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REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AHRC-OPB-A

08 February 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR Foreign Area Officers managed by HRC

SUBJECT: 2014 Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Annual Assignment Strategy

1. Purpose. This memorandum provides assignment guidance and manning prioritization, for fully trained FAO majors and lieutenant colonels. The current assignment strategy is nested in the FY13-15 Active Component Manning Guidance EXORD (ALARACT 293/2012). The unique, predominantly joint, and overseas nature of FAO positions precludes a "one-size-fits-all" assignment template, however, the branch aims to meet grade and Areas of Concentration (AOC) fill targets IAW the Army-directed fill categories NLT FY16 (with some exceptions in select AOCs). FY14 will stand apart as a year of significant transition for our Army as we return to an emphasis on manning units to actual skill/ grade authorizations (as opposed to management by aggregate assigned strength irrespective of skill or AOC). While all assignments between FY13 and FY16 will remain nested in the intent of this guidance, rare case-by-case exceptions to this strategy may still apply IAW emerging Army requirements. The Commander, U.S. Army HRC is the approving authority for these exceptions.
2. Scope. The Army continues to operate in a dynamic environment of high operational demand while simultaneously experiencing critical personnel shortages in select FAO AOCs. These shortages prevent HRC from filling all authorized FAO positions and manning requirements according to documented grade and skill. Increased FAO accession targets and optimized FAO training timeline initiatives have already been implemented to remedy branch shortages as quickly as possible while maintaining the integrity of the FAO training program and the superior quality regional experts it produces. Due to the amount of training required for each new FAO, and significant increases in authorizations over the last two years, select AOCs will not return to 100% fill for another 24-36 months. Consequently, we will remain in a situation where aggregate demand exceeds the supply of qualified officers for three more years. In accordance with HQDA guidance, personnel distribution decisions will be made based on Force Pools (Mission/ Rotational/ Operational) with specific target manning levels by rank and AOC that are designed to enable supported units to meet mission requirements, as well as mitigating the impact of key vacancies in each customer organization HRC FAO Branch supports. Unit leadership must understand obtaining timely FAO fills from recent authorization increases will remain contingent on available FAO inventory.
3. Main effort. HRC FAO Branch will continue to provide support to Emerging Requirements (e.g. Security Force Assistance Teams (SFATs), Modular Brigades augmented for Security Force Assistance (MB-SFAs), Joint Manning Documents (JMD), and Worldwide Individual Augmentation System (WIAS) taskings) as required, while at the same time fulfilling other FAO requirements IAW the unit manning prioritization outlined below. Each of these additional requirements creates friction in the assignment process (and challenges for the supporting command in the case of WIAS taskings). Given the dynamic nature of this environment, as in the past, we intend to annually review and revise this

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strategy. A new strategy may be published sooner if HRC receives new manning guidance from the CSA.

4. Unit manning prioritization. IAW CSA Army Manning Guidance, HRC FAO Branch will utilize Force Pools (Mission/ Rotational/ Operational) with specific target manning levels by rank and AOC to meet Army mission requirements. The Mission Force Pool consists of units that remain in a constant state of readiness and are maintained using individual replacements. The Rotational Force Pool consists of units that move through the RESET phases (Regeneration, Train/Ready, and Available), and the Operational Sustainment Force Pool consists of units that are not organized, trained, or equipped to rapidly deploy. FAO Branch's target fill rate is derived from 48-coded authorizations in the Personnel Management Authorization Document (PMAD) compared to the available trained FAO population. In previous years, select units were manned at 50% and below to meet aggregate fill rate targets in priority units. Under this new guidance, the CSA-directed endstate envisions each unit returning to a minimal manning level of 80% by grade and skill. Interim manning target are being utilized by many functional areas/ low density branches to meet CSA intent in spite of severe grade/skill shortages and FAO branch is no different. FAO does not have the excess population to support assigning FAOs to non-FAO billets or excess commands. Additionally, non-FAOs that are filling FAO billets in select units may adversely impact a unit receiving trained FAOs IAW the approved Army manning document. Finally, per guidance received from senior Army leadership, HRC FAO Branch will look to gap headquarter units in favor of filling down-range positions.

5. FAO professional development. IAW DA PAM 600-3, FAOs should successfully complete at least one assignment from three of the following five categories before promotion to colonel:

(a) Overseas U.S. country team. Assignments include SDO/DATT, Army Attaché, Assistant Army Attaché, and security cooperation/assistance positions in a SCO.

(b) Army operational. Assignments include positions at the 162nd Infantry Brigade, Army Service Component Command, Corps HQs, and Army Staff.

(c) Political-Military. Assignments include OSD Staff, Joint Staff, National Security Staff, Department of State, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, DIA, Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), and combatant commands.

(d) Institutional. Assignments include AHRC, DLIFLC, USMA, TRADOC, Fort Leavenworth, Carlisle Barracks, and WHINSEC.

(e) Contingency Support as a FAO. FAOs deploy in support of overseas contingency operations. Deployed FAOs provide unique skill sets for senior Army and JIIM leaders at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

6. Slating Considerations.

a. HRC FAO Branch conducts two assignment cycles per year: Summer (16 April – 15 October) and Winter (16 October – 15 April). HRC FAO Branch's goal is to notify officers of their assignment nominations seven months prior to their report date, whenever possible. Eligible FAOs will be given the opportunity to submit five assignment preferences.

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b. **Combat Tours.** Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) deployments remain the Army's main effort, and an increase in 48-coded security cooperation and end-use monitoring WIAS requirements in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan have translated to a consistent supply of FAO deployment requirements. Combat tours are key professional and developmental experiences that provide unique skills and competencies to in-theater commanders and allow the FAO Corps to participate in accomplishing the Army's critical tasks. In previous years, FAO branch was able to nominate qualifying FAOs for WIAS taskings that had not yet served in a post-9/11 combat deployment. The pool of FAOs without at least one combat tour is nearly exhausted, however, and FAO Branch must now look to officers with more than one combat tour to meet validated WIAS requirements. HRC FAO Branch will utilize overall dwell and total number of months deployed (among other criteria) in drafting an equitable order of merit list for taskings the branch is required to nominate officers for.

(1) HRC FAO Branch is responsible for approximately 50-60 habitual WIAS requirements in support of OCO. FAO Branch will continue to work to identify deployments which leverage the unique skills and experience FAOs can offer to support OEF/OSC-I/HOA, but all deployment requirements must be filled and each tasking may not be the "ideal fit" for each FAO tasked.

(2) Officers who have not deployed in support of OEF/OSC-I, possess over 50 months of dwell, or have less than 6 months total deployed time should not be surprised if they are notified of their nomination for a WIAS deployment tasking in the near future. HRC FAO Branch will continue working to ensure that officers currently assigned to dependent- restricted areas are not immediately deployed, and will continue working with supporting commands to mitigate negative impacts on the unit.

c. **Assignments.** FAO Branch uses the following criteria in determining assignments:

(1) **Deployments.** Has the officer completed a combat tour? How long has it been since the officer (and how many months has the officer spent) deployed? Will the assignment be able to support the officer serving a combat deployment as required?

(2) **Skills and Experience.** Does the officer possess the requisite skills and experience requested for the job? Does the officer need to gain the skills or experience offered by a specific assignment?

(3) **Geographic Rotation.** Does the assignment support rotating officers between the NCR, COCOM, ASCC and the region? Is there an appearance of "homesteading"?

(4) **Professional Development.** Does the assignment develop the officer in terms of broadening exposure to different types of FAO work (Overseas U.S. country team, Army operational, Political-Military, Institutional, Contingency Support, etc.)?

(5) **File Strength.** Does the officer have a performance history that is appropriate for the position (would the gaining command accept the officer's nomination)?

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(6) Language. Does the officer have the appropriate language skills and level of proficiency? Would the officer be able to gain them in time to take the job?

(7) Timing. Will the officer be able to relocate from the current location to the proposed assignment by the report date? Joint rules and TDY schools en route continue to be a major factor in assignment slating.

(8) Education. Does the officer require training en route to the assignment? HRC can only enroll officers in training TDY en route.

(9) Special Considerations. How would EFMP, planned retirement, joint domicile or other personal factors affect the proposed assignment? EFMP is just a consideration. An EFMP declination does not preclude an officer from an assignment. Each assignment cycle a number of officers must be assigned to a job in an unaccompanied status because of EFMP issues.

(10) Branch strongly considers officer preferences during the assignment process. However, preferences are not choices and there is no guarantee an officer will receive one of his/her preferences. Approximately 20% of officers do not receive one of their preferences each cycle. HRC places officers where the Army needs them most, while working to achieve a balance between the needs of the Army, the professional development needs of the Officer, and the personal needs of Officer and his/her family.

d. Tour Extensions. FAO Branch only considers extension requests endorsed by the officer's chain of command. AOC Support Teams will notify eligible officers of key assignment cycle dates, to include deadlines for submitting extensions both via email and the HRC FAO Branch website at the beginning of each assignment cycle. Officers serving in 24 month assignments need to submit extension requests prior to reaching 12 months on station. This ensures Assignment Officers have sufficient time during the following assignment cycle to either fill or not fill the position.

(1) Attaché extensions. The final approval authority for all Attaché extensions is the Commander, U.S. Army HRC. Whereas extensions to a fourth year are an exception to policy, they must meet the needs of the Army and are rarely approved. Extension requests from a 24- month assignment to 30-36 months are normally approved, provided they are submitted in a timely manner and the officer is in good standing with DIA. With attaché assignments where DIA, the Army, the Officer, and FAO Branch have invested anywhere from an additional four months to 12 months plus of training, such extensions provide a greater "pay-off" on training (and over an extended period of time reduce the number of officers in training collectively). For 24-month attaché assignments, however, the officer must request through DIA to extend within the first one to two months of arriving on station.

(2) HRC FAO Branch will not approve extension requests that limit professional development opportunities for the requesting officer or other FAOs awaiting assignment.

(3) HRC FAO Branch does not approve extensions beyond 36 months in the same billet or

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consecutive in-region or joint assignments if the requesting officer has not completed a combat tour deployment during that assignment or without extreme extenuating circumstances.

(4) Other factors influencing extension approval are individual developmental needs (to include combat experience), developmental nature of the assignment, and the changing needs of the Army.

(5) High School Stabilization: FAO branch makes every effort to support HS Senior Stabilizations, but there are a couple of important points to remember about this process. First, because of the unique nature of FAO assignments an officer needs to apply in the summer immediately prior to the child's sophomore year. Second, if the stabilization places an officer near 4 years TOS, HRC will consider moving the officer early (before the junior year starts). Finally, the HS senior stabilization program is designed around the family, not necessarily the officer. HRC FAO Branch will make every reasonable effort to keep the officer home, but this is not a stipulation of the program. A FAO can still deploy or serve an unaccompanied assignment when his/her family is covered by HS Senior Stabilization.

e. Cross Area of Concentration (AOC) assignments. These assignments may occur on a case-by-case basis according to the needs of the Army and joint organizations.

f. Regional experience. FAO assignments will promote regional experience versus country specific experience. It is unlikely HRC FAO branch will allow an officer to return to the same country unless the officer has already served in another country in their AOC.

g. Repetitive assignments. Consecutive assignments to any one type of work (Attaché, ODC, etc.) may occur on a case-by-case basis according to the needs of the Army. However, IAW Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, "Repetitive assignments to any one type of work or in any one location typically reduce an officer's utility as a FAO."

h. Nominative Assignments. The majority of FAO assignments are nominative. Assignment Officers will not submit nomination packets that include dated or missing information. It is the officer's responsibility to ensure his/her ORB, DA Photo and OMPF are complete, current and accurate. DA Photos that are old, missing or taken in a previous rank delay an officer's nomination and HRC FAO Branch's ability to generate an RFO in a timely manner.

i. EFMP. The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) is a mandatory enrollment program that works with other military and civilian agencies to provide a comprehensive, coordinated, multi-agency approach for community support, housing, medical, educational and personnel services to Families with special needs. EFMP enrollment is processed through the officer's servicing Medical Treatment Facility (MTF). The military sponsor and the attending medical and/or educational specialist complete the appropriate enrollment forms; DD 2792 for medical and/or a DD 2792-1 for educational needs. The completed forms are forwarded to the controlling regional medical command EFMP team for review and input into the EFMP database. Exceptional Family Member (EFM) enrollment must be updated at least every three years or as the EFMs condition changes, whichever

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occurs first; the educational EFMP data must be updated yearly. EFMP profile information is highly sensitive and only accessible by authorized personnel who have a "need to know."

EFMP enrollment is designed to aid in the assignment process only, and does not adversely affect an officer's career. It does not appear on a "board" ORB. When an Officer who is enrolled in the EFMP is nominated for assignment, HRC will confirm the availability of required services at the gaining installation or country. When services are available, the assignment is processed; if not, HRC considers alternative assignment locations based on existing priorities, or sends the Officer in unaccompanied status. Deletion from assignment instructions is not granted solely because of EFMP enrollment. The EFMP is an assignment consideration, and not an assignment limitation. All Officers processing for assignment outside the Continental U.S. (OCONUS) must have Family members medically and educationally screened and, if required, enrolled in the EFMP. Once a family member no longer requires treatment for special needs, the sponsoring Officer can request disenrollment. The disenrollment process mirrors the enrollment process and the final decision rests with the attending physician, NOT the Officer. Disenrollment from the EFMP is not related to DEERS eligibility and does not affect DEERS enrollment.

7. The point of contact for this assignment strategy is the undersigned at (502) 613-6672 or e-mail at michael.d.rayburn3.mil@mail.mil.



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