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**STATEMENT OF  
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SENIOR LANGUAGE AUTHORITY  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS  
ON  
10 SEPTEMBER 2008  
CONCERNING  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL AWARENESS EFFORTS**

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Thank you Chairman Snyder, Congressman Akin, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee for requesting Marine Corps participation in this hearing on the Department of Defense foreign language and cultural awareness transformation efforts. As a Foreign Area Officer and someone who majored in Modern Languages in college in addition to serving as the Marine Corps' Senior Language Authority, I take a deep professional and personal interest in enhancing our foreign language skills, cultural awareness and regional expertise. The following responds to the four main questions in the subcommittee invitation letter.

**1. What language skills, cultural awareness, and regional expertise are required by the Marine Corps' military and civilian personnel, in particular, the general forces?**

As Marines, we must be able to navigate the human terrain as well as we navigate the physical terrain of the battlefield. In order to accomplish this, the Marine Corps initiated a plan for implementing operational culture and language skills for every Marine in accordance with Department of Defense direction. Our plan includes training in operationally relevant culture issues for all Marines during their initial training at our recruit depots and at The Basic School for officers. This is followed up by pre-deployment training for all Marines. The Career Marine Regional Studies (CMRS) program is focused on building language and culture knowledge within the career force (i.e., all Marines serving beyond their initial enlistment and all officers). CMRS education will involve self-study via distance learning and potentially culture and language instruction, as part of the curriculum in required professional military education (PME) courses.

In part due to our heritage and expeditionary nature, the Marine Corps has always had an interest and requirement for cultural and linguistic competence. Our experience since 9/11 as well as our assessments of the future operational environment and challenges and opportunities heightened our awareness of the need for a much greater emphasis and efforts to ensure that all Marines are equipped with the culture and language knowledge to allow them to plan and operate successfully in the joint and combined expeditionary environment.

On becoming Commandant in January 2003, General Hagee, the 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps, issued his planning guidance and directed that the Marine Corps

“develop a comprehensive plan to increase our capabilities in irregular warfare by improving foreign language, cultural, and counter-insurgency skills. The end-state will be a career force sufficiently skilled in regional culture and fundamental language familiarization to allow them to act as regional knowledge resources within their units.”

In response to this, the Marine Requirements Oversight Council (MROC) designated the Marine Corps Director of Intelligence (DIRINT) as the Marine Corps Senior Language Authority in November 2004. The MROC directed the DIRINT to adopt a broad perspective on Marine Corps language policies beyond intelligence-related language issues in coordination with several other Marine Corps organizations, such as Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA), Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), Training and Education Command (TECOM), Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) and Plans, Policies and Operations (PP&O).

General Hagee provided additional guidance in April 2005 and said “we will place renewed emphasis on our greatest asset – the individual Marine – through improved training and education in foreign languages, cultural awareness, tactical intelligence and urban operations.”

### **The Defense Language Transformation Road Map**

In January 2005, Department of Defense (DoD) issued the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap (DLTR) which established DoD language and regional expertise goals, desired outcomes, required actions, and a process to determine when these goals and actions had been accomplished. The DLTR provided additional emphasis and guidance that complemented and reinforced ongoing Marine Corps efforts to increase our language and regional expertise.

In addition to setting department-wide goals for DoD to improve foreign language and regional area expertise, the DLTR assigned the following tasks to the Marine Corps in order to meet the overall DLTR goals.

#### **Task 1.D. Ensure doctrine, policies, and planning guidance reflect the need for language requirements in operational, contingency, and stabilization planning.**

The Marine Corps completed an extensive review of all doctrinal publications, policies, and formal guidance for inclusion of foreign language capabilities in August 2006. Sixteen relevant documents were identified and the Marine Corps Foreign Language Steering Committee developed a Marine Corps Strategic Language List to provide an initial estimate of critical language and associated regions in which Marine Forces required capability. The required training ranged from familiarization to post-graduate study. MCCDC funded a Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 study on the operational

linguist program. The final study report was issued in April 2005 and resulted in the inclusion of language requirements in the development of new documents and a scheduled review cycle for existing publications.

**Task 1.J. Conduct a one-time self-report screening of all military and civilian personnel for language skills.**

In December 2003, Marine Administrative (MARADMIN) message 573-03 directed that the entire Marine Corps complete a one-time screening of all Marines for foreign language capability to establish a baseline database. As a follow-on procedure to continue screening of all officer and enlisted accessions, TECOM mandated screening and testing of enlisted Marines at the Recruit Depots and officers at The Basic School (TBS). Once screened and tested, test rosters are sent to the Marine Corps Foreign Language Program Manager for long term tracking. The Marine Corp Manpower Management System then assigns the extra military occupational specialty (MOS) of 2799 (Military Interpreter/Translator) to Marines who demonstrate language proficiency, based upon test results. Civilians are also screened, tested and receive Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP) at MCIA.

**Task 1.P. Ensure incorporation of regional area content in language training, professional military education and development, and pre-deployment training.**

In May 2005, the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) was established at Marine Corps Base Quantico as the central Marine Corps agency for operational cultural and language familiarization training programs. The Marine Corps defines operational culture as those aspects of cultural knowledge information and skills

most relevant to successful planning and execution of military operations across the spectrum of conflict.

CAOCL promotes a grasp of operational culture and language familiarization as regular, mainstream components of the operating environment—the human terrain—throughout the full spectrum of military operations. As the Corps’ “one-stop” clearing house for operational culture and language familiarization training, CAOCL provides instruction and subject matter expertise to the Total Force, and works with other USMC training and education stakeholders to set long term conditions for career-long language and culture professional military education (PME) beginning at the grades of Lieutenant and Sergeant. Lieutenants at TBS and Sergeants at the Sergeants Course are introduced to operational culture concepts and their application in military operation.

Marines receive Global War on Terror (GWOT) focused operational culture and language familiarization training through in a variety of CAOCL run and/or sponsored venues with the assistance of the Defense Language Institute-Foreign Language Center (DLI-FLC), the Naval Postgraduate School, and local universities. The Marine Corps University is expanding the Command and Staff College’s programs for language and culture training, and also funds study abroad trips for the School of Advanced Warfighting.

**Task 1.Q. Exploit “study abroad” opportunities to facilitate language acquisition.**

The Marine Corps’ long-standing Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program is undergoing an expansion driven by the establishment of 24 new FAO billets created to support the Headquarters elements of each Marine Component Command and MEF. Due

to increased demand, the Marine Corps will access and train 52 new FAOs into the Study Track training pipeline, 27 in FY08 and 25 in FY09 respectively. This is a marked increase from the traditional number of ten new FAOs who normally enter training each year. Beyond FY09, we anticipate that FAO accessions will stabilize at roughly 18 officers per year. There are just over 250 Marine FAOs currently on active duty. Additionally, the Marine Corps has another 67 officers on active duty with the Regional Affairs Officer (RAO) designation. Like their FAO counterparts, RAOs have extensive regional political-military knowledge attained through study at the graduate level, and many have at least some regional travel experience. The principle difference between these designations is that RAOs do not have the language expertise of FAOs. Together, there are 97 T/O billets that draw Marine FAOs or RAOs. These billets include service at a wide variety of joint and combined commands, as well as numerous DoD agencies, to include the Defense Attaché System. They also include a number of higher headquarters billets throughout the Marine Corps.

The Personnel Exchange Program (PEP) currently has 36 active duty exchanges with 13 allied nations, having grown by five billets in the last three years. Additionally, a pilot Short-Term Exchange Program (STEP) test case is underway to determine the feasibility of utilizing shorter exchanges as a means of expanding international exchanges with non-traditional partners.

Historically, Olmsted Scholarships have been awarded to three Marine officers per year. Four officers were chosen this year, however, an increase to five is anticipated for next year. The Marine Corps and the Olmsted Foundation have begun to shift language training for those Marines with advanced target language skills from the

traditional Defense Language Institute (DLI) path toward in-country training in order to further enhance proficiency.

Marine Officers attend Foreign Professional Military Education (FPME) at both Intermediate Level Schools (ILS) and Top Level Schools (TLS). ILS students are assigned to nine locations: Argentina, Australia, Spain, Norway, Korea, France, Brazil, the United Kingdom and the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). With the exception of Australia, all require language training. Of the 10 TLS locations, five conduct classes in English (India, United Kingdom, Australia, Pakistan and NATO Defense College). Four (Argentina, Japan, Norway and the Inter-American Defense College) require language training at DLI. English translation is available for all classes.

**Task 1.S. Make foreign language ability a criterion for general officer/flag officer advancement.**

Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) received permission from the Secretary of the Navy to emphasize the importance of language and cultural experience through a precept to all promotion boards. For example, the FY09 Brigadier General's precept included the following in the career patterns section "The Marine Corps benefits when the officer possesses a broad spectrum of experiences, such as foreign language proficiency and cultural awareness." The General Officer inventory was also screened for language skills as a result of the aforementioned MARADMIN 573-03.



**Task 2.I. Implement language and regional familiarization training during the deployment cycle.**

Current pre-deployment language and culture/regional familiarization requirements are primarily supported by the CAOCL. Their efforts are reviewed in detail later in the statement.

**Task 3.A. Identify tasks and missions that will require 3/3/3 and determine the minimum number of personnel needed to provide the language services.**

The Marine Corps service standard for linguist proficiency is Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) level 2/2. The Marine Corps has no standing mission that requires a 3/3/3, although that goal of level 3/3/3 is encouraged for our professional linguists, and has been incorporated in the appropriate career development plans and the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) manual.

The Marine Corps supports billets at the National Security Agency (NSA) where a level 3/3 is considered to be desirable for cryptologic linguists. The Marine Corps Intelligence Foreign Language Program (MCIFLP) is responsible for the growth and sustainment of our intelligence cryptologic linguists. The program manager and occupational field sponsor work together closely with NSA to facilitate language enhancement training for Marine linguists to improve from a 2/2 to 3/3 when assigned to NSA billets.

Additionally, the Marine Corps fills 25 Defense Attaches billets with a desired proficiency of 3/3/3. Marine Corps FAOs are required to maintain a level 2/2/2, and have a stated career goal of 3/3/3.

**Task 3.B. Set a DoD goal of ILR proficiency level 3/3/3 for language professionals, and implement training and career management plans to achieve and sustain this level.**

The Marine Corps has 1475 language coded billets (160 Officer, 1315 enlisted). These billets consist of Cryptologic Linguists, Counter Intelligence/Human Intelligence Specialists, Intelligence Specialists and FAOs. MCIFLP O&M funding provides for refresher, intermediate, and advanced level language training for intelligence Marines upon reenlistment and in conjunction with permanent change of station moves. The goal is to increase Marine cryptologic linguist proficiency to the 3/3 level. In addition, NSA enhances language training for cryptologic linguists serving in NSA billets. The MCIFLP has used funds to provide language training via individually exportable methods of training, immersions and isolated immersion for Marines in pursuit of high foreign language proficiencies.

**Task 3.D. Maintain a cadre of Service members with language capabilities for tasks requiring less than 3/3/3 proficiency. Identify tasks that require less than 3/3/3 proficiency; determine the languages, the ILR proficiency level and densities required.**

The Marine Corps maintains a cadre of linguists at all levels of proficiency. The Intelligence Department's language section tracks and identifies linguists and language-enabled Marines for assignment as requirements arise. All linguists are required to maintain a minimum of 2/2 proficiency, and enhance their language skills through participation in regular training events.

The Marine Corps also offers a Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) to retain Marines with capability in key languages. To increase fulfillment of GWOT language requirements, the Marine Corps has instituted two new programs. During FY06 and FY07, 100 new accession Intelligence Specialists were enrolled at the DLI to learn GWOT languages.

In an effort to expand language training opportunities for Marines who would not normally be required as part of their normal duties to be proficient in a language, we began the GWOT language re-enlistment incentive program. This program offers 40 seats annually at DLI for GWOT languages and is aimed at Marines of any specialty who are reenlisting after their first and/or subsequent enlistments.

Thanks to Congressional funding and revised DoD policies, we can now offer Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (and in increased amounts) to Marines regardless of their specialty. Today, all Marines who have language ability are strongly encouraged to take the Defense Language Proficiency Test in order to be eligible for FLPP.

As a result, more Marines are now being paid more money for language proficiency than ever before. In FY05, the Marine Corps paid 363 Officers and 1,530 Enlisted Marines FLPP totaling \$2,075,000. As of June 2008, we've paid 604 Officers and 2,179 Enlisted Marines FLPP totaling \$4,300,000. Previously, FLPP was limited to specific billets and military occupational specialties.

Although 2/2 is normally the minimum level of proficiency to earn FLPP, since 2006, the Marine Corps can pay a Marine \$100 per month in FLPP at the 1/1 level for an Immediate Investment Language (IIL) listed on the Strategic Language List approved by

the Defense Language Steering Committee (DLSC). By way of comparison, a Marine at the 3/3 level in an IIL will receive \$500 per month.

For most other languages except those designated as “dominant in the force,” we are able to pay FLPP to all Marines – regardless of specialty – so long as they have a 2/2 proficiency. FLPP for these “dominant in the force” languages is restricted to personnel in specific billets and specialties.

## **2. How will the Marine Corps ensure the aforementioned language and culture needs are met?**

### **Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025**

In response to new dangers to America in the 21st century, General Conway, the 34<sup>th</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps in June 2008 issued the Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025 that defines the role of the Corps in tomorrow’s security environment, informs future requirements, and positions the Corps for continued success. Of particular interest is that this Vision and Strategy says that Marines will be:

“Educated and trained to understand and defeat adversaries in complex conflicts.

We will go to greater lengths to understand our enemies and the range of cultural, societal, and political factors affecting all with whom we interact.”

Thus, the Marine Corps is committed to a prioritized regional approach to gaining cultural and linguistic experience and expertise.

### **Culture and Language Training for All Marines**

Recognizing the importance of cultural awareness to all Marines, TECOM has implemented periods of instruction on operational culture during entry level training for

enlisted Marines at Marine Corps Recruit Depots (MCRD) and for officers at TBS. The training and education does not stop there, as operational culture and language familiarization are integrated into each level of PME throughout a Marine's career.

Most significantly, operational culture and language familiarization training have been made an integral part of the pre-deployment training. Marine Corps Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP) is divided into blocks of instruction and training in ascending competency levels. Block I and Block II training is mandatory for all Marines and is conducted at their home station. The first two blocks focus on common Marine warfighting skills and the current operating environment. Currently CAOCL provides operational cultural and language familiarization instruction via their Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) during these blocks of instruction. In response to current Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) PTP requirements, CAOCL has developed and currently provides training assistance for Marines and Sailors preparing for deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan. Each operational culture package consists of topics including, but are not limited to: Cultural Assumptions, History, Religion, Kin Networks, Use of an Interpreter, and Relationships and Communications. Additionally, tactical language familiarization packages in Iraqi Arabic, Dari and Pashto are provided for both the main force and Marine Corps Advisors. The type and extent of language familiarization and operational culture instruction provided during this training is tailored to meet the needs and time available to the units being trained. All Marines receive a very basic level of language training that is focused on key words and phrases associated with likely military tasks such as vehicle checkpoints, entry control points, and searches.

Units are increasingly requesting and receiving greater amounts of language instruction for key personnel down to the squad level.

While Blocks I and II are conducted at the home station, Blocks III and IV are conducted in the field environment during the Desert Talon, Mojave Viper, or other TECOM approved alternate training exercises. Block III focuses on combat service support operations. Block IV is combat training for the ground combat element in which the ground element will be evaluated via CAOCL staff as well as by the normal exercise training staff on their implementation of operational culture and language via interaction with the native Iraqi/Afghan – American role players present at Mojave Viper. Block V training is sustainment training conducted while in theater.

In an effort to meet home station training requirements, CAOCL is establishing Language Learning Resource Centers (LLRC) at all of the major Marine Corps Installations around the world to facilitate culture and language training for all Marines. The LLRCs are “language labs” equipped with language familiarization and operational culture distributed learning study materials and may be used as classrooms for the various courses offered by CAOCL. The LLRCs are in addition to the existing six Modular Language Training Systems in Hawaii, Okinawa, California, and North Carolina to support the career linguists in our Intelligence Battalions and Radio Battalions.

In order to provide additional and different opportunities to Marines for language familiarization and operational culture self study, CAOCL is currently fielding and/or sponsoring a number of distributed learning products. Some examples include a computer-based simulation program – Tactical Language Training System (TLTS) which currently provides language and culture training via four modules – “Tactical Iraqi,”

“Tactical Pashto,” “Tactical Dari,” and “Tactical Sub-Saharan Africa French” respectively. These modules are high-end, interactive, video simulations using “avatars” in a variety of tactical scenarios. It requires the “player” to listen and respond to both verbal and non-verbal communications in the target language and culture from the avatar. If the “player” responds correctly, positive results ensue and the simulation continues to another scenario. In the case of an incorrect or culturally inappropriate response, no or adverse events happen, and the player is able to learn from his mistakes.

In FY09, CAOCL will field two other distributed learning products, the language training program “Rosetta Stone” and the language and culture training program “Critical Language (CL-150).” These products will be provided via the Marine Corps’ online distance learning environment, MarineNet, (<https://www.marinenet.usmc.mil>) as resources for all Marines to access and build their skills.

The Career Marine Regional Studies (CMRS) program is tasked with providing our career Marines with focused, in-depth, operationally relevant, regional, cultural, and language familiarization to enable them to assist in the planning and execution of a wide range of military operations requiring knowledge of cultures and languages in specific regions. CMRS divides the world into 17 regions of logical country groupings linked by geography, language, history, religion, economic considerations, regional affiliations, and US interests. Some individual countries are listed in more than one region because of their importance to the United States, size, affiliations, or regional impact. Education will be facilitated via distance learning products from the CAOCL that will be hosted on MarineNet. Officers are expected to begin study immediately upon receiving their regional assignment at TBS and should complete their required study prior to entering the

promotion zone for Major. Enlisted Marines will begin study early in their second re-enlistment and should complete their required study prior to entering the promotion zone for Gunnery Sergeant.

### **Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA) and Cultural Intelligence**

MCIA is the Service intelligence production center, and is well known throughout DoD and the Intelligence Community (IC) as the “cultural intelligence experts.” Its mission is to provide all-source intelligence to the expeditionary forces, the supporting establishment, and the Intelligence Community. They provide DoD and the IC with culture smart cards which are pocket-sized graphical depictions of cultural intelligence that promote cultural awareness as well as containing key phrases in the relevant language. MCIA also produces country handbooks, cultural field books and cultural intelligence studies that range in levels of complexity. Units can request cultural awareness through smart cards, cultural understanding through cultural field books, and cultural intelligence through the cultural intelligence studies, a text book like product with in depth knowledge of an area of interest.

Cultural intelligence is the all-source analysis of individual and group beliefs, customs, ethics and demographic data for the purpose of anticipating individual or group actions. MCIA’s Cultural Intelligence Division has worked with the members of the IC, TECOM entities, Marine Special Operations Command and with other DoD agencies to develop and deliver courses related to building and using cultural intelligence capability. The Cultural Intelligence Division will continue to develop its relationship with TECOM entities, such as the Marine Corps University and CAOCL to develop modules on the use of cultural intelligence products and services. Funding for MCIA’s cultural intelligence



program is from the General Defense Intelligence Program. In FY08, MCIA received \$4.3 million and for FY09, the Administration has requested \$4.2 million. Over the period FY09-FY13, the Marine Corps has requested approximately \$23 million to fund our cultural intelligence efforts. The desired end state is the integration of cultural intelligence in existing courses on culture, leadership, and planning throughout the Marine Corps, DoD, and the IC.

**3. & 4. What tradeoffs in terms of time, resources, or other readiness training will be needed to meet the needs of the Marine Corps? What risk is assumed if our needs are not met?**

In the near term, we are meeting our current cultural awareness and language familiarization goals primarily via our programs in support of entry level training, pre-deployment training, and professional military education. However, the current very high deployment tempo we are experiencing means that some units and individuals don't receive as much training in all areas to include language as some commanders desire.

For the long term, we believe we are off to a very promising start with what we are doing in our PTP, PME and CMRS programs. CMRS is still a relatively new program and we are still early on in its implementation and need to see how this progresses in order to be able to make informed decisions about changes that could require allocation or reallocation of time, resources or other readiness training. We believe that this program as currently envisioned will meet our basic requirements, and we are already looking for how we might improve this program. While a broader or more comprehensive program such as involving more language training or in-country

experience would likely require more time and resources, our biggest challenge today is our deployment tempo.

The Marine Corps is extremely proud of its Marines and what they do for our great Nation every day. The Corps has made great progress in developing the culture and language abilities of Marines. Consequently, Marines are better prepared to execute a wide variety of missions on diverse battlefields. We will continue to grow our programs and explore new ways to evolve our training to better enable our Marines to execute their missions while navigating the human terrain. Thanks to your recognition of the importance of cultural awareness and language and the support you have provided, we have made a great deal of progress and are on what I believe is the right track. With your continued support, I also believe that we will continue to improve our capabilities in the future.