



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAR 28 2011

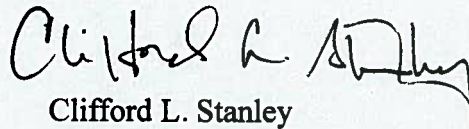
MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL INTELLIGENCE
AGENCY
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY

SUBJECT: Language and Culture Summit White Paper – Language and Culture: Changing Perspective

In January 2011, nearly 300 senior leaders from across government, industry and academia attended the summit, Language and Culture: A Strategic Imperative, to propose bold and innovative solutions for increasing language, regional and cultural capabilities across the Department. The attached White Paper, *Language and Culture: Changing Perspectives*, documents the results of this pivotal event.

Your organization played a significant part at the Summit, and the participants made substantive and far-reaching contributions to the outcomes. The most important of these outcomes are the foundational recommendations that will guide the Department in the years ahead as organizations and perspectives evolve.

As the Department acts on the recommended solutions from the Summit, we will need to work collectively to build and increase capabilities essential for the defense and security of the Nation. Thank you for your strong involvement in language and culture, and for your continued support and advocacy for this very important program.


Clifford L. Stanley

Attachment:
As stated



Department of Defense Summit Language and Culture: *A Strategic Imperative*

Language and Culture: Changing Perspective

February 2011





UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

DoD Summit on Language and Culture: A Strategic Imperative

In January 2011, nearly 300 senior leaders from across the Department of Defense (DoD), other U.S. Government agencies, industry and academia attended the summit, *Language and Culture: A Strategic Imperative*, to propose bold, innovative solutions to challenges in increasing language, regional, and cultural skills across the Department. This paper, *Language and Culture: Changing Perspectives*, documents the results of this pivotal event.

The challenges are clear -- the Department of Defense and Nation must promote, build, and sustain these critical skills and, more importantly, drive the organizational changes needed to ensure we have the right mix of capabilities and the capacity needed to meet current and future demands. The key themes that emerged from the Summit reflect a strengthened perspective, based on a decade of conflict, that language and culture are integral to our long-term national and global security. The recommendations proposed during the sessions build on the achievements of the 2005 *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* and support the strategic direction laid out in the *DoD Strategic Plan for Language Skills, Regional Expertise and Cultural Capabilities*.

Summit participants recognized and agreed that language, regional, and cultural skills are core warfighting competencies that cut across the full spectrum of operations in a dynamic, interconnected global world. The escalating need for these skills is not confined to a single mission, organization, or department. Rather, the complex and evolving nature of today's national security challenges demand a coherent, holistic and collaborative interagency and international approach to address the challenges we face.

Collectively, we can and will build the language, regional, and cultural skills essential for the defense and security of the Nation.

Clifford L. Stanley

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION.....	4
BACKGROUND.....	4
KEY THEMES AND CHALLENGES	5
RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS	7
Challenge 1: How Can We Develop a Capabilities- and Capacity-Based System to Identify and Generate Accurate Demand Signals	7
Challenge 2: What Must We Do to Build, Enhance, and Sustain Language, Regional, and Cultural Skills throughout the Personnel Life Cycle ...	9
Challenge 3: How Can We Establish and Strengthen Interagency and International Partnerships to Increase Interoperability and Build Capacity.....	12
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As President Obama evaluated the future of American military strength, he declared that such strength “will be measured not only by the weapons our troops carry, but by the languages they speak and the cultures they understand.”¹ In order to address the challenges of the 21st Century in building and sustaining these skills, DoD’s changing perspective prioritizes language, regional, and cultural skills as core warfighting competencies critical to mission success. The Total Force and our partners and allies must be equipped with these abilities to be successful at home and abroad.

In January 2011, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness hosted a summit entitled *Language and Culture: A Strategic Imperative*, which addressed the Department’s need to build and enhance language, regional, and cultural capabilities. The Summit provided a forum where nearly 300 leaders from across the DoD, other U.S. Government agencies, industry and academia proposed solutions to key challenges facing the Department and the Nation. Specifically, Summit participants addressed three major challenge areas—building a capabilities- and capacity-based system, improving personnel management, and building partnerships—and discussed, analyzed, and recommended initiatives to meet these challenges.

Currently DoD determines future language, regional, and cultural capabilities in a requirements-based (or billet-based) system. The first challenge posed was to develop a capabilities- and capacity-based system to identify and generate accurate demand signals. To respond to this challenge, bold recommendations included the establishment of a three-tiered Force Management Model (i.e., language and regional specialists, surge capacity, and general purpose force), development of a capabilities-based identification process, and incorporation of a feedback mechanism to inform future mission and operational demands. Further, the recommended solutions call for a capability-centric approach that will ensure that the language, regional, and culture needs are accurately determined, prioritized, and communicated to force providers.

The second challenge identified was to promote personnel language, regional, and cultural capabilities throughout a career for both the language and regional professionals and general purpose forces. In addition to having the ability to communicate with a person in another language, research has shown that learning a second language aids in the development of general cognitive skills, e.g., enhances one’s ability to adapt in a complex, dynamic

¹ Address to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Phoenix, Arizona, August 17, 2009.

environment; improves one's analytical thinking and problem solving skills, etc., thus providing for more analytical, adaptive leaders. However, as we expand the second and sometimes third language skills in native English speaker, we must also nurture retention of the primary language of our heritage speakers who may already speak two or more languages, since all language atrophies if not properly nurtured. Recommendations spanned the personnel life cycle and included the development of language, regional, and cultural policies and programs that emphasize the value of these skills, expansion of recruitment to include more language-, region- and culture-enabled personnel, and implementation of an effective compensation model. Further, the recommendations supported a lifetime of service by proposing ways to retain language, region, and culture-enabled personnel after separation or retirement. Pre-accession recommendations were also discussed and include the expansion of language requirements and courses in the DoD Education Activity (DoDEA) schools and Childhood Development Centers (CDCs).

The final challenge was to establish and strengthen interagency and international partnerships to build capacity and increase interoperability. Recommendations included formalizing partnerships with academic institutions, standardizing language testing, evaluation and learning systems across U.S. Government agencies, and expanding military international exchange programs. These recommendations strive to bridge the gaps between DoD, U.S. agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and between the U.S. and its partner nations. Commanders related that language and culture skills are instrumental to building partnerships and without these skills U.S. forces can be construed as an occupying force rather than an ally.

Several key themes emerged during the Summit that revealed a changing perspective on the criticality and long-term value of these skills to the Department:

1. DoD must adopt a holistic, joint and interagency approach to resolve language, regional, and cultural challenges.
2. DoD must value language, regional, and cultural skills and endorse them as core competencies – as important as all other warfighter competencies. At a minimum, all DoD personnel should have the right mix of language, regional, and cultural competencies to support overall mission readiness.
3. DoD must make a significant paradigm shift in the personnel management system to reflect the organizational value of language, regional, and cultural skills.

4. Language and culture skills are a national security and economic imperative. DoD can serve as a national model for pre-K through 12 language and culture learning with pilot programs in DoD Child Development Centers (CDCs) and DoDEA Schools.

It was clear from the comments by senior level speakers, panelists and participants that language, regional, and cultural capabilities are not just for “here and now.” Rather, they must be valued as long-term investments and resourced accordingly. The *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* galvanized and strengthened the Defense Language Program. Now, the Department is ready to make a significant shift – an organizational change that promotes language, regional, and cultural skills as core warfighter competencies and provides the organizational structure required to promote those skills.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Clifford Stanley declared that “the time is now to establish the foundation needed to address today’s, and more importantly tomorrow’s, language, regional, and culture needs.” This paper, *Language and Culture: Changing Perspective*, documents the Summit proceedings and will be used in navigating this organizational change to enhance and institutionalize language, regional, and cultural capabilities.

INTRODUCTION

Language and Culture: Changing Perspective summarizes key themes and outcomes of the Department of Defense Summit, *Language and Culture: A Strategic Imperative*, a collaborative gathering of senior leaders from DoD, other U.S. Government agencies, industry, and academia. On January 25th and 26th, 2011, these leaders met to discuss challenges and propose bold and innovative ideas for building and sustaining language, regional, and cultural capabilities essential to mission readiness in today's dynamic global environment. Senior leaders set the Department on a new course for determining future capabilities; improving the personnel management system; establishing greater language, regional, and cultural proficiency; and improving interoperability with other U.S. agencies, coalition allies, and international partners. The Summit was the first step toward changing the Department-wide perspective on language, regional, and cultural capabilities. This paper provides insight that will be used in building a "coherent, comprehensive and integrated plan"² to guide the Department through this change.

BACKGROUND

Over the past several years, the Department has made significant progress in building a Force with language, regional, and cultural capabilities. In June 2004, DoD hosted the National Language Conference, which produced *Call to Action for National Foreign Language Capabilities*, a virtual roadmap for national foreign language capability development. In February 2005, the Department published the *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap (DLTR)*, which served as the management plan for investment in linguistically and regionally focused programs and infrastructure. At a follow-up conference in October 2007, DoD leaders developed a framework for synchronizing policies, plans and programs, and opened the aperture to include regional and cultural capabilities. Viewed as a sequel to the 2004 *Call to Action*, the resulting White Paper, *DoD Regional and Cultural Capabilities: the Way Ahead*, documented recommendations from the 2007 conference and guided the Department as it worked to implement those recommendations.

The *Department of Defense Strategic Plan for Language Skills, Regional Expertise, and Cultural Capabilities* is a critical step toward further enhancing and institutionalizing language, regional, and cultural capabilities within the Department. Critical to this effort is that the Department must go beyond a requirements-based, programmatic focus to a capabilities-based system.

² Stanley, Dr. Clifford. *Language and Culture: A Strategic Imperative*. 26 January 2011.

This system articulates the capacity needed to provide the forces with the skills necessary to profoundly influence the outcomes of U.S., allied and coalition operations anywhere in the world, at any time.

APPROACH

The Summit was an instrumental and influential step in creating a broader, more holistic and transformational approach to building, enhancing, and institutionalizing language, regional, and cultural capabilities within DoD and the Nation. The Office of the Under Secretary for Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD (P&R)) developed the content for the Summit and established initial Focus Areas³ and Challenge Statements through senior leader interviews and action officer working group sessions.⁴ These senior leader interviews and action officer working groups also validated the three overarching goals set forth in the *DoD Strategic Plan for Language Skills, Regional Expertise, and Cultural Capabilities*. The insight provided during these activities informed panel discussions at the Summit. And as a result, the Summit produced the bold and innovative solutions that are set forth in this paper and support the overall strategic goals.

KEY THEMES AND CHALLENGES

This document's recommendations are underpinned by several common themes, echoed throughout the Summit in the keynote speakers' remarks, panelists' presentations and participants' comments offered during plenary and panel discussions. These themes include:

1. DoD must adopt a holistic, joint and interagency approach to resolving language, regional, and cultural challenges.
2. DoD must value language, regional, and cultural skills and endorse them as core competencies – as important as all other warfighter competencies. At a minimum, all DoD personnel should have the right mix of language, regional, and cultural competencies to support overall mission readiness.

³ USD P&R provided the following three focus areas: 1) How do we employ a system to better address language, regional, and cultural capability and capacity needs?; 2) How do we effectively integrate language, regional, and cultural capabilities across the personnel life cycle?; 3) How do we improve interoperability and support building partnership capacities in a dynamic global environment?

⁴ USD P&R set forth the following three challenge statements: 1) Design and implement a capabilities-based system that provides the enhanced capabilities and capacities needed to succeed in the full spectrum of operations; 2) Create an enterprise approach to prepare, access, develop and sustain language, regional and cultural skills to prepare for and meet the full spectrum of operations; and 3) Achieve the right proportions of English language capabilities and foreign language capabilities to maximize understanding and support interoperability.

3. DoD must make a significant paradigm shift in the personnel management system to reflect the organizational value of language, regional, and cultural skills.
4. Language and culture skills are national security and economic imperatives. DoD can serve as a national model for pre-K through 12 language and culture learning with pilot programs in DoD Child Development Centers (CDCs) and DoDEA Schools.

The recommended solutions outlined herein are organized around three overarching challenges:

Challenge 1: How Do We Develop a Capabilities- and Capacity-Based System to Identify and Generate Accurate Demand Signals

Challenge 2: What Must We Do to Build, Enhance, and Sustain Language, Regional, and Cultural Capabilities throughout the Personnel Life Cycle

Challenge 3: How Do We Establish and Strengthen Interagency and International Partnerships to Build Capacity and Increase Interoperability

The challenges and themes drive the content of this paper and will guide stakeholders as they implement the recommended solutions outlined in the following pages.

RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

Challenge 1: How Can We Develop a Capabilities- and Capacity-Based System to Identify and Generate Accurate Demand Signals

“The best way that we, as the U.S. Armed Forces, will achieve the necessary level of language skills and cultural competencies is through a holistic Joint and Interagency approach.”

General Norton Schwartz, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force

Once language, regional, and cultural skills have become core operational capabilities critical to mission success, accurately forecasting these needed capabilities will become increasingly difficult. Currently, DoD is using a requirements-based system to project these capabilities. The challenge with this system is it links performance criteria (i.e. tasks to be accomplished) to a specific billet, generating a targeted personnel demand. Collectively, these individual requirements do not address all the capabilities required for mission success, i.e., there are other capabilities needed that are not linked to a specific billet, but rather can be provided by anyone in the unit. The requirements-based system has historically lacked a clear linkage to military strategies and the needs of the Combatant Commands (COCOMs). To address these gaps, the focus must shift from requirements-only to include needed mission capabilities. New organizational approaches and processes are needed to better forecast not just immediate and short-term needs, but also future language, regional, and cultural capability and capacity demands. This move from a reactive requirements-based process to a more proactive, mission-centric capabilities- and capacity-based system will strengthen the COCOMs' and Services' abilities to fill capability gaps, mitigate risks and predict the appropriate skill levels for a “bench” of warfighters equipped to handle current contingencies and future operations.

Require Cross-cultural Competence (3C) Across the Force

Require General Purpose Forces (GPF) to have a basic, foundational understanding of culture and its critical role in a variety of culturally complex, operational environments.

- **Employ a Language, Regional, and Culture-specific Force Management Model that Establishes Target Percentages**

Require Services to employ a three-tiered model, establishing requirements for target percentages in each of the following categories:

- *Language and Regional Professionals*

- *Surge Capacity “Bench” (Subset of the GPF that will reach higher proficiency levels in a language, region or specific culture)*
- *GPF not included in the Surge Capacity “Bench”*

- **Develop a Department-wide Language, Regional, and Cultural Capabilities Determination Process**

Evaluate, refine and expand the Joint Staff-led methodology for determining the language, regional, and cultural capabilities for not only the Geographical COCOMs but also the Functional COCOMs and other supporting agencies such as Combat Support Agencies

“The Department needs to focus strongly on its capstone strategic guidance documents to inform and support language and cultural capabilities needs determination.”

**- Dr. Kathleen Hicks
DUSD Strategy, Plans and Forces**

- **At a Minimum, Ensure at Least one Person per Platoon or “Platoon-sized” Element is Proficient in Language at the 1+ Level**

Expand language proficiency across the Force by requiring at least one person per platoon or “platoon-sized” element to be proficient in a language at the 1+ level, with a goal of level 2 in oral communication in the primary (or operationally relevant) language of the area of deployment.

- **Establish a Mechanism for Capturing Post-Deployment Feedback**

Gather and leverage bottom-up feedback from returning units and individuals on language, regional, and cultural capabilities used during their deployment. With this input, the Services and COCOMs can better validate whether COCOMs’ stated requirements are accurate, and if the language, regional, and cultural capabilities being delivered are sufficient to meet actual mission and operational demands.

Challenge 2: What Must We Do to Build, Enhance, and Sustain Language, Regional, and Cultural Skills throughout the Personnel Life Cycle

To maintain a position of global leadership, the United States must broaden and deepen its language, regional, and cultural capabilities. To meet current and future missions, the DoD must do the same. This involves promoting language, regional, and cultural skills throughout the personnel life cycle, as well as fostering human resource solutions for the recruitment, training, and sustainment of these critical skills. These changes should be as comprehensive and transformational as the Goldwater-Nichols Act was for increasing "Jointness." The Department can also more efficiently use its personnel and training resources by capitalizing on prior investments of training Reservists, incentivizing ROTC cadets to study languages, recruiting personnel for the military or civilian workforce who already possess these skills, and building a surge capability. Ideally language, regional, and cultural training should start long before recruitment, and Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools need to increase their focus on language and cultural education and thus serve as a national model to encourage this early educational reform across America.

The following recommended solutions address the current barriers to the enhancement of language, regional, and cultural capabilities throughout the Department:

- **Create a Total Force that is Linguistically, Regionally, and Culturally Competent and Values These Competencies**

Further institutionalize language, regional, and cultural skills by developing competencies that emphasize their value at varying levels of proficiency, and include such competencies in promotion criteria, as appropriate.

- **Build and Sustain Cross-Cultural Competence (3C) across the Total Force**

Train and educate all members of the Total Force to have a baseline of cross-cultural competence (3C), and ensure some members have additional, enhanced cross-cultural skills and abilities beyond the 3C baseline.

"The Department needs to do better to sustain language and cultural skills. Almost everyone's proficiency is highest on graduation day."

**- Admiral Eric Olson,
CDR, USSOCOM**

- **Make DoDEA Schools and Child Development Centers (CDCs) the National Model for Language Learning**

Set a goal for DoDEA high school graduates to be functionally proficient (level 1 or higher on the DLPT scale) in at least one foreign language, incorporate foreign language as a core subject, and provide language training in after-school programs when possible. Similarly, CDCs should provide language training appropriate for Pre-K children. DoDEA and Department of Education should identify school districts to pilot the implementation of language requirements and language learning mechanisms similar to DoDEA and CDCs.

"We need so many languages, it takes so long to learn them, and our needs change so rapidly, that we must take a longer, more strategic view of language training and education. It is in the long-term interests of DoD to invest in these skills early."

**- Dr. Richard Brecht,
Center for the Advanced**

- **Emphasize the Recruitment of Language-, Region- and Culture-Enabled Personnel**

Expand the focus of recruitment to target candidates who already possess significant language, regional, and cultural skills (e.g., Heritage speakers, the National Security Education Program's (NSEP) Language Flagship graduates, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, linguists from other professions) for non-linguist or other positions that require language proficiency or regional/cultural expertise.

- **Transform the Assignment Process to Maintain and Enhance Language, Regional, and Cultural Skills**

Include personnel's language, regional, and cultural skills as a key criterion for both military and civilian assignments and align individuals to the region where they have experience/expertise if possible. This will improve the sustainment and utilization of these skills and enable the Department to capitalize on individuals' training and education and build stronger relationships with our partners and allies.

- **Incorporate Immersion Opportunities into Career Development**

Increase immersion opportunities and reduce experiential barriers as part of the language and regional professionals' career development process, as well as for a subset of the GPF. Additionally, require immersion experience for commissioning ROTC and academy students, such as semester study abroad, to increase language proficiency and cultural understanding. Further, the Department should be proactive in incorporating local language and culture into day-to-day operations for all Service members abroad.

- **Strengthen Programs for Military and Civilian Language and Regional Professionals**

Improve the current, active-duty Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program to reduce the barriers for FAOs to pursue a second operational specialty through dual tracking and enhance promotion potential by increasing career-enhancing opportunities. When not deployed, assign personnel job-related tasks to promote sustainment and utilization of their skills. Increase the number of active-duty FAOs and create a FAO-like program for Civilian, National Guard/Reserve and Enlisted personnel.

- **Build Surge Capability**

Develop a DoD Civilian Language Corps modeled after the National Language Service Corps; better utilize Reserve component personnel with language, regional, and cultural skills; and develop a distinct subset of the GPF to serve as a “bench” for surge capabilities.

- **Improve the Compensation Structure**

Enhance the effectiveness of the compensation program to encourage personnel to report and sustain their skills, as well as to improve recruitment and retention of military and civilian personnel with language, regional, and cultural abilities.

- **Promote a Lifetime of Service**

Design and implement mechanisms needed to integrate “up-or-stay”, on-and-off ramps, and revised retirement rules into the Department’s life cycle management to allow for continued service. Provide post-separation opportunities for personnel to leverage their skills in programs like the “Linguist-to-Teacher” program or the National Language Service Corps.

Challenge 3: How Can We Establish and Strengthen Interagency and International Partnerships to Increase Interoperability and Build Capacity.

The Department of Defense as an enterprise and the United States as a nation require the support and expertise of other Departments, institutions, and partner countries to meet today's multidimensional challenges. Both stability and kinetic operations take place in complex environments that require critical language, regional, and cultural skills to ensure effective collaboration with interagency and international partners. Across the organization, DoD must create opportunities for collaboration with partners by establishing initiatives that maximize interaction, relationship building and resource sharing. Interagency and international partnerships are key enablers for mission success.

The following recommended solutions were developed to facilitate and improve interoperability through partnerships between DoD and other organizations and countries:

- **Explore the Use of Renaissance Teams to Tackle Cross-Cutting National Security Challenges**

Using Provincial Reconstruction Teams as a model for interagency collaboration, establish "renaissance" teams that draw on various U.S. Government agencies' expertise (to address cross-cutting international challenges that impact the Nation and the world, such as climate change, energy, and food security.

- **Expand and Formalize Interagency and International Exchange Programs**

Ensure exchange programs serve as the foundation for interoperability between agencies and partner nations. DoD Service members and staff will serve rotations at other U.S. Government agencies and with partner nation militaries and have the option to repeat rotations to build continuity within a region or Agency. Designated personnel from specific career fields and language-, region- and culture-enabled personnel will be prioritized for interagency and international immersion exchanges.

- **Expand the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP)**

Expand the National Guard SPP to all 50 States (currently 43 states are participating). States with large National Guard populations will partner with regions and countries neighboring their current international partners. The program focuses operational units on specific regions to the maximum extent possible in order to ensure continuity of operations and relationship-building.

"We are lacking a total government approach [to international operations]. We talk about it, but it's not there."

**- General Anthony Zinni,
USMC (Ret)**

- **Create Partnerships with Educational Institutions to Build and Sustain Personnel with Language, Regional, and Cultural Capabilities**

Partner with academia as a resource for sustaining language, regional, and cultural capabilities for non-deployed DoD personnel. Form mutually beneficial relationships by inviting DoD language, regional, and cultural experts to serve as tutors and fellows at academic institutions when they are “in garrison.”

- **Standardize Language Testing, Evaluation and Learning Systems across US Government Agencies**

Drive the development and sharing of common testing, assessment and training mechanisms across all agencies for greater reciprocity as well as for pooling of resources (both human resources and training resources.) Agencies will identify a common baseline for language learning and evaluation that will become the interagency standard.

“Language and culture goes right to the heart of partnerships – we cannot continue to expect our partners to speak our language and know our culture without reciprocating.”

**- General Douglas Fraser,
Commander, USSOUTHCOM**

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Clifford Stanley called for the Summit to serve as “recognition of the challenge to move [forward]” in identifying, building, and strengthening language, regional, and cultural capabilities in the Department of Defense. This White Paper, *Language and Culture: Changing Perspective*, documents the bold and innovative ideas set forth by the senior leaders, panelists and participants during the Summit -- ideas that will catalyze a Department-wide change in perspective.

The DoD Summit, *Language and Culture: A Strategic Imperative*, was the most recent and significant step in an ongoing effort to enhance DoD language, regional, and cultural capabilities. It is a crucial shift towards the fundamental, Department-wide organizational change needed to institutionalize these essential capabilities. To accomplish this profound endeavor, DoD must first determine our future language and cultural capabilities by developing a capabilities- and capacity-based system to identify and generate accurate demand signals. Second, DoD must promote the recruitment, retention, sustainment, recognition and utilization of personnel with language, regional, and cultural capabilities throughout a career. Finally, DoD has to establish and strengthen interagency and international partnerships to build capacity and increase interoperability, to bridge the gaps between DoD, U.S. agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as between the U.S. and its partner nations.

As the Department moves forward to implement the *DoD Strategic Plan for Language Skills, Regional Expertise and Cultural Capabilities*, this paper will be a foundational guide to forge a way ahead toward the paradigm shift -- a changing perspective -- called for by senior leaders and endorsed by the Summit participants. As Dr. Clifford Stanley declared, “the time is now.”