Asymmetrical Warfare, Transformation, and Foreign Language Capability

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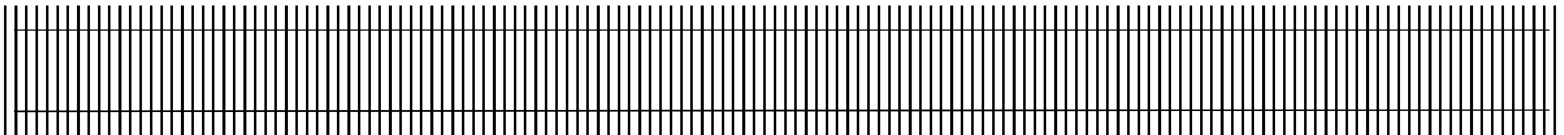

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For the Department of Defense (DOD) to transform itself for modern asymmetrical warfare, foreign language capability must be understood as an integral component. There is no doubt that the current global war on terrorism is an asymmetrical war against an unpredictable enemy rather than the predictable or symmetrical threats against self-important dictators or the Soviet Union. Understanding how our enemies think and act—specifically, what motivates their murderous ideology—will be the key to combating terrorism and identifying centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities from the strategic to the tactical level of war. Truly "knowing our enemy" requires understanding the culture, politics, and religion of the terrorists, which in turn requires experts in their language. Two early lessons learned from Afghanistan are that foreign language skills were absolutely critical for overthrowing the Taliban regime so quickly and that the military does not have enough foreign language capability. Without improved foreign language capability, intelligence gathering, special operations, and our general capability to fight asymmetrical, unconventional warfare will continue to be restricted. Furthermore, foreign language capability is not only important for intelligence gathering and special operations, it is essential for understanding how the enemy thinks from the strategic to the tactical level of war.

Similar to developing special operations capabilities, there are no shortcuts to improving foreign language capability. It takes considerable time to develop language skills to the level of complexity necessary for intelligence and special operations. Fortunately, improvement is possible if it is joint and uses military-educated linguists assisted and supplemented by computer technology, contract linguists, and U.S. military personnel with heritage language skills. Historically, U.S. forces have never had enough foreign language capability and had to adapt the best that they could, sometimes with terrible results, including the tragic events of 11 September 2001 (9-11).

At the end of the Cold War, several prominent scholars proclaimed we were at the end of history. Instead, we are witnessing the emergence of new types of ideological extremism, which hope to enforce their vision of the world, whether in religious or political terms. The consequence for American defense is to adapt from the previous ideological challenge of Soviet totalitarianism to new, less-predictable enemies that may or may not fight on conventional battlefields and

hide in the hinterlands of the world where the languages spoken are rarely studied in the Western world.

Fighting ideological extremism requires flexibility in and out of conventional conflict—something that American leadership failed to understand during the early stages of the Vietnam conflict. President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara thought they could entice Ho Chi Minh to an agreement by bribing him with power plants while attritting his forces. Johnson and McNamara fundamentally misunderstood an enemy who was willing to spend over 1 million Vietnamese lives for his ideological vision of a Communist Vietnam. Osama Bin Laden and other Islamic extremists are not much different. In both cases, the ideological extremism motivated an absolute unwillingness to compromise with what they perceived as the manifestation of evil on Earth—the United States—and they willingly slaughter innocent civilians for their self-perceived, morally righteous, ideological mission. Since U.S. leaders did not understand the nature of the Vietnamese conflict, they fell by default into a war of attrition that they could not politically win at home. Our current enemies also believe Americans are too weak to withstand casualties, which is all the more evidence to them that we should be destroyed, and all they have to do is poke us until we fall.

A key lesson learned from these historic experiences is that the ideology is central to how an enemy perceives the United States and how he is willing to fight. We are not fighting strictly organized military units, but extremists who are motivated by an ideology that shapes their asymmetrical strategies and tactics. The ideology and how the enemy disseminates it through propaganda is the center of gravity. For the United States not to understand how to counter enemy lies and propaganda is one of our critical vulnerabilities because we are unable to prevent the attraction of suicide bombing recruits. With better knowledge of what motivates recruits, psychological operations and public diplomacy can directly challenge the ideology, delegitimizing it in the eyes of the parents of teenage boys, thus capitalizing on one of his critical vulnerabilities. When Muslims view the violence as illegitimate, Bin Laden and others are revealed for what they are, murderous, immoral thugs on the fringe of civilization; he and others will be effectively marginalized and perhaps their own people will turn on them.

Understanding the ideology of our present enemies, and thereby what motivates their desire to kill, requires understanding culture and politics, which is revealed in language. General Maxwell D. Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs in 1960, was so convinced of the necessity of foreign language and cultural exposure for officers, he wanted all officers to have foreign language as an integral part of their education. Foreign language education, however, is not easy, and it is very time consuming both to acquire and sustain. Language is the least understood of human activities; learning is the most difficult of human activities; consequently,

language learning is hard.[1] Education for 6 to 18 months provides language students practical proficiency, but it does not make fluent, experienced intelligence analysts. A key challenge for training experts in foreign languages, whether for intelligence or special operations, is only part classroom learning to build a foundation. Much more is gained through experience, and the entire process requires a lot of time to develop. Education begins to open the door to other cultures; experience makes them comprehensible. For example, during an FBI investigation involving a possible drug operation, two translators learned that a subject was going to "pray to Buddha and get some eyeglasses." The junior translator thought this to be an innocuous statement of fact and deemed it of no intelligence value. The senior translator, however, took into account who was communicating with whom and the phrases they were using. As it turns out, Thailand is the land of a thousand Buddhas. Someone going to pray to Buddha, in this context, is going to Thailand. Similarly, "eyeglasses" is a euphemism for "four eyes," which is a euphemism for "Number 4 China White."[2] The speaker intended to go to Thailand to buy illegal narcotics.

The difficulty and expense of acquiring foreign language capability, however, has encouraged efforts to find shortcuts or rely on firepower and technology as substitutes for our limited capabilities. Some Army transformation proposals, in fact, do not give much weight to foreign language needs, other than to hope it is solved with more technology or push it into the Reserve Components (RC) in the hope the language would not be needed. Conventional, symmetrical operations rely less on foreign language capabilities in intelligence gathering when the targets are other conventional forces that are easily identifiable with advanced signals intelligence technology. However, when the enemy is unconventional, hiding within civilian populations and motivated by an ideology that targets civilians, the foreign language capability of intelligence and special operations assets is one of the critical tools to unlocking the secrets of the enemy in his hiding places. The Army, therefore, must be far more adaptable to fight asymmetrically outside of the conventional spectrum of operations. In other words, the Army must develop a full spectrum of *capabilities* beyond the symmetrical battlefield.

The general concept of "transformation" is that the DOD and the Army could be much better prepared to fight asymmetrical warfare. There is, however, tremendous disagreement about what a transformed military should look like and, more important, how to fight asymmetrically. The September 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review* summarizes succinctly the purpose of transformation:

> *A central objective of the review was to shift the basis of defense planning from a 'threat-based' model that has dominated thinking in the past to a 'capabilities-based' model for the future. This capabilities-based model focuses more on how an adversary might fight rather than specifically*

whom the adversary might be or where a war might occur. It recognizes that it is not enough to plan for large conventional wars in distant theaters. Instead, the United States must identify the capabilities required to deter and defeat adversaries who will rely on surprise, deception, and asymmetric warfare to achieve their objectives.

Transformation within the Army will not be successful without fully understanding that an approach to warfare focusing on conventional battlefield operations will hamstring asymmetrical operations. If transformation is understood as greater mobility and dominance on the battlefield, "dominant maneuver and precision engagement," it will remain a symmetrical warfighting doctrine aimed at identifiable targets. The enemy, unfortunately, is as much the ideology as it is troop concentrations on the battlefield. The ideological motivation of the terrorists, however, cannot be targeted like troop concentrations, and terrorist courses of action—that is, how they intend to kill more civilians—cannot be determined by satellite imagery, terrain analysis, or weapons capabilities assessments. The U.S. military is generations ahead of our enemies in technology and training, but they are unwilling to accept American dominance. Their ideology is too important to their lives to surrender, so they fight the best way they can, through terrorism, rationalizing the moral necessity of murder. The United States can win asymmetrical warfare despite being handicapped in many ways. "Dominant maneuver and precision engagement" on the battlefield, however, will not effectively prevent the enemy from planning a nuclear, biological, or chemical (NBC) attack on major urban centers. "Information warfare" and "mastery of information" is not just better access to a global positioning system (GPS) and knowing the location of the enemy; it must include knowledge of how the enemy thinks, which is difficult without improved foreign language capability. Precision bombing and computer technology assist warfighting, but they cannot tell us how the terrorists think or what they are planning. Retired Israeli General Arie Amit told an audience in Washington in March 2002 that the United States would not prevail against terrorists unless we understand "their language, their literature, and their poetry."

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Languages

Central Asia Languages

- Afghanistan
  - Dari, Pashto, Tajik, Uzbek
- Uzbekistan
  - Uzbek

Figure 1. Central Asia Languages

Figure 2. Southeast Asia Languages

- Turkmenistan
  - Turkmen
- Tajikistan
  - Tajik
- Pakistan
  - Pashto, Urdu, Baluchi
- India
  - Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi
- Established programs at DLI
  - Persian-Farsi, Chinese, and Russian

Southeast Asia Languages

- Philippines
  - Tagalog, Tausug, Cebuano, Ilocano
- Indonesia
  - Indonesian/Javanese
- Malaysia
  - Malay

Sources of Foreign Language Capability: Strengths and Weaknesses

Expanding foreign language capabilities based on what is actually needed for the global war on terrorism essentially means to greatly expand the pool of language assets. Currently, the DOD and Army foreign language program models are still threat-based models. The reasons for this generally come down to the expense in terms of time and difficulty in educating and maintaining linguists. A capabilities-based model implies something like a joint language pool to address surge requirements where unexpected, as recommended by the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security.[3] Before 9-11, the Army's plan, in particular, attempted to map out a cheaper and faster alternative by recommending the replacement of most of the DLI language courses with RC-based training, computer technology, greater heritage speaker recruitment, and hiring native contractors, rather than spending the time and resources to develop true foreign language capability. The solution, however, is not to be found in how one language asset or component could replace another. Foreign language capability is a far more complex problem, which will require a combination of computer technology to assist linguists, with support from contractors and heritage speakers. Historically, the United States has never had enough linguists for war. The solution lies in

intelligently managing all sources of foreign language capability to gain synergy by augmenting each other, maximizing strengths, and minimizing weaknesses.

Computer Technology

Computer translation—often referred to as "machine translation"—has been offered as a panacea for decades. Languages, however, are not symmetrically translatable word for word—greatly complicating software design and making perfect translation impossible. The greater the differences between languages' structure and culture, the greater the difficulty to accurately translate the intent of the speaker. Further, many of the languages required for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) in Afghanistan do not have developed bodies of literature or even standardized grammar, compounding translation difficulties.[4] Because languages are an expression of an individual's cultural, political, social, and religious experiences, even free translations of phrases can be difficult. Words, phrases, and even tone can have profoundly different symbolic meanings to different people. For example, within English the word *spirit* could mean a ghost, a stiff drink, or part of the Christian Trinity. Across languages, the Christian phrase, "The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," can imply in Russian that "The Vodka is good, but the meat is bad." More important, simple prepositions can have life-threatening implications—for example, are antipersonnel mines "next to the road" or "on the next road?" The point is that the linguist must also have the military intelligence skills of an experienced analyst to recognize the context of what might be meant.

Computers, however limited for aiding nonlinguists, are powerful tools for linguists in intelligence and special operations to sort through tons of untranslated information or "triage" documents, sorting contents by priority. Off-the-shelf commercial software is designed for commercially viable languages, but not for the less-commonly taught, low-density languages that we now need. Commercial software also is aimed at audiences that want to be understood—terrorists do not want us to understand. For software to help in intelligence, it must be programmed to search for code words and symbolism, as in the FBI example, and designed by people who understand both English and the target language. Further, as language evolves, so must computer software. Languages also evolve quickly, just as code terminology evolves quickly.

Another powerful innovation is using technology to sustain linguists' perishable language skills through secure Internet capabilities, as currently being developed by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) and the National Foreign Language Center, called LANGNET. LANGNET is under development as an Internet-delivered program that will aid linguists in sustaining

and improving their proficiency. The system first conducts a sophisticated diagnostic assessment through a series of questions that will determine the learning needs, then customizes a learning program for the linguists based on the answers. It is interactive for reading, listening, and speaking; it is far beyond putting a textbook on a screen. It will take several years of labor by professional language educators to populate the databases with sufficient learning objects in the most common languages, but there is a high payoff potential for foreign language education in the United States, within and outside of government.

Reserve Components

Relying on the RC for less-commonly taught languages is a more hopeful than practical idea; the time and resources required for sustaining language capability with training and incentives is not significantly less than the Active Component (AC). The Army and DOD both studied moving most less-commonly taught languages into the RC to save resources. The Army Language Office recommended the policy and adopted it in the Army Language Master Plan before 9-11. The draft DOD plan, the Defense Reserve Language Plan (DRLP), however, was dropped, in part because the RC cannot sustain language skills needed without essentially the same commitment of resources as the ACs. In addition, reservists have difficulty with committing the time needed to sustain their perishable language skills on their own without hindering their civilian careers. If a language is needed for any unplanned contingency, it is likely that the RC linguists would be few in number and then overtasked, which occurred with Serbian Croatian linguists in Bosnia, resulting in overreliance on native contractors without clearances.

The Army language plan accepted risk in the less-commonly taught, low-density languages with the hope that they would not be needed or needed in small enough numbers that could be supplemented by the RC or contractors. It was a dangerous risk to take, because the hope that low-density languages would not be required is not the basis for a Reserve force; rather, the basis for the RC is to be prepared for actual call-up. Predictably, the risk failed in maintaining multiple languages skills for OEF. There is an ongoing high demand for difficult, less-common languages of the Afghanistan area of operations from DOD, the Departments of State and Justice, as well as nongovernmental organizations. There is a high potential the risk will fail in future areas of operations in the war on terrorism. As a consequence, the U.S. military is again scrambling with critical shortages in language assets and often relying on tribes and factions with unreliable agendas for language support. The lack of language capability has led to a predictable gap in intelligence capability.

The RC's few assets in low-density languages, however, provided an unplanned benefit. Several reservists with the native language skills needed for OEF languages were put on active duty at DLI to develop language programs and teach languages that were previously never identified as a joint requirement at DLI's OEF task force.

Contractors

Contract linguists are valuable because they can be called upon on short notice, fill the need for language capability, and their careers do not have to be managed. There are some important limitations, however, that must be understood to avoid dangerous or even fatal gaps in intelligence. First and foremost, native contractors may not be loyal or trustworthy, having their own political agenda—which was certainly the situation in Bosnia and is reported to be the case with a few FBI contract translators who had suspicious personal contacts.[5] Further, if relied upon too heavily, contractors can create a monopoly leverage for money, or worse, have a monopoly over information and potentially provide poor, skewed, or intentionally misleading translations to U.S. forces, which happened in Bosnia to senior U.S. officials.

With limited organic foreign language capability, American forces are subject to price leveraging by a few contractors. The reverse of price leveraging by a monopoly is paying too little for services, which creates and attracts correspondingly poor capabilities. For example, during the Vietnam War, a well-established company, Berlitz, had the contract to teach Vietnamese to American military personnel. Berlitz cut the salaries of the teachers to increase its own profit, causing a strike and a consequent disruption of intelligence assets deploying to Vietnam during combat operations in November 1967—three months before the Tet Offensive. The replacement contractor used barmaids from Saigon as cost-effective teachers because they had some limited exposure to English. As might be suspected, the vocabulary taught had limited military value.[6]

Contractors also are not always educated enough, in either their own language or English, to do the job of translating complex military or political subjects—as was also the case in Bosnia. Other issues to consider are that if the area of operations is dangerous, contractors may refuse to go; they are, after all, noncombatants. For example, pro-Taliban forces lynched a language contractor in Afghanistan working for the *Boston Globe*, sending a chilling message to others who might cooperate with Americans and Europeans. Some contractors are prior-service military with security clearances, which are invaluable. Yet, they too can act as a monopoly or refuse to enter a combat zone. A long-term consideration is that these contractors are often DLI graduates, making the DOD an unintentional

supplier of contractors in languages only taught at DLI or the State Department's Foreign Service Institute (FSI).

Contractors native to areas of operation are frequently the only linguists available on short notice and simply must be used. It is plausible that relying on native Afghanis for key intelligence left intelligence gaps that allowed key Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders to escape. This makes relying on contractors very problematic. (Another problem in Afghanistan is that few people speak English outside of Kabul.) The lack of measurable quality and supervision over contractors can leave American forces with poor capability and blind to serious intelligence gaps. A contractor monopoly over information is a dangerous failure of intelligence that cannot be ignored. The questionable reliability of contractors is reflected in Joint Publication (Pub) 6-0, *Doctrine for C4 Support to Joint Operations*, page II-10, which states as a fundamental principle that "the United States will provide its own interpreters to ensure that U.S. interests are adequately protected."

Heritage Speakers/Civilian-Acquired Skills

"Heritage speakers" are U.S. military personnel whose first language is not English or who have acquired foreign language skills outside of the military. The greatest asset of heritage speakers is being reared in the culture of the target language and having a level of experience before they ever join the U.S. military. DLI's origin, in fact, is as a heritage intelligence school to improve the Japanese of Nisei (second-generation Japanese-Americans) for intelligence and interrogation in the Pacific theater. There are also some limitations to keep in mind. Heritage speakers frequently are not well-enough educated in their first language to accurately translate for military intelligence. Of the 1,400 Nisei interviewed in 1941, only 60 were capable of learning Japanese beyond "kitchen-heritage speaking," and only two were sufficiently proficient in both Japanese and English to translate accurately, and they were used as instructors. Many of those rejected did not show the skills or were not educated enough to learn either English or Japanese at a high enough literacy to translate accurately for intelligence work. This remains a common problem of Spanish-heritage soldiers. Many have little or no formal education and are essentially functionally illiterate in English and Spanish and cannot accurately translate.

Another issue for heritage speakers is the security risk. Many heritage speakers came to the United States to seek freedom from oppression, and immediately after 9-11, three-quarters of DLIFLC's Arabic faculty volunteered to deploy with U.S. forces, even though few have prior military experience and most are well over 50 years old. They are loyal Americans willing to fight for freedom. They are not a risk, but an asset. Granting top secret clearances, however, to people whose foreign backgrounds cannot necessarily be verified, which has been rec-

ommended as a shortcut to recruiting more heritage speakers into intelligence, is perhaps unrealistic since 9-11—especially considering Al Qaeda's active efforts to penetrate U.S. bases and intelligence assets and the reports of espionage within the FBI by contracted heritage translators.[7] Whether or not the reports are completely accurate, the dangers are real and the consequences are fatal.

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM

There are many implications for transformation of the DOD and Army for fighting asymmetrical warfare. For example, if in fact the goal of transformation is to be able to wage asymmetrical warfare, the experts of unconventional operations in special operations must be included in the process. The obvious lessons learned thus far from the highly successful combat operations in Afghanistan was the effectiveness of joint special operations, including CIA elements, working with B-52s dropping joint defense attack munitions as strike fighters. Joint and coalition operations, however, would have been severely hampered without the soldiers using their language capability to work with the northern alliance and exploiting the critical vulnerabilities of the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

The sudden and high demand for languages rarely or never taught in schools and universities in the United States required tremendous initiative to support OEF. Support for OEF has taken the form of deploying language support when it is ready. The most immediate support DLI could provide was to send out "language survival kits" (LSKs) it had and then develop new LSKs for several languages and dialects. The survival kits are essentially phrase books (now available on portable CD or MP3 players) that use common military or medical phrases and terms. They are immediate, but limited in capability, particularly since the target audience may not be literate enough to read or may not even wish to communicate—for example, during interrogation. Concurrently, DLI and the language service program managers sought language-capable U.S. military personnel, American citizens, or immigrants willing to help, as did the FBI and CIA. A few DLI faculty had OEF language skills and were reassigned to DLI's OEF task force, as were some of the Arabic faculty that volunteered. Several other faculty members were recruited from Fremont, California, which is a concentration of Afghan immigrants and known as "Little Kabul." With a small base of growing faculty, DLI began to create programs to teach OEF languages to current U.S. military personnel in conversion programs from Persian-Farsi into Dari and new recruits into new programs. All services participated; the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy determined requirements and identified personnel quickly. One advantage of writing new programs was being able to incorporate new technology into classrooms, such as personal MP3 players and laptops for students to practice listening and speaking. One of the more unique innovations was DLI using its Korean

faculty to create a medical LSK for a Korean medical team traveling to Afghanistan to help with medical care for civilians—communication with patients is crucial for accurate diagnoses.

Solutions

Each of these foreign language capability sources has significant shortcomings, but when managed correctly, the weaknesses can be overcome to improve intelligence and special operations capabilities. The table below summarizes the major sources and advantages and disadvantages of military-educated linguists, RC linguists, prior-service military, native contractors, computer assistance, and heritage speakers.

Table 1. Foreign Language Capabilities

Military-Educated Linguists
Advantages: Measurable Quality and Capability – Deployable U.S. military personnel: combatants. – Top Secret/Secret clearance. – Many are careerists or join other agencies after the military: FBI, NSA, DOS, DEA. – After career are available in RC or contractors. – Joint Pub 6-0: "U.S. Interpreters Ensure Interests Protected." – *Disadvantages* – Lead time to plan and educate new linguists: 6 to 18 months. – Takes time to build experience and sustain capabilities: a career in itself, poorly supported by personnel system.
Reserve Component Linguists
Advantages: Measurable Quality and Capability – Deployable U.S. military personnel: combatants. – Top Secret/Secret clearance. – Many are careerists or join other agencies after the military: FBI, NSA, DOS, DEA. – Joint Pub 6-0: "U.S. Interpreters Ensure Interests Protected."

Disadvantages

- Lead time to plan and educate new linguists: 6 to 18 months.
- Takes time to build experience and sustain capabilities: a career in itself, poorly supported by personnel system.
- Limited time for sustaining perishable skills.

Contractors—Prior-Service Military

Advantages

- May have clearances.
- Can be available on short notice for common languages.
- Do not need to manage their careers.

Disadvantages: Varying Quality

- Lack of quality translates into intelligence gaps.
- Support affected by money, danger, etc. (may quit or strike).
- Without oversight, can be high cost and/or low quality.
- Possible labor disputes: Berlitz strike in 1967 Vietnam program.
- Noncombatants and only some have clearances.
- Not long-term solution for foreign language capability.

Contractors—Native

Advantages

- Available for local languages and dialects.
- Do not need to manage their careers.

Disadvantages

- Lack of quality translates into intelligence gaps.
- Often different political agenda and varying degrees of translation accuracy—a problem in Bosnia.
- Opportunity for enemy intelligence penetration.
- Monopoly over information.
- Can quit over money, danger, politics, etc.
- Noncombatants and do not have clearances.
    - Not long-term solution for foreign language capability.

Heritage Speakers/Civilian-Acquired Skills
(U.S. Military and Citizens)

Advantages

- Available on short notice for local languages and dialects.
- Shorter training pipeline, if higher literacy.
- Experience in language from birth, know culture.

Disadvantages

- Varying literacy level in English and/or target language. Must have capability evaluated.
- Lack of quality translates into intelligence gaps.
- May not qualify for clearances.
- Not enough volunteers of military age and fitness who are literate in target language.

Computer Technology

Advantages

- Powerful tool for educated and experienced linguists: screening, triaging, and working aids.
- Powerful tool for experienced educators.
- Powerful potential for linguist sustainment in the field, such as through MP3 technology or sensitive compartment information facility.

Disadvantages

- Machine translation is not accurate.
- Programming is time consuming and costly.
- Programming fails with low-literacy languages (e.g., Pashtu or Baluchi).
- Easily fooled by code terminology.
- Cannot teach, must be used by experienced educator.
- Reliant on programming by experienced linguists.
- Cannot replace humans.

Lessons Learned and Relearned

Problems

- United States never has enough foreign language capability for war.
- We need all means available managed according to capabilities and reliability.
- Intelligence gaps remain without improvement.

Solutions

- Use all sources to improve foreign language capability, but it requires active involvement and oversight by Defense Foreign Language Program.
- Create joint language pool in accordance with Homeland Security, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence recommendation.
- U.S. military verifies credibility and capability of contractors and native speakers.
- U.S. military leverages technology to:
  - Process far more information.
  - Educate and sustain language skills.

In summary, experience has demonstrated repeatedly that there is no one solution to increased capability. In Bosnia, for example, the shortage of reliable Serbian and Croatian linguists caused commanders to tier linguists and contractors according to their capabilities to do the job and their security reliability. Highly sensitive work was left to the military linguists, whereas negotiating simple support services with local vendors could be done by locally hired linguists where loyalties are less relevant. The path to improved foreign language capability to help fight the global war on terrorism successfully is to combine all components and sources of foreign language capability and actively manage them by U.S. military personnel who understand each component's strengths and weaknesses.

In general, improved foreign language capability is neither fast nor easy, but it is achievable and the people and systems are in place to accomplish it for the long-term war against terrorism. The nature of modern asymmetrical warfare requires a far more sophisticated understanding of the ideological motivation of our terrorist enemies than is required in symmetrical conflicts. Limited foreign

language capability in intelligence and special operations—as well as other sectors of the government—has already cost United States lives by not understanding the enemy's strategies and tactics. Two of the essential lessons learned from previous conflicts are that the United States never has enough foreign language capability, and the lack of it has cost lives.

Notes

1. Dr. Ray Clifford, Chancellor, Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center.
2. Everrette Jordan, *Globe* Magazine (November 2001).
3. "Counterterrorism Intelligence Capabilities and Performance Prior to 9-11," Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, July 2002, vi.
4. "Lost in Translation," *Government Executive* (May 2002).
5. James V. Grimaldi, "2 FBI Whistle-Blowers Allege Lax Security, Possible Espionage," *Washington Post*, 19 June 2002.
6. "Final Report on the Defense Language Institute, South West Contract Vietnamese Program from Activation, August 1967, to Deactivation, July 1973," Defense Language Institute, 28 June 1973.
7. Grimaldi, 10.

Figure 1. Central Asia Languages

Figure 2. Southeast Asia Languages