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AIR UNIVERSITY

RECRUITING FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS
STRATEGIES FOR THE AIR FORCE

By

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Biography

Maureen B. Higgins is a civilian with the U.S. Air Force and a student at the Air War College. Previously she was the Director of the Civilian Personnel Office, Air Force District of Washington (AFDW), Washington D.C., where she was responsible for providing installation- and MAJCOM-level human resources management support for civilians assigned to the National Capital Region including the Secretary of the Air Force and Headquarters U.S. Air Force. Ms. Higgins has held various assignments at Air Staff, major command and unit levels, including two assignments in Germany, Turkey and an assignment with the Washington Headquarters Service. She has extensive experience in personnel and resource management and policy development. Ms. Higgins has a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Affairs from Virginia Tech and a Masters of Public Administration from Troy State University.

“An essential component of U.S. national security in the post-9/11 world is the ability to engage foreign governments and peoples, especially in critical regions, to encourage reform, promote understanding, convey respect for other cultures and provide an opportunity to learn more about our country and its citizens. To do this, we must be able to communicate in other languages, a challenge for which we are unprepared.”¹

Introduction

“A person who speaks three languages is trilingual; a person who speaks two languages is bilingual; a person who speaks one language is – American.”² Some may get a chuckle out of this old joke; however, it presents a daunting challenge for the Air Force, other military services and U.S. government agencies as they strive to increase the number of employees fluent in foreign languages. The United States has been called *cementerio de lenguas*, a language cemetery, but in recent years, accelerated migration and the shock of 9/11 raised new concerns about the American love affair with monolingualism.³ The threats faced today are diverse and complex with areas of potential instability scattered around the globe. Problems may require a wide range of U.S. military engagements, including humanitarian assistance or U.N. peacekeeping operations. How well the U.S. forces analyze and interact with the local people they deal with during the Global War on Terror will be a decisive factor in whether the U.S. succeeds or fails in counterinsurgency operations.⁴ The expeditionary Air Force (AF) mission

¹ “National Security Language Initiative” Fact Sheet, Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/58733.htm>

² Steve Fidel, “Americans Need Foreign Language Skills in Global Community,” *Deseret Morning News*, March 15, 2007

³ Mary Louise Pratt, “Building a New Public Idea about Language,” Interagency Language Roundtable publication, http://www.govtilr.org/Publications/Prof_Pratt.htm

⁴ John W. Davis, Maj. (ret.), “Our Achilles’ Heel: Language Skills,” *Military Review*, March-April 2006

demands Airmen with international insight, foreign language proficiency and cultural knowledge to understand the specific regional context in which air and space power may be applied.⁵

Lack of necessary linguistic skills could lead to grave consequences as evidenced by the terrorist attacks of the past decade. Some impacts include the inability for military to communicate with coalition partners or local populations, failed diplomatic efforts, delays or inability to translate large volumes of documents which may provide vital intelligence, and an inability to surge during a humanitarian crisis. Language shortfalls are especially damaging to timely and accurate intelligence collection and analysis, where the proper linguistic skills could be more important than firepower.⁶ Without critical language skills, we could also be vulnerable to spies who might gain access to military plans because they are skilled in English and the American troops are ignorant of theirs. Limited understanding of foreign cultures can restrict analysts and cause them to misinterpret situations or deteriorating conditions that might lead to a trouble spot.⁷ Efforts to increase security, establish governments and economic development in Iraq and Afghanistan are hampered because less than five percent of provisional reconstruction team members speak Arabic.⁸

The shortage of officers with foreign language skills has long been a problem in the U.S. military and other agencies, but since the war in Iraq began, the President and Congress have directed the Defense Department, State Department, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and other agencies to increase the numbers of foreign language speakers in their workforce. Many efforts are underway, but it will take a comprehensive approach to address short and long-term

⁵ John P. Jumper, General, USAF, "CSAF Sight Picture: Officer Force Development – International Affairs Specialists," *Air Force Policy Letter Digest*, April 2005

⁶ Davis, p. 110

⁷ Ellen Laipson, "Foreign Language Requirements in the Intelligence Community," Statement to Senate Government Affairs Committee, September 14, 2000

⁸ ----- "Short Staffed in Iraq," *Government Executive*, November 1, 2007, p. 12

needs. A brief examination of the historical context will help explain the current problem and what approaches might be taken by the Department of Defense (DoD). Organizations faced with language skill shortfalls typically use one or a combination of three approaches to fill the need: recruitment, training and technology. While this paper will provide some information on training efforts, the primary focus is on recruitment efforts and recommendations for the Air Force, DoD and other federal agencies. Strategies the AF should consider include a comprehensive, on-going review of future requirements, development of candidate pools to meet surge requirements, creative recruitment techniques, recruitment of heritage speakers, career paths that utilize and develop language skills, use of financial incentives and other recruiting and retention tools, revision of security clearance processing, and perhaps most importantly, collaboration with other government agencies to address this national problem. Focusing on these actions will help ensure the DoD and U.S. government agencies are successful in meeting their foreign language goals.

Background

The shortage of foreign language speakers in the U.S. government and concern about its harmful effects on national security are not new. The United States has a long history of ambivalence about the value of foreign language. In 1923 the U.S. Supreme Court overturned laws restricting the teaching of foreign languages in 22 states. In 1940 a report recommended eliminating foreign language instruction in high schools because too many students were failing. By the 1950s, concern about the Soviet Union outpacing the U.S. led to the 1958 National Defense Education Act, which included the goal of producing more foreign language teachers and programs. The enthusiasm was short-lived, and the 1979 Presidential Commission on

Foreign Language and International Studies reported “Americans’ incompetence in foreign languages is nothing short of scandalous, and it is becoming worse.”⁹ In December 1991, the language shortfalls were again acknowledged as a national problem and President George H. W. Bush signed the National Security Education Act which would fund scholarships and studies abroad intended to improve America’s poor record in foreign studies and enlarge the pool of Americans with foreign language skills. Senator David Boren, who headed the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said “Our ignorance of world cultures and world languages represents a threat to our ability to remain a world leader.”¹⁰

U.S. agencies may have missed opportunities in the 1990s to begin addressing the language shortfalls. For instance, it was only after terrorists bombed the World Trade Center in February 1993 that Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents went back and translated previously taped phone conversations and confiscated documents, all in Arabic, and which might have been useful in preventing the attack.¹¹ After the Khobar Towers were attacked in 1996 the Downing Commission’s investigation cited the lack of Arabic translators as a contributing factor. There was only one interpreter assigned to the 4404th Wing, and when Security Police needed to talk with their Saudi police counterparts, they had to call the on-call interpreter, brief him on the situation, and request he contact the Saudi police. The commission found when letters regarding on-going security issues discussed at force protection meetings were provided by Saudi officials, they were never translated.¹² The Defense Department and other agencies should have heeded these warnings to begin recruiting for the needed language capabilities. Robert Baer, a former

⁹ Katherine McIntire Peters, “Lost in Translation,” *Government Executive*, May 1, 2002

¹⁰ ---- “U.S. Plans Scholarships to Push Foreign Studies,” *New York Times*, December 25, 1991.
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0CE6D81038F936A15751C1A967958260>

¹¹ Peters

¹² John L. Conway III, Col (retired), USAF, “The View from the Tower of Babel: Air Force Foreign Language Posture for Global Engagement,” *Air and Space Power Journal*, Summer 2005,
<http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj05/sum05/conway.html>

CIA agent who spoke Arabic and Russian, believes the U.S. missed opportunities in the early 1990s to collect vital information on the brewing threat of radical Islam in Afghanistan. He didn't speak Dari or Pashto, the language predominant among refugees pouring into Tajikistan to escape the civil war in Afghanistan. To debrief the refugees, he asked CIA headquarters for assistance and found the CIA had no speakers in these languages.¹³ Baer criticized the CIA for its lack of language-qualified agents, saying that prior to September 11, 2001 the London CIA office didn't have a single Arabic speaker. It wasn't much better in the European offices in Bonn, Paris or Rome, and there were no agents in Hamburg's mosques to report that Muhammad Atta was recruiting suicide bombers for 9/11. Even in the Middle East, CIA agents spent little attention on recruiting and running local foreign intelligence sources.¹⁴ Shortly before 9/11, Reuel Marc Gerecht, a former CIA operative, indicated the Directorate of Operations (DO) had done little to prepare the CIA for its confrontation with radical Islamic terrorism. He indicated the DO never developed a team of Afghan experts throughout the Soviet-Afghan war from 1979-1989, and the agency rarely kept case officers in the region long enough for long-term seeding operations.¹⁵ Former CIA director (1993-1995), R. James Woolsey, acknowledged the government erred in not having more intelligence officers and analysts able to read and understand Arabic, Farsi and other Middle Eastern languages.¹⁶ The Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Strategy for the Future published in March 1999 included several technology initiatives for translation in German, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Japanese and Korean as well as a proof-of-concept system that would perform Persian (Farsi)-to-English machine translation.

¹³ Peters

¹⁴ Robert Baer, *See No Evil, the True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism*, Crown Publishers, New York, NY, 2002, 284 pages, p. xvi-xvii

¹⁵ Gerecht

¹⁶ Steve Hirsch, "CIA Performance Disputed as Congress Plans Hearings," *Global Security Newswire*, April 1, 2002. http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2002/4/1/1s.html

The strategy indicated 50 people had received foreign language training, but there were no action items to address shortfalls in critical languages or human intelligence (HUMINT) capabilities.¹⁷

The Defense Department also recognized the shortfall, but did little to address the need. Although Army officials predicted a need for hundreds of Arabic speakers prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, when 140,000 troops deployed only 42 spoke Arabic, and only half of those were estimated to be able to speak the language intelligently.¹⁸

After 9/11 the President and Congress called for review of the circumstances surrounding the terrorist attacks. Although the Office of the Inspector General found no “single point of failure” that would have predicted or prevented 9/11, it found the CIA’s counterterrorism unit responsible for Bin Laden had an excessive workload, and most case officers didn’t have the operational experience or training necessary to accomplish their mission.¹⁹ The shortage of skilled foreign language speakers was viewed by many as a contributing factor. The 9/11 Commission Report found the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) did not have a management strategy for a war against Islamic terrorism. Such a strategy would have defined the capabilities needed – including language training. Among the proposals, the 9/11 Commission recommended the CIA Director develop a stronger language program, with high standards and sufficient financial incentives.²⁰ Congress found there was a critical need to improve foreign language capabilities, particularly for the intelligence community, and this direction was codified in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. The DNI was specifically

¹⁷ *DCI Strategy for the Future*, CIA website: https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/archived-reports-1/ann_rpt_1999/dci_annual_report_99_18.html

¹⁸ Davis, p. 110

¹⁹ *CIA Accountability with Respect to the 9/11 Attacks*, Office of Inspector General Report, June 2005, Approved for Release August 2007, p. v – xii.

²⁰ *The 9/11 Commission Report, Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 358, 415

tasked to identify linguistic requirements and to develop a comprehensive plan for meeting those requirements²¹

In November 2004 President Bush directed the DCI to strengthen language programs by increasing the number of officers proficient in mission-critical languages by 50 percent. The Air Force, other services, and many federal agencies are facing the same challenges and are pursuing a host of initiatives to recruit and train workers in foreign languages. For instance, since 2004 the CIA has embarked on an unprecedented recruitment campaign that appears to be making progress. In January 2007, CIA Director Michael Hayden told *USA Today* 15 percent of the agency's workforce had been hired in the previous two months.²² While many new employees have been hired in recent years, and many others are undergoing foreign language training, the U.S. must view this as a long-term effort and stay on course to ensure the military and other agencies have individuals with the right foreign language talents to meet current and future needs.

Recommendations

Achieving the mandate to improve the foreign language capabilities and to increase the number of military troops and government workers proficient in mission-critical languages will require the Air Force, DoD and other federal agencies to develop short and long term strategies to meet current and future needs. Focusing on the following actions will help ensure the U.S. is successful in meeting its goals.

²¹ Public Law 108-458—December. 17, 2004 118 Stat. 3679, Intelligence Reform And Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, http://www.nctc.gov/docs/pl108_458.pdf

²² Karen Rutzick, "Conflicting Images," *Government Executive*, July 15, 2007, p. 24

Define Requirements

“The U.S. needs scholars, area experts, diplomats, negotiators, businesspeople, and public servants with the ability to communicate at an advanced level in the languages and cultures of the populations in order to establish and maintain relationships around the world, whether or not the languages they speak are considered "critical" at the moment.”²³

The first step for success in improving language capabilities is to project requirements far in advance of the need. Government agencies have not been very adept at projecting future requirements, and the nature of intelligence work makes it even more difficult to anticipate where a future crisis may occur. Compounding the problem of estimating required language skills is the fact it takes a full year of study to acquire even limited proficiency in a foreign language, and it takes much longer to achieve a professional level.²⁴ One approach is to define foreign language requirements based on the most important regions and countries and establish language needs in proportion to where conflicts are most likely to occur. Air Force requirements for language capabilities must be documented in the manpower data system that documents both peacetime and wartime requirements, and in the military and civilian personnel data systems. To date, determining and documenting requirements remains a challenge. Approximately 4,500 of 328,000 AF military positions are identified as requiring foreign language proficiency, and very few deployment requirements for language have been identified. Anecdotal evidence is that some organizations are unwilling to code positions as such because they fear the position will be too hard to fill.²⁵ The Air Staff Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services and the office of the Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs recognized not all organizations have complied with 2005 direction to update language requirements on the unit

²³ Pratt

²⁴ Jeffrey J. Kuenzi, *Requirements for Linguists in Government Agencies*, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, September 2, 2004, p. 13

²⁵ e-mail from Capt Greg Duffy, AF/A1DL, December 4, 2007. Data provided on February 1, 2008 indicates 4,410 AF positions identified with language requirement.

manning document, and they believe hundreds of positions are not coded properly. The Air Staff manpower office has drafted another memo requiring Major Commands and Unified Commands to comply with instructions to identify language requirements.²⁶ After future requirements are defined, they should be assessed and revised continuously to minimize the possibility of needs that weren't anticipated.

Foreign language capabilities are a critical component in the arsenal of weapons against terrorism. Active duty military and federal civilians in many occupations might require foreign language; however, there are a number of occupations where the need is critical and where shortfalls are impeding progress in the war on terror.

In the Air Force, few entry level careers identify foreign language as a requirement. Crypto linguist is the only initial skill training field for enlisted members, and one of the primary needs for officers with foreign language and cultural skills in the Air Force is in the International Affairs Specialist (IAS) programs. International affairs programs are being revamped to replace and improve upon the old Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program.²⁷ Former Air Force Chief of Staff General John Jumper acknowledged that in the past the Air Force did not deliberately select or train these officers to develop regional skills, and there was a perception that international duty assignments would be detrimental to an officer's career. In April 2005 he announced a revised program to deliberately develop international affairs specialists. The IAS program would select and develop mid-career line officers and develop them in one of two international affairs tracks. Officers in the Regional Affairs Strategist track would have three years of education,

²⁶ Draft AF/A1M memo, provided by e-mail from Kimberly Williams, AF/A1MR, January 23, 2008

²⁷ Bruce Lemkin, Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, Headquarters U.S. Air Force. Address to Air War College, Maxwell AF Base, February 6, 2008

earning regionally focused graduate degrees followed by basic and advanced language training.²⁸ While the program will provide needed regional expertise for the AF, it will also provide career opportunities for individuals who have foreign language capabilities and expertise in particular countries or regions.

The Air Force's International Health Specialist (IHS) program could serve as a model for recruiting and utilizing individuals with foreign language skills. In 2002 the AF had 47 IHS team members aligned to the unified commands and in academic positions at military medical establishments. Team members represent the various officer medical corps and enlisted career fields, and many of them are well versed in the linguistic, cultural, political, military, medical, and economic issues of the area of responsibility at the time of their first assignment.²⁹ Through the Humanitarian and Civic Assistance and Military-to-Military programs these military medical teams serve the local community by offering free basic medical and dental care for villagers in various locations throughout the world. U.S. Embassy personnel select the locations and inform the villagers of the event. By interacting with foreign military forces and exposing local civilian populations to positive contacts with U.S. military personnel, the United States hopes to strengthen counter-terrorism capabilities and win the hearts and minds of the locals.³⁰ The AF can capitalize on the success of this program by expanding the concept to other functions involved in operations overseas. By tapping into the inventory of people with existing foreign language capabilities, the AF can target individuals to assignments where the skills will be best utilized.

²⁸ Jumper

²⁹ Col Jane B. Ward, Col Kerrie G. Lindberg, Maj. Daniel S. McNulty, Maj Mona P. Ternus, "A Global Engagement Enhancer: The International Health Specialist," *Air & Space Power Journal*, Fall 2002, <http://www.airpower.au.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj02/fal02/phifal02.html>

³⁰ Capt. Jennifer Lovett, "U.S. Air Forces in Europe medics deliver in Uganda," EUCOM website, <http://www.eucom.mil/english/FullStory.asp?art=1272>

The U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) must consider foreign language skills as one of its core capabilities because foreign languages touch virtually all points of the intelligence cycle. Intelligence collection depends heavily on language whether it is gained from human or other sources. Language is also critical in processing of information, such as translation and interpretation, as well as in dissemination and integration of intelligence reports.³¹ The intelligence specialty most in need of foreign language skills is HUMINT, where case officers with the right skills gain intelligence through espionage and related means. The case officer's tradecraft involves integrating clandestine techniques with the physical, political, cultural and security environment of the operational situation. The case officer must do this while engaging with his or her assets by written and oral communications, often involving complicated technical subjects, political or economic issues, so ability to understand the nuances of a foreign language is crucial.³² Inadequate HUMINT capabilities have been seen as a "systemic problem that contributed to the inability to gain prior knowledge of the 9/11 plots."³³ Although effective HUMINT has always required employees with foreign language capabilities, needs have changed significantly since the end of the cold war. During the cold war the CIA needed a relatively finite set of foreign languages, but today intelligence agencies need a broader range of language skills including more obscure languages and dialects. U.S. intelligence organizations must have sufficient numbers of workers fluent in languages such as Farsi, Dari or Tajik to be able to task or deploy them on short notice to remote areas where problems could lead to U.S. engagements.³⁴ Increasing the number of officers with foreign language skill is the first step, but

³¹ Ellen Laipson, "Foreign Language Requirements in the Intelligence Community," Statement to Senate Government Affairs Committee, September 14, 2000

³² Burton Gerber, "Managing HUMINT: The Need for a New Approach," from *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*, edited by Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber, Georgetown University Press, Washington DC, 2005, p. 93-94.

³³ Richard A. Best, Jr., *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, Intelligence Issues for Congress*, June 4, 2007, p. 4-5

³⁴ Gerber

case officers also need the specialized training, people skills and other HUMINT attributes to accomplish their missions. Former agent Reuel Marc Gerecht points out that even a Muslim intelligence officer with native language skills could not easily penetrate a terrorist cell because he or she is typically linked with American organizations; the key is with non-official cover case officers who are not openly attached to the U.S. government.³⁵ The intelligence community, including the AF and other services, need intelligence personnel with the critical language skills necessary to recruit and engage with sources and operate effectively in hostile territory. The language shortfall problems encountered in the past must serve as a reminder of the importance of identifying requirements. Since foreign language requirements will usually be needed in combination with other specialized skills, accurately projecting requirements will help ensure recruiting and training plans are tailored to meet future needs.

Identify Existing Foreign Language Capabilities

In addition to identifying position requirements, military and civilian members must identify their foreign language skills so the AF is cognizant of the capabilities in the existing inventory. After 9/11, new efforts were made to collect and track this data; however, more rigor should be put into the process. The Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools (AFOATS) administers a Foreign Language Self-Assessment survey of new officers accessed through AFOATS. For each language identified, overall level of capability is input into the Military Personnel Data System (MilPDS). The U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) also began administering a survey to collect data on Airmen who speak languages other than those taught at

³⁵ Reuel Marc Gerecht, "The Counterterrorist Myth," *The Atlantic Online*, July/August 2001, www.theatlantic.com/doc/print/200107/gerecht

USAFA.³⁶ While AFOATS has been collecting this data for many years the practice has been in place only a few years at USAFA. Currently officers commissioned through AFOATS already have assignments by the time the survey is administered. In order to be most useful to the AF, this data should be collected upon recruitment to help target assignments. This data is also collected by civilian personnel offices for AF civilians, but little emphasis was placed on collecting this data until after 9/11. Data in the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) indicates 4111 U.S. appropriated fund civilians had identified foreign language proficiency as of January 2008.³⁷ This data will be useful for determining placement of newly commissioned AF officers into jobs with language requirements, and it will help identify people with specific language skills when critical needs arise. The AF is already taking some steps to identify and track foreign language capabilities of military and civilian Airmen, but there are several things that could be done to improve data collection. The AF should ensure the survey is administered to all accessions, including enlisted, officers and civilian members. Since an individual's level of proficiency can change over time depending on use or non-use of the language, the AF should require recertification every few years. The most efficient means of administering the survey would be through use of on-line "self-service" applications that allow individuals to identify and update their capabilities. The application already exists for civilians to self identify and update their language skills in the DCPDS, and such capability should also be included in the future Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIMHRS). Maintaining information on the existing language capabilities of the AF is a critical factor in determining where shortfalls exist and will facilitate recruitment and development plans.

³⁶ Uribe e-mail, December 28, 2007

³⁷ DCPDS data and e-mail from AFPC/DPDOPI, January 28, 2008

Establish a Pipeline and Develop Talent Pools

Given the nature of the GWOT and irregular warfare, it is likely that even with the best planning, unexpected requirements will emerge. A Congressional Research Service report offers that requirements for linguists were fairly static in the Cold War; however, since the early 1990s, the U.S. military has been involved in a much broader number of situations throughout the world. After 9/11 demand for skilled linguists resulted in increased reliance on contract personnel and recall of retirees to the workforce, particularly in the Intelligence Community.

In January 2006 President Bush announced the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), a \$114 million program designed to increase the number of Americans learning critical need foreign languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Farsi, and others through new and expanded programs from kindergarten through university and into the workforce. The State Department, the departments of Education and Defense, and the intelligence community are participating in programs and a host of initiatives are being developed to achieve three broad goals: expand the number of Americans mastering critical needs languages and start at a younger age; increase the number of advanced-level speakers of foreign languages, with an emphasis on critical needs languages; and, increase the number of foreign language teachers and resources.³⁸

Defense initiatives fall under the National Security Education Program (NSEP). David Chu, Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness reported in 2006 the Defense Department would allocate over \$750 million over the next five years to increase personnel with

³⁸ State Department Fact Sheet, National Security Language, January 5, 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/58733.htm>

critical language abilities, and provide another \$25 million to be used for NSLI.³⁹ Defense NSEP initiatives include a proposal to establish a Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps (CLRC) in response to a Congressional tasking to explore use of such a program during times of emergency or national need.⁴⁰ The basic concept of the CLRC is to find people with needed foreign language skills during peace time, certify their skill levels and conduct security clearance reviews.⁴¹ At this time, the pilot project has been renamed the *The Language Corps* and will run from 2007 to 2010.⁴² The Department of Defense NSEP has awarded a \$19 million dollar contract to General Dynamics Information Technology to develop and test various organization concepts for the Language Corps to work out the mechanics of recruiting, hiring and certifying linguists, and help determine the pay and benefits required to attract sufficient talent.⁴³ General Dynamics will develop, implement and recruit at least 1,000 certified experts to test a pilot Language Corps in languages deemed important to the security and well-being of the nation. Recruiting is expected to begin in early 2008, and the DoD is developing a list of languages deemed critical. It is surprising to note Arabic may not be one of the languages recruited for because, according to director of the National Security Language Program, Robert Slater, “Arabic is a heavily recruited language already,” and “we’d rather look at some other languages right now.”⁴⁴ While it is evident many efforts are underway to recruit and train military service members and civilians in Arabic, excluding this critical language from the CLRC program

³⁹ Gerry Gilmore, Bush Kicks off Foreign Language Initiative, American Foreign Press News Articles, <http://www.defenselink.mil/utility/printitem.aspx?print=http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=14684>

⁴⁰ Kuenzi

⁴¹ “Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps,” Strategy Page website, November 25, 2005 <http://www.strategypage.com/htmw/htintel/articles/20051125.aspx>

⁴² National Security Education Program website, <http://www.ndu.edu/nsep/>

⁴³ Katherine McIntire Peters, “News+Analysis: The Language Corps,” Government Executive, August 1, 2007, http://www.govexec.com/story_page_pf.cfm?articleid=37630&printerfriendlyvers=1

⁴⁴ Brittany R. Ballenstedt, “Defense to Begin Recruiting Foreign Language Corps,” *Government Executive*, January 15, 2008 http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=39027

appears to be disconnected from other efforts, and may lead to a misunderstanding that the U.S. has sufficient expertise in this language. In order to maintain appropriate focus on creating language capacity, the recruited languages should be consistent across the DoD.

In addition to the creation of a language corps, the contractor will create a continuously operated Language Training and Communications Center, provide personnel support and run activation exercises.⁴⁵ We must foster such a program to meet long term needs, but it would be ill advised for the DoD to count on this program to meet near term needs since the pilot program is barely underway and because such programs were previously suggested and never materialized.⁴⁶ Furthermore, it appears by planning to establish a center for language training, this program may duplicate functions already carried out by the Defense Language Institute (DLI). This contract should not be used to create an additional language training center since it already has established training centers under the Defense Language Institute. Establishment and testing of a pilot language corps should be administered in conjunction with existing programs to avoid duplication and make most efficient use of funds, and it should be closely monitored to ensure a good return on investment.

Developing language pipelines to grow future military professionals requires partnership between education institutions and the military. Schools should identify gifted and motivated language learners, offer them opportunities to develop their abilities, and track them into programs of study that will make use of their languages.⁴⁷ The Air Force has recognized this need and has expanded Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) scholarships to offer Foreign

⁴⁵ ----- "General Dynamics Awarded \$19 Million Contract to Establish National Corps of Language Professionals," May 23, 2007, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2007/05/mil-070523-general-dynamics01.htm>

⁴⁶ "Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps," Strategy Page website, November 25, 2005
<http://www.strategypage.com/htmw/htintel/articles/20051125.aspx>

⁴⁷ Pratt

Language Express Scholarships to students majoring in foreign language. Currently these scholarships are offered in over 20 targeted languages including Arabic, Chinese, Kurdish, Pashtu, Russian and Urdu. Scholarship processing for students who meet the criteria is expedited at the local detachment.⁴⁸ The Air Force also offers college students studying foreign language to participate in four-week Foreign Language Immersion programs in destinations including China, Russia, Germany and Japan. The intent is to further language and cultural learning by constant, practical use of the foreign language.⁴⁹ Although these immersion opportunities will provide invaluable cultural and language exposure to future Airmen, the host countries are not consistent with languages deemed critical by the AF and DoD. The AF should revise and expand these programs to include countries in key areas such as the Middle East and other Arabic-speaking countries and reduce the number of students sent to Western Europe. The AF ROTC office's budget was recently increased by ten million dollars which can be used to increase the number of scholarships offered and expand exchange and immersion programs to countries speaking strategic languages.

While offering scholarships to students interested in studying language, the AF would likely get a greater return on investment by aggressively seeking and offering scholarships to students who already speak another foreign language, particularly those considered of strategic importance. By partnering with school systems, the DoD can encourage American high schools and even secondary schools to begin the pipeline to target strong language students for DoD sponsored enrichment programs such as summer intensive courses, study abroad, or to study other languages. Undergraduate programs could be pipelines to officer commissions in career

⁴⁸ US Air Force ROTC Website, "Foreign Language Majors," <http://www.afrotc.com/scholarships/incolschol/expressLang.php>. The list of approved languages is subject to change.

⁴⁹ US Air Force ROTC Website, "Foreign Language Immersion," <http://www.afrotc.com/collegelife/summerexp/foreignLang.php>

fields requiring language, such as intelligence or international affairs specialists, and they could be coupled with funded graduate programs in key language and regional specialties. The IAS officer career field provides a good opportunity. Because most IAS positions typically start at mid-career level, there are few, if any, opportunities to begin developing international expertise in company grade officers and entry level civilians. This presents a problem for recruiters who are trying to attract individuals who have foreign language skills. For instance, the AF has increased the number of ROTC scholarships for foreign language majors, but when a prospective ROTC candidate asks about career opportunities after completing college, the recruiter is unable to guarantee the officer will be able to use the language skills in his or her assignments. With very few field grade officer positions identified with a language requirement, recruiters are unable to make a connection between requirements and scholarships.⁵⁰ Candidates who are passionate about the language and region of study may seek other opportunities in which they can have a better guarantee of international work after graduation. One recommendation to alleviate this problem is to develop international affairs specialist career paths for military and civilians that begin at entry levels. The AF should recruit students who have foreign language capabilities or who are willing to major in foreign languages and develop meaningful career paths that put these skills to use throughout their career. This will not only serve to help attract candidates with the right skills, but also will create a pipeline for the higher level RAS positions.

The U.S. Air Force Academy offers another means of accessing AF officers, and the Academy requirement for language coursework has increased. The cadet language requirement has increased from two to four semesters for most cadets, and two semesters for science and engineering majors. The number of cadets enrolled in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and

⁵⁰ Interview with Brian M. Smith, Major, USAF, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Recruiting, interview February 6, 2008

Portuguese⁵¹ is projected to increase from 24 percent in 2005 to 50 percent by 2010. In addition, the number of cadets participating in language and international programs such as foreign language or foreign area majors/minors, language or cultural immersion, study abroad or exchange programs has almost doubled from 2005 to 2007.⁵² While these efforts will undoubtedly give academy graduates more exposure to foreign language, there is no guarantee the AF assignment system will make use of the skills gained while at the academy, and there is little evidence of efforts to recruit cadets that already speak another foreign language. The AF should focus efforts on recruiting more heritage speakers into the enlisted and officer ranks, then develop them with the specialized training needed in various career fields, as well as provide them with assignments that will make best use of their language capabilities. On the enlisted side, AF recruiters seek candidates to fill requirements from all markets throughout the country. When recruiters encounter a strong concentration of foreign language speakers they may increase efforts through advertising, zone canvassing and high school and college visits. Those that pass the Defense Language Aptitude test and other requirements would be targeted to linguist positions.⁵³ Concern over ability to grant security clearances to people who have family connections overseas can hinder these efforts.

Expanding the number of military members and civilian workers with foreign language skills will reap great benefits, but will be a long process. The U.S. must also prepare to meet short notice surge requirements. To prepare for emergency requirements, the DoD should develop and maintain a database of individuals with language capabilities that could be drawn upon when a need arises. This would include current active duty members and civilians, former

⁵¹ Portuguese is spoken by 186 million people in South America and is the official language in Brazil and several African countries including Angola, Guinea Bissau, and Mozambique.

<http://clvweb.cord.edu/prweb/portuguese/default.asp>

⁵² E-mail, LtCol Dan Uribe, USAFA/DFP, December 6, 2007

⁵³ E-mail, CMSgt Mike Gasparetto, Chief, Enlisted Accession Policy, AF/A1PTS, December 10, 2007

employees, retirees, former military members, academics, contractors, and employees of other government agencies. When a need arises the agency can seek these individuals to employ on a short or long term basis either as reservists, federal employees, contractors, or by temporary detail from other agencies or private industry. The CIA used a similar approach after 9/11 and brought back many already cleared retirees to fill the ranks until new hires were fully trained.⁵⁴ Taking such a joint, or even interagency, approach would allow any military service or agency to tap into these resources when needed to meet surge or emergency requirements, but it would demand clear articulation and prioritization of requirements to ensure the most critical needs are met. The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap includes an initiative to develop a means of tracking information on language skills of current and retired military members and civilians, however, there is no indication the work has commenced.

Creative Recruitment

Just as the DoD needs to explore a variety of employment methods to meet an emergency need, they should also use innovative hiring practices and examine ways to reach non-traditional candidates such as first generation Americans who live abroad or who have foreign language and cultural expertise that is so critically needed. Military recruiters are advertising linguist opportunities on their websites, as are other federal agencies. The CIA has embarked on an aggressive advertising campaign indicating an attempt to gain more ethnic and linguistic diversity. An ad in Amtrak's Arrive magazine is aimed at candidates interested in the National Clandestine Service (NCS), and a similar ad was recently spotted in the walkway between concourses at Dulles airport in Virginia. Some ads target ethnic groups such as one celebrating

⁵⁴ Steve Hirsch, "CIA Effort to Beef up Recruiting Begins to Pay Off," *Government Executive*, August 29, 2003 <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0803/082903nj2.htm>

Chinese New Year, and another aimed at people of Middle Eastern background which reads: “For over 100 years Arab-Americans have served the nation. Today, we need you more than ever.”⁵⁵ In December 2006 the CIA even began using Facebook.com, the popular social networking site, to recruit potential employees into the NCS, marking the first time the CIA has ventured into social networking to hire new personnel. The site provided an oversight of what the NCS is looking for in a recruit, along with a 30-second promotional YouTube video aimed at college-aged applicants. CIA spokeswoman Michele Neff said Facebook was an invaluable tool when it comes to peer-to-peer marketing.⁵⁶

Since September 11, 2001, CIA applications have more than doubled. The CIA received 134,000 resumes in 2006 and expects 160,000 in 2007. They succeeded in bringing in many new hires, with 40 percent of the workforce hired since 9/11,⁵⁷ and 15 percent hired in the last two months of 2006.⁵⁸ In addition to language skills, the CIA reported sixty percent of the new hires are under age 30 and one in six has military experience. In 2004, National Public Radio reported five percent of new hires speak Chinese and almost two percent speak Arabic, representing an improvement since 9/11 and indicating recruiting efforts are paying off.⁵⁹ Although one-quarter of CIA applicants claim language skills, CIA tests reveal that only about 12 percent are proficient.⁶⁰ This highlights the importance of testing proficiency before placing individuals in critical positions and payment of monetary incentives.

Instead of focusing on traditional means of advertising, the Air Force should make maximum use of the internet to reach potential recruits. All military services are using internet

⁵⁵ Hirsch

⁵⁶ Chaddus Bruce, “CIA Gets in Your Face(book),” *Wired* on-line magazine,

⁵⁷ Stephen Barr, “Fast Changing CIA Puts New Emphasis on Recruiting,” *The Washington Post*, February 19, 2007 http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/18/AR2007021801026_pf.html

⁵⁸ Rutzick

⁵⁹ National Public Radio (NPR) transcript, “Analysis: CIA’s New Recruiting,” September 3, 2004

⁶⁰ Barr

sites for recruitment, and they should continue to seek creative of targeting messages about opportunities for foreign language speakers to groups likely to have those skills. Most young Americans are comfortable using the internet and it is a major tool for strategic communication that can be used to reach people who might otherwise never encounter a military recruiter. The Air Force should explore creative ways of using such tools as chat rooms, blogs, and social networking sites to promote opportunities for language-related jobs to enhance recruiting efforts.

If the military and U.S. agencies are serious about seeking candidates with native language and cultural skills, they must consider non-traditional approaches to recruiting. For example, some intelligence agencies have a majority of their jobs in the Washington DC area, and many individuals with needed foreign language skills may not be interested in relocating to that area. To reach candidates in communities with large ethnic populations that possess desired language skills such as Chinese, Arabic, Korean, Farsi, Dari, Pashto and Urdu, these agencies should consider moving some positions to other parts of the country or developing telework centers for work such as translation of open source material. With the military, federal agencies and many private companies attempting to build foreign language capacity, recruiting for language jobs is a buyers market, and the AF should employ every weapon in the advertising and recruitment arsenal to attract the expertise needed.

Recruit Heritage Speakers

While there appears to be no shortage of job opportunities, studies show there are far too few students enrolled in critical language studies to meet the need any time in the near future. The Congressional Research Service found that language instruction at American academic institutions has concentrated primarily on a small number of languages such as Spanish, French

and other romance languages. Less than 200,000 bachelor's degrees in language studies were awarded from 1992 to 2002; however 60 percent were in romance languages and less than one percent in Middle Eastern languages.⁶¹ The Committee for Economic Development reports that only one-third of students study a foreign language in junior high and high school, and that drops to about 9 percent in college. Approximately 70 percent study Spanish, and while the number of students taking Arabic is increasing, it still accounts for only 0.8 percent of enrollments in postsecondary education.⁶² Because the U.S. does not have a sufficient supply of individuals who acquire foreign language skills in school or college, successful recruitment will target candidates who learned foreign language at home. Census data offers some hope, with over 47 million people, or 18 percent of the population, reporting that they spoke a language other than English at home in 2000. Of these, 28 million report speaking Spanish, 2 million speak Chinese and 600,000 speak Arabic. The growing requirements for skills in less commonly taught languages will necessitate that federal agencies devise avenues to employ individuals from these individuals who learned foreign languages at home or from living overseas.⁶³

Solving the U.S. language problem cannot be done without engaging local heritage communities. Mary Louise Pratt said “nothing has greater potential for revitalizing and revalorizing the study of languages than the multilingualism that exists” in America, and it is foolish to not capitalize on the massive resource of people that speak languages other than English.⁶⁴ To do so, requires a huge cultural shift and commitment throughout the government and education system to elevate the importance of learning and embracing foreign languages. One strategic communication suggestion is to change the American view of bilingualism, but this

⁶¹ Kuenzi, p. 7-8

⁶² Committee for Economic Development, “Business and Academic Leaders Endorse Foreign Language Studies Efforts,” November 1, 2007, http://www.ced.org/newsroom/press/press_2007foreignlanguages_endorsers.pdf

⁶³ Kuenzi, p. 2, 11

⁶⁴ Pratt

won't be an easy task. Pratt points out students in U.S. schools who speak languages other than English are viewed negatively, even when they speak English well. She suggests a paradigm shift is needed to view these students as linguistically endowed and take advantage of multilingual schools to give all children the experience of learning and using more than one language.⁶⁵ There are some indications US schools are increasing language classes. To illustrate, *USA Today* reported a 100 percent increase in Chinese language programs in the last two years, with programs in more than 550 elementary, junior and senior high schools, and there has been a 51 percent increase in college-level Chinese language enrollments since 2002.⁶⁶

The communities in which multilingualism exists can also serve as recruiting sources for military, scholars, diplomats, and international professionals. If, for example, U.S. Census language data were used to identify pockets of non-English-speaking communities, those foreign languages might be targeted by the volunteer reserve corps to provide language services in a particular area of the country in times of emergency. A good source for identifying heritage communities is the Modern Language Association interactive language map, which shows the density of speakers of 30 of the most commonly spoken languages in the U.S.⁶⁷ The Air Force can use this to assist in targeting recruitment efforts when specific foreign language skills are needed.

Career Development

⁶⁵ Pratt

⁶⁶Elizabeth Weise, "As China Booms, So Does Mandarin in U.S. Schools," *USA Today*, November 19, 2007. http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2007-11-19-mandarin-cover_N.htm

⁶⁷ Medha Tare, "Assessing the Foreign Language Needs of the Department of Homeland Security: A Government-Wide Effort," *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, vol. 3, no. 1, June 2006 <http://www.homelandsecurity.org/newjournal/Articles/displayArticle2.asp?article=143#end20>

Once individuals with foreign language skills enter into military service or other government jobs, it is important that assignments make use of those talents and provide challenging opportunities as well as on-going development of the language skills. Even native speakers may need education in another dialect in addition to job-specific training. Continuous development of language skills should include immersion, and some maintain that linguists should not be permitted to live on U.S. bases overseas, as living in the local community will enhance their language skills and ability to communicate with the local population. Developing a skilled workforce to meet future needs also necessitates that career paths offer opportunities for promotion and advancement while still utilizing the skills that are so needed in the Air Force. There may be a perception by some military members that taking a job requiring language skills is damaging to one's future promotion opportunities; and, on the other hand, there are individuals with language talents that have longed to utilize those skills in job assignments but have never had the opportunity. In addition to the frustration the individual feels, the AF could be wasting its investment in language training if assignments don't make use of the language skill and the individual loses the skill over time. For instance, if a student on an ROTC scholarship studies Arabic for four years of college and is then assigned to a series of stateside assignments not requiring Arabic, the Airman's language skill will likely degrade and more intensive training will be required years later if an assignment will require the language. While the DLI website, LingNet, provides a variety of resources in various languages, including the "Countries in Perspective" series, the Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS), and materials developed by other government and Department of Defense agencies,⁶⁸ it would not give AF members the same experience as they would gain from living abroad and being fully immersed

⁶⁸ LingNet web site is a service provided by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, <http://www.lingnet.org/default.asp>

in a foreign country. Interaction with local nationals or native speakers on a regular basis would give the individual exposure to the dialects and nuances he or she would likely encounter in an operational environment or assignment requiring language expertise. The Air Force must find a balanced approach to provide challenging assignments to foreign language speakers, and to help members retain language skills even if current assignments don't require those capabilities. The AF should also look across other agencies for assignments that will support national security goals and still enable effective use of the language skills. Rotational assignments to joint organizations, State Department, DHS or other activities will serve the national interest, maintain current language skills, and should not impact his or her chances of promotion.

Promotion opportunities must also be taken into consideration and reviewed in each of the career fields that are highly dependent on foreign language skills. For example, some have suggested the Air Force International Affairs career structure does not appear to offer a reasonable expectation of promotion, and embassy assignments at field grade ranks will usually not get an officer promoted. Air Force leaders have acknowledged that assignments to international affairs and other jobs requiring language or regional expertise have sometimes been viewed as "career enders." They are working with the AF Personnel Center assignment teams to ensure a balance between assignments that maintain language proficiency also provide fully competitive career opportunities.⁶⁹ The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap includes making foreign language ability a criterion for general officer and flag officer advancement.⁷⁰ If the DoD is serious about enforcing this action, foreign language capability should be a promotion and selection consideration at all levels for both military and civilians. Rather than make it a requirement, it should be viewed as an enhancer and candidates being considered for

⁶⁹ Lemkin

⁷⁰ Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, January 2005, paragraph 1.J.

promotion or selection should get extra points for their foreign language skills. Some agencies are giving additional recruitment credit for applicants who speak foreign languages. For example, the State Department's website indicates job applicants will receive extra points, for demonstrating language capability by passing a language test by telephone, with higher points being credited for the most critical languages.⁷¹ In order for the AF, DoD and federal agencies to create and sustain robust foreign language capabilities long-term, these skills must be viewed as value-added in both recruitment and career development.

Financial Incentives

In addition to seeking ways to reduce barriers to employment, the DoD and other agencies need sustained funding for recruitment incentives and special language incentives. Military officers and enlisted members who are proficient in a foreign language may be eligible for foreign language proficiency pay (FLPP), and in June 2006, the maximum monthly payment was increased from \$300 to \$1,000. The increase was intended to help DoD identify untapped skills by encouraging members who are already proficient in a language to self-identify, and to motivate members to acquire or improve language skills, or expand their proficiency to other languages or dialects.⁷² Payment of these bonuses is contingent on certification of proficiency in a foreign language identified on a DoD-approved list of strategic languages and meeting other eligibility criteria identified in applicable DoD regulations.⁷³ In 2006, about 20,000 service members were receiving FLPP and approximately 7,249 of those were proficient in Arabic. As

⁷¹ State Department website, <http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/selection.html#FLS>

⁷² Sara Wood, Sgt, US Army, "DoD Announces Increase in Foreign Language Pay," *American Forces Press Service News Articles*, May 11, 2006. <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=15793>

⁷³ DoD Instruction 7280.03, Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB), August 20, 2007

of January 2008, the AF was paying foreign language proficiency bonus to 4,355 Airmen,⁷⁴ and the total spent on FLPP in 2007 was about \$20.5 million.⁷⁵ Separate regulations govern the payment of FLPP to DoD civilians who are proficient in foreign languages and use them in performance of their duties. Prior to June 2005 payment of civilian FLPP was limited to intelligence workers, but DoD revised the policy to expand coverage to include non-intelligence work. The maximum payments were also increased commensurate with military bonuses, from \$150 per pay two week period to \$500.⁷⁶ As of January 2008, the AF was paying FLPP to 26 civilians at an average of \$183 per pay period, or a total of \$123,500 per year.⁷⁷

Other federal agencies are also using financial incentives to attract and retain language experts. Several language incentive systems are offered at CIA, and all employees who attain certain levels of expertise through training, classes or self-study are eligible for monetary incentives. New employees may qualify for a significant hiring bonus with a one-time, lump sum payment of up to a maximum of \$35,000. Language Instructors are also eligible to earn annual “bonus” pay based on evaluation of their language proficiency.⁷⁸ Employees whose jobs require use of a foreign language or who maintain their language proficiency in support of a certain crisis or surge requirement are enrolled in the Corporate Language Program which offers payments for language maintenance as well as language achievement awards.⁷⁹

In addition to foreign language proficiency pay, military members and federal civilians stationed in foreign countries may receive housing allowance, and other differentials for living overseas. In Iraq and Afghanistan for instance, federal employees’ compensation includes a 35

⁷⁴ e-mail from Capt Greg Duffy, AF/A1DL, February 1, 2008

⁷⁵ Department of the Air Force, Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Estimate, Military Personnel Appropriation, Exhibit PB-30J, February 2008. <http://www.saffm.hq.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-080204-069.pdf>

⁷⁶ AFPC HR Advisory Number 2007-22, Foreign Language Proficiency Pay Guidance, 13 April 2007

⁷⁷ DCPDS data and e-mail from AFPC/DPDOPI, January 28, 2008

⁷⁸ Language Magazine’s JobShop, September 27, 2007 <http://www.languagemagazine.com/jobshop/jobshop.html>

⁷⁹ CIA Fact sheet https://www.cia.gov/ads/pdf/CCB_LanguageInsert_0828.pdf

percent danger pay allowance and a 35 percent foreign post differential.⁸⁰ While pay can serve as a motivator to help build foreign language capacity, the AF, DoD and government agencies should also consider use of other recruiting and retention tools, such as student loan repayments and retention incentives, and payment of relocation costs for new civilian hires. Keys to the success of such incentives are to target them to recruit and retain individuals with mission-critical skills and to ensure sufficient and sustained funds are programmed to meet future recruiting needs.

Improve the Security Clearance Process

Although indications are the efforts of the AF, other services and U.S. agencies are having some success, citizenship and security clearances still pose huge hurdles for reaching heritage speakers. For example, AFROTC recruiters turn away many college students who have foreign language skills because they are non-citizens and statutorily prohibited from serving as officers. Similarly, the CIA's recruiting campaign is achieving success, however, many Americans of Middle-Eastern background have been rejected because of relatives overseas or travel in countries that raise alarm among security officers.⁸¹ The CIA recruitment website lists four types of jobs requiring language skills, including cooperative education jobs for graduate and undergraduate college students. All require U.S. citizenship and most require relocation to the Washington DC area at the applicant's expense.⁸² While some security concerns are well-founded, the federal government should review the background check and security clearance processes and standards to seek opportunities to eliminate barriers to employment of people with needed language skills. The State Department website informs candidates with dual citizenship,

⁸⁰ "Short-Staffed in Iraq"

⁸¹ Douglas Jehl, "CIA is Reviewing Its Security Policy for Recruitment," *New York Times*, June 8, 2005

⁸² Careers at CIA website, <https://www.cia.gov/careers/jobs/language-positions/view-jobs/index.html>

extensive travel, education, residence and/or employment overseas, or who have foreign contacts, spouse or family members who are not U.S. citizens, that the security clearance investigation may take longer due interviews required.⁸³ While we must be mindful of security concerns, we need to ensure we do not discourage the applicants who are most needed. The connections identified as possible concerns are ones which likely contributed to the foreign language skills. At a minimum, government agencies should work to streamline and expedite processing of clearances, and recruiting websites should be worded so as not to discourage applicants from applying. The multilevel security clearance model used at the National Security Agency may serve as a model for other agencies. It allows for some headquarters positions to be filled by people who hold less than a top secret clearance, and in limited situations, non-American citizens can be hired.⁸⁴

The AF, DoD and other agencies must endeavor to remove barriers to hiring foreign language speakers. The security clearance process is often cited as a barrier to hiring first or second generation Americans and people who have relatives and contacts in foreign countries. While this doesn't preclude granting a clearance, the investigation process could take much longer than normal. Compounding that is the fact the security clearance process has long suffered from backlogs and long delays in processing investigations. Federal Computer Week reports that "after more than 30 years of throwing money and people at the problem, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Defense Department and the Office of Management and Budget have teamed to seek a long-term solution for what they say is a laborious and faulty security clearance process." The AF has been designated to manage procurement for the effort

⁸³ State Department Careers website, <http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/selection.html#SCL> and pamphlet, "Dual Citizenship – Security Implications," undated, <http://www.careers.state.gov/docs/DualCitizenship.pdf>

⁸⁴ Jehl

and is soliciting ideas from industry.⁸⁵ Technological solutions will likely be applied to improve the process and eliminate backlogs. One company cited foreign contacts and foreign travel as areas where much more information is available today electronically in the form of foreign travel, entry/exit records, and visa requests. Establishing an architecture that integrates and draws from various data bases will help eliminate cumbersome manual steps in the current process, and enable adjudication of clearances in days or weeks, rather than months.⁸⁶ The DNI has also rolled out a 500-day improvement plan which includes a number of initiatives to modernize business practices. Among them is a plan to transform the security clearance process both within the IC and at the national level. The desired outcome is to quickly attract and hire qualified individuals including "first generation Americans whose native language and cultural experiences are indispensable to facing current and future national security challenges." They also plan to reduce clearance processing time from over 270 days to 60 days to ensure the IC will have the talent and capability it needs.⁸⁷

U.S. citizenship is a barrier associated with military officer and civilian positions; however, the military has enlisted non-U.S. citizens for almost 200 years. Since 9/11 the number of these recruits has grown and is expected to continue rising. Today there are over 35,000 non-U.S. citizens enlisted in the military, including about 3,000 Airmen. The services recognize the benefits the linguistic and cultural diversity non-citizens bring, especially in the face of the challenges of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), however security concerns may restrict

⁸⁵ Jason Miller, "Security Clearance Process Needs New Ideas," Federal Computer Week, FCW.COM, August 20, 2007. http://www.fcw.com/print/13_29/news/103537-1.html

⁸⁶ Tom Conroy, Vice President, National Security Programs, "Revolutionizing the Security Clearance Process to Enhance National Security," Northrop Grumman Corporation, undated, p. 1-3. <http://www.it.northropgrumman.com/MMPDFs/RevolutionizingtheSecurityClearance%20Process.pdf>

⁸⁷ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, United States Intelligence Community (IC) 100 Day Plan for INTEGRATION and COLLABORATION, undated. <http://www.dni.gov/100-day-plan/100-day-plan.pdf>. Plan has been revised and incorporated into a 500 Day Plan for the Intelligence Community. Dr. Donald Kerr, Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, Statement for the Record before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, December 6, 2007. http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/20071206_testimony.pdf

future job opportunities available to these individuals.⁸⁸ Over 200 countries are represented, with the largest percentage coming from Mexico, the Philippines, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador.⁸⁹ The Army established a program aimed at attracting both citizen and non-citizen native or heritage speakers of Arabic, Dari, Kurdish, Pashto and Turkish, with the goal of producing translators to work overseas. While a few of enlistment requirements have been relaxed, the security clearance rules still apply.⁹⁰ The positions do not require citizenship (a condition for security clearance), but they undergo the National Agency Check/Local Agency Check/Credit Check (NACLC) and an additional counterintelligence investigation. Similarly, the Marine Corps set a goal of attracting 300 Arabic speakers annually, and plans to assess them into various career fields without waiving any requirements.⁹¹

Government-Wide Approach Needed

The vast array of language related training and recruiting initiatives indicate the Defense Department and many other government agencies are getting serious and creative in attempts to increase the numbers of individuals with foreign language skills. Recent hiring surges are a good indication their innovative advertising is paying off, however, there remains a serious shortfall in the critical foreign language skills needed for effective counterinsurgency operations, intelligence operations, to maintain the global war on terror, and to work with allies and coalition partners. Unfortunately, the military departments are competing with other government agencies such as the FBI, State Department, CIA, Department of Homeland Security and non-

⁸⁸ Anita U. Hattiangadi, Aline O. Quester, Gary Lee, SgtMaj, USMC (Ret.), Diana S. Lien, Ian D. MacLeod with David L. Reese, Robert W. Shuford, Non-Citizens in Today's Military: Final Report, The CNA Corporation, April 2005, p. 7. <http://www.cna.org/documents/D0011092.a2.pdf>

⁸⁹ CNA report, p. 22-24

⁹⁰ CNA report, p 99-101

⁹¹ CNA report, p. 31-32

governmental relief organizations for the same types of language capabilities. Many contractors have secured lucrative contracts with the DoD providing linguistic services in Iraq and in the U.S. and are also advertising to attract the same candidates. For instance, the Army awarded a 5-year, \$4.65 billion contract for Iraq-related translation and interpretation services to Global Linguistic Solutions LLC (GLS), a joint venture formed by security contractors DynCorp International and McNeil Technologies⁹², and Defense also awarded DynCorp the contract to develop and implement the Language Corps pilot project. A six page brochure produced by the Partnership for Public Service advertises dozens of foreign language related initiatives with links to over sixty websites.⁹³ These efforts present an opportunity for the U.S. to begin a shift from monolingualism to multilingualism. At the same time, the sheer number of initiatives and lack of focus on defining the true requirements presents the risk of duplicated efforts, and cost escalation due to competition between many government agencies as well as private companies paid with public funds.

As the AF, the DoD and other federal agencies strive to build stronger foreign language capabilities, they must approach this as a long term effort, and they must collaborate, rather than compete against, other intelligence and government agencies. Addressing the problem requires an integrated, cross-government strategy and partnership with U.S. schools and colleges to reenergize language training in our country. Mary Louise Pratt suggests that today's dramatic circumstances offer a broader opening for a new public idea about language, language learning,

⁹² "L-3 Out, Dyncorp-McNeil in for \$4.65B Iraq Translation Contract?," December 10, 2007, <http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/l3-out-dyncorpmcneil-in-for-465b-iraq-translation-contract-02885/>

⁹³ "Existing Foreign Language Programs/Institutions of the Federal Government," *Foreign Language Initiative DRAFT Resources Directory*, April 2, 2007, http://www.makingthedifference.org/contact/documents/LanguageDirectory_ForSchools_2April07_StudentVersion.pdf

multilingualism and citizenship, and we must seize this opportunity.⁹⁴ Collaboration across agencies will provide opportunities to explore pilot projects such as centralized recruitment and screening of applicants; to examine redundancies in organizations and processes such as language training, and to seek opportunities to consolidate and achieve efficiencies. For instance, conducting a review of the various language training institutes run by CIA, Defense, State Department and university language programs would determine if efficiencies could be gained by combining programs to free up some resources and linguists to meet operational needs. The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap also advocates development of a Joint Language Service Corps, but it may be worth exploring this as a government wide pool with skilled linguists being hired by one activity with possibility of being assigned to jobs in any number of agencies based on skill level. Such a program would have the benefits of achieving efficiencies by consolidating recruitment efforts, ensuring resources were devoted to the highest priority requirements, and provide a wide range of challenging career progression opportunities for linguists. It would also enable tiers of positions based on security clearance requirements; individuals could be hired to do work such as open source translation, while security clearances are pending, and be assigned to other jobs as clearances are obtained. Shortfalls will persist for the foreseeable future, so the U.S. must continuously seek innovative ways to make the best use of scarce foreign language resources.

Conclusion

“By the time a language has become a national security imperative, in a way it's already too late: the other has already been defined as an enemy; the failures of communication and understanding have already done their damage. And if there are no experts who know the language, it's too late to create them now.”⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Pratt

⁹⁵ Pratt

Although America missed many opportunities to address the problem of monolingualism, it is not too late, and failure to continue efforts could lead to disastrous effects. According to John MacGaffin, consistency and organizational will are key elements of success in improving an agency's language capabilities. "Organizational will is required to keep students in language training until they are fluent, rather than pull them out prematurely when some other inevitable 'priority' tempts management to reassign them. Organizational will is required to commit individuals and funding over the long term to the most important targets, without being diverted by old notions of 'career diversity' or budgetary pressures."⁹⁶ Unless the AF, DoD and other agencies can significantly improve foreign language capabilities, we will not be able to succeed in counterinsurgency, peace operations, humanitarian relief, or to acquire the intelligence policymakers need in order to understand the security threats posed by individuals or organizations. Progress is being made and must continue with strategies including on-going review of future requirements, development of candidate pools to meet surge requirements, creative recruitment techniques, recruitment of heritage speakers, career paths that utilize and develop language skills, use of financial incentives and recruiting and retention incentives, revision of security clearance processing, creative recruitment techniques, and partnership with other government agencies. Focusing on these actions will ensure the AF, DoD and other agencies are successful in meeting U.S. national security goals, and developing foreign language skills may prove to be one of our most successful tools in fighting the war on terror and in winning the hearts and minds of Iraqis. Much like counterinsurgency operations, this will be a

⁹⁶ John MacGaffin, "Clandestine Human Intelligence: Spies, Counterspies, and Covert Action," *from Transforming U.S. Intelligence*, edited by Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber, Georgetown University Press, Washington DC, 2005, p. 93-94.

long fight. The U.S. government must demonstrate the political and organizational will and commitment to improve foreign language capabilities.

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