

**STATEMENT
OF
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**BEFORE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**HEARING
ON
STATE DEPARTMENT TRAINING: INVESTING IN THE WORKFORCE
TO ADDRESS 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES**

MARCH 8, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today to address the Department of State's training programs. As the Director General mentioned, we appreciate your continued interest in these issues, and are pleased that the GAO found that the Department is meeting 26 of the 32 attributes used to assess federal strategic training and development efforts. We welcome the GAO's recommendations in those areas where we can strengthen our actions; as an example of our commitment, I note that we have already closed out one recommendation – on curriculum design guidance.

The Foreign Service Institute – FSI for short – is the Department's principal training arm. We provide career-long training programs for the Department's personnel. Our programs include over 600 classroom courses and over 200 in-house developed distance learning courses. These start with orientation for both employees and family members, and include progressively advanced tradecraft, leadership, and language training for staff as they take on new assignments and progress through their careers. Tradecraft training provides our workforce with the tools to effectively perform their jobs at home and abroad – and covers disciplines as diverse as management, consular, public diplomacy, political and economic reporting, and information technology and office management. Beyond these traditional areas, we also provide training in stability operations for those destined for our most challenging assignments, in area studies, and in cross-functional disciplines such as international negotiations, program management, and strategic planning. Foreign language instruction is critical to our diplomats' ability to communicate America's message to foreign audiences and engage with both governments and local populations; we provide instruction ranging from six months to up to two years in some 70 languages. Leadership training is also an important focus at all levels, starting with entry-level Civil and Foreign Service

staff, up to Ambassadors and Senior Foreign Service and Senior Executive Service principals. And in our transition programs, we recognize that a foreign affairs career is, almost by definition, a mobile one that will have many turning points. Here we aim to give employees – and their family members as well, who are partners on the journey – tools that help them anticipate and cope with the issues they face, ranging from security in dangerous overseas environments, to raising resilient foreign service children, to returning from high-stress assignments.

FSI's curriculum is geared to support the entire country team that represents the United States in our missions abroad, and our training audience includes students from over 47 federal agencies and the military service branches. We also harness the expertise of external sources such as the General Services Administration, the Defense Acquisitions University, the Graduate School and other vendors to bring in or purchase training that is beyond the foreign affairs sphere but very pertinent to the work State personnel do – for example, government-wide human resources, acquisitions, or federal budgeting.

We face many challenges in providing training for today's complex foreign affairs environment. Under the Secretary's Diplomacy 3.0 initiative, which the Director General has already discussed, we have increased training enrollments for State personnel over 50% from pre-Diplomacy 3.0 levels. Another important area of focus recently has been the development of our Stability Operations curriculum, which supports the growing deployment of personnel to Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Sudan, and other critical areas of instability. This includes the Interagency Integrated Civilian-Military Training Exercise for Afghanistan conducted with DoD partners at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Butlerville, Indiana. We heeded the call from Congress, the GAO and others to

strengthen interagency coordination and created programs such as the National Security Executive Leadership Seminar, a 10 day seminar conducted over five months for rising interagency leaders at the GS-15/FS-01/06 level.

A continuing challenge is the need to train a workforce that is deployed worldwide. We are proud to be leaders in the area of computer based distance learning (DL), which makes it possible to provide training 24/7 anywhere in the world with access to the internet. Ten years ago, FSI had only ten of our courses available by distance learning. Today, we have over 200 courses on subjects ranging from foreign languages, to tradecraft, to the basics of reconstruction and stabilization. Our expertise in DL allows us to quickly respond to emerging requirements for world-wide training, such as on the NO FEAR Act. Because we created a DL course and rolled it out quickly to our global workforce, State was one of the first cabinet level agencies to substantially meet the NO FEAR Act training requirement. We also provide a commercial library of DL courseware on a variety of workplace skills such as IT, communication, and effective supervision. We have also been working to increase opportunities for training in the field. We have developed agreements with regional centers in Florida, Frankfurt, and Bangkok to provide forward-deployed training either through visiting FSI staff or certified adjunct faculty.

FSI works closely with HR and other bureaus in the Department to ensure that our training is meeting the Department's needs and anticipating future requirements. This collaboration may take the form of comprehensive studies. The Director General has mentioned the comprehensive job analyses HR conducted for FS Generalists and Specialists in 2007 and 2009, the results of which we used to ensure the timeliness of our course offerings and reflect training needs, and the

recently published American Academy of Diplomacy report on “Forging a 21st-Century Diplomatic Service for the U.S. through Professional and Education and Training.” These inform our planning for training and employee development. Beyond this kind of formal analysis, FSI also constantly engages with stakeholders in the Department and elsewhere to update course material and create new courses where necessary. For example, last year, we successfully piloted new courses on promoting human rights and democracy, on supervisory and leadership skills for entry-level staff, and on understanding the interagency for mid-level employees. The release of the QDDR report presents another opportunity for self-assessment, and we are currently conducting in-depth curriculum reviews in several areas highlighted by the QDDR, such as Development and Diplomacy and Interagency Agility.

Regarding training performance measures, I note that the performance measures FSI has been using were developed a few years ago under our participation in the previous Administration’s Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) process. However, it is timely for us to review our training related performance measures and we will do so during the upcoming Bureau Strategic and Resource Plan cycle. As the GAO noted, over time linkages to strategic planning for training and development have lessened in the agency’s planning processes. In addition to looking at our own bureau strategic plans coming up, the Director General and I will discuss with the Under Secretary for Management the possibilities for including linkages to training and employee development in the overall strategic planning process.

In terms of reviewing the impact of our individual courses, FSI has been expanding use of what (under the Kirkpatrick system) are termed “Level 3” evaluations, i.e.,

impact of the training in the workplace once the student has returned to the job. Further, fueled by the QDDR report, we have formed an internal working group which is examining FSI's training evaluation activities, and making recommendations for further improvements.

In terms of data collection and analysis we believe that we are already collecting much of the data the GAO recommends through the Department's corporate systems, the Global Employee Management System (GEMS) and Student Training Management System (STMS). Through HR's data warehouse known as the Knowledge Center we think there is some existing capacity for bureau training officers to generate reports to result in data usable for analysis. HR and FSI will continue to explore ways to make bureau Executive Directors more aware of the availability and utility of Knowledge Center data. However, more sophisticated reports generation may require additional programming and program enhancement to the GEMS and STMS applications which would depend on resource availability.

CONCLUSION

The men and women of the Department's Civil Service, Foreign Service, and Locally Employed Staff workforce are a vital national resource. They have chosen the path of public service and are doing tough jobs, often in rough locales and at great personal risk. They deserve the best preparation we can provide to do their jobs at the high level they aspire to achieve, and to help them develop into our potential future leaders. Especially in an era of tight budgets, training is critical to ensure that our employees are performing their work with maximum efficiency and the ability to rapidly adapt. Speaking for FSI, and I know Director General Powell will concur, we are proud of what we have been able to do for the Department,

including increasing training opportunities through distance learning and other creative delivery methods. We believe our curriculum helped the Department earn a top-five ranking among large agencies as a “best place to work ” in the most recent employee survey conducted by the Partnership for Public Service.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to address you and the Subcommittee today. Along with the Director General, I would be happy to answer your questions.