

**ADL AS A TOOL OF SECURITY
SECTOR REFORM:**
**Observations and the Case of the Balkan
RADLI project**

Aaron Presnall, PhD
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As the military of NATO and Partnership countries reduces in number of employees and soldiers, modernizes, and reorganizes with a focus on new missions and democratic control, their single most important scarce resource is the individual.

In a modern democratically controlled military, everyone must continually improve throughout her career, not only during periods of regular education. On the other hand, a small military needs all its personnel at work. Courses offered requiring months away from military posts are no longer acceptable. Downward budget pressure on partners also means fewer teaching staff, requiring more efficient use of each faculty member and subject matter expert.

As educational systems increasingly go online, the ability to participate in and to produce online education becomes a critical element of reinforcing professional integrity, legal and ethical norms, interoperability, operational capability, and regional integration.

In this environment, Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) is a strong tool to bring knowledge to the student, filling an educational gap on demand to satisfy the individual and her situational need for knowledge. It is at the same time a powerful vehicle for partnership and ultimately, transformative change in business practices.

In the case example of Norwegian SSR support to the West Balkans, ADL is directly contributing to operational readiness, while creating opportunities for partner nations' active participation in the multinational environment, achieving closer cooperation with other nations' defense systems in the framework of Partnership for Peace. ADL is also supporting accelerated mil-to-mil cooperation processes in the region, in the form of the Regional ADL Initiative (RADLI). In turn, RADLI member nations contributed significant support to the Viking 18 exercise in Sweden, with course content and through leadership roles in the PfPC ADL Working Group, which performed usability testing for ADL components for Viking.

In sum, ADL is an important tool to build the future West Balkan smart defense.

ADL in SSR

- Delivers operationally relevant training, nationally and internationally
- Enables SSR to reach across national stakeholders: MoD, J7, J6, & Mil Academy
- Amplifies value delivery in paired SSR efforts, such as PELT or building integrity
- Offers a realistic platform for regional mil-to-mil cooperation initiatives
- Demands a multi-year comprehensive approach with an emphasis on stakeholder buy-in
- Offers scope for beneficiary nations to evolve into international leaders, mentoring others
- Provides a sandbox environment for testing transformative US technology and techniques
- Exemplifies Norway's leadership in SSR innovation

Early Days: Norwegian - Serbia bilateral ADL SSR

Since 2010, the Norwegian MOD's SSR program has supported and advised the Serbian military in the implementation of ADL pedagogy, technology, regulations, and international partnerships. This has resulted in global class capability in the ADL department of the Centre for Simulation and Distance learning within the Military Academy of Serbia, development of Serbia's leadership in regional mil-to-mil collaboration on ADL, and transformed regional capability in support of international peace support operations deployment.

The Serbia Center provides a virtual learning platform to the Serbian MoD and Armed Forces with infrastructure support from the Serbia J6. They deliver both education and approval of e-learning teachers to the AF and have an important role in the e-course production of AF and partners. In the project period, Serbia has become a member of the NATO PfPC ADL Working Group, the NATO Training Group (NTGTG IT&ED), and in 2013 became a full Partner Lab of the ADL Initiative, an honor shared by only a handful of nations. (<https://adlnet.gov/partners-partnership-network>)

With the termination of direct bi-lateral assistance for ADL at the end of 2016, Serbia shifted from a recipient to a partner in a region for ADL capacity building.

Shift to Regional Emphasis in Norwegian Defense Security Sector Reforms (DSSR)

The Norwegian MOD's DSSR southeast Europe work has shifted in 2016 from primarily bilateral projects, toward larger and wider regional projects in order to achieve better results and to make full use of synergies among national efforts. This new regime for DSSR initially took the form of support to the creation of the Balkan Medical Task Force (BMTF), a field medical hospital staffed by BiH, Serbia, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Serbia.

In 2017, Norway leveraged the success of seven years of ADL capacity building in Serbia and the initial success of the BMTF to establish the Regional ADL Initiative (RADLI).

West Balkan Regional ADL project (RADLI)

Stakeholders:

In addition to the Serbia Simulation and Distance Learning Center itself, the Serbia Military Academy, the Serbia Military Medical Academy and other organizational units of the Serbia MoD and General Staff all took an active role in building the foundational ADL capabilities of Serbia to date. Each of these stakeholders was directly and significantly involved in the design of the RADLI project and take an active part in assuring its success. The Directorate of Telecommunications and Informatics (J-6) is fully committed to provide all network conditions to host regional partner nation ADL platforms and to assure ADL courses and mobile learning platform are available and secure on the Internet.

In Macedonia, the Office for International Cooperation/MoD, Human Resources/MoD, J-7, the Military Academy were all actively involved in the design of the project and are fully supportive.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Department of International Cooperation of MoD BiH, Sector for Personnel Management MOD BiH, the Joint Staff of the AF BiH, Support Command of the AF BiH, and Operational Command of the AF BiH are each actively supportive and involved in project design and implementation.

The Slovenian MoD Department of International Cooperation, Sector for Personnel Management, and the Joint Staff are all actively involved in implementation, though Slovenia joined after the initial design phase of the project.

The Montenegrin Armed Forces are aware, involved and supportive of RADLI, but will remain in an observer role in the project for the near term.

Synergy with earlier SSR work:

The RADLI project links directly to the larger body of the Kingdom of Norway for security sector reform in Serbia, including support to the MoD Sector for Policy Planning, J7, J6, the Military Medical Academy and the 7 Self Access Centers of the PELT program. In cooperation with Norway, the Serbia Ministry of Defense Directorate of Education prepared a comprehensive program for developing and implementing a distance-learning platform for use by the Military Academy and Command and Staff Colleges. In 2010-2011, the Kingdom of Norway funded initial capital costs covering a distance-learning lab, digital library and on-line ADL platform. In addition, this cooperation yielded a prescribed set of standards and regulations defining the development strategy of distance learning in the defense sector, as well as technical, and pedagogical standards for ADL in the Serbia MOD. In 2012-13, this platform registered over 1,000 course completions across 16 ADL courses built with the ADL Center staff in compliance with the SCORM 2004 standards to service customer demand at the Military Medical Academy, the School of Higher Security Studies, and NODEFIC itself. In 2014-16, ADL expanded across the system in the Serbia AF and MOD, with hundreds of courses built locally and tens of thousands of course completions.

Regional cooperation was the next natural challenge. The BMTF and its donors indicate that ADL is a highly desirable contributor to training the multinational and frequently rotating BMTF staff, and they see this initiative as an important supporting function to build a high quality operational unit.

The regionalization of PELT is another opportunity for regional synergy in ADL. Serbia ADL already cooperates closely with PELT Serbia and many regional stakeholders expect that English language skills will soon emerge as a regional priority for ADL.

RADLI Project Description:

The RADLI project seeks to leverage the center of ADL excellence in Belgrade to elevate *operationally relevant* ADL capabilities of the region with technology professional networking, standards, technical skills, and collaborative innovation. Developing a formal regional initiative is a painstaking and time consuming process. RADLI proceeds on a two track path: 1) immediate practical collaboration, innovation and professional networking to build capacity for joint ADL among the regional partner nations; 2) gradual development of the political and legal framework for formalizing the institutionalization of this regional collaboration over time.

A regional steering committee, comprised of the Directors of the regional partner nation ADL Centers, meets once a year to mark progress toward these aims. Representatives from the Norwegian AF and the Jefferson Institute serve as observers on the Steering Committee. The Jefferson Institute serves as the implementing local partner, as in previous Norway SSR/ADL projects.

Project Goals:

RADLI will initiate Balkan ADL regional cooperation, broadening access to the wealth of internet based training and education tools for students and faculty to use in support of their missions:

- 1 expanding qualified and professional personnel, trained to adapt quickly within modern military norms and standards of integrity, and at a level required to achieve operational capability for interoperable joint effort engagement in peace keeping and peace support missions;
- 2 increasing engagement with regional and international processes for peace and stability;
- 3 delivering a powerful demonstration project of regional cooperation for the Balkans, and for NATO PfP partners.

The three-year **objectives** for this project (2017-2019) are:

- 1 Active participation of the regional partner nation Centers for Distance Learning in professional networking at international conferences and activities in the field of ADL and mobile learning. This includes:
 - Annual Balkan Regional ADL conference
 - NTG IT&ED
 - ADL Initiative Director's meeting
 - Annual Nordic Regional ADL conference

The Project Steering Committee convenes in a side meeting at each of these annual events.

- 2 Development of a joint RADLI skinned LMS, hosted by J6 in Serbia.
- 3 Mentor regional partner nation ADL Centers in practical regional collaborative course development. Mentoring cycles are paced at approximately eight courses built per year for the full project duration.
- 4 Support innovative collaboration in joint regional blended ADL/Simulation course development: targeting support to the training requirements of the Balkan Medical Task Force.
- 5 Continuing professional development of the staff at the regional partner nation Centers for Distance Learning in accordance with requirements and needs, including attending advanced courses for the processing of multimedia content (video editing, web design, sound processing, Adobe Flash and Adobe Photoshop).

Sustainability:

The RADLI project was developed at the request of and in close cooperation with the MOD and AFs in Serbia, Macedonia, and BiH, with active communication with Montenegro and Slovenia. The Serbian MOD formally proposed the idea of a regional ADL project in 2015. Thus, local ownership was a given from the start.

The Serbia Military Academy has a small staff of highly qualified programmers and network administrators fully capable of maintaining the deliverables. Serbia's J6 is committed to support as well. Subject matter experts from across the region are exceptionally motivated to contribute to course development.

Partner nation SMEs will continue to build their own ADL courses without additional coding or technical skills beyond the ability to prepare a power point presentation.

Gender factor:

The percentage of women in the Military Academies of the region are on the rise. One third of the cadets at the Military Academy of Serbia are women, with 580 men and 220 women enrolled in total. We strive to ensure gender balance in the faculty and SMEs who create the course modules and in the selection of students for testing these modules.

Serbia's Contribution:

The Serbia MOD will provide substantial in-kind contributions toward the project's success. The Serbia MOD declared through the official document *Intent for future cooperation* as well as many regional and international activities realized during 2015 and 2016 it's will to improve regional ADL partnership. The contributions will include expert support and dedicated staff time for regional partners in:

- 1 preparing and crating documents & regulations for ADL capacity development
- 2 training ADL team/staff members for performing administrative tasks, multimedia content production and course management
- 3 organization of an annual regional ADL conference event
- 4 collaborative e-courses production
- 5 e-courses hosting & exchange

Synergy with other partnership initiatives:

RADLI successfully leveraged national resources (SMEs and national ADL organizational infrastructure) with regional networks in 2018 to deliver meaningful value to the Viking 18 exercise, a multinational civil-military CAX held in Sweden. Three of the courses provided by RADLI to the Viking LMS were among the top five most popular courses for the 2,500 exercise participants from 64 nations and international organizations.

In 2018, Canadian Defense initiated cooperation with RADLI on development of virtual reality mini-simulation content for ADL courses. Initiated as a technology sharing effort, early successes have now evolved into content sharing within the context of the RADLI Virtual field Medical Hospital, originally designed as a training environment to support the Balkan Medical Task Force. The Danish Armed Forces have also made exciting progress in developing mini-VR simulation elements for ADL courses, and may collaborate with RADLI in the near future.