Chapter Title: Introduction

Book Title: An Assessment of the Ability of the U.S. Department of Defense and the Services to Measure and Track Language and Culture Training and Capabilities Among General Purpose Forces

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Defense Language Office (DLO) tasked MITRE Corporation and the RAND National Defense Research Institute (NDRI) at the RAND Corporation, two federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs), to jointly address questions concerning the U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD's) ability to measure and track language, regional expertise, and culture (LREC) training and capabilities for general purpose forces (GPF).

Background

Government directives provide basic guidelines for GPF personnel with respect to LREC training (e.g., DoD Directive [DoDD] 1322.10 or counterinsurgency [COIN] training guidance). However, although these directives and guidelines are based in field expertise, there is little tracking from them to the specific mission requirements. Furthermore, there is concern that the current means of tracking such training and capabilities are incomplete or inconsistent and that they do not adequately reflect a unit's readiness or effectiveness in terms of mission success. Detailed specification, tracking, and validation are needed.

Objective and Research Questions

The objective of this task is to provide information to policymakers about the available data to track LREC training and skills, as well as available information on how LREC affects readiness and mission accomplishment.

To reach the stated objective, the following research questions were addressed:

1. According to the best available data, what is the relevance of LREC training and capabilities to overall unit readiness and mission accomplishment?
2. How does DoD currently track LREC training and capabilities of GPF?
3. To what extent does this tracking adequately reflect unit readiness and the ability to accomplish missions?
4. How can DoD improve tracking of LREC training and capabilities to adequately reflect unit readiness?

Scope and Organization of This Report

This project focuses on GPF. It does not include information relating to language professionals, such as translators, interpreters, and foreign area officers (FAOs), or relating to commands

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or agencies. It does include information relating to nonlanguage professionals deploying with National Guard and Reserve Components.

Chapter Two describes the methodology and data used in the study. Chapter Three addresses the first research question and uses available data to assess the importance of LREC training and skills for mission readiness and mission accomplishment. Chapter Four addresses the second research question and addresses how DoD currently tracks LREC training and skills and whether or not that tracking adequately reflects mission readiness. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the findings and offers recommendations for linking LREC training and skills to mission readiness and success. In addition, we include four appendixes. Appendix A lists the policies and directives we reviewed for this analysis. Appendix B lists our interviewees, and Appendix C provides the interview questions we used. Appendix D details the confidence intervals (CIs) for our analysis of the Status of Forces Survey of Active-Duty Members (SOF-A).

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