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DD/A REGISTRY
FILE: Training
28 Apr 81

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Max Hugel
Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT: Improving Language Capability at CIA

REFERENCE: Memo to DDA from DDCI dtd 11 Mar 81, same Subject

Responses to the series of questions raised in reference memo are attached. Separate answers are keyed to each of your inquiries. This also provides useful background information for the 6 May 1981, Executive Committee meeting.

/s/ Max Hugel

Max Hugel

Attachment

cc: DCI

Distribution:
Orig - Adse
1 - DCI
1 - ER
1 - DDA Subj
1 - DDA Chrono
2 - OTE Registry
2 - DTE
2 - LS/TE

DDA/OTE/LS/[redacted](28Apr81)
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ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP

28 April 1981

TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post)	Initials	Date
1. EO/DDA	✓	28 APR 1981
2.		
3. ADDA	H	4-28
4.		
5. DDA	✓	

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FROM: (Name, org. symbol, Agency/Post) [redacted]

Director of Training and Education

Room No.—Bldg. 1026 C of C

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I. Progress being made to ensure that language training requirements are being properly carried out.

Approximately 50% of Language School training is accomplished by means of non-scheduled (i.e., specially arranged) courses. This pattern is indicative of the responsiveness of the Language School to training demands, but also illustrates the ad hoc nature of a high percentage of requirements. More precise and longer term planning of requirements will enable the customer to better utilize the program of scheduled courses and thereby improve cost efficiency. Each directorate has been asked to submit predicted requirements for full- and part-time training at the Language School and part-time training at Headquarters and Rosslyn beginning with the fall 1981 term. Attached is a list of these requirements as well as a list of requirements which the Language School currently lacks the resources to teach.

From statistics maintained on a weekly basis the Language School can keep you informed periodically of the correlation between predicted and actual enrollments. Reports concerning Language Development Committee (LDC) activities and the Language Incentive Program are made each quarter. An annual LDC report summarizes the statistics and activities of each fiscal year.

Recommendations:

a. that submissions of language training requirements from each directorate be required annually which will result in better language training planning and a regularization of the language program through larger classes run on a more definite schedule,

b. that the LDC report quarterly on the effectiveness of the Language School responses to language training requirements levied upon it,

c. that reporting on the status of the LIP continue on a quarterly basis and that the activities of the total program be summarized in an annual report.

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LANGUAGE SCHOOL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS
Fiscal Year 1982

	Part-time Headquarters	Part-time C of C	Full-time C of C
Arabic	15	2	2
Armenian	-	1	-
Bulgarian	-	-	1
Chinese	39	7	5
Danish	-	-	1
Dutch	1	2	2
French	52	17	32
German	24	3	30
Greek	-	5	3
Hebrew	-	1	-
Hungarian	4	-	1
Indonesian	1	5	4
Italian	16	5	11
Japanese	4	1	1
Korean	1	-	-
Persian (Dari)	-	-	1
Persian (Farsi)	3	-	1
Polish	2	3	2
Portuguese	10	4	4
Romanian	1	-	1
Russian	109	16	7
Serbo-Croatian	-	-	1
Spanish	70	13	22
Swedish	-	-	2
Thai	-	2	4
Turkish	2	4	3
Vietnamese	1	6	-
	355	97	141

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EXTERNAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

	Part-time	Full-time
*Afrikaans	1	
Azerbaijani	1	
Byelorussian	1	
*Burmese		1
Georgian	2	
Kazakh	1	
Kirghiz	1	
Latvian	1	
Moldavian	1	
Russian (Advanced Scientific and Economic)	2	
*Slovenian	1	
*Swahili	1	
Tajik	5	
*Ukrainian	1	
	19	1

*NOTE: With the exception of the full-time Burmese requirement from OSO all others are FBIS requirements. The Foreign Service Institute School of Language Studies can teach the five asterisked languages. Arrangements are in process to bring in a Tajik instructor to teach five FBIS employees in a concentrated eight-week course during the summer of 1981.

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II. Relation of Language Competency to Promotion

All components of the Agency agree that language competency is an important factor which should be considered when ranking personnel for value to the service and promotion when it is essential to effective job performance. It is also an indication of an individual's overall potential. However, since many Agency positions do not require the use of a language, possession of language skills cannot be a uniformly applicable factor in determining whether or not a person should be promoted. At the present time, language skill is not a mandatory requirement for promotion.

The DCI area, DDS&T and NFAC Language Development Committee representatives report that their directorates would like to retain this flexibility. In the DDO where language skill is more essential, long range plans include a requirement for Operations officers occupying positions necessitating foreign language competence to achieve a tested proficiency of R-3, S-3 in at least one foreign language before advancing to the mid-career level.

Recommendations:

a. that language skill not be made a mandatory requirement for promotion throughout the Agency,

b. that DDO proceed with plans to include by 1985 a requirement for demonstrated proficiency in one foreign language for Operations officers to advance to mid-career level.

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III. Attainment of Fluency Levels

1. In response to the question as to whether or not language students are developing the needed levels of functional language ability, we must reluctantly report that at least for students enrolling in beginning language courses (both full-time and part-time) the answer is clearly "no". Although Language School language training produced 176 gains in speaking proficiency including 30 new professional level (S-3 or better) language speakers in FY 80, only four of those cases involved students who entered training with 0 or 0+ language ability. The average proficiency attained by students in FY 80 was between levels 1 and 1+. Tables A, B, C, and D contrast length of training attended and proficiency levels attained by language group. In researching the probable causes for this obvious shortfall in speaking skill acquisition, we have analyzed Language School training data for FY 80 and arrived at the following conclusions. The main contributing variables (listed in order of importance) which are related to the development of oral proficiency across languages are:

a. The number of hours actually spent in training.

b. The difficulty of the language being studied.

c. Language aptitude as measured by the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT).

d. The number of other languages already learned.

(See also Table E--Regression Analysis Summary.)

2. Of these four variables only the relative difficulty of the language being studied is a constant. Since relative language difficulty is dependent on the degree of similarity between the target language and English, (i.e., the greater the language "distance" the more difficult the target language is for Americans), it is essentially a given factor beyond our control. The other three variables, however, can be influenced or even controlled by managerial decisions such as:

a. increasing the number of hours students actually spend in training;

b. selective screening of prospective language students which would increase average language aptitude;

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c. giving personnel who have demonstrated the ability to learn foreign languages priority in future language study.

Actions in each of these areas would require, however, some modification of existing policies and procedures.

3. The number of hours spent in training correlated higher with attained language proficiency than any other variable. Hence the greatest potential gains would come from removing constraints in this area. This could be accomplished by lengthening courses and/or actual duration of training. The number of hours established for beginning language courses was based on FSI guidelines established to provide sufficient training time for the best students to attain desired proficiency levels. (See Table F). Lengthening of standard courses to provide sufficient time for average students to reach professional proficiency levels would very likely mean doubling the length of existing courses.

4. The feasibility of the above option must be seriously questioned since students are not now remaining in training for current course durations, which makes it impossible at this time to accurately predict the optimum length of training for average students. We don't know what proficiency level most would attain if left in training long enough to complete the present courses. The average length of training for students during FY 80 is compared with the published course lengths for our major languages in Table G. It is obvious that improvements must be made in this area.

5. Pre-screening of prospective language students for minimum language aptitude or demonstrated language learning ability would result in more gifted students and allow classes to cover more material in the time available. This would increase the level of proficiency attained. The Language School currently accepts all students and routinely provides special tutorial help for those who have difficulty mastering the language. It is quite possible that this extra training assistance is one of the reasons for the moderate correlation found for FY 80 between ending proficiency and MLAT scores. (The partial correlation between these variables after controlling for hours of study was 0.21). Other conditions which clearly reduce this correlation value are purely statistical in nature. Both correlated variables had severely restricted ranges in FY 80. Since students were not left in training very long they only attained

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minimal proficiency levels no matter what their aptitude scores might have been; and for one reason or another, the FY 80 students did not represent the full range of language aptitude, but tended to cluster around the below average and average categories with almost no students in the superior range. MLAT categories of FY 80 Language School beginning full-and part-time students are given below:

Not Tested:	48
Poor:	13
Below Average:	29
Average:	38
Above Average:	22
Superior:	1

(The one student in FY 80 with a superior MLAT score remained in training fewer than five weeks.) Footnote 3 to Table F provides additional information relative to MLAT scores of Agency personnel.

Recommendations:

a. that Agency offices be directed to commit language students to remain in training for the advertised length of the course,

b. that the Language School conduct a study to determine optional course length by language group to enable average students to attain minimum professional proficiency,

c. that each entering language student have on record an MLAT score which is not more than five years old,

d. that the Language School accept students with below average language aptitude by exception only,

e. that in instances of inadequate resources, the Language School give priority to students who have demonstrated a successful language learning ability.

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TABLE A

WEEKS OF TRAINING AND SPEAKING PROFICIENCY
OF FY 80 FULL-TIME BEGINNING STUDENTS

French, Italian, and Spanish

Weeks of Training	Speaking Proficiency 0	0+	1	1+	2	2+	3	Row Total
0-5	3	3	4					10
6-10		1	6	1				8
11-15		2	6	5	2	1	1	17
16-20			3	3	6	3		15
21-25			1	2	6	1		10
26-30				2	2	1		5
Column Total	3	6	20	13	16	6	1	65

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TABLE B

WEEKS OF TRAINING AND SPEAKING PROFICIENCY
OF FY 80 FULL-TIME BEGINNING STUDENTS

Dutch, German, and Swedish

Weeks of Training	Speaking Proficiency 0	0+	1	1+	2	2+	3	Row Total
0-5		1						1
6-10			1					1
11-15		3		1				4
16-20			1	1				2
21-25		1	1					2
26-30				1				1
31-35					1	1		2
Column Total		5	3	3	1	1		13

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TABLE C

WEEKS OF TRAINING AND SPEAKING PROFICIENCY
OF FY 80 FULL-TIME BEGINNING STUDENTS

Greek, Polish, and Russian

Weeks of Training	Speaking Proficiency 0	0+	1	1+	2	2+	3	3+	Row Total
0-5			2						2
6-10		1	1						2
11-15									
16-20						1			1
21-25					1				1
26-30									
31-35				4					4
36-40								1	1
Column Total		1	3	4	1	1		1	11

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WEEKS OF TRAINING AND SPEAKING PROFICIENCY
OF FY 80 FULL-TIME BEGINNING STUDENTS

Chinese, Japanese, and Korean

Weeks of Training	Speaking Proficiency 0	0+	1	1+	2	2+	3	Row Total
0-5	1	2						3
6-10								
11-15								
16-20								
21-25			1					1
26-30								
31-35					1			1
36-40								
41-45			1	1				2
Column Total	1	2	2	1	1			7

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REGRESSION EQUATION SUMMARY

Dependent Variable: Speaking Proficiency at End of Training
Full- and Part-time Students - FY 80

Independent Variables	Multiple R
Hours of Training Received	.62
Language Difficulty	.64
Total MLAT Score	.68
Number of Other Languages Learned	.69

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Estimated Average Proficiency Levels
Attained in Language Training

Language	Weeks of Uninterrupted Training	Students's Demonstrated Ability		
		Below Average	Average	Superior
French Italian Spanish	24	2	2+	3
Dutch German Swedish	32	2	2+	3
Greek Polish Russian	44	2	2+	3
Chinese Japanese Korean	44	1+	2	2+

These estimates are based on the combined experience of the CIA Language School and the School of Language Studies of the Foreign Service Institute. They are useable as guidelines for expected achievement, but should not be interpreted as guarantees because:

1) student motivation and diligence will also have an impact on learning,

2) these data are merely estimates because gaps in the empirical duration-of-training data base preclude a more precise analysis, and

3) the basis for these estimates includes FSI data which might be derived from experience with students possessing higher language aptitude than typical Language School students. (The average Agency MLAT score falls at the 25th percentile for FSOs. The average MLAT score for all FY 80 Language School students fell at the FSO 32nd percentile, and the average MLAT for CY 80 CT classes fell at the FSO 42nd percentile.)

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The following table gives the advertised course length, average scheduled length of training, and average attendance for students receiving end-of-training reports in the most popular full-time beginning language courses.

LENGTHS OF TRAINING TIME

Language	Number of Students	Advertised Course Length	Average Length of Training Scheduled	Average Length of Training Attended
French	29	24 weeks	17.6 weeks	16.1 weeks
German	19	32 weeks	18.9 weeks	16.5 weeks
Spanish	40	24 weeks	15.6 weeks	13.8 weeks

Attendance remained a serious problem with part-time classes, as well. Nearly one-fourth of those who enrolled in part-time classes completed fewer than ten hours of instruction. This is 8% worse than last year. Furthermore, those who completed sufficient training to receive end-of-training reports missed, on the average, one out of every three classes.

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IV. Recruitment of Language Competent Personnel

The Office of Personnel Policy, Planning and Management (OPPPM) recruits people with language qualifications and/or ability to fill a variety of different position requirements throughout the Agency. Specific skills necessary to fill the positions are detailed by component managers in recruitment guides. Transcriber, translator, and language instructor requirements are clearly identified in recruitment guides which in many instances identify specific languages coupled with S&T or NFAC related substantive knowledges. Although these combined requirements make it more difficult to recruit qualified personnel, we are having some measure of success by concentrating on colleges and universities which have produced qualified candidates in the past. A number of other occupations such as the DDO Career Trainees, NFAC Analysts, DDS&T SIGINT Officers, and Authentication Specialists include language requirements of a general nature in the recruitment guide. Recruitment for these occupations is difficult due to the lack of specific information about the language requirement and the limited number of applicants that meet both substantive and language qualifications.

In this category Agency managers are inclined to place a greater priority on substantive qualification and hope that the necessary language qualification can be acquired through Agency or external training. Greater emphasis on defining specific language requirements and proficiency levels in the recruitment guides will assist in tailoring OPPPM recruitment efforts and the Recruitment Division will reissue such instructions to all offices engaged in establishing recruitment guides.

Recommendations:

a. that greater emphasis be placed on making language requirements more specific for non-language specialists such as Career Trainees and analysts,

b. that Recruitment Division reissue such instructions to all offices engaged in establishing recruitment guides,

c. that Recruitment Division be encouraged to recruit language-qualified personnel for the CT Program regardless of whether or not they meet formal educational standards currently being applied.

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V. Space for the Language Program:

At Headquarters

The Language School presently uses approximately 3,197 sq. ft. of space at Headquarters for the language program. Of this space, 2,322 sq. ft. have been donated by the DDO; 150 sq. ft. by NFAC; and 725 sq. ft. by the DDA. The 3,000 sq. ft. balcony of the South Cafeteria is being converted into 9 classrooms for language use. This additional space--in conjunction with the 2,472 sq. ft. of currently-used space which will be retained--will meet our current space needs and allow for a modest increase in Headquarters program participation.

At Chamber of Commerce Building

The anticipated addition in FY 82 of 2,025 sq. ft. of space for language classrooms in the Chamber of Commerce Building will be sufficient to meet projected requirements including those resulting from the development complement for language training in FY 83. More judicious scheduling of language training by our customers will allow us to make better utilization of space by forming larger classes. Finally, a more careful screening of students for language aptitude before being placed in language study will eliminate the necessity of splitting classes in order to form compatible groups.

Recommendations:

a. that conversion of the 3,000 sq. ft. space on the balcony of the South Cafeteria proceed as planned. The 2,472 sq. ft. of the currently-used space be retained for classroom use in the foreseeable future,

b. that the Language School be assigned 2,000 additional sq. ft. language classrooms in the Chamber of Commerce Building.

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VI. CIA's role in a long term broadly based program for language improvement.

1. In November 1979 the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies issued the text of its final report to the President entitled "Strength Through Wisdom - A Critique of U.S. Capability." Pointing to the fact that it had found "a serious deterioration in this country's language and research capacity at a time when an increasingly hazardous international military, political and economic environment is making unprecedented demands on America's resources, intellectual capacity and public sensitivity", the Commission called on the President to "set an agenda for action in these areas of national need" and made a number of recommendations to repair this deficiency in both the private and public sector. Among these recommendations: "The U.S. Government should achieve 100% compliance in filling positions designated as requiring foreign language proficiency, review criteria for such designation in order to strengthen the government's foreign language capability, and evaluate the career systems of foreign affairs agencies to ensure adequate career incentives for obtaining and retaining foreign language and area expertise."

2. In October 1979 working parallel with and responsive to the activities of the Presidential Commission, CIA established the present Language Incentive Program (LIP) "to encourage the development and maintenance of foreign language skills to support Agency activities." The LIP appears to be specifically responsive to the Commission charge as far as an internal program for the Agency is concerned.

3. The President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies also recommended that the language profession establish national proficiency goals and procedures for testing them. The Commission recommended the establishment of a National Criteria and Assessment Program for foreign language study, which would:

> ". . . establish language proficiency achievement goals for the end of each year of study at all levels, with special attention to speaking proficiency. The National Criteria and Assessment Program would fill a major gap in current language teaching by developing tests based on actual proficiency, rather than by the number of hours spent in the classroom, as is now the case."

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With or without the creation of a formal National Criteria and Assessment Program the benefits of implementing this proposal would be manifold. As in most areas of human endeavor, communication is the key to success. The existence of national functional language proficiency standards and evaluation procedures for assessing those standards would, for the first time, provide a common language for communication both within the profession and between the profession and its customers. Not only would it then be possible to make meaningful judgments about curricular options, but also about student achievement, student placement, and program articulation.

4. The most pressing need for language proficiency standards is in the area of oral language skills. Initial efforts should concentrate on speaking standards. Fortunately, there exists among agencies of the U.S. Government an accepted, standardized system and its rating criteria for evaluating spoken language skills in communicative settings. Commonly referred to as the FSI oral interview, it has been used to rate employees' functional language ability for over 25 years. In addition, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) has been using the same system to test Peace Corps volunteers and bilingual teachers. The Agency is one of the primary sources of the government's expertise in this area, and it would not be overstating the case to say that Agency personnel, working over the next several years with individuals from academe and from other government agencies, will play a key role in the development of an extremely valuable testing tool that will affect foreign language instruction across the country for decades to come. Cooperation to this end has already begun among the national language related professional organizations, i.e., Modern Language Association (MLA), American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), who in combination with the ETS look to the U.S. Government Interagency Language Roundtable as a source of testing and rating standards. Continuing work in this burgeoning cooperative effort is already being done by the Agency Language School in setting standards for measuring functional foreign language competence in federal agencies and the Department of Defense. This work can be extended to universities and secondary schools. This effort would result in common testing of communicative skills, a concomitant redirection of now inappropriate instructional techniques, and establishment of levels of achievement stated in proficiency levels rather than time units. It would address the professed

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national goal of teaching functional language skills not now reflected in the curriculum, current instructional activities, or present tests and reporting procedures of academic institutions. We believe it offers the most practical, most effective, and least costly means of contributing to a national program for the improvement of foreign language competence.

5. Specifically the Language School will accelerate the production of a handbook on oral proficiency testing techniques and rating standards which will incorporate government-wide standards. The handbook will be followed by English language materials to use as a common base for initial training in other languages and ultimately training materials in selected languages will be prepared. The total effort will not only be useful for national use but directly adaptable to Agency needs.

6. Any additional direct efforts by the Agency to contribute to a national program can best be accomplished by the full support and encouragement of developmental programs and by publicizing the Agency's emphasis on language competence. The DCI/DDCI and other appropriate Agency spokesmen should speak out on the importance of language training to the Agency along the following lines: a) A description of the Agency's Language Incentive Program. It is not widely known that the Agency places high value on the acquisition and retention of language skill, and that employees are rewarded monetarily for doing so. b) A statement of the importance of language ability in the recruitment of career trainees. c) An indication that the Agency spends a large amount of money yearly in the language training of employees. The Agency would benefit considerably by having the incoming language ability of individuals at a higher level so that training can concentrate on improving competence rather than on initial learning.

7. In addition, the professional staff of the Language School should be encouraged to play an active role in professional language associations in order to help make more visible the Agency's commitment to quality language instruction. The staff of the Language School should be encouraged to make public presentations at high school, college, and university career forums that emphasize the kinds of language skills needed in government.

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8. Finally, within the restriction of available time and assets, the Agency should support the linguistic and pedagogical training and retraining of language instructors in secondary and higher education schools. Congressman Paul Simon is likely to reintroduce his Foreign Language Assistance Act which includes a plan to create a national network of centers for foreign language research and teacher development. If this means of coordinating professional training is implemented, CIA's expertise and experience would be an important contribution.

Recommendations:

a. that the Language School be authorized to expend time and effort (approximately one and a half manyears) in FY 82 to spearhead a program for development of national test standards,

b. that the influence of the DCI/DDCI and other Agency spokesmen be applied to publicize the Agency's interest in and emphasis on foreign language competence,

c. that the DCI/DDCI support Congressional and Executive branch efforts to further the development of language-related resources,

d. that the staff of the Language School play an active role in the propagation of foreign language awareness by participation in professional conferences and appearances at schools and universities.

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