OSD Perspectives on Language, Regional, and Cultural Skills for Security Force Assistance in AFRICOM

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Summary

- Importance of Language and Culture Training for AFRICOM

- Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) Challenges - AFRICOM

- Implications for Security Force Assistance

- Engagement in AFRICOM

- Regional Challenges
Institutionalizing LREC Education Programs in DOD

- Foreign language training, in addition to English language training
- DoD recognizes English language training is a critical tool for building security partnerships that promote U.S. strategic interests and for increasing interoperability and allied and partner capacity

OSD Policy Role in Developing the Strategic Language List

- Capabilities Based Review → Strategic Language List
Guidance for conducting the initial CBR included in the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap & the Defense Language Program

- Recommended tying CBR to two year strategic guidance cycle

- Identified future language and regional proficiency capabilities based on national security documents and ten year horizon

- Produced a Strategic Language List
Capabilities Based Review (CBR) 2010

❑ Current Status
  - Steering Group kicked off the CBR in early June
  - Updates will be based on the latest guidance and policy
  - Final report will be issued in September

❑ Deliverables
  - Recommended Strategic Language List
  - List of languages for which the DoD will provide Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) and Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP)
  - Methodology for determining which languages are dominant in the force
    - Areas where DoD has sufficient strategic capability
Intended to guide investment planning and programming for the Defense Language Program

Defining Strategic Languages

• Languages for which DoD has current or projected requirements and for which training and testing will be provided, incentives applied, and other resources allocated

• The SLL will not preclude the DoD Components from maintaining capability and authorizing special pay for languages for which they may have requirements
  - Defined by DoD Directive 5160.41E

SLL Categories

• **Immediate Investment Languages:** Those languages for which DoD requires a substantial capability in-house

• **Stronghold Languages:** Those languages for which DoD requires an on-call capability for surge response to meet crisis or contingency needs
Strategic Language List (SLL)

- The SLL has a 10-year time horizon and includes:
  - Strategic Language Capability Needs (≈10 years)
  - Current Language Requirements (≈2 years)

- The SLL is not intended to address Critical Demand / Low Density needs (e.g., languages for which only 1-2 speakers are required)

- The SLL will not, under normal circumstances, vary significantly from year to year
  - e.g., no “strategic shocks”
Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) Challenges - AFRICOM

- **Colonial Languages**
  - Examples
    - English
    - French
    - German
    - Spanish
    - Portuguese
    - Italian

- **African Languages**
  - Examples
    - Hausa
    - Igbo
    - Somali
    - Swahili
    - Yoruba
    - Tuareg
Role of Arabic in Africa

Implications for Security Force Assistance

- Focusing foreign language training on colonial languages is efficient for certain missions.

- Training in non-colonial languages is required to carry out Security Force Assistance in remote locations.
  - Availability and method of testing in many of these languages is limited.

- No singular solution.
  - Requirements demand a mix of foreign language training in colonial and non-colonial languages.
  - Improvements in testing procedures will enhance opportunities for advancement and growth for both SOF and GPF.
Engagement In AFRICOM

- **Security Force Assistance**
  - **Flintlock**
    - SOF exercise focused on military interoperability and capacity-building
    - Part of a U.S. AFRICOM-sponsored annual exercise program with partner nations in northern and western Africa
    - Designed to build relationships and develop capacity among security forces throughout the Trans-Saharan region of Africa
  - **Joint Combined Exchange Training**
    - Provides SOF with language and cultural skills needed to be effective in the region
    - Provides partners with key tactical and operational skills needed to improve interoperability
Policy Priorities

• Security Sector Reform

• Countering transnational security challenges

• Increase African ability to carry out peacekeeping

• Build a network of African civil, military, and opinion leaders

• Expand focus on whole-of-government approaches
Regional Challenges

- Horn of Africa
- Somalia
- AMISOM
- Gulf of Guinea
- Trans-Saharan
Questions