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**BEYOND THE DEFENSE LANGUAGE  
TRANSFORMATION ROADMAP:  
BEARING THE BURDEN FOR TODAY'S  
EDUCATIONAL SHORTCOMINGS**

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND  
INVESTIGATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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HEARING HELD  
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### TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2010

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS,  
*Washington, DC, Tuesday, June 29, 2010.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 1:34 p.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Vic Snyder (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. VIC SNYDER, A REPRESENTA-  
TIVE FROM ARKANSAS, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS**

Dr. SNYDER. Good afternoon, and welcome to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations' hearing on the Department of Defense's [DOD] progress in transforming the United States military's foreign language skills, cultural awareness, and regional expertise capabilities.

In November of 2008 this subcommittee came out with this report, "Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: DOD's Challenge in Today's Educational Environment." We thought it was a pretty good report, but it was not the beginning of this discussion, and it is certainly not the end; it is just an ongoing issue that we have in this country.

And November 10th, 2009—the Marine Corps birthday, by the way—General McChrystal, in his "for whom it may concern" memo for counterinsurgency training guidance for ISAF [International Security Assistance Force], said the following: "Language Training: Everyone should learn basic language skills. Every deployed person should be able to greet locals and say 'thank you.' Each platoon, or like-sized organization, that will have regular contact with the population should have at least one leader that speaks Dari, at least a zero-plus level, with a goal of a level one in oral communication. These personnel will not replace interpreters, but will enhance the capabilities of the unit. This language skill is as important as your other basic combat skills."

A little over a year and a half ago this committee—this subcommittee—held its last hearing on language and culture. At that time the Department was nearing completion of the task it set out for itself in the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, but neither having—but having neither an accurate picture of what language skills reside in the force nor what capabilities were required by the commanders in the field there was no true strategic plan to guide the services in their role as force providers.

I look forward to hearing about the progress in these areas and the status of the Department's strategic plan from our witnesses today. And we also recognize, as it was discussed during our previous series of hearings, that this is a national problem, that once again the military inherits the challenges that we have in the country that we do not emphasize language skills enough. Many, many of us—far too many of us—speak only English.

And also, at this particular time in our economic history we are grappling with the issue in this country right now about potential cutbacks in teachers. And there is anecdotal evidence that some of the first teachers to go when a district is looking to save money are arts, music, and foreign language, which doesn't help our national security perspective either.

We have witnesses today from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and the Government Accountability Office [GAO], which has assisted the Congress with a study that reports on building language skills and cultural awareness in the military. And seated directly behind them we also have the senior language authorities from each of the services, whose job it is to organize, train, and equip this transformed force.

Now, I will formally introduce all seven of you, but I first wanted to turn to Mr. Wittman for any opening comments he would like to make.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROB WITTMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE  
FROM VIRGINIA, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS**

Mr. WITTMAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much for your leadership on this. I think this is a critical issue and it is good that we continue to reexamine this to make sure we know where we are from a progress standpoint.

Witnesses, thank you so much for taking time out to join us today. We are looking forward to your testimony.

Today, as we begin to return to a topic that this subcommittee previously addressed, and that is building language and cultural competencies in our military forces, I think it is extraordinarily important that we take that time to do this reevaluation and figure out where we are today.

By the way, Mr. Chairman, I do think that our persistence and ability to periodically review previously examined issues is one of the strengths of this subcommittee, and I appreciate your leadership there. You have kept us on focus there, and I think that is extraordinarily important.

You know, it is rare that lasting progress will be made with a single report. We all know that repeated examination, however, does begin to bear fruit over time, and that, I believe, is the case here.

The need for more language and cultural training for our general purpose forces has only gained importance since our November 2008 report. Not only have these competencies now received more emphasis in our campaign in Afghanistan, but increasing numbers of combatant commanders have stressed the need for these skills in the areas of operation.

Indeed, the military services have all taken measures to increase these competencies in their forces with varying types of programs. As always, I am reluctant to dictate to the services how they should approach this training. Even so, though, since the services are all responding to the same combatant commander requirements the wide divergence of programs is still puzzling to us.

Regardless, I am very gratified to see the serious efforts and formal programs that are underway across the board, even without much formal OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] guidance in place yet. It is apparent that you all are taking this issue very seriously and understand the need for our troops to more effectively interact with the local populace, and I thank you for that.

I look forward to hearing about these ongoing programs and learning more about the formal OSD direction that may be forthcoming to provide an overarching framework for how we address this in a comprehensive format. Additionally, I am interested in how these programs are being received by the leadership and rank and file within each of the military services. Specifically, are language and cultural skills seen as career-enhancing?

I look forward to your testimony and thank you again for your efforts.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wittman can be found in the Appendix on page 25.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Wittman, and thank you for your service on this topic here.

We are joined today by three testifying witnesses: Mrs. Nancy Weaver, the Director of the Defense Language Office, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; Brigadier General Walter Golden, United States Army, Director of J-1 Manpower and Personnel, Office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Ms. Sharon Pickup, Director, Office of Defense Capabilities and Management of the Government Accountability Office.

Also, sitting behind you three are the senior—the service senior language authorities. For the Navy it is Rear Admiral Dan Holloway, Director of the Military Personnel Plans and Policy division; for the Army it is Brigadier General Richard Longo, Director of Training, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff; for the Air Force it is Mr. Don Get, the Senior Language Authority for the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff; and for the Marine Corps, Colonel Dimitri Henry, incoming commanding officer to the Marine Corps Intelligence Command.

And we actually thought about having all seven of you sitting at the table but figured we would all get bogged down. And so we will have you there available, and we will do it two ways of—we may call on you or folks at the table might say they want to refer to you. Or if you think there is just something we need to know please feel free to raise your hand or tap somebody in front of you on the shoulder and we will be glad to have you pull up to the microphone for folks.

But we appreciate all of you being here today. The opening statements will be made part of the record.

And, Mrs. Weaver, we will start with you, and then General Golden and Ms. Pickup. The lights will go off in 5 minutes—you

feel free to surge on through if you have got more than 5 minutes of material, but if you can stay approximately in that framework then we can get to our questions.

Mrs. Weaver.

Is your microphone on? You may want to pull a little bit closer to—

Ms. WEAVER. Okay.

Dr. SNYDER. For whatever reason somebody is trained to put these things up in the air like swans. [Laughter.]

**STATEMENT OF NANCY E. WEAVER, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE LANGUAGE OFFICE, OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PERSONNEL AND READINESS)**

Ms. WEAVER. Chairman Snyder, Ranking Member Wittman, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on this very important topic. The Department is building a force with language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities needed to succeed in today's missions. The ability to understand and interact successfully with local populations, allies, and partners are key enabling factors for mission success.

The 2005 Defense Language Transformation Roadmap marked the Department's initial efforts to prepare the force to meet the challenges of the new operational environment. Through specific actions we have improved oversight and management of the defense language program, adapted and created policies and programs to support the Roadmap goals, and enhanced training.

We are now moving beyond the Roadmap by continuing to refine processes for generating and prioritizing language and regional requirements, providing strategic direction, and adapting existing programs and policies to ensure we have the right mix of language and regional skills. For example, the Department is in the final stages of completing a capabilities-based assessment which will provide improved processes to help determine and prioritize requirements. This pivotal effort was led by the Joint Staff, and Brigadier General Golden will provide more information in his comments.

The Defense Language Strategy Plan is in the final stages of coordination. This plan will set the strategic direction in priorities for building and maintaining language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities for the next 6 years.

Where once the training mission of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center was mostly resident basic courses for the professional linguist, the request for nonresident training for general purpose forces has experienced tremendous growth. The center has responded with more than 160,000 instructional hours through mobile training teams, video teletraining, virtual classroom training, and language training detachments. Additionally, the number of language training detachments is anticipated to grow from 23 to over 40 in the next several years in order to provide more training opportunities for all personnel.

The demand for a higher degree of language and regional expertise that requires years—not weeks—of study is on the rise. Therefore, we are continuing to invest in programs to influence future recruits and employees, starting with our own school system.



The Department of Defense Education Activity, or DODEA, provides language-learning opportunities beginning in elementary school through partial immersion programs in host nation classes. In secondary schools distance learning and classroom instruction help students meet the graduation requirement for at least 2 years of study in a single foreign language. During the past academic year about 70 percent of all students in grades 7 through 12 were enrolled in foreign language classes.

Another initiative is the State Roadmap Project, which represents an important federal-state partnership to explore how language education issues might be addressed in the state and local levels. Ohio, Oregon, and Texas currently have roadmaps. We are now collaborating with Utah and California to begin a roadmap process.

While we have made progress there is still more to do. We appreciate the recommendations provided in the subcommittee's November 2008 report and the Government Accountability Office report issued in June 2009. These recommendations have been incorporated as part of our ongoing effort to develop mission-ready all volunteer force to meet our national security objectives.

Thank you very much for your continued support.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Weaver can be found in the Appendix on page 27.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mrs. Weaver.  
General Golden.

**STATEMENT OF BRIG. GEN. WALTER GOLDEN, USA, DIRECTOR,  
J-1 MANPOWER AND PERSONNEL, OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN,  
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

General GOLDEN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Wittman, distinguished members of the committee, it is my privilege to report on the transformational progress the Joint Staff has made in response to both this committee's report on building language skills and cultural competencies in the military, the GAO's report on military training, and the need for requirements data to guide development of language skills and regional proficiency. This has been a complex task.

Our challenge has been to break away from today's paradigm, where coded billets drive the need for recruiting and training, to one in which the geographic combatant command's capability requirements also drive force development. The Joint Staff has had oversight over this effort while the Army volunteered to lead the language assessment and the Navy volunteered to lead the regional expertise and culture assessment.

Together we have, for the first time, developed a standardized, documented methodology for the geographic combatant commands to use to identify language, regional expertise, and culture capabilities requirements. This methodology will lay the foundation for the services to develop their sourcing solutions not only in the near term but also in the longer term.

The value of the methodology is that once implemented the results will be based on sound analysis that is traceable to national strategy, prioritized by each geographic combatant command, integrated, validated, and adjudicated by the Joint Staff, and sent by

senior Joint Staff leadership to the services for response. It provides the services a strong foundation that will influence the hard decisions regarding additional training because all of the services operate under the constraints of limited time to train, finite dollars, and troop ceilings. It preserves the Title 10 responsibilities of the services while capitalizing on combatant commands' knowledge of their area of responsibility—[microphone feedback]

Dr. SNYDER. General, I am sorry. Supposedly we have somebody coming to figure out what we need to do differently.

General GOLDEN. I will continue. [microphone feedback]

It preserves the Title 10 responsibilities of the services—would you like me to continue or just wait for a second?

It preserves the Title 10 responsibilities of the services while capitalizing on combatant commands' knowledge of their area of responsibility and tasks to be performed. This will be an iterative, cyclical process.

The Joint Staff anticipates implementing the methodology this fall with the results of the first iteration being sent to the services in the spring of 2011. Results will not be immediate. We anticipate that the results of this first iteration will assist the services as they determine their foreign language and regional expertise requirements, measure their capability, and determine sources solutions.

With maturity we expect greater agility in identifying, prioritizing, and responding to language and regional expertise requirements. I look forward to any questions you may have concerning this transformational endeavor.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General Golden.

Now we are going to see how GAO handles our sound system.

Ms. Pickup.

**STATEMENT OF SHARON L. PICKUP, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND MANAGEMENT, U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE**

Ms. PICKUP. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Wittman, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me today to discuss GAO's work on DOD's efforts to improve language skills and regional expertise. Without question, the changing security environment and insights from ongoing operations have led the Department to proactively move to develop a workforce that is more language-capable and has a better understanding of the cultures and regions around the world.

To that end, DOD has set some ambitious goals, among them to create what is called foundational expertise, in its general purpose forces and civilian ranks. This is no small undertaking. It encompasses all of DOD and requires the military services to adjust training as they continue to support the high pace of deployments and balance competing demands for resources.

Clearly, Congress and this subcommittee in particular has kept the spotlight on the importance of building language and cultural competencies in the military. Concurrently with the work that led to your November 2008 report, GAO has also evaluated DOD's efforts.

In our most recent report of June 2009 we examined whether DOD had a viable strategic plan and whether it had the informa-

tion it needed to assess capability gaps and related risks. Let me briefly touch on what we learned and recommended, and DOD's progress.

Comprehensive strategic plans that have clear goals, objectives, and metrics, and are linked to resources can help guide large-scale transformations. As you know, DOD published a Defense Language Transformation Roadmap in 2005 which laid out broad goals, objectives, and specific tasks, and it also set up a governance structure to oversee the implementation of the roadmap. As well, the services have developed strategies to guide their training efforts.

While the roadmap was a positive step it had some limitations. Certain goals and objectives were broad and not measurable, and it didn't identify priorities or resource needs. Without a robust strategic plan we concluded that DOD did not have a sound basis to guide and synchronize efforts, and ultimately to ensure it was investing resources in the highest priority activities, and it still needed metrics to measure progress.

To be fair, DOD did not label the roadmap as a strategic plan and, at the time of our work, recognized that it needed one. We understand a draft is now being reviewed, and once approved DOD expects to have a follow-on implementation plan with metrics. And, you know, from our point of view it will be important for DOD to set a specific milestone to complete that action quickly so it can begin measuring its progress.

Equally important is a means to assess capability gaps and related risks. As of June 2009 DOD had inventoried the language skills of military personnel and since then has collected similar data on civilians.

For regional proficiency skills, DOD has collected data on specific occupations but not yet on all military members or civilians. It lacked a common definition of regional proficiency and a way to measure these skills, so we recommended that DOD develop these elements. DOD agreed, and earlier this month DOD told us it has commissioned a study and set up an internal working group to address these issues, which it expects to produce results by sometime later next year.

As for requirements, as of last June DOD did not have a validated methodology for determining its needs. Different methods were used and estimates varied widely.

For example, in February 2008 the U.S. Pacific Command estimated its needs to be more than all of the other combatant commands combined. And DOD agreed it needed to do more work in this area and now, as General Golden stated, has addressed methodology under review.

Without valid requirements, neither DOD nor the services can be sure that ongoing or planned training efforts will produce the capabilities most needed for current and future missions. This concludes my remarks, and I will be glad to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Pickup can be found in the Appendix on page 41.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you all.

We will put ourselves on the 5-minute clock here and go back and forth with our questions.

I wanted to start—and this may be an unfair question, but you all can tell me if it is unfair—Secretary Gates, on May 24th of this year, put out a memorandum which he calls—the subject line, “Implementing Counterinsurgency Training Guidance to Support Execution of the President’s Afghanistan-Pakistan Strategy,” and the third page just has one sentence on it which says, “I expect all Department Components to identify opportunities to reinvest and reward critical expertise and modify training and personnel processes to ensure success in the region. I look forward to your full support.” And there are several references in that memorandum to language skills and cultural competencies.

Mrs. Weaver, is it fair for me to ask you, how did you all respond to that memo from Secretary Gates?

Ms. WEAVER. Thank you, sir. We have very excited about the memo from Secretary Gates, and personnel and readiness is in the process of building a letter—a memo—to go out to the services that provides a little bit more guidance on how we expect this to be implemented.

The Army has already moved forward to develop a training program for all individuals going to Afghanistan with the training standard that was outlined in General McChrystal’s memo on counterinsurgency—and I would ask the Brigadier General Longo provide more details—that actually implements that—a standard that every troop will have language and cultural capability and that at least one per platoon will have a higher level of language so that it will aid the organization in fulfilling its mission.

Dr. SNYDER. So General McChrystal’s memorandum came out several months before Secretary Gates’—Secretary Gates’ memorandum cause you all to change anything, what you had been planning to do otherwise?

Ms. WEAVER. It expedited.

Dr. SNYDER. Expedited?

Ms. WEAVER. Yes, sir.

Dr. SNYDER. When you have looked at this issue of—that we are talking about today—and I think GAO is discussing and very capably, the ability to set up a system that will provide long-term help and be able to be evaluated—how have you all looked at this with regard to the immediacy of two wars in which we clearly need—every day—need an abundance of capable folks with both language and cultural competencies, versus the long-term needs of wanted to be prepared for things all around the world? How has the immediacy of these two wars going on affected what you do?

Ms. WEAVER. Of course implementing the President’s strategy in Afghanistan is our highest priority. We have increased the number and level of training opportunities for deploying troops in specific languages of the region, and we have also put resources to ensure that individuals have the level of training and training materials that they need both prior to deployment and during deployment.

Preparing for future, we have got the strategic language list that identifies languages that would be of strategic importance, and we have implemented systems in the training pipeline that would allow us to surge quickly if we needed those languages.

Dr. SNYDER. You have enabled me to segue to my next question when you used the word “surge.” Describe for me what occurred

and how—what kind of a grade you all would give yourselves after the Haiti earthquake.

Ms. WEAVER. Well, as far as language, sir, we used the language readiness index—or tool—to identify the languages that we had, and we could drill down to tell where—by name—where the individual was, what language they had, where they were located, and if they were available. The services used this in order to ensure that we had language-speakers during the first and second waves to respond to Haiti. Knowing that we had French Creole-speakers helped immeasurably communicate what we were trying to do in the local area.

Dr. SNYDER. Was that a tool that you didn't have until relatively recently?

Ms. WEAVER. We have had it for about 2 years, sir. It became totally populated with our capability last year. It has got active duty, Guard, Reserve, civilian, and we are in the process of ensuring that we can load our contractors so that we will have a full spectrum of capability at our fingertips.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Pickup, in your testimony you talked about there being the formation of a working group to try to determine where requirements need to go or where the development of requirements need to go and that there is a need to do more. Can you give us a little more about where the Department is in the process of developing a consistent methodology and for aggregating those requirements?

You know, I know that there is inconsistency across the board about what the needs are, how do you develop a methodology to number one, assess the needs, how do you develop a methodology to make sure the need is being met, all those different elements of taking it essentially from start to finish about developing that capability across all of our service branches.

Can you maybe elaborate a little bit more about that? I was interested in your comment about how you see there still being a continuing need to really create, I think, more depth to that effort?

Ms. PICKUP. When we first looked at where DOD stood in terms of requirements methodology it was clear to us that they had laid out a process, and it produces results back in the 2006 to 2008 timeframe. But I think there was a lot of discretion given to the combatant commands, for example, in terms of how they came up with requirements.

So what the outcome was that everybody looked at it a little differently, which is why you had such a wide variance in the estimates and you had, for example, the Pacific Command given its really detailed analysis of their detailed operational plans, considering both general purpose and professional linguists, levels of proficiency, those kinds of things, whereas the other combatant commands might have taken an approach.

So while there was a process, what we thought was lacking was kind of a validated standard methodology that everyone could use.

Now, having said that, this is no easy task, and as I understand from the information that we have gotten since then that the Joint Staff and OSD have worked to try to come up with such a methodology. We haven't had a chance to review it, and I think, you know,

one of the positive features we have heard is that rather than trying to get into the individual specifics of numbers of units and individuals, it is probably going to play to the combatant command's strength, which is to identify broader capabilities.

The challenge will be to translate those capabilities into specific requirements. And the only other thing that I would say is given the high op tempo [operational tempo] and also the manner in which we are deploying folks and the resource environment we find, I think it is going to be a challenge for the Department to kind of look at this, either in phases or potentially incrementally, within the force because I don't think that they are either going to be able to afford or sustain language proficiency in every single general purpose force.

Mr. WITTMAN. Well, let me take it back down a level, too. You spoke about the combatant commands and what they assess as their needs. Have they gotten to the point where they have really been able to have some consistency in how they assess their needs? Do they have consistent methodology in how they do that and the information that they provide to you so that you can consolidate that effort and try to come up with, as you said, a workable, reasonable scenario to make sure that they meet their language and cultural requirement needs?

Ms. PICKUP. Well, from GAO's perspective, we evaluated that initial process. When the methodology comes out from the Joint Staff, hopefully here in the next month or so, we will take a look at that to see what kind of elements it contains. And as we, you know, continue our effort to evaluate the language, you know, training progress, we will also probably be visiting the combatant commands and definitely the ground forces to see how they came up with those requirements and how the services intend to translate them.

Mr. WITTMAN. Okay. That was one of my concerns is making sure that from top to bottom we were looking at the methodologies, making sure the combatant commands had full scope of what their needs were and making sure that they are doing things in a consistent manner. So it is good to hear that you will be doing that.

Mr. Chairman, I will yield back. If we are going to have a second round of questions I will go ahead and pick up then.

Dr. SNYDER. I could just stay here all day long just going back and forth, so—

I wanted to ask, Mrs. Weaver, in your—both your written and oral statement you made mention of the state roadmaps, was it Texas, Ohio, and Oregon—and then Utah and California on the way. The first time that I think we as a committee heard about the—what sounds like good success in Ohio, Oregon, and Texas was a couple of years ago when we were gathering information for our report, and I understood that California and Utah were underway.

And everyone seems to think that these are good things to help states come up with what they need in their state but then we all benefit as a country as they move these things forward. However, you know, two states partly underway every 2 years—at best that means in 23.5 years we will have finally gotten to all 50 states, and

I would assume that Texas, Ohio, and Oregon will then be out-of-date, and so we can start again 24 years from now.

If this is such a good idea why is it taking so damn long to get these things started? They are not huge expenses. Where is the priority on this if they are—they are important enough for you to put in your written statement, why aren't they important enough to get underway 10, 15 states a year or something?

Ms. WEAVER. We have considered them very important, but since it is a partnership we have to have the state's concurrence to move forward. Right now many of the states are a little hesitant to do that.

We are continuing to broach other states to build partnerships, and Utah and California we are moving out, but we definitely have other states that we are working through flagship programs to see if they will partner with us and move forward in a roadmap.

Dr. SNYDER. What is the obstacle?

Ms. WEAVER. Funding.

Dr. SNYDER. Did you all make a request to the budget process for additional funding for this program, or what is the status of that?

Ms. WEAVER. Sir, the funding problem is not necessarily with the Department of Defense. We are committed to this program. The challenge is to get the states to commit resources to move forward with more aggressive language programs within their school districts.

Dr. SNYDER. But I thought the idea of this was that there was seed money available to help them with their plan and that there was going to be federal funding available. I thought that was the program, that you all have some support through staffing and personnel to help them get this thing together—

Ms. WEAVER. We do have funding to help with the roadmap, personnel to help them and interact, but it is actually putting objectives down in the roadmap that the state will move forward with.

Dr. SNYDER. How much federal dollars are going into programs at the elementary and junior high school level?

Ms. WEAVER. I don't have the specific dollar amount, sir, but I can get that for you.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 59.]

Dr. SNYDER. But that is an ongoing DOD program?

Ms. WEAVER. It is. We have three model programs, K-12, that works with our flagship programs to energize language in the school system.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Pickup, do you all have any comments on that program?

Ms. PICKUP. No. We have pretty much focused on kind of more the operational needs than the educational system.

Dr. SNYDER. I mean, I don't fault what you are doing. It just seems like something that you shouldn't all be doing or shouldn't have to be doing. And when you talk about measuring results I am not sure how we measure our best bang for DOD buck when we are going to have to look 20 and—I don't know, 15, 20, 25 years from now to see if a 4-year-old kindergarten student, how his Dari or Urdu is doing.

Mrs. Weaver, what role does the National Language Service Corps play in what you all are doing?

Ms. WEAVER. The National Language Service Corps is part of our surge operation. It is—consists of about 1,000 civilians who volunteer to be called in a national emergency and they speak the higher level proficiency in a number of languages. These individuals have actually been deployed with the oil spill in the Gulf Coast and we have had test programs with the CDC and with PACOM.

Dr. SNYDER. My time is about up.

General Golden, is there anything you want to comment on that we have—I have asked about so far, or Mr. Wittman has asked about?

General GOLDEN. Sir, I would just like to expand for a minute on a couple of the questions, first in terms of kind of the short- and long-term approach and response to Secretary Gates' memorandum, and second about the capabilities-based assessment.

First, in terms of a short-term approach I would like to point out the initiative that was really originated by General McChrystal's request, the AfPak Hands program, that I think provides, certainly in the short term, a solution to provide folks that are—have a fairly good understanding of both the language and the culture for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and then a methodology that allows them to receive a continuum of training over a period of four or five years with repeated tours in theater to kind of gain some of the capabilities that we are seeking.

And then also in terms of that, DLI—General Longo can address in greater detail, but the Defense Language Institute and the Army's efforts to really expand their capacity beyond the brick and mortar of the school by providing mobile training detachments as well as an online capability and automated tools I think has allowed us to reach a much greater audience, at least for some of the fundamental aspects of language.

And then second, in terms of the capabilities-based assessments, some of the questions asked of GAO by Ranking Member Wittman, I think if we had the opportunity to explain to you in detail our approach to the capabilities-based assessment I believe it addresses each of the key areas that you spoke about, because what we have advocated is a requirements-based process for each COCOM [Combatant Command] that is standardized, and we actually send a team out to the COCOM and ensure that the process is followed for each of the COCOMs.

The proof of principle that we executed for this program was done at PACOM [United States Pacific Command], which has been mentioned several times in terms of their analysis, as well as SOCOM [United States Special Operations Command], so two different COCOMs that we evaluated this model against. Kind of the foundation for this assessment is based on their steady state security posture, some of the numbered plans and other areas they have, and that is what we are addressing in this first year, fiscal year 2010, for each of the COCOMs. I received a correction—SOUTHCOM [United States Southern Command], not SOCOM. I meant SOUTHCOM.

And then the second piece of that is that during the second year we will go at some of the conventional and irregular warfare mis-



sions. So the initial 2 years we think we will build a very good foundation using those commonalities between COCOMs and then in the follow-on years be able just to adjust off of that as national security strategy—their steady state security posture changes as well as the evolution of some of their plans for irregular and conventional warfare.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General. You are lucky, General; nobody ever gives me a note correcting me until after it comes out in the press.

Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For Mrs. Weaver and General Golden, I wanted to ask, is the Defense Language Office effectively providing strategic direction and programmatic oversight to the services on their future needs and requirements in the areas of language skills, cultural awareness, and even regional expertise? How is that coming about? I just wanted to get your perspective on that.

General GOLDEN. I will take the first stab. I think that the oversight being provided right now is adequate but certainly not optimum.

I would say that it is adequate because there is a—the oversight is really provided by a council that includes representatives from all the services, the Joint Staff, and OSD. So I think that that is an effective venue to make sure that everyone's voice is heard and that all bring an equal voice to the table.

In terms of the way ahead, the future part, I think it will be even more effective as we mature this capabilities-based oversight because now—the intent there is once we receive the input from the COCOMs and they prioritize their language and regional expertise requirements then the Joint Staff will validate those and then pass those to the services so that they can do their own gap analysis and try to identify and match up resources against the capabilities that are required.

So I think it is adequate now—certainly not ideal. But I believe that we have a plan, given the direction that we are going with first the DOD roadmap, the strategy that will be published, and our own capabilities-based assessment to make it a much better organization for providing that oversight and direction in the future.

Ms. WEAVER. I believe the Defense Language Office provides a center that ensures total collaboration so that we can view the Department as a whole and gather those initiatives that are likely to get us where we are going. I agree with General Golden: Until we fix the requirements process and we can apply it against the capability then training and where our gaps are is right now just a guess.

We do have a system to try to look out and see what we need in the future, working with the policy people, and that is through capability-based reviews that we conduct every other year, and that gives us more of a strategic perspective. We do work through the council. We do think it is a collaborative process because there is many pieces to where the Department needs to go as well as the individual missions of the services.

Mr. WITTMAN. Let me kind of get a little more general in scope now. I realize we are in a realm of resource limitations, but in looking at what you are being asked to do as far as cultural awareness—and obviously there are directed efforts in making sure you have that cultural awareness, as you say, strategically placed—but there is also a need, I think, out there that you have acknowledged that is in a more—in a larger sense among the general forces.

Can both you and General Golden give us an idea about where you are going as far as cultural awareness-building within the entire force structure, how you are pursuing that, where you believe that effort is, the criticality of the effort as opposed to where you are right now in providing cultural awareness in those very strategic elements of the force structure?

Ms. WEAVER. We believe cross-cultural communication or the ability for an individual to have a understanding of multiple cultures is a competency that we need—or capability that we need—throughout the force, and we intend to move forward to ensure that individuals have that cultural competency. Cultural-specific, which is individual training prior to going to where they are going to be deployed, is part of pre-deployment training.

We have just identified the various definitions and we are working with the services to see what programs are already in place and how these programs and best practices can be implemented across the Department.

General GOLDEN. Sir, I would like to ask General Longo. I think the Army has a pretty good roadmap. I would like to ask General Longo to respond to that question.

General LONGO. Glad to do so, not sure how to work the microphone.

Dr. SNYDER. Pick one up, or pull your chair up there beside him, or whatever you want to do.

General LONGO. With regards to cultural training, the Army has done a tremendous amount of work to get it embedded in all levels of our education system. From the time a soldier enters basic combat training till the time an officer graduates from the Army War College there is cultural training that is appropriate to their rank and authority embedded throughout.

And then within our collective training scenarios, either at home stations or at our combat training centers, we also have a very deployment-specific focus on cultural training. So we are both planting the seed corn in our educational institutions and then harvesting it as we get closer and closer to a deployment. We recognize the importance of cultural training.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Chairman, with your indulgence, if I could ask the Navy and Marine Corps representatives maybe to comment on that, too, on your efforts there with that general cultural awareness for the force—and the Air Force, too. I want to make sure we get all the service branches there. I don't want to leave anybody out.

Admiral HOLLOWAY. I think one of the examples I would like to give that our parallel system to the Army would be, following up on Mr. Chairman's point about the Haiti surge—I think it lends a good story.

Admiral John Harvey, a Fleet Forces commander, would say that upon news of that disaster in Haiti his commanders were told to move out, make the suffering and the people the center of gravity, and flow to the region. Sitting behind me today is Mr. Lee Johnson, who runs the program for us, and within 6 hours Lee had the list of the Creole speakers in the United States Navy. In 2.5 days from a cold start our hospital ship was underway from Baltimore fully staffed.

The head of the Chaplain Corps moved out, and he took the surgical ward from Bethesda chaplains, that deal with the wounded warriors—took a few of those chaplains, put them on the hospital ship. They also had language skills, got underway with a bunch of stuffed animals, and as they greeted children and family members that were buried for days and hadn't seen anyone, they were greeted with Creole language-speakers, a stuffed animal, and given medical care.

Just speaking to the chaplain yesterday—happen to be over at Bethesda—he tells the story how the calming effect of hearing a language, seeing someone hand them a stuffed animal, and having the comforts of a hospital ship off the coast, how successful that was putting that center of gravity of the people at rest.

We moved a carrier in place and had language-speakers on our helicopter squadrons to ensure that as they flew both water and the injured back, after dropping off water, there was someone—at least one—that could communicate in that language as a calming effect, as well. The culture—big C, little L for language—is the Navy's approach. It is across the continuum of education, and I think the Haiti response and the surge with both the carrier, the helicopters, our forces, our medical, our chaplains tells a good story as how they did impact that surge. Thank you.

Colonel HENRY. Gentlemen, good afternoon. As the Army stated earlier, the Marine Corps has taken the same similar approach. From boot camp all the way through deployment the Marine Corps has recognized the need for cultural and language training. In boot camp we do a cultural 101 level, where we just speak of culture in general so the recruits and future Marines get an understanding of how important it is, and as we progress through the ranks, like the Army the Marine Corps has recognized the need to have the seed corn out and to harvest it as we get ready to go to deployment.

One of the final evolutions before Marines head out to deployment is at Twentynine Palms, where we do Mojave Viper or enhanced Mojave Viper, and there the Marines get to utilize those cultural and language skills that they have used—or learned—over the course of their career up to that deployment and actually use it in mock villages where we have specifically, for whatever region they are going into—of course now it is Afghanistan, and Pashtun and Dari; before it was the Iraqi dialect and that part of the world. So, like the Army, we recognize that and have implemented that and it has become part of the curriculum across the disciplines as we move forward. Thank you.

Mr. GET. Chairman Snyder, Mr. Wittman, the Air Force follows a similar approach, and one of the advantages of the Defense Language Steering group is that we share these best practices. So, like the Army and the Marine Corps, we have looked at culture in our

professional military education as a foundation for culture general, and that goes all the way from junior ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] to the senior service college. In fact, the Air Force ROTC Command has just published a new textbook that cultural competencies and cultural awareness is engrained throughout the textbook.

We use a building block approach, as I mentioned. So at basic training, as the Marines do, they get an introduction to culture for a couple of hours. It progresses through in their professional military development.

A good example would be, by the time that they get to the Air Command and Staff College, as a senior captain or a major, in addition to more cultural awareness training there is language training added—30 hours of language awareness, language development, that is provided by professional language instruction from the Defense Language Institute. Again, this is one of the ideas that came out of our collective steering group. It has been very effective, and it is mandatory at Air Command and Staff.

It is voluntary at the Air War College. However, the participation is well over 50 percent. It is one of the most popular elective courses at the lieutenant colonel level.

For culture-specific, very similar to what the Marines and the Army are doing, we have an Air Advisor Academy that focuses on the specific deployment area. So if we have partnership teams going to Iraq to help train the Iraqi air force they receive culture-specific training for that environment; if they are going to Afghanistan to partner with ISAF in training Afghanis, that is the focus of their training.

So all the programs are very, very similar, and again, we are sharing our best practices. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

General Golden, in your statement, which I have here somewhere, you make the comment toward the end of it, "With maturity we expect greater agility in identifying, prioritizing, and responding to language and regional expertise requirements." I mean, it is the easy question to ask, I guess, is, you know, with maturity—we went into Afghanistan in October 2001 when, you know, there were a bunch of 18-year-olds were 10 years old, and yet we are still grappling in a very major way with these language issues.

So I am not sure what propels us—I am not blaming you; it is all of us—what propels us, as a nation, to maturity. I mean, do you have any comments about that? I mean, it must be very frustrating for our folks who are doing multiple tours in Afghanistan still having to grapple with the fact that they are struggling to get people with language skills and we have been there for eight and a half, going on nine years.

General GOLDEN. Sir, I think that is a very fair question, and I would offer two points to kind of offer both my personal and professional perspective. The first point that I would bring is, again, going back to this capabilities-based assessment, that the maturity that I refer to for the capabilities-based assessment is building this foundation for kind of what is on the shelf, and the steady state security posture looks out in the future for 10 years.

Now, obviously I am sure you and many folks in this room probably don't have a great degree of confidence in our nation or military's capability to predict with absolute certainty where our next conflict is going to be, but as you have said, we certainly know where we have been in conflict the last nine years, and so that should be a guiding point that I think will be captured by the capabilities-based assessment and expand upon efforts like the AfPak Hands program that will allow us the proficiency that we are looking for.

I think the second challenge that we have is just in terms of the difficulty of some of the languages and cultures that we are trying to learn. Dari and Pashtun, for example, are both Category 4 languages for which there isn't a lot of resources available, at least in terms of the written word, so we have kind of had to build this train as we rode it.

But without attributing, you know, too much fault to my choice of words for maturing, I would just like to go back to the point that really my allusion and my decision to use the word "maturing" was to build beyond the two COCOMS, PACOM and SOUTHCOM, that we have already kind of surveyed and linked to their steady state security posture, expanding that to all of the geographic commands, being able to apply those lessons to the intelligence community, for example, and Special Operations, to get a much more holistic view than perhaps the narrower focus that we have looked at our language and cultural expertise issues for the last nine years.

Dr. SNYDER. In General McChrystal's memorandum he talks about having one person per platoon that has, you know, reasonably good oral language skills compared to, you know, I guess the general forces. Do you the three of you—is that a reasonable standard to aim for, do we think, as a force?

General Longo.

General LONGO. In November General McChrystal came out with that codified requirement. In December the office of the secretary of defense provided the services resources to get after that. By February we had four language training detachments set up at the four posts in the Army first, and next year it will be at other services, that had the next deploying brigades. In each of those posts the commanders committed to participating in a training regiment for that one soldier per platoon.

So Fort Campbell was the first place we went to. We had 75 soldiers show up, and in a 16-week period, which just concluded in the beginning of June, 98 percent of the soldiers met General McChrystal's established standard of zero-plus or better.

And then he also asked that every soldier that goes has some rudimentary greeting capability, which we thought was very important also. What we did with that was the Defense Language Institute put out a 6-hour program—you can access it online and if you don't have access to the Internet they will send a CD—which gives a broad overview of cultural awareness. It also gives them common greetings that they say into the computer and get feedback back.

So through those two programs we are very quickly able to meet General McChrystal's standard, and we think it is having an impact already as those soldiers deploy.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. General Longo and the Colonel from the Marine Corps, I will direct these questions to you, if I might. I have brought up before, through the years—and the Marine Corps makes it today—what role boot camp might play in this, given the full agenda. And I was talking with an enlisted Marine not long ago who thought that the idea of having some kind of early language skill training—language, not just cultural awareness but language training in boot camp—could be helpful both to the soldier or Marine, but then also ultimately helpful to the military—at least help you find some people that have both interest and might meet that basic requirement. Have you all considered or thought about actually having some kind of language skill at the boot camp level?

General LONGO. Sir, in the Army we have not added that, but I would like to tell you something we are doing with our officer corps, which is the incentivizing the taking of language courses while they are still in college. We reward them by pay; we give scholarships to people who major in foreign languages in our ROTC institutions, and at our Military Academy we have a requirement for two or four semesters of a foreign language. But as far as for the enlisted soldier in basic combat training, we have not implemented that.

Dr. SNYDER. Is that true for the Marine Corps also, Colonel?

Colonel HENRY. Sir, for the Marine Corps, on the officer side we have partnered with Harvard, George Washington, Tufts, and a couple other universities—San Diego State—to implement something similar. Although we do not offer money to the officers to get those skills we have worked with those universities to develop something specifically to help us in that regard.

As far as boot camp, we have not looked at the language implementation, other than to ensure that we screen those Marines who may have a foreign language in their background so that we can capture that and record it so that we have it in a database.

And we also offer, as we go through the training, and we offer them money so they can test—if they test and get a one-one we will start paying them. So we try to inculcate them early on that language is important and something that the force needs, and that if they can develop that skill they can get the extra money to do so.

Dr. SNYDER. General McChrystal's memo refers—I think he uses the phrase “strategic corporal.” I still think there can be benefit from additional language skills at the enlisted level, but—I mean, you depend on your officer corps for a lot of things, but at some point I think there could be value in having some rudimentary language skills early on in an enlisted career.

Mrs. Weaver, you—I am going to take you up on your offer to get us the information about how much money is going into the kindergarten through grade 12 language stuff, and maybe as a committee Mr. Wittman or I might address a letter to Secretary of Education Duncan about if he is aware of that and what he thinks about DOD dollars having to go to try to beef up foreign language training in our schools.

The last question I wanted to ask to you all, and to each of the three of you, is, I think when you were last here—you were here about a year-and-a-half ago, Mrs. Weaver, I think—and when we asked you what you thought would happen when we came back and revisited this topic in a year or so, and you thought there would be dramatic improvements. Would you say—to the three of you—that there has been dramatic change and improvement since last we spoke?

Ms. WEAVER. I think we have moved a lot farther than even we anticipated. Our language and culture program has permeated the general purpose forces. We have got institutionalized programs that will ensure that we are building capability and looking out in the future. And we have got the support of senior leadership now, as we did from the very beginning, who know the value of language and culture and are supporting our efforts.

Right now, mandatory pre-deployment training for all troops who deploy and when they return they have follow-on training. We are improving the level of training, the amount of training materials that are available, and we are taking training to the individual in mobile training teams and language training detachments.

So right now we think that we have the capability to move forward and provide the training at least to the general purpose forces and special forces that we need. We have also got continued support for the professional linguist at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey.

Dr. SNYDER. General Golden.

General GOLDEN. Sir, obviously I am one of the few that wasn't here during your last hearing, so I guess you could question my assessment, but I also believe that there has been dramatic progress.

And what I would offer is, as I chose the words for my opening statement you may remember that a word I used was to report on the transformational progress the Joint Staff has made. And so, you know, as I looked at the word "transformational"—I actually thought I might be called to task on that word, so I went and made sure that I understood the definition of transformational. So I looked it up and it defined it as an "orients an organization in a new direction and takes it to an entirely new level of effectiveness."

And so what I would offer to you is at least from the Joint Staff perspective I really do believe this capabilities-based assessment that is standardized among the COCOMs, is oriented on their steady state security posture, forces them to identify and prioritize their language requirements, have that validated by the Joint Staff, and then passed to the services in terms of requirements that they can match against resources, I believe meets that definition of a new direction and eventually take it to an entirely new level of effectiveness. And I think if you take that in context with the AfPak Hands program for Afghanistan specifically, then I believe we have made dramatic progress since the last hearing.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Pickup.

Ms. PICKUP. Well, I would echo that I think the Department has made progress, and clearly I think that the command emphasis is critical to this. I think the Department and the services are energized behind this.

And the roadmap, as I said, was a good start; they have a ways to go on requirements. And as we have heard today, there is an array of programs and activities, particularly in the last several months, in response to the operational commanders' emphasis and needs.

And I think as the Department and Joint Staff goes forward it is going to be very important for them to develop metrics to assess the impact of some of these programs and activities, particularly the more recent ones, to capitalize on the momentum and the command emphasis and to make any adjustments as they see fit while they wait for the more formal requirements to define the implementation process, and so that they can be prudent in their investment, both in the near term and in the long term, and the number and the nature of the programs they undertake.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Wittman, anything further?

We appreciate you all for being here, both the three in the forward seats and the row behind you. Thank you for your service. I think this topic is very important, and I won't be here for the next time the committee does this, but I think this is a topic that is very important I am sure to the committee and to Chairman Skelton, and to both parties on the committee, and I anticipate it is an issue we will follow for a long, long time.

Thank you all. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:41 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



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**A P P E N D I X**

JUNE 29, 2010

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**PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

JUNE 29, 2010

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**Statement of Ranking Member Rob Wittman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
House Armed Services Committee**

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**Language and Cultural Awareness in General Purpose Forces**

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**June 29, 2010**

Thank you, Chairman Snyder, and good afternoon to our witnesses – we appreciate your being here.

Today, we again return to a topic the subcommittee previously addressed, that of building language and cultural competencies in our military forces. By the way, Mr. Chairman, I think that our persistence and ability to periodically review previously examined issue areas is one of the strengths of this subcommittee. It's rare that lasting progress will be made with a single report; repeated examination, however, will begin to bear fruit over time, and that appears to be the case here.

The need for more language and culture training for our general purpose forces has only gained importance since our November 2008 report was published. Not only have these competencies received more emphasis in our campaign in Afghanistan, but increasing numbers of combatant

commanders have stressed the need for these skills in their areas of operation. Indeed, the military services have all taken measures to increase these competencies in their forces, with varying types of programs. As always, I am reluctant to dictate to the services how they should approach this training. Even so, since the services are all responding to the same combatant commander requirements, the wide divergence of programs is puzzling. Regardless, I am gratified to see that serious efforts and formal programs are underway across the board, even without much formal OSD guidance in place as yet. It is apparent that you all are taking this issue seriously and understand the need for our troops to more effectively interact with the local populace.

I look forward to hearing about these ongoing programs and learning when more formal OSD direction may be forthcoming to provide an overarching framework. Additionally, I am interested in how these programs are being received by the leadership and rank and file within each of the military services. Specifically, are language and cultural skills seen as career enhancing? I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.

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**Statement**  
**of**  
**Ms. Nancy E. Weaver**  
**Department of Defense**  
**Senior Language Authority**  
**Before the**  
**House Armed Services Committee**  
**Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations**  
**June 29, 2010**

Chairman Snyder and members of this distinguished subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on this very important topic.

Our volunteer Force is a Global Force. They selflessly serve, often far from family and friends, in locations where the people, languages and cultures are significantly different than their own. Through lessons learned, we know that Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and DoD Civilians who deploy must not only be competent in their occupational skills, but must also possess language skills, regional knowledge, and cultural competence appropriate for the interactions they will have with the local population and the missions they are charged to accomplish. In today's operational environment, we not only have to focus on fighting our enemies and gaining the trust of the indigenous population, we must also understand and build coalitions with our partners. Therefore, our personnel must have an understanding of the cultures and be able to communicate with our nation's partners and allies. These vital skills are central to operations, missions, and the 21<sup>st</sup> century global environment.

Strengthening the Defense Language Program to support the war fighter aligns with the Personnel and Readiness strategic priority to develop personnel to execute current and future missions and shape and maintain a mission-ready All Volunteer Force. Our efforts to provide language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities to the Total Force began with the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap. This document was an actionable plan that focused on developing and/or adapting the programs, policies and initiatives to build foundational language and regional expertise; create the capacity to surge; and, develop a cadre of advanced language professionals within the Department of Defense. Now, we are moving beyond roadmap. And while we have done many things right over the past several years, there is still more to do.



We appreciate the recommendations contained in this subcommittee's November 2008 Report, "Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: DoD's Challenge in Today's Educational Environment" and in the Government Accountability Office Report dated June 2009, "Military Training: DoD Needs A Strategic Plan and Better Inventory and Requirements Data to Guide Development of language Skills and Regional Proficiency." We agree with the recommendations and will continue to adapt existing language programs to develop the capability necessary to meet the challenges of operating in a changing and complex environment. The Department will also continue to refine its processes to develop a Department-wide, sustained strategic and systematic approach to identify and prioritize language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capability requirements; to build a Total Force to meet those requirements; and to improve our partnership building capabilities.

#### **Recommendations**

Overall, the nine recommendations of the 2008 report reflected a need for the Department to improve its strategic direction and oversight. Today, the Department has an effective, comprehensive oversight process linked to an integrated strategy for language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capability. We have used the subcommittee's recommendations to improve our efforts and have made significant progress in the past 22 months.

The first recommendation called for the Department to clarify policy characterizing foreign language, regional expertise, and cultural awareness as critical or core competencies essential to DoD missions. Based on that recommendation, the Department has designated foreign language, regional expertise and cultural capabilities as "key enablers." This term is a more accurate description of these capabilities and aligns with other key enablers included in the

2010 Quadrennial Defense Review. As an ongoing process, the doctrine, policy, and guidance are reviewed to ensure the existence of adequate coverage for these capabilities.

The Department paid close attention to the HASC and Government Accountability Office's recommendation to develop a comprehensive foreign language, cultural awareness, and regional expertise strategy that includes the prioritization of efforts and resources. A draft DoD Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Capabilities Strategic Plan is currently in the senior-level formal coordination process. This actionable plan establishes three goals to move the Department's efforts beyond the initial foundation established by the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap and sets the strategic direction for the next six years.

This Committee and the Government Accountability Office also recommended that DoD focus on the need to improve deficiencies in the requirements generation process. The Department recognized the need to standardize the reporting of combatant commands' operational needs and for an established process to identify emerging and future capability requirements. We are in the final stages of a capabilities-based assessment to develop a standardized methodology for Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC) to identify and prioritize language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities required for their missions. The assessment also created a process to integrate, validate, and prioritize the GCC capability requirements in order to send clear demand signals to the Services, who are the force providers. The changes recommended by this assessment are being reviewed internally and are expected to be approved and implemented by the end of this calendar year.

The third recommendation was for the Services to use a secondary occupational code or special experience identifier for personnel who, while not language professionals, have validated language training/skills or regional expertise. Based on a task in the Roadmap, we can identify

qualified linguists and personnel with language skills who are not language professionals. While we can identify regional experts, i.e., Foreign Area Officers (FAO) and Regional Area Officers (RAO), through Service and DoD personnel data systems, we are not currently able to define and establish criteria to identify lower levels of regional expertise, which represent the majority of DoD personnel. However, we are continuing collaborative efforts to define and establish the criteria and processes to identify personnel who possess lower levels of regional proficiency. These lower levels of regional proficiency could be gained through training, education, experience or family heritage. Once the criteria are identified, the Services and DoD agencies will be able to capture this information in the data bases.

To address targeting ROTC language and culture grants, the National Security Education Program (NSEP) is our lead for implementing the ROTC Language and Culture Project grants to develop critical language programs. During 2008-2009, the Department expanded the Project Global Officer (GO) program, which provides funding through a competitive process to colleges and universities, which provide the Department with the largest number of officers through their ROTC programs. As a result of this initiative, Project GO has provided grants to 24 U.S. colleges and universities, including 5 Senior Military Colleges, to improve the languages, regional, and intercultural communication learning opportunity of future military officers. The project has funded over 480 domestic and overseas summer scholarships to ROTC students for critical language study and has supported university infrastructure development in critical languages of strategic interest to the Department, to include Arabic (all dialects), Chinese (Mandarin), Russian, Persian (Dari, Farsi, Tajik), Uzbek, Pashto, Swahili, Wolof, and Korean. Project GO is the only program offered for ROTC students to use to study critical languages domestically during the summer and for summer language study abroad.

There is a recognized advantage in gaining foreign language skills pre-accession. Therefore, DoD has focused on providing opportunities to encourage ROTC cadets and midshipmen to study a foreign language, particularly those of strategic interest to the Department. One incentive to encourage ROTC students is the Skill Proficiency Bonus, which was authorized in the FY 2009 National Defense Authorization Act. Eligible ROTC cadets and midshipmen may receive up to \$3,000 per year to pursue courses in a foreign language and/or cultural studies program relevant to the strategic needs of the Department. During the first year of partial execution, (Academic Year 2009) 29 students were paid the Skill Proficiency Bonus. We anticipate greater ROTC student participation in 2010, which will be the first complete academic year of the program.

In addition to the ROTC programs, the Service Academies continue to provide foreign language and cultural instruction for cadets and midshipmen to better prepare them for leadership roles in today's global environment. The United States Military Academy, United States Naval Academy and United States Air Force Academy all have robust programs that offer opportunities for cadets and midshipmen to travel and study abroad.

In response to the recommendation for DoD to improve the placement of NSEP Fellows into positions within the Department, we have implemented the Professional Development Program. This is a two-year pilot intern program, which allows NSEP Fellows non-competitive conversion to career or career-conditional status after successful completion of the program.

The Department has also placed greater emphasis on critical language and cultural programs in its own school system making it a model for producing students with language proficiency in critical languages. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) Foreign Language Program prepares kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to meet the

challenges of the world community by providing opportunities to develop communication proficiency in one or more foreign languages and to recognize the importance of other cultures. Students can select classes to communicate in multi-lingual and multi-cultural societies beginning with elementary school foreign language programs such as Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools (FLES), Partial Immersion and Host Nation. Languages in these programs include Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Turkish. DODEA requires a minimum of two years of foreign language in secondary schools for graduation and has developed distance learning and virtual school offerings as well as a unique hybrid cyber-school pilot program for Spanish heritage speakers.

The Department recognizes the importance of recruiting personnel with language abilities and regional or cultural expertise, maintaining their proficiency, and utilizing them in follow-on assignments to maximize their knowledge, skills, and abilities. All of the Services have heritage recruiting plans designed to meet their specific requirements. The Army's Interpreter-Translator or "Zero-Nine-Lima (09L)" program is the most extensively executed plan, which to date, has graduated approximately 1,000 soldiers from Advanced Individual Training. These soldiers have been (or are now) utilized in Iraq or Afghanistan. The Army is undertaking a pilot program with United States Africa Command and United States Pacific Command to generate interpreter-translators fluent in languages found in these geographic regions. The Army, Air Force, and Navy also recruit native and heritage speakers through the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) Pilot Program, which was launched in November 2008. This program recruits legal non-citizens with critical foreign language and cultural skills, as well as licensed healthcare professionals, and as an additional incentive, they receive expedited U.S. citizenship processing in return for their service. MAVNI recruits add significant foreign

language depth to the Department, as nearly 50 percent speak their target language at the General Professional Proficiency level or higher. Approximately 66 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher education and 30 percent possess a master's degree or higher. To date, the program has generated over 5,000 qualified language leads and 1,000 qualified healthcare professional leads.

#### **Issues for Further Study**

The committee report offered 11 issues for further study that suggested we look at training and education efforts across the Department to evaluate the similarities and differences in the policies and programs.

The Department places a high priority on recognizing and employing personnel with in-depth language, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities that will maximize utilization of these skills. For example, the Department recently launched the Afghanistan-Pakistan (AF/PAK) Hands program to create a core of approximately 730 military (and a small number of civilian personnel) with language and regional skills. The personnel assigned to this program are highly successful military and civilian personnel who have proven they are capable of performing at a very high level. They will rotate between relevant assignments in-theater and stateside.

Since the value of assessing foreign language skills as part of readiness cannot be overstated, the Department launched a comprehensive effort to improve language proficiency assessment. The Services have 474 operational test sites that deliver lower and upper range web-based tests in listening and reading. In FY 2009, a total of 104,340 web-delivered foreign language proficiency tests had been administered in listening and reading by the Services. There has also been a marked increase in the number of Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPIs)

administered throughout the force. The Department administered approximately 2,800 OPIs in FY 2008 and administered 9,900 in FY2009 and anticipates administering 14,000 in FY 2010. The Department is also developing very low range listening and reading tests as well as computer-delivered OPIs in response to increased demand. These tests will enable us to assess the full range of proficiency needed for language professionals as well as the General Purpose Force and Special Operations Force with greater fidelity.

The Department is working to develop a process to standardize procedures and establish criteria to assign regional proficiency skill levels and track them in DoD data bases as recommended by this Committee and the Government Accountability Office's June 2009 report. This effort is aligned with the regional expertise requirements procedures developed during the Language and Regional Expertise and Associated Culture Capabilities Based Assessment outlined earlier. The methodology should also generate the information needed to determine the best sources of language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities.

The Department has streamlined the language requirements submission process and improved the visibility of language assets present in the DoD inventory. As a result, we can better identify DoD personnel with language assets and match them against requirements.

The Department closely monitors the Service FAO programs and annually provides DoD senior leadership feedback from each of the Services. We continue to standardize, develop, and expand our Foreign Area Officer capacity and sustain these skills. In a related effort, in January 2010, the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence asked the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) to develop a pilot Civilian Foreign Area Specialists (CIVFAS) Program with the goal of identifying and developing a CIVFAS cohort over a five-year period. The establishment of a CIVFAS Program for the Defense Intelligence Enterprise complements the DoD FAO Program,

especially with the increasing demand for personnel with language skills and regional expertise at the professional level.

Another significant issue raised in the HASC report concerns the Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB). The purpose of the FLPB program is to encourage military personnel to identify, sustain, enhance and test their skills, thus increasing the Department's capability in strategic languages. The current FLPB program has been in effect for three years and pays a maximum of \$12,000 a year for sustaining the highest language skill proficiency levels and is one of the only incentive bonuses (or pays) that doesn't differentiate between Active Duty and Reserve service. We have initiated a review which starts this month and will run through June 2011 to determine the effectiveness of the current FLPB policy for military personnel and explore options to improve this program. Specifically, the review will include: (1) Service's FLPB programs and determine if there are any "best practices" that could be employed by all; (2) explore a variety of revised FLPB payment options that may encourage the military linguist to become 2/2, 2+/2+, and 3/3 skill level proficient, earlier in his or her career; (3) validating our current skill level certification and Strategic Language List processes; and (4) a comparison of compensation programs being offered to linguists in the private sector, to ensure the DoD military FLPB program remains "competitive." The National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) was launched in 2006. This initiative was an interagency collaboration involving the Departments of Defense, Education, and State as well as the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; it addressed the necessity to expand the pool of potential hires with competencies in languages critical to national security. The Department's contribution to the NSLI was primarily through the National Security Education Program's (NSEP) expansion of the Language Flagship initiative in high need critical languages, such as Arabic and Chinese, to



produce certified superior level graduates that may be hired by the federal government, particularly the national security community. Additionally, the National Language Service Corps is designed to provide immediate access to qualified language professionals during times of national need or emergency. It provides a pool of language-qualified personnel to augment steady-state resources.

Study abroad, cultural immersion, and personal relationships that enhance language learning and cultural awareness are also risk indicators that slow down the granting of security clearances. Consequently, the Department has determined that NSEP award recipients can be processed for clearances upon acceptance of their award as opposed to waiting until a position is offered and accepted. This allows processing to begin much earlier in the hiring cycle and speeds up the entire process.

Finally, we are examining language, regional, and cultural courses, the curricula, and programs of instruction for officer and enlisted Professional Military Education. The purpose of this task is to provide independent and objective analyses of language, regional and cultural content within Enlisted and Officer Professional Military Education and officer and enlisted accession programs across the Services and five DOD Regional Centers in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the language, regional and cultural education and training in meeting mission requirements, and what steps, if any, should be taken to address any gaps or shortcomings in these programs.

#### **Notable Defense Language Program Initiatives**

The Defense Language Program continues to mature and meet the needs of the war fighter. The Afghanistan Pakistan Hands (APH) program provides a cadre of experts who speak

the local language, are culturally aligned, and are focused on regional issues for an extended period of time. These experts enhance the region's engagement and communications, which are essential for strategic success. APH personnel rotate between positions in theater and out of theater that directly influence the U.S. strategy in the region. The program will create a core of approximately 730 military (and a small number of civilian personnel). As of May 2010, 86 APH have deployed and 103 are in training. The most recent graduating class demonstrated strong results. More than 78 percent of graduates achieved the elementary level proficiency of 1/1 or higher on the Interagency Language Roundtable scale) on the Defense Language Proficiency Test—a noteworthy accomplishment.

The demand for language training to meet the needs of the force has grown beyond traditional brick-and-mortar language institute methods. The Department has committed to an innovative, locally-provided, life-long learning approach, through the use of Multi-purpose Language Training Detachments (MPLTDs) and dedicated highly specialized Language Training Detachments (LTDs). To support the operational needs of the Total Force, the Department is investing \$33 million, over the Fiscal Year Defense Plan, to fund 10 LTDs at key continental United States (CONUS) locations to improve the language and cultural capabilities of the general purpose forces in support of major deployment operations.

Current operations have also placed heavier burdens on the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) than ever before. DLIFLC has met this challenge and is now an agile, globally focused institution capable of responding to immediate and urgent training demands. It currently operates 23 LTDs in 21 different locations. From October 2009 to the present, DLIFLC instructors have taught over 8,500 students in nonresident language training, provided nearly 43,000 students language familiarization training, and have shipped over 1.5

million language survival kits. Additionally, within three days of the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the DLIFLC supplied over 20,000 Language Survival Kits to troops deploying to Haiti. These tools proved extremely useful in enhancing communication between the Haitians and our Service men and women.

The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap directed the development of the Language Readiness Index (LRI) as part of the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS). The LRI is a strategic, near real-time, web-based tool that compares language capability inventory against requirements for Component missions and roles, allowing analysts to identify gaps in the Total Force. Senior leaders can use this tool to make informed decisions, develop risk assessments, examine risk mitigation measures, and shape the future force. LRI was used during the Department's responses to the recent earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, and Turkey. It not only identified what language capabilities were available in the force, but was also used to generate a by-name list of DoD personnel who spoke the language, where they were assigned, their language proficiency skill levels, and their availability.

It is a challenge to build the level of proficiency needed to support current operations, when most recruits or new employees have little or no prior language and cultural background. Therefore, we are making an investment today to strengthen the language and cultural message to future employees.

The State Roadmap Project represents an important federal-state partnership to explore how language education issues might be systematically addressed at the state and local level. This Roadmap effort represents a re-conceptualization of the approach to building, sustaining, and mainstreaming language learning into the educational process at the state and local level. The initial Roadmap projects include three states: Ohio, Oregon and Texas. Three existing

Language Flagship institutions, at Ohio State University, University of Oregon, and University of Texas, Austin, assisted and advised the States in their Roadmap development efforts. The ultimate goal of the State Roadmap Project is to serve broad national socio-economic, educational, and political interests more effectively by educating students to become globally competent.

The Department has initiated or completed numerous activities and studies to improve the level of language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities throughout the force. These actions range from emphasis on pre-accession language training in our nation's schools and in our Academy and ROTC programs, targeted recruiting, special pays, increased focus on better defining the requirements and the language talents we have in the Total Force. The result will be a full spectrum effort to institutionalize and grow these capabilities for our Force.

The goal is to ensure that DoD personnel and warfighters are prepared for 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges. More work remains to be done as we continue to seek creative solutions to these challenges. The results are worth the time and resources as commanders provide lessons learned about the successes gained due to having DoD personnel with the requisite language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capability.

Thank you for your continued support of language and culture.

United States Government Accountability Office

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**GAO**

Testimony  
Before the Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations, Committee on Armed  
Services, House of Representatives

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## MILITARY TRAINING

### Continued Actions Needed to Guide DOD's Efforts to Improve Language Skills and Regional Proficiency

Statement of Sharon L. Pickup  
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management



June 29, 2010

## MILITARY TRAINING

## Continued Actions Needed to Guide DOD's Efforts to Improve Language Skills and Regional Proficiency



Highlights of GAO-10-879T, a testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

Today, and in the foreseeable future, military operations require U.S. personnel to work alongside multinational partners and among local populations. The Department of Defense (DOD) has placed a greater emphasis on transforming language and regional proficiency capabilities, which includes cultural awareness. GAO's prior work has found that integrated strategic plans with measurable goals and funding priorities linked to goals can help guide organizational transformations. Decision makers also require complete information to identify capability gaps and assess risk.

This testimony summarizes GAO's prior work and recommendations on DOD's efforts to develop language skills and regional proficiency and the steps DOD has taken to implement our prior recommendations. Specifically, it addresses the extent to which DOD has (1) developed a strategic plan to guide its language and regional proficiency transformation efforts and (2) obtained the information it needs to identify capability gaps and assess risk. GAO's statement is based on a June 2009 report and work conducted during May 2010 through June 2010 to update the status of GAO's recommendations.

View GAO-10-879T or key components. For more information, contact Sharon Pickup at (202) 512-9619 or pickups@gao.gov.

## What GAO Found

DOD has taken steps to transform its language and regional proficiency capabilities, but it has not yet developed a comprehensive strategic plan to guide its transformation efforts. DOD established Senior Language Authorities within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the military services, and other components, developed a governance structure to provide internal oversight over transformation efforts, updated policies, and published a Defense Language Transformation Roadmap with broad goals and objectives. Each military service has also developed or is currently developing strategies using the roadmap as guidance or as a complementary document. However, GAO reported in June 2009 that not all objectives within the 2005 roadmap were measurable and that DOD had not identified the resources required to implement roadmap tasks or linked the roadmap to funding requests. In the absence of a comprehensive plan, GAO concluded it would be difficult for DOD to guide the military services as they develop their strategies and related training programs, and ensure these efforts were consistent with DOD-wide goals. Furthermore, DOD and Congress would lack information needed to assess progress toward a successful transformation and evaluate funding requests. GAO recommended that DOD develop a strategic plan that includes measurable performance goals and objectives and investment priorities. DOD agreed with this recommendation and estimated that a strategic plan would be completed by September 2009. In June 2010, DOD officials informed GAO that the plan is undergoing final review and approval.

DOD lacks the information needed to identify gaps in language and regional proficiency and to assess related risks. GAO reported in June 2009 that DOD had developed an inventory of its language capabilities for military personnel, but it did not yet have data on regional proficiency capabilities because DOD lacked an agreed-upon way to assess and validate these skills. GAO concluded that without complete information, DOD could not determine capability gaps and assess risk effectively and recommended that DOD establish a mechanism to assess and validate regional proficiency capabilities. DOD agreed with this recommendation. As of June 2010, DOD had not established such a mechanism. GAO also reported that DOD lacked a standardized methodology to aid DOD components in identifying language and regional proficiency requirements and, as a result, estimates of requirements varied widely. GAO concluded that without such a validated methodology, DOD would not have a reliable way to identify language and regional proficiency requirements. GAO recommended that DOD develop a validated methodology for identifying these requirements for all communities and all proficiency levels. DOD agreed, stating that it had two assessments underway intended to produce a standardized methodology. In June 2010, DOD officials told GAO that, based on the assessments, they had developed a methodology, which is being reviewed by senior DOD leaders.

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be here today to discuss our work on the Department of Defense's (DOD) efforts to improve the knowledge and skills of U.S. forces to speak foreign languages and acquire greater awareness of diverse cultures in countries and regions around the world.<sup>1</sup> Today and in the foreseeable future, military operations—including counterinsurgency and stability operations—require U.S. military personnel to work alongside multinational partners and interact with local populations in a variety of regions and contexts. Because of lessons learned from ongoing operations, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as changes in the overall security environment, DOD is placing greater emphasis on developing language and regional proficiency within its military and civilian workforce. In its 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, DOD concluded that U.S. forces would be able to perform their missions more effectively—both in the near term and against future adversaries—if they had more and better key enabling capabilities, including language expertise. Based on their operational experience, ground commanders have also expressed the same view. In particular, the former U.S. commander in Afghanistan stressed that language training is critical to conducting counterinsurgency operations and achieving success, and stated that language training is as important as marksmanship and other key training. Among other things, he called for military personnel in ground combat units to obtain a certain level of language proficiency and to better understand the Afghan culture. In May 2010, the Secretary of Defense reinforced the need for U.S. forces and DOD civilians to be prepared for the complexities of the operational environment in Afghanistan and Pakistan. To that end, the Secretary issued guidance, which included a statement about the need for aligned training, personnel processes, and programs to provide deploying units, leaders, and staffs with required language and cultural skills.

Congress, and this subcommittee in particular, has played a key role in emphasizing the importance of building language skills and regional proficiency in DOD, and in overseeing DOD's efforts. In addition to the subcommittee's study on the challenges DOD faces in building language

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<sup>1</sup>DOD uses various terms such as "regional proficiency," "regional expertise," "cultural awareness," and "cultural expertise" to refer to acquiring knowledge and skills to familiarize U.S. forces with customs, traditions, and political, social, and economic conditions and other aspects of foreign countries and regions. For the purposes of this report, we are using the term "regional proficiency" to encompass all of these terms, including cultural awareness.

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skills and cultural competencies in the military,<sup>2</sup> we have also evaluated DOD's progress in these areas. We issued two products, in November 2008 and June 2009, and in many cases reached similar conclusions and recommendations as your subcommittee.<sup>3</sup> In response to a mandate from the House Armed Services Committee, in the committee report accompanying the proposed Fiscal Year 2011 National Defense Authorization Act,<sup>4</sup> we will be continuing our work, and will be focusing more specifically on the efforts of the Army and Marine Corps to develop and implement language, regional expertise, and cultural awareness training plans for general purpose forces.

Today, you asked me to discuss our June 2009 report, and in particular, our recommendations and DOD's progress in implementing them. My testimony addresses the extent to which DOD has (1) developed a strategic plan to guide its language and regional proficiency transformation efforts and (2) obtained the information it needs to identify capability gaps and assess risks. In summary, because of the magnitude of such a large-scale organizational transformation, it is important that DOD have a comprehensive strategic plan with viable performance goals, objectives, and metrics for measuring progress. In order to identify potential gaps, assess risks, and develop viable mitigation strategies, DOD also needs complete information on its existing inventory of language and regional proficiency skills as well as validated requirements of its needs. Therefore, we recommended that DOD develop a comprehensive strategic plan for its language and regional proficiency transformation, establish a mechanism to assess the regional proficiency skills of its military and civilian personnel, and develop a methodology to identify its language and regional proficiency requirements. DOD agreed with our recommendations and has completed some actions, and has others underway. However, until it develops a strategic plan and has complete information on its inventory of language and regional proficiency skills

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<sup>2</sup>U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, *Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: DOD's Challenges in Today's Educational Environment* (November 2008).

<sup>3</sup>See GAO, *Defense Management: Preliminary Observations on DOD's Language and Cultural Awareness Capabilities*, GAO-09-176R (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 25, 2008), and *Military Training: DOD Needs a Strategic Plan and Better Inventory and Requirements Data to Guide Development of Language Skills and Regional Proficiency*, GAO-09-568 (Washington, D.C.: June 19, 2009).

<sup>4</sup>H.R. Rep. No. 111-491 at 259 (2010), which accompanied H.R. 5136.



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and related requirements, it will not have a sound basis for guiding its efforts or developing strategies to address any gaps in capabilities.

This statement is based on our June 2009 report.<sup>5</sup> In addition, our comments are based on information we obtained in May 2010 and June 2010 to update our prior work, including DOD's progress in implementing our recommendations. In particular, we obtained updated information from DOD officials regarding their efforts to develop a strategic plan and a methodology to identify language and regional proficiency requirements, among other things. All of the work was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, and our previously published report contains additional details on the scope and methodology for that review. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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<sup>5</sup>GAO-09-568.

**DOD Has Taken Steps to Transform Language and Regional Proficiency Capabilities, but Still Needs a Comprehensive Strategic Plan to Guide Its Efforts**

The Office of the Secretary of Defense has taken a number of steps over the past several years to transform its language and regional proficiency capabilities, including designating Senior Language Authorities within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the military services, and other DOD components; developing a governance structure; updating policies; and publishing the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap—the primary document that DOD has used to guide its efforts to date. The governance structure consists of a number of components, including the following:

- *Defense Language Steering Committee*: comprised of Senior Language Authorities from the military services and other DOD organizations and chaired by the DOD Senior Language Authority, the committee provides senior-level guidance regarding the language transformation effort and the development of DOD's language capabilities.<sup>6</sup>
- *Defense Language Action Panel*: comprised of less-senior representatives from the same entities represented on the Defense Language Steering Committee, the panel supports the activities, functions, and responsibilities of the Defense Language Steering Committee.
- *Defense Language Office*: provides strategic direction and programmatic oversight to the DOD components on present and future requirements related to language as well as regional and cultural proficiency, and supports the DOD Senior Language Authority in carrying out their assigned responsibilities.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to setting up a governance structure, DOD published the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap in 2005, and in this document established overarching goals and desired outcomes. DOD considered

<sup>6</sup>The Defense Language Steering Committee includes representatives from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller); Office of the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics; the Office of the Director, Program Analysis and Evaluation; the combatant commands; the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force; the Defense Intelligence Agency; the Defense Security Cooperation Agency; the Defense Threat Reduction Agency; the National Security Agency; and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency.

<sup>7</sup>The Director of the Defense Language Office, within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, has been designated as the DOD Senior Language Authority.

these outcomes to be the same as objectives. Table 1 below shows the roadmap's goals and selected objectives.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 1: DOD Goals and Selected Objectives for Language and Regional Proficiency Capabilities Transformation**

Goals	Objectives
Create foundational language and regional proficiency in the civilian, officer, and enlisted ranks for both Active and Reserve Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOD has personnel with language skills capable of responding as needed for peacetime and wartime operations with the correct levels of proficiency.</li> <li>• The total force understands and values the tactical, operational, and strategic asset inherent in regional proficiency and language.</li> <li>• Regional area education is incorporated into Professional Military Education and Development.</li> </ul>
Create capacity to surge language and regional proficiency resources beyond these foundational and in-house capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOD has the ability to provide language and regional proficiency support to operational units when needed.</li> </ul>
Establish a cadre of language specialists possessing general -professional proficiency* for reading, listening, and speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOD understands the numbers of personnel and levels of proficiency and performance required for tasks involving general-professional-proficiency-level and below language skills, and the DOD components have established career paths and training plans to get the right people to the correct proficiency level.</li> <li>• Programs are in place to train personnel to achieve a general-professional-proficiency level or higher, along with specialized professional skills, where required to support DOD specified tasks.</li> <li>• Programs are in place to train personnel to achieve a general-professional-proficiency level or below to support DOD language-specified tasks.</li> </ul>
Establish a process to track the accession, separation, and promotion rates of language professionals and Foreign Area Officers <sup>8</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military personnel with language skills and Foreign Area Officers are developed and managed as critical strategic assets.</li> <li>• All services have established professional career tracks for Foreign Area Officers and promote Foreign Area Officers competitively.</li> <li>• DOD oversight ensures the effective tracking and management of these strategic assets.</li> </ul>

Source: DOD.

Notes: Data are from the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap.

\*General-professional proficiency for reading is the ability to read with almost complete comprehension; for listening is the ability to understand a standard dialect; and for speaking is the ability to speak with sufficient vocabulary for most formal and informal conversations.

<sup>8</sup>According to DOD, Foreign Area Officers are commissioned officers who, in addition to their primary military specialty, also possess a combination of strategic focus, regional expertise, cultural awareness, and foreign language skill.

<sup>8</sup>In addition to these goals and objectives, the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap contains five separate objectives specifically for the transformation of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. This center provides DOD-wide foreign language education, training, evaluation, and proficiency enhancement.

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For each roadmap goal, DOD identified several tasks that it planned to complete in support of the objectives, and assigned responsibility to various organizations for initiating efforts to complete the tasks. For example, to support the goal of creating foundational language and regional area expertise, one of the tasks DOD identified was to publish an annual Strategic Language List. This list reflects languages for which DOD has current and projected requirements and for which it intends to allocate resources, such as to provide training and testing, and pay incentives. The Defense Language Office has been responsible for monitoring completion of the roadmap tasks, which totaled 43 tasks. As of June 2010, DOD officials stated that they had completed all of the tasks except one related to developing policy and doctrine, which they consider to be an ongoing effort.

Using the roadmap as guidance or a complementary document, each military service has developed or is in the process of developing a service-specific strategy for language and regional-proficiency transformation. These strategies are intended, in part, to guide service training efforts. The military services provide predeployment training to general purpose forces—the amount of which depends on the unit's mission and the amount of time available for such training as articulated by the commander of the unit. The services have established centers to assist in coordinating, developing, distributing, and providing basic language and regional proficiency training and have also taken steps to incorporate language and regional proficiency into their professional military education for general purpose forces.

Our prior work has shown that for a strategic plan to be helpful, it should contain certain key elements, such as measurable performance goals and objectives and funding priorities that are linked to goals.<sup>9</sup> Table 2 below further discusses these elements.

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<sup>9</sup>See, for example, GAO, *Status of Department of Defense Efforts to Develop a Management Approach to Guide Business Transformations*, GAO-09-272R (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 9, 2009); *Defense Business Transformation: A Full-time Chief Management Officer with a Term Appointment Is Needed at DOD to Maintain Continuity of Effort and Achieve Sustainable Success*, GAO-08-132T (Washington, DC.: Oct. 16, 2007); *Defense Business Transformation: Achieving Success Requires a Chief Management Officer to Provide Focus and Sustained Leadership*, GAO-07-1072 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 5, 2007).

**Table 2: Key Strategic Planning Elements for Language and Regional Proficiency Transformation**

Planning element	Description
Measurable performance goals and objectives	Establish long-term goals that identify expected results and when to expect such results. Set forth specific, measurable, and time-bound objectives linked to long-term goals to measure progress toward achieving these goals.
Funding priorities linked to goals	Identify funding priorities and link to goals to assist with organizational, congressional, and executive branch funding decisions.

Source: GAO.

While the roadmap did establish goals and desired outcomes, which DOD considered to be objectives, we found they had some limitations, and that other key planning elements were missing. For example:

- Some goals and objectives in DOD's roadmap were not measurable or time-bound. For example, one of DOD's objectives is for the total force to understand and value the tactical, operational, and strategic asset inherent in regional expertise and language. However, we reported that DOD does not define how it intends to measure the total force's understanding of language and regional expertise or provide a time frame for achieving the objective. In the absence of measurable objectives, DOD officials assessed progress toward goals and objectives by tracking the number of associated roadmap tasks that they consider to be fully operational, meaning DOD's Senior Language Authority had determined the intent of the task had been met. However, this approach focused solely on the achievement of specific tasks rather than the extent to which the outcome of these tasks reflected progress toward language and regional proficiency transformation goals. We also reported that DOD considered a task fully operational before the task was complete, which further complicated DOD's ability to measure progress toward goals and objectives. For example, DOD considered the roadmap task that assigned responsibility to the Secretary of the Army to create courses for emerging language needs to be fully operational because a plan to build these courses had been developed. However, at the time, the Army had not yet established the courses and DOD did not continue to formally track the Army's efforts.
- DOD had also not identified the resources required to implement the tasks in the roadmap or linked the roadmap to its funding requests. In short, the roadmap did not contain any funding information; therefore, DOD had not identified the total cost of its transformation effort. In its annual budget requests, DOD had requested funding for 22 major language and regional proficiency programs that it considered to be priorities, as reflected in what it calls the Defense Language Program

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of Record. However, the two documents were not clearly linked; therefore we were unable to determine how the 22 programs related to the tasks and activities outlined in the roadmap.

At the time of our work, DOD recognized that the roadmap was not a true strategic plan, and that the department had reached a point with its transformation efforts where such a plan was needed.

In the absence of a comprehensive strategic plan that includes measurable performance goals and objectives, funding priorities linked to goals, and accountability for achieving results, we concluded it would be difficult for DOD to guide the military services as they develop and implement their strategies, and supporting programs and activities, and also to ensure these efforts were synchronized and consistent with departmentwide goals. Furthermore, for both the department and Congress, the lack of a comprehensive plan would make it difficult to develop or evaluate funding requests, respectively, and assess progress towards achieving successful transformation of language and regional proficiency capabilities. Therefore, we recommended that DOD develop a strategic plan with all the key elements I have mentioned. In its comments, DOD agreed and stated that it planned to complete a strategic plan by September 2009, which it referred to as the Defense Language and Regional Program Strategic Plan for 2010-2015. Our latest information from DOD officials, as of this month, is that the plan has been drafted and is undergoing final review and approval. They expect to publish the plan later this year and told us it will include elements such as performance goals, objectives, and funding priorities linked to goals. They stated that an implementation plan with metrics to measure progress will be published at a later date. While a specific milestone has not been established, it will be important that DOD complete this action quickly.

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**DOD Has Not Fully Developed the Information It Needs to Identify Gaps in Language and Regional Proficiency and Assess Risk**

In addition to a comprehensive strategic plan, it is important for DOD to have complete information on the current level of language and regional proficiency within its forces as well as the requirements for these capabilities. With this knowledge, the department can identify gaps and assess risks. Risk assessment helps decision makers identify and evaluate potential risks so that alternatives can be designed and implemented to mitigate that risk. It also allows them to prioritize needs and allocate resources based on such factors as strategic, operational, and financial considerations. At the time of our June 2009 report, DOD had efforts underway to gather inventory data and define requirements, but did not

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yet have complete information. Since then, DOD has made some progress in each of these areas.

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**Availability of Inventory Data on Language and Regional Proficiency within DOD**

At the time of our June 2009 report, DOD was in the process of developing a strategic management tool called the Language Readiness Index. Once fully operational, DOD expects this tool to contain inventory and requirements data on the language and regional proficiency capabilities of military, civilian, and contractor personnel. By matching the inventory and requirements data, DOD intends to be able to determine potential gaps in capabilities and assess risk to its ability to conduct current military operations as well as potential future military operations. At the time of our prior report, DOD had obtained information on military personnel language skills through a combination of testing, referred to as the Defense Language Proficiency Test, and through service members voluntarily sharing or "self reporting" information in personnel records. This information, which includes the name of the foreign language and the skill level—as measured on a scale from 0 (no proficiency) to 5 (educated native proficiency)—with respect to speaking, listening, and reading, had been incorporated into the Language Readiness Index. However, DOD had not yet incorporated information about the language skills of DOD civilians and contract linguists in the Language Readiness Index, but planned to do so.

We also reported that DOD did not yet have a complete inventory of the regional proficiency skills of all service members or DOD civilians. Instead, DOD only identified and tracked those military members serving in specific occupations requiring a high level of regional proficiency, such as Foreign Area Officers.<sup>19</sup> DOD guidance provided regional proficiency skill level guidelines—measured on a scale from 0 (prenovice) to 5 (expert)—intended to provide DOD components with benchmarks for assessing regional proficiency needs, developing regional proficiency curricula, and assessing DOD-wide regional proficiency capabilities. However, these guidelines did not provide measurable definitions that would allow for testing of particular regional proficiency levels. Unlike language proficiency skill levels, which have been defined and can be measured, DOD had found it difficult to define the elements needed to

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<sup>19</sup>According to DOD, Foreign Area Officers are commissioned officers who, in addition to their primary military specialty, also possess a combination of strategic focus, regional expertise, cultural awareness, and foreign language skill.

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assess regional proficiency levels because such a definition must take into account knowledge and experience of historical, political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic factors across many global regions or specific foreign countries. Thus, DOD did not have a way to test or otherwise evaluate the skills of service members or DOD civilians in accordance with the regional proficiency guidelines in order to develop an inventory of regional proficiency skills. Furthermore, DOD had not established milestones for developing the ability to evaluate regional proficiency skills.

Because DOD did not have complete information on the regional proficiency capabilities of its military and civilian workforce or a method to evaluate proficiency levels, we concluded it could not determine capability gaps and assess risk effectively. Furthermore, DOD did not have the information it needed to inform its strategic planning for language and regional proficiency transformation. Therefore, we recommended that DOD establish a mechanism to assess and validate the full range of regional proficiency capabilities of service members and DOD civilians—including the development of measurable definitions and milestones to achieve an assessment—and incorporate the information into the Language Readiness Index.

DOD agreed with this recommendation, stating that it would provide definitions and other guidance by March 2010 that would enable the services and defense agencies to measure and determine appropriate regional proficiency levels. As of June 2010, DOD officials told us they had incorporated additional information about the language skills of DOD civilians in the Language Readiness Index and are examining the legal considerations of gathering information for contract linguists. However, DOD has not yet established a mechanism to assess and validate regional proficiency skills. DOD officials stated that they had recently commissioned a study and established an internal working group to address this issue, but they noted that defining and measuring regional proficiency is a difficult undertaking that has taken longer than originally estimated. DOD anticipates completing its study on regional proficiency by September 2011.

Status of DOD's Efforts to Determine Language and Regional Proficiency Requirements

Having complete inventory data is important, but equally important is the need to match this inventory to valid requirements. In June 2009, we reported that DOD had developed a process to enable combatant commanders, the military services, and other organizations to submit their language and regional proficiency requirements. They were to identify information such as the level of the language proficiency needed, level of



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the regional proficiency needed, the occupational specialty needed, the desired number, and the desired source for filling the need. Although DOD outlined this process, it did not require the organizations to use a particular methodology for identifying this information, instead leaving it to the discretion of the organizations as to how they determined their requirements. In the absence of a validated methodology, estimates of requirements differed widely, especially by the combatant commands. For example, as of February 2008, the requirements of U.S. Pacific Command outnumbered the requirements of all other combatant commands combined. This variance occurred primarily because U.S. Pacific Command had included low-level language and regional proficiency requirements associated with general purpose forces, such as language or regional proficiency skills at proficiency levels 0 or 1, while others did not.

Without a validated methodology that was consistently applied by all organizations, DOD did not have a reliable means to identify language and regional proficiency requirements. Therefore, we recommended that DOD develop a transparent, validated methodology to aid in the identification of language and regional proficiency requirements and that its scope should include all communities, such as general purpose forces, human-intelligence collectors, signal-intelligence analysis, Foreign Area Officers, and DOD civilians, and all proficiency levels from the lowest levels to the highest levels. DOD agreed with this recommendation, noting that it planned to complete two assessments by November 2009 that would identify a validated process to prioritize and refine DOD's foreign language and regional expertise requirements and produce a standardized methodology to measure risk of identified gaps and shortfalls. At that time, DOD noted that given the 90-day window it had established to conduct these assessments, the scope of the assessment would be narrower than what our recommendation called for. As of June 2010, DOD officials told us these assessments were completed and that the results were used to develop a validated methodology for determining language and regional proficiency requirements. Once approved by senior leaders—estimated to occur later this year—officials stated the methodology will be codified in DOD guidance and that the Joint Staff would provide training to the combatant commands on how to apply it. Officials stated that it would then take an additional several months for the combatant commands to determine the language and regional proficiency capability requirements. Because it is not yet approved, we have been unable to review or assess the methodology.

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**Concluding  
Observations**

To respond to the evolving security environment, DOD conducts a set of complex and wide-ranging missions, such as irregular warfare, counterinsurgency, stability operations, and nonwarfighting activities. DOD has acknowledged the need to build and maintain certain fundamental capabilities, such as language and regional proficiency capabilities, which the department has deemed critical to success in these operations. Accordingly, DOD and the military services have undertaken various initiatives aimed at transforming language and regional proficiency capabilities. However, DOD has not yet produced a comprehensive strategic plan to guide and synchronize these efforts, including aligning service-level strategies with departmentwide goals, and it does not yet have complete inventory and requirements data needed to properly assess gaps and risks. As a result, DOD is not in a sound position to determine the appropriate scope and nature of its efforts to achieve desired goals, measure progress, and make informed investment decisions. As DOD completes its efforts to develop a strategic plan and capture complete language and regional proficiency and inventory and requirements data, it is essential that the department and the military services review and make necessary adjustments to their approaches and ensure that future funding requests are aligned accordingly.

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Mr. Chairman this concludes my statement. I look forward to answering any questions that you or other members of the subcommittee may have at this time.

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**GAO Contact and  
Staff  
Acknowledgments**

For further information on this testimony, please contact Sharon Pickup at (202) 512-9619 or at pickups@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this statement. Individuals making key contributions to this testimony include Patricia Lentini, Assistant Director; Edward Anderson; Gabrielle Carrington; Nicole Harms; Susan Langley; Terry Richardson; Rebecca Rygg; Matthew Ullengren; and Chris Watson.

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**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING  
THE HEARING**

JUNE 29, 2010

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### RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY DR. SNYDER

Ms. WEAVER. In FY 2010, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) offered four programs that educate students in a foreign language. The programs are Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES), Partial Immersion, Host Nation, and Middle and High School Foreign Language programs. The estimated cost for these DoDEA programs in FY 2010 is \$79 million.

- Elementary School Programs include FLES Spanish: Taught in 63 DoDEA elementary schools in grades K–3 with 12,000 students and approximately 102 teachers. Students receive up to 90 minutes of Spanish each week by a certified Spanish teacher.
- Partial Immersion Programs are located in Pacific and Europe schools. There are 40 classrooms in 14 elementary schools with an estimated 800 students and approximately 40 teachers. Programs are taught in the languages of German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. Students are in a typical elementary classroom learning core subjects for half the day in the immersion language.
- Host Nation programs are located in Pacific and Europe schools and taught to all students in the elementary schools to 10,000 students. There are 76 Host Nation (HN) cultural enrichment programs in 11 countries: Bahrain, Belgium, England, Guam, Korea, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Okinawa, Spain, and Turkey. Languages are Arabic, Chamorro, Dutch, British English, French, Italian, German, Japanese, Korean, Italian, Spanish, and Turkish. Students are in a Host Nation classroom for at least 45 minutes of instruction each week.
- Middle and high school Foreign Language (FL) courses are also offered in all DoDEA middle and high schools through face-to-face and virtual classes taught by 486 teachers. Each year, approximately 16,000 students take a FL course for credit including students taking classes taken through the Virtual High School. Classes are offered from Level I through Levels V/VI & AP/IB in Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian, Korean, German, Japanese, Spanish, and Turkish.

In addition, the Department of Defense provides approximately \$750,000 a year, through the National Security Education Program's (NSEP) Language Flagship effort, to support K–12 language programs and is funded through Fiscal Year 2015. As an integral part of the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), the Department of Defense agreed to fund 3 pilot models of articulated K–12 language instruction. These programs are funded through NSEP Flagship programs at the University of Oregon, Ohio State University, and Michigan State University.

In partnership with the Department of Defense in the NSLI initiative, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the Department of State also provide support to the K–12 programs. ODNI commits, annually, more than \$10 Million to the STARTALK program which is designed to train K–12 language teachers and offer summer immersion opportunities for high school students. STARTALK's purpose is to increase the number of Americans learning, speaking, and teaching strategically important foreign languages to the Nation. The Department of State also commits significant funds to middle school and high school students studying overseas for summers, semesters, and full academic years. [See page 11.]





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**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING**

JUNE 29, 2010

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### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY DR. SNYDER

Dr. SNYDER. In your oral testimony you stated that the Department is in the final stages of coordination of the plan that will provide strategic direction for language learning and cultural awareness for the next six years? When do you anticipate this coordination being complete?

Ms. WEAVER. The Department of Defense Strategic Plan for Language Skills, Regional Expertise, and Cultural Capabilities has been coordinated at the component senior leadership level. We are currently adjudicating all inputs received. The final version of the plan will be forwarded through the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD (P&R)) to the Deputy Secretary of Defense for approval before the end of 2010.

Dr. SNYDER. While this strategic plan has been in the drafting and coordination phases, two of services have issued, and one is close to issuing, their strategic visions for foreign language and cultural awareness training absent current written guidance from the Department. What factors have contributed to what appears to have been a delay?

Ms. WEAVER. The factors that contributed to the current timeline are the following:

- a) The Services current strategic plans were written with input from the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap (DLTR) and emerging Service needs.
- b) The Department began development of a strategic plan that would continue transformation of language and culture, building on the achievements of the DLTR.
- c) A Department-wide working group, consisting of representatives from the Services, Defense Agencies, Joint Staff, and Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), developed this plan, with periodic review and guidance from the Defense Language Steering Committee.

This plan has been developed along a timeline to ensure it conformed to key strategic planning documents, to include the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report, and the 2010 Defense Planning and Programming Guidance. The Services that have not yet issued a strategic plan will use this plan as well as other strategic documents to update their specific vision for language and regional awareness goals and objectives.

Dr. SNYDER. What challenges does the Department face in developing the same framework for determining requirements and assessing current capabilities for cultural awareness and regional expertise that it has presently have for language skills?

Ms. WEAVER. The primary challenge the Department faces is that the assessment tools used to determine an individual's regional expertise and culture proficiency are not as mature. In order to address this challenge, the Department has recently developed a conceptual framework and methodology for determining the regional expertise and cultural capability requirements. We will test the framework and methodology through a Capabilities-Based Assessment (CBA). The CBA will evaluate the Joint Mission Essential Task List relevant to each COCOM mission, determine the requirements, and express the demand in terms of the degree of capability required to accomplish the task. These demands will then be prioritized and sent to the force providers (in most cases the Military Services), who will then recruit, train, and educate personnel in order to meet those demands. This will be the first time the Department has conducted a requirements generation and reporting process for regional and cultural skills.

In order to identify existing capability within the Department, we are continuing to develop procedures for assessing an individual's regional (and associated cultural) proficiency. The assessments will include education and discipline of study, frequency and duration of assignments in the region, jobs performed while in the region, as well as personal travel, family background history, etc.

Dr. SNYDER. In your written testimony you stated that the initial state roadmap projects include three states: Ohio, Oregon, and Texas. How much funding has the Department provided for the development of state roadmaps?

Ms. WEAVER. In FY 2008, Congress appropriated \$1M to the Department of Defense to support federal language coordination. DoD reached an agreement with Congress that the Department, through the National Security Education Program (NSEP), would apply these funds to an effort that would launch three pilot state roadmaps for language education. These roadmap efforts were launched in Ohio, Oregon, and Texas with the one-time \$1M appropriations. Since FY08, NSEP has continued to coordinate and support implementation of key recommendations of the three roadmaps with no additional congressional support. In FY 2009 NSEP allocated \$223,000 and in FY 2010 \$100,000, chiefly out of NSEP's Flagship budget for the development of these state roadmap projects.

Dr. SNYDER. In your written testimony you stated that the Department has implemented a two-year professional development pilot program for National Security Education Program (NSEP) fellows to assist fellows in competing for positions in the government related to their language skills and regional expertise. How many NSEP fellows have taken advantage of the pilot?

Ms. WEAVER. Currently, six NSEP interns are participating in this pilot Professional Development Program (PDP): four Foreign Affairs Specialists (Office of the Secretary of Defense, Virginia) and two Foreign Language Instructors (United States Air Force Academy, Colorado).

Dr. SNYDER. In your written testimony you stated that the validated methodologies will be based on the combatant commander "steady state postures." The current framework was not responsive to the needs of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. It appears that neither U.S. Central Command nor the Joint Staff anticipated the foreign language training directed by General McChrystal's November 10, 2009 memorandum, which came eight years into the war. How will the Joint Staff incorporate agility into this peacetime process?

General GOLDEN. We initiated the capability based assessments because we lacked a standardized framework to determine requirements. The methodology that we developed will build an unprecedented global baseline of requirements for language, regional expertise and culture. Requirements drive training, education, recruitment and retention. Until requirements are documented, the only drivers for education and training are those tied primarily to intelligence or foreign area officer billets and those determined by individual commanders. Agility will be enabled by identifying requirements in advance.

Dr. SNYDER. In your oral testimony you stated that the Joint Staff has oversight of two capabilities-based assessments, one by the Army for foreign language and one by the Navy for culture, to develop standardized methodologies for the combatant commands to establish requirements. What is the status of these two efforts? When will they be completed? What factors have contributed to what appears to have been a prolonged process? Given Secretary Gate's May 24, 2010 memorandum on endorsing General McChrystal's counterinsurgency training guidance, has the Joint Staff considered advancing the timeline and expediting the current schedule?

General GOLDEN. A single methodology to determine language, regional expertise and culture has been developed and fully coordinated with the Services and Combatant Commands. Coordination at all levels has been crucial. This effort is unprecedented. It has been a complex undertaking, because it is critical that it address global requirements, apply to each geographic combatant command and provide a refined and targeted signal to the Services for force development.

We will accelerate the timeline where possible. The first step is identifying requirements for Steady State Security Postures (SSSPs). This will be arduous and cannot be accelerated. However due to the criticality of this effort, we have eliminated about six months from the original implementation plan by beginning the identification of surge requirements immediately after collecting the SSSP requirements. Thereafter, this will be an iterative process where we will continue to refine requirements and respond to changing priorities.

Dr. SNYDER. When will the combatant commanders start using the validated methodologies?

General GOLDEN. Between October and December 2010, a Joint Staff facilitation team will visit each geographic combatant command to train participants in the methodology and facilitate the identification of requirements for the initial Steady State Security Postures. Then each combatant command will complete the identification of requirements for their remaining SSSPs. This work should be completed by Sprint 2011.

Dr. SNYDER. The House version of the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act directed the Government Accountability Office to review the services' language, cultural awareness, and regional expertise training. What is the status of this review? What preliminary issues and questions will you be looking at?

Ms. PICKUP. The committee report accompanying the proposed Fiscal Year 2011 National Defense Authorization Act<sup>1</sup> directs the Comptroller General of the United States to review the services' language, regional expertise, and cultural awareness training plans for general purpose forces. Specifically, because of the continued presence of the Army and Marine Corps in Iraq and Afghanistan, where missions typically require close contact with foreign populations, the mandate directs GAO to focus on DOD's ground forces.

We began our work with DOD in response to the mandate on July 1, 2010. To date, we have conducted meetings with the Office of the Secretary of Defense; Headquarters, Department of the Army; and Headquarters, United States Marine Corps. We plan to conduct additional meetings with these offices and we expect to visit the services' force providers, training commands, and lessons learned centers, as well as U.S. Central Command and U.S. Joint Forces Command. We also plan to visit selected units that are training for, or which have recently returned from, missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In general, we will be reviewing the progress of the two services in implementing training programs in support of their goal to develop forces that are more language capable and have a better understanding of the cultures and regions around the world. Our specific preliminary objectives in conducting this review are to determine (1) how the Army and Marine Corps define training requirements for language proficiency, regional expertise, and cultural awareness; (2) the extent to which training requirements in these areas have been integrated into predeployment training and other joint exercises, and the metrics, if any, that have been developed to evaluate the impact of this training; (3) the challenges, if any, that the services face in implementing training requirements for language proficiency, regional expertise, and cultural awareness; and (4) the extent to which the services have incorporated lessons learned from ongoing operations regarding language proficiency, regional expertise, and cultural awareness into training programs.

Dr. SNYDER. Service academy majors in fields related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) typically take fewer foreign language courses than their humanities and social science counterparts. The Naval Academy, unlike the Military Academy and Air Force Academy, does not require STEM majors to take any foreign language. This seems incongruous with the growing importance of language skills in maritime operations. Given the Academy's goal of graduating 65% STEM majors, what is the Navy's rationale for the majority of its Academy graduates entering the service with no foreign language proficiency?

Admiral HOLLOWAY. Navy has taken a hard and critical look at the courses required of Midshipmen, and has determined that U. S. Naval Academy's academic program best serves the skills needed by officers to support the nation's maritime missions. The current academic balance is supported completely by Navy's Foreign Language Office. It is correct that the Academy's goal is to graduate 65% STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) majors, and those majors have no language requirement. However, the Academy does have vigorous and relevant language and regional studies programs. The language studies department provides not only foreign language training, but a foreign language education by offering language major and minor programs in Arabic and Mandarin Chinese, and language minors in Russian, Japanese, French, German, and Spanish.

Enrollments in languages and cultures at the Naval Academy have increased. For the current Fall Semester, 1,552 midshipmen, one third of the Brigade, are enrolled in language courses in the Department of Languages and Cultures. The department was renamed to reflect more accurately its double emphasis: enhanced language capabilities and intercultural competence/cross-cultural dynamism. The Class of 2010 produced 155 minors (seven were dual minors), four Chinese majors, and nine Arabic majors. A major requires 14 3-credit hour courses, ten of which have to be taught in the target language, e.g., Arabic or Chinese.

Foreign Language education focuses simultaneously on increased language capabilities and cultural competencies through the study of courses such as Window on Arabic Culture, Arabic Discourse in Modern Society, Modern Arabic Literature, Chinese Culture through Films, Twentieth-Century Chinese Literature, and Intercultural Communication. The Academy's Political Science Department has expanded its academic offerings to include courses such as Middle East International Politics, Asia International Politics, Islam and Politics in Southeast Asia, and National Security Policy of Japan.

Navy has implemented language study in other commissioning programs. To encourage critical foreign language and regional studies, Navy established the Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) Academic Major program for the

<sup>1</sup>H.R. Rep. No. 111-491 at 259 (2010), which accompanied H.R. 5136.

Senior Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps. Its purpose is to encourage select NROTC Midshipmen to pursue language and regional studies majors. The set goal for the program is to produce 20–30 Midshipmen graduates annually. Those selected to participate will major and minor in LREC course disciplines deemed critical by the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. In its first year of implementation, 18 NROTC Midshipmen were enrolled. Areas on which students may focus include Arabic, Chinese, French, Hausa, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish as well as related regional studies, political science, and international relations.

While Navy does not direct that its STEM majors participate in foreign language courses, given the rigor of those curricula, we remain confident our commissioning accession requirements, both via the Naval Academy and NROTC, are appropriately prioritized to provide the right balance of skills needed in its officer corps to successfully perform the nation's maritime missions.

Dr. SNYDER. Is your service paying foreign language proficiency pay to personnel outside the military linguist or foreign area officer career paths? If so, to whom and at what levels? What is your service's policy for paying its special operations forces?

Admiral HOLLOWAY. Navy pays the Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) to a substantial number of personnel beyond career linguist categories. Full FLPB is paid to all members who test at the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) L2/R2 proficiency levels or higher for all languages on the Department of Defense Strategic Language List (SLL), except those that have been declared Dominant in the Force (DIF), e. g., Spanish, French. Eligible members receive FLPB regardless of designator, rating, or billet assignment.

Navy pays what it terms "Expeditionary FLPB" to Sailors assigned to Navy special operations and expeditionary forces at the L1/R1 proficiency levels. Those forces include all designators and ratings assigned to the Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC), Naval Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC), Fleet Marine Force (FMF), the Health Services Augmentation Program (HASP), and to the Afghanistan-Pakistan (AFPAK) Hands program.

Navy also pays FLPB at the L1/R1 levels for contingency situations including emergent, unplanned, or ad hoc operations for which an individual's foreign language skills are required to facilitate or enable the command's mission.

Dr. SNYDER. Is foreign language proficiency a consideration for promotion for officers outside of the linguist or foreign area officer career paths? Does your service have any flag officer positions, apart for those normally filled by foreign area officers, for which language proficiency is a consideration for selection and assignment?

Admiral HOLLOWAY. Foreign language proficiency has been called out in the precepts for all officer promotion boards and enlisted advancement selection boards to ensure these highly sought after skills receive appropriate recognition. Navy currently does not have any Unrestricted Line Flag Officer positions requiring language proficiencies, however, we recently initiated a program that offers language training and culture information products to all Flag Officers enroute overseas assignments. Opportunities under this program include the offer of tutors, language learning software, and language survival kits. The program has been endorsed at the highest levels of Navy leadership and to date has been received with overwhelming and positive response. Navy also recently designated its first Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Flag Officer—skilled in Russian at ILR levels L1+/R2.

Dr. SNYDER. Is your service paying foreign language proficiency pay to personnel outside the military linguist or foreign area officer career paths? If so, to whom and at what levels? What is your service's policy for paying its special operations forces?

General LONGO. Yes, the Army pays a foreign language proficiency bonus (FLPB) to Soldiers outside the Linguist or Foreign Area Officer (FAO) career paths. Governed by Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 7280.03, the DoD Financial Management Regulation 7000.14–R, Volume 7A, Chapter 19, and Army Regulation 11–6 (Army Foreign Language Program) any Soldier, regardless of military occupational specialty (MOS), assignment, or rank can be certified to receive FLPB by achieving a score of 2 or higher in reading and a 2 or higher in writing on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). Soldiers may receive entitlements for proficiency in multiple languages; however the annual FLPB entitlement may not exceed \$12,000 or \$1,000 monthly. Each Soldier must test annually in each language for which they are receiving FLPB to continue receiving payment.

The FLPB is also paid to Soldiers who demonstrate a Level 2 or higher proficiency of two of the three modalities (reading, listening and speaking) in a dominant language (Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian, German, and Italian) or maintain that proficiency level in any of the languages on the Department of Defense Strategic Language list, which is annually updated by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In order to receive a FLPB in these two categories, the following criteria must be met:

- a. Soldier must possess a "language dependent MOS and one of these languages must be their Control Language", or
- b. Soldier must be attending military education as a student and the course is taught "exclusively" in this language or Soldier is an Instructor teaching this language "exclusively," or
- c. Soldier must be assigned to a position on the unit military table of equipment or TDA that the billet is "specifically" coded for this language.

Army Special Forces (SF) receive foreign language training as part of the SF curriculum. In addition to basic language training, Soldiers in the SF community are each assigned a control language for which they receive FLPB. Some SF Soldiers are also in "language coded billets" for which they are paid FLPB. The same FLPB regulations and FLPB payment requirements apply to these Soldiers as it does for the rest of the general purpose force.

Dr. SNYDER. Is foreign language proficiency a consideration for promotion for officers outside of the linguist or foreign area officer career paths? Does your service have any flag officer positions, apart for those normally filled by foreign area officers, for which language proficiency is a consideration for selection and assignment?

General LONGO. Foreign language proficiency is not a consideration for promotion for officers (01-06) outside of the linguist or foreign area officer career paths. Additionally, there are no general officer billets that have a language requirement.

Dr. SNYDER. You stated that the Air Force looks at culture in our professional military education as a foundation for culture general, and that it goes all the way from junior ROTC to the Senior Service College. Can you describe the general culture material in the junior ROTC curricula? How does it compare to what recruits receive in basic training?

Mr. GET. The Holm Center at Maxwell AFB provides a text and a curriculum to Junior ROTC programs that emphasizes regional detail/regional studies. The JROTC program is designed to stimulate junior cadet awareness of (and interest in) the broader world, and that later instruction (say in AFROTC or the Academy) will build on that interest by providing generalizable understandings and skills to deal with the world as a whole (in other words, a culture-general approach).

This is different from the approach taken in basic training (BMTS). Currently, the BMTS curriculum includes four hours of Human Relations training, of which approximately an hour and a half is devoted to culture-general content. This is supplemented by a number of practical exercises in the Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training (BEAST) capstone experience, which include opportunities to apply culture learning. The Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) staff communicates regularly with the BMTS staff to identify other places to weave in culture-general content.

Dr. SNYDER. Is your service paying foreign language proficiency pay to personnel outside the military linguist or foreign area officer career paths? If so, to whom and at what levels? What is your service's policy for paying its special operations forces?

Mr. GET. The Air Force pays Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) outside the military linguist or foreign area officer (or Air Force Regional Affairs Strategist) career paths IAW AFI36-2605 AFGM2, dated 4 May 2010. With the following exceptions, all personnel maintaining a 2/2 Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) score are paid FLPB:

For dominant in the force languages, required proficiency levels are noted below.  
 Spanish—4/4 and Tagalog—3/3  
 German, Italian, French, Russian and Portuguese—3/3

IAW AFI36-2605 AFGM2, dated 4 May 2010, Airmen serving in language-coded billets while assigned to a US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) or Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) organization will receive FLPB if they maintain a current proficiency level of at least a 1/1 in any two modalities. FLPB will apply to the language coded against the billet. Sub 2/2 FLPB will be paid for a maximum of 2 years for Category I-III languages and for a maximum of 3 years for Category IV languages as identified on the DoD Language Category List. Airmen must demonstrate improvement in any modality annually in order to continue to receive Sub 2/2 FLPB. Any Career Field Authority, in coordination with the Air Force Senior Language Authority (SLA), may identify other language-coded billets eligible for FLPB at the 1/1 level or higher. The Air Force has also extended the special operations exception described above to AFPAKHANDS personnel.

Dr. SNYDER. Is foreign language proficiency a consideration for promotion for officers outside of the linguist or foreign area officer career paths? Does your service have any flag officer positions, apart for those normally filled by foreign area officers, for which language proficiency is a consideration for selection and assignment?

Mr. GET. For the first question, not at this time. This is something that needs to be researched, which we are doing. We are still working out the details on how the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) participants will be annotated to demonstrate what they have accomplished. Currently, we are in the paper work process to track LEAP within a Language Enabled Airmen Developmental Resource (LEADR) database, in addition to using the SEI to annotate them in the system.

For the second question, yes, two positions:

1. A position in DIA requiring Chinese Mandarin for Intelligence Collection
2. A position in EUCOM requiring Turkish for Foreign Military Sales & Security Assistance Program Management

Dr. SNYDER. Is your service paying foreign language proficiency pay to personnel outside the military linguist or foreign area officer career paths? If so, to whom and at what levels? What is your service's policy for paying its special operations forces?

Colonel HENRY. Since 2006, the Marine Corps has paid all Marines, regardless of occupational field, Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP). Although 2/2 is normally the minimum level of proficiency to earn FLPP, the Marine Corps also pays a Marine \$100 per month in FLPP at the 1/1 level for certain GWOT or "Long War" languages that enhance our mission effectiveness.

For most other languages except those designated as "dominant in the force," we are able to pay FLPP to all Marines at the 2/2 level. FLPP for these "dominant in the force" languages is restricted to personnel in specific billets and specialties (FAOs, Marine Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC), and Intelligence). Since 2006, Spanish is the only language for which the restrictions apply to Marines.

Annually, the Marine Corps publishes Marine Administrative Messages (MARADMINs) which outline the USMC strategic language list (categories for FLPP payment) and additional exemptions to the FLPP policy.

MARADMINs 042/10 & 044/10 (full MARADMINs are below) allow for payment of Marines assigned to MARSOC down to the ILR 1/1 level for languages that are critical for mission success. All language lists are determined and approved through a joint effort between Intelligence Dept, Plans, Policy & Operations, Manpower & Reserve Affairs, and the Marine Forces Components. (e.g., MARSOC, MARFORPAC and MARFORCOM).

Dr. SNYDER. Does your service have any flag officer positions, apart for those normally filled by foreign area officers, for which language proficiency is a consideration for selection and assignment?

Colonel HENRY. The Marine Corps does not have general officer positions for which language proficiency is required; however, there are certain billets that Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) will consider language proficiency for selection and assignment. A specific example is the Chief of Staff for SOUTHCOM. M&RA strives to assign a BGen with a Spanish capability to this billet.

Dr. SNYDER. What is the status of the implementation of the Marine Corps' regional skills program for career officers and enlisted personnel? When will the first cohort for each have their promotion to major and gunnery sergeant respectively dependent on mastery of the requisite language proficiency and regional expertise?

Colonel HENRY. The Marine Corps' Regional, Culture, and Language Familiarization (RCLF) Program represents the Corps' enduring, career long training and education effort to institutionalize language and culture capabilities in the General Purpose Force in the out years (ie: post-OEF) and the implementation is ongoing. The RCLF Program Concept Plan is in the staffing process and has received Marine Corps-wide O6 and O7 level reviews. Once the Commandant signs the USMC Language, Regional, and Culture Strategy, the RCLF Program Concept Plan will be released for 3-Star review.

Officers assigned to The Basic School are receiving regional assignments with associated culture classes, and have recently been provided access to the Officer Block II curriculum resident on MarineNet, the Marine Corps' primary distance learning mechanism. Enlisted Marines are receiving Block I training at the recruit depots and coordination with Enlisted Professional Military Education continues to further development of the remaining enlisted blocks. The Marine Corps is expected to have its initial operating capability across all the respective officer and enlisted blocks by the end of FY11. Implementation of Officer blocks I and II are complete. In Block I, officers receive their regional assignment while at The Basic School and it is formally entered and tracked via the Marine Corps Total Force System. For Block II, those Second and First Lieutenants who have been assigned a region will complete a 13 module curriculum (1 module focused on operational culture/culture general and 12 modules associated with their specific region) reside on MarineNet. This cur-



riculum has been available since 18 August 2010, and more than 140 enrollments have occurred to date.

The intent is to ensure that there is a focused effort across the training and education continuum to actively develop, enhance, and sustain these skill sets throughout the force, from accession to retirement. Given the current status of the RCLF Program's development and implementation, it may be 8–10 years before those Second and First Lieutenants who have regional assignments progress through the program and come into zone for Major. The same is true for the enlisted ranks. The officer promotion process, in particular, must adhere to certain statutory requirements, so the Service does not have complete authority in dictating what is, or is not, a mandatory requirement for promotion. However, there is some latitude in outlining what comprises a “best and fully qualified” officer/enlisted for promotion, and the Marine Corps is exploring the feasibility of including successful progress in the RCLF Program as one of those components.

