

The U.S. Army Initiates a Proactive Approach to Leverage Cross-Cultural Understanding: The Case for the Culture & Foreign Language Enterprise

KOME – An International Journal of Pure
Communication Inquiry
Volume 2 Issue 1 p. 14-27
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Published by the Hungarian Communication
Studies Association

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Abstract: This article will describe how the U.S. Army has created a culture & foreign language enterprise in an effort to leverage cross-cultural understanding in support of U.S. Army mission objectives. Topics to be addressed include problems and challenges related to cultural issues that the U.S. Army has encountered since September 11, 2001 during military operations in Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan and surrounding countries in the region and steps taken to address these problems and challenges.

Such topics describe the workings of the Army bureaucracy as it sought to maneuver resources in a manner that could effectively address culturally oriented issues and obstacles. The resulting approaches that have been created, funded, defended and sustained are detailed as examples of how large government institutions can persevere with agility to address such goals.

The primary focus of this article, regarding the aforementioned, is the Army Culture & Foreign Language Enterprise. The life of this Enterprise exemplifies how a vision for utilizing civilian social science Ph.D.s, in support of Army goals & objectives related to culture, came to fruition and effectively functions. This description illustrates how such an Enterprise approach can be employed in other types of settings and with other types of issues.

Keywords: U.S. Army, cross-cultural understanding, culture, foreign language, public affairs