



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
TRAINING AND EDUCATION COMMAND
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MEMORANDUM THRU

Director, MAGTF T&E Standards Division, Training and Education Command

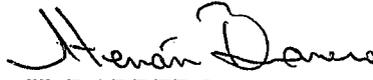
FOR HQMC, Strategy and Plans Division (PLU), Plans, Policies, and Operations, Washington, D.C. 20380-1775

Subj: SPAIN TRIP REPORT

1. **Purpose.** To provide PLU with a report on the benefits of my language sustainment training conducted in Spain from 14 to 24 July 2012.
2. **Summary.** The combination of language classes and immersion greatly improved my language skills in as short period. In addition to improving my language capability, the exposure to the locals gave me a clear perspective of what Spaniards are actually feeling as the economy sinks deeper into recession.
3. **Discussion.** The primary reason for choosing AIL Spanish in Madrid was because it was accredited by the "Instituto Cervantes" that guarantees Spanish schools have achieved the highest teaching standards. The location of the school was also a factor since it was in the center of the city in the "Barrio Salamanca," an exclusive commercial and residential neighborhood close to the museums, government buildings and parks of the city.
 - a. The classes ran from 0930 to 1330 Monday to Friday with a 30-minute break in between. There was homework every night that normally took about one hour.
 - b. I took a placement test on line prior to the course and I was placed with the upper level intensive group. The group that I was in had six students and the instructor emphasized understanding. The classes were very well structured and it quickly raised my proficiency level to where it was after living in Colombia.
 - c. The following comments are observations and not an analysis of the current situation in Spain. As a Latin America FAO I was interested to see firsthand what was on the mind of the average Spaniard and how the economy has impacted immigrants from Latin America in Spain since remittances are so important to some economies in Latin America. The people that I spoke with were eager to talk about their economic situation and in the ten days that I was there, I saw two small peaceful demonstrations, one against the recent increase of the sales tax and the second on the decreasing unemployment benefits. It was clear that the

majority of the working class is frustrated with the government's drastic measures it is taking to prevent a full-blown bailout. During the economic boom, Spain attracted million of Latin Americans for the economic opportunities and because the Spanish government was so generous in helping immigrants integrate economically. Spain was sometimes the preferred destination of choice for economic immigrants over the U.S due the shared language. Over the past decade many became legal residents or citizens, however, locals say that many of those immigrants are now going back to their country of origin because the unemployment rate is so high. Some may be going back but there are Latin Americans everywhere one goes. It was interesting to find out that the police have quotas for arresting illegal immigrants. On a Sunday I asked a gentlemen selling clocks a the "Parque del Retiro" if he would be there the next day and he responded by saying that he would not because Sunday was the only day that the police allowed vendors on the park. Two days later I witnessed an undercover police officer confiscate the merchandise and money of a street vendor. The police action may be effective on some immigrants already there but in my opinion the economic recession will prove far more effective at self-deportation and at stemming the flow of future immigrants. Tourism is still strong but the summer season will be ending soon and the number of unemployed will likely increase and cause more pain for the Spanish economy.

4. **Recommendation.** This form of training is very effective because it increases confidence in the use of a foreign language. My language baseline significantly improved by participating in discussions and reading articles every night. The first hand exposure to locals is also priceless in knowing what people are thinking and feeling.


H. BARRERO