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AND THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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April 2013

**Review of
the Process for Establishing Language
Designated Positions**

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PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY OF THE REVIEW

This review was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2011 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of BBG, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and BBG. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; whether U.S. interests are being accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; whether instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this review, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on-site interviews; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.



United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its responsibility to promote effective management, accountability, and positive change in the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office, post, or function under review. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

The recommendations therein have been developed on the basis of the best knowledge available to the OIG and, as appropriate, have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that these recommendations will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations.

I express my appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. W. Geisel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

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Context

Proficiency in foreign languages is essential to perform certain functions overseas. For other functions, language skills are helpful. Language skills enhance the Department's ability to engage with foreign audiences, report on events, and oversee mission operations.

The Department designates language proficiency requirements in speaking and reading levels by position. Achieving the professional proficiency level, a speaking-3/reading-3 (3/3), would allow individuals to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations and read with almost complete comprehension on unfamiliar subjects. The Department does not require officers trained in a language to use those skills on more than one assignment, normally does not require officers entering the Department with language skills to serve in missions necessitating those skills,¹ and rarely directs assignments² (other than for entry-level officers). These factors increase the need for formal language training. In 2012, 1,829 Department employees started language training.

Numerous Government Accountability Office reports over the past 10 years have highlighted Department challenges in meeting its foreign language needs.³ Most reports address shortfalls in the number of language-qualified officers serving in the Near East and South Central Asia and the number of officers with supercritical language skills such as Arabic and Chinese.

In 2010, the Department revised the process for identifying LDP in order to strengthen and standardize its use across missions. Under the revised process, LDPs are recommended by overseas missions and approved by regional bureaus and the Bureau of Human Resources (DGHR) every 3 years, rather than every year.⁴ The triennial review process was designed to generate in a more thoughtful review of language requirements. According to 13 *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM) 221, "LDPs should be designated only for those positions where language proficiency is essential, rather than merely helpful or convenient."

Of the Department's 9,762 direct-hire overseas positions, 4,121 (42 percent) are language designated. About 60 percent of those positions are in Europe, Central America, and South America. Appendix I shows LDPs by bureau and function, Appendixes II and III by mission, and Appendix IV by language. The number of LDPs increased by 42 percent from 2002 to 2011, which DGHR attributes to the growth in the Foreign Service, the need for more Chinese and Arabic speakers, and consular section expansions in Brazil, Mexico, India, and China.

¹ A notable exception is the recently revised recruitment language program under which applicants who receive a hiring preference for possessing certain language skills now must use those skills on a future assignment.

² When an officer's assignment is nearing completion, he or she bids on a list of available positions.

³ GAO-09-955, GAO-09-1046T, GAO-07-1154T, GAO-06-894, GAO-06-535, and GAO-04-139.

⁴ Functional bureaus provide LDP recommendations to regional bureaus. Disagreements are taken to DGHR.

Language Designated Position Findings

The revised LDP process did not achieve the rigor necessary to channel Department resources to developing and maintaining language skills where they are most needed. Since January 2011, OIG has recommended eliminating 64 LDPs, mostly in Europe, because the officers occupying those positions use English in the performance of their duties. At the same time, other missions need more LDPs or LDPs rated at higher levels. Recent findings by the Benghazi Accountability Review Board mirror OIG findings related to insufficient LDPs in difficult locations. Appendix V shows recent OIG recommendations to increase and decrease language requirements at various missions.

Mission-Recommended Language Requirements Need Closer Review

The process for identifying LDPs starts at overseas missions. During the first triennial LDP review in 2010 and 2011, DGHR instructed all regional bureaus to consult with their overseas missions for “an in-depth review of all LDP requirements for positions at embassies.” DGHR reiterated that “operational need” is the decisive criterion in determining when language proficiency is “essential” rather than “merely helpful or convenient,” as noted in 13 FAM 221 b. DGHR also directed missions and bureaus to consider the official designation of national language, the importance that host nation interlocutors attach to speaking their language, the general level of English language use, the quality of local interpretation and translation services, and the importance of being able to speak the host nation language in public or at representational events.⁵ During OIG inspections conducted after January 2011, OIG found that some missions never reviewed LDPs and that others did not apply the FAM criteria or DGHR guidance.

Regional bureaus applied varying levels of scrutiny to the language recommendations they received from their missions. The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs relied on missions to review and recommend LDPs and did not alter any of their recommendations. Another regional bureau could not explain why positions were designated in an indigenous language of one country, whereas no positions were designated in an indigenous language of a different country where three times as many people spoke the language.

Regional bureaus that have difficulty attracting candidates and have difficult languages reviewed mission-recommended LDPs more closely and applied their own criteria. Representatives in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs considered a number of factors, including the strategic importance of the country; the likelihood that language skills could be used in future assignments; and, to some extent, cost. To develop a larger pool of Chinese speakers, the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs allowed its missions to apply the “essential” criteria liberally for that language. On the other hand, representatives the OIG team spoke with in the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), South and Central Asian Affairs, and African Affairs acknowledged keeping LDPs artificially low in both number and level to attract more bidders.⁶ Officers in these locations must look for ways of conducting diplomacy without

⁵ Appendix VI summarizes DGHR guidance to missions.

⁶ Bureau representatives stated they sometimes have difficulty attracting bidders in difficult locations that require 2 years of language training, a frequent problem in NEA.

using language skills such as relying on locally employed (LE) staff to provide translation when dealing with government officials or visa applicants.

No formal mechanism exists to assess whether embassies and regional bureaus are applying LDP criteria. During the 2010–2011 triennial review, neither missions nor regional bureaus were required to provide DGHR documentation justifying their LDP recommendations. Although requiring missions to produce documentation justifying every LDP periodically has merit, a number of bureaus pointed out that this task would generate an unwieldy amount of information to review. Requiring each embassy instead to submit a memorandum explaining its overall rationale for identifying LDPs would be a more realistic approach and would provide regional bureaus and DGHR with a factual basis for evaluating the merits of embassy LDP recommendations.

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Human Resources should require every embassy to provide narrative explaining the rationale behind its recommendations for language designated positions. The narrative should address major factors driving the essential designations such as those outlined in the Bureau of Human Resources’ guidance—English language penetration and the local culture and language—and demonstrate why incumbents have found language skills to be essential to the performance of their duties. It should also identify any new language designated positions that are needed. (Action: DGHR)

Bureau-Recommended Language Requirements Need Closer Review

Just as regional bureaus do not adequately review the recommendations of the missions, senior Department officials do not adequately review recommendations from the regional bureaus. DGHR is responsible for the Department’s LDPs and, as noted in 13 FAM 220 a., the Director General makes final decisions on whether positions should be language designated. DGHR representatives indicated that they had no expertise or other basis to challenge regional bureau recommendations. The Under Secretary for Management similarly stated that he relies on regional bureau assistant secretaries to define LDP requirements.

Lack of high-level review has led to anomalies. Proficiency requirements for officers performing similar functions across missions and bureaus vary widely. For example, there are two language designated general services officer positions in Switzerland, three in France, and four in Italy; however, there are no language designated general services officer positions in Haiti, Thailand, or Indonesia and only one such position in Egypt. The latter four countries all have fewer English language speakers and more difficult working environments.

Some bureaus—NEA, the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, and the Bureau of African Affairs in particular—acknowledge that they keep language requirements low to attract bidders. OIG has pointed out in numerous reports the drawbacks of underdesignating positions.⁷ In Jerusalem, for example, political officer Arabic skills were insufficient to conduct business in the West Bank. In Muscat and Kuwait, language limitations undermined political and public diplomacy outreach efforts. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, the shortage of language qualified officers limited the missions’ ability to participate in public debates with fluency in local languages.

⁷ See Appendix V.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

The table below and Appendixes II and III show LDPs, including those at the 3/3 level, for various missions. There are only 15 3/3 level LDPs in Egypt, 4 in Pakistan, and 10 in Iraq, whereas Italy, Greece, and Ecuador maintain 50, 10, and 42 such LDPs, respectively. Reviewing LDPs at a macro level with associated costs would better enable the Department to determine whether training funds are being spent where most needed.

Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the S-3/R-3 Level
Colombia	114	103	90%	79
Guatemala	48	42	88%	32
El Salvador	52	43	83%	32
Spain	49	40	82%	28
Ecuador	65	53	82%	42
Peru	70	55	79%	45
China	458	327	71%	30
Italy	101	70	69%	50
France	123	82	67%	58
Japan	121	67	55%	41
Israel	133	48	36%	24
Sweden	26	9	35%	9
Greece	65	19	29%	10
Egypt	144	30	21%	15
Afghanistan	364	32	9%	6
Iceland	12	1	8%	1
Pakistan	252	20	8%	4
Sudan	49	3	6%	0
Iraq	425	19	4%	10

The Under Secretary for Political Affairs (P) and the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources (D) do not provide input on the distribution of LDPs across bureaus or the associated language training costs. All regional bureau assistant secretaries fall organizationally under P, and D is responsible for Departmentwide resources. Both P and D could review LDPs every 3 years in coordination with DGHR’s revised LDP process or every 4 years in conjunction with the Department’s Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. The results of the review would affect the number of LDPs at various missions and, by extension, where language training funds are spent.

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Human Resources should prepare a report for the Under Secretary for Political Affairs and the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources that lists recommended language designated positions by mission; assesses the extent to which the distribution is consistent with U.S. interests; highlights the cost implications of the recommendations; and requests input on the distribution of language designated positions across missions and bureaus. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with P and D)

Transparency Needed in Language Training Costs

No office in the Department maintains figures showing the full cost of language training. The estimates in this report were generated by the OIG team and include costs of instruction, officer salaries while in training, per diem and related costs to bring officers (and sometimes their household effects) back to the United States for training, and housing and other support costs for officers attending overseas training facilities.

The OIG team estimates training students to the 3/3 level in easier world languages such as Spanish can cost \$105,000; training in hard languages such as Russian can cost \$180,000; and training in super hard languages such as Chinese and Arabic can cost up to \$480,000 per student.⁸ Students learning super hard languages to the 3/3 level generally spend one year domestically at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and then a second year at an overseas training facility.

FSI, DGHR, and the Department's central fund for American salaries pay nearly all of the costs of language training; the costs are almost never borne by the missions or bureaus recommending LDPs. The OIG team estimates the Department spent \$195 million providing language training in 2012, 40 percent of which represents student salaries while they are in training. DGHR, FSI, and the central fund spent about \$158 million⁹ in FY 2012 for training domestically at FSI. Overseas training facility costs—borne by FSI, DGHR, the central fund, and regional and functional bureaus—are estimated to total an additional \$37 million.¹⁰

Cost is not a factor in the language designation process. Given a governmentwide need to be more cost conscious, language training costs should be transparent and part of the LDP process. Eliminating language training for positions that do not require language skills would free up funds for additional language training elsewhere.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Budget and Planning, in coordination with the Foreign Service Institute and the Bureau of Human Resources, should determine training costs by language and level and make those costs available to missions, bureaus, under secretaries, and deputy secretaries that recommend and approve language requirements. (Action: BP, in coordination with FSI and DGHR)

Regional bureaus do not consider cost implications when recommending LDPs. At present, regional bureaus have no incentive to control language training costs. The most effective way of ensuring that regional bureaus scrutinize LDPs is to require that they bear some responsibility for the costs. The Department has a number of charging options. The Department

⁸ The OIG team's estimate for easy and hard languages was developed based on FSI's weekly tuition rate, the standard number of weeks for 3/3 training, the salary of a mid-level Foreign Service officer, benefits based on Congressional Budget Office figures, and per diem based on 14 FAM 575.3 and Federal Travel Regulations. Cost estimates for super hard languages were developed using the above methodology for the domestic portion of training and data provided by Embassy Beijing and NEA and data in the Department's standard overseas support cost model for the overseas portion of language training.

⁹ Figures were developed based on data from FSI and DGHR and on per diem based on 14 FAM 575.3 and Federal Travel Regulations.

¹⁰ Figures were developed based on data from FSI, DGHR, Embassy Beijing, the American Institute of Taiwan, and NEA and assuming salaries for mid-level officers, benefits based on Congressional Budget Office figures, and overseas support costs using the Department's standard overseas support cost model.

could establish some form of an LDP or language training cap for each regional bureau. During the triennial LDP process, bureaus with difficult languages and greater needs would receive larger caps. Other more elaborate options include reimbursable agreements (already used by FSI to charge other agencies for language training) or the working capital fund.¹¹ Under both of these options, regional bureaus would receive base funding transfers and would pay for the language training associated with their LDPs.¹²

Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Budget and Planning, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, the Bureau of Administration, the Foreign Service Institute, and the regional and functional bureaus that fund positions, should determine the best means for holding bureaus accountable for the training costs associated with their language designated positions. (Action: BP, in coordination with DGHR, A, FSI, AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA, WHA, and CA)

Most of the Department's language training is in world languages that can be used more than once in an officer's career. Using the data shown in Appendix IV, 67 percent of the students starting language training in 2012 were enrolled in Spanish (23 percent), French (13 percent), Chinese-Mandarin (9 percent), Portuguese (8 percent), Arabic (8 percent), or Russian (6 percent). However, the Department does not require officers trained in a language to use those skills on more than one assignment.

Other Issues That Affect Language Designated Positions

Several factors outside the FAM criterion influence language designations. In addition to factors mentioned earlier, promotion and tenure policies tied to language skills also influence the number and level of LDPs. Some LDPs are established to allow opportunities for entry-level personnel to demonstrate language proficiency before being tenured. LDPs at the 3/3 level facilitate officer promotions into the Senior Foreign Service.¹³ Many believe asymmetric designations with lower reading levels are more appropriate, but serving in those positions may adversely affect officers' ability to progress within the Foreign Service because promotion and tenure requirements are generally tied to symmetric designations. Others believe the Department should train to the 4/4 level for some positions. One bureau established LDPs not because they were essential but to develop cadres of officers with those language skills to bid on future assignments.

The existing FAM criterion is valuable in that it should result in a list of only those positions for which language skills are essential.¹⁴ However, a working group that includes the

¹¹ The working capital fund provides the most flexibility in responding to changing language training demands, but it is also the most difficult to set up.

¹² Some bureaus oppose options entailing base fund transfers to the regional bureaus because of the administrative burden associated with setting up and administering such a system. DGHR and FSI also believe that having regional bureaus control language training funds would result in less language training, as funding would be used for other bureau priorities. The OIG team believes the recommendation is necessary to encourage bureaus to review and prioritize LDPs and to consider the associated costs. The Bureau of Consular Affairs pointed out that functional bureaus that own and fund positions should also receive an LDP budget. The OIG team agrees with this approach in principle and encourages the Bureau of Budget and Planning to devise a practical means of doing so.

¹³ As noted in 13 FAM 211.1 a., officers should have language proficiency to the 3/3 level in two languages before reaching the Senior Foreign Service. According to 3 FAM 2324.4 c., an officer must have achieved a 3/3 proficiency level in any language in order to be promoted into the Senior Foreign Service.

¹⁴ Assuming additional oversight as recommended in this report.

regional bureaus and FSI is needed to determine what other designations, policies, or procedures could fulfill these other needs of the Foreign Service. As a part of the process, the working group could consider requiring officers who receive language training to serve more than one tour at a mission where the language is required, thereby reducing the need and cost for additional training and positions.

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Human Resources should convene a multibureau working group to review the promotion and tenure policies related to language skills, the best way to develop cadres of language-qualified officers in key languages, and the existing *Foreign Affairs Manual* criteria on language designation. (Action: DGHR)

Objective Measures of Need

The Department would benefit from adopting quantifiable measures to help determine whether language designations are necessary. One measure of LDP need is whether incumbents are using their language skills regularly on “essential” aspects of their work. If the mission or bureau repeatedly requests that DGHR waive language requirements for a position, language skills may not be needed for the position. FAM criteria to this effect were in place in the past but were dropped in 2012.¹⁵ Testing officers in LDPs on their language skills at the conclusion of their assignments would also provide a measure of how intensely they used their language skills. If officers’ test scores deteriorated at the mission, this might indicate that language skills are not needed at the designated level.¹⁶ Both DGHR and FSI note, however, that testing officers at the end of their assignments would be a costly endeavor.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Human Resources should reinstate the *Foreign Affairs Manual* provision that eliminated language designated position requirements for all positions for which two consecutive waivers were provided. (Action: DGHR)

¹⁵ 13 FAM 221 b. (2) stated that LDPs were to be dropped automatically if waivers were given on two consecutive assignments. DGHR did not consistently enforce this requirement, which was eliminated on April 19, 2012. DGHR stated that the language waiver process has been strengthened and that language waivers are now provided only if something unexpected happens. DGHR believes the requirement will unnecessarily penalize missions if something unexpected happens twice in a row.

¹⁶ Test scores could also assist supervisors in documenting officers’ performance.

Language Incentive Pay Findings

The LIP program has, until recently, suffered from lack of oversight. The program is outlined in 3 FAM 3911.1: “To foster the development and use of foreign language skills deemed critical to its mission, the Department provides monetary incentives for proficiency in designated hard and extremely hard languages.” Of 72 languages included in LIPs, incentive pay is provided for 50, including Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, Japanese, Russian, Greek, Czech, Estonian, and Slovenian.

The list of LIP languages has not been adjusted for years, and it is unclear why LIP is provided for some languages but not others. The FAM criteria do not elaborate on how to select LIP languages. The Department provides LIP at many missions that do not have difficulty attracting bidders. Less than one-fifth of the countries where the Department provided LIP in 2012 appeared on DGHR’s 2012 historically difficult-to-staff list and the missions did not have a significant number of hard-to-fill positions. For example, employees with Greek language proficiency received LIP payments of \$200,000 in FY 2012, although that mission is not historically difficult to staff and had no hard-to-fill positions last year. Poland also is not historically difficult to staff and had no hard-to-fill positions last year, yet employees received \$343,000 in LIP. Employees in Japan received \$392,000 in LIP even though Japan had no hard-to-fill positions in 2012. If LIP is provided to encourage officers to bid on assignments, it is questionable why many of these languages are LIP designated.

If LIP is provided primarily to encourage officers to learn hard and super hard languages that are strategic and for which the Department is trying to develop cadres of language-qualified officers, the Department should note these objectives in the FAM, implement a formal process whereby strategic languages are identified, and define the number of officers needed by language to fill future positions. This information could feed into decisionmaking on which languages incentives are necessary. The Department of Defense’s (DOD) review and preparation of a Strategic Language List could serve as a model. Every 2 years, DOD conducts a strategic review to determine the languages it should focus on to meet strategic and operational needs over the next 10 to 15 years. After considering national strategic guidance, intelligence assessments, ongoing operations, and input from the combatant commands, joint staff, armed services, and DOD agencies, DOD prepares a Strategic Language List to inform policies and resource allocation decisions as DOD recruits, trains, tests, and retains its personnel. Additionally, providing officers some or all LIP payments at the conclusion of their assignments could provide a greater incentive for officers to use and maintain their language skills.¹⁷

A Language Policy Working Group, composed of representatives from DGHR, FSI, and the regional bureaus, has been reviewing LIP for the past year and plans to recommend significant changes in LIP languages. The OIG team applauds these efforts.

¹⁷ DGHR opposes testing at the end of an assignment, pointing out it would be costly to do so and opining that it is better to give officers incentive to learn and use LIP language skills through positive reinforcement, which LIP currently provides.

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Human Resources should publish in the *Foreign Affairs Manual* a new section that states the criteria for designating a language for language incentive pay. (Action: DGHR)

Recommendation 8: The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with the Foreign Service Institute and the regional bureaus, should review language incentive pay and add or remove any language that does not meet the newly revised criteria. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with FSI, AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA, and WHA)

Recommendation 9: The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with the regional bureaus, should determine whether providing some or all language incentive payments at the conclusion of officer assignments is feasible and, if so, publish this policy in the *Foreign Affairs Manual*. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA, and WHA)

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Human Resources should require every embassy to provide narrative explaining the rationale behind its recommendations for language designated positions. The narrative should address major factors driving the essential designations such as those outlined in the Bureau of Human Resources' guidance—English language penetration and the local culture and language—and demonstrate why incumbents have found language skills to be essential to the performance of their duties. It should also identify any new language designated positions that are needed. (Action: DGHR)

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Human Resources should prepare a report for the Under Secretary for Political Affairs and the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources that lists recommended language designated positions by mission; assesses the extent to which the distribution is consistent with U.S. interests; highlights the cost implications of the recommendations; and requests input on the distribution of language designated positions across missions and bureaus. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with P and D)

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Budget and Planning, in coordination with the Foreign Service Institute and the Bureau of Human Resources, should determine training costs by language and level and make those costs available to missions, bureaus, under secretaries, and deputy secretaries that recommend and approve language requirements. (Action: BP, in coordination with FSI and DGHR)

Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Budget and Planning, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, the Bureau of Administration, the Foreign Service Institute, and the regional and functional bureaus that fund positions, should determine the best means for holding bureaus accountable for the training costs associated with their language designated positions. (Action: BP, in coordination with DGHR, A, FSI, AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA, WHA, and CA)

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Human Resources should convene a multibureau working group to review the promotion and tenure policies related to language skills, the best way to develop cadres of language-qualified officers in key languages, and the existing *Foreign Affairs Manual* criteria on language designation. (Action: DGHR)

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Human Resources should reinstate the *Foreign Affairs Manual* provision that eliminated language designated position requirements for all positions for which two consecutive waivers were provided. (Action: DGHR)

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Abbreviations

D	Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources
Department	U.S. Department of State
DGHR	Bureau of Human Resources
DOD	Department of Defense
FAM	<i>Foreign Affairs Manual</i>
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
LDP	Language designated position
LE	Locally employed (staff)
LIP	Language Incentive Pay
NEA	Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
OIG	Office of Inspector General
P	Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Appendix I: Language Designated Positions by Bureau and Function¹⁸

Language Designated Positions by Bureau

Region/Bureau	Number of Department Positions Overseas	Number of Department Positions Overseas That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions Overseas That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions Overseas That Are LDPs at the S-3/R-3 Level
African Affairs	1,224	344	28%	226
East Asian and Pacific Affairs	1,648	708	43%	343
European and Eurasian Affairs	2,218	1,017	46%	666
International Organizations	93	12	13%	6
Near Eastern Affairs	1,410	403	29%	206
South and Central Asian Affairs	1,169	240	21%	81
Western Hemisphere Affairs	1,896	1,384	73%	1,151
Other	104	13	13%	11
Total	9,762	4,121	42%¹⁹	2,690

Language Designated Positions by Function

Function/Cone	Number of Department Positions Overseas That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions Overseas That Are LDPs at the S-3/R-3 Level
Consular	1,284	834
Executive	179	170
Information Management	70	6
Management	391	198
Medical	0	0
Multifunctional	53	38
Political/Economic	1,030	851
Public Affairs	500	429
Security	366	106
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement	45	45
Office Management	203	13
Total	4,121	2,690

¹⁸ The OIG team developed these charts based on DGHR-provided data on LDPs and the number of overseas Department positions.

¹⁹ Forty-two percent (4,121) of the Department's 9,762 overseas positions are language designated.

Appendix II: Language Designated Positions by Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are Language Designated²⁰

Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Argentina	57	53	93%	41	72%
Colombia	114	103	90%	79	69%
Mexico	402	356	89%	326	81%
Venezuela	77	68	88%	57	74%
Guatemala	48	42	88%	32	67%
Dominican Rep	65	56	86%	48	74%
Holy See	7	6	86%	5	71%
Central African Rep	7	6	86%	5	71%
Brazil	242	206	85%	177	73%
Honduras	48	40	83%	30	63%
El Salvador	52	43	83%	32	62%
Chile	40	33	83%	25	63%
Costa Rica	39	32	82%	25	64%
Spain	49	40	82%	28	57%
Ecuador	65	53	82%	44	68%
Cape Verde	10	8	80%	7	70%
Peru	70	55	79%	45	64%
Mali	23	18	78%	11	48%
Haiti	64	50	78%	40	63%
Panama	41	32	78%	22	54%
Bolivia	41	32	78%	22	54%
Gabon	17	13	76%	8	47%
Nicaragua	41	31	76%	22	54%
Cuba	36	27	75%	27	75%
Kazakhstan	51	38	75%	21	41%
Uruguay	30	22	73%	14	47%
Belarus	15	11	73%	6	40%
Guinea	22	16	73%	11	50%

²⁰ The OIG team developed this chart using DGHR-provided data on LDPs and the number of overseas Department positions.

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Congo	51	37	73%	28	55%
Portugal	28	20	71%	14	50%
China	458	327	71%	136	30%
Mozambique	24	17	71%	12	50%
Paraguay	27	19	70%	14	52%
Italy	101	70	69%	48	48%
Slovakia	19	13	68%	8	42%
Algeria	31	21	68%	15	48%
Cameroon	31	21	68%	11	35%
Ukraine	71	48	68%	21	30%
Vietnam	91	61	67%	33	36%
France	123	82	67%	63	51%
Uzbekistan	36	24	67%	11	31%
Madagascar	21	14	67%	9	43%
Benin	18	12	67%	8	44%
Cote d'Ivoire	32	21	66%	16	50%
Laos	23	15	65%	10	43%
Turkmenistan	23	15	65%	6	26%
Togo	17	11	65%	7	41%
Tunisia	39	25	64%	21	54%
Turkey	109	69	63%	34	31%
Djibouti	19	12	63%	7	37%
Latvia	19	12	63%	6	32%
Kyrgyzstan	32	20	63%	10	31%
Moldova	24	15	63%	15	63%
Mauritania	16	10	63%	5	31%
Poland	70	43	61%	20	29%
Chad	18	11	61%	8	44%
Burkina Faso	18	11	61%	7	39%
Morocco	60	36	60%	29	48%
Azerbaijan	35	21	60%	12	34%
Albania	25	15	60%	9	36%
Russia	193	114	59%	63	33%
Estonia	17	10	59%	7	41%
Angola	24	14	58%	12	50%
Tajikistan	26	15	58%	7	27%

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Georgia	40	23	58%	9	23%
Serbia	42	24	57%	16	38%
Niger	21	12	57%	6	29%
Lebanon	43	24	56%	16	37%
Burundi	18	10	56%	6	33%
Japan	121	67	55%	41	34%
Yemen	47	26	55%	7	15%
Lithuania	20	11	55%	5	25%
Czech Republic	33	18	55%	11	33%
Senegal	53	28	53%	20	38%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	44	22	50%	17	39%
Bulgaria	34	17	50%	9	26%
Armenia	30	15	50%	10	33%
Macedonia	28	14	50%	5	18%
Luxembourg	14	7	50%	6	43%
Suriname	14	7	50%	6	43%
Equatorial Guinea	10	5	50%	5	50%
Burma	31	15	48%	2	6%
Croatia	27	13	48%	10	37%
Romania	44	21	48%	20	45%
Montenegro	13	6	46%	5	38%
Saudi Arabia	115	50	43%	14	12%
Indonesia	124	53	43%	35	28%
Jordan	72	30	42%	10	14%
Hungary	41	17	41%	9	22%
Cambodia	36	14	39%	10	28%
Thailand	114	44	39%	16	14%
Mauritius	13	5	38%	5	38%
Kuwait	43	16	37%	7	16%
Syria	49	18	37%	8	16%
Germany	229	83	36%	67	29%
Israel	133	48	36%	24	18%
Nepal	39	14	36%	6	15%
South Korea	95	34	36%	15	16%
Sweden	26	9	35%	9	35%

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Norway	26	9	35%	9	35%
Libya	30	10	33%	7	23%
Netherlands Antilles	3	1	33%	1	33%
Mongolia	22	7	32%	6	27%
Taiwan	126	38	30%	23	18%
Oman	30	9	30%	2	7%
Switzerland	88	26	30%	16	18%
Greece	65	19	29%	10	15%
Bahrain	33	9	27%	4	12%
United Arab Emirates	89	24	27%	14	16%
Bangladesh	45	12	27%	2	4%
Qatar	30	8	27%	3	10%
Slovenia	15	4	27%	2	13%
Tanzania	31	8	26%	6	19%
Kosovo	31	8	26%	5	16%
Denmark	24	6	25%	6	25%
Belgium	134	30	22%	28	21%
Finland	27	6	22%	5	19%
Timor-Leste	9	2	22%	2	22%
Egypt	144	30	21%	15	10%
Malaysia	48	10	21%	7	15%
Hong Kong	58	12	21%	5	9%
Netherlands	41	8	20%	8	20%
Rwanda	21	4	19%	2	10%
India	268	46	17%	8	3%
Canada	111	19	17%	18	16%
Austria	100	17	17%	10	10%
Ethiopia	56	9	16%	3	5%
Belize	19	3	16%	3	16%
Cyprus	28	4	14%	3	11%
USA	104	13	13%	11	11%
Brunei	8	1	13%	1	13%
Sri Lanka	33	4	12%	0	0%
Afghanistan	364	32	9%	6	2%
Iceland	12	1	8%	1	8%

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Pakistan	252	20	8%	4	2%
Sudan	49	3	6%	0	0%
Singapore	34	2	6%	1	3%
Fiji	18	1	6%	0	0%
Kenya	76	4	5%	0	0%
Iraq	425	19	4%	10	2%
Ghana	46	2	4%	1	2%
Philippines	118	5	4%	0	0%
Barbados	36	1	3%	1	3%
Nigeria	100	2	2%	0	0%
United Kingdom	108	2	2%	2	2%
South Africa	127	0	0%	0	0%
Australia	68	0	0%	0	0%
Jamaica	43	0	0%	0	0%
Uganda	34	0	0%	0	0%
Liberia	30	0	0%	0	0%
Zimbabwe	29	0	0%	0	0%
Trinidad & Tobago	24	0	0%	0	0%
Ireland	24	0	0%	0	0%
The Bahamas	24	0	0%	0	0%
Zambia	24	0	0%	0	0%
Guyana	22	0	0%	0	0%
New Zealand	22	0	0%	0	0%
Botswana	21	0	0%	0	0%
Malawi	17	0	0%	0	0%
Sierra Leone	17	0	0%	0	0%
Malta	15	0	0%	0	0%
Namibia	15	0	0%	0	0%
Swaziland	14	0	0%	0	0%
Papua New Guinea	13	0	0%	0	0%
The Gambia	11	0	0%	0	0%
Lesotho	10	0	0%	0	0%
Eritrea	9	0	0%	0	0%
Marshall Islands	4	0	0%	0	0%
Micronesia, Fed.	4	0	0%	0	0%

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
States of					
Bermuda	3	0	0%	0	0%
Palau	2	0	0%	0	0%
Grenada	1	0	0%	0	0%
Samoa	1	0	0%	0	0%

Appendix III: Language Designated Positions by Mission Size²¹

Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
China	458	327	71%	136	30%
Iraq	425	19	4%	10	2%
Mexico	402	356	89%	326	81%
Afghanistan	364	32	9%	6	2%
India	268	46	17%	8	3%
Pakistan	252	20	8%	4	2%
Brazil	242	206	85%	177	73%
Germany	229	83	36%	67	29%
Russia	193	114	59%	63	33%
Egypt	144	30	21%	15	10%
Belgium	134	30	22%	28	21%
Israel	133	48	36%	24	18%
South Africa	127	0	0%	0	0%
Taiwan	126	38	30%	23	18%
Indonesia	124	53	43%	35	28%
France	123	82	67%	63	51%
Japan	121	67	55%	41	34%
Philippines	118	5	4%	0	0%
Saudi Arabia	115	50	43%	14	12%
Colombia	114	103	90%	79	69%
Thailand	114	44	39%	16	14%
Canada	111	19	17%	18	16%
Turkey	109	69	63%	34	31%
United Kingdom	108	2	2%	2	2%
USA	104	13	13%	11	11%
Italy	101	70	69%	48	48%
Austria	100	17	17%	10	10%
Nigeria	100	2	2%	0	0%
South Korea	95	34	36%	15	16%

²¹ The OIG team developed this chart using DGHR-provided data on LDPs and the number of overseas Department positions.

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Vietnam	91	61	67%	33	36%
United Arab Emirates	89	24	27%	14	16%
Switzerland	88	26	30%	16	18%
Venezuela	77	68	88%	57	74%
Kenya	76	4	5%	0	0%
Jordan	72	30	42%	10	14%
Ukraine	71	48	68%	21	30%
Peru	70	55	79%	45	64%
Poland	70	43	61%	20	29%
Australia	68	0	0%	0	0%
Dominican Rep	65	56	86%	48	74%
Ecuador	65	53	82%	44	68%
Greece	65	19	29%	10	15%
Haiti	64	50	78%	40	63%
Morocco	60	36	60%	29	48%
Hong Kong	58	12	21%	5	9%
Argentina	57	53	93%	41	72%
Ethiopia	56	9	16%	3	5%
Senegal	53	28	53%	20	38%
El Salvador	52	43	83%	32	62%
Kazakhstan	51	38	75%	21	41%
Congo	51	37	73%	28	55%
Spain	49	40	82%	28	57%
Syria	49	18	37%	8	16%
Sudan	49	3	6%	0	0%
Guatemala	48	42	88%	32	67%
Honduras	48	40	83%	30	63%
Malaysia	48	10	21%	7	15%
Yemen	47	26	55%	7	15%
Ghana	46	2	4%	1	2%
Bangladesh	45	12	27%	2	4%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	44	22	50%	17	39%
Romania	44	21	48%	20	45%
Lebanon	43	24	56%	16	37%
Kuwait	43	16	37%	7	16%

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Jamaica	43	0	0%	0	0%
Serbia	42	24	57%	16	38%
Panama	41	32	78%	22	54%
Bolivia	41	32	78%	22	54%
Nicaragua	41	31	76%	22	54%
Hungary	41	17	41%	9	22%
Netherlands	41	8	20%	8	20%
Chile	40	33	83%	25	63%
Georgia	40	23	58%	9	23%
Costa Rica	39	32	82%	25	64%
Tunisia	39	25	64%	21	54%
Nepal	39	14	36%	6	15%
Cuba	36	27	75%	27	75%
Uzbekistan	36	24	67%	11	31%
Cambodia	36	14	39%	10	28%
Barbados	36	1	3%	1	3%
Azerbaijan	35	21	60%	12	34%
Bulgaria	34	17	50%	9	26%
Singapore	34	2	6%	1	3%
Uganda	34	0	0%	0	0%
Czech Republic	33	18	55%	11	33%
Bahrain	33	9	27%	4	12%
Sri Lanka	33	4	12%	0	0%
Cote d'Ivoire	32	21	66%	16	50%
Kyrgyzstan	32	20	63%	10	31%
Algeria	31	21	68%	15	48%
Cameroon	31	21	68%	11	35%
Burma	31	15	48%	2	6%
Tanzania	31	8	26%	6	19%
Kosovo	31	8	26%	5	16%
Uruguay	30	22	73%	14	47%
Armenia	30	15	50%	10	33%
Libya	30	10	33%	7	23%
Oman	30	9	30%	2	7%
Qatar	30	8	27%	3	10%
Liberia	30	0	0%	0	0%

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Zimbabwe	29	0	0%	0	0%
Portugal	28	20	71%	14	50%
Macedonia	28	14	50%	5	18%
Cyprus	28	4	14%	3	11%
Paraguay	27	19	70%	14	52%
Croatia	27	13	48%	10	37%
Finland	27	6	22%	5	19%
Tajikistan	26	15	58%	7	27%
Sweden	26	9	35%	9	35%
Norway	26	9	35%	9	35%
Albania	25	15	60%	9	36%
Mozambique	24	17	71%	12	50%
Moldova	24	15	63%	15	63%
Angola	24	14	58%	12	50%
Denmark	24	6	25%	6	25%
Trinidad & Tobago	24	0	0%	0	0%
Ireland	24	0	0%	0	0%
The Bahamas	24	0	0%	0	0%
Zambia	24	0	0%	0	0%
Mali	23	18	78%	11	48%
Laos	23	15	65%	10	43%
Turkmenistan	23	15	65%	6	26%
Guinea	22	16	73%	11	50%
Mongolia	22	7	32%	6	27%
Guyana	22	0	0%	0	0%
New Zealand	22	0	0%	0	0%
Madagascar	21	14	67%	9	43%
Niger	21	12	57%	6	29%
Rwanda	21	4	19%	2	10%
Botswana	21	0	0%	0	0%
Lithuania	20	11	55%	5	25%
Slovakia	19	13	68%	8	42%
Djibouti	19	12	63%	7	37%
Latvia	19	12	63%	6	32%
Belize	19	3	16%	3	16%

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Benin	18	12	67%	8	44%
Chad	18	11	61%	8	44%
Burkina Faso	18	11	61%	7	39%
Burundi	18	10	56%	6	33%
Fiji	18	1	6%	0	0%
Gabon	17	13	76%	8	47%
Togo	17	11	65%	7	41%
Estonia	17	10	59%	7	41%
Malawi	17	0	0%	0	0%
Sierra Leone	17	0	0%	0	0%
Mauritania	16	10	63%	5	31%
Belarus	15	11	73%	6	40%
Slovenia	15	4	27%	2	13%
Malta	15	0	0%	0	0%
Namibia	15	0	0%	0	0%
Luxembourg	14	7	50%	6	43%
Suriname	14	7	50%	6	43%
Swaziland	14	0	0%	0	0%
Montenegro	13	6	46%	5	38%
Mauritius	13	5	38%	5	38%
Papua New Guinea	13	0	0%	0	0%
Iceland	12	1	8%	1	8%
The Gambia	11	0	0%	0	0%
Cape Verde	10	8	80%	7	70%
Equatorial Guinea	10	5	50%	5	50%
Lesotho	10	0	0%	0	0%
Timor-Leste	9	2	22%	2	22%
Eritrea	9	0	0%	0	0%
Brunei	8	1	13%	1	13%
Holy See	7	6	86%	5	71%
Central African Rep	7	6	86%	5	71%
Marshall Islands	4	0	0%	0	0%
Micronesia, Fed. States of	4	0	0%	0	0%

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Country	Number of Department Positions in Country	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs	Number of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level	Percent of Department Positions in Country That Are LDPs at the 3/3 Level
Netherlands Antilles	3	1	33%	1	33%
Bermuda	3	0	0%	0	0%
Palau	2	0	0%	0	0%
Grenada	1	0	0%	0	0%
Samoa	1	0	0%	0	0%

Appendix IV: Language Designated Positions by Language and Number of Students in Language Training

<i>Number of LDPs by Language²²</i>	
Language	Count
Spanish	1,155
French	572
Chinese-Mandarin	381
Russian	361
Arabic-modern	319
Portuguese	268
German	118
Italian	77
Serbo-Croatian	67
Turkish	67
Japanese	66
Vietnamese-STD	61
Indonesian	55
Ukrainian	47
Thai	44
Polish	43
Korean	36
Romanian	35
Hindi	30
Persian-Afghan	29
Hebrew	28
Albanian	26
Persian-Iranian	23
Dutch	22
Georgian	22
Greek	21
Azerbaijani	20
Czech	19
Urdu	19
Kirghiz	18
Bulgarian	17
Hungarian	17
Kazakh	17
Pashto	16
Burmese	15
Lao	15
Armenian-East	15

<i>Number of Students Starting Training in 2012 by Language²³</i>	
Language	Students
Spanish	417
French	233
Mandarin	162
Portuguese	156
Arabic	145
Russian	120
German	57
Vietnamese	44
Serbo-Croatian	32
Turkish	29
Italian	28
Indonesian	27
Albanian	21
Japanese	20
Dari	19
Polish	18
Romanian	17
Thai	17
Urdu	17
Haitian Creole	12
Hindi	12
Bulgarian	11
Czech	11
Hebrew	11
Korean	11
Armenian	10
Burmese	10
Farsi	8
Greek	8
Khmer	8
Pashto	8
Swahili	8
Azerbaijani	7
Dutch	7
Lao	7
Norwegian	7
Swedish	7

²² The OIG team developed this chart using a list of LDPs provided by DGHR.

²³ The OIG team developed this chart using data provided by FSI.

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<i>Number of LDPs by Language²²</i>	
Persian-Tajiki	15
Cambodian-Khmer	14
Turkmen	14
Bengali	13
Nepali/Nepalese	13
Slovak	13
Uzbek	13
Latvian	12
Lithuanian	11
Macedonian	11
Chinese-Canton	10
Malay	10
Swahili/Kiswahili	10
Estonian	9
Norwegian	9
Swedish	9
Tamil	8
Gujarati	7
Mongolian	7
Amharic	6
Danish	6
Finnish	6
Filipino/Tagalog	5
Slovenian	4
Telugu	4
Arabic Egyptian	2
Hausa	2
Panjabi/Punjabi	2
Singalese	2
Haitian Creole	1
Icelandic	1
Kinyarwanda/Rwanda	1
Kurdish	1
Somali	1
Tibetan	1
Total²⁴	4,414

<i>Number of Students Starting Training in 2012 by Language²³</i>	
Bengali	6
Macedonian	6
Nepali	6
Tagalog	6
Georgian	5
Lithuanian	5
Tamali	5
Ukrainian	5
Hungarian	4
Malay	4
Latvian	3
Slovenian	3
Tajiki	3
Telugu	3
Amharic	2
Danish	2
Hausa	2
Kurdish	2
Mongolian	2
Uzbek	2
Cantonese	1
Estonian	1
Finnish	1
Gujarati	1
Kinyarwanda	1
Kyrgyz	1
Singhalese	1
Slovak	1
Somali	1
Tibetan	1
Turkmen	1
Icelandic	0
Kazakh	0
Punjabi	0
Setswana	0
Total	1,829

²⁴ The total number of LDPs by languages (4,414) differs from the total number of LDPs overseas (4,121) because some LDPs are dual designated—officers can meet requirements with either of two languages.

Appendix V: OIG Recommendations Related to Language Designated Positions

Recommendations to Reduce Language Designated Positions

Inspection of Embassy Lisbon, Portugal, and Constituent Posts *(ISP-I-12-53A, September 2012)*

OIG recommended that the mission eliminate five of the embassy's 22 LDPs. Three incumbents in two successive assignment cycles were given language waivers for serving without language ability. Those officers work effectively without language skills as does the financial management officer, who reported that Portuguese was not essential for his position and whose predecessor arrived with a waiver and served 3 years without language ability.

Inspection of Embassy Bucharest, Romania *(ISP-I-12-45A, August 2012)*

OIG recommended the mission conduct a review of its 21 LDPs and reduce that number. Romanian is not essential to the work for a substantial number of Romanian LDPs. Officers reported only a marginal need for their language skills. The mission had not reviewed proficiency requirements to determine whether they were essential.

Inspection of Embassy Prague, the Czech Republic *(ISP-I-12-42A, August 2012)*

OIG recommended the mission remove Czech language designations for three positions. The Czech education system provides nearly universal English-language instruction at most public schools, and English is far more widely understood than in the years prior to the fall of communism. The need for Czech language to conduct diplomatic operations has diminished.

Inspection of Embassy Nairobi, Kenya *(ISP-I-12-38A, August 2012)*

OIG recommended the mission drop language designations for the political military officer and regional information resource officer for whom Kiswahili and French are not essential. The political military officer's principal responsibilities entailed maintaining relationships with English-speaking Kenyan authorities in Nairobi. Language training was waived for the officer's predecessor. The other officer covers nine countries from Nairobi, and French is not essential.

Inspection of Embassy Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei *(ISP-I-12-35A, June 2012)*

OIG recommended the mission remove the public affairs officer's Malay language designation. The officer received 9 months of Malay language training but rarely uses Malay in work-related interactions and most Bruneians speak excellent English.

Inspection of Embassy Singapore, Singapore *(ISP-I-12-36A, June 2012)*

OIG recommended the mission remove the assistant public affairs officer's Malay language designation. The officer spent several months in language training first in Washington and then in Malaysia but rarely used Malay in day-to-day interactions with staff, local media, or educational contacts. Most Singaporeans speak English, which is the medium of instruction in most schools.

Compliance Followup Review of Embassy Bangkok and Consulate General Chiang Mai, Thailand *(ISP-C-12-33A, June 2012)*

OIG recommended the mission resubmit its list of LDPs. During the compliance followup

review, the embassy, with OIG's concurrence, identified five positions requiring only a familiarization course. OIG also found asymmetric language designations would better suit the mission and recommended that HR determine whether some LDPs could be asymmetric levels.

Inspection of the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, France *(ISP-I-12-27, May 2012)*

OIG recommended the mission remove language requirements for three entry-level positions in the economic section whose duties and responsibilities were identical to other positions in the section, which were not designated. The incumbents, their supervisor, and the deputy chief of mission agreed language skills were not essential. The mission provides interpretive services for all its meetings, and virtually all personnel from other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development missions and the Secretariat speak English.

Compliance Followup Review of Consulate General Hong Kong, China *(ISP-C-12-29A, May 2012)*

OIG recommended the mission remove consular officer Mandarin language requirements and instead designate the positions as language preferred positions. Six consular officers received Mandarin language training before arriving at the mission. Consular officers in Hong Kong said they rarely use their Mandarin language skills, which deteriorate while they are in country. Although the Department has an interest in creating a cadre of Mandarin speakers, the current practice of training consular officers in Mandarin, giving them an assignment where Mandarin is not required for conducting day-to-day business and is rarely used, then assigning them to a non-Mandarin speaking position undermines this goal.

Inspection of Tri-Mission Vienna Joint Management Office *(ISP-I-12-19A, March 2012)*

OIG recommended the mission remove language designations for four regional security officer positions. None of the offices considered German essential to fulfilling their responsibilities, as most of their work is conducted in English and LE staff is competent in English. Two regional security officers were assigned without reaching designated level of language proficiency and without a language waiver. The mission did not conduct a comprehensive survey of LDPs to determine whether language skills were essential.

Inspection of Embassy Helsinki, Finland *(ISP-I-11-67A, September 2011)*

OIG recommended the mission remove language designations of four of its six LDPs. Expertise in Finnish is not essential to the work of most of the officers who have learned it. Three officers do not use Finnish or use it sparingly, as English is widely spoken in Finland at all levels of society.

Inspection of Embassy New Delhi, India, and Constituent Posts *(ISP-I-11-39A, June 2011)*

OIG recommended the mission cut at least 50 percent of the consular officer language designations in country. Thirty-seven consular officer positions in India are LDPs. Officers typically get 6 to 9 months of language training prior to their assignment. According to visa officers and consular managers, most visa interviews are conducted in English because applicants have sufficient proficiency in English. LE staff can and do translate in multiple local languages if needed for complex interviews.

Inspection of Embassy Stockholm, Sweden *(ISP-I-11-30A, March 2011)*

OIG recommended the mission eliminate one of the three consular officer language designations.

The officer's interactions with Swedish authorities are conducted in English, and his clientele are primarily English-speaking American citizens, permanent resident aliens, or Swedes who have American citizen children. English has been compulsory in Swedish schools for more than 50 years, and almost all visa applicants speak good or even excellent English. LE staff assists when interpretation is required, which occurred in only 3 percent of the nonimmigrant visa cases in 2009.

Inspection of Embassy Athens, Greece (*ISP-I-11-15A, February 2011*)

OIG recommended that the mission reduce the number of language designated positions from 36 to 20 and reduce the post's 3/3 LDPs from 12 to 9. Most officers reported they seldom needed to speak Greek for more than pleasantries in their professional work, and their language skills steadily deteriorate after arrival at post. Only half a dozen Department officers have the ability and need to deliver substantive public addresses or conduct complex official discussions in Greek.

Recommendations to Increase Language Designated Positions or Reduce Waivers

Inspection of Embassy Beirut, Lebanon (*ISP-I-12-10A, February 2012*)

OIG recommended the mission require Arabic proficiency in the newly upgraded consular unit chief position. The unit chief must regularly interact with Arabic-speaking host country officials and professional contacts. Language skills would greatly enhance the chief's ability to operate in Beirut.

Inspection of Embassy Seoul, Republic of Korea (*ISP-I-11-55A, August 2011*)

OIG recommended the Department design a program to meet long-term Korean language needs. Currently, fewer than 100 Department employees have achieved general professional proficiency in Korean, and of those currently assigned to LDPs in South Korea, nearly half have not achieved the required level of proficiency. Although the mission stated there was no need for LDPs beyond the 3/3 level, OIG disagreed and concluded there was a strategic need for officers with advanced proficiency levels. Relatively few officers bid on South Korean positions designated at the 3/3 level because of the difficulty of the language, the perception that learning a one-country language is of limited usefulness, and fact that there are fewer professional opportunities in Korean at the senior levels compared to Arabic and Chinese.

Inspection of the Office of the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (*ISP-I-11-48, June 2011*)

OIG recommended the office recruit detailees or excepted Civil Service employees with local language proficiency to serve full time in Embassies Kabul and Islamabad as public spokespersons, to provide career public diplomacy officers training needed to engage Afghan and Pakistani local language media at any time and any place, and to consider developing a speakers bureau of experts who are proficient in Urdu, Pashto, or Dari, who can be detailed from their regular jobs to assist with outreach and engagement strategies in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Fewer than 120 active career and career-conditional employees can read and speak Urdu, Pashto, or Dari at a competency level of 3/3 or greater. There is a shortage of language-qualified press officers in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, which has one of the lowest levels of literacy in the world and where people get their information primarily from radio (in rural areas) or television (in urban areas), U.S. officials should be able to engage with the broadcast media in

Dari and Pashto. An analogous situation exists in Pakistan. In an effort to fill the gap, a detailee from DOD sometimes calls media contacts in Pakistan to engage with them in Urdu.

Inspection of the Consulate General Jerusalem *(ISP-I-11-34A, March 2011)*

OIG recommended the Department cease granting language waivers for LDPs in the political section, acting to redesignate all positions in that section as mid-level. The 6 months of language training entry-level officers obtain before filling first-tour or mid-level positions is insufficient to conduct business in the West Bank in Arabic. The practice of assigning entry-level officers with language waivers to mid-level political positions forces section leaders to divert too much time from reporting and operations to mentoring and training.

Inspection of Embassy Amman, Jordan *(ISP-I-10-35A, March 2010)*

OIG recommended the mission convert a 1-year entry-level officer LDP into a 3-year mid-level officer LDP. The complexity of the portfolio and importance of the issues in U.S.-Jordanian relations warrant the assignment of an experienced officer. OIG also noted that several officers who are not language qualified occupy LDPs and that collective deficits in the officers' language proficiencies over time could constrain the embassy's ability to develop relationships more broadly among Jordanian civil society, political parties, and business people, particularly outside Amman.

Inspection of Embassy Baghdad, Iraq *(ISP-I-09-30A, July 2009)*

OIG recommended the mission reassess the need for spoken and written Arabic language skills for officers in the public affairs section. Institutional knowledge in the mission's public affairs section resides with contractors; noncareer, temporary appointment Civil Service employees hired under U.S. Code Title 5, Section 3161 (3161s); DOD-funded bilingual bicultural advisors; and members of the military serving multiple tours in Iraq. The bilingual cultural advisors, all of whom speak Arabic, will likely leave Iraq when U.S. troops draw down, and the Department may lose its ability to hire 3161s. The drawdown of U.S. troops and the ability to hire 3161s will affect the section's staffing and ability to conduct programs. Under the current staffing plan, only 4 of the 12 Foreign Service positions are language designated.

Appendix VI: Language Designated Positions Guidance

Director General's April 30, 2010, Memorandum

A memorandum from Nancy Powell, Director General of the Foreign Service, in late April 2010 launched measures to reform the process for designating positions for language skills. The Director General announced that the LDP process would be conducted once every 3 years, instead of annually. She requested that regional bureaus review all positions for each of their posts and develop “an authoritative list of LDP requirements in each region.” Regional bureaus were to review positions to be filled in the 2011 assignment cycle and send the results to her by May 28, 2010, although results for Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan were to be sent by May 14. To complete this exercise, “authoritative lists for all positions” were to be sent to her by January 17, 2011. Regional bureaus were to certify that, “in accordance with 13 FAM 221, the language requirement for each LDP is essential to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.” Changes in LDP requirements for a position were to be based on considerations such as the specific tasks requiring language skills and the percentage of time spent on each; changes in responsibilities or the work environment that justify changing current language level requirements; and any specific OIG recommendations for changes in position language designations. The memorandum outlined nine additional considerations to apply in the process.

The goals of the exercise were to standardize the process to raise “this key resource exercise to the highest levels of the Department.” The Director General announced that DGHR had decided to strengthen the process because “the LDP process is the foundation upon which all other Department language policies are built.”

Director General's December 16, 2010, Memorandum

After reminding the assistant secretaries of the April 30, 2010, memorandum, the Director General announced the next phase of the review process by requesting that they send the LDP requirements for all positions not previously reviewed by January 28, 2011. She included a list of LDP criteria to guide the assistant secretaries' thinking, help standardize the posts' approach to LDP positions worldwide, and address congressional criticism that the Department did not have a “transparent, comprehensive process for identifying foreign language requirements to determine positions that should be designated.” The Director General advised, “You need not send me a written justification for each LDP, but you should be able to provide a justification if required during our review.” She asked for the assistant secretaries' help in identifying any special positions that might have greater needs than the LDP proficiency, identifying this as the “preferred planning level.” She also solicited ideas for improvements in language policies for recruitment, language probation, and LIP to be submitted through the Language Issues Working Group.

The Director General outlined the following general criteria for LDPs:

- To execute successfully the requirements of the position, the employee must have proficiency in the host nation language. “Operational need” is the decisive criterion for LDPs, where language proficiency is essential, rather than merely helpful or convenient to enhancing U.S. effectiveness abroad;

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

- Official designation of national language(s);
- Importance that host nation interlocutors attach to speaking their language;
- General level of English-language penetration;
- Professionalism of interpretation and translation services available;
- Importance of being able to speak host nation language(s) in public or at representational events; and,
- Availability of media in host nation language(s).

Appendix VII: Bureau of Human Resources Strategic Plan

2010 Strategic Plan for Foreign Language Capabilities

DGHR, with the participation of the regional bureaus, the FSI, and the Bureaus of Consular Affairs, Diplomatic Security, Resource Management, and Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, prepared a Strategic Plan finally approved by DGHR's principal deputy assistant secretary in March 2011. After outlining the specific needs of officers in overseas position for language capabilities, the strategy set forth a general goal of identifying and meeting the Department's current and projected needs for language proficiencies. The strategy specified that the Department should work to increase the rate at which LDPs were filled from the then prevailing 60 percent fill rate to 90 percent by 2016–2017. It outlined some objectives to ensure that the Department achieved this goal. The plan then listed “six key steps”: (1) expand the training complement; (2) improve the Department's language designation process; (3) develop a modeling tool; (4) recruit personnel with foreign language proficiency through the Recruitment Language Program; (5) make incentives more effective and maximize the effect of language and assignment policies; and (6) strengthen and develop new approaches for language training.

The plan recognized that the language designation process had relied on individual post management “with little input from Washington bureaus.” The strategy paper recognized that, “the lack of bureau oversight and consistent, agreed upon criteria has resulted in inconsistency in LDP designation.”²⁵ The plan called for the development of “well-defined, consistent criteria” without regard to the number of bidders. The plan included the move from annual reviews to triennial reviews already underway. However, it called for requiring more senior reviews of post recommendations by regional and functional bureaus and developing a program to meet emerging needs outside the triennial review period.

The strategic plan also outlined the responsible offices and the timeframe for accomplishing each component action of the six key steps. Many actions would be completed before the end of 2011, but others would extend as far into the future as 2017.

²⁵ *State Department Strategic Plan for Foreign-Language Capabilities* (March 7, 2011), p. 5.



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Arlington, VA 22219