

EXPLANATION OF THE DATA

Following is an explanation of how CSSMM researchers derived the total number of military discharges of Arabic speakers reported in The New Republic magazine in January 2005.

The first discharge figures were obtained after a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request was submitted to the Pentagon in 2004 by CSSMM. The Pentagon's initial response indicated that 73 people had been discharged for homosexuality from the Defense Language Institute (DLI) at the Presidio of Monterey between 1998 and 2003. These are uniformed service members who are trained in language skills for use in military intelligence and related tasks.

Of the DLI discharges, one was listed as a Cryptologic Linguist Helper with proficiency in Arabic. However, the language specialties of 62 service members were marked "unknown," making the data partially incomplete. Accordingly, Congressman Marty Meehan (D-MA) asked Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to clarify the data, and the Defense Department provided the new data in its reply to Rep. Meehan.

The new data, contained in a December 2004 memo to Rep. Meehan signed by David Chu, Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, indicated that sixteen of the unknown language specialties were Arabic and six were Persian (Farsi). This additional data brings the total number of homosexuality discharges in Arabic during this period to seventeen and the total number in Persian (Farsi) to six.

The Pentagon data further reported fifteen homosexual discharges with "Occupation Code 241 - Language Interrogation/Interpretation" from the military at-large. Of these, two were listed as "Interrogators" with proficiency in Arabic, bringing the total number of Arabic discharges to nineteen, while the total number of discharged specialists in Persian (Farsi) remains unchanged at six.

Concerned that the separate data sets could overlap, CSSMM queried the Pentagon for further clarification. The response, contained in a January 2005 email, confirms that the seventeen Arabic discharges from DLI were distinct from the two Arabic linguists discharged from the military at-large. Further corroborating the point, the email listed the discharge totals as "3 Arabic linguists" and "16 Arabic students," noting that the students were not "military linguists" but students studying the language.

In 2004, CSSMM interviewed an additional Arabic linguist who served in Iraq in 2003 and was discharged in 2004, a year not included in the above Pentagon data. This additional discharge brings the total number of discharges in Arabic to twenty, and the total number of discharges in Persian (Farsi) to six.