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SUBJECT: Remarks by General Hugh P. Harris, CG, USCONARC

TO: See Distribution

1. Upon his assumption of command of USCONARC, General Hugh P. Harris addressed the senior officers and civilian employees of that headquarters concerning his views and basic philosophy. A copy of his remarks is attached hereto.

2. General Harris' clearly expressed views on command and staff relationships are, in my opinion, well worth careful reading and assimilating.

C. W. G. RICH  
Major General, USA  
Commanding

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The following remarks were made by the Commanding General, USCONARC to senior officers and civilian employees of that headquarters on 11 March 1964.

When I take on a new job, I like to see and talk to the key people who are to work with me. That means the officers and civilian employees who work in senior staff capacities and command assignments. I feel that senior officers should go about often and be seen by those who work for him and by those for whom he works. That's why I'm here now. I want you to feel that you know me as an individual as well as the commander here. I know that when we have mutual confidence and acquaintanceship, we will have a capable and efficient headquarters by any standard. I hope the initial orientation remarks that I will make today will help in this regard.

I want you to know, first off, that I value the work of our civilian employees who have given and do give us such loyal and competent service over the years. We could not function here at USCONARC without the continuity you provide us. Military people move along - you civilian employees provide us stability and objectivity. I expect that as much effort will be made to take care of the requirements of our civilian help - as for military members. I know, too, that neither the military nor civilian group has any monopoly on brains. I want this to be a military-civilian team.

I know that all assembled here have had extended service and varied experiences. I am sure that all of you know your business, because here at USCONARC level is no place for amateurs or inexperienced people. I know that many of you officers have had distinguished military careers and I know that others of you will have. I am quite sure there are several future senior commanders and future general officers here. I hope that what I say will be of some value and interest to you; not only for your service here, but also when you receive your next assignment and possibly throughout your military career. I like to feel that those who serve with me receive some permanent benefit from such service--and that they will pass these lessons on to their subsequent commands. That is the "pay-off" to the Army.

I am proud to be your commander here at Fort Monroe. As some of you know, I served here as G-3 from 1958-1960. I have also been Chief of Staff of one of our continental armies, the Second at Meade,

and Commandant of one of our schools, the Infantry School. Also Chief of Staff of the XVIII Airborne Corps about 1950, when STRAC was founded. I say this only to indicate that I think I am well aware of the great responsibility we now share together. Also, my recent service in both the Far East and in Europe has shown me again the importance of providing well-trained individuals and units to our field forces overseas. I am particularly interested in closing the gaps now existing in MOS-qualified people - particularly in critical MOS areas. We need more and better trained technicians. I am interested in providing better trained and properly motivated young officers and NCO's. I think we should do all we can to develop the young officer's and NCO's career potential. They may have to meet more demands than we've had in the three decades or so that I've been about. I am vitally interested in the training of our reserve and National Guard units. I appreciate their importance to our Army and to our Nation. Yes! we have many important missions and each is vital to our Nation as a whole.

#### A few words about my philosophy of command.

I operate on the basis that everyone who works for me wants to do a good job, and if he doesn't, it's partly my fault, because I haven't been explicit enough about what I want. I operate on the basis that the staff and commands are entitled to know what the commander wants. If he doesn't know or won't tell you what he wants - how can you possibly know? I operate on the basis that we are professionals; that we take care of our jobs first before all other considerations. I operate on the basis that the commander is responsible for his outfit and everything that his outfit does and fails to do; and I like to see it evident that everyone knows who his boss is when I visit a unit. I like to see proud and confident units, and I particularly like to see proud and confident soldiers.

I want our subordinate commanders to be given every prerogative of command by our senior staffs. When these commanders are doing a good job and getting the desired results, I want them given credit and I want them generally left alone. It is very important that our commanders feel they are given necessary latitude. I don't want to inhibit the USCONARC staff from taking necessary action on my behalf when it's justifiable, but I do want the combat commander given the latitude under which he can operate effectively.

I want us to give emphasis to our combat training. You all know what the international situation is today, and that we have a threat against our National life. I don't think that things are going to get any better while we are together here. I know that we face a period of

prolonged tension and, despite balmy breezes at times, this tension will increase in many trouble spots.

I believe that we can confidently face the facts of life in regard to this threat. These Soviets are not 12 feet tall. Probably average about 5 foot 9-1/2 inches -- but, in respect to this threat, it is obvious that we cannot hide our heads and hope that it will go away, for it won't. No amount of wishful thinking will win this battle. We can stand up to these people and we can take the necessary action to defeat them because we have the natural resources to do it. I am quite confident that our armed forces, backed by our industrial power and intelligent citizenry, can take care of our National interests today, and tomorrow. However, we must trust the leaders we have because they alone have all of the information that is available. They have been subjected to the scrutiny of our electorate, or have been appointed by elected representatives and they alone have the moral responsibility to keep us sufficiently strong to take care of ourselves based on any threat at any one time. There are some people who have a little knowledge of the facts, no responsibility for results, and who are not privy to intelligence sources, but still think they have the answers to these complicated problems. They don't impress me much. I believe our informed citizens and capable leadership will be able to find a workable solution to the problems of our day. We will survive this threat as we have all others. Our National history is the result of our fierce determination to overcome adversity. To overcome the obstacles presented by war and nature have challenged our energies, our discipline, and our way of life. By overcoming these obstacles in the past, we have strengthened ourselves. Crises after crises through the decades have developed our resources, our discipline, and our dedication to strenuous endeavor and this process has made the United States of America a tough and highly competitive Nation. It is now partly our responsibility to see that our country is safe in a dangerous and troubled world. I know we, together here, can do this job well.

Yes - I'm sure that you appreciate the stresses which are bound to arise during the period we will be together. I am sure that you join with me in expressing the hope that the United States Army will not have to face up. But if we do, we could follow no greater principle or creed than that reflected in the words of Mr. Lincoln, who, when faced with the crisis of 1860, said:

Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us nor frightened by threats of destruction to our Government, nor of dungeons for ourselves, but let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.

I have great respect for the American combat soldier. I've commanded him at all echelons from platoon to the field army and know him fairly well! Our job is to see that these men can do dangerous combat missions in varied environments and still survive. This is a matter of training, equipment, and leadership. I know that it's to the American soldier that we must partly look for our ultimate security as a free people. Furthermore, if you turned to history and closely examined any past campaign or battle that has been fought, you will find that in the final analysis the battle has been won by the man on the ground, with a weapon in his hand, and the guts and determination, if you will-- to close with and kill that enemy. Our nuclear weapons, rockets, ballistic missiles, aircraft and ships do not replace the combat soldier, they simply increase his ability to win. So I know that these soldiers' every need must be our main interest. I know, too, that in serving your subordinates well, you will get your greatest satisfaction. This feeling of satisfaction is, in fact, your greatest reward for military service. I know you civilian employees can feel this just as fully.

I would like for you to have a sense of urgency in daily routines. We can't give less than our full capability and do this job. We must keep our soldiers constructively busy, alert, and interested. A soldier's time is expensive and valuable. This means our commanders and staffs must know what their men are doing. In fact they must know their men! This "knowing your men" is a fundamental I wish you would stress.

I am very interested in our physical condition. I expect you to have outside exercise and keep yourself physically fit to do your job. There are outside physical conditioning activities here in which you can participate, and I suggest you do. I expect people to watch their weight! Scales in our bathroom are fine investments. If your golf score is over 100, you are not playing enough. If your score is honest and consistently under 72, you're neglecting your work!

I think it is very important that we have a fine working relationship in the USCONARC staff. The individual capability of any staff member is of little value to me unless he can work harmoniously with others. I like to see my staff respected by subordinate commanders and their staffs and we must earn this respect by serving those commanders and staffs well. A subordinate commander's problem is your problem and my problem. I don't like to see staffs that act as though their main interest is to see how well subordinate commanders can do without the equipment or resources that they should have been provided. Unselfishness is quickly noted by subordinate commanders. I also work closely with our senior commanders - I will depend on their advice and counsel as well as that of the USCONARC staff.

I also intend to give these Army commanders authority and flexibility to operate!

I want to have a good working relationship with our counterpart at higher, lower, and adjacent headquarters because we really can't do our jobs well without such a relationship. I want us to be as helpful as we can to the DA and CINCSTRIKE staffs - they have tremendous problems. I don't want us to recommend actions to DA that we know cannot, for obvious reasons, be approved. I'm not interested in a file of alibis!

Frequently I will deal with individual staff members directly and when I do, I expect them to immediately inform the Chief of Staff what was said. I know that's standard procedure, but I depend on it. In respect to my Chief of Staff, I keep him fully informed on all matters. There are no secrets between us, and I think that the commander and the Chief of Staff should have a particular relationship and have complimentary personalities. When a unit has a strong, hard, tough commander, it needs a smooth, quiet Chief of Staff to keep things going smoothly; whereas, when a unit has an easy-going type of commander, then his Chief of Staff should be strong, hard, and tough.

My office is open to you at any time. I don't want you to feel that you are bothering me. I have a capacity for details when necessary. I am never too busy to see members of this staff with a problem involving our units. I expect you to alert me and don't try to keep bad news from me. Otherwise, objectionable things will arise that could be prevented. I've seen this too often!

I like to have a personal relationship with the Surgeon, IO, and the Chaplain on certain matters which always interest me. Specifically, I think that the physical and spiritual health of a command is important. In this regard all of our men are American soldiers and there is no difference to me in respect to race, religion, or creed. When an American soldier is not treated courteously or properly, on or off duty there is an issue with me!

I want you to know that I depend on the staff. I need a good staff. No one can do a job such as this without much help. There is no such thing as a one-man effort in this business, particularly if your commander likes to do a little golfing, fishing, hunting, and poker playing on the side. Yes - we have too much responsibility for one-man shows!

I like to see an informal, friendly atmosphere in the staff and I would like to feel that we have a happy ship.

When there are alternate courses of action, I like to have the staff work handed to me somewhat on a silver platter so I can reach and get the pearl and get on with my business. It is only in this way that we can solve these command problems and not get bogged down in details. Also, you must give me time to consider command actions - when you have deadlines to meet from higher headquarters don't be waiting outside my door or that of the Chief of Staff expecting to get a quick superficial review in order to meet deadlines. Also, don't give subordinate headquarters short deadlines except when absolutely necessary. I particularly dislike it when higher staffs want more time for review than you give the unit staff to provide the answers!

I like simple, direct language used in written or oral communications. Instructions should be easily understood and very difficult to misinterpret or misunderstand. I have found the old adage, "If it can be tied up, it will be" is pretty true at this level.

I want the USCONARC staff to visit units as frequently as is required to get our work done. I want these inspections to be constructive and conducted with a helpful attitude. A staff member who makes inspections and creates ill-will at the same time, generally nullifies the value of his visit and I usually have to pick up the pieces. When you must find fault, I want you to discuss the shortcomings thoroughly and be frank with the commander concerning your impressions.

In respect to training, I have said that I wanted our soldiers kept constructively busy, interested, and alert, and that means we have to know what our outfits are doing. However, we cannot teach everything that is needed to be known about modern warfare unless we teach all compatible phases and portions of each step of training at the same time. This is what we all know as concurrent training. I hope all staff members will be sure that those features of training which apply to their own specialty are properly integrated into our training programs.

I know that you've heard a lot about decentralization of training. I subscribe in general to the principle of decentralization of training. But I want the commanders in the chain of command to provide the impetus and inspiration in their training programs. I know that if we have well-trained small units, other requirements will fall into place.

We have certain resources here and we must use them to the best advantage. These resources are relatively limited. We will always be short of some current needs, so I need your help at all times to stretch our current facilities. These resources are intended to be used for the benefit of our men and it's my intent that they have these resources whenever it is within policy and availability. Staff members

can, within policy, say "yes" at any time to requests from subordinate units whenever the resources are available and the policy is known. My Chief of Staff and I retain the right of turndowns. I must always be informed when a turndown of a senior commander is contemplated!

I wish you to be very, very careful about classified documents. When you have violations you spend an inordinate amount of time investigating what has happened instead of working on matters that you should.

I am interested in the readiness of all of our combat materials. I figure training and maintenance are about equal in importance. I place a lot of emphasis on maintenance programs.

I want our staff to cooperate with and respect the other Armed Services. The Navy moves us to other theaters of operations, protects our lines of communications, gives us support in amphibious operations and in countless other ways contributes to our success in battle. The Air Force provides our strategic and tactical airlift, keeps the enemy air off our backs, gives us the air support that is so vital in combat and resupplies us by airdrops when other means fail. It takes all of our armed forces working together to defeat the forces of aggression now pitted against us.

I could go on and talk about many other things but you have heard some of my views and basic philosophy. If you ponder on the implications of what I have said, you will know me pretty well. But if we can do well the things I have discussed here, we will do a great service to our Army and each of you will be proud of yourself and those who work along side you.

I'm truly glad to see you -- may we all have an enjoyable tour of duty together -- both professionally and personally. You have my most sincere regards and best wishes in your respective work.