SELECTING FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the US Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

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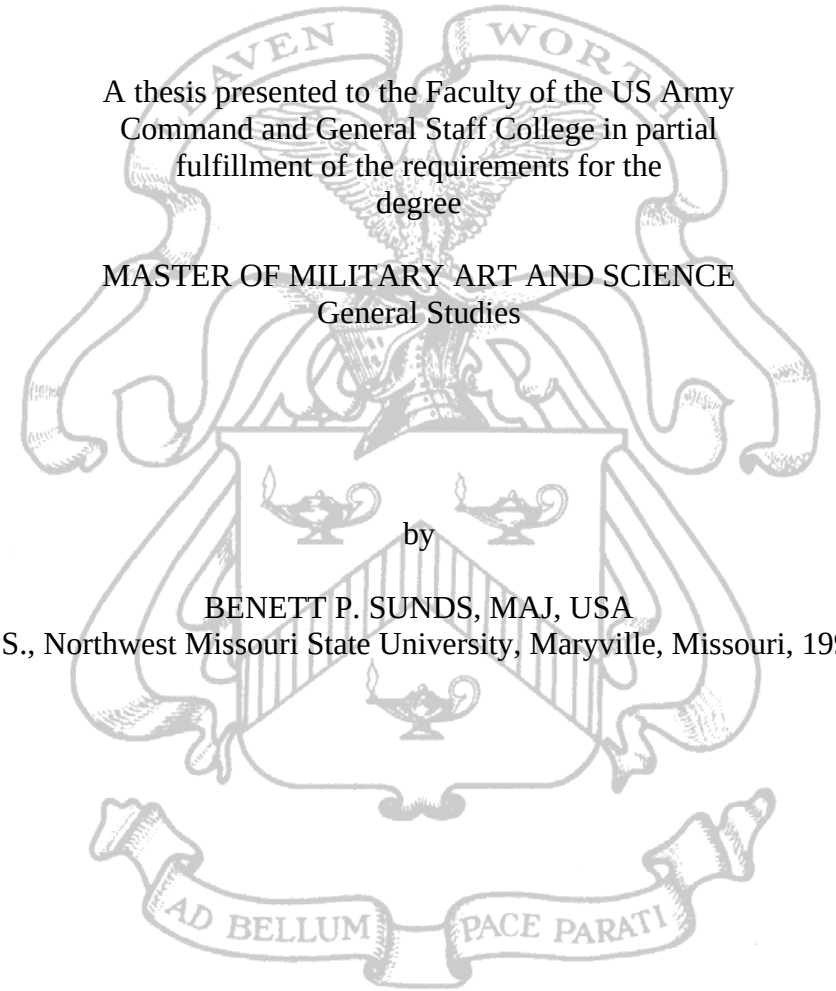

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14. ABSTRACT The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) is creating an ever-increasing role for U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF). This fact is evident with the approved increase in Special Operations force structure in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review. With the global nature of the current war, the demand for culturally attuned and foreign language capable Soldiers have never been higher. Dubbed "the long war," GWOT early lessons learned identified an increased need for various foreign languages at greater proficiency levels. As the U.S. Army component of USSOCOM has the preponderance of forces with foreign language capabilities, this study focuses on the selection method for foreign languages taught to ARSOF. This thesis' central research question is: Is the current model or methodology for foreign language selection for ARSOF relevant and effective for the global nature of operations today and the future?

This thesis examines the current methodology for foreign language selection for ARSOF, and compares that model to similar models of like purpose. History shows a tendency in SOF to react to foreign language requirements vice anticipate them. Proficiency is increasing in initial language training, and to some degree in maintaining proficiency; however, the selection process determining the languages taught receives little attention.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

SELECTING FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES, by MAJ Ben Sunds, 104 pages.

The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) is creating an ever-increasing role for US Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF). This fact is evident with the approved increase in Special Operations force structure in the *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review*. With the global nature of the current war, the demand for culturally attuned and foreign language capable Soldiers have never been higher. Dubbed "the long war," GWOT early lessons learned identified an increased need for various foreign languages at greater proficiency levels. As the US Army component of USSOCOM has the preponderance of forces with foreign language capabilities, this study focuses on the selection method for foreign languages taught to ARSOF. This thesis' central research question is: Is the current model or methodology for foreign language selection for ARSOF relevant and effective for the global nature of operations today and the future?

This thesis examines the current methodology for foreign language selection for ARSOF, and compares that model to similar models of like purpose. History shows a tendency in SOF to react to foreign language requirements vice anticipate them. Proficiency is increasing in initial language training, and to some degree in maintaining proficiency; however, the selection process determining the languages taught receives little attention.

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ACRONYMS

AFSOF	Air Force Special Operations Forces
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
CA	Civil Affairs
CGSOC	Command and General Staff Officers Course
DA PAM	Department of the Army Pamphlet
DCS	Deputy Chief of Staff
DLI	Defense Language Institute
DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
IO	International Organization
MG	Major General
NAVSOF	Navy Special Operations Forces
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
SF	Special Forces
SMDR	Structure Manning Decision Review
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOFLO	Special Operations Forces Language Office
SWA	Surface, Ward & Associates
SWCS	Special Warfare Center and School
TRAP	Training Requirements Arbitration Panel

TSCP	Theater Security Cooperation Plan
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command
USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> 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. (2004, 1)
>
> Clifford F. Porter, Ph.D., *Asymmetrical Warfare, Transformation, and Foreign Language Capability*

Dr. Porter acknowledged the need for an increased foreign language capability in his article *Asymmetrical Warfare, Transformation, and Foreign Language Capability*. At the same time, the United States (US) Department of Defense (DOD) announced similar concerns. He goes on to speak of the unconventional nature of operations today and the foreign language requirements in different areas of the military highlighting the needs of special operations units. The topic of this thesis is to study the current process or methodology that determines which foreign languages to teach initial entry US Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) requiring a foreign language, and to measure the effectiveness and relevancy of those languages by geographical region. Therefore, this thesis' central research question is: Is the current model or methodology of foreign language selection for ARSOF relevant and effective for global operations today and the future? For the purpose of this thesis, the term ARSOF units or Soldiers refer to Special Forces (SF), Civil Affairs (CA), and Psychological Operations (PSYOP). Army Special Operations units and Soldiers requiring foreign language skills are all SF, active duty CA and PSYOP, and some reserve duty CA and PSYOP. These units normally align by

geographical region, so this thesis examines foreign language requirements by region. The region this author primarily discusses and uses as an example is Europe, as that is where the author's orientation lies.

The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) created an increasing role for ARSOF, which includes SF, CA, and PSYOP. This fact is evident with the increased allocation of ARSOF personnel in the *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR). With the global nature of GWOT, the demand for culturally attuned and foreign language capable Soldiers are high. Dubbed "the long war," GWOT lessons identified an increased need for various foreign languages at greater proficiency levels. As the US Army component of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has the preponderance of forces with foreign language capabilities, this study focuses on the ARSOF language selection methodology. History shows ARSOF reacting to foreign language requirements vice anticipating them. Proficiency levels are increasing in initial language training, and programs to maintain proficiency are better; however, the selection process determining the languages taught receives little attention

The question of actual foreign language requirements versus foreign language coded positions in units continues to appear in working groups like the one established to address the active duty expansion of CA. The author was a member of this working group over the past three years. Much attention in training focuses on the separate, core qualification courses for SF, CA, and PSYOP even though approximately one third of all initial ARSOF training is teaching foreign languages to all three branches in a combined setting. The author's interest is in studying the process of foreign language selection for training, and determining if the current process is valid and effective. Personal experience

indicates that a narrow base of languages for the European region hampered effectiveness in recent operations. The selection of foreign languages for initial training affects all ARSOF Soldiers requiring foreign language skills. The assumption of this author is that poor selection of foreign languages for training reduces the regional effectiveness of the previously mentioned Soldiers in their ability to accomplish their mission. The analytical tool to confirm or disprove this assumption is a survey of currently serving SF, CA, and PSYOP Soldiers discussed in chapter 2.

One of the key skills for the three main ARSOF branches mentioned above is building rapport with indigenous people. Two main elements of rapport building are cultural knowledge of an area and foreign language skills to communicate and influence people in their native language. Therefore, the foreign languages taught during the initial ARSOF training programs are critical to the direct effectiveness and relevancy of those units conducting their missions in the different regions of the world. Admittedly, the current state of affairs with the GWOT causes many ARSOF Soldiers to work outside of their assigned regions. However, the military at large cannot afford to lose the regional focus and situational awareness on other parts of the world outside of the Middle East.

The other geographic combatant commands (GCC) outside of the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) are not eliminating their Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP), and ARSOF should not eliminate their significant contributions to them. In addition to USCENTCOM, the other GCCs outside of North America include the United States European Command (USEUCOM), United States Pacific Command (USPACOM), and United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM). These GCC commanders' have a stake in ARSOF units' capabilities

as a component supporting their TSCPs. This includes a wide array of foreign language skills to execute activities under the programs of the TSCPs. US Army Special Operations units' capabilities and specialized training offer the geographic combatant commanders' very powerful and useful tools in executing key activities within these TSCPs. Sometimes only ARSOF Soldiers possess the skills required to support a TSCP, and some activities are restricted for Special Operations Forces (SOF) alone. Each regional TSCP is critically important as it supports an interagency approach to building alliances and limiting conflict through preventive engagements.

Many questions require an answer to arrive at a definitive yes or no to the thesis topic question. Is there a current model or methodology to determine the foreign languages needed? Does the model or methodology consider after action reports (AARs) from operations conducted in the various parts of the world? Is there a need for an objective model that considers all languages and dialects spoken by the different regions? Do other Army elements that require and teach foreign languages have something to teach ARSOF? Does the US Department of State (DOS) have a model that has application for identifying foreign languages and requirements for regions? The proponent with the decision-making authority for ARSOF foreign languages will answer many of these questions.

At this point, there are three commands that can presumably answer these questions; the USSOCOM, the US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), and the SWCS. The research may indicate that no unified, long-range model or plan for determining foreign languages required exists. In that case, this author is proposing a model to use as a technique for complete or partial implementation. In the event a model

or long-range plan does exist, the author will compare and contrast that model with the proposed model. The goal is ascertaining the validity and relevancy of both, and drawing conclusions and recommendations from the comparison.

Another possibility is looking at how foreign languages required are determined for the Defense Language Institute (DLI) and drawing from that model, or using it as another means of comparison. It is possible that all of the research and the proposed model only validate the model already in use. In this case, the thesis will only add relevancy to a program already in place, and may help to explain the reasons why the current program works as it does for future ARSOF leaders' reference.

This author's assumption is that no study exists, at the graduate level, of the process of identifying foreign languages for training at the SWCS for ARSOF Soldiers. Initial research and conversations with key people involved with foreign language training at the SWCS indicate that this is true. Many studies exist from the past four or five years concerning the SOF and ARSOF foreign language programs according to sources at USSOCOM and the SWCS. This thesis examines these studies and draws conclusions from them regarding foreign language selection.

It is important to define how this author will determine effectiveness and relevancy of foreign languages taught by geographical regions. Some AARs from ARSOF units operating in or out of their assigned region, and a survey submitted to ARSOF officers in the current Command and General Staff Officers Course (CGSOC) class measures the effectiveness of the current foreign languages in use. The assumptions for this measurement are that unclassified AARs provide sufficient information and that no survey of the type mentioned currently exists. The main question is, Did the foreign

language that you and, or your unit speak fully support operations, or would a different foreign language or dialect (of the region) have been better suited to the operation? The key to this survey is foreign languages taught and utility (effectiveness) in the respondent's assigned regional area.

The survey will also determine the correlation between foreign languages learned and geographical regions assigned. The limitation will be an ARSOF officer that has not worked in his or her assigned geographical region where the foreign language resides will not be able to gauge the effectiveness of his or her language in that region. This process of segregation is essential to narrow the scope of the results to categorize those questioned that had the opportunity to "test" their trained foreign language in the region where the language is spoken and those that did not. As an example, an ARSOF officer regionally aligned to Europe with German as a trained foreign language that only has operational experience in Afghanistan or Iraq is important to the outcome. However, in this case the results will not count towards the regional effectiveness statistics. The various geographic regional definitions occur in detail later in the paper, but in simplistic terms, this author will use the active duty SF Groups' definitions of their geographic regions. All respondents complete the survey for non-attribution, using no names with surveys destroyed after data compilation. Clearly, the survey is only a random sampling of all ARSOF Soldiers with foreign language experience as only ARSOF commissioned officers receive the survey due to time limitations.

The relevancy of foreign languages measures a comparison of languages taught compared to the total number of languages spoken in a region. How many people speak those languages is also a consideration of operational relevancy. In other words, is the

foreign language relevant to the population based on the total numbers of native speakers in the region, and not only to the primary language or dialect spoken in a country or region? In addition, the issue of relevancy includes a brief discussion of culturally acceptable languages. In Europe, as in many other parts of the world, fluency in many languages is commonplace. Some languages spoken in an area, due to past historical reasons, are not necessarily the most effective way to communicate. For example, in some areas of Europe, Russian fluency persists, but trying to communicate in that language is more of an insult than an effective means of communication. Therefore, identifying foreign language requirements for a region based solely on the highest number of people that speak the language is not a relevant model. As mentioned above, a model that produces a Soldier trained in the German language that serves an ARSOF career in a Middle East oriented unit is also not relevant.

The commander with the authority to approve the language selection methodology or model must approve the clear definitions of relevance and effectiveness. The number of languages in a region to teach that meet those relevant and effective criteria is also with the same command authority. Obviously, the commander with approval authority always retains the decision to subjectively disagree with the outcome of a model and select different languages due to current or anticipated operational needs. However, a process designed and tested to ascribe a priority list of languages by geographical region is worth consideration. If all criteria of a model are valid and weighted according to command guidance, then the results of such a model offer a valid, objective point of departure for selecting languages.

There are a few limitations in preparing this thesis. This author attempts to utilize only unclassified information for the research of this paper to ensure the widest dissemination possible but may dedicate one chapter to classified information if completely unavoidable. This will be a challenge to ensure that the conclusions drawn do not reveal, or rely heavily on, classified information. This author will write about units, operations, and unit Modification Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) in generic terms in order to avoid compromising essential elements of friendly information, and to preclude classifying the thesis. Where a lack of written history is present, the author will conduct personal interviews with key people possessing knowledge of the missing history documents relevant to the operation or event. The author's experience indicates that this is often the case with SOF as the operational tempo remains so high that catching up with what happened often takes years to accomplish. Tracking down participants of operations for interviews may be a long process as many deploy again before a thorough study of the event or operation can be conducted. This does not prevent interviews from taking place, but does affect the comprehensive written study of an operation or event.

The scope of this thesis is purposefully narrow as not to address the entire foreign language program but only one part. There are a few delimitations because of this narrow focus. The assertion does not discount the current operational needs in foreign language training. One of the elements of the foreign language-training base is the need to reflect current operational requirements, but this should not be the only, or primary, element in a long-range model, plan or strategy. This author will not discuss how to fund any proposals for foreign language training or site selection of where the training should

occur. Also, any proposal about the process of how to resource any change, that is teachers, training material, and like items, is a topic for another thesis. This thesis does not delve too deeply into foreign language proficiency levels, or propose methods of retaining proficiency, as the focus is the foreign language requirements alone. In addition, the thesis does not address the best method or methodology for learning foreign languages.

This author does recognize that a state of war forces an adaptation to meet current restrictions and requirements. The benefits of a long-term approach will take six to ten years to materialize, as any current change to foreign languages taught would take that long to achieve a type of balance in the ARSOF force. Students of the new program will become the future key decision makers about foreign language training. As an example, the SF, CA, or PSYOP Captain learning a foreign language today may be the next battalion commander of one of the units mentioned with language skills in the next ten years. The intent of this thesis is an objective study of the foreign language selection process unconstrained by funding or resources allowing only the identification of requirements without regards to external mitigating factors.

There are three basic assumptions addressed in this thesis. The first is the possibility that SF, CA, and PSYOP need foreign language skills for different reasons and therefore need different foreign languages. This thesis identifies existing information on the reasons that SF, CA, and PSYOP require foreign language skills, but uses this information only in a supporting fashion for the main topic. A thorough study of this topic needs separate research. This author uses other institutions that require foreign language skills and training as a comparison tool only, and does not expand into the

entire history of foreign language training and all of the different agencies in the US government that conduct this type of training.

The second assumption is that after the Cold War foreign language training also transformed from a purely threat based program to a capabilities based one. To explain the trends in selection of foreign languages taught at the SWCS, the thesis will not go back farther than ten years or about 1995. The author uses this rationale to stay away from the Cold War era, and allow sufficient time after the collapse of the Soviet Union to understand the new world order that ensued. The thesis shows there were impacts on the foreign languages taught at the SWCS to cope with the post Cold War world as the foreign languages selected for training changed almost annually from 1995 to 2005. The last assumption is that the DOD is currently studying the foreign language programs of SOF, the Defense Attaché program with foreign area officers (FAOs), and others in its efforts to create and define foreign language and culture programs for the entire department. Accordingly, others, besides this author, will certainly study the methods for determining foreign languages for training.

The first step is identifying what is already in print, or not, on the subject of ARSOF languages. Another piece of information imperative to this process is identifying the languages of the world and the number of speakers. In addition, major languages require classification by country, region, or even globally to ascertain their importance on both a regional and global scale. Chapter 2 covers this information in detail.

The second step is to analyze what, if any, impact the renewed interest in foreign languages throughout the DOD has on SOF languages and programs. The trends of foreign languages, programs, and training are worth consideration for determining why

and how the selection process of foreign languages in ARSOF occurs. Lastly, identifying current and past language selection models and their relevance, effectiveness, and possible application for ARSOF is critical to comparing models or proposing new ones. Chapter 3 expounds upon these areas and others.

The third step in the process analyzing all of the information and selecting the most important criteria required for an effective model. Chapter 4 covers the analysis of all of the information contained in the previous chapters and compares known models to each other. The fourth and final step is explaining conclusions, making recommendations, and proposing topics for further research. Chapter 5 includes this information as well as a regionally oriented foreign language selection model for consideration for ARSOF specifically, but also any other interested organizations.

This author's potential bias is born from a frustration of limited answers to the question of foreign language selection and relevance to operational necessity. Additionally, this author has seen the discrepancy between trained languages, authorized language positions in an ARSOF unit, and required languages for operations as a member of one of these active units that rely heavily on foreign language skills. The potential solution or fix of this discrepancy begins at the point of foreign language selection for initial ARSOF training.

The process for studying this discrepancy and identifying possible solutions begins with a discussion of the current languages of the world and in ARSOF training. Included in this step is identifying existing literature on languages of the world and the SOF and ARSOF language programs. In this context, and used throughout the thesis, the term SOF relates to those units in USSOCOM requiring foreign language skills that

include ARSOF, US Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF), and US Navy Special Operations Forces (NAVSOF).

CHAPTER 2

WORLD LANGUAGES AND ARSOF

> If the King's English was good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for me! (circa 1920)
>
> Attributed to Ma Ferguson, Governor of Texas

The purpose of this thesis is ascertaining if the process of foreign language selection for ARSOF Soldiers with a language skill requirement is relevant and effective. Therefore, the next step is reviewing the literature available on the subject and some of the related history. Included in this chapter is a compilation of various authors' works, studies, facts on languages of the world, and the current ARSOF languages. Where information gaps persist due to a lack of written documents, this author uses personal interviews and electronic mail correspondence with key people at various institutions and organizations to fill the void. The research leads to two, main groupings of opinions evolving on the subject of foreign languages. One group advocates the status quo, while the other perceives needed changes. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, one of the limitations to the research was time. This limitation allowed for very few personal interviews at remote locations, but the opinion of this author is that these interviews are paramount to this and further research. The reason for this assertion is the lack of written documents of current processes and history of SOF foreign language programs.

The topic, as specifically stated, does not produce a windfall of publications from which to draw information. Undoubtedly, some of the required information lies with people working in the foreign language-training field at the SWCS at Fort, Bragg, North Carolina. The author conducted a research trip to Fort Bragg to interview key personnel

in order to proceed on this thesis topic. The interviews and discussions during this research trip included people in the Department of Training and Doctrine at the SWCS, as well as an interview with Major General (MG) James W. Parker, the Commanding General (CG) of the SWCS. The topic does have numerous references to draw from on the expanded material of foreign language training in the DOD and some other US government agencies or departments, as well as authors of articles and books. No formal, written model or process is currently in use to determine foreign language requirements at the SWCS. This is not to say that there is no process, but that the process is not formalized or written. It is possible that the process is developed and executed elsewhere.

The assertion of this author is that a formalized, written process is critical, as part of a long-term strategy or plan for all SOF language training that is replete with checks and balances, some type of objective screening model, and input to the process from all effected operational units. This author considered processes by which other institutions in DOD and other government agencies select foreign languages. The process of foreign language selection has little application in US or international corporations in reference to ARSOF language selection. The requirements for foreign language capability are radically different in civilian corporations from the military's, so these references are not used. Also used as references are organizations that monitor and categorize languages of the world. Many of these organizations produce rankings based on different sets of criteria.

According to *Ethnologue*, there are over 6,912 living languages in the world today, but some are so minuscule that only a handful of people still speak them. *Ethnologue* is a premier organization that publishes a book every few years, and

maintains a website that tracks and catalogs languages all over the world. Their definition of a living language is at least one person speaking the language and it is their primary or first language. Identification as a separate language is because it is unique enough in its written form, spoken form or separate dialect to warrant classification as a language. This explanation is oversimplified, but serves the purpose for this research. The number one language spoken is Mandarin Chinese with over 885 million speakers. The definition of a speaker of a language is that a person has fluency and speaks the language as a first or primary language in day-to-day activities. English ranks number three in the world with 322 million speakers (Ethnologue 2005).

The numbers of speakers of any language is hard to define. In countries like Belgium, where multiple languages abound on a daily basis due to trade and other reasons, it is unclear if these statistics account for all of the languages spoken. This is important to note, as many more people in the world may be fluent in French than list French as their primary language, so the actual numbers of French speakers worldwide may appear lower and be somewhat skewed. The number one language in the world as a secondary language is in fact French. If only primary speakers of languages count towards the statistics and list in table 1, then the results may differ with secondary speaker numbers included. French becomes number ten when excluding English from the list. The top ten languages, numbers of speakers and primary country with the most speakers of the language according to *Ethnologue* as of 1999 are in table 1.

Table 1. Top Ten Languages by Primary Speakers in the World

Rank	Language Name	Primary Country	Population
1	CHINESE, MANDARIN [CHN]	China	885,000,000
2	SPANISH [SPN]	Spain	332,000,000
3	ENGLISH [ENG]	United Kingdom	322,000,000
4	BENGALI [BNG]	Bangladesh	189,000,000
5	HINDI [HND]	India	182,000,000
6	PORTUGUESE [POR]	Portugal	170,000,000
7	RUSSIAN [RUS]	Russia	170,000,000
8	JAPANESE [JPN]	Japan	125,000,000
9	GERMAN, STANDARD [GER]	Germany	98,000,000
10	CHINESE, WU [WUU]	China	77,175,000

Source: Ethnologue, *Top 10 Languages* (Document on-line: Ethnologue, 2005).

The primary country is the country with the most native, or first language, speakers of the language. In addition, a primary country recognizes the language as the official language of the country. As an example, the US has more native speakers of the English language than the United Kingdom (U.K.); however, it is not the official

language of the country by the government. Therefore, the UK lists as the primary country with the most speakers of English because it is also their official language. The population numbers, however, reflect the total number of native, or first, language speakers of the language worldwide (Ethnologue 2005).

The languages currently taught to ARSOF Soldiers only cover one half, or five out of the ten most populated languages worldwide, assuming that most Soldiers already know English well enough to be in the service of the US armed forces. Portuguese, recently cancelled by the SWCS, was a core training language for many years. Japanese is a language trained on and off at the SWCS throughout its history to Soldiers anticipating an assignment in the Asian region or a unit aligned with that region. However, no records indicate training or development of Bengali, Hindi, or Wu Chinese at SWCS.

Ethnologue breaks languages into five regions of the world much akin to DOD. However, the Americas are not separate like the DOD regions. The regions are the Americas, Pacific, Africa, Europe, and Asia. The Americas cover North, Central, and South America and includes Greenland. The US accounts for 165 of the 1,002 languages of the Americas region of the almost 7,000 languages worldwide. Many of the US languages are from immigrants bringing language and culture with them and quite a few of the Native American languages are nearly extinct. The Europe region has only 239 living languages, but comprises the second largest population in the world with over 26 percent of the total number of language speakers in the world. By contrast, the Africa region has 2,092 of the nearly 7,000 living languages worldwide but account for only about 12 percent of the total world population of language speakers. The Pacific region

has 1,310 of the almost 7,000 worldwide languages but account for only 0.1 percent of the world's language speaking peoples. Asia has both the highest total number of living languages at 2,269, and the highest percentage of language speakers in the world at close to 61 percent. Due to English and Spanish as primary languages in some countries in the Africa and Pacific regions, all regions listed above have representation in the list of top ten languages of the world by population (Ethnologue 2005).

Simply taking the top 20 or 40 languages most spoken in the world, and applying those languages to a model in order to determine requirements for foreign language selection, would obviously not equally represent all regions. The languages with the highest population of speakers, however, should be at least a consideration when deciding language requirements for ARSOF Soldiers to have a truly global impact. Since the exact location of the next conflict in the world is unknown, the wary must resist the obvious tendency of targeting the most popular languages worldwide as a sole criterion.

Army Regulation 350-16, *Total Army Language Program*, 13 March 1998, covers foreign language training and guidelines for the US Department of the Army. USSOCOM, USASOC and the SWCS promulgate many of the policies concerning maintenance of language proficiency and administrative tracking of linguists. Some of the research information and references contained herein are from e-mail correspondence with major commands and major subordinate commands within USSOCOM in an attempt to find existing policies and processes for foreign language selection and training. The author started this process with the SWCS and USASOC and found that it often takes a considerable amount of time to find the right person to speak about the ARSOF, or overall SOF, foreign language program. Part of the difficulty in finding the correct

offices and people for correspondence at these commands is the recent history of reorganization. Over the past few years in particular, some offices and people in the foreign language arena have moved and been renamed more than once.

The author received positive feedback on the relevancy of the thesis topic from the Special Operations Forces Language Offices (SOFLO) of the SWCS, USASOC, and USSOCOM. The general impression was that the topic is worth studying, rarely studied, and often very political in nature. The sensitivity of the topic appears to be due to the strain on budgets, time, and resources for initial or acquisition training, and maintaining proficiency after one learns a language. Any change to the menu of foreign languages offered creates an additional backlash of changes in budgets and resources. Due to the sensitivity of the subject, this author agreed to not divulge names of sources, and paraphrase sources rather than quote directly. The most encouraging comments related to a degree of "professional envy" in having the opportunity and time to study a specific area of the foreign language process that normally receives little attention.

The reason that the SWCS is a key institution in the ARSOF foreign language selection process is because it not only trains almost all of the ARSOF languages at their location, but they are also responsible for establishing, resourcing, and executing the training. The USASOC delegated authority to the SWCS for all elements of the ARSOF foreign language program according to sources at the SWCS and USSOCOM. Most of the former employees and offices of the USASOC SOFLO are now in the SWCS. This leaves very few, if any, foreign language office spaces or people at the USASOC. This is an important observation as a major command level is missing for oversight and planning in the foreign language process.

Sources at foreign language offices within USSOCOM state that an informal process exists for determining SOF foreign languages for training and development. A review of the foreign languages developed occurs every two years, in theory. The reason that this author says in theory is that sources at USSOCOM, who wish to remain unnamed, state that this review did not occur from 1997 to 2003 in any form. A concurrent review, conducted across the USASOC major subordinate commands for the ARSOF languages, includes the SWCS, US Army Special Forces Command, and US Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command. This review, now conducted annually, presumably started in 2004 or 2005. The USSOCOM has about forty languages "validated" as a requirement, which means that they received approval within the command and funded through a dedicated budget for either initial, contingency, or proficiency training. The SWCS also uses these three categories in defining foreign language training.

Initial or acquisition training is the training conducted at an institution for SOF Soldiers that gives a basic level of proficiency and requires the greatest amount of training time in one setting. Contingency language training consists of language training required for a mission or operation that is different from one of the initial languages and conducted at the unit level normally with support from an institution that conducts initial language training. Proficiency or sustainment training maintains proficiency in a language and uses a wide array of resources, which also includes immersion training in a country where the ARSOF Soldier's language prevails. The bulk of language resources required for acquiring initial training materials, instructor contracts, and tools for maintaining proficiency stem from the USSOCOM validated list. This is an important

process as the list of validated languages translates to the justification for funding of the foreign language program for all SOF units.

Differences persist in the funding of foreign language training between USSOCOM and the DOD. USSOCOM uses major force program eleven funding (MFP-11) as mandated by the Nunn-Cohen Amendment (DefenseLINK 2000) and includes foreign language training, and not MFP-2 funding as the rest of DOD does for foreign languages, therefore the two are hard to compare. Still, a large imbalance exists between the two funding programs. Sources at USSOCOM indicate that the entire DOD, including USSOCOM, has approximately 35,000 foreign language skill positions. The DOD has approximately 26,000 of these positions, or about 67 percent of all positions. The DOD receives over 380 million dollars in MFP-2 funding for foreign language training each fiscal year. The USSOCOM maintains approximately 9,000 positions for foreign language skills, or about 33 percent of the entire DOD positions. In 2005, USSOCOM received approximately 12 million dollars in MFP-11 funding designated for foreign language training for the fiscal year. The significance of this is that with funding and positions added together, the DOD represents 67 percent of the total foreign language positions in the entire US armed forces and 97 percent of the total funding. By contrast, the USSOCOM represents 33 percent of the total foreign language positions in the entire US armed forces and only 3 percent of the total funding.

Part of the imbalance stems from the different requirements for skill level, or proficiency. Overall, DOD has higher requirements than USSOCOM as graduates of DLI must attain an Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) proficiency rating of 2/2/2/2 or better upon course completion. The first rating refers to listening ability, the second

reading, the third, speaking, and the fourth writing. Six base levels of measurable proficiency as determined by an examination or examiner range from 0, or 0.0 to 5 or 5.0. A plus denotes an increased level of proficiency in a base level that is close to the next higher base level, but not quite there, for example a 1.6, or 1-plus is a high 1 rating that is almost a 2 base rating (DLI 2006, Ch 2). However, it is difficult to imagine that the difference in proficiency requirements directly translates to a differential in funding of 30 percent or more. Arguably, the DLI as the foreign language training institution for DOD also teaches foreign languages for some other US government agencies' employees, but the impact of training additional people appears minimal. The exact impact to funding for DOD, or transfers of funds between DOD and other US government agencies is unknown and requires further research outside the scope of this thesis.

Sources at the SWCS state that there are only ten languages currently selected and used for initial training for ARSOF Soldiers: Arabic-Modern Standard, Korean, German, Russian, Spanish, French, Persian-Farsi, Indonesian (Bahasa), Tagalog and Mandarin Chinese. Within the last few years, languages previously taught and eliminated include Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian, Turkish, Thai, and Pashto. The intent of the shift is to focus on core languages that provide a baseline for each major region of the world that generally aligns with each GCC.

One of the difficulties arising from studying languages by region is the definitions of geographical regions or areas. Many differences persist throughout US government agencies in defining geographical regions as well as greater academia. This is problematic for synchronizing US national policy, strategy, and goals in documents like the TSCP used in DOD. The DOD TSCP in each GCC regional area incorporates the

DOS regional and country plans in an interagency effort. For the purposes of this thesis, the definitions of geographic regions are as defined by DOD. The four major GCC's geographical areas, excluding Northern Command, which covers North America, are Central Command covering the Middle East and part of Africa; European Command covering all of Europe and most of Africa, primarily sub Saharan; Pacific Command covering Asia and most Pacific islands; and Southern Command covering Central and South America.

Much effort goes into studying operations, doctrine, equipment resources, and specific core task training for SF, CA, and PSYOP. A considerable amount of ARSOF language training personnel's attention is on the actual foreign language training and achieving and maintaining proficiency levels, however, this author found very little on the process used in selecting the foreign languages themselves. History shows that the languages selected for training to ARSOF Soldiers requiring foreign language skills as part of initial training reflect the operational requirements of the time with some degree of forecasting for requirements in the near future.

According to MG Parker, the language selection process considers anticipated operations over the next ten years. MG Parker also stated that he believes that the language that an ARSOF Soldier learns initially should remain as the main foreign language for the Soldier throughout his or her career to keep a focus on proficiency levels similar to the US Army's physical fitness program-- a lifelong mind-set. Other foreign language requirements may appear on a temporary basis for missions or operations, but the ARSOF Soldier always returns to his or her initial language to maintain proficiency. These other language requirements for operations or missions fall into the contingency

language category and trained at the unit level with support from the SWCS (Parker 2006).

Each ARSOF unit requiring foreign language skills has a Command Language Program Manager tasked with maintenance and administration of foreign languages and training resources. MG Parker added that an ARSOF Soldier should receive assignment to a unit geographically aligned with where his or her language skills have application and should remain assigned to units in the same geographical region to the greatest extent possible (Parker 2006).

Other sources within USSOCOM indicate that the validation process for foreign languages developed or under development for SOF language training anticipate only five years out. The process for validating languages, and initial step for introducing new ones, comes primarily from the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC) aligned with each GCC according to these same sources. This process appears very pragmatic as it mirrors the DLI process of receiving input from each service component of the US armed forces. However, it begs the question of where these efforts synchronize into one cogent approach to foreign language selection. On one side are the TSOC recommendations with the GCC TSCP in mind as well as current and anticipated operations in their region of the world looking five years into the future. The opposite side is the SWCS conducting an annual review with all of the SF, CA, and PSYOP units' senior leadership looking ten years into the future. Add on to this the intent for an ARSOF Soldier to receive one initial language that is for the duration of a typical career, or up to 18 years, and it is easy to see where discrepancies may appear.

How many languages were the same in 1988 as compared to the ten languages at the SWCS today? A retrospective check of languages as far into the past as the prediction of the future offers some invaluable insight. Presumably, Russian, French, German, and Arabic at a minimum were on the list in 1988, but sources at the SWCS state that Mandarin Chinese was not. The indicators for a need for Chinese were present in 1988 as both the language and population were in a growth pattern. Therefore, it is important to identify the current trends of languages as they relate to the world in considering criteria for a foreign language selection model

The current methodology at SWCS suggests a threat based approach vis-à-vis a capabilities-based approach to foreign language selection. Dr. Clifford Porter from DLI explained the problem this way, “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” (Porter 2004, 6).

There are differences between the languages trained at the SWCS; the languages identified by position on some of the ARSOF unit’s personnel positions documents, and the post mission comments by some ARSOF units. As an example, this author received training for the French language at the SWCS, and then received assignment to a position in a unit designated for an officer with foreign language proficiency in Portuguese.

Lastly, this author contributed to a post mission report that made a comment about the absence of personnel on a mission with proficiency in the Armenian language. Whereas this example appears extreme, it is not isolated according to discussions with peers of this author in other CA units as well as SF and PSYOP units. The unit of assignment for this author had a European orientation. Other ARSOF units working in regions of the world other than Europe might experience different results. During informal discussions with this author, most ARSOF Soldiers with foreign language skills in Spanish and working in Latin America do not share these same experiences.

The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap is a very detailed document that shows the current relevancy of reviewing foreign languages, who receives training, and how to maintain proficiency. In January of 2005, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld established a Defense Language Office to lead the effort. This office reports directly to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, David S. C. Chu, and is tasked with studying the entire program in DOD as it exists now, make recommendations for further development and planning, and review potential programs for implementation as directed by the Secretary of Defense. The *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* closely resembles past documents within USSOCOM.

The roadmap lists as part of required actions the need to " Build a capabilities-based language requirements determination process," and that "this process will be a zero-based, systematic, and comprehensive process that identifies and validates language and regional expertise requirements in DOD, based upon the *National Security Strategy*, the *National Defense Strategy*, and the *Security Cooperation Guidance*, as well as contingency and operational planning" (The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap

2005, 5). The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is the office of primary responsibility for the task, and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff is responsible for ensuring the full operating capability (The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap 2005).

Many authors such as Robert Kaplan discuss the relevancy of foreign language trained ARSOF forces and the capability that being able to speak a foreign language brings to operations. During a recent lecture conducted at the CGSOC class of 2005 and 2006, Kaplan also detailed the negative effect on operations that result when SOF teams attempt to operate in countries or regions and are incapable of speaking the local language or dialect. He has expounded upon this point through many of his articles and books. Mr. Kaplan lived with, and observed, ARSOF Soldiers and units conducting a variety of missions in various countries. The main theme of Robert Kaplan's observations about language capability is that both the effectiveness and emotions of many conversations with local indigenous populations get lost in translation, especially when ARSOF Soldiers must use interpreters due to a lack of language skills (Kaplan 2005, 7).

There is no shortage of examples of the need for foreign language proficient Soldiers. A recent article in the *Military Review* presented the idea of assigning FAOs at each Division of the US Army to fill the void (Sargent 2005, 15). This idea is consistent with Mr. Kaplan's comments. Foreign Area Officers typically work at the strategic or operational level vis-à-vis US Army divisions, which are at the tactical level. The US military categorizes operations at three levels. The tactical level is the lowest of the three and includes individual Soldiers and teams up through Divisions. The operational level is next and is Corps, Theater Armies, or the regional GCCs. The strategic level coincides

directly with national interests and is the highest level of operations and planning encompassing a global vision. This author believes that as many US Soldiers as possible should receive foreign language and cultural training at all levels of operations. The tactical level, arguably, has the greatest requirement for both language and cultural training with the spectrum shifting to more need for cultural awareness for planning than language skills as it climbs to the operational and strategic levels.

One key research tool developed for this thesis was a questionnaire for the ARSOF officers of the current CGSOC class that possessed a US Army trained foreign language. The purpose of the questionnaire was to build a case for the need of more relevant language training by region of the world, and determine if the current selection of languages are relevant and effective for the Contemporary Operating Environment. The questionnaire's scope was limited to the last five or six years as most potential respondents in the current CGSOC class have only been in ARSOF since 1999 or 2000. This author cancelled the questionnaire upon discovery of a survey conducted in 2004 by an independent consulting corporation at the behest of the USSOCOM, which interviewed Soldiers from SF, CA, and PSYOP of all ranks, active and reserve. The results of this survey superseded any results of the anticipated survey for the thesis as it covers a wider range and current enough for relevancy.

Surprisingly, the initial research indicated that the need for foreign language skills in the US Army dates as far back as World War II, or 50 years. One of the most recent examples of addressing foreign language training in ARSOF is from a Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) thesis written in 2003 by a US Army SF officer, Major (MAJ) Moll. His thesis addresses the topic of the ARSOF foreign language program as it relates

to SF training and effectiveness for GWOT. MAJ Moll asserts that while touted as a skill that many ARSOF Soldiers possess, specifically SF Soldiers, the reality is that most Soldiers are only mildly conversant and need more proficiency training with dedicated training time. He also stated that foreign language training is an area that normally receives minimal training attention. MAJ Moll continues saying that key mission related training requirements often overshadow foreign language training, and time is not a commodity afforded to unit commanders. The premise is that language proficiency training is not a high priority-training requirement compared to other training, and often does not receive emphasis by higher commanders of time allocated for training (Moll 2003, 66-69).

The last information found in this thesis research is a 2003 report from the General Accounting Office (GAO). The report (GAO Report 03-1026) is the result of a study of the SOF foreign language program as directed by the US Congress. Specifically, the Senate Report on the Fiscal Year 2003 National Defense Authorization Act mandated that GAO "review SOF foreign language requirements and training" (GAO 2003, 2). The findings listed four recommendations to the DOD. The DOD concurred with three of the four recommendations and non-concurred with one. The DOD did not concur with the recommendation that the Secretary of Defense direct a long-term strategy to USSOCOM for their foreign language program. The DOD stated that the USSOCOM had a draft strategy document that required staffing through multiple agencies before completion and approval by DOD (GAO 2003, 27). The author has not located that document, or a written long-term plan concerning SOF foreign language training.

The DOD did agree with the 2003 GAO report to incorporate distributive learning approaches. They also agreed with the recommendation that the Defense Secretary evaluate proficiency pay incentives, and pay and allowance funding for SOF reserve and guard members. The DOD also concurred with the last recommendation from the 2003 GAO report, which refers to improving options for oral testing of foreign language proficiency.

The study did not take a hard look at the foreign language selection process, but focused on assessing "USSOCOM's recent actions to improve the management of the SOF foreign language program and the delivery of training" and "identify ways for the command to deal with ongoing challenges that limit SOF personnel's access to language-training opportunities" (GAO 2003, 8). The 2003 GAO report admitted that "although we reviewed the process for determining SOF language requirements, we did not examine the specific criteria and rationale for decisions made for those requirements (e.g., languages, number of personnel needed, and proficiency levels required for units) in its recent assessment" (GAO 2003, 8). Therefore, the assumption and initial findings of this author is that the process of foreign language selection has not received thorough study.

Additionally, the 2003 GAO report addresses the numbers of SOF members that require foreign languages in accomplishment of their assigned missions. Of the approximately 44,000 service members of USSOCOM, only about 12,000 require a foreign language capability. Consider that of those 12,000; nearly 90 percent reside in ARSOF while 9 percent are in NAVSOF, and 1 percent in AFSOF. The rationale behind assigning proponency to ARSOF and USASOC for USSOCOM foreign language training is sound as they own more than 90 percent of the forces requiring foreign language skills.

The NAVSOF and AFSOF elements of USSOCOM that have foreign language capability requirements are responsible for their own foreign language training programs within guidelines and policies established by USSOCOM and USASOC (GAO 2003, 2-8). In discussions with senior commanders of some of the AFSOF units, this author discovered that most of the AFSOF members requiring foreign languages also attend training at the Army's SWCS. The language selection process and languages selected at the SWCS for ARSOF have a great impact on AFSOF too as most AFSOF requirements for training are met through the program at the SWCS.

To date, this author's research found no combination of considerations for a formula determining foreign language requirements. That is, no process exists outside of annual reviews that merely keep pace with current and near term planned or anticipated operations. This is the reason that the foreign languages selected seem constantly in a reactive as opposed to a proactive mode. This process is in a recurring loop that cannot stop due to operational demands. Identifying a model for determining foreign language requirements seems the next, logical step for USSOCOM and USASOC as part of a long-range strategy for the foreign language program as the 2003 GAO report states. A model of this type could break the cycle of reactive selection to a process of proactive selection. Of course, the reality is that no process or model can accurately forecast the future. By looking at the languages and regions of the world on a more scientific basis, this author developed a model that includes these language facts as a building block, along with other considerations addressed later, to fill a potential void in ARSOF training programs.

The contribution to the ARSOF community is a detailed study of an area that historically gets little attention, and providing insight on the process of determining the

selection criteria and methods for selecting foreign languages. If a methodology already exists, then the proposed methodology or model should either validate or invalidate that methodology. If a methodology does not exist, then this author proposes using the model herein or at least serves as a base on which to build a methodology or model. At the end of the day, ARSOF leaders need the ability to explain to their Soldiers exactly why they receive training in a particular language, and where, globally, they can expect to use it. The next chapter reviews other possible considerations for a model of foreign language requirements, and the current interest in foreign language training. The review also includes lessons learned from ARSOF Soldiers utilizing their foreign language skills in missions supporting the GWOT since the events of 11 September 2001. Most of this information comes from a survey using interviews in all three ARSOF branches.

CHAPTER 3

CURRENT INTEREST, TRENDS AND MODELS

> Knowledge of foreign languages is particularly important in light of America's leadership in the free world. Yet the American people are deficient in foreign languages, particularly those of the emerging nations in Asia, Africa, and the Near East. It is important to our national security that such deficiencies be overcome. (Kraus 1958, 1)
>
> President Dwight D. Eisenhower "Address to Congress, February 1957" in *Military Review*, December 1958

The quote above came from an article written by Colonel (COL) Walter E. Kraus, Artillery, for the December 1958 issue of *Military Review,* when he was the Commandant of the United States Army Language School. The title of the article is "The Soldier's New Sidearm: Language", and explained the need for emphasis on foreign language training in 1958. The similarities between this article and many written today are eerie. Another quote from this article is from COL Kraus referring to a program "which has the approval and encouragement of General Maxwell D. Taylor who has urged all career officers to acquire proficiency in a foreign language" (Kraus 1958, 55). The program was essentially a nonresident studies course. This sounds amazingly similar to one of the required actions of the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in the January 2005 *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* to "establish the requirement that junior officers complete language training" (Defense Language Transformation Roadmap 2005, 7). The last stunning quote from COL Kraus' article in 1958 states, "With the Army fast becoming streamlined for greater flexibility, officers and non commissioned officers will have to accept more and more responsibility outside their special fields. Adeptness in speaking a foreign language certainly will be an

intellectual sidearm indispensable to the Army man of tomorrow. Actually 'tomorrow' is a misleading word. The need is critical today" (Kraus 1958, 55). The 109th US Congress in its first session in February of 2005 passed Senate resolution number 28 designating 2005 as *The Year of Foreign Language Study*.

When studying the current methodology for foreign language selection, or proposing a new methodology or model, an important process is reviewing the history of foreign languages and programs in the US Army, and specifically ARSOF. Equally important to the process is identifying the current interest and opinion of senior leaders on foreign language training within the USSOCOM, the DOD, and other agencies of the US government. This author focuses on the past ten years, back to circa 1995, for the ARSOF languages history in determining recent patterns and trends in the language program. This is important for two reasons; this date is prior to the terrorist attack on the US of 11 September 2001 showing the language emphasis and languages taught before that event, and the timeframe is after the declared end of the Cold War so languages no longer focused on the Soviet Union threat. The term language refers to languages other than English as the US Army and DOD use English as the language of choice for written, electronic, and oral communications. Whereas English is not an official language of the US, it is the primary language of over 80 percent of Americans and is an official language of almost half of the fifty states (*Ethnologue* 2005).

The difference in language proficiency requirements for SF, CA, and PSYOP Soldiers both historically and as currently mandated by USSOCOM offers yet another viewpoint when studying the methodology of language selection. This chapter also identifies the reasons behind the differences in proficiency level requirements for SF, CA,

and PSYOP, and suggests a theory, based on trends and policies, as to the different reasons that these three groups require foreign language proficiency.

The requirement for foreign language ability in modern SOF dates back to the Office of Strategic Services during World War II, which grew into the Special Forces of the US Army and the Central Intelligence Agency. The requirement for foreign language ability for PSYOP and CA dates to about the same period; however, for CA, the date is arguably even earlier as US Soldiers conducted limited CA type activities and learned languages of Native American tribes in the days of the Frontier Wars-- circa mid to late 1800s. With the increase in expeditionary style and nation building missions in the early twentieth century, the demand increased for Soldiers with the capacity for learning, or who already possessed, language skills of the indigenous people where these operations took place (Birtle 2004, Ch 2).

Operations in Mexico, Cuba, Russia, and the Philippines are examples of US expeditionary forces deployed to areas where English is not a prevalent language, and required either US linguists, or local interpreters, to communicate with local inhabitants. Some of the early lessons learned from these operations included the difficulty in using interpreters and the ensuing, linguistic void created during operations for commanders that built a blind dependency on local interpreters with no way to truly evaluate an interpreters effectiveness in literal translations without another linguist of the American government. In addition, a hindrance to operations was the question of a local interpreter's loyalties, and again, without a second, known, quality linguist to check the interpreter's translations and conversations, there was no way for a commander to know if an interpreter was conducting literal, objective translations (Birtle 2004). The worst-

case scenario is a local interpreter that is passing information to insurgents within a local population, to the detriment of friendly forces. This author has personal experience with similar situations where a check of an interpreter's translations by an American linguist, unbeknownst to the interpreter, resulted in the immediate termination of the interpreter's employment. The relief of the local interpreter was due to liberties taken in translation for either personal benefit or questionable loyalties.

Many authors discuss the importance of foreign language knowledge in the US Army and the impact that deficiencies have on operations. Some works, as far back as World War II, refer to the immense effort that went into training US Army linguists in Japanese. Ironically, a few authors note that the US Army presumably learned its lesson in not having enough trained linguists to cover all areas of the world and that they would never be "caught short" again. In World War II, obtaining the amount of linguists required for the European theater of war was relatively easy as a large pool of first or second generation speakers of most European languages already existed in the US due to a large immigrant population and a nationwide draft. There were, however, many discussions concerning the difference between first generation immigrants to the US and second-generation immigrants. The recurring theme was that the second-generation linguists lacked the cultural knowledge that their first generation ancestors possessed. The same circumstances existed in World War I for the American Army's late entry. Linguistic requirements were easily met due to the pool of immigrant Soldiers and the region of the war where American Soldiers deployed.

In a recent article by Robert D. Kaplan, he offered some observations from his time spent with an SF team in Afghanistan in 2003. The setting was an initial

interrogation of an Afghani suspected of terrorist affiliation. “It was clear that the counterintelligence guy was missing a lot. He didn’t speak any Pashto beyond a few phrases. Here was where the American Empire, such as it existed, was weakest. . . . invaders who could not even speak his tongue (Kaplan 2005, 7).” Mr. Kaplan goes on to say, “Several years into the war on terrorism, one would think that Pashto would be commonly spoken, at least on a basic level, by American troops in these borderlands. It isn’t. Nor are Farsi and Urdu-the languages of Iran and the tribal agencies of Pakistan, where US Special Operations forces are likely to be active, in one way or another, over the coming decade. Like Big Army’s aversion to beards, the lack of linguistic preparedness demonstrates that the Pentagon bureaucracy pays too little attention to the most basic tool of counterinsurgency: adaptation to the cultural terrain” (2005, 7).

Documents from the Korean War, Vietnam War, Operations Desert Shield and Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom all share a common theme on lessons learned when it comes to foreign language skills. They include general statements such as: inadequately prepared for interpreter support, lacked interpreters, needed more trained US linguists, deficient in local language skills, not having the ability to communicate directly with locals and captured enemy Soldiers hampered operations, and the list goes on. The harsh reality is that there were identified lessons, but not learned lessons. In the grand strategy of resources, foreign language training is one of the first programs and budgets to receive cuts during the historical reduction in military forces after every major conflict. The same was true for SOF personnel until the creation of USSOCOM in the 1980s. Now a separate funding and resources path comes directly from

Congress, disallowing SOF from becoming part of the traditional first wave of cuts by DOD after a major conflict.

There are conflicting inferences in some old DOD documents which direct responsibility for managing the foreign language requirements for the US Army as the foreign language proponent to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff (DCS), G-2, Intelligence. As the primary staff officer for intelligence, the Army G-2 probably looks at current and future, anticipated threats. In general, the languages taught by the DLI are presumably a product of intelligence analysis through the GCCs and the service components, even though the Army G-2 does not provide representation during the training requirements process. In order for this thesis to remain an unclassified publication, any specific methods of analysis in use by the US Army DCS G-2 are unexplored due to sensitive information.

The DLI is an integral part of the training requirements process for foreign languages taught at the DLI, but is not the chair of the process, and does not take sole responsibility for the outcome. The process is a yearlong and involves the Headquarters, Department of the Army, DCS G-3, Operations, and G-1, Personnel, as well as the other service's program managers, and the DCS for Operations and Training of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). The DLI's responsible office for the process is their DCS for Operations. New for 2006 is also a document detailing stronghold and investment languages on a strategic level from the DOD's Defense Language Office under the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD (P&R)) according to Dr. Donald Fischer, Chancellor of the DLI Foreign Language

Center (Fischer 2006). This document's classification is for official use only and therefore outside of the scope of this thesis.

The DOD, and subsequently DLI, process for identifying long-range training requirements project two to seven years out. The requirements go through a training requirements arbitration panel (TRAP) which reviews the schedule for languages and language training two years out over five staggered reviews leading up to the execution of the schedule for the fiscal year at the end of those two years. This allows many opportunities to adjust the schedule prior to execution in case of new requirements or priorities through guidance and directives. The entire process starts every August with a MEGA-TRAP, which is the main requirements review meeting conducted in conjunction with the pre structure manning decision review (SMDR). The pre SMDR, 45 days prior to the SMDR and conducted with the TRAP is chaired by the executive agent, DCS G-3 and analyzes and reviews the service requirements. This process usually encompasses a full week of analysis and review. TRAPs occur during each quarter of the fiscal year. A fiscal year begins each October and runs through the next September in alignment with the US government budgetary process.

The SMDR is in October in conjunction with the second TRAP and co-chaired by the DCS G-1 and G-3 with attendance by DLI, TRADOC, and executive agent (G-3). The SMDR synchronizes institutional training and resource requirements. A Council of Colonels arbitrates the requirements review for critical courses left unresolved in November. If the Council of Colonels cannot resolve an issue, it passes to the General Officer Steering Committee in November or December for resolution. Upon resolution of issues and validation of requirements, the Army Program for Individual Training

(ARPRINT) publishes in January. The manpower and funding planning documents, or Management Decision Package, draw from the validated requirements for approval and submission in January or February. From the ARPRINT, the DLI incorporates the requirements for languages, number of students, and classes for the fiscal year into the Army Training Requirements Resource System (ATRRS) in January and February. The ATRRS process formalizes the requirements for language classes into training schedules and student positions for attendance at the DLI for the fiscal year. Another TRAP occurs in February with the schedule published for the next fiscal year in March based on the SMDR and previous TRAPs. The last TRAP occurs in May leading into the process starting all over in August. Obviously, the process for determining training requirements is lengthy and continuous with many checks and balances which denies any one department or service monopolizing the process in their own interest.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the USSOCOM does not follow the same pattern for determining their required foreign languages. The USSOCOM DCS J-2, Intelligence, or Intelligence section, may provide information and input in the process of selecting language requirements, but the responsibility currently lies with USASOC's SWCS. Because the SWCS solicits input from all of the major subordinate commands of operational units throughout USASOC, the ARSOF language requirements arguably derive from operation and threat analysis. This process appears more threat based than capabilities based since current and near-term operations focus on defeating current and near-term threats. The incorporation of language requirements in support of shaping operations to prevent conflict, such as those described in a TSCP, are more capabilities based as those operations do not focus on threats, but prevention of future threats. A

capabilities-based approach suggests a requirements determination process that includes current and near term operations as a criterion, but is not the sole criterion.

One of the required actions for the USD (P&R) and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is to "build a capabilities-based language requirement determination process" (Defense Language Transformation Roadmap 2005, 5). The date for full operating capability for this action is by March 2006 (Defense Language Transformation Roadmap 2005, 5). All of the GCCs and USSOCOM provided input and representation to the *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* via the creation of the Defense Foreign Language Steering Committee (DLFSC). The DLFSC formation, directed by the Deputy Secretary of Defense (DepSecDef), includes a Senior Language Authority (SLA) from each of the Services, the Joint Staff, GCCs, USSOCOM, and Defense Agencies. The other directed appointments of SLAs by the DepSecDef include the USD (P&R), and the Directors of the Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and Threat Reduction Agency at the General or Flag Officer or Senior Executive Service equivalent level (Defense Language Transformation Roadmap 2005, 2). The SLA for USSOCOM is the Director of the Center for Knowledge and Futures.

According to Army Regulation 350-20, which is a joint publication known by different references for the other services, the Secretary of the Army is the Executive Agent (EA) for the entire Defense Foreign Language Program (DFLP) of DOD (AR 350-20 1987, 1). The Secretary of the Army, as the EA for the DFLP, subsequently delegated the overall responsibility to the DCS for Operations and Plans, Director of Training (G-3). This stands to reason why the DCS G-3 of the US Army chairs the SMDR training requirements along with the DCS G-1 for identifying requirements for TRADOC and the

DLI. Similarly, in 2003 the GAO report on Military Training concerning the SOF foreign language program identified that USSOCOM delegated proponency of the SOF language program to USASOC, who subsequently delegated authority to SWCS. Since the beginning of the research for this thesis, the USSOCOM removed those delegations and the proponent for SOF foreign language programs now resides in the Knowledge and Futures Center of USSOCOM.

Similar to the US Army DCS G-3 as the office with overall responsibility for the DFLP, the SWCS solicits operational requirements from applicable units within USASOC and has overall responsibility for the ARSOF foreign language program. According to the current Commanding General of the SWCS, "The institution cannot chase crisis languages" and described the change to the SWCS's language program for fiscal year (FY) 2006 as a reduction of trained languages to ten that have "enduring regional application" (Parker 2006). To that end, the SWCS changed the languages taught over the past ten years primarily derived from operational need and was, in fact, chasing crisis languages in a reactive process. A more detailed example of this phenomenon occurs later in this chapter.

Upon extensive research for models that support selection of foreign languages, an article appeared which offers an interesting approach. The article titled "Top Languages" by George Weber appeared in *Language Today*, a British publication that no longer exists, in December 1997. The article first appeared in 1995 under the name "Geolinguistics" in an unknown publication. Essentially, the article uses a formula based on weighted criteria to rank the top ten most influential languages of the world. The model is easily understood, reminiscent of the US Army's military decision matrix and

difficult to argue the results if the assumptions are agreed upon as valid. Figure 1 shows the basic model with criterion.

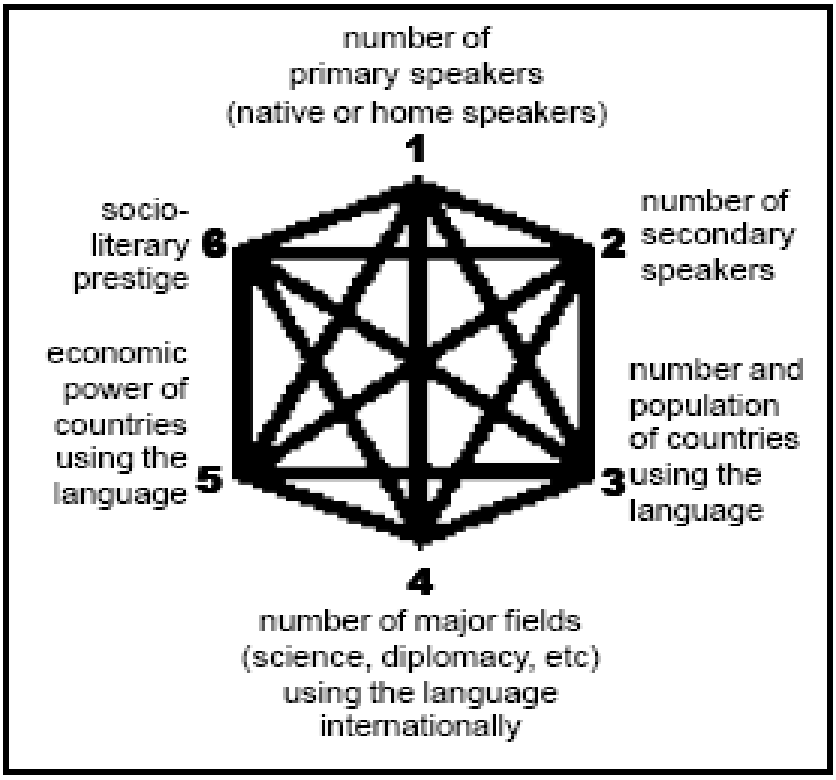

Figure 1. Top 10 Most Influential Languages of the World
Source: George Weber, "Top Languages," *Language Today* (London, England), 1997, 22.

As figure 1 shows, all of the criterion are interrelated and takes into account not only languages by total number of native speakers, but also secondary speakers and number and populations of countries using the language. The number of major scientific and geopolitical fields using the language internationally, economic power, and socio-literary prestige criteria may require inversion for a military model. The reason for this is that, historically, many lesser conflicts for the US military over the past 20 or more years

were in regions of the world that did not have significant scientific and geopolitical power, economic strength or socio-literary prestige. This lack of power in these three factors was the underpinnings that helped create the conditions for conflict and the reason for US military involvement. This was arguably the case in US military operations in Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Colombia, El Salvador, Liberia, and the Philippines.

Figure 2 shows the results of the model using the weighted points of each criterion.

> Each field is weighted in importance reflected in the maximum number of points that could be assigned to individual languages for that field. The six fields chosen are
> 1. Number of primary speakers: max. 4 points
> 2. Number of secondary speakers: max. 6 points
> 3. Number and population of countries using the language: max. 7 points
> 4. Number of major areas of human activity in which the language is important: max. 8 points
> 5. Economic power of countries using the language: max. 8 points
> 6. Socio-literary prestige of the language: max. 4 points (plus an additional point for being an official United Nations language)
>
> Twenty major languages were then assigned a number of points in each field and the points added together and the top ten were ranked accordingly. C'est tout, as the French would say. No advanced math or quantum physics required. Assigning points in this way inevitably involves a certain degree of arbitrariness. (Weber 2006)

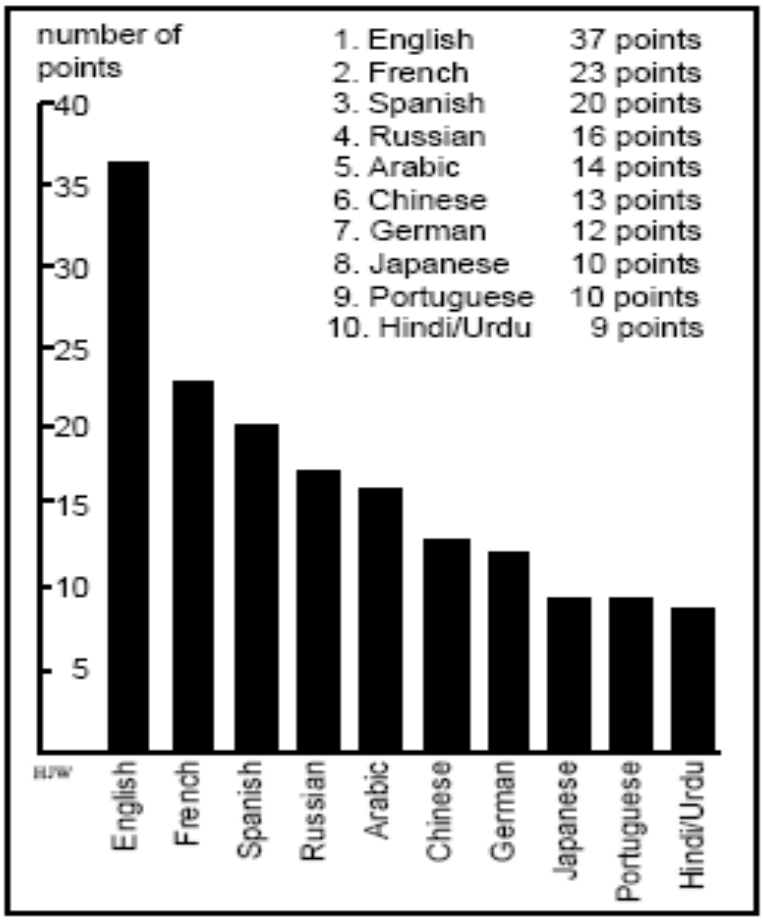

Figure 2. Results of Most Influential Languages Model

Source: George Weber, "Top Languages," Language Today (London, England), 1997, 22.

The English language easily tops the chart in this outcome, receives the maximum number of points in each criterion, and becomes the standard in measuring all others. The exact math or points by criterion for each language are unknown, but relatively easy to speculate where languages received less than the maximum points possible. The model exudes the heaviest weighting of the criteria for the economic power and major fields using the language internationally. Following this closely is the total number of population and countries using the language, then by numbers of secondary speakers.

Notice that the total number of native speakers and socio literary prestige are the lowest weighted criteria on an equal footing. This is interesting in that the total number of native speakers, while still a criterion used, is not of the utmost importance in consideration of all factors, and is indeed one of the two lowest factors. Therefore, the perception derived from this model is that the total number of native speakers of a language is a noteworthy consideration when prioritizing languages for functional means, but is not the only criteria, and not weighted heavily in relation to other factors. The lesson derived for this author from finding and studying this model is that a model based on operational requirements and total number of native speakers alone lacks a holistic approach. This could potentially mitigate some of the unknowns when assessing future, anticipated operations through predictions.

Within the “Top Languages” article, Mr. Weber explains the rationale behind the selection of each criterion and the indicators, or trends, used in justifying the points applied to each criterion by language. Addressed in the article are the statistical shortcomings and inefficiencies with any worldwide accounting endeavor; however, since the margin of error is roughly the same for all languages, the differences in statistical data used are negligible. As an example, the highest estimate for numbers of primary speakers of English is still significantly lower than the lowest estimate of primary speakers of Chinese. Russian, Spanish, and Hindi or Urdu could change places by a couple of positions, but all still remain in the top ten list, whether using the highest or lowest estimates. The secondary speaker’s list details also offer a glimpse of the importance of the top languages, as the top nine are still nine of the top ten primary

speakers' list. French tops this list, followed by English and Russian. Chinese ranks seventh on the secondary speakers list (Weber 1997, 3-4).

Also in the article is a historical perspective on the top ten languages selected. English, Spanish, and German were rising over the past ten years as languages, circa 1987 to 1997. English has been increasing over both the past 100 and 500 years. Spanish was increasing over the last 500 years, but was stable with no gain or lose at the past 100-year mark. German also was rising over the past 500 years, but with a downward trend at the last 100-year mark. Russian was the only language that was decreasing in numbers of speakers during the time frame of 1987 to 1997, presumably in part due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. French, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and Hindi or Urdu showed no signs of increase or decrease during the period of 1987 to 1997, though all had different trends over the past 100 and 500 years. The last graphic depiction and consideration worth mention in the article is how the languages compared with one another in their written form or script. All of the languages on the top ten list also comprise the top ten list of numbers of languages by written form save Chinese and Japanese as Chinese has two languages using its' script and Japanese only one. Latin has 172 languages represented, and tops the list, followed by Cyrillic with 37, Arabic with 22, and Devanagari with 20. No other scripts whether on the top ten list or not, have languages using those scripts in double-digit numbers.

As mentioned previously, the ARSOF foreign language program consists of three categories according to briefings by members of the SWCS to this author. The initial acquisition-training category includes the current ten core languages taught at the SWCS to all ARSOF Soldiers requiring foreign language skills due to their military occupational

specialty (MOS). This training occurs as a part of the initial training program for all SF and active duty CA and PSYOP, and some reserve CA and PSYOP. Most initial language training occurs at the SWCS, however some training occurs at the DLI, or unit level language labs if these locations often a better solution to specific cases.

The second category is contingency languages and training which are those languages either identified and developed as required but not part of the core languages, or not identified as required or developed, but developed and trained out of operational necessity. Contingency language training occurs primarily at the unit level with support from the SWCS. The intent of the contingency language program is to provide training in a language for ARSOF Soldiers requiring language skills different from their initially trained language from the list of ten core languages. This language training is for basic working knowledge of a language required for a specific mission or operation that was unplanned or outside of the scope of the languages for which a Soldier or unit aligns geographically. An example of this is an ARSOF Soldier or unit regionally aligned with Europe preparing for deployment to Iraq. In this case, the knowledge of different European languages does not coincide with the area of deployment, so required training in Arabic or Kurdish as part of a training plan in preparation for deployment falls into the contingency language training category.

The third category is sustainment or proficiency training and normally occurs at the unit level. There are also a number of language training centers in the US and abroad that offer training to increase or maintain proficiency levels. Of course, the SWCS and DLI also offer proficiency training in certain instances, as the resident instructors already possess the required skills to assist in maintaining or increasing proficiency levels beyond

the scope of initial training. Another program of this category is immersion training where an ARSOF Soldier can live and study a language in another country for at least a month. This program allows a Soldier to use a language on a daily basis and increase his knowledge of culture of the host country simultaneously.

The languages taught at the SWCS to train ARSOF Soldiers requiring foreign language skills changed over the past ten years to meet operational requirements and some of these were crisis languages. According to sources at the SWCS, no written, historical records exist for initial training languages by year. However, through discussions of languages trained over the last ten years and the changes to those languages, the most apparent and recent example of a crisis language is probably Serbo-Croatian. Serbo-Croatian appeared as an initial acquisition language at SWCS in the mid-1990s. The reason for the inclusion of this language was due to operations in the Balkans region of Europe. Not until 2005, at least ten years later, was the language cancelled as a part of the core group. Arguably, the need for Serbo-Croatian as a foreign language skill required reduction or cancellation years before. The SF, CA, and PSYOP missions to the Balkans region slowed to a trickle of the total ARSOF force years ago as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization took complete control and the American force presence dwindled. Serbo-Croatian is a prime example of a language linked to current operational needs, almost exclusively, and rose and fell in popularity based on operations. Confined to a small region of Europe, the language only encompasses four or five nation-states.

As part of larger Europe with more than 90 nation states and almost 250 languages, Serbo-Croatian does not have much “enduring regional application.” The concept of teaching a language as a reaction to operations and then canceling that

language when operations virtually stop in the region where it is required is, in this author's opinion, a very shortsighted approach. The result was that in the years following the reduction in Soldiers for operations in the Balkans, no concurrent reduction occurred for training Serbo-Croatian as an initial acquisition language for ARSOF. Therefore, a large group of ARSOF Soldiers received training in a language that had little relevance or application for operations of the day. These same Soldiers received assignments to SF, CA, or PSYOP units that questioned why they received so many new Soldiers into their ranks with Serbo-Croatian as their trained foreign language skill when operations in the Balkans region were miniscule.

Since an ARSOF Soldier now learns only one foreign language to maintain proficiency in for the rest of their career, an average of about 14 to 18 years considering retirement at 20 years, the question of "enduring regional application" arises. This is not arguing that Serbo-Croatian should not be one of the initial acquisition languages available for new ARSOF Soldiers. On the contrary, Serbo-Croatian is a language that has some "enduring regional application," but this author argues that it should be proportionate to the region where the language resides. This proportionality, based on a model determining a prioritized list of languages through analysis of many factors, should reflect the language's standing in relation to geographical location and the world. How often courses occur, and what percentage of ARSOF Soldiers with a European geographic orientation receive this language as a career skill, is the desired outcome for the selection process. Additionally, if the last ARSOF Soldiers receiving Serbo-Croatian as an initial language occurred in 2005, then a career based on even 14 years remaining until retirement eligibility means that those Soldiers maintain proficiency requirements in

Serbo-Croatian until 2019, or 2023 for 18 years of service remaining. The history of the Serbo-Croatian language as an initial acquisition language for ARSOF shows that the cycle of adjusting language training based primarily on operations continues. This ideology appears stuck in an all or none mind-set that presumably derives from the difficulties in contracting and obtaining resources for small programs and classes.

This author believes that a model addressing language requirements that consider many factors and not just current operational needs is more relevant for languages such as Serbo-Croatian. A phased plan would keep these languages in the inventory of ARSOF Soldiers, but at a rate proportionate to the region based on a model with the ability to surge when necessary. This would potentially eliminate the cycle of introducing a language not previously taught, to a full-scale effort to qualify Soldiers on the language due to operational needs, only to terminate the language when the operational need for the language passes. This is exactly what happened over a ten-year period with the Serbo-Croatian language at the SWCS.

Chapter 5 describes in more detail the nature of the proposed model in achieving a "steady-state" program that has the ability to surge when and where needed without severely affecting either operational needs or the language program of USSOCOM. The basic concept is maintaining a pool of ARSOF Soldiers with a working knowledge of multiple languages. This way, additional Soldiers can train quickly to augment a small existing core of Soldiers in ARSOF that already speak the required language. Rather than "flooding the force" with a "language of the moment" and dependency on a cycle of all or nothing initial languages, the statistical odds of already having ARSOF Soldiers with

skills in a language required greatly increase with the increase of initial languages proffered.

Another key problem with starting previously uninstructed languages anew is the impact on the ARSOF Soldiers and their units on missions. The first graduates of any new initial language become the newest members on ARSOF teams upon arrival to a unit and by default usually the most junior members. This means that a language developed and taught in the language program due to an immediate operational need risks being understood by only the most junior and, or least experienced members of a team, at least initially. Whether the ARSOF team is SF, CA, or PSYOP does not matter, as the circumstances are the same. This phenomenon affects the team mission if it is on a mission to an area where the newest team member's language skill happens to be the only one that is relevant or effective. This author discussed this problem with some SF, CA, and PSYOP Soldiers who learned Serbo-Croatian when it first began as an initial language on their way to their first ARSOF unit. Upon their arrival at their unit and subsequent deployment to the Balkans region, they expressed that this had a negative impact as the most inexperienced team members were the only ones with compatible language skills for the region. As the newest team members, the priority was integration with the team and MOS skills, but having the only compatible language skills for the area forced some to become the de facto team interpreter.

The requirements for language skills for the core ARSOF Soldiers of SF, and at least active duty CA and PSYOP derive from a variety of sources, not the least of which is US Army personnel regulations and policies. These documents outline the requisite skills and critical tasks for each MOS in the US Army by rank or grade. The requirements

for commissioned officers of SF, Functional Area 39C (active duty CA) and the Civil Affairs branch, and Functional Area 39B (active duty PSYOP) are in Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*. "The core competencies for all Army Special Operations forces officers are-cross-cultural communications, regional expertise, language ability (1/1/1), interpersonal skills, personal lethality (Warrior Ethos), adaptive thinking and/or leadership and technical proficiency" (DA PAM 600-3 2005, 323). The SF warrant officers and enlisted personnel, and at least active duty CA and PSYOP enlisted personnel, have similar requirements listed in their scopes of work relating to language ability and regional expertise. Reserve Component CA and PSYOP Soldiers of all ranks have different foreign language requirements and proficiency levels, but is not a requirement for all like active CA and PSYOP Soldiers. The regional focus is similar in both active and reserve units of SF, CA, and PSYOP.

The 2003 GAO report on the foreign language-training program of USSOCOM stated that SF Soldiers require a language proficiency rating of 0+/0+/0+ with a desired level of proficiency of 1/1/1. Each number represents speaking, reading, and listening, respectively (GAO 2003, 34). The scale starts at "0" and goes up to "3" for practical purposes with a "3" rating estimating fluency enough to communicate effectively. A "0" rating equals a very limited knowledge of the language only, but high enough to register on the Defense Language Aptitude Test (DLPT) according to ratings established by the ILR. The current system for incentive pays for foreign language proficiency within DOD begins at a 2/2/2 rating and above. Active duty CA and PSYOP Soldiers require a 2/2/2 level of proficiency according to the 2003 GAO report on the SOF foreign language

program, which matches most current active duty CA and PSYOP unit positions. However, DA PAM 600-3 identifies the proficiency level requirements for active duty CA as 1/1/1 (DA PAM 600-3 2005, 323). The SWCS currently requires a 1/1/1 proficiency level for all ARSOF Soldiers attending foreign language training for graduation of a language course. Sources at USSOCOM confirm that the foreign languages and proficiency levels required for each unit requiring that capability undergo a review and validation annually. The final approval authority is the USSOCOM Commanding General and the review assesses current and anticipated operational needs.

This author believes that the reasons for required foreign languages and proficiency levels are different for SF, CA, and PSYOP due to different missions and therefore ascertaining languages and proficiency levels required warrant reviewing each separately. As an example, a CA Soldier requires foreign language skills not only for dealing with an indigenous population and government and multinational forces, but also to work with nongovernmental and international organizations (NGO and IOs). The requirement for SF and PSYOP Soldiers working with NGO and IOs is not as high as CA Soldiers. Likewise, PSYOP Soldiers may need foreign language skills when determining information in print media from various sources in various languages. This requirement is not as high for SF or CA Soldiers. In addition, the specific areas of listening, reading, and speaking may require different levels of proficiency for all three groups as SF Soldiers may need more direct contact proficiency in listening and speaking, but limited reading, whereas a PSYOP Soldier may require the opposite proficiency levels.

The Surface, Ward and Associates (SWA) SOF *Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* conducted in 2004 and 2005 for the USSOCOM

SOFLO office verifies the aforementioned beliefs. The project study focuses on related problems in the SOF foreign language program as part of the recommendations and findings from the GAO report of 2003 on the SOF foreign language program. Part of the project was a study using focus groups for information on the current impressions of SOF members about the SOF language program. For the ARSOF section, focus groups included SF, CA, and PSYOP Soldiers from both the active and reserve components of the US Army (SWA 2004, 66).

The SWA focus group report identifies the reasons that SF, CA, and PSYOP Soldiers believe that they need foreign language proficiency in their jobs, proficiency levels required, and impact to missions if foreign language skills are lacking or insufficient proficiency levels exist. Building rapport generally ranked the highest among all three groups as the reason for needing foreign language skills. Cultural awareness as a key requirement also ranked high between CA and PSYOP Soldiers, but not as high with SF Soldiers. The impact to missions without foreign language proficiency is greater with SF Soldiers, followed by CA, and then PSYOP. Only CA Soldiers, with a handful of PSYOP Soldiers believed that they needed separate training from SF for foreign languages because of higher proficiency needs. SF and PSYOP Soldiers believed that more terminology that is military requires incorporation into foreign language training with CA Soldiers agreeing to a limited degree. All three groups stressed the importance and value in language immersion programs. Time and proficiency testing topped the active duty list for shortcomings in the language program for all three groups. Likewise, all three groups for reserve Soldiers agreed that time and available resources were the primary detractors for foreign language training (SWA 2004).

All focus groups related that at least a 1/1 rating for language proficiency is required for their missions. SF Soldiers believed that their proficiency levels should reflect a 1/1 or 2/2 level with the potential for one or two members on an SF team to maintain a 3/3 level. CA and PSYOP Soldiers mostly agreed that their proficiency levels required are 2/2 or possibly 3/3. Differences existed in the areas of importance for foreign language proficiency as well. SF Soldiers generally believed that Speaking was the most important attribute, followed closely by listening, and then both reading and writing as low priorities. CA Soldiers believed that speaking and listening were the two most important skills, followed by reading, and then writing, however writing was as important as reading at more senior ranks in CA. PSYOP Soldiers believed that speaking and writing were top priorities, followed by reading, and then listening. The last general inference drawn from the SWA study is the perceptions of need for different categories of languages. The study contained a question asking if there was a need for more general languages, like French or Spanish, more national languages, like Ukrainian or Polish, or more local dialect languages. SF Soldiers split opinions on the need for general and local dialect languages, with very few national languages. CA Soldiers believed national languages were most important followed by general and local dialects equally. PSYOP Soldiers had split opinions evenly among all three language categories (SWA 2004).

A recent trend identified by this author on the topic of foreign languages is the introduction of foreign language training at the CGSOC or Intermediate Level Education course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The languages offered are all oriented towards the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and are a little over a month long. The intent is to give the students, all Majors, some basic language skills for areas they will work in

with some cultural training interspersed. The program is currently mandatory for officers who know they will deploy to the areas mentioned within six months; however, others may attend the classes. The program is a satellite project of the DLI. This author believes that a focus on cultures of these areas for understanding the impacts of operational planning is more appropriate than a month of language training for officers at the field grade level, like majors. However, this new emphasis on foreign languages is a start and an undoubted result of the *Defense Foreign Language Transformation Roadmap* of 2005.

The last trend in foreign languages and training is the addition of web-based foreign language programs offered on the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) website. The programs offered include English, two forms of Spanish, and Danish as well as 26 other languages. AKO is available to all Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, and retirees. The programs available are free of charge and are for either beginners or people seeking to increase or maintain their proficiency in a language. There are some curious choices for languages offered, one of which is Danish. Whether Danish is on AKO because it was a bonus language, part of a packaged deal with the software publisher, or made available on purpose is unknown. The coincidence of Danish appearing as an available language on AKO is with the controversy surrounding cartoon depictions of the Prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper in the fall of 2005. The cartoons caused protesting and riots in many Muslim countries as it was very offensive to many in the Islamic faith.

After reviewing some of the history of ARSOF languages, languages of the world, current interest and trends in foreign languages and training, and models for selecting foreign languages, the next step is a general analysis of all of this information. The

analysis in the next chapter covers this information as it relates to the process of foreign language selection for ARSOF as a part of a larger foreign language program and strategy in determining if the current process is relevant and effective. In concluding the research, a majority of the information available only relates to the main thesis question without answering it directly, but is important for understanding why the current process appears as it does. As the next chapter shows, many of the shortcomings in the SOF foreign language program are still reconciling even as this thesis publishes. Major transformation measures continue throughout not only SOF and the US Army, but also DOD and many other government agencies as well in response to the GWOT.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

> We cannot afford to chase crisis languages, but must focus on languages with enduring regional application. (January 2006)
>
> Major General James W. Parker, Interview by Author

In pursuit of answering the question of ARSOF foreign language selection methods, it is important to provide some analysis of the limited information that exists and make some educated assertions and assumptions to fill in the gaps. This chapter provides an analysis of the key findings of the research contained herein. The quote listed at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates the current attempt of the CG of the SWCS to fix a training system that has been deficient for many years. The good news is that a senior officer in ARSOF is doing something to address these training deficiencies in foreign languages. At a minimum, the reforms enacted by MG Parker and the SWCS are at least addressing the issue recognized by multiple sources as stated in previous chapters, even if the transformation is not the total solution. To this extent, the SWCS deserves much credit for turning around a program that was defunct.

Whether the SWCS should endure most of this transformation for SOF foreign languages is debatable. This author argues that the authority to take the lead for transforming the SOF foreign language program in general was too low, and should remain a USSOCOM responsibility rather than the SWCS. The de facto responsibility and oversight for the SOF foreign language program should be at the SOF command headquarters (USSOCOM), and not relegated to one of the major service commands (MACOM), like USASOC, or a major subordinate command of one of the MACOMs,

like the SWCS. Again, the SWCS deserves recognition for taking the lead in an area of a program that was really outside of their purview in the absence of a sound plan or other authoritative directorate at the time. The USSOCOM shifted the proponent authority for the SOF foreign language program back to their headquarters this past year and remedied the authority problem.

The transformation plan by MG Parker and the SWCS for the ARSOF language program began in 2004. Since the "training pipeline" for all CA, SF, and PSYOP Soldiers that require foreign language training is at least nine to ten months long, the results of these changes are just bearing fruit as of the writing of this thesis. Another major improvement is the assignment of SF, CA, and PSYOP Soldiers to geographical areas where the Soldier has previous experience, regional language ability, or ethnic association. This process, largely ignored in the past as the quintessential concept of "needs of the Army" took precedence, was not always commensurate with common sense. As an example, a Soldier that is Korean American and speaks Hangeul fluently would forego language training after initial CA, SF, or PSYOP training and receive assignment to a unit with an Asian region orientation. A few years ago, this same Soldier might learn Russian with assignment to a unit of European regional orientation because that is where the need was at the time. In the past, this seemingly "logical thing to do" was not always the case, and some current ARSOF Soldiers have examples of such "illogical" language and region assignments; this author also has personal knowledge of this fact.

The many reports and surveys conducted throughout the late 1990s and early years of the new century support the fact that the foreign language program for

USSOCOM as a whole needed a major overhaul. This is evident most clearly in the 2003 GAO report on the USSOCOM foreign language program as mandated by the US Congress. This in depth study spelled out the deficiencies, as well as the strengths, of the USSOCOM program, but acknowledged that it did not study the language selection process. As stated early in this thesis, the topic is very narrow and accordingly, there are few written documents for reference material. Most of these limited references are from associated topics that only lightly touch upon the exact subject of language selection. The best references relating to the topic were the DLI selection process, *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap*, SWA study and survey, and the George Weber article, *Top Languages*, which described a model for identifying the ten most influential languages of the world in 1995. The proposed model in chapter 5 uses a combination of all processes and models found during the research.

The exact selection process for foreign languages taught at the SWCS is classified. Therefore, this thesis does not contain a side-by-side comparison of the proposed model or methodology vis-à-vis the current SWCS methodology. A comparison of this nature must be in a classified document, and reserved for another study. What is unclassified in the current model in use is that the focus for language selection is on current operations and anticipated operations over the next ten years. The languages currently taught fulfill an acceptable percentage for those anticipated areas. Again, that percentage, and the study of current and future operations require a study in a classified document. This recommended study is the proposed, next step in additional research after the findings in this thesis.

The current focus on language selection based on anticipated operations through the next ten years is another subject for debate. This author believes that ten years is not sufficient for forecasting requirements for the future. The reason for this is that the intent is that an ARSOF Soldier receives training in only one foreign language during their initial training. That language aligns with the region of the world where the Soldier works. This language does not change for the Soldier throughout his or her career, which allows proficiency retention and even increased proficiency over time (Parker 2006). This trend is different from what became common practice in the past two decades, as some ARSOF Soldiers learned three or more different languages in the course of a twenty-year career. This author has personal knowledge of many cases of this occurrence. Part of this phenomenon was due to ARSOF Soldiers reassignment to units with an orientation towards geographic regions of the world not commensurate with their initial language training or assignment. Another reason was due to a changing world of threats and allies, which changed the foreign language requirements in some geographical regions such as Europe.

MG Parker's intent is to keep ARSOF Soldiers aligned in units where they will remain working in the same geographical region, which benefits both the unit and the Soldier to maximize experience and foreign language skills (Parker 2006). To this end, it is even more important now than ever to "get it right" from the beginning of an ARSOF Soldier's initial training to prevent the same from learning three or more languages in a career. Learning three or more languages over a career arguably results in marginal proficiency in multiple languages and prohibits a Soldier from focusing his or her efforts and proficiency training on a single foreign language. Of course, all of this is irrelevant if

the Soldier does not work in a geographical region where the trained foreign language is prevalent. Proficiency in any learned language is a perishable skill, therefore, the necessity of physical contact with the language and the culture surrounding it is imperative. Additionally, if the intent for an ARSOF Soldier is learning one foreign language well, and retaining proficiency throughout his or her career, the model or process for selecting the languages must predict relevancy farther than 10 years. In fact, if the preceding is true, the process must take into account that a selected language should remain relevant for 18 years. The typical career for an SF or PSYOP Soldier enlisted into the US Army for those branches has approximately 18 years of service remaining after completion of initial training, assuming a full twenty-year career and retirement, and a two-year initial training program.

The DLI model or process for foreign language selection, and teaching methodology is different from that of the SWCS for a few reasons. One of those reasons is the proficiency level requirement of the Soldiers receiving the training. The intent of the SWCS is not to train linguists that are extremely fluent in all aspects of a foreign language, whereas the intent of the DLI is training linguists. The missions of Soldiers trained to be linguists are radically different from the missions of ARSOF Soldiers trained with foreign language skills. For de facto linguists that are graduates of DLI, their entire mission may revolve around using their foreign language skills, almost as an interpreter would. As MG Parker stated, “An important distinction is that we are not training linguists, rather our objective is to provide the SF, CA, and PSYOP Soldiers the capability to communicate in their assigned foreign languages, expressing themselves within the context of the customs, traditions, and mores of a specific culture or mix of

cultures indigenous to their area of responsibility" (McKaughan 2005, 34). Similarly, the US State Department's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) trains linguists and personnel to work in a particular country vice a geographic region. Therefore, the FSI resembles the DLI model more than the SWCS model for foreign language selection and teaching methodology although they offer over 70 languages (Foreign Service Institute 2006).

The vast majority of ARSOF foreign language skill requirements is for SF versus CA or PSYOP by sheer number of units. In addition, the SF centric core competencies encompass the majority of all USSOCOM core competencies or tasks. Therefore, the focus by the SWCS is on "conversational" ability, with the intent to train foreign military or paramilitary organizations in missions such as Foreign Internal Defense. The study conducted in March, 2005 by SWA Consulting, an independent, organizational consulting and contract research firm based in Raleigh, North Carolina, identified the differences in requirements for SF, CA, and PSYOP as perceived by Soldiers from each group in a focus group process. The findings and relative recent timeframe of this research led the author to use this survey in lieu of a survey constructed for only the current SF, CA, and PSYOP officers in the CGSOC of 2005 to 2006. The reasons for utilizing this survey and not conducting the originally intended survey in chapter 1 of this thesis is that the SWA survey was recent enough to still have validity to this research, and entailed a much larger scope and cross section of the different ARSOF units. This survey was also unrestricted by rank whereas the initial, proposed survey was only for commissioned officers. The results of the SWA study are more relevant as the random sampling focus groups are much larger in scope and diversity.

The DLI model for language selection, or indeed the DOD model as they are synonymous, includes the input of the GCC commanders for their regions of responsibility. Each service also provides their language managers for representation at the requirements determination process. This consideration manifests through the operational units within USASOC for ARSOF at the annual review conference held by the SWCS, and the prioritization of areas by the USSOCOM through their annual requirements validation process. Though important in consideration to the process, the research does not reveal a direct link between the requirements for foreign languages as determined by the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) that support each GCC and the SWCS. If the TSOCs' input is included in the ARSOF process, then no gap occurs. If however, the TSOCs' input is not included in the ARSOF process, it seems that an important element is missing. The assumption is that the TSOC may have a different view of anticipated SOF operations in a geographical area than the GCC, which considers all DOD operations (all services, conventional and unconventional). The foreign language requirements list from a TSOC might be different from a GCC's, as it could be the same size, but with different languages, or the list might be longer or shorter.

Another inference drawn from the research is the differences between spoken and written languages. An example is the difference between Hindi in India, and Urdu, in Pakistan. The spoken languages are essentially the same as they are local dialects of the same language; different cultural, religious, and written forms separate them. Both India and Pakistan had heavy British influence in their history that is still apparent today, however English is an official language of Pakistan, but only a small percentage of Pakistanis can speak English, whereas English is only an "associate language" in India,

yet a high percentage of Indians can speak English. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is the two countries' foreign policies over the past century and their respective economic growth. Despite being essentially the same language, Hindi is in the Devanagari script in its written form, and Urdu is in the Arabic script, mainly due to different religions (Ethnologue 2005). The reason that this is significant is because whereas SF and CA Soldiers may not see this difference in written form as a major obstacle to them, it most assuredly is important to a PSYOP Soldier planning to distribute leaflets containing written messages to a local populous. Therefore, the different scripts used in different languages are also a consideration in determining language requirements and may vary widely for different ARSOF units, depending on their mission.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the question of proficiency levels required appears valid in the study. The trend that appears is the unconscious habit of rounding numbers evenly when applied to rating proficiency levels using the DLPT scores. Even the standard for graduating from initial foreign language training at the SWCS in one of the core languages increased from a 0+/0+/0+ to 1/1/1 level of proficiency during the past year. The argument here is that it is possible that SF, CA, and PSYOP Soldiers need an increased proficiency in one area more than the other two areas as the results of the SWA study showed. The reason for this is due to the different missions and reasons for needing foreign language skills. As an example, a PSYOP Soldier probably requires an increased proficiency in the written portion of a language, more than listening, to develop and disseminate PSYOP products for either oral transmission or written products. Conversely, an SF or CA Soldier probably requires greater proficiency in speaking and listening than with writing skills. They may have contact that is more direct with a local populous and

use less written products. In this case, a PSYOP Soldier may require a proficiency level in a given language of 1/2/1, and an SF or CA Soldier a level of 2/1/2.

In the past, a CA officer was required to maintain a proficiency level of 2/2/2 and an SF officer at 1/1/1, however, according to DA PAM 600-3, all ARSOF officers require a 1/1/1 proficiency level (DA PAM 600-3 2005, 323). Identifying and agreeing upon the exact proficiency levels required for each branch by proficiency skill is a key aspect for future analysis and requirements determination. Breaking the paradigm of nice, round, whole numbers that match across all measures of proficiency is another recommendation for a separate study to determine the exact proficiency levels required. If this results in the need for changing the way that proficiency pay levels are determined, then so be it. The proficiency level required should link directly to the skills necessary for mission accomplishment, and not to set special duty pay and allowance tables. A recent study of all CA tasks and foreign language proficiency levels required for each task identified that the majority of tasks require a 2, 2+, or 3 level of proficiency in listening, reading, and speaking (Lett 2001, 3).

The idea of defining languages spoken by region is not new. Language statistic formulation derives from many data collection methods. Most collators of these types of statistics readily admit that there is a large margin for error. Factors like politics, access to areas and countries, and poorly defined questions are often contributors to skewed data. However, several organizations, like Ethnologue, believe that margin of error is consistent enough for each language that it mitigates inaccurate findings at the same rate for all languages. Therefore, if the margin of error is roughly the same for all language

data concerning numbers of native speakers, then the data is still reliable. Mr. George Weber echoed these sentiments in his article “Top Languages.”

Another consideration when using numbers of speakers as a criterion for a model is secondary speakers of a language, or people that speak a second, or even third, language. These statistics also are relevant when considering total speakers in any language. A good example of this is in Eastern Europe where Russian is still prevalent in many countries that were former satellites of the Soviet Union. In the Republic of Armenia, almost all native inhabitants speak Armenian; however, the majority, due to the influence of the former Soviet Union, also speaks Russian. In addition, a new trend bears consideration and further demographic study. Younger Armenians are learning English as a second language in school, in a shift away from Russian. English appears a choice above Russian in many instances for business on a global scale, whereas Russian is more prevalent only in the immediate larger region around Russia.

This phenomenon is not isolated in the Republic of Armenia. This trend extends to parts of the Ukraine, Poland, and other former Soviet Union countries as well. The past, valid assumption that understanding Russian is good enough to communicate in countries like Armenia, Ukraine, and Poland without a knowledge of the country’s native language is slowly losing validity. The assumption works today largely, but might not 30 years from now, or even 18 years. This changes the approach to communicating in these countries, or with allied military forces operating jointly with US forces in another country. A one language common to all type of attitude towards Eastern Europe, that is, Russian, no longer suffices. English aside, this means that someone must know each country’s native language to communicate in his or her own native tongue. The argument

frequently appears that if most of them speak English, then there is not a need to understand their native language. This sort of argument could exist anywhere, but would then lead to the question, why does anyone need to understand any language other than English at all? The answer is that the US, and many other countries throughout history, pursued a similar policy that, essentially, equates to isolationism, much to their chagrin. History has shown that countries that pursue this type of pure hegemonic state stay behind as the world moves forward around them.

Perhaps the best way to begin understanding a people's culture starts with their language, as many cultural nuances exist there. The ideal in establishing rapport is often through speaking to someone in his or her native language. Ignoring this can send unwanted subtle messages, not the least of which is that a Soldier does not care enough about a people and their culture to bother themselves with learning their language. This is not true of all cultures though, as some Asian cultures pride themselves in a language that is so difficult to master that only native speakers are adept enough to learn it (Weber 1997, 7).

This analysis reinforces the findings of the GAO report of 2003 in that a strategy for the SOF foreign language program is an identified deficiency. The foreign language selection process for ARSOF, indeed all SOF, is only one component of that larger strategy. In the absence of a formal, written strategy for the SOF language program it is easy to understand the confusion and localization of subordinate language programs. This is not to say that there are not valiant efforts at individual units within USSOCOM by dedicated leaders; there are. Nevertheless, those efforts lack synchronization under an

overarching strategy with command endorsement and emphasis at the very senior levels throughout USSOCOM.

The fact is that a process does exist for selecting foreign languages in ARSOF and it is somewhat relevant for selecting languages for each geographical region. At least one language exists in the SWCS list of ten core languages for each geographical region of the world. However, the level at which this process occurs is not the most relevant for developing a system of checks and balances and oversight. No "honest broker" exists in the process as the institution that teaches and resources the foreign language school also leads the selection process. As with the DLI, the teaching institution should receive their guidance, direction, and tasks from the next higher-level headquarters while participating in the selection process, but not leading it. In the case of the SWCS, this would be the USASOC; however, USASOC delegated authority for these decisions down one level to the SWCS making it the all-encompassing command level for all ARSOF language decisions. These decisions carry heavy influence for some of the other services' SOF components as stated earlier in this thesis. This is an example of the lack of command emphasis as identified by many SOF members in the SWA survey of 2004.

The study conducted by SWA for USSOCOM also identified the different language skill requirements and proficiency levels in the various areas of listening, reading, speaking, and writing for SF, CA, and PSYOP. In spite of this, the ARSOF foreign language program still has a one-size-fits-all approach for the three branches. This approach disregards the separate requirements and reasons for requiring language skills, proficiency levels by skill area, and even the selection of foreign languages for all three. Part of this solution is transforming the teaching methodology and focus areas for

foreign language skills by tailoring courses for the specific needs of the three branches. The other unaddressed part is a new survey asking which foreign languages were required in recent operations instead of what Soldiers thought of the quality of their initial foreign language training.

The SWA survey of 2004 also only lightly touched on the subject of receiving training in a language that is not relevant or effective for the current operations. A simple question of language relevancy and effectiveness for a Soldier's last operation would solidify the assessment of the current ten language courses conducted at SWCS. In addition, a question asking if a different language would have increased unit effectiveness would also serve as a metric of the ten base language's relevance. The true measure of effectiveness is difficult as the ARSOF language program is in the second year of a new plan. The graduates of SF, CA, and PSYOP qualification and language courses should receive a survey about six months after arrival at their first ARSOF unit to assess the effectiveness and relevance of their languages. This is assuming that by then most of these Soldiers participated in at least one operational mission, allowing them sufficient experience for drawing conclusions.

The real discrepancy appears between the foreign language requirements and foreign language selection processes. Equally important is the determination process identifying which languages are initial acquisition languages, and which belong in the contingency category. There is a need for a system of checks and balances as part of a process for tracking the utilization and frequency of contingency languages. A contingency language with a recurring requirement demands consideration for inclusion as an initial acquisition language. Conversely, a language that is in the initial acquisition

language category, but rarely used requires consideration for downgrading into the contingency language category.

These conclusions lead to a need for a foreign language selection process that occurs at various levels and follows the requirements determination process. Once there is a consolidated list of requirements, the prioritization of those languages and placement into the category of either initial acquisition or contingency occurs. The proposed model in the next chapter serves as an alternative for the requirements determination process. The categorical placement and final prioritization of those languages identified is ultimately a command decision. The criteria developed for the proposed model, however, may also apply in analyzing and making recommendations for the categorical placement of languages as either initial acquisition or contingency.

The foreign language selection process will likely remain subjective to a degree, no matter what the process. However, applying a model that considers all-important factors can reduce individual stigmatisms if the factors receive mutual agreement before analysis begins. This is to say that if the facts, assumptions, and critical factors used for weighted criteria receive concurrence from a review board, then the results mitigate individual disputes. Even if this process limits disputes over identifying requirements, disagreements are likely to remain over where to draw the line between initial acquisition and contingency languages. The frequency and size of language classes, as well as the percentage of Soldiers learning each language in relation to the total number of ARSOF languages will likely also remain an area of confrontation. A goal of this thesis is reducing these potential areas of disagreement and subjectivity by replacing them with a

model or process that derives from solid facts and agreed upon assumptions, continuously reviewed for relevancy, to mitigate the effects of subjectivity.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> Discretion of speech is more than eloquence; and to speak agreeably to him with whom we deal is more than to speak in good words or in good order. (1561-1626)
>
> Francis Bacon

There are many conclusions drawn from the research of this thesis in answering the question of the effectiveness and relevancy of the process or model used in the selection of foreign languages trained at the SWCS for ARSOF. Although the current ARSOF foreign language selection process is relevant for each geographical region, the effectiveness of the core languages trained today remains unanswered, but indicators show that it could be more effective than it is. The bottom line is that the answer is still subjective as the process at the SWCS underwent a new strategic approach based on a two-year, phased plan beginning in late 2004 that is still in the final stages of implementation. Therefore, there is an additional review required sometime after the beginning of 2007 to gauge the effectiveness of the strategy, which also relates to the topic of this thesis. Answering the effectiveness and relevance questions completely for the language selection process requires more time because measuring it involves more study. This is feasible, but only after the current strategy is fully implemented and analyzed again. This chapter describes the conclusions from the research, recommendations for improving some components of the ARSOF language program including an alternative model for determining foreign language requirements, and areas that require further research in either unclassified or classified settings.

This author believes that a foreign language requirements determination process that is utilized by the three separate branches within ARSOF (SF, CA, and PSYOP), and by geographic region of each branch, will result in different language requirements by all three. This difference in languages and proficiency levels required does not appear in the current process. The current process coalesces all three branches under a generic ARSOF umbrella for determining requirements. The idea that the missions and, therefore, foreign language requirements are similar enough for all three branches that there is no need to analyze each separately is a faulty assumption in this author's opinion.

Since ARSOF units comprise approximately 89 percent of the USSOCOM forces requiring foreign language skills, it is reasonable to subdivide the three major branches within ARSOF. The other units within ARSOF that do not currently require foreign language skills are usually supporting elements to the three branches in some fashion. ARSOF units can accomplish all of the USSOCOM core tasks by themselves with no external support. Conversely, no other SOF service element can accomplish this. For instance, NAVSOF and AFSOF cannot accomplish the USSOCOM core tasks of CA or PSYOP operations without augmentation of ARSOF Soldiers. This point is not to downplay the roles of NAVSOF or AFSOF, but to highlight the immensity of the size, influence, and capabilities that ARSOF has in USSOCOM. It also aids in understanding why the SWCS, under USASOC, was the proponent for the whole SOF language program until recently.

The report in 2003 conducted by GAO on the SOF language program set the stage for transformation. The study conducted by SWA through SOFLO in 2004 and 2005 began the process of detailed analysis for the required changes to the SOF language

program and data for building the SOF foreign language strategy. It is apparent that the SOF language program still needs a written strategy providing subordinate elements of USSOCOM clear direction, guidance, goals, and objectives. As of the date of this thesis, that strategy is not published. The need for this strategy is clear on many points, not the least of which is how many years out the requirements determination process should focus. The DLI process plans for five years out, as does one of the requirements validation processes of USSOCOM. The SWCS plans for ten years into the future, but trains Soldiers with one language intended to remain unchanged for the duration of a career, which can be anywhere from 14 to 18 years at a minimum, as covered earlier in this thesis. There also remains the question of why the SWCS teaches only ten core languages when the USSOCOM has validated requirements for over 40 languages.

On a larger scale, the *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* provides a detailed plan for foreign language capability for all DOD components by assigning responsible offices and dates for completion. The USSOCOM contributed to the studies and analysis leading up to the publication of this document. As the document states, one required action is to "build a capabilities-based language requirement determination process" (Defense Language Transformation Roadmap 2005, 5). The intent is for a comprehensive and systematic process based on national security strategy documents that include operational and contingency planning (Defense Language Transformation Roadmap 2005, 5). Therefore, languages required to support current and contingency operations should remain as a criterion of any model used to determine requirements. However, this criterion is not the only consideration when determining language requirements, as many other factors are at least equally important to a holistic approach.

The model developed by George Weber exemplified the fact that ranking foreign languages for a specific purpose requires consideration of all applicable factors. Just as using only the total numbers of native speakers of a language is illogical in determining the most influential languages of the world, using only operational and contingency planning requirements as the sole criterion for determining the languages most required for ARSOF Soldiers is illogical.

The *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* also identifies the need for foreign language skills to work in concert with coalition partners. The document lists four assumptions used in development of the new strategy, and three of the four mention coalition partners (Defense Language Transformation Roadmap 2005, 3). This implies that foreign language skills are a prerequisite for not only building rapport and positive relations with indigenous people in an area of conflict, but also with coalition partners. An example of this from this author's personal experience is a South Korean unit working in Iraq during a rotation in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit contained some Soldiers that spoke English well, but the preponderance spoke only Korean. Elements of an American unit accompanied the Korean unit to serve as translators from Korean to English so that interpreters hired from the local area could translate English into the local dialect. This process increased the cooperation of the American and South Korean forces and enabled the Korean unit's effective operations. In this case, the language requirements did not derive from a current or perceived threat, but out of necessity for enabling the operations of all coalition partners. This is but one example of many such operations where foreign language requirements resulted from a need for clear communication within a coalition. Therefore, a conclusion is that current and potential

coalition partners' languages require significant consideration as a criterion in any selection process.

Another conclusion of the research resulted from the difficulty in identifying where foreign language offices are at different command levels in USSOCOM, and the command and control relationships of these offices with adjacent and higher headquarters. As an example, the de facto SOFLO office has undergone many moves falling under different organizations and changes in location since its inception. The structure and locations of language offices require review and concurrence at the highest levels in USSOCOM to alleviate radical changes every few years due to command personalities and preference.

The last conclusion of research is that the current interest and therefore funding for foreign language programs is significant, however it is not clear that USSOCOM and the SOF language program are benefiting from this increased funding. The USSOCOM, however, should receive increased funding for foreign language training especially in light of the significant increase scheduled for SOF outlined in the 2006 QDR. This current interest in foreign languages means that the requirements determination process should proceed without regard to funding or resource restrictions if those were ever issues in the past.

The shortage of foreign language capability is not peculiar only to ARSOF, SOF, or DOD. Many US government agencies with requirements for foreign language skills face similar shortages in qualified people with the correct number, type, and levels of proficiency. This fact emerged from an earlier GAO study in 2002 that stated, "Although more than 70 federal agencies have foreign language needs, some of the largest programs

are concentrated in the Army, the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation" (GAO Report 02-375 2002, 4). Whereas this report concentrates on reviewing only four federal agencies, the trend that appears across all agencies is that significant shortages exist in foreign language requirements, not just in the four selected for detailed review. This report identifies a lack of a strategic approach as the primary obstacle facing each federal agency in correcting their collective deficiencies in foreign languages and proficiency levels.

The US military has increased cooperation from fighting as combined arms units to joint service task forces at increasingly lower command levels. There is also significant improvement of the working relationship with other federal agencies in an interagency effort towards winning the GWOT; therefore, it seems logical to synchronize efforts for a capabilities based foreign language pool at the interagency level as well. One of the first steps in a systemic, strategic approach in building a federal or national capabilities based pool of people with the required foreign language skills is to narrow the list of the approximate 7,000 languages throughout the world to a manageable list for analytical review. This author contends that a good starting point is the roughly 200 languages in the world that contain two million or more speakers (Ethnologue 2005). The assumption is that over the past two decades the languages required for conflict areas where DOD, DOS and many other federal agencies worked all had at least two million speakers. This requires independent study to validate or invalidate the assumption. However, if the assumption turns out correct and used as a fact, then at least one federal agency, DOD, can safely assume that their starting point for analyzing and reviewing the applicability of each language is a list of about 200 languages. Surely, 70 federal agencies with thousands

of foreign language positions can provide fidelity and capability for proficient speakers and linguists for 200 languages.

The first recommendation from the research is that a study similar to the 2003 GAO report or the 2005 SWA study occurs with the specific goal of determining if the foreign language selection process is fulfilling the end state requirements of ARSOF units. This study should focus on languages needed for current and anticipated operations, as well as the geographical regions as a whole, with consideration for the great unknown of the time and place of future conflict and enemies, and alliances in those conflicts. The focus group should remain essentially the same as the SWA report of 2005, using a random sampling of Soldiers in all SF, CA, and PSYOP units receiving initial language training through the SWCS. This allows for the most current and accurate information to satisfy the questions of relevancy and effectiveness. This thesis serves as the base for this broader study. The relevancy and effectiveness of the three-tiered strategy of the SWCS towards the ARSOF language program also needs evaluated at this time. Is the strategy of breaking up the program into initial or core language training, sustainment training, and contingency training working? Are there contingency languages taught at the unit level with support by the SWCS on a basis that is consistent enough to merit consideration as an initial acquisition language through the SWCS?

Although the additional study discussed above will bring about a clearer answer to the research topic, this precursory thesis suggests that there is already enough evidence to make some other recommendations. The answer to the next evaluation of the ARSOF program will likely be that the ten core languages do not satisfy all ARSOF unit requirements. The assumption of this author is that the expansion of these units requiring

foreign language skills will further exaggerate this point. This author's assumption is that the inclusion of the United States Marine Corps element, known as Marine Special Operations Command or Marine Special Operations Forces, and the expansion of the active duty CA and SF forces will not only increase the need for additional instructors and training resources, but also potentially increase the numbers of languages taught throughout USSOCOM.

As the 2005 SWA study suggests, and discussed earlier in this paper, this author recommends a separate requirements determination process for foreign language selection for SF, CA, and PSYOP. This need exists due to not only different mission activities and proficiency level requirements for each branch, but also the potential for different languages themselves. If SF and PSYOP have not undergone an assessment linking mission tasks to the required language proficiency level, with each task analyzed by the proficiency areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing, similar to the "CA Language Needs Assessment" in 2001, then a recommendation is that this happens. This recommendation may require an assessment in a classified document to report the findings, similar to the study of where the intelligence sections within ARSOF and SOF provide input to the requirements determination process for USSOCOM, and throughout the DLI process throughout DOD.

The recommendations specific to the SWCS include compiling the history of foreign languages taught annually at the SWCS since its inception to draw conclusions and trends from and ensure that transformation includes these historical figures for reference. Another recommendation mentioned in the conclusions above is a new look at where the proponent for the ARSOF language program resides most effectively. A

neutral outsider viewpoint is that the Army Special Operations foreign language program should reside within the Army Special Operations Command as the senior command level organization for ARSOF.

Another conclusion is that the recent transformation of core language training at SWCS for ARSOF expanded the language program in the area of proficiency levels in initial acquisition training, but it has not expanded the number of languages taught. The recommendation is that the core languages expand to provide a broader coverage for any geographical region. One reason, for example, for possibly increasing the number of core languages, or moving languages currently in the contingency category to the initial acquisition category is a traditional TSCP mission. From this author's experience during a Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) mission, designed to start or sustain a country's de-mining program as one of the programs available under a regional TSCP, a combined HMA team consists of SF, CA, and PSYOP for ARSOF which all possess foreign language skills.

At the rudimentary level, an SF team consists of 12 Soldiers, which may have up to six different languages coded for positions on the team, or one different language for every two Soldiers. A CA team of four Soldiers each has different languages assigned to the team positions, with the same structure for three Soldiers from a PSYOP team. Therefore, the maximum total of potential different languages covered by this combined team could be thirteen with six from SF, four from CA, and three from PSYOP. Even though the possibility that members of the other two teams duplicate no one language is small, it is still theoretically possible. If all three teams are geographically oriented to the same region and have language skills in thirteen different languages, then the possibility

that at least one or two members of the combined HMA team having the correct language for the area of operations increases over only two or three languages for an entire region.

Using the example of narrowing the list of foreign languages for analysis to 200 from 7,000 as an initial cut, even five languages for each geographical region adds up to only 23 to 25 languages, or less than 15 percent of all languages with two million or more speakers. The USEUCOM received an allocation for ten languages by itself in this example as the command consists of the two major continents of Europe and Africa and over half of the total number of countries in the world. If the USPACOM received five languages, and the USCENTCOM, and USSOUTHCOM received only three due to the overwhelming use of Spanish, the total languages used as a core add up to 23, or 25 if USSOUTHCOM receives an allocation of five languages also. Another possibility for increasing coverage is requiring all ARSOF Soldiers to learn one of the contingency languages as a third language at the unit level, but only for familiarization and to have a base to build upon if required. If the third language is similar to their initial acquisition language in spoken inflections and written script, or part of the same language family, obtaining a minimal or 0/0 level of proficiency just to have some measurable proficiency would not be difficult. The focus is still on the initial language for maintaining proficiency in this concept, however the pool of languages covered in pursuit of a capabilities-based approach literally doubles.

The last and most significant recommendation is adaptation of a new model for the process of foreign language selection. The intent for application of this model is increasing the effectiveness of the current process by adding other factors identified in this thesis as important to the identification of requirements. The model builds upon the

concept formulated from the only model found in the research designed to rank languages for a specified, functional reason by assigning points determined by weighted criteria. The model, and both the numbers of criteria used, as well as what criteria are used, are flexible for adaptation to fit the needs of the user. The recommended model with weights of importance, three being the highest importance and one the lowest, is in figure 3.

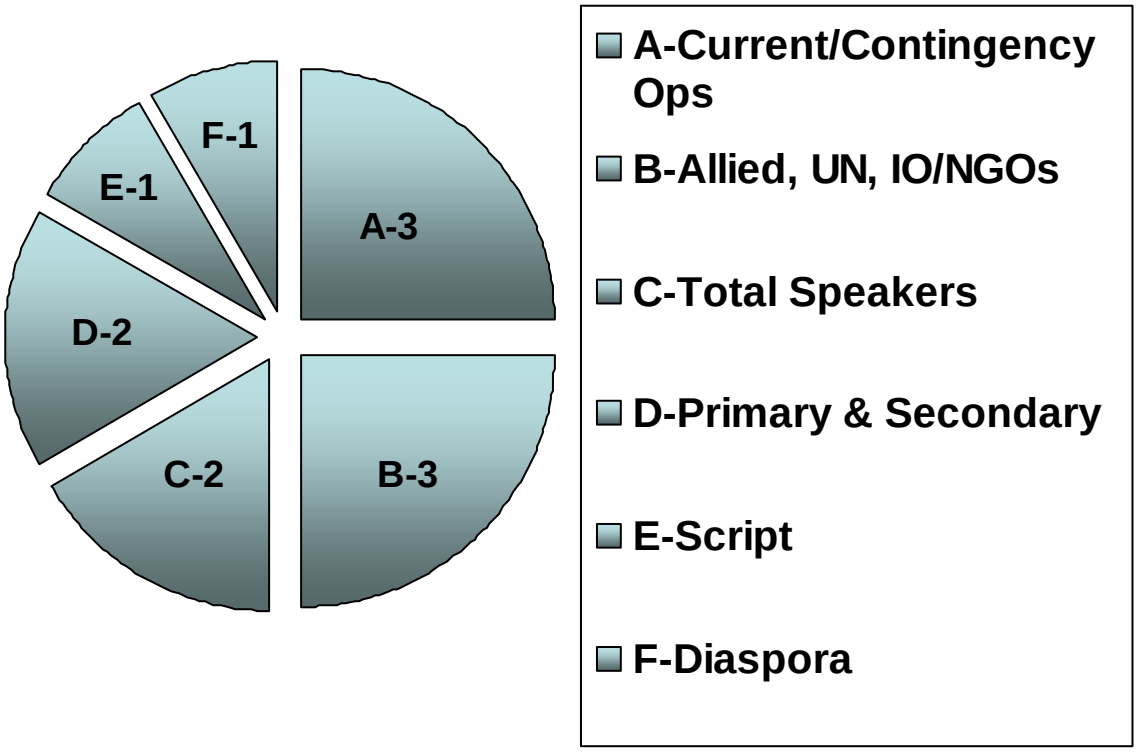

Figure 3. Weighted Criteria for Proposed Model

The first criterion is current or projected contingency operations. The model design is for analyzing each language of a region to determine its ranking within the region and then in the world compared to languages of other geographic regions for

ARSOF requirements. The weight multiplier assigned to this criterion is three and is equal to the second criterion as one of the two most important factors. A language needed for current operations and on the current operations list receives three points. A language not on the current operations list, but needed for other programs like TSCP receives two points. A language needed due to requirements identified for potential or projected operations or TSCP missions receives one point. Therefore, the highest possible score for this criterion is nine points and the lowest possible score is three points, unless no criteria are met, resulting in no points.

The second criterion is allies and IO or NGOs. This criterion is of equal weight compared to criterion one and is the other most important factor. The weight assigned is a multiplier of three. As the cooperation with coalition partners of the US grows in importance, this criterion becomes at least as important as the first. A language used by a country participating in current coalition military operations with US forces, is an official language of the UN, or top 20 largest IO or NGOs worldwide receives three points. A language used by a country allied with the US militarily through formal agreements, NATO, or other organizations, but not currently working in a US military coalition operation, or one of the top 50 largest IO or NGOs receives two points. A language used by a country allied with the US militarily through informal agreements, but not currently, working in a US military coalition operation or one of the top 100 largest IO or NGOs receives one point. Therefore, the highest possible score for this criterion is nine points and the lowest possible score is three points, unless no criteria are met, resulting in no points.

The third criterion is the total number of native speakers in the world. The weight assigned is a multiplier of two as one of the two second most important criterion. This criterion only counts the total number of native or primary speakers in the world, and not the secondary speakers. A language that ranks in the top ten for the world receives three points. A language that ranks in the top 50 languages of the world receives two points. A language that ranks in the top 100 languages of the world receives one point. Therefore, the highest possible score for this criterion is 6 points and the lowest possible score is two points, unless no criteria are met, resulting in no points.

The fourth criterion is languages spoken or used in more than one country in the region or the world, or a country that has a significant population of secondary speakers of the language in the region or the world. The weight assigned is a multiplier of two as one of the two second most important criterion. A language used as a primary or secondary language in ten or more countries in the region or the world receives three points. A language used as a primary or secondary language in five or more countries in the region or the world receives two points. A language used as a primary or secondary language in three or more countries in the region or the world receives one point. Therefore, the highest possible score for this criterion is six points and the lowest possible score is two points, unless no criteria are met, resulting in no points.

The fifth criterion is languages using a written script other than Latin or unique to the region or the world. The weight assigned is a multiplier of one as one of the two least important criterions. Languages using a written script other than Latin and unique to both the region and the world receive three points. Languages using a written script other than Latin and unique to the region, but not the world receive two points. Languages using a

written script other than Latin, but not unique to the region or the world receive one point. Therefore, the highest possible score for this criterion is three points and the lowest possible score is one point, unless no criteria are met, resulting in no points.

The sixth and final criterion is languages with small American diasporas of heritage or first generation speakers. The weight assigned is a multiplier of one as one of the two least important criterions. Languages with an American diaspora of less than 100,000 speakers receive three points. Languages with an American diaspora of less than 200,000 speakers receive two points. Languages with an American diaspora of less than 500,000 speakers receive one point. Therefore, the highest possible score for this criterion is three points and the lowest possible score is one point, unless no criteria are met, resulting in no points.

An example of how differently this model ranks some languages in Europe appears on the next page in table 2. The numbers used for the first criterion are hypothetical in this example as the true points awarded come from classified documents concerning operations. The criteria cover the factors of operational necessity, allied forces and IO or NGOs and total numbers of primary and secondary speakers in the world. Lesser factors also considered are written scripts other than Latin, as learning a new alphabet when learning a new language increases the amount of training time and difficulty for proficiency acquisition as well as languages with scripts unique in the world, and the potential pool of interpreters living in the US for possible employment in a crisis.

Table 2. Example of European Languages in Model					
	Turkish	German	French	Russian	Armenian
Current/Contingency Ops	6	3	9	9	6
Allied, UN, IO/NGO	9	6	9	9	3
Total speakers	4	6	6	6	0
Primary & Secondary Speakers	4	6	6	6	4
Script	0	0	0	2	3
Diaspora	3	0	0	1	0
Totals	26	21	30	33	16

In summary, foreign languages and foreign language training are right in the middle of transformation and national attention. With this attention comes funding and assistance to help fix problems identified. Those that have a strategy for employment and a systemic method or model for determining requirements and proficiency levels are able to justify increased funding levels for assistance in maturing a program. The strategy developed that links to national goals and objectives and understands the implications of foreign language proficiency requirements in relation to other federal agencies becomes the strategy for all to emulate as part of a national level plan. Although the current ARSOF foreign language selection process is relevant for each geographical region, the effectiveness of the core languages trained today remains unanswered, but indicators show that it could be more effective than it is.

As one of the SOF truths of USSOCOM is that one cannot mass-produce SOF after an emergency occurs, one cannot mass-produce Soldiers with foreign language

skills after an emergency occurs. A capabilities based pool of “linguists” will take years to build, but the time to start is now. One initial, small, but essential step in this plan is the process of determining requirements and selecting languages to fulfill those requirements through careful analysis and consideration of all factors when determining requirements and predicting requirements for the future. The ability to methodically analyze requirements and select languages is important to any successful language program. As Colonel Kraus said in 1958 when writing about adeptness in speaking foreign languages and the need for increasing the Army’s foreign language capability, “Actually ‘tomorrow’ is a misleading word. The need is critical today” (Kraus 1958, 55).

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