

The Army's New TRADOC Culture Center

Major Remi Hajjar, U.S. Army

AN IMPORTANT PART of the ongoing transformation of the U.S. Army involves its cultural awareness (CA) campaign, which seeks to enhance Soldiers' abilities to understand and leverage cultural factors. If the early conflicts of the War on Terrorism foreshadow the future, then the need to understand foreign cultures takes on an unprecedented level of significance. Contemporary analyses increasingly identify foreign populations as centers of gravity (COGs), a fact that underscores the necessity of the CA initiative.¹ One important development in the promotion of cultural awareness in the U.S. Army is the emergence of the new U.S. Army Training and Doctrine (TRADOC) Culture Center, located at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center (USAIC) at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.²

The Culture Center opened its doors on 1 February 2006, although it began providing significant CA training and support to the Army well before then. The Center's main purpose is to support CA development and training and to disseminate relevant cultural training, knowledge, and products across the Army and, potentially, across the Department of Defense (DOD).³

The Center's vision includes cross-cultural training, education, research, collaboration among military and civilian scholars, and physical and virtual organizational features. As the Center matures, it anticipates influencing the rise of new culture centers across the Army, military, and DOD. Its concept of how to leverage cultural knowledge to enhance military operations includes four levels of understanding a particular culture that range from instruction for baseline Soldiers at the lowest level to key military decisionmakers at the highest.⁴ The Center's preliminary charter mandates—

- Developing Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian cultural products (with heavy emphasis on the Middle East).
- Developing, refining, and assessing training standards.
- Producing proficient trainers to teach culture.
- Expanding ongoing cyberspace initiatives, including building a digital library and a cultural website to support the "Military Intelligence (MI) University."
- Building partnerships with military and civilian institutions that contribute to the Center.

The Center's Structure

The Center has five sections: a front office or headquarters, a Cultural Training and Education Branch, a language lab, a Partnering Branch, and a Cross-Cultural Applied Research and Dissemination Branch.⁵ (See figure 1.)

Major Remi Hajjar, U.S. Army, is completing the University of Foreign Military and Culture Studies at Fort Leavenworth. He recently graduated from the Command and General Staff College and prior to that served as an assistant professor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA). He received a B.S. from USMA and an M.A. from Northwestern University. He has served in a variety of command and staff positions in support of the 25th Infantry Division (Light) at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and the U.S. Army Intelligence Center at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

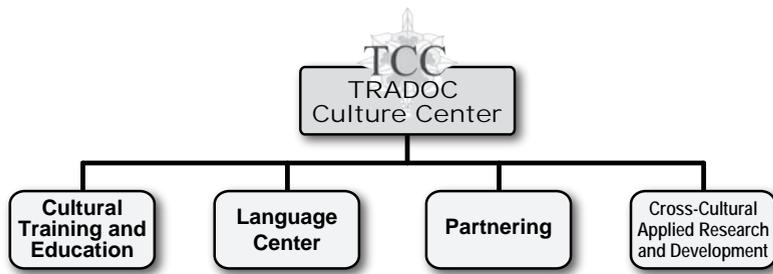


Figure 1. TRADOC Cultural Center's structure

The front office supervises all aspects of the Center's missions and functions, to include overseeing critical training missions, developing and cultivating beneficial professional relationships, formulating grant proposals, and determining requirements and associated research assignments for relevant present and future country and area studies.

The Center falls under the 111th MI Brigade of the USAIC. TRADOC and the Combined Arms Center (CAC) at Fort Leavenworth are at the apex of the Center's chain of command.

The Cultural Training and Education Branch (CTEB) develops and provides cultural products to all customers, including USAIC schools, other TRADOC schools, Army units, and DOD and national agencies, among others. Its main mission is to coordinate and conduct training with CA trainers and developers for its customers. CTEB also manages trainers, contractors, and instructors for classroom support; develops and exports distance-learning products; develops and helps construct lesson plans; and coordinates the exchange of cultural knowledge and training products with its partners, such as the Defense Language Institute (DLI), the University of Foreign Military and Culture Studies (also known as Red Team University), and other institutions.

The language laboratory, a part of USAIC before the Culture Center was developed, is one of the branches of the new Center. It is tasked with—

- Providing language sustainment training opportunities for cadre and students.
- Serving as a repository for foreign language literature.
- Administering relevant language exams (such as the Defense Language Proficiency Test).
- Sponsoring video-teleconferencing that supports language training.
- Maintaining close ties with DLI.
- Providing the rest of the Culture Center team with language-oriented insight.

The Partnering Branch develops collaborative relationships with various military, governmental, academic, and civilian agencies to formulate grants and further the Center's purpose, mission, and vision. The branch seeks to build a synergistic team that simultaneously enhances the Center and benefits professional allies. For

example, it aims to build alliances with foreign students attending USAIC schools in order to draw on their expertise and insight to better the Culture Center. Several organizations are Culture Center partners, among them TRADOC, CAC, DLI, the Army Research Lab, and other components of the U.S. Army; organizations from the other services; the America, Britain, Canada, and Australia (ABCA) program; and a handful of major universities such as New Mexico State, Columbia, and Brigham Young. The list goes on. Partnering Branch continues to expand its professional associations and relationships to provide the Center with cultural awareness products and opportunities based on cutting-edge research, knowledge, and ideas.

The Cross-Cultural Applied Research and Dissemination Branch coordinates and conducts applied research for current and anticipated future needs. Its mission is to help generate funding to support research and dissemination; to serve as a repository of cultural materials; to initiate publication of a refereed journal of applied cultural research; to coordinate and supervise the visiting scholars program; and to support the entire Center, particularly the training and education branches.

Center Membership and Accomplishments

A unique, talented team with ideal backgrounds and experiences propels the Culture Center forward in support of its purpose and vision. Team members include 18 CA experts and educational specialists, among them 12 linguists. Four members of the team hold doctorate degrees, most possess advanced degrees, and together the team has more than 100 years of combined military and civilian experience in the Middle East.⁶ Some members are former interpreters, others are retired military officers, and one is a former journalist. Many team

members speak Arabic and have lived in the Middle East. Anteon Corporation, a contractor, provides a number of the Culture Center’s members.⁷

The Center has made significant progress in support of the Army’s CA campaign. It arranged for an imam affiliated with Georgetown University to brief USAIC on moderate interpretations of Islam, which helped to bolster knowledge and cultural awareness; developed common core standards and topics for professional military education (PME); and produced numerous CA classes that enable units across the Army to train Soldiers in cultural issues vital to success in military operations.

The Center has also—

- Expanded the development of cultural products on the Middle East and Southeast Asia (especially the former).
- Made noteworthy progress on potential future CA needs, including development of products on Africa and other global areas of concern.⁸ (See figure 2.)
- Deployed training teams across the Army to assist CA trainers and Soldiers preparing to deploy.⁹ (See figure 3.)
- Experimented with innovative educational ideas, including CA practical exercises that cater to the younger Soldier’s penchant for playing video games.

Challenges

Preliminary insights from Army battalion commanders whose Soldiers received training from the Center reveal that some of the commanders thought the Center provided generally sufficient CA training for junior enlisted troops. This feedback indicates that the Center has done well in providing the Army with the basics (for example, tiers 1 and 2 of CA training), which will help Soldiers in contemporary missions. However, at least one commander wished the Center provided more sophisticated, detailed, and specific

cultural knowledge for more senior Army professionals. So it seems that at least one Army leader eagerly anticipates the availability of higher level CA training (tiers 3 and 4) at his installation.¹⁰

Preliminary feedback also suggests that perhaps the U.S. Army is mildly resistant to CA training. One Army training evaluator received feedback that some units did not have the time to conduct CA training because of other, overwhelming, training requirements. However, such resistance is not necessarily directed at the specific type of training (CA training, for example); the resistance might stem from being overtasked in general, a condition that makes it difficult to add CA training to an already full training plate. This observation should remind Army commanders everywhere that leaders must set unit training priorities and seek sufficient, quality training on the tasks they deem most imperative (including CA). If TRADOC installations feel overtasked, this leads to a pertinent question: Are sufficient hours and attention being dedicated to CA training across the force? If foreign populations are COGs in current and projected military operations, then CA training is critical; it must receive adequate time and attention if it is to become a force multiplier today and into the future.

Islam	Bahrain Overview and Culture
Cross Cultural Communications	Egypt Overview and Culture
Middle East Geography	Jordan Overview and Culture
Middle East History	Kurdish Overview and Culture
Arab Culture	Kuwait Overview and Culture
Afghanistan Overview and Culture	Lebanon Overview and Culture
Tribalism in Afghanistan	Oman Overview and Culture
History of Mujahadeen in Afghanistan	Syria Overview and Culture
Mujahadeen Tactics in Afghanistan	U.A.E. Overview and Culture
National Security Strategy of the United States	Yemen Overview and Culture
Empire of Liberty	Israel Overview and Culture
Globalization	Pakistan Overview and Culture
Saudi Arabia / Wahhabism	Iran Overview and Culture
Tribalism in Iraq	Turkey Overview and Culture
Iraq Overview and Culture	Qatar Overview and Culture
Tactical Application of Cultural Knowledge	Shi’a Hierarchy (The Ayatollahs)
Tactical Application of Cultural Knowledge Practical Exercise Class	The Culture of Terrorism
	Terrorism Overview
	Palestine Overview

Figure 2. Developed training materials

11th ACR Fort Irwin TTT	40 hours 11 to 22 October 2004
Deploying Reserve Officers	40 hours 25 to 29 October
Camp Shelby TTT	8 hours 7 to 9 December
Camp Bullis TTT	8 hours 13 December
Fort Huachuca TTT	16 hours 17 December
Fort Benning CRC TTT	40 hours 9 to 21 January 2005
Fort Riley 3rd BCT TTT	40 hours 17 to 21 January
Fort Stewart 1st 76th FA TTT	40 hours 24 to 28 January
Fort Lewis Deploying GTMO unit	8 hours 11 February
Fort Knox Train the Trainer	40 hours 14 to 18 February
Fort Lewis Deploying GTMO unit	40 hours 28 Feb to 4 March
Fort Huachuca MICCC TTT	8 hours 4 March
Fort Lewis Deploying GTMO unit	40 hours 28 Feb to 4 March
Fort Huachuca MICCC TTT	8 hours 4 March
Fort Wainright Alaska TTT	8 hours 21 to 23 March
Fort Knox TTT	40 hours 14 to 18 March
351st CA Cmd TTT	40 hours 4 to 8 April
Fort Huachuca NGB TTT	30 hours 11 to 13 April
Camp Shelby TTT	8 hours 8 April
Fort Huachuca 111th MI BDE TTT	40 hours 18 to 22 April
Fort Drum 10th Mt. Div TTT	8 hours 18 April
Fort Hood 4th Bde 4th ID	40 hours 2 to 6 May
Fort Lee Combined Arms Support Cmd	40 hours 19 to 24 June
Fort Sill Field Artillery Center	40 hours 11 July to 15 July
Patrick AFB Defense EO Management Inst	40 hours 25 July to 29 July
Aberdeen Proving Grounds	40 hours 8 to 12 August

Legend: ACR, armored cavalry regiment; AFB, air force base; BDE, brigade; BCT, brigade combat team; CA, cultural awareness; CRC, CONUS Replacement Center; EO, equal opportunity; FA, field artillery; GTMO, Guantanamo; ID, infantry division; MI, military intelligence; MICCC, Military Intelligence Captain's Career Course; NGB, National Guard Bureau; TTT, train the troops.

Figure 3. Examples of CA training conducted

The TRADOC Culture Center is a vital part of the U.S. Army's transformational CA campaign. The Center has already added value to the force by creating solid CA classes on relevant cultures for Army schools and courses, deploying units, and the Army at large. Like any new organization, however, it faces some preliminary challenges, including securing long-term funding and additional resources to meet growing requests for CA support. The Center must also refine and expand its regional analysis and associated CA classes. Clearly, though, TRADOC's Culture Center benefits the U.S. Army. All members of the profession should tap into this valuable new institution to bolster force-wide cultural awareness.

How to Request Training Support

The Center plans its training schedule out to 18 months, but its calendar fills up quickly. The deputy director hopes to expand the size of the Center as soon as possible to increase its ability to fulfill all

of its missions and requests for support, including providing personnel to travel to Army installations worldwide. Art Vigil, the Center's current scheduler, is the point of contact for arranging CA training. If your unit wants CA training support from the Center, contact Vigil at <art.vigil@us.army.mil>, giving him as much lead time as possible. **MR**

NOTES

1. See MG (now LTG) Peter Chiarelli and MAJ Patrick Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations," *Military Review* (July-August 2005): 6.
2. For more information, see U.S. Army Intelligence Center, USAIC Cultural Center Proposal (Fort Huachuca, AZ: May 2005).
3. *Ibid.*, 3.
4. *Ibid.*, 6.
5. *Ibid.*, 9-14.
6. See "The U.S. Army Intelligence Center Opens the TRADOC Culture Center," *The Fort Huachuca Scout*, 9 February 2006, A3.
7. *Ibid.*
8. U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC), "Cultural Awareness Training in Common Core PME [Professional Military Education]: Decision Brief to Commanding General, CAC," 14 September 2005, 13-14. Figure 2 comes from this briefing.
9. *Ibid.*, 15. Figure 3 comes from this briefing.
10. Based on an interview with another Army commander, it seems this particular Army unit is on the cusp of incorporating tier 3 and 4 CA classes in its PME curriculum, which should ameliorate concern about the lack of senior-level CA training. In this case, it seems the issue boils down to a matter of actually applying the higher order CA training in PME classes as opposed to critiquing the CA material.