

EUSA Well-Being Advisory Council Meeting -- Notes

10 April 2001, (1000-1140 hours)

Opening Remarks

Colonel Laughlin announced that LTG Zanini signed the MOI for EUSA Well-Being Advisory Council. He added that the MOI is a living document and changes can still be made if needed. He welcomed those in attendance and thanked them for coming.

Additionally, COL Laughlin informed the committee that all feeder organizations (BOSS, AFAP, etc) will present Action Plans (within 30 days of conferences/meetings/forums) and will close out issues within a 6-month timeframe. This is guidance expounded on from CG's intent. CG specifically put out similar guidance last week to a limited forum.

Issues for Advisory Council

Mrs. Linda Warner facilitated the presentation of Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) issues and introduced the subject matter experts present to answer questions on respective issues. The six issues below were presented/discussed by the individual indicated.

1. Medical/Dental staffing shortage. COL Schmidt discussed the staffing shortages and related issues, which could contribute to the perception of a shortage of dental treatment.

COL Laughlin asked that COL Schmidt lay-out the issues in a way that allows the commander (EUSA) to fight the fight; to include Measures: patients, clinic hours, staffing at each clinic, identified problems, and limiting factors.

Mrs. Zanini asked that they think "outside of the box" suggesting that they consider options such as but not limited to, the possibility of using volunteers as receptionists.

COL Rowe added that we should consider letting soldiers go back to CONUS as dental Cat IVs and focus our dental efforts on dental problems and two-year folks. Everyone arrives in Dental Cat I status. Within the course of a year (10th-11th month usually) you become a Cat IV. Should we be spending a lot of time and effort on this vice dental care for those who need it? This comments speaks to Area I and is not applicable to the entire peninsula. Other Areas receive dental exams as part of initial in-processing.

2. Postal charges. Mr. MacKessy provided a brief explanation of the postal system and how the United States Postal Service (USPS) is charged to execute services the same on the peninsula as it is in the states. Companies may choose not to do business overseas; that's their prerogative. He stated that our issue was more of an Internet problem and gave examples to support. This issue has been forwarded to DA, and he deemed it closed. He also noted that DA already informed them to submit names of Internet companies who do not ship to APO/AP addresses. They will pass information up the chain to the Military Postal Service Activity (commanded by BG (P) Frost) once received. To this date there have not been any names passed to 8th PERSCOM.

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COL Laughlin tasked 8th PERSCOM to conduct an Information Campaign to get the information out peninsula-wide regarding the reporting procedures for Internet companies not APO/AP friendly. He also asked that they provide feedback at the next meeting. Additionally, COL Jones mentioned that 8th PERSCOM is working behind the scenes to convey to major carriers the advantages of doing business on the peninsula in an effort to remove some barriers that exist.

3. Taxes. LTC Murch surfaced the need to obtain tax deductions for service members stationed on the Korean peninsula. He added that the CINC's Initiative Group is working the issue and asked that we remove (from the AFAP slide) the phrase, "where a state of war exists".
4. Criteria for employment for non-U.S. citizen family members. Ms. Margaret Smiley presented the issue of military spouses whom were non-U.S. Citizens and their ineligibility to obtain certain employment positions on post. Recent changes have negated the problems of off base employment.

COL Laughlin asked if the same issue existed at CONUS locations. The answer was yes this is not specific to Korea. He tasked Civilian Personnel Division to clear peripherals out and present the direct cause of the problem, be it law, statute, policy, or etc.

Mrs. Zanini further requested that it be laid-out separately in its application to appropriated and non-appropriated fund positions.

COL Rowe added that they should also consider the concerns of U.S. Citizens on availability of employment, guarding against tipping the scale too much.

5. Cost of mid-tour leave imposes a hardship on enlisted soldiers. Mr. Jerry Waynick stated that to provide transportation for E1-E6 would cost up to 14 million dollars per year.

COL Laughlin asked that we not let the price scare us from doing the right thing. He tasked G4 Transportation to coordinate with the RM in 8th PERSCOM and to formulate a recommendation to the CG. COL Laughlin indicated that he would staff it electronically. He further requested a decision paper, which includes the impact.

6. Housing allowance inequity: Military and Civilian. COL Laughlin presented this issue in COL Lorimer's absence. He indicated that there would not be substantial changes in the immediate future, but we are moving in the right direction. CG's goal is to improve Quality of Life. New square footage standards have been introduced, and new OHA rates as well. This is an active CINC Initiative Group issue as well.

There were not any other specific issues introduced by entities that feed into the oversight committee: BOSS, AFTB, and associated other QOL organizations/sub-committees.

Open Discussion

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COL Laughlin expressed his desire to have a system for tracking issues. He asked the committee members to give serious thought in identifying off-the-shelf software to execute. Additionally, SFC Price, CIG, mentioned she has a tracking system we may want to implement if we are unable to find something importable. AFAP folks were also given guidance by LTC Gatson to coordinate with DA AFAP to see what they use as they have what seems to be a rather elaborate system in place as well.

Mrs. Zanini gave the example of how DPW created a system to track work orders, follow-up, and provide comment cards. This enabled them to effectively address their issues.

COL Trede agreed, stating that documentation is a big deal especially when the council requests action plans.

CSM Palacios expressed a desire that we draw the line between AFAP and Well-Being. He asked that the committee understand the arching umbrella intent of Well-Being.

SGM Perry asked that the council look at how we capture the synergy of all programs.

COL Rowe asked how do we bring other issues into the Well-Being Advisory Council? He listed examples to include; reception & out-processing, internet access, and ATMs.

COL Laughlin laid-out that each command (2ID, 19TSC, etc.) should probably have their own "Well-Being Council" to focus issues the EUSA Well-Being Advisory Council will take. The EUSA Well-Being Council will make recommendations to the CG who will discuss with MSC Commanders and make decisions.

Closing Remarks

COL Laughlin again thanked everyone for their participation. He reiterated that AFAP is just one of the foods we are teething on. Well-Being is not limited to AFAP. AFAP is just one of the tools enabling us to learn the process by which we will overwatch all programs. We need to work the top issues. We must service the high-value targets.