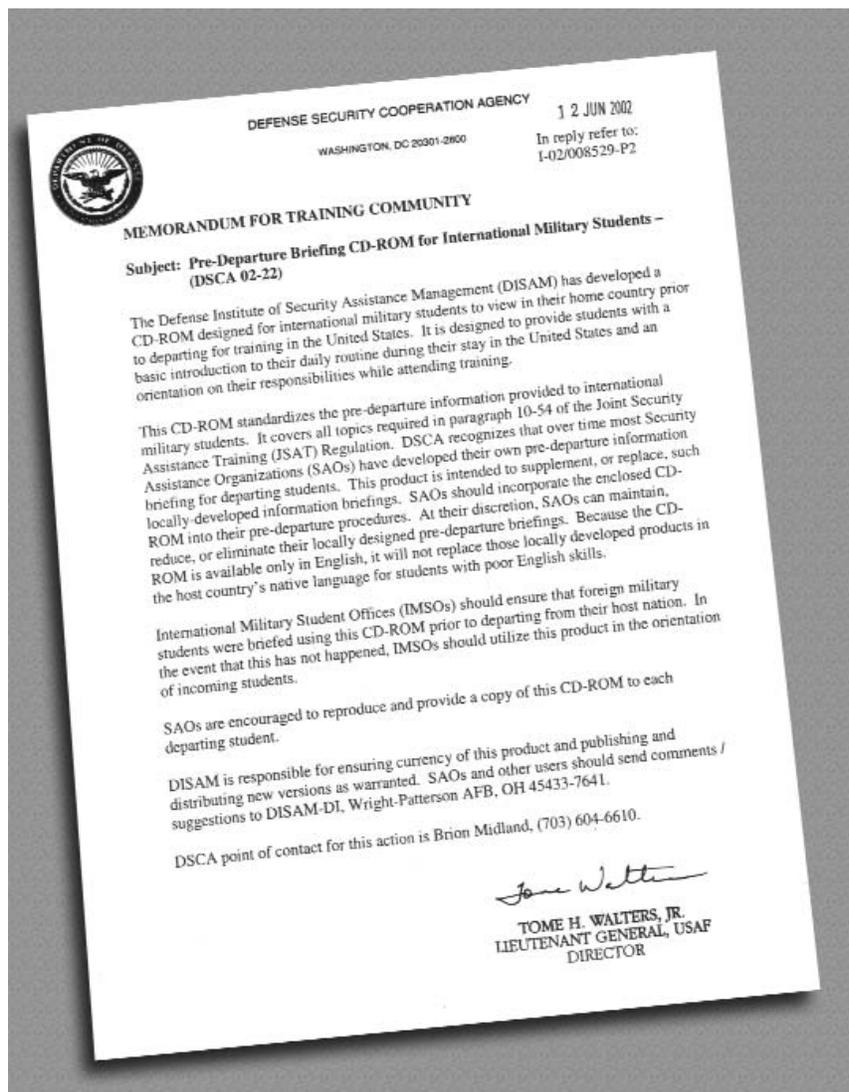

International Military Student Pre-Departure Briefing

By

Richard C. Rempes
Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management

One of the routine, but more important duties of security assistance offices (SAOs) is to present a “pre-departure briefing” to all international military students (IMS) selected to attend schools in the United States. In some of the larger and busier SAOs, training officers often provide this briefing, or an equivalent packet of written information, to students many times a week. In order to reduce this load on SAO manpower and standardize the information being presented to all IMS, DISAM set out last year to produce a CD-ROM that would fulfill this requirement for all countries sending students to the U.S. under the security assistance program. That project is now complete and, as this issue of *The DISAM Journal* goes to press, copies of the CD-ROM are being distributed to SAOs and other members of the training community.



Background

The requirement for the pre-departure briefing comes from the *Joint Security Assistance Training Regulation (JSAT)*, which states in paragraph 10-5,

SAOs will ensure that IMSs are thoroughly briefed before departing from their home country. When it is impossible to brief the IMS orally, the SAO will develop a written pre-departure briefing package for delivery to the IMS. Also, the IMS will be thoroughly briefed by the IMSO upon arrival at each training installation. The importance of these briefings cannot be overemphasized. Much embarrassment can be prevented if they are intelligently and diligently carried out for every IMS.



The minimum content of the briefing is spelled out in paragraph 10-54 of the JSAT, which itemizes no fewer than twenty-eight topics and numerous sub-topics. Over the years, this implementation has taken a variety of forms. Most SAOs have developed their own local version of an oral briefing and/or written package of information for the student. Recently, a few SAOs, notably Malaysia and Singapore, have produced their own briefings on CD-ROM. The scope and content of these briefings are largely at the discretion of the SAO, ranging from minimal coverage of the topics listed in paragraph 10-54, to elaborate presentations with extensive local country-specific supplementation. Unfortunately, there are still occasions when students depart for CONUS without any pre-departure briefing. This generally happens when selected students are stationed and depart to the U.S. from locations far from their servicing SAOs.

ODC Singapore's Pre-Departure Briefing CD

To remedy this problem, and to ensure that every IMS receives the same baseline pre-departure information, a standardized and easily distributable briefing needed to be developed.



A Generic Briefing

With the proliferation of multi-media capable personal computers (PCs), and taking from the lead of security assistance training coordinators such as Sean O'Hara from ODC Singapore and Jaya Arasan from SAO Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), DSCA decided that a generic briefing could be produced on CD-ROM and made available to all SAOs and IMSOs dealing with international military students. In June 2002, Lieutenant General Tome Walters signed a memorandum for the training community (on the next) which directs SAOs to incorporate this CD-ROM into their standard pre-departure procedures. Every student bound for the U.S. comes from a unique personal background and

brings a different impression of the United States to his training experience. As such, the briefing is devoid of any country-specific information, adheres strictly to the topics required in paragraph 10-54 of the JSAT, and is presented in sub-titled English.



Topics Are Organized Chronologically

The student starts with information useful to know long before departure, such as English language requirements, American cultural information, U.S. currency, medical coverage, driving, etc. Next, topics important closer to departure time are covered, such as baggage and airline tickets. The following section discusses issues relevant while in the U.S., such as student-instructor relationships and the DoD Informational Program (IP). The last section covers actions required upon return home, such as filing vouchers and student de-briefing. The CD also includes block-by-block descriptions of both the IMET and FMS version of the computer generated Invitational Travel Order (ITO), as well as the paper-based DD Form 2285.

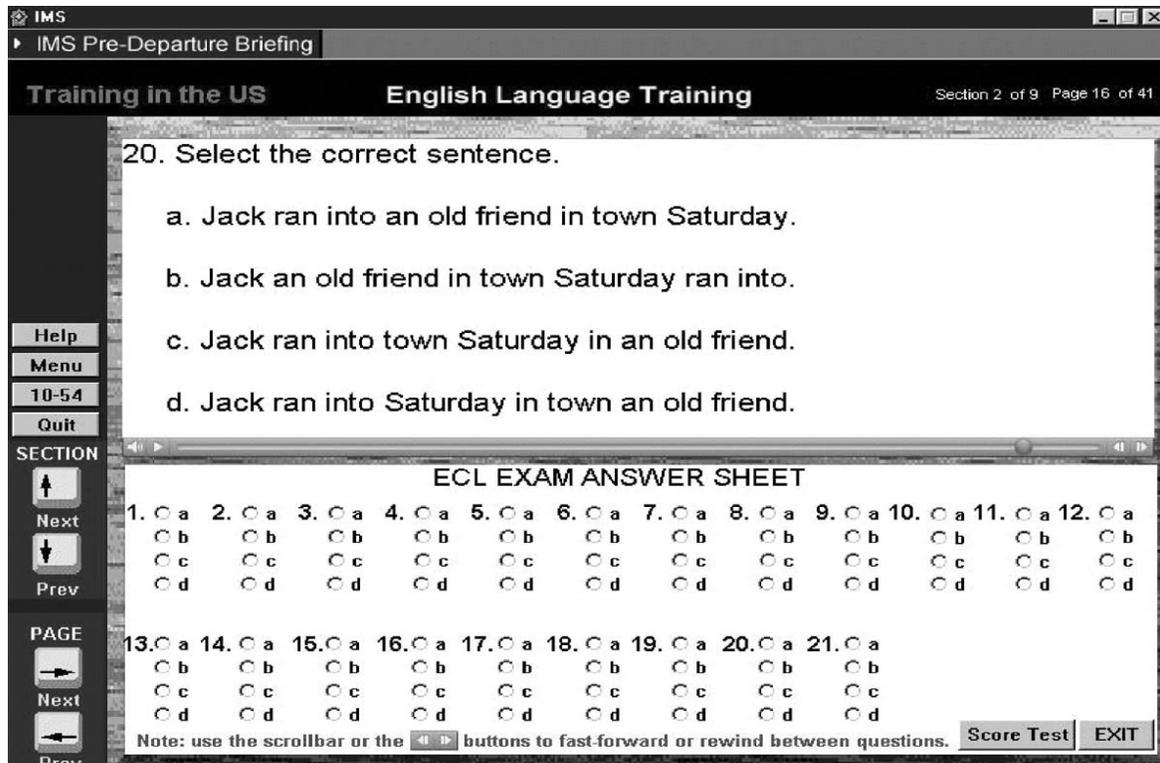
An Interactive Presentation

Presented by Army Major Robert Holzauer, a DISAM assistant professor, the briefing is essentially a menu-driven collection of QuickTime® movies filmed in locations relevant to the topic at hand (in a bank, a post office, a military clothing store, etc.), each with supporting graphics and sub-titled English narration.)



Many of the movies are supplemented with interactions or links to websites. Students can practice counting U.S. currency, look up current exchange rates, learn more about American culture and society on the web, or locate their destinations in the U.S. on an interactive map. There is a practice ECL test that students can take, and there are numerous side-bar articles and interactive charts, such as a U.S. rank and insignia matrix and lists of U.S. military terms, abbreviations and slang.

Given the nature of the tools and web links in the briefing, IMSOs will find the CD useful for students wanting to know more about the community where they are training, current exchange rates, medical information, and similar information.



SAO Handling and Implementation

Although the basic briefing requirements are covered on the CD-ROM, SAOs are authorized to supplement it with any locally-developed materials. Ideally however, the CD-ROM represents a stand-alone product which relieves the SAO of the burden of additional briefing other than answering student questions. SAOs, IMSOs (who are on distribution for the CD-ROM through their service training organizations), and other users are authorized to download, reproduce, and distribute copies of the CD as local requirements dictate. It is recognized that most SAOs do not have the time or available computer workstations for students to routinely view the CD-ROM from SAO offices. Therefore, the following procedure is suggested, which should be convenient and appropriate for most SAOs:

- The SAO retain two copies of the CD-ROM for occasional in-house use and send four copies to the host nation training point(s) of contact. (Each SAO will receive six copies of the CD from DISAM).

-
-
- The SAO coordinates with his host nation counterpart(s) to ensure that each IMS has viewed the CD in host nation facilities (e.g., the language laboratory) before the SAO issues the Invitational Travel Order (ITO).

Further guidance for the SAO is contained in the DISAM memo accompanying the distribution of the CD-ROM.

Designed for the Future

The QuickTime® multimedia player format was chosen because it allows students to easily pause and replay any section of a movie they wish. Additionally, QuickTime® allows for multiple audio and text tracks. Future versions of the briefing could include alternate languages for both audio and sub-titles with little modification to the existing product. QuickTime® movies are also scalable in both size and quality, such that future versions of the product might be re-purposed for 100 percent web delivery.

Hardware/Software Requirements and Installation

The Pre-Departure CD requires a Pentium II or compatible personal computer running at a 233 Mhz or greater, 32Mb RAM, an 8X or faster CD-ROM drive, color monitor capable of 800 x 600 resolution, "SoundBlaster" or compatible 16 bit sound, speakers, Windows 95/98/ME/2000/XP, Internet Explorer 4.0 or greater and QuickTime® version 5 (included on the CD). Two installation options are available:

- Run from the CD-ROM - 8.5 Mb hard drive space required for QuickTime®; program runs entirely from the CD.
- Install to Hard Drive -290 Mb required for QuickTime® and program files; CD not required after installation.

Either option will automatically look for QuickTime® software on the user's system and will attempt to install it if not present (some systems require system administrator privileges to install any software, your IT support personnel can help you if this is the case).

References

1. *Joint Security Assistance Training Regulation* (JSAT) AR 12-15/SECNAVINST 4950.4A/AFI 16-105, 5 June 2000.
2. Memo, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Pre-Departure Briefing CD-ROM for International Military Students* (DSCA 02-22), 12 June 2002.

About the Author

Richard C. Rempes is an instructor and distance learning developer at the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management and is the system administrator of the DISAM e-learning site. He is a former U.S. Army Ammunitions Logistics and Quality Assurance Specialist and taught at the US Army Defense Ammunition Center. He is currently pursuing a Masters in e-Education from the University of Phoenix and holds a Bachelor of Applied Arts from Central Michigan University. He can be contacted at (937) 255-3899, DSN 785-3899 or e-mail richard.rempes@disam.dsca.osd.mil.

