AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

FIRE, READY, AIM:

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL SKILLS DURING OFFICER FORMAL EDUCATION

by

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Contents

Illustrations

Page

Executive Summary

Recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan underscore the assertion that the US military needs to be able to interact effectively across cultural boundaries. Consequently, there has been a significant effort to emphasize development of intercultural skills in Air Force (AF) professional military education (PME). This paper provides a vector check on recent efforts to energize intercultural curricula across the continuum of officer formal education. Specifically, it examines intercultural curricula at the US Air Force Academy (USAFA), Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), Officer Training School, Air and Space Basic Course (ASBC), Squadron Officer's School (SOS), Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) and Air War College (AWC), analyzing how each program teaches subjects related to building officers' intercultural skills—namely in the areas of cultural awareness, regional understanding and foreign language competency.

The author focused on core curricula, rather than optional or elective offerings, under the premise that core curricula best reflects institutional values and priorities in educating the mainstream officer. The methodology for the study was to examine each institution's plan for teaching culture, region and language in Academic Year 2007, noting changes from previous years based on leadership's direction to emphasize intercultural skills. To gather data, the author interviewed faculty and staff at all of the institutions, reviewed applicable lesson plans and consulted experts in the field. Given the picture of what will be taught across the continuum of education, the analysis endeavors to compare the anticipated product against the perceived

expectations. In other words, what will be taught in Academic Year 2007, and does it adequately address the perceived need? The subsequent paragraphs outline the author's conclusions.

Despite attempts to accentuate it across all levels of PME, the AF still does not still does not adequately emphasize cultural awareness. While colleges should be lauded for actively seeking opportunities to more effectively integrate aspects of culture into their existing curricula in supporting roles, no institution has stepped up to the plate to provide officers a solid enough foundation in the fundamentals of cultural awareness and cross-cultural communications. ACSC and AWC lessons attempt to introduce the fundamentals of culture, but these efforts do not allot enough time to adequately address the subject. Plus, they are too late in officers' careers. Instead, ASBC should institute a three-module, one-day course aimed at laying the foundation for future cultural learning. The first module would address the fundamental dimensions of culture while the second focused on internal and external perceptions of American culture. The last module would reinforce the first two through small group exercises designed to evaluate situations through the lens of culture and practice cross-cultural communications. Of note, in order to maximize cultural awareness exposure for officers at various stages of PME, AU should mandate a similar course for SOS, ACSC and AWC. This foundational course should continue for the next five to six years—until the bulk of graduates from one PME level begin to attend the next higher level course. The paper also provides specific recommendations for follow on culture-related lessons at SOS, ACSC and AWC.

Of the three intercultural skill subsets, developing regional understanding is clearly the strength across the various curricula. At each PME level, from accessions to AWC, core requirements focus on regional studies. Although the world in which the AF operates is far too diverse to make students particularly knowledgeable about every region, the courses do work

together to provide both specific regional understanding about current issues as well as a framework of analysis for future challenges.

Regarding language training, the current AF vector to fill the perceived need is to increase foreign language requirements in USAFA and ROTC. Unfortunately this plan runs a strong risk of overselling what it will actually deliver. Notwithstanding perceptions among AU faculty and Air Staff officers, the policies being implemented will result in only about 18% of line officers who will have had a requirement to take four semesters of a foreign language. The accessed foreign language proficiency will not only be quantitatively less than expected, but also qualitatively so. Four semesters is unlikely to produce in incoming second lieutenants the anticipated 1+/1+ proficiency level in the easier languages—much less in the sought after, more difficult languages such as Arabic or Chinese. Additionally, without a broader AF strategy to develop and maintain language skills throughout officers' career, language skills will wither on the vine. If the AF truly believes it important for officers to have language skills, then it must articulate linguistic requirements and build career-long processes to support them.

Introduction

Recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have underscored the assertion that the United States military needs to be able to interact effectively across cultural boundaries. Many in both the press and academia have detailed examples where a lack of cultural understanding and language skills has negatively impacted the mission at hand. The prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib remains a well-known case in point where cultural dissonance was fundamental to the transgressions committed there. Most instances, however, are not nearly as nefarious. Stories abound of good soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen trying to do the right thing under difficult circumstances only to be stymied by failures to communicate across cultural boundaries.

America's civilian and military leaders not only have recognized the shortcomings, but they also appreciate that remedies must come about largely through better education and training. Responses have included broad policy initiatives such as President Bush's National Security Language Initiative which seeks $114 million dollars in funding for fiscal year 2007. The program aims to, "Further strengthen national security and prosperity in the 21st century through education, especially in developing foreign language skills."[1] With new and expanded programs ranging from kindergarten through universities and into the workforce, the initiative intends to dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critical need foreign languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Farsi.[2]

Congress has also been involved. The ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, Representative Ike Skelton (MO), after hearing testimony in October 2003 on lessons learned from Iraq sent a letter to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld urging him to invest in cultural awareness training. He wrote, "In simple terms, if we had better understood the Iraqi culture and mindset, our war plans would have been even better than they were, the plan for the

post-war period and all of its challenges would have been far better, and we may be better prepared for the 'long slog', as you put it, that we must be prepared to face in order to win the peace in Iraq. I am convinced that we must improve our 'cultural awareness' capability by incorporating it into the curricula at the staff and war colleges."[3]

That message, among others like it both internal and external to the organization, did not go unheard in the Department of Defense (DoD). The last several years has seen a flurry of activity across DoD seeking to improve the military's capabilities in areas of cultural awareness and linguistic competency. The DoD-level centerpiece to this effort has been the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap. The result of two years of study and published in February of 2005, the Language Roadmap recognized, "…the reality that the Department of Defense needs a significantly improved organic capability in emerging languages and dialects, a greater competence and regional area skills in those languages and dialects, and a surge capability to rapidly expand its language capabilities on short notice."[4]

The Language Roadmap established many specific objectives and timelines for the DoD and subordinate services to markedly improve language capabilities. Here are a few examples of assigned tasks from the document: [5]

- Require combatant commanders to identify linguistic and translator requirements as part of their contingency and deliberate planning processes for operations and plans.
- Develop a recruiting plan for officers and civilians with foreign language skills in universities.
- Ensure incorporation of regional area content in language training, professional military education and development, and pre-deployment training.
- Establish the requirement that junior officers complete language training.
- Make foreign language ability a criterion for general officer/flag officer advancement.
- Implement language and region familiarization training during the deployment cycle.
- Create courses for emerging language needs.
- Establish "reachback" capability for deployed forces; i.e. call-back to interpretation/translation centers.

Overall, the document is bold and aggressive in its perspective. Although it acknowledges the need for regional expertise outside of language, as its name implies, it is very heavily weighted toward language. As the debate continues on how to best solve the challenge of educating and training military members in the area of culture and language the DoD-level strategy, as embodied in the Language Roadmap, has been to focus more so on language, than on culture.[6] Put another way, it is the "Big L, little c" approach.

In addition to direction from DoD, Air Force leadership clearly saw the need to for Airmen to be internationally savvy. In a July 2002 Sight Picture, Air Force Chief of Staff General John Jumper wrote, "To be truly successful at sustaining coalitions, pursuing regional stability, and contributing to multi-national operations, our expeditionary forces must have sufficient capability and depth in foreign area expertise and language skills…. These international skills are true force multipliers and essential to our ability to operate globally."[7] Also, in contrast to the DoD focus on "Big L, little c," General Jumper saw the way ahead to be closer to "Big C, little l."[8] In a June 2004 speech to the National Language Conference, he said that expanding cultural sensitivity was more compelling than the technical aspect of learning languages. He went on to say that with more than 70% of the Air Force having some deployed combat experience, "Now is the time to make the big steps we need to make in language and in cultural sensitivity."[9]

With lessons learned coming back from the field and acknowledgement from senior leaders that improvements must be made, the Air Force has set out to improve the training and education it gives airmen in the area of intercultural skills. Air University (AU), responsible for most of the Air Force's formal education programs, shoulders a large part of this load. The weight of the AU effort has so far been focused on the resident officer professional military education (PME) programs. Additionally, there have been changes in the three primary accession programs for

line officers. Notably, Air University oversees two of these accessions programs, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and Officer Training School (OTS). However, the third, the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), is a direct reporting unit to Headquarters Air Force. With the upcoming academic year, there will be substantive changes at USAFA, OTC and ROTC as well as officer PME aimed at addressing perceived shortcomings in officer development vis-à-vis developing intercultural skills.

This paper examines how well curricula in Air Force officer formal PME programs address the development of intercultural skills. The study encompasses the continuum of education from officer accession programs through senior developmental education in Air War College, analyzing how each program teaches subjects related to building officers' skills in the areas of cultural awareness, regional understanding and foreign language competency. The author argues that although efforts to build regional understanding are headed in the right direction, designs to increase emphasis on cultural awareness still fail to provide a solid analytical foundation early enough in an officer's career and that foreign language initiatives will not produce results commensurate with the currently perceived expectations.

Before moving on, it is worthwhile to a point out a significant limitation of this study. Many of the plans and decisions discussed in subsequent chapters are in fact works in progress. As such, they may change from what is detailed in the paper. The paper endeavors to provide the most up to date information available and to highlight distinctions between ideas, plans being built for future implementation and established programs or courses. Nevertheless, by the time this paper is read, it is likely something has changed.

Even with this limitation, the study is pertinent now because there is enough being done to see where the overall effort is headed. Additionally, it is still early enough to influence the

debate. The proverbial train has not left the station. It may have for the upcoming academic year, but not in terms of the long term development of the force. Institutional change rarely happens overnight. It takes time for new ideas to germinate, grow and mature. In that sense, this paper is considered as a vector check for an effort that has recently lifted off the ground.

The rest of this paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter Two develops the background for the study by defining key terminology and articulating why intercultural skills matter. The third chapter addresses the question of, "Where are we now?" by detailing what each of the various schools has planned for the upcoming academic year in subjects relating to intercultural skills. Chapter Four provides analysis of the planned curricula. The paper ends with a chapter recommending changes to the proposed cultural awareness curricula and some food for thought on language initiatives.

Chapter Two - Intercultural Skills

When dealing with the subject of how one interacts with different cultures people often use terms ambiguously. What does it mean to be culturally aware? What is cultural dissonance, or cultural competence? When someone says they speak a foreign language, what level of proficiency does that imply? When the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap asserts that the military needs to make foreign language ability a requirement for advancement to general/flag ranks, what is meant by "foreign language ability?"[10] To minimize confusion, this chapter defines and discusses the key terms. In doing so, it sets the foundation for the rest of the study.

In this paper the term *intercultural skills* describes the primary set of skills and knowledge necessary for Air Force officers' successful professional and personal interaction with other

cultures. The author divides intercultural skills into three distinct, yet interrelated subsets; cultural awareness, regional understanding, and foreign language competency.

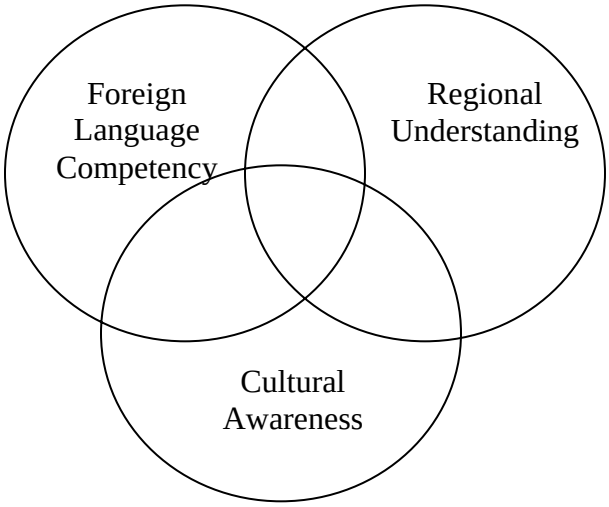

Figure 1. Primary Facets of Intercultural Skills

These distinctions are useful. Deconstructing the multi-faceted concept of intercultural skills into smaller parts makes it easier to discuss and is necessary for effective analysis. Additionally, Air University (AU) is building its curricula around a similar framework. This will become helpful in subsequent chapters detailing the plans for professional military education (PME) and officer accessions programs.

Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is the ability to understand and appreciate differences among cultures and to be sensitive to the unique challenges cultural differences can create. Any discussion of cultural awareness, however, needs to begin with an understanding of what culture is. As an abstract concept, a concise definition of the word *culture* is elusive. Consequently, it is instructive to look at what experts in the field have to say.

Noted cultural researchers and authors Geert and Gert Jan Hofstede described culture as, "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others." They noted that culture is a both a learned and collective phenomenon, deriving from one's social environment, rather than one's genes.[11] In their model, culture manifested itself in terms of an outer layer of practices with an inner core of values.

They pointed out that the practices—the symbols, heroes and rituals—of a culture tend to change over time much more easily than the underlying values.[12] Being aware that an outer shell of practices may belie the inner core of values is an important point of distinction for officers dealing with cross-cultural situations. An Egyptian teenager dressed in Levis and a Hard Rock t-shirt, wearing Nikes and singing in English to an American Top 40 hit on his I-pod, may have the outward trappings of a Western culture. However, the Hofstedes would contend his Egyptian and Arab heritage influence him much more when it comes to his inner core of values.

Dr. Gary Weaver, Executive Director of American University's Intercultural Management Institute, establishes a similar model. He described culture as the behaviors, beliefs, values, thought patterns and worldviews of a group. In an article for an intercultural communication seminar he wrote:

> "Culture is like an iceberg. The tip of the iceberg is the smallest part. Most of the iceberg is submerged. The same is true for culture. That which you can easily see—the behavior of people—is the smallest part of culture. It is external while the greatest part, internal culture, is beneath the water level of awareness. It is inside people's heads."

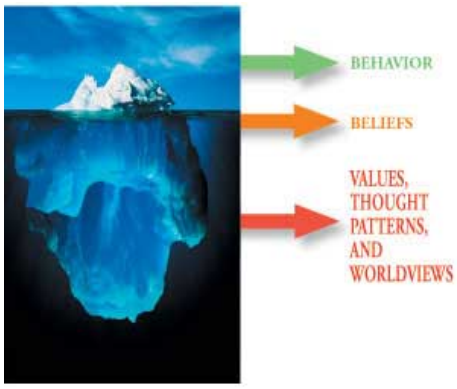

Figure 2. Culture as an Iceberg Metaphor

Dr. Weaver pointed out that when two cultures collide, just like an iceberg, the biggest collision is below the surface with a clash of often unconscious cultural values. He asserted that mistakes at the behavior level, such as not greeting people correctly or wearing the wrong clothes, are

generally relatively minor. People expect such errors from those of another culture. But because individuals are typically much less aware of their own cultural values, they are not as prepared to deal with a different set of cultural values.[13]

One can study culture from two perspectives, culture-general and culture-specific. Culture-general refers to its broad characteristics. Global in scope, it refers to a methodology or framework for understanding aspects of a society that apply across all cultures.[14] For example, various cultures have differing outlooks on rules versus relationships, they fall somewhere along a continuum from individualistic to collective in their perspective of groups, and they value time differently. Fons Tompennaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, in *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business,* referred to these as the dimensions of culture.[15] Knowledge of culture-general can provide the tools to understand such things as; the general principals upon which cultures organize themselves, the general categories of a wide range of behaviors and world views, the ways cultures express their ideas and values, how to improve intercultural communication and how to learn another culture.[16] Culture-specific narrows in scope, referring to the traits of a specific culture. Culture-specific education is best understood when it is built upon a foundation of culture-general knowledge. Understanding how to analyze culture in general along with culture-specific knowledge is essential to effectively communicating, building relationships, negotiating and influencing across cultural boundaries.

In developing cultural awareness, experts in the field habitually draw upon two major themes. One is that understanding and appreciating the differences among cultures must begin with an understanding and appreciation for one's own culture. Most people, especially geographically isolated Americans, do not consciously realize they swim in a sea of their own culture. Who Americans are culturally, has everything to do with how they perceive other

cultures. The other major theme culturalists stress is the importance of discerning not only the outward behavioral aspects of culture, but also understanding the underlying values. It is in understanding the values of a culture that one can begin to predict future behavior.

The example below, a survey extracted from *Riding the Waves of Culture,* highlights just how different cultural values can be among two different nations. In this case it points out how differently Americans tend to prioritize rules and relationships as compared to South Koreans. Respondents were given the following scenario:

> You are riding in a car driven by a close friend when he hits a pedestrian. There are no other witnesses and the pedestrian is bruised, but not badly hurt. The speed limit in this part of town is 20 miles an hour, but you noticed that your friend was driving 35. His lawyer tells you that if you will testify under oath that your friend was driving 20, he will suffer no serious consequences. Would you testify that your friend was driving 20 miles an hour? YES or NO ?

Given the scenario above, only 7% of Americans indicated they would lie for their friend, as compared to 63% of South Koreans who said they would.[17] The dramatic disparity between the two percentages highlight how differently two societies can see the same issue. In cultural terminology, this example would attest to the universalist ("rules are rules") versus particulartist ("it depends") orientations of different cultures. This is not to say that all South Koreans are particularist in their outlook. Individual personalities have a great deal of impact and always lay over the top of cultural influences. Because of this, becoming culturally aware may allow one to generalize about another culture, but would be misapplied if used to stereotype.

Cultural awareness is a critical skill for achieving what Air University refers to as the cross-cultural effects of communicating, building relationships, negotiating and influencing across cultures.[18] It is to be able to achieve these desired effects that makes investing in raising the

cultural intelligence of the officer corps important. The officer who appreciates the nuances of culture in general, or who is additionally armed with specific knowledge about a given culture, will be better prepared to achieve these effects. Conversely, a lack of cultural awareness will undoubtedly hinder an officer's ability to communicate, build relationships, negotiate and influence across cultural boundaries. As Air Force Doctrine Document 2-5, *Information Operations,* states, "Knowledge of other cultures enhances our effectiveness and helps to ensure our activities do not create misunderstandings or unintended negative attitudes."[19] Clearly, being culturally aware is not the only skill necessary to be successful in this area. Another one, especially important to the Air Force officer dealing with international security issues, is to have an understanding of particular regions of interest.

Regional Understanding

In terms of intercultural skills for the Air Force officer, regional understanding refers to gaining a working knowledge of the geostrategic, economic, political, military, social and historical environment in which national military strategy is executed.[20] Since regional studies is a broad, interdisciplinary field, Air Force officers need to concentrate on areas pertinent to executing the national military strategy. They must be prepared to support theater combatant commanders on staff and during operations as well as take the helm in various overseas leadership positions.

The desired outcomes and learning objectives from the Air War College's Regional Studies course provide an excellent overview of the goals of developing regional understanding. These objectives target the senior officer level, and as such provide an excellent force development end state for regional understanding. The bullets below, largely paraphrased from the Academic

Year 2006 Regional and Cultural Studies Guidebook, summarize that in developing regional understanding Air Force officers should be able to: [21]

- Be familiar with key regional actors, distinguish among their national perspectives and analyze how their national interests align with those of the US.
- Assess US military strategy in a region in light of potential threats to US security objectives.
- Appraise US and allied theater military strategy, doctrine, and force capabilities based on projected regional threat conditions and the nature of the relationship with allied governments.
- Assess the value of airpower and the difficulties of its employment in a regional setting.
- Forecast trends in the international geopolitical system and assess the potential role for military power in terms of current and future national security policy.

Regional understanding is a key intercultural skill for the Air Force officer because it, like cultural awareness, provides critical background and context for interaction with other cultures. At both the individual and organizational level, being familiar with a particular regional environment and its current issues fundamentally helps communicating, building relationships, negotiating and influencing across cultural boundaries. Consider an officer tasked to develop a major military exercise with the Colombian Air Force. Imagine how poorly he might fare if he failed to appreciate the impacts of the ongoing war and insurgency, the strained relations with Venezuela and how a military exercise might be perceived by Venezuelan leadership, and widespread lack of personal security within the country.

Foreign Language Competency

Foreign language competency generally addresses the ability to communicate in a foreign language. In a generic sense it to refers to the ability to read, speak, listen (and understand), or write in a foreign language. The language teaching community, though, sees it as a more complicated subject. One of the popular models, known as "Communicative Competency," accounts for the kinds of knowledge people need to use language in meaningful interaction. The Communicative Competency Model, addresses four competencies: [22]

- **Grammatical Competence**: the ability to use the forms of the language (sounds, words, and sentence structure). Grammatical competence is the primary focus of study in most academic language courses.
- **Discourse Competence**: the ability to understand and create forms of the language longer than sentences, such as stories, conversations, or business letters. Discourse competence includes understanding how particular instances of language use are internally constructed.
- **Sociolinguistic Competence**: the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts. Sociolinguistic competence overlaps significantly with discourse competence because it has to do with expressing, interpreting and negotiating meaning according to culturally-derived norms and expectations.
- **Strategic Competence**: the ability to compensate for lack of ability in any of the other areas. What do you do when you don't know a word that you need? How do you manage a social situation when you aren't quite sure about the rules of etiquette?

If the Communicative Competency model helps to better deconstruct what competency means, then what articulates how competent a person is at communicating in a foreign language? The Air Force uses the Federal Foreign Language Proficiency (FFLP) Levels to categorize individuals' linguistic skills as well as dictate requirements for particular positions. The Interagency Language Roundtable, consisting of 18 major government agencies including the DoD, Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Central Intelligence Agency and Department of Education, sets standards for skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing.[23] They use a scale of "0" to "5" with a "+" to indicate when a skill level substantially exceeds the base for one skill level, but does not fully meet the criteria for the next. As an example, figure 3 summarizes ILR descriptions for speaking proficiency levels.

0 – No Proficiency – Unable to function in the language. May know limited, isolated words
1 – Elementary – Sufficient capability to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy and travel requirements.
2 – Limited Working – Sufficient capability to meet routine social demands and limited job requirements. Can deal with concrete topics in past, present, and future tense.
3 – General Professional – Able to use the language with sufficient ability to participate in most formal and informal discussions on practical, social and professional topics. Can conceptualize and hypothesize.
4 - Advanced Professional -- Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. Has range of language skills necessary for persuasion, negotiation, and counseling.
5 - Functionally native -- Able to use the language at a functional level equivalent to a highly articulate, well-educated native speaker.

Figure 3. Federal Foreign Language--Speaking Proficiency Levels[24]

As an incentive to maintain language skills in needed areas, the Air Force offers Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP) to individuals who demonstrate proficiency on the DLPT. Proficiency in this case is defined as reading and listening skills of Level 2/2 or higher. The DLPT exams are notoriously difficult and Airmen typically do not test as high as they self-assess their capability. In the year ending in May 2006, 3,548 DLPTs were given to officers in 51 different languages. With a pass rate of 46%, the Air Force coded only 1,644 officers as proficient in a foreign language.[25] Stated another way, the Air Force only considers 2.3% of the officer corps as officially proficient in a foreign language. Interestingly, in a recent effort to target scarce incentive dollars toward languages in which the Air Force has little resident capability, the Air Force restructured FLPP, paying more for some languages and discontinuing incentives for others. The following languages, comprising a full 75% of tested officer proficiency (and 69% of enlisted), were declared abundant and will no longer earn an incentive unless members are performing duties in language-designated positions: French, German, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Tagalog.[26] The impact of this remains to be

seen, but it clearly sends a mixed message to many when linguistic skills are being so emphasized by senior leaders on one hand, but not apparently valued enough to earn an incentive on the other. What will also be interesting to watch is whether targeting other languages with FLPP will actually result in an increase in the number of proficient speakers, or just a decrease in measured proficiency in the abundant languages.

Learning a foreign language takes a significant amount of time and effort, especially for more difficult languages. The Defense Language Institute (DLI), the military's primary foreign language school, has a graduation goal for students to test to a 2/2/1+ proficiency for listening, reading and speaking, respectively. Just over 90% of graduates met the goal in Fiscal Year 2005.[27] To accomplish this course lengths range from 25 weeks for Spanish and French, 47 weeks for Russian and Tagalog, to 63 weeks for Arabic, Chinese and Korean.[28] Achieving Level 3 competency solely through academic studies rarely occurs. It usually requires supplementation by a prolonged regional immersion where one uses the language on a daily basis and comes to discern nuances associated with sociolinguistic and strategic communicative competencies in various settings.[29] Also, the time investment required to achieve each proficiency level climbs exponentially, not linearly. For example, one well known civilian language teaching center estimates the expected number of preparation and classroom hours to reach Levels 1, 2, and 3 in a difficult language such as Japanese is 475, 1650 and 3300 hours respectively. [30]

Stated in terms of undergraduate language education, the investment to produce linguistic competency is no less demanding. For undergraduates taking two semesters of a foreign language only the most able students in the easiest languages are likely to learn enough to register anything on the ILR scale.[31] For the more challenging languages such as Chinese and Arabic, students taking four semesters are likely to reach a proficiency of only 0+/0+/0+;

however, students studying European languages might reach a proficiency of 1/1/1.[32] Students earning a minor in a foreign language will typically test out at a level of 1+/1+/1+, with the better students reaching a Level 2/2/2 proficiency.[33] Of course, these are generalizations. Actual results vary with the difficulty of the language, the quality of the program, the aptitude of the student, and how well the student applies himself.

Language is also a perishable skill. If not used and practiced, language skills atrophy. For example, the Air Force requires DLI graduate linguists to dedicate fours hours of study each week just to maintain their language skills. Four hours of study is for Airmen with 2/2 DLPT scores. The relationship to proficiency and maintenance requirements are inversely proportional. Those with higher proficiency need less investment, while those with lower proficiency need more to maintain their current capability.[34] Thus, to be at all successful, any Air Force efforts to build officer's language competency must include a continuing education plan that will help them maintain some amount of proficiency.

As figure 1 in the beginning of the chapter illustrated, culture, region, and language are interrelated bodies of knowledge. For example, although people usually study language as a distinct subject, educators understand that language and culture are inextricably linked.[35] Thus, to build essential sociolinguistic competence, advanced language courses traditionally integrate significant cultural aspects into the curriculum.[36] Similarly, courses building regional understanding often incorporate aspects of culture. In both of these cases, though, culture is presented as a "side dish," rather than as the main focus of study.[37] As we will see later, when culture gets incorporated into other courses, one of the potential dangers is that the foundations of culture may never get addressed.

Why Intercultural Skills Matter

Having officers with effective intercultural skills is critical to the Air Force for four primary reasons. First and foremost, Airmen must have intercultural skills to successfully plan and execute the art of war. Fundamentally, any coercive military strategy seeks to influence individuals and organizations across cultural boundaries. Strategists must envision the world through the enemy's perspective in order to try and predict their behavior. This necessitates an understanding of their beliefs and values as well as specific knowledge of the region. Also, when prosecuting air operations Airmen must view intelligence through a cultural lens so that it becomes more than data and information, but actual knowledge and analysis. Even in conflicts where airpower may not play a leading role, the Air Force needs senior leaders with strong intercultural intellect. They must positively influence the joint and interagency debate that forms the military strategy, ensuring decision makers avoid cross-cultural errors of ethnocentrism or mirror imaging.

As the US executes operations against enemies from other cultures, it will invariably enlist the support of other nations. The fact that Air Force officers must be prepared to work and integrate with allied and coalition partners is a second major reason to invest in intercultural skills. Working with friends and allies though, goes beyond real-world operations to include peacetime training exercises. This reason is particularly compelling in today's strategic environment due to the growing diversity of American coalition partners. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's forward to the National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism (NMSP-WOT) asserts, "Essential for the successful prosecution of this long-term war will be efforts to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new regional partners that agree to participate in distinct aspects of the War on Terrorism."[38]

In the Cold War era, the major allies with whom the US endeavored to integrate militarily were essentially members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Japan, and South Korea. Today, the palate is much more diverse. In 1996 there were 16 nations in NATO, but there are now 26. Additionally, in recent military operations the US has built coalitions from the far corners of the globe. In Iraq, 37 different coalition members have contributed troops to the effort, including such non-traditional allies as Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Tonga, Honduras and Moldova.[39] In Afghanistan the coalition is just as diverse, but consists of a somewhat different set of countries. As a leader, the American military must be able to integrate these countries into operations in concord with their military capabilities and national political constraints.

A third reason Air Force officers need effective intercultural skills is that as US global partners diversify, so too will the location of significant overseas bases. Europe, Japan and the Korea are no longer the overwhelming focal points of Air Force basing and operations. Within the last five years the Air Force has opened significant Air Bases in once distant locations as Qatar, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Officers at these locations must work directly with foreign military counterparts, government officials and local civilians to make the base operate. They must be able to communicate, build relationships and negotiate with host nation personnel to assure the successful completion of a myriad of objectives. These run the gamut from base support contracts to military joint-use agreements to interacting with local residents about noise complaints. The Air Force can, and likely will, employ interpreters to assist in these efforts, but they are not a panacea. While interpreters can help bridge the basic language gap, they will unlikely be able to set the cultural context during communications and negotiations. Also, since many of these locations will likely be joint-use bases, Airmen must be prepared to work

alongside their foreign counterparts. In these instances having multitudes of interpreters is just impractical.

In February 2003, Colonel Wolters and his 16-man advance team secretly arrived at King Faisal Air Base, Tabuk, Saudi Arabia to negotiate with the Royal Saudi Air Force Regional Commander the details of what would become the temporary home to 72 Air Force aircraft and over 3000 Airmen. Colonel Wolters had received no culture or language training in preparation for this assignment. Nor did he get any background briefs on Major General Saidais, his organization, or his staff. He did not even have an interpreter.[40] While Colonel Wolters and his team were eventually able to most get everything worked out and make the mission happen, it was not without significant setbacks caused by a lack of cultural awareness. In one instance, Colonel Wolters perceived he had reached and agreement with his host on the use of hanger space for U.S. aircraft. What had really happened was that his Saudi counterpart, in typical Arab fashion, was more just being polite in not openly refusing a request, than actually agreeing. This failure to communicate across cultures caused friction and delays when typically gung ho American officers, thinking the deal was done, began to impose themselves at lower levels.[41] Colonel Wolters' experiences underscore expeditionary basing drives a requirement that the Air Force develops officers with solid intercultural skills.

The final and most pervasive reason that having intercultural skills is important is that, as a global organization, the Air Force will routinely station its officers overseas. As of June of 2006, 9,520 (13.3%) of its active duty officers were stationed in overseas assignments.[42] Additionally, the Air Force had another 2,819 (3.9%) officers deployed abroad in expeditionary operations for tours ranging from four months to one year.[43] Thus, if over 17% of force is overseas at a given

time, it stands to reason that over the span of a career, the vast majority of officers will be stationed overseas at least once, if not on multiple occasions.

With such a significant amount of its force stationed abroad, the Air Force would do well to prepare them for the experience. Airmen stationed overseas become de facto representatives of America and the Government of the United States. As General Jumper said when he was the Air Force Chief of Staff, "Every one of you is an Ambassador."[44] The general and specific impressions Airmen make on foreign nationals do much to form the perceptions countries have of America. Those perceptions help build, maintain or erode strategic alliances. Being able to avoid the "Ugly American" syndrome is even more critical now when US popularity abroad is at an all time low.[45] Research in the business world has shown that employees given intercultural education prior to living abroad statistically fare much better.[46] Similarly, an investment in intercultural education can pay additional dividends for the Air Force.

Being intellectually prepared to prosecute war against enemies from other cultures, working with allies and coalition partners in peace and conflict, ensuring overseas bases operate effectively and living overseas as de facto ambassadors of the US are four compelling reasons why Air Force officers need a strong foundation of intercultural skills. Considering these rationales, the next chapter examines what the officer accession programs and professional military education institutions are doing to develop those skills in the officer corps.

Chapter Three - State of the Union

This chapter reviews the current and near-term future state of cultural awareness, regional understanding, and linguistic education and training across officer accessions programs and PME. The chapter begins by looking at the product coming into the Air Force from the three primary commissioning sources in regards to the training and education they will receive in

intercultural skills. From there it turns to how AU is incorporating intercultural education its three officer PME colleges: Squadron Officer College (SOC), Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) and Air War College (AWC).

Reviews of the curricula below concentrate primarily on each school's core requirements. For this paper, *core* refers to courses, lectures, reading, etc. that are mandatory for the entire class—regardless whether they contribute directly to any academic degree granting capability or not. Examining a school's core requirements is useful in that it highlights what an institution truly values. The institution has somehow determined that mandatory material is more important to the overall student body than material that goes toward elective credit, or is altogether optional. Underlying reasons for why certain material is, or is not, in the core curriculum vary to include both external and internal pressures. For example, accreditation as Joint PME schools mandate certain curricula at ACSC and AWC. Similarly, a desire to make both schools' graduates eligible for master's degrees constrains the curricula as well. If institutionally Joint PME and master's accreditation are accepted as "must dos," then the time available for other priorities diminishes. As an internal pressure, senior leaders within a college may have certain subject areas they believe merit attention. Regardless of how schools arrive at their curricula, the author's premise is that, in the end, core requirements are an excellent indicator of institutions' academic values and priorities.

Officer Accessions

For each of the past five years, the Air Force has accessed about 4,000-5,000 new line officers though one of three primary commissioning sources, the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and Officer Training School (OTS). The percentage varies year to year, but the rough breakout is that 20-25% of officers

gain their commission through USAFA, 50-60% from ROTC programs and 15-25% graduate from OTS.[47] Cadets and officer trainees going through each of these programs all receive some mandatory training in intercultural skills. However, the programs, with their own unique environments and constraints, cannot maintain the same educational requirements for cultural awareness, regional understanding and foreign linguistic competency.

USAFA exposes cadets to some modicum of cultural awareness through two core courses, both taught in cadets' fourth-class year. A three semester-hour world history course, "Surveys the major pre-modern civilizations and the development and diffusion of modern culture throughout the world, focusing primarily on world civilizations from 1500."[48] Freshmen also take a three semester-hour social science course which offers a multi-disciplined survey of political, economic and geostrategic issues of regions around the world. Both courses touch on cultural awareness aspects in some small fashion, but neither introduces any analytical framework for the dimensions of culture from an anthropologic perspective.[49] The weight of effort in each of these courses is more focused on developing regional understanding.

In an effort to increase emphasis on cultural awareness and regional understanding, ROTC and OTS are in the middle of a major expansion of their Regional Studies course (ROTC and OTS use the same course). As such, the class is growing from 4 to 29 hours of contact time. This is roughly equivalent to a 1.5 semester-hour college class. The bulk of the course entails six four-hour blocks, each focusing on a different region of the world. The course familiarizes cadets with each region by providing an overview and addressing current issues and US interests in each region.[50] For many this represents their first exposure to the international landscape. Like the classes at USAFA, course material predominately focuses on regional understanding, and only touches on cultural awareness at the fringes.[51]

Language requirements for each of the accessions programs differ markedly with USAFA having the most robust and OTS having the least robust requirements. Beginning with the incoming Class of 2010, USAFA will ostensibly require cadets to take four semesters of a foreign language. However, for cadets in certain technical majors, the school will waive the requirement down to two semesters. Based on the historical distribution of majors, the two-semester exception will apply to about 50% of each class—not an insignificant percentage.[52] Within ROTC, the plan currently undergoing implementation has all four-year scholarship cadets in non-technical majors being required to take four semesters of a foreign language. For students in technical degrees, or those not on scholarships, there will be no language requirement.[53] OTS has no language requirements, nor are there any envisioned for the future.[54] Intuitively, some OTS accessions will have had some language background, but exactly how much is difficult to discern as language self-assessments are just now becoming mandatory in accessions programs.[55] Assuming the academic background of officer trainees in OTS roughly mirrors the national average, the Air Force can expect only 8-9% of them to have had any language training at the university level.[56]

The requirements outlined above clearly do not attest to the sum of education in cultural awareness, regional understanding and foreign languages incoming second lieutenants receive during their undergraduate education. But it does capture these institutions' core requirements. As such it represents the mainstream product the Air Force will access in the next several years. Certainly, some students will take intercultural-related classes as electives or major in subjects contributing to their intercultural skill set. For example, USAFA offers an elective in cultural anthropology and also graduated 38 cadets this year who majored in Foreign Area Studies.[57] Similarly, 19.2% of the 879 graduating cadets in the Class of 2006 minored in a foreign

language.[58] The number of officers majoring in a foreign language though, is very small. As of June 2006, only 0.7% of the officer corps had received a degree in a foreign language.[59] In an effort to push linguistic competency, ROTC also recently received funding to offer up to 100 three to three-and-a-half-year fast-track scholarships for young Americans willing/qualified join ROTC and major in some of the targeted, less popular languages. Unfortunately, between March and June of 2006, only eleven people had accepted.[60] Even with funding the prospect is difficult in that, almost by definition, the less popular languages are not widely studied at America's universities. For example in 2004, US civilian colleges and universities granted only 26 Bachelor of Arts degrees in Arabic and none Korean or Farsi.[61] Officers entering the Air Force who take advantage of elective intercultural education opportunities will be farther along than those who receive only the Air Force's core requirements. But they are the exception, not the rule. As AU considers how to further develop intercultural skills of the force through PME, it needs to build upon the foundation of the mainstream product coming through USAFA, ROTC, and OTS, not the outliers.

Squadron Officer College

SOC operates two separate Basic Developmental Education (BDE) courses for company grade officers. The Air & Space Basic Course (ASBC) is a resident-only, six-week course targeting 100% of line second lieutenants during their first year of service. Squadron Officer School (SOS), currently lasting five weeks, has an 80% attendance opportunity and is geared toward captains, typically in their sixth to seventh year of service.[62] Like all of the colleges at AU, SOC is currently going through the machinations of figuring out how to better incorporate intercultural material into the curricula.

SOC does not currently envision a specific cultural awareness module for either ASBC or SOS. However, it does aim to incorporate aspects of culture as it expands its curricula in the area of regional understanding and international studies. For both courses, SOC plans to develop a two-hour symposium discussing how to address current regional issues and military objectives from a culturally sound perspective. In addition, future ASBC and SOS students will receive one-hour regional issues lectures on the Middle East, China, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. SOC chose these regions to align with the Chief of Staff's declaration of Arabic, Chinese, French and Spanish as the Air Force's four "strategic languages."[63] Within each of these briefs SOC expects to highlight some aspects of cultural awareness. SOC also hopes to exploit a class DLI is developing discussing religions of the world and why they are important to America by bringing in a regular DLI guest lecturer for both courses.[64] Apart from the regional studies focus, SOC is also incorporating aspects of culture into a public affairs and media lesson taught in ASBC and SOS.

Both ASBC and SOS will only minimally address foreign languages. ASBC is integrating the use of DLI-developed language survival kits during an exercise simulating being deployed at an expeditionary location.[65] The guides, in both printed and audio formats, provide basic information and language support for personnel entering a new theater of operations.[66] SOC also plans to incorporate the language survival kits into one of SOS's teambuilding or leadership exercises. Within both the ASBC and SOS contexts however, students are not so much expected to study and become proficient with a particular kit, but rather practice using one and develop an awareness of their existence as a future resource. As the other minor aspect of language offered, both courses will also highlight resources available through DLI's LingNet.[67] The LingNet web site provides regional and cultural perspectives as well as language training for various areas.[68]

In total, the language piece for ASBC and SOC amounts to being exposed to the language survival kits and getting an overview of an intercultural skills web site that might be a future resource.

Significant long term changes to BDE may impact how SOC teaches intercultural skills in the out years. SOC is building a program that would combine distance learning modules with formal in-residence Air Force education (in both PME and possibly other schools) to result in an accredited, competency-based masters degree. SOC has coined this effort Transformational Basic Developmental Education, or T-BDE. Within the T-BDE framework many of the distance learning modules become SOS prerequisites so that the in-residence time can focus on more experiential learning. Specifically, the regional studies lectures migrate to the distance learning modules while the Public Affairs lesson, symposium and Religions of the World lecture remain in the on-campus curriculum.[69] Significant changes may also occur in terms of language training. SOC expects the Deployment module of the distance learning curriculum to have some basic language training for officers prior to being deployed overseas. In addition, CGOs with prior linguistic competency will have the opportunity to receive T-BDE master's credits by completing appropriate online classes using the Global Language Online Support System available through LingNet.[70] As of June, 2006 the T-BDE plan is painted only in broad brush strokes and SOC has not yet determined the specific implementation. As such the plan outlined above may well evolve into something different.

Air Command and Staff College

ACSC is making significant changes in its curriculum for the Academic Year 2006-2007 in order to sharpen the school's focus on intercultural skills. To provide energy and direction to this effort it created a Department of Culture and Language. The department not only works

separate initiatives for culture and language studies, but also coordinates with other ACSC departments to infuse more considerations of culture into applicable parts of the curriculum. The paragraphs below outline the plan for the coming school year. Since most of these initiatives are still works in progress, it's probable they may change somewhat in their actual execution.

To increase emphasis on cultural awareness, ACSC has three substantial efforts in the works for their core curriculum. First, The Inter/National Security and War course addresses the political, cultural, strategic military and regional contexts that impact military operations.[71] A six semester-hour course, it will have "Culture" as one of its three main themes—alongside "Interests" and "Issues." The course is designed such that as it analyzes different regional issues, it will do so with an eye toward the impacts of culture on the dynamics of the situation. Besides being ACSC's main effort for developing regional understanding, it should also help teach officers how to perceive conflict through the lens of culture.

Second, The Art of Military Leadership course dedicates one of its lessons to cross-cultural communications. In the 90-minute seminar entitled, Leadership in a Coalition Environment, "Students analyze the impact of cultural diversity on their roles as leaders and followers in coalition operations."[72] The lesson introduces a method for understanding basic differences between cultures, describes aspects of American culture, provides ideas for how to interact with other cultures and shows their relevance in a military coalition environment. This particular lesson, conspicuously, is the only instance across the entire AU core curricula that students actually have readings on, and the subsequent in-class discussion reinforces, anything substantive on the general dimensions of culture.

The third major effort to push cultural awareness will occur on each of five dedicated Culture Days. These days, interspersed throughout the year, will focus on a particular region.

The academic portion of the day will include a multi-disciplined panel discussion on regional issues lasting 90 minutes in a lecture hall format. Also that day will be a keynote speaker to lecture exclusively on the culture of that region. Five keynote, culture-specific lectures represents a significant addition to the ACSC curriculum. As opposed to most lectures that are "Big R, little c," these are being planned as "Big C, little r."[73] Along with the academic forum, the Culture Days may have other, non-mandatory offerings such as foreign language films and planned social events hosted by international officers from the applicable region.[74]

Of the officer PME schools at AU, ACSC has made the most significant investment in terms of building linguistic competency. Beginning with the Class of 2007, per direction from the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Mosley, ACSC will require US students to study Chinese, Arabic, Spanish or French.[75] Notably, ACSC does not plan to use actual time in the classroom for this part of the curriculum. ACSC felt that valuable contact and seminar time with the students was better spent on other subjects and that computer-based training on students' off hours could meet the objectives without negatively impacting other parts of the syllabus.[76] The program will consist of self-paced, individual study proffered through the commercial linguistic software Rosetta Stone. Students must complete the Rosetta Stone Level 1 module for listening and speaking, which roughly equates to 170 hours of study. The school will not mandate the reading and writing module of Rosetta Stone as it would have required an additional 80 hours of study. Since the language initiative is purely additive to the curriculum, the ACSC leadership decided that including the reading and writing modules would demand too much of students' time.[77]

ACSC's goals with their language program include building a familiarization with a language, cultivating an appreciation for language as a part of culture and showing officers they can learn a language if they dedicate the time.[78] ACSC clearly recognizes a 170-hour investment

in language training, unless someone is leveraging previous experience, will not build linguistic skills that could come close to qualifying as proficient on the ILR scale. With the proposed program, students learning French and Spanish languages may approach somewhere between a Level 0+/0+ and 1/1 for listening and speaking, but they would need probably three times the proposed investment to achieve a similar measured proficiency for the more difficult languages of Chinese and Arabic.[79]

ACSC is planning strategies to help students successfully accomplish the Rosetta Stone Level 1 module and get the most of their language program. ACSC will kick off the language program with a two-hour lecture by a DLI instructor on techniques for learning languages. Also, ACSC hopes to structure the spring semester seminar rosters such that, to the maximum extent practical, they can group together students studying the same language along with international officers who speak it too.[80] The college had hoped to supplement individual study time with some direct contact time with DLI instructors but that has not come to fruition.

Air War College

The AWC core curriculum addresses material developing cultural awareness primarily in two places. First, the Leadership course dedicates a three hour lesson to cross-cultural communication. It entails a 90-minute lecture by the faculty's social anthropologist followed by a 90-minute seminar discussion. The lesson covers how cultural differences can be a barrier to communication, general dimensions of culture most relevant to senior leaders, and how leaders can apply their awareness of cultural differences to effectively communicate across cultural boundaries.[81]

The other course addressing cultural awareness--more than just a nominal mention—is the aforementioned Regional and Cultural Studies. As the name implies, the course addresses both

cultural awareness and regional understanding in a three-semester-hour course providing 30 hours of seminar instruction on a specific region of the world such as Latin America or Central Asia. A nine to twelve-day trip to the region reinforces the readings and seminar discussions while providing an opportunity to interact with various government officials and civilian agencies as well as experience the local culture. Taught by PhD regional experts, the course seeks to deepen the understanding of the geostrategic, economic, political, cultural and historical environment in which the US executes national military strategy.[82] Primarily focused on developing both a framework for future analysis in addition to understanding about a specific region, each of the Regional and Cultural Studies courses does delve into cultural considerations. However, neither the amount of cultural material taught, nor its organization is standardized. Professors are given latitude in how to fold cultural aspects into their individual syllabi.[83]

The other core course focused on developing regional understanding is Global Security. Global Security is a two semester-hour course looking at security issues across various regions of the world. Each lesson consists of a lecture and seminar devoted to a separate region of the world. Course material touches on selected contemporary security issues of all the regions, but by design, cannot approach the depth of the Regional and Cultural Studies course in any particular area.

Beginning with the class of 2007, AWC will institute changes regarding language instruction. Previously, survival phrases taught informally within the Regional and Cultural Studies course in preparation for the field study program represented the whole of language focus. However, the plan for Academic Year 2007 has two additions. First, AWC will offer non-credit, elective language courses in Chinese, Arabic, Spanish and French.[84] The course structure has not yet been totally developed, but current plans have it scheduled for three sessions

comprised of 15 hours of class time each.[85] While not mandatory, each US Air Force student will be "highly encouraged" to take one of the classes.[86] Similar to ACSC, students will also receive a two-hour briefing on the process of how to learn a language.[87] Second, AWC will increase language emphasis within each of its Regional and Cultural Studies courses by mandating completion of an appropriate DLI-developed Head Start language program. The overall goals of the AWC language program include; familiarizing US students with one of the four strategic languages, introducing them to a language so as to allow them to practice social contact skills while traveling on their regional studies trip, and demonstrating the possibilities of learning another language.[88]

Chapter Four - Analysis

In looking at how PME addresses cultural awareness across the continuum of education from accessions through AWC the point that stands out is that, despite attempts to increase its exposure, cultural awareness is still not adequately emphasized. While colleges should be lauded for actively seeking opportunities to more effectively integrate aspects of culture into their existing curricula in supporting roles, no institution has stepped up to the plate to give officers a solid foundation in the fundamentals of cultural awareness and cross-cultural communications. Lessons at ACSC and AWC have both made attempts to address the fundamentals of culture, but these efforts are too late in officers' careers. Additionally, the time allotted in these lessons is not enough to adequately address the material. The paragraphs that follow address these assertions.

That instruction in fundamentals of cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication is beneficial has been well substantiated. Although there is not yet reliable empirical evidence garnered from military environments on the benefits of this training, there is plenty of qualitative

and anecdotal evidence—hence, the calls from senior civilian and military leaders to make it a priority.[89] Within the civilian sector, empirical studies have clearly demonstrated the benefits cross-cultural training has had on the effectiveness of employees stationed abroad and working with people from other cultures.[90]

As for the timing of cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication training, it needs to be as early in an officer's career as possible, so that they have it before they are exposed to cross-cultural environments. As it stands now, cross-cultural communications will be first taught at the 10 to 14 year point by ACSC. But, by then the vast majority of junior officers will have already deployed overseas or been stationed abroad, many more than once. Therefore the timing is late to need. Besides missing an opportunity to adequately prepare officers for intercultural exchanges, the author conjectures that missing cultural training early in their career would negatively impact an officer's professional development vis-à-vis becoming culturally aware. The young officer who understood culture as a framework of analysis would likely gain much more out of her cross-cultural experiences than the officer who, although he might know a few tidbits about a specific culture, had not been given the tools to take an analytic approach to his cross-cultural experiences.

Even when culture is finally directly addressed, ACSC only devotes one lesson, "Leading in the Coalition Environment," to the subject. This lesson, new to Academic Year 2007, expects to address the fundamentals of cultural awareness, cross-cultural communication, and how they might be applied to working in some coalition situations—all in one 90-minute seminar.[91] This is just not enough time to adequately cover the material to any reasonable depth, even at an introductory level. The following chapter provides recommendations for a more substantial plan to integrate cultural awareness and related skills across the continuum of education.

Of the three intercultural skill subsets—cultural awareness, regional understanding, and linguistic competency—developing regional understanding is clearly the strength across the various curricula. At each level, from accessions to senior developmental education, core requirements focus on regional studies. Although the world in which the Air Force operates is far too diverse to make students particularly knowledgeable about every region, the courses do work together to provide both specific regional understanding about current issues as well as a framework of analysis for future challenges.

While regional understanding may be on solid ground, language's foundation is a bit shaky. The overarching problem with language training in accessions and at AU is that it is not part of a broader Air Force strategy to develop and maintain language skills throughout an officer's career. Because it takes such a sustained investment to build and maintain language skills, language training given only during those limited times an officer is either in undergraduate training or attending PME will be largely wasted and inefficient. If the Air Force truly believes it important for officers to have language skills, then it must articulate linguistic requirements and build career-long processes to support them. Otherwise, most language skills will wither on the vine. Once the Air Force decides on a desired end state and overall strategy to achieve it, then AU will be able to better envision what it can do to support the cause.

In the meantime, the plan to increase foreign language requirements through accession programs, while laudable, runs a strong risk of being oversold as to what it will actually deliver. There is a sense among the AU faculty as well as officers on the Air Staff that the upcoming changes to accession program language requirements are going to solve the Air Force problem of building sufficient language skills. They acknowledge that maintaining those skills may still be an issue, but at least incoming second lieutenants will have sufficient language capability when

they get commissioned. Unfortunately, the Air Force has not yet gotten its arms around what the problem really is regarding how much language competency it needs and in which specific languages. Inputs are just now coming in to the Pentagon from combatant commanders categorizing language requirements to meet their theater needs.[92] Until the services can arbitrate and meld those requirements with their own, it is difficult to articulate any exact needs.

Without any firm requirements, the DoD, and the Air Force in turn, took another approach. One characterized Admiral Ernest King's comment after meetings with General George Marshall during World War II, "I don't know what this logistics is, but I know I want more of it!"[93] Not knowing exactly what it wanted, the initial DoD target set forth as fallout from the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap was that, by 2013, 80% of junior officers would be able to speak a foreign language to a proficiency level of 1+/1+.[94] The services saw that goal as too aggressive and difficult to implement so they pushed back on that decision.[95] Consequently, the new vector became to build language competency by increasing emphasis on foreign languages in undergraduate studies.[96] That vector subsequently evolved into the increases in USAFA and ROTC core language requirements discussed earlier. In speaking to many officers involved in planning and executing the Air Force Language Roadmap, there seems to be an expectation that the new vector will result in 40-50% of incoming second lieutenants having some semblance of proficiency in a foreign language. Additionally, the PowerPoint brief outlining AU's development plan indicated the vector should result in an annual production of approximately 875 (25%) incoming second lieutenants with 1+ /1+ language proficiency.[97] Even though these revised expectations fall substantially below the initial 80% goal, they are advertised as a significant paradigm shift for making language a priority with the Air Force culture. Analysis of

the numbers, however, reveals that even the revised expectations are significantly disconnected from reality.

Under the new policies, the Air Force can expect less than 20% of its incoming second lieutenants to have had at least four semesters of language classes. In each of the last five years ROTC commissioned approximately 2,200 officers. Of those, roughly 800 per year were on four-year scholarships, with only about 240 of that group being in non-technical majors.[98] Thus, ROTC will produce about 240 of 2200 incoming second lieutenants with a four-semester language requirement. Similarly, USAFA will graduate about 500 of 1000 cadets with a four-semester requirement each year. OTS, which commissions roughly another 1000 second lieutenants yearly, will likely only contribute up to 50 more to the total.[99] Putting the numbers together one sees that for the approximately 4400 second lieutenants, only about 18% will have had at least four semesters of a language. Of course, these numbers are approximations and will vary year to year, but provide a good ballpark accounting of where the Air Force is going based on the current vector.

Two other factors contribute to the gap between expectations and what the plan will actually deliver. First, as discussed in Chapter Two, students studying four semesters are not likely to develop 1+/1+ proficiency in any language, much less in the more difficult ones. In this sense the current plan represents not only a further quantitative departure from the initial goal, but also a qualitative one as well. The second factor to consider is that the analysis above only represents requirements for line Air Force officers.[100] If one were to account for *all* officers, to include those commissioned directly into specialties such as the medical service corps, the percentages would be even lower.

Language training in PME is not going to alter the calculus. At only five to six weeks long, the ASBC and SOS are just too short. As ten month schools, both ACSC and AWC conceivably have the time, but chewing up valuable contact time with language classes comes too much at the expense of other academic priorities. The Air Force invests a tremendous amount of resources to bring together the diverse student bodies and faculties for both ACSC and AWC. Language classes do not leverage the group dynamics and seminar discussions fundamental to both programs. Both of the colleges clearly recognize this since they both made decisions to not have language classes displace any of their other contact curricula.

Chapter Five - Recommendations and Conclusions

Putting an increased value on developing cultural awareness, regional understanding and foreign language skills is certainly a hot topic within the Air Force right now. The fact that the Air Force Chief of Staff funded AU with $16 million to jump start the process as well as mandated language training for ACSC and AWC students attests to the priority he is trying to give it.[101] AU leadership is clearly focused on the task.

As the previous chapters outlined, there is a lot of good work being done. USAFA and ROTC are increasing language requirements in their programs. ROTC and OTS are growing their regional studies course from 4 to 29 hours. SOC is also incorporating regional studies with some cultural elements into its curricula. ACSC has made a strong effort to increase emphasis on culture with some specific lessons as well as incorporating it into existing classes. Both ACSC and AWC are following General Mosley's direction to include language familiarization in their curricula. That being said, there are spots needing improvement, particularly in the areas of culture and language.

The Air Force needs teach its officers how to appreciate the nuances of culture as early as practical in their careers. Teaching it in either commissioning programs or the ASBC ensures that officers get the training at the right time—before they get stationed or deploy overseas. The ASBC is a better choice between the two because it is much easier to control course content, ensure the quality of instruction and standardize how material is taught. The accession programs are, by their nature, fractured. USAFA does not fall under AU and therefore may choose a different tack unless compelled to do otherwise by Headquarters Air Force. Also, ROTC detachments all over the country rely on just a handful of officers to teach their PME courses. Trying to get them all up to speed and on the same page to teach a subject with which they may have little familiarity will be difficult. Conversely, SOC can market to a larger audience, bringing in guest lecturers for the ASBC who are not only experts on culture and also effective and engaging speakers. Additionally, SOC will likely have better success in getting their faculty up to speed than ROTC. This is not to imply that one set is any better than the other, but only to acknowledge the physical differences in the environment.

If the ASBC is the appropriate time to introduce culture, then the next question becomes, "What should be taught?" To develop a sense of this, the author interviewed professors who teach culture, looked at what books on the subject had to say, and researched several web-based programs designed to prepare individuals to live abroad. While each took a slightly different tack, used somewhat different terminology, and sometimes reached different conclusions, a consistent theme surfaced throughout the research on how to approach the study of culture. All consistently expressed that the study of foreign cultures is best laid upon a foundation of understanding the general framework and dimensions of culture as well as having an appreciation for one's own American culture.

The intent of a culture module at the ASBC should not to be to teach officers about specific cultures, but more so to prepare them for a career in which they have tools to learn about, appreciate, and analyze the differences in cultures. To achieve this, ASBC should develop a mandatory Fundamentals of Cultural Awareness course for their curriculum. Acknowledging time as a limited resource and competing priorities in the curriculum, the author believes significant gains can be made with only about seven hours of contact time—if the college commits to expending the resources to bring in experts in the field who can also effectively teach and motivate. If well organized and taught, it could conceivably be taught as a one day symposium. One full school day within the ASBC dedicated to introducing cultural awareness skills does not seem too much to ask for a global organization such as the Air Force.

SOC should divide the course into three modules. The first module should define culture, address the fundamental dimensions of culture, offer a framework for how to analyze culture and motivate students to appreciate why culture matters. The second module should concentrate on American culture, giving students an understanding of the cultural baggage Americans carry with them and how that can shape interaction with other cultures. It should also address how other cultures tend to view Americans. The last module should reinforce the first two through small group exercises designed to practice cross-cultural communications and how to evaluate situations through the lens of culture.

In the near term, a similar full day Fundamentals of Cultural Awareness course needs to be taught at SOS, ACSC and AWC. This is to account for officers that are currently at various stages of PME. They would not have received the class at the ASBC and so they should get it at the next PME opportunity. After five to six years, as officers begin to attend the subsequent level of PME, all the schools except the ASBC should be able to reduce the full day symposium

to a much shorter review. This approach places an additional burden on SOS, ACSC and AWC besides the other culture-oriented classes outlined below. Nevertheless, it ensures the Air Force emphasizes culture in PME in such a way it gets to the majority of the officer corps as soon as practical rather than only targeting incoming lieutenants.

For SOS, the author recommends a syllabus consisting of the Fundamentals of Cultural Awareness plus another two lessons. The goals at this developmental level would be to introduce (or eventually reinforce) the fundamentals of cultural awareness and arm officers with effective tools to evaluate the impact of culture on performing Air Force missions. A second lesson should focus on learning a typology to be able to effectively evaluate a foreign culture. In other words, what are the right cultural questions to ask and things to consider about a specific culture that are pertinent to accomplishing particular Air Force missions? This would be akin to how international security studies often use the DIME instruments of national power (Diplomatic, Informational, Military, Economic), or PMESII models (Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, Informational) as analytical tools. The last module should practice applying the culture-oriented typology to one or two non-western cultures. This would not only reinforce the process, but also expose students to specifics about high interest areas such as Chinese or Arab cultures.

The overall goal of the culture oriented lessons at ACSC should be to prepare mid-level officers to work on multi-national staffs and plan air operations with an appreciation for potential impacts of culture. First, ACSC should have the full-day Fundamentals of Cultural Awareness course. Beyond that, there should be one lesson on the cultural impacts of leading and working in a coalition environment and another lesson examining historical case studies. The lesson on

case studies should examine military operations where cultural influences have played pivotal roles, either positive or negative, in the outcome.

Following the Fundamentals course the Air War College cultural focus should be in two areas. The first is to better incorporate culture into its popular and well-developed Regional and Cultural Studies course. As it stands now, there is no mandatory lesson within this course focusing exclusively on culture and there should be. The lesson should use the dimensions of culture and cultural typology to compare cultures in the region to each other as well as to American culture. The second is to add a mandatory cross-cultural negotiations course to the curriculum. Air University is in the process of standing up a Negotiations Center of Excellence and there is a good opportunity to leverage this resource into AWC curriculum. AWC has field-tested a course in this area but has not come to conclusion on a final form, or how it might be integrated into the core curriculum.[102] Being able to negotiate effectively is an important skill for senior officers. They must also be prepared to do it across cultures as the experiences of Colonel Wolters detailed in Chapter Two highlighted.

To execute the plan above, Air University will need additional resources beyond building the time into the schedule. First, every PME school should have at least one instructor on the faculty with a background in social or cultural anthropology who can be responsible for their particular school's cultural curriculum and training other members of the faculty. Currently, AWC has the only one and this is not enough to service the entire University. Additionally, AU must be ready to bring in other experts to teach and lecture as required. AU must appreciate that there is relatively little on-campus corporate knowledge when it comes do teaching culture as a main course rather than a side dish. Because of that, it should spend the money on bringing in outstanding lecturers who can get the process jump started over the first few years. As the

corporate knowledge grows, the University can perhaps lean more heavily on resident faculty members. The critical part here is to ensure that the quality of instruction is high, regardless of the source.

Since courses building regional studies are well integrated across the continuum of PME, the author has no major recommendations. However, with the expanded format of the regional studies course in ROTC, the program might consider leveraging local university professors with in-depth understanding on various regions to help teach certain lessons. They may be able to team with the military instructors to markedly improve the quality of instruction. The same holds true, incidentally, if the Air Force decides to incorporate a Fundamental of Cultural Awareness class into the ROTC curriculum.

On the language side, the Air Force needs to first come to grips with what it really wants. Building and sustaining language skills require significant investment. To expect to make substantial gains with minor infusions here or there is to not understand the basic nature of learning and maintaining foreign language skills. The currently envisioned plans will provide some incremental improvement to the officer corps language skills, but are far from a major paradigm shift. As the leadership guru Stephen Covey says, "Begin with the end in mind."[103] With language skills, the Air Force has failed to do this. Some of the questions it needs to answer up front include; what percentage of the officer corps needs to be able to communicate in a foreign language? What level of proficiency do they need to maintain? What languages does the Air Force need its officers to speak? Are foreign language skills important enough to require them for promotion? In this author's opinion, if the Air Force is truly serious about foreign language competency as an essential skill for officers, then it must somehow tie it to the

promotion and/or assignment system. Once the Air Force can answer these questions then AU and other players in the force development arena can work to find a solution.

One resource efficient way to increase foreign language competency, would be to actively recruit individuals already possessing heritage linguistic skills. This would also likely bring with it, an increased level of cultural awareness and possibly some increased regional understanding. However, at this time the Air Force has no recruiting goals to bring heritage speakers into USAFA, ROTC or OTS.[104] USAFA, ROTC and OTS have all started asking applicants to self-identify language skills, but do not yet award any point values in their admissions processes.[105] [106] Targeted recruiting, to perhaps include incentives of heritage speakers is something the Air Force needs to consider.

In determining the way ahead for language skills in particular, the Air Force will need to consider whether it should leverage distance learning to evolve PME into a process that is a regular part of officers' careers—as opposed to the current paradigm where they take a focused course every four to five years. Similarly, it needs to question PME course length and what subjects are most effectively taught in a classroom environment versus what can be done via distance learning. These considerations require not only technical solutions as to how this can be effectively done, but also value-based decisions as to how an officer's time is best spent. Officers in the field already work long hours. Levying more requirements alongside their other duties will come at some opportunity cost.

In the meantime, it will be interesting to see how ACSC's new requirement for computer-based language training as an area of additional study will go in its inaugural year. ACSC would do well to have gather entry and exit survey data as well as to follow up in a couple of years to see if the effort is worthwhile. ACSC should also have a sampling of its faculty do the same

program alongside the students. This will not only give the institution a much better idea of what it is actually asking the students to accomplish, but also provide a different perspective for feedback as they evaluate what to do for future years. The bottom line is that ACSC's efforts, like AWC's, will bear little fruit until they are part of broader focus on language development spread across an officer's career. Despite that, the program for the coming year should be kept in place on a trial basis. The Air Force has got to start somewhere to increase emphasis on foreign language skills. Even if this is not the best way to start, it may at least help to overcome some of the institutional inertia to get the Air Force moving. It can fix exactly where and how it is moving a little later.

While solving the language problem will require significant resources to achieve marked improvements across the officer corps, there are substantial gains to be made in the area of cultural awareness without too much investment. First, AU needs to introduce the fundamentals of cultural awareness much earlier in an officers' career than is currently planned. Furthermore, it needs to build on that foundation with additional culture-oriented curricula most applicable to various levels of leadership. These are all relatively easy things to do. It is mostly just a matter of choosing to do it, building the curricula to support it and training or hiring instructors who can effectively teach it.

The investment in intercultural skills will pay dividends. Officers with a strong foundation of intercultural skills will be more intellectually prepared to prosecute warfare against enemies from other cultures across the spectrum of conflict. Furthermore, they will better prepared to work with allies and coalition partners in peace and conflict as well as ensure overseas bases operate effectively. Finally, living overseas as de facto ambassadors of the US they will shape the hearts and mind campaign integral to America's soft power base.

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[93] As quoted by Honorable Gordon England, Secretary of the Navy, (address to the NMCI Industry Symposium, New Orleans, LA 22 Jun 2004) http://www.navy.mil/navydata/people/secnav/england/speeches/england040622.txt

[94] Ibid.

[95] Lt Gen Walter Sharp, Director Joint Staff, to Undersecretary for Defense for Readiness and Personnel, memorandum 26 August 2005.

[96] Swanson, interview.

[97] Air University, "In Contact Brief: Incorporating Language Training and Cultural/Regional Education into Officer Force Development Plans." Powerpoint Briefing. Aug 2005.

[98] Dickinson, interview.

[99] Although there are no language requirements to apply to OTS, intuitively, some applicants will have had some language background. Exactly how much, though, is difficult to discern as language self assessments are just now becoming mandatory in accessions programs. Assuming the academic background of officer trainees in OTS roughly mirrors the national average, the Air Force can expect only 8-9% of them to have had some language training at the university level. Of these, the author does not have data to say how many take four semesters, but one can logically assume it is less than 8-9%. The author has made the assumption of 5% as a ballpark estimate.

[100] The author acknowledges that there are a few non-line officers commissioned through USAFA and ROTC, but they are the exception and would not substantially alter the overall math.

[101] List Interview.

[102] Wright Interview.

[103] Stephen Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989).

[104] Maj Rob Swanson, Headquarters Air Force Airmen Learning Division, phone interview with author, 14 Aug 2006.

[105] Rolland Stoneman, Associate Director of Admissions US Air Force Academy, e-mail to author, 23 Jun 2006.

[106] Jack Sanders, Reserve Officer Training Corps Registrar, e-mail to author, 16 Aug 2006.