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# Functional Area 48

## Foreign Area Officer

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**U.S. ARMY**

# FOREIGN AREA OFFICER

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## **FOREIGN AREA OFFICER (FAO)**

Foreign Area Officers serve where expert Army officers are needed to match their professional military skills and knowledge with their regional expertise, language skills, and knowledge of US and foreign political-military relationships. The US Army serves the nation's security interests in many vital areas of the world where U.S. troops are not stationed. In these areas, the Foreign Area Officers are our forward-deployed forces. Foreign Area Officers serve worldwide as attaches, key security assistance officers, political-military policy staff officers, political-military intelligence staff officers, and political-military instructors.

Foreign Area Officers, best described as the Army's "Soldier Statesmen", serve in:

- The Defense Attache System.
- Key positions in Security Assistance Organizations.
- The Office of the Secretary of Defense.
- The Department of State.
- The Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- The Defense Intelligence Agency.
- Combined and Joint Commands.
- The Department of the Army Staff.
- Army Major Commands and Service Schools.

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## NEED FOR AREA SPECIALISTS

As a world power with international responsibilities, the United States has many requirements for officers trained in political-military affairs. The dynamics of a rapidly changing international environment increase the need for the utilization of Foreign Area Officers in important assignments throughout the world. As the Army's "Soldier Statesmen," Foreign Area Officers are trained to provide interface between the formulation of national security policy and the execution of its objectives.

The FAO program offers a unique opportunity to serve the Army in exciting, challenging positions where the individual officer can make a difference. The education and training of Foreign Area Officers consists of four phases which may vary depending on an officer's background and experience.



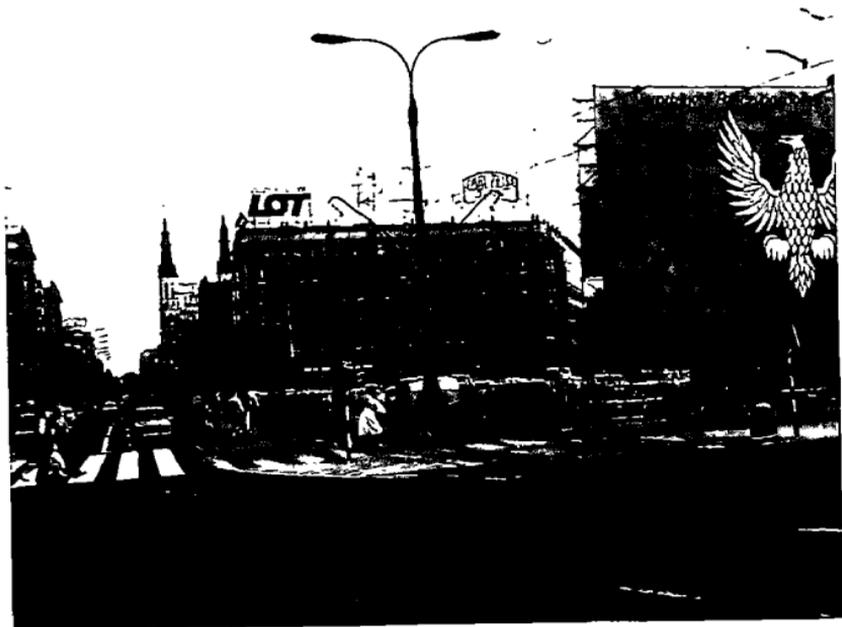
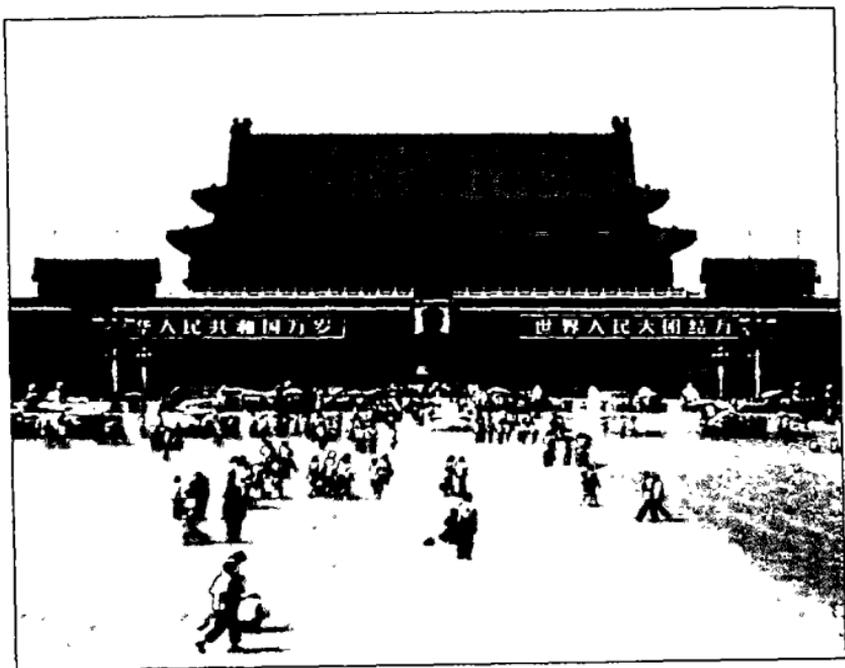
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## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Foreign Area Officers develop their expertise in specific regions. These Areas of Concentration are defined as follows:

- 48B Latin America
- 48C Western Europe
- 48D South Asia
- 48E Soviet Union/Eastern Europe
- 48F China
- 48G Mid East
- 48H Northeast Asia
- 48I Southeast Asia
- 48J Africa south of the Sahara





## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Foreign Area Officers must be soldiers, linguists, area experts, and political-military experts. This is a tall order and to achieve it Foreign Area Officers receive carefully managed development that "keeps them green" while achieving a sophisticated level of language and area knowledge.



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- **Stages of development:**

1. FAO Entry Course. A short introductory course, taught at the US Army Special Warfare Center, that introduces the newly designated Foreign Area Officer to the basic FAO missions and skills.

2. Entry-level Language Training. Basic foreign language training is taught at the Defense Language Institute, Presidio of Monterey, California for most languages. The courses vary in length from six to twelve months, depending on the difficulty of the language studied.

3. Graduate Education. Officers will normally earn a master's degree in an area studies curriculum at a proponent-approved graduate institution. Some officers will enter the FAO program with a graduate degree in a closely related discipline and will have met the graduate-level objective. (Acceptable disciplines are listed in Ch. 48, DA Pam 600-3).

4. In-Country Studies. In-country studies designed to immerse the Foreign Area Officer in a foreign cultural and linguistic environment; provide advanced language studies; and develop a sense of region and country through a program of travel, research, and study. In most cases, the Foreign Area Officer attends a foreign military or civilian course of instruction. The duration of in-country studies varies from twelve to eighteen months. In other cases the officer will serve as an exchange officer in a foreign military unit. Russia/East European FAO students attend a two-year course at the US Army Russian Institute (USARI) in Garmisch, Germany. The curriculum at USARI is presented in the Russian language. Field trips are scheduled to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to complement classroom studies.



- Standards:

An officer is expected to succeed in all phases of Foreign Area Officer training in order to remain in the program.

Language School. Officers must achieve the minimum level of language proficiency at the completion of initial language training (Standards are outlined in Ch. 48, DA Pam 600-3).

Graduate School. Officers must complete course of study with award of a master's degree.

In-country study. Officers must successfully complete in-country study, to include successful completion of formal schooling at a foreign military or civilian institution.

- Foreign Area Officers dual-track in their branch and in the FAO program to maintain the necessary professional military expertise to perform their duties as Foreign Area Officers. By virtue of their early selection for development Foreign Area Officers may aspire to command in their branch at the grade of lieutenant colonel and colonel.





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## **SELECTION OF THE CAREER FIELD**

Foreign Area Officer is a functional area for OPMD-managed commissioned officers who are branch qualified as captains. Qualifications for entrance are:

1. Officer is a volunteer.
2. Officer is branch qualified.
3. Officer has sufficient time to complete Foreign Area Officer training prior to promotion to major. Normally the officer will be designated at the fifth or sixth year of commissioned service.
4. Officer demonstrates aptitude for language training by achievement of a minimum score on the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) or by demonstration of measurable proficiency in a foreign language. Minimum DLAB scores for all non-linguists is 90. Minimum scores for more difficult languages are higher. Consult DA Pam 600-3.
5. Officer holds a baccalaureate degree, preferably in social/political science, from an accredited institution.
6. Officer's academic record and Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores are adequate for admission to quality graduate schools. Officers must provide undergraduate transcripts and current GRE scores prior to selection for training.
7. Officer must be eligible for duty in sensitive positions requiring a high standard of personal security.
8. Officer and family members are free of serious or chronic medical problems which would preclude worldwide assignment.



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## PREPARATION

Cadets interested in the FAO program can begin their development early by taking courses and getting grades which support future success in graduate programs. Taking a foreign language is also helpful.

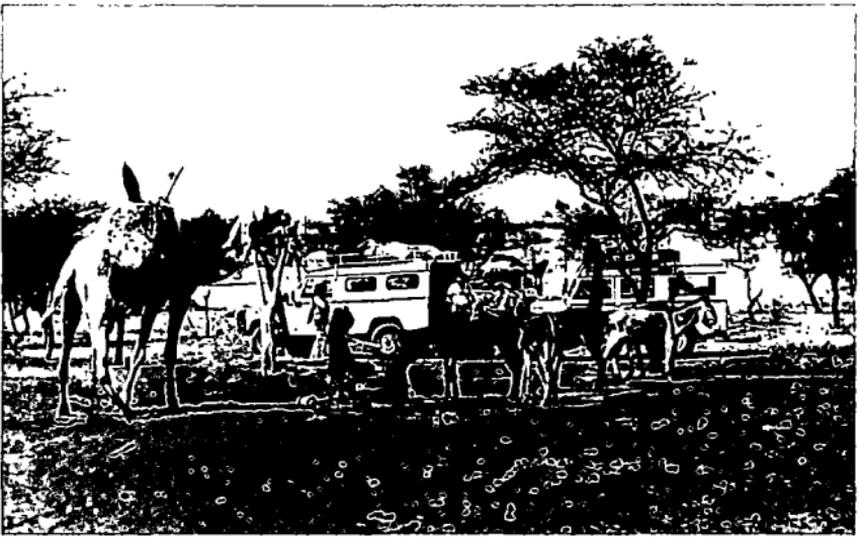
Junior officers interested in the FAO program can enhance their chances of selection by taking the following actions:

1. Non-linguists should take the DLAB; officers with a language background should substantiate their proficiency on the DLPT.

2. Officers with low GRE scores, or no scores at all, should arrange to take the test.

3. OFFICERS SHOULD STRIVE TO DO WELL IN CHALLENGING BASIC BRANCH JOBS. OFFICERS WITH WEAK BRANCH SKILLS AND WEAK FILES WILL NOT BE SELECTED FOR THE FAO PROGRAM.







**For further information, write:**

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