

The Leader's Regional Advise and Assist Course (LRAAC) Preparing Leaders to Win in a Complex World

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“The Army cannot predict who it will fight, where it will fight, and with which coalition it will fight. To win in a complex world, Army forces must provide the Joint force with multiple options, integrate the efforts of multiple partners, operate across multiple domains, and present our enemies and adversaries with multiple dilemmas.”

-General David Perkins

Forward, The US Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World, 2020-2040

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Today our Army faces as much uncertainty as any point in time since the close of the Korean War. Our senior leaders are working to address a multitude of threats from Afghanistan to Africa to Eastern Europe even, it seems, as these threats transform before us. At the same time the U.S. Army faces a dwindling budget and reduced force structure which could increasingly limit the resources available to meet these threats. At the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), Fort Polk, La., we understand that one of the best ways to hedge for an uncertain future is by investing in leader development. The Army Leadership Development Strategy (ALDS) states that “developing leaders is a competitive

advantage the Army possesses that cannot be replaced by technology or substituted with advanced weaponry and platforms;”¹ so it follows that it is during times such as these when we most need to invest in our junior leaders at the Brigade and below.

Currently our conventional forces are distributed across the globe, executing a broad array of missions. For example, U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) alone currently has units regularly engaged in over 150 countries. You can find our soldiers committed to operations ranging from brigade-level deployments in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) to small-team and individual deployments in the U.S. Africa



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Command (AFRICOM) AOR. Regardless of where you search out our formations, you will find leaders engaged with the full range of joint, inter-organizational, and multinational partners. Furthermore as budgets shrink, this trend can only increase. The new Army Operating Concept, *Win in a Complex World*, calls for the Army to engage regionally to *shape security environments* and *set the theater* of operations as part of its core competencies. The ALDS nests within that goal, placing regional engagement at the top of the list of “near-term” priorities for leader development. ALDS states that “leaders must understand the strategic environment, be able to think critically and creatively, visualize solutions, and describe and communicate crucial information to achieve shared understanding, collaborate, and build teams.”² It stands to reason that as resources dwindle, leveraging the full capabilities of our partner organizations only becomes more important to the successful execution of Unified Land Operations (ULO). Leaders who can successfully engage, leverage, and synchronize partner efforts will be of great value to any formation.

With these thoughts in mind, the JRTC Operations Group has developed a training curriculum to help commanders prepare their leaders for the complexities of the present and future operating environment. The Leader’s Regional Advise and Assist Course (LRAAC) is a week-long, immersive training event designed to provide leaders at the company and battalion level the cognitive foundation for operating in a complex foreign environment. Observer, Coach/ Trainers (OC/Ts) from the 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment, deliver a doctrinally-grounded curriculum that provides students both a conceptual foundation to shape the lens through which they view hu-

man inter-action and hands-on scenario-based training exercises to develop and hone their inter-personal engagement skills. Taken in full, the course helps leaders better understand and engage with their inter-organizational and multi-national partners. The final result is a leader more capable of accommodating cultural differences, tolerating ambiguity, building relationships, and leveraging the strengths of others.

Core Curriculum

As presently taught, the LRAAC consists of three fundamental components. The first and the foundational component of the course consists of six “core” classes. These classes help build skills essential to the successful execution of all security cooperation missions. As the 3rd Battalion transitioned from the 162nd Infantry Brigade into the JRTC Operations Group, it aggregated and collated training and reference materials which conventional U.S. Army advising cadre, including the 162nd Infantry Brigade, had developed and maintained for nearly a decade. As such the core curriculum draws on the U.S. Army’s experience from over 13 years war as refined by a cadre of security force assistance and foreign area specialists. The curriculum is based on current Army doctrine and is the foundation for every course the 3rd Battalion teaches, whether it be LRAAC for a unit assigned to the AFRICOM AOR, the Joint Security Force Assistance (JSFAC) Course for an individual advisor heading to an Afghan ministry, or the Security Force Assistance Course (SFAC) for a brigade deploying as advisory teams to work with an Afghan Army Corps. The six courses in the core curriculum teach a basic set of engagement skills for conducting security cooperation missions anywhere in the world. [See Table 1.](#)

Regionally-Focused Curriculum

Building on the core curriculum, the second component of the LRAAC consists of five courses which prepare leaders for operations as part of a Regionally Aligned Force (RAF). This segment of the LRAAC focuses on the historical and cultural nuances of a specific country or region while building the student’s understanding of the US interagency, media engagement, and regional Foreign Security Forces (FSF). [See Table 2 for these course descriptions.](#)

Lane Training Scenarios

The third and final component of the LRAAC curriculum consists of engagement lane training exercises (LTXs) that challenge students to bring together all they have learned in immersive scenarios. These exercises are built upon the same fundamental principles as any training lane designed to teach and test tactical skills. Students are evaluated by certified OC/Ts who employ video recording to deliver instrumented after action reviews (AARs) throughout the course. Based upon their own training objectives and their unit’s anticipated mission set(s), unit commanders can tailor the course by choosing which LTXs the cadre will employ from a menu of available scenarios. [Common scenarios are listed in table 3.](#)

The LRAAC 5-Day Program

The LRAAC is delivered as a 40-hour course. Days generally consist of classroom instruction in the morning followed by a practical exercise/scenario-based LTX in the afternoon. The chart below depicts a typical week-long LRAAC. It begins with the basic elements of the core curriculum. Each day closes with practical exercises in which the students employ the skills they have learned that day. The following

morning begins with an instrumented AAR of training events conducted the previous day in order to prime students for the material ahead, and the final day consists of a series of LTXs built around the unit commander’s requirements. [See Table 4.](#)

The Officer Coach/Trainer (OC/T) Cadre

Instruction for the LRAAC primarily comes from OC/Ts in the 3rd Battalion who are certified through the JRTC OC/T Academy, the Army Basic Instructor Course, and certification processes specific to the 3rd Battalion’s own internal training program. Many of the battalion’s cadre have lived and worked abroad and/or served as advisors on previous tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Classes involving force protection and insider threat are developed and instructed by the battalion’s SERE-C qualified cadre, and many of the OC/Ts are graduates of regionally-focused courses such as those provided by the DOS Foreign Service Institute and the Asian Pacific Center for Security’s Asian Pacific Orientation Course (APOC). Finally all the development of regionally-focused curriculum is supervised by Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) resident in the JRTC Operations Group.

Taken in comparison with recent decades, the operational environment of the future promises unprecedented complexity, and our present trajectory suggests that the Army will be asked to accomplish more tasks with fewer resources. In this environment, leaders who can leverage the talents and capabilities of partner organizations and nations are much more likely find quicker, more efficient paths to mission success. At the JRTC we recognize and embrace this operational dynamic; subsequently we have developed the LRAAC as one vehicle for preparing

Army leaders to overcome challenges as part of a Joint, Inter-organizational, and Multina-

tional team. Culturally aware and adaptive leaders will never ensure mission success, but

one can be certain that they are a necessary element to future solutions. ■

Notes

1. U.S. Army. *U.S. Army Leader Development Strategy 2013* on line at the United States Army Combined Arms Center website. <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/CAL/repository/ALDS5June%202013Record.pdf>.

2. U.S. Army. TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1. *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World, 2020-2040* (October 2014) on line at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command website. <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/tp525-3-1.pdf>

and U.S. Army, "U.S. Army Leader Development Strategy 2013" on line at the United States Army Combined Arms Center website. <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/CAL/repository/ALDS5June%202013Record.pdf>.

Course	Description
Cross Culture Communications	"Advisors derive their effectiveness from their ability to understand and work with foreign counterparts from another culture. They must understand enough of their own culture and their counterpart's culture to accurately convey ideas, concepts, and purpose without causing counterproductive consequences. (FM 3-07.1 Security Force Assistance) This class explains social systems, operational environment, factors affecting communication, non-verbal communication, cultural taboos, and culture shock. The class helps students shape effective communication across varied cultures.
Human Behavior and Rapport	"Rapport comprises understanding, respect, and trust. No amount of resources or firepower can compensate for a lack of rapport between advisor and FSF counterpart. It must be honest, genuine, and heartfelt. Mutual understanding, respect, and trust are the building blocks to success." (FM 3-22 Army Support to Security Cooperation) This class combines the Human Needs Hierarchy by Dr. Abraham Maslow with culture, environmental effects, and personalities to equip leaders with solid techniques for building rapport.
Influencing and Negotiations	This class explains methods for influencing others using Dr. Robert Cialdini's Six Principles of influencing and provides six additional techniques for influencing. The class also provides students with a 10 step model as an example of a way to influence a counterpart. Part 2 of the class explains distributive and integrative approaches to negotiations, interest based negotiations, and counter-negotiations.
Use of Interpreters	The "Use of an Interpreter" class instructs the students on proper techniques to use an interpreter before during and after a planned and impromptu engagement with foreign security forces (FSF), media, civilians etc. This class explains how to choose an interpreter and rehearse planned engagements. It provides the student guidelines for employing interpreters during impromptu engagements.
Mutual Perceptions and Insider Threat	Originally based on requirements for Joint Advisors serving in Operation Enduring Freedom, this class distills the fundamental principles for defending against inside threats to US personnel and applies them to other operational environments. The class covers the latest techniques to prepare, deter, detect and respond to insider threat.
Team Survivability	This class focuses on preparing individuals, teams, and small units for deployment to a foreign country. The class covers the Code of Conduct, Guardian Angel / Team Force Protection, evasion plans of action (EPA), personnel recovery, personnel recovery frameworks, isolated personnel responsibilities, evasion, survival, and recovery. This class is designed and instructed by Level C Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE-C) certified personnel for the resident training program.

Table 1

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Course	Description
Basic Security Cooperation	This class gives leaders an overview of security cooperation (SC) and security assistance (SA). Course focuses instruction on the differences in SC and SA and ties in security force assistance (SFA). Course further explains basic differences in authorities between Title 10 and Title 22 missions.
Region / Country Orientation	This class discusses regions and countries of interest focusing on issues that impact U.S. forces deploying to the area.
Media Engagement	This class explains how effective public affairs strategy helps internal and external audiences understand the operation and engender confidence in the force. The class also explains how media reduces the fear, suspicion, apprehension and misunderstanding which degrade operational effectiveness and how media interaction can help achieve strategic goals and how poor media interaction can erode established relationships.
Foreign Security Forces (FSF) Training Management	This class outlines considerations and techniques for training a FSF. It covers understanding, advising, and mentoring the FSF; understanding traditional beliefs and their influence on the mission and training; understanding the physical environment and socio-economic challenges of training FSF; and identifies steps to successfully train and advise.
Embassy Operations	This class provides an introduction to the Department of State (DOS), U.S. policy, DOS goals, US embassy organization, and protocol. The class will prepare the deploying soldiers to engage and coordinate with interagency personnel working in the area of operations.
Nonstandard Weapons Familiarization	This class utilizes foreign and nonstandard US weapons that students will come into contact with in the area of operations. Course is limited to weapons on hand: Avtomat Kalashnikova (AK-47) Dragunov Sniper Rifle (SVD) Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) Ruchnoy Pulemyot Kalashnikova (RPK) Pulemyot Kalashnikova (PKM) Course will include characteristics, assembly and disassembly, loading/unloading, and functions check of the weapon (No Live Fire). This class is only available during the resident course.

Table 2

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Exercise	Description
Meet Host Nation Commander	Utilizing Cultural Role Players, this lane rehearses probable circumstances surrounding introductions and rapport building with FSF and FSF leaders.
Meet Senior Defense Officer/Defense Attaché (SDO/DATT)/Office of Security Cooperation Chief	This lane reinforces understanding the role of SDO/DATT and Office of Security Cooperation. The lane also reinforces understanding of resident military roles in the embassy and around the country.
Meet US Ambassador / Deputy Chief of Mission	This lane rehearses a meeting with a senior DOS official at the embassy. Scenario covers different issues that typically arise when DOD and DOS interact. The lane reinforces understanding of the DOS and other agencies that can be found in foreign countries.
Train Foreign Security Forces (FSF)	This lane reinforces understanding of issues involved with training Foreign Security Forces. Scenarios present problem sets typically encountered when training FSF across varied cultures.
Threat scenario	Lane training exercises (LTX) to enforce situational awareness and understanding of threats and reaction procedures contained in theater/country threat briefings and other force protection documents.
Theater Entry	This lane rehearses entering a permissive foreign country as a non-combatant. The LTX presents typical and specialized problem sets for soldiers to work through including loss of baggage, improper entry documentation, corrupt customs officials etc.

Table 3

Day 1		Day 2		Day 3		Day 4		Day 5 STX	
0900-1000	Region / Country Orientation	0900-1000	AAR	0900-1000	AAR	0900-1000	AAR	0600-0700	Inbrief
1000-1100	Human Behavior and Rapport	1000-1100	Use of Interpreter	1000-1100	Media Engagement	1000-1100	Mutual Perceptions Insider Threat	0700-0930	Unit determines events from LTX Menu to meet training objectives
1100-1200	Embassy Operations	1100-1200	Cross Culture Communications	1100-1200	FSF Training	1100-1200	Team Survivability	0930-1100	
1200-1300	Lunch	1200-1300	Lunch	1200-1300	Lunch	1200-1300	Lunch	1100-1300	
1300-1430	Security Coop Orientation	1300-1430	Influence and Negotiations	1300-1430	Nonstandard Weapons Familiarization	1300-1500	LTX4 A Group (~30) B Group (~30)	1300-1400	
1430-1700	LTX1 A Group (~30) B Group (~30)	1430-1700	LTX2 A Group (~30) B Group (~30)	1500-1700	LTX3 A Group (~30) B Group (~30)	1500-1700	AAR / Admin	1400-1600	
								1600-1700	Final AAR

Table 4

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