

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for FA48 Area of Concentration (AOC) Realignment
(December 2020):**

1. What will happen, and why is AOC realignment needed?

A: The number of FAO AOCs will reduce from eight (8) to five (5), with each AOC becoming adaptable to the Operational Environment (OE). This solution provides the following opportunities for the Army and Joint Force:

(1) It reflects the Army's requirement to address the China problem set regionally by developing broad expertise, and it will align FAOs in the Asia-Pacific more closely with Army and Joint Force posture and shaping efforts. This means developing knowledge of China, while also understanding other regional actors that will influence U.S. policy in the region. While still learning critical regional languages, all FAOs will focus broadly on the China problem set, both within China and across the Asia-Pacific region in South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and Oceania. China is operating worldwide, and so must we as a FAO Corps.

(2) This realignment generates more viable and adaptable AOCs from a Human Resource (HR) and Force Management (FM) perspective through development of more officers with regional talent and flexibility aimed at the inherent challenges to the Asia-Pacific. Additionally, it adheres to the Army's Grade Cap Distribution Matrix (GCDM) (the percentage of billets at the MAJ, LTC, and COL grade plates in each AOC) and promotion of the "Best Officer" from larger AOC Cohort Year Groups. Promotions of FAOs to LTC and COL is currently less predictable in the small sub-regional AOCs (48D/F/H/I), and it requires FAO Proponent to leverage Force Management tools that are ultimately not sustainable in the long-term.

(3) The new AOCs will be more aligned towards regional problem sets, which will result in cleaner developmental models that align more closely with CCMD and Defense Agency regional alignment. Central Asia continues to be a "seam" region in which FAOs from multiple AOCs may be qualified to serve.

2. Which AOCs / regions are most affected? What does the new Army FAO AOC map look like?

A: See enclosure 1 (Current and New AOC Maps). FAO Proponent and HRC, supported by the FA48 Council of Colonels (CoC) and General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC), developed a course of action to merge the existing AOCs of 48F-China, 48H-Northeast Asia, and 48I-Southeast Asia into a larger 48P-Asia-Pacific AOC. Elements of 48D-Central & South Asia will be split along linguistic, ethnic, and historical boundaries, with the Indian sub-continent merging into 48P, realigning Iran and Afghanistan to 48G (Middle East) and returning the former Soviet Union Central Asian states to 48E (Europe-Eurasia). The number of FAO AOCs will reduce from eight to five, with each AOC adaptable to the OE.

Current AOCs (8) (# of Billet Authorizations. Asterisk * = Small AOCs not viable):

48B—Western Hemisphere (142)
 48D—Central and South Asia (54*)
 48E—Europe/Eurasia (250)
 48F—China (43*)
 48G—Middle East/North Africa (124)
 48H—Northeast Asia (54*)
 48I—Southeast Asia (56*)
 48J—Sub-Saharan Africa (108)

New AOCs (5) (# of Billet Authorizations):

48B—Western Hemisphere (144)
 48E—Europe/Eurasia (262)
 48G—Middle East/North Africa (135)
 48J—Sub-Saharan Africa (114)
 48P—Asia-Pacific (Merged F/H/I, and part of D) (196)

3. What was the governing process for mission analysis and HQDA approval of this initiative?

A: FAO Proponent and HRC conducted a series of Councils of Colonels (CoC) in 2020 and multiple General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC) events from 2019-2020. The purpose of these engagements was to 1) Obtain feedback and concurrence from the FAO community, and 2) Explain the mission analysis and justification of the AOC realignment initiative to senior FAOs. FAO Proponent also conducted coordination with the major affected commands and agencies, and all entities provided documentation voicing their support for the AOC realignment COA. Both the Army G-3/5 (MG Gericke) and G-3/5/7 (LTG Flynn) approved the AOC realignment solution in November 2020.

4. When will AOC realignment be implemented?

A: Billet Recoding: Billet recoding will occur no later than 01OCT22 (FY23). Personnel Recoding: Previously coded 48D officers will be recoded 48E, 48G, or 48P, respectively, after analysis of an officer's Control Language (CLANG), experience, and Army Human Resource requirements. Previous 48F, 48H, and 48I coded FAOs will become 48P. Personnel reclassification will occur in JUN-SEP22.

5. What are the next steps in the implementation process?

A: FAO Proponent submitted the Military Occupational Classification and Structure (MOCS) packet to the Army G1 office in November 2020. Once formally staffed, the G1 office will publish the Notice of Future Change (NOFC) to begin implementation. Formal AOC realignment to five AOCs will occur 01OCT22, and personnel recodes will occur JUN-SEP22.

6. What does AOC realignment mean for me as an Army FAO in my current AOC?

A:

48B: No change.

48D: In general, HRC will conduct personnel recoding of officers to 48G (Dari and Farsi CLANGs), 48E (Russian CLANG) and 48P (Hindi and Urdu CLANGs). Of note, FAO Proponent and HRC will assess an officer's CLANG, experience, and HR need within an AOC cohort year group to determine the new AOC for 48D FAOs. This will occur in 2022. In addition, Farsi CLANG officers may have the opportunity to receive Arabic language training in the future.

48E: Absorbing some Central Asian states. CYG sizes will increase slightly.

48F: FAOs will recode to 48P. CYG sizes will increase significantly. FAOs will expand KSBs to include the broader Asia-Pacific region.

48G: Absorbing some Central Asian states. Some FAOs will learn both Arabic and Farsi. CYG sizes will increase slightly.

48H: FAOs will recode to 48P. CYG sizes will increase significantly. FAOs will expand KSBs to include the broader Asia-Pacific region.

48I: FAOs will recode to 48P. CYG sizes will increase significantly. FAOs will expand KSBs to include the broader Asia-Pacific region.

48J: No change.

7. How can 48P FAOs (and other FAOs) expand their KSBs to include the China and Russian problem sets, broader Asia-Pacific issues, and other regional issues?

A: The FAO life-cycle is based on the three domains of leader development—institutional training, structured self-development, and operational assignments. FAO Proponent's objective is to develop and distribute regionally aligned policy professionals with a comprehensive depth and breadth of experience.

Institutional MEL-4 FAO Training: Sub-regional AOC specialization risks inadvertently limiting a FAO's knowledge and expertise within a sub-region of Asia that is too "small" or

specialized (i.e. China/Taiwan; Southeast Asia & Oceania; Northeast Asia, etc.) when many of the security challenges are broad “Asia-Pacific” issues. Since early 2019, FAO Proponent directs 48D/F/H/I FAO trainees to seek exposure to and study China and strategic security issues within the broader Asia-Pacific region (beyond a FAO’s sub-region) during ACS and IRT, in order to ensure FAOs arrive to their first utilization assignments with the diverse regional proficiency skills to advise Army and JIIM leaders, execute Security Cooperation activities, and interact with counterpart militaries in support of the National Defense Strategy, Army Strategy, and GCC plans. FAO Proponent will codify this guidance with a revision of DA Pam 600-3 after the AOC realignment NOFC is published in 2021. In sum, all FAOs need to be aware of our near-peer competitors and how they operate globally. ***All 48P officers must be familiar with the broader China problem set and other major security issues in the broader Asia-Pacific region.***

Institutional Continuation Training: Once complete with FAO MEL-4 training, Asia-Pacific FAOs can participate in academic institutional training opportunities, to include in-resident topic-focused courses and seminars through the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) and the Joint FAO Regional Skill Sustainment Initiative seminars executed under U.S. Navy oversight. Select organizations and FAO Proponent Office offer language enhancement training and immersion opportunities for FAOs, per the respective organization’s language policy. Of course, other institutional training opportunities are available (DSCU, JMAS, etc.) that prepare FAOs for specific assignments.

Structured Self-Development: As part of the training triad, much of a FAO’s continuing education and professional development will be self-study using digital academic and library resources. See the FAO milSuite site for select resources (“Lifecycle Management—Development” folder): <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/army-foreign-area-officer-program>

Utilization / Operational Assignment: AIM2 and ATAP are distribution functions that drive development. Per DA Pam 600-3, “FAO majors and lieutenant colonels principally develop their core competencies and skills through breadth and depth of FAO assignments”, to include varying assignments on a Country Team, Political-Military, Army Operational, Institutional, and Contingency Support. A larger Asia-Pacific AOC will ideally allow a FAO’s first utilization assignment to be applicable to their respective sub-region in Asia (based on the assigned CLANG), while FAOs should be prepared to serve across the broader Asia-Pacific in follow-on assignments or after achieving LTC. All FAO Colonels may serve worldwide, as required.

8. Does AOC realignment mean every Asia-Pacific 48P FAO will learn Mandarin? What impact(s) will AOC realignment have on the assignment of Control Languages / priority languages and the FAO training pipeline?

A: No, this does NOT mean everyone will have Mandarin as their CLANG, although FAO Proponent is currently assessing Priority Languages within the Asia-Pacific region. After initial review, FA48 will have a slight increase in throughput (CLANGs) to Mandarin, Japanese,

UNCLASSIFIED

Korean, Thai, and Indonesian. Vietnamese may remain constant at current rates. FAOs with Hindi or Tagalog as a CLANG will maintain that assigned CLANG for their FAO career.

For IRT location assignments, 48P will likely see broader participation in the foreign staff college experiences, meaning any 48P FAO can conduct IRT in South or Southeast Asia through foreign staff college attendance.

Drafted by: MAJ Anthony Nelson

Approved by: COL John Moore