) Cooperates with the PAO or designate in the conduct of complaint investigations.

4. Definitions.

   a. Complainant: The person or group lodging a complaint against U.S. Forces or activities.

   b. Complaint Management: The application of procedures and techniques to reduce the public's need to complain and to reduce the escalation of complaints into the political realm.

5. Complaint Worksheet.

   The Complaint Worksheet will be used to record information about complaints, and to describe the processing history of complaints. Detailed instructions for using the Complaint Worksheet are also attached.

6. Complaint Management Process.

   Figure A-1 (following page) provides a schematic of the complaint management process, noting relevant paragraphs of the SOP that provide guidance.

7. Complaint Input Procedures.

   a. Oral Complaints.

      (1) Persons who receive complaints should have German language skills, and need to be familiar with the SOP and Complaint Worksheet. Each Office where complaints could be received via telephone or personal contact will maintain a supply of Complaint Worksheets. Personnel in the office who have German language skills will read this SOP, and will be able to use the Complaint Worksheet to gather information about complaints.

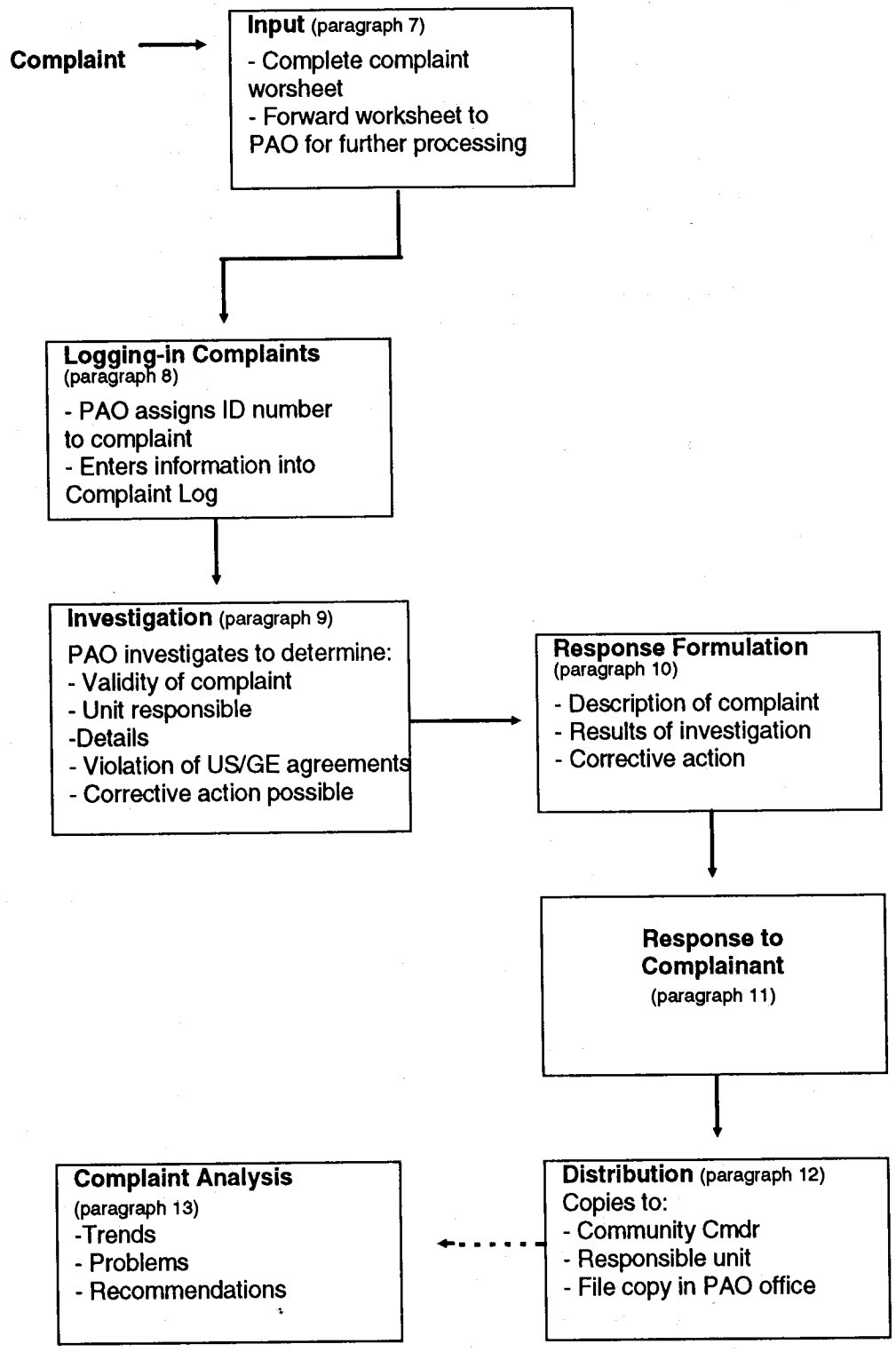

Figure A-1. Complaint Management Process

(2) When an oral complaint occurs, the recipient of the complaint will ask the complainant questions from the Complaint Worksheet, and will complete as much of the form as possible. After gathering information from the complainant the recipient will forward the Complaint Worksheet to the Public Affairs Office (ATTN: Complaints) for further processing.

(3) Complainants calling to find out the status of a complaint already made should be directed to the PAO.

b. Written Complaints.

Written complaints should be forwarded to the Public Affairs Office (ATTN: Complaints) for processing.

c. Referred Complaints.

Referred Complaints are those which have been forwarded from another office.

(1) An oral referred complaint occurs when someone who has made a complaint via telephone or in person has been transferred to another office.

- ☐ Oral complaints should not be referred
- ☐ If, however, a complainant has been referred, the receiving office should complete a Complaint Worksheet and follow oral complaint procedures.

(2) Written referred complaints are those which have been sent from one MILCOM to another, from higher headquarters to a MILCOM, or from a MILCOM to a higher headquarters. Written referred complaints should be routed to the Public Affairs Office (ATTN: Complaints) for further processing.

8. Logging-in Complaints.

a. Assignment of Identification Number

(1) Every complaint received will be assigned an Identification Number and will be logged-in by the Public Affairs Office.

(2) Identification numbers will consist of three parts: a three digit identifier of the MILCOM or Higher Headquarters receiving the complaint; a two digit number indicating the calendar year the complaint was received; a three or four digit number indicating the sequence in which the complaint was received. For example: "WUR-89-001" indicates complaint number one in Wurzberg in 1989.

b. Complaint Log

(1) Information on complaints will be entered into a Complaint Log book upon receipt. The Complaint Log will contain the following entries:

- ☐ identification number
- ☐ date complaint was received
- ☐ date of final disposition of the complaint
- ☐ name of complainant
- ☐ remarks

(2) Complaints referred from a higher headquarters will be logged into the receiving office and given a new identification number. Any identification number assigned by other offices will be noted in the REMARKS section of the Complaint Log.

(3) MILCOMs referring a complaint to another MILCOM or higher headquarters will assign the complaint an identification number, and will enter

it into the Complaint Log. They will note that the complaint was referred, and the name of the receiving office in the REMARKS section. The date of referral will constitute the date of disposition in the Complaint Log.

9. Complaint Investigation.

a. The objective of the complaint investigation is to determine the validity of the complaint, to determine facts surrounding the incident, and to identify if corrective action is warranted and/or feasible.

b. The complaint investigation will be conducted by the Public Affairs Office or can be assigned to another office if appropriate (e.g. Airfield).

c. The complaint investigation should obtain the following information:

- ☐ validity of the complaint — i.e. was it, in fact, caused by U.S. Forces?
- ☐ unit responsible for causing the complaint
- ☐ details about the complaint from the unit's point of view
- ☐ violation, if any, of existing US/German agreements
- ☐ corrective actions, if any, needed to prevent further complaints

d. The processor should enter this information on the Complaint Worksheet and record the progress of the investigation on the Complaint Worksheet's last page.

e. The processor should confer with appropriate management at the MILCOM to determine if feasible alternatives could be employed to eliminate the substance of the complaint.

f. Complaint investigations should be conducted expeditiously. If the complaint investigation has, or is likely to take more than 15 working days, an interim reply should be provided to the complainant either in writing or by telephone.

10. Response Formulation.

a. After completing the complaint investigation, the PAO should formulate a response to the complaint.

b. The response should contain the following:

- ☐ description of complaint from complainant's point of view
- ☐ results of complaint investigation showing that complaint was, or was not, caused by U.S. Forces Activities
- ☐ pertinent circumstances that contributed to the incident
- ☐ corrective action, if appropriate, that will be taken to minimize the problem in the future

11. Communication of Response to Complainant.

a. Responses can be communicated through written, telephonic, or personal visit as appropriate.

b. The date of communication of response to the complainant should be entered into the Complaint Log and Complaint Worksheet as the date of final disposition of the complaint.

12. Distribution.

a. The Public Affairs Office will forward one copy of the complaint response and the last page of the Complaint Worksheet to the CC, and to the unit responsible for the complaint.

b. The record of the complaint should be maintained by the PAO for one year.

13. Complaint Analysis.

a. Upon request of the CC, the PAO will perform an analysis of complaints received. It is suggested that such analyses be performed on a quarterly and on a yearly basis.

b. The analysis should, at a minimum, consist of the following:

(1) A table showing the total number of complaints received, delineated by the type of complaint, as follows:

TYPE OF COMPLAINT	NUMBER	PERCENT
Noise	xx	xx
Air Pollution	xx	xx
Maneuver Damage	xx	xx
Water Pollution	xx	xx
Dirt or Debris	xx	xx
Other	xx	xx
Total	xxx	100

(2) A table showing the total number of complaints received, delineated by the noise source of the complaint, as follows:

TYPE OF COMPLAINT	NUMBER	PERCENT
Heavy Weapons	xx	xx
Helicopters	xx	xx
Generators	xx	xx
Light Weapons	xx	xx
Troop Activities	xx	xx
Construction	xx	xx
Fixed Wing Aircraft	xx	xx
Convoys/Tracked Veh.	xx	xx
Recreation Activity	xx	xx
Other	xx	xx
Total	xxx	100

(3) A table showing the total number of complaints by the day of occurrence.

(4) Percentage of the complaints occurring during "quiet hour" periods.

(5) Percentage of the complaints occurring on holidays.

(6) Average processing time for complaints, in days.

(7) A Table showing the disposition of complaints, as follows:

COMPLAINT DISPOSITION	NUMBER	PERCENT
Corrective Action Taken	xx	xx
Corr.Act. Recommended But Not Taken	xx	xx
No Corr. Act. Recommended	xx	xx
Pending	xx	xx
Total	xxx	100

(8) Assessment of any trends that appear in the data (e.g. complaint cluster associated with communities, or days of the week, etc.)

(9) Potential problems with respect to any incidents.

(10) Recommendations for the Community Commander to consider.

APPENDIX B

Complaint Worksheet

This Appendix presents a model worksheet for recording complaint information. Instructions on completing the form are included after the form.

Complaint Worksheet

I. Complaint Details

ID Number:_____

1. Date of complaint (M/D/Yr): _____ 2. Time received: _____ a.m./p.m.

3. Received by (name): _____ 4. Organization/Office: _____

5. Rank/Title: _____ 6. Organization Phone: _____

7. Form of complaint: ___ Telephone call ___ Letter ___ Personal visit

8. Origin of complaint: ___ Direct contact ___ Referral from higher HQs ___ Referral from elsewhere in the community

9. Description of incident: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Note: Use Remarks section, on reverse of this form to add additional details, as necessary.

10. Date of incident (M/D/Yr): _____ 11. Time: _____ a.m./p.m.

12. Day (circle one): M T W Th F Sa Su 13. During quiet hours? ___ Yes ___ No

14. If applicable, name of the holiday during which the incident took place:_____

15. Type of complaint: ___ Noise ___ Air pollution ___ Maneuver damage ___ Water pollution ___ Dirt/Debris ___ Other (specify)_____

16. Cause of complaint: ___ Heavy weapons ___ Helicopters ___ Generators ___ Other (specify)_____ ___ Light weapons ___ Troop activities ___ Construction ___ Fixed wing aircraft ___ Convoys/Tracked equipment ___ Maintanence activities

17. Damage claimed as a result of the incident? ___ Yes ___ No

18. If yes, describe: _____

19. Description/identification or markings of Unit involved in the incident:

_____

_____

20. Has anyone else been contacted about this incident (if so, who)? _____

II. Complainant Information

1. Name of complainant: _____ 2. Organization represented: _____

3. Address: _____ 4. Phone: _____

5. Classification: ___ Private German citizen ___ U.S. military/dependent ___ Local public official ___ Interest group leader ___ Länder Official

___ Other (specify) _____

6. Does the complainant want a report of the complaint? ___ Yes ___ No

III. Remarks

IV. Complaint Analysis and Disposition Summary
(To be completed after complaint investigation)

int followed up by (name): _____ 2. Organization/Office: _____

_____ 4. Final disposition date: _____

e complaint valid? ___ Yes ___ No

. If no, why? _____

IS/German or local agreements violated? ___ Yes ___ No

. If yes, describe: _____

hose responsible for the incident identified? ___ Yes ___ No

). If yes, identify unit: _____

ctive Action Recommended: _____

_____

_____

_____

her follow up actions required? (specify) _____

_____

_____

_____

Complaint Worksheet Instructions

General Instructions

There are four parts to the Complaint Worksheet:

Part I: Complaint Details. This section of the form asks for the basic information about the incident the person is complaining about. This section of the form should be completed.

Part II: Complainant Information. This section asks for information about the person making the c plaint. It should be completed, if the person making the complaint provides this information c willing to do so.

Part III: Remarks. This section of the form provides space for adding any additional information.

Part IV: Complaint Analysis and Disposition Summary. This portion of the form is to be completed by person performing the investigation of the complaint after it has been received.

Keeping in mind the advice of the Complaint Management Handbook's Chapter on COMMUNIC TIONS (— the risks of questioning —) it would probably be a good idea to do a lot of Active Listen and note taking at first, and then ask only those questions for which information is still missing.

Specific Instructions

I. Complaint Details

ID Number: Leave this area blank. The number will be assigned by PAO.

1. Date of Complaint (M/D/Yr): Enter the current month, day and last two digits of the ye separated by slashes.

2. Time Received: Enter the time the complaint was received. Both military and civilian times a acceptable but, if civilian time is used, circle either a.m. or p.m. (whichever is appropriate).

3. Received By (Name): Enter the name of the person who is receiving the complaint informati and recording it on this form.

4. Organization/Office: Enter the identifying symbols associated with the person who is receiv the complaint; either place of work, (for example, CEWRC-IWR-R), or the location and nam the office.

5. Rank/Title: Enter the rank or the title of the person who is receiving the complaint informa and recording it on the form.

6. Phone: Enter the office phone number or any other numbers where the person who is recei the complaint can be reached during the day.

7. Form of Complaint: Indicate how the complaint was delivered.

8. Origin of Complaint: Indicate where the complaint originally came from. Direct contact indicates the complaint was directly received from the complainant

   Referral from Higher HQs indicates the complaint was sent to you from some Higher HQs

   Referral from elsewhere in the community indicates that the complaint was sent to you from some other part of the MILCOM

9. Description of incident: Describe, in the complainants own words, the pertinent details of the complaint (particularly any details which may not be adequately covered by the remaining questions in the survey). Use the "Remarks" section (Part III) for more space if necessary.

10. Date of incident (M/D/Yr): Enter the actual date of occurrence of the complaint incident by stating the month, day and last two digits of the year, separated by slashes.

11. Time: Enter the time during which the complaint actually occurred. Both military and civilian times are acceptable but, if civilian time is used, circle either a.m. or p.m. (whichever is appropriate).

12. Day (circle one): Circle the day on which the complaint incident actually occurred.

13. During quiet hours? Indicate whether or not the complaint incident took place during the daily German quiet hours.

14. If applicable, name of the holiday during which the incident took place: Enter the name of the holiday.

15. Type of complaint? Check the general area under which the complaint incident should be classified. If multiple types are mentioned, check the one that seems most appropriate. Determine the most appropriate response through the use of probing questions such as, "so the complaint is primarily about...".

16. Source of complaint: Check the physical activity from which the disturbance originates. If none of the items listed are appropriate, write in the cause in the "Other" category.

17. Damage claimed as a result of the incident? Do not ask about damage. Record such information only if the complainant volunteers descriptions of damages which have resulted from the incident in question.

18. If yes, describe: Describe the damages claimed by the complainant.

19. Unit involved and location: Enter any identifying information which will help to pin point the specific parties involved in the complaint incident. Information should be specific enough to enable contact either with the parties involved or with their commanding officer. Note any identifying marks which the complainant might remember.

20. Has anyone else been contacted about this incident? Report the names of any other persons or organizations the complainant contacted before calling this office, (for example, police or government officials).

II. Complainant Information

1. Name of complainant: Enter the name of the person who is giving the details concerning the complaint incident.

2. Organization Represented: If the complainant represents a government agency, environmental group or other association, enter the name of this group.

3. Address: Enter the complete address, home and/or office, which will enable further contact with the complainant if necessary.

4. Phone: Enter the complete phone number, home and/or office, which will enable further contact with the complainant if necessary.

5. Classification: Indicate the background from which the complainant comes.

6. Does the caller want to be contacted for a report of the complaint? If the complainant wants to be sent a report of the complaint. If the complainant indicates "yes" the complainant's current phone number and address should be obtained.

III. Remarks

Use this space for additional information or details as necessary.

IV. Complaint Analysis and Disposition Summary

1. Complaint followed up by (name): Enter the name of the person who is following up the complaint report and recording the resulting actions and recommendations on this form.

2. Organization/Office: Enter the identifying symbols associated with the person who is following up the complaint report; either place of work, (for example, CEWRC-IWR-R), or the location and name of the office.

3. Phone: Enter the office phone number or any other numbers where the person following up the complaint can be reached during the day.

4. Final disposition date: Enter the date of the final action taken concerning this complaint incident by stating the month, day and last two digits of the year, separated by slashes.

5. Was the complaint valid? Based on the facts in this case, indicate whether you think the incident was valid and the complainant justified in reporting it.

6. If no, why? If you do not consider the complaint to be a valid one describe the supporting evidence which caused you to arrive at this alternative conclusion.

7. Were US/German or local agreements violated? If formal or informal agreements were involved enter "Yes".

8. If yes, describe: If applicable, enter the circumstances and pertinent details under which the incident is in violation of existing agreements.

APPENDIX C

A. Complaint Handling Functions

The information contained in this Appendix has been extracted from a report to the Consumer Affairs Council requested by the United States Office of Consumer Affairs, entitled: CONSUMER COMPLAINT HANDLING IN AMERICA: AN UPDATE STUDY (Part I). The report was prepared for the USOCA by the Technical Assistance Research Programs Institute (TARP); Washington, D.C.; in September 1985.

HOW COMPLAINTS ARE HANDLED: A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

TARP has defined complaint handling practices in functional terms. After visiting more than 300 primary and third-party complaint handlers, TARP has been able to identify six key sets of functions that must be performed in order for consumer complaints to be handled properly. These functions are divided into two groups: OPERATIONS and SUPPORT functions.

Input, Response, and Output comprise the OPERATIONS functions. They are the day-to-day steps taken in responding to complaints. The SUPPORT functions of Control, Management, and Public Awareness ensure that consumers know where to send their complaints and that complaints are handled according to established procedures.

The six sets of complaint handling practices consist of 19 discrete functions. These 19 generic steps must be performed by business as well as government agency and private voluntary organization complaint handlers. They apply to complaints submitted via mail, telephone, or personal visit.

OPERATIONS FUNCTIONS

INPUT
- Screening
- Logging
- Classification

RESPONSE
- Response Investigation
- Response Formulation
- Response Production

OUTPUT
- Distribution
- Storage and Retrieval

SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

CONTROL
- Internal Follow-up
- Referral Follow-up

MANAGEMENT
- Statistical Generation
- Policy Analysis
- Input into Policy
- Evaluation
- Planning
- Accountability
- Incentives
- Staff Selection and Training

PUBLIC AWARENESS
- Creation of Public Awarenes

1. INPUT

1.1 Screening: Screening is the sorting of complaints from general communications flow and the directing of those complaints to the offices designated to handle complainant problems. In certain cases, it may be necessary to refer complaints outside the organization to more appropriate complaint handling offices. Improper screening may result in assignment of complaints to inappropriate offices. This, in turn, is likely to result in substantial delays in responding to the consumer's problem due to the need for reassignment. Moreover, the greater the number of times the complaint is

transferred among offices, the greater the risk that the complaint will be misplaced, lost, or forgotten.

1.2 Logging: Logging is the centralized recording of data elements that describe the status of individual complaints. The log serves as a data base to be used in performing various operations and support complaint handling practices. Where a computerized file medium is utilized, log entries may constitute a complaint file. Aggregate data drawn from the log may serve as a basis for statistical reporting, policy analysis, input to policy, and evaluation. The range of data elements recorded determines the uses to which the log may be put. Data may be recorded on the log at every stage of input, response, and output.

1.3 Classification: Classification is the coding of complaints according to predesignated descriptive schemes. The results of classification provide a principal data base to be used in the statistical generation and policy analysis functions and, in addition, support performance of the evaluation function. If complaints are not properly classified, statistical generation and subsequent policy analysis are severely hindered. In addition, classification may supplement screening by providing an additional criterion for routing complaints to the most appropriate complaint handling office/analyst. Classification data may also be used in defining the issues to be investigated during the problem investigation phase or to drive response formulation if no investigation is required.

2. RESPONSE

2.1 Response Investigation: The first step in response is usually response investigation. This consists of first identifying the issues that define the complaintants problem and then obtaining data for use in the response formulation. Improper response investigation may cause serious problems. First, the collection of inaccurate and/or incomplete data may lead to an inappropriate problem resolution. Second, among all complaint handling practices, investigation is the major cause for delayed responses. Tardiness in investigation can delay the response for weeks or months. Third, investigation is often the most labor-intensive complaint handling practice. Therefore, improper investigatory techniques can result in inefficient and costly use of staff time. Proper investigation procedures and resources can avoid these problems.

2.2 Response Formulation: The second step in response is response formulation. The complaint handler decides how to resolve and respond to the complaintants problem. This decision is based on data obtained during problem investigation and the application of complaint-handling problem resolution guidelines. Problem resolution is the most important step in complaint handling.

2.3 Response Production: The last step in response is response production. On the basis of decisions made during problem resolution, the complaint handler prepares the text of the final response and transmits it. The response text should state the complaint handling office's decision and the rationale for this decision. If the decision is adverse to the complaintant, routes of appeal (where available) should be delineated. The second stage of production is the mechanical preparation and transmission of the final response.

3. OUTPUT

3.1 Distribution: Distribution involves sending out the final response to the complaintants request for assistance. Other

interested parties may also receive information copies of the response. When the response is distributed, the complaint is logged out. Prior to logging out the complaint, disposition entries may be made on the log.

3.2 Storage and Retrieval: The PAO maintains complaint complaint files. Often separate filing systems are kept for open and closed complaints. Storage and retrieval policies govern the maintenance and accessing of such filing systems. The complaint files may serve as data bases for logging, classification, response formulation, control, statistical reporting, policy analysis, and evaluation. Data from complaint file documentation is coded for logging and classification purposes. Responses are formulated on the basis of complaint file documentation. These files may also be reviewed for tracking complaint progress as well as for identifying problem trends. Complaint files are frequently audited for evaluative purposes.

3. SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

. CONTROL

1.1 Internal Follow-up: Internal follow-up consists of controlling the disposition of complaints handled in-house. Standards are set for response time and quality. The degree to which these standards are being met is then monitored. If standards are not being met, management acts to correct the deficiencies. Performance of internal follow-up ensures that complainant receive responses to their requests for assistance.

1.2 Referral Follow-up: Referral follow-up consists of the controlling of complaints that are referred to other complaint handling offices in headquarters, in the field, or in another organization. In many offices () a large percentage of the incoming complaints must be referred to a dealer, a retailer, or a field office. Therefore, the adequacy of an office's referral policies can have a significant impact on the percentage of complaints that are ultimately resolved to the consumer's satisfaction.

2. MANAGEMENT

2.1 Statistical Generation: Statistical generation consists of the tabulation of aggregate data describing the complaints received (e.g., number of complaints on a certain subject) and the operation of the complaint handling office (e.g., number of complaints to which it took more than 10 days to respond). Logging and classification are the principal data bases for such reports. Data presented in statistical reports is used as the basis for conducting policy analysis and subsequent input into policy. However, these printouts our table are never distributed as is outside the complaint handling office as they are usually unsorted, uninterpreted data which would confuse rather than enlighten senior management. Statistical data is also used for evaluating complaint handling office performance.

2.2 Policy Analysis: Policy analysis consists of interpreting the data presented in statistical outputs. The aim of such analysis is to uncover the root causes of consumer problems. Once problems are identified, the cost of not eliminating them is quantified and solutions are proposed. The conclusions resulting from this policy analysis serve as a principal data base for input into policy. While performance of the operations practices may resolve individual consumer complaints, the results of policy analysis may have a greater effect by preventing future problems.

2.3 Input Into Policy: Input into policy consists of two steps. First, the conclusions of policy analysis are put into their final format. A number of written reports are

produced or oral briefings are prepared. Second, the report/briefing is submitted to a range of constituencies, including senior management. It is through such linkages with line management and senior management that complaint handling personnel contribute to the formulation of policy. Without such linkages, it is difficult for the complaint handling office to attack the root causes of consumer problems.

2.4 Evaluation: Evaluation is the assessment of complaint-handling office performance. Such assessments measure whether the performance objectives set forth in the office's forward plan are being met. Evaluation identifies problems in the performance of the operations and support complaint handling practices. Management upgrades complaint handling practices on the basis of feedback from evaluation.

2.5 Planning: Planning is the process of setting complaint-handling office priorities for a fixed period of time. Planning addresses the two operational goals of the office (handling of individual complaints and identification of the root causes of problems) as well as the goal of office maintenance.

2.6 Accountability: Accountability consists of assigning complaint handling and complaint prevention responsibilities to specific offices and personnel. Responsibility is assigned for performing each of the operations and support practices. Given the press of other duties, complaint handling may not be performed adequately unless such an accountability policy is adopted. If an account- ability policy is adopted, the manager will know where the problem lies if complaints are not handled properly. Additionally, the assignment of complaint prevention accountability to all departments, including those without direct customer contact, is one of the best methods of preventing complaints due to the policies and procedures of company "back office operations".

2.7 Incentives: Incentives are rewards and penalties. They are used to encourage the prevention of consumer problems and the proper handling of consumer complaints. For example, sales personnel can minimize consumer problems by using proper marketing practices. Problems concerning product quality should lessen if assembly line workers do their jobs correctly. The best complaint handling policy is to prevent consumer problems by rewarding such positive job performance. In cases where such prevention measures have failed, incentives are used to encourage the proper handling of consumer complaints.

2.8 Staff Selection and Training: The complaint-handling office staff members must be selected in such a manner that they have the appropriate personality traits as well as the technical qualifications to perform their jobs. This is especially true in telephone or face-to-face complaint handling situations. They then must be given the appropriate training to both handle and prevent complaints. Without appropriate selection and training, turn-over will be high and performance will be low.

3. PUBLIC AWARENESS

3.1 Creating Public Awareness: Public awareness is created by informing consumers that complaint handling offices exist and then teaching the public how to utilize those offices for obtaining assistance. First, consumers are told that their complaints are welcome. Second, complaint handlers' jurisdictions are defined. Third, consumers are taught where to complain. Fourth, they are told what information should be provided in their complaint in order to obtain problem resolution. Unless public awareness is

created, the full marketing benefits of complaint handling cannot be realized. Properr public awareness reduces the percentage of misdirected complaints, as well as the percentage of customers who experience problems and do not request assistance. It also lessens the need to re-contact complainants for the purpose of requesting additional information.

* * * * *

NOTE: Readers interested in learning more about these 19 complaint handling functions should refer to the 74 page report from which the information in this Appendix is quoted. For each of the 19 functions, ideas are presented that deal with these facets of system development:

general approaches; issues to be considered; evaluation of the function; and common problems in implementing the function.

☆U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE:1991 -281 - 521/42531