



## Briefing on the National Security Language Initiative

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[Fact Sheet: National Security Language Initiative](#)

(11:30 a.m. EST)

**MR. ERELI:** Welcome, everybody. We're delighted to have you. We're also delighted to have our Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs and Deputy Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy Dina Powell and our Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Barry Lowenkron. They are joined by Deputy Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Erica Barks-Ruggles just in case they ask -- answer some questions, you know who they are -- and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs Thomas Farrell.

Here to brief you on an embargoed basis on the University Presidents Summit which is taking place this afternoon and tomorrow -- and Dina will speak to that -- and then also specifically on the Strategic Language Initiative which will be a big part of that University Presidents Summit and which will be announced later today. So this is on the record on an embargoed basis until after 4:15.

We'll begin with Dina and go to Barry and then open it up to your questions.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** Thank you, Adam. As Adam mentioned, we are very pleased that today and tomorrow Secretary Rice and Secretary Spellings will be co-hosting the first-of-its-kind U.S. University Presidents Summit. The Secretaries are looking forward to engaging with these academic leaders on some significant areas of partnership, including how we continue to attract foreign students and talent to the United States, how we encourage and incentivize U.S. students to study abroad and how we prepare U.S. students to be globally competitive through language skills and an enhanced focus on international education.

We are extremely encouraged by the level of interest for this summit, both from the academic community and senior government officials, who, by their participation, have highlighted a commitment to these critical issues. Attending the summit are over 120 university presidents, representing the richness and diversity of the U.S. higher education system. We have presidents coming from all 50 states, including Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. We have presidents from leading private and public institutions, research institutions, as well as community colleges, historically black colleges and Hispanic-serving institutions.

I mentioned some of the senior government officials -- Secretary Rice, Secretary Spellings. We'll have folks from Commerce, Homeland Security and other senior officials from State and Education. But we are delighted that First Lady Laura Bush will be coming tomorrow and speaking at the luncheon session led by Under Secretary Hughes. The First Lady really has shown a deep commitment to the issues of international education through her support for literacy programs, her engagement with UNESCO and her engagement with exchange programs here and around the world.

Today, the President, as Adam mentioned, will be announcing a new initiative, which is the National Security Language Initiative. And I will turn it over to my colleague, Assistant Secretary Lowenkron, to talk to you about that, and then we're both happy to take your questions.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Thank you. I should say at the outset, and in case you're wondering why the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor is involved in this initiative, this began during the transition when, at that time, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice gathered several of us and we went through

several critical issues that she felt needed to be addressed, and I was asked to take the lead in terms of this National Security Language Initiative.

The National Security Language Initiative -- its origins came from Dr. Rice herself when she said that we need to think kind of in a broader way about challenges to -- not only to our national security but to America's standing in the world and the degree to which America could compete in the world. Compete -- compete in the world of ideas, compete in the world of commerce. The construct for her is what happened after Sputnik in the fall of 1957 when there was a big push in the United States to ramp up studies of science and math, but also a big push really to ramp up the studies of Russia. And she said, what can we do? What can we do in partnership with others in the Administration as well as with the private sector, with foundations, with the academic community, in order to ramp up the study of critical languages, of Arabic, of Chinese, of Russian, of Hindi and Farsi.

And so after working on this for the better part of a year, we now have the elements of this National Security Language Initiative. What is this initiative? Well, it encompasses three broad things. One, to expand the number of Americans who are mastering critical need languages and start them at a younger age. And by younger age, it includes pilot projects to start them at the kindergarten level and work them up through elementary school, middle school, high school and colleges. And I can get into details about other such programs focusing on younger, younger students.

Second, to increase the number of advanced-level speakers of foreign languages with the emphasis of critical needs languages. So think about a continuum. You already have some students who have been exposed to some of this language. How can we press in order to advance? How can we help them advance their mastery of this language? That's the second component.

And the third component is teachers. Because it is not simply a matter that not enough Americans are learning these foreign languages; we don't have enough teachers to teach these foreign languages. We were struck by the fact, for example, that less than 2 percent of high school students in the United States combined today study Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Korean, Japanese, Russian or Chinese. And so we need programs to help them study. We also need teachers to teach, to teach these critical languages.

Rather than, if you'd like, what I could do is go into specifics of each of these three areas, but I should add that this is an initiative that is in partnership with the Department of Education, the Department of Defense and with the DNI, Director of National Intelligence. The DNI portion came as a result of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. The Defense Department interest came as a result of their need to train in basic foreign language skills nearly 3,000 people a year. In terms of our needs here at the State Department, we need a Foreign Service -- many of the officers coming into the Foreign Service do not have sufficient expertise or no expertise in foreign languages. It is economically better to take kids at a very early age and expose them to the study of languages rather than start them from scratch in their A-100 course when they become Foreign Service officers.

Now, a final point and then we can throw it open to questions and I can get into some specific on this. A final point is that (inaudible)? What do we expect of these kids? Kids. High school kids, college kids, graduate students. We have options for them. With some of these programs, there will be a requirement to commit to a government job. For example, there's a National Security Education Program run by the Pentagon. It's been there since post-Sputnik. And what that means is that they get financial aid for their studies, then there is a commitment. They have a commitment to take a government job. If there is no government job available, if there is not a match, then they could agree to go into a civilian linguist reserve corps in which they could be called up six months within four years if we need their help in a critical language. This corps is also open to retired Foreign Service officers. It's open to retired military individuals or it's open to, you know, people who have studied these languages at a graduate level and would like some funding so they can keep their expertise fresh.

And finally, if students have mastered these languages, they can also apply to be placed in high schools. Where we have in mind is the Department of Education is going to help set up as a clearinghouse a structure modeled after Teach for America. So, in essence, if you have a school out there that needs a Farsi teacher and you have somebody that has studied Farsi and says, "I think I'd like to teach Farsi," what this program will do is to say, okay, we will commit to funding and getting you the teachers certificate and then serve as a clearinghouse to match you up with a school district or the individual school that may need you to teach Farsi.

So this is the range of the programs. They go from intensive, beginning at elementary school, all the way through and include high school exchanges, colleges and graduate schools. And our goal is, in essence, to ramp up the mastery of these critical languages, not solely for national security reasons but also in terms of America's standing in the world.

So let me stop there and we can get into more specifics.

**MR. ERELI:** If I could ask you, if you have a question, identify yourself and your news organization for our briefers. Paul.

**QUESTION:** Paul Baskin of Bloomberg News. Can I -- I don't know if I can jump on to other issues, but deemed exports is apparently one of the issues coming up, and also visas. It's kind of, if you ask the university presidents what they're most concerned about, they are interested in languages but those two they're also very interested in. And on deemed

export, apparently the Commerce Department is actually going the other way and making the rules even tighter, and I'm wondering if there's anything you're going to be able to tell them to kind of assuage their concerns on the fact that there are a lot of foreign students coming into the U.S. to do research and are blocked from participating. And on visas, they say that the Administration has done a lot to clear it up but there's still a perception issue out there that needs to be addressed. And also on the program that brings scholars on for short term, apparently there are still problems there. So I'm just looking for anything that you're going to be able to tell them on any kind of advances on any of those areas.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** Sure. Well, clearly, we worked closely with the university presidents to set up the agenda. We wanted to be able to make sure that all the concerns that they have and opportunities that they might see can be addressed, and so both those topics will be addressed, both the deemed export issue and the visa issue.

On the deemed export issue, as you noted, it really is in the hands of the Commerce Department at this time and I think it's why it's very critical that there be a very open dialogue on this issue during the module on it. And the module will include representatives, very senior representatives from the Commerce Department as well as Chuck Vest, former head of MIT. And what I can tell you is no final decisions on a rule have been made, but this is certainly an opportunity for the folks at Commerce to hear directly from the university presidents on this issue that they do have serious concerns about.

On the visa issue, I'm glad to hear you say that there have been improvements because we really are proud to showcase some of those improvements. Clearly, after 9/11, there were some issues, but the interagency group made it a priority to address them. There are over 500 new positions that were created specifically to address the increased workload for visa processing overseas. Secretary Rice and Secretary Chertoff and others have worked to improve the interagency procedures. They now -- not only is there overwhelming majority of people that are applying for visas, usually issued a visa, 97 percent in fact, within a couple of days, but for that tiny fraction of applicants who require additional processing, the time for visa issuance has gone from months and -- I'm sorry, weeks, sometimes months, to less than 14 days. And I have actually, as I have traveled, talked to people in our Consular Affairs sections about the fact that there are special lines for students, that they get numbers. And so we are, again, very glad to see improvements in the visa issuance process. Obviously, we continue to work on them.

But what you hit on, I think is right. We need to market the fact that our visa process has improved because you still hear a concern about it and we do need to get the message out even more that we have worked on these issues and that we welcome foreign students. I have heard the President no less than five times, the Secretary of State say in remarks, we welcome and encourage foreign students to the United States. So I think that is certainly an issue that will come up and the moderators for that session will be our own Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Maura Harty and senior officials from Homeland Security.

**MR. ERELI:** Charlie.

**QUESTION:** Two unrelated questions. If an American student wants to go to Beijing to study Chinese, does your program pay for it? And on a different issue, Barry, you said something -- I don't know the exact words, but there's a commitment for four years, so if you have a need, if you train somebody in Farsi, if you need them, does that mean somebody might find themselves going to translate for a military unit if there is a military need even though he thought he was going to be teaching high school?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** Charlie, I'll take the first. We do have some programs. The State Department commitment in this area really is very much focused in the -- within the ECA Bureau through exchanges, through the Gilman Scholarship Exchange Program, which actually takes underserved American students abroad -- they could go to Beijing and study Chinese -- as well as Fulbright. We'll be enhancing several parts of our Fulbright exchange to encourage language -- extensive language training abroad.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** In terms of -- you ask in terms of what is the requirement in that specific Defense Department program, the NSEP. It is a two-year requirement but it is not -- I wouldn't call it the equivalent of a draft. So in other words, if somebody -- let's say they've mastered Arabic. They cannot be directed to an assignment. It has to be one in which it's a mutual fit. But clearly, the intent is that when a student does sign on to the National Security Education Program, that he or she will say, I will make a good faith effort in order to repay the assistance that I got to study this language in some capacity working for the government.

**QUESTION:** Can I follow up on that? You were talking about starting these kids in like kindergarten. So you're asking them to make a commitment?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** No, no, no. That's a different program. That program, in essence, it started off as a pilot program. And in fact, it just started this year in a school in Portland, Oregon, in which we had a school system that committed to start introducing Chinese to kindergarten kids and then, when these kids go into elementary school, they can continue that, middle school, high school and then go into the university.

Once they're through with university, if they want to proceed, if they want to say, I really like Chinese and I want to get some funding for it, then what they could do is, if they want, they can go to the National Security Education route or then

go into an equivalent of Teach for America. There are lots of options for them. Or they can just end it.

**MR. ERELI:** I'm sorry, let's just go to Sue. She's been waiting.

**QUESTION:** Sue Fleming from Reuters. Have you set goals as to how many Arabic, Chinese, Hindi speakers, or whatever you would like, by a certain target date? And have you also ranked languages in terms of strategic importance to the United States, with, say, Arabic first, Chinese?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Two things. In terms of ranking languages, what we did was we researched the work that was done by other foundations, and including the work that the Pentagon had done in parallel with this initiative, which was they reached out to 400 major foundations and universities and they identified the critical gaps -- it's Arabic, it's Farsi, it's Hindi and so forth. So it's not a matter of rank ordering. We need to focus on those critical languages.

Well, we have set our goals in terms of the number of individuals that we would like to see participate in these programs. So there is no set goal saying that we need one million Arabic speakers or 500,000 Farsi speakers.

**QUESTION:** Because you mentioned that there were 2 percent of high school students --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Less than 2 percent.

**QUESTION:** Less than 2 percent who spoke the range of six languages.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Yes, combined.

**QUESTION:** Combined. So wouldn't you be looking at, say, 20 percent of those being able to? Have you set those kind of goals?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** We're not going to set -- we're not setting the goals in terms of by X number of individuals by Y number of years. Our goal is to start building capacity.

**MR. ERELI:** Elise, did you --

**QUESTION:** No, actually, that was exactly my question about how you chose languages. Thanks.

**MR. ERELI:** Yes, ma'am.

**QUESTION:** Kelly Field with *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. I was wondering if you could provide more details about the programs being offered through universities and for college students. Is this that -- we're talking about building on NSEP and also sort of a new program modeled after Teach for America. Are those the two main programs or are there others and how much money for those?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Well, let me address the second point first, talking about how much money. In essence, when you're looking at -- you're looking at when this initiative will be launched, we're looking at FY07 in excess of \$100 million. It's about \$114 million.

Roughly, three quarters of that will be borne by the Department of Education or the Department of State and the rest will be by the Department of Defense and also by Department of National Intelligence, the DNI. Education will take the bulk of it, roughly about \$57 million, and State will come in second.

In terms of what we offer for college kids, we have -- I mentioned the National -- the NSEP. The National Flagship Language Initiative, which is to produce -- our goal is produce 2,000 advanced speakers of Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi and Central Asian languages over the next several years. But this is trying to get the -- this is trying to get kids to advance their work at the graduate level.

We also have Fulbright -- we're going to ramp up Fulbright exchanges and we're also going to support immersion language study centers abroad. So those are the tools. In fact, we're thinking in terms of the State Department contribution, summer immersion programs for university level students in critical languages. We're going to send them abroad.

**MR. ERELI:** Dmitri.

**QUESTION:** Technical question. Can we have a complete list of those languages that you are most interested in?

**MR. ERELI:** (Inaudible).

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**MR. ERELI:** Yes, sir. Sir, did you have a --

**QUESTION:** Yes, I do. Can you talk about --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Your name?

**QUESTION:** I'm sorry my name is Mike Genofsky. I'm with *The New York Times*. Can you talk about the overall costs for every -- you just said \$114 million. I'm not sure what that encompasses. And also, how does this intersect with what the Pentagon is doing with their own efforts to -- essentially, it sounds like -- do exactly the same thing you are? Is that part of this?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** It's part of it.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** It's part of it.

**QUESTION:** But they're talking about spending, in their words, hundreds of millions of dollars. Can you kind of tie this all in a neat package for me?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Yeah, the neat package for '07 is the Pentagon has brought to table roughly \$25 million, \$25 million, which will include the -- they started this pilot project in Portland. They're going to expand it. They're going to add, I believe, add up to two more. And then Education is going to --

**QUESTION:** Two more schools?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Two more schools and then Education is going to --

**STAFF:** Districts.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** District. Education is going to add about, what?

**STAFF:** Twenty-four, I believe.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Twenty-four additional schools.

**QUESTION:** Schools or districts?

**STAFF:** Districts.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Districts. They're also committed to setting up the Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps. So that's part of their contribution. That's \$25 million.

In terms of Education, it's about \$5 million to set up this teacher corps. It's \$1 million for e-learning clearinghouse. In other words, to help schools to help teachers do e-learning, getting materials and e-learning on critical languages. It's \$24 million to do the -- it costs about \$1 million apiece to do these school districts. And it's about \$24 million to redirect foreign language assistance programs to focus on these critical languages. How do you help schools? How do you help teachers in order to master these critical languages?

From the State Department, it's the summer scholarships that I mentioned. It's Fulbright Scholarships, including getting Fulbrighters to come to the United States and teach these languages. And it's also ramping up Gilman Scholarships. These are scholarships for disadvantaged kids. We're going to be ramping up -- my understanding is -- all the Gilman Scholarships. We're also ramping up within that study of critical languages.

So that's kind of the breakdown that gets you to about \$114 million for '07. And once we launch that, then we start taking a look at the numbers for '08 and '09.

**QUESTION:** Where does Congress fit in (inaudible)? I mean, what have you done and (inaudible)?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** To a certain extent, we're kind of pushing on an open door with some

people on Congress because they've already -- a number of senators have already said they want to introduce legislation to get the United States to be more competitive in terms of foreign languages. And so what we anticipate is just having a sitdown with them and saying this is our program now, we are on\* launch.

**QUESTION:** But you've given us for '07 are just going to be requests. When you said the Pentagon is putting \$25 million, they don't have it yet, right?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** No, this is the commitment of the President in the '07 budget for the \$114 million.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** Charlie, can I also just say that Congress has been very supportive of the University Presidents Summit. And in fact, many of them discussed the need to make it

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** Charlie, can I also just say that Congress has been very supportive of the University Presidents Summit. And in fact, many of them discussed the need to make it a priority to market more aggressively to foreign students. And you know, the visa issue and the deemed export issue came up as some of the concerns. But I also just really want to highlight that not only Secretary Rice, Secretary Spellings and the President care deeply about continuing to market to foreign students, but members on the Hill really we worked closely with them on this agenda because they believe, as we do, that it's not just an issue of visa improvements or marketing those improvements, but it's a collaboration with the university presidents, a partnership, to encourage them to aggressively market their programs around the world. I think many of you probably know that over the last decade or so, many of our competitors, you know, have been marketing to these same students. And so it's -- I just want to really underscore the fact that this is -- cannot be easily dismissed as just a visa issue, that the universities themselves and certainly, in collaboration with us, must continue to aggressively market to foreign students.

**MR. ERELI:** Let's just take it around a little bit.

**QUESTION:** Libby Leist from NBC. I'm just wondering how much this foreign language deficit that you're talking about hurts our public diplomacy efforts and you know, to the extent that it takes a long time to sort of catch up, how far behind are we in making progress in public diplomacy?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, that's -- as you've heard, Under Secretary Hughes, one of the E's is education and a specific piece of that is the critical -- the International Security Language initiative. In order to effectively communicate our values around the world, it matters. It matters how many languages you can communicate it in. So clearly, it is a public diplomacy challenge and this is part of a major public diplomacy priority to not only encourage Americans to speak foreign languages, but to understand other cultures, to travel, to become global citizens. Because really, as you -- when you think about it, public diplomacy is certainly not the work of government officials, it's a part of it, but it really is about Americans as they travel, business men and women.

And as Assistant Secretary Lowenkron has sort of revealed, we do have a long journey to get to where other countries are that, you know, and the percentage, differences between other countries' citizens speaking English, so it is a challenge and it's a huge public diplomacy priority and that's why I'm really pleased that the interagency, under the direction of the President, has made it a priority in terms of this initiative.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** If I could just add one more thing to that and that's the Secretary feels real strongly that if you're going to engage in area studies, if you're going to commit to studying history and politics of Russia or China, you've got to get the language. You really have to get that language. And the language has to come earlier.

**QUESTION:** Who is going to be in charge of this initiative? I apologize if you've already mentioned that. And also 114 million doesn't really seem very much when you have such a huge challenge. If you look at how much money is going to No Child Left Behind and in various other programs, it just doesn't seem a huge amount of money that's going to really bridge those gaps that you have in terms of language training.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** I would say in terms of -- we're setting up the interagency process which essentially we'll have Education and the State Department shepherding this, along with the Defense Department, in order to kind of do any fine tuning (inaudible) and expanding of this initiative. I would push back in terms of the -- in terms of saying this is not a lot of money. (Inaudible) we view this as serious seed money to get this thing launched. And when you're talking about -- when you're talking about trying to reach little kids and reach the university level, and when you're talking about trying to build capacity, trying to train teachers to do this, this is seed money. And I came out to meet today to tell you that it's 114 million and, you know, more, but I will tell you now that there are a number of individuals in foundations and individuals in the private sector that are eager to participate in this as well. So I view this as an investment.

**MR. ERELI:** Over here, yeah.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.) Some might ask why this is a summit for college presidents and not, say, high school or

elementary teachers because the train might have already left the station by the time students reach the college level. So I was wondering if you could address that.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** Actually, you know, that's part of why this is co-hosted by Secretary Spellings. And her great goal for this summit is, in fact, what you're hitting on which is, how do we prepare U.S. students to be globally competitive. But university presidents play a very unique role, even in the kinds of courses that they offer at universities and not just language, but you know, making sure that there are various diversity in their college campuses. But this -- that's why this language initiative and the summit are really partnerships with the Department of Education because you're right, we're trying to reach younger and younger ages to get young Americans interested in the rest of the world, interested by taking foreign languages, interested by participating in exchange programs which, as Barry mentioned, is a big piece of what we're going to do at the high school level, these immersion summer courses, which not only teach the language, but teach the culture and the history. So I think that we are looking at it from a K-12, through -- you know, university perspective. But clearly, as we're talking about, you know, international students studying at the collegiate level, the right group to bring together for this summit was the university presidents.

**MR. ERELI:** Got time for one more. Michael.

**QUESTION:** I just wanted to follow up a little bit on that. Is there anybody here from the K-12 community? And gosh, the Department of Education is trying to get people just to read and do math at grade level. How do they get kids in elementary school to start thinking about speaking Chinese and Farsi and Arabic. I mean, it seems like the resources would be an enormous cost to really fulfill this, if you want to really start at that young age and work forward.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** (Inaudible) start with education, it's clear that this was not going to be either you teach critical languages or you teach basic reading, either you teach Farsi or you teach math. And this is a responsibility that Secretary Spelling said she would take on and she's very enthusiastic about the program. As I said and I stress, that this is a -- in terms of starting from kindergarten, this is a pilot program. We're very enthusiastic about it. But we are committed -- we are committed to making this thing viable.

Let me give you a personal example. My two kids were in the -- Mclean, Virginia, they basically -- they had a fabulous elementary school. A year after they left, the elementary school went bilingual with French and they missed out and so they had to make break their teeth on French beginning in eighth grade, which their father did as well, not too well. But the idea of them offering kids an opportunity to start some basic Farsi or some basic Chinese in first or second grade as part of the normal curriculum, I'm pretty excited about that idea.

**MR. ERELI:** Yes, sir.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.) What kind of an issue is in (inaudible) in this project where they teach new languages (inaudible)?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** The Peace Corps and the New Language Initiative, I don't think there's really a connection.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Right. They teach overseas. We're talking about --

**QUESTION:** In terms of exchange students.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** In terms of exchange students?

**QUESTION:** Yeah.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** They do have separate programs, as does ARD, as do other agencies. We're really talking about the State Department exchange programs here. For this initiative and expanding those that really not only invite native speakers here to teach Americans, but send American teachers and students abroad to get intensive language training and return and hopefully teach more Americans as well.

**MR. ERELI:** Okay. We'll make these the last two questions. Ma'am.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) you mention about that you talked to some senators and they're supportive and I understand that Senators Alexander and Lieberman had exchanged language -- language exchange program with China, so are you supportive of that?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** I don't know the specifics of that, of the -- of that proposal, but I will say that, I mean, in general they've been among our greatest supporters in terms of pushing, in terms of exchanges and that's what this is --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** And we just received -- the Secretary received a letter this morning from Senator Coleman commending her on hosting -- co-hosting this summit which we'd be happy to get to you all because he has, you're right, been a leader in the Senate on these issues.

**MR. ERELI:** Yes, ma'am.

**QUESTION:** If I can go back to the pilot project that (inaudible) the first one, you have two more schools and (inaudible) school districts?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Right. We have --

**QUESTION:** Where are they -- where are those -- are they nationwide or --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** It's, basically, it's -- we accept proposals and the first one essentially came down to three districts and Portland won out. So it's a matter of districts want to compete for them and then we basically post the competition, what we are looking for and how we can help and so that's the goal. It's open to school districts across the country.

**QUESTION:** Okay. And are they only in Chinese?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** No, no, no, no. This one is in Chinese. You can get one in Farsi, we can get one in Hindi, you can get one Arabic.

**MR. ERELI:** All right. Moving right into the other question. This is the last question.

**QUESTION:** I'm sorry. (Inaudible) for comparison sake, how many school districts across the country are you aware of actually have their own immersion language programs? So when you say this (inaudible) how will this compare to nationwide what individuals (inaudible) districts on their own?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** We'll need to defer to our experts, but the Arabic statistic is a pretty --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Staggering.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** -- staggering one. I think, Erica, who gave the stat that the Modern -- do you have the --

**DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY Barks-Ruggles:** The Modern Language Association, the MLA, their statistic is that there are 15 K-12 public schools in the U.S. that teach Arabic.

**QUESTION:** Fifteen.

**DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY Barks-Ruggles:** Fifteen. One, five.

**QUESTION:** One, five.

**DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY Barks-Ruggles:** Public schools. And there's a number of religious schools as well. But the number is under 100 total.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) initiative? (Laughter.)

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** We don't know.

**QUESTION:** And that could be high school level, not necessarily the elementary school level?

**DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY Barks-Ruggles:** Yes, K-12.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** That's K-12.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** And I think the other --

**DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY Barks-Ruggles:** And it's about 2,000 -- we have about 2,000 Chinese language

teachers spread out across schools and so some of those are in the same school, K-12 in the U.S.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** Compared to, though, 200 million Chinese students taking English.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOWENKRON:** Let me just -- I don't want to overwhelm you, just throw out statistics, one thing that struck me was that secondary school students, kids in high school, only 44 percent of them enrolled in any foreign language; 70 percent of those who do enroll, enroll in Spanish which you can understand why. But basically on 44 percent of high school students enroll in a foreign language.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY POWELL:** In any foreign language.

**MR. ERELI:** Thank you guys for coming. If you got extra, maybe we can stand by a little bit, but just thank you for coming. Appreciate it.

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