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MEMORANDUM FOR HQMC, Strategy and Plans Division (PLU), Plans,  
Policies, and Operations, Washington, D.C. 20380-1775

Subj: YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA TRIP REPORT

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this trip was Indonesian language sustainment. Official travel to the Republic of Indonesia, from 2-16 June 2012, by Captain Antonio M. Contreras, USMC, 8248 East Asia FAO. This was an unaccompanied trip.
2. **Discussion.** I chose to visit and study in Yogyakarta due to the abundance of universities, language schools, and cultural richness of its traditions, events and locations. Yogyakarta (Yogya) is home to the Univeristas Gadjah Mada, one of the oldest and most reputable universities in Indonesia. The city boasts the largest number of institutions of higher education per capita, and a large number of language schools. The result is a city with the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest percentage of non-local Indonesians, that is also accustomed to foreigners. It is a place of learning, a uniquely Indonesian culture melting pot which benefits from freedom from the shortcomings associated with Jakarta (impersonal reputation, traffic congestion, and pollution). As a result, I found Yogya to be particularly well-suited for my visit.
  - a. I selected Alam Bahasa to be my language school. It is one of several Indonesian language schools in the city, and has a good reputation. It is used by several American universities (e.g. University of North Carolina), as well as government agencies across the world (U.S. State Department; Australian government) to prepare students and employees to successfully navigate the language and culture of Indonesia. During my course of study, I met students from UNC and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs. I also met Australian, German and American businessmen, a Swiss relief aid worker, and was told that the school was used by US Air Force and Army personnel in the past.
  - b. The curriculum was well prepared and on par with the DLI curriculum. The teachers had diverse backgrounds. They were well-prepared to teach the lesson's contents and were obviously trained to be teachers to foreign students. From talking to students from other schools, it seems that many instructors' sole qualification is that they are native speakers. This is not the case at Alam Bahasa. During the course, I was assigned a lead teacher, who was assisted by 4 teachers in delivering a well-crafted and progressively difficult program of instruction.

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c. I spent 6 hours in class each day, one-on-one with rotating teachers every 2 hours. This 12-day course resulted in a very intense 60-hour program. Classes initially focused on reading and listening comprehension, grammar, and syntax. After initial proficiency assessment, we worked through 2 textbooks, newspapers and other materials. Additionally, I was able to include three field trips into the schedule, visiting the temples of Prambanan and Borobudur, and the Indonesian Air Force Museum in Yogya. The school provided transportation for the field trips. My daily routine consisted of the following:

0800-1200: Classroom instruction with 2 15-minute breaks

1200-1300: Lunch with students and teachers at local restaurants

1300-1500: Classroom instruction or field trip, depending on schedule

1500-1800: I took time in the afternoon to walk through the university areas and talk to students, roadside vendors, and anyone who expressed an interest in talking to me. This provided my most meaningful conversations outside the classroom setting.

d. The instruction received at the school was excellent, and well worth the price. I highly recommend Alam Bahasa for FAOs in training. The feedback from beginner language students from UNC was consistent: the school is able to get people with little to no knowledge of the language speaking with confidence in short time. Immersion in Indonesia yields better results than class time stateside.

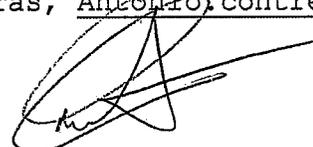
e. Billeting was arranged through the language school: it provided a list of available homestays in the area, and ensured that the family in question would be ready to receive the student for the duration of the course. While adequate and fiscally responsible, the homestay I selected ended up lacking the very thing I was hoping to get from the setting: daily interaction with an Indonesian family, and an "insider perspective" on typical family life. The family consisted of Mr. Agus, his wife, Mrs. Inge, and their daughter. Mr. Agus was away teaching photography in Jakarta for most of my visit, while his wife tended the family restaurant and was seldom around. I never saw their daughter, and had little opportunity to interact with the parents. The household also employed a couple as caretakers, but they were very reserved and showed no interest in conversing with me other than making sure my needs were met.

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f. By far my most meaningful contacts outside the school were the result of my walks throughout the university grounds. I found university students to be detached from political activity and often lacking in opinion-or reluctant to express an opinion to a foreigner-regarding political and economic matters. The main source of concern, beyond the prospects of employment after graduation, was the effect of corruption in their personal lives. Indonesians are very nationalistic, which often distorts conversations about the country, living conditions, and most matters that could cause national embarrassment.

g. I did not visit to the US Embassy in Jakarta, nor did I have an opportunity to meet the current FAO in training in Jakarta.

3. **Recommendation.** Immersion TAD to Indonesia, combined with language classes improved my language and cultural proficiency. I gained a new perspective on Javanese natives' interactions with migrants from other islands, such as the disdain shown towards Papuan students. I recommend this approach and location for other Indonesian FAOs. I also recommend a 2 weeks period of training since 1 week would have been too short to accomplish the trip objectives. This is particularly true considering the jet-lag resulting from the 11-hour difference with Washington DC, and the resulting mental toll the first few days. The projected cost of the training was \$9,581; the travel claim voucher amounted to \$6,614. Point of contact for this report is Captain Antonio Contreras, Antonio.contreras1@usmc.mil or (703) 784-3690.



A. M. CONTRERAS