

8 June 1978

BG Vincent E. Falter  
Acting Director of Strategy,  
Plans, and Policy  
HQDA ODCSOPS  
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear General Falter:

I received your letter of 1 June 1978 and appreciate the concern you expressed over our recommendation to disestablish the FAO Course.

The education and training system proposed by RETO envisions many changes to officer education and training programs culminating with the phase out of all advanced courses in FY 87-88. We recognize that to some this can be a highly charged emotional issue. I can assure you, however, that we have given it extensive thought and study. (Sufficient I think to avoid the pejorative label of "tenuous premises.") These recommendations are not based on fiscal constraints, but rather on careful study and analyses of where and at what point in an officers career certain skills and knowledge should be gained. As a result of this analysis the system we propose envisions an expansion of the basic course to provide the officer a better foundation in fundamental skills. We further recommend the establishment of Military Qualification Standards wherein the officer will be given precise objectives and standards that he must meet prior to his tenth year of active commissioned service.

Under the current system, all officers attend an advanced course, however, only approximately 40 percent go on to mid-level education at a staff college. To overcome this deficiency -- a deficiency which leaves half the officer corps with no formal training or education after the advanced course -- we have recommended the establishment of a Combined Arms and Services Staff School for all officers upon promotion to major. Yet, some skills and knowledge still must be taught by each service school with respect to the specialty for which they are proponent. To achieve this specialty specific training we recognize the need for TDY functional courses. The TDY mode is required so that PCS constraints and the concern for personnel stability in units will not preclude attendance at vital courses at the appropriate time. Thus, while the advanced

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course, as currently structured, will be discontinued the proposed officer training and education system will provide comprehensive and timely training and education to meet the Army's requirements in the 80's.

The study group was and is aware of the recommendations resulting from the 1977 FAO General Officer Steering Committee. Certainly a front-end analysis is necessary and desirable before you can determine what the FAO training requirements are and we have given strong support to this approach throughout the system. From our vantage point, however, it does not appear that given the other lengthy training and education programs for FAO's that an additional PCS course is warranted unless as a result of the front-end analysis additional supportive evidence is surfaced. Our position analysis does not so indicate. We have stated, and continue to believe that there is a need and justification for a FAO course which addresses the military application of all politico-sociological and cultural knowledge gained through graduate and in-country training. We believe, however, that such a course for all FAO's will probably not require a lengthy PCS. We further recognize the potential impact that the disestablishment of the advanced courses could have on the military family. In fact, I have directed further study in that area.

Finally, in the out years we see a need for institution of promotion by specialty and the associated need to code positions by specialty and by SSI with assignments eventually being made in accordance with SSI requirements rather than simple specialty codes.

As you are aware, the overall RETO recommendations, excepting the specialty recommendations, are now being staffed by Department of the Army. The analysis of the 46 OPMS specialties to include the very well done analysis of SC 48 by USAAMA, the RETO recommendations, and your comments will be turned over to the OPMS General Officer Steering Committees for resolution and action as required.

Sincerely,

B. L. HARRISON  
Major General, USA  
Chairman, Review of Education  
and Training for Officers