

# Staying Left of the Language Boom

## Language and Culture Training in the Cold

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The US Air Force (USAF) has developed various specialties, over time, in their respective missions and Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs).<sup>1</sup> This article argues for the revolution of specialized language training for Airmen and Guardians alike;<sup>2</sup> and it challenges the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) training standard,<sup>3</sup> which avoids the focus of fictional literature in the training of foreign languages for military students. Furthermore, it challenges the notion that our language training should shift as our other priorities may have towards near competitors such as the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia. Instead, it argues for specialized language training such as training of African specific dialects of Portuguese such as those found in Angola or Mozambique.

### Background

Recently, I reflected on my ten years of service on active duty as a US Air Force officer while teaching Portuguese to students through a Defense Language Institute contract, which reminded me of the unique opportunities that exist in the US Armed Forces. USAF Officers learn quickly as Company Grade Officers (CGOs) that they must stay left of boom.<sup>4</sup> Of course, the definition of boom has been expanded beyond the battlefield to other fields that support the military such as language, communications, contracting and so much more.

The diversity of languages we train Airmen to speak within the USAF, whether the language of Contracting or Maintenance, is always very specific to their individual AFSC tribe. Specialized careers call for specialized training and the USAF succeeds in the training of these areas, for the most part. However, our training of foreign languages could take a lesson from the specialized nature of the training that most AFSC career fields train their Airmen and Guardians. For this article, one may define specialized language training as training that is tailored to both the region and sector in which the Airman and Guardian will operate. For example, a loadmaster traveling to Mozambique should be aware of the regional differences in the Portuguese dialect in that region, along with the lexical breadth needed to operate as a loadmaster.

The US military has a steady requirement for the training of military personnel in various languages around the world. While working for the National Foreign

Language Center recently as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for the Portuguese language, I can confirm that the interest of the Department of Defense (DoD) and other similar agencies in the US reaches beyond that of Spanish, Chinese, and Russian. Due to my experience, I will focus this article on the Portuguese language.

The opportunities to work in a Portuguese speaking role in the USAF are few. However, we teach Portuguese to personnel that will not use it in their assigned positions, just to maintain a stockpile of trained personnel. This “buying in bulk quantity” approach is cheaper than providing training on demand, yet it is not always ideal for those who need it. Instead, this article proposes a quality versus quantity approach in our language training.

What’s more, places where we send our troops *en masse*, we normally never give language training at all. I think of my service in Kuwait and my colleagues who were assigned to South Korea, Germany, or Italy, who often worked in 100 percent English speaking environments. The value added of this quantitative approach to language training is questionable; especially, as an example, when a troop going to Mozambique isn’t provided specialized training for that country, but instead provided the same training as personnel assigned to Rio de Janeiro. Despite our failed efforts early on in Afghanistan, it is disturbing that we still underestimate the value of intricate language and cultural knowledge in lesser focused regions of the world. During Contingency Contracting training, we were often shown “success” stories of Contracting Officers that had to succumb to using pictures in their statements of work on construction projects valued over \$100,000 in order to communicate with contractors due to the lack of translators. The next Cold War, which has arguably already started, will be more than likely fought once again on the peripheries of nations, and we must not divest ourselves from a capable force in these areas. Therefore, the USAF must continue to invest in training a diverse group of languages using a variety of different methods.

### **In a World of Conventional Warfare, Why Fictional Literature?**

“Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree.”

– Ezra Pound<sup>5</sup>

Literature has a fascinating way to transport its readers to faraway places, hence exposing them to different perceptions and ideas. It is this detailed language expertise and knowledge that will be needed in our competition with the PRC and Russia in the peripheries of countries where competition is bound to occur. In a world dominated by text messages versus telephone calls, the World War II method of teaching foreign languages, focused on verbal communication, can no

longer remain in place. The armed forces need not only oral proficiency, but also critical reading and writing skills in the foreign languages we need to pursue.

These peripheries of countries where future conflict can be expected, such as Equatorial Guinea or Angola, require specialized training for their unique dialects. After all, we are not talking about training hundreds of officers to know how to navigate Mozambique, we are often talking about a small handful, or less, of personnel. The training for this small number of personnel should be pursued qualitatively instead of quantitatively. As a warranted contracting officer and Language Enabled Airman Program graduate, I respect and understand that every budget has its limits. I also understand that the USAF's principal mission is and will always be to "Fly, Fight, and Win." However, I continually wonder, as we toe the line with our next enemy, if will we continue to make the same mistakes of the past, and limit ourselves to our own set of rules, which many in the world do not care about.

For years, the DLPT has focused on a list of genres limited to crime/narcotics, terrorism, defense/security/police, geopolitics (international relations), economics, technology/cyber, environment, society, and administration/logistics. However, one of the critical definitions DLPT test makers use to assess language proficiency at the 2+ level, in accordance with the Interagency Language Roundtable Scale, is through the use of "descriptive words."<sup>6</sup> However, descriptive words are commonly found in one of the few genres that is not on this list, fictional literature. Evi Puspitasari's article, "Literature-based learning to build students' vocabulary" confirms the idea that descriptive vocabulary is gained in the study of literature.<sup>7</sup> For the purpose of this study, literature "is a world of fantasy, horror, feelings, visions... put into words."<sup>8</sup> Fictional literature is a gateway into the ideals of the individuals who write it and is often one of the most studied sources from a culture.

The US military has recently followed more and more restrictive rules, justified sometimes, which limit the force. An example would be the hiring a Portuguese professor with a PhD in Brazilian Literature, instead of a local person from the area of interest, such as Cabo Delgado, who would have priceless knowledge of the culture. Or further still, requiring that only US citizens be hired to train our troops in foreign languages. This runs against private industry standards, such as the hiring of Duolingo language experts, in which the discriminating factor is often against those who are not local or native speakers. While there might be many bilingual children from birth in the states, or immigrants who naturalized later in life, these two groups have their own drawbacks, which limit competition for positions in critical training roles. This article does not wish to limit the importance of official certifications and degrees, but instead affirms the need for specialized training. Literature professors, often avoided even as part of the foun-

dation of our defense language program, are essential to train people in the intricacies of the modern languages. Literature should be added to the list of language categories in the preparation of language materials, as it often plays just as an important role or even more so than crime, economy, or terrorism. Stephen D. Krashen<sup>9</sup> and Rosanna McCoy Weir<sup>10</sup> confirm in their research that literature is more effective when it comes to learning new vocabulary. Others such as Krsteva Marija and Marija Emilija Kukubajska<sup>11</sup> explain how the study of literature can help students understand the often-complicated reaction of authors and their socio-cultural challenges at the time. The authors demonstrate how imaginative expression and psychological responses are discovered in the study of literature. Their work addresses specific responses to challenging tendencies such as drug and alcohol addiction, social unrest, promiscuous and socio-pathological deviations. Another example is the plethora of literature which provides insight into the socio-pathological reactions of veterans in their respective nations' conflicts.

Fictional literature provides evidence, through multi-dimensional corpus-based linguistic studies, to be a very descriptive language. In a case study which focused on student's scores on academic papers Tony Berber Sardinha and Marcia Veirano Pinto<sup>12</sup> claim the phenomenon occurs because "the lack of lexico-grammatical features associated with narration which gave the fiction texts such high scores, were much less common in the latter group of registers" when comparing descriptive style in the text of fiction versus other "event-orientated discourse."<sup>13</sup> This evidence demonstrates that the type of language that occurs in fiction has a different register of vocabulary than that of a news report. If today's USAF language testing programs do not include such language, it will exclude it from the training that USAF language trainers will provide their students, a very important register in their development.

In fact, Sardinha and Pinto explain how higher student scores usually come from higher quality essays in academic writing.<sup>14</sup> Sardinha and Pinto further state that their study of narrativity and readability "indicates that quality essays in the first factor are characterized as lexically complex, more cohesive, more descriptive, and containing more rhetorical features..."<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Sardinha and Pinto clarified that "lexical sophistication" correlated with essay quality.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the elimination of fiction as a subject in our DLPT and Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) would render our training less sophisticated. Although fiction may not be the most important tool or source for creating training content, we should not actively seek to ignore it as has been done until now.

Thus, the student of foreign language who studies literature learns how native speakers respond to situations and challenges in their cultural context, by serving as a gateway to the creative and critical thinking mindset of a native speaker.

Puspitasari declares that students who study literature do not need to go to the country they are studying, because literary works are “a brilliant way” to learn cultural knowledge.<sup>17</sup> They also are able to learn a foreign language’s most intricate mannerisms pertaining different personalities/tones. Piera Carroli confirms that literature enhances students’ ability to learn languages and cultures “at a deep level.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, one can assume that literature training in a foreign language is an effective way to enhance in-depth language and cultural training.

However, Carroli points out other advantages of using literature in language and culture training when she states that literature is like slow food for understanding connections between language, culture, and rhetoric in a world overwhelmed by digital texts and images.<sup>19</sup> It confirms the need for language training to be afforded the time necessary to develop quality skillsets when communicating in a foreign language and culture. In a world of fake news and information overload, we need USAF Officers to be able to critically interpret the information presented to them in foreign contexts.

The concept of literature not covering subjects that are deemed of interest to the armed forces is simply not true. Romances, testimonies, and tales of conflict and war have been intertwined since the existence of literature. There are many post-modern and post-colonial romances that directly deal with the trauma of war.<sup>20</sup> In the Portuguese language, works such as *Os Cus de Judas* by António Lobo Antunes are not so distant from the geopolitical and military themes that the content creators of today’s DoD’s learning content strive for.

The study of literature may seem a waste for a nation who has only been at peace, or absent of conflicts, for 15 years in total since its inception; perhaps other things need to be focused on considerably more. However, thinking critically about the way people interpret information in the overly globalized and connected world we now live in, it becomes evident how fundamental it is to understand language to the utmost degree. Training our officers in literature is the avenue for such a way forward in the ever-graying context of today’s conflicts. Although this article does not assume that literature is the only tool that should be incorporated into language training, it does suggest that areas such as literature and films have a place in the sophisticated training of tomorrow’s LEAP Airmen and Guardians.

### **Staying Left of the Language Boom: Making the Case for Portuguese**

Portuguese, as a foreign language, is not on the list of courses most children can take as an elective in US schools. However, on 24 February 2022, the modern political posture of the world, as we know it, changed substantially when Presi-

dent Putin decided to further invade the peaceful country of Ukraine, and Europe quickly recouped years of lost unity with the US overnight. It seemed the full force of NATO had awoken after enjoying peace during the first two decades of the 21st century. The impact of Ukraine could be felt all around the world and nations such as Portugal began to show support for the US more strongly than ever before in their confronting of Putin's actions. Yet, other nations, such as Brazil, reminded everyone that they favor their old neutral ways a bit more than their friends to the North. Both former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the current President Jair Messias Bolsonaro have taken a very questionable stance in terms of their support for NATO and the West instead of offering substantial foundational support.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps we are seeing the true colors that may have been camouflaged by the Amazonian appeal and raw potential of military and business opportunities. However, neutrality leaves room for influence and exit routes for parties involved in international war crimes. In a war that has quickly become more about sanctions and business than bullets and planes, the need for unique skillsets in language becomes more important as international laws are interpreted differently and misinformation becomes overwhelming.

### ***Brazil Bolstering a Neutral Stance***

Until recently, most US citizens might find trouble appreciating the importance of Portuguese training when they look at a nation like Brazil. Sure, there are tons of raw materials and over 200 million people in Brazil, but there are more conflicts with bigger foes that need attention now. Yet, despite concluding military agreements as recent as March 2020, one would be seriously mistaken to assume that Brazil cares more about the US than any of its other allies, such as Iran or the PRC.

The US has a rich history of influence in Brazil and that influence hasn't always been positive. Jerry Dávila notes in his work *Dictatorship in South America* how the US, during the Cold War, "reinforced inequality" not only in Brazil but in all of Latin America.<sup>22</sup> Beyond economic "reinforcement," the US also negatively impacted the Federative Republic of Brazil with the use of military force. Dávila explains how, during Brazil's 1964 military coup, the US Navy sent fuel and supply ships to the Brazilian coastline to assist those conspiring against their elected leaders and political system.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the US also sent Dan Mitrione to Brazil to teach electroshock torture to the military regime.<sup>24</sup> Public figures such as Henry Kissinger, who served under Presidents Nixon and Ford from 1969 to 1977, saw the military dictatorships in Brazil and other South American nations as safe-houses for US interests.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, it is understandable how Brazil may want to distance itself from a nation that has arguably done just as much harm as good.

More than ever, both the right and left of current political leadership in Brazil are taking a neutral approach. Despite the alliance between Brazil and the US becoming stronger than it has been since 1964, perhaps the alliance has quite the gloomy outlook for the near future due to the fragmentation of world politics caused by the invasion of Ukraine. In a 4 May 2022 interview with *Time*, former President Luiz Inácio da Silva took about as neutral approach as he could on issues involving the US and Russia.<sup>26</sup> Although he claimed Putin should not have invaded Ukraine, he also blamed the US and President Zelensky for inciting the conflict even more. Ever since Brazil became a Republic once more in 1985, more and more of its citizenry have come to understand that there can be differing points of view; but even the so-called populist and current President, Jair Messias Bolsonaro, took a somewhat similar stance and even defended Russia, stating that Ukraine and Russia were brother-like nations where even many in Ukraine spoke Russian, and therefore Brazil would remain neutral. Bolsonaro further quoted economic advantages for Brazil in their dealings with the Russian fertilizer industry. Additionally, as per a 27 February 2022 Reuters report on the issue, the President declared, “a chief of state like that of Russia does not want to undertake any massacre, anywhere.” This is slightly different rhetoric than one may find in many Western news releases, which have been reporting mass grave sites in Mariupol.

So, why does it matter if Brazil is taking a neutral approach? One reason might be due to the broad access the US has granted to the Brazilian Air Force inside the US military, which may bring into question if the rationale is still valid. However, the personal relationships developed under mutual access agreements do matter, and overcommunicating and interrelationships should be preferred even if it might risk some negative outcomes. As an example, Dávila claimed that the relationship forged in World War II between US Ambassador Lincoln Gordon and Brazilian Military Attaché Vernon Walters helped guide US policy and influence during the Goulart regime in Brazil.<sup>27</sup>

### ***The Next Cold Conflict Should Draw Attention to Portuguese Speaking Africa***

The need for expertise in Portuguese has reestablished itself recently in the US armed forces. After recently working at both the National Foreign Language Center and the Defense Language Institute, it was evident that our taxpayer dollars are flowing into training our members to communicate, read, and listen in Portuguese. Whether training at the Naval Warfare School in Rio de Janeiro or serving in other capacities such as defense attaché in Mozambique, the need for language training renews itself each year. The US Air Force Academy and US military have

established Portuguese programs for over a decade now. Due to recent Chinese government developments in Africa, such as the development of bases in Equatorial Guinea, a country that shares Portuguese as one of its three official languages, the competition for influence in West Africa should favor training Portuguese to our troops. This is especially true in Angola, if the US looks to compete for influence in this region - gateway to our flank in the Atlantic Ocean. Even if one disagrees on the importance of Portuguese training for the US military officers in West Africa, there is no disagreement on the current real threat of terrorism in regions such as Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, another Portuguese speaking country. The time is now to assess when the shift in our focus should move towards Africa. If our Brazilian allies to the south outweigh our need to focus on Africa, then we must at least diversify how we train Portuguese to our service members.

I applaud recent organizations that I have served under, which have diversified their Portuguese training to include specific African dialects. However, most of the armed forces still treat Portuguese as either Brazilian or Continental. Anyone from Lisbon to Luanda who speaks Portuguese understands the complications of generalizing such a broad and diverse range of Portuguese as only one dialect for training and testing. Clenir Louceiro, Emília Ferreira, and Cruz E. C. Vera prove this diverse range based on their work on the seven distinct voices in the Portuguese language.<sup>28</sup>

Two of the smaller nations where Portuguese is spoken as the official language can vary greatly in terms of practical communication. Much influenced by the creoles of the High Guiné and the creoles of the Gulf of Guiné, Portuguese can differ greatly from Cabo Verde to São Tomé, Príncipe.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the sustained use of Portuguese as a second language in nations such as Mozambique and Angola, have in turn, developed new grammatical frameworks in those nations which often differ from European Portuguese, despite being based on the same. Since this is a recent phenomenon, one cannot characterize specific grammar for Mozambican Portuguese (PM) or Angolan Portuguese (PA). Pronunciation, lexicon, and even supplemental verbal clauses are three easy ways to observe variations among PM and PA with European Portuguese (PE). Lexical differences such as *confusionar* (*arranjar confusões* PE) and *emprestação* (*empréstito* PE) are just two examples of differences in Mozambique.<sup>30</sup> There are even more syntactical structural variations in relative clauses. The Mozambique dialect is known to suppress prepositions, for example Raposo demonstrates how Mozambicans would say *entregou o emissário a carta* versus *ao emissário* (PE) and *ninguém portestou a iniciativa* versus *contra a iniciativa* (PE). Additionally, there are morphosyntactic aspects that are common. For example, Mozambicans would say *as pessoas preferem ganharem naquela hora mesmo* versus *ganhar* (PE).<sup>31</sup> These gram-



matical differences may seem irrelevant, but they can truly affect the communication of our Airmen and Guardians if misunderstood. Furthermore, one may understand the perception of US personnel in the Portuguese speaking world when only one dialect, usually Brazilian Portuguese, is taught to its members. The USAF should diversify its Portuguese training like other DoD agencies and increase the Portuguese training for specific African regions.

Beyond the lexical and syntactical differences in a language, those who work in other languages must have a deep understanding of their culture and the context the language works in. Body language is paramount in the establishment of authority in language. Authority often amounts to respect, and if we intend to train our Armed Forces to communicate respect, we must understand culture at its most minute level. Richard Nixon famously gave Brazilians the US “OK” sign with his hand, without realizing this gesture was offensive in their culture. These slips, although understandable, could have life or death consequences in other contexts.

Portuguese, as a language, is an interesting case because its training has been generalized as a “one size fits all” that would benefit by purchasing in bulk. However, the case of Angola shows how wrong this assumption may be. Angola, like many other young democracies resulting from the third wave of democracy in the region and the recent end of civil wars that began almost immediately after their colonization ended, exemplifies the complexity of nations in modern Africa. Rich in resources and often out of sight of international regulation, Angola has been no stranger to international influence dating back to its colonial war with Portugal and its more recent civil war.

In fact, the idea of the US being involved in Angola should come as no surprise. Dating back to President Gerald Ford’s administration, the US has spent money and resources to have influence and a presence in this nation. W. Martin James III states that the meeting known as the “40 Committee” was held to provide Roberto Holden, founder of the *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* (FNLA, National Front for the Liberation of Angola), a militant political organization that played a major role in Angola’s struggle for independence from Portugal, with US \$300,000 to reassure that the US would not abort the mission to impede the advances of the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola).<sup>32</sup> Further, he states the CIA funneled approximately \$50M to FNLA and the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) through then Zaire, without congressional approval.<sup>33</sup>

At the time, former US President Jimmy Carter and US Senator Dick Clark (D-Iowa) debated the repeal of the Clark Amendment<sup>34</sup> due to the Senator publicly claiming that the President wanted to involve the US in the Angolan civil

war.<sup>35</sup> The switching of parties did not sway the US involvement in Angola. Ronald Reagan publicly announced to the *Wall Street Journal* that he wanted to arm the Angolan rebels with weapons, thus proving, once again, the US's intention of military support in the region.<sup>36</sup> With such actions taken in the previous Cold War, one cannot anticipate anything different in the conflicts we face in the next great conflict with near competitors such as Russian and China.

Chinese influence in the Portuguese speaking Africa sphere has increased substantially in the last few years. For example, in Angola, with over 13 million people, Chinese investment has exceeded US\$20 billion according to Willy C. Shih.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, the US has made new attempts to rid the government of corruption by opening new windows of opportunity, despite having only invested a mere US \$126M since 1995, according to the US Department of State (DoS).<sup>38</sup> According to the DoS, "the new government is making concerted efforts to improve and diversify sources of foreign direct investment (FDI)."<sup>39</sup> This demonstrates potential for influence in the region and should not be taken lightly, especially since China has been successful in the establishment of naval bases with access to the Atlantic Ocean in other Portuguese speaking nations in Africa.

### ***Cabo Delgado Charges the US in Portuguese Investment***

The DoD vision ... On 15 March 2021, the US Government and the Government of Mozambique launched a two-month Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) training program. The program assigned US Special Operation Forces to train Mozambique marines in an effort to prevent the spread of violent extremism and terrorism in the region. As of 10 September 2021 the US Government presence is still in Mozambique and had reportedly trained Mozambique armed forces on life saving tactics, according to the US Embassy in Mozambique.<sup>40</sup> Despite our focus changing from such insurgencies around the world, as those that exist in Mozambique, the threat still exists.

This was not a relatively quick response by US military forces, who have been hesitant to get involved in Africa since the 1993 tragedy in Somalia, known as "Black Hawk Down."<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, this has allowed atrocities such as the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 and others that have largely continued: from sending of humanitarian support to respond to the attacks of Boko Haram, to now, with the lack of adequate support in Mozambique since 2019. According to the US DoS, a small fraction of the incidents reported that occurred in 2019 are: 1) a terror attack on a convoy associated with the Anadarko Petroleum Corporation between Mocimboa da Praia and the Afungi Peninsula, 2) the killing of a contractor on 21 February, 3) the killing of seven people, including two children and a police officer on 3 July in the Nangade District, 4) two separate attacks in Mui-

dumbe and Macomia Districts that burned 70 homes, 5) vandalization of a primary school, 6) setting a hospital on fire while killing seven police officers, one civilian, and kidnapping four women on 10 September, and 7) the clashing of ISIS's affiliate with Russian security forces resulting in the death of 10 soldiers.

Even though the US does not have a vested National Security interest in Africa, there is no hiding US economic interest: The US has reportedly spent an annual US \$445 million in assistance to Mozambique while spending roughly US \$978 billion in Afghanistan and Pakistan since 2019, according to a study completed by Brown University, all this spearheaded by Rod Beckstrom, who demonstrated how decentralized organizations often become more decentralized when attacked.<sup>42</sup> This overinvesting in a small, centralized portion of a largely decentralized problem, explains why the focus on cutting off the heads of groups such as ISIS has proved time and time again to be ineffective. The economic ranking of Mozambique stands near the lowest nations in the world, according to the United Nations Human Development Index. The Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network reports that more than 53 percent of the population has been measured as “multidimensionally poor.”<sup>43</sup> Such locations have been target areas for terrorist organizations in the past, and we must maintain at least a small and ready force for such needs that may arise in these regions.

### *Language's Global Reach in Remote Areas - East Timor*

As the next Cold Conflict draws inevitably closer to all things in the Pacific due to its proximity to China, one must not forget the impact of another Portuguese speaking nation, East Timor. East Timor has a long history of imperialist forces coming to stake their claim to the island. Dating back to the Portuguese influence during colonial times, which ended only rather recently, to other outside forces such as Japan, during World War II, using the island as yet another point of progression towards nations such as Australia. In the past, although this island is small, it obtained the interest of US President Gerald Ford during the Cold War, in order to stop the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. Indonesia then invaded East Timor and dominated the region for a little over a decade. This volatile region only gained its independence from Indonesia in 2002, after originally claiming independence in 1975 from Portugal. This young and rather vulnerable democracy may come to the forefront once again in the new battle for influence in the region.

### **Conclusion: Diversify our Language Training**

Many in the DoD plead for more influence and investment, and the language community must continue to do so as well. Every means available must be

leveraged, to include literature and multimodal resources, in the training of our future leaders. Furthermore, through measured reforms, this shift in doctrine would not cost the USAF much more in the long run than it currently invests in its overall language program; as employing new innovative approaches, such as use of specialized local SMEs to instruct alongside university professors, would contribute to offsetting any additional overall costs. In a world where both personal relationships and pop culture matters, we must continue to revolutionize the way we train our Airmen and Guardians in foreign languages.

Additionally, equipping our troops with a deeper cultural understanding will ensure us much needed allies in the expected bipolar/East-West cold war era style world, which seems soon to arrive. Will we be able to fully convince giants such as Brazil and India to value endangered democracies around the world versus their current autocratic allies? Will we be able to leverage African resources and promote democratic values in Africa? The answer to those questions will depend on our future leaders' development in the intricate understanding of how these countries view the world; and there's no better avenue to expanding our future leaders' knowledge and understanding of such nations, than through highly sophisticated language expertise. □

## Notes

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Jordan Eason, a USAF Civil Servant, holds a Bachelor's in Foreign Area Studies from the US Air Force Academy (USAFA), and a masters from Arizona State. He studied Multidisciplinary Portuguese Studies at the Universidade Aberta in Lisbon and has a Masters in Translation and Interpretation from the University of Illinois. He was an instructor and course director of Portuguese at USAFA from 2016-2018. Currently completing his PhD at the University of Coimbra focused on remediation of classics of Portuguese literature for foreign learners, he has also worked as the sole internal subject matter expert for the Portuguese language (African, Brazilian, and European dialects) for the University of Maryland's NFLC. He also has experience as an Instructor for the Defense Language Institute's ICA Languages Contract and as a Lecturer of the University of Michigan.