



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7  
400 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0400

*Senior FAO's -  
I'm proud of the work  
you are accomplishing!*

DAMO-SS

22 September 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR FOREIGN AREA OFFICER COLONELS

SUBJECT: FA48 Colonel Assignment Philosophy

1. Greetings from the Army Staff! I am proud of the work you have accomplished this year. As FAO Proponent, I would like to communicate my assignment philosophy to FAO colonels as we move into the summer 2022 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 continues to implement the Army Talent Alignment Process (ATAP), administered through the Assignment Interactive Module 2.0 (AIM2) Marketplace as the system of record for colonel assignments, FA48 has retained flexibility to implement a hybrid approach. Like last year, due to the length of the attaché nomination process, attaché positions will not be competed in the Marketplace, while other assignments will be available in the Marketplace between late September and early November. With this hybrid approach, the attaché nomination process largely occurs between May and September.
3. Impact of Utilization Rate on Manning of FA48 Billets. Utilization rate is the number of colonel FA48 requirements we have open divided by the number of officers available to fill them. This year, we have about 74 billets to fill and 69 FAO colonels available to move. Overall, the FAO colonel utilization rate is suboptimal and still falling as we promote colonels from small FAO YGs, a problem we anticipated since the low accessions 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 you to prioritize the consideration of FA48 positions. As stated above, FA48 is short colonels this movement cycle—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 matches can be broken 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 fill these positions with qualified colonels regardless of Area of Concentration (AOC). I strongly urge you to volunteer for one of these assignments early during your time as a colonel for the valuable experience you can gain in one of 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

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performance, and tour 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, listed below.

- a. DATT/ARMA Afghanistan (12-month tour) (TBD)
- b. Director, SAO Afghanistan (WIAS) (12-month tour) (TBD)
- c. ARMA Pakistan (12-month tour)
- d. Chief, SAO Pakistan (12-month tour)
- e. ARMA Iraq (12-month tour)
- f. SDO/DATT Somalia (12-month tour)
- g. Chief, Russia Deconfliction Cell, CJTF-OIR, Kuwait (WIAS) (2 x 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 colonels 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 colonel population. Continually relying on 48D/48G/48J to fill our most austere assignments is neither equitable nor a sustainable management practice. There is no one right path of assignments to produce a well-rounded FAO colonel, but keep in mind that we want versatility; therefore, assignment breadth is important. Ideally, FAO colonels have a balance of embassy and non-embassy assignments and not solely concentrate on attaché, security cooperation, or policy assignments. As the Army develops its colonels towards competitiveness for selection to BG, 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 nascent assignment process that the Army has adopted. 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 are informed by each officer's personal situation and preference.

7. The POC for this memorandum is LTC Shawn Dillingham at (703) 545-9018 or [shawn.w.dillingham.mil@army.mil](mailto:shawn.w.dillingham.mil@army.mil).



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