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## **DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE**

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### **CURRENT NEWS 7 DECEMBER 2010**

#### **Improved Marine Corps Language Training**

Marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C. and Camp Pendleton, Calif., now have the option of pursuing intermediate and advanced language study before deploying to Afghanistan. The bases recently added two new courses in Pashto and Dari which are Afghanistan's main languages. The new courses were added in answer to demand from operational forces, most now working to tame Helmand province in the country's south. The basic language course is unchanged. Marines will still complete about 40 hours of live instruction and 100 hours of computer-based self-study which will help them master about 50 words and phrases. But motivated Marines who have a knack for languages can now boost their communication skills with intermediate and advanced options.

#### **Foreign language skills come first: survey**

The Eurobarometer survey Employers' perception of graduate employability released last Thursday reveals that foreign language skills come first among post-secondary graduate employers across Europe when it comes to the next generation of recruits. Although the graduate employers polled (from workplaces with 50 or more employees) were less likely to highlight the importance of foreign language skills with regard to current recruits (33% rated these skills as "very important" and 34% as "rather important"), 30% said that foreign language skills are the most important skills with regard to the future. In Hungary 59% said it was very important while 36% found it rather important. Overall this means that foreign language skills were ranked as a higher requirement for future graduates than the ability to adapt to new situations (27%) and planning and organisational skills (23%).

#### **Budget-Cutting Colleges Bid Some Languages Adieu**

THE bad news was not unexpected: sweeping cutbacks at the [State University of New York at Albany](#), prompted by sweeping cutbacks in state aid. The reactions, too, had a whiff of the familiar: student rallies, faculty resolutions, an online petition. But then came an op-ed article in the French newspaper [Le Monde](#), calling the cuts Orwellian. And an open letter from the French philosopher [Jean-Luc Nancy](#), sarcastically suggesting that universities give up teaching the humanities altogether. The university announced this fall that it would stop letting new students major in French, Italian, Russian and the classics.

#### **America's Chinese Problem**

Cutting-edge programs like those at the immersion charter school Yu Ying in Washington, D.C., and reports of Chinese-language courses popping up in heartland America would all seem to suggest that Americans are on the fast track to learning Chinese—and ultimately understanding China. But the sad fact is that Americans are not learning Mandarin, the main tongue spoken in mainland China, in droves. Just take a look at the numbers. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, in 2008 only 4 percent of middle and high schools that offer foreign-language instruction included Mandarin. That's up from 1 percent in 1997. While that initially seems like respectable growth, the same survey reveals that 13 percent of schools still offer Latin and a full 10-fold more schools offer French than Mandarin. How is it that one a dead language and the other a language primarily used to impress your dinner companion can trounce one spoken by 1.3 billion natives and many millions more expats and immigrants abroad?

### **Students of Estonian Language Showing More Interest**

As more non-Estonian speakers show interest to learn the national tongue, the Ministry of Education promises to allocate extra money for compensating language tuition to those who successfully complete their exams. "The Estonian language is needed everywhere in all affairs [in Estonia]," said Minister of Education Tõnis Lukas. "This attitude has been confirmed by data from the last few years showing rising interest among people to improve their Estonian language skills. This year, to our delight, there is a large number of people taking and passing exams. To preserve interest, the state will continue compensating language courses for those who successfully complete the exams."

### **Port superintendent ready to fight for return of school programs**

Saying it's time for a turnaround, Superintendent Marc Kerble told the community last night that he's ready to fight for the return of foreign language at the middle school, a school chorale and band program, and numerous other lost programs he views as vital to creating an excellent school system.

## **PREVIOUS NEWS**

### **Female Marines prepare for deployment, mission**

A dozen women sit huddled on the floor of a narrow carpeted room. Half are Afghans, their faces half-shrouded by scarves as they speak through an interpreter. Half are female Marines, who have shed their Kevlar helmets but remain armed with flak jackets and rifles. What had taken place wasn't a shura in an Afghan village, but it was just about as close as you can get without leaving North Carolina. This week, the Marine female engagement team attached to Regimental Combat Team 8 trained aboard Camp Lejeune in a military operations in urban terrain town, a simulated environment complete with native Afghan roleplayers, realistic city layout, and the threat of hidden explosive devices at every street corner.

### **Turning pain into progress: Kunar women's rights movement gains momentum, support**

What amount of suffering would a person have to endure to commit suicide by lighting themselves on fire? This was the question that came to mind as Nasima Shafiq Sadat, Kunar Province Director of Women's Affairs, recounted the tales of sorrow of Afghanistan's women to two U.S. servicemembers from the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team's Female Engagement Team. It was a day with two purposes, said Dr. Rafiullah Bidar, Jalalabad regional program manager for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. "First, we want to achieve awareness, especially about the law protecting women from abuse. Second, we want to discuss better implementation of the law in Kunar."

### **Technology and Foreign Language**

Series of slides regarding the use of technology in foreign language acquisition.

### **Russian Language Skills of Immigrant Workers from CIS Countries Falling Every Year**

Every year since the end of the Soviet Union, the share of migrant workers coming to the Russian Federation from CIS countries who have a minimal competence in the Russian language has declined, according to surveys conducted by the Moscow Center for Migration Research. Part of the reason behind this reflects a shift in the source of such migrants – in the 1990s, most gastarbeiters in the Russian Federation came from Ukraine and Belarus while now the overwhelming majority comes from Central Asian states – but another part is the general decline in Russian language competence in these countries.

### **School Administrators Work To Develop Foreign Language Exams**

With New York State no longer developing final exams for select foreign languages and threatening to eliminate more due to budget restrictions, a group of Long Island school administrators has met in an effort to develop proficiency tests for middle school and high school students. The Foreign Language Association of Chairpersons and Supervisors ([FLACS](#)), which includes representatives from 60 school districts across Nassau and Suffolk counties, held a public meeting Wednesday at Half Hollow Hills East High School in Dix Hills. FLACS officials said the group is working to fill the void created by the state.

Districts that do not join the consortium will have to create these exams for themselves, since the state is no longer providing them.

### **Gates Approves COIN Standards For Afghanistan**

*(DefenseNews.com)*...Kate Brannen

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has approved a list of essential counterinsurgency (COIN) skills that troops need to be successful in Afghanistan.

### **First US trained Afghan chopper pilots return to Kabul**

Afghan 1st Lt. Abdul Saboor Amin and 1st Lt. Ahmad Fawad Haidari became the first two Afghan Air Force helicopter pilots to successfully complete language and pilot training in the United States, recently returning to begin Mi-17 conversion training at the Afghan Air Force Base in Kabul, Afghanistan. The first stop on their American tour took them to San Antonio, Texas and the Defense Language Institute English Language, where the pilots were given an intensive six month language course. Since English is the international language of aviation, it was crucial for the two to be proficient. This importance was underscored by the fact that many of the 62 pilot candidates who were dropped from the program saw their dreams dashed during this phase due to a lack of English comprehension, said Amin and Haidari.

### **Wicomico superintendent, school leaders to encourage Chinese language instruction**

Wicomico County Superintendent John Fredericksen is traveling to China in an effort to bring Chinese language instruction to Maryland public schools. The trip is funded by China's Confucius Institute, though Fredericksen said he is paying his own airfare. Planning for the trip involved Maryland Superintendent of Schools Nancy Grasmick, Washington County public schools Superintendent Betty Morgan, University of Maryland College of Education Dean Donna Wiseman, Fredericksen and other educators. Several world language educators and leaders of the Board of Visitors of the Confucius Institute of the University of Maryland will be among the 27-member delegation.

### **High SAT often not enough**

Beyond SAT scores, admissions committees look for the number of Advanced Placement classes students take and how highly they score on those tests. A score of 5 is needed at most highly selective colleges to test out of a subject. Caveat: Yale and other Ivy League schools have established new policies requiring students to take a foreign language, even if they tested out on the AP exam. Proficiency in a foreign language makes sense in an increasingly interlocked world.

### **Languages needed to boost exports**

BUSINESSES and language experts in Wales are backing calls for more young people to learn **foreign languages**. Research shows that Welsh firms could increase sales by 44.5% if they recruited more staff with languages skills. The calls follow a Welsh Assembly Government action plan to boost modern foreign languages learning. The average take-up of languages at GCSE level has dropped to 27% in Wales, yet businesses in a wide range of industries need candidates with practical language skills.

### **Vacationing in a native tongue**

Like most Americans, Cynthia Giambalvo Waage of Del Mar, Calif., did not speak a foreign language. Her Italian-born grandparents spoke only English at home. "I really had no interest in learning Italian at all," she said. That changed when her husband suggested they take classes at the Italian Cultural Center of San Diego. "This will probably last a month" she recalled thinking. Soon after, on a **trip to Italy**, a travel companion left a backpack with passports and other valuables on a train. With rudimentary Italian, Waage explained the situation to an officer, who located the bag at a nearby station, untouched. "So I was a hero," Waage said. "It was great motivation to learn Italian."

### **HUMAN LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE 2010**

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence are proud to present the Human Language Technology (HLT) Showcase. The Showcase will bring language technology professionals and industry leaders together to display, demonstrate, and

discuss language tools, technologies, software applications, and programs that benefit the Department of Defense community. These technologies have a direct impact and application to the various Department of Defense disciplines. Representatives from various Intelligence Agencies within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence will also attend the event.

The Showcase will take place from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 2, 2010 at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The Human Language Technology Showcase will feature products and programs relating to machine translation tools, foreign language speech tools, language-in-image technologies, information discovery tools, linguist aids and translation services, and language learning educational tools. Attendees will have the opportunity to network, share ideas, ask questions to industry experts and engage in hands-on demonstrations. In addition, informative presentations from experts in government and industry will be offered concurrently with the exhibits.

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### **Two More Afghan Air Force Lieutenants Head to the US for Training**

On Dec. 1, the Afghan Air Force's English Immersion Lab know as the Thunder Lab graduated another two pilot candidates who will now proceed to more advanced training in the U.S. The two officers are going directly to the U.S. for language training at Defense Language Institute in San Antonio, Texas, and then to pilot training at either Columbus Air Force Base, Miss. for fixed wing aircraft or Fort Rucker, Ala. for helicopters.

### **B.C. Must Invest in Mandarin Classes**

A University of B.C. professor was quoted this week in the Sun as saying B.C. will have to invest more in Chinese-language classes from kindergarten to post-secondary if it truly wants to be a gateway for business with China. "*We live in a province that is heavily oriented toward Asian in business ties, but the reality on the ground in terms of investments so citizens of B.C. know something about Asia is essentially a generation behind,*" said Ross King, the head of UBC's Asian studies department.

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### **Marine doing 'something great' with her life**

And the life Pacheco has lived in Afghanistan as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps' first official Female Engagement Team is very far from the life she lived in the rural bedroom community of Pipersville. She would then spend the day patrolling the dusty roads of the Helmand province in southern Afghanistan - a region where both the U.S. military and the Taliban have a strong presence and relations with the populace are tense. She would pat down the women who approached the Marine Corps' base to make sure they were not carrying bombs or other weapons. Or she would go with several other female Marines to the homes of local widows and other women to help give them medical treatment or teach them ways to become financially independent.

### **Chinese exchange widening horizons**

Chris Cordner moved from California to Maine and gave up a scholarship to another school because the University of Maine at Farmington has a long-established Chinese exchange program with the Beijing University of Technology. This year, Cordner, an international studies major at UMF, is racing to learn Chinese in classes taught by a visiting professor from BJUT. By next fall, Cordner plans to be studying in Beijing, China's burgeoning capital city of 22 million people, and attending classes with 23,000 other students at BJUT.

### **Bilingual Mandate Challenges Chicago's Public Preschools**

Administrators in the Chicago public schools are seeking to strike the right balance between providing guidance and permitting flexibility as they put in place the nation's first state mandate for providing bilingual education to preschoolers. [New rules](#)  approved by the Illinois state board of education in June flesh out a January 2009 change that essentially extends the same requirements for educating English-language learners in K-12 public schools to 3- and 4-year-olds in public preschool centers. ("[Illinois May Mandate ELL Rules for Preschool](#)," April 28, 2010.)