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

Subj: INDONESIAN LANGUAGE SUSTAINMENT TRIP REPORT

1. **Purpose.** To report on official travel to the Republic of Indonesia, from 24 July - 14 August 2012, by Maj Jonathan F. Brown, USMC, 8248 Southeast Asia FAO.
2. **Summary.** As a study track FAO, this trip was designed to dust off rusty language skills after two years of neglect, and re-establish current social and cultural perspectives through immersion. I lived with a host family for two weeks, participated in the Ramadan fast as a conversation topic and demonstration of respect for my Indonesian friends, and attended intense one-on-one classes at Realia language school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
3. **Discussion.** I began the trip with a visit to the Defense Attaché Office (DAO) at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta. I chose language sustainment in Yogyakarta because I am familiar with the city, it caters to international students, the atmosphere is preferable to congested Jakarta, and it was an opportunity to reunite with my old host-family in the cultural center of Java.
 - a. Yogyakarta is an education city, like Boston, Massachusetts; home to a high density of reputable colleges, universities, and vocational schools. Yogyakarta has deep traditions rooted in its history as home to the Mataram kingdom, which dates to the 16th century. The Kraton (palace) remains the center of legitimate authority and culture to this day. "Yogya" is also home to the two greatest Hindu and Buddhist temples in Javanese history: Prambanan and Borobudur; both dating to the 9th century. Yogyakarta is a city of the arts; proud of its culture; and consequently draws the second highest per-capita of international and intra-national students and visitors, behind Jakarta.
 - b. I selected Realia as my language school. This is the second time I have taken language sustainment/refresher

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- training here. There is a high density of quality language schools in town, but Ambassadors, attachés from several countries, and scores of international students regularly make their way to Realia for their performance and training record. I heard it summarized well by an Australian student, "Realia began with a proven formula for teaching language, and has been perfecting it ever since."
- c. Realia's location was conveniently close to my host family. The school is situated on the north side of town, near the intersection of Ring Road and Jalan Kaliurang (km 5). It is close to the campus of University of Gadjah Mada (UGM). Realia has a guest house, and regularly coordinates home stays with local families within close walking distance. A Realia van is on hand to pick up students at the airport, to and from hotels or homestays beyond walking distance. Realia provides lunch each day. Realia has wi-fi on site. They make the logistics look easy.
- d. Realia offers classes in 2-hour sessions; up to 6 hours per day. To maximize my 2 weeks of language sustainment, I signed up for 6-hours per day at a cost of \$14 USD per hour. The school rotated teachers in 2-hour blocks from 0800-1000, 1000-1200, and 1300-1500. Lunch filled the hour from 1200-1300, and was served on-site. Realia teachers built a teaching plan around my ability, assessed through conversation on the first day. They used each 2-hour block to focus on grammar fundamentals, vocabulary-building, and translation exercises, and were flexible to shift to any subject or skill development I requested. 6-hours makes for an exhausting day, especially when fending off jet-lag, but progress was immediately noticeable. The value of immersion was reinforcing lessons from class beyond the classroom.
- e. Homestay was a wonderful option, beyond simply providing a place to stay. I had daily discussions with my host family, covering a range of topics from family life to the Olympics; observations about Indonesian politics, corruption in the police force, and local economics. I happened to arrive in the middle of Ramadan, which meant everyone was fasting. Since I had jet-lag, and was wide awake by 4am each morning, I participated in the morning "sahur" and fasted all day, making an event of 'breaking the fast' with my host family, teachers, and friends. It

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was an easy conversation topic which cost me nothing, and won instant appreciation as a sign of respect from a non-Muslim American. It also happened to be the same 2-week period as the Olympics. Indonesia had one team with any hopes of medaling; the badminton team. This was the only event covered on Indonesian TV, which was all the more embarrassing when their team was disqualified for "throwing" games to achieve better seating in future rounds. Essentially, I saw none of the Olympics.

- f. While in Indonesia, I took advantage of 3 opportunities to visit families I have supported over 6 years, since initial FAO In Country Training. In Jakarta, I pay to keep my old house-keepers daughter in school, to the tune of \$300 per year. Vita was 12 when I started paying for her school. Now she is 18, and about to begin her 2nd year of college. In Yogya, I pay to keep a single mother's kids in school. Kiki was 11 when I started paying for her school; now she is 17, and finishing high school. In Bali, I paid the final year of college for the daughter of a family that hosted me in 2006. Kadek Ayu is now a high-school teacher. Relationships forged over time in Indonesia are priceless; and the image of generous Americans leaves a widespread impact in a country like Indonesia.

4. **Recommendation.** This form of training was cost effective and valuable. I improved my DLPT score from 2+/2+/2+ in 2011 to 3/2+/3 in 2012. Projected cost was \$9,288. Final cost was \$5,866. Aside from valuable language sustainment, I gained updated insights into current political, economic, social, and security issues. I was also able to re-establish contact with the Embassy team and Indonesian friends. For further details about Realia language school, their website is:

<http://www.realians.com>

J. F. BROWN