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Helmand Council Members Face Dangerous Task: Reaching Out To Other Women

(Stars and Stripes (Europe Edition))...Nancy Montgomery

...Helmandi, Sharifa, her sister Karima and a woman named Bibi Laiga left their homes in the district capital, Lashkar Gah, for a tour of the town's hospital, meetings with local officials and, separately, local women. The event was part of a larger Marine effort to connect the Afghan people with their nascent government. It was also one of the attempts by Regional Command-Southwest civil affairs and female engagement teams to reach out to some of the most isolated and powerless women in the country — gingerly, in hopes of not creating a backlash.

Simulation keeps Combat Center Marines in fight

The Deployable Virtual Training Environment is a simulation designed to teach Marines up to five languages, cultural nuances, convoy operations and the steps to call for fire support. The language program even teaches the Marines parts of languages other commercial language learning programs don't, said George Hernandez, an instructor at the Battle Simulation Center.

Army Maj. Graduates from DLI program

Army Maj. Craig C. Colucci is one of a group of U.S. service members who graduated from the Afghanistan-Pakistan (AF-PAK) Hands Program at the Defense Language Institute, Presidio of Monterey, Monterey. Graduates have, or will soon be, deployed to Afghanistan as part of their training commitment. Upon arrival in Afghanistan, the cadre members will receive additional language and counterinsurgency training and then sent out to serve in the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan for immersion with their Afghan counterparts.

Air Force Culture and Language Center develops cross-cultural competent airmen

Iraq, Afghanistan, Horn of Africa, Korea, Sudan, Kosovo ... since the creation of the Air Force, especially for the past 18 years, in times of crisis the United States has called on airmen as the country's first responders. Global vigilance, global reach, global power. That is what the Air Force does. That is what Air University prepares its students for. "But how do you prepare for an expeditionary career when you don't know where the next crisis will be, or where you're going next?" asked Dr. Brian Selmeski. The Air Force's answer is cross-cultural competence, or 3C: the ability to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately and effectively act, in a culturally complex environment to achieve the desired effect. This will prepare airmen for an uncertain operational future, helping them achieve success anytime, anywhere. Developing 3C airmen is the mission of AFCLC.

Female Engagement Team (USMC)

United States Marine Female Engagement Teams have their origins in Iraq and Afghanistan during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. During these conflicts, units recognized the importance of communication with the female Muslim populations in these regions. The first concept of a FET was largely based on the Marine "Lioness" teams of Iraq, which had been successfully utilized to search female Iraqis for concealed weapons and contraband items during a wide variety of missions. Since then the teams have evolved into an important resource that can reach the local Afghan communities in ways that have not been done before.

GAFB squadron honored

Officials recently announced the 316th Training Squadron at Goodfellow Air Force Base earned the Command Language Program of the Year award for the second consecutive year. The squadron will go on to represent the Air Force at the Department of Defense level. The 316th Training Squadron is

responsible for monitoring and training more than 2,000 cryptologic language analysts annually in a joint service environment, officials said.

Lingual differences hurt learning, LeMoine says

Students who have learned different English dialects encounter difficulties in their education due to a language gap known as the "deficit perspective," according to Noma LeMoine, chief executive officer of LeMoine and Associates Educational Consulting. These students, known as "Standard English learners," should be provided with a bilingual education in order to facilitate their learning experience, LeMoine said in a lecture at the Rockefeller Center on Thursday.

Goodbye, cruel words: English. It's dead to me.

The English language, which arose from humble Anglo-Saxon roots to become the lingua franca of 600 million people worldwide and the dominant lexicon of international discourse, is dead. It succumbed last month at the age of 1,617 after a long illness. It is survived by an ignominiously diminished form of itself. The end came quietly on Aug. 21 on the letters page of The Washington Post. A reader castigated the newspaper for having written that Sasha Obama was the "youngest" daughter of the president and first lady, rather than their "younger" daughter. In so doing, however, the letter writer called the first couple the "Obama's." This, too, was published, constituting an illiterate proofreading of an illiterate criticism of an illiteracy. Moments later, already severely weakened, English died of shame.

Tech professor's study targets better speech therapy for bilingual kids

Dr. Sue Ann Lee, a Texas Tech Health Sciences Center School of Allied Health Sciences professor specializing in speech and language sciences, is working to help better equip speech pathologists when it comes to treating bilingual children. Her focus is at the beginning. With a grant from the National Institute of Health's Eunice Kennedy Shiver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, Lee is studying how bilingual children without speech problems acquire speech. She will note when they start to speak and when they begin to differentiate each language.

Fallows talks Mandarin, Chinese culture

Fallows and her husband, a writer for The Atlantic, went to Shanghai for three years to research the effects of the Internet on Chinese society. Her experiences during the project evolved into a critically acclaimed book, "Dreaming in Chinese," which approaches Chinese culture from a linguistic perspective. "It felt like somebody had grabbed my mouth and I could not utter or understand a single word," Fallows said of her arrival in China. She noted that the dialect spoken in Shanghai is different from the she had learned back home in Washington, D.C. "I thought my teacher must have been teaching me Cantonese instead of Mandarin."

Calif Chinese program prompts school board recall

Four members of a suburban school board are being targeted in a recall effort over their support for a middle-school language program funded by the Chinese government, one of the members said Friday. Under the program, which already is in place at dozens of other schools across the [United States](#), the district was to receive \$30,000 a year for language and culture programs at Cedarlane Middle School, along with some 1,000 textbooks, [CDs](#) and other educational materials. The recall petition served to Chen claims he "believes that the United States will be subservient to China and manipulates students to serve China's government," among other claims.

Fairfax County Public Schools

Fairfax County Public Schools' (FCPS) [online registration for two-way immersion and partial-immersion](#) elementary school foreign language is open. Current prekindergarten students may apply for the two-way immersion program, and current kindergarten students may apply for the partial-immersion world language program for the 2011-12 school year. The deadline for registration is February 18. [Details](#).

PREVIOUS NEWS

DoD Civilians Help Afghan Rebuilding Effort

(FederalNewsRadio.com)...Suzanne Kubota

The Ministry of Defense Advisors Program is designed to help the Afghan government build civilian capacity within the Defense Ministry. The goal is to send as many as a hundred DOD civilian advisors to train Ministry employees on everything from acquisition to logistics.

Program implements language improvement initiatives

The International Affairs Specialist program has revamped its training, testing and maintenance policies to better prepare regional affairs strategists to meet mission demands, officials said. RAS officers serve as attachés and security cooperation officers. They also serve in other positions that require sustained personal interaction with partner nations and require professional foreign language speaking proficiency to be effective, said Lt. Col. Keli Bedics, International Affairs Specialist program chief.

Wednesday Warfighter: Work to Be Done for Kunar's Women

Members of the Forward Operating Base Wright Female Engagement Team were in attendance to help interact with the Afghan women and conduct the personal hygiene class. It was surprising to me how the most basic things we take for granted are crucially important to these women. I was eager to come and work with women here specifically because they have had such a difficult life. Although there are women across Afghanistan that are getting involved in government and working on higher-level issues like women-run businesses, it is evident to me that most women in Kunar Province are not getting their basic needs met. Few have running water or electricity. They do not generally have access to health care. Many women here still do not have access to school and cannot read or write. These problems need to be solved before they can worry about politics, elections or opening a store for business.

The Unilingual Americans: America must strengthen its foreign language standards

New Jersey educational budgets were hit hard in 2010, and amidst the frenzy of necessary spending cuts, there was a clear victim: [foreign languages](#). My town's public schools were no exception. During the debates, often expressed was the misguided view that foreign language study, at an elementary school or middle school level, is a luxury. Yet in our ever-globalizing world where the number of native English speakers is [decreasing](#), foreign language proficiency is a necessity. Sadly, the experience of my school district is far from unique, and national statistics are not encouraging. A [2006 study](#) by the U.S. Department of Education found that only 31 percent of elementary schools (and only 24 percent of public elementary schools) reported offering a foreign language.

UI launches program for cultural competency

A relaunched series at the University of Iowa aims to enrich faculty members with one concept: cultural competency. The Staff Language and Culture Services will restart "Accents In the Workplace and Education" this semester, said director Jane Gressang. The voluntary program aims to inform UI faculty members about adjusting to an environment in which there are non-native English speakers and cultural differences. Judie Hermsen, the senior administrative director of UI Human Resources, said it increases knowledge of other cultures.

Teaching immigrants is growing challenge for Nashville schools

Students whose first language isn't English were 15 percent of Metro's public school enrollment in 2005. They're 22 percent today. The majority require special services that, a decade ago, local educators barely knew existed. In 2008, after a state Office of Civil Rights violation over foreign-language speakers' treatment, the district was forced to rethink its approach. The state commissioned George Washington University to study how Metro taught students categorized as English Language Learners. The report revealed students were grouped in classrooms away from their English-speaking peers and stalled out academically after a few years. Programs varied in content and quality among schools. Metro started by changing top administrators, hiring more translators and teachers, and mainstreaming that population into regular classrooms. It made a difference. Data released Friday show 78 percent of Metro's English Language Learners speak, read and write proficiently, well over the 62 percent state target. Nearly 19 percent exited special programs on time, compared with the 16 percent state target.

New ASTM Committee to Develop Standards for Language Services

Newly formed ASTM International [Committee F43 on Foreign Language Services and Products](#) will develop standards that promote best practices for users and providers of language services and products. The new standards development group will also serve as a resource on language translation and proficiency for law enforcement, intelligence and other federal agencies.

[MLA Announces two searchable tools](#)

The Modern Language Association (MLA) announces two searchable tools presenting enrollments in languages other than English taught in institutions of higher education in the United States. The first is the user-friendly [Language Enrollment Database, 1958–2009](#), which makes available language enrollment data over time. This data is a compilation of enrollment numbers from all the MLA language enrollment surveys, starting with the first one in 1958. None of this data was previously available in electronic format. The second is an enhanced [MLA Language Map](#) that shows where languages are taught in the context of where they are spoken. Enrollment figures are available for each language mapped, as are the locations and size of language programs.

[4 Tips to Learn a Foreign Language in College](#)

American businesses are now focused on tapping massive emerging markets in China and India, and leaders in those markets have their eyes peeled for young talent who can immediately flourish in a foreign setting. Given the increasingly international nature of the business world, the need for college students to learn a foreign language—particularly in-demand languages like Chinese, Spanish, or Arabic—is greater than ever, education experts say. "Fluency in a foreign language involves a skill set that is now very important to many employers, especially those who require their employees to travel overseas," says Kathy Mahnke, director of the Center for World Languages and Cultures at the [University of Denver](#). "Being able to communicate in a colleague's native tongue helps business negotiations as well as social interactions with that colleague go much more smoothly than does working through a translator. There are just some cultural aspects of communication that do not translate well." "Americans no longer have the luxury of staying mono-lingual," said Michelle Randall.

[Multilingualism promotes cultural understanding](#)

In most foreign countries, chances are that we Americans will find English speakers to understand us. English has become the language of business and diplomacy. Why bother to learn a foreign language, many of us ask, when everywhere we go, someone speaks English? The sad, and unintended, consequences of our reluctance to learn foreign languages will become clearer in the coming decades. There is much more involved in speaking another language than appears on the surface, and it's critically important that we Americans realize this, especially if we are to compete on an international basis. Research shows that speaking a foreign language isn't only a way to communicate what we want, or to increase enjoyment of a travel experience. Speaking a foreign language allows us to understand people on a deeper level than the mere words can denote. The thought processes hard-wired into our brains by the way our languages are constructed are subtle and far-reaching.

[Sumac to start dual language classes](#)

A new L-STEM Program (Language, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) will debut at Sumac Elementary School in the 2011-2012 school year.