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REMARKS BY
GENERAL EDWARD C. MEYER
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TO FOREIGN AREA OFFICERS
MONDAY, 4 OCTOBER 1982

I don't need to remind this group about LTC Ray and others -- they were FAO's like you. Far better than others, perhaps, you understand the turbulent, fast changing and dangerous world we live and work in -- where:

- Predictable animosities are more explosive (Lebanon, Israel, Syria).
- Soviet Union forces have been employed outside its border (Afghanistan).
- Insurgencies flourish (El Salvador, Nicaragua).
- Terrorism abounds.
- And even friends fight (Falklands).

There are some basic lessons to be drawn from these conflicts and situations -- basic lessons that go back to the time of Ghengis Khan! or Sparta! or Athens!

- It's not necessarily the biggest armies that triumph but the best!
- The "best" is the force whose small units are well trained and well led, and
- Success depends on thorough, complete preparation by key people -- you FAO's are among those key people.

Clearly, those real-world circumstances offer up another lesson: We can expect no easy answer to how we will respond to

situations affecting our national interests. There are very real limits on our ability to employ military resources in support of or to implement our national policy. But a military resource of expansive capability, insight, and rational action which we do possess, and which can be and is employed easily and effectively in the national interest is you, the FAO specialist.

It is a given that we must possess an Army well trained, well led, well equipped, ready and able to protect our vital interests whenever and wherever they are threatened. This is the traditional Army role. It is the obligation you took on and have continually prepared for as a member of the profession of arms.

Conversely, present policy recognizes that we cannot afford to maintain the "storybook tradition" of reacting to things "military" distinct and apart from things "political." Political, economic, psychological and military programs and realities are not separate and distinct. Rather, they are the threads of a complex fabric, replete with knots and snags and possessing a great potential for becoming unraveled through neglect or misstep. Care must be taken to ensure that this fabric is fashioned into a strong and stable design for peace and maintained through diligence and knowledge.

As FAO's you are the major means by which U.S. national objectives can be carried out and through which the proper national response to crisis situations determined. In a very

real sense you constitute a distinctly unique portion of our forward deployed forces -- you are engaged. You might be the only alternative between our nation's "doing nothing" or moving toward an unacceptably high level of military response to situations affecting our vital interests.

But the most important arena may not be head-to-head competition with our adversaries. The struggle in the nonaligned "camps" may be where we win or lose. Those of you whose regional specialties encompass those areas can anticipate great challenges in which you personally affect interests vital to our security. A basic element of our national strategem is the forging of viable coalitions with allies and regional states having shared interests. Your training and expertise make you a tangible asset in the development and maintenance of more effective ties between the United States and our allies.

Those of you whose specialties focus on our adversaries won't lack for challenges either. You could be directly involved in something like the MBFR negotiations to try to reduce tensions while at the same time recognizing it is crucial to know and understand your enemy and train to beat him. With your developed expertise and experience, you can provide an invaluable service toward this end.

All of that bespeaks a considerable investment in you, and the greatest return on that investment will come later in your service at higher levels of responsibility. As senior officers at OSD who regularly interface with the NSC, or as senior U.S.

military representatives in other countries, or a whole host of jobs requiring the skills and experience of a soldier-statesman.

You must continue to study your specialty, sharpen your interpretive abilities, and make these talents operative through effective articulation -- running the gamut from U.S. national interests, through U.S. military requirements, to Army requirements.

This point leads me into a different but closely related topic -- that of your professional development.

If I understand correctly, the basic fear of having FAO as a specialty is that attaining the skills required to be able to do what we want you to do takes time. For a number of years you are outside the perceived Army mainstream, off in the halls of academe thinking in spatial and very esoteric terms -- a world not well understood by the 2,000-year-old infantry officer on the promotion board!

As late as 1979 there were some negative indicators -- unintended ones -- that had FAO officers discouraged:

- Selection rates were low; e.g., 43% selection to O6.
- It appeared that many of the GO's in obvious FAO positions lacked bonafide credentials.
- And that selection beyond O6 was virtually nonexistent.

We'd created a veritable "catch 22."

Today I see signs that the situation is improved. That's not to say that further progress isn't needed, and won't take place. But...

- We now are managing all FAO assignments, up to and including 05's, through the FAO management cell in the Military Personnel Center.
- We've put out floors to 05 and 06 promotion boards to ensure our minimum organizational needs are met, and as a consequence,
 - Selection rates to 06 have risen to a level equal to the Army-wide average of 50% on the last list.
- The last selection list to 07 included three FAO's.
 - One of whom did not command as an 06, dispelling another negative concern about the FAO program.
- A recent study of FAO requirements, education, training, and management resulted in many new initiatives, among which will likely be: [DCSPER has study for approval]
 - Development of SC-18 for Special Operations Forces (convert UW-48E).
 - Merger of the Civil Affairs (48D) and Civil Military Affairs (48F) into 48D for ease of management.
 - An increased number of logistics officers (SC-91, 92 and 95) in FAO specialty.
 - Increase to fully funded graduate degree programs (87 for 1983) and more incountry studies (33 for 1983).
 - Support for initiatives being considered by DIA to improve FAO retention and quality of life security assistance and attache assignments. One of the foremost Army goals is to improve quality-of-life

support for our soldiers and their families and receive from them continued dedication to service. Equally important is the FAO family who is being asked to demonstrate a high degree of dedication and motivation to service in countries and locations around the world that a lot of times don't measure up to the travel brochures! Some of the issues we're addressing are:

- funded environmental leave travel
- improving medical/dental support
- providing an allowance for one round trip per college age dependent/year

While all of this points to an overall improvement to the FAO specialty you must recognize that implicit in that improvement is a shared responsibility. The Army will fully use your knowledge and talents, educate your commanders to the role a FAO can perform, and provide you the opportunity to develop as professional Army officers.

For your part the Army asks that you:

- Develop a good set of military skills
- Seek a broad range of experiences in both of your specialties. Don't shortchange either skill. It's the combination that makes you unique. Your value is precisely that you are a soldier with a FAO background.
- Speak out and help others to understand the kind of interpretation possible through your skills. Let's not

get trapped into accepting uninformed opinion as fact.

We all need to be smarter.

It's my conviction that only a few people genuinely have the opportunity to influence history. The path you've chosen offers one such opportunity -- the chance to give of yourself in meaningful purpose for the welfare of this nation. You've got an exciting time ahead of you -- I applaud your interest and devotion.