The U.S. Army in Asia Pacific: Operationalizing Regional Understanding

Policy recommendations for Brigade Alignment, the FAO program, and JSOTF

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“The Army must support national efforts aimed at preserving stability and promoting peace in an unstable and chaotic world, judiciously investing in those capabilities best suited to the task. Success depends as much on understanding the social and political fabric of the surroundings as it does on the ability to physically dominate them. In an environment defined by the intermingling of friends, enemies, and neutral parties, understanding social and cultural networks becomes just as important as the weapons we employ. Only then can we isolate enemies, identify centers of gravity, and achieve lasting results,”¹ – General Raymond Odierno, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

"As we end today's wars, I have directed my national security team to make our presence and missions in the Asia-Pacific a top priority,"² – U.S. President Barack Obama.

“With most of the world's nuclear powers and some half of humanity, Asia will largely define whether the century ahead will be marked by conflict or co-operation, needless suffering or human progress,”³ – U.S. President Barack Obama.

³ Ibid.
Executive Summary

The purpose of this brief is to determine the best ways for the United States Army to contribute in the joint services’ effort to ensure stability and promote US interests in the Asia Pacific region. This question is important because the Army is at a crossroads: the war in Iraq has ended, Afghanistan is winding down, budget cuts have begun, and the Administration has ‘rebalanced’ towards Asia. Given these developments, how should the Army prioritize its efforts? What capacities are important?

The Army can best contribute to the joint services in Asia Pacific by focusing first and foremost on maintaining a war fighting force that can destroy the nation’s enemies on the field of battle. The maintenance of such a force at a high state of readiness deters aggression in the region. Beyond the maintenance of a credible deterrent, the Army should provide a capacity for preserving peace through influence, military advice and assistance, and by enhancing partner capability to promote stability.

We approach this via three avenues:

1. Optimize existing regional specialists. In this paper we make recommendations for the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program.4

2. The Army has begun a formal process of aligning units with specific regions abroad.5 This alignment must be mission enhancing. It should not include language or cultural training. These distract from war fighting functions.

3. Employ regionally aligned forces to enhance regional security. A good model for doing so is the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P). Using regular forces to augment a Special Operations element reinforces a proven model that leverages the Special Force’s capacity to maintain continuity and relationships. This allows for better coordination of the partnering effort over an extended period of time.

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4 This paper provides recommendations on optimizing the FAO program but does not go into depth on Special Forces, Olmsted scholars, the AFPAK hands program or other avenues to gain, maintain, and utilize regional expertise.

Policy Recommendations

1. Optimize Existing Regional Specialists – FAO
   1. Screen service-wide for qualified officers.
   2. Incentivize the FAO career track by increasing operational commands for FAOs and promotion opportunities.
   3. Promote sustained language skills by:
      a. Using pre-existing schools within the CIA, DIA, or State Department for those FAOs not currently working in their region of expertise.
      b. Following State Department policy for its Foreign Service Officers and allow in-theatre FAOs to study at local language programs.
   4. Incentivize language training for PACOM-affiliated nations.
   5. Increase the FAO budget for new applicants by 20% per annum through FY2017.

2. Optimize Regionally Aligned Forces
   1. Focus first on war fighting capacities - offense, defense, and stability operations.
   2. Supplement with regionally aligned scenarios for exercises, staff exercises and exchanges, small unit exchanges, regional counterpart participation in combined training center validation exercises, officer and noncommissioned officer professional development.
   3. Occasional unit participation in host nation major exercises.
   4. Do not commit time or resources to language and cultural training unless it is basic familiarization immediately before a training or operational deployment.

3. Reinforce Success - JSOTF-P
   1. In the event that regionally aligned forces deploy short of war, they should do so in support of a Special Forces led advisory effort.
   2. Enhance partner capabilities to promote security through low footprint advisory operations working in coordination with the US Country Team.
   3. Augment special operations forces with regular forces fulfilling a broad spectrum of tasks. This allows the special operations headquarters to closely coordinate with the Country Team over an extended period, maintain relationships, and provide the continuity and context necessary to achieve positive security outcomes.
   4. A Special Warfare headquarters at the PACOM level should validate requirements, supervise pre-deployment training, and coordinate the employment of regionally aligned forces augmenting advisory mission.
   5. Avoid redundancy - Special Forces remain the regional experts and maintain the relationships with host nation through repeat deployments; participating regular forces gain broad experience applicable to future combat roles.
This brief is outlined in the following manner:

Section I describes the background of US’ interests in Asia, the constraints that limit employment options for the US Army in the region, as well as opportunities.

Section II details the FAO program as an example of how the Army can optimize existing programs to achieve regional expertise and influence in a cost effective manner.

Section III provides detail on the concept of regionally aligned forces and proposes that such alignments, if properly executed, should not distract from core competencies.

Section IV describes the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines and extrapolates lessons for the Army for effective operational employment in an advisory role from that model.

Section V concludes the paper.

The Appendix contains all Figures and Tables cited in-text as data.
Section I: Background, Constraints, and Opportunities

Behind the US ‘Pivot to Asia’

In the fall of 2011 and early 2012 the Obama Administration issued a series of announcements stating that it would be expanding its presence and effort in the Asia-Pacific. The scope of this shift includes East Asia and Australasia but particular emphasis has been placed on Southeast Asia and coastal regions of South Asia. This ‘pivot to the Pacific or ‘rebalancing towards Asia’ has been the subject of considerable attention but it is by no means the initiation of new policy. The Administration draws on a long history of US presence in the region. Technically, the US has been a Pacific power since 1833, when President Andrew Jackson’s envoy signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce between Siam (now Thailand) and the United States.

Four reasons currently stand out as driving this pivot:

1. As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq wind down and troops redeploy, the US stands at an inflection point in its strategic focus and policymaking. By some measures the decade the US spent in-theatre in the Middle East was an interlude between ‘acts’ in the Asia-Pacific. US foreign policy was driven in great part by an activist role in humanitarian interventions during the 1990s. However the explosion of Asian economic growth and subsequent Asian financial crisis during the nineties brought the region sharply into focus for policy makers. 9/11 demanded considerable resources and time in the Middle East but as those wars wind down policy makers have turned their attention back to a region that has taken on an increasingly important role as a key player in global politics.

2. Asian-Pacific nations, in particular China, have become increasingly intertwined with the US’ economic future. As of the end of 2012 Asian nations held 55% of all outstanding US Treasury securities, accounting for roughly $2.25 trillion worth of foreign official notes, Treasury bills, and T-bonds (See Appendix: Figures 1 & 2). The region boasts the largest share of the global population and since 2000 has become the second largest source of exports and the single largest source of imports for the US. Asian economies have also exhibited sustained GDP growth over the last decade notwithstanding the global downturn in 2007-8 (See Appendix: Figure 3). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects average growth in the Asia-Pacific region of 6.5% for 2013 in contrast with anemic growth forecasts for the Americas.

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7 Interventions occurred in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Iraqi-Kurdistan, and Rwanda (albeit late in the latter).

and Europe.\textsuperscript{9} The Administration has already nodded to these trends by pursuing the Trans-Pacific Partnership and making the Asia-Pacific region a priority within its National Export Initiative to boost US exports by 2015.

3. China’s emergence as an assertive regional power has added new color to its role as our most consequential partner and relationship in the region. In the past China’s disputes over maritime territory have led to tense relationships with many of its Asian neighbors, including Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia. These disagreements have usually been resolved quietly or allowed to sit unsettled. Recently however 6 remote islands that the Japanese call the Senkaku, and the Chinese call the Diaoyu, have become a hot spot in the region. China’s willingness to assert itself over disputed maritime territories has consequences for freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and beyond, which could potentially affect US’ ability to project power in the region. The US has also watched China’s efforts to modernize and expand its military over the past decade and the pivot speaks to this by calling for sustained and substantive military-to-military engagement.\textsuperscript{10}

4. The US emerged from the last decade in a fiscally constrained environment - replacing the fiscal surplus of the 1990s with a massive deficit and bitter Congressional conflict over how to resolve repeated financial impasses. The Department of Defense (DOD) faces approximately $487 billion in cuts over the next ten years. It faced twice that amount in the most recent chapter of fiscal cliff ‘game of chicken’ but narrowly avoided sequester cuts of approximately $500 billion when Republicans and Democrats were able to cobble together a last-minute package.\textsuperscript{11} Regardless, the Pentagon faces hard choices over the coming decade and the US’ economic budgetary woes and bitter partisan politics have bred concern by foreign partners over the US’ ability to sustain commitments. A ‘rebalancing towards the Asia-Pacific’ signals that US commitment to the region will not wane. According to Secretary of State Clinton, ‘In Asia, they ask whether we are really there to stay, whether we are likely to be distracted again by events elsewhere, whether we can make -- and keep – credible economic and strategic commitments, and whether we can back those commitments with action. The answer is: We can and we will.”\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} As of March 5, 2013 the Pentagon faced $47 billion in cuts due to sequestration. Talks have stalled in Washington and by all accounts sequestration will move forward.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
Military Implementation of Asia Rebalancing

Many of the higher profile initiatives in the rebalancing towards Asia occur within the security realm. Four features stand out as high priority areas:

1. The administration signaled that it would maintain its strength in the region despite pending reductions in defense spending.\(^{13}\)

2. A broader distribution of forces emphasizes building up US military capacity in the southern part of the region. This would complement pre-existing bases in Japan and South Korea and deep US capacity in Northern Asia.

3. Increased flexibility in force structure prioritizes a different type of troop deployment that would be smaller, more agile, and self-sustaining. This kind of deployment avoids capital-intensive permanent-base build-ups and places a strong emphasis on direct engagement and interaction with foreign militaries.

4. “Enhancing partners’ capabilities” is prioritized and this means strengthening the capacity of key partner states in the region through cooperative ventures in counter-terrorism, counter-drug, and counter-insurgency operations.\(^{14}\)

These priorities are driven by the fact that the combined wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are nearing completion and the operational requirements for maintaining access to Asia Pacific are technologically steep. Those requirements are vaguely outlined by the Air-Sea Battle concept, which many observers believe to be focused on countering China’s ability to deny the US regional access in the event of conflict.\(^{15}\) Given the geography and the emerging anti-access capabilities of regional powers in the region, the Asia Pacific has been rightly characterized as a maritime theater. Maintaining the global commons and guaranteeing the ability of the US to enter the region in defense of its allies and interests require heavy investment in maritime and supporting capabilities.

Therefore branches with a historical presence in the region have suffered less proposed cuts to their budgets and force structure. New postings of US troops have been proposed in Singapore, Australia, and the Philippines but with the exception of the Korean Peninsula and larger engagements during WWII, the Asia-Pacific has historically been a maritime theatre of operations.


\(^{15}\) Ibid, p.16.
The new budget proposed by the DOD endorses continued deployment of all 11 naval aircraft carriers, sustains production of attack submarines and development of new cruise missile for those submarines, and sustains production of a broad range of naval ship types. Cuts concentrate heavily therefore on US ground forces. The DOD’s Budget Priorities and Choices planning document cites plans to reduce the active Marine Corps by 10% from 202,000 to 182,000. It also cites plans to reduce the size of the active Army by 14% from the post-9/11 peak of 570,000 to 490,000. Two of four Army brigades are slated to be withdrawn from Europe and rotational deployments in Latin America and Africa have been altered to a less troop-intensive commitment.\(^{16}\)

The US Army is therefore expected to see troop reductions for the first time since the 1990s and is in the position of defining a new role for itself as it looks to the future and into a new era of US power projection.

\(^{16}\) Department of Defense. Budget Priorities and Choices. (January 2012).  
Conditions affecting US Army employment in Asia

Broadly speaking, a number of factors constrain how the services, and the US Army in particular, can contribute in the Asia Pacific region:

1. Opportunity costs in maintaining a credible deterrent:

The Army’s primary and mission critical role is to deter, and if necessary, defeat adversaries. The Army should not divert essential resources from its core task to other ‘mission enhancing’ endeavors. Any realistic recommendations for complimenting the joint force must be weighed against their potential to degrade the Army’s primary task.

Prioritizing the capacity to deter constrains options in Asia and worldwide. It argues against over specialization in non-war fighting tasks. An Army focused on nation building, advisory capacity, or humanitarian assistance cannot similarly be focused on core war fighting functions. Accordingly, all recommendations in this paper are weighed against their costs in war fighting readiness.

2. Host nation politics and costs for forward basing:

Increasing the number of US soldiers stationed abroad is a politically sensitive issue. In Japan we see particular sensitivity regarding US military basing.\(^{17}\) Increased basing throughout the region is likely to be interpreted regionally and by China as containment or encirclement. Observers raised such concerns recently when the U.S. based additional Marines in Australia.\(^{18}\)

Furthermore, it costs more to base US troops abroad, with estimates of the increased cost typically ranging between 10 and 20 percent.\(^{19}\) Therefore, in this time of fiscal tightening and in the interest of regional politics, any recommendations for increasing the Army’s role in Asia Pacific should avoid major non-rotational troop basing.

3. Preponderance of large Armies presents an opportunity:

Seven of the world’s ten largest armies are found in the Asia Pacific region.\(^{20}\) Furthermore, the armies of many smaller countries maintain considerable influence on

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their nations’ politics. This presents an opportunity for military to military engagement that the US Army can, above all other services, best fulfill due to shared interests and experience. Addressing this opportunity, recommendations in this paper emphasize the importance of regional experts with language skills commensurate to the task. Additionally, this paper offers recommendations for expanding current military advisory and assistance capacities at the task force level.

4. Conflict in the region likely to manifest on land:

While incidents have occurred frequently at sea throughout the region, the primary theater for conflict remains the land.\textsuperscript{21} Often this conflict is intrastate as demonstrated in Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, Philippines and Indonesia\textsuperscript{22}. The Army remains the best choice within the military to engage in the long-term security force assistance to address such internal conflicts; this paper describes a way to do so without sacrificing the ability to deter aggression against the US, its allies, and its interests.

\textbf{Given those constraints, how can the Army best support the joint effort to secure US interests?}

Without sacrificing its conventional competencies to deter aggression and wage war, the Army can assist in preventing conflict and shaping the peace by:

1. Ensuring United States Army interoperability with regional partners.

2. Capitalizing on the military to military engagement.

3. Advising and assisting partner forces.

4. Shaping its advising and assistance mission to the reality of host nation politics. Implies a relatively small footprint and efforts to reinforce the legitimacy of the host nation.

\textsuperscript{21}The map, by Foreign Affairs, is a clear illustration of the ascending number of maritime disputes in the South and East China Seas where the disputes have surged from 1 in 1950s to 29 in 2010s. “A Map of Conflicts in the South and East China Seas.” Foreign Affairs. Foreign Affairs published by the Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed March 5, 2013. http://www.foreignaffairs.com/a-map-of-conflicts-in-the-south-and-east-china-seas

Section II: Optimize Army Regional Specialists - Foreign Area Officer Program.  

Language, regional and cultural skills are enduring war fighting competencies that are critical to mission readiness in today’s dynamic global environment. Our forces must have the ability to effectively communicate with and understand the cultures of coalition forces, international partners, and local populations. – Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, August 2011

The military has a number of programs that increase the cultural understanding and regional specialization of select officers. In the Army, these programs include the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program, the Olmstead Scholarship, and the AFPAK hands program. We examine the FAO, the joint service’s flagship program.

What makes the FAOs so valuable?

In the wake of 9/11 it became clear the U.S. military establishment was sorely lacking in regional expertise in the Middle East. A concerted push was made to train personnel as quickly as possible but the Department of Defense (DOD) realized that a long-horizon plan was needed to sustain this capacity. If the U.S. was to achieve national security objectives and success in future operations its Armed Forces needed to be prepared to operate in a variety of conditions throughout the world.

By mid-2005 the DOD had taken the four service’s FAO programs under one umbrella and identified their critical skills as:

- Foreign language proficiency and
- Detailed knowledge of the regions of the world gained through in-depth study and personal experience.

These capabilities facilitated:

- Close and continuous military-diplomatic interaction with foreign governments and, in particular, with their defense and military establishments.

The staffs of the Combatant Commands, the Defense Agencies, and the DOD military diplomatic offices at the U.S. Embassies and diplomatic posts were ordered to include FAOs on their staff. Their role was to:

- Provide expertise in planning and executing operations,
- Provide liaison with foreign militaries operating in coalitions with U.S. forces,
- Conduct political-military activities, and
- Execute military-diplomatic missions.


24 For a more comprehensive background of the Army FAO see Appendix II: FAO History and Background and Appendix III: FAO Components of Training
At their core, FAOs combine regional and political-military expertise with a foundation in professional military skills. This allows them to provide a linkage between foreign and U.S. political-military institutions. They are invaluable to the various departments they serve and there exists high demand for their expertise.

**Demand for FAOs Is Increasing**

In FY 2011 there were 2046 accessed (active) FAOs (see Figure 1). This represents a 5% increase from the previous year and a 31% increase since the implementation of the Joint FAO Program in 2005.

In aggregate the individual services are looking to recruit almost 200 new FAOs per year and approximately 1250 new FAOs are projected to enter the program by 2017 (see Figure 2). While these numbers may seem impressive the growth does not meet demand. The DOD has set a goal of filling 95% of the billets available to FAOs and across almost all FAO users this goal is unmet.

For the Joint Chiefs and Combatant Commands (COCOM) there were 492 FAO billets at the end of FY 2011. This represents a 14% increase over the previous year however the fill rate decreased from 82% to 80% (see Figure 3). Critically, PACOM FAO billets were understaffed by 27%. We believe this is a need the Army can and should fill.

**Prioritizing The Army FAO Program**

Given the $487 billion in DOD cuts projected over the next decade, the active Army will be reduced by roughly 14% from the post-9/11 peak of 570,000 to 490,000. Two of four Army brigades are slated to be withdrawn from Europe and rotational deployments in Latin America and Africa have been altered to a less troop-intensive commitment. The US Army is therefore expected to see troop reductions for the first time since the 1990s and is very likely looking for other places to trim its budget. The Navy recently indicated that it would not be able to meet its goal of 400 new FAOs by 2017 and the DOD expects the other services to possibly cut back on their projections and funding.

However, filling the need for PACOM FAOs provides the Army with a role that kills numerous birds with one stone:

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26 Defense Budget Priorities and Choices, January 2012, Department of Defense, p. 11.

1. Create an Army staff presence in the Pacific and Asian theatres – traditionally the province of Air Force and Navy – that will be sustained for many years out in the future.

2. Asian military establishments are heavily dominated by land armies. Army FAOs would therefore have a natural advantage in building relationships with these military establishments.

3. Closing this capacity gap serves a critical national security need articulated by the DOD – close and continuous military-diplomatic interaction with foreign governments and, in particular, with their defense and military establishments.

Given the drawdown in budget and reduction of ground troops this is one way the Army can continue to serve the national interest. It may hurt given budget considerations but it is a highly effective and relatively cheap way for the Army to contribute to the pivot. We believe the Army should increase, not decrease, its FAO budget and prioritize language training that reflects the needs of PACOM.

**What Are The Challenges?**

There are four challenges the Army must face if it is to increase its FAO pool and remain competitive within the PACOM theatre – the quality of its applicants, the number of applicants, improving and sustaining language skills, and budget reductions.

1. **Applicant Quality**

The FAO applicant quality metric measures the qualified FAO applicants for each accession position. These applicants have solid performance files in their military specialty and have scored high enough on their language tests to be considered for the language training. The Army’s metric declined from 2.0 in FY 2010 to 1.6 in FY 2011 (see Figure 4) - a 20% drop in qualified applicants. Except for the Marine Corps, all branches experienced declines in this metric and the Army’s was the least precipitous. One contributing factor to this decline is that the Army does not screen for officers service-wide. Rather, it waits for applicants from eligible year groups to voluntarily apply for the FAO career track.

2. **Number of Applicants**

The FAO Applicant per Accession metric simply counts the number of applicants per required accession post. Historically, the DOD-wide focus on the importance of FAOs has meant that the program has seen an increase in the number of applicants per year. The Army faced a 22% decline for FY 2011 (see Figure 5) and this is consistent for all services except for the Marine Corps, which saw an increase of approximately 3000% in its applicant pool (see Figure 6). This extraordinary increase is a result of the Marine Corps Commander ordering a service wide screening and automatic entry into the applicant pool for all eligible candidates.
3. Language Skills

Army FAOs are responsible for sustaining their own language skills and must maintain a score of 2/2 (listening/reading) on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). However, many postings require a score of 3/3 and as of FY 2011 the Army did not incentivize oral proficiency, one of the key components of any FAO’s usefulness and ability to integrate with host-countries’ military staff.

4. Budgetary Considerations

On average an Army FAO costs roughly $260,000 for 3 years worth of training (see Figure 7). The Army projects that it will access 395 FAOs over the next 5 years (see Figure 9) and has budgeted approximately $100 million for that 5-year period for new applicants. Given the fiscal environment there will quite obviously be pressure from without and from within to trim where possible. We believe that this should be avoided at all costs.

Looking Ahead

1. Quality and Quantity

A simple way to respond to the first two challenges is for senior leadership to signal that it prioritizes the FAO track for Army officers. One option is to follow the Marine Corps model - screen service wide for qualified officers and automatically drop their files in the application process. Another option is for leadership to incentivize the FAO career track by increasing operational commands for FAOs, which are a traditional route to promotion, and increase other promotion opportunities.

2. Language and Budget

There are pre-existing schools within the CIA, DIA, or State Department to help sustain language skills for those FAOs not working within their region of expertise. We also recommend that FAOs in-region be allowed to study at a local language program. The State Department currently allows Foreign Service Officers assigned to embassies to study language locally and this seems to have worked well. In addition, these local programs tend to be much cheaper than stateside training and they offer the opportunity to improve cultural knowledge.28 We also recommend incentivizing language training for the Asia region and any PACOM affiliated-nations.

As to budget, there are no simple solutions given the current and future fiscal constraints. Leadership must make the hard decision and prioritize the FAO program. This is a low-cost investment relative to the benefit of positioning Army FAOs over numerous

countries and security agencies. Given the US’ interests in the Pacific-Asia region and the understaffing of PACOM FAOs we recommend that the Army increase its budget for new applicants by 20%. A 20% budget increase represents an additional 80 Army FAOs over the next five years. It also represents an additional $20 million but we believe that in this case it’s both prudent and wise to ‘pay to play.’

Our policy recommendations are therefore as follows:

1. Screen service-wide for qualified officers and automatically drop their files in the application process.

2. Incentivize the FAO career track by increasing operational commands for FAOs and promotion opportunities.

3. Promote sustained language skills
   a. Use pre-existing schools within the CIA, DIA, or State Department for those FAOs not currently working in their region of expertise.
   b. Follow State Department policy for its Foreign Service Officers and allow in-theatre FAOs to study at local language programs.

4. Increase the FAO budget for new applicants by 20% per annum through FY2017.

5. Incentivize language training for PACOM-affiliated nations.

If the Army wishes to find a low-cost way to contribute to the effort and build a sustained presence in Pacific-Asia, investing in its FAO program is smart policy. As the forward presence of military units decreases, we believe the FAO program and the regional experience will only continue to increase in importance. FAOs will become increasingly prized for their regional expertise and relationships with foreign military counterparts. Army funding for the FAO should be protected, prioritized, and expanded wherever possible.
Section III: Regional Alignment of Forces.

For the last ten years the Army has prepared units for Afghanistan and Iraq with a process called Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN), which focuses on predictably providing units of relatively comparable capacity for deployment to those combat theaters. Recognizing a chance to make the Army’s method of generating units more relevant following the withdrawal from Iraq and transition in Afghanistan, General Odierno announced that, “we will have the opportunity to adapt this process to be more wide-ranging, especially as we re-balance toward the Asia-Pacific region.”

The response to this opportunity is the concept of regionally aligned forces. Regionally aligned forces are those Army units assigned or allocated to combatant commands, and apportioned for planning. These aligned forces maintain proficiency in wartime fundamentals, but also possess a regional mission and training focus that includes an understanding of the languages, cultures, geography, and militaries of the countries where they are most likely to be employed.

This means that most of the Army’s 45 brigade combat teams will align with a combatant command, as the combatant commands have authorities over regions. Ideally, these regionally aligned forces, with their greater regional understanding, would some how better contribute across the full spectrum of operations. The current model for regional alignment, as illustrated by a brigade aligned with the Africa region, seems to ‘get it right’; training tasks are tailored to the needs of the combatant command and operational employment is limited to small-scale security cooperation and exercises. Language and cultural training is limited to a few weeks, which should allow sufficient time to train core war fighting functions.

Concerns

Determining the ideal level of regional understanding for an aligned force demands striking a balance between war fighting abilities and all other mission enhancing capacities. War fighting tasks include the ability to conduct offensive, defensive, and stability operations. These are time consuming tasks to train for and demand continual maintenance.

1. A robust regional understanding program would consume a tremendous amount of time to ‘do it right’. As the Foreign Area Officer program illustrates, it requires a significant investment of time to gain and maintain cultural and language

competencies, approximately 3.5 years - graduate education lasts a year, language training a year, and in-country immersion usually lasts 18 months.33

2. Investing heavily in language and cultural training will lead to over specialization at a cost of flexibility.34 Which of the 2,187 languages do you focus the brigade, or select members of the brigade, on?35 If the unit focuses on one set of language and culture and is subsequently utilized elsewhere, even in the PACOM area of operation, then that training was arguably a waste of time. And that time could have been better spent on perishable war fighting tasks.

3. Training and maintaining these competencies across a large formation would require an overhaul of the way the Army manages human resources. US formations do not typically allow the ‘homesteading’ required to maintain proficiency in regionally aligned tasks. A soldier or leader trained in a language or culture as part of a regionally aligned brigade is unlikely to remain in that unit for longer than three years.

‘Just Enough’ Brigade Alignment

The answer “to what extent should home station brigades align regionally?” is then ‘just enough.’ Brigades should align “just enough” that the alignment does not impact their ability to train and maintain core war fighting competencies. They should align in those roles that promote interoperability, exposure, and enhance the regional understanding of their leaders without investing in the unobtainable idea of effective language ability and comprehensive cultural training. The Army can execute a model that gives its aligned forces just enough regional understanding to influence, advise, partner, and demonstrate utility in PACOM in both training and operations.

33 See Appendix III: FAO Training Components.
34 Andrew Exum of the Center for New Security describes the difficulty of achieving baseline competence in language or cultural understanding in his critique of the AFPAK hands program, “If these soldiers had been immersed in two years of intensive language training and an additional four years of education in the people, tribes, history and cultures of Afghanistan, at the end of those six years, they would still have only a fraction of the local knowledge of an illiterate subsistence farmer native to the region.” Andrew Exum, “Special Forces, or the Danger of Even a Lot of Knowledge.” World Politics Review, 13 June 2012 accessed online at http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12050/abu-muqawama-special-forces-or-the-danger-of-even-a-lot-of-knowledge
35 The number 2187 was derived through a simple calculus of the number of languages, provided by Ethnologue, spoken in all of the countries under the responsibility of PACOM. “World Languages.” Ethnologue: Languages of the World, accessed March 5, 2013. http://www.ethnologue.com/region/SAS
**Recommendations for Proper Alignment for Training**

Training for a regionally aligned brigade should focus on those measures that make the US Army the dominant land power in the world. Those tasks that comprise offensive, defensive, and stability operations are essential. To do them right executing units must devote the majority of their training on the individual, small unit, and collective tasks that form their ‘mission essential task list’.\(^{36}\) This is a continual process of receiving new personnel, forming teams, and then validating those teams as they perform across the full spectrum of operations. A war fighting-focused need not be completely exclusive of regional understanding, however. The regional alignment of the unit can be stressed through scenario planning, staff exercises, leader training programs, language self-study incentives, combined (with partners) validation exercises, and exchange programs.

In an optimally regionally aligned unit the following would occur:

1. Planning staff’s work hand in hand with the supported combatant commander to ensure their scenario addressed a regional contingency. This would highlight the regional contingency to the aligned unit and familiarize their leaders with the geography, personalities, and groups involved.

2. Staff exercises addressing regional contingencies should occur at all staff levels within the aligned unit. Combined staff exercises with host nation counterparts would offer an opportunity to increase interoperability, build relationships, and gain cultural understanding. Additionally, these staff exercises would enhance partner staff capacity.

3. Leader-training programs with partner nations would increase interoperability and cultural understanding. These should be modeled after the leader training programs at the various US combined training centers.\(^{37}\) Leader training programs go a step beyond staff exercises by incorporating commanders down to the company level.

\(^{36}\) An Army unit’s mission essential task list, or ‘METL’, is a list of tasks derived from the organization’s wartime mission. These tasks apply to the organization as a whole and complement the mission of the unit’s higher headquarters. This list of tasks forms the basis for the unit’s training plans. This summation of the METL is drawn from Army Field Manual (FM) 25-100, Chapter 2 “Mission Essential Task List”, accessed online at [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/25-100/chap2.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/25-100/chap2.htm)

\(^{37}\) The leader-training program is a long-standing program providing comprehensive week long training for Company through Brigade Commanders, and their staffs. A Common thread throughout this program is a focus on troop leading procedures, military decision-making, and team building. Appropriately resourced, incorporation in LTP is an ideal place for relationship building with regionally aligned leaders and staffs. Details for LTP drawn from “Leader Training Program” located on the Operations group webpage for the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, CA accessed online at [http://www.irwin.army.mil/CommandGroupUnits/Units/OPSGRP/Wrangler/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.irwin.army.mil/CommandGroupUnits/Units/OPSGRP/Wrangler/Pages/default.aspx)
Recommendations for Proper Alignment for Language

Language competence, within a regionally aligned unit, is a difficult goal to achieve without sacrificing core competencies.

1. Incentivize individual self-study by paying for ‘extra curricular’ language instruction for interested soldiers and leader and tying demonstrated competence in regional languages to promotion points.

This could be executed through computer instruction or local instruction. Either way, those interested would self-select due to time constraints. This language training would suffer from the same flaws as trying to train throughout the brigade in that it would be difficult to target and may not necessarily be the right language to a contingency, but this method would not distract from core training.

Recommendations for Proper Alignment for Major Readiness Exercises

1. Major readiness exercises should occasionally be undertaken as combined exercises with partner nations. This would enhance interoperability and increase understanding for the participating unit. Fiscal constraints prevent combined validation exercises from becoming the norm, but the benefits of an occasional combined exercise are numerous.

2. A regionally aligned unit should participate in an individual and small unit exchange program managed by the supported combatant commander. These would be short term, unaccompanied exchanges- perhaps for a quarter. A leader would embed in the hosting nation and work in a similar capacity to his home station function. The small unit exchange would be for a specified training event, perhaps for two weeks. These exchanges would be difficult to target much like language; there is no guarantee that the participating leader or small unit will deploy for a contingency operation to the same location he gained familiarity with. The advantage of this exchange program is that it builds a familiarity with deploying, working with a partnered nation, and enhanced cultural understanding that will make the leader and small unit better able to operate in ambiguous situations in the future.

Conceptually, these measures enhance regional understanding by training leaders and staffs, and by seizing upon cost effective opportunities for immersion and exposure. The bulk of the aligned unit’s training effort will remain focused on its core war fighting tasks. Language and culture will not be prioritized over the mission essential task list. Language competency is too overly specialized and unrealistic in an aligned brigade. An
optimally aligned regional brigade will remain a flexible force, specialized primarily in war fighting enhanced with deliberate measures to increase regional understanding. The operational employment of such forces in operations to prevent conflict or enhance partner capacity short of war is described in the subsequent section.

Our recommendations are therefore as follows:

1. Focus first on war fighting capacities- offense, defense, and stability operations.

2. Supplement with regionally aligned scenarios for exercises, staff exercises and exchanges, small unit exchanges, regional counterpart participation in combined training center validation exercises, officer and noncommissioned officer professional development.

3. Occasional unit participation in host nation major exercises.

4. Do not commit time or resources to language and cultural training unless it is basic familiarization immediately before a training or operational deployment.
Section IV: Operational Employment - Operation Enduring Freedom - Philippines

The Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines (JSOTF-P) is a good example of how the US military can enhance the ability of partners to maintain stability in the region. This operation, conducted by special operations forces, offers guidelines on a realistic, cost effective, and useful application of Army forces in PACOM. This section briefly describes the history and relevant lessons of JSOTF-, and makes recommendations for expanding the role of general-purpose Army forces into what is largely a Special Forces construct.

JSOTF-P

The southern Philippines has experienced conflict for several centuries. Distance from the center of government, ethnic and religious heterogeneity, and other factors contribute to a turbulent political landscape. Conflict in the southern Philippines has been historically widespread, but in its contemporary permutation is largely relegated to the islands of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. Contemporary conflict can be traced to Muslim separatist movements that began in the 1960s. Offshoots of this separatist activity allowed jihadi training camps during the early 80’s; these camps and associated personalities contributed to the influx of al Qaeda affiliated personnel in the late 80s and early 90s leading to the presence of terrorist groups such as the Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf Group.

Recognizing the threat of these groups toward Philippine and US security and national interests, both governments implemented a comprehensive counterterror policy. JSOTF-P is a key security cooperation measure within this policy. The United States established the task force in July of 2002, at the request of the Philippine government, to support the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in their effort to defeat terrorists and create the conditions necessary for stability in the Southern Philippines. The task force is comprised of approximately 600 personnel, including Army Special Forces, joint service special operations personnel, and a host of support personnel. At the headquarters and staff level, the task force has personnel working with the US Embassy Country Team and the general headquarters for the AFP. The task force, over the course of many years, has been successful in enhancing the AFP’s ability to address the terrorist threat and to maintain security in the Southern Philippines.

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41 Abou Sayyaf has not managed a high-profile terrorist attack since 2005; smaller attacks continue. The group has splintered in recent years and turned to criminal activity. Its estimated strength has declined from 1,200 in 2002 to fewer than 500 today. Jemaah Islamiyah has fewer than 100 members in the Philippines. From Max Boot, Richard Bennet, “Treading softly in the Philippines; why a low-intensity
JSOTF-P operations and emphasis

JSOTF-P enables partner force operations. The primary partnering location is at the military brigade or police battalion headquarters level, with select partnerships occurring at subordinate unit levels. JSOTF-P places particular emphasis on partnering information support and civil affairs teams with each subordinate component. Partially as a result of this partnership, the Army of the Philippines has a relatively robust civil affairs capacity, further enabling civic action and the extension of government to conflict areas. JSOTF-P provides intelligence to support Philippine operations as appropriate. Finally, JSOTF-P supports a whole-of-government approach, working hand in hand with the US embassy to further embassy initiatives training local law enforcement.42

Broad Lessons from JSOTF-P

1. Whole of government approach is critical.

The mission of JSOTF-P is “JSOTF-P in coordination with the US Country Team, builds capacity and strengthens the Republic of the Philippines (RP) security forces to defeat selected terrorist organizations in order to protect RP and US citizens and interests from terrorist attacks while preserving RP sovereignty.”43 Acknowledging the importance of coordination with the US Country Team is important. The sovereign government of the Philippines has the lead in determining the scope and duration of military operations; and it is critical that the US military work with the Country Team and the interagency to ensure its partnering efforts are appropriately nested.

2. Low cost-to-benefit ratio.

JSOTF-P’s cost is estimated at $52 million a year.44 At that price, the US enabled the AFP in disrupting and dismantling Al Qaeda affiliates and increased the capacity of the AFP to maintain security in the Philippines. In contrast, the US military effort in Afghanistan costs $30 billion per year.45 Perhaps the Afghanistan – Philippines comparison is an unfair one, but it is useful to note that the low fiscal price and small

counterinsurgency strategy seems to be working there,” January 5, 2009. The Weekly Standard, accessed online at http://staging.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/956zznwj.asp?page=3
42 Ibid.
44 Max Boot, Richard Bennet.
amount of troops makes the JSOTF-P model more feasible politically and more sustainable in the long run.

3. Relationships are important.

Decades of engagement between the US military and the Philippine military preceded JSOTF-P and this relationships assisted in the development of the campaign plan. Additionally, repeat tours to JSOTF-P created a sense of continuity amongst both Philippine forces, participating US units, and members of the US Country Team. Effective advising and assisting requires more than just a unit capable of teaching. Relationships must be formed and maintained to ensure success and consistency over the long term.

_Caveats_

JSOTF-P works in the Philippines but that does not mean the model will work everywhere. The context of the political and security situation in the Philippines drives the goals, means, and methods used.

Several factors are worth pointing out:

1. The United States and the Philippine’s security goals had significant overlap, namely terrorist groups associated with Al Qaeda.

2. The US and the Philippine governments and peoples have a long history of engagement, to include military to military ties.

3. The AFP was and is an effective institution; therefore, the US could focus on enhancing its capacity rather than building an Army.

Even with these caveats the aforementioned lessons still have applicability and can help guide operational employment of Army forces in PACOM for situations short of war. This would increase the cultural and regional proficiency of the Army at a low opportunity cost.

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47 The capacity to maintain this continuity was provided by the alignment of US Special Forces groups; each group is assigned a specific area of regional responsibility. Individuals within those groups tend to repeatedly deploy to the same countries and work with the same military counterparts.
What about the big Army?

JSOTF-P provides lessons and opportunities for the Army. The primary lesson, however, is that there are already elements within the military that can achieve results in the spectrum of conflict short of conventional war fighting.

JSOTF-P was and is, as its acronym makes clear, a Special Operations deployment. Special forces personnel, with their regional specialization in language and repeat tours, formed the core of this task force. They could repeatedly deploy to JSOTF-P, maintaining corporate knowledge and forging long lastin g relationships and understanding. A regionally aligned conventional Army unit could conceivably do the same, but it would require language specialization and repeat tours to the Philippines. The conventional unit would likely never achieve the same results, however, because it would not be comprised of the typically older and more specially selected personnel that form Special Forces units. A direct application of regionally aligned forces to achieve JSOTF-P style results would not only be redundant but also much less effective than utilizing more specialized forces.

If one assumes that the demand for missions like JSOTF-P will increase in the future, then it is useful to look at ways the Army can support the effort. Regionally aligned forces are the force of choice for such augmentation. An executing Special Forces headquarters could benefit from having additional trainers, staff, liaisons, and support while the aligned conventional unit would benefit from the exposure and real world experience conducting the partner-enhancing mission.

Our recommendations are therefore:

1. In the event that regionally aligned forces deploy short of war, they should do so in support of a Special Forces-led advisory effort.

2. Enhance partner capabilities to promote security through low footprint advisory operations working in coordination with the US Country Team.

3. Augment special operations forces with regular forces fulfilling a broad spectrum of tasks. This allows the special operations headquarters to closely coordinate with the Country Team over an extended period, maintain relationships, and provide the continuity and context necessary to achieve positive security outcomes.

48 ‘Big Army’ refers to the Army excluding special operations forces.
4. A Special Warfare headquarters at the PACOM level should validate requirements, supervise pre-deployment training, and coordinate the employment of regionally aligned forces augmenting advisory mission.

5. Avoid redundancy - Special Forces remain the regional experts and maintain the relationships with host nation through repeat deployments; participating regular forces gain broad experience applicable to future combat roles.
Section V: Conclusion

Regional understanding, expertise, and fluency are important to the US Army. Programs supporting those concepts should be resourced appropriately. More important for the Army and the nation, however, is that units remain proficient on their core war fighting tasks. Dedicating resources to specialists like FAOs and Special Forces will not distract from those tasks. Aligning brigades in a prudent manner, recognizing the limits of time, and maximizing opportunities for limited exchanges will ensure that the alignment program does not degrade readiness. In the event that a conventional brigade or unit deploys in an advisory capacity, it should do so in conjunction with or in support of a Special Warfare construct.

In aggregate, the recommendations in this paper are complimentary. By optimizing its regional experts the Army will maintain a group of leaders who can assist in identifying opportunities for partnering in the region, maintain situational awareness, and influence through military-military relationships.

Where opportunities exist to enhance partner capability to promote security and achieve US interests, an appropriately sized special operations task force should deploy and work closely with the Country Team and host nation to establish a framework for an advisory and assistance effort. That task force should be augmented by regionally aligned forces, as appropriate, with the scope of augmentation validated and coordinated by a special warfare headquarters at the combatant command level. Small elements of regionally aligned forces at their home bases will fulfill these requirements, requiring only a minimal crash course in culture and language before deployment. Their roles overseas will coincide with their primary skills- infantry will train small unit tactics and marksmanship, staffs will train mission planning, and so on.

Finally, the vast majority of regionally aligned forces will focus on their war fighting tasks; with mission readiness exercises incorporating regional contingency scenarios and regional staffs or forces as appropriate.
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Appendix I: Figures

Figure 1: Holdings of U.S. Treasuries - Asia vs. ROW

![Figure 1: Holdings of U.S. Treasuries - Asia vs. ROW](image1)

Figure 2: Asian Holdings of US Treasuries.

![Figure 2: Asian Holdings of US Treasuries](image2)
Figure 3: GDP Growth in Asia 2000 – 2010

Figure 4: FAO Population – FY 2011
Figure 5: Current and Projected FAO Population

![Current and Projected FAO Population](image)

Figure 6: FY 2011 FAO Fill Rate by COCOM

![FAO Fill Rate by Combatant Command Group](image)
Figure 7: Army FAO Qualified Applicants

Figure 8: Army FAO - Number of Applicants per Position
Figure 9: FAO – Number of Applicants per Position

Figure 10: FAO Cost of Training
Figure 11: FAO Cost of Training Breakdown

![Bar chart showing FAO Training Cost by Area for different services (Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Army). The chart indicates the cost distribution between Language Training Cost, In-Country Training, and Graduate-level Schooling.]

Figure 12: Projected Number of FAO Accessions FY 2012 – 2017

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Appendix II: FAO History and Background

During WWII the US Army developed the Language and Area Training Program. The program’s goal was to provide officers with language knowledge and area expertise so as to inform sound intelligence estimates and support command decisions. The program required four years of training – attending language school, receiving a graduate degree from a civilian university, and two years overseas in, or near, the region of specialization.49

By 1953 this program had been renamed Foreign Area Specialist Training and the training was expanded to include psychological warfare, civil affairs and military government. Army officers with FAST qualifications were now eligible for special warfare operations, the Department of Army’s (DA) General and Special staff, area-study instructor duty, and advisor duty for the national intelligence community at large. In the late 1960s a complementary program existed called the Military Assistance Officer Program (MAOP), which focused on aspects of military advisory duty, stability operations, and civic action having social, political, economic and psychological impact.50

In the early 1070s the Nixon Administration realigned foreign aid into two camps – military/security assistance and economic and humanitarian assistance. Security assistance established and prioritized foreign policy tools like foreign military sales and international training. It was this prioritization that truly institutionalized the need for a cadre of foreign area specialists from all branches of the military. Over the previous decade the US Army had essentially established two international-oriented career programs - one driven by intelligence requirements (FAST) and the other by operational needs (MAOP). These were therefore merged to form the Army’s Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program.51

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Appendix III: Components of FAO Training

1. FAO Entry Course

This one-week orientation at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California familiarizes the trainee with the program’s objectives and various career paths.

2. Language Training

The Army FAO program aligns its officers into one of 9 regions and offers 31 languages. Basic language training with the Defense Language Institute varies between 6 – 12 months depending on which language is studied.

![Chart 1: FAO Army Language by Regional Specialization](chart1.png)


3. Graduate Training Studies

Graduate study is fully funded leading to a Masters degree in area studies. Schools eligible are those listed on the Title VI List of Area Studies Programs though the Department of Education. Since most area studies programs require language expertise this allows the officers to maintain and improve their language skills.

4. In-Country Studies

The Army supports an immersion program in country for up to 18 months. During this period the FAO is encouraged to travel and develop contacts that will prove useful once assigned to a U.S. security agency.
Appendix IV: Summary of FAO Survey

1. Please briefly describe a historical incident or personal anecdote for how regional or cultural understanding helped achieve a military or humanitarian objective. Please briefly include how that objective contributed to securing national interests.

The reputation I developed as a company commander, with a Sunni/Shia fault line running directly through my AO, helped me not only reconcile some of the factions that had been previously warring, but also reintegrate some of the Shia commanders who had previously been targeting Sunnis. This reconciliation led to a cessation of violence and cooperation between the two sides, and I would not have been able to do this without a solid understanding of their history and culture.

After several deployments soldiers understood what looked normal and what didn't with how locals acted around them. They were better able to figure out when a person was hiding something, because they knew the culture. This helped achieve our national interests by disrupting the flow of arms into Baghdad when soldier would locate enemy weapon's caches on patrols.

Ability to understand the importance of pride to the Arab culture in Iraq allowed me/our unit to operate post-SOFA. Continuous pressure on extremist networks enabled a nascent Iraqi government to gain traction.

SF's use of Montagnard tribesmen in multiple roles during the Vietnam War, primarily as a means of securing otherwise unguarded border regions.

Numerous, and obvious examples from my tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Among them: knowing which interpreter or partner-force military element to use (Shia, Sunni, Christian, old, young, male, female, Turkish, Tunisian, Arab, Pashto, etc.) for a given situation. Also, understanding tribal dynamics to create positive outcomes - assisting the right people, leveraging relationships, etc. Regarding the impact on "national interests" - I had the opportunity to employ this regional/cultural understanding in critical areas at critical times (such as a key Sunni/Shia fault-line in Baghdad in 2007/2008), where I felt our novel approaches and use of cultural/regional understanding had a significant make-or-break impact over a wide area.

Close relationships with the Philippine forces in WW2 allowed for guerilla warfare against the Japanese.

While conducting Counter Drug operations in Latin America as part of a SFODA, I personally witnessed how cultural understanding both created an international incident and contributed to future partnership building. The SFODA that I was a member of successfully integrated itself and trained with a partner nation force that culminated in a very successful joint training exercise that demonstrated the value of the partnership.
Because I am a DLI Language Thai Speaker with significant immersion time, I was able to brief (in Thai) the Deputy Chief of Staff (4-Star) of the Royal Thai Army on COAs for the purchase of U.S. Army aircraft to include the UH-72A and UH-60M.

2. Please briefly describe a situation in which lack of regional understanding undermined our national interests.

The most glaringly obvious example to me is the upheaval we caused in Iraq by deposing the Sunni-led government and supporting democratic elections. With a Shia majority, it is no surprise that the government became majority Shia, and it is further no surprise that the Sunnis were unhappy about that development. I believe we greatly miscalculated the history of this conflict, Shia ties to Iran (and Sunni suspicion thereof), and other cultural issues.

We did not plan well for post invasion Iraq.

Our complete miscalculation about the reaction to the US invasion of IZ and removal of Saddam.

Discounting Iraq's sectarian and tribal nature led to prolonged conflict long after the conclusion of major combat.

Our unbending support of corrupt leaders (al-Maliki and Karzai) even in the face of substantial evidence of election fraud (Karzai). Our national policy in Afghanistan is irreparably damaged due to the latter lack of regional/cultural understanding - we are inexplicably supporting a massively corrupt leader, so the people will "fill in the blanks" as to our motivation. Other examples include lack of support for Iranian opposition parties, lack of clear policy direction in Syria, Egypt, and Libya (not to mention the most obvious examples - Afghanistan and Iraq), which leaves both the U.S. military, and any potential friendly groups in a mire of indecision.

Believing that Shias in Iraq would embrace the US as liberators and easily organize into a functioning democracy after Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

We thought that post-war Iraq would be very pro American and quickly establish a stable government- we did not anticipate an insurgency and the instability, something that can be attribute in part to not understanding the region and country, or the demographics.

During the same deployment, the team leader before me due to a lack of not only cultural understanding but also organizational awareness personally insulted the base commander but insisting that he had a right to maintain a beer cooler on his base. His inability to compromise or respect the partner nation colonel's wishes demonstrates how we as Americans often overly arrogant with respect to the limits of our power.

The deweaponization, removal from power, and hunt of Baathist military leaders in Iraq was a strategic mistake. We had zero understanding of their role in Iraqi governance.
3. Please briefly describe a current engagement or hotspot where the US Army's regional understanding can contribute to a resolution of differences.

As Mali becomes an area of increasing, we need to pursue regional understanding to adequately inform our strategic ends and policy pertaining to that area.

Iraq. Understanding the regional pressures informs good policy decisions.

Afghanistan. Iran. Syria. Africa

The Southern Philippines and Indonesia. Understanding of social factors greatly increased efficiency. Still ongoing, but much better focused now.

Africa. Stop using drones as the "easy button" of national policy without bothering to significantly address underlying problems (Salafists, corrupt governments, etc.) If a problem is so great the military needs to be used - then use it, all of it, until the job is complete. Our continued use of lethal drones in areas of undeclared hostilities is both not pragmatic (in the long term) and counter to the laws of war. Forgive the normative statements - not enough space to write a dissertation...

The last decade has forced the US Army to develop a partnership "skill" that can be extremely powerful if leveraged appropriately. I believe the US Army is uniquely situated to leverage its assist and advice capabilities to work jointly with several partner nations; whether it be in Africa or the Pacific/Asia AORs. The US Army's role as primary relationships builder with other partner nation armed services is even more relevant given that many partner nation armies have a large influence in their respective political institutions.

South China Sea.

4. In which region(s) does the US Army have the weakest regional agreement?
5. *What is the most useful training in the FAO pipeline?*

- Immersion in a region.
- Language Training if applicable.
- In-Region Training for cultural immersion and to increase language proficiency.

6. *In what way do you believe FAO officers are best utilized?*

- When aligned with commanders/policy makers.
- On joint staffs that are responsible for their region.
- By interfacing with foreign militaries and developing personal and professional relationships that allow for
  - In-Country Embassy Teams as Defense Attaches and Security Cooperation Officers.

7. *In what way do you believe FAO officers are poorly utilized?*

Placed in Embassies to serve in various DoD positions. The worst is the Office of Defense Cooperation. Many ODCs outright forget that their purpose is to further US national interests and instead think that their purpose in life is to help the host nation and nothing more.

- When forced to do general staff jobs where their regional expertise is not utilized or furthered
- On Army and Joint Staffs that are excessively large bureaucracies.

8. Do these assignments contribute to sustained regional understanding?

![Bar Chart]

- Answered: 7  Skipped: 6
9. Do you believe that FAO Officers are typically assigned where they can be most effective?

10. How much regional understanding should an aligned Army unit have?

11. How can the US Army achieve that level of understanding?

The best way to achieve that level is immersion, but if we cannot do that, we should use realistic training sites with role players from that region. If that is still not feasible, or too expensive in an era of fiscal uncertainty, the classroom would be the next (and probably last) option.

   Immersion: have short training deployments to those areas. Study: have mandatory study of the region as part of the training cycle; also have news of current events read and understood by all soldiers. Language training: group training classes on language at the small unit level. Recruitment: recruit smarter soldiers with an interest in study abroad and language skills, recreate the image of the army as a way of learning foreign cultures. Culture: Encourage travel and exposure to culture in the region and not be insular within their unit when in foreign areas.
Basic overview of a region during training. Reciprocal unit exchanges. Officer/leader immersion exchanges. Select language training. Routine exercises w/ partners.

Schooling and TDY trips (several months at a time, at least) to the region. This will provide language abilities and the opportunity to experience the culture first-hand, which is something you can't get out of a classroom or book.

Immersion of leaders (company-grade and above), a formal lesson plan for all junior leaders/soldiers. The most important is the battalion and brigade-level commanders and CSMs; without their "buy-in" most of the other programs would be largely irrelevant.

Through both FAOs and training for operational branch officers.

Identified conventional officers should be taken through DLI language training and basic to advanced negotiation. Training or schooling should also be provided on cultural training respective to the AOR. 3 month immersion tours combined with an understanding of embassy operations would also be beneficial.

Army Officers that demonstrate language capability, should have a secondary FAO regionally designation. They can spend time overseas to build this capability.

12. What parts of the FAO program or Special Forces pipeline should be mandatory for leaders (enlisted and officer) serving in regionally aligned brigades?

I think language training and immersion training are the most important.

Language and the "Adaptive Thinking and Learning" block of the 18A course.

Language training - mandatory; immersion tours - highly encouraged.

Language. Some exercise that simulates assisting and advising a partner nation's armed forces that incorporates common advisor dilemmas. This could be similar to Robin Sage but would not require a focus on UW training. Within the exercise officers should be tested on MDMP so as to understand how the core elements of MDMP are beneficial to small group planning.

Security Force Assistance Foreign Internal Defense and Development Security Cooperation/Assistance Theoretical classes on COIN/CT
13. Did we miss an obvious question? Any last thoughts?

My sense after 6 deployments and 10 years of overseas experience is that the underlying issue that "undermines the national interest" is not the military's "regional understanding" - though that is certainly important - it is the lack of a clearly defined, fairly applied, and intelligently implemented foreign policy. That bit of cynicism aside, within the scope of this survey's intent my basic thought is that the education/immersion efforts should focus on the BN, BDE, and Division commanders and CSMs: they set the tone and the priorities in their units. If they do not have an informed vision, no amount of cultural/regional training of junior leaders and soldiers will make a significant difference.

The role of SOCOM/JSOC in FID/SFA was largely ignored in this survey. That is a critical piece of how the SF community melds, meshes and clashes with the conventional military in terms of roles, responsibilities and scope. SF Soldiers typically are more trained and experienced with greater regional expertise than conventional soldiers. Also, the role of FAOs in relation to SF and conventional communities is a significant cleavage that merits further attention.