

Enclosure 1: FAO traps

Language: For all FAOs, language is pre-determined based on their prior skills, the officer's DLAB, and their preferences during the VTIP. However, because of these determiners, how an FAO conducts language training, or if they do not, creates multiple biases and issues within their Area of Concentration (AOC). One of these biases is true, but most are perpetuated myths.

1. **The DoS FSI trains language(s) better than DLI.** This trap is often used to justify consolidating the FAO pipeline in the NCR region. It is likely true, at least in the speaking portion. However, FSI costs significantly more than DLI Monterey or Washington, it has limited capacity to absorb Army FAO language requirements, and FAOs who go to FSI struggle to pass the DLPT upon completion as they are not taught it during class. The Army will never move our language training in mass to FSI for multiple reasons, mainly because of the financial costs.
2. **The Army can reduce PCSs by doing all language training in the NCR.** This trap is often used by FAOs who did language training in the NCR, attended FSI, or were assigned niche languages such as Turkish, Vietnamese, or Serbian-Croatian. These FAOs must learn that language training through DLI Washington is done differently and costs significantly more. Having most of the prominent languages moved (again) from DLI-Monterey to Washington would double the Army's budget for FAO language training and likely result in fewer training opportunities. In a resource-constrained environment, doing so would negate the overall attempt at reducing FAO training costs for the Army.
3. **FAOs do not graduate DLI with a 3/3/2.** This trap is used by FAOs who are polyglots or prolific language speakers or senior Army officials who encounter a native speaker and then later work with a DLI graduate. Only some people can translate for the SECDEF, and we should understand that DLI does an excellent job of taking a non-speaker to a speaker within a short time. In 2022, I ran the stats of this trap, and around 45%+ of FAOs were graduating DLI with a 3/3/2 or 1+. The other 50% were graduating at the 2/2/1+ level or higher, and very few FAOs a year (single digits on one hand) were failing language training. Compared to the rest of the Army, FAOs have the language skills we require.
4. **If an FAO fails DLI, they can still self-study and achieve the 2/2/1+ standard.** As someone who almost failed out of DLI-Monterey, I find this trap utterly false and only applies to a few distinct FAOs. DLI is the most intensive language training an FAO will ever get; if they cannot do it there, they likely will only achieve a 2/2/1+ if they are a polyglot type. However, in that case, most polyglots would not fail DLI anyway. Army FAOs, as a functional area, are soft in this area. The Special Forces does not allow an officer to fail the Q-course; instead, it will enable "self-study" to become qualified. FAO should not either. Those officers who fail DLI may not have the heart to be an FAO. Those at DLI Monterey have the opportunity for some retraining, which does not cost additional funds; those in Washington do not. Either way, an FAO should only move on to the next training phase if they have achieved the minimum training standard.
5. **My language does not matter, and I will never serve in the country where it is spoken.** 48Ps and 48Es usually say this trap, and it has some validity. Only some 48E or 48P Turkish, Vietnamese, Thai, and Serbian-Croatian speakers serve in those countries (outside of IRT). I surmise less than 50%, but HRC can run that science project to get an

actual percentage. This issue creates a huge morale issue within those two AOCs between the "haves" and "have nots." The haves are the Russian, Chinese, and Korean speakers, and the have-nots are the rest.

6. **We should not be in classes with enlisted members and learn numbers we will not use.** FAOs usually say this myth with a low DLPT score or who struggled to finish DLI Monterey. Most FAOs who attended language training at DLI-Monterey before 2010 will complain of being in classes with enlisted members suffering through the numbers drill and not speaking enough. Most do not know that this changed to almost all FAOs being in an all-officer class with more FAO focus. This change raised the cost of language training for DLI, and thus the Army, and it should be investigated if we are trying to reduce FAO training costs. The FAO community imposed this cost on DLI, but we have yet to analyze whether it produced better FAO linguists. I surmise it did, but the cost was not worth it. The overarching effect of this was a reduced arrival date for courses, which affect FAOs' PCS timelines and has created much friction with onboarding FAOs, i.e., where there used to be four Russian courses a year; for example, there are now two. That means we have to consolidate our incoming trainees into the same classes and might be extending their training timelines. Most of the timeline issues with IRT were caused by reducing the number of language courses FAOs can attend.
7. **We should eliminate specific niche languages.** FAOs trained in one of these niche languages constantly perpetuate this bias, and they feel invalidated in their struggle to learn a language that they will never use.

In-Region Training (IRT): Why is IRT so important to becoming an FAO, and why 12 months? In 1907, in Peking, China, IRT was 24 months. A Mandarin-speaking Army officer would spend 24 months at Berkley learning Mandarin and getting a master's degree, then spend two years in China. Later, it changed to Hong Kong, but it was still two years old. Stillwell spent three+ months building a road for USAID during his IRT; during that time, he solidified his language skills daily. The Army allowed in 1917+ to cross-attach FAOs to other interjencies and respected the requirements. All of the FAO greats did this, so what has changed? The answer is that we formalized the Army requirements over time in the FA48 functional area. A great question is why Army senior leaders continuously question the value and cost of a (FAO) Soldier's cultural immersion into a foreign society. Is it that expensive? How expensive is SF training? We will only win the narrative if an FAO can answer these questions to a senior Army leader.

8. **All regions should adopt the Garmisch or Beijing IRT method.** The Beijing method started in 1907 in Peking, China, and later the 48E method in Germany in the early 1940s. This method is at the heart of how FAOs are trained, and the FAO GOSC should relook this with a 2040 modernization. These two methods of training FAOs worked and still work because they are done based on how they were historically done in those two regions, and historical funding streams support them. For 48Es, Garmisch is nice, but the schooling situation creates many issues for families. The Army drew down the mission support aspects for families, and the current family support differs from the program officers experienced from 1950-2000. For 48Ps (China FAOs), the previous training models are obsolete. We are still waiting to get IRT back to Beijing, a strategic issue we must address. Why are/were these two models the premier IRT model? I would suggest

because they have the following aspects: 1) multiple cultural touchpoints create in-depth comprehension; 2) standardized program expectations for all trainees; 3) a standardized rating scheme for all trainees; and 4) a focus on a GCC and an ASCC.

9. **IRT should be a language immersion experience.** This trap comes from FAOs in the 48B, 48J, and 48G worlds, mainly because those AOCs have multiple countries that speak the same language. Around only 50% of 48Ps or 48Es conduct IRT in a country where they speak their DLI-trained language. If only around 50% of FAOs conduct IRT in a country where their DLI training is undertaken, then why do we, as an FAO community, consistently say IRT should be a language immersion experience? 48Es, 48Ps, and half of the 48Js cannot conduct IRT in a country that speaks their DLI-trained language, and it has never been 100% achieved. This FAO myth and trap are based upon what AOC the FAO is in.
10. **IRT must be 12-months.** This trap comes from FAOs that conducted the traditional 12-month IRT and has some validity. During my research for the IRT OER White Paper I found that Proponent waived only about 9% of FAOs IRT. Of that, a majority are special forces with extensive experience in the theatre. Not all FAOs have the timeline to conduct a 12-month IRT, which we have made worse with our FAO-only DLI courses.
11. **IRT brings families into the embassy environment, which is the most important thing.** This works for IRTers who have spouses and families, and less than 50% of IRTers are married and with children. It is different for each AOC, but mostly, those IRTers who move to a country just for IRT spend most of their time traveling while their families deal with living in a foreign country where they do not speak the language. How many of those spouses would prefer to stay in Monterey or the US while their spouse traveled during IRT? The single IRTers occupy a house only to likely never live in it.
12. **We should establish regional centers of excellence for FAOs (like 48E and 48P).** This trap is usually made by Garmisch grads or those who had a bad IRT experience and think they should have been "spoon-fed" like the Garmisch IRTers. The regional center concept has much value, and the GOSC should focus the Army FAO 2040 on this concept. We have dispersed our FAOs to too many embassies worldwide with little guidance and training, and FAO training has become an individual experience, diluting our brand.
13. **We should improve our IRT handbook.** This trap is accurate and almost always comes from new IRT FAOs. The last version I saw still has the National Guard FAO Strategic Scout symbol on it.
14. **IRTers should attend JMAS and the SCO course during IRT.** This FAO trap is an excellent idea, and the training these two courses give would go with an FAO into all the assignments they will have. However, both courses require you to reattend them once you pass a five-year mark. Therefore, having IRTers attend these courses would not only significantly increase the number of students these courses would be required to accommodate, which neither course can, but it would also put a dual burden on the officer and family to have to attend the course twice. This trap would also cost the Army twice for the same training. I would surmise this requirement is at the heart of many FAO's issues with multiple PCSs.

Advanced Civil Schooling:

15. **FAOs attending Ivy League schools have automatic street credibility with their Foreign Service counterparts.** This trap is, of course, perpetuated by FAOs who attended Ivy League schools and is a fallacy that solely justifies high-end ACS slots. There are minimal measurable effects of creating a better FAO through their attendance at NPS versus an Ivy League school. The officers who are "better FAOs" because they went to an Ivy League school were likely better already.
16. **ACS should be 24 months.** This trap is usually perpetuated by FAOs who joined FAO to go to a specific program and later learned that FAOs only do 12-month-long ACS programs. It is a myth that ACS used to be 24 months old. Historically, ACS was created in 1916 and has almost always been 12 months for Army officers, specifically FAOs. The 24 months come from some programs, such as the original 48Ps and 48Es, who took language training at civilian universities in conjunction with ACS for 24 months.
17. **CGSC and NIU can provide the same education as civilian universities.** This new FAO trap is emerging due to the decline of the ACS budget and is perpetuated by HRC and Proponent staff members. Before moving further in this direction, we need an in-depth analysis of the long-term effects of this decision. CGSC and NIU will only provide FAOs with strategy focused classes, not regionally focuses classes, which is required by DA PAM 600-3. I believe beginning this trend will negate the entire purpose of sending FAOs to ACS and lead to a complete elimination of ACS for FAOs.

Promotions:

18. **FAOs only promote if they have command or key designated jobs such as BN S3.** This myth is usually perpetuated by FAOs who became FAOs but still have very grounded feelings for their basic branches. They have not walked away from being in an Army unit anymore. Significantly few FAOs were a BN S3 or a BN XO, and now almost none were a BN CMDR. FAO has the highest promotion rate to Major in the Army, one of the top five highest promotion rates to LTC, and one of the highest to Colonel. The Army is an up-or-out system; unfortunately, not all FAOs will promote it.
19. **The FAO IRT OER does not matter.** This trap is perpetuated by IRT FAOs who likely OER shopped and received an MQ during IRT. Reference enclosure 3, my IRT OER White Paper for more details. Overall, the FAO IRT OER does matter, and it likely contributes directly to our SELCON numbers and low SSC numbers.
20. **FAOs should be commanders, e.g., dual-tracked.** FAOs perpetuate this myth who are closely attached to their basic branch or are the FAOs who still need to fully transfer over to being an FAO. These FAOs fear their lack of FAO skills is causing them not to be promoted. Some regret becoming FAOs. The truth of this trap is that all the problems that FAOs used to have ended in 1997 when the Army ended the dual-track process. Since 1997, FAO promotions have gone through the roof, and FAOs began to execute multiple FAO billets, refining our trade more and more.

Foreign Staff Colleges

21. **An FAO attending a foreign staff college gets the same experience as a regular IRT FAO.** This trap is usually perpetuated by FAOs who went to foreign staff colleges and likely is rebutted by FAOs who did a traditional 12-month IRT with extensive travel.

FAOs who do foreign staff college are some of the best linguists I have encountered in FAO, but most lack experience in their region until their second or third tours. Not all foreign staff colleges give ILE credit, so why do we send our FAOs there?

22. **FAOs go to these schools because the Army wants FAOs to go.** Almost all FAOs are going to a foreign staff college because the FAO Proponent decided FAOs should go to that country's staff college, not because the country formally requested it to the Army G 3/5/7 staff. The Army does not direct FAOs to go to any foreign ILEs. The Army does send FAOs to foreign war colleges solely based on our abilities to speak the language of the war college. Most foreign staff college assignments start with a good idea from an FAO on the country team, likely those who went to another foreign staff college. The Army staff has little to no decision in FAO Proponent committing the Army to send FAOs to these staff colleges. Most are FAO proponent-driven decisions without an accurate analysis of whether or not the pipeline can and should sustain this commitment.

Other Random Traps

23. **Army senior leaders do not value FAOs.** FAOs who perpetuate this myth tend to be currently serving under one of the rare Army General Officers who has it out for FAOs. Army senior leaders do not value the bad FAOs they experience when they travel overseas to an embassy and then have dinner with a young Major or Lieutenant Colonel, who perpetuates one of the many myths mentioned above. That FAO likely looks fat in their uniform, or could not speak their language well, etc. Army senior leaders have high expectations of FAOs. Unfortunately, the functional area has some FAOs in our ranks who should never be assigned to a position that puts them before a senior Army leader.
24. **FAO training is expensive, and we must make it cheaper.** Is it? How expensive is FAO training? Eliminating salary and PCS costs and any training costs that any other Army officer would go through, what costs does the Army pay for FAOs? First, language training, which also pays for other branches, but it does pay a large percentage of language training at DLI for Army FAOs (~20% but check my math). Next, ACS, yes, a large percentage of the ACS budget is Army FAOs, which should continue. However, we now have the ASP3 PhD program (which I would un-fund wholistically) and other branches that have used ACS as a retention requirement since the officer bonuses in 2008. Then IRT, other than the \$40,000 TDY costs, the expensive embassy costs, say around ~\$10 to 15M a year from the G 3/5/7's budget. If you compare Army FAO training costs to Army Special Forces officer training costs, it would be minuscule. The actual cost to Soldier ratio is minimal for what the Army gets out of Army FAOs. We are at fault for perpetuating this myth as an Army FAO community. The exact cost is at G 3/5/7, and we must better justify the budget. That is where we are failing because we have an LTC from FAO Proponent fighting this fight to a three-star.
25. **FA48 FAO should cone its officers solely as attaché or security cooperation officers.** This trap is usually perpetuated for the security cooperation aspect by 48Bs as they almost all spend time doing SCO work during IRT, and most of their country team assignments early on are in the SCO world. The attaché focus tends to come from the 48Es, who are overly attached. You could also add staff coned, which tends to go from 48Ps because they are almost all staff officers until they make LTC, and some spend their entire careers on staff.

26. **We should be more selective in our selection process.** This bias is usually from a West Point graduate who speaks two to three languages fluently or attended an Ivy League graduate school. These officers think all FAOs should be as well-groomed as they are. FAO already has a 39% acceptance rate, making it any harder, and we would not make it our mission. We should return to requiring the GRE again, a writing sample, etc. The interviews that began a few years ago assisted in making the VTIP process more effective.
27. **The assignment process needs to allow us the proper transparency.** This trap is always from the officer who did not get the job they wanted, likely because the officer interviewed horribly or asked only for a European assignment when they were an African FAO.
28. **JMAS should not be a PCS.** This FAO is not a trap or a myth, but FAOs often misunderstand why this is a current policy. The Army's minimum requirement for a PCS is 20 weeks or more of training. Therefore, if an FAO is only going to the JMAS course (4 months) and has no other follow-on training, such as language training, it is not technically required to PCS to JMAS according to Army Regulations. This requirement is new (~5 years), and the DAS directs it. There are financial implications to this change, and undoing the change also has financial implications. Allowing officers to PCS to JMAS, if they have other training or enable other officers to be TDY en route, is a simple math equation that should be done by HRC and permitted by the DAS. The ATTARS system allocates this status, which then allocates Army funding for training. HRC should request that the DAS withdraw this requirement and allow HRC to determine PCS versus TDY based on the officer's timeline and requirements. It will likely take years for this decision to come to fruition as the Army will need to POM for more TDY funds. However, the effects of this requirement have been a standard year-long PCS into the NCR region and excessive moves or separations of FAO families.
29. **Post VTIP FAO transfers: I did not need this training because I can already fully execute FAO duties.** We should be methodical and judicious when accepting transfers after the VTIP. From Civil Affairs to other branches, FAO FA48 should deliberately debate and defend against officers requesting to transfer to FA48 post the VTIP. There will be GO influences, and those cases should be adjudicated at the FAO GOSC level because, previously, G-35 GOs have tried to influence transitions. If the officer's situation creates too much friction, then the FA48 community should move on and accept them. One officer of 1200 is negligible. These are the areas where the FA48 will receive small and minor requests, almost always with GO involvement, and we should entertain the request and move on. None of those officers will be true FAOs, and those officers will likely never be FAO GOs. Overall, too often, one Army GO conflicts with FA48 and demands things, and we overestimate their request when we should entertain their biases and move on. For example, a GO's ADC, who missed the BN CMD list and speaks French, now wants to become an FAO. Let us say yes and move on. Half of these FAO transfer requests will be good FAOs; the others will not. The Army system will ensure that none, if only a few, will make it to an embassy country team. Most may be able to execute the duties we expect of an FAO. However, a Civil Affairs LTC who requests to transfer over the same year as their O6 board should be denied because she intended to move to FAO to get promoted, not actually to be an FAO.