## .S. will find biligual apabilities important

"If a pessimist, Chinese."
What's an easy second language?
"No such thing," the Jesuit said. "No such thing," the Jesuit said.
"You don't learn a second language without hard
work I was picked up by the ears in a monastery in You don't learn a second language without hard
work. I was picked up by the ears in a monastery in
France and learned French - very swifly. Everything
was in French. No English spoken. It took eight months France and learned French - very swiftly. Everything
was in French. No English spoken. It took eight months
to survive and after 18 months I was good at it." Isn't that to survive and after 18 months 1 was good at it." Isn't that
old-fashioned
on line? These what with translating machines coming
itle gadgets that students hope will on line? These are little gadgets that stadentst hope will
take the pain out of foreign language the way the take the pain out of foreign language the way the
pocket calculators make mathematics almost pleasant?
"That's ridiculous," Healy said. "You can't carry "That's ridiculous," Healy said. "You can't carry
around a pocket translator anymore than you can put a around a pocket translator anymore than yo cat pur a
sunrise in your pocket."
The commission on which Healy serves, in its report to President Carter, said: Americans' scandalous incompetence in foreign lan-
guages also explains our dangerousty inadequate under-
standing of world aftirs. standing of world affairs.
.Our schools graduate a large majority of students Our schools graduate a large majority of students
whose knowledge and vision stops at the American
shoreline, whose approach to international affairs is proshoreline, whose approach to international affairs is pro-
vincial, and whose heads have been filled with astonishing misinformation. 'In a recent published study of schoolchildren's knowledge and perceptions of other nations and peo-
ples, over 40 percent of the 12 th graders could not locate ples, over 40 percent of the 12 th graders could not locate
Egypt correctly, while over 20 percent were equally
ignorant about the whereabouts of France or China." Egypt correctly, while over 20 percent were equally
ignorant about the whereabouts of France or China."
The Commission learned: - Only 15 percent of U.S. high school students now
study a foreign language. Twenty-four percent did in Only one out of 20 public high school students
studies French, German or Russian beyond the second year. (Four years is considered a minimum prerequisite for useable language competence.)
Only eight percent of U.S. colleges and universi-
ties now require a foreign language for admission. ties now require a foreign language for admission.

- There are 10,ooo English-speaking Japanese busi-
ness representatives on assignment in the United
"Our schools graduate a large majority of students whose knowledge and vision stops at the American shoreline ..

States. There are fewer than 900 U.S. counterparts in
Japan - and only a handful of those have a working Japan - and only a hand
knowledge of Japan - The foreign affairs agencies of the U.S. government are deeply concerned that declining foreign lan-
guage errollments in our schools and colleges will lower guage enroliments in our schools and colleses
the quality of new recruits for their services.
The Commission headed by The Commission, headed by James A. Perkins, head
of the International Council for Educational Develop of the International Council for Educational Develop-
ment, recommended the creation of a National Comment, recommended the creation of a National Com-
mission on Foreign Language and International Studies
to deal with the problem.

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