

Analysis of the Security Cooperation Certification Exercise (CERTEX)

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This is the sixth and final “mini-report” produced by Kristin Post, a contracted researcher in the Center for Advanced Operational Culture’s (CAOCL’s) Translational Research Group (TRG). It is a product of a multi-year research project¹ between the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group (MCSCG) and CAOCL. All of the mini-reports have been thematic snapshots of the data collected in 2013 and 2014 with Marine advisor teams who participated in the “Global Training and Advising Course” at MCSCG.

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Author’s note:

To protect the identity of all of the participants, I refer to individuals by their rank only instead of rank and last name. Additionally, I denote their rank in all capital letters, which is unlike typical Marine Corps writing convention; however, this helps the reader identify the participants and their contributions within this text.

Acronyms in this report: AO (Area of Operations); CAOCL (Center for Advanced Operational Culture); CERTEX (certification exercise); CLATT (Country Liaison Assessment and Training Team); CO (Commanding Officer); FSF (Foreign Security Forces); GLT (Georgia Liaison Team); GTT (Georgia Training Team); JAF (Jordanian Armed Forces); MCSCG (Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group); MEF (Marine Expeditionary Force); MOS (Military Occupational Specialty); MTT (Mobile Training Team); PTP (Pre-deployment Training); TIG (Training Instructor Group); SC (Security Cooperation); SNCO (Staff Non-commissioned Officer); SPMAGTF-Africa (Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Africa)

¹ This research project is conducted under MCCDC Human Subjects Research – Protocol # MCCDC.2013.003-IR-EP7-A/CAOCL STUDY. This joint research project between CAOCL and MCSCG provides an actionable assessment of how Marines who receive advisor skills training from MCSCG view its impact.

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I. Teams observed in the CERTEX

This report includes interviews and observations collected from three CERTEXs in 2013. So that readers may better follow the participants in the study, this table is included as a quick reference guide to some relevant information, including the name of the team, their anticipated area of operations, the dates I observed their participation in the MCSCG “Global Training and Advising Course,” and other demographic data.

Table 1: Teams observed in the CERTEX			
	UNIT CHARACTERISTICS		
SC Team	MARCENT 13.2	3/8	MARCENT 14.1
Active duty/ reserves	Marine Reserves	Active Duty	Marine Reserves
Area of Operations	Jordan	Various countries in Africa (SPMAGTF)	Jordan
MOS composition	Various (03-infantry, 06-communications, 04-logistics, etc.)	Engineers and logisticians	Various (03 infantry, 06-communications, 04-logistics, etc.)
Headquarters location	Joint Training Center – Jordan	Sigonella, Italy	Joint Training Center – Jordan
Training partner(s)	Jordanian Armed Forces	(potential) Uganda, Senegal, Nigeria, etc.	Jordanian Armed Forces
	OBSERVATION DATES in 2013		
“Global Training and Advising Course”	May 8-9; May 15-16	October 4-9	N/A
Blue Canopy Training	N/A	N/A	November 12-15
CERTEX preparation	N/A	N/A	December 9-13
CERTEX confirmation brief	June 24	N/A	December 10
CLATT MTT (Camp Lejeune)	N/A	November 15-17*	N/A
CERTEX	June 28 - July 2	November 19 - 21	December 16 – 20
	CERTEX		
MCSCG staff in charge of CERTEX	TIG	CLATT	TIG
Advisor team/rank organization	HQ: LTCOL ² , CAPT (2), & MSGT Team 1: SSGT+ Team 2: GYSGT+ Team 3: GYSGT+	Team 1: CAPT Team 2 & 3: LTs (2) Team 4: did not observe Team 5: did not observe	HQ: MAJ, CAPT, & GYSGT Team 1: LT+ Team 2: LT+ Team 3: LT+

*Did not observe this training

² This LTCOL was not the LTCOL who deployed with the team.

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INTRODUCTION

*In most cases, successful team training involves exposing the team to realistic scenarios that represent the types of problems that it will encounter in the operational environment. Such scenarios, when appropriately designed and paired with effective feedback and debriefing mechanisms, help teams to develop the repertoire of instances necessary to support adaptive team performance.*³

The Marine Corps has employed training exercises as described above to prepare its units for combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past dozen years. According to Marine Corps training doctrine, these types of training exercises, known as Mission Rehearsal Exercises (MRXs) are used to “evaluate training at both the individual and unit levels.”⁴ In recent years,⁵ the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group (MCSCG) has adapted the MRX model to evaluate teams deploying on security cooperation (SC) missions. As part of its advisor training package, MCSCG provided three advisor teams a block IV certification exercise, or CERTEX in 2013.⁶ A document known as the Marine Corps Task List (METL)⁷ contains potential security cooperation tasks, and either the Combatant Command or the MEF determine which Mission Essential Tasks (METs) are required to certify advisor teams. MCSCG then conducts the CERTEX to evaluate and ultimately certify the team as mission capable. In order to evaluate the teams, MCSCG staff observe the advisor team activities, create training scenarios (known as “injects”), and provide feedback during the exercise and in a post-exercise “hot wash.” Ultimately, MCSCG staff write a letter of recommendation to the commanding unit stating whether or not an advisor team is ready to execute the tasks required of their mission.⁸

As part of a multi-year collaborative research project, I observed the three CERTEXs in 2013. The intent of this mini-report is to provide feedback to MCSCG on the CERTEX and offer some insights on how it might be improved in the future. One question this report answers is whether advisor Marines value the CERTEX. Based on their feedback, they do, especially as it pertains to strengthening team dynamics and improving team management and performance. The second portion of this paper is based on my professional observations of two organizational approaches toward the CERTEX and the impact they had on some learning outcomes. Two different parts of MCSCG staff organized the CERTEXs in different ways and had different feedback styles. This paper details these two styles and then provides four

³ Popp, R., Williams, M., Beling, P., Cannon-Bowers, J., et al. (2012). *Improving the Decision Making Abilities of Small Unit Leaders*. National Academies Press. Washington, D.C.

⁴ Marine Corps Order 1553.3B, Unit Training Management (UTM) Program, November 23, 2011, retrieved from http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/MCO%201553_3B.pdf

⁵ MCSCG became fully operational in its current form in 2012, according to Rosenau, W., McAdam, M., Katt, M., et al (2013). *United States Marine Corps Advisors: Past, Present and Future*. CNA Strategic Studies. Alexandria, VA.

⁶ I observed a total of seven different advisor teams receive the MCSCG classroom training, but only three participated in a CERTEX. A team's participation in a CERTEX is determined by the MEF or Combatant Command.

⁷ The METL includes Mission Essential Tasks (METs) such as Marine Corps Task (MCT) 1.17.2 “Advise Partner Nation Forces” and MCT 1.17.3 “Train Partner Nation Forces.” These two METs were evaluated among all three teams.

⁸ Again, few advisor teams participate in a CERTEX, so this letter of recommendation is not a universal requirement prior to deployment.

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examples from the CERTEXs to illustrate how they differ. I conclude with some recommendations for the future conduct of CERTEXs.

I. Advisor teams in the CERTEX

The CERTEX provides a new geographical and physical environment, challenging scenarios, professional observation, and performance assessment feedback to advisor teams. Equally, if not more important to the Marines, is that the CERTEX allows the teams and individuals to assess themselves in an environment where they are “going through the motions”⁹ of their advisor mission, often for the first time. It is not a surprise that Marines are learning from one another and assessing their team performance, given the Marine Corps’ approach to leadership. The CERTEX allows more time than the classroom for team observation and building cohesion, and many Marines appear to view this as a very positive benefit of the exercise. Among interviewees, when asked about the benefits of the CERTEX, at least one-third of the Marines (from SGT to CAPT) appreciated being able to assess themselves and others. This thematic consistency applied to all three teams I observed in the CERTEX, regardless of team composition, training schedule, or mission. Their responses are not statistically significant, but they represent the most significant thematic consistency across the teams, and are worthy of some comment. Security cooperation Marines are using the MCSCG CERTEX to watch, adjust to, assist, and learn from one another, with the expectation that this will provide a foundation for how they will work together throughout the deployment. This is something MCSCG staff probably know implicitly, but may not consider when justifying or planning future CERTEXs. So this portion of the paper will show the breadth of Marines who appreciate the CERTEX as an activity that promotes insights on the team level.

a. MARCENT 13.2 and 14.1

The first CERTEX I observed was with MARCENT 13.2, the second was a SPMAGTF-Africa team from 3/8, and the last one was MARCENT 14.1, which replaced MARCENT 13.2 in Jordan in February 2014. Both of the MARCENT teams were drawn from Marine Reserve units around the country. Their three month MCSCG training is the longest available for any advisor team and included the two-week “Global Training and Advising Course,” several weeks of Modern Standard Arabic, a one-week tactical driving course, and 1.5 weeks of instruction in SERE, apprehension avoidance, and surveillance awareness. Each MARCENT team had 20 or more Marines with military occupational specialties (MOSs) in engineering, logistics, communications, and infantry (and two Corpsmen). These Marine Reservists often said they were eager to volunteer for security cooperation missions because they had limited deployment options otherwise. Thus, almost all Marines on both teams had at least one prior deployment, and a few had already served on an advisor team in Jordan.¹⁰ Each team had several collective years of experience in the Marine Corps, with the lowest rank on either team a SGT. The rank and background of the senior leadership varied.¹¹ These two teams received the most training of any at MCSCG, and they also tended to have higher-ranking enlisted Marines, several of whom had prior SC experience.

⁹ GYSGT, MARCENT 13.2, interviewed July 1, 2013.

¹⁰ MARCENT 13.2 had two SNCOs and MARCENT 14.1 had two SNCOs and one LT who had a prior deployment to Jordan. Other Marines were on advisor teams in Georgia.

¹¹ At the MARCENT 13.2 CERTEX, the CO was a LTCOL. He had two CAPTs and one MSGT on his senior leadership team (one LT selected for CAPT was away on emergency leave). The MARCENT 14.1

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For these teams, their prior experience did not mean that they performed flawlessly. In fact, some appreciated that the teams could make mistakes without impacting the mission. MARCENT 13.2 in particular struggled in its first few days of training, and they knew it. According to one SNCO, this was because some people did not make use of rehearsal time prior to the exercise.¹² Whether those Marines did not rehearse because they had prior experience or were told by others who had prior experience that the CERTEX would be easy is unknown. Rehearsal would have helped Marines practice the ideal, but the CERTEX introduces new challenges, such as interruptions in the training schedule that result in shortened classes. In this SCNO's mind, Marines need to make mistakes in order to process what their job really entails, which is one reason the CERTEX is an important augment to classroom teaching. Another SNCO on the team talked about how the team was rotating through some different training options (round robin versus sequential) and learning which format worked best. In the end, though the team struggled, the CERTEX helped them identify what to fix before deployment.¹³

The CERTEX allowed Marines to learn about each other's proficiencies and deficiencies. A LT talked about how advisor Marines are familiar with a skill like patrolling, but still need to work on it. He said, "we need to actually kit up and go out and see who doesn't know. These guys looked through PowerPoints on patrolling, we taught them how to teach a patrol class, but that didn't refresh their skills."¹⁴ A MARCENT 13.2 SGT talked about the benefits of watching how other Marines taught and learning what he liked and did not like about their instructional styles. He explained, "I think how I would do it differently. The things they do that I like, I learn on the spot."¹⁵ A MARCENT 13.2 CAPT who was interviewed in 2014 after his deployment said that he used the CERTEX to judge the capabilities and limitations of his Marines, including seeing who is adaptable. He said the length of time was also good, "being out there three days, you learn more about your team."¹⁶ As one of the senior leaders, this CAPT used the CERTEX to help him manage his team according to their skill sets. The chance to observe and passively learn from other people is potentially an undervalued strength of the CERTEX, and it may be important for MCSCG staff to encourage all advisor Marines, not just the senior leaders, to set aside time for deliberate observation of everyone else on the team.

b. SPMAGTF-Africa (3/8)

Overall, 3/8 Marines at the CERTEX had less security cooperation-specific experience than the Marine Reservists, and many of them had not received MCSCG training at Ft. Story. They were engineering and logistics active duty Marines and included more junior-ranking Marines than the MARCENT teams. However, like the MARCENT Marines, the 3/8 officers and SNCOs enjoyed the benefits of rehearsing mission-relevant tasks with the role players and of improving over time, especially among the junior Marines.

For the 3/8 Marine participants, the CERTEX is a valuable rehearsal space, especially when combined with foreign language speaking role players. A SGT and LT in 3/8 both stressed importance of the role

CO was a MAJ. He had one CAPT and one GYSGT on his leadership team. I am unaware of why there were these differences in rank and leadership composition; it may be a matter of availability.

¹² SSGT, MARCENT 13.2, interviewed June 28, 2013.

¹³ GYSGT and SSGT, MARCENT 13.2, interviewed separately on July 1, 2013.

¹⁴ LT, MARCENT 14.1, interviewed December 18, 2013.

¹⁵ SGT, MARCENT 13.2, interviewed July 1, 2013.

¹⁶ CAPT, MARCENT 13.2, interviewed February 19, 2014.

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players and appreciated that the “language barrier was there” so Marines could practice working with an interpreter. The LT also mentioned how Marines were learning other intangibles with the role players, “the kind of things [young Marines] can’t know is body space – people touching you, all the jostling in the airport.”¹⁷ Another LT talked about how young Marines gain experience in teaching and training, which will speed up their effectiveness when deployed, he said, “without the CERTEX they would do fine, but it would take a while. With it, they only need small adjustments.”¹⁸

The CERTEX allows Marines to identify and improve on their individual deficiencies over time. A SSGT discussed how the team dynamic is such that all the Marines are refining as they go, based on the performance of the person who went before them. He said, “one of them learns from the other. The first guy out is the worst, he gets learned from. They all get better.”¹⁹ Some 3/8 officers used their enlisted to assist them. A LT said he watched his enlisted Marines as instructors, many of whom seemed relaxed despite being in a foreign environment, “I learn a lot from my Marines. It’s funny [as an officer], you go to all these schools, and [your style] gets more formalized. You forget it’s about the basics.”²⁰ A CAPT asked his enlisted Marines to help him “be more personable”²¹ in his cross-cultural interactions. Given military rank hierarchy, this request for assistance could be surprising coming from an officer, but it appears that advisor Marines on all three teams want to continue to improve by learning from one another. (See Appendix C, “Relationships: One Marine’s Perspective” for a description of how 3/8 Marines improved in building cross-cultural relationships.)

II. Organizational approaches to conducting CERTEXs

In this next portion of the paper, I will discuss two MCSCG staffs and their impact on CERTEX organization. The first is the MCSCG academic/instructional staff (Training Instructor Group, or TIG), and the second is the regional advising staff (the Country Liaison and Assessment Training Team, or CLATT). The TIG organized and executed CERTEXs for the two MARCENT teams deploying to Jordan (one in June, one in December). In November, the AFRICOM CLATT organized and executed the SC field training for the SPMAGTF-AFRICA team from 3/8. The two MCSCG staffs shared many advising and mentoring approaches, including the use of observation, scenarios, and feedback. That said, the structural organization was different, and their feedback timing and content were different. At the time of data collection for this research project, these two groups had not observed the CERTEXs of the other. If that remains to be the case, this paper could provide insights for MCSCG staff who have never observed a CERTEX different from their own.²²

Before I describe the MCSCG staffs and their mentoring approaches, I will discuss the three instructional tools at their disposal: 1) observation, 2) injects, and 3) feedback. Throughout the CERTEX, some MCSCG staff were “paired” with groups of Marines and observed them throughout the day. One

¹⁷ LT, 3/8, interviewed November 20, 2013.

¹⁸ LT, 3/8, interviewed November 20, 2013.

¹⁹ SSGT, 3/8 interviewed November 21, 2013.

²⁰ LT, 3/8, interviewed November 21, 2013.

²¹ CAPT, 3/8, observed November 19, 2013.

²² It is my understanding that the TIG and all of the CLATTs have increased their collaboration over the past year. At the time of the research, I was aware that the TIG had worked with the SOUTHCOM CLATT, and since that time, there may be greater TIG/AFRICOM CLATT or TIG/MARCENT CLATT collaboration.

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important role of the observer was to see how Marines reacted to planned scenarios, or injects.²³ These are situations that are likely to occur on a SC mission. A subtle inject is when role players are disruptive while a Marine is teaching a lesson. A more complex inject could be when a partner nation commanding officer suddenly yells at, and possibly strikes, a subordinate in front everyone involved in the training. Many injects appeared to be designed to create mission-relevant “friction” for the Marines, which is a critical concept in warfighting doctrine.²⁴ Because of this, injects may not always be realistic, so MCSCG feedback is essential because it can create a bridge between the mission, inject and what Marines need to know. It was up to MCSCG staff to choose when to stop the action in order to offer advice, review an action, generate discussion, offer culture-specific details, point out a weakness, or signal a future challenge, so feedback timing and frequency varied. Also, the audience varied; sometimes MCSCG staff worked with an individual, but most often they debriefed Marines as a group. Observation, injects and feedback are all important to the CERTEX learning experience. In what follows, I will contrast the structural aspects of different CERTEXs by the TIG and CLATT, feedback timing, and overall tone and guidance.

a. TIG Observers

The primary structural difference in the TIG CERTEX is that they divided and mentored the advisor team according to rank. Three or four senior leaders on the MARCENT teams were observed by up to three TIG senior leaders. Meanwhile, the rest of the MARCENT teams were divided into three groups, each mentored by two TIG SNCO observers. During most of the training day, the MARCENT senior leaders were at a mock headquarters, and the rest of the team was a 20-minute car ride away at a field training site. At least once or twice a day, the senior officers drove from their headquarters out to the training site for “inspection” visits. The MARCENT teams were probably separated in this way to simulate their daily activities downrange. However, this physical separation impacted the ability of the advisor Marines to process some things together as a team, to observe progress across the team, and to learn from the team. Potentially the greatest impact of team-level feedback would be on the MARCENT senior leadership, who might have gained from hearing what critiques and positive feedback the TIG had for their Marines with regard to their instructional skills and execution. Likewise, the senior leaders sometimes heard information in their debriefs that might have benefitted the rest of the team (as I will describe below in the airport scenario).

As for feedback frequency and timing, the TIG’s SCNO observers tended to let the exercise run uninterrupted, even after major events, and provided feedback at the end of the day.²⁵ This had some disadvantages, the main one being that morning activities were sometimes overlooked (as with the welcome ceremony as described below). Furthermore, cognitively, Marines may have “checked out” at the end of the day. Some MCSCG observations and feedback at the end of the day is appropriate. All of it or the bulk if it at one time as the day is ending is potentially less effective. Meanwhile, the MARCENT leadership was on a different debrief schedule. The TIG senior leaders did not shadow the MARCENT leaders all day since they had other duties in running the CERTEX. This meant that they occasionally

²³ MCSCG staff also referred to these scenarios as Master Scenario Events List, or MSELs.

²⁴ MCDP 1, Warfighting, Chapter 1, “The Nature of War.” Published 1997.

²⁵ I observed occasional one-on-one feedback, once with MARCENT 13.2 and twice with MARCENT 14.1. Because I was rotating through the groups, I may have missed other instances.

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missed observing an interaction. Otherwise, they tended to mentor the advisors after any major event/interaction rather than at the end of the day.²⁶

In both cases, the timing and frequency of the TIG mentoring debriefs could be described as “hands-off.” One benefit of a hands-off approach could be that it gave advisor Marines the room to fail without worrying they would be “caught.” It also could allow the advisor team to become fully immersed in the action, rather than be interrupted every few hours to discuss what they are doing. There is a balance between these two extremes, and the AFRICOM CLATT’s mentoring approach below illustrates some of the benefits of on-the-spot mentoring and feedback. As for the feedback content, the TIG focused on advisor roles, professional skills and concepts, and hard Marine skills. For instance, in the initial interaction between the MARCENT 14.1 MAJ and his FSF counterpart, he briefed a broad training schedule. Afterward, the TIG leadership and SME made a total of seven training and time-specific comments, such as, “I expected you to hand him something that laid out the schedule” and “what I was looking for was you talking about the battle rhythm.”²⁷ These comments are more particular than a comment from the AFRICOM CLATT after 3/8 briefed their schedule, which was, “the schedule is not important, only if they understand the plan.”²⁸ Finally, there was very little culture specific advice from the TIG.²⁹ However, throughout the exercise, observers from the CENTCOM CLATT³⁰ and a cultural subject matter expert (SME) often shadowed the MARCENT senior leaders. I did not observe the SME or the CENTCOM CLATT stop the action to offer feedback, and they rarely offered unsolicited advice. Most of their feedback was as requested by the advisor team lead or as invited by the TIG. The TIG’s approach to the CERTEX was physically separate the team, offer infrequent feedback, and focus on specifics. These are all differences from the AFRICOM CLATT.

b. AFRICOM CLATT Observers

The Marines on 3/8 were physically separated, but in smaller teams and with mixed ranks. They were divided into 5 groups, and the officers and enlisted personnel in the group stayed together on the same training site throughout the day with the CLATT observer(s) who shadowed them. Each team had one CLATT officer and all but one had a second senior enlisted observer.³¹ The notional location of one group I observed was Uganda, the other, Senegal. It is likely that this grouping was meant to simulate how small teams may get sent from HQ in Italy to one of many African countries. Furthermore, a

²⁶ See Appendix A: Research Methodology for an explanation for potential missed debrief sessions.

²⁷ MAJ and LTCOL, TIG, observed December 16, 2013.

²⁸ CAPT, AFRICOM CLATT, observed November 19, 2013.

²⁹ Most of the TIG had not been to Jordan, with the exception of the TIG CO who accompanied MARCENT 13.2 to Jordan at the start of their deployment and thus spoke from his personal experiences when observing MARCENT 14.1. Many of the other TIG observers had SC experience in the country of Georgia.

³⁰ In June-July, a CENTCOM CLATT MAJ played the role of the Security Cooperation Officer (SCO), gave an in-brief, and debriefed MARCENT 13.2’s senior leader on the final day of the CERTEX. In December, an officer and SNCO from the CENTCOM CLATT observed the MARCENT 14.1, but did not directly engage them. They did provide feedback to the TIG during the internal debriefs.

³¹ Groups 2 and 3 were combined, and they were paired with one CLATT MAJ. I observed this latter group more than the others because it included two Marines I had already observed and interviewed in Ft. Story.

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SPMAGTF has many missions,³² among them is security cooperation. While the battalion and MEF were in charge of the overall training, the MCSCG staff were in charge of evaluating Marines solely on SC mission essential tasks. As with the TIG, the physical grouping of the 3/8 Marines during the CLATT's CERTEX appeared to be influenced by the way they might be grouped while deployed.

The CLATT had a relatively small role to play in the overall pre-deployment training exercise, and as a result, they had fewer logistics to coordinate, giving them all day to shadow their groups. Rather than wait until the end of the day, the CLATT observers debriefed the entire team or part of the team once every few hours. This may seem invasive, but the Marines did not react negatively, and the on-the-spot mentoring sometimes led to thoughtful questions that may have been lost over time. For instance, while a young Marine was struggling to teach something to the foreign security force (FSF); his GYSGT offered him some advice in front of the class. During the debrief session afterward, the Marine asked the CLATT observer if his credibility as an instructor would have decreased if that had happened "in real life." This question indicates advisor Marines were already exposed to concepts like "face-saving"³³ and were applying them to situations as they arose. This kind of discussion is more likely when the debrief occurs just after the engagement. Had the Marine had to wait until the end of the training day, he may have forgotten that moment.

Unlike the TIG observers, who had a variety of MOS's, most of the CLATT are Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) or Regional Area Officers (RAOs), with some Foreign Area Staff NCOs (FASs). The content of their feedback was often about building relationships, and many times included culture-specific information. This is because FAOs, RAOs and FASs have in-depth training on a region or country. When it came to an advisor skill like instructional delivery, the CLATT tended to broadly critique the group. Even when critiquing an individual, the AFRICOM CLATT rarely focused on specific details. For instance, in one group debrief, a CLATT officer asked a LCPL how he thought he did after his period of instruction. The LCPL admitted that he lost control of the class, and offered his solution, "I should have taught prone, then had a prac app, then done sitting, and a prac app."³⁴ The CLATT MAJ replied, "you felt it, knew it, and you know what the fix is going to be."³⁵ By inviting this Marine's self-assessment, the harshest judgment came from the Marine himself, allowing the MAJ to offer encouragement. Broad statements such as this kept the tone from becoming too negatively critical and modeled a positive mentoring approach for advisor Marines to employ downrange.

The TIG did not observe the AFRICOM CLATT CERTEX and so may not have first-hand knowledge of how on-the-spot mentoring can work when put into practice. When asked why they did not mentor on the spot, a TIG officer said he anticipated that Marines would feel nitpicked. Interestingly, enlisted MARCENT 13.2 and 14.1 MARCENT Marines used this term about TIG feedback. One SSGT said the TIG were "digging deep"³⁶ to find things to comment on. A GYSGT felt one inject he experienced was designed to "nitpick and screw with us, but not to make anything happen."³⁷ The Marines on 3/8, who were mentored

³² Other Marines in the battalion were selected to train for other SPMAGTF missions like crisis response. This also meant that 8th Marines and II MEF were in charge of the entire pre-deployment exercise, to include training logistics that the TIG managed for the MARCENT teams.

³³ This concept is explained in the MCSCG advisor course.

³⁴ LCPL, 3/8, observed November 20, 2013.

³⁵ MAJ, AFRICOM CLATT, observed November 20, 2013.

³⁶ SSGT, MARCENT 14.1, interviewed December 19, 2013.

³⁷ GYSGT, MARCENT 13.2, interviewed July 2, 2013.

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on the spot, did not use this term to describe the AFRICOM CLATT feedback. Counter-intuitively, on-the-spot mentoring is not necessarily invasive, nor does it seem to cause offense, even when officers are critiqued in front of and by their SNCOs. This may not be true in all cases, or with other rank configurations, but a more hands-on approach can be used to a positive effect in certain situations.

III. Four scenarios and lessons

Using a few cases from different exercises, I will describe how scenarios and feedback are used effectively or ineffectively.

a. In the airport: the importance of a team-level debrief

First, I will discuss the airport scenario, which is one of the few planned injects that occurred in all three CERTEXs. It took place in a cavernous cement 1950s-era airplane hangar just beside the entrance to Ft. Pickett and was meant to simulate what it would be like when Marines arrive in country. To set the scene, the role players set up tables in a line that snaked through the hangar and donned official-looking uniforms.³⁸ The advisor Marines arrived by van from Ft. Story, unloaded their luggage, and queued up at the first table along with other role players acting as civilians. While in line, the role players yelled and shoved, and at some point an official grabbed a civilian and started to hit him. This is not necessarily behavior all Marines will encounter when they land in country, but most Marines understood that this was a way to prepare them for a foreign environment. The toughest scenario was in 3/8's CERTEX, where a Marine was "found" with drugs (that were planted in his luggage), which resulted in his sitting on the floor while an "official" speaking French yelled angrily in his face.³⁹ The AFRICOM CLATT used these injects and Marine choices as talking points in team debriefs after the scenario, and some of their feedback will be discussed below. The TIG did not conduct any on-site debriefs with the MARCENT teams and missed an opportunity to allow Marines to discuss their experiences. The airport inject is the first one advisor teams encounter and is one of only two in the MARCENT CERTEXs that includes the entire team. The MCSCG observer(s) can set the tone for the rest of their CERTEX at this point by conducting an on-the-spot debrief session with the team, as was the case for 3/8.

After each of the four groups in 3/8⁴⁰ went through the scenario, their CLATT observer(s) were waiting at the back of the hangar along with another CLATT officer who briefed them in his role as embassy personnel. After the embassy brief, the CLATT observer(s) started the debrief with open-ended questions. One junior Marine said he was thrown off when someone in line asked him if he was related to another Marine in the line. This prompted warnings from the CLATT observers about scams and pickpockets, information that they knew from having traveled to the region multiple times. This also allowed the group to think about the kinds of behaviors they were not used to, where foreign strangers are talking to them (sometimes in English), pushing them, and standing in close contact. One CLATT officer summed up the shift in the physical environment in a way that hints at culture stress, which is often manifested in a feeling of being overwhelmed. He asked, "Who got overwhelmed? There is bumping, it smells. That's how it will be. We are exposing you to it, so you are desensitized."⁴¹ Even predictable

³⁸ For the June CERTEX, they even played audio of planes taking off and landing.

³⁹ There were more challenges for 3/8, probably to prepare Marines for worst case scenarios that can occur in civilian airports in less stable countries.

⁴⁰ As stated earlier, groups 2 and 3 were combined into one.

⁴¹ CAPT, AFRICOM CLATT, observed November 19, 2013.

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details, such as the standard official query “what is your reason for travel?” prompted interesting conversations. Some Marines did not answer that they were training the military, and the CLATT said this was the wrong response. “You’re in the military, you’re here to train the military, there is nothing secret about that.”⁴² Given this, it is possible that the airport scenario, even if it included nothing other than standard airport behaviors, could challenge advisor Marines in profound and important ways. Having MCSCG observers present, engaged, and asking questions afterward deepens the learning potential.

As mentioned, I did not observe any airport debrief between the TIG and MARCENT 13.2. The MARCENT 14.1 senior leaders (MAJ, GYSGT, CAPT) were debriefed about the airport inject later in the day after they had separated from the rest of the team and after their first engagement with the JAF. Interestingly, the MARCENT 14.1 MAJ used the debrief to ask questions about whether he should be truthful about his purpose for being in Jordan and his length of stay (just as with the 3/8 Marines above, he was tempted to avoid telling the truth). The cultural SME told him honesty is the best policy for security personnel, but not necessarily with other people standing in line. This was good information for the CO, and ideally he relayed it to the rest of his team who were not present for this exchange.

Meanwhile, his GYSGT⁴³ may have missed an important lesson in cross-cultural communication. While progressing through the line with his luggage, he had to answer many questions about a luggage tag with “GUNS” written on it. After being asked repeatedly what guns he had, he finally explained that the label signified his military rank and that there were no guns inside the bag. This was an interesting cross-cultural lesson on several levels. First, it showed that the airport security could read and speak some English, even though Arabic was the primary language. Second, the GYSGT was unwisely making himself vulnerable from an operational security standpoint (people may more easily identify him as military). Finally, his luggage was giving alarming misinformation. Few people, if any, would have felt comfortable with luggage that said “GUNS” on the outside, and even fewer would know that “GUNS” is short for “Gunnery Sergeant.” This could have been a useful talking point in an immediate group debrief session in which the team could have discussed how to answer security questions properly, challenges they faced, and feelings of frustration or disorientation. For this and other reasons, when time allows, the TIG should consider debriefing each team directly after the airport scenario.

b. Welcome ceremony: what is its purpose?

The welcome ceremony could satisfy a few different learning objectives and present Marines with realistic cultural challenges if executed according to the TIG’s stated intent.⁴⁴ Its current educational value can be increased with a few minor changes. Before the exercise, the TIG instructed both MARCENT teams to conduct a welcome ceremony with their JAF counterparts. During the confirmation brief a TIG MSGT signaled to the MARCENT 14.1 team that the ceremony was a way to show cultural respect saying, “you are trying to build rapport in this military. If you’ve got a little pomp and circumstance, it’s a little more ‘hey, game on,’ - not for the Marines, but to show you’re taking their culture into consideration.”⁴⁵ Both

⁴² MAJ, AFRICOM CLATT, observed November 19, 2013.

⁴³ The MARCENT 14.1 GYSGT was present for the debrief from the TIG, but the MAJ was the only Marine who received any feedback.

⁴⁴ The CLATT CERTEX for SPMAGTF-Africa did not include a welcome ceremony. I am not sure why because it is consistent with the CLATT’s objectives of building relationships. If executed properly, it could be worth adding to future CLATT CERTEXs.

⁴⁵ MMSGT, TIG, observed December 10, 2013.

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MARCENT teams indicated that they knew the welcome ceremony was important. The MARCENT 13.2 CO told his team, “who knows how long the opening ceremony will be? We will have to be flexible,”⁴⁶ indicating that he thought it could force his Marines to adjust their training schedule. The MARCENT 14.1 Marines were observed rehearsing their ceremonial formation the day prior to the ceremony. Though both teams felt it important enough to plan and rehearse for, the ceremony itself averaged about five minutes on both occasions. Immediately afterward, the Marines and role players got into their vans and left for the training site. Neither team was debriefed by the TIG afterward. The ceremony could and does allow Marines to practice non-verbal communication, language use, and use of the interpreter. It could also help Marines understand how cultural perceptions of time vary, along with how to use operational culture in the planning process, if the TIG prepares or debriefs the teams accordingly.

Even in the five minute ceremony, Marines demonstrated several cross-cultural communication skills, though not always proficiently. On both occasions, a Marine failed to take off his sunglasses, a non-verbal oversight that causes insult in many cultures. The advisor team leaders addressed the Jordanians in Arabic, though not very much. Afterward, they received no feedback on the appropriate ceremonial greetings which could be useful to memorize and use during deployment. Finally, both team leaders let their interpreters decide where to stand and what to interpret, seemingly forgetting some of the skills discussed in the “use of interpreter” lesson. All of these issues could be or were covered in the advisor course. The ceremony is an excellent opportunity for MCSCG observers to link their curriculum to their activities in the CERTEX and demonstrate why they are relevant to the deployment. These issues could be addressed if the TIG and cultural SME debriefed the team immediately after the ceremony.

The lesson from the welcome ceremony that Marines anticipated learning was how to adjust their training schedule to accommodate unexpected events. This is mission relevant. In fact, a SGT and CAPT from MARCENT 13.2 both said during post-deployment interviews that they wished the CERTEX had included a more dramatic training timing or logistics challenges (e.g. there are too many JAF for the number of vehicles to get them to the training area) because such things did happen overseas.⁴⁷ The ceremonies I observed ended when the Marines were done with their portion. To extend the ceremony to a point where it challenges Marines, the role players are crucial. They need TIG guidance on how to extend it and for how long. A half-hour ceremony could be an interesting time length; while a relatively small portion of the entire training day, it would likely be tedious for Marines and perhaps make them feel more pressure to adjust their training schedule. In regard to planning, the TIG already reminds the senior leaders about the ceremony during their confirmation brief. If advisor teams were truly planning for a ceremony, it should appear on their training schedule. This was not the case for MARCENT 14.1.⁴⁸ Not only that, the team could indicate a flexible approach by scheduling “white space” in the training schedule to allow some give if the ceremony were longer than anticipated. No matter how long the ceremony ends up being, one of the desired end states is that Marines have planned for different cultural conceptions of how time is spent, particularly as it pertains to building rapport, and at a minimum the TIG can critique the team’s written schedule if such flexibility is not built in.

The TIG told the Marines to use “pomp and circumstance” to build rapport. Neither team went beyond executing standard Marine Corps protocol. To address this, the TIG could provide advisor teams with

⁴⁶ LTCOL, MARCENT 13.2, observed June 28, 2013.

⁴⁷ SGT and CAPT, MARCENT 13.2, February 19, 2014; interviewed individually

⁴⁸ MARCENT 14.1 shared their written schedule with me; I did not receive a similar schedule from MARCENT 13.2 because I was not aware they prepared one and did not ask.

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culture-specific information about Jordanian ceremonial protocol to see if advisor Marines will integrate that into or modify their ceremony.⁴⁹ Alternatively, the TIG could discuss different ways to add “pomp and circumstance” in the debrief after the ceremony. The desired end state here is that Marines know how to build rapport through formal greetings and other rituals to their counterparts. Unfortunately, with no guidance from the TIG, advisor Marines may be missing why the welcome ceremony is important for relationship building. For instance, one MARCENT 14.1 Marine was talking to another about the “bulls*** ceremony”⁵⁰ earlier in the day. While this was said in an aside, it is indicative of an attitude that such ceremonies are not relevant to their mission. Marines are less likely to be dismissive of the welcome ceremony if there are some clear learning outcomes, whether they are reminded of their cultural faux pas in an on-the-spot debrief, given culture-specific information about ceremonies in Jordan, or forced to adjust their training schedule to compensate for lost time.

c. Situational injects: powerful learning experiences

The majority of the activities and planned injects for all the CERTExs appeared to be neutrally or positively received by the advisor Marines. There are even a few examples of “situational injects” where Marines could clearly state what they learned and how. A situational inject is not like the planned injects; they are “on the spot” type scenarios, introduced by the MCSCG observer, often in response to a specific weakness. In one case, a TIG observer noticed that a MARCENT 14.1 LT was not involving his Jordanian counterpart on the first day of the exercise. The next day, the TIG observer asked the Jordanian to yell at the LT and refuse to continue training. The LT understood his anger, convinced him to continue with the training, and involved him to a much greater extent. Later, the LT said on his prior deployment in Georgia, his counterparts were not involved, but he realized that did not make any sense.⁵¹ The TIG observer’s use of the role player to correct the LT’s behavior not only encouraged him to have a closer working relationship with his counterpart, but it also may have helped the Marine avoid misapplying knowledge from a prior deployment.

In another example, an improbable situational inject became a lively dialogue among a LT and his SNCOs. In this case, the MCSCG observer noticed that the LT was too hesitant when engaging his Ugandan CO. During their end-of-day hotwash, the CLATT MAJ told the other MCSCG observers that his LT was not quite as strong as he could be, but it was okay because the LT “has a strong GYSGT who was in Afghanistan” and because the LT was “a smart guy.”⁵² The next day, the CLATT observer told the Ugandan CO to ask the LT for \$10 million, which he did. After observing the LT’s reaction to the request and his entry into prolonged negotiations, the CLATT observer halted the action and gathered the LT together with his SNCOs. The CLATT MAJ asked the LT why he went “so many rounds on a non-starter.”⁵³ The LT responded, “I felt like saying ‘no’ was not an option. I was worried about losing rapport.”⁵⁴ This was a credible reply, and the 3/8 GYSGT asked the MAJ about the impact of rapport loss. The MAJ responded that the advisor team needed to balance being accommodating with being realistic. “The relationship is definitely the most important, but he is feeling you out. You have to show

⁴⁹ As a start, MARCENT teams that have deployed to Jordan, the CENTCOM CLATT, and other MCSCG staff are all potential sources of information about Jordanian ceremonial protocol.

⁵⁰ GYSGT, MARCENT 14.1, observed December 17, 2013.

⁵¹ LT, MARCENT 14.1, interviewed December 18, 2013.

⁵² MAJ, AFRICOM CLATT, observed November 19, 2013.

⁵³ MAJ, AFRICOM CLATT, observed November 20, 2013.

⁵⁴ LT, 3/8, observed November 20, 2013.

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you have a nutsack too.”⁵⁵ The debrief session ended there, and they moved on to observing the junior Marines in their training.

The next day, the SNCOs and the LT were still working out the answer to the original question, “why go so many rounds on a non-starter?” One SSGT had a few theories about why the LT did not reject the request. “I go back to lack of experience. Also, in the Marine Corps, you should not say ‘no.’ Officers are told they should try to find a solution.”⁵⁶ The SSGT is adding another layer to the story; not only was the LT worried about rapport loss, he may have been communicating in a way that worked in his own culture. However, it was ineffective cross-culturally. Meanwhile, the LT said he and the GYSGT discussed the inject after the CERTEX was over. “I was telling him that enlisted Marines are often better than us. The officers get too formal, whereas the enlisted ‘speak people’ better.”⁵⁷ This adds another layer; maybe Marines communicate differently according to their rank. These are both important cross-cultural communication lessons that enlisted leaders and officers were considering as a result of one inject.

This is the only inject that I observed where it was clear that the advisor Marines were discussing the CERTEX and assessing their learning experience together as a team. This internal team dialogue was potentially due to the fact that the CLATT observer made a point of including the SNCOs during the post-inject debrief for the LT.⁵⁸ Throughout the 3/8 CERTEX, the CLATT officer(s) intentionally used the debrief sessions to encourage the enlisted leaders to share their leadership experience or to praise enlisted Marines who had performed a skill well. These small groups of Marines, with field officers and below, seemed to have a more “flat” team dynamic than a Marine Corps battalion tends to have. This flatter structure appears to have facilitated learning for 3/8 Marines. Group debriefs across ranks may work for other teams as well.

d. Range operations: a challenge in alignment

MARCENT Marines gave range safety and/or weapons safety briefs daily in their CERTEXs,⁵⁹ and they were evaluated on their presentation skills by the TIG. If advisors are participating in live-fire exercises in country, range and weapons safety briefs are implied tasks. Therefore, it is reasonable the TIG would evaluate advisor Marines on their ability to execute such briefs. Ideally, the criteria for evaluation would come from the classroom lesson. There is a lesson on range control in the MCSCG advisor course titled “Range and Training Area Operations” and it does not cover the safety brief, but does include information on tactical and strategic aspects of range control. By strategic, I mean the advisor-level skills such as negotiating with foreign forces; by tactical, I mean the skills necessary to give a weapons brief. This is a simplified view of these skills and their practical application, but useful for this discussion. Put another way, a range safety or weapons safety brief requires procedural knowledge (knowing *how*); whereas range control requires declarative knowledge (knowing *what*) and may require leadership, negotiation, and creative problem solving with the partner nation forces (as I will explain below). Based on my observations of MCSCG classes and the written student outline, there are some inconsistencies in how

⁵⁵ MAJ, CLATT, observed November 20, 2013.

⁵⁶ SSGT, 3/8, interviewed November 21, 2013.

⁵⁷ LT, 3/8, interviewed November 21, 2013.

⁵⁸ In other debriefs, CLATT observers typically gathered together the whole team. This also helped encourage communication among the team.

⁵⁹ Like the welcome ceremony, the safety brief was not an observed activity in the SPMAGTF-Africa CERTEX. Based on the importance of the safety brief to advisor relations and Marine safety, the CLATT may wish to consider adding it to their CERTEX activities.

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the material is presented in the classroom and the CERTEX. Sometimes, the tactical training skills appear to be of sole importance; sometimes the strategic advisor skills do. Only in the written student outline do both receive attention (some tactical skills and definitions are provided, but the weapons and safety briefs are barely mentioned). I will use examples from the student outline, two classroom observations (in May with MARCENT 13.2 and October with 3/8), and CERTEX observations to demonstrate where there is potential or actual confusion and suggest solutions that may resolve this confusion.

The student outline on “Range Operations” includes strategic level considerations and a brief mention of the safety brief as the last step in the operational risk management process.⁶⁰ There is no specific mention of what a weapons safety brief is or how it should be conducted, perhaps because weapons safety briefs are more “engrained” in Marines. In the student outline, this omission of the weapons safety brief and relatively minor reference to the range safety brief are of note, because in the CERTEX advisor Marines were evaluated on both. On the strategic side, the student outline begins by telling Marines about Marine Corps Order 3570.1, which applies to personnel training outside the US. That order tells Marines that when there are two safety standards, the ones providing “the higher degree of protection apply.”⁶¹ Seemingly contradictorily, the student outline also states, “it is not your duty as an advisor to force the Marine Corps Order onto the FSF”⁶² and then lists follow up steps to take when “the FSF commander decides not to take your advice and you are unable to influence him/her to see the appropriateness of your guidance.”⁶³ In other words, knowledge of the Marine SOPs (like how to give a weapons or range safety brief) is not enough; Marines also are legally bound to understand the partner nation SOPs and to employ strategic level advising skills, including being open to discussion, attempting to persuade the FSF, and knowing what options are available to advisors if the advisor and the FSF disagree on safety standards.

Unlike the outline, the classroom lessons seemed to go in one direction or the other. In May, I observed a “Range Operations” lesson, which was actually a practical application. MARCENT 13.2 Marines worked with a few TIG Marines (who served as role players) and walked them through a “dry fire” exercise. I did not make note of whether the MARCENT Marines gave a range or weapons safety brief in particular, but the entire exercise appeared to be a tactical-level refresh and rehearsal. This could be especially helpful for Marine Reservists who may not train on ranges to the same extent as active duty Marines. The second “Range Operations” lesson was not a practical application and was not a refresh of Marine SOPs. Instead, it was conducted in the classroom and included information and examples of SOPs in other militaries. Early in the class, the MCSCG instructor told the 3/8 students, “you have to find the happy medium between them and stay within your own regulations.” He went on to tell the class many stories, all variations on the theme, “you’re going to see some craziness happen.”⁶⁴ He never mentioned tactical skills, despite the fact they take up almost half of the student outline. These advisor Marines were not able to rehearse their SOPs, as the MARCENT team did in May. On the other hand,

⁶⁰ Global Trainer Advisor Course Student Outline, “Foreign Security Force Training Management: Range & Training Area Operations,” dated October 24, 2012.

⁶¹ Marine Corps Order 3570.1C, “Range Safety,” effective February 29, 2012.

⁶² Global Trainer Advisor Course Student Outline, “Foreign Security Force Training Management: Range & Training Area Operations,” dated October 24, 2012.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ SSGT, TIG instructor, observed October 08, 2013.

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the advisor Marines in May were not reminded of the strategic considerations of how to work with their partners on range safety SOPs.

The TIG instructors could be exercising their judgment and simplifying the lesson based on whatever skill was in greater need. But advisor Marines, especially those whose mission includes live-fire exercises, will need both strategic advisor and tactical training skills. Perhaps, if classroom time does not allow for both to be covered, the TIG can think of other ways to include the material in existing lessons. For instance, the TIG divides officers and enlisted personnel into different classes to discuss instructional delivery and developing a training plan. Perhaps the “Instructor Delivery Methods” lesson, which already includes a practical application, could allow some (or all) enlisted Marines to demonstrate a range or weapons safety brief; and along with that, learn tactical level definitions that may be relevant their ability to discuss range operations with FSF. The officers, in their “Analyze and Design SC Training Plan” lesson, could include range operations as a part of an overall training plan that includes live-fire ranges, and plan how to address the strategic level negotiations with the FSF, as outlined above.

In the CERTEX for MARCENT 14.1, the TIG’s emphasis was tactical. Two SNCOs were critiqued on their execution of the range safety and weapons safety briefs. As stated before, these briefs are barely mentioned in the range operations student outline. Yet, the TIG instructor(s) appeared to have in mind a standard delivery sequence for weapons and range safety briefs that they also expected the advisor Marines to know. It is uncertain where they would have learned this sequence prior to the CERTEX, but nevertheless was the source of most negative feedback. One SSGT, for instance, made an instructional decision about which brief to cover first. He decided to give the weapons safety brief before the range safety brief because his greatest concern was a negligent discharge (ND). This choice was related to his uncertainty about what role he was playing and why he was giving a range safety brief at all. A range safety brief is typically given by the Range Safety Officer (RSO). The TIG has an actual RSO for the Ft. Pickett training area who would normally give the brief before the start of the exercise. The TIG, however, told this SSGT he should give a range safety brief without informing him of his exact role. The SSGT was unclear if he was giving it as if he were in Jordan or Ft. Pickett. To enforce a clear demarcation between the training exercise and range safety protocol, he suggested that he and the role players “do all the non-exercise stuff, then get back in the car and come out again.”⁶⁵ His confusion about RSO roles is exercise-related. His assumptions about the FSF drove his decision to order the briefs. He knew they were arriving with “weapons;”⁶⁶ some were potentially loaded, so he chose to address that first. This would seem to be in keeping with adherence to a strict safety standard. Rather than simply regurgitate his procedural knowledge and conduct the standard range safety and weapons safety briefs as he would with Marines, this SSGT appeared to be thinking more strategically. However, according to him, the TIG did not offer reasons for why his choices were invalid.

The second SSGT made instructional decisions based on completely different assumptions about the Jordanians. Since he had been there on a prior mission, he treated the role players as if they were already proficient in weapons handling. He said the TIG “dinged” him because he did not demonstrate how to clear a barrel at the proper time. In his mind, most Jordanians know how to clear a chamber, so he chose to show them individually, when they were at the clearing barrel, rather than collectively.⁶⁷ Perhaps this was a poor instructional choice, but it shows that the SSGT is willing to be flexible and take

⁶⁵ SSGT, MARCENT 14.1, interviewed December 18, 2012.

⁶⁶ These were fake weapons. There was no actual safety concern.

⁶⁷ SSGT, MARCENT 14.1, interviewed December 19, 2013.

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FSF skills into account. This is a strategic level perspective, and it echoes what the MCSCG student outline says. It is also supported by the cultural SME who observed MARCENT 14.1. He agreed with the SSGT that most Jordanians know proper weapons handling. However, the SME thought that Marines should practice in-depth weapons safety briefs in case they are suddenly required to go elsewhere in the Middle East. If this is the learning objective, the TIG should share this ahead of time. In fact, they could use each day of the CERTEX to assign the role players collectively different levels of safety consciousness and weapons handling proficiency. This would give the advisor Marines more latitude to demonstrate training skills for remedial to higher level weapons safety.

These examples illustrate a lack of internal consistency. The student outline covered both tactical and strategic level skills; each classroom lesson focused on one or the other; and the TIG observers at the CERTEX commented on Marines' delivery of the weapons safety brief only, which is not explicit in the student outline and may not be in the classroom lesson, depending on how it is taught. To address these issues, the TIG could spend more time aligning the three: student outline, classroom instruction, and CERTEX. I recommend using the student outline as the starting point, since it appears to cover most of what advisor Marines should know and because both levels are important. If the TIG only focuses on tactical level skills refresh (as in the practical application I observed in May and in one of the CERTEXs), there is a risk that Marines would conclude that their training mission is to force or enforce their SOPs onto the FSF. As the student outline clearly states, this is not an advisor training objective. To avoid this, advisor Marines need the greater context and need to understand how tactical or strategic level skills fit together.

Here are some questions advisor Marines and the TIG can use to plan for range control and range safety:

- REAL WORLD:
 - Are Marines conducting live-fire exercises in country? If so, which country's safety standard is more protective?
 - Does this Marine advisor team need a refresh on Marine tactical range control skills?
 - Are the FSF generally considered proficient in weapons handling? Does this change the Marine advisor's training approach? If so, how?
- CERTEX:
 - What are the "current conditions" Marines need to know (regarding weapons handling skills, SOPs, location of the range, anticipated live-fire exercise)?
 - If advisor Marines are not conducting a live-fire exercise as part of their CERTEX training, do the role players even need weapons? If so, what latitude do Marines have in dealing with weapons safety?
 - Who has what billet (i.e. Range OIC, RSO, instructors, etc.)?

IV. Past and future CERTEXs

The CERTEX is not a static activity, though it has many elements that are repeated in each exercise. Based on my observations of the three CERTEXs in 2013, and on what Marines with multiple deployments on SC missions told me, the CERTEX has evolved in significant ways and will likely continue to do so. For instance, the SSGT from MARCENT 13.2 mentioned earlier, who had to change his attitude when he encountered Arabic-speaking role players at the "airport" on the first day of CERTEX

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training. In his prior rotation, the CERTEX apparently used Marines to play the foreign military.⁶⁸ Based on that experience, he was prepared to “shoot from the hip” for the second exercise but soon realized that “we’re going to have to step up our game.”⁶⁹ Thus, MCSCG has increased the impact of the CERTEX by employing foreign language speaking role players. This allows Marines to use foreign language skills and get authentic experience using interpreters. Foreign language speaking role players also impart regional cultural information and add authenticity to the exercise.

MCSCG has also continued to refine the role player roles. For instance, one area of difficulty for MARCENT 13.2 was in building relationships directly with their Jordanian counterparts.⁷⁰ The Marines claimed this was because the role players did not know their ranks and, when asked, said they were “soldiers.” For the MARCENT 14.1 CERTEX, the TIG ensured that certain role players had a designated rank and were introduced to the advisor Marines accordingly. The role player uniforms were also modified to indicate rank differences. By the end of the exercise, all of the MARCENT 14.1 senior and junior leaders had very consistent communications with their counterparts at a level that was not observed with the MARCENT 13.2 team.⁷¹ Again, this change, which was meant to increase the level of realism, had a positive effect on the overall learning experience, according to some Marines.

A Marine on MARCENT 14.1 who was on a prior SC team to Jordan noticed another change in the CERTEX that, based on his experience, made it more focused on the actual mission. This SSGT said his first CERTEX was focused on “testing the retention of the knowledge” and included scenarios he found less realistic, such as an ND and a vehicle mounted improvised explosive device. He said that, while those threats were possible in Jordan, they were minor concerns. His second evolution of the CERTEX was better because it was “more focused on building the relationship between the counterparts.”⁷² Increased mission-relevance is at least as important as increased authenticity or realism, and they all work together to create a more effective training event.

Over time, Marines have noticed that the CERTEX has become more realistic and more mission relevant. These improvements are likely the result of MCSCG staff building its own expertise and honing in on what works. When they used Marines as role players and focused on retention of knowledge in the CERTEX, they were still a new organization getting up to speed. A year later, they had foreign language speaking civilian role players with clearly defined roles, and MCSCG staff was emphasizing skill building and assessment. These are all signs of increased professionalization within the organization. Another sign of maturation is the expanding number of MCSCG staff who execute CERTEXs for various SC missions. I observed both the TIG and the AFRICOM CLATT, and I am aware that the SOUTHCOM CLATT is experienced in running a CERTEX. With more staff involvement, MCSCG can leverage their respective strengths. My observations in this paper include examples from the TIG CERTEXs and the AFRICOM

⁶⁸ This Marine’s attitude change says a lot about the value of role players. Because MCSCG invested in role players who looked and sounded “the part,” this Marine (and maybe others) realized he needed to take the exercise seriously. If MCSCG ever seeks to reduce the cost of the CERTEX by using Marines as role players again, one potential outcome is that Marines will not take the CERTEX as seriously.

⁶⁹ SSGT, MARCENT 13.2, interviewed June 29, 2013.

⁷⁰ They also did not learn individual names. In an interview on July 1, 2013, a GYSGT told me that his team called one role player “red soul patch,” meaning he had a red beret and a “soul patch” type of beard.

⁷¹ The difficulties MARCENT 13.2 faced when working with the JAF may only be attributed in part to the lack of clear roles for the role players. Other aspects of MARCENT leadership may have contributed to the challenges.

⁷² SSGT, MARCENT 14.1, December 18, 2013.

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CLATT CERTEX. Their mentoring approaches differed, probably in part due to the very different SC missions for which the MARCENT teams and SPMAGTF-Africa team were preparing. In addition, the AFRICOM CLATT had greater luxury to focus on relationship-building, while the TIG was responsible for assessing that and other Marine hard skills. I have given some examples where the TIG could modify certain aspects of their CERTEX to include greater team-level feedback and more consistent instructional guidance throughout the advisor course. An overhaul of the CERTEX is not necessary or warranted. Throughout the report (and summarized below), I have suggested small changes to the exercise as well as to the advisor course that would leverage some of the strengths of the TIG and CLATT mentoring approaches and combine them in ways that may improve learning outcomes. As MCSCG continues to mature, learn from past experience, experiment with new ideas, improve cultural accuracy, refine learning objectives and outcomes, and adjust to changing SC missions, it is likely that the improvements to the CERTEX will continue.

V. Summary of observations in this report

- Advisor Marines value the CERTEX for a variety of reasons, including:
 - It is a valuable rehearsal space.
 - It enables them to see the consequences of their actions without impacting the mission.
 - It enables them to observe individual and team proficiencies and deficiencies.
 - They learn from one another if they are motivated to take time to observe. If this is not happening already, MCSCG staff should encourage it.
- Advisor Marines with prior SC deployments, especially to the same AO, are likely to be seen as valuable resources to the rest of their team. Throughout the advisor course (and CERTEX, if applicable), MCSCG staff should be aware of whether the information from “experienced vets” is accurate or not and encourage their accurate advice.
- The TIG and the CLATT employed different organizational structures and different communication styles likely due to a combination of factors.
 - CLATT feedback consistently emphasized the importance of building good relationships. Some CLATT organizational and feedback approaches could be employed by the TIG when feasible (in the first day) and if they are not inappropriate to the mission.
- Team-level debriefs are desirable and effective, especially after major scenarios (e.g. the airport arrival) at the beginning of the exercise.
 - Changing when and how teams are divided can impact outcome. For example, MARCENT teams could work together as a team for the first full training day and then, depending on their progress, separate into senior/trainer groups as currently structured.
- The welcome ceremony is likely to have negligible educational value unless:
 - The cultural importance of the ceremony is enhanced and “enforced.”
 - And/or there is a significant interruption to the Marine training schedule.
 - And/or MCSCG staff debrief the advisor Marines immediately afterward.
- MCSCG observers use situational injects to personalize training and address individual learning objectives for a Marine
 - A CLATT observer’s situational inject was especially effective when followed by an immediate group debrief because it encouraged immediate reflection and led to subsequent conversations among the group.

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- Range operations encompass legal, practical, and life-saving considerations for advisor Marines. It also may be an area that produces friction with FSF.
 - As currently taught, the range operations written curriculum is not aligned with the classroom presentation or CERTEX observer feedback. A realignment of these three components will provide a more robust learning experience and assessment validity.
- The CLATT may consider adding a welcome ceremony and range operations injects into their CERTEXs, given that they are both related to rapport building.
- Advisor Marines with prior experience say the CERTEX has improved over time because
 - It includes foreign language speaking role players.
 - It focuses on relationships.

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APPENDIX A: Research Methodology

During each CERTEX, I conducted participant observation. I also opportunistically conducted semi-structured interviews with some of the Marines during breaks in the training. In addition to the Marine SC teams, I observed the MCSCG staff in their activities and internal communication. I did not formally interview anyone except the Marines in training, but I had informal conversations with the role players, MCSCG staff, hired subject matter experts, and the MARCENT 13.2 commanding officer⁷³, which added to my understanding of the interactions I observed in all of the CERTExs. All of my data is recorded in written notes. In June-July, they were handwritten, which facilitated my ability to roam the physical distance between training activities. For the second and third CERTExs (November and December), I typed my notes and observations on a mini-computer. This data is considerably more detailed than my handwritten notes, especially in regard to training conversations and feedback. Most of the time, I typed notes simultaneously while I was observing or interviewing a Marine. There were times when I observed the activities without taking notes to remain mobile, unobtrusive, warm (in the winter months), or dry (during a thunderstorm in July). After a period of time observing or talking, I would then remove myself from the activities or use downtime, such as lunch, to capture what I was able to remember.

Throughout the CERTExs, all three SC teams were physically separated to some degree, sometimes miles apart from one another. Thus, I was often forced to decide which activity to observe, which also impacted which Marines and the MCSCG feedback I observed. In regard to the MARCENT teams, the physical separation was between the senior officers and junior officers/SNCOs. With the 3/8, the separation was among groups. I “floated” between two of four groups with 3/8 and between the officers and field training with the MARCENT teams. My movement among training sites or groups was only possible with a base-authorized vehicle, so I “hitched rides” with MCSCG staff, Marines, or role players when they were going to a desired location. The timing of departure, arrival, or return were not under my control. Therefore, I chose to spend most of my time with the SNCOs/junior officers on the MARCENT teams and with groups two and three from 3/8 and built relationships accordingly.

Prior to the start of each day’s exercise and at the end of the day, I observed the MCSCG staff’s internal discussions. These were the only opportunities for them to coordinate and compare notes because, for most of the day, they were separated and paired up with the teams they were observing. With the MARCENT CERTExs, the TIG observers were divided amongst the three groups: there were one or two TIG enlisted observers with each field training team, and there were up to three TIG officers and a cultural subject matter expert (hired by the contracting company that hired the role players) who observed the senior staff. The senior leaders and field training teams never received feedback at the same time. The CLATT had a different observation layout. The teams from 3/8 were matched with an officer, and all but one group had a second senior enlisted CLATT observer. The CLATT observers typically stopped the Marine activities every few hours to gather the group and role players together to debrief. Because of the distributed aspect of the MARCENT teams, I potentially missed some TIG feedback (especially if it was one-on-one or informal) when I was in another location. This was less likely with each 3/8 team since everyone trained in the same vicinity.

⁷³In December, the LTCOL in charge of MARCENT 13.2 traveled from Jordan to Virginia in order to observe the MARCENT 14.1 CERTEx. I am referring to this CO, who was different from the CO I observed during the June-July 2013 CERTEx.

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Appendix B: Meeting Foreign Security Counterparts, an Instructional Tool

On a crisp and clear Tuesday afternoon in November 2013, the first day of the CERTEX training for 3/8, a CAPT and his team of six Marines met their “Senegalese” counterparts for the first time. The conversation that followed was the lengthiest “formal” cross-cultural conversation I observed in any of the CERTEXs. This conversation was rich with cross-cultural concepts and skills, to include recovering from cultural misunderstandings that could be similar to real-world exchanges downrange. What follows is a brief description of the context of the meeting, an explanation of some conversational themes, and a transcript of an excerpted portion of the hour-long initial engagement. I include this as an Appendix for two reasons. First, it demonstrates how, without any additional “friction” (other than an abundance of time), a simple conversation between Marines and role players can be a deep learning experience. And second, the conversational themes and transcript may be a useful classroom exercise or tool if integrated by MCSCG curriculum developers.

The CAPT for 3/8 had prior theater security cooperation experience in South Korea and Timor L’este. This was his first advisor mission to Africa. When he and the Marines first arrived to the training area, they were introduced to the French-speaking interpreter. After that, he met the Senegalese commanding officer, a large man wearing reflective sunglasses, a green beret, a set of fatigues with a vest for ammunition, and a yellow-on-green patch, likely indicating his rank. Their initial introduction was a bit awkward, and the CO almost immediately asked the CAPT about his marital status. They then exchanged some pleasantries about working together. After a few minutes of rapport building, the CAPT described the training schedule. Like other Marines I observed in similar conversations, the CAPT seemed more comfortable discussing the training schedule and logistics than engaging on a personal level.

Had their meeting ended there, this would have been very similar to other introductory conversations I observed by team leaders with MARCENT 13.2 and 14.1, which also started with mild awkwardness followed by a quick attempt at rapport building before they began the discussion about the training schedule. However, one significant difference with the 3/8 conversation is that all six members of the advisor team met the rest of the Senegalese forces just after this initial introduction. In contrast, the MARCENT senior leaders met their Jordanian counterparts in a mock headquarters office the first day, and the rest of the MARCENT teams met their counterparts in the parking lot after an opening ceremony the following day. It is difficult to say how militaries would meet “in the real world;” however, as an educational tool, I argue that an “extended engagement” between both teams on the first day of the exercise gives advisor Marines enough time to feel uncomfortable and make mistakes and yet also build rapport with their counterparts.

When the CAPT was meeting the Senegalese CO, the rest of the two teams did not engage one another. In fact, the rest of the Marines stood apart watching their CAPT with their backpacks on, which gave them a militaristic and stand-offish appearance. Then the Senegalese CO introduced his team of eight soldiers, and the CAPT reciprocated. After that, both teams shook hands and socialized. One Senegalese soldier asked a Marine how many wives he had, and two others discussed soccer and baseball. The CLATT observer, standing next to me, commented that he was making a deliberate choice to allow the teams to speak to one another in English because the Marine interaction with the role players was more important than their use of French or waiting for their turn with the interpreter. This casual socialization went on for about fifteen minutes before the Marines moved out of their formation. Some took off their packs. A SSGT introduced himself to several Senegalese one-by-one. Though it had taken a while to get to this point of physical relaxation, the conversations were comfortable and personal from the start and eventually included interesting cultural exchanges, such an explanation of how some children are named in Ghana (by the day they are born) and the differences between West African countries.

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After this point, everyone sat down on the grass and talked for another half an hour or so in an informal question and answer session. The interpreter continued to interpret, but certain role players spoke English, permitting a more natural conversational pace. This extended group conversation among officers and enlisted of both militaries is what truly sets this introduction apart from the other exercises I observed. A conversation for this length of time meant that there was time to bounce back and forth between building rapport and “talking shop,” and there were several opportunities for missed conversational cues and repairing misunderstandings. These skills are among those that DoD considers necessary for cross-cultural competence.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the conversational themes in this excerpt are likely to be consistent with those of actual exchanges between Marines and foreign security forces. First, I will discuss the themes and cross-cultural skills exhibited or required in different portions of the conversation. This is followed by a transcript of conversation.⁷⁵ Marines preparing for advisor missions in the future may benefit from an examination of these topics and skills in the MCSCG advisor’s course. At the end, I suggest some discussion points that instructors could use to engage Marines in a discussion using this transcript.

Conversational Themes

These six conversational themes are not intended to be a comprehensive list of the topics and challenges that Marines may encounter when engaging foreign security forces. However, they are a useful sample of common topics evident in this short excerpt and are likely to be familiar to Marines who have had similar engagements.

- 1) Requests for “more” (e.g. new or better equipment, more training, logistical supplies, etc.)
 - a) Problem solving opportunities
- 2) Questions about the military training and its benefits
- 3) References to combat experience or Marine experience
- 4) Cultural references or humor
- 5) Extensions of hospitality
- 6) Interpreter misunderstandings (military terminology, use of acronyms, simultaneous conversations, etc.)

	Conversational Theme	Theme name	Number of instances in this excerpt
1	Questions about the training and its benefits	“Training”	10
2	Requests for “more” (“More”)	“More”	8
2a	Problem solving opportunities	“Problem solving”	5
4	References to combat experience or Marine experience	“Marine experience”	4
5	Cultural references or humor	same	4
6	Extensions of hospitality	“Hospitality”	3
7	Interpreter misunderstandings	same	3

⁷⁴ Reid, P., Steinke, J., Mokuolu, F., Trejo, B., et al (2012). A Proposed Developmental Sequence for Cross-Cultural Competence Training in the Department of Defense. DEOMI Technical Report No. 01-12. Washington, D.C. (p.29).

⁷⁵ This is a real time transcript from the field, where I simultaneously typed while observing the conversation. The difference between my typing speed and conversational speed is such that I did not capture every word accurately; however, the basic content is represented in this record.

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Cross-cultural competencies

For this learning exercise, I select three cross-cultural competencies on which to focus: “relationship and rapport building,” “willingness to engage,” and “self-presentation.” This is not an exhaustive list of cross-cultural competencies that advisor Marines may require or use when interacting with partner nation forces. In fact, these three competencies are taken from one educational framework, which suggests eight total competencies across several skill levels.⁷⁶ There are other educational frameworks with as many or more competencies. This selection of three is intended to illustrate how to use a conversation (or the written text) to identify where cross-cultural competencies can be/are being used. In the table below, I list “relationship and rapport building,” “willingness to engage,” and “self-presentation” in the left-hand column next to a Marine’s statement taken from the transcript. If used as a classroom activity during the MCSCG advisor course, instructors can give students a table with several (more than three) cross-cultural competencies and a blank right-hand column. Marines could read a written transcript (as below), watch a Marine engage a role player (as with Blue Canopy role player interactions), or watch a video of an engagement. As they read or observe, they can match Marine statements to the cross-cultural skills they demonstrate, as illustrated below. There will always be many correct answers, even though I only indicate one statement per skill. The point is to engage Marines in a discussion about the cross-cultural skills they are learning and how to apply them in an actual conversation, similar to one they might have downrange.

In addition to this potential classroom activity, I developed discussion questions (listed at the end of the appendix) that can also be used by MCSCG instructors to engage Marines in a dialogue about important cross-cultural skills and themes.

I. Demonstration: matching activity

	Cross-cultural competencies	Example
1	Relationship & Rapport building	<i>The training I bring has been used for many years. We would like to learn as well from your experience. My Marines have a good understanding of what to teach, but they want to learn as well.</i>
2	Willingness to engage	<i>If the Marines or I say a word you don’t understand, make sure you ask because we have our own language.</i>
3	Self-presentation	<i>You learn some things are different- but the basics we learned all worked well. In my first firefight, as soon as we started getting shot at, I didn’t have to think about what I needed to do. All the Marines to my left and right didn’t have to think about what they had to do- we had done it so often, we were able to do it without thinking. You may never know how good you are until you are tested, but the more you practice, and the more you know the soldiers around you are well trained, you will do the right thing.</i>
4	Etc. (additional cross-cultural competencies)	...

⁷⁶ Reid, P., Steinke, J., Mokuolu, F., Trejo, B., et al (2012). A Proposed Developmental Sequence for Cross-Cultural Competence Training in the Department of Defense. DEOMI Technical Report No. 01-12. Washington, D.C. (p.29).

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ANNOTATED TRANSCRIPT⁷⁷ OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN MARINES AND ROLE PLAYERS

Date: November 18, 2013

The advisor Marines are meeting their counterparts for the first time. The role players are representing the Foreign Security Forces (FSF) as if they were from Senegal, but are actually from all parts of the African continent. The FSF Commanding Officer (CO) speaks French. A Marine CAPT is the CO of the advisor team. At this point in the conversation, he and his interpreter have already greeted the FSF CO and gone over the initial introductions and explanation of the training schedule. The rest of the role players outnumber the rest of the Marines, and they all remained physically separated during this initial introduction. Just before this excerpt begins, both groups were introduced to one another. They are now seated in a circular group in the grass - Marines on one side, FSF on another.

Characters: ROLE PLAYER- any role player; FSF CO- the role player acting as the FSF Commanding Officer; INTERPRETER- the role player acting as the interpreter; MARINE- any Marine

Speaker	Dialogue	Theme
ROLE PLAYERS (many)	How many classes will we have tomorrow? What are we learning? Are we going to use real guns? Will it be dangerous for us?	Training
MARINE	M16	
ROLE PLAYER	Are you bringing them? Or are we using ones we already have.	"More"
MARINE	What kind of guns do you have?	
ROLE PLAYER	We have AK-47s. Some don't work.	Problem solving
MARINE	We'll use your AKs. How many times have you shot AKs?	
ROLE PLAYERS	<i>[missed response. Conversation moves on to hosting a feast for the Marines.]</i> We will kill a goat and eat it. It's good when it's fresh. <i>[Get into details of the food.]</i> Did you bring any cigars?	Hospitality
MARINE	Nobody smokes. I have chewing tobacco and that's it.	
ROLE PLAYERS	They don't like the chewing tobacco. They like cigars. Have you	Hospitality

⁷⁷ This conversation was captured by the author in real time in typewritten notes. It was not recorded, and is not a verbatim record.

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	chewed qat? Are we going to train only with you?	Training
MARINE	Tomorrow, there will be two classes. One is marksmanship <i>INTERPRETER asks what this means.</i> <i>(Explaining to the interpreter and the Senegalese)</i> Marksmanship is how to shoot properly. If the Marines or I say a word you don't understand, make sure you ask, because we have our own language.	Interpreter misunderstanding
ROLE PLAYER	Did you bring an M16? I would like to see them.	"More"
MARINE	We have to train with your weapons; we didn't bring any	
ROLE PLAYER	They know how to work with their own guns if they work. You came, so we were hoping to learn something new.	Problem solving
MARINE	You will. And if you know all the training, then we'll move onto the next thing.	
ROLE PLAYERS	We're concerned about our equipment; we're tired with AK-47. We want to learn new things. We see you on TV- you have good guns.	"More" Cultural reference/humor
MARINE	If we train you on weapons you don't have...	
ROLE PLAYERS	In future, if you get new weapons, is there is a possibility to train on those?	"More"
FSF CO	Please give us the entire program.	Training
MARINE	You will learn how to shoot from stable platform, you will learn how to shoot accurately with any weapon.	
ROLE PLAYERS	<i>[teasingly]</i> Are you going to teach skill that you use in Somalia? <i>Marines don't understand.</i> ...the pirate that was killed. <i>[referring to the movie/real life Captain Phillips.]</i>	Cultural reference/humor
FSF CO	What's next?	
MARINE	Next, we will go into patrolling. We will start with the basics of what formation to use in what situations.	
INTERPRETER	What does formation mean? Pattern?	Interpreter misunderstanding
MARINE	How they will stand and walk around and what that will look like. [Makes gestures in the grass.]	
INTERPRETER	Oh, you mean positionment.	
MARINE	<i>One Marine expands on the idea and relates formation to</i>	

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	<i>playing soccer.</i> Once we get basics, we can do this with hand/arm signals, so enemy doesn't know what we are doing. After that, we will go into boat ops. Boat maintenance, navigation, eventually riverine.	
INTERPRETER	What is riverine?	Interpreter misunderstanding
MARINE	Doing operations or missions using your boats.	
FSF CO	We don't have the boats you are talking about.	
MARINE	We will use whatever boats you have.	
FSF CO	Have you used traditional boats?	Marine experience
MARINE	We haven't. But the principles apply to all boats	
FSF CO	Because we are talking about canoes. <i>Marines laugh. FSF CO is getting offended.</i> This is serious- this is what we have. Our army is not as equipped as you think.	Problem solving
MARINE	I thought he was making a joke.	Cultural reference/humor
FSF CO	No, we are serious. We have canoes. <i>[Laughs.]</i>	
ROLE PLAYER	If someone is injured, how do we handle that? Will we have training?	Training
MARINE	We're not conducting medical training. What do you do when you normally have injuries?	
ROLE PLAYER	Sometimes we use traditional medicine. Now that you're here, you will bring new ways of doing things. We wanted to know how you do that. How you handle those situations?	
MARINE	That's a possibility that we can do that. I will let them know if and when.	
FSF CO	So many of us have been in Army for so many years. I see only young people here. What can you do to help us?	Marine experience
MARINE	The training I bring has been used for many years. We would like to learn as well from your experience. My Marines have a good understanding of what to teach, but they want to learn as well.	
FSF CO	We welcome you. We want to help you get to know our culture from the start. We should eat together. We can go to canteen or	Hospitality

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	we can go outside, go to clubs. Can we go out and get beer after class?	
MARINE	We would love to get a meal with your soldiers. We just need to know ahead of time where we are going so we can plan ahead.	
ROLE PLAYER	You're not teaching us anything new.	Training
MARINE	We are not here to supply you with weapons- we are here to help you out	
ROLE PLAYER	So we are not going to get one more gun?	"More"
MARINE	It is not our purpose to bring supplies. It's to teach and learn from you.	
FSF CO	Do your Marines have questions for us?	
MARINE	What do you specialize in? <i>[Don't hear answer]</i>	
ROLE PLAYER	Are we also going to teach you? <i>[Marine questions end quickly. All the role players contribute to the questions and conversation.]</i>	Training
FSF CO	From now to the end of training, can you get us some new equipment?	"More"
MARINE	We are glad to do this. <i>[Explains the difference between what the Senegalese government has requested, and what they know on the ground.]</i> We'll go back to explain and tell our highers that this is what you want.	Problem solving
ROLE PLAYER	How often are we doing this training?	Training
MARINE	We will keep this going as long as possible. <i>[To interpreter]</i> Is there anything else they want to know about in particular?	
ROLE PLAYER	We wanted to know about your gun. We also wanted engineering expertise on water systems.	Training
MARINE	My guys don't do that. We operate a lot of weapons. What specifically do you want to know?	
ROLE PLAYER	Something new. It will be difficult to learn if we don't see it. <i>[There is more discussion of what the FSF don't have, and then it becomes evident all they wanted to know was the name of the pistol.]</i>	
MARINE	We use a 9mm pistol.	
ROLE PLAYER	That's not new. We have that <i>[Laughter.]</i>	

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MARINE	We only have one new weapon- the infantry automatic rifle. It looks like an M16, but it is fully automatic.	
ROLE PLAYER	How many rounds?	
MARINE	It takes a regular magazine, so 30 rounds.	
ROLE PLAYER	Can some of us go to America?	"More"
MARINE	They are welcome anytime, but we cannot facilitate that. I've been with many foreign military in US schools. It's an opportunity that you have, but I'm not sure how that works in each country, how you would get opportunity to do that.	
ROLE PLAYER	Have you ever been to war?	
MARINE	Yes, a few us of have.	
ROLE PLAYER	Which one?	
MARINE	Iraq and Afghanistan.	
ROLE PLAYER	What did you learn from that experience?	Marine experience
MARINE	The bad guys aren't from that area. The locals were very nice to us, and we were able to kill the bad guys.	
ROLE PLAYER	[To Marine CO] What did you learn there to teach our men?	Training Marine experience
MARINE	To win a firefight is really easy. You do what you learn- and you do it so often, you don't have to think about it. But takes a lot of practice to get to that point. The difficult part is to get them to stop wanting to fight you.	
ROLE PLAYER	Does new technology- new guns help a lot on the battlefield?	
MARINE	I don't think so. We can win with any weapon.	
ROLE PLAYER	But when you have the technological advantage, you can win anything.	
MARINE	I disagree. It's how much they care and how much they've trained.	
ROLE PLAYERS	In those two countries, did you see a difference between [military] theory and practice?	
MARINE	You learn some things are different- but the basics we learned all worked well. In my first firefight, as soon as we started getting shot at, I didn't have to think about what I needed to do. All the Marines to my left and right didn't have to think about what they had to do- we had done it so often, we were able to	

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	do it without thinking. You may never know how good you are until you are tested, but the more you practice, and the more you know the soldiers around you are well trained, you will do the right thing.	
ROLE PLAYER	Thanks for saying that, it boosts our morale, but my point is we still need equipment. Sometimes we shoot, and the weapons won't work at all. Can you teach us how to fix them? [<i>The Marine has a side conversation and the lightbulb goes off "...they only want...but I understand- they need to learn about an immediate action drill."</i>]	"More," Training Problem solving
MARINE	When a weapon jams- it's only temporarily broken. We can teach you how to fix that.	Problem solving
ROLE PLAYER	With everything you said, we are reassured. We think tomorrow will be a good day.	
MARINE	That is what I have planned. If you would like more, we can discuss that.	
FSF CO	It is getting quite late. There are a lot of mosquitos here. I hope you are prepared for it. They can give you the disease.	
MARINE	We will meet for our meeting tomorrow at 0830.	
FSF CO	Senegalese or Marine time?	Cultural reference/humor
MARINE	Senegalese time. [<i>Group shakes hands- first with the interpreter, then with each other, and say goodbye.</i>]	

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Are the Senegalese asking for additional training? In what? Can the Marine advisors provide this training?
- 2) Why are they making so many requests? Do you consider this rude? Do you think they consider this rude?
- 3) What kind of cultural misunderstandings are evident in this transcript?
- 4) These Marines tended to answer each question directly. Another strategy is to answer the intent behind the question. A third strategy is to ask more clarifying questions. Respond to this request by the Senegalese and either: a) answer the intent or b) ask clarifying questions:

We wanted to know about your gun. We also wanted engineering expertise on water systems.

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APPENDIX C: RELATIONSHIPS: ONE MARINE'S PERSPECTIVE

November 21, Team 4 training area, 3/8 CERTEX

It was mid-morning and the sun was out but there was a late-fall chill in the air. The Marines and African role players were warmly dressed and settling into their third and final training day of the CERTEX. A Marine LT and his Ugandan foreign military counterpart were in the notional "headquarters" of the Ugandan military training facility discussing what they had enjoyed about the cultural exchange and learned from the training over the past few days.

Meanwhile, the rest of the Marines were standing around the small field in small groups, intermingling with the role players acting as the Ugandan military. Two young Marines were learning dance moves from their counterparts. Leaning against a log on the ground off to the side, taking it all in, was one of the SSGTs. He was a youthful looking grandfather of two with a prior deployment to Iraq where he was partnered with Iraqi military engineers.

When asked what he thought of the CERTEX, he described the evolution of his team's behavior. First, they were reticent, he said, because Marines have a tendency to stick with their unit. Also, they may have had negative biases about the Ugandan military (or various African militaries that they encountered during the CERTEX), which he attributed to having very little first-hand knowledge of the continent. That all changed over the past two days, as Marines had plenty of time to socialize with the role players. The SSGT had watched them become more comfortable in their roles as cross-cultural trainers, and he was gaining confidence in the team's ability to accomplish their mission. As he gestured to the mixed groups of Marines and their counterparts laughing, dancing and mingling, he said, "We're all having a good time. This is not rehearsed. [The Marines] were not told to come out here and [behave this way]...they were told to be less apprehensive. But this is genuine social interaction. I like it."

According to the SSGT, increased cross-cultural understanding and social interaction are the purpose of the CERTEX. He added, "If one thing has been driven home [by the CLATT observers], it's about the relationship."

As the Marines and their African [or Ugandan] counterparts ended their break and transitioned back to their training classes, the SSGT seemed pleased to know that his Marines were already doing well in building cross-cultural relationships within such a short period of time.

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