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As Goes Hamas . . .

Cross-Cultural Considerations for US Security
Cooperation in the Middle East

Foreign Area Officer Heroes:
Your Distinguished Predecessors

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FAO Journal Editor
LTC Steve Gotowicki
US Army (Retired)
editor@faoa.org
and
LCDR Michael Beidler,
USN

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Letter from the President . . .

Dear Colleagues,

My thanks for the great turnout at our last FAOA Policy-Luncheon, which featured the Director of DIA, LTG Michael Maples, as our guest speaker. As you know, DIA is the single largest user of FAOs, especially in the Defense Attaché System. His comments on the importance of your FAO skills to our senior leadership were based on first-hand experience and you should all feel proud of the contributions you are making.

Rick Herrick has taken over the responsibility for our Policy-Luncheons and he has arranged for the next one to be on Wednesday, 12 December 2007, at the Ft. McNair Officers' Club. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Dr. David Chu, will be our featured speaker at this event. Details on this have been sent via e-mail to local DC officers.

Bob Olson is coordinating our efforts to have a FAOA dining-out next year and needs your help in putting a committee together to make it a successful and fun event. Please contact Bob at rolsonssm@aol.com if you can help in this regard.

The FAO Journal Editor, Steve Gotowicki, also needs our support for articles, letters to the editor, etc. The best way of sharing our FAO experiences and professional knowledge is through our FAO Journal. Please help Steve to make it as meaningful as possible. You can send your input to him at editor@faoa.org.

Your association is managed by a 10 member board of governors (BoG) and representatives from the four Services. In accordance with our by-laws, the membership should elect a new BoG in the first quarter of 2008. Therefore, I would like to solicit your nominations for the BoG, to include a short biographic sketch. Ideally, those nominated would live in the Washington, DC area so

as to take an active role in the running of the FAOA. Please submit your nominations by e-mail NLT 15 January 2008 to president@faoa.org or webmaster@faoa.org. We will post a ballot in the **FAO Journal** and on the web page in early February.



Finally, Rick Herrick and I attended an event at the DACOR Bacon House in Washington DC. This historic house, built in 1824, is close to the White House and serves as the HQs of the Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Ret., Inc. (DACOR). The organization pursues programs of a public and educational nature to enhance awareness of and foster leadership in international affairs. In short, DACOR should be of interest to many FAOs. Because of our involvement in the international arena, DACOR would welcome military FAOs becoming members. If you are interested you can get additional information at www.dacorbacon.org.

Thanks again for your support of the FAOA.

Steve Norton

As Goes Hamas . . .

Lieutenant Colonel David DiMeo, USA, 48G

When the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections yielded a majority for Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement—*Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya* in Arabic), many skeptics' worst fears regarding the progress of Middle East democratization and the Arab-Israeli peace process seemed validated. Had the fledgling experiment in free elections really brought to power a group officially designated as a terrorist organization by the United States government? More importantly, did this really happen in the crucial territory upon which so many hopes for regional stability rested? Surely, this signal event, paralleled by the emergence of Shi'ite clerics as power brokers in Iraq and the large, popular celebrations over Hizb'allah's perceived "victory" against the Israeli military in Lebanon, reinforced some alarmists' dire predictions of an inevitable conflict of cultures.¹

Indeed, Hamas' election victory provided an indicator of the political forces moving across the Arab world today, but perhaps not the same kind of movement that radio talk show hosts have perceived. Rather than an inherent antipathy to peace, religious tolerance, and democracy, the populist appeal of Islamist groups like Hamas stems from an ability to give voice to the political, social, and economic grievances of a tired and frustrated public. Internationally, Hamas finds itself a beneficiary of the regional turmoil fueled by a power vacuum in Iraq, rising Shi'ite power, a backlash against American military intervention, and a stalled peace process.

The Rise of Hamas

Public Services. The deciding factor in Hamas' election victory may not have been militant Islam's message, but rather the more mundane issue of daily economic survival. Hamas traces its history to the populist Muslim Brethren (Editor's note: also known as the Muslim Brotherhood), a group which established branches in nearly every Arab country after being founded in Egypt in 1928. The Brethren's success in establishing grassroots support through its social welfare organizations correlates roughly to the increase in corruption and inefficiency of each country's respective government welfare system. Needless to say, the Palestinian territories, where corruption reaches levels out of proportion to its relatively tiny population, have provided an extremely fertile ground for the growth of the Brethren. In fact, some 90-95% of Hamas activity is concentrated on social welfare.² UN workers, for instance, who may personally abhor

some aspects of Hamas' policies, nonetheless concede that it is often the only organization in the territories that actually delivers international aid supplies to the intended recipients.³ The situation is often made worse by imposed security measures, some of which involve closing state-run schools and clinics and withholding aid money, all of which exacerbate the grievances upon which Hamas feeds. (As Lenin once said of the conditions necessary to fuel revolution, "the worse, the better."⁴) Even by Western ac-



some aspects of Hamas' policies, nonetheless concede that it is often the only organization in the territories that actually delivers international aid supplies to the intended recipients.³ The situation is often made worse by imposed security measures, some of which involve closing state-run schools and clinics and withholding aid money, all of which exacerbate the grievances upon which Hamas feeds. (As Lenin once said of the conditions necessary to fuel revolution, "the worse, the better."⁴) Even by Western ac-

counts, Hamas' municipal leaders have, since their election, remained successful in delivering the basic services—like public sanitation, for instance—that its secular competitor, Fatah, could not.⁵

To make the charge that Hamas' social welfare activities are secretly a "front" for its terrorist operations largely misses the point. Certainly, a portion of the funds from Hamas' "charitable organizations" are funneled into militant operations, but legitimate social welfare activities tend to win irreplaceable public support, allowing the organization to dominate the political scene in a way that armed action alone cannot.

Public Resistance. While the 1987 Intifada, a spontaneous, youth-led uprising, took most major Palestinian political groups by surprise, the Muslim Brethren quickly capitalized on the moment, forming Hamas under the leadership of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. By attracting much of the uprising's youth under its newly-formed umbrella, Hamas stole a good deal of the popular legitimacy of Arafat's Fatah party (although that group would rebound considerably by imitating Hamas' success during the second Intifada in 2000). In fact, investigation into the backgrounds of Hamas' earliest militant recruits showed that many had little inclination toward religion before making the switch from secular Palestinian organizations.⁶

Whether Hamas' central leadership can actually control all of the militant factions under its umbrella remains an issue for debate. Nonetheless, it has proven itself adroit at playing upon public reaction to attacks by expressing sympathy for the grievances of angry Palestinians who engineered the attacks and only taking responsibility selectively. However, this is a much more difficult tactic to continue utilizing having gained legitimate political power, especially when Hamas officials must publicly address terrorist acts that occur, and run the risk of their proclamations up-

setting either the militant factions allied to them or the moderate swing voters who brought them to power, or both.

. . . And the Fall?

If Hamas' victory appeared to some to be one part of a unified wave of international Islamism, that illusion did not last long. With only a slim majority in the Legislative Council and less than a majority of the popular vote, Hamas found itself deadlocked with President and Fatah leader Mahmud Abbas to form a government. The ensuing deadlock was broken largely through the intervention of Saudi King Abdullah, leading to the Mecca Accord in February 2007, which called for a unity government between Fatah and Hamas.

To a large extent, Hamas gained from the agreement, which lent important international legitimacy to a party that many leading powers—particularly the United States and the European Union—officially ostracized as a terrorist organization. Still, Saudi support was less an endorsement of Hamas' ideology than it was a necessary measure to improve regional political conditions. Fearing the rise of Shi'ite leadership and strengthening of Iran's influence in the Gulf—both resulting from the power vacuum in Iraq—Saudi Arabia seized upon the Palestinian crisis to demonstrate its regional leadership, just as Hamas benefited from the legitimacy that it gained. Indeed, the Arab media have described the intervention as a sign of awakening Saudi diplomatic power, the success of which could help stabilize the whole region.⁷

Yet, through the accords, Hamas also lost a certain measure of legitimacy. To address the key roadblock of recognition of Israel, a demand that Hamas has vowed never to accept but which the United States has insisted upon as a prerequisite for dealing with a Palestinian government,

the Mecca Accord offered the compromise that all parties would “respect existing agreements.”⁸

While vague enough to cement the accord, this compromise is likely to leave unsatisfied both Hamas’ defiant supporters and its diplomatic partners.

As some predicted, the Islamist backlash to the accord was not long in coming. The dreaded “voice” of radical Islam to many American observers—that of al-Qa’ida deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahiri—condemned Hamas via the familiar channel of an audio tape sent to the al-Jazeera network, accusing this “deceiving” organization of “surrendering” to the enemy—a scathing denunciation that lumped Hamas with Israel, the United States, and Saudi Arabia.⁹ Had Hamas ever been a part of a rising “wave” of international Islamism, that wave quickly broke on the shore.

Where to, Hamas?

The image of a struggle between radical Islam and secular modernity provides a simplified lens to view the world, much as did the global struggle against Communism during the Cold War. Yet the voters who elected Hamas, while concurrently expressing a preference for peaceful coexistence by a large majority¹⁰ are less indicative of a wave of militant theology than they are of a frustration with years of corruption, incompetence and stagnation. These problems—and the resulting militancy—are not new. Before the rise of Islamist groups like Hamas, Yassir Arafat was a wanted terrorist and even today, much of the Fatah leadership remains in Israeli jails on charges of terrorism. Indeed, Hamas’ parent movement was cultivated and funded during the 1960s and 70s by Middle Eastern governments—including Israel—as an antidote to the major terrorist threat at the time, the left-wing revolutionary movements.¹¹ Just as radical Islamic theology was not the main factor attracting frustrated Palestinians to Hamas, the disappearance of that radical theology would not slow down the process of decay that was well in place before Hamas’

inception.

None of this is to deny that the religious crusade is very real for many of the leaders and militant activists of Islamist movements like Hamas, Hizb’allah or Iraq’s Shi’ite militias, nor deny that such militants pose a very real terrorist threat. Rather, religious radicals are the beneficiaries, more than the cause, of sentiments of frustration on a local and regional level. And popular support, or at least tolerance, is essential to their operations.

Those same societal frustrations, however, are likely to become Hamas’ undoing. While the very same strengths Hamas utilized in order to gain power—its ability to deliver social services and express popular grievances—will remain in demand, its ideological baggage—a radical stance of defiance—may very well become a clear obstacle to the social progress Palestinian citizens desire. Although most Palestinians support peaceful coexistence with Israel, Hamas’ public refusal to recognize Israel’s right to exist is viewed popularly as the only obstacle to securing the international aid required to provide additional social welfare services. Because of this, Hamas’ official position will become more tenuous. In order to maintain the support of the people it seeks to govern, Hamas must distance itself from the fringe elements, a process already evident in al-Qa’ida’s recent condemnation of Hamas. Nevertheless, without resolution of the underlying societal problems upon which Hamas rose to power, greater stability will never take hold.

LTC David DiMeo is an Academy Professor of Arabic at USMA West Point. He has a Ph.D. from Harvard University and an M.A. from Princeton University as well as a B.S. from West Point. Prior to this assignment, he served as Liaison to the Saudi Ministry of Defense and in the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt.

Cross-Cultural Considerations for US Security Cooperation in the Middle East

Major Hank Kron, USA, 48G

“Now it is not good for the Christian’s health to hustle the Aryan brown. For the Christian riles and the Aryan smiles and he weareth the Christian down. And the end of the fight is a tombstone white with the name of the late deceased, And the epitaph drear: “A fool lies here who tried to hustle the East.”

— Rudyard Kipling

Former Commander of US Central Command General Tony Zinni provides a fascinating account of culturally-based misunderstanding at senior levels in Tom Clancy’s *Battle Ready*. General Zinni describes how, in his initial experience in the Middle East, Secretary of Defense William Cohen left a senior meeting in the Arabian Gulf uncertain as to where his interlocutors stood. Secretary Cohen offered succinct explanations and crisp requests for endorsement of US military objectives in the region. Frustrated by hearing anything but direct and clear responses to his agenda, General Zinni explains how he advised SECDEF that they had indeed received endorsements of our objective in those meetings. Perplexed, Secretary Cohen said he did not hear any endorsements at all¹. However, the culturally astute General Zinni pointed out the subtle meaning of a parting phrase offered to Secretary Cohen: “*you must always know that we’re your friends.*”² Vagueness had been used to deliberately avoid a clearly defined position which would have contained uncomfortable criticism. The operative implication was a positive reinforcement of the strategic relationship—a “green light” without saying exactly so—that served as a prime example of the typical indirectness in the Middle East which was sincerely

meant yet not readily understood—even by SECDEF.

Despite the fact that English served as the common language between the two sets of representatives, *cultural* rather than linguistic interpretations defined the nature of the communication. From senior US government officials on down to the array of American forces deployed in the Arabian Gulf region implementing the entire spectrum of Security Cooperation activities, Americans grapple with the significant impacts of cultural differences in the Middle East³. Typical examples of misunderstood communication in the Middle East are: the ever polite and positive responses to requests that really mean something else; avoidance of straightforward blunt criticism; seemingly irrational delays that belie a lack of consensus among decision makers; the reluctance of detailed long range planning; the inexplicable avoidance to commit to obvious requirements according to our needs assessments. These are but a few examples of situations that frequently present themselves to Americans in the region. Despite our long and successful history of engagement in the region, many Americans continue to misunderstand the real meanings behind these foreign behaviors. The unique context of interpersonal communication in conducting Security Cooperation activities presents opportunities for us to acquire improved skills in understanding the mentalities and meaning of our Middle Eastern partners. We need to constantly work to enhance our cross-cultural comprehension levels to more effectively interact with our foreign partners in the Middle East.

US Department of Defense professionals who engage with our Middle Eastern partners are generally well prepared to deal with the obvi-

ous cultural differences. US service members and particularly those involved in implementing Security Cooperation activities in the Middle East receive effective “cultural awareness” training, but the scope and depth is primarily intended to assist in avoiding embarrassing social offenses. US Security Cooperation implementers are sensitized to Islamic practices and traditional Middle East norms. The aim is to demonstrate our respect for fundamental values in the region so that we can establish credible relationships that support our mutual interests. For example, American personnel in the region generally know about the inappropriate use of the left hand, are sensitive to avoid compromising situations among mixed genders, adjust well to the enhanced restrictions during Ramadan, and understand what’s going on when hearing the calls to prayer five times per day, etc.

However, as highlighted in the passage from Tom Clancy’s *Battle Ready*⁴ even the most senior US officials can thoroughly misread the true meanings conveyed to us—even in English—by our Middle Eastern friends and allies. Oftentimes subtle cues and hints go unrecognized while Americans engage with Middle Easterners. Our Security Cooperation personnel encounter many subtle and foreign forms of verbal and non-verbal communication that are misinterpreted and or unnoticed, resulting in lost opportunities to effectively engage. There are many types of situations where less-than-effective cross-cultural communication can affect expectations directly and adversely, impacting the outcomes of security assistance activities. Moreover, in large part because of the intangible nature of this subject matter, well-intended after action-reviews (AAR) tend to overlook impacts, contributing causes, and resultant lost opportunities. Cross-cultural misunderstandings often contribute to misunderstood intentions, diluted explanations, altered perceptions, and in many instances significantly impact mutual expectations and outcomes. Moreover, cultural misunderstandings and the impacts they can generate

occur frequently as unrecognized factors—primarily on the American side. Given the importance of Security Cooperation in contributing toward our strategic objectives in the Global War on Terrorism, exploiting any and every opportunity to become more effective in understanding our partners in the Middle East becomes a top priority.

Once we’ve acknowledged that there are situations in the Middle East that present foreign and subtle forms of communication which we may misinterpret, we can then work to gain a deeper understanding and improve our “cross-cultural comprehension level.” To better understand “why,” to more reliably predict “when,” and to more effectively manage expectations requires an in-depth look into the motivations that drive behavior and the communication patterns that tend to emerge to reinforce those motivations. We can then observe the differences in cross-cultural communication in the Middle East and define more effectively the real meanings conveyed in communication.

In working to improve our knowledge, skills and abilities to better understand the various nuanced meanings in Middle Eastern cultural contexts, we first need to become more attuned to what is *meant*, rather than just what is spoken. In learning to read the meanings we first need to understand the basic motivations of the actions. Recognizing and interpreting appropriately the fundamental motivations which drive meanings depends on knowing about the core ethos of the particular culture. We’ll address some of the key drivers of motivation and behaviors in the Middle East by “peeling back the onion” of religious imperatives, values, traditions, and attitudes. Then we’ll highlight pivotal behavior patterns that reinforce those values. We’ll also use a series of cross-cultural dialogues to exhibit how Americans and Middle Easterners use different mentalities to approach the same topics of discussion. Progress towards improved cross-cultural communications requires factoring in new considerations while interpreting

meaning in interpersonal engagements. And finally, we need to realize that it takes ongoing practice and experience to improve cross-cultural communication skills.

Cultural adjustment and gaining enhanced cross-cultural communication skills is a more elusive effort than we might initially consider. Effective cross-cultural engagement requires a focused and raised comprehension of foreign and nuanced communications, coupled with practical experience over time. It should be noted, however, that assessing how a particular “blend of circumstances” was reached and “what could have been” are frustrating questions to address. Although outcomes are more reliable measurements of effectiveness, inter-personal relationships and cross-cultural communications defy hard evidence of effectiveness. This contributes to less emphasis on the intangible aspects of inter-personal relationships despite our recognition of the importance of those dynamics. We know it’s important to drink tea and engage in casual conversation, but it’s a chore for most Americans and many do not realize the depth and breadth of meanings in the information exchanged while “shooting the breeze.”

Confucius said “All people are the same; it’s only their habits that are different.” In a practical sense, cultural adjustment to different habits suggests adjustment not to culture but to behavior. Culture is an abstraction that can be appreciated intellectually, but behavior is the key manifestation of culture that we encounter, experience, and with which we deal⁵ Both verbal and non-verbal communication are important behaviors in comprehending the actual meaning conveyed in a given context. Really understanding key dimensions of what’s going on in a given situation (that is, “reading between the lines”) can be a vague, intangible, and uncertain effort, even within one’s own operating environment, let alone in a foreign context. Trying to detect the real meaning of what’s being communicated often relies on unfamiliar cue words and phrases, as well as all sorts of body language. Complicating this effort further, defining the true mean-

ing of a message can also be hinged upon what is *not* said, how intensely something is said, and/or when something is said in a given context.

Much of this cross-cultural misunderstanding is due to reliance on social conditioning-based expectations. The familiar term “ethnocentrism” points to universal tendencies for people to evaluate foreign behavior by the standard of one’s own culture. We are conditioned from our social environment to expect and assume certain meanings in given situations. Our cultural upbringing provides us with a frame of reference that we unconsciously use to interpret situations. However, we recognize that foreign cultures produce, in some instances, vastly different habits and patterns of action to convey different meanings. The old proverb notwithstanding, we can put ourselves in someone else’s shoes, but it’s still our own feet we feel⁶ A useful way to identify and define the differences in Middle Eastern communication patterns is to also recognize American behavior patterns and the underlying American cultural basis for communicating and comprehending situations⁷

American practitioners in the field can work to raise awareness of probable differences in meaning and, over time, understand the coded hints and the underlying, oblique, and indirect subtle meanings conveyed by Middle Easterners. However, we need to realize that there is no consistently applicable formula to discern meaning in every set of circumstances. There is no absolute explanation that can be applied to every situation. Each situation includes participants with individual traits and each situation carries a unique context that defines what meaning and responses are appropriate for the people engaged.

Cross-cultural dialogues are useful tools to highlight how different cultural conditioning affects interpersonal behaviors. The cross-cultural dialogues in the following paragraphs illustrate and contrast the Middle Eastern and American “mentalities.” The goal is to identify some key culturally-based assumptions in the Middle East that drive different behavior and

show that culture affects meaning; once aware of certain motivations and subtleties, we can work to improve our understanding of actual intentions and reduce the pitfalls of false expectations. Keep in mind that the explanations of the dialogues contain cultural generalizations that may be accurate about wider groups, but may never be wholly true of particular individuals. Individuals encountered in the Middle East will display a broad range of characteristics that may or may not conform to any extent to the typical generalizations. In particular, military officials in the Middle East generally represent an elite, progressive class within their society, most of whom are specially selected to interact with Americans due to their previous overseas experience or experience interacting with foreigners. As such, they tend to have adjusted their own cross-cultural communication skills to better interact with Americans. Consequently, the Middle Eastern official's ways of communicating with Americans will invariably be different than the garden variety merchant in the bazaar. Nonetheless, a lifetime of cultural conditioning will continue to have a compelling drive upon the motivations and expressions that Middle Eastern officials will exhibit.

There is an underlying ethos—a shared core of assumptions about people and the world that Middle Easterners will continue to experience and express. It is these core culturally-driven motivations and communication patterns that are key to understanding context and meaning. Highlighting the underlying Middle Eastern cultural ethos that motivates and determines behavior patterns provides us with a basis of explanation of the supporting behaviors.

Core Middle Eastern Ethos:

1. At the end of the day, GOD (not detailed planning) determines outcomes (fatalism)
2. Avoid shame; preserve the collective honor (group identity)
3. Obligations to always remain courteous, polite, respectful, and hospitable

4. Requirements to protect the virtues of *our* wome⁸
5. Preserve and enhance the stature of history/reputation—of family, clan, tribe, region, ethnicity, those like us [states are the newest link]

Supporting Behavior Patterns:

1. Exaggerated flattery is an expectation. Reduced quantities subtly signals criticism. Absence of any flattery (i.e., silence) is thunderously meaningful and devastating.
2. Identity lies in membership of a social group. The group takes the credit, so the group gets the flattery, not the individual. Overdoing individual flattery invites jealousies from others. Intentionally over-exaggerating flattery to an individual signals an intent to wish bad tidings upon them.
3. Since my team (family, clan, tribe, neighborhood, region, sect, nation, country) is everything, respecting the hierarchy is vital, and inter-personal relationships are approached through cooperation, group support, and preserving appearances. Embarrassing others openly, publicly, and directly by the competition, as well as slander, is reserved for outsiders.
4. Working the network. Raise and reduce stature through praise and criticism via intermediaries and emissaries. Who is doing it (i.e., who they are in the hierarchy) signals how heavy the meaning is.
5. Silence speaks volumes. The absence of what would otherwise be said can be thunderously meaningful. No comment, no joy, no shame.
6. One always knows, knows how to do it, or knows someone who can do it. Knowing things and knowing people demonstrates individual abilities and personal stature. Long diatribes about related topics can mean “I really don't know about that subject, but look how much I do know about this”—all to garner your respect.

7. Smiles and hospitable offerings mean little substantively. Strangers and foreigners must receive more. Familiar faces can gauge their standing by how much they receive relative to previous instances and others.
8. The interpersonal relationship matters. Friendship sows trust, respect, and mutual obligations for support. Thus, the need to look each other straight in the eyes, smell
- The following situation-based dialogues are intended to illustrate typical cultural differences and how Americans and Middle Easterners can approach the same situation from entirely different viewpoints. For some readers, the subtle cues and meanings conveyed by the Middle Easterners will be evident and stark. However, we need to remind ourselves that what may seem obvious to comprehend in an academic environment can be easily misread or missed altogether

Conceptual Comparisons of American and Middle Eastern Cultural Attributes

American

Action-oriented
 Goal-oriented
 Direct/open
 Disclosing
 Optimistic
 Individually-orientated
 Symmetrical relationships (age/status)
 (age/status)
 Do one thing at a time
 Concentrate on the job
 Stick to deadlines/schedules
 Focused on the job
 Reluctant to borrow or lend
 Avoid crossing privacy boundaries
 Accustomed to short-term relationships

Middle Eastern

Interaction-oriented
 Being-oriented
 Indirect/tactful
 Face saving
 Fatalistic
 Interdependently-oriented⁹
 Complimentary relationships
 Juggle many things at once
 Distractions/interruptions OK
 Time commitments are objectives
 Focused on the people
 Often and easily borrow/lend
 Minimal privacy boundaries with
 family/friends/close associates
 Tendency toward lifetime relationship¹⁰

one's breath and body odor, or touch hands and arms in order to connect viscerally. Middle Easterners have highly honed skills at reading and judging people.

9. Middle Easterners carry the reputation of their entire group. So, who's selected to be their "who's who" signals "what's what." Someone with the reputation and clout needs to be there to have anything done. "Experts" with no clout means no importance. It's not unlike the axiom: "It's not what you know, but who you know."⁹

while engaging in a foreign and distracting set of circumstances on the ground.

Situation: Just Trying to Help—Versus—I Need A Straight Shooter Who'll Get It Done

Iron Mike: I saw the official in the customs office today.

Abdullah: Oh, good.

Iron Mike: He said you never spoke to him about releasing that U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS)

equipment.

Abdullah: I'm very sorry, sir.

Iron Mike: In fact, he said he's never heard of you.

Abdullah: It's possible, sir.

Iron Mike: But when I asked you if you knew him and if you could help, you said you could.

Abdullah: Oh, yes, sir.

Iron Mike: But it wasn't true. You don't know him and you didn't even talk to him.

Abdullah: Excuse me sir, but I was only trying to help.

For Iron Mike, Abdullah is not only ineffective, but may be considered a liar! He said he knew the customs official and he could help. Abdullah did not know the customs official—therefore he lied. However in his world, Abdullah is obliged to give his boss a positive response—whether or not he can actually deliver. Another Arab would understand that Abdullah's positive response should not be taken literally—that he actually knows the man in the customs office and is going to be able to do something. It's understood that he's willing to try to help either because it's his job and his superior has tasked him, or in another similar situation because a friend has asked for help. Abdullah figures that he may know somebody that knows the customs official and somebody can have some pull. Abdullah will use his network of friends to help! Abdullah also expects some time to get this networking done and if after some time, he can't then he expects his boss to realize that he wasn't able to do it and he should look for another alternative—without direct confrontation. Instead, Iron Mike directly confronts Abdullah with the failure and even implies he's a liar. It's a measure of Abdullah's good manners that he maintains his composure and respectfulness. If other Arabs had been witness to Iron Mike's confrontation revealing Abdullah's deficiencies, the shame factor would have a serious impact on Abdullah. It would be no surprise to other Arabs in that case, if Abdullah gradually withdrew his efforts and found a polite reason to

find employment elsewhere. Iron Mike would have no clue as to why he lost a good man¹¹

Situation: A Bird in the Hand—Versus—One Well Done or Two Half Baked

Mohammed: Sir, would you like to see the two new offices we've completed?

Iron Mike: Offices? I thought we agreed to build one office and, if there were any funds left over at the end of the fiscal year, we would buy equipment for the one office.

Mohammed: Yes, but there was enough money to build two offices at once.

Iron Mike: But, is there any money left over to equip the offices?

Mohammed: Unfortunately, no, sir.

Iron Mike: Then we can't use them!

Mohammed: Not presently, but isn't it good? We used all the money!

Iron Mike thinks Mohammed is cooking up something on the side or is irresponsible with government funds, or just plain irrational. Mohammed's view is completely different yet just as rational and dutiful as Iron Mike's. Mohammed wouldn't think to rely on left over money to remain available to fund office equipment. It's better to use up all the money at once while you have it available and then request additional money for the necessary equipment to complete the overall effort. Now you have two offices and the funding source is under pressure to equip at least one if not two. All this is based on operating assumptions of predictability and reliability of the system, the government, and even in reality in general. Iron Mike trusts his system and government, and as an American has grown up with principles like: Make it happen, where there's a will there's a way, there's nothing we can't do. . . ! Government services are transparent, law abiding, and for the benefit of citizens regardless of who's involved. Mohammed has no such notions of accountability in government or predictability over outcomes in

life. Fate determines everything and if you have it you use it or lose it¹²

Situation: Feasibility—The Facts or the Man

Iron Mike: I think we should examine the feasibility study for the proposed Ministry building.

Nasser: I agree, sir. Perhaps we can begin by discussing who the director of the project will be.

Iron Mike: That will have to be decided, of course. But first we have to see if the project is doable.

Nasser: Yes, sir, that's exactly my point.

Iron Mike wants to examine the substance of the new project for a Ministry building to see if it's executable. Nasser is also interested in determining if the project is doable, but not by examining the facts contained in the feasibility study. He will know if it's really going to happen based on who's put in charge of the project. If someone of influence and authority is put in charge, then it means the Ministry takes the project seriously. If a relatively minor official with no clout is selected to run the project—no matter how expert he may be—it's a good bet the project will never get off the ground regardless of how well engineered the plans are¹³

Situation: A Very Persuasive Decision Brief

Iron Mike: So, Hamad, how do you think the briefing was?

Hamad: Sir, Brigadier Ali was very impressed. Your presentation was clear, organized, and informative.

Iron Mike: Well we worked really hard to capture all the data—we focused on the relevant metrics.

Hamad: Yes, the briefing had a lot of information.

Iron Mike: Yes, but it's been awhile and no feedback or decision from Brigadier Ali.

Hamad: I think the Brigadier may have thought there was something missing, that you were not very involved or enthusiastic about the project.

Iron Mike: I don't know what else I could have done, the facts really speak for themselves in this project.

For Iron Mike, the cold hard facts don't lie. You can't argue with the statistics. Stick to the numbers and we can't go wrong. Brigadier Ali appreciates facts too, but facts are not going to implement the project. This is Iron Mike's project and Brigadier Ali is thinking he certainly has his information in order, he's made a persuasive case on the merits of the facts. But who is Iron Mike? We can trust facts on paper. Brigadier Ali wants a warm and fuzzy about Iron Mike—that he's committed to complete the project as outlined. In addition to the facts, Brigadier Ali wants to see something of Iron Mike—the man—in his briefing, but Iron Mike didn't come out from behind his numbers. Instead of embarrassing Iron Mike by openly discussing his rational, Brigadier Ali would prefer to choose silence as a signal that he's not convinced to give the project to Iron Mike. If Iron Mike pressed for an answer, a polite yet seemingly oblique reason would be given by Brigadier Ali's intermediaries that would further confound Iron Mike¹⁴

Situation: The Plan is Under Study

Iron Mike: Abdulsalam, what did you think of the new plan?

Abdulsalam: Seems very fine, but I'm still studying it, we need to be certain.

Iron Mike: Still studying it after three weeks? It's not that complicated!

Abdulsalam: There are one or two aspects that might be a problem.

Iron Mike: Oh, I know that, but we should put the plan into action and work the bugs out later.

Abdulsalam: Seriously?

Iron Mike is ready to adopt new concepts into action and make adjustments once implemented. Many other cultures are skeptical of new things, "There's nothing new under the sun." The pre-

sumption is what's worked is better than risking failure. When all the glitches are addressed in the plan, then Abdulsalam may be more inclined to initiate a trail run. Trial and error is not the preferred way to operate. Americans believe if you fall on your face, you get up. Many other cultures feel if you fall on your face, no one ever forgets the sight of you sprawled in the mud¹⁵

Situation: Wait Here—Versus—I'll Do It Myself on the Way

Iron Mike: Khalid, I was wondering if my vehicle was ready from the service shop down the street yet?

Khalid: Yes, sir. The shop called and your car is ready.

Iron Mike: Great. I'll go pick it up.

Khalid: Oh, no sir! I'll send a driver to pick it up and bring it here for you.

Iron Mike: No need to pull someone out of the office for that. It's on my way anyway.

Khalid: Please, sir. You wait here and drink some tea. I'll have the car here right away.

Iron Mike is unaware of the image and status he carries around in this environment. The image of the American officer in charge walking down the street to the garage to talk with the mechanics to get his own car signals to those in this environment that his office is in disarray, his drivers and assistants are absent, and he has no clout to do anything about it. Not only does this reflect badly on Iron Mike in the eyes of the locals, but all the locals working in his office would never live it down to others that they allowed such an indiscretion to happen¹⁶

Situation: Performance Evaluation—Constructive Criticism

Iron Mike: Khalil, let's go over your semi-annual performance evaluation.

Khalil: Whatever you think, sir.

Iron Mike: As you know, you're performing well overall. There are just a few areas for improvement I'd like to discuss with you.

Khalil: I see.

Iron Mike: One is in writing, which isn't easy for you, is it?

Khalil: No, sir.

Iron Mike: And the other is in identifying training needs. Your staff could use more computer training.

Khalil: Yes.

Iron Mike: Anyway, it's all written here in the report. You can read it for yourself. Otherwise, no serious problems.

Khalil: I'm very sorry to disappoint you, sir.

The imperatives of honor and avoidance of shame means that criticism has to be handled very delicately in the Middle East. Oftentimes, a lack of overdone praise is sufficient to signal dissatisfaction. When unavoidable, criticism should be expressed with the utmost discretion and indirection. Iron Mike was actually pleased with Khalil's performance and said so—*once*, and closed with "*otherwise no problems.*" An American would probably read that evaluation just for what Iron Mike meant. For Khalil, the brief understated praise coupled with a direct focus on spelling out the deficiencies meant his boss thought he's performing badly. Khalil naturally assumes that Iron Mike will bend over backwards to be sensitive about Khalil's sense of self image, honor, and reputation. If that was the best Iron Mike could do to praise him, if that represents the best face Iron Mike could put on the situation, then Khalil's read was things are bad for him there. If Iron Mike had quickly slipped the critique into a majority of the time highlighting Khalil's successes, then Khalil would have been able to stomach the criticism. Now, Iron Mike has no clue that Khalil's morale is shot after that perform-

ance evaluation. That terribly insensitive session will be the main family topic of discussion for a long time in Kahlil's house. It would be no surprise to another Arab if soon enough Khalil's performance really drops off and he soon finds a new place to work. Khalil would offer a plausible and polite reason to find employment elsewhere yet would remain on the friendliest of terms. Iron Mike will still have no clue as to really why he lost such a good man¹⁷

Situation: She's the Best Man for the Job

Iron Mike: Khalid, even though the host nation senior leadership pledged to fully support our investigation, ever since I sent in Lieutenant Jane to investigate the incident, the host nation support has declined. Are they stonewalling because of gender?

Khalid: Sir, there are several female forensic officers in the military here.

Iron Mike: Well, Lt. Jane is the very best forensic expert we have. That should have signaled our priority on this.

Khalid: I'm sure everyone recognizes her technical expertise.

Although Iron Mike perceives a passive-aggressive reaction to assigning Lieutenant Jane to the case, he can't see any other reason than gender bias as the cause of host nation indifference to her. Iron Mike sent in the best expert he had to work the case. The host nation reaction doesn't make sense. Khalid understands that the lack of enthusiasm by the host nation to pursue the case is because an unknown officer of very young age showed up on the scene without Iron Mike's personal endorsement on the ground. Her expertise notwithstanding, her youth and lack of introduction by a trusted senior, signals a lack of priority in the eyes of the locals.

Situation: The "Inshallah"

Iron Mike: Mohammed, will you be here tomor-

row to join us for dinner, and will you bring your friends too please?

Mohammed: Yes—Inshallah!

Iron Mike: We'll expect to see you and your friends here for dinner tomorrow at 19:00.

Mohammed: Yes, Mike, Inshallah. Dinner with you and our friends. It will be our pleasure!

Iron Mike has heard of the real meaning of Inshallah—"if God wills it," [but to him] it really means "not likely to happen." So, Iron Mike will now invite another group for dinner because he doesn't expect Mohammed to show.

In Mohammed's context, Inshallah must be added—as reinforcement of his personal commitments. He said yes—twice, and confirmed yes is for dinner—with friends. Although he will do everything he can to attend, it's doubtful he would show up precisely at 19:00 sharp. Iron Mike is probably in for a surprise when Mohammed shows at 20:30 and Mike will have to awkwardly manage the situation as he had invited another competing group to the dinner. The meaning of "Inshallah" can range from a definite yes—as in a subordinate's response to a direct order from a superior, an uncertain maybe, and even to a polite deflection signaling no. The local environment, the context of the circumstances, and the people involved will all determine the appropriate usage.

Situation: Getting to Know You . . .

Iron Mike: Hassan, now that we'll be working together as counterparts, I wanted to let you know about my background. I've got B.S. and M.S degrees in engineering, and have 18 years experience in the US Army Corps of Engineers. I've completed several major projects of the type we're about to embark on together. How about you?

Hassan: Sir, my family is from a section of Baghdad that you would probably not be familiar with. My uncle Nasser speaks excellent English and would like to meet you. Shall I arrange to

have my Uncle Nasser meet you ?

Mike has no clue as to the meaning of Hassan's seemingly off target response. Mike will probably drive on and see how Hassan performs, but why couldn't Hassan just rattle off his credentials and experience, and what does his family's location and his uncle have to do with it anyway? On the other hand, Hassan considers it very inappropriate to tout his own credentials directly to Mike. Hassan typically discusses his family's background and most Arabs would instantly understand his reputation by his family name and by his neighborhood. . . . Hassan did realize that Mike wouldn't know his family's reputation by mentioning the city and neighborhood, so he then proceeded to set up a meeting for Mike with his uncle who would represent his family and act as an intermediary with Mike and openly brag about his nephew's impressive engineering credentials.

Situation: The Agenda

Iron Mike: Khalifa, I see what you mean, that's a very important point. That's what we need to focus on but . . .

Khalifa: Sir, now if I could explain some of the details.

Iron Mike: I wish you had brought this to my attention earlier in the meeting.

Khalifa: Excuse me, sir?

Iron Mike: I mean, this is something we need to look at together very closely. But, we've already extended our meeting.

Khalifa: Yes, of course, sir. But if you'll just bear with me a few moments.

Iron Mike: Let me ask my secretary to put you on my calendar for Friday.

Khalifa: Excuse me, sir?

Iron Mike: So we can continue then.

Khalifa: You want me to come back again, on Friday?

Even though Iron Mike recognizes that they're getting somewhere, he's unwilling to further extend the meeting and prefers to keep things on track rather than upset the schedule. Schedules are man-made, but once we have a schedule, for many of us A-Type hard chargers, it's the person, not the schedule that has to do the accommodating. To do otherwise means being unorganized and undisciplined. Khalifa is operating off of another set of assumptions. The time and schedules are meant to be a flexible framework to organize the day's activities. What can a few more minutes of their time be worth compared to resolving the issue¹⁸

The following excerpts highlight how complex cross-cultural interactions can be and how others assume Americans are conditioned to respond:

Knowledge and a Little Luck!

Sometime in 1906, I was walking in the heat of the day through the bazaars. As I passed an Arab café, in no hostility to my straw hat but desiring to shine before his friends, a fellow called out in Arabic, "God curse your father, O Englishman." I was young then and quicker tempered, and could not refrain from answering in his own language that "I would also curse your father if he were in a position to inform me which of his mother's two and ninety admirers his father had been!" I heard footsteps behind me, and slightly picked up the pace, angry with myself for committing the sin Lord Cromer would not pardon—a row with the Egyptians. In a few seconds, I felt a hand on each arm. "My brother," said the original humorist, "return and drink coffee and smoke with us. I did not think that your worship knew Arabic, still less the correct Arabic abuse, and we would benefit further by your important thoughts."

— Ronald Storrs, "Orientations"¹⁹

Those Americans, They'll Follow The Rules—Even When There's No Good Reason To!

Once we were out in a rural area in the middle of nowhere and saw an American come to a stop sign. Though he could see in both directions for miles and saw no traffic was coming, he still stopped!

—Turkish exchange student in “There Is a Difference

Profiling the Yanks

McDonald's restaurants are probably a good reflection of the American character. They're fast, efficient, they make money, and they're clean. If they're loud and crowded and if the food is wastefully wrapped, packaged, boxed, and bagged . . . let's face it, that's us Americans.

—Andy Rooney, “A Few Minutes with Andy Rooney”²¹

Increasing effectiveness in cross-cultural communication involves becoming more attuned to what the real meaning is in a situation—what is meant versus what is said. We need to recognize our own American-centric assumptions and then deliberately adjust our interpretations to our acquired understandings of Middle Eastern motivations, cultural conditioning, assumptions, and supporting behaviors. The challenge is not only to become equipped to define the situation more appropriately—that is, according to the locals' viewpoint. We also need to increase our perceptiveness to recognize the brief and subtle cues while engaging in the substance of the agenda and, invariably, while functioning within a broader and distracting environment. Discerning the significance of various behavior patterns can be like acquiring a new language. When we listen to someone speak a foreign language we tend to only hear those words that seem familiar, and the rest is noise. Similarly, in observing foreign behavior—including English spoken in a foreign context—we pick out those actions and the mean-

ing of the spoken English and define what's going on according to our own culturally-based assumptions. All the rest, rich in meaning to everyone but us, is just random, undifferentiated action and utterances. It's the same when we come across a word we don't understand while reading. We guess at the meaning from the context. Further complicating this challenge is the Middle Eastern style of omission of input, or the deliberate timing or intensity of the input, all which impart a significance that is altogether absent in American forms of communication. We also need to be aware that there is not only behavior that we misinterpret because there's no corresponding cultural meaning in the American context, but there is behavior and speech in the Middle East that we don't even pick up on at all. There is, quite literally, more to a foreign culture than meets the eye. While we can't always trust what we see, our observations remain the primary gauge to learn about a foreign culture. We simply have to be aware that some of what we see may only be in the eyes of the beholder²²

In identifying Middle Eastern core cultural ethos, we gain an improved understanding of the common motivations of behavior. We can realize that Middle Eastern motives can be very different than American “mentalities.” People assume naturally that their interpretations of context and meaning are common everywhere. Therefore, it is a common tendency for Americans to draw upon their own distinct American frames of reference to define meaning in cross-cultural situations—and likewise for the inexperienced Middle Easterner. The list of key Middle Eastern values and the highlights of various behaviors that tend to emerge in support of those values provide a basis to examine the cross-cultural dialogues. Cross-cultural dialogues can be an effective tool to exhibit vastly different mentalities expressed in key yet nuanced and subtle communications. The explanations of the dialogues—from the viewpoints of the American and Middle Eastern partici-

pants—offer insights as a new frame of reference to define meaning in certain situations.

American service members conducting Security Cooperation activities with Middle Easterners need to remain mindful that we've acquired our own cultural conditioning over the course of our formative years into adulthood. We need to recognize that, like learning a foreign language in adulthood, we gain proficiency; still, our newly gained knowledge, skills, and abilities to adjust to foreign contexts should be a continuous learning process. If approached as an ongoing effort to enhance our cross-cultural communication abilities, we can expect to increase our understandings of why, increase our ability to predict when, and thereby improve our management of important mutual expectations that emerge in the unique interactive and personally driven field of Security Cooperation activities.

Major Kron is the Director of Middle East Studies, Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management

Endnotes

¹ Later on, General Anthony Zinni points out that Secretary Cohen committed himself to understanding the Middle Eastern culture and connecting to the people in the region. The incident recounted in *"Battle Ready"* happened early in Secretary Cohen's tenure; since then, Secretary Cohen has become admired for spending time to learn the culture.

² Tom Clancy, *"Battle Ready with General Tony Zinni Ret."* (New York: Putnam, 2004), pp. 308-309.

³ In this discussion, the term *Middle East* is defined as those peoples whose mother tongue is Arabic, and/or societies whose Islamic traditions serve as the predominant basis for their cultural values. While ethnically and somewhat culturally different, the Turks, Iranians, and Afghans are also included in this category. This definition of *Middle East* can extend well into the CENTCOM, and EUCOM (and soon AFRICOM) Areas of Responsibility (AOR). For instance, in the CENTCOM AOR, the four countries that comprise the Central Asian States, despite their Turkic heritage and, in the instance of Tajikistan—a Farsi lineage, have evolved into hybrid cultures combining the legacy of the Central Asian steppe tribes with recent Russian influences. The societies of the Indian subcontinent, despite their robust Islamic identities, possess unique cultures that incorporate Southwest Asian culture with British tradition. Maronite and Coptic Christians in the Levant (Lebanon) and "Misir" (Egypt), whose mother tongue is Arabic, will tend to exhibit mostly the same culturally-based communication patterns as their Muslim brethren. Likewise, Arabic-speaking peo-

ples across the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa will also share generally the same culturally-based communication patterns as peoples in the Arabian peninsula and Mesopotamia.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 308-309.

⁵ Craig Storti, "The Art of Crossing Cultures", (Yarmouth, Maine, 1989), p. 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51

⁷ We develop our notions of how to behave and interpret situations from our upbringing. We internalize these behaviors and meanings to the point where they become unconscious and instinctual. What we know and understand is what we've taken in and has been reinforced from our experiences. But the world we observe and the behaviors we internalize are not exactly the same as Mohammed's. In the United States, parents teach their kids that it's good to be an individual, self reliant, to say what you mean and mean what you say; that where there's a will, there's a way; that hard work can take you wherever you want to go; and that once you're grown up, you alone are responsible for your actions. In Mohammed's world, kids learn to identify themselves through the group; to depend on others as they depend on you; to avoid direct interpersonal confrontations; and that GOD's will is paramount. These learned cultural attitudes are acquired over time primarily in the formative years. Most people can't even explain why they behave or think in certain ways. This is also part of the reason why we project our own norms onto people of other cultures. If we don't remember learning these ways formally, we think it must have been inborn and therefore universally human. Another reason we attribute our own norms to foreigners is that people we've encountered have consistently behaved according to our expectations, so there is no need to interpret things any other way.

⁸ *OUR* women can be understood in terms of priority and intensity by relationship in the various groups to which family reputation, obligations of protection, and kindredness is ascribed. Therefore, in concentric circles of decreasing priorities, we can see Middle Eastern males feeling protective for females of their immediate household, extended family, neighborhood, tribe, province, country, region, ethnicity, religion, and finally any woman in distress.

⁹ Hasan Dindi, Maija Gazur, Wayne Gazur, and Aysen Dindi, *"Turkish Culture For Americans"* (Boulder, CO: International Concepts, 1989), pp. v-vi.

¹⁰ Adapted from Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall, *"Understanding Cultural Differences"* (Anchor Press Doubleday, 1977), p. 15.

¹¹ Craig Storti, *"Cross-Cultural Dialogues"* (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1994), p. 112.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁹ Craig Storti, "The Art of Crossing Cultures," pp. 85-86.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 112.

²¹ Ibid., p. 113.

²² Ibid. p. 81.

Continued from page 6

Endnotes

¹ For one of many examples, see Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, "The New Threat: The Radical Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism," *The New Republic*, 13 March 2006 online edition, which describes Hamas as an "avowedly annihilative Islamic messianic political party."

² *Orange County Register (California)*, 10 March 1996, A9.

³ See discussion of Hamas' effectiveness in handling international aid in Sara Roy, "Alienation or Accommodation?" *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXIV:4 (Summer 1995), 81; and *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 313.

⁴ Elena Sokova, Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, "On the Benefits of Studying History," <http://cns.miis.edu/cres/elenax.htm>.

⁵ Simon Robinson, "Why Rising Popularity Poses a Dilemma for Hamas," *Time* 23 Jan 2006 online edition.

⁶ Lamis Adoni, "Searching for Answers: Gaza's Suicide Bombers," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXVI:4 (Summer 1997), 38-41.

⁷ For example, Dina Ezzat, "The Riyadh Factor," in the *Egyptian al-Ahram Weekly*, Issue No. 839, 5-11 April 2007 online edition.

⁸ Claude Salhani, "Analysis: Misinterpreting the Mecca Accord," *United Press International* 19 February 2007, online edition.

⁹ Excerpts in English translation available at "Al Qaeda Number 2 Ayman Al-Zawahiri Condemns Hamas for Accepting Unity Deal With Fatah," *Fox News* 11 March 2007, online edition.

¹⁰ See Robinson in note 5 above for polling data.

¹¹ Acknowledged by Israeli General Yitzhak Segev, Military Governor of Gaza; see Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 35-36.

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FOREIGN AREA OFFICER HEROES: YOUR DISTINGUISHED PREDECESSORS

Rod Propst

The Foreign Area Officer—strategic scout, cultural regional specialist, linguist, intelligence collector, staff officer, military representative to USG missions abroad, trusted advisor to both United States and Host Nation governments, and—above all—warrior. All of these terms describe your potential roles as a FAO at various points in your military career as you more fully develop your individual capability and serve at ever higher, more diverse assignments across the globe. As you develop your personal aptitudes and qualifications, you can be justifiably proud of your skills and contributions, which parallel those of your outstanding predecessors. You represent a long line of men and women in arms who have fulfilled these various roles, whether or not they were officially “FAOs.” Many of those who preceded you have fascinating stories, and their role in national and international strategic affairs is significant.

These brief snapshots of several of your illustrious forerunners—William Donovan, Aaron Bank, Virginia Hall, Edward Lansdale, and Vernon Walters—serve to introduce you, as either newly-minted or experienced Foreign Area Officers, to their dedication, depth of preparation, and contribution. They serve as models for your individual contributions to our government, our military, and the nations in your region of expertise.

WILLIAM DONOVAN—A GODFATHER FOR FAOS AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Born in Buffalo, New York, on New Year's Day 1883, William Joseph Donovan's decades of service provide a model of Foreign Area Officer preparation and service. At the age of 14, Will found himself enrolled in the Daughters of the Heart of Mary's Nardin Academy; the school's selfless public service, done secretly, served Donovan well as a future model for working undercover. Will began college at Niagara University, but later transferred to Columbia University's School of Law, where he became a close friend of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Their friendship altered the intelligence history of the United States beginning well prior to World War II.

Donovan's military service began in 1912. He joined the newly-established Troop I (Cavalry) of the New York National Guard's 74th Regiment. Within a month, he made corporal; later in the year, his peers elected him to serve as Captain of the Troop. Even before being called upon to lead his men in combat, Donovan deployed to Europe in a role in which he found himself often, and one

which parallels the role of today's FAO. Asked by the Rockefeller Foundation to visit Europe as part of the War Relief Commission, he began making a lengthy study of Belgium; later, while in Berlin, he studied the Polish problem. In a similar role, he also deployed to Austria. As a result of his studies, Donovan made a major impact on the protection of civilians and prisoners of war.

By 1916, Donovan had returned from the European theater only to deploy with his troops to Mexico. After service there, Donovan joined the Fighting 69th Regiment, which Roosevelt had helped establish under Donovan's and other's prodding. When Douglas MacArthur's 42nd “Rainbow” Division went to war, the 69th was integrated into it. Given his fluency in French, he went to a French Field Officer's School—the in-country training all FAOs know well. In late 1918, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his gallantry in Ourck, France; later, at Landres and St. Georges, France, was wounded during the engagement and won the Medal of Honor. By 1919, Donovan was the Colonel of the regiment, which was renamed the 165th Infantry. He completed his service in France and returned home later that year after setting up the American Legion in Paris.

By July of 1919, Donovan was embroiled in his first of many “FAO” assignments, as a secret emissary of the President as part of the Siberian Expeditionary Force. He served as a reporting go-between, able to assemble a well-rounded story that included both State Department and War Department versions of events in the Russian Far East. His country studies and reports (particularly those of Japan, Russia, and China) are models of astute reporting and demonstrate a depth of cultural understanding. In February 1920, Donovan made a another presidential-sponsored trip to Europe's Low Countries, Germany, Poland, France, and Italy. In 1923, in Berchtesgaden at the Pension Moritz, Donovan met a young German Army spy who had infiltrated the German Workers Party—a meeting he would never forget, that young spy was a young Adolph Hitler. Just as Donovan had learned French when he saw war coming in the earlier part of the century, he began to study German, preparing for an inevitable war on that front.

As another global war loomed, Donovan studied problems specific to Asia, Africa, and Europe. He began a series of pre-war visits to Italy, where he reported on the growth of Italian power in Eritrea and Ethiopia. By

now, the brilliant Donovan was reporting directly to President Roosevelt, his old law school chum. His report on the war in Spain served as a predecessor of tactics, techniques, procedures, and equipment for the next war to come. By 1939, his sense that Germany would invade through the Low Countries had raised enough eyebrows and gained such credibility that he conducted another solo mission to Europe for the President. It was during this set of visits that Donovan became familiar with Stewart Menzies, the British Secret Intelligence Service chief, and a young Brigadier, Colin Gubbins, who would ultimately lead Britain's Special Operations Executive. This familiarity would serve as a model for Donovan's crowning achievement. His history of individual trips and reports designed for an executive audience would, in later years, serve as a model for the CIA's collection and reporting mechanisms. Later, Donovan went to the Pacific; prophetically, after launching from a new aircraft carrier at Pearl Harbor, he said, "If we can [launch aircraft from a ship], the Japs can, too." In his last pre-COI/OSS mission, Donovan began a more personal relationship with the British as he studied the war they waged against Germany. He then went to the Balkans and the Mideast—everywhere sensing the inevitability of war.

Donovan's last report as an informal representative gives clear indications of the route of both intelligence and special operations (not to mention Foreign Area Officer) responsibilities and roles over the next half-century. He urged the formation of commando units, which later became an integral part of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and served ultimately as the basis for the formation of the US Army Special Forces in 1951 by OSS veteran

Aaron Bank. He foresaw an intelligence arm that reported on both political and military topics of interest—a break from tradition, to be sure, and one that witnessed the ultimate birth of the CIA with the National Security Act of 1947.

On July 11 1941, Donovan formed the Coordinator for Intelligence—the Executive Branch's intelligence arm—at the old State Department Building on Pennsylvania Boulevard. Modeled as a mix of both military operations, psychological operations, and political and other intelligence operations, Donovan cut a wide swath through traditional roles, roles we are now most comfortable with and which many FAOs require lengthy training and experience to accomplish. Donovan's genius was to combine a warrior's ethic with an academic ability to assemble, analyze, and report on world events during a global conflagration. Not surprisingly, this wide path forced Donovan to cross swords with both traditional intelligence collectors and the military establishment.

Ultimately, the pressure was so great that the President put in place a broader organization with even greater breadth. This was the Office of Strategic Services. Donovan placed staffs in every theater where they could best understand and report on events, as he had done personally for decades previous. He used cultural, historical, linguistic, and other subject matter experts as leverage to both fight a smarter special operations war and to collect more realistic, timely intelligence useful at both tactical and strategic levels.

With the dissolution of the OSS at the end of the war, Donovan's FAO-like service continued. He served on

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the Nuremberg conference, worked for European unification as part of the Committee for a United Europe, completed numerous "special missions" such as the investigation of the death of CBS News correspondent Polk in Greece, and even returned from an exhaustive Far East trip with solid recommendations concerning the Philippines, the Malay Peninsula, Siam (Thailand), Burma, and Indochina.

As a model for Foreign Area Officer preparation and training, and as a further model for the capabilities of a strategic scout, warrior, and diplomatic scholar and advisor, William Donovan is among the most noteworthy of FAO predecessors. The war fighting capability he designed, implemented, and executed (such as the OSS's Jedburgh Teams and Operations Groups) served as the model for the emergence of the Army's Special Forces, which was, at one time, an integral part of the FAO community before it became a separate functional area, then a separate branch, in the 1980s.

To learn more about Donovan, Richard Dunlop's *Donovan: America's Master Spy* is a thorough and readable biography.

AARON BANK—THE FATHER OF ARMY SPECIAL FORCES, OSS, AND THE FAO MODEL

As a student of the world, a central voice in the development of the American special operations capability, a bridge between the political and civilian worlds, and a war fighter, Aaron Bank is one of the stalwart examples of the pre-FAO-corps Foreign Area Officer.

Bank was born in New York City on 23 November 1902. Although his parents were Russian immigrants, his mother spoke to him almost exclusively in French and his grandfather in German. Well-to-do, he was schooled as a young man in Switzerland, resulting in his fluency in German, Spanish and French. Having spent many years on the continent prior to World War II, he once served as the head lifeguard at the expensive and exclusive Biarritz Resort in Switzerland. He knew languages and lived cultures intimately, a trait our modern Foreign Area Officer training pipelines seek to duplicate.

When Bank joined the Army in 1939, he was commissioned an infantry officer. However, due to his age, he was assigned intelligence officer duties despite his desire for a more active infantry role. In 1943, while assigned as a tactical training officer for a railroad battalion at Camp Polk, Louisiana, he responded to a unit bulletin board announcement that asked foreign language speakers to volunteer for "special assignments." The young captain soon found himself in the Office of Strategic Services. After reporting to the Q Building in Washington DC, he was sent to the training site at the Congressional Country Club. Bank found himself training with William Colby, future CIA direc-

tor; Lucien Conein, a key future clandestine agent in Vietnam; and Serge Obelansky, a former member of the Czar's Army. After initial State-side training and officially joining the FAO community, Bank deployed to Great Britain, where he received advanced training with the Special Operations Executive. Among his instructors was Major Fairbairn, the famous ex-Shanghai cop who taught hand-to-hand combat for the SOE, OSS, and later the CIA; Fairbairn also invented the popular special operations stiletto which bears his name.

After his advanced training, Bank was assigned to the Jedburgh Project. The Jedburghs were three-person teams consisting of American, British, and French officers and NCOs who were sent behind enemy lines to organize local insurgents. Bank was assigned to the French element. His mission took his team (PACKHARD) to the French departments of Gare and Lozere on 31 July 1944. He organized the fighting in that area and assisted in Operation ANVIL, the invasion of southern France six weeks after D-Day, by clearing beaches of Germans prior to the arrival of friendly forces.

After Paris had been retaken, Bank's first Jedburgh mission concluded and another soon followed. He was asked to design and lead a team who would conduct similar operations against German forces, but would focus predominantly on the capture of high-ranking Nazi officials as they fled to their "Alpine Redoubt" in the German Alps. Donovan, the head of OSS, ordered Bank to "get Hitler." Hitler committed suicide and the war ended before the combined U.S.-German team, code-named IRON CROSS, became operational.

In May 1945, the OSS reassigned Bank to Indochina. From the China Operations Group in Kunming, Bank led a team through Hanoi and Haiphong to disrupt Japanese communications. He then led searches for POW camps in Laos. At one point, Bank accompanied Ho Chi Minh on trips through Indochina—true FAO politico-military submersion training.

With the deactivation of the OSS, Bank became an early military champion of unconventional warfare, a capability which straddled the military and politico-diplomatic communities. Although this resulted ultimately in the formation of military units, these units focused heavily on language fluency, area knowledge, and cultural sensitivity—hallmarks of our present-day Foreign Area Officer community. He served in the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in Korea, but was recalled in 1951 to serve on the Army's PSYWAR staff. (The linkage between PSYOPS and Special Forces is detailed in Paddock's book, cited at the end of this character sketch in explicit terms. The implicit Foreign Area Officer linkages are less visible to those unfamiliar with the development of the Army's 48-series FAOs.)

On the Army Staff, Bank worked with two special warriors with unconventional experience in the Philippines, Russell Volkman and Wendell Fertig, and two famous members of Merrill's Marauders, Russell Blair and Marvin Waters. They began to define the roles of the unconventional warfare community with a heavy FAO flavor. Initially, the Army confused Ranger capabilities, OSS Operations Groups capabilities, and special operations forces capabilities, but Bank was instrumental in separating the confusion between these terms and unit types; as such, Bank became the philosophical father of army special forces.

When the Rangers were disestablished on 23 August 1951, this created space for a new Special Forces Group. Bank's boss, General McClure, gained authorization to set up the Psy War Center on 4 December 1951. Bank secured some poor real estate at Fort Bragg—Smoke Bomb Hill—and the Center was approved and established on 27 March 1952. By the next quarter, Colonel Bank was assigned as commander of the 10th Special Forces Group, which was established on 19 June 1952. Although the Special Forces Group was a war fighting unit, Bank insisted upon in-depth language and cultural experience and continued training in those areas, ensuring the formation of a direct link between FAOs and Special Forces.

By 1953, world events again pushed Bank into the action. East Berlin riots against Soviet tanks led to the further isolation of loyal, Western Berliners, deepening concerns of further Soviet expansion on the continent. If the Soviets continued in this manner, "stay-behind forces" to lead insurgents would be requisite. With his OSS and new SF background, Bank was the obvious choice to command the new, second special forces group, the 77th Special Forces in Bad Tolz, Germany. At the end of 1954, Bank's command ended and he moved to the 7th Army staff. Bank retired in 1958.

In later years, Bank's impact on the FAO community surfaced again. Revealing weaknesses in our nuclear facilities, he was instrumental in developing Red Teams to probe additional weaknesses—a practice that continues to this day. Moreover, his early antiterrorism research was key in the development of present-day force protection doctrine; his efforts, however, would not be fully appreciated until the wake of the Khobar Towers bombing and the Downing Commission's critique of America's current DoD antiterrorism programs. Bank, one of the most visionary special operators and Foreign Area Officer forbearers, died in San Clemente, California, on 1 April 2004.

To learn more about Colonel Bank, the "Father of the US Army Special Forces," his *From OSS to Green Berets* is a thorough and readable description of his efforts. In

addition, Alfred H. Paddock's exhaustive *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* highlights Bank's and Russell Volkman's efforts in creating the Green Berets; it should be on every FAO's bookshelf.

VIRGINIA HALL— A FAO OUTSIDE THE FOLD

Virginia Hall's career spanned more than three decades in the SOE, OSS, and CIA, conducting the types of missions that gave birth to the FAO corps. Hall's FAO-like contributions began in 1909 at age three, when her Baltimore, Maryland, family first visited Europe. A country girl from Box Horn Farm who loved outdoor life, she excelled at languages at a young age, as she demonstrated on another trip to Europe while attending Baltimore's Roland Park Country School. Although she began her college studies at Radcliff and later Barnard College, she transferred eventually to the Sorbonne and the *Ecole des Services Politiques* in Paris and completed her undergraduate degree at Vienna's *Konsular Akademie*. She returned to the States to attend graduate school at American University in Washington, DC, where she demonstrated fluency in German and French and a working knowledge of Italian. By mid-1931, Hall landed her first FAO-like job as a Consular Officer at the US Embassy in Warsaw, Poland. Two years later, she transferred to the American Consulate in Smyrna, Turkey.

In December of 1933, Virginia experienced a hunting accident. Climbing a fence, she blew off her foot with a shotgun. Although she tried to become a Foreign Service Officer for years after that, the State Department's "no amputees" rule disqualified her. Rehabilitating herself relentlessly, by the following December she was assigned to the American Consulate in Venice, Italy. By June 1938, she was assigned to the Consulate in Tallin, Estonia, where she ultimately resigned in May 1939 due to her inability to become an FSO.

After her resignation, Hall moved to Paris. There, she witnessed first-hand the fall of France. Prior to the fall, she worked for the *Services Sanitaires de l'Armee*, a French organization similar to the American Red Cross. Once France fell to the Germans, she decided that finding a way to continue the fight from France was too difficult. She moved to England to search for another venue to get back in the fight and landed a job at the American Embassy in London. During an interim stay in Lisbon, prior to her arrival in England, Hall met George Bellows, who introduced her to Vera Atkins, the principal aide to the F Section [France] Head of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), Maurice Buckmaster. After a lengthy process, Virginia Hall was selected to be a field operative for the SOE; as one of forty females ultimately trained throughout the war, she

prepared for insertion behind the enemy lines in France. It was here that her traditional FAO-like background was further refined with the types of skills resident in later CIA and Special Forces operators. Selwyn Jepson, famous as one of the SOE's best "assessment and selection" men, finally decided to use Hall. Under cover as Brigitte LeContre (code name Germaine), Hall first deployed to Vichy France in August 1942, then moved to Lyon, where she developed her first resistance contacts. Her role soon expanded to include movement of downed pilots, reception of new SOE personnel, and expanding resistance asset contacts. Her HECKLER cell moved many airmen to Marseilles, where they ultimately rode the famous "O'Leary Line" ratline through Spain to Gibraltar and back home. By late summer, Hall/LeContre was known as Marie Monin (code name Philomene); it was under this name that the infamous Klaus Barbie would become familiar with her and seek to root out her organization and eliminate her. By November, the allied invasion of North Africa was imminent, and Virginia escaped by way of Perpignon, over the Pyrennes, across Spain, to Gibraltar, and safely home to England.

By the time she returned to England, she was renowned in France, her image captured on wanted posters describing her as "the most dangerous of all Allied spies, *La Dame qui Boite* [The Limping Lady]." Hall was then reassigned to Spain to seek ways to make Allied inroads there, after which she returned to London and received wireless operator training, preparing for her reinsertion into France. However, by that time, the new American Office of Strategic Services was operational. With her extensive operational background, country familiarity, and desire to work for her home organization, she was reassigned to the OSS and reinserted into France as part of the SAINT circuit. There, she established a strong resistance cell, this time of the *Maquis* (Men of the Brush). As one of only thirty-two Americans in France when the D-Day assault began, her team began work with the Allied forces. By late 1944, she was running a Resistance cell in Le Chambon, France, where she greeted the Jedburgh Team JEREMY, having preceded them by months. By December 1944, she had returned to London—her mission complete—and retrained for insertion into Austria to organize resistance there. Hall became Anna Moller (code name Camille) until war's end. At the end of the war, Virginia Hall received the Distinguished Service Cross.

Hall retired from the OSS in September 1945, at which time she resumed her European travels. By early 1948, she had returned to the "new OSS," serving as one of the Central Intelligence Agency's first employees. In 1946, she became the first female in the CIA's Career Staff, where she made significant strategic contributions until her retirement in 1966. Virginia Hall died on 12 July 1982.

Her in-depth country experience, her facility with multiple languages, her work as both a staff officer and as an official USG representative overseas in numerous diplomatic missions, her work at the CIA, and her utter fearlessness as a warrior makes her one of the finest examples for all Foreign Area Officers—perhaps especially so as a standard-bearer for today's female FAOs.

To learn more, Judith L. Pearson's *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy* is a thorough and readable biography. A shorter snapshot of Ms. Hall is contained in Elizabeth McIntosh's *Sisterhood of Spies*.

EDWARD LANSDALE—NOT THE "UGLY AMERICAN"

Edward Lansdale, a United States Air Force officer, is among the best examples of a true Foreign Area Officer before that designation officially existed. His preparation for, participation in, and longevity of foreign area duties makes General Lansdale a viable case study; in addition, Lansdale's reputation in the PSYOPS and counter-insurgency world makes him even more valuable as a reference point for FAOs, given the nature of conflict in these early years of the 21st century.

Edward Geary Lansdale was born in Detroit, Michigan, on 6 February 1908. There is less in his background that indicates his future role as a quasi-Foreign Area Officer than in our other case studies. Prior to World War II, Lansdale had been an ad agency writer in San Francisco. His writing skills were put to use in the OSS beginning in 1941; but by 1943 he was an intelligence officer in the US Army. This experience paved the way toward Lansdale's future FAO-like role. In his own words, "Military intelligence duties had opened the way for a rare education about the people, the life, and the land of the Philippines. . . . My eyes had been opened to a world outside my own country." Replace that country with any other and one has the modern FAO.

Lansdale remained in the Philippines after the war working at Army Forces Western Pacific (AFWESPAC) and Philippine Ryukyu Command (PHILRYCOM) until 1948. During his stay, he assisted in rebuilding the Filipino intelligence capability and made lasting friendships that enabled his future success in the islands. Prior to his transfer from the Philippines in 1948, Lansdale transferred laterally to the newly-established US Air Force as a Captain. Upon his return to the States, he became an instructor at the Strategic Intelligence School at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado. By 1949, he had obtained a job in Washington, DC, as a member of the Air Staff, where his studies on unconven-

tional warfare placed him outside of the mainstream, Cold War focus. In 1950, at a party at Fort Meyer, Virginia, Lansdale met Ramon Magsaysay, the future Secretary of Defense and President of the Philippines. Magsaysay was so impressed with Lansdale that he asked President Quirino to have Lansdale assigned to the Joint US Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG) later that same year.

Lansdale's accomplishments in the Philippines would establish his enduring reputation as a counterinsurgency subject matter expert, which informed his less successful efforts in Vietnam in the 1960s. Lansdale and Magsaysay lived together—for security reasons Lansdale had convinced Magsaysay that living on Manila's JUSMAG compound would be prudent—and Lansdale became Magsaysay's personal advisor. The pair reinvented the intelligence arm, professionalized the Philippine army, took away the insurgent initiative, established many lasting social programs, and incorporated the PSYOPS piece of the puzzle, a task embedded in the special ops/FAO community at its inception. By 1953, Lansdale had completed his mission in the Philippines and moved back to Washington. That return was to be short-lived.

When General John W. "Iron Mike" McDaniel took an intentional demotion from Lieutenant General to Major General to accept the job as US Military Assistance/Advisory Group (USMAAG)/Indochina, he and Saigon Ambassador Donald Heath asked for Lansdale by name, given his previous success in the Philippines. In this three-year Vietnamese tour, Lansdale worked civic action, military professionalism and strengthening, nationwide pacification, refugee issues, and psychological operations. He also established a career-impacting relationship with Ngo Dinh Diem, the first democratically-elected president of South Vietnam.

Lansdale's influence as a foreign area and special operations specialist continued with his return to Washington in 1957. He became the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, rising quickly to the position of Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, where his duties focused on highly sensitive special operations. He also served, in 1959, on the Draper Committee, the President's Committee on Military Assistance.

The early 1960s were a busy time for Lansdale. In early 1960, President Eisenhower approved a CIA plan to overthrow Castro's regime in Cuba. Lansdale became head of what was (now familiarly) named Operation MON-GOOSE. During this period, he also wrote numerous memoranda—as Donovan had for Roosevelt—on Vietnam. Seeing a Philippine-style solution for that beleaguered country, Lansdale wrote "Concept for Victory in Vietnam" in mid-1964. This paper, among others, led US Ambassador

Henry Cabot Lodge to ask for Lansdale and his "team" to work their magic in Vietnam. Although Lansdale's impact was less in Vietnam than it had been in the Philippines—his relationship with Diem was less familiar than that with Magsaysay, and ended with Diem's death in 1963—but as a model for politico-military solutions (the heart of the Foreign Area Officer) and for the use of friendship in building effective counterinsurgency and psychological operations, his impact remains significant. Leaving Vietnam in 1968, Lansdale retired from public life until his death on 23 February 1987.

One of Lansdale's key lieutenants in the 40s, 50s, and 60s, Charles "Bo" Bohannan, once described the members of Lansdale's team and their FAO-like approach (albeit somewhat unflatteringly):

"They were . . . officers . . ."

"They knew [and] had worked . . . with hundreds of [pick a country group] [and] had gained their respect . . ."

"They had top-level U.S. backing stateside . . ."

"They had the full cooperation of the [host nation] leader[s] . . ."

"They were ingenious, adaptable, rather unscrupulous bastards . . . and master salesmen."

Many worse descriptions or models for the modern FAO can be found; Bohannan's, however, describes our corps quite well. Lansdale's own description of his activities should be on a visible post-it on every FAO's desk: "I acted as sort of a catalyst to bring together some solutions to problems with American experts who could help." That is the Foreign Area Officer corps in a nutshell.

A "master of *sub rosa* intelligence work," Lansdale is worthy of further study by the modern FAO. To learn more, Lansdale's *In the Midst of Wars* is a thorough and readable memoir. For more on Lansdale's counterinsurgency roles, see *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counter-terrorism* by Michael McClintock. For a similar take, FAOs should consider reading Eugene Burdick and William Lederer's *The Ugly American* (see the author's December 2000 *FAO Journal* article), whose harmonica-playing, folk song-singing Colonel Edward Barnum Hillandale is likely modeled on Lansdale. Many suggest that another must-read for Foreign Area Officers is Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*; Greene's character Alden Pyle may very well be based on Lansdale as well.

Vernon Walters—A FAO's FAO

Lieutenant General Vernon "Dick" Walters may well be the supreme Foreign Area Officer role model. Born on 3

January 1917 in New York City, by age six his family had moved to France, where his ability to master languages surfaced. Although he attended a Jesuit secondary school, he never attended university for all his achievements.

During World War II, Walters served in Africa and Italy. His Italian, French, and Dutch language skills made him a valued interpreter, staff officer, and highly valuable intelligence officer. In the post-WWII years, he became an interpreter and advisor to five Presidents. Among his important politico-military roles were: (1) translator at early NATO summits; (2) contributor to the Marshall Plan's formulation; and (3) co-establisher of Supreme Allied Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE).

In his role as a staff advisor to President Truman, he sat in on the historic meeting between Truman and MacArthur that ultimately led to MacArthur's relief in the midst of the Korean War. Given his Spanish and Portuguese language skills, additional work for Truman in Latin America served to increase American influence throughout the hemisphere. Later, he was a staff advisor and interpreter to President Eisenhower, in addition to his escort and translator duties for Vice-President Nixon. During a trip to Caracas, Venezuela, Walters was injured in an attack on the Vice-President. Because of their strong personal relationship, Nixon would later appoint him as Deputy Director of the CIA.

Walters was also a multiple-tour military attaché, the crowning achievement for most Foreign Area Officers. He served as the Defense Attaché (DATT) in France, Italy, and Brazil. While the DATT in Paris from 1967 to 1972, he assisted Henry Kissinger in his secret talks with the North Vietnamese.

By the 1970s, General Walters, an accomplished Foreign Area Officer, entered a series of roles for which he is best remembered. He was the Deputy Director for the CIA for four years beginning in 1972, serving four Directors (he was acting Director in 1973). During his tour, he played a role in numerous historical events that shaped the world at the time: the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the conclusion of the Vietnam conflict, the Chilean coup that overthrew Allende, and Watergate (he was asked to pay off the Watergate burglars and famously refused). It was in 1976 that Lieutenant General Walters retired from active duty; but that did not end his selfless service to his country.

In 1981, Walters was asked by President Reagan to be his roving ambassador. Walters fulfilled this role until 1985, after which he served a four-year term as the country's Ambassador to the United Nations. Upon leaving that post, he again returned to embassy duty as Ambassador to West Germany. He retired from public life in 1991 and died

in Palm Springs in 2002. Fluent in nine languages, he utilized up to sixteen different languages during his career. (The endlessly haughty French president Charles de Gaulle once told President Nixon after a speech translated by Walters, "You gave a magnificent speech, but your interpreter was eloquent.") As a bridge between the military and politico-diplomatic communities, General Walters' represents the finest in what it means to be a Foreign Area Officer.

To study the importance of intelligence, diplomacy, and the warrior ethic in the making of a FAO, General Walters' autobiography, *Silent Missions*, provides the serious FAO student with an entertaining set of anecdotes, written in Walters' folksy, yet urbane style.

* * *

Lansdale wrote, "When a man leaves home, he sometimes travels more than a physical distance." This point of view is at the heart of the Foreign Area Officer's experience, and defines our historical, cultural, political, and martial immersion in those countries in which we serve. The Foreign Area Officer, by any or no name, has proven invaluable to military and other government leaders who seek depth of regional knowledge, true cultural understanding, the ability to work seamlessly in foreign languages, a broad and deep strategic sense, and the warrior ethic. Hopefully, the reader sees a bit of himself in these sketches; where one has yet to reach these plateaus, these character sketches surely provide many examples with which the modern FAO can enhance the widely diverse individual skill sets required for the successful FAO operator, whether on a staff, in a mission abroad, or as a warfighter. Call yourself what you will, but remember the one underlying word that can be used to describe these gentlemen and lady and yourself: VITAL. Your personal dedication and preparation should be equal to that descriptor; and as these snapshots demonstrate, the road before you is well-lighted.

Rod Propst is the Vice President for Government Operations at the Praemittias Group, Inc. in Reston, Virginia. He has previously authored articles on Islam, diplomacy, escape and evasion, Foreign Area Officer predecessors, and analysis of special operations-related literature in the Foreign Area Officer Journal. A retired US Army officer, among Propst's assignments was as a Defense Attaché in Mexico City, and as a clandestine field operative and staff officer in national asset counter-terror units.

F.Y.I. — Service FAO POCs



U.S. Army FAO Proponent Office

U.S. Army FAO Proponent Office
COL Steven Beal - Div Chief, (703) 602-8183 / DSN 332-8183 Email: steven.beal@hqda.army.mil

Mr. Charles Reimer, Deputy Division Chief, (703) 602-8179 / DSN 332-8179, Email: Charles.reimer@hqda.army.mil

LTC Alfred Brooks - 48B Regional Manager, COM 703-602-8191 / DSN 333-8191, Email: Alfred.brooks@hqda.army.mil

LTC Roderic Jackson - 48G/J Regional Manager, COM 703-602-8188 / DSN 332-8188, Email: roderic.jackson@hqda.army.mil

LTC William Maxcy—48D/F/H/I Regional Manager, (703) 602-7373 / DSN 332-7373, Email: William.maxcy@hqda.army.mil

LTC Jonathan Edwards - 48C/E Regional Manager
COM 703-602-8195 / DSN 332-8195,
Email: jonathan.edwards@hqda.army.mil

LTC Gary Garay- FAO Coordinator, Defense Language Institute,
(831) 242-6467/DSN 768-6467
Email: gary.garay@us.army.mil

U.S. Army FAO Assignments Team, HRC

LTC TJ Moffat- Assgmts Off (COLONELS – 48).
(703) 325-2861/DSN 221-2861
EMAIL: Thomas.moffat@us.army.mil

LTC Matt Greco — Branch Chief
(703) 325-3153/DSN 221-3153
EMAIL: matthew.greco@us.army.mil

MAJ Jerzy Zubr - Assgmts Off (48C, E),
(703) 325-3134/DSN 221-3134
EMAIL: jerzy.zubr@us.army.mil

MAJ Jeffrey Wyatt - Assgmts Off (48D, G, H, I), (703) 325-3132/DSN 221-3132, EMAIL: Jeffrey.wyatt1@us.army.mil

MAJ Jeff Miller – Assgmts Off (48B,F,J).
(703) 325-2755/DSN 221-2755
EMAIL: jeffrey.s.miller@us.army.mil

MAJ Brunilda Garcia - HRC-St. Louis FA 48 Manager
314-592-0608 - DSN: 892-0608
FAX: 314-592-0649 - DSN: 892-0650
E-mail brunilda.garcia@us.army.mil

MS. Fran Ware - TRG PLANS (48B, C, H, I).
(703) 325-3135/DSN 221-3135
EMAIL: frances.ware@us.army.mil

MS. Aundra Brown - TRG PLANS (48D, E, G, J).
(703) 325-3121/DSN 221-3121
EMAIL: aundra.brown@us.army.mil

Ms. Mary Gathers - Human Resource Specialist
(703)325-0159/DSN: 221-0159
FAX: 703-325-6374/DSN: 221-6374
Email: Mary.Gathers@us.army.mil

US Army Reserve FAO Program

COL John D. Blumenson - Asst. Div Chief (DIMA)
(408) 209-7563
E-mail john.blumenson@us.army.mil

USMC FAO Proponent

PLU: Col Dan Hahne- Branch Head, International Issues Branch
EMAIL: daniel.hahne@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 692-4254 or DSN 222-4254

PLU EA: Mr. Tom Braden- Deputy Branch Head, International Issues Branch, (FSU FAO) EMAIL: thomas.c.braden@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 693-1365 or DSN 223-1365

PLU-1: LtCol Jon Foster- PACOM-SE Asia (E. Asia RAO)
EMAIL: jonathan.foster@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 692-4346 or DSN 222-4346

PLU-2: LtCol Travis Tebbe- PACOM-NE Asia (Korean FAO)
EMAIL: travis.tebbe@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 692-4364 or DSN 222-4364

PLU-3: LtCol Patrick Carroll- CENTCOM (Middle East/North Africa FAO)
EMAIL: patrick.carroll1@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 692-4345 or DSN 222-4345

PLU-4: Maj Edel Sanchez- SOUTHCOM/NORTHCOM (Latin America FAO) EMAIL: edel.sanchez@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 692-4344 or DSN 222-4344

PLU-5: Maj Dan Bates- EUCOM- Western Europe, NATO (Turkish FAO)
EMAIL: daniel.l.bates@usmc.mil: (703) 692-4367 or DSN 222-4367

PLU-6: Major Mike Barnes- Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Africa and Israel (Russian FAO) EMAIL: michael.w.barnes@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 692-4368 or DSN 222-4368

PLU-7: LtCol Art Collins- Security Cooperation and Programs (E. Europe RAO) EMAIL: arthur.collins@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 692-4341 or DSN 222-4341

PLU-8: LtCol Chris Sill- International Affairs Officer Program Coordinator (China FAO) EMAIL: christopher.sill@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 692-4365 or DSN 222-4365

USMC Foreign Language Officer:

LtCol Gregory Murray: HQMC, DC (I), IOP
EMAIL: Gregory.murray@usmc.mil Phone: (703) 614-1161

Admin Support from MSGBN in Quantico

MSGBN Personnel Officer
Phone (703) 784-4781, DSN 278-4781

US Navy FAO Proponent

CDR Dawn Driesbach, FAO Officer Community Manager
703-697-8761 (primary) 703-693-2394 (alternate)
Dawn.Driesbach@navy.mil

U.S. AIR FORCE FAO Proponent

Col Rob Sarnoski, (703) 588-8349, Chief, International Airmen Division

Lt Col Deborah Determan - Chief, International Affairs Specialist (IAS) Branch Comm (703) 588-8346, DSN 425-8346

Lt Col Cathy Carter - Deputy Chief, International Affairs Specialist (IAS) Branch, Reserve Advisor (Reserve IAS Program, Rosetta Stone, Transparent Language) Comm (703) 588-8337, DSN 425-8337

Maj JJ Casey - Chief, Strategic Plans and Programs (European RAS) (Outreach, Public Affairs, Strategic Issues) Comm (703) 588-8321, DSN 425-8321

Capt Jason Kollars - IAS Force Development (Force Management Issues, RAS/PAS Inquiries) Comm (703) 588-8322, DSN 425-8322

MSgt Jackie Phillips - IAS Education and Training Manager (FSI, LASI, JSOU)

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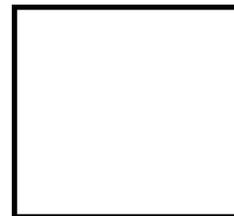
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**FAOA
P.O. Box 295
Mt. Vernon, VA. 22121**



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