



# Department of Defense

## DIRECTIVE

NUMBER 5160.41E  
October 21, 2005

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USD(P&R)

SUBJECT: Defense Language Program (DLP)

- References:
- (a) DoD Directive 5160.41, subject as above, April 7, 1988 (hereby canceled)
  - (b) Assistant Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Defense Foreign Language Program Restructure," October 19, 1994 (hereby canceled)
  - (c) Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Management of the Defense Foreign Language Program," May 10, 2004 (hereby canceled)
  - (d) DoD Directive 5101.1, "DoD Executive Agent," September 3, 2002
  - (e) through (g), see enclosure 1

### 1. REISSUANCE AND PURPOSE

This Directive:

- 1.1. Reissues reference (a) to update Defense Language Program (DLP) policy and responsibilities.
- 1.2. Cancels references (b) and (c).
- 1.3. Establishes Senior Language Authorities (SLAs) and the Defense Language Steering Committee (DLSC), formerly titled the Foreign Language Steering Committee.
- 1.4. Authorizes the publication of implementing guidance on "Management of Language and Regional Capabilities."
- 1.5. Designates the Secretary of the Army as the DoD Executive Agent (EA) for the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), in accordance with reference (d), and Executive Agent for contract foreign language support to the DoD Components. Exceptions to contract foreign language support are outlined in subparagraph 5.11.2.1.
- 1.6. Designates the Secretary of the Air Force as the DoD EA for the Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC) in accordance with reference (d).

## 2. APPLICABILITY

This Directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities in the Department of Defense (hereafter referred to collectively as the “DoD Components”).

## 3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. Critical Need. An operational or mission need determined by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), in conjunction with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)), and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)), to be critical.

3.2. DoD Personnel. All military (Active duty, National Guard, and Reserves) members and DoD employees.

3.3. Executive Agent. As defined in reference (d).

3.4. Language Professional. A person who possesses a foreign language capability, as defined in Interagency Language Roundtable Skill Level Descriptions (reference (e)), in one or more foreign languages and requires a foreign language to perform his or her primary function.

3.5. Language Skilled. A person who possesses a foreign language capability in one or more foreign languages.

3.6. Regional Expertise. Graduate level education or 40 semester hours of study focusing on but not limited to the political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic factors of a foreign country or specific global region through an accredited educational institution or equivalent regional expertise gained through documented previous experience as determined by the USD(P&R) or the Secretary of the Military Department concerned.

## 4. POLICY

It is DoD policy that:

4.1. Foreign language and regional expertise be considered critical competencies essential to the DoD mission and shall be managed to maximize the accession, development, maintenance, enhancement, and employment of these critical skills appropriate to the Department of Defense’s mission needs.

4.1.1. Consistent with the Privacy Act implementation in DoD Directive 5400.11 (reference (f)), all DoD personnel shall be screened upon accession and periodically thereafter for possession of a foreign language and regional expertise. DoD personnel shall be advised of the purpose for collection of this information. Personnel claiming a foreign language capability may be tested to determine proficiency. Results shall be made a permanent entry in the individuals' personnel record and shall be forwarded to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) database or the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS), as appropriate.

4.1.2. The study, maintenance, and employment of skills in critical languages by DoD personnel shall be encouraged with provision for special pay and time for self-managed and classroom maintenance and enhancement of language skills in continuing education programs, when authorized by law.

4.1.3. Military units deploying to, or in transit through foreign territories shall be equipped, to the greatest extent practicable, with an appropriate capability to communicate in the languages of the territories of deployment or transit. The Commanders of the Combatant Commands shall determine what is appropriate based on current situation and circumstances.

4.1.4. During times of critical need, operational necessity or as mission dictates, the Department shall make full use of available capabilities without regard to Service or DoD agency affiliation, consistent with law and regulation.

4.2. Centralized oversight of automated language translation tool and system research, development and acquisition shall be managed to promote a coherent DoD-wide program advancing cross language communication and avoiding duplicative efforts.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness shall:

5.1.1. Provide overall policy guidance for the DLP.

5.1.2. Appoint a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service (or equivalent) member as the Senior Language Authority for DoD. The DoD SLA shall chair the DLSC.

5.1.3. Establish the DLSC which shall consist of General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service (or equivalent) representatives from the Office of the USD(P); the Office of the USD(I); the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller); Office of the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics; the Office of the Director, Program Analysis and Evaluation; the Combatant Commands; the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Military Departments; the Counter Intelligence Field Activity; the Defense Intelligence Agency; the Defense Security and Cooperation Agency; the Defense Threat Reduction Agency; the National Security Agency; and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency.

5.1.3.1. The DLSC shall, as a minimum:

5.1.3.1.1. Recommend and coordinate language policy.

5.1.3.1.2. Identify present and emerging foreign language and regional expertise needs for military and civilian personnel.

5.1.3.1.3. Identify language training, education, personnel, and financial requirements.

5.1.3.1.4. Serve as an advisory board to the USD(P&R) for the DLIFLC and the DLIELC.

5.1.4. Develop and sustain personnel systems that maintain accurate data on all DoD personnel with certified and self-reported foreign language proficiency and area expertise.

5.1.5. Determine when there is a “critical need” (see subparagraph 4.1.4.) in conjunction with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the USD(P), the USD(I) and the Secretaries of the Military Services.

5.1.6. Review plans for addressing resource needs in accordance with the direction provided by the capabilities-based review conducted by the USD(P), as referenced in subparagraph 5.3.2. and in coordination with the USD(P), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Heads of the DoD Components.

5.1.7. Approve the assignment of the Commandants of the DLIFLC and DLIELC as submitted by the DoD EA.

5.1.8. Publish a DoD strategic language list and update it annually, in coordination with the USD(P), the USD(I), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Combatant Commanders, and the Secretaries of the Military Departments. This list outlines languages in which the Department of Defense has current and projected requirements. Training, testing, and foreign language proficiency pay will be provided. This list will not preclude the DoD Components from maintaining capability and authorizing special pay for languages which they may have requirements.

5.1.9. Establish a language readiness-reporting index to measure language capabilities within the DoD Components.

5.1.10. Monitor the accession, retention, and promotion of language professionals.

5.1.11. Have direct contact with the Commandants of the DLIFLC and DLIELC.

5.2. The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics shall:

5.2.1. Designate a representative to the DLSC. The representative shall be a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service (or equivalent) member.

5.2.2. Oversee research, development, testing, evaluation, and acquisition of multi-language technology to be employed with the operating forces, except technology to be employed within the DoD Intelligence Components, and shall coordinate these efforts with the USD(P&R) and the USD(I).

5.2.3. Consult with the USD(P&R), the USD(I), and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to understand technology needs and guide research, development and acquisition of automated language translation system capabilities.

5.3. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy shall:

5.3.1. Designate a representative to the DLSC. The representative shall be a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service (or equivalent) member.

5.3.2. Initiate an annual policy and strategy review to update the capabilities-based review to identify emerging language requirements based on national security strategy documents including the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, and the Security Cooperation Guidance. Provide direction resulting from this review through the USD(P&R) to the Heads of the DoD Components.

5.3.3. Consult with the USD(P&R), the USD(I), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Combatant Commanders to determine when there is a “critical need,” as described in paragraph 4.1.4.

5.4. The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence shall:

5.4.1. Designate a representative to the DLSC. The representative shall be a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service (or equivalent) member.

5.4.2. For language-related capabilities in foreign intelligence and counterintelligence activities of the DoD Components:

5.4.2.1. Identify present and emerging needs.

5.4.2.2. Oversee research, development, testing, evaluation, and acquisition of multi-language technology to be employed within the DoD Intelligence Components.

5.4.3. Screen all civilian personnel upon accession and periodically for foreign language and regional expertise then forward results to the USD(P&R) personnel system.

5.5. The Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer shall designate a representative to the DLSC. The representative shall be a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service member.

5.6. The Director, Program Analysis and Evaluation shall:

5.6.1. Designate a representative to the DLSC. The representative shall be a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service equivalent.

5.6.2. Maintain a separate OSD program element for DLIFLC and DLIELC.

5.7. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall:

5.7.1. Designate a SLA, who shall be a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service or equivalent member, have direct access to senior leadership, and understand the totality of the Joint Service language needs. The SLA shall also be a member of the DLSC.

5.7.2. Develop employment doctrine and oversee a planning process to ensure the consideration of language requirements in operational and contingency plans.

5.7.3. Provide planning guidance to the Combatant Commanders to enable consideration of language requirements in operational planning.

5.7.4. Determine critical needs in coordination with the Combatant Commands and the Military Services. Consult with the USD(P&R), the USD(I) and the USD(P) to determine when there is a "critical need," as described in subparagraph 4.1.4.

5.7.5. Recommend ways to make full use of available capabilities without regard to Service or DoD agency affiliation, in coordination with the USD(P&R), the USD(I) and the USD(P) during times of critical need, to the Secretary of Defense.

5.7.6. Screen all civilian personnel upon accession and periodically for foreign language and regional expertise then forward results to the USD(P&R) personnel system.

5.8. The Commanders of the Combatant Commands, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shall:

5.8.1. Designate a SLA. Each SLA shall be a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service (or equivalent) member, have direct access to senior leadership, understand the totality of the organization's language needs and be a member of the DLSC.

5.8.2. Incorporate language needs into all operational and contingency plans. Plans shall include the capacity to surge language and regional capabilities beyond organic capabilities.

5.8.3. Screen all civilian personnel as stipulated in this Directive upon accession and periodically for foreign language and regional expertise then forward results to the USD(P&R) personnel system.

5.9. The Directors of the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, the DoD Counterintelligence Field Activity, (all under the USD(I)); the Directors of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (under the authority and direction of the USD(AT&L)), and the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency (under the authority and direction of the USD(P)) shall:

5.9.1. Designate a SLA. Each SLA shall be a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service (or equivalent) member, have direct access to senior leadership, and understand the totality of the organization's language needs. Each SLA shall also be a member of the DLSC.

5.9.2. Build, train, and maintain an appropriate level of foreign language qualified civilian personnel.

5.9.3. Screen all civilian personnel in accordance with this Directive upon accession and periodically for foreign language and regional expertise then forward results to the USD(P&R) personnel system.

5.9.4. Establish technical requirements, appropriate levels of language expertise, and specialized language training programs to achieve language proficiency required for internal use or special missions for which the Agencies (as identified in paragraph 5.9.) maintains operational responsibility.

5.10. The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall:

5.10.1. Designate one SLA per Military Service. Each SLA shall be a General/Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service (or equivalent) member, with direct access to senior leadership, and an understanding of the totality of the organization's language needs. Each SLA shall also be a member of the DLSC.

5.10.2. Organize, train, and equip a level of language professionals and personnel with regional expertise (military and civilian) to meet operational requirements and maintain a plan to meet surge requirements.

5.10.3. Screen all personnel in accordance with this Directive upon accession and periodically thereafter for language and regional expertise then forward results to the DMDC database or the DCPDS, as appropriate using the Defense Language Proficiency Test and/or the Oral Proficiency Interview (reference (e)) as standard DoD language proficiency measures.

5.10.4. Monitor the previous year's accession, retention, and promotion of language professionals and report the results annually to the USD(P&R) by November 30th.

5.10.5. Ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, all military units deploying to or transiting foreign territories have an appropriate capability to communicate in the languages of the territories of deployment or transit and provide appropriate cultural awareness training, basic language familiarization, and language aid, in coordination with DLIFLC, except in cases of emergency.

5.10.6. Develop a language program as an integrated, single Total Force capability leveraging language skills across the active, reserve, and civilian communities.

5.11. The Secretary of the Army shall serve as the DoD EA for the DLIFLC and in that role shall:

5.11.1. Maintain a separate program element(s) for DLIFLC. Report funding status quarterly to the DLSC or more frequently as requested by the DLSC Chair.

5.11.1.1. Provide annual budget and staff resource requirements for the full range of DLIFLC needs to the OSD in the overall budget and financial plans. Program to meet the foreign language education and training needs of the DoD Components.

5.11.1.2. Nominate the Commandant, DLIFLC to the USD(P&R) for approval before assignment.

5.11.2. Serve as the EA for all contracts specifically for foreign language support provided to the DoD Components.

5.11.2.1. Exceptions include personal services contracts established by in-theater personnel, intelligence and counterintelligence organizations, or U.S. Special Operations Command in accordance with Section 129b of title 10, United States Code (reference (g)). Other exceptions for direct contracting of language services may be granted under memoranda of agreement between the contracting entity and the EA.

5.11.2.2. The EA shall establish the policy and procedures for the DoD Components to submit their requirements for contract language support.

5.11.2.3. DoD policies for counterintelligence and security screening shall be followed for all language services contracted, as appropriate.

5.12. The Secretary of the Air Force shall serve as the DoD EA for the DLIELC and in that role shall:

5.12.1. Maintain a separate program element for DLIELC. Report funding status quarterly to the DLSC, or more frequently as requested by the Chair, DLSC.



5.12.2. Provide annual budget and staff resource requirements for the full range of DLIELC needs to the OSD in the overall budget and financial plans. Program to meet the English language education and training needs of the DoD Components. The DoD Components shall reimburse the EA for language services.

5.12.3. Nominate the Commandant, DLIELC to the USD(P&R) for approval before assignment.

5.13. The Commandants of DLIFLC and DLIELC shall:

5.13.1. Oversee the standardization, testing, research and development, and evaluation of all Foreign and English language training, education and related services within the Department of Defense, excluding specialized language training programs of Defense Agencies designed for internal use or special missions for which the Agency maintains operational responsibility (including Service academies).

5.13.2. Meet foreign and English language education and operational training needs of the Department of Defense.

5.13.3. Provide operational foreign language services (interpretation and translation) to DoD missions, excluding treaty enforcement and intelligence operations, within available personnel and financial resources. DLIELC shall provide operational services and management oversight of grant-aid international English language programs conducted under security assistance.

5.13.4. Annually prepare and update a 5-year plan (current fiscal year plus 4) and submit it to the USD(P&R) by November 30th outlining the approach, priorities, methods, and milestones to accomplish their respective mission. As part of this report include the previous year's accomplishments on each aspect of the 5-year plan to the USD(P&R) by November 30th.

5.13.5. Be authorized direct communication with the DoD SLA and serve as technical advisors to the DLSC.

5.13.6. Staff support and resource requirements and issues through the EA to the USD(P&R).

6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective immediately.



Gordon England  
Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense

Enclosures – 1  
References, continued

E1. ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES, continued

- (e) Interagency Language Roundtable Skill Level Descriptions<sup>1</sup>
- (f) DoD Directive 5400.11, "DoD Privacy Program," November 16, 2004
- (g) Title 10 U.S.C.A. 129b

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.govtilr.org>.