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12 Oct 12

From: Major Ryan E. Crais, 7490/0802
To: Branch Head, International Affairs Branch (PLU)
Via: Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group
Subj: URDU LANGUAGE SUSTAINMENT REPORT, INDIA 7-30 Sep 2012

1. Purpose. To report on TAD to Lucknow, India for Urdu language sustainment training.
2. Objective. The primary objective of this trip was to sustain my Urdu language proficiency in a fully immersed environment. The secondary objective was to sustain regional expertise and relationships through visits with Indian Army officers and liaison with the U.S. Embassy country team.
3. Executive Summary. I conducted two weeks of immersion language training in Lucknow, India followed by one week of engagements with Indian Army officers in Southern India. During the entire trip I spoke Urdu at every opportunity. Because I had attended the American Institute of Indian Studies in Lucknow in the past, my teachers quickly identified my language deficiencies and rapidly brought my language proficiency back. Returning to the same school proved extremely beneficial in terms of maximizing my time in-country. Every morning I attended classes and every afternoon we focused on speaking skills. These two weeks in Lucknow successfully refreshed my language and cultural skills. The subsequent regional travel to meet with Indian Army (IA) officers and the new country team members also renewed my currency as a South Asia FAO in India and it allowed me to practice my Urdu in a professional setting.
4. Trip Highlights:
 - a. In-country Immersion. After not being in India for over one year, I was concerned with losing some of my language base. Within the first few days the majority of my vocabulary and speaking fluency returned. During my last week visiting with the Indian Army Officers I practiced speaking both Urdu and Hindi, reinforcing my refreshed language skills. While there are pseudo-immersion opportunities CONUS-based, there is limited comparison to the benefits offered by in-country immersion in

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India and just as important, my maturing rapport with my Urdu instructors.

b. Exposure to the Indian Army and military bases. For Marine Corps South Asia FAOs there is a significant lack of tangible experience with the Indian Army. To date only one Marine Officer has attended India's Command and Staff College in Wellington and only one South Asia FAO has supported the annual Indian Army Exercise SHATRUJEET. Due to the support of the US Embassy country team in Delhi and my past efforts in sustaining relationships with Indian Army officers, I was afforded the opportunity to visit my colleagues at their military bases. These visits provided significant insight to the daily life of an Indian officer at both his home and workplace and served as my first ever visit to an Indian Army military base. Both visits continued to foster long-standing rapports with IA officers.

c. Indian Army Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), Wellington. I toured the DSSC base and three evenings in a row I met with different groups of DSSC instructors and several DSSC students. I was most impressed with the significant amount of combat experience that the instructor group possessed. For example, one of the instructors I met was a Colonel with 13 years of combat experience in a 22-year career. Much of their combat experience has been in a counterinsurgency environment. The instructors were a group of highly articulate officer. The attending international students expressed the honor and challenge with attending this premier school in the Indian army. Accordingly, only the "diamonds" in the IA Officer corps are afforded a chance to attend this school. They must pass a rigorous writing exam to gain entry. Combining the quality of the instructor group with a chance to forge rapports with the future leaders of Indian Army my recommendation remains that the Marine Corps pursue an annual school seat at DSSC designated specifically for our South Asia FAOs conducting in-country training.

5. Daily Urdu Training Schedule. From 0700-0900 I prepared for class by doing homework and memorizing vocabulary. From 0900-1300 I attended a group class with two other students. From 1400-1700 I received additional one-on-one speaking classes. Each evening I joined a local host family for dinner and continued speaking Urdu on the streets with the locals and my Lucknow friends.

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6. Itinerary. The following itinerary was followed:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Activity</u>
07 Sep	Fri	Departed Fort Story, Va for India
08 Sep	Sat	Arrived in Delhi
09 Sep	Sun	Departed for Lucknow
10 Sep	Mon	Began 12-day intensive language study
21 Sep	Fri	Finished intensive language study; departed Lucknow for Delhi; met with Security Cooperation Officer at his home due to the embassy being closed due to potential protests
22 Sep	Sat	Stayed with current Marine Corps Olmstead Scholar and had dinner with one of my former Urdu instructors
23 Sep	Sun	Departed for Pune and met with former 91 st Amphibious Brigade Officer; toured National Defense Academy
25 Sep	Tues	Departed for Wellington to meet and reside with an Indian Army officer, a former Naval Postgraduate School colleague.
26-28 Sep	Wed- Fri	Visited Indian Army Command Staff College; met with both the ARMA and Assistant ARMA from Delhi embassy country team; met with DSSC Instructors and students
29 Sep	Sat	Flew to Delhi, met with US Embassy SDO/DATT and departed India for Fort Story, Va

7. Recommendations.

a. Plane Tickets. The cost for a plane ticket through military travel is excessive. My refundable plane ticket cost \$3900. I recommend assuming the risk and buy a non-refundable plane ticket through SATO between \$1700 to \$2000. The remaining funds can be better applied for another student's immersion opportunity.

b. Repeat Immersion location. Since the summer of 2010 I have attended AIIS in Lucknow on several occasions. Consequently, my teachers know my weaknesses and strengths due to our past history of working together. This knowledge of my language deficiencies allowed us to create a tailored curriculum that expedited my language training and remediation. I recommend returning to the same school each year for in-country immersion to maximize your time while away from your command.

8. Way-Ahead. My dual-modality OPI is scheduled for 10 Oct and my DLPTs are scheduled for 10-11 Oct. Additionally, AIIS has

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agreed to allow me to attend their Hindi immersion program in Jaipur, India in Jan 2013. This language training will sharpen my Hindi speaking skills for the upcoming Exercise SHATRUJEET with the Indian Army in India.

9. Point of contact. I can be contacted by phone or e-mail at (757) 962-4151 or ryan.crais@usmc.mil.



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