

PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS

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SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED
BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Snyder, Congressman Akin and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Air Force's culture and language transformation efforts in support of the world's most respected air, space and cyberspace force. Our Airmen have been continuously deployed and engaged in combat missions for over 17 straight years. Today, on any given day, over 33,000 Airmen are engaged in expeditionary operations around the globe supporting a multitude of diverse operations--conventional and irregular warfare (IW), stability, security, transition and reconstruction (SSTR) operations, humanitarian operations, foreign internal defense (FID) missions, and coalition building. The Air Force commitment and contributions to the Joint Force Commanders prosecuting the Global War on Terrorism are clear, with more than 26,000 Airmen deployed in the CENTCOM area of responsibility and other regions. In short, over the past two decades Airmen have operated in diverse locations and culturally complex environments throughout the world, including Honduras, Somalia, Colombia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Georgia, Countries of the Former Soviet Union, Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Philippines, Horn of Africa, and Iraq.

In viewing the dynamic global environment, the 2008 National Security Strategy makes it clear that we face a spectrum of challenges, including violent extremist networks, hostile states armed with weapons of mass destruction, rising regional powers, emerging space and cyber threats, natural and pandemic disasters and a growing competition for resources. The Air Force must organize, train and equip our forces to respond to these challenges while anticipating and preparing for those of tomorrow. We must therefore balance strategic risk across the spectrum of

conflict, making the best use of the capabilities within the United States government and among our international partners. Whenever possible, the Air Force will seek to prepare to reduce uncertainty. This means we will continually review our understanding of trends, their interaction, and the range of risks we may be called upon to respond to or manage. In short, tackling these strategic challenges requires an assessment of the tools available to construct a durable, flexible, and dynamic Air Force capable of responding to our Nation's needs. This is precisely what we've begun to do with the Air Force Culture, Region and Language (CRL) Program.

AIR FORCE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS

The appointment of a Senior Executive to serve as the Air Force Senior Language Authority (SLA) responsible for the policy development and program oversight of Air Force CRL efforts was a direct result of corporate Air Force's commitment to long-term oversight for language and culture programs. Equally significant, funding direction by OSD greatly assisted us in garnering significant Air Force funding. These resources directly translated into a number of important language training and capacity building efforts. In short, our partnership with the Defense Language Office has been beneficial.

In this dynamic global environment, the Air Force CRL program serves as the Air Force's Roadmap for Culture and Language Transformation efforts. The Air Force CRL Program is consistent with OSD guidance, yet tailored to meet Air Force-unique mission requirements and enables several of General Schwartz's priorities. Ultimately, the end state of the Air Force's CRL efforts will produce "Airmen-Statesmen,"- *Airmen with key Joint-Warfighting capabilities* - congruent with our vision of *Airmen capable of influencing the outcomes of US, allied and coalition operations and maximizing operational capabilities by Building Partnership Capacity.*

One of the most significant challenges in our transformation efforts has been limited, non-specific inputs from Combatant Commanders (COCOM) defining their needs. More definitively, what are the specific requirements for Airmen in terms of quantity, force packages, and specialties in relation to the degree and level of foreign language capability and regionally-oriented cultural awareness skill sets? In the absence of specific, overarching requirements, and to ensure we make investments in the right type of education and training for the right types of Airmen, the Air Force commissioned the RAND Corporation's PROJECT AIR FORCE division to conduct a study of Air Force CRL requirements. In response, RAND will soon publish the report titled *Cultural Skills for Deployed Air Force Personnel: Defining Cultural Performance*. A key aspect of the study was a survey analysis of over 6,000 recently deployed Airmen on the impact of 14 categories of cultural behavior required in the deployed environment. Using RAND's statistical findings, we are focusing our CRL efforts for the General Purpose Force (GPF) on the following premises:

- Most Airmen surveyed believed that cultural and regional education and training were important.
- A minority of Airmen believed that language skills would have significantly improved or helped them perform their job in the deployed environment.

Concurrently, the Air University assembled a team of scholars to further define the problem, develop a conceptual model to better address the Air Force's needs and link it to the force development construct. The results were clear terms of reference (culture, region and language), and the identification of the intellectual center of mass, cross-cultural competence (3C). Defined, C3 is "the ability to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately and effectively act, to achieve the desired effect in a culturally complex environment." It emphasizes

general, transferable cultural concepts, skills and attitudes, and provides a framework for cultural learning in any specific context.

THE END STATE: Airmen with Key Joint-Warfighting Capabilities/Airmen-Statesmen

The findings of these studies established a solid and sustainable foundation for an Air Force-wide approach to Culture and Language. The main focus of our efforts is the GPF, as well as specialized functional communities (for example, Intelligence, Special Operations, Regional Affairs Specialist (RAS), and Counter-Intelligence). Based on the premises gleaned from the RAND study and the scholar study conducted at Air University, we have defined the following overarching goals as the desired end state of the USAF CRL Program:

1. Airmen Developed and Sustained with Sufficient Cross-Cultural Capacity: Airmen with appropriate levels of cross-cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes who are able to meet Air Force mission needs and able to surge for emergent requirements, to include:

All Airmen: A total force infused with Cross-Cultural Competence (3C) at the appropriate developmental level.

Foreign Language Enabled: Total Force Airmen with just-in-time language ability development to meet tactical mission requirements.

Foreign Language Professional: Career language professionals (Officer, Enlisted, and Civilian) with demonstrated, sustained language skills, intrinsic to their respective Air Force specialty and mission sets.

Developing Leaders: Deliberately developed Airmen senior leaders who are cross-culturally competent “Airmen-Statesmen.”

2. Total Force 3C Capabilities Aligned with Requirements: Align 3C capabilities and Air Force institutional competencies in the total force with operational requirements to support Joint and Air Force missions. Essentially, 3C will permit Airmen to better understand and influence operations, activities or actors, joint, inter-agency, allied, coalition, non-combatant and adversary alike. The Air Force, therefore, needs to systematically tailor CRL competency development to meet requirements.

3. Total Force 3C Capabilities Sustained into the Future: Implement agile, responsive and cost-effective plans and policies that sustain Air Force 3C capabilities.

The Acting Secretary of the Air Force recently approved Air Force Policy Directive 36-26, *Force Development*, which lists leader competencies the Air Force values (termed “Institutional Competencies”). A number of 3C-related competencies, including Building Teams and Coalitions, Negotiating, and Regional/Cultural Awareness are now part of the Air Force leadership development policy and these competencies will be “hard wired” into Air Force leadership development and assessment programs.

Additionally, we recognized that CRL skills should be systematically taught at certain developmental points in an Airman’s career in relation to the member’s rank and responsibility level. Since all Airmen should be versed in CRL issues, we took steps to fully integrate 3C into all levels of Professional Military Education (PME), both in-residence and correspondence methodologies. In fact, Air University has made 3C the focus of their “Quality Enhancement Plan,” an integral part of their academic reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This process will be at the accessions level, Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps and Officer Training School, and expand at our company grade officer programs at the Squadron Officer College. Officers and civilians who are competitively selected to attend in-

residence Air Command and Staff College and Air War College will receive enhanced CRL instruction to prepare them for key senior leader billets in combined, joint, inter-agency and coalition environment(s). In addition, cross-cultural competence will also become integrated into PME for enlisted Airmen from Airman Leadership School through the Senior Non-commissioned Officer Academy. Further, all learning is tied to measurable outcomes, permitting the Air Force to assess and adjust efforts as necessary. This work has attracted the attention of leading civilian academics and military educators in the United States and abroad; we aim for it to become the model for cross-cultural learning.

The Air Force also recognizes the value of building partnership capacity by immersing highly-skilled Airmen with allied and partner air forces. As such, we are nearly tripling the number of Military Personnel Exchange Program (MPEP) billets in non-English countries to 140 by FY12 with a focus of program expansion to countries where US military presence has been limited or non-existent. Additionally, in FY09 we have 18 officers attending foreign developmental education in 11 countries, 29 Olmsted Scholars obtaining Master's degrees at foreign universities, and 16 National Defense Fellowships focused on International Affairs.

Furthermore, the Air Force recently institutionalized the Regional Affairs Strategist (RAS) program (USAF version of the Foreign Area Officer-FAO). The program is unique in that designated RAS Officers are dual-tracked between their FAO-type assignments and their primary Air Force specialty. This rotational assignment policy serves to provide a level of expertise not only to the specialized FAO community, but also to the GPF when RAS officers return to their "line" unit. This expertise inter-change pays dividends to all involved since a RAS officer stays current in their primary specialty, while also providing their functional communities with highly specialized CRL capability and expertise. RAS officers are selected

via a competitive process based on their leadership, duty performance, and aptitude to serve in the international environment. Identified officers attend a regionally-oriented, international affairs graduate program at the US Naval Postgraduate School followed by foreign language training at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). Upon completion of the RAS education program, officers are awarded a Master's degree, Joint PME (Phase I) credit, and foreign language certification. Due to the extensive training of a RAS, eligible officers may receive in-residence Developmental Education credit which is considered a positive promotion board indicator. Also, functional assignment teams are provided instruction to consider the specialized skill sets of the RAS officer when assigning key staff and command assignments. The Air Force believes the RAS program will, in the long run, significantly increase the number of "Airmen-Statesmen" occupying key leadership positions.

In December 2007, Air University's Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, was designated as an Air Force-level Center with the unique mission to develop expeditionary Airmen by synchronizing education and training across our PME schools and expeditionary Airmen training venues. The Air Force consolidated these functions to provide Airmen with a one-stop shop. It also ensures that efforts are guided by subject matter experts who can leverage the efforts of Air Force and DoD institutions, as well as the academic community for research and teaching. As delineated in the AFCLC's charter, the Air Education and Training Command (AETC) leads synchronization efforts at the operational and tactical level in coordination with the Air Force SLA, the Air Force Language and Culture Executive Steering Committee (AFLC- ESC), and overall Air Force policy and doctrine. Equally important, all MAJCOMs, Agencies and career functional managers (CFM) will partner with the

Air Force SLA and the AFLC-ESC to define, articulate and establish requirements in current and future planning and manpower policies.

It is also worth noting that the AFCLC is coordinating our language and culture training efforts at Air Command and Staff College and Air War College where a Defense Language Institute Mobile Training Team capability was recently acquired to provide 40-hours of “face-to-face” instruction for the required language familiarization course of study.

Since we will not be able to build deep organic expertise in every culture and language Airmen are likely to encounter during operations, it is important to invite our partners to the United States to build needed relationships. The Air Force has Executive Agent responsibility for the Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC), the DoD’s vehicle to teach English language skills to citizens of allied countries, and we believe that DLIELC is the premier vehicle for establishing “Building Partnership Capability” within DoD. Additionally, allies and nation partners may not have the resources to attend DLIELC in-residence, so we have robusted our Mobile Training Team (MTT) capability to deliver English language training to our partners in their respective countries. At the same time, we will establish relationships, strengthen communication bonds, and ultimately foster an environment of cooperation between the DoD and our foreign military counterparts. We will also build and strengthen relationships with our Latin American partners thru the Inter-American Air Force Academy (IAAFA). IAAFA is critical to the conduct of the GWOT as the relationship between Latin American countries and Al Qaeda are linked via the drug trade, which fuels the cycle of Narco-Terrorism.

We are synchronizing processes to meet culture and language learning requirements for the abilities Airmen need in an expeditionary environment. For example, we are extending Basic Military Training to by 2.5 weeks (to 8.5 weeks), to teach Airmen to operate in the expeditionary

environment of the 21st Century, including foundational culture awareness training. In addition, we are using Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) MTTs in conjunction with the Air Advisor Action Group at our training site at Fort Dix, New Jersey. This region-specific language (Arabic or Dari) and culture training is tailored for those GPF Airmen selected for 1-year deployments as Aviation Advisors to the Coalition Air Force Training Team (CAFTT-Iraq) or the Combined Airpower Transition Force (CAPTF-Afghanistan). The Air Advisor curriculum now provides 56-hours or the equivalent of 7 training days of integrated classroom and interactive culture and language training. Of note, the Air Force Negotiations Center of Excellence provides one day of intensive cross-cultural negotiations training to the Aviation Advisors. Response from our deployed advisors indicates that this skill set is critical to the conduct of their mission and we are exploring expansion of this unique and overlooked capability.

We have also placed enhanced focus on culture and language training at our officer accession sources, with the objective of developing officers with acute cultural understandings, able to forge partnerships and alliances. A majority of Air Force Academy and ROTC cadets are enrolled in foreign language education and are now able to participate in study abroad programs, not only at foreign military academies but also local universities. Currently, we have 54 cadets enrolled as Foreign Language majors, with another 629 scholarship cadets majoring in technical degrees and taking languages as an elective. Another 100 cadets participate annually in foreign culture and language immersions in countries of strategic importance. Beginning with cadets contracted in August of 2006, AFROTC scholarship cadets majoring in non-technical degrees must now complete 12 semester hour equivalent of foreign languages. Further, USAFA cadets

who are technical majors are taking 6 semester hours in a foreign language and non-technical majors are taking 12 semester hours in a foreign language.

TRADE-OFFS

There will likely need to be tradeoffs in terms of time and training resources required to reach our desired end-state, but the USAF regards the CRL program as a critical investment in future capabilities. For instance, officers participating in the RAS program are periodically unavailable for assignment within their home Air Force Specialty communities, while students in various language programs must take time from other duties and studies. We also realize that a concept of operations will not come to fruition without the required programmatics to include funding of culture and language initiatives. The Air Force viewpoint is that culture and language is a “must pay” to ensure that we have the capability to provide Joint Force Commanders with culturally-skilled, language-capable Airmen they need to accomplish their missions. As good stewards of taxpayer dollars, the SLA personally reviews the Return on Investment analysis to ensure a Culture and Language initiative aligns to the overarching Program and meets operational commanders’ requirements.

The Air Force has been very successful in programming efforts to increase funding for CRL programs. To date, the impact of our increase in CRL funding has had a marginal impact on other requirements.

However, as the Air Force responds to Congressional mandates to reinvigorate the nuclear enterprise, and as we respond to Secretary of Defense direction to substantially increase our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, this could change. Equally important, as GWOT supplemental funding decreases, this could also have a significant impact on the tradeoffs we may be required to accept.

CONCLUSION

The Air Force must continue to transform to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Globalization has made varying degrees of cross-cultural competence (3C) a critical and necessary capability for all Airmen. Air Force Senior Leaders must be proficient in 3C in order to influence the outcomes of US, allied and coalition operations, and to maximize operational capabilities through Building Partnership Capacity. Often the first in and the last to leave, the Air Force will continue to conduct shaping initiatives including security assistance, security cooperation, humanitarian assistance and crisis response all the while building partnerships and promoting coalitions to meet the security requirements of the 21st Century.

Today's Airmen are engaged in dynamic operations executing missions, meeting Air Force commitments, and keeping the United States on a vector for success against potential future threats in an uncertain world.

The Air Force must safeguard the ability to see anything on the face of the earth, range it, observe or hold it at risk, supply, rescue, support, deter or destroy it, assess the effects, and exercise global command and control of all these activities. Rising to the 21st Century challenge is not a choice, but rather a service that culture and language will critically enable. It is our responsibility to provide a dominant Air Force to America's joint team in service to the Nation.

We appreciate your unfailing support to the men and women of our Air Force, and I look forward to your questions.