



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, G-3/5/7
400 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0200

DAMO-SS

1 October 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR FOREIGN AREA OFFICER COLONELS

SUBJECT: FA48 Colonel Assignment Philosophy

1. Greetings from the Army Staff! As FAO Proponent, I would like to communicate my assignment philosophy to FAO COLs as we move into the summer 2021 assignment cycle. The integrity of this process and your understanding of it are very important for the FAO Corps.

2. ATAP/AIM2: As the Army moves toward implementing the Army Talent Alignment Process through the AIM2 Marketplace as the system of record for COL assignments, FA48 has been afforded some flexibility to implement a hybrid approach. Due to the length of the attaché nomination process, attaché positions will not be competed in the Marketplace, while non-attaché positions will be competed in the Marketplace. With this hybrid approach, the attaché nomination process will typically occur between May and September, and the non-attaché positions will be advertised in the AIM2 Marketplace between mid-October and December.

3. Impact of Utilization Rate on Manning of FA48 billets: Utilization rate is the number of COL FA48 requirements we have open divided by the number of officers available to fill them. This year we have 75 billets to fill and 68 FAO COLs available to move. Overall, FAO COL utilization rate is suboptimal and is still falling as we promote COLs from very small FAO YGs, a problem we have seen coming since the low accessions in these YGs well over a decade ago. The hard reality is that we must fill our FA48 requirements in accordance with the Army's readiness guidance. For those officers participating in the AIM2 Marketplace, I need for you to prioritize the consideration of FA48 positions. As you read above, FA48 is short COLs this movement cycle, which means that a very limited number will be able to fill 01A positions. I look forward to the AIM2 Marketplace process enabling the best match between officer and unit preferences, but it is worth noting that we will have to carefully consider breaking a match if we fall short of meeting our FA48 readiness requirements.

4. Operational Assignments: Each year, our priority of fill goes to the eight standing operational requirements listed below. We will fill these positions with qualified COLs regardless of AOC. I strongly urge you to volunteer for one of these assignments early during your time as a COL for the critical experience you can gain in these billets. If enough officers do not volunteer, I will consider the following factors when directing officers to these high-priority requirements: dwell time, manner of performance, and tour



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equity. Keep in mind that mathematically, if you intend to serve to MRD, you will almost certainly be asked to serve in one 12-month operational unaccompanied billet.

- a. DATT/ARMA Afghanistan (12 month tour)
- b. Director, SAO Afghanistan (WIAS) (12 month tour)
- c. ARMA Pakistan (12 month tour)
- d. Chief, SAO Pakistan (12 month tour)
- e. DATT/ARMA Iraq (12 month tour)
- f. SDO/DATT Somalia (12 month tour)
- g. Chief, Russia Deconfliction Cell, CJTF-OIR, Kuwait (WIAS) (2x 6 month tours)
- h. MINUSMA Senior Advisor, Mali (WIAS) (12 month tour)

5. Assignment Diversity and Tour Equity: In working with SLD/COMO to arrive at what jobs may be best for you, you must understand that FA48 COLs are managed as strategic leaders with the potential for global utilization. It is increasingly important to consider tour equity and out-of-AOC assignments across the FA48 COL population. Continually relying on 48D/48G/48J to fill our most austere assignments is neither equitable nor a sustainable management practice. There is not one right path of assignments to produce the most versatile COL, but keep in mind that versatility is what we want and therefore wider assignment breadth is key. Ideally, FAO COLs have a balance of embassy and non-embassy assignments and will not have solely concentrated on attaché, security cooperation or policy assignments. To ensure FAO COLs are postured to accomplish the Army's most critical missions in support of the Joint Force, it is increasingly important to become strategic generalists with a broader background.

6. Proponent Commitment. I ask you to enter the assignment cycle in good faith, and to understand the new assignment process that the Army is adopting. My commitment to you remains to strive to find the assignment solution that is optimal for each officer's career and family circumstances. You have my assurance that my recommendations to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army will satisfy the needs of the Army and will be informed by each officer's personal situation and preference.

7. The POC for this memorandum is LTC Daniel Bolton at (703) 545-9018 or daniel.b.bolton.mil@mail.mil.



BRADLEY T. GERICKE, Ph.D.

Major General, USA

Director, G-3/5 Strategy, Plans, and Policy