



HIGHLIGHTS

- DoD's bureaucratic infrastructure and orientation remain Eurocentric, leaving it inadequately prepared to meet rising security challenges from the Asia-Pacific region.
- Key shortfalls include staffing shortages in Asia-Pacific regional offices, a disproportionately low allocation of resources for peacetime military activities, senior DoD officials' time and attention, and numbers of linguists and regional experts.
- Addressing existing shortcomings and implementing a more effective Asia security strategy requires DoD leadership to make tough trade-off decisions regarding the dedication of resources to the regional theaters, especially a shift from Europe to Asia.

## Refocusing the Department of Defense on Asia

### *Regional resource allocation must outgrow the Cold War's legacy*

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#### The Importance of Asia

Long before the September 11 terrorist plot was hatched in Central Asia or Operation Enduring Freedom unfolded in Afghanistan, key indicators pointed to Asia as the emerging primary theater of interest for the US. Encompassing 60 percent of the world's population, generating approximately 34 percent of world Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and representing 35 percent of US trade, the Asia-Pacific region exerts a strong gravitational pull on US strategic thinking. Moreover, long-term trends – political, economic, and military – suggest that the primary security challenges the US will face in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are emerging from that region.

This paper examines the capacity of the Department of Defense (DoD) to address key security challenges stemming from the Asia-Pacific region\* in terms of

“infrastructure” elements – including DoD's organizational structure, personnel distribution, education and training programs, and peacetime military activities. Toward this end, we examine the degree to which DoD's historical focus on NATO, Europe, and the Soviet threat continues to translate into a disproportionate devotion of resources – financial and human – to the European theater, and a lesser allocation of resources dedicated to Asia. Finally, this paper recommends steps that DoD should take to address resource imbalances and capability shortfalls in order to implement a more intensive security strategy in the Asia-Pacific region.

Today, US attention is largely focused on the terrorist threat emanating from Central Asia, but other key factors undermine broader stability in Asia and threaten US interests. Of particular concern are historical animosities which, coupled with strong nationalist tendencies, foster regional tensions (e.g., China and Japan). Unresolved conflicts (e.g., Korea, Taiwan) create persistent threats of violence that would inevitably involve the United States. Moreover, the

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\* For the purposes of this analysis, the Asia-Pacific region is defined as the US Pacific Command's area of responsibility. See Fig. 1., next page.

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*This paper is based on a 2001 study undertaken for the Director of Net Assessment, co-directed by C. Michael Brown and Dr. Clark Murdock, a DFI consultant.*

**Fig. 1. The US Pacific Command Area of Responsibility**



success of nuclear weapons programs in competing Asian states drastically raises the stakes in some of these conflicts (e.g., India, North Korea). Governments and societies in transition further contribute to political instabilities in the region and raise the specter of failed states (e.g., Indonesia, North Korea). These political and social instabilities create fertile ground for terrorist organizations, interstate conflict, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

But a deeper look at key elements that support DoD's daily business – including the Department's organizational structure, personnel distribution, education and training programs, and peacetime military activities – uncovers capability shortfalls. Of particular concern is the degree to which DoD remains focused on Europe and the Former Soviet Union (FSU). While the ongoing war against terrorism may help bring about a gradual shift in DoD's focus, the Department's underlying infrastructure and dedication of resources

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*Key elements supporting DoD's daily business in Asia suffer shortfalls. Organization, personnel distribution, education and training programs, and peacetime military activities all tilt anachronistically towards Europe.*

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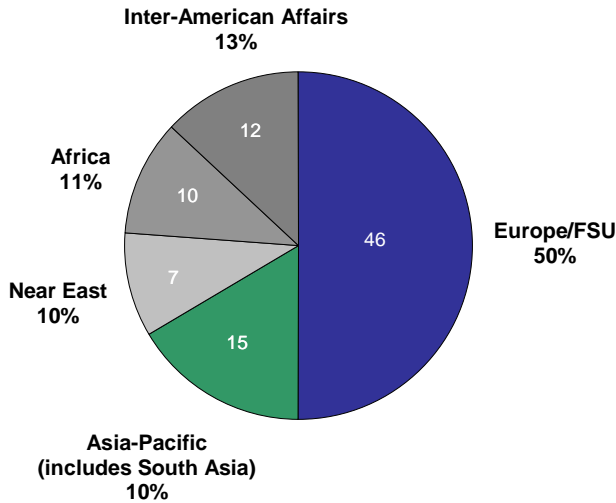
#### DoD Resource Imbalances and Capability Shortfalls

However, a decade after the end of the Cold War, the DoD infrastructure remains "Eurocentric" and largely unprepared to meet the multi-dimensional challenges rising from the Asia-Pacific region. At first glance, this is not self-evident: the US maintains approximately 100,000 forward-deployed forces in the Asia-Pacific theater, supports a robust military infrastructure in Northeast Asia, and has signed five treaty alliances with Asia-Pacific nations (including Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand).

presently remain out of step with emerging realities. For instance, DoD's Asia-Pacific regional offices suffer from organizational disparities and, in general, lack adequate staffing to meet future requirements:

- Asia-Pacific offices within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Joint Staff are significantly under-resourced in comparison to the personnel devoted to Europe and the FSU. Within OSD, European, NATO, and FSU regional offices are staffed with approximately three times more personnel than the offices dedicated to the Asia-Pacific region. Within the Joint Staff, this ratio is more than two to one.

**Fig. 2. OSD Personnel by Region, 2000**

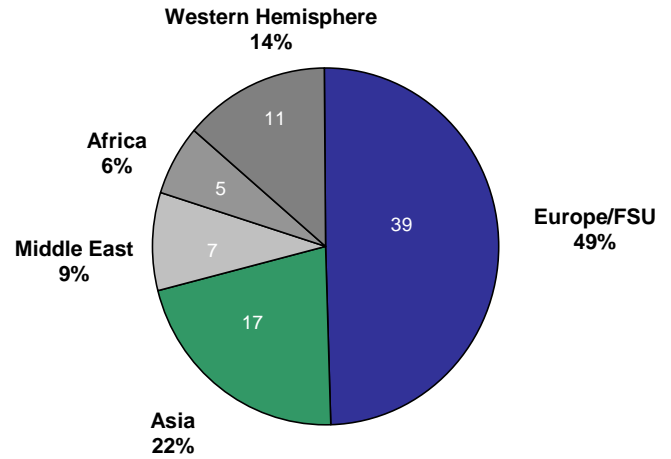


- Headquarter organizations within the Asia-Pacific theater are under-resourced, particularly in personnel. Staff size at the European Command (EUCOM) headquarters, for example, is nearly three times that of the US Pacific Command (PACOM) headquarters.

In the near term, these staffing shortfalls will affect DoD's ability to address daily operational needs. Yet the long-term effects are perhaps more serious. In particular, these shortfalls undermine the prospects for the long-term strategic thinking that will be essential for the assurance of US interests in the region.

Funding levels for peacetime military activities (such as bilateral and multilateral exercises, International Military Education and Training (IMET), and Security Assistance programs) are also indicative of regional disparities. In

**Fig. 3. Joint Staff Personnel by Region, 2000**



which Europe largely remains the focus of DoD staff. For example, in CY2000, senior DoD officials (including the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, service chiefs, and high-ranking civilians) spent about two and a half days in the European theater for every day spent in Asia.

DoD's capacity to address challenges in the Asia-Pacific theater is further impeded by systemic shortfalls – especially in the military services' regional education and training programs – which apply globally but are particularly acute in Asia. For example, while the armed services recognize the critical value of foreign language skills (essential for the conduct of coalition operations, multinational exercises, etc.), resource constraints have forced language training into a position of low priority outside of the intelligence field.

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*The overall level of time and attention that Defense officials dedicate to regional issues paints a telling picture, in which Europe remains the predominant focus of DoD staff.*

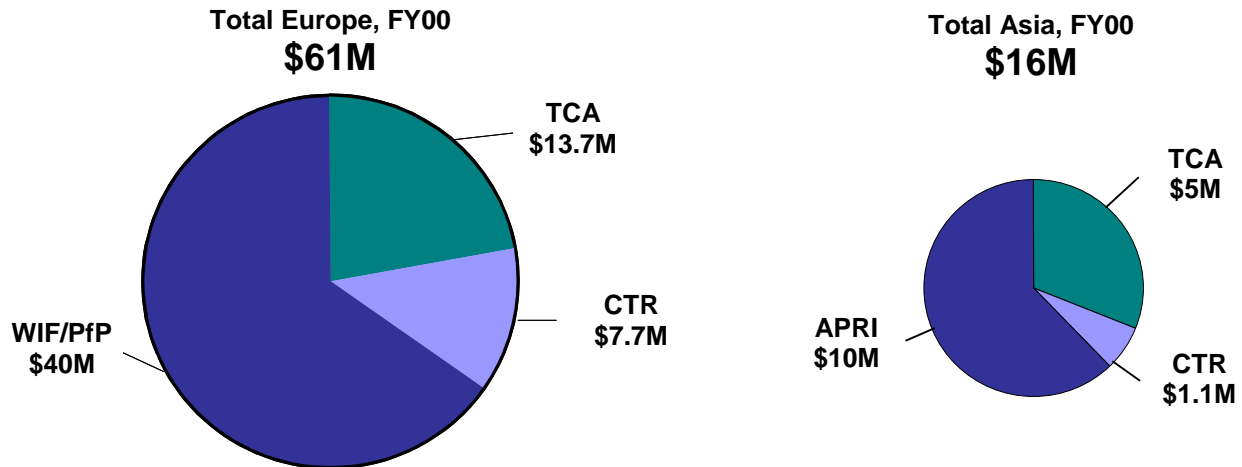
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FY00, PACOM received only one quarter of the funding allocated to the European theater for military-to-military activities. While America's war against terrorism might help to channel additional program funding to this theater, current funding for peacetime military activities is inadequate to gain greater operational access and to build effective coalitions.

While less quantifiable than staffing and funding, the overall level of time and attention that DoD officials dedicate to regional issues paints a telling picture, in

Compounding this problem is the fact that no DoD-wide language program exists to identify critical language requirements and to provide top-down, strategy-driven guidance to the services for meeting those needs. Each service independently defines its own language requirements and determines its own policy on Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP). However, FLPP is generally too low to provide adequate incentives for service members to learn or retain language proficiencies. Moreover, most services do not differentiate FLPP, offering the same language pay for

**Fig. 4. Europe vs. Asia: Comparison of Funding for Peacetime Activities, 2000**



**Key:** TCA = Traditional CINC Activities; WIF/PfP = Warsaw Initiative Funding for Partnership for Peace and related activities; CTR = Cooperative Threat Reduction in the Former Soviet Union; APRI = Asia-Pacific Regional Initiative

critical languages as for more commonly spoken languages.

While the shortage of linguists is a problem across the board, DoD policies result in a shortfall of Asian languages considered more difficult for English speakers to master (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean). Consequently, and despite shifting strategic focus toward the Asia-Pacific region, DoD-sponsored language training in European languages far outweighs the study of Asian languages. In 2000, the Defense Language Institute graduated nearly twice as many

regional specialists, and no standardized FAO program exists across the services. The FAO programs of the Air Force and the Navy – which will arguably represent the predominant US military services in the Asia-Pacific region – are particularly in need of expansion. Overall, the services’ FAO programs are supply-driven rather than demand-driven. That is, the regional allocation of designated FAOs is largely driven by the availability of qualified personnel, not by the definition of strategic requirements. The services have found it relatively more difficult to attract Asia-Pacific FAOs and, consequently, have as much as a 2-to-1 disparity

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*An effective Asia strategy will require more than forward-deployed forces and power-projection capabilities. It also requires a support infrastructure able to meet future challenges.*

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European language students as Asian language students, including three times more Russian speakers than Chinese speakers.

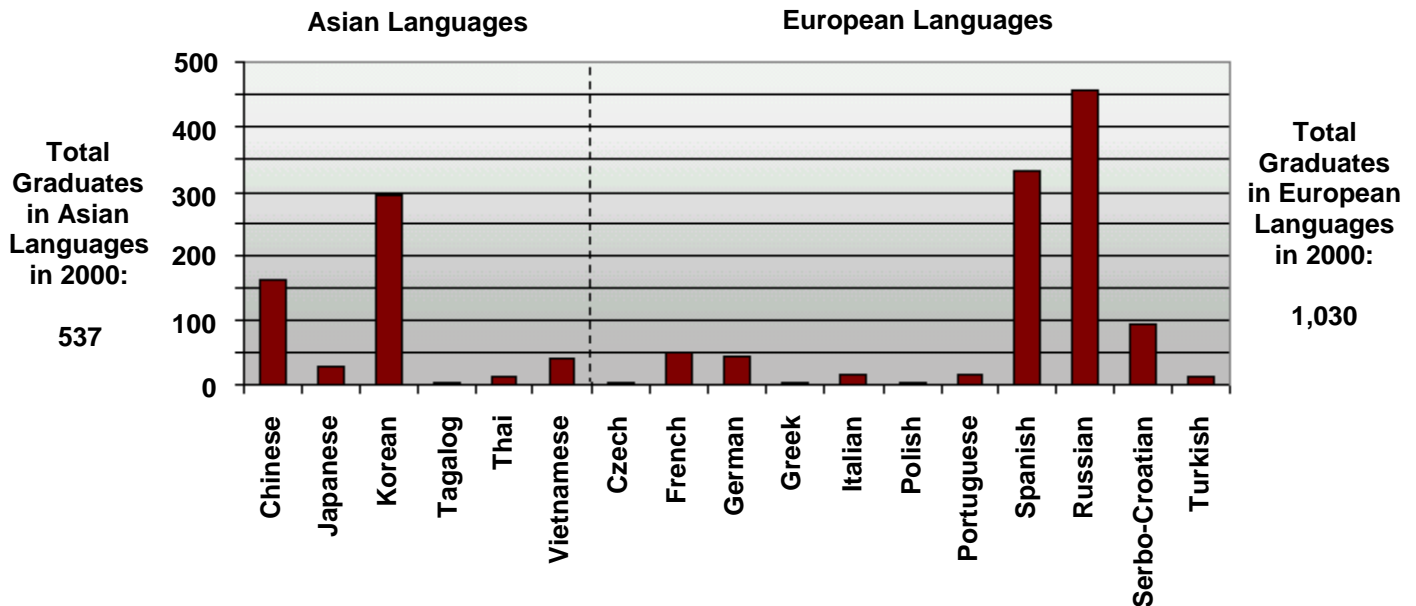
In addition to foreign language capabilities, regional awareness and understanding is key to the development of effective policy in the Asia-Pacific region. Consequently, the services’ institutionalized regional specialist programs, called Foreign Area Officer (FAO) programs, represent one of the services’ most valuable tools for building relationships in the Asia-Pacific theater. However, with the exception of the Army, the services have not fully embraced the concept of training

between European and Asian regional specialists. This means that, in Asia, many attaché positions and policy billets on headquarter staffs are filled with personnel lacking the requisite regional experience and languages.

#### Addressing Imbalances and Shortfalls

Challenges emerging from the Asia-Pacific region dictate that DoD must address these resource imbalances and capability shortfalls. Ultimately, a solid security strategy for Asia will require more than forward-deployed forces and adequate power projection capabilities. An effective

Fig. 5. Defense Language Institute Graduates — All Services (2000)



Asia strategy will also require that DoD's support infrastructure – to include the staffing and training of personnel and the allocation of program funding – is adequately resourced to meet future requirements. Creating this support will require the following actions:

- Adequate staffing of regional offices and theater headquarters;
- Implementation of strategy-driven language training and regional specialist programs;
- Allocation of adequate funding for peacetime military activities; and
- Clear direction and strong, vocal support from the Secretary of Defense for the long-term restructuring of DoD.

**Adequate staffing of regional offices and theater headquarters.** A more intensive Asia strategy will require plus-ups in OSD and Joint Staff personnel dedicated to Asia-Pacific issues. While the Secretary of Defense has committed to reducing the size of the Pentagon bureaucracy, any reduction in personnel should be accompanied by a reprioritization of regional billets in an effort to more adequately address Asian security issues. Toward this end, OSD and the Joint Staff should conduct a senior-level review of current billet structures to provide a more strategic balance of personnel among the regional offices.

Similarly, any reorganization and/or reduction in theater headquarter staffs must consider the imbalance in the size of regional command headquarters and the existing shortage of personnel in the service headquarters in the

Asia-Pacific theater. Future staffing decisions for this theater should give priority to bolstering manpower and capabilities in critical areas currently experiencing the greatest shortfalls. In particular, all-source intelligence, force protection and anti-terrorism, information operations, exercise planning and assessment, and international plans and policy are key areas plagued by resource shortages.

**Implementation of strategy-driven language training and regional specialist programs.** The requirement for larger Pentagon and theater staffs to work Asia issues is matched by a requirement for higher quality in the language training and regional education they receive. The Department should establish a centralized Defense Foreign Language Program (DFLP) office with policy, funding, and oversight authority over all DoD language programs. The DFLP office would provide strategy-driven guidance to the services and other DoD agencies, better ensuring that DoD components identify and respond more effectively to critical language requirements. In addition, the DFLP office would be responsible for reviewing the services' Foreign Language Proficiency Pay policies to implement more effective incentives for personnel to learn and retain critical language capabilities.

With respect to broader regional specialist programs, all services should implement policies to more effectively utilize personnel with regional expertise. The services should ensure that trained FAOs are staffed to appropriate positions (e.g., positions as defense attachés, security assistance officers, country desk officers, etc.)

for the dual purpose of ensuring that regional experts are working regional issues and that “warfighters” are freed up for other operational duties.

In addition, the Air Force, Navy, and Marines should use the Army’s FAO program as a model to formalize their own FAO programs. Formalization of regional specialist programs should include the provision of regional and language training, as well as the designation of a FAO career track. Admittedly, the formalization of FAO programs within the Air Force and Navy will take time. However, an interim solution might include the establishment of a Regional Proficiency Pay program to identify and utilize personnel with regional expertise as a second occupational specialty. Additionally, ROTC recruitment and scholarship programs could be broadened to include degrees in languages and regional studies.

**Allocation of adequate funding for peacetime military activities.** Current funding for peacetime military activities in the Asia-Pacific theater is inadequate given requirements to expand operational access, build effective coalitions, and develop partner capabilities in this region. Consequently, DoD should seek a targeted increase in funding for peacetime activities. Priority areas for dedicating this additional funding should include broader participation by regional partners in bilateral and multilateral exercises, greater participation in IMET courses, and an expansion of cooperative security activities conducted with partners such as the National Guard and the Coast Guard. DoD will need to lead an interagency effort to ensure that priorities receive proper attention in future decisions on security assistance.

**Clear direction and strong, vocal support from the Secretary of Defense for long-term restructuring of DoD.** Overall, implementing changes such as those outlined above will represent a significant challenge, despite the magnitude of emerging security threats in the Asia-Pacific region. The Pentagon’s near-term focus is on the war against terrorism. Moreover, the lack of an immediate, overarching threat to the security status quo in Asia; the cultural and historical ties to Europe; and the

many bureaucratic forces vested in DoD’s business operations all represent obstacles to organizational change. Consequently, long-term restructuring to focus DoD on the Asia-Pacific region will require clear direction and strong, vocal support from the Secretary of Defense.

Even while prosecuting the war on terrorism, Secretary Rumsfeld should define and publicize a long-term Asia strategy that ensures the US will have the financial and personnel – as well as the technical – resources to remain a stabilizing presence in the Asia-Pacific theater. Toward this end, the Secretary should define a vision for the US’s Asian security strategy and should subsequently work with OSD, the Joint Staff, and the services to ensure that staffing decisions, education and training programs, and funding allocations reflect the new security priorities in Asia.

The Secretary must empower agents of change at the Pentagon to oversee organizational and personnel changes. Moreover, the Secretary himself should set an example regarding the increasing importance of the Asia-Pacific theater. Following former Intel CEO Andy Grove’s axiom that “leadership starts with your calendar,” the Secretary must ensure that he and other senior defense officials schedule more high-visibility visits to the region and that an increasing level of time and attention is devoted to Asia issues.

## Conclusion

Overall, senior defense leadership must make tough trade-off decisions regarding the dedication of resources to the key regional theaters. While Europe remains no less important than before, there exist growing requirements to re-channel resources to address the security challenges emerging from Asia. DoD leadership must address the current imbalances in the allocation of personnel, resources, and programs among the theaters and must free up resources to implement a more intensive security strategy in the Asia-Pacific theater.

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