

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 12, 2014

The Honorable Gene Dodaro  
Comptroller General  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We understand that the Department of State (“State”) is moving forward with plans to construct a new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (“FAST-C”) in Blackstone, Virginia. The selection of the Fort Pickett site comes after more than a decade of failed proposals to develop property at other sites in the Washington-Metro area and the inability to expand current use at the Bill Scott Raceway in Summit Point, West Virginia. The Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) has submitted a proposal to the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) to retrofit an existing law enforcement training center in Glynco, GA (the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center or “FLETC”) to service the Department of State’s needs. The FAST-C and FLETC proposals vary considerably in cost, scope, and projected completion time, which we believe warrant an impartial review before the Administration moves forward with either.

It is our understanding that State has proposed that the General Services Administration (GSA) construct a new FAST-C 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 Diplomatic Security (“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.

DHS already operates FLETC in Glynco, GA, which provides security training for DHS and 91 law enforcement and military partner agencies and organizations. DHS has proposed to expand and upgrade the current FLETC facility – 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 thereby request that the Government Accountability Office (“GAO”) review both the Department of State’s FAST-C proposal and the DHS proposal to expand the existing FLETC site to meet State’s requirements. A review should consider the strengths, weaknesses, and risks

of each agency's existing capabilities, proposed new infrastructure, and any other relevant tangible factors.

In order to ensure the highest quality security training is provided at the best price to the American taxpayer, we request that GAO address the following questions during its review:

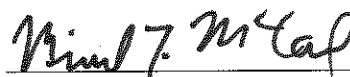
1. Does the State Department have a strategic capital planning process and, if so, how does it conform to leading practices and how do its plans for a new DS training center fit into it?
2. What requirements has the State Department established for a new DS training center, and how do the different proposals, such as the status quo, FAST-C, FLETC, and others fulfill those requirements?
3. To what extent do the cost estimates for the project conform to leading practices?
4. What are the potential consequences of any changes in scope being considered for the project on the effectiveness of State Department training and for meeting project requirements?

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Thomas Hill, Professional Staff Member for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, at (202) 225-5021 or Mr. Ryan Consaul, Staff Director for the Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, at (202) 226-8417.

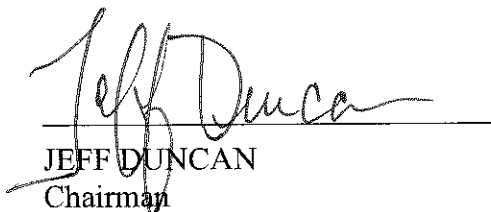
Sincerely,



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