

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 9, 2014

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Burwell:

We understand that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is reviewing two proposals to meet the Department of State's (State) security training requirements: (1) State's proposal to construct a new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC), and (2) an expansion of the existing Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC).

We believe a prompt, thorough review of both proposals is required to determine which of these proposals best address the Department of State's training needs in a fiscally responsible way. We request your office conduct a rigorous analysis of the data provided by these agencies that considers the strengths, weaknesses, and risks of each agency's existing capabilities, proposed new infrastructure, and any other relevant tangible factors.

Embassy security and the safety of U.S. personnel abroad are areas of great concern to us. Over the past two years, our Committees have conducted oversight thorough full Committee hearings and staff briefings, and we assess that the State Department's Diplomatic Security (DS) training facilities may be insufficient to meet recommendations put forward by the Accountability Review Board (ARB) that was convened following the 2012 terrorist attacks in Benghazi. Specifically, we are concerned about the implementation of the ARB's recommendations that State develop courses for DS agents and other State personnel integrating high-threat training and risk-management decision processes and provide Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) training for all personnel assigned to high-risk, high-threat posts.

We understand that State, in an effort to comply with these ARB recommendations, has proposed that the General Services Administration (GSA) construct a new FASTC at Fort Pickett, an Army National Guard facility in Blackstone, VA. This proposal aims to consolidate State's eleven security training facilities, improve instructional efficiency, and provide training to an estimated 9,000-10,000 DS and other State personnel. The initial cost for this project was over \$950 million, but a reduction in scope lowered that estimate to approximately \$907 million and then to \$460 million. We understand from State that the cost could change further.

We are mindful, however, that DHS already operates FLETC, which provides security training for DHS and 91 law enforcement and military partner agencies and organizations. FLETC currently possesses extensive existing infrastructure that DS could leverage to provide security training: a permanent training center in Glynco, GA; two residential training sites in Artesia, NM and Charleston, SC; a non-residential facility in Cheltenham, MD; and international academies in Hungary, Thailand, Botswana, and El Salvador.

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In particular, we understand that FLETC owns existing facilities in Glynco, GA that may be applicable to DS training needs. FLETC officials report that the Glynco facility can be expanded and upgraded – including construction of new buildings, weapon ranges, and driving tracks – to meet the requirements in State’s original plan at a cost of \$272 million. By leveraging its existing facilities to meet State’s training needs, FLETC estimates its proposal could save the U.S. government almost \$1 billion over 10 years. With such a substantial amount of projected cost savings, we believe it is critical that FLETC’s estimate receive thorough consideration and a full, independent analysis.

We are concerned by the widely differing cost estimates provided by State and DHS to satisfy State’s security training needs. Our Committees have received varying information about which requirements are critical to improving the safety of personnel and facilities overseas and how each proposal would satisfy those requirements. We encourage you to analyze the reliability of the data provided by both agencies to help inform the Administration’s decision.

The Members of our Committees want to make certain that DS agents and other Department of State personnel have the right training to operate overseas in dangerous environments. We also want to ensure that training is delivered in a fiscally responsible way. We believe that the significant difference in the estimated costs between the State FASTC and DHS FLETC proposals, and the potential for duplication of efforts, necessitates that both proposals be fully reviewed.

We look forward to seeing the results of your review and trust that you will make any recommendation based on a full review of all available facts.

Sincerely,



EDWARD R. ROYCE
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs



MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security



JEFF DUNCAN
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency
Committee on Homeland Security

cc: The Honorable John Kerry, Secretary, Department of State
The Honorable Jeh Johnson, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security