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From: Major Saunders, D.E., XXX XX 2342/1302
To: Strategy and Plans Division (PLU), Plans, Policies, and
Operations, HQMC

Subj: RABAT, MOROCCO LANGUAGE SUSTAINMENT TRIP REPORT

1. **Purpose.** To report on language sustainment training in Rabat, Morocco from 25 April to 15 June, 2012, by Major David E. Saunders, USMC, 8220 and current Olmsted Scholar.

2. **Summary.** Currently stationed in Rabat, Morocco as an Olmsted Scholar and attending classes at Mohammed V University at the Agdal campus in Rabat, Morocco. Language sustainment was provided as an opportunity to further hone language skills with an emphasis on high-level conversational exercises as well as reading exercises. The sustainment complemented university classes and local cultural immersion.

3. **Discussion.** During my first six months in Morocco I was able to complete language training both in a small class setting (4-6 students) as well as one on one with funding provided by the Olmsted Foundation. However, with the start of university classes and depletion of Olmsted funding I was unable to continue this additional training. Due to the complex language environment here in Morocco it remains difficult to practice Modern Standard Arabic on a daily basis through interactions with the local populace. Funding provided by PLU allowed me to continue directed study in Modern Standard Arabic in addition to the standard daily interactions I encountered.

a. As a University student, I had a great deal of time and opportunity for listening to Modern Standard Arabic as well as interacting informally with my classmates. However, this did not lend itself to higher level communication, as would be needed for presentations and more formal interactions. As a result, I engaged a tutor in a one on one setting at the Center for Cross-Cultural Learning (CCCL, www.cccl.ma). My previous interactions had been with Qalam wa Lawh (www.qalamcenter.com) and I decided to use another language program in order to broaden my experience with language institutions in Rabat.

b. I met with my tutor twice weekly for two hours each session. I found the sessions to be helpful with more formal communications. In addition, after working with my tutor we

developed a program where we would discuss current issues in Morocco and then I would discuss the same topic with other tutors at CCCL. I found this method - initial discussions with my tutor followed by either a one on one discussion or group discussion - to be very profitable for me. In addition to presenting me with different Arabic speakers it allowed me to use varied vocabulary in a different format and in different modalities which led to better retention.

c. The only drawback that I experienced with CCCL was a lack of flexibility. Occasionally I had conflicts between my tutoring schedules and class schedules. Unfortunately this is due to the fluid nature of university class schedules in Morocco and seems to be the rule rather than the exception. In those cases I had to choose between going to my university classes or going to my tutor. This was exacerbated by a very strict rescheduling policy enforced by CCCL. In essence, students are not able to reschedule their classes, which was very surprising due to the overall fluid nature of schedules in Morocco as a whole.

d. Overall I completed 32 hours of language study with a one on one tutor at a cost of approximately \$600. Originally my request had been for \$1150, but due to the complexities of scheduling tutoring around my university schedule I did not complete my second programmed period of classes which was scheduled to start at the end of September. If given the opportunity I would try to work with CCCL in the future to design a more flexible system around existing university requirements.

4. **Recommendations.** Language sustainment through CCCL remains a viable option. This is a great opportunity; PLU and the comptroller made it extremely easy to get reimbursed for expenses paid, especially for those of us who are working outside of the normal USMC construct. This sort of funding is a great opportunity for FAOs and Olmsted scholars currently stationed in foreign countries, especially due to the fact that funding requests for these Officers only include the actual tutoring costs and no TAD or per diem is required.

5. **Contact Info.** Please contact me at daveandbeckysaunders@gmail.com or at (212) 66-121-9882 with any questions.



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