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**Statement**

**of**

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**Before the**

**Senate Armed Services Committee  
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**Language Technology and Regional Expertise**

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## INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and members of this distinguished committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this very important topic.

Today, the Department of Defense (DoD) is engaged in two very important efforts. We are transforming how the Department values, employs, and deploys foreign language capability and regional expertise. During the planning phase, we identified the need for a deeper national language talent pool from which we can recruit and exploit during times of surge. In an effort to respond to the growing need for language and regional expertise, we are supporting the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), launched by President Bush in January 2006.

Foreign language and regional expertise, which includes cultural awareness, are emerging as key competencies for our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Total Force. The active, guard, reserve and civilian personnel, along with our supporting contract personnel, understand that these essential skills are needed for mission accomplishment. We have overcome many obstacles and made good progress, and the transformation that has occurred is apparent across the entire Department, but there is still work to be done.

Language skills are not easily acquired and, once acquired, are not universally applicable to all regions within a country or situation. Regional expertise requires continuous learning to stay current in an ever-changing world environment. As judicious planners and good stewards, we constantly assess the relevance of what we are doing today with what we might be called to do in the future.

## **THE NEED FOR CHANGE**

Current military operations demand different skills than those that were mastered to win the Cold War. Today's operations increasingly require our forces to operate with coalition and alliance partners and interact with foreign populations, in a variety of regions, with diverse languages and cultures. Our enemies blend in with the local population, making identification and achieving victory more difficult. To be effective in stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations, as well as other counterinsurgency measures and to prevail in the long war, we must be able to understand different cultures and communicate effectively in order to gain the support of the local people.

We have responded to this shifting paradigm with a shift in strategy. Operational lessons learned and studies stressed the need for the Department to create and maintain language capabilities within the force and have the ability to surge on demand to meet unexpected challenges. The Strategic Planning Guidance for Fiscal Years (FY) 2006 through 2011 directed development of a comprehensive roadmap to achieve the full range of language capabilities necessary to carry out national strategy. The result was the 2005 DoD Language Transformation Roadmap (DLTR) that continues to be the pivotal document for our accomplishments today.

Leadership has continued to reinforce the importance of foreign language and regional expertise within the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Total Force. The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review provides approximately \$430 million through the Future Years Defense Program, with \$66.7 million in the FY 2008 President's Budget Request for initiatives to

strengthen and expand our Defense Language Program. These initiatives span across technology, training, education, and recruitment and include the Army Heritage Speaker (09L) Program, Service Academy Language Training Programs, Foreign Language Proficiency Pay, ROTC Language Training Grants, Accession Screening Program, the Language Corps, National Security Education Program, and the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).

The Strategic Planning Guidance for FY 2008 through 2013 outlines the national commitment to developing the best mix of capabilities within the Total Force and sets forth a series of Roadmaps that support the goals of the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap.

### **MANAGING CHANGE**

The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, signed by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on February 14, 2005, is our management guide for building language skills and regional proficiency into today's Force. The Roadmap provides broad goals that will ensure a strong foundation in language, regional and cultural expertise, a capacity to surge to meet unanticipated demands, and a cadre of language professionals.

To ensure oversight, execution, and direction for this transformation, the Deputy Secretary assigned the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness responsibility for the Defense Language Program. The Deputy Secretary then directed the appointment of Senior Language Authorities in the Military Departments, the Defense and Joint Staffs, Defense Agencies, and Defense Field Activities at the Senior Executive Service, and General and Flag Officer ranks to ensure senior-level involvement and

oversight. We established the Defense Language Steering Committee, consisting of the Senior Language Authorities, to act as an advisory board and guide the implementation of the Roadmap. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness appointed me as the DoD Senior Language Authority and Chair of the Defense Language Steering Committee. We revised the DoD Directive for the Defense Language Program and established the Defense Language Office to ensure oversight and execution of the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap and to institutionalize the Department's commitment to these critical competencies.

**CREATE FOUNDATIONAL EXPERTISE: BUILDING COMPETENCIES FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TOTAL FORCE**

A critical initiative of the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap involved determining what capabilities and resources were needed. The Combatant Commands, Military Services, Defense Agencies, and Defense Field Activities began identifying the language and regional expertise requirements necessary to support their operational and contingency planning and day-to-day requirements.

The Military Services and Joint Staff initiated reviews of all relevant doctrine, policies, and planning guidance to ensure that they incorporated language and regional expertise to include cultural awareness. These documents help us outline the approach for developing and, more importantly, employing these war fighting and peacekeeping competencies.

There had been no accurate assessment of what languages and proficiency levels existed within the Total Force. The Department is now conducting a self-assessment of

in-house language capability and we have learned that we have a significant capability not apparent to our management systems. Even though our assessment is not yet complete, as of the beginning of the current fiscal year, the Department had 141,887 Active Component; 77,319 Reserve Component; and 38,246 civilian members of the Total Force who reported having foreign language skills. We now have policies in place so that individuals are routinely screened as part of the military accession and civilian hiring process.

In order to encourage service members to identify, improve, and sustain language capability, we implemented a revised Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP) policy, and, with the support of Congress, increased the proficiency bonus from \$300 maximum per month, up to \$1,000 maximum per month for uniformed members. We are currently finalizing the DoD Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) policy to align payment for Reserve and Active Components by increasing Reserve proficiency pay ceiling from \$6,000 to \$12,000, consistent with Section 639 of Public Law 108-163, the Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act. DoD policy for civilians assigned to non-intelligence positions allows FLPP of up to five percent of an employee's salary when duties require proficiency in a foreign language identified as necessary to meet national security concerns and the employee is certified as proficient in that language. The use of FLPP for civilians is also available within the Intelligence community and the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). Intelligence career field personnel and civilian personnel covered by NSPS may receive up to \$500 per pay period provided the language

proficiency facilitates performance of intelligence duties or is deemed necessary for national security interest.

### Building A “Learning” Organization To Strengthen The Foundation

Of the many occupational skills taught to our personnel, language and regional expertise are among the more difficult to address in a systematic manner. Learning a foreign language is not easy and proficiency deteriorates, if not maintained. The strategic languages we seek, such as Arabic, are some of the most difficult and take a long time to develop.

Regional expertise involves understanding complex issues in areas such as political, military/security, economic, sociological to include history and religion, scientific/technical, the geographic terrain, and, most importantly the cultural norms of a region. It takes time and continuous study to ensure current and relevant knowledge as countries and regions change over time. We must fully understand how to identify and catalog our regional expertise capability as we have with language. Regardless, of the challenge, we do know that every war-fighter needs fundamental language skills and cultural awareness with a cadre of experts needing higher levels of proficiency, depending on the jobs and missions being performed.

In addition, there are risks associated with selecting the languages and regions that should be taught or emphasized. Unlike other primary job skills, language and regional expertise do not necessarily transfer from one theater of operation to another. It is impossible to foresee with certainty where we will operate in deployment or contingency operations in the future and we must cultivate the capability of responding quickly to the

unexpected, such as we did when Operation Enduring Freedom required a rapid development of curriculum in Dari and Pashto.

To acquire and sustain these capabilities, the DoD must commit to building and sustaining a “learning organization” that offers mission-focused instruction to all personnel at the appropriate times, with the appropriate delivery method such as deploying training technology, to support our people in maintaining and enhancing these hard won skills. This learning begins even before potential recruits join the Total Force.

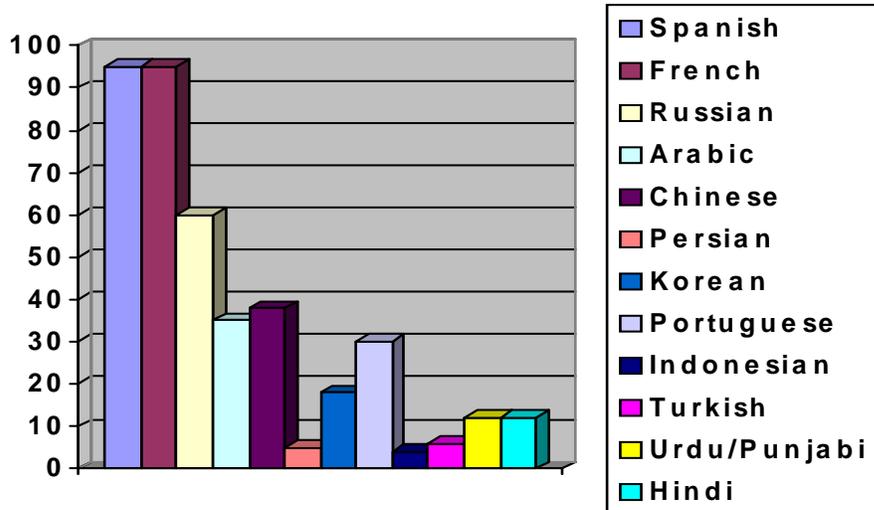
#### Pre-Accession Language Training

Pre-accession language training focuses the Department’s effort on building language skills in future officers prior to commissioning. The three Service Academies enhanced their foreign language study programs to develop pre-accession language and cultural knowledge. They expanded study abroad, summer immersion and foreign academy exchange opportunities; and added instructor staff for strategic languages. The United States Military Academy and the United States Air Force Academy now require all cadets to complete two semesters of language study; and the United States Naval Academy requires its non-technical degree-seeking midshipmen to take four semesters of language study. Language study programs have regional information such as socio and geo-political considerations and key aspects of culture embedded in the course of study. The United States Military Academy and the United States Air Force Academy also established two new language majors of strategic interest, specifically in Arabic and Chinese. The United States Naval Academy, for the first time in history, will offer midshipmen the opportunity to major in a foreign language, including Arabic and

Chinese beginning with the Class of 2010. In Fiscal Year 2007, \$25.57 million was directed to the Service Academies to develop and implement their language programs, including curricular development and hiring of staff and faculty to teach more strategic languages. President's Budget request for FY 08 is for \$16.95 million.

The Academies are aggressively pursuing increased opportunities for their cadets and midshipmen to study abroad to reinforce both their acquired language and culture knowledge, and currently have programs available in 40 countries. Four-week summer language immersion programs are offered as well as semester exchanges with foreign military academies. The Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act allows the Academies to expand these exchanges from 24 exchanges to 100 exchanges per academy per year, and this Congressional support is greatly appreciated.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) cadets and midshipmen also have expanded opportunities to learn a foreign language. The Air Force and Navy have ROTC students accompany their academy counterparts during familiarization and orientation travel opportunities. Of the 1,321 colleges and universities with ROTC programs, 1,148 offer languages as noted on this chart. Significantly, many of the languages we need for current operations are not widely offered at this time.



Percentage of ROTC Cadets with Access to Foreign Language Instruction

The Department has just awarded four grants to colleges and universities with ROTC programs. This is a pilot program started this year to provide grants to select colleges and universities with established ROTC programs to expand opportunities for ROTC cadets and midshipmen to study languages and cultures critical to national security. Increasing the number of less commonly taught languages in college curricula remains a challenge in which we are actively engaged.

### Primary Skills Language Training

There are dramatic changes in how the Department is training members who require language skills to perform their primary jobs. The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center's (DLIFLC) budget climbed from \$77M in FY01 to \$203M in FY07 to better respond to these changes. The Institute has an enrollment of 4000 students a year. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, we have redirected training toward the strategic languages, such as Arabic, Chinese and Persian Farsi. One of the major programs implemented in FY06 by DLIFLC is the Proficiency Enhancement

Program (PEP). PEP is designed to graduate students at increased proficiency levels. Changes include reducing the student-to-instructor ratio, increasing the number of classrooms, creating improved expanded curricula, and expanding overseas training. Cultural awareness has also been added to every language course.

A critical component of our effort to improve the language capability is to validate and deliver tools for measuring language proficiency. We have taken steps to strengthen our Defense Language Testing System by updating test content and delivery. The Services and Defense Agencies are taking the same test, thus we are able to use the test scores to calculate a Language Readiness Index and determine the gaps. We can then target our recruiting, training, and other interventions to reduce these gaps. Delivering these tests over the Web is greatly increasing the availability and accessibility of these tests to Defense military and civilian language professionals worldwide, and the use of advanced technology to store and track proficiency test scores is providing us with the capability to use this information for national security planning. Currently we have delivered over 11,000 web-delivered tests to date.

### Supporting Deploying Forces

The Department recognizes that not all personnel will be able or required to demonstrate intermediate or advanced level language skills and regional expertise; as technology can help meet some of these demands. As directed in the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, and in my role as the DoD Senior Language Authority, I am working with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics to establish a coherent, prioritized, and coordinated DoD multi-language

technology research, development, and acquisition policy and program. This technology, such as machine translation tools, will aid in bridging the gaps when the desired capability is not available. However, regardless of how advanced the technology, it cannot replace the need for service members to personally acquire the language skills and cultural knowledge to effectively interact with the local people and leaders. .

Department policy, therefore, requires that military units deploying into, or in transit through foreign territories shall be equipped, to the greatest extent practicable, with an appropriate capability to communicate in the languages of the territories of deployment or transit and to operate with an appropriate knowledge of the cultural norms.

The Services have taken great efforts to prepare members to achieve optimum outcomes by understanding the regions in which they deploy and being culturally aware. All the Services have incorporated regional and cultural information within Professional Military Education (PME) curricula. The Services established Centers of Excellence to oversee and standardize training and impart essential and mission-targeted cultural training to their members. The Army Training and Doctrine Command Culture Center, the Navy Center for Language Regional Expertise and Culture, the Air University Cultural Studies Center, and the Marine Corps Center for Advance Operational Culture and Language all focus on offering the training that best supports their deployment model and is compliant with Joint Professional Military Education guidelines. Since Service missions differ, this approach is logical and effective.

We will host a DoD-wide Culture Summit this summer. This forum will serve as the foundation to develop operationally relevant cultural policies and synchronize efforts across all the Services.

Getting the right information to deploying personnel in time to be useful, but not so early that it is forgotten before they arrive, is “just-in-time” training. We have significantly improved our means of providing language and regional familiarization training to units during their deployment cycles. The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center’s (DLIFLC) foreign language and cultural instruction extends beyond the classroom to service members and civilians preparing for deployment by offering Mobile Training Teams, video tele-training, Language Survival Kits, and online instructional materials. Since 2001, the DLIFLC dispatched 300 Mobile Training Teams to provide targeted training to more than 32,000 personnel. Deploying units received over 200,000 Language Survival Kits (mostly Iraqi, Dari, and Pashto). Field support modules outlining the geo-political situation, cultural facts, and fundamental language skills, key phrases and commands are available for 19 countries in 17 languages on the DLIFLC website. There are 31 on-line language survival courses. Computer-based sustainment training is available as well via the Global Language On-line Support System, which supports 12 languages and six more language sustainment courses are available on the DLIFLC LingNet website.

### Heritage Recruiting

Ensuring that we have a strong foundation in language and regional expertise involves reaching out to personnel who already possess these skills into our Total Force.

All of our Military Services have developed heritage-recruiting plans to bring personnel into the force with key language skills and regional expertise. These plans focus on reaching out to our heritage communities and their children who possess near-native language skills and knowledge of the culture.

One particularly successful program is the Army's 09L Interpreter/Translator Program. The Army launched this pilot program in 2003 to recruit and train individuals from heritage Arabic, Dari, and Pashto communities to serve in the Individual Ready Reserve and support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The program was so successful that in 2006, the Army formally established the 09L Translator Aide as a permanent military occupational specialty with a career path from recruit through sergeant major. More than 317 heritage speakers have successfully graduated and deployed; an additional 175 personnel are currently in the training pipeline. The Army continues to expand and develop the program in response to the positive feedback from the commanders and warfighters in the field. The QDR provides \$50 million over a five-year period, from FY 2007 to FY 2011, to further expand this program.

Additionally, we have embedded recruitment of key language skilled individuals into our civilian recruiting efforts, thereby recruiting individuals with DoD critical sets to include languages to serve in mission critical occupations. We have developed a comprehensive outreach program with colleges, universities and professional and heritage associations; reenergized our branding and marketing materials; and revamped our "Go Defense" recruitment website to attract individuals to DoD as the "Employer of Choice." Our recently updated website include vignettes of current Department

employees in mission critical occupations, including language, who discuss their work and the satisfaction they realize from it as well as the benefits of working for the DoD.

Attracting and hiring individuals with high proficiency language skills from heritage communities and graduates of the DoD-sanctioned education programs presents security clearance challenges. We have partnered with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to develop and are implementing a number of important initiatives to help reduce these barriers. Within the Department, we are also conducting a scrub of all civilian positions coded for language to validate clearance level requirements; establishing a pilot to expedite hiring; and, promulgating best practices from the hiring pilot.

Security clearances are particularly challenging for our 09L members. Current security requirements mandate that only U.S. citizen can obtain a security clearance and many of our 09Ls are Legal Resident Aliens. The Army issued a “Limited Access Authorization” allowing non-citizens in the 09L program to take a polygraph. Upon passing the polygraph, the member can then handle classified material while in theater. This accommodation enables 09L to handle classified material while in theatre awaiting citizenship or granting of security clearance.

### **Ensuring Surge Capability—Generating Competencies to Meet the Unexpected**

As we evaluated our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, it was obvious that we did not have sufficient language capability within the force to meet demands. The Army, as the Executive Agent is coordinating contract linguist support. As a result, highly proficient contract linguists have been made available to commanders in theater. This is

one example of how we can generate a surge capability harvesting language resources from the talent pool within and outside our country. We are also developing appropriate processes to maintain contact with our military and civilian retirees and separatees. The goal is to build a personnel database with language and regional experience information that would allow us reachback capability for voluntary recall. While current surge capability is obviously focused on ongoing operations, we are also looking beyond for potential or emerging areas in which the Total Force might be called upon to operate.

### **Building Professionals**

Post 9/11 military operations reinforce the reality that the DoD needs an improved capability in languages and dialects of strategic interest. A higher level of language skill and regional expertise, to include cultural awareness, across all the Services are necessary to build the internal relationships required for coalition/multi-national operations, peacekeeping, and civil/military affairs. In 2005, the Department began building a cadre of language specialists possessing high-level language proficiency (an Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Proficiency Level 3 in reading, listening, and speaking ability or 3/3/3) and regional expertise. We are working with the DoD Components to identify the tasks and missions that will require 3/3/3 proficiency and determine the minimum number of personnel needed to provide this language capability.

### Managing the Professionals

The Department has spent a great deal of effort in managing its cadre of uniformed regional experts—the Foreign Area Officers. DoD Directive 1315.17, “*Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Programs*,” updated in April 2005, established a common set of standards

for FAOs. Most importantly, the new policies require the Services to establish FAO programs that “deliberately develop a corps of FAOs who shall be commissioned officers with a broad range of military skills and experiences; have knowledge of political-military affairs; have familiarity with the political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographical factors of the countries and regions in which they are stationed; and, have professional proficiency in one or more of the dominant languages in their regions of expertise.” The purpose of this approach to the FAO Program is to build an FAO Corps capable of operating in a joint environment with similar training, developmental experiences, and expertise.

All FAOs must be qualified in a principal military specialty. Studies undertaken by the Department have confirmed that qualification in a principal military specialty must be an absolute prerequisite for FAOs to be successful, regardless of Service. In FY 2007, there are approximately 1,600 FAOs designated, qualified or are in training.

#### Sustaining and Supporting Special Forces

The U.S. Special Operations Command has recognized the need and value of language and regional expertise. They require each member to possess not only strong military skills but also regional and language skills. Special Operations Forces’ policies ensure that their personnel are regionally trained and that their expertise and contributions are increased through consistent assignment in their region. Special Forces requirements are for speakers at a level one on the Interagency Level Roundtable. Level one is described as a functional, but limited language proficiency level. Special Forces members can take the Defense Language Proficiency Test 5, but prefer the Oral

Proficiency Interview, since the majority of their requirements focus on the speaking modality. We are working to increase the availability of Oral Proficiency Interviews to meet U.S. Special Operations Command needs.

### **OUR EFFORTS ARE NOT ENOUGH**

We recognized that in order to increase language capability in the Department and achieve higher levels of language proficiency among our language professionals, we had to assume a more proactive role in promoting and encouraging language education in the American population. We need to be able to identify and recruit individuals who have the language skills and regional expertise we need. In June 2004, we convened a National Language Conference to begin dialog and stimulate thinking to this end. The conference led to the development of a White Paper published by the Department outlining a number of key recommendations.

In January 2006, the President announced the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI). The Initiative was launched to dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critical need foreign languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, and Farsi. The Secretary of Defense joined the Secretaries of State and Education, and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to develop a comprehensive national plan to expand opportunities for U.S. students to develop proficiencies in critical languages from early education through college. The White House provides ongoing coordination as partner agencies work to implement this plan.

The focal point for the Department's role in the National Security Language Initiative is the National Security Education Program (NSEP). NSEP represents one of

the national security community's most important investments in creating a pipeline of linguistically and culturally competent professionals into our workforce. NSEP provides scholarships and fellowships to enable U.S. students to study critical languages and cultures in return for federal national security service. NSEP has partners with universities, providing grants for the development and implementation of National Flagship Language programs, specifically designed to graduate students at an ILR level three (3/3/3) language proficiency (in reading, listening and speaking modalities) in today's critical languages. These programs provide a major source of vitally needed language expertise in the national security community. As part of the DOD contribution to the NSLI, the NSEP has expanded the National Language Flagship Program to establish new Flagship programs in Arabic, Hindi, and Urdu and to expand the Russian Flagship to a Eurasian program focusing on critical Central Asian languages.

The Flagship effort serves as an example of how NSLI links Federal programs and resources across agencies to enhance the scope of the Federal government's efforts in foreign language education. For example, the Flagship program is leading the way in developing model pipelines of K-12 students with higher levels of language proficiency into our universities. I am very proud to tell this committee that we launched the nation's first fully articulated K-16 program – a Chinese pipeline with the University of Oregon/Portland Public Schools. While focusing on early language learning, this effort has already succeeded in enrolling ten students, as freshmen, from the Portland high schools in an experimental advanced four-year Chinese program at the University of Oregon. We have also awarded a grant to the Chinese Flagship Program at Ohio State

University to implement a statewide system of Chinese K-16 programs. Finally, we awarded a grant to Michigan State University to develop an Arabic K-16 pipeline project with the Dearborn, Michigan school district, announced in conjunction with a Department of Education Foreign Language Assistance Program grant. We hope Congress will approve the Department of Education's request for the NSLI, which will significantly expand on the K-12 model that NSEP has established.

Our second commitment to the President's National Security Language Initiative is the launching of the Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps pilot program, now renamed The Language Corps. Authorized by Congress, this effort will identify Americans with skills in critical languages and develop the capacity to mobilize them during times of national need or emergency. The Language Corps represents the first organized national attempt to capitalize on our rich national diversity in language and culture. We just awarded a contract to assist us as we begin a three-year pilot to meet our goal of 1,000 Language Corps members.

In spring 2006, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness invited the Federal Chief Human Capital Officers to join the DoD in building the Language Corps. We will continue to engage the federal community as we proceed with the three-year pilot.

The Department's contributions to the NSLI reflect the significant amount of coordination among DoD staff, our NSLI partners, other federal agencies, and state government and local education systems. The NSLI was built so that programs proposed

by the Departments of State, Education, Defense, and National Intelligence, when funded and executed, would improve the national language capacity.

Finally, the Department is coordinating a series of regional summits to engage state and local governments, educational institutions, school boards, parents, and businesses at the local level in addressing foreign language needs. The National Security Education Program reached out to the expertise of its three Flagship Universities – in Ohio, Oregon, and Texas to convene these summits and to develop action plans that reflect an organized and reasonable approach to building the infrastructure for language education at the state and local level. These summits will take place later this spring and action plans will be produced by the fall 2007.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thank you for the opportunity to share our current and future language and regional expertise transformation efforts. I hope to leave you with the understanding that building foreign language capability and regional expertise within the Department is serious business. We have taken actions to ensure that our efforts are institutionalized in our recruitment efforts, compensation rules, plans, policies, training, and doctrine. We have made great progress and the Defense leadership commitment to the development of this important competency has been unwavering. However, we have not yet reached the finish line. Your continuing support of our efforts through legislation and appropriations is appreciated. The journey has just begun, but we must do it right as our nation, and our national security depends on successful strategy and sustained execution.