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ENSURING AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE DIPLOMATIC SECURITY TRAINING FACILITY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE DEPARTMENT AND USAID MANAGEMENT, INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS, AND BILATERAL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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CONTENTS

	Page
Hon. David A. Perdue, U.S. Senator From Georgia	1
Hon. Tim Kaine, U.S. Senator From Virginia	4
Hon. Gregory Starr, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC	6
Prepared Statement	7
Connie L. Patrick, Director, Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Glynco, GA	9
Prepared Statement	10
Michael Courts, Director, International Affairs and Trade Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office, Washington, DC	12
Prepared Statement	14

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Written Statement of Earl L. "Buddy" Carter, Member of Congress, First District of Georgia, Submitted by Senator David Perdue	32
Responses of Gregory Starr to Questions Submitted by Senator David Perdue on Behalf of Representative Buddy Carter	34
Responses of Michael Courts to Questions Submitted by Senator David Perdue	37
Responses of Michael Courts to Questions Submitted by Senator David Perdue on Behalf of Representative Buddy Carter	40
Responses of Michael Courts to Questions Submitted by Senator Tim Kaine	41
Letter Submitted for the Record by Senator Tim Kaine	42
Letter Submitted for the Record by Senator David Perdue	43

ENSURING AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE DIPLOMATIC SECURITY TRAINING FACILITY FOR THE TWENTY–FIRST CENTURY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2015

U.S. SENATE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE DEPARTMENT AND USAID MANAGEMENT, INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS, AND BILATERAL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,

Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. David A. Perdue (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Perdue, Isakson, Kaine, Cardin, and Murphy.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID A. PERDUE, U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

Senator PERDUE. Good afternoon. The committee will come to order.

Thank you for being here, and I appreciate my colleagues being here for this hearing.

This hearing of the Subcommittee on State Department and USAID oversight is entitled "Ensuring an Efficient and Effective Diplomatic Security Training Facility for the Twenty-First Century."

I would like to begin by welcoming our witnesses today: Assistant Secretary Greg Starr, Director Connie Patrick, and Mr. Michael Courts. Thank you so much. I appreciate your time and energy today. I know you have been laboring over this decision for a long time, and we hope to bring some clarity to that today as we move in the next few months, it sounds like, toward a final adjudication in terms of what is best for our personnel and the taxpayers.

We are here today to discuss the GAO's report that we have all seen that was requested by Congress to examine two options for the State Department's new consolidated diplomatic security training facility.

Before that, I thought I might give a little background. The tragic events that transpired in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11, 2012, remind us that we need to prepare our Foreign Service officers for the worst and prepare our diplomatic security agents to take on any challenge while protecting sovereign U.S. soil and valuable American lives.

Our civil servants overseas are operating in an increasingly hostile world. Just this February, State had to evacuate the U.S. Embassy in Sanaa due to increased hostilities there. And there have been others. This is ongoing every month it seems. Our State Department personnel are, indeed, in very tough situations around the world, and we owe them the utmost in protection.

Indeed, protecting Americans abroad is paramount. Our Nation must ensure that Americans sent to serve our Nation overseas are safe and have the skills they need to protect themselves from any threat.

As chairman of the State Department Management Subcommittee and as a member of the Budget Committee, I am also responsible for the accountable spending of taxpayer dollars, as we all are. Today we are here to look at the process for building this new diplomatic security facility.

For those of you who are not familiar with the history, I thought I might just go through just a little bit of background.

State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security—DS I will refer to as we go through this—identified the need to consolidate training functions as early as 1993. State leases and contracts today—there are 11 facilities to provide comprehensive high-threat and hard skills training, and then there are eight other facilities that provide soft skills training, which a 2011 GAO report has found to be insufficient, ineffective, and changes needed to happen. So this has been identified for some period of time.

In May 2008, State came up with the concept of the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center, or FASTC, as we will refer to it in the rest of the conversation today. This program was authorized and appropriated in 2009 when Congress set aside $70 million to identify and procure a permanent site for FASTC. Over 2 years, State and GSA studied 70 sites and determined that Fort Pickett was their best option in 2010 in Virginia.

In December 2012, State put forth a full master plan for FASTC with their price tag of under $1 billion, $900 million plus.

In 2013, OMB directed State to consider as an option augmenting an existing facility like the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, or FLETC, in Brunswick, GA, which currently trains over 90 law enforcement and other Federal and local agencies with hard and soft skills training.

Let me say this before we go any further. If this hearing does not do anything else, it confirms that God has a sense of humor, that the two facilities we are now looking at as the final options—one is in Virginia, and our ranking member, Senator Tim Kaine, represents Virginia. And the other facility is in Georgia, and I represent Georgia, along with my senior Senator Johnny Isakson here.

But I want to assure, for the record, everyone here that we are all about the same objective, and that is this. We want to make sure that our personnel are adequately trained to meet the challenges and dangers abroad. That is the objective function.

And the second thing that we are here to do as part of oversight of the State Department is make sure that we spend taxpayer money appropriately. That is it. There is nothing parochial going on here, and I applaud Senator Kaine for the way he has handled this and Senator Isakson in the past as well.

Let me continue with this. FLETC's original proposal was $272 million against that same scope at that point. We will talk a lot today about scope. But the scope that presented the first estimate—and that is what it was. It was a bid at $900 million. FLETC's proposal came in with a similar scope or a given scope of $272 million.

State later reduced the scope of that plan, removing soft skills, cafeterias, housing, medical, and recreation facilities. In the end, we are looking at a reduced scope proposal with an initial capital cost of $413 million at FASTC versus $243 million for augmenting FLETC. And later we will get into these numbers a little more. I am just trying to hit the high points here.

Per the request of Congress, GAO has reevaluated these proposals. Unfortunately, we still do not have a true apples-to-apples comparison as we sit here today, and we will talk about that more as well.

What we want to get at today is the process by which these decisions have been made. The State went ahead on a major construction project. And we have invested, I think, $71 million now at the Fort Pickett, VA, location. This full assessment, while it may end up being the right choice—I would argue that we do not have a true apples-to-apples comparison yet today against the original scope or against the revised scopes that have been put forward.

So part of our hope today is to make sure that we all agree or the State Department will present what that scope needs to be so that as we look at this outside group that is doing the new study between now and December, we will not have to revisit this after that so that we all agree on what that scope of mission is.

There is a delay actually. I think that project has been put on hold, as I understand it, until we get this apples-to-apples comparison.

And I applaud the State Department for taking one last look at this to make sure that we spend the money that is absolutely necessary.

And I just want to make sure again that we reemphasize that this is not a parochial conversation. This is about taxpayer money and the mission that we have of training people.

The review today, though, is part of a bigger process—I want to take just a second on this—about how we spend money in the State Department. And it is not just in training. Looking at embassy construction is just one that we will eventually get to.

There are several recent examples that do raise concerns. Just this summer, our committee received a notification from State that the new Embassy Compound in Islamabad, Pakistan, originally estimated at $850 million, is now going to be—the estimate overrun is about $87 million.

The $1 billion Embassy in London is now $100 million over budget, and it is not done yet.

And in Papua-New Guinea, a $50 million originally now has turned into a $211 million Embassy in Papua.

So it raises questions. As a business guy looking at this, I know Tim with his background—Senator Kaine rather—has looked at these things as well. Overruns happen when scopes change. We all

understand that. But when you see a continuous pattern, it does heighten the need for oversight in my opinion.

So with that, let me turn to our ranking member, Senator Tim Kaine, and thank him for his work on this over the past few months since I have been here and indeed in the years past. Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. Thank you and thanks, Mr. Chair, for your kind opening comments and to our witnesses and my other colleagues for being here today.

One of the things I appreciate being ranking member of this subcommittee, as the chair led off with, it is about the personnel, and that has been his attitude and it is certainly mine. When we travel and we interact with personnel in the State Department who are doing tough missions abroad, often in places where they cannot bring their family, places that are dangerous, we always remember to thank them. And that is something that bonds all of us on this.

And this is about an important matter, about the safety of our embassy personnel in a world that sadly is a lot more dangerous than it used to be and that we would hope that it would be.

A few comments on the history because I am troubled by this as well, but I guess the thing that troubles me most is the delay. And so that is kind of what I want to get into. This was a project that was identified by the State some years ago, as the Chair indicated, the need to have a facility that better trained State Department personnel to meet the security needs of a more dangerous world.

By late 2010, December 2010, after this very significant site selection process—and this is now more than 2 years before I came to the Senate—the State Department and GSA together had identified Fort Pickett as the appropriate site for this particular mission. Plans were then made, EIS, et cetera to move that forward, and then the horrible tragedy of Benghazi occurred in September 2012, sort of underlining and putting an exclamation point after the need for better security training. So the initial study was done by the State and the GSA.

In the aftermath of the attack on Benghazi, the Accountability Review Board that reviewed what happened and, more importantly, made recommendations for how to avoid it ever happening again focused on the need for better embassy security training. And there were two subcommittees that were appointed to implement the recommendations of the ARB. ARB recommendation 17 dealt with embassy security training. And both of those subcommittees, as they analyzed what needed to be done, came back to the need not only for a new facility but for the facility at Fort Pickett because of its proximity to State Department personnel in Washington and the proximity to the Marine Security Guard training program that provides all that great Marine security at post 1 at every embassy all around the world. Fort Pickett had a number of virtues, but the proximity to State and the proximity to the Marine Security Guard was one of its principal virtues.

So at that point when the Accountability Review Board had come up with its recommendations, we now have State and the GSA and the Accountability Review Board all pointing in the same direction.

As the chair mentioned, the decision was made, I think, following some congressional inquiry, especially from the House side, to review and reanalyze the choice of Fort Pickett, vis-a-vis the FLETC facility in Georgia. The OMB conducted that analysis from about February 2013 through April 2014, an additional year of kind of waiting. But they did the analysis, and when they finished, they decided to defer to the initial choice that State and the GSA had made.

At that point, in the aftermath of this Benghazi attack and the recommendation that the security training needs of our personnel were paramount, it was my hope that it would then move forward. But as part of the appropriations process last year, the House inserted language that was accepted as part of appropriations language to require a study by now a fifth agency. I am calling State, GSA, OMB—three—the Accountability Review Board, but now the fifth agency, the GAO. The GAO has done a study. It came out on the 9th of September, and that is the occasion for this hearing today to dig into the GAO's recommendations.

And I know we will have questions and digging into process both for this project in particular, but also more generally, as you point out, what is the right way that we should be doing projects.

But I am just mindful here of time passing. It has been nearly 5 years since the State/GSA process chose Fort Pickett as the site after a multiyear search to get to that decision. It has been 3 years now since the attack on Benghazi, multiple years after money was put into the budget to do this training facility. And I just feel a sense of urgency about the need for this training, as I know you do.

You know, you go to these embassies overseas. Like you go to the one in Beirut and you walk by the memorial marker to all those embassy personnel who were killed in the Beirut bombings. I think Americans remember that marines were killed, but they may not remember so much how many State Department lives were lost there. And we see the evacuation, whether it is in Libya or Yemen. These are tough times for the people doing these jobs, and I think we need to move with dispatch to make sure that the security training that we provide is as strong as it can be. Cost is important, clearly, but the security training being done and being done right is critically important.

And so that is what I hope we will get at and move toward as we have this hearing today.

Senator PERDUE. Well, thank you, Ranking Member.

Now we are going to reach to our witnesses today. The first up is Assistant Secretary Greg Starr, who serves as Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security. In this capacity, he is in charge of the security and law enforcement arm of the State Department. He previously served as Director of the Diplomatic Security Service.

His overseas assignments have included Senior Regional Security Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, as well as Senior Regional Security Officer positions in Tunis, Tunisia; Dakar, Senegal; and

was assigned to the Regional Security Office in Kinshasa, Zaire, presently the Democratic Republic of Congo.

I might add also that he shared with me, as we were being introduced just a minute ago, that he has actually personally been evacuated twice in his career. Assistant Secretary, thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF HON. GREGORY STARR, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. STARR. Chairman Perdue, thank you very much. Ranking Member Kaine, distinguished members, Senator Cardin, Senator Isakson, good afternoon. And I want to thank you for the opportunity to discuss our plans for a foreign affairs training center at Fort Pickett, VA.

As has been said, improved training was a key finding of the Benghazi Accountability Review Board in the aftermath of the attack in 2012. The Diplomatic Security Organization and Management Review Panel, which was commissioned after the ARB, and then a Best Practices Panel, both staffed with serious, high-minded individuals whose judgment I find impeccable and their credentials impeccable, both came to the conclusion—both panels recommended that the Department establish a consolidated training facility in close proximity to Washington, DC.

Since that time, attacks on State Department facilities and personnel in Herat, Afghanistan; Erbil, Iraq; Ankara, Turkey, plus the need for evacuations from Libya and Yemen, only highlight the danger that our employees face while fulfilling our diplomatic responsibilities abroad. We have learned from these events, just as we have learned from Benghazi, and we continue to modify the training as we learn new, hard lessons almost every day.

The Department has initiated efforts to combine numerous hard skills training venues into one consolidated site and we tried to do this even prior to the Benghazi-related recommendations. In 2009–2010, the Department and the General Services Administration reviewed over 70 properties before selecting Fort Pickett in Blackstone, VA. In 2013, we reduced the scope of the project to focus solely on the consolidation of hard skills training, cutting the project's cost from an initial estimate of over $900 million to $413 million, an estimate that has been verified by GSA and their two independent accounting firms.

In searching for a consolidated training center in proximity to Washington, this has been a priority for us for two primary reasons.

First, Washington is the hub for the Department of State and other Federal agency personnel preparing to go overseas. Having a closer training facility will cut travel costs, provide more training opportunities not just for our officers, but particularly for our family members, and improve logistics.

Second, staying in the mid-Atlantic region allows us to continue to train with critical security partners, particularly the United States Marine Corps elements that we work with every single day. This collaboration is essential, as we have seen in Libya, Yemen, and Burundi. According to the recently released Government Ac-

countability study, Marine units stationed in Quantico, VA, have already determined that their budget will not support travel to facilities located outside of the Washington region.

Consolidation is critical because it increases the effectiveness of the training by allowing students to seamlessly transfer from one real world scenario to another. Threats often emerge quickly and a consolidated training center will provide the flexibility necessary to immediately train for emerging threats and major events.

Our specialized training for high-threat environments includes heavy weapons, explosives demonstrations, armored vehicle driving, helicopter landings, extensive night training, evacuation training. Finding a single site that can accommodate all of these elements without disrupting the surrounding area has been challenging. A low population density region is critical to ensuring the current and foreseeable real world training requirements that we need and can be met 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center has a strong core competency in training Federal law enforcement agencies, and this is why we send our own agents there for basic investigative training. But with FASTC, we are not training for law enforcement duties. We are preparing diplomatic security agents for service at critical threat overseas, which requires an extremely specific skill set, working with our DOD partners, rather than our domestic law enforcement partners.

In April 2013, the Department asked to suspend project efforts at Fort Pickett and reevaluate the feasibility of locating FASTC in Glynco. Over the next year, we worked collaboratively with FLETC through multiple site visits and exchanges of information. After the review, we decided to locate FASTC at Fort Pickett as reflected by the administration's request for $99 million of FASTC funding in 2016.

That said, we recognize the concerns of Congress and have arranged for an independent cost-benefit analysis comparing FASTC, FLETC, and our interim training center, Summit Point. The CBA is being conducted by Deloitte under contract to GSA.

While we look forward to receiving that cost-benefit analysis, the Department remains confident—confident—that Fort Pickett is the best option for an effective and cost-efficient training facility. We appreciate the time and effort on the part of Director Courts and his team at GAO in examining this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity. I am out of time at this point. And I look forward to answering any questions you have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Starr follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GREGORY B. STARR

Chairman Perdue, Ranking Member Kaine, and distinguished members of the committee—good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department's plan for a Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Improved training was a key finding of the Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB) in December 2012. The Diplomatic Security Organization and Management Review Panel and Best Practices Panel, both convened as a result of the ARB, recommended that the Department establish a consolidated training facility in close proximity to Washington, DC.

Since that time, attacks on State Department facilities and personnel in Herat, Afghanistan; Erbil, Iraq; and Ankara, Turkey—plus the need for evacuations from

Libya and Yemen—have highlighted the danger our employees face while fulfilling our diplomatic responsibilities abroad. We have learned from these events and continue to modify our training as needed.

The Department had initiated efforts to combine numerous hard skills training venues into one consolidated site even prior to the Benghazi-related recommendations. In 2009–2010, the Department and the General Services Administration (GSA) reviewed over 70 properties before selecting Fort Pickett in Blackstone, Virginia. In 2013, we reduced the scope of the project to focus solely on the consolidation of hard skills training, cutting the project's cost from over $900 million to $413 million, an estimate which has been verified by two engineering firms.

In searching for a consolidated training center, proximity to Washington, DC, has been a priority for two primary reasons. First, Washington is the hub for Department of State and other federal agency personnel preparing to go overseas. Having a closer training facility will cut travel costs, provide more training opportunities to family members, and improve logistics. Second, staying in the mid-Atlantic region allows us to continue to train with our critical security partners, especially the Marine Corps. This collaboration is essential, as we have seen in Yemen, Libya, and Burundi. According to the recently released Government Accountability Office (GAO) study, Marine units stationed in Quantico, Virginia, have already determined that their budget will not support travel to facilities located outside of the Washington region.

Consolidation is critical because it increases the effectiveness of the training itself by allowing students to seamlessly transfer from one real world scenario to another. Threats often emerge quickly and require immediate action to counter. Having a dedicated and consolidated training center will provide the flexibility necessary to immediately train for emerging threats and major events.

Our specialized training for high threat environments includes heavy weapons, explosives demonstrations, armored vehicle driving, helicopter landings, and extensive night training. Finding a single site that can accommodate all of these elements without disrupting the surrounding area has been challenging. A low population density region is critical to ensuring that current and foreseeable real-world training requirements can be met 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) has its strong core competencies in training federal law enforcement agencies, which is why we send our own agents there for basic investigative training. But with FASTC, we are not training solely for law enforcement. We are preparing Diplomatic Security agents for service at critical threat overseas posts, which requires an extremely specific skill set, working with our DOD partners, rather than our domestic law enforcement partners.

In April 2013, the Department was asked to suspend project efforts for Fort Pickett and reevaluate the feasibility of locating FASTC at FLETC in Glynco, Georgia. Over the next year, the Department worked collaboratively with FLETC through multiple site visits and the exchange of information to further evaluate this possibility. After an extensive review, the administration supports the State Department's decision to locate FASTC at Fort Pickett, as reflected by the administration's request for $99 million in FASTC funding for FY 2016.

That said, the Department recognizes the concerns Congress has raised about this plan. To that end, we have temporarily put this project on hold again and arranged for an independent Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) comparing FASTC at Fort Pickett, FLETC at Glynco, and the Interim Training Facility (ITF) at Summit Point, West Virginia. The CBA is being conducted by Deloitte under contract to GSA and is slated for completion by mid-December.

While we look forward to receiving the CBA, the Department remains confident that Fort Pickett is the best option for an effective and cost efficient consolidated training facility. We appreciate the time and effort on the part of Director Courts and his team at GAO in examining this issue.

As for the current status and timeline for future development of FASTC at Fort Pickett, we are hoping to move forward with construction after the completion of the CBA so that we are on track to be fully operational in early 2019.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I look forward to answering any questions you have.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Our next witness is Director Connie Patrick. Connie Patrick was selected as the fifth Director of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, FLETC, in July 2002. Previously, Ms. Patrick spent over 6 years in various FLETC associate director positions.

She provides oversight for the training of the majority of Federal offices and agents in that location.

Prior to her appointment at FLETC, Ms. Patrick completed a distinguished 20-year sworn law enforcement career in Florida, starting in 1976 as a deputy sheriff with the Brevard County Sheriff's Office. She served in uniform patrol, vice and narcotics, homicide, and intelligence.

Welcome, Ms. Patrick, and we look forward to your comments.

STATEMENT OF CONNIE L. PATRICK, DIRECTOR, FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTERS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, GLYNCO, GA

Ms. PATRICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Kaine, and members of the committee. It is an honor to be here with you today.

I would like to thank Congress for its long-standing support of FLETC's mission, to train those who protect the homeland. I have been privileged to serve as the Director since 2002 and after holding several senior positions with FLETC and after completing a career in Florida.

Forty-five years ago, Congress established FLETC under the premise that consolidated Federal law enforcement training provides consistency and efficiency in preparing law enforcement officers and agents, while enabling agencies to conduct specialized training that meets their operational needs.

Today, FLETC delivers training to 96 Federal partner organizations, thousands of State, local, tribal, and international officers and agents at four domestic training sites throughout the United States, at international law enforcement academies, and at export locations both internationally and in the States. FLETC also engages in ongoing training review, development, and research in coordination with stakeholders, has a long history of working with our partners to adapt training programs and facilities to meet emerging needs.

The Department of State was an original signatory to the FLETC memorandum of understanding in 1970 and remains a valued partner. The Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security Service, DS, criminal investigators attend the basic training program at FLETC-Glynco, and the agents attend various advanced training programs there as well. Department of State granted FLETC certification to conduct the Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat Training program this year in March. FLETC fully supports Department of State's need to consolidate its training in furtherance of best preparing its personnel to serve its critical overseas function.

In early 2013, the Office of Management and Budget requested that FLETC work with the Department of State and General Services Administration to assess the viability of using capacity at FLETC-Glynco and to determine the cost of any additional construction to meet their needs. FLETC accordingly developed a rough order of magnitude cost estimate of $200 million, which FLETC later refined to $272 million in November 2013 at OMB's request. This estimate and associated business case are based on the Department of State's original full master plan and guarantees

Department of State's primacy of use of facilities constructed specifically for their needs.

In April 2014, FLETC received notification from OMB that the decision had been made to allow Department of State to establish the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett. Since that time, FLETC has taken no further action on this issue except to respond to congressional inquiries on its 2013 cost estimate.

FLETC remains committed to Department of State's goal to consolidate its training and looks forward to a continued partnership with Department of State.

And I am pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Patrick follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CONNIE L. PATRICK

Good afternoon Chairman Perdue, Ranking Member Kaine, and members of the committee. It is a pleasure to be with you today to discuss the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers' (FLETC) capabilities and our participation in the administration's due-diligence of the State Department's overseas security training facility.

FLETC OVERVIEW

I would like to acknowledge and thank Congress for its long-standing support of FLETC's mission to train those who protect the homeland. Congress created FLETC in 1970 under the premise that consolidated federal law enforcement training provides consistency and efficiency in the preparation of law enforcement officers and agents, while enabling agencies to conduct specialized training unique to their missions. I have been privileged to serve as the Director of FLETC since 2002, after completing a 20-year sworn law enforcement career in Florida.

Today, FLETC is the Nation's largest provider of law enforcement training. It delivers basic and advanced training to 96 federal partner organizations and thousands of state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement officers and agents at four domestic training sites in Glynco, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; Artesia, New Mexico; and Cheltenham, Maryland; at the International Law Enforcement Academies worldwide, and at export locations throughout the United States and internationally. FLETC also engages in ongoing training review, development, and research in coordination with stakeholders at all levels of law enforcement to ensure its training continues to meet its partners' evolving needs. In fiscal year 2014, FLETC trained nearly 60,000 law enforcement officers and agents at all of its sites and export locations. Since 1970, FLETC has trained over 1 million law enforcement officers and agents.

FLETC's consolidated training model offers quantitative and qualitative benefits to both taxpayers and law enforcement agencies. While FLETC provides training in core areas common to all law enforcement officers, such as firearms, driving, tactics, investigations, and legal issues, partner organizations deliver training specific to their operational needs. Moreover, the consolidated training model avoids unnecessary duplication of infrastructure and resources. Using the FLETC model, one federal agency builds and manages the infrastructure germane to a residential training facility, such as a cafeteria, gymnasium, library, training venues, classrooms, computer laboratories, dormitories, and recreational facilities, which all partners utilize. Moreover, agencies leverage and share existing support infrastructure, such as water, sewage, maintenance, and power services.

Beyond the economic rationale for the consolidated training model, agencies also benefit from enhanced interoperability and high quality training by training together. For example, FLETC's curriculum development and review process brings together experts from across the law enforcement community to share and vet ideas about training content and methodology. Like the peer review process in many professions, the healthy exchange of thoughts and concepts breeds thorough analysis of contemporary law enforcement issues and techniques, and invokes beneficial change. FLETC law enforcement training classes often comprise officers and agents from a variety of agencies, improving future interoperability in the performance of daily duties and during times of emergency. The consolidated training model thus leverages the significant role that training can play in fostering long-term collaborative mindsets, teamwork, and information-sharing capabilities in law enforcement officers from different agencies.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, underscored the critical need for all law enforcement agencies to work together more effectively; to share intelligence, information, and know-how more seamlessly; and to break down traditional stovepipes that had previously prevented integration of effort. In the increasingly complex law enforcement landscape, the consolidated training model offers consistency in training law enforcement officers and agents in core competencies, combined with the flexibility to enable agencies to prepare personnel to meet their specific operational needs. The congressional vision that established FLETC 45 years ago remains as relevant today as it ever was. FLETC continues to build partnerships across the vast law enforcement community to ensure optimal execution of the consolidated law enforcement training model.

FLETC'S EXPERIENCE IN MEETING AND ADAPTING TO PARTNERS' CHANGING TRAINING NEEDS

FLETC has a long, rich history of adapting training programs and facilities to meet emerging threats and associated agency training requirements. As training demands increased and changed in the post-9/11 homeland security environment, FLETC grew to four domestic training sites, and its international mission significantly expanded. The transition into the post-9/11 environment occasioned a refocusing and expansion of many FLETC training programs as well as the creation of new ones to meet emerging needs, such as anti/counterterrorism, flying armed, intelligence awareness, and critical infrastructure protection. Working with the Transportation Security Administration in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, FLETC assisted in the rampup of the Federal Air Marshal Service by aiding in the design of a formal training program and sustaining an increased tempo for student throughput. Also at that time, FLETC worked with the U.S. Border Patrol to transition its Border Patrol Academy to FLETC's site in Artesia, New Mexico, as the agency doubled in size and had to train thousands of agents to meet increased staffing requirements. FLETC also created the first basic academy of the Office of the Courts for 4,000 federal probation officers, and assisted the U.S. Coast Guard in consolidating its law enforcement training effort at FLETC's site in Charleston, South Carolina.

Additionally, over the past decade and a half, in coordination with its partner organizations, FLETC has built new state-of-the-art facilities to provide realistic training scenarios and exercises for officers and agents confronting a changing world. These new venues include multipurpose facilities for counterterrorism and complex tactical training. Additionally, FLETC has constructed high-speed driving ranges that support armored vehicles such as armored suburbans, where partner organizations train prior to deployments throughout the world. During its history, FLETC has worked with numerous partner organizations to develop training venues based on specific training requirements. For example, FLETC collaborated with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to construct a mock port of entry, with the U.S. Capitol Police to build a replica of the U.S. Capitol complex, and with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to develop a bomb range that met their specifications and an arson investigation practical exercise venue.

In the face of unprecedented growth in FLETC's training throughput in the years following the September 11 terrorist attacks, FLETC has consistently met its participating partner organizations' law enforcement training needs. FLETC leverages the numerous avenues it has in place to collaborate on training with its partner organizations, and encourages ongoing dialogue on training and administrative matters.

FLETC ENGAGEMENT ON DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S (DOS) TRAINING CONSOLIDATION EFFORTS

DOS was an original signatory to the FLETC Memorandum of Understanding in 1970, and remains a valued partner. DOS's Bureau of Diplomatic Security Service (DS) criminal investigators attend basic criminal investigator training at FLETC, and DS agents attend various advanced FLETC training programs. In April 2014, OMB asked FLETC to work with DOS to attain certification to deliver DOS's Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) Training at FLETC's Glynco location. DOS granted FLETC this certification in March 2015. FLETC piloted the FACT Training in Glynco the week of July 27, 2015, and will incorporate this program into its scheduled offerings for fiscal year 2016. FLETC fully supports the administration's decision to consolidate DOS's hard skills training at Fort Pickett, Blackstone, Virginia, in furtherance of best preparing its personnel to serve its critical overseas function, which has been explained in the testimony from my colleague from the Department of State.

In early 2013, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requested that FLETC work with DOS and the General Services Administration to assess the viability of using available capacity at FLETC facilities, and the cost of any additional required construction to meet DOS's training needs. FLETC accordingly developed a rough order of magnitude cost estimate of $200 million, which OMB asked FLETC to refine in August 2013. In response, in November 2013, FLETC submitted a more detailed cost estimate of $272 million to OMB.

This estimate and associated business case are based on DOS's original full scope master plan, and account for training that FLETC could conduct immediately, training that would require modification to existing facilities, and training that would require new construction. FLETC's proposal was based on DOS's stated physical plant requirements and guarantee for DOS primacy, but not exclusive, of use of facilities constructed specifically for the needs of DOS. These venues would be available for the use of and benefit to other agencies when not in use by State.

In April 2014, FLETC received notification from OMB that the decision was made to allow DOS to establish the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett. Subsequently, the administration's 2016 budget request included $99 million for construction of the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett and therefore no investment is being made at FLETC for DS training. Since the decision was made to proceed with Fort Pickett construction, FLETC has taken no further action on the issue except for responding to congressional inquiries on its 2013 cost estimate. FLETC has cooperated with a Government Accountability Office (GAO) engagement on this topic, and GAO recently published its report. Additionally, the General Services Administration recently advised FLETC that Deloitte Consulting LLP would be conducting a cost benefit analysis comparing Fort Pickett, FLETC, and another venue DOS currently uses to conduct training.

FLETC supports the administration's decision to consolidate State's training at Fort Pickett, stands ready to assist however possible, and looks forward to a strong continued partnership with DOS.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Our next witness, Michael J. Courts, is a Government Accountability Office Director in the agency's International Affairs and Trade Team.

Since 2003, he has directed GAO reviews of a wide range of U.S. Government operations and programs in the international arena to assist Congress in carrying out its oversight responsibilities.

Thank you for joining us today, Mr. Courts. We look forward to your comments.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL COURTS, DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRADE TEAM, U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. COURTS. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Kaine, and members of the subcommittee.

I am pleased to be here this afternoon to discuss the State Department's efforts to locate a consolidated facility for diplomatic security training, more specifically, two different proposed sites for such a facility, one known as the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center, or FASTC, at Fort Pickett in Blackstone, VA, and the other at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, or FLETC, in Glynco, GA.

This testimony is based on a GAO report dealing with this subject that we issued last month.

GAO was asked to testify this afternoon on key site requirements critical to providing diplomatic security training and the extent to which the two different proposed sites meet these requirements and the estimated capital and recurring costs of these proposals and the extent to which the capital cost estimates conform to leading practices.

In summary, we analyzed four of State's requirements that we determined were critical in the selection of a site for the facility and found the FASTC site in Blackstone fully met the requirements and the FLETC in Glynco did not. We also found that neither the FASTC nor the FLETC estimate for capital costs fully meets best practices for reliable cost estimates.

My first point is that as a purpose-built facility, the FASTC site would fully meet State's four critical site requirements: consolidation, proximity to Washington, DC, exclusive use, and 24/7 availability.

The Fort Pickett site would enable State to consolidate at one location most of the widely scattered hard skills training venues it is currently using. FLETC can accommodate many of these venues on its campus but would have to conduct some exercises such as training of long-range weapons, heavy explosives, and some nighttime exercises at the Townsend Bombing Range about 30 miles away.

The FASTC site at Fort Pickett is about 160 miles from Washington, or nearly 3 hours by car, and located near the Marine Corps units in Virginia that are the Diplomatic Security Bureau's primary training partners. FLETC is approximately 640 miles from Washington, or about 5 to 6 hours by air.

The FASTC site would allow State to control its training venues and have the flexibility to implement scheduling changes to respond to rapidly evolving security situations overseas. FLETC can offer State priority scheduling but not exclusive use.

Fort Pickett, which covers about 42,000 acres in a rural area, is available for nighttime training. FLETC, which is adjacent to the Town of Brunswick, GA, does not conduct certain types of training at night, and FLETC officials told us that exercises there currently end by 10 p.m.

My final point is that neither the FASTC nor the FLETC estimate for capital costs fully meets best practices for reliable cost estimates. The FASTC estimate fully or substantially meets three of the four characteristics and partially meets one. The FLETC estimate partially or minimally meets all four characteristics.

I should note that FLETC had limited time and information to prepare its estimate.

State and GSA estimated that acquisition and construction costs for the current plan for FASTC would be $413 million. State and GSA have obligated $71 million of these costs to date. FLETC's estimate was $243 million, but FLETC did not have complete information on State's requirements when it developed this estimate.

Projected recurring costs for things like operations and maintenance are greater for FASTC than FLETC based on current cost estimates. For example, the cost could be $266 million greater over 25 years and $372 million greater over 50 years. However, because these costs are based on capital cost estimates that were unreliable, these projections may also be unreliable.

We projected the cost of sending students to training for both proposals, including travel, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses and compensation for time spent traveling. And we found that under multiple scenarios, the costs of sending students to FASTC were less than sending them to FLETC. For example, the cost

could be from $122 million to $323 million less over 25 years and from $309 million to $736 million less over 50 years.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Kaine, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be happy to address any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Courts follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL J. COURTS

Chairman Perdue, Ranking Member Kaine, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss our work on the Department of State (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security's (DS) efforts to locate a consolidated training facility. State has been in the process of looking for a site suitable for its DS training facility for more than a decade. In 2011, we reported that the lack of a consolidated training facility was a significant challenge to carrying out DS's mission.[1] DS currently provides training at 12 contracted and leased sites in seven states, which DS officials believe is inefficient and more costly than a consolidated facility would be.

In 2011, State and the General Services Administration (GSA) identified Fort Pickett near Blackstone, Virginia, as the preferred site for a DS training facility, known as the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC). The initial 2012 master plan for FASTC would have consolidated training in hard skills (e.g., firearms, driving, and explosives) and soft skills (e.g., classroom-based training in counterintelligence, cybersecurity, and law) at Fort Pickett for an estimated cost of $925 million. In 2013, State reduced the scope of FASTC to exclude facilities for soft-skills training and life support functions, such as dormitories and a cafeteria, ultimately decreasing the estimated cost of the current proposal to $413 million. Also in 2013, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directed State to work with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to assess the viability of using the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia, to accommodate DS's training. In November 2013, FLETC submitted a business case to OMB indicating that it could meet DS's requirements, including soft-skills training, for an estimated cost of $272 million. Following this assessment, DS, FLETC, and OMB could not agree on a path forward.

Ultimately, OMB deferred to State on the decision of where to locate its training facility. In April 2014, the administration reaffirmed the selection of Fort Pickett for FASTC. To date, State and GSA have obligated about $71 million of the estimated $413 million in capital costs toward FASTC at Fort Pickett, including for the purchase of land in May 2015.

My testimony summarizes our September 2015 report on the FASTC and FLETC proposals for accommodating DS training.[2] Like that report, this testimony discusses (1) key site requirements critical to providing DS training and the extent to which the FASTC and FLETC proposals meet these requirements and (2) the estimated capital and recurring costs of these proposals and the extent to which the capital cost estimates conform to leading practices for reliable cost estimates.

For our September 2015 report, we reviewed documents on the requirements for DS's training facility and proposals to meet these requirements from State, DHS, and GSA. We also reviewed the Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB) report and reports by two panels established as a result of recommendations by the ARB, including the Independent Panel on Best Practices. We conducted site visits to Fort Pickett, FLETC, and three of DS's current training venues, interviewed officials at State, FLETC, GSA, and OMB about the proposals, and spoke with officials from agencies that DS identified as its training partners, including the Marine Security Guards, Naval Special Warfare Command, U.S. Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Central Intelligence Agency. We focused on four requirements of the center that our analysis indicated were critical to providing basic and advanced DS training courses. While we assessed the need for these site requirements to accommodate DS's existing and planned training, we did not assess whether specific DS training courses are necessary to accomplish DS's mission of providing a safe and secure environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. We did, however, confirm that DS currently conducts and plans to continue to conduct training that includes elements such as nighttime training, long-range firearms, and heavy explosives. We identified the number of courses and students that use these elements, as well as the projected number of such courses at the future training center. We observed a training exercise that involved several of these elements. We also asked DS officials to explain why the elements were necessary and, to the extent possible, reviewed actual examples of incidents overseas that supported DS's identified need

for specific training elements. In some cases, we discussed these elements with DS's identified training partners as well as with FLETC.

To assess the cost estimates for each proposal, we reviewed the September 2014 capital cost estimate for FASTC and the November 2013 capital cost estimate for FLETC. We evaluated whether each cost estimate was generated according to best practices outlined in GAO's Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide.[3] We reviewed data provided by State, GSA, and FLETC regarding their cost estimation practices. We also interviewed State, GSA, FLETC, and contractor staff responsible for preparing the FASTC and FLETC cost estimates. We reviewed cost data provided by State, FLETC, and GSA to determine the recurring operations and maintenance, recapitalization investment, and staffing and associated costs for each proposal. We also developed three scenarios to estimate the costs of sending students to each location, including costs for travel, lodging, meals and incidental expenses, and compensatory time for travel. We discussed assumptions regarding these costs with State, FLETC, and OMB officials and subsequently developed our own assumptions using several data sources. We provided our assumptions to State and FLETC for review and confirmation, and we revised our assumptions based on their comments where appropriate. Additional details on our scope and methodology can be found in our September 2015 report.

We conducted the work on which this statement is based in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

BACKGROUND

DS currently provides training in hard skills to a diverse student population. DS provides security familiarization training for Foreign Service and other civilian personnel and their families. It also provides advanced courses for DS agents, such as the High Threat Operations Course, an intensive 10-week course designed to provide agents with specialized training in a variety of tasks, including leadership, weapons, small unit tactics, air operations, and movement security procedures needed to operate in high-threat, high-risk posts. In addition, through the Antiterrorism Assistance program, DS provides training to foreign security personnel in areas such as crisis response, explosive incident countermeasures, post-blast investigations, and armored vehicle driving. DS has expanded its training over the last decade, and following the 2012 attack on the U.S. Special Mission compound in Benghazi, Libya, the independent ARB recommended further security training for DS agents and all other Foreign Service personnel.

In June 2015, DS projected that it would train nearly 6,300 students in hard skills in fiscal year 2015, compared to 3,500 students in 2007. DS estimates that it will provide more than 9,000 students with over 20,000 weeks of training per year once its training facility is fully operational.

FORT PICKETT FULLY MEETS DS'S REQUIREMENTS WHILE FLETC DOES NOT

For our September 2015 report, we analyzed four of DS's requirements that we determined were critical in the selection of a site for DS's training facility and found that Fort Pickett fully met all four while FLETC did not fully meet any.

- *Consolidation.* Building FASTC at Fort Pickett would enable DS to consolidate at one location 10 of the 12 widely scattered hard-skills training venues it is currently using.[4] FLETC can accommodate many of these venues on its Glynco campus but would have to conduct some exercises, such as training in long-range weapons and heavy explosives, as well as some nighttime exercises, at the Townsend Bombing Range, a Marine Corps training facility about 30 miles from Glynco. FLETC did not include costs for using this facility in its 2013 proposal.
- *Proximity to Washington, DC.* The Independent Panel on Best Practices, established as a result of the Benghazi ARB, recommended a consolidated training center, located in proximity to State's Washington, DC, headquarters, given State's reliance on military units and other government agencies located nearby. Fort Pickett is located about 160 miles from Washington, DC, or nearly 3 hours by car one way, compared to FLETC, which is approximately 640 miles from Washington, DC, or 5 to 6 hours by airplane one way. Over 90 partner organizations conduct training at FLETC; however, DS's primary training partners, including the Marine Corps' Security Augmentation Unit and its Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team, are based in Virginia, and an official responsible

for Marine Security Guard training told us that the cost of transporting personnel and equipment to and from FLETC would be prohibitive.

- *Exclusivity of use.* The Independent Panel on Best Practices "strongly endorsed" State's efforts to develop a training facility that it could control, noting that agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Secret Service, and the Drug Enforcement Administration have adopted such a policy as a best practice. At Fort Pickett, DS would control its training venues and have the flexibility to implement scheduling changes to respond to rapidly evolving security situations overseas. FLETC stated that DS would be assured of priority scheduling, but not exclusive use, for those facilities that would be built for DS and provided a detailed plan showing the facilities currently available and those that would be constructed for DS. FLETC officials stated that when DS was not using facilities prioritized for its use, other federal, state, and local agencies would be allowed to train at and benefit from the facilities.
- *24/7 availability.* DS conducts training during hours of darkness on about 190 days per year, including 140 nights that involve loud noises such as gunfire and small explosions. We found that Fort Pickett, which covers about 42,000 acres and is set in a rural area, is available for nighttime training. FLETC, which is adjacent to the town of Brunswick, Georgia, does not conduct certain types of training at night, and FLETC officials told us that exercises there currently end by 10 p.m. According to FLETC officials, DS could conduct such nighttime exercises at the Townsend Bombing Range.

CAPITAL COST ESTIMATES FOR THE FASTC AND FLETC PROPOSALS ARE UNRELIABLE

In our September 2015 report, we found that neither the FASTC nor the FLETC estimate for capital costs fully meets best practices for reliable cost estimates. The FASTC estimate fully or substantially meets three of the four characteristics[5]—comprehensive, well documented, and accurate—and partially meets one characteristic of reliable cost estimates—credible;[6] the FLETC estimate partially or minimally meets all four characteristics (see table 1).[7] FLETC officials noted that their estimate was prepared in a short period of time based on incomplete information regarding State's requirements; more complete information would have enabled them to develop a more comprehensive estimate. Our assessment of the reliability of these cost estimates focused on the processes used to develop the estimates rather than estimates themselves, enabling us to make a more direct comparison of their reliability.[8]

Table 1: Extent to Which the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) and Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) Acquisition and Construction Cost Estimates Meet the Characteristics of Reliable Cost Estimates

Characteristic	FASTC	FLETC
Comprehensive	Fully met	Partially met
Well documented	Substantially met	Partially met
Accurate	Substantially met	Partially met
Credible	Partially met	Minimally met

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the Department of State, FLETC, and General Services Administration. | GAO-16-139T

Notes: "Minimally met" means that the agency provided evidence that satisfies a small portion of the criterion. "Partially met" means that the agency provided evidence that satisfies about half of the criterion. "Substantially met" means that the agency provided evidence that satisfies a large portion of the criterion. "Fully met" means that the agency provided complete evidence that satisfies the entire criterion.

In September 2014, State and GSA estimated that acquisition and construction costs for the reduced-scope plan for FASTC would be $413 million. FLETC's November 2013 proposal included a cost estimate comparable to the full-scope plan for FASTC; however, FLETC officials said that because they did not have complete information regarding the reduced-scope plan for FASTC, they were unable to develop a comparable cost estimate. For example, these officials said that State did not tell them which venues had been removed from the plan and that they were unaware of some of DS's training exercises. These officials said that they subtracted the costs of some facilities from the FLETC full-scope estimate to arrive at a reduced-scope

estimate of $243 million. FLETC has not refined its cost estimate since OMB notified it that the administration had selected the FASTC proposal in April 2014.

In addition to capital costs for acquisition and construction of a DS training center, the analysis in our September 2015 report included projections for recurring costs for operations and maintenance (O&M) and for recapitalization investment—the costs of replacing broken systems and equipment.[9] Our analysis also included recurring staffing and associated costs for each proposal. Using data provided by State, GSA, and FLETC, we projected these costs over 10, 25, and 50 years. We projected the capital and recurring O&M, recapitalization investment, and staffing costs to be $201 million more, in net present value, for FASTC over 10 years, $266 million more for FASTC over 25 years, and $372 million more for FASTC over 50 years (see table 2).[10]

Table 2: Projected Capital, Operations and Maintenance, Recapitalization Investment, and Staffing Costs over 10, 25, and 50 Years for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) and Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC)

	FASTC	FLETC	Difference
Costs over 10 years	$1.067 billion	$866 million	$201 million
Costs over 25 years	$2.177 billion	$1.911 billion	$266 million
Costs over 50 years	$4.090 billion	$3.719 billion	$372 million

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the Department of State, FLETC, and General Services Administration. | GAO-16-139T

Notes: Costs shown in net present value. Figures are rounded.

Finally, the government is expected to incur costs of sending students to training. These recurring student costs include travel, lodging, meals and incidental expenses, and compensation for time spent traveling. We projected these costs over 10, 25, and 50 years in three different scenarios for both the FASTC and FLETC proposals. We estimated that the costs of sending students to FASTC over 10 years would be $43 million to $121 million less, in net present value, than sending students to FLETC. The difference in student costs between FASTC and FLETC increases over time, from between $122 million and $323 million less for FASTC after 25 years, to between $309 and $736 million after 50 years (see table 3).[11]

Table 3: GAO's Estimates of Recurring Student Costs over 10, 25, and 50 Years for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) and Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC)

	FASTC	FLETC	Difference
Costs over 10 years			
Low scenario	$184 million	$227 million	$43 million
Mid scenario	$189 million	$260 million	$71 million
High scenario	$200 million	$322 million	$121 million
Costs over 25 years			
Low scenario	$463 million	$585 million	$122 million
Mid scenario	$470 million	$670 million	$200 million
High scenario	$504 million	$828 million	$323 million
Costs over 50 years			
Low scenario	$942 million	$1.3 billion	$309 million
Mid scenario	$954 million	$1.4 billion	$471 million
High scenario	$1.0 billion	$1.8 billion	$736 million

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the Department of State, FLETC, and General Services Administration. | GAO-16-139T

Notes: Costs shown in net present value. Figures are rounded.

Chairman Perdue, Ranking Member Kaine, and members of the subcommittee, this completes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have at this time.

End Notes

[1] GAO,"Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts," GAO–11–460 (Washington, D.C.: June 1, 2011).

[2] GAO, "Diplomatic Security: Options for Locating a Consolidated Training Facility," GAO–15–808R (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2015.

[3] GAO, "GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide: Best Practices for Developing and Managing Capital Program Costs," GAO–09–3SP (Washington, D.C.: March 2009).

[4] State indicated that DS would continue to use a FLETC facility in Cheltenham, Maryland, for weapons requalifications for agents assigned to the Washington, D.C., area. In addition, State officials said that they will continue to use the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' National Canine Center in Front Royal, Virginia, for canine training.

[5] The four characteristics are defined as follows: (1) comprehensive—the cost estimate should include both government and contractor costs of the program over its full life cycle; (2) well documented—a good cost estimate, while taking the form of a single number, is supported by detailed documentation that describes how it was derived; (3) accurate—the cost estimate should provide for results that are unbiased, and it should not be overly conservative or optimistic; and (4) credible—the cost estimate should discuss any limitations of the analysis because of uncertainty or biases surrounding data or assumptions.

[6] "Minimally met" means that the agency provided evidence that satisfies a small portion of the criterion. "Partially met" means that the agency provided evidence that satisfies about half of the criterion. "Substantially met" means that the agency provided evidence that satisfies a large portion of the criterion. "Fully met" means that the agency provided complete evidence that satisfies the entire criterion.

[7] Specifically, the FLETC cost estimate partially meets three characteristics—comprehensive, well documented, and accurate—and minimally meets one characteristic—credible.

[8] More detail on our assessment of each cost estimate is provided in encl. V of GAO–15–808R.

[9] Because these recurring costs are based on capital costs that we determined were unreliable, these projections may also be unreliable. Thus, such projections should be used with caution.

[10] Net present value shows, in today's dollars, the relative net cash flow of various alternatives over a long period of time.

[11] We determined that these data were reliable for the purposes of developing a range of estimates of student costs. More details on our scope and methodology, including the assumptions we used in each of these scenarios, are provided in encl. III of GAO–15–808R.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you all. I should also thank you for your career of service. You are in extremely important roles of responsibility in this critical area.

Before we get started with questions, I would like to ask unanimous consent that we add to the record a written statement from Congressman Buddy Carter from Georgia. Congressman Carter's district is home to FLETC and has been following this issue very closely. So with that, I will enter this into the record.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The written statement submitted for the record can be found in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section at the end of this hearing.]

Senator PERDUE. I will go ahead and start my questions. And I would appreciate it if you guys could be as brief as possible. This is a very confusing issue and a lot of questions will come up, but try to be as brief as you can. We are going to mind the time as well.

I want to start, Mr. Courts, with you and try to look at a couple things. From a business perspective, any RFP has to have a scope and that scope has to be agreed upon by the users and by the oversight people or whatever. In this case, that scope has been changed several times over the life of this exercise. And I could not agree more with the ranking member about the sense of urgency. Let us get an answer. It has been some 5 years since we got serious about evaluating this. Most of what I am talking there happened on somebody else's watch. So I am not directing this at any of the witnesses.

But I want to try to summarize where we are from your report, the GAO report, as best I can and ask a couple of questions because I think we still today do not have estimates for both sites against what we now understand to be the real scope, if that is fair. If that is not fair, Mr. Courts, I hope you will correct me.

But as I understand it, there are three things that are involved. One is original capital costs. Then you have student costs, which

is a recurring cost, and that is an annual cost. And you have operating cost, which is an annual cost again. And the life of the project is somewhere between 25 and 50 years. Pick a number and then make a decision. I am not going to weigh in on that.

But your report gives us low, medium, and high estimates for both and then over 10, 25, and 50 years, if I remember it correctly. And so what I want to do is just highlight what is missing from what we now know, at least from a cost standpoint, and then we can get on to the subjective things. For example, I think we have some constraints that are coming out now, for example, cotraining with marines and things like that, that if they had been in the original scope, the question is of these 70 facilities that were evaluated, which ones would or would not have been candidates for this requirement, FLETC being one of those, if that cotraining is indeed a requirement.

The numbers as I see them finally is that the current FASTC estimate of first capital—and this is hard skills training only. This is a scope change from the original that had hard and soft skills training. And there is a third dimension of this that I want to point out and that is—and I do not know the right vernacular, but it is weapons training, it is blast training, it is assault training in a mockup embassy situation. You got to have access to it 24/7. In the FLETC option, that is, as I understand it, to be done at Townsend, requires original capital, and there is an ongoing operating cost for that as well, if that is right. So there are three things: hard skills, soft skills, and this weapons training and assault training.

The ongoing costs—I am just going to pick a couple of midpoints here. You mentioned the low and the high, and this is in the report, so I am not trying to quibble with the numbers. But I am just pointing out that if you look at it over 50 years, you got the student training costs. One facility is about $400 million higher than the other one. And then if you go to operating cost, the other one is $400 million higher than the other one. So over 50 years, it is kind of a wash.

On your report, FLETC has an advantage on the operating cost over that period of time if you look at it over 25 years and so forth.

But here is my question. What is missing at FLETC is the cost of the Townsend capital costs and any ongoing transportation costs or training costs relative to that additional increment that is not in their estimate today. I think that is correct. At FASTC, what is missing could be the couple years of housing and cafeteria needs until the commercial industry provides that, and then the ongoing cost differential between doing that on campus versus off campus.

As far as I can see, if those things had been met against the scope, then we would be able to get to an answer. And I think that is what Mr. Starr has said that that study by Deloitte is going to provide.

But before we get into that, the question is this. Has the scope at this point, as we sit here today, as Deloitte starts their analysis—has everybody at State agreed on what the scope is and what will be included?

And let me give you a specific example. Marine training, cotraining, right now seems to be a very important issue in this exercise. And yet, we learned that there is cotraining going on right

now in L.A. I think that was last week or something where marines and State Department personnel are doing an assault training exercise out there, which I commend. So the question is, has the scope and all the requirements been defined at this point?

Mr. COURTS. Senator, the proposal that we looked at for FASTC was the $413 million proposal, and our understanding is that that particular proposal does include the full scope of what State is planning, including training with the marines in Chesapeake and in Quantico.

Senator PERDUE. But not soft skills. Correct?

Mr. COURTS. It does not include the soft skills training. That was part——

Senator PERDUE. Yes. The $272 million and the $413 million are hard skills. At FLETC it is hard skills only, and at FASTC it is hard skills is what you are describing right now.

Mr. COURTS. That is correct.

Senator PERDUE. But without soft skills.

Mr. COURTS. That is correct.

Senator PERDUE. Okay.

The other issue is, as we look at this scope right now and go forward, how do we determine the best way to do that? What I am trying to get at this, is if that is a requirement and FLETC cannot provide that Marine training—and I will direct this at Mr. Courts and Ms. Patrick—then FLETC does not meet the Marine cotraining requirement, if I understand how you are describing that. Is that correct or not? Am I oversimplifying that?

Mr. COURTS. Well, we spoke with the Marine Corps units that State trains with. This is primary training partners. And they told us that they would not be able to travel to FLETC both as a matter of cost and as a matter of practicality because they are not only transferring their personnel but also their gear and equipment.

Senator PERDUE. How do that in L.A.?

Mr. COURTS. I am not familiar with the L.A. exercise. I would have to defer to Mr. Starr on that.

Senator PERDUE. Do you know anything about that exercise, Mr. Starr?

Mr. STARR. Our participation in that exercise I believe is leadership. It is a role-playing base. We have officers playing embassy officers. It is not hard skills type of training where we are involved in.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

There is one other—I am out of time. I will come back to this later. I will yield the balance of my time, and we will go to the ranking member.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thanks to the witnesses for your testimony, and especially the GAO for your work on the report.

As I read the report and just to kind of summarize, the analysis really looks at these two facilities across two dimensions, operations and cost. And cost has an operating and a capital component, but let us just look at operations for a minute.

You look at four operational criteria, and you conclude that the FASTC site meets all four and the FLETC site does not fully meet any of the four. Is that correct?

Mr. COURTS. That is correct.

Senator KAINE. One of the criteria that you look at deals with a consolidation and the ability to use partners. Obviously, there is a Marine presence in many places, but the Marine Security Guard program is headquartered at Quantico. And so the proximity between that program and FASTC is important.

Your report indicates that you reached out to the Marines, and they indicated that it would not be either sort of practically effective or cost effective for them to send personnel at such distance. I reached out to the Marines to get a letter to that effect, and I have a letter that the Marines—Jan Durham, who is the Assistant Deputy Commander with the Marines, over this submitted, and I would like to submit that for the record, Mr. Chair.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The letter submitted for the record can be found in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section at the end of this hearing.]

Senator KAINE. A second operational component that I wonder about is the exclusive use component. You talk about the need at FASTC, that State would have use day, night, whenever they wanted it. At FLETC they would have priority use but not exclusive use.

My understanding is that the State Department does some classified activity in connection with this training as well, and that that would not be more conducive in the exclusive use scenario rather than in the FLETC scenario. Is that correct?

Mr. COURTS. My understanding is that there are some courses that involve classified information with respect to certain threats and certain countermeasures to deal with those threats. I am not familiar with whether or not the FLETC could accommodate that versus the FASTC facility. I do believe that that capability is included in the plans for FASTC. I am not certain whether it is for FLETC.

Senator KAINE. Ms. Patrick, do you know, does FLETC have the classified capacity?

Ms. PATRICK. Reflecting back to the 2013 analysis, we based ours strictly on the building and the master plan capacity. So the requirement for the secure facilities was not one that I was aware of. So I would have to reflect back on what was actually in the building and if there was a need for that. So I am not aware of what the need was.

Senator KAINE. If there is, in fact, the need for classified activity, is FLETC currently constituted to handle that?

Ms. PATRICK. We have some classified capabilities, but I just do not know the nature of what is required.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

With respect to the second aspect of the analysis, which is the cost side and, again, maybe breaking it into two, on the operational costs, you conclude that FASTC is more operationally cost effective largely because of the proximity questions than FLETC would be. Correct?

Mr. COURTS. That is correct.

Senator KAINE. And then with respect to the capital costs—and this is one that the chair was really digging into—there is a cost

differential in terms of the FLETC proposal and the number for FASTC. I think you conclude that the FASTC proposal fully or substantially meets sort of three of the four cost criteria that you are interested in and only partially meets one of the four. But the FLETC cost proposal sort of only minimally meets the four cost criteria on the capital side. Is that correct?

Mr. COURTS. That is correct.

Senator KAINE. And I think you point out that that is not FLETC's fault, that FLETC did not have necessarily all the information that would be within the State Department concerning the needs, the capital needs of their own operations. Is that correct?

Mr. COURTS. That is correct. And they only had 60 days to come up with their estimate.

Senator KAINE. And finally, Director Patrick, let me just ask you this. Your testimony was very crisp and to the point, and I know you submitted your written testimony for the record and so it was a summary. But I just want to read two aspects of your testimony just to ask if you stand by this position.

First, on page 3 of your testimony, "FLETC fully supports the administration's decision to consolidate DOS's hard skills training at Fort Pickett, Blackstone, VA, in furtherance of best preparing its personnel to serve its critical overseas function, which has been explained in the testimony from my colleague from the Department of State." And that is your position today.

Ms. PATRICK. It is.

Senator KAINE. And then on the last page of your testimony, again, somewhat repetitively, "FLETC supports the administration's decision to consolidate State's training at Fort Pickett, stands ready to assist however possible, and looks forward to a strong continued partnership with DOS." And that is also your testimony today.

Ms. PATRICK. Yes, it is.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator PERDUE. The Senator from Georgia.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, Senator Kaine, that is exactly why I support Connie Patrick. She shoots straight, and we are so proud of her in Georgia and what she has done for so many years at FLETC. And I appreciate her being here today and appreciate your acknowledging her loyalty to the country and to the training of our security agents.

Secretary Starr, thank you for taking my calls. You and I have had numerous calls on issues regarding training in Georgia, and I appreciate very much your doing so.

I want to follow up on what Senator Perdue talked about because this to me means everything. I have just finished as chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee, finally solving the VA hospital problem in Aurora, CO. That is a hospital that started out 13 years ago as an estimate of $348 million. We finally came to agreement last week, and it is going to be $1,635,000,000. And the problem is—and I was interviewed by the Denver press, and they said why do you think this thing got so out of hand. I said it looks like a horse built by a committee, which is a camel. Anytime you have too

many people changing the definition along the way, your cost can overrun.

So the scope definition Senator Perdue asked is really totally important because you can craft a scope to have the best foot forward for what you really want to do, yet leaving out things for the future. Are you confident that the scope definitions that we are going to make our final decision upon will be fair comparisons both ways and not just written to determine where the site should go?

Mr. STARR. Senator, thank you for the question. I think it really gets to the heart of what we are talking about.

We are already training both families and Foreign Service officers for the foreign affairs counterthreat course, and we are training diplomatic security agents. And we are doing antiterrorism assistance training for foreign governments. And we are training units from foreign governments that protect our embassies.

The Department made a decision to expand in one particular are, the FACT training, tremendously so that every Foreign Service officer is going to get that every 5 years now. We are going to try to move as many families as we can through that as well. After Benghazi, we made a decision that we needed to vastly increase the hard skills training, the high intensity training for our agents as well. And when we put all of this together, we have the curriculums. We have the courses. We have the hours. We know how many people we want to put through by year up through 2019. And we specifically designed our requirements around all of the people that we need to train and how we need to train them.

Then with a very good partner, GSA, we went forward and tried to plan this for the hard skills training. GSA then went out and got two independent estimates from independent contractors on what it would really cost to build this because I am like you. The last thing I want to be in front of you is saying that this is going to cost $413 million and come back to you with an $800 million price tag on it.

I think when you plan a project, you get the hard numbers that you need to do. You do the absolute best that you can, and then you do not even rely just on the people that are saying this is what we need. Then you go to a good partner like GSA that has a record of building, and then you get independent cost estimates.

So when I come to you and say this is $413 million and GAO looks at it and says, you know, three out of the four factors they are right hard on and there is a fourth factor they could have done a little better, and GSA is going back and rectifying that fourth factor for GAO, we know it is going to come in at that cost. I like you do not like taking taxpayers' money and saying it is going to cost one thing and then having a much higher bill at the end of it. I am confident we can bring this in at that cost. That is my promise to you.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, that is the answer I was hoping to hear because I have seen far too much evidence in Washington from time to time where we have an unrealistic scope and we get an authorization to go forward, and then we get a surprise at the end when they say, oh, by the way, we forgot. In this type situation, I do not think there would ever be an excuse for forgetting, but I want to make sure that scope is as critical as possible.

Mr. Courts, thank you for the work you do at GAO.

You got a statement on page 12 that a person responsible for security guard training at the Marine Corps confirmed that the cost at FLETC would be prohibitive. I think that is the statement.

Mr. COURTS. That is correct. That is what they told us.

Senator ISAKSON. Did they make that analysis solely or did you make an analysis independent of what they said?

Mr. COURTS. We did not make an independent analysis on that.

Senator ISAKSON. So in other words, you took that at face value.

Mr. COURTS. We reported what they told us.

Senator ISAKSON. Connie, Director Patrick, thank you very much for what you do for our great State of Georgia and what you do for the training of our enforcement officers. This is an important decision for us to make, and I hope as we make the decision, we will be unified in our support and the result will be a facility that all of us can be proud of. But we are very proud of the training you do for the security agents of the United States of America around the world. Thank you.

Senator PERDUE. Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I am a novice on this issue, but it seems pretty simple to me that it does not get much more important than protecting our State Department personnel overseas. It is hard enough to get people to do these jobs. It becomes even harder if they think that we are messing around with their security. And the State Department, GAO, GSA, everyone wants to build this facility and they know where to build it. Yet, you are not able to build it, as you say, Secretary Starr, because of the concerns you have heard from Congress.

So without getting involved in the details of the Virginia site and the Georgia site, which the members from Virginia and Georgia know much better, just maybe share with me what the implications for continued postponement is. What is the implications for the ability to have the best trained, most capable security officers out in the field? I know you are going to do as good a job as you can with your current resources. But so long as we are not allowing you to make the decision on siting that you have told us loud and clear that you want to make, what does that mean for our men and women on the ground?

Mr. STARR. Thank you for the question, Senator.

In its simplest terms, we are ramping up from about 3,500 people a year for FACT training the employees of the Department of State. We want to get to over 6,000 per year. And then we want to make sure that we can get as many families in on the space available basis as possible. I cannot do that at the current facility.

With a purpose-built facility by 2018, 2019, as we ramp this up, we meet the time schedule for full implementation of FACT training for everybody in the Department and families at the same time as the facility is built. At the interim facility, I cannot do that at the moment.

Further, we are using 11 different sites now. We are moving students and instructors around continuously. We think that in one site, we can save over $11 million a year in training costs and almost double the amount of students that we train with that same budget. I cannot do that at the current site. I promise you we will

strive to do absolutely the best training we can for our people. That is my job, making sure that our people have got the best training. I will do the best that I can with the facilities that I am given.

But honestly, we have thought about this long and hard. The ability to collocate all of our training so we are not sending students and instructors to 11 different sites and doing things so that we get them there quickly and efficiently, that we keep them on and have training that starts in one place and goes directly to another without having to change location, my mobile security teams that are constantly out at high-threat embassies and coming back so I can get them quickly requalified on heavy weapons and get them back into the field, this is what Fort Pickett gives me.

The ability to train with the Marine security augmentation units, that is another 1,000 marines that were given to the—the Marine Corps gave us essentially for embassy security on top of the Marine Security Guard program that is 1,700 marines at this point. We have got another 1,000 that we use. And we have already deployed over 50 times in the last 5 years for higher-threat situations. So training with them literally 50 miles away continually—because they do not stay for long. Those units rotate through all the time. We have to have a cost and training schedule with them. That is what Fort Pickett gives us.

Senator MURPHY. So when you say that you cannot meet your anticipated volume, 6,000, with current facilities, what does that mean? When do we get to a breaking point here in which we are really jeopardizing your plan for the safety of our men and women overseas?

Mr. STARR. I would prefer to have stuck shovels in the ground right now, and that was the plan so that by 2018, when we ramped fully up to everybody, we were set. With our temporary pause, we hope to be less than 3 or 4 months behind on this and hope to still meet that schedule.

Senator MURPHY. And just lastly, as I was reading through GAO's report—and I will just ask you, Secretary Starr—this issue over having full use or partial use of the facility. Just help me explain why that is important.

Mr. STARR. FLETC is a great training partner, sir. But our needs for our students—you know, Connie can promise us a lot of priority on things, but that also means when we take priority, somebody else gets bumped as well. And there is Federal law enforcement training that has to go on as well. So we believe that having a dedicated facility that is based on our needs for 9,000 to 10,000 people a year—Connie is already training 22,000 Federal law enforcement officers a year and other courses down there. The dedicated capability to do it in one place without having to bump others is important. The ability to have it close to where we are helps us. These are the types of things that a dedicated facility does.

And I will add one more thing. We are not sure that Townsend Bombing Range can even be used for the things that we—we do not have a land use agreement with them. We do not have an agreement with the Marine Corps. We do not have any guarantees that that can be used. Now, it is possible that they could be used, but that is going to take years to figure out.

Senator MURPHY. Well, thank you to all of you. It is an impressive report, Mr. Courts. Thank you, Ms. Patrick for the amazing work that you do. Nobody has got a harder job than you do, Mr. Starr.

So thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the time.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, I have just got a couple additional questions both on the efficacy of the estimates that we have—but first, you just mentioned something. I have been a little confused about this consolidation. I get it. Everything you just said makes sense to me.

Can you speak to the soft skills training where I think the current strategy is the hard skills training is going to be in a consolidated manner so you have this assault training and weapons training that might be met at Townsend potentially? But in this case, it would be on site at FASTC. We have already violated the consolidation theory, I would guess, unless there is something I am missing here relatively to soft skills training. Can you speak to why it is acceptable? The current model is going to be hard skills training in one location and soft skills, I guess, would be at the eight facilities that are available to today. Is that correct?

Mr. STARR. Yes, sir. Our soft skills training, much of which at the—some of which is done at FSI and much of which is done in conjunction with FSI—we do a lot of training right at the Arlington campus here. We also have soft skills training on engineering and computer security. We have soft skills training on counterintelligence and investigations, advanced type of training courses.

In a perfect world, would I love to have everything collocated? Absolutely.

Senator PERDUE. That was the original scope before you got involved.

Mr. STARR. Honestly, sir, I left as the Director of Diplomatic Security in 2009, and my emphasis was on a hard skills training center. Hard skills. I spent nearly 3½—a little more than 3½ years at the United Nations, and when I came back after Benghazi, I saw that the scope had generally been increased because I think people honestly wanted to look at did it make sense to combine both soft and hard skills into the same center. In a perfect world, that is probably what you would want to do. The cost of that was just too much to bear.

And we are already located in northern Virginia for our soft skills training. It is close to the Department of State. It is close to FSI already. We have the space and the facilities. Some of it is leased. Some of it is at FSI, which is owned. And really the one thing that we cannot do is the hard skills training, and that is why we decided, okay, we need to consolidate and concentrate on consolidating that.

Sir, in a perfect world, I would love to have one place that I could do it all. But there are cost constraints. We believe that Fort Pickett gives us the best answer for the hard skills training and we will continue to do the soft skills training in this immediate area.

Senator PERDUE. Were you a little surprised that the estimate came back that much different just by taking soft skills training out? It went from $900 million to $400 million, cut in half. I would think the hard skills training would be much more expensive from

a capital planning perspective. Were you a little surprised with that differential?

Mr. STARR. Surprised perhaps a little, sir. The soft skills side of the original master plan contained many, many more buildings, actual buildings that had to be built, and therefore, also a greater amount of land. And I think when you take those buildings that had to be built off of it for classroom spaces and things like that, it changed the dynamic considerably.

Senator PERDUE. Director Patrick, would you respond to a couple things? I had a question going to the report. This may be a detail question, but I would like to understand. I do not know whether it is your estimate or whether GAO did it as a percentage or whatever. But the 370 additional staff that would be needed to train—do you agree with that? And if not, what would be required there, and in the GAO report, how should it be amended to get the right number? That is question one.

Question two. I would like to come back and ask the question about Marine cotraining and also Townsend.

So if you do not mind, talk about personnel quickly, if you will.

Ms. PATRICK. I believe the number of personnel were a State Department number, and I think we must have stipulated that it was the same number or to be used for both facilities because——

Senator PERDUE. Was that a percentage of—was that done as a percentage of total cost, or was that built up from the bottom up in terms of—Mr. Courts, you—or I do not know who came up with that estimate.

Mr. COURTS. I do not believe that was a percentage. I believe that was the number that had actually been compiled by looking at the number of courses and the number of instructors required.

Senator PERDUE. Can you speak then to the Townsend Bombing Range? It gives 24/7 but it is 30 miles away, et cetera. Can you speak to the potential limitations that that might bring? And also, could you train using that facility at the level that would be minimally required?

Ms. PATRICK. Well, the Townsend Bomb Range is a very large parkland owned by the Marine Corps. And the part of the property that we were considering is about a 5,000-acre plot that is currently being used to do long-range firearms training. We currently use that right now to do that type of training. We are in the process of signing an MOU with the Marine Corps to use that property for continued training to benefit not only FLETC students but also the Georgia Air National Guard—or the Georgia National Guard.

Senator PERDUE. Have you been contacted by Deloitte yet?

Ms. PATRICK. We did get a phone call. The CFO was contacted. And I think we have a date that they will be visiting our site.

Senator PERDUE. Mr. Courts, have you met with Deloitte yet?

Mr. COURTS. We have not.

Senator PERDUE. Do you anticipate working with them?

Mr. COURTS. We have not gotten any notification or communication from them to date.

Senator PERDUE. Mr. Secretary, I think it is 12/15, December 15, is the due date for that report. Is that right?

Mr. STARR. Yes, sir.

Senator PERDUE. Do you have any update, interim report from them on the progress of that study?

Mr. STARR. We have had several meetings with them already. We have the agreed-upon scope. We are making sure that it, hopefully, meets everything that Congress wants on it, and it is going forward. We know that they have the staff on board already and are commencing the survey.

Senator PERDUE. So specifically, if we all agree on what the scope is and that scope requires—I keep coming back to this because I keep hearing the scope change over the last 5 years dramatically, hard/soft together, then hard/soft separate, and now Marine cotraining is a prerequisite. You know, from a perspective of trying to evaluate these moving numbers, we talked with the GAO a few weeks ago about how hard it has been to estimate that.

But if that is a constraint that has to be met and FLETC cannot meet it, then what has Deloitte been hired to do?

Mr. STARR. I think the cost-benefit analysis is what—an independent cost-benefit analysis as opposed to what I think is a very thorough look that GAO has done and our own requirements on it.

But, sir, you are coming back to the question of the Marines. The Marines are less a question about cost than they are about whether or not we can actually collocate——

Senator PERDUE. Well, that is what is I am saying. If you prequalify a site and that site cannot be supported by the Marines, then it is not a viable option. Is that correct?

Mr. STARR. Well, that is pretty much what we have been saying all along, that we have concerns that FLETC and the Townsend Bombing Range are not viable for our training.

Senator PERDUE. But I keep coming back to they are doing that today in other locations, and I am confused as to how they could be executing that today and say going forward they cannot do that.

Mr. STARR. We are currently borrowing space at Fort A.P. Hill where we have our capstone exercises. We are doing a lot of our night training at A.P. Hill where we have Marine units come in and work with us. We have to go down to Quantico and work with them on their site, and we use their long-range ranges there. We are sort of making do with places as we can get space and as we can get time and rearranging the ability to do these things. Again, it goes to the question that collocating in one place gives us efficiencies that we believe will cut costs and allow us to increase the number of throughput for training that we just currently do not have as we sort of hot bunk it from place to place.

Senator PERDUE. But those cost savings should show up in whatever cost-benefit analysis finally is done——

Mr. STARR. Yes, sir.

Senator PERDUE [continuing]. And in the analysis that GAO did.

Director, do you have any response to the training? Do you cotrain with marines now for any of the other forces that you train?

Ms. PATRICK. On occasion from King's Bay and we have had——

Senator PERDUE. Are there other training facilities inside Homeland Security where that training—I think it was at Moletsy in L.A. I may have that name wrong.

Ms. PATRICK. We have a joint training center in L.A. at the L.A. ports where we train maritime boat training. And there is an exer-

cise that is being conducted there that involves the State Department and the Marines from Camp Pendleton.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

I have one more question, but I am going to defer to the ranking member.

Senator KAINE. Let me focus a little bit on this Marine issue while we are on it. I know the Marines are good partners. They are on the Townsend range. But do you currently have significant ongoing training in tandem with the Marine Security Guard program that is run out of Quantico?

Ms. PATRICK. No, sir.

Senator KAINE. That is the issue. The Marines have all these different units, but the Marine Security Guard program, which was bulked up by 1,000 additional marines in the aftermath of the Accountability Review Board, is at Quantico.

And, Secretary Starr, you were talking about the fact that until you get the site, you are using other sites like A.P. Hill. A.P. Hill is 20 miles from Quantico. You use Quantico because the Marine Security Guard program is right there. While you use other sites, my understanding is, you are trying to use sites that are as close to that Marine Security Guard unit as you can.

Mr. STARR. Yes, sir. That is what allows the marines to participate with us. If it was too much further away, they just could not do the joint training with us.

Senator KAINE. Am I right that before the State Department and GSA chose Fort Pickett ultimately, they looked at about 70 different sites prior to landing on Fort Pickett. Is that correct?

Mr. STARR. That is correct, sir.

Senator KAINE. And it was the strong preference from the very first days of this search that the site chosen would be one that would be proximate to D.C. because of the proximity to FSI, main State, and the Marine Security Guard program.

Mr. STARR. Yes, sir.

Senator KAINE. In terms of the timing going forward, am I right that at FASTC, an EIS has been completed that would enable—you do not have to do that in order to get into the construction side of things. Is that correct?

Mr. STARR. Correct, sir. All of the planning, all of the permits, including the environmental impact statements, have all been done. We were prepared to break ground.

Senator KAINE. And then finally, a little bit about Townsend. I have not been to Brunswick, so I am kind of operating at a deficit. I lived in Macon for a year, which I loved, but I did not go to Brunswick when I was there. But I want to make sure I understand the scenario.

So FLETC's proximity to Brunswick, which is a major community, has led either by rule or just by courtesy to some curtailment of 24-hour operations, just to try to fit in with the community. Is that fair to say, Director Patrick?

Ms. PATRICK. Yes. There is no noise ordinance that prohibits us from training, but it is a good neighbor policy established by FLETC and a reasonable time—10 p.m. is when we generally cease training exercises.

Senator KAINE. So if the idea is that State has is to do nighttime operations that would involve simulated nighttime attacks or things, that could be done at Townsend. But would you have to do any construction of embassy-like buildings or infrastructure at Townsend to do that? I gather that is part of the FASTC hard plan that has been put together to have buildings that could be used for these 24-hour operations. Would you need to do construction at Townsend if you were going to have those kind of nighttime explosive operations there?

Ms. PATRICK. What we would need to do is we would revisit their expectations because our plan and our proposal and what we presented to OMB in 2013 was the master plan. And so in terms of what needs to be where, would have to be reassessed because at the time we did not know about the capstone exercise. That was something we learned within the last year. And so, again, we would have to go back and find out from our customer exactly what their needs are and where they would be best fitted.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. And thank you to all the witnesses for your testimony today.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

I just have one last, moving off the specific challenge we have right now of deciding what is best for the objectives we have. I want to reach into a little bigger issue that affects this analysis. I think you just said, Director Patrick, that you still do not have all the requirements necessary for a response to what I would call in the business world an RFP, request for proposal. Sitting here today, you do not have that. Is that correct?

Ms. PATRICK. Partially because—the answer is no, but it is because the decision, once it was made by the administration—we did not require any additional information.

Senator PERDUE. Okay. That is fair.

I would like to talk about, though, the flow of information. I have already had my say about scope, and I think we all agree with that. We have somewhat inherited the changing nature of the scope. A lot of this may have been eliminated. A lot of time has been spent making estimates, and we are spending a lot of money with Deloitte. And I applaud that, by the way.

But I would like to put in the record—and I think you have seen this, Mr. Secretary. It is a letter from Chairman Royce in the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He wrote a letter yesterday to Secretary Kerry. He noted that in 2014, the State Department sought to prevent FLETC personnel from communicating with Congress. And I would like to give you a chance for the record to respond to that. Are you aware of that? Have you see that?

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The letter submitted for the record can be found in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section at the end of this hearing.]

Mr. STARR. I just received a copy of that letter right before I came here. I did not see that sentence in there, sir. But we have never tried to prevent FLETC from communicating with either OMB or Congress. We have been up here a lot, and we have had

a lot of communications. And quite frankly, no, the State Department has never tried to keep FLETC from talking.

Senator PERDUE. And then there is one other issue I think I just want to clear up for the record because I think, going forward, this is not the last time we will spend large money in support of State Department efforts. But I think Deputy Secretary Heather Higginbottom in March, I think, of last year in an email expressed annoyance with their contact with the Appropriations Committee. She wrote to Resource Management OMB Director Steve Koziak: "The approach staffers had that DHS has been blanketing the Hill with DHS's position that DS, Diplomatic Security, should be utilizing FLETC, I am planning to call DHS Deputy Director Ali Majorcas on this. It is clearly out of bounds."

I know you cannot take these out of context and it is not your quote. But I want to just be sure for the record that that is not indicative of the attitude that we have. I have met with the Secretary. I have a lot of respect for her. This sounds out of character to me. But I just want to make sure, going forward, that this is not representative.

Mr. STARR. It is difficult for me to comment on, Senator, but I can tell you that I know Heather Higginbottom, and I think the only thing she would ever ask for is a fair and level playing field. There was no attempt to muzzle anybody. I think that Heather probably just wants to make sure that everybody is getting all the same information at the same time.

Senator PERDUE. Director, did anybody in DHS ever give you instruction to not talk to the Hill?

Ms. PATRICK. No. No one gave me any instruction not to.

Senator PERDUE. Good. Thank you.

And one last question. Mr. Secretary, I know that we put the construction on halt at Fort Pickett, and I think there is a penalty. What is the penalty per day that we are paying on that? Do you know?

Mr. STARR. If we can restart by January or February, the penalties will be less than 1 percent of the cost of the contract, 1 percent of the overall cost of the project, less than $3 million. But if it continues, if we move this further on, those costs are going to rise.

Senator PERDUE. It is about $10,000 a day. Is it not?

Mr. STARR. Sir, I just do not know the daily cost, sir, but the estimate through January or February is about $3 million.

Senator PERDUE. Well, very good.

I want to thank the witnesses and the ranking member. I think you can see from the questioning today the objectivity here. We are all trying to get to the right answer, whatever our responsibility is. And I think we all agree that the overriding requirement here is to get our people trained to make them as safe as we possibly can and to use our assets as best we can. And that is my only ask as we go forward looking at this Deloitte study.

There are some prohibitive costs, by the way. I mean, you just said, Mr. Secretary, we would love to have hard and soft together. It is prohibitive from a cost standpoint. Therefore, we cannot do it. We will adapt.

There is a cost with the Marines, by the way, in terms of their travel and so forth.

So it really is a matter of looking at this thing objectively. With the mission statement of training our people and the constraint of making sure we spend every dime appropriately.

With that, I thank our witnesses again for your career of service and for your testimony today.

With that, we stand adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:40 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER, MEMBER OF CONGRESS, FIRST DISTRICT OF GEORGIA, SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAVID PERDUE

Chairman Perdue, Ranking Member Kaine, and members of the committee, thank you for the invitation to offer this Statement for the Record and for holding this important hearing. The attempted construction of a Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett in Blackstone, Virginia, to conduct Diplomatic Security (DS) training is the perfect example of bureaucracy run amok. In this instance, the State Department has attempted an end run around congressional oversight in order to jam the American taxpayer with a wasteful and duplicative project.

At every turn, the State Department has been openly hostile to efforts of interagency cooperation. In reports from both the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO), State is repeatedly admonished for its failure to cooperate with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide an accurate assessment of the cost of meeting its needs. As such, Congress and the American people have been denied a true and transparent "apples to apples" comparison between constructing a duplicative facility at FASTC and accommodating the State Department's needs by expanding the high quality training being conducted at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) at Glynco, Georgia.

To what end is this stonewalling? It has certainly not expedited bringing this vital training on board. On the contrary, it has delayed the process as the State Department remains insistent on building its own facility regardless of the cost to taxpayers. As one Office of Management and Budget (OMB) official explained in an interview to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, his office came to believe the State Department would prevail not because of new substantive analysis or discussion but because of persistence. This is not how the people's business should be done.

Ensuring American outposts abroad and the diplomats that staff them are fully trained to protect themselves is of vital importance. That is why this Congress has fully funded the administration's request for embassy security funding. It is incumbent on us all, however, to use limited taxpayer resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

Having reviewed reports from OMB and GAO, several meeting with officials who conducted the analysis, as well as repeated questioning of Assistant Secretary of State Gary Starr, I remain unconvinced that the construction of a FASTC located at Ft. Pickett is the best use of taxpayer funds. While neither report can be considered complete, they offer several issues that should be addressed.

First, GAO reports in their analysis that the State Department has been working on cost estimates and course requirements since 2008 while FLETC had only 60 days to conduct an assessment on how they could accommodate training requirements laid out by the State Department. To ask any federal agency to conduct an assessment on such a large scope in such a short amount of time is completely unreasonable. The process effectively gave FLETC one day to complete an analysis which would be held to the same standard as one completed over the course of 5 weeks. Compounding this inequity, the GAO report found that the State Department withheld information regarding course requirements and certain training necessities from FLETC during those 60 days. I strongly urge the subcommittee to address how FLETC could provide an accurate and comparable assessment under the time constraint. In addition, what benefit did the State Department believe its deliberate failure to withhold information would have to bringing the training online?

Second, the GAO report's finding that, over a period of 19–60 years, conducting training at FLETC could become more costly overtime is based on data it judged to be inadequate. It also relies on the State Department's blatant disregard for the intent of Congress by obligating some $71 million in locating, approving, and beginning construction at Fort Pickett. As such, it takes into consideration the $10,000 per day fine the State Department is incurring as a result of prematurely entering a construction contract before receiving congressional approval for a project of this magnitude. The State Department is being rewarded for attempting to get construction at Fort Pickett so far down the road that it's too late to turn around as Congress and the American people can work to stop the egregious waste of taxpayer dollars. I encourage the subcommittee to examine the questionable legal authority the State Department used to begin construction and the budgetary implications of these actions.

Moreover, the GAO's finding on cost ignores the likely prospect of the State Department seeking additional funds in the future. As I am sure the subcommittee is well aware, the State Department's cost estimates have fluctuated widely. From an initial proposal of $950 million to a secondary $907 million, then to $461 million and most recently $413 million, these projections must be approached with caution. The reduced costs are largely a factor of eliminating life support services and narrowing of the training offered. In contrast, FLETC has proposed to expand its existing high quality facilities to accommodate the full scope of State's initial proposal at a cost of $272 million. I hope the subcommittee today will examine the reduced capabilities of the most recent proposal by state and the likelihood, especially given State's repeated mismanagement of construction projects, for the Department to return to Congress for additional funding in the future.

By its own admission the GAO report is fundamentally flawed because it, "did not assess whether the training elements identified by [Diplomatic Security] were necessary for OS to accomplish its mission." Rather, it chose to accept State's requirements and build them in to its baseline assumptions in evaluating the two options. This is a critical failure in the report as there has been varying reports from State itself on what would meet the needs of this important training. I encourage the subcommittee to examine this failure and whether the identified requirements are sufficient.

I also urge the subcommittee to review reports of inappropriate actions taken by the State Department. Interviews conducted by the House Foreign Affairs Committee have uncovered a systematic effort by State to suppress OMB's report which found, "FLETC can meet the vast majority of State's current requirements for access to facilities and course scheduling, training requirements, and life support services, all at a much lower cost." As I referenced earlier, the committee found that OMB officials were persuaded to drop their objections to constructing a duplicative facility at Fort Pickett not because of new reports or analysis but as a result of a February 3, 2014, meeting with State Department officials. It is unclear what was said during this meeting but, according to OMB Resource Management Office Director Steve Kosiak, it was not the result of any new substantive analysis or discussion. I find it difficult to understand how FLETC was capable of providing the necessary resources while a facility is being built at Ft. Pickett but not after State embarked on construction.

I am also deeply troubled by actions taken by Deputy Secretary Higginbottom to prevent FLETC personnel from communicating with Congress. In an email dated March 7, 2014, Deputy Secretary Higginbottom stated to Director Kosiak that she was "annoyed" with FLETC personnel and she would call the Department of Homeland Security Deputy Secretary Mayorkas because these actions were "clearly out of bounds." This appears to be an effort to deny Congress the ability to conduct oversight and ignoring the mandate of every public official to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Overall, my biggest concern is with the blatant disregard for the taxpayer funds and the correct process. The State Department's actions represent a "Washington knows best" mentality that has been rejected by the American people but is all too prevalent in the bureaucracy. Perhaps this is why the 10 richest counties in the country are located in the vicinity of this city.

I want to again thank Chairman Perdue, Ranking Member Kaine, and the members of this subcommittee for holding this hearing today. I believe this is a perfect opportunity to show the American people that we are listening and that we, too, are fed up with the out-of-control spending and the Washington bureaucracy ignoring

the will of the people. I believe this is a chance for us, as Members of Congress, to rein in the bureaucracy and show how the people's business should be done.

EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER,
Member of Congress, First District of Georgia.

RESPONSES OF GREGORY STARR TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAVID PERDUE ON BEHALF OF REPRESENTATIVE BUDDY CARTER

Question. Assistant Secretary Starr, in response to a question regarding communication between Secretary Higginbottom and Director Kosiack, you stated that the State Department has not taken any action in deterring Department of Homeland Security employees from communicating with congressional staff. Could you explain how you are aware of all the communications between Secretary Higginbottom and Secretary Mayorkas?

Answer. I am not aware of all communications between Deputy Secretary Higginbottom and Deputy Secretary Mayorkas. I am confident that there has not been any attempt to deter anyone from communicating with Congress in the FASTC deliberations.

Question. Assistant Secretary Starr, on February 3, 2014, you attended a meeting with Secretary Higginbottom, Under Secretary Kennedy, and Director Kosiak. The purpose of this hearing was to discuss the appeal that the State Department had filed regarding OMB's decision to choose FLETC as the preferred site for DS training. After the meeting, OMB reversed their decision. Can you explain what was discussed in that February 3rd meeting? Was there in analysis or study done after that meeting to provide substance to OMB's reversal?

Answer. The Department of State appealed OMB's decision based on several criteria, which were all later validated by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report GAO–15–808R, "Diplomatic Security: Options for Locating a Consolidated Training Facility."

OMB's fundamental concern was that the need to expand Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) training be met as soon as possible. The Department responded that moving FACT training to FLETC would only be a short-term solution at the cost of producing long-term, enduring problems. This was based on an examination of the travel costs associated with moving over 9,000 students per year to and from FLETC. The GAO later validated this study, stating that travel to Georgia instead of Fort Pickett would cost an additional $101 million to $166 million every 10 years. We have certified FLETC to provide FACT training and anticipate organizations, like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, located closer to FLETC could utilize the facility for FACT training.

OMB also suggested that FLETC could meet most of DS' training requirements. The Department expressed concern that FLETC could not meet all of the Department's training requirements and suggested that building a facility that could not meet all of our training needs was a misuse of taxpayers' money. The GAO report supported this point, finding that FLETC did not fully meet any of the Department's four critical requirements for FASTC while the Fort Pickett option met all four.

OMB had been concerned that the cost of FASTC at Fort Pickett could increase over time, particularly if the Department chose to construct additional new facilities, such as dormitories and a cafeteria, if the private sector did not mobilize resources to meet temporary housing and food service needs based on the demand created by FASTC. The Department disagreed with this, citing that the cost estimate for the Fort Pickett option had been independently verified by two engineering firms, while FLETC's numbers were not. The GAO report agreed with this as well, stating that the FASTC project had "substantially met" best practices for construction estimates in three out of four categories while FLETC's proposal had "substantially met" none.

Question. Assistant Secretary Starr, as you have stated many times, the State Department has invested over $70 million preparing for construction at the Ft. Pickett site. Can you explain the authority that the State Department has to spend this money on preparation for construction without congressional approval for such construction? What fund was this withdrawn from to fund these actions? What legal authority did State use to use these funds for preparation of the Ft. Pickett site?

Answer. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), P.L. 111–5, included Diplomatic and Consular Programs (D&CP) appropriations for the express purpose of funding "urgent domestic facilities requirements for passport and training functions." The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying ARRA specified that

D&CP appropriations were provided "to continue design and begin construction of a consolidated security training facility," among other purposes. In addition to obligating D&CP appropriations under ARRA, the Department also obligated prior year D&CP appropriations for "Worldwide Security Protection." Congress was notified of funding provided for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) via Congressional Notifications in 2009.

In addition, since 2009, we have regularly briefed our committees of jurisdiction on the FASTC project.

Question. Assistant Secretary Starr, according to interviews done by the Foreign Affairs Committee, a compromise was made where the State Department would conduct training at FLETC until the Ft. Pickett site was built. Can you explain to me how FLETC would be able to conduct training while construction of the Ft. Pickett site is being completed but not after the site was completed?

Answer. The compromise in question refers only to the provision of the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course for excess demand that cannot be met using existing hard skills facilities. The Department is moving toward a worldwide expansion of FACT training whereby the vast majority of U.S. Government personnel serving under chief of mission authority will require FACT training before deploying overseas and will need to repeat this training every 5 years.

The Department estimates that it will need to train approximately 6,500 FACT students per year by FY 2018. The Department will not be able to meet the full 6,500 student per year requirement using its current leased facilities. The long-term solution is to train all 6,500 FACT students at the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett. As the Department ramps up this training, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) has sufficient training capacity to meet current demand. If the Department reaches a point where demand exceeds capacity, it has reached a compromise agreement with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to use the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia (FLETC-Glynco) as the primary overflow site.

DS officials have been working with officials at FLETC to prepare them to begin providing the FACT course. FLETC is currently certified to offer this course. The FACT course is one of the most basic courses in the DS hard skills inventory. Like DHS, several other agencies have been certified to offer the FACT-equivalency courses, including the FBI. Since FLETC is certified to provide the FACT course, it can provide FACT to Customs and Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and other DHS divisions that would benefit from such training. Also, foreign affairs agencies that are closer to Glynco, such as Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, may avail themselves of the Glynco location.

Question. Assistant Secretary Starr, you continue to mention the penalties that are being placed on delaying construction at Ft. Pickett. Wouldn't it have been easier to obtain congressional approval before entering into a contract for construction? Couldn't someone say that the consequences of $10,000 a day is the fault of the State Department trying to get to far down the road and force Congress' hand to fund a project that fiscally irresponsible?

Answer. In a best-case scenario, wherein construction begins by February 2016, GSA estimates that there will be an increase of $3.1 million in project costs. These costs are not "penalties," rather they are the result of cost escalations over time for labor and materials. Should our timeline slip further, additional cost escalations are likely and would further increase the total cost for the project.

The Department and GSA conducted an extensive site selection process, reviewing over 70 sites before selecting Fort Pickett as the preferred site for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC). The administration reaffirmed the Department's selection of Fort Pickett in April 2014. Although not publically released until September 2015, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) determined in May 2015 that the Fort Pickett alternative is the only site that fully supports the FASTC functional requirements and is fiscally the best course of action. Based on the cumulative results of multiple reviews, and to avoid further delays, the Department determined that moving forward with construction at Fort Pickett was a logical course of action. That said, the Department is sensitive to the concerns voiced by Congress and opted to place on hold construction efforts until an additional level of due diligence can be completed as requested in late July 2015.

Question. Assistant Secretary Starr, since there is evidence to suggest that the State Department is great at brokering deals and you continue to stress the importance of working with the Marine Corps for training, couldn't the State Department

contract with the Marine Corps to use their resources like flights and vehicles? As you have stated several time, synergy between the two groups is very important.

Answer. The Department has spoken to representatives of the U.S. Marine Corps units with which it currently trains regarding the issue of possibly conducting training in Georgia. As stated in the GAO report, Marine Corps representatives have stated that supporting such training in Georgia would be cost prohibitive.

Question. Assistant Secretary Starr, you mentioned that a third party, Deloitte, had been contracted to conduct an assessment and they had contacted the CFO of FLETC to set up a time to conduct this study. This study is support to be presented by December 2014. Can you tell me if 6 weeks is enough time to conduct this study in a fashion that will provide a truly reliable cost assessment? If so, how can a cost analysis in 45 days be more reliable than a cost analysis conduct in 60 days, like the one done earlier this year?

Answer. The period of performance for the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is 75 days; however, in advance of that time period, the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Department gathered all of the data information available, compiled since 2009, so that Deloitte could assess how much new information needed to be developed and determine which data already existed as well as the validity of that data. Deloitte has multiple teams deployed simultaneously to execute the CBA so that the cost model is being developed in parallel with data gathering and validation. The estimating process itself will not take more than 30 days and will include sensitivity analysis to account for anticipated risk based on the varying level of information that exists with each alternative being analyzed.

Question. Assistant Secretary Starr, in reports by the OMB and GAO, State was admonished for not fully cooperating with FLETC in its efforts to provide a thorough and accurate cost projection. Specifically, State did not provide comprehensive course requirements and training necessities. In what way was this lack of cooperation productive in the effort to bring this training online as quickly as possible?

Answer. In February 2013, the Department decided to reduce the scope of FASTC to hard skills only training, and the Department provided to FLETC all of the training and facility requirements for the reduced scope, hard-skills only FASTC program. In April 2013, the Department provided FLETC and OMB with an informational package on the proposed FASTC. Included in this package was a compilation of documents that provided detailed descriptions of the Department's training mission, and facility and training venue requirements. This package included detailed hard-skills course descriptions, venue requirements in terms of required acreage and square footages, a narrative description of the proposed use for each hard-skills venue, class sizes, and frequency of classes. The package was accompanied by a cover memo, which I signed, that provided a detailed description of each specific document and emphasized the hard skills components of the Department's training program that compose the reduced scope FASTC program. This is the same information that the Department had to develop its reduced scope project. Further documents, such as a reduced scope master plan, had not been developed at the time of the due diligence process. In order to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, the Department could not spend money on developing a formal reduced scope master plan until the administration affirmed that Fort Pickett was the best location for the Department of State's hard skills training facility.

In September 2013, the Department provided to FLETC the reduced cost estimate for the reduced scope FASTC, a 71-page, line-by-line itemized list that describes each component for all hard-skills venues to include related site work and infrastructure requirements. Additionally, the reduced scope program was a primary point of discussion during the Department and OMB's site visit to FLETC on September 4, 2013, and served as the basis of the consensus document developed by the Department and FLETC. Since early 2013, the Department has worked diligently with OMB and FLETC to provide the requested information and facilitate OMB's analysis.

Question. Assistant Secretary Starr, in your testimony before the committee you indicated that soft skills training would be colocated with hard skills training, "in a perfect world." What assurances can you give the committee that State will not return to Congress to seek additional appropriations to build out life support services and soft skills training capabilities in the future?

Answer. The Department explored the option of consolidating both hard and soft skills training functions at a single location and determined that the cost was fiscally unachievable. Given the overseas environments in which we operate, the Department's hard skills requirements must be a training priority, which is why we

have pursued a hard skills only consolidation plan. There is no need for soft skills training capabilities at Fort Pickett because we meet those requirements in a cost effective manner in the Washington, DC, area. The Department is also confident that the local economy can provide life support infrastructure that is cost effective for the government and economically advantageous to the region.

RESPONSES OF MICHAEL COURTS TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAVID PERDUE

Question 1. Based on your understanding of government construction projects, aren't cost benefit analyses usually mandatory before purchasing land and starting into a contract? How about an RFP?

Answer. The two objectives of our September 2015 report were to examine (1) key site requirements critical to providing DS training and the extent to which the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) and Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) proposals meet these requirements and (2) the estimated capital and recurring costs of these proposals and the extent to which the capital cost estimates conform to leading practices for reliable cost estimates.[1] Thus our work for this report did not include an assessment of whether a cost-benefit analysis or request for proposal (RFP) was necessary for this project or for government construction projects in general.

Question 2. According to your report, the State Department did not provide key information to DHS as FLETC prepared its cost estimates, schedules, and plans. For example, FLETC was not given State Department's reduced-scope plan, and they were not provided information about State's capstone exercises. Given these assertions, how direct was the comparison between these two agencies' proposals? Do we have an apples-to-apples comparison here? How do we get that? What information is missing from each of the proposals?

Answer. Our assessment compared each agency's process for developing the cost estimate to the best practices identified in the GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide.[2] These best practices are 12 steps in a high-quality cost estimating process that, if followed, will result in a reliable cost estimate. We did not compare the estimates to each other. See encl. V of our September 2015 report for a detailed discussion of our analysis, including our assessment of the extent which each proposal met each best practice for developing reliable cost estimates.

In our September 2015 report, we noted the limitations that FLETC faced in developing its proposal in several places. For example, our report states that FLETC officials noted that they relied on information provided by State, which, they said, was incomplete, and that they had only 60 days to refine their capital cost estimate. FLETC officials also noted that they were not provided DS's reduced-scope plan that would have allowed FLETC to revise its cost estimate, schedule, and plans. Specifically, in testimony before your committee, the Director of FLETC stated that at the time FLETC prepared its proposal, it did not know about DS's capstone training exercise. As a result, she said FLETC would have to reassess what training would need to be done where, in order to incorporate the use of Townsend Bombing Range into its proposal. Finally, FLETC officials said that they took no further action on this project after the administration selected the Fort Pickett option in April 2014. State and GSA continued to refine the FASTC cost estimate following their proposal to OMB.

As a result, it would be impractical to reconcile the differences in requirements and costs between the two proposals at this date. State's current development of a cost-benefit analysis comparing FASTC, FLETC, and current operations may, if done according to best practices, provide an apples-to-apples comparison among alternatives.

Question 3. We have heard repeatedly that State did not provide information requested related to its Master Plan and de-scoped plan for FASTC. Can you comment on State's willingness to provide information? How did that complicate your analysis?

Answer. As we indicated in our report, we found that State did not provide all of the relevant information regarding its training requirements and cost data to OMB or FLETC. For example, FLETC officials said that they did not have complete information regarding the reduced-scope plan for FASTC and were unable to develop a comparable cost estimate. In addition, FLETC officials told us that they did not receive information from State about State's advanced training capstone exercises, which span multiple days and involve several different venues.

However, State fully complied with all of our requests for information and data for our review. State also accommodated all of our requests to visit existing training facilities and the proposed site of FASTC at Fort Pickett. We also observed DS's High Threat Operations Course Capstone exercise, at DS's invitation. We obtained updated data on requirements and costs from State that neither FLETC nor OMB had, and the analysis for our September 2015 report included events through June 2015.

FLETC also was fully cooperative with all of our requests for information throughout the course of our review. In addition, FLETC was very flexible in accommodating our visit to their Glynco campus.

Question 4. How did you test DS's identified "training requirements"? The GAO report suggests that Diplomatic Security (DS) has concerns that the FLETC explosives training environment would be inadequate.

Answer. For our September 2015 report, we developed a list of four site requirements by compiling material from multiple sources, including State's 2012 master plan for FASTC and the 2014 update; the master and supplemental program of requirements for FASTC; the draft, supplemental, and final environmental impact statements for FASTC from 2012 and 2015; the 2008 and 2015 reports to Congress from State; the Benghazi Accountability Review Board report; the 2013 State report from the Independent Panel on Best Practices; and the 2013 State Report on Diplomatic Security Organization and Management. We also interviewed officials from State; FLETC; GSA; OMB; and several training partners identified by DS, including the Marine Security Guards, Naval Special Warfare Command, Third Special Forces Group, U.S. Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Central Intelligence Agency.

Based on the information we gathered and analyzed, we compiled a list of site requirements for DS's training center and discussed the rationale for these requirements with DS, FLETC, and other agency officials. We observed training exercises to understand the need for some of the requirements identified by DS, such as venue consolidation and availability of training facilities 24 hours a day. Based on these discussions and observations, we focused on four site requirements that our analysis indicated were critical to the provision of basic and advanced DS training courses—consolidation of venues; proximity to Washington, DC; exclusive use; and 24/7 availability.

While we assessed the need for these site requirements to accommodate DS's existing and planned training, we did not assess whether specific DS training courses are necessary to accomplish DS's mission of providing a safe and secure environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. We did confirm, however, that DS currently conducts and plans to continue to conduct training that includes elements such as nighttime training, long-range firearms, and heavy explosives. We identified the number of courses and students that use these elements, as well as the projected number of such courses at the future training center. We observed a training exercise that involved several of these elements. We also asked DS officials to explain why the elements were necessary and, to the extent possible, reviewed actual examples of incidents overseas that supported DS's identified need for specific training elements. In addition, in 2011 we reported that DS has a process in place to identify its training needs, a process that was reviewed and accredited by the independent Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation.[3] This process involved division chiefs, branch chiefs, subject matter experts, and DS instructional staff and uses a seven-phased industry-recognized training framework for course design and development. Among these seven phases are two directly related to identifying and validating training needs—the analysis and design phase:

- Analysis phase: In this phase, DS staff examines the audience, identifies job tasks and job performance measures, selects the instructional setting, and validates cost estimates. A task list is developed to guide initial course development, which involves subject matter experts in verifying the job tasks.
- Design phase: In this phase, DS staff determines the training objectives, lists course prerequisites, identifies needed learning objectives, and establishes the appropriate performance tests.

Our response to question 5 below has more details about State's requirements for explosives training.

Question 5. Please describe the types of explosive training that DS requires, why such training is necessary, and why DS believes it must be conducted in a consolidated facility? How do Diplomatic Security's explosives training requirements compare with other agencies' training? From what I understand, ATF agents, as well

as 94 other partner agencies, are only exposed to up to 3 pound blasts, and yet DS has called for 5 pound blasts. Does this seem justified to GAO?

Answer. More than 15 DS courses include explosives, such as Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT), Basic Special Agent Course, High Threat Operations, and Explosive Incident Countermeasures. In fiscal years 2013 through 2015, DS provided more than 500 of these courses to over 11,500 students, according to data provided by State.[4] Although most DS students may not need to use a venue capable of handling large explosives (such as those up to 5 lbs.), DS plans to use this facility to train foreign personnel, such as bomb squads, in explosive incident countermeasures and post-blast investigations through the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) Program. Data provided by State indicate that nearly 1,900 students received training that included explosives through ATA from fiscal years 2013 through 2015.[5] According to DS, it trains on larger explosives in part because its teams have encountered much larger explosive devices in the field, such as a complex attack against the U.S. consulate in Herat, Afghanistan in September 2013, using truck- and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and seven insurgents equipped with small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, and suicide vests.

In addition, State officials expressed concern that FLETC's existing blast pad could not accommodate the increased number of DS students. For example, DS projects that, in fiscal year 2018, nearly 6,500 students per year will take the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course, which includes 2 hours of specialized training on explosives, ranging from 0.05 lb. to 0.5 lb.

We identified consolidation of venues as one of the key site requirements critical to providing DS training based on several factors. In 2008, State reported to Congress on the need for consolidating all DS training in one location. In 2011, we reported that DS officials estimated that in 8 weeks of training almost 1 week was spent in travel between and among the training sites.[6] Further, the Management Review Panel and the Best Practices Panel, both established as a result of recommendations made by the Benghazi Accountability Review report, strongly endorsed State's efforts to consolidate its training venues. In addition, DS has emphasized the need to have various training venues close to one another so exercises can move from one venue to the next without stopping. For example, we observed a capstone exercise at the conclusion of a High Threat Operations Course that took place over 80 consecutive hours, during which students were harassed by sniper fire, forced to contend with transporting and caring for wounded comrades, and compelled to evacuate under hostile fire. This exercise also involved a complex attack on a mock consulate that included several explosions and gunfire.

Question 6. Reoccurring operating costs in your report for FLETC were estimated as 3 percent of capital costs. FLETC, however, currently operates for less than this amount. Can you explain why this was not considered in the report?

Answer. Our estimate of recurring operations and maintenance (O&M) costs for FLETC did not assume a flat rate of 3 percent. For these costs, we used data provided by FLETC as part of its November 2013 response to OMB. These data included venue-specific O&M costs that, in some cases, were less than 3 percent of capital costs. FLETC estimated the annual O&M cost of facilities to meet FASTC's reduced scope to be $7.1 million—or about 2.9 percent of FLETC's reduced-scope capital cost estimate of $243 million. In our calculations of FLETC's O&M costs, we used this number, phased in over 4 years and inflated by 1.9 percent per year—the same assumptions made by FLETC.

For FASTC, we estimated recurring O&M costs to be 3 percent of capital costs per year, consistent with industry standards and the same assumption used by OMB to facilitate a consistent analysis of the FASTC and FLETC options.

As part of our quality assurance process, we discussed our initial findings with State, GSA, and FLETC, and provided these agencies with a draft of our report for comment. None of these agencies expressed concern about the assumptions we made in calculating recurring O&M costs.

End Notes

[1] GAO, Diplomatic Security: Options for Locating a Consolidated Training Facility, GAO–15–808R (Washington, DC: Sept. 9, 2015).

[2] GAO, GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide: Best Practices for Developing and Managing Capital Program Costs, GAO–09–3SP (Washington, DC: March 2009).

[3] GAO, Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts, GAO–11–460 (Washington, DC: June 1, 2011).

[4] These figures include actual courses through May 31, 2015, and planned courses from June 1, 2015, to September 30, 2015.

[5] Ibid.

[6] GAO–11–460.

RESPONSES OF MICHAEL COURTS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAVID PERDUE ON BEHALF OF REPRESENTATIVE BUDDY CARTER

Below are two questions for the record that Senator Perdue submitted to GAO on behalf of Representative Buddy Carter of Georgia. Because of the similarity to two of Senator Perdue's questions, our responses below refer to answers to Senator Perdue's questions above.

Question 1. Director Courts, in your report you note that while the State Department had since 2008 to conduct its assessment while FLETC was only given 60 days. That is the equivalent of giving one student a day to complete an assignment while giving another 36 days. Is it really reasonable to judge the two assessments on the same scale?

Answer. As we noted in our response to Question 2 from Senator Perdue above, our assessment compared each agency's process for developing the cost estimate to the best practices identified in the GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide.[7] These best practices are 12 steps in a high-quality cost estimating process that, if followed, will result in a reliable cost estimate. We did not compare the estimates to each other. See encl. V of our September 2015 report for a detailed discussion of our analysis, including our assessment of the extent which each proposal met each best practice for developing reliable cost estimates.

In our September 2015 report, we noted the limitations that FLETC faced in developing its proposal in several places. For example, our report states that FLETC officials noted that they relied on information provided by State, which, they said, was incomplete, and that they had only 60 days to refine their capital cost estimate. FLETC officials also noted that they were not provided DS's reduced-scope plan that would have allowed FLETC to revise its cost estimate, schedule, and plans. Specifically, in testimony before your committee, the Director of FLETC stated that at the time FLETC prepared its proposal, it did not know about DS's capstone training exercise. As a result, she said FLETC would have to reassess what training would need to be done where, in order to incorporate the use of Townsend Bombing Range into its proposal. Finally, FLETC officials said that they took no further action on this project after the administration selected the Fort Pickett option in April 2014. State and GSA continued to refine the FASTC cost estimate following their proposal to OMB.

As a result, it would be impractical to reconcile the differences in requirements and costs between the two proposals at this date.

Question 2. Director Courts, by your report's own admission, you "did not assess whether the training elements identified by [Diplomatic Security] were necessary for DS to accomplish its mission." If you cannot certify that the training elements identified are sufficient to meet the needs of DS, how can you be confident that your analysis is accurate?

As we noted in our response to Question 4 from Senator Perdue above, we developed a list of four site requirements by compiling material from multiple sources, including State's 2012 master plan for FASTC and the 2014 update; the master and supplemental program of requirements for FASTC; the draft, supplemental, and final environmental impact statements for FASTC from 2012 and 2015; the 2008 and 2015 reports to Congress from State; the Benghazi Accountability Review Board report; the 2013 State report from the Independent Panel on Best Practices; and the 2013 State Report on Diplomatic Security Organization and Management. We also interviewed officials from State; FLETC; GSA; OMB; and several training partners identified by DS, including the Marine Security Guards, Naval Special Warfare Command, Third Special Forces Group, U.S. Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Central Intelligence Agency.

Based on the information we gathered and analyzed, we compiled a list of site requirements for DS's training center and discussed the rationale for these requirements with DS, FLETC, and other agency officials. We observed training exercises to understand the need for some of the requirements identified by DS, such as venue consolidation and availability of training facilities 24 hours a day. Based on these discussions and observations, we focused on four site requirements that our analysis indicated were critical to the provision of basic and advanced DS training courses—consolidation of venues; proximity to Washington, DC; exclusive use; and 24/7 availability.

While we assessed the need for these site requirements to accommodate DS's existing and planned training, we did not assess whether specific DS training

courses are necessary to accomplish DS's mission of providing a safe and secure environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. We did confirm, however, that DS currently conducts and plans to continue to conduct training that includes elements such as nighttime training, long-range firearms, and heavy explosives. We identified the number of courses and students that use these elements, as well as the projected number of such courses at the future training center. We observed a training exercise that involved several of these elements. We also asked DS officials to explain why the elements were necessary and, to the extent possible, reviewed actual examples of incidents overseas that supported DS's identified need for specific training elements. In addition, in 2011 we reported that DS has a process in place to identify its training needs, a process that was reviewed and accredited by the independent Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation.[8] This process involved division chiefs, branch chiefs, subject matter experts, and DS instructional staff and uses a seven-phased industry-recognized training framework for course design and development. Among these seven phases are two directly related to identifying and validating training needs—the analysis and design phase:

- Analysis phase: In this phase, DS staff examines the audience, identifies job tasks and job performance measures, selects the instructional setting, and validates cost estimates. A task list is developed to guide initial course development, which involves subject matter experts in verifying the job tasks.
- Design phase: In this phase, DS staff determines the training objectives, lists course prerequisites, identifies needed learning objectives, and establishes the appropriate performance tests.

End Notes

[7] GAO, GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide: Best Practices for Developing and Managing Capital Program Costs, GAO-09-3SP (Washington, DC: March 2009).

[8] GAO, Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts, GAO–11–460 (Washington, DC: June 1, 2011).

RESPONSES OF MICHAEL COURTS TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question 1. 1. What did you find in reviewing OMB's preliminary analysis in 2013 regarding the FASTC and FLETC proposals and speaking with OMB officials? Was this analysis based on complete information? Do you find this analysis credible at this point in time?

Answer. As our September 2015 report notes, we reviewed OMB's preliminary documentation analyzing the FASTC and FLETC proposals and spoke with OMB officials about this analysis. OMB officials indicated that in July 2013 OMB prepared a template for cost analysis populated with any available preliminary numbers, which it provided to both State and FLETC to facilitate a discussion between those agencies. State provided cost estimates for 1 year. FLETC provided estimates for 10 years, but because FLETC did not have complete information regarding DS's requirements, FLETC's estimate did not account for all of these requirements. Therefore, OMB's analysis in the fall of 2013 was based on incomplete information and did not take into account subsequent events. For example, project timing was one area in which OMB's preliminary analysis determined that FLETC held an advantage over FASTC, partly because State and GSA would have to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for FASTC while FLETC would not. However, since the completion of OMB's analysis in 2014, State and GSA completed the EIS and obligated funds for FASTC, reducing the remaining amount of time needed to complete the project. We obtained updated data on requirements and costs from State, and our analysis included events through the June 2015 award of a contract for the first phase of construction for FASTC.

Furthermore, FLETC officials indicated that its proposal to OMB was based on incomplete information about State's reduced-scope plan for FASTC. FLETC did not incorporate plans for matching State's reduced-scope plan in FLETC's proposal to OMB. Because FLETC was informed that the administration had reaffirmed the selection of Fort Pickett for FASTC in April 2014, FLETC did not update its initial proposal or cost estimates.

Question 2. If you combine the unreliable and reliable cost estimates you received from both FASTC and FLETC, which facility is most cost effective?

Answer. In our September 2015 report, we found that neither the FASTC nor the FLETC capital cost estimates fully met best practices outlined in GAO's Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide,[9] and that, therefore, any projections based on these

figures may be unreliable. We did not combine these figures with our own estimates of the costs associated with solely sending students to each location, which were reliable, because doing so may result in unreliable projections. Without reliable projections of capital costs, we are unable to determine which facility is more cost effective.

End Note

[9] 11GAO–09–3SP.

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS US MARINE CORPS
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-3000

5730
PP&O
7 Oct 15

The Honorable Tim Kaine
United States Senate
611 S Jefferson St Suite 5b
Roanoke, VA 24011

Attention: Nicole Porreca

Dear Senator Kaine:

Thank you for your inquiry of September 4, 2015, concerning the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report on the Department of State (DoS) Diplomatic Security Training Facility and requesting the Marine Corps' consideration in the location of this site. We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with this information.

The Marine Corps greatly values its partnership with DoS in providing security for our nation's diplomatic missions and the professionals who work therein. The Marine Corps continues to sustain and grow the relationship with DoS and other agencies as well as synchronizing diplomatic security and safety training.

As noted in the GAO report, the Marine Security Guards (MSGs), the MSG Security Augmentation Unit (MSAU), and the Fleet Antiterrorism Security Teams (FAST) are training partners with DoS in diplomatic security hard skills exercises. An average of 150 Marines attend the joint Department of State/USMC Marine Security Guard School five times a year, training a total of approximately 750 Marines annually. Additionally 25 MSAU Marine Security Guards attend MSAU Indoctrination Training with the Department of State five times a year, training a total of 125 MSAU Marines per year. During FY15, 135 Marines & Sailors assigned to FAST participated in five CAPSTONE exercises in conjunction with the Department of State at Fort A.P. Hill. These units are all headquartered in Quantico and Yorktown, Virginia. As noted in the GAO report, establishing a DoS training facility in an area over 600 miles from the Washington, DC area would be impractical for the Marine units to participate in the training.

My point of contact for MSG training inquiries is Mr. Mark Lopez, who can be reached at (703) 692-4240, or mark.d.lopez@usmc.mil.

Very respectfully,

Jan M. Durham
Assistant Deputy Commandant (Acting),
Plans, Policy & Operations (Security)

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY SENATOR DAVID PERDUE

EDWARD R. ROYCE, CALIFORNIA
CHAIRMAN

AMY PORTER
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RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

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One Hundred Fourteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
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October 7, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Since 2013, the Committee has been examining the Department of State's plan to construct a Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett, Virginia. This has included briefings, site visits to current and prospective locations, and the review of internal documents and communications. The purpose of this effort has been to gain a full understanding of the Administration's decision to build a new training center rather than expand the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia. However, instead of finding that the Administration engaged in a thorough and fact-based decision-making process, the Committee has unfortunately discovered a flawed selection process that has lacked transparency, appeared manipulative, and shown little regard for fiscal responsibility.

The Committee began investigating the State Department's FASTC proposal after receiving varying cost estimates and scopes of work. The Department initially proposed to spend $950 million to construct FASTC at Fort Pickett, an underused military base located in Blackstone, Virginia. After the Committee expressed concern, the project's scope was narrowed, lowering the estimated cost to approximately $907 million, then to $461 million, and most recently to $413 million. As an alternative, FLETC proposed to expand its existing facilities to accommodate the full scope of State's *initial* training proposal at a cost of $272 million. This represented a potential savings of $678 million without having to compromise the State Department's training needs – an attractive alternative worth serious consideration.

As an initial step, the Committee asked the Office of Management and Budget on January 9, 2014, to evaluate which proposal could meet the State Department's training needs in a "fiscally responsible way." Specifically, it asked OMB to examine the Fort Pickett proposal versus an expansion of the existing Department of Homeland Security FLETC site. In so doing, the Committee requested that OMB conduct a "rigorous analysis of the data provided by these agencies that considers the strengths, weaknesses, and risk of each agency's capabilities, proposed new infrastructure, and any other relevant tangible factors."

On February 21, 2014, OMB replied that it would "continue to work with the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security throughout the FY2015 Budget process to ensure that the Budget supports training programs that best address the Department of State's needs in a cost effective manner." On April 17, 2014, State and FLETC personnel notified Committee staff that the Administration had decided to adopt State's proposal to build FASTC at Fort Pickett. Despite the Committee's documented interest in the matter, OMB provided no explanation of its decision to pursue the Fort Pickett option – nor did it indicate that it had done any kind of in-house review.

On May 1, 2014, the Committee requested that the Administration explain how it arrived at its decision. Specifically, the Committee sought "the opportunity to review the results of [its] analysis of the FLETC and State FASTC proposals, plus any alternatives that OMB considered." Given the amount of funding at stake, it was important for OMB to explain why it selected an option that provides far fewer services but still costs over $100 million more than the alternative. Instead, the Administration withheld its analysis and remained silent.

The Committee then wrote to you on September 17, 2014, asking the Department to "not move forward and expend any funding for development at the Fort Picket site" until the Government Accountability Office could review the proposals. It did this because it was not clear that the Administration performed its due diligence. It was also a reasonable request considering that there would be no impact on current training. The Department rejected this suggestion out of hand.

Instead, the Department assured the Committee that it "concluded, and the Office of Management and Budget has reaffirmed, that Fort Pickett is the most effective and efficient proposal for a consolidated hard-skills training facility." It further stated that "[t]he Department's training requirements demand an integrated facility that FLETC is simply not able to support at this time," and that "the Office of Management and Budget reaffirmed that FLETC is not a viable solution for FASTC."[1] Immediately thereafter, the Department solicited bids for construction to begin on August 1, 2015.

Having little choice, I issued a subpoena on May 26, 2015, to compel the production of OMB's internal analyses and communications with the Department about this matter. Upon receipt of key documents that the Committee sought, it became clear that OMB analysts concluded the opposite of what the State Department told this Committee. OMB's substantive, written analyses did *not* reaffirm or conclude that FASTC was the superior choice.

Indeed, in an internal OMB document entitled "Discretionary Issue Paper #4," the Resource Management Office (RMO) concluded that "FLETC can meet the vast majority of State's current requirements for access to facilities and course scheduling, training requirements, and life support services, all at a much lower estimated cost than Fort Pickett." It further advised that "[w]hile Fort Pickett would have an advantage for location and interagency synergies, the RMO

[1] Letter from Secretary of State John Kerry to House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Edward R. Royce, October 3, 2014.

does not believe that the difference is substantial enough to rule out FLETC." Moreover, the RMO asserted that "...FLETC would ultimately have more capabilities than FASTC at Fort Pickett at a lower cost." Analysts also highlighted that FLETC would be $812 million less over a 10-year period when accounting for net present value. For these reasons, the RMO recommended to then-Director Sylvia Matthews Burwell that the State Department "construct FASTC at FLETC, Glynco, GA for $287 million, which could be done at the current RMO recommended level."[2]

FLETC Director Connie Patrick echoed this assessment in testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee on July 28, 2015. Ms. Patrick testified that FLETC could accommodate the State Department with priority use of its facilities, including the nearby Townsend Bombing Range for Capstone exercises, large explosives detonation, and nighttime operations. She also maintained that FLETC could do this for $1,600 per student, per training week, which includes life support costs. Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Greg Starr disagreed with this cost estimate in testimony at the same hearing, but was unable to provide data that would disprove this assessment.

According to interviews of OMB staff, Director Burwell initially decided against building FASTC at Fort Pickett. Emails from January 2014 between Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom and RMO Director Steve Kosiak reveal that the State Department elected to appeal OMB's decision.[3] Further challenging the Department, Mr. Kosiak pressed Ms. Higginbottom to justify why FLETC could not meet the State Department's needs. He also urged her to meet with FLETC representatives and learn about a "potentially game changing parcel of land in close proximity to the FLETC campus" that "would address virtually all of State's concerns, particularly 24/7 use, other than it is not within closer proximity to DC."[4] The State Department appears to have ignored this counsel.

Mr. Kosiak and Ms. Higginbottom then apparently agreed to meet in person to discuss the appeal, along with Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Greg Starr and Under Secretary for Management and Resources Patrick Kennedy.[5] OMB could not confirm whether FLETC participated. During this February 3, 2014 meeting, the State Department and OMB reached a "compromise," whereby OMB would rule in favor of moving forward with the FASTC facility, while the State Department would utilize FLETC in the interim for its training needs.[6]

According to an interview of Mr. Kosiak, this reversal in OMB's position *was not based upon any new substantive analysis or discussion*. Rather, the State Department's senior leadership

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[2] "Discretionary Issue Paper #4, Department of State, FASTC or FLETC? A Path Forward for Diplomatic Security Training," Office of Management and Budget, Fall 2013.
[3] Email from Steve Kosiak to Heather Higginbottom, Monday, January 27, 2014, 3:01PM, Subject: Further update on FASTC/FLETC.
[4] *Id.*
[5] Email from Heather Higginbottom to Steve Kosiak, Wednesday, January 29, 2014, 2:15PM, Subject: RE: OMB meeting with State and FLETC. *See also:* Email from Heather Higginbottom to Steve Kosiak, Wednesday, January 29, 2014, 9:26AM, Subject: RE: Further update on FASTC/FLETC.
[6] Email from Steve Kosiak to Heather Higginbottom, Tuesday, February 04, 2014, 11:10AM, Subject: Potential Diplomatic Security Training Compromise.

appeared to have pressured OMB to reverse its decision. As Mr. Kosiak later explained to Committee staff, OMB believed the State Department would prevail if it was persistent enough, regardless of OMB's internal analysis, cost projections and the inordinate investment of staff resources.[7] At no time did there appear to be any regard for fiscal responsibility.

After OMB granted the appeal, the Department then sought to prevent FLETC personnel from communicating with Congress. In an email dated March 7, 2014, Ms. Higginbottom expressed annoyance at FLETC's contact with Appropriations Committee staffers. She informed Mr. Kosiak that "[t]he approps staffers said that DHS has been 'blanketing the Hill with DHS's position that DS should be utilizing FLETC.' I'm planning to call [Department of Homeland Security Deputy Secretary] Ali Mayorkas on this, as it's clearly out of bounds."[8] It is unacceptable that Ms. Higginbottom would attempt to stifle the flow of pertinent information to Congress – especially at a time when we needed *more* information, not less.

Before relying any further on this flawed process, I recommend that you, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, and OMB Director Shaun Donovan thoroughly examine the record. After all, it formed the basis of your assurance to this Committee that due diligence had been done and that OMB "reaffirmed" your decision.[9] The Committee's investigation suggests otherwise.

I would also like to raise several important points about GAO's September 9, 2015 report entitled *Diplomatic Security: Options for Locating a Consolidated Training Facility*. The Foreign Affairs and Homeland Security Committees commissioned this report last September because we lacked key information necessary to make an informed decision on how to proceed. Unfortunately, the work is deficient in several critical respects, lessening its utility.

By its own admission, for example, GAO "did not assess whether the training elements identified by [Diplomatic Security] were necessary for DS to accomplish its mission."[10] Instead, it used those requirements as a baseline assumption in the report. This is a critical omission, in that there is significant debate about whether DS truly requires what it is seeking.

For example, the Department maintains that FLETC is insufficient because it cannot provide high explosives detonation capabilities on a 24-hour basis. Do DS agents need the ability to set and detonate more than 5 pounds of plastic explosives? More than the amount that the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms and 94 other partner agencies require? This projection of force is arguably outside the scope of an agency designed to protect and quickly evacuate personnel. DS is not a paramilitary organization.

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[7] According to an interview of an OMB employee, they had never spent this much time on a single project in their 30 year career.

[8] Email from Heather Higginbottom to Steve Kosiak, Friday, March 07, 2014, 12:47PM, Subject: RE: FAST-C.

[9] Letter from Secretary of State John Kerry to House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Edward R. Royce, October 3, 2014.

[10] *Diplomatic Security: Options for Locating a Consolidated Training Facility*, Government Accountability Office, September 9, 2013, p. 3.

GAO also made cost projections and assertions based on data it judged to be inadequate. In a section comparing the capital and recurring operating costs for each facility, it criticized the State Department and FLETC for providing unreliable figures. Specifically, it found that each entity supplied estimates that "may be unreliable" and that "any projections based on these figures may also be unreliable."[11] In other words, the reader should review GAO's report with some caution when deciding which facility makes the most fiscal sense.

In the end, the report fails to resolve decisively which facility can do the job, at what price, and in what timeframe. I hope that the General Services Administration's newly commissioned report will take a hard look at all factors, and I commend you for seeking that additional review. It is unfortunate, however, that the Department entered into contracts that it has now sidelined at a penalty of $10,000 per day while it carries out cost-benefit work that should have been completed long ago.

After examining the record, I hope you will appreciate why many in Congress remain skeptical of the Administration's choice to pursue the Fort Pickett option. There is little confidence that it has made an objective, fiscally responsible decision in a transparent manner.

It is critically important that our diplomats receive the training necessary to protect themselves overseas. That is why Congress has appropriated the Administration's full request for embassy security funding. It is important that these limited resources be used most efficiently. I look forward to continuing this discussion with you as the Department reassesses its decision. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE
Chairman

Cc: The Honorable Eliot Engel, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Honorable Shaun Donovan, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Jeh Johnson, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
The Honorable Gene Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States

[11] *Id.*, at p. 16.

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