Audit
Report

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

ARMY SPECIAL FORCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Report Number 91-123

September 27, 1991

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The following acronyms are used in this report.

ASD(SO/LIC) ... Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict)
BMLC .................................................. Basic Military Language Course
CINC .................................................... Commander in Chief
DLI ...................................................... Defense Language Institute
ILR ...................................................... Interagency Language Roundtable
SFFLC .................................................. Special Forces Functional Language Course
SOF ...................................................... Special Operations Forces
USASOC .............................................. U.S. Army Special Operations Command
USSOCOM .......................................... U.S. Special Operations Command
September 27, 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (SPECIAL OPERATIONS/LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT)

SUBJECT: Quick-Reaction Audit Report on Army Special Forces Foreign Language Program (Project No. ORB-0056.01)

Introduction

This is our final quick-reaction audit report on the Army Special Forces Foreign Language Program. This audit was performed as part of an ongoing audit of Special Operations Forces Training Programs. The objective of our overall project is to determine whether Special Operations Forces (SOF) training courses and joint training exercises, training equipment and facilities, and the related budgeting for SOF training requirements are managed efficiently and effectively. For this segment of the project we evaluated the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) plans for developing a Basic Military Language Course (BMLC) and for revising the Army Special Forces Functional Language Course (SFFLC), at a combined estimated cost of $70 million.

Because additional funds were to be expended imminently for the BMLC, we concluded that prompt management action was needed to coordinate other language requirements for incorporation into the plans and to ensure that the BMLC is cost-effective. This report addresses only the conditions pertaining to the BMLC and the SFFLC. Conditions on the overall SOF Training Program will be addressed in a separate report.

The audit showed that USASOC was developing the BMLC without fully considering foreign language requirements of the theater commanders and other SOF units; has not fully coordinated the development of the BMLC with the Executive Agent for the Defense Foreign Language Program; and has not adequately justified the BMLC in accordance with DoD and Army regulations.

Background

Special Operations Forces consist of Active and Reserve Army, Navy, and Air Force units that include Special Forces, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs units. The SOF units
operate under the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and support the missions of the theater commanders. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict) (ASD(SO/LIC)) provides policy guidance and oversees planning, programming, resourcing, and executing special operations and low intensity conflict activities. The ASD(SO/LIC) is responsible for presenting and justifying the SOF program to Congress.


The Secretary of Army was designated the Executive Agent for the Defense Foreign Language Program and is responsible for the management of language activities among the DoD Components. The Executive Agent coordinates with DoD Components foreign language activities for the Defense Foreign Language Program. The General Officer Steering Committee, a DoD committee that was established as the forum for addressing foreign language issues, provides guidance and makes recommendations for the overall management of the Defense Foreign Language Program. The Secretaries of the Military Departments appoint Program Managers, who are responsible for the development, coordination, and conduct of all facets of their foreign language programs.

In the Department of Defense, foreign language proficiency is measured using the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale of 0 to 5, or six "base levels." Base level 0 represents essentially no communicative ability, and base level 5 represents a speaking proficiency that is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate, well-educated native speaker and that reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is spoken. The "plus level" designation is assigned when proficiency substantially exceeds one base level but does not fully meet the criteria for the next level. The ILR is an intergovernmental forum that provides for the exchange of information pertaining to foreign language instruction.

Discussion

In August 1990, the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (the School), U.S. Army Special Operations Command, initiated an assessment of language requirements in Army Special
Forces units. The School established an analysis team to conduct interviews and to administer on-site written surveys at four active duty Army Special Forces Groups and one Army National Guard Special Forces Group. The primary objective of the interviews and surveys was to determine the language proficiency levels required to accomplish missions and to ascertain existing language capabilities. The respondents totaled 260 soldiers from various echelons of command and staff within the 5 Special Forces Groups, which were assigned about 3,500 personnel.

In January 1991, the analysis team issued a report, which concluded that there were deficiencies in qualifications for foreign languages that were required to meet mission requirements and that improvement was needed in training Army Special Forces personnel. The report concluded that:

- the Special Forces soldier requires a language proficiency level of ILR 2 for speaking, listening, and reading and between an ILR 1 and 2 for writing;

- the SFFLC provides the equivalent of a proficiency level 0+ with emphasis on military missions and does not provide adequate initial entry language training skills;

- the School's initial language training goal should be a proficiency level of ILR 1 and should provide further training to achieve a level of ILR 2; and

- the Special Forces soldier requires more general language and some technical language capability.

To resolve the deficiencies and to improve foreign language training, the School proposed to develop the BMLC and to revise the SFFLC.

SOF linguist positions to support theater commanders' requirements have not been adequately identified. The analysis team's efforts did not include theater commanders' foreign language requirements or language training requirements for other Reserve Army Special Forces, Psychological Operations, Civil Affairs, and Navy and Air Force SOF units. The projected cost of $70 million does not include foreign language requirements of those SOF units.

Basic Military Language Course. The proposed BMLC will become the new entry-level foreign language training program for Army Special Forces Groups. The BMLC will provide training in 13 foreign languages and will help attendees to achieve an initial proficiency level of ILR 1. The intended results of
training are to have attendees achieve a 65-percent general language skill and a 35-percent technical language skill mix. The BMLC will also provide further training to enable Army Special Forces soldiers who have achieved this skill mix to reach a proficiency level of ILR 2. The Defense Language Institute (DLI) Foreign Language Center (the Center), U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, will design and develop the BMLC. The BMLC will use computer-based technology including voice recognition systems.

Special Forces Functional Language Course. The SFPLC, which was established in March 1989, is the School's existing entry-level language program for Special Forces soldiers. The SFPLC, which concentrates on technical language skills versus general language skills, offers courses in 13 languages. Depending on the language difficulty, the courses vary in length from 12 to 18 weeks. The objective of the SFPLC was to have a Special Forces soldier achieve a 0+ proficiency level. Because of the proposed BMLC, the SFPLC will be revised and used for language proficiency sustainment and enhancement training. The revised SFPLC will incorporate computer-based technology to include voice recognition systems.

In March 1990, the School signed a memorandum of agreement with the Army Training and Doctrine Command's Training Development and Analysis Directorate (the Directorate) for the analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of a computer-based voice recognition training course to enhance the SFPLC. During fiscal years 1989 and 1990, the Directorate converted 10 of 46 Spanish and French lessons and 2 of 46 Arabic lessons to use for computer-based voice recognition at a cost of about $884,000. The cost included converting lessons into software and 24 computer-based voice recognition systems with associated hardware and software. Twelve of those systems were installed in the School's language laboratory.

Requirements Coordination. The Executive Agent delegated management and administrative responsibilities for DoD foreign language training requirements to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (the Deputy Chief). As part of those responsibilities, the Deputy Chief chairs the General Officer Steering Committee (the Committee). In July 1990, at the direction of the Committee, the Army Program Manager, Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, requested that DoD Components submit updated manning documents that designated language coded positions requiring a minimum language proficiency level of ILR 2. Active Army Special Forces units submitted manning documents with 4,986 language coded positions; 63 percent were at an ILR 0+, and 37 percent were at an ILR 2 proficiency level.
However, language training requirements for Special Forces' positions coded ILR 0+ are now obsolete due to language training requirements of ILR 1 and ILR 2 proficiency levels as recommended in the analysis team's report issued in January 1991. While the Special Forces units of the Reserve Components have not submitted updated manning documents as requested by the Committee, documents that were submitted indicated that only about 1.5 percent of the Reserve units' positions and none of the National Guard units' positions were language coded. Accordingly, the total Special Forces language requirement has not been identified and reflected in supporting manning documents.

Justification for the BMLC. The BMLC has not been adequately justified to show that it is the most cost-effective alternative as required by DoD Directive 7041.3, "Economic Analysis and Program Evaluation for Resource Management," October 18, 1972. Also, program review documentation has not been submitted for approval to the Executive Agent for the Defense Foreign Language Program as required by the joint regulation.

Economic Analysis. DoD Directive 7041.3 and implementing Army Regulation 11-18, "The Cost and Economic Analysis Program," May 7, 1990, require that an economic analysis be made in developing and justifying resource requirements. An economic analysis is the systematic evaluation of alternative solutions to a specific mission requirement in terms of comparative costs and benefits. The Directive outlines the elements of an economic analysis to include identifying feasible alternatives and listing benefits and costs for each alternative. Existing training courses available to DoD should be among the alternatives considered. The cost analysis includes nonrecurring costs, such as investment costs, and recurring costs such as personnel costs.

We requested that the School provide the cost analysis and other acquisition planning information that supported the projected cost of about $70 million. The School did not have a cost analysis, but provided data showing $38.7 million of resourced costs and $31.5 million of unresourced costs for fiscal years 1991 through 2000. The School also provided a cost data sheet showing $18.1 million in costs for fiscal years 1991 through 1994. About $15.7 million has been funded for fiscal years 1991 through 1994 and the remaining $54.5 million will be reprogrammed or reallocated funds for fiscal years 1995 through 2000. To date, about $1.7 million has been obligated for BMLC development.
When we requested the cost breakout for the $18.1 million, the personnel at the School stated that they did not have detailed costs, because the cost estimate was furnished by the Center. The Center provided us a cost estimate of $8.1 million for BMLC design and development and SFPLC revision. The $8.1 million includes costs for personnel, travel expenses, course development, software conversion of course lessons, and developmental computer hardware for 13 foreign language courses. The School will procure the computer equipment for the language laboratory at an approximate cost of $3,755 each. We were unable to reconcile the difference between the $18.1 million and the $8.1 million cost estimates. We were also unable to determine the detailed cost breakout of the projected cost of $70 million.

Other Regulatory Guidance. The proposed development of the BMLC does not comply with the joint regulation for the Defense Foreign Language Program. Documentation on the foreign language program mission, course objectives, and skills; training facilities, including language laboratory systems; length of course; instructor qualifications; screening and proficiency tests; and estimated direct operating costs have not been submitted for approval by the Executive Agent for the Defense Foreign Language Program.

Conclusion

We recognize that SOF mission requirements include language capabilities to meet both peacetime and wartime contingencies. Recent experiences in Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm have shown that a lack of foreign language capability can negatively affect operational missions, both during and after contingency operations. However, an Army Special Forces language training program should not be developed unless it is coordinated with other SOF units to meet their language requirements and with the Executive Agent for the Defense Language Program and unless it is cost-effective.

Recommendations for Corrective Actions:

We recommend that the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict):

1. Identify foreign language requirements and related proficiency levels needed by the theater commanders for Special Operations Forces missions.
2. Update manning documents to reflect foreign language proficiency requirements for all Special Operations Forces personnel that support theater missions.

3. Perform an economic analysis to determine whether the development of the Basic Military Language Course is the most cost-effective alternative.

A draft of this report was provided to the addressees for comment on June 14, 1991. On July 18, 1991, the ASD(SO/LIC) requested that we meet with representatives from his office, the U.S. Special Operations Command, and the School to discuss the issues in our report and to facilitate resolution. We met with those representatives on August 13 and August 14, 1991, at the School. On August 23, 1991, we provided a briefing on the results of the meeting to the office of the ASD(SO/LIC). Based on the results of the meetings and the briefing, the Assistant Secretary provided management comments on the draft report on September 13, 1991.

Management Comments

The comments from the Assistant Secretary concurred with the finding and Recommendations 1., 2., and 3., and nonconcurred with Recommendation 4. in the draft report. The response described completed and planned actions and estimated completion dates for planned actions. The comments are summarized below, and the complete text of the comments is in Enclosure 1.

The management comments on Recommendation 1. stated that the School will pursue expanded coordination with the Joint Staff and theater commanders to validate the requirements at the appropriate level of specificity. On August 22, 1991, the Commander, USASOC issued guidance to validate the Army Authorization Documents System language requirements. In addition, the Commander in Chief (CINC), Special Operations Command will be requested to obtain validation of language requirements from the theater CINCs. Estimated completion is Second Quarter, FY 1992.

The management comments on Recommendation 2. stated that updated manning documents will be validated by the theater commanders. A summary of language requirements reflected in current authorization documents for Active and Reserve Component
Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units was forwarded to combatant CINCs for validation. Completion is contingent upon receipt of validation prescribed in Recommendation 1.

The management comments on Recommendation 3. stated that, with the assistance of USASOC and USSOCOM staffs, the School will prepare an economic analysis in accordance with appropriate regulations, and will submit the analysis for approval. Estimated date for completion is December 1991.

For Recommendation 4., the Assistant Secretary proposed that rather than deferring funds for ongoing course development and revision, the School should be authorized to continue the current program while implementing Recommendations 1., 2., and 3. The Assistant Secretary stated that deferment of the funding would put at risk the training efficiencies and momentum developed in the joint School and DLI effort. Further, the comments stated that the USSOCOM staff will be directed to exercise close and continuous supervision of the combined effort.

Audit Response

We consider management's comments on the finding and recommendations to be responsive. Regarding Recommendation 4., in the draft report, management proposed that the School be allowed to continue development of the BMLC program and revision of the SFFLC program while implementing Recommendations 1., 2., and 3. Based on the concerted efforts being undertaken to implement those recommendations evidenced at our meetings and briefing in August 1991, we have no objection to this alternate proposal. Therefore, we have deleted Recommendation 4. from the final report.

The comments on the draft of this report conformed to the requirements of DoD Directive 7650.3, and there are no unresolved issues. Accordingly, comments on the final report are not required. This report claims no monetary benefits, but other benefits are listed in Enclosure 2.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist in facilitating the resolution of issues raised by our audit report. The courtesies extended to the audit staff are appreciated. A list of activities visited or contacted is in Enclosure 3. If you have
any questions on this report, please contact Ms. Mary Lu Ugone at (703) 693-0317 (DSN 223-0317) or Mr. Michael Claypool at (703) 693-0164 (DSN 223-0164). The final report distribution is provided in Enclosure 4.

Robert J. Lieberman
Assistant Inspector General
for Auditing

cc:
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence)
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel)
Comptroller, Department of Defense
Secretary of the Army
MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, READINESS AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT,
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INSPECTOR GENERAL

SUBJECT: Draft Quick-Reaction Report on Army Special Forces Foreign Language Program (Project No. ORB-0056.01)

This office appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoD IG) Quick-Reaction Report, "Army Special Forces Foreign Language Program," dated June 14, 1991, (Project No. ORB-0056.01). While extensive, detailed, and conscientious work on the part of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) and the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) is evident, I concur with the DoD IG findings that specific language requirements are not fully coordinated with Theater CINCs, that the total requirement has not been identified and reflected in supporting manning documents, and that specific DoD Directives and Army Regulations were not strictly adhered to when conducting the required economic analysis. I generally concur with your findings and recommendations, with one exception, and will request through the U.S. Special Operations Command that compliance be effected. While I understand the intent of your recommendation that fund obligation be deferred until your recommendations are fully met, I believe that such an action would adversely affect progress to increase the language readiness for our Army Special Operations Forces (SOF), and recommend that this action be held in abeyance. Detailed comments on the DoD IG report are provided in the attachment.

The Commander in Chief, U.S. Special Operations Command, and I are committed to continuing the corrective measures now underway to solve a persistent and long-standing language shortfall within our SOF community. In this vein, I believe that efforts by USASOC and USAJFKSWCS are an important first step and must be continued without delay. Rather than stopping the ongoing program, I propose that the USAJFKSWCS be authorized to continue developmental efforts, while simultaneously implementing the recommendations contained in your report. We would welcome a review by the DoD IG in 6 months to document progress in satisfying recommendations cited in the Quick Reaction Report.

With concerted effort by all concerned, I believe that we can complete the appropriate corrective actions, while maintaining the momentum of this vital program to increase SOF language capabilities.

James R. Locher, III
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict)

Attachment:
As stated

ENCLOSURE 1
Page 1 of 5
Recommendation 1: Identify foreign language requirements and related proficiency levels needed by the theater commanders for Special Operations Forces (SOF) missions.

ASD(SO/LIC) Reply: Concur. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) is prepared to pursue expanded coordination with the Joint Staff and Combatant CINCs to validate requirements at the appropriate level of specificity. The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJKSWCS) briefed the Commander, USASOC, August 22, 1991, at which time he issued guidance to validate the current The Army Authorization Documents System (TAADS) language requirements document. A request to Theater CINCs will be prepared by USASOC, requesting validation of language requirements. However, until the request is approved by CINCSOC and forwarded to the Theater CINCs, a definitive completion date cannot be determined. The estimated completion date is 2nd Quarter, FY 92.

Recommendation 2: Update manning documents to reflect foreign language proficiency requirements for all SOF personnel that support theater missions.

ASD(SO/LIC) Reply: Concur. This recommendation has been partially completed. USASOC forwarded the attached summary, which includes language requirements reflected in current TAADS documents for Active and Reserve Component Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations. Requirement documents will be validated by Combatant CINCs, per Recommendation 1 and reconciled with TAADS. Completion is contingent on Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 3: Perform an economic analysis to determine whether the development of a Basic Military Language Course is the most cost-effective alternative.


Recommendation 4: Defer further fund obligations for the Basic Military Language Course program development and the Special Forces Functional Language Course program revision until Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 are implemented.

ENCLOSURE 1
Page 2 of 5
ASD(SO/LIC) Reply: I understand the intent of the recommendation. However, I am convinced that requirements validated by USASOC and the efforts demonstrated by USAJFKSWCS justify continuing the current program, with key oversight modifications, to solve the persistent and long-standing language shortfall within our SOF. I believe that the efforts displayed by USASOC and USAJFKSWCS are an important first step and must continue without delay.

Funds transferred by USAJFKSWCS to the Defense Language Institute (DLI) for course development not only support Special Operations efforts toward expanded language training, but also significantly contribute to enhanced language training methodologies for DLI, itself. Products for the USAJFKSWCS, under development by DLI, are anticipated to replace existing first-term material for 13 different language courses at DLI. Additionally, DLI is currently developing computer assisted programs of instruction for USAJFKSWCS which will allow DLI to use the same products for off-the-shelf, computer assisted homework for resident courses, as well as training modules for nonresident training. The complementary aspects of this relationship serves the overall Defense community, not just SOF. Products developed for USAJFKSWCS will enable DLI to make significant gains in developing computer assisted training products, and enhance National Security Agency-led efforts to upgrade sustainment and enhancement training throughout the Command Language Program.

Rather than deferring funds for ongoing course development and revision, risking the loss of training efficiencies and momentum for USAJFKSWCS and DLI efforts, I propose that USAJFKSWCS be authorized to continue the current program, while implementing recommendations contained in the DoD IG report. I will recommend that the USSOCOM staff exercise close and continuous supervision of the combined USASOC-USAJFKSWCS effort.

Attachment:
As stated

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES (SOF) LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
PER MANNING DOCUMENTS

Effective date: November 1990
Prepared: 20 Aug 91
By: R.D. Garcia

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20 Aug 91

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TOTAL 0 2164 0 2164

SUMMARY

Active Component: 4378
SF Reserve/National Guard: 658
CA/PSYOPS Reserve: 2164
TOTAL: 7198

ENCLOSURE 1
Page 5 of 5

TOTAL P.03
### SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL BENEFITS RESULTING FROM AUDIT

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<th>Recommendation Reference</th>
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<td>1. and 2.</td>
<td>Program Results. Identification and coordination of foreign language requirements.</td>
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<td>Economy and Efficiency. Provides an economic analysis to determine the cost-effectiveness of language programs for Special Forces.</td>
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ACTIVITIES VISITED OR CONTACTED

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Assistant Secretary of Defense (Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence), Washington, DC
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict), Washington, DC

Department of the Army

U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Washington, DC
U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Washington, DC
U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Training Development and Analysis Directorate, Fort Monroe, VA
U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, NC
U.S. Army Special Operations Command, John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, NC
U.S. Army Force Integration Support Agency, Fort Belvoir, VA

Defense Activities

Defense Language Institute, Presidio of Monterey, CA
FINAL REPORT DISTRIBUTION

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Assistant Secretary of Defense (Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence), Washington, DC
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel)
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs)
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict), Washington, DC
Comptroller, Department of Defense

Defense Activities

Commander in Chief, Special Operations Command
Director, Joint Staff
Chief, National Guard Bureau
Commandant, Defense Language Institute

Department of the Army

Secretary of the Army
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management)
Chief, Army Reserve
Auditor General, Army Audit Agency

Department of the Navy

Secretary of the Navy
Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management)
Auditor General, Naval Audit Service

Department of the Air Force

Secretary of the Air Force
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Financial Management and Comptroller)
Auditor General, Air Force Audit Agency

Non-Defense Activities

Office of Management and Budget
U.S. General Accounting Office, NSIAD Technical Information Center
FINAL REPORT DISTRIBUTION (Continued)

Congressional Committees

Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senate Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Senate Subcommittee on Readiness, Sustainability, and Support, Committee on Armed Services
Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs
Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Committee on Governmental Affairs
House Committee on Appropriations
House Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations
House Committee on Armed Services
House Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services
House Committee on Government Operations
House Subcommittee on Legislation and National Security, Committee on Government Operations
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
TEAM MEMBERS

William F. Thomas, Director, Readiness and Operational Support Directorate
Mary Lu Ugone, Program Director
Michael Claypool, Project Manager
Cecelia Miggins, Team Leader
George Cherry, Team Leader
Bob Beets, Auditor
Lisa Evans, Auditor
Sandy Stone, Auditor