

September 9, 2015

The Honorable Edward R. Royce  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Michael T. McCaul  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Jeff Duncan  
House of Representatives

## Diplomatic Security: Options for Locating a Consolidated Training Facility

The Department of State's (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is responsible for ensuring a safe and secure environment for the successful conduct of U.S. foreign policy. This responsibility includes developing and delivering training programs to protect U.S. government personnel and their families under chief-of-mission authority at diplomatic and consular posts overseas. DS currently provides training in hard skills (e.g., firearms, driving, and explosives) and soft skills (e.g., classroom-based training in counterintelligence, cybersecurity, and law) to a diverse student population (see fig. 1).

**Figure 1: Examples of Bureau of Diplomatic Security Hard-Skills Training Exercises**



Source: Department of State. | GAO-15-808R

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 Accountability Review Board (ARB) recommended further security training for DS agents and all other Foreign Service

personnel.<sup>1</sup> In 2014, DS estimated that it would train more than 9,000 students per year for the next 10 years, compared to 3,500 students trained in 2007.

State has been in the process of looking for a site suitable for its DS training facility for more than a decade. In 2011, State and the General Services Administration (GSA) identified Fort Pickett near Blackstone, Virginia, as the preferred site for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC). The initial 2012 master plan for FASTC would have consolidated hard- and soft-skills training at Fort Pickett for an estimated cost of \$925 million. In March 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.

In April 2014, the administration reaffirmed the selection of Fort Pickett for FASTC, and State and GSA began implementing their plan to construct FASTC. State and GSA have obligated about \$71 million to date toward FASTC at Fort Pickett.<sup>2</sup> In May 2015, GSA purchased land and, in June 2015, awarded a contract for the initial phase of construction of FASTC. Enclosure I provides a more detailed timeline of events in the selection of a site for DS's training center.

To address congressional members' concerns about the considerable variation in the cost estimates for FASTC and FLETC, we were requested to provide further information on both the requirements and costs of constructing a DS training facility. In addition, in June and July 2015, several pieces of legislation were introduced in the House and Senate related to FASTC.

- The House Committee on Appropriations reported the fiscal year 2016 appropriation bill for State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs to the House chamber and recommended fully funding State's request for embassy security. This bill included up to \$99.134 million for FASTC, but stipulated that the funds for FASTC from that or any prior appropriations act making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs would not be made available for obligation until FASTC has been authorized by a subsequent act of Congress.<sup>3</sup>
- The Senate Committee on Appropriations reported to the Senate chamber the fiscal year 2016 appropriations bill for State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs that would condition the obligation of funds for FASTC at Fort Pickett on a number of actions

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<sup>1</sup>Since 2009, we have issued a series of reports on diplomatic security, including on DS training challenges. A list of our recent work on DS can be found at the end of this report.

<sup>2</sup>State and GSA have obligated a total of \$82 million for FASTC, including \$11 million during the 2010 search for a suitable site for DS training that identified a site in Queen Anne's County, Maryland.

<sup>3</sup>Making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, H.R. 2772, 114th Cong. (2015).

including, among other things, State submitting a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the construction of FASTC at Fort Pickett.<sup>4</sup>

- The Department of State Operations Authorization and Embassy Security Act, Fiscal Year 2016 would require OMB to provide documentation related to its consideration and analysis of FASTC at Fort Pickett and State to provide documents and materials related to the determination to construct FASTC at Fort Pickett to certain congressional committees.<sup>5</sup>

Enclosure II provides more detail on this pending legislation.

This report updates preliminary information we provided to your staff in July 2015. Enclosure I examines (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.

We reviewed documents on the requirements for DS's training facility and proposals to meet these requirements from State, DHS, and GSA and conducted site visits to Fort Pickett, FLETC, and three of DS's current training venues. We interviewed officials at these agencies and at OMB about the proposals and spoke with officials from agencies that DS identified as its training partners. We focused on four requirements of the center that our analysis indicated were critical to providing basic and advanced DS training courses. We did not assess whether the training elements identified by DS were necessary for DS to accomplish its mission; however, we confirmed that DS currently conducts and plans to continue to conduct training that includes these elements. We reviewed the September 2014 capital cost estimate for FASTC and FLETC's November 2013 capital cost estimate. We assessed the reliability of both cost estimates against the best practices for reliable cost estimates described in GAO's *Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide*.<sup>6</sup> We also developed various scenarios to estimate the costs of sending students to each location.

We reviewed OMB's preliminary documentation analyzing the FASTC and FLETC proposals and spoke with OMB officials about this analysis. OMB initially concluded that FLETC had cost advantages over FASTC and could accommodate most of State's training. However, OMB conducted its analysis in the fall of 2013 based on incomplete information and therefore did not take into account subsequent events, such as the completion of the FASTC environmental impact statement or the obligation of funds for FASTC. Our analysis is based on updated data on site requirements and costs from State and includes events through the June 2015 award of a contract for the first phase of construction for FASTC. In addition, FLETC officials indicated that FLETC's proposal to OMB was based on incomplete information about State's requirements and the reduction in scope of FASTC. FLETC did not incorporate plans for accommodating all of State's requirements or for matching State's reduced-scope plan in FLETC's proposal to OMB.

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<sup>4</sup>Making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, S. 1725, 114th Cong. (2015).

<sup>5</sup>Department of State Operations Authorization and Embassy Security Act, Fiscal Year 2016, S. 1635, 114th Cong. (2015).

<sup>6</sup>GAO, *GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide: Best Practices for Developing and Managing Capital Program Costs*, GAO-09-3SP (Washington, D.C.: March 2009).

More information on the scope and methodology of our research is provided in enclosure III.

We conducted this performance audit from November 2014 to September 2015 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.

In summary, 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.<sup>7</sup> First, 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.<sup>8</sup> FLETC can accommodate many of these venues on its Glynco campus but would have to conduct some exercises at a Marine Corps training facility about 30 miles away. Second, we found that Fort Pickett is available for nighttime training, which DS conducts on about 190 days per year, while at FLETC there may be some limitations on nighttime training. We also determined that the Fort Pickett site held advantages in terms of proximity to Washington, D.C., and exclusivity of use, both of which were requirements highlighted in reports stemming from the Benghazi ARB.

In September 2014, State and GSA estimated that acquisition and construction costs for the reduced-scope plan for FASTC would be \$413 million; however, 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. Instead, these officials said, they subtracted the costs of some facilities from the FLETC full-scope estimate to arrive at a reduced-scope estimate of \$243 million.<sup>9</sup> FLETC has not refined its cost estimate since OMB notified it that the administration had selected the FASTC proposal in April 2014. We found that neither the FASTC nor the FLETC estimate for capital costs fully meets best practices. The FASTC estimate fully or substantially meets three of the four characteristics—comprehensive, well documented, and accurate—and partially meets one characteristic of reliable cost estimates—credible; the FLETC estimate partially or minimally meets all four characteristics.<sup>10</sup> 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. See enclosure V for more detail on our assessment. 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.

In addition to capital costs for acquisition and construction of a DS training center, the government will incur costs of sending students to training. These recurring student costs

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<sup>7</sup>For more information on how we selected these requirements, see enc. III.

<sup>8</sup>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. See enc. IV for a map of DS's hard-skills training sites.

<sup>9</sup>FLETC's November 2013 proposal included an estimate of \$272 million to meet State's full-scope plan for FASTC.

<sup>10</sup>Specifically, the FLETC cost estimate partially meets three characteristics—comprehensive, well documented, and accurate—and minimally meets one characteristic—credible.



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 estimate that the costs of sending students to FASTC over 10 years will be \$43 million to \$121 million less, in net present value, than sending students to FLETC.<sup>11</sup> 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 enclosure III for further details on the assumptions used in each of these scenarios.

## Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to State, DHS, GSA, OMB, and the Departments of Defense (Defense) and Justice for comment. In its written comments, reproduced in enclosure VI, State generally agreed with our findings. State, DHS, GSA, OMB, and Defense also provided technical comments that we incorporated, as appropriate.

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As agreed with your offices, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the report date. At that time, we will send copies to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretaries of State, Homeland Security, and Defense; the Administrator of the General Services Administration; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and the Attorney General of the United States. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact Michael J. Courts at (202) 512-8980 or [courtsm@gao.gov](mailto:courtsm@gao.gov), or David J. Wise at (202) 512-5731 or [wised@gao.gov](mailto:wised@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in enclosure VII.



Michael J. Courts  
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## Enclosures – 7

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<sup>11</sup>Net present value shows, in today's dollars, the relative net cash flow of various alternatives over a long period of time.

## **Enclosure I: Analysis of Two Proposals for Consolidating the Hard-Skills Training Provided by the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security**

This enclosure updates preliminary analysis and information provided to requesters in July 2015. It discusses the Department of State's (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) training; State and the General Services Administration's (GSA) proposal to create the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) to accommodate this training; the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) direction for State and GSA to work with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) to assess the viability of using FLETC for DS training; and the costs associated with each option.

## DS Training Students

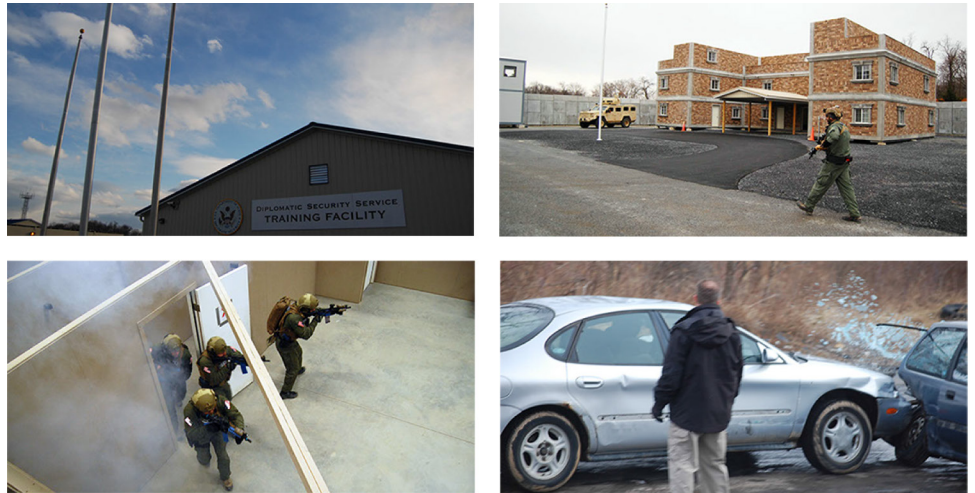
DS provides security training to a diverse student population. These student groups include the following:

- **DS special agents**, who are DS's lead operational employees. About 40 percent serve overseas, managing the security requirements of diplomatic and consular posts. About 60 percent serve domestically, conducting investigations and providing protective details to foreign dignitaries. DS has reported that there were about 2,000 special agents as of June 2015.
- **Foreign Service personnel** and other U.S. government civilian employees under chief-of-mission authority, and their family members, at overseas posts. As of March 2015, there were approximately 25,000 personnel under chief-of-mission authority, in addition to their family members, and Foreign Service Nationals, some of whom are eligible for DS training.
- **Foreign security forces** that receive training funded by the U.S. government through the Antiterrorism Assistance program and the Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response. State expects to train more than 800 such personnel in fiscal year 2015.

## Current Diplomatic Security Training

DS currently provides hard-skills training at more than 11 contracted or leased facilities in 7 states, including at its Interim Training Facility at the Bill Scott Raceway in Summit Point, West Virginia (see fig. 2). Enclosure IV includes a map of DS's existing hard-skills training locations. According to State, the cost to use these facilities was more than \$21 million in fiscal year 2014.

**Figure 2: Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Interim Training Facility in West Virginia**



Source: Department of State (photo). | GAO-15-808R

DS hard-skills training includes security familiarization training for Foreign Service and other civilian personnel as well as basic and advanced training for security professionals. Students are trained in firearms, explosives, antiterrorism driving techniques, defensive tactics, and security operations, among other things. For example, the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) familiarization course provides Foreign Service personnel with instruction in personal security skills necessary for recognizing, avoiding, and responding to potential terrorist and other threat situations. In response to a Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB) recommendation, DS has expanded the number of personnel required to take FACT and is currently phasing in this training for all U.S. government personnel under chief-of-mission authority overseas for 45 days or more during 1 calendar year.

Advanced training for DS special agents includes the High Threat Operations Course, an intensive course designed to provide agents with specialized training in a variety of tasks, including leadership, tactical medicine, personnel recovery, weapons, small unit tactics, air operations, communications, and movement security procedures needed to operate in high-threat, high-risk posts. This course includes nighttime and weekend training, culminating in a multiday nonstop field exercise. Agents joining DS's Mobile Security Deployment teams receive additional specialized training in individual and team tactical skills to work effectively under extreme stress. DS also provides training to foreign security personnel in areas such as crisis response, explosive incident countermeasures, post-blast investigations, and armored vehicle driving.

DS trains with partners from the U.S. Marine Corps, including Marine Security Guards, the Marine Security Augmentation Unit, and the Marine Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team. In addition, DS conducts limited joint training exercises with partners in the U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Intelligence Community.

## **The Search for a Suitable Site for Consolidating DS Training**

In 2008, State identified the need for a consolidated training facility for DS, and in 2011 we reported that DS officials believed that using multiple facilities to accomplish their training mission was inefficient and more costly than a consolidated training facility would be.

In 2009, State allocated \$118.1 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Worldwide Security and Protection funds to acquire a site for and design and build FASTC, obligating most of these funds to GSA. In June 2009, GSA announced that it had initiated the search on behalf of State for an appropriate space to build FASTC. In fiscal year 2010, State allocated an additional \$17.6 million of Worldwide Security and Protection funds to GSA to build FASTC.

After working through a systematic process with GSA to identify and evaluate potential sites, State selected a location for FASTC in Queen Anne's County, Maryland. State had planned to begin building by early 2011; however, in June 2010, State and GSA determined that the site would no longer be considered because of local concerns regarding environmental and other land use issues that could delay the project for several years.

State subsequently revised its criteria for FASTC, expanding the acceptable distance from DS headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, to 220 miles and focusing on publicly owned properties. GSA evaluated 41 sites against the revised site criteria and identified 2 that met State's requirements. In the fall of 2010, these 2 sites were then evaluated through site visits and a suitability analysis. Following this evaluation, State and GSA determined that only Fort Pickett, near Blackstone, Virginia, fully met all of State's mandatory criteria for FASTC.

See figure 3 for a detailed timeline of events in the search for a suitable location for a consolidated DS training facility.

## **DS's Proposal for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett Near Blackstone, Virginia**

In December 2010, State and GSA completed a feasibility study for consolidating DS's hard-skills and soft-skills training at Fort Pickett. In December 2012, State and GSA completed a master plan for FASTC. The estimated capital cost of this full-scope project was \$925 million. In March 2013, to reduce the estimated cost of FASTC, State eliminated from its proposal classrooms for soft-skills training and other facilities supporting students residing on campus, such as dormitories and a cafeteria. The current plan for FASTC includes three paved and two off-road driving tracks, a mock urban environment including a mock embassy, indoor and outdoor firearms ranges, an explosives training environment, and an administrative area. All facilities at FASTC would be new construction, except for two existing long-range rifle ranges, which DS would have priority use for or could use when available. In September 2014, State and GSA revised the estimate for capital costs for the scaled-down FASTC to \$413 million.

State officials indicated that DS will continue to provide soft-skills training at existing State and leased facilities in the Washington, D.C., area. Under the reduced scope plan, students attending hard-skills training would stay at hotels in the greater Richmond or Petersburg, Virginia, areas. Currently, hotel capacity in nearby Blackstone cannot accommodate the roughly 600 students per week that State expects to train. State, GSA, and local county officials said they expect that private industry will provide the needed hotel capacity, noting that developers have submitted preliminary plans to construct additional hotels in Blackstone.

In May 2015, GSA purchased land for FASTC adjacent to Fort Pickett from Nottoway County, Virginia, for \$4.8 million, and on June 17, 2015, it awarded a contract for construction of the first phase of FASTC for \$24.8 million. State and GSA estimate that construction of FASTC will be complete in 2019.

## **The Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers' Proposal for Accommodating DS Training in Glynco, Georgia**

In early 2013, OMB directed State and GSA to work with FLETC to assess the viability of using available capacity at FLETC's headquarters in Glynco, Georgia, to consolidate DS training. In May 2013, FLETC indicated that it could accommodate DS's training at a rough order-of-magnitude estimate of \$200 million in capital costs. In November 2013, FLETC further refined its proposal and estimated that it could provide all of the elements in the original FASTC master plan, including soft-skills training and student life support, for \$272 million in capital costs. FLETC officials indicated that they never received DS's reduced-scope plan for FASTC. Therefore, based on limited information, FLETC subtracted the costs of some facilities from its estimate to arrive at a reduced-scope estimate of \$243 million. FLETC's proposal also includes the use of Townsend Bombing Range, a training facility operated jointly by the U.S. Marine Corps and the Georgia Air National Guard, for large explosives and long-range firearms that cannot be used on the FLETC campus. Townsend Bombing Range is about 30 miles from Glynco, or about 45 minutes by bus.

Personnel from more than 90 federal law enforcement organizations and thousands of state, local, and international law enforcement officers currently receive training at FLETC, including DS agents who participate in FLETC's Criminal Investigator Training Program. According to FLETC officials, FLETC has about \$625 million in existing infrastructure, including training venues, classrooms, dormitories, and a cafeteria, that could be used to support training outlined in the FASTC master plan. In its November 2013 business case for DS training, FLETC indicated that it could meet some of DS's training requirements immediately and begin construction of new facilities, such as additional driving tracks and a mock urban venue, within 18 to 24 months of approval and funding of the project. FLETC estimated that it could fully implement its plan approximately 4 years after receiving class schedules from State and funding for the project. In April 2014, OMB directed FLETC to cease its planning for DS training, according to FLETC officials.

**Figure 3: Key Events in Plans to Consolidate Bureau of Diplomatic Security Training**

Department of State (State) Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC)		Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC)
<b>2008</b>		
State report to Congress identifies need for Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) to have a consolidated training facility.	May	
<b>2009</b>		
Funding to State for site acquisition and development of FASTC from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.	Feb.	
The General Services Administration (GSA) announces that it has initiated a search for a site for FASTC on behalf of State.	June	
State and GSA determine that, of 30 potential sites for FASTC, only 1 site in Queen Anne's County, Maryland, meets overall needs.	Nov.	
<b>2010</b>		
State and GSA determine that Queen Anne's County site will no longer be considered for FASTC.	June	
State and GSA evaluate 41 sites against new criteria; 2 sites meet State's requirements, including Fort Pickett, near Blackstone, Virginia.	July - Aug.	
Analysis of 2 remaining candidate sites conducted to determine the suitability of each site. Only Fort Pickett is determined to be a suitable location for FASTC.	Sept.- Nov.	
State and GSA complete a feasibility study for FASTC at Fort Pickett.	Dec.	
<b>2011</b>		
GAO report on DS training finds that DS's existing training facilities are inadequate.	June	
<b>2012</b>		
Attack on U.S. Special Mission Compound, Benghazi, Libya.	Sept.	
FASTC Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is published.	Oct.	
FASTC master plan completed; project cost estimated to be \$925 million.	Dec.	
Benghazi Accountability Review Board report recommends changes to DS high-threat training.	Dec.	

**Figure 3 (continued): Key Events in Plans to Consolidate Diplomatic Security Training**

Department of State (State) Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC)		Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC)	
2013			
Jan.	The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directs FLETC to work with State and GSA to assess the viability of using available capacity at FLETC's headquarters in Glynco, Georgia, and estimate the cost of any additional required construction to meet State's needs.		
DS reduces the scope of FASTC; cost estimated to be \$459 million.	Mar.	Mar.	State officials visit FLETC to discuss DS requirements and FLETC capabilities.
Report on DS Organization and Management recommends that State establish a single dedicated training center that is conveniently located.	May	May	FLETC reports to OMB that its rough order-of-magnitude cost estimate for additional construction is approximately \$200 million.
Independent Panel on Best Practices recommends that State "establish a dedicated DS Foreign Affairs Training Center within a reasonable distance to the Washington, DC, metropolitan area."	Aug.		
Aug.	OMB directs DS and FLETC to work together to further refine initial cost estimates and submit a coordinated response.		
State reports to OMB that FLETC is not a viable option for FASTC because it does not meet DS's requirements, but State does not provide detailed cost data on the Fort Pickett proposal, as requested by OMB.	Oct.-Nov.	Nov.	FLETC provides a business case for DS training to OMB, with a full-scope cost estimate of \$272 million. With limited information from State on its reduced-scope plan, FLETC subtracted the costs of some facilities from its estimate to arrive at a reduced-scope estimate of \$243 million.
Nov. 2013 - Apr. 2014	OMB initially concludes that FLETC had cost advantages over FASTC and could accommodate most of State's training. However, according to OMB officials, this conclusion was based on incomplete information from State regarding the requirements and estimated costs of DS's proposed training center.		
2014			
Apr.	OMB concludes its review process, deciding to defer to State on the decision. Administration reaffirms State's selection of the Fort Pickett site. FLETC ceases planning for potentially accommodating DS training at its Glynco campus.		
State and GSA revise the cost estimate for FASTC to \$413 million.	Sept.		
FASTC master plan update is completed.	Oct.		
2015			
Final EIS for FASTC at Fort Pickett is published.	Apr.		
GSA purchases Local Redevelopment Authority land from Nottoway County and awards contract for first phase of construction for FASTC.	May-June		

Source: GAO analysis of information provided by State, FLETC, GSA, and OMB. | GAO-15-808R

## Site Requirement 1: Consolidation of Venues

DS has been seeking to establish a dedicated security training facility to consolidate its hard-skills training since the early 1990s. In 2008, State reported to Congress on the need for consolidating all DS training in one location. In our 2011 report, we noted that DS officials estimated that in 8 weeks of training almost 1 week was spent in travel between and among the training sites.

Both the Management Review Panel and the Best Practices Panel, which were formed as a result of recommendations in the Benghazi ARB report, recommended that DS consolidate its training venues to meet its unique training needs.

To provide different types of hard-skills training to its diverse student population, DS determined that it needs several different venues that can all be located on one site.

According to State, to accommodate the various structures DS requires, the consolidated training site needs

- approximately 1,500 acres;
- indoor and outdoor shooting ranges of various lengths, with at least one that is 800 meters in length; and
- multiple explosives ranges that can accommodate charges up to 5 pounds.

In addition, DS has emphasized the need to have various training venues close to one another so, for example, training exercises can move from one venue to the next without stopping, and can include events such as a motorcade facing hostile fire in a mock urban area that then enters a mock embassy compound while under attack and then moves a protectee from the motorcade into the mock embassy under protective cover.

## Locating FASTC at Fort Pickett, Virginia, Allows DS to Consolidate Its Hard-Skills Training at One Site

DS officials told us that DS will be able to construct nearly all of its tactical training facilities in one location on 1,350 of Fort Pickett's 42,000 acres. The FASTC environmental impact statement states that the site offers sufficient space for driving tracks, firearms ranges, and an explosives range, and will have enough space to build related classrooms next to each training site. DS also plans to construct a mock embassy close to mock urban environments and driving tracks so that students can engage in exercises that encompass more than one venue.

DS officials said that FASTC at Fort Pickett will be able to accommodate advanced team training, such as exercises in which students use live fire in enclosed structures, as well as what DS refers to as its capstone exercises. These exercises occur at the end of advanced courses and provide trainees with an opportunity to engage in realistic simulations, applying what they have learned. We observed a capstone exercise at the conclusion of a High Threat Operations Course for DS agents. This exercise took place over more than 80 consecutive hours, during which students were kept outside in the dark, harassed by sniper fire, forced to contend with transporting and caring for wounded comrades, and compelled to evacuate under hostile fire. DS staff explained that the capstone exercises are designed to place security personnel in high stress conditions similar to those they would face if they were under attack overseas.

In addition, the FASTC proposal includes a venue capable of handling large explosives. Although most DS students may not need to use this venue, DS plans to use this facility to train foreign personnel, such as bomb squads, in explosive incident countermeasures and post-blast investigations.

The current proposal for FASTC does not include soft-skills training, which DS plans to conduct in the Washington, D.C., area. In addition, it excludes life support functions, so students will rely on the local economy for food and lodging.

## Moving DS Hard-Skills Training to FLETC Would Require at Least Two Sites

FLETC trains students from over 90 partner organizations on about 1,650 acres in Glynco, Georgia, but it cannot accommodate all of DS's training elements at one site. According to FLETC, many but not all of the elements that DS has requested are available on its campus or can be built there. For example, FLETC currently has 25- and 50-meter firing ranges and can construct three additional ranges of 100 to 150 meters. It can provide paved and unpaved driving tracks, a mock embassy in an urban area, and an explosives range that can handle explosives up to 3 pounds. However, the FLETC campus does not have space for long rifle ranges or an explosives range that can handle large explosives. In addition, for safety reasons, FLETC does not allow the use of live fire in training exercises but can offer the use of simulations.

DS officials have expressed concern that given the dense layout of FLETC and large student population—nearly 23,000 in fiscal year 2014—DS would likely face challenges in conducting its advanced training capstone exercises on the FLETC campus. FLETC officials noted that they did not receive information from State about these exercises, which is why FLETC's plan did not include them. DS has commented that if its training were moved to FLETC, DS would still need another site for several of its advanced courses, such as those requiring long-range weapons, 5-pound explosives, and possibly nighttime training with gunfire and explosions. This situation, they said, would not result in the consolidation of DS hard-skills training venues. FLETC has proposed the use of Townsend Bombing Range, about 30 miles away, where it could construct long rifle ranges and explosive ranges that could accommodate 5-pound explosives.

Based on data we reviewed, FLETC could house at least some DS students in its dormitories and could feed all students at its cafeteria, at a lower cost to the government. Also, FLETC offers several other existing facilities and classrooms that State could potentially use for training, such as a mock hotel.



## Site Requirement 2: Proximity to Washington, D.C.

The two panels established as a result of the Benghazi ARB examined how DS could best operate in high-threat, high-risk environments, and both these panels recommended a consolidated training center, located in proximity to State's Washington, D.C., headquarters. The report of the Independent Panel on Best Practices stated that, given State's reliance on the military and other government agencies, it is imperative that the training facility be located within close proximity to the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area.

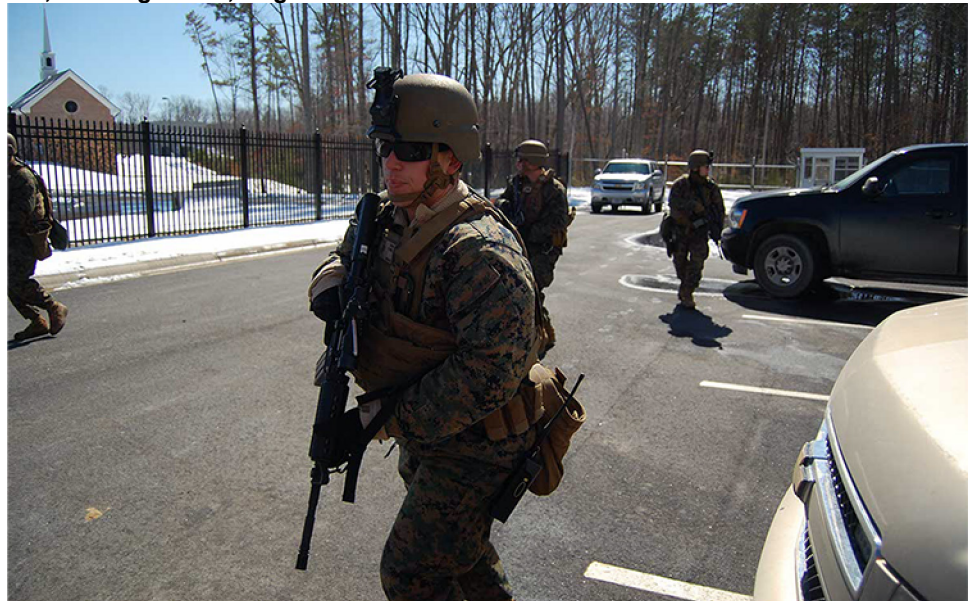
According to DS, establishing its consolidated training center in the greater Washington area will facilitate joint training with its partners in the federal law enforcement and foreign affairs communities, most of whose members are based in the Washington area. State maintains that its evolving overseas mission mandates a stronger emphasis on its coordination and collaboration with the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community in areas of training, planning, contingency support, transportation, logistics, emergency response, and evacuations in foreign countries.

According to State, the majority of DS students will travel to its hard-skills training facility from the Washington, D.C., area. For example, State said that FACT students, who are projected to account for about 70 percent of DS students, will combine this training with additional training at the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Virginia; with consultations at State headquarters; or with both other training and consultations. New DS agents—projected to be about 100 per year—are to begin their training at the Foreign Service Institute and then travel to FLETC for criminal investigator training before returning to the Washington area for DS-specific training.

## Fort Pickett, Virginia, Is within a 3-Hour Drive from Washington and Close to State's Primary Training Partners

Fort Pickett is about 160 miles from Washington, D.C., or nearly 3 hours by car one way. State has indicated that its primary training partners are all based in the mid-Atlantic region, including the Marine Corps, Army Asymmetric Warfare Group, FBI, Central Intelligence Agency, Secret Service, Defense Intelligence Agency, and Naval Special Warfare Command. We spoke with each of these agencies and found that while most currently conduct limited or no joint training in hard skills with DS, the Marines conduct such exercises frequently. For example, one exercise we observed involved members of the Marine Security Augmentation Unit from Quantico, Virginia, and the Marine Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team from Chesapeake, Virginia, who joined DS students in countering an assault on a mock consulate (see fig. 4).

**Figure 4: Bureau of Diplomatic Security Capstone Exercise with Marines at Fort A.P. Hill, Bowling Green, Virginia**



Source: Department of State. | GAO-15-808R

## FLETC Is Farther from Washington and DS Partners but Could Provide Other Training Synergies

FLETC is located in Glynco, Georgia, approximately 640 miles from Washington, D.C. Travel to FLETC generally involves a flight to Jacksonville, Florida—about an hour's drive from Glynco—or a transfer in Atlanta if flying to the small airport adjacent to FLETC. Overall, traveling by air between Washington and FLETC takes 5 to 6 hours each way. Despite the distance, FLETC officials told us that they believe DS would benefit from valuable synergies in working with other agencies at FLETC, in addition to the advantages that joint training offers through shared resources and economies of scale. For example, as agencies compare training, they get new ideas to improve the training they offer. These officials also noted that some agencies that operate overseas, such as the U.S. Marshals Service, train at FLETC, and that FLETC has recently been approved to provide FACT training for U.S. government officials and their families who have been assigned overseas. According to FLETC officials, FLETC began piloting FACT training at its Glynco campus during the last week of July 2015. DS officials said that State will continue to provide FACT training for State personnel. It is unclear how many students from other agencies will take FACT at FLETC.

However, DS officials noted that the agencies that train their personnel at FLETC are not responsible for embassy security. In addition, DS officials stated that if DS's training facility is located at FLETC, some of DS's key training partners would choose not to travel to Georgia. An official responsible for Marine Security Guard training confirmed that the cost of traveling to FLETC would be prohibitive.

### Site Requirement 3: Exclusive 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 FBI and U.S. Secret Service have adopted such a policy as a best practice.

DS officials told us they need a facility that they have exclusive use of to ensure that they are able to train personnel and respond to a changing threat environment abroad. According to DS officials, because DS does not currently own its training facilities, its access to some facilities may be constrained. For example, DS uses the firearms ranges at the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Virginia, to train with heavier weapons that none of its other facilities can accommodate. However, according to DS officials, to accommodate military needs, the Marines occasionally require DS to change its training schedule, sometimes with minimal notice, which increases costs and makes it difficult for DS staff to meet training objectives within the time available.

In addition, DS has concluded that exclusive use of its training facilities is necessary because of the need to periodically update its training venues and its training curriculum to reflect the changing overseas threat environment affecting diplomatic personnel. For example, in response to a Benghazi ARB recommendation that DS develop a response to the use of fire as a weapon, State revised the FACT training curriculum in 2013 to include instruction on evacuation from a smoke-filled environment, which required the construction of smokehouses at their existing training venues.

### DS Will Have Exclusive Use of Training Facilities at Fort Pickett

If DS constructs training facilities at Fort Pickett, DS will control its training venues and have the flexibility to implement scheduling options and changes, such as those that arise when training foreign security forces traveling from abroad. DS will also be able to accommodate the deployment schedules of Foreign Service personnel. DS officials noted that they are experiencing an increasing need for Mobile Security Deployment teams, which are being sent to more places and for longer periods to provide enhanced security and counterassault capability. As a result, more teams need training, and teams in training need more rapid turnarounds so they can be quickly redeployed to respond quickly to changing security conditions overseas. Given the current threat environment around the world, DS officials do not see this need decreasing.

### FLETC Can Offer DS Priority Use but Not Exclusive Use

FLETC stated that DS would be assured of priority scheduling 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 (see fig. 5). However, 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. FLETC noted that it has a long-standing history of de-conflicting scheduling issues and has consistently accommodated the training needs of its many partner agencies over the past 40 years, even in the midst of unprecedented demand for law enforcement training immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

**Figure 5: Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers Counter-Terror Operations Training Facility**



Source: Department of Homeland Security. | GAO-15-808R

FLETC officials told us that they were confident that FLETC could, with some flexibility from DS, accommodate DS’s training needs and its schedule. For example, they noted that there are agencies currently training at FLETC that initially wanted to build their own training facilities somewhere else, such as the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Officials of that agency confirmed that their agency is now satisfied with the decision to train at FLETC.

DS officials told us that because DS would not have exclusive use of its facilities at FLETC, DS may have to compete for venue or range time with over 90 other partner agencies and would have to conform to FLETC scheduling requirements. DS is concerned that if it unexpectedly required a particular training venue at FLETC, that venue might not be available for DS to conduct the needed training in a timely manner. In addition, DS is concerned that in the future, should other agencies need to increase their training efforts, DS’s training needs could be given a lower priority. OMB officials also noted that FLETC may not be able to accommodate all DS’s hard-skills training if FLETC’s student numbers or DS’s training needs increase substantially.



## Site Requirement 4: 24/7 Availability

DS's training facility needs to be able to accommodate training that involves explosions and loud gunfire at all hours of the night, according to DS. Data provided by State show that, during DS's 240-day annual training cycle, it conducts training during hours of darkness on about 190 days. DS officials further explained that for about 140 of these days, the nighttime training exercises include loud noises, such as gun fire and small explosions. For example, the High Threat Operations Course, offered five times per year, includes 15 nights of training. In addition, for about 30 days a year, the training exercises continue for 24 hours a day over several days, according to State data. Other training segments can begin as early as 4:00 a.m. in no-light or low-light settings and often involve loud weapons fire and many small explosives that produce bright light and loud noise.

## FASTC at Fort Pickett Would Be Available for Training 24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week

DS and National Guard officials told us that Fort Pickett, which covers about 42,000 acres and is set in a rural area, can accommodate training at any hour, including exercises that involve noise from guns and explosives (see fig. 6). The Fort Pickett Base Commander told us that he did not have any concerns about DS's training activities. He stated that Fort Pickett has a good relationship with the surrounding counties and routinely has nighttime exercises with gunfire from tanks and small arms. For example, in the past year Fort Pickett has hosted 2 weeks of nighttime training that included artillery fire and helicopter takeoffs and landings. The Base Commander told us that DS's planned nighttime training will create less noise than current nighttime exercises. Furthermore, throughout the public comment period on the FASTC draft environmental impact statement, local residents did not express any concerns about potential nighttime exercises that DS might conduct at Fort Pickett.

**Figure 6: Examples of Bureau of Diplomatic Security Nighttime Training Exercises**



Source: Department of State. | GAO-15-808R

## FLETC May Not Be Available for Training 24 Hours a Day

The Director of FLETC has noted that FLETC does not conduct certain types of training at night at their campus in Glynn County, Georgia, and FLETC officials told us that current exercises there end by 10:00 p.m. For example, the director stated that nighttime helicopter landings—which State conducts as part of some of its training exercises—would be difficult on FLETC's campus but could be accommodated at Townsend Bombing Range. DS officials told us that FLETC has not provided any written confirmation that DS training, including gunfire and explosions, would be allowed during nighttime hours. There is a noise ordinance in Glynn County that states that it is the intent of the ordinance to limit noise in certain areas, excluding two areas, one of which is FLETC. However, we contacted county officials, including the police chief, about this ordinance and received conflicting information. DS officials questioned how long that exemption would continue should DS begin conducting nighttime exercises on the FLETC campus. DS officials also expressed concern about potential restrictions on nighttime exercises at Townsend Bombing Range, although FLETC officials told us that the Marines conduct nighttime training there.

Characteristics of Reliable Cost Estimates

A reliable cost estimate is critical to the success of any program. Such an estimate provides the basis for informed investment decision making, realistic budget formulation and program resourcing, meaningful progress measurement, proactive course correction when warranted, and accountability for results. According to OMB, programs must maintain current and well-documented estimates of program costs, and these estimates must encompass the full life cycle of the program. Among other things, OMB states that generating reliable program cost estimates is critical to supporting OMB’s capital programming process. Without this capability, agencies are at risk of experiencing program cost overruns, missed deadlines, and performance shortfalls.

Our past research has identified several best practices that are the basis of effective program cost estimating and should result in reliable and valid cost estimates that management can use for making informed decisions. A high-quality and reliable cost estimate has the following four characteristics:

- **Comprehensive:** The cost estimate should include both government and contractor costs of the program over its full life cycle.
- **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.
- **Accurate:** The cost estimate should provide for results that are unbiased, and it should not be overly conservative or optimistic.
- **Credible:** The cost estimate should discuss any limitations of the analysis because of uncertainty or biases surrounding data or assumptions.

For further details on our methodology, see enclosure III.

Neither the FASTC nor the FLETC Estimate for Acquisition and Construction Costs Fully Meets Best Practices

We reviewed the September 2014 capital cost estimate for FASTC. We also reviewed FLETC’s capital cost estimate included in its November 2013 proposal to OMB. 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. FLETC officials said that they took no further action on this project after the administration selected the Fort Pickett option in April 2014.

We found that the FASTC estimate fully or substantially meets three of the four characteristics and partially meets one characteristic of reliable cost estimates, while the FLETC estimate partially or minimally meets all characteristics (see table 1 and enc. V). Pending legislation would require State to provide a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis that would include, among other things, a life-cycle cost estimate of construction, maintenance, and sustainment of FASTC at Fort Pickett.<sup>12</sup>

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-15-808R

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.

<sup>12</sup>S. 1725, 114th Cong. (2015). See enc. II for more information on this and other pending legislation.

## Capital, Operating, and Recapitalization Costs

We identified the current capital cost estimates for both the FASTC and the FLETC proposals. The most recent estimate for FASTC is from September 2014, while FLETC has not updated its November 2013 cost estimate because OMB notified it that the administration had selected the FASTC proposal in April 2014.

Our analysis includes projections of the recurring costs for operations and maintenance (O&M) and for recapitalization investment—the costs of replacing broken systems and equipment. In response to a request for cost data from OMB, FLETC provided a detailed estimate of its O&M and recapitalization investment costs on a facility-by-facility basis over 10 years. State's response to OMB did not include detailed cost information over 10 years.

Our analysis also includes staffing and associated costs for each proposal that FLETC provided to OMB, based on an assumption of 370 full-time equivalent staff per year. We did not assess the reliability of these data because they were the same for both proposals and did not contribute to the overall difference in estimated costs.

Initial projections of O&M, recapitalization, and staffing costs are shown for 10 years because OMB's request for these data was for 10 years. We also projected these costs over 25 and 50 years, because State and OMB indicated that this project is expected to be operational for at least 50 years.

## Uncertainties in Projected Capital and Recurring Operating Costs

Because of potentially unreliable capital and recurring operating cost estimates, and the lack of detailed information, the following projections may not be reliable.

### Projected Capital and Recurring Operating Costs for FASTC

State and GSA estimate that the capital costs for FASTC will be \$413 million. The FASTC proposal did not include estimates for O&M, recapitalization investment, or staffing costs over a 10-year period. We assumed O&M and recapitalization 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. We estimate these costs to be \$220 million over 10 years. In addition, data provided by FLETC suggest that staffing and associated costs for FASTC would be \$531 million over 10 years.<sup>13</sup> Using data provided by State and GSA, we projected the net present value of total capital and recurring costs for FASTC to be \$1.1 billion over 10 years, \$2.2 billion over 25 years, and \$4.1 billion over 50 years.<sup>14</sup>

Because we found that the capital cost estimates for FASTC may be unreliable, any projections based on these figures may also be unreliable. Thus, such projections should be used with caution. Estimates for FASTC do not include the costs for soft-skills training, which DS said it plans to continue conducting in the Washington, D.C., area.

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. According to State and GSA officials, a large portion of these obligations are not recoverable regardless of which option is selected.

### Projected Capital and Recurring Operating Costs for FLETC

FLETC estimated the capital costs of its proposal to be \$272 million, including facilities for soft-skills training. FLETC's proposal also included a reduced-scope estimate of \$243 million, which was derived by subtracting the costs for facilities that DS had removed from its scope from FLETC's original estimate. Based on FLETC's estimates for O&M and recapitalization investment costs included in its proposal to OMB, we project that O&M and recapitalization investment costs will be \$179 million over 10 years. In addition, FLETC's proposal also included \$531 million for staffing and associated costs, based on an assumption of 370 full-time equivalent staff per year. Using data provided by FLETC, we projected the net present value of total capital and recurring costs for the FLETC proposal to be \$866 million over 10 years, \$1.9 billion over 25 years, and \$3.7 billion over 50 years.

Because we found that the capital cost estimates for FLETC may be unreliable, any projections based on these figures may also be unreliable. Thus, such projections should be used with caution. FLETC officials indicated that some costs in the FLETC proposal, such as for architect and engineering tasks that will be performed by in-house staff, would come out of FLETC's operating budget and are therefore not included in FLETC's capital cost estimate.

<sup>13</sup>FLETC's proposal to OMB notes that this figure is based the assumption that State's estimate of 370 full-time equivalent staff would transfer to FLETC.

<sup>14</sup>Net present value shows, in today's dollars, the relative net cash flow of various alternatives over a long period of time.

**Costs of Sending Students to Each Location**

In addition to the capital, operating, and recapitalization costs of each proposal, there are costs associated with sending students to each location. These student costs include travel, lodging, meals and incidental expenses, and compensation for time spent traveling.

We developed three scenarios to estimate the range of these student costs. These estimates are based on State’s estimate of 9,213 students per year for the next 10 years. Many of these students are expected to take courses that last only 1 week, such as FACT, while others are expected to take courses that last as long as 6 months, such as Mobile Security Deployment teams’ initial training.

Our scenarios make various assumptions regarding airfares for students traveling to FLETC by plane and the availability of seats on these flights; the cost and availability of lodging, including hotels at both locations and dormitories on FLETC’s campus; per diem allowances for meals at each location; and the amount of time students spend traveling to each location.

We based our assumptions on documents from State and DHS and on interviews with officials from these agencies. We solicited input from each of these agencies on a preliminary set of assumptions and revised our scenarios based on agencies’ responses. We estimated these costs over 10 years because OMB requested these data from State and FLETC over 10 years. We also projected these costs over 25 and 50 years because State and OMB indicated that this project is expected to be operational for at least 50 years. For more information on these scenarios, see enclosure III.

We determined that these data were reliable for the purposes of developing a range of estimates of student costs.

**Estimated Costs of Sending Students to DS Training Vary Widely but Are Expected to Be Lower for FASTC**

We estimate that the costs of sending students to FASTC over 10 years—including travel, lodging, meals and incidental expenses, and compensation for time spent traveling—will be \$43 million to \$121 million less, in net present value, than sending students to FLETC (see table 2). In our mid-range scenario, we estimate that it will cost about \$71 million less to send students to FASTC than to FLETC. The difference in student costs between FASTC and FLETC increases over time, from between \$122 million and \$323 million after 25 years, to between \$309 and \$736 million after 50 years.

Table 2: 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
<b>Costs over 10 years</b>			
Low scenario	\$184 million	\$227 million	\$43 million
Mid scenario	\$189 million	\$260 million	\$71 million
High scenario	\$200 million	\$322 million	\$121 million
<b>Costs over 25 years</b>			
Low scenario	\$463 million	\$585 million	\$122 million
Mid scenario	\$470 million	\$670 million	\$200 million
High scenario	\$504 million	\$828 million	\$323 million
<b>Costs over 50 years</b>			
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-15-808R

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

**Travel Costs Account for the Largest Amounts of the Projected Differences in Estimated Student Costs**

Travel costs associated with sending students to FASTC at Fort Pickett, Virginia, are \$101 million to \$166 million less, in net present value, over 10 years than sending them to FLETC in Glynco, Georgia. This difference reflects the added expense of flying students to FLETC from Washington, D.C., either directly to Jacksonville, Florida, or connecting through Atlanta to Brunswick, Georgia, as well as the differences in costs of compensating employees for time spent traveling, compared to sending them by bus to FASTC.

Lower costs for lodging and meals at FLETC compared to FASTC mitigate the higher travel costs to a limited extent. We estimate that feeding and housing students at FLETC will cost \$44 million to \$59 million less than at FASTC over 10 years, in net present value, largely because FLETC can house some students in dormitories on its campus at a lower cost than hotels charging GSA- or State-negotiated rates. However, FLETC may not be able to accommodate all DS students in its dormitories, as its monthly occupancy rates averaged nearly 70 percent in fiscal year 2014, and nearly 79 percent in May through September, when DS says the majority of its students train.

## **Enclosure II: Pending Legislation Related to the Department of State's Foreign Affairs Security Training Center**

In June and July 2015, three pieces of legislation were introduced in the House and Senate related to the Department of State's efforts to establish the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center. As of August 2015, these bills have been placed on the legislative calendar.

### ***H.R. 2772, Making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes***

As introduced by the Chairwoman of the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations on June 15, 2015, this bill includes the following language.

Of the funds made available under this heading in this Act, up to \$99,134,000 may be made available for a Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC): *Provided*, That none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act and in prior Acts making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs may be obligated or expended for FASTC until such Center is specifically authorized by a subsequent Act of Congress: *Provided further*, That if FASTC is not specifically authorized before September 30, 2016, funds designated for FASTC may be made available to support and expand training at sites in existence prior to October 1, 2014 and for other embassy security activities.

H.R. 2772, Title I, 114th Cong. (2015).

### ***S. 1725, Making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes***

As introduced by the Chairman of the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs of the Senate Committee on Appropriations on July 9, 2015, this bill includes the following language.

#### **FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECURITY TRAINING CENTER—**

(1) None of the funds made available by this Act and prior Acts making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs may be obligated for design, site preparation or construction of a Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett, Virginia, until each of the following occurs:

(A) The Secretary of State submits to the appropriate congressional committees, the Comptroller General of the United States, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the construction of FASTC at Fort Pickett, Virginia that includes, at a minimum, the following: a life-cycle cost estimate of construction, maintenance, and sustainment of FASTC; an estimate of the effect of FASTC on the total cost associated with conducting security training for Department of State personnel and dependents, as appropriate; and a detailed analysis that quantifies the impact of FASTC on the training capacity and operational effectiveness of Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Department of State;



(B) The Comptroller General submits an assessment of the analysis required by subparagraph (A) to the appropriate congressional committees on the methodology, analysis and conclusions of the report submitted by the Secretary of State; and

(C) The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, reviews the report required under subparagraph (A) and the assessment required under subparagraph (B), and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the construction of FASTC at Fort Pickett, Virginia would provide efficiencies and increases in the training capacity and operational effectiveness of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security commensurate with the estimated life-cycle costs of constructing, maintaining, and sustaining FASTC.

(2) Not later than 180 days after the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit the report required subparagraph (A), and not later than 180 days after receiving such report, the Comptroller General shall submit the assessment required under subparagraph (B).

S. 1725, Title VII, § 7004(f), 114th Cong. (2015).

*S. 1635, Department of State Operations Authorization and Embassy Security Act, Fiscal Year 2016*

As introduced by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on June 18, 2015, this bill includes the following language.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECURITY TRAINING CENTER.

(a) OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide to the appropriate congressional committees all documents and materials related to its consideration and analysis concerning the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett, Virginia, and any alternative facilities.

(b) DEPARTMENT OF STATE.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall provide to the appropriate congressional committees all documents and materials related to the determination to construct a new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett, Virginia, including any that are related to the development and adoption of all related training requirements, including any documents and materials related to the consideration and analysis of such facility performed by the Office of Management and Budget.

S. 1635, § 536, 114th Cong. (2015).

## Enclosure III: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

For this review, we examined

- (1) key site requirements critical to providing the Department of State's (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (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 their capital cost estimates conform to leading practices for reliable cost estimates.

We did not include in our review State's Interim Training Facility in Summit Point, West Virginia, where State currently conducts a large amount of its hard-skills training, including the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat course. State considered this facility during its search for a suitable site for FASTC and determined that the facility did not meet State's criteria for public ownership and minimum size.<sup>15</sup> In addition, our 2011 report on DS training noted that the increased capability at the Interim Training Facility had enabled DS to consolidate some functions and reduce, but not eliminate, the need for other facilities.<sup>16</sup> This report cited DS officials, who said that the interim facility was only a stopgap solution with inherent limitations and could not meet several of DS's training elements, such as the use of heavier weapons and explosives and the integrated tactical use of driving and firearms training in a mock urban environment.

### Site Requirements

To develop the list of four requirements discussed in this report, we compiled 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; the General Services Administration (GSA); the Office of Management and Budget (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 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.

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<sup>15</sup>In June 2010, President Obama issued a memorandum directing executive departments and agencies to take steps to make better use of federal real property assets. Based on this memorandum, State and the General Services Administration (GSA) determined that the site for FASTC should be publicly held, according to State and GSA officials.

<sup>16</sup>GAO, *Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts*, GAO-11-460 (Washington, D.C.: June 1, 2011).

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. However, in 2011 we reported that DS has an accredited process in place to identify its training needs and that DS follows an industry-recognized training framework that identifies job tasks and determines the learning objectives and training needs necessary to develop those skills.<sup>17</sup> This process was reviewed and accredited by the independent Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation. Furthermore, as part of our current review, we confirmed 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.

## Cost Estimates

We reviewed the September 2014 capital cost estimate for FASTC that GSA provided and the November 2013 capital cost estimate for FLETC that the Department of Homeland Security provided. To assess the quality of these estimates, we reviewed the methodology behind each estimate and evaluated the estimates against selected best practices in the *GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide* (GAO Cost Guide).<sup>18</sup> We assessed the overall cost estimating procedures for the FASTC and FLETC proposals against relevant best practices within the following four characteristics: (1) comprehensive, (2) well documented, (3) accurate, and (4) credible. Each characteristic is associated with specific best practices criteria. We used a five-point scale for these assessments: "Not met" means we found no evidence that satisfies the best practice. "Minimally met" means we found evidence that satisfies a small portion of the best practice. "Partially met" means we found evidence that satisfies about half of the best practice. "Substantially met" means we found evidence that satisfies a large portion of the best practice. "Fully met" means we found complete evidence that satisfies the entire best practice.

To examine the extent to which the agencies' cost estimates for the FASTC and FLETC proposals were reliable, we evaluated whether each cost estimate was generated according to best practices outlined in the GAO Cost Guide. 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. After assessing State's, GSA's, and FLETC's procedures and cost estimates against each relevant best practice criterion, we calculated the average of the best practice assessment ratings to determine the overall rating for each of the four characteristics. In order for a cost estimate to be considered reliable, the estimate must have "substantially" or "fully" met each of the four characteristics.

Our assessment of the reliability of the FASTC and FLETC cost estimates focused on the processes used to develop the estimates rather than the estimates themselves. We did not

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<sup>17</sup>GAO-11-460.

<sup>18</sup>GAO, *GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide: Best Practices for Developing and Managing Capital Program Costs*, GAO-09-3SP (Washington, D.C.: March 2009).

generate our own independent estimates for capital costs (acquisition and construction) of the FASTC or FLETC proposals. Generating such estimates was outside the scope of our review.

To determine the recurring operations and maintenance (O&M), recapitalization investment, and staffing and associated costs for each proposal, we reviewed cost data provided by State, FLETC, and GSA. Consistent with industry standards, we assumed O&M and recapitalization costs to be 3 percent of capital costs per year, the same assumption used by OMB to facilitate a comparable analysis. We estimated staffing and associated costs based on an estimate of 370 full-time equivalent positions, which FLETC included in its proposal to OMB and, according to FLETC, is based on State's estimate. We also discussed these data with officials from these agencies and from OMB. We updated these data based on revised estimates of capital costs of the proposed projects.

To develop scenarios of the recurring 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. Based on these discussions, we developed our own assumptions using the following data sources:

- **Travel:** Estimated shuttle costs from State; government airfare and privately owned vehicle mileage rates from GSA.
- **Lodging:** Government lodging rates from GSA; estimated negotiated lodging rates from State; on-campus dormitory rates (owned and leased), occupancy rates from fiscal year 2014, and negotiated contract rates from FLETC.
- **Meals and incidental expenses:** Government per diem rates from GSA; on-campus rates for meals and incidental expenses from FLETC.
- **Compensatory time for travel:** Travel time data from Google Maps; government pay scale data from the Office of Personnel Management; assumptions on the General Schedule grade and step of students from State and FLETC.

Table 3 provides further details on our scenarios.

**Table 3: Assumptions Used in Student Cost Scenarios**

Scenario	Assumptions
<b>Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC)</b>	
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Travel:</i> Five hundred students drive their personal vehicles to FASTC. The remainder take a shuttle provided by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) from the Washington, D.C., area.</li> <li><i>Lodging:</i> All students stay in lodging at the Department of State's (State) negotiated rate of \$65 per night.</li> <li><i>Meals and incidental expenses:</i> All students receive the General Services Administration's (GSA) Rest of U.S. rate for meals and incidental expenses of \$46 per day.</li> <li><i>Compensatory time for travel:</i> Students take 3 hours, each way, to travel between Washington, D.C., and FASTC. Three-quarters are at the General Schedule (GS) 10 Step 10 level, and one-quarter are at the GS-12 Step 7 level.</li> </ul>
Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Travel:</i> Five hundred students drive their personal vehicles to FASTC. The remainder take the DS shuttle from the Washington, D.C., area.</li> <li><i>Lodging:</i> In the first 3 years, all students stay in lodging at State's negotiated rate of \$75 per night; starting in year 4, all students stay in lodging at State's negotiated rate of \$65 per night.</li> <li><i>Meals and incidental expenses:</i> All students receive GSA's Rest of U.S. rate for meals and incidental expenses of \$46 per day.</li> <li><i>Compensatory time for travel:</i> Students take 3 hours, each way, to travel between Washington, D.C., and FASTC. Half are at the GS-10 Step 10 level, and half are at the GS-12 Step 7 level.</li> </ul>
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Travel:</i> Five hundred students drive their personal vehicles to FASTC. The remainder take the DS shuttle from the Washington, D.C., area.</li> <li><i>Lodging:</i> All students stay in lodging at State's negotiated rate of \$75 per night.</li> <li><i>Meals and incidental expenses:</i> All students receive GSA's Rest of U.S. rate for meals and incidental expenses of \$46 per day.</li> <li><i>Compensatory time for travel:</i> Students take 3 hours, each way, to travel between Washington, D.C., and FASTC. One-quarter are at the GS-10 Step 10 level, and three-quarters are at the GS-12 Step 7 level.</li> </ul>
<b>Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC)</b>	
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Travel:</i> Five hundred students drive their personal vehicles to FLETC. The remainder take commercial flights. Half of those fly from Washington Reagan National (DCA) airport to Brunswick, Georgia (BQK), and the other half fly from DCA to Jacksonville, Florida (JAX). Three-quarters of all flights are on less expensive Capacity Controlled (CA) fares, and one-quarter are on more expensive Unrestricted Coach (YCA) fares. In addition, all students who fly to FLETC receive \$100 in miscellaneous travel costs for baggage fees and ground transportation to and from the airports.</li> <li><i>Lodging:</i> Half of the students in the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course stay in FLETC dormitories at the average of FLETC's owned and leased dormitory rates. The other half stay in hotels at the average of FLETC's negotiated lodging rates. All other students, including DS agents, stay in FLETC dormitories at the average of FLETC's owned and leased dormitory rates. The 500 students who drive to FLETC stay 1 night en route each way, at GSA's Rest of U.S. rate.</li> <li><i>Meals and incidental expenses:</i> All students receive FLETC's meal rate of \$22.49, plus \$5.00 for incidental expenses, per day.</li> <li><i>Compensatory time for travel:</i> All students receive 11 hours of compensatory time for travel: 5 hours of travel each way between Washington, D.C., and FLETC, and 1 hour roundtrip to the Townsend Bombing Range. Three-quarters of all students are at the GS-10 Step 10 level, and one-quarter are at the GS-12 Step 7 level.</li> </ul>

Scenario	Assumptions
Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Travel:</i> Five hundred students drive their personal vehicles to FLETC. The remainder take commercial flights. Half of those fly from DCA to BQK, and the other half fly from DCA to JAX. Half of all flights are on CA fares, and half are on YCA fares. In addition, all students that fly to FLETC receive \$150 in miscellaneous travel costs for baggage fees and ground transportation to and from the airports.</li> <li><i>Lodging:</i> All FACT students stay in hotels at the average of FLETC's negotiated lodging rates. All other students, including DS agents, stay in FLETC dormitories at the average of FLETC's owned and leased dormitory rates. The 500 students who drive to FLETC stay 1 night en route each way, at GSA's Rest of U.S. rate. Because of the limited capacity of flights to BQK and JAX, half of all students arrive at FLETC 1 day early (i.e., Saturday for a Monday course start) and thus incur 1 additional day of lodging.</li> <li><i>Meals and incidental expenses:</i> All students receive FLETC's meal rate of \$22.49, plus \$5.00 for incidental expenses, per day.</li> <li><i>Compensatory time for travel:</i> All students receive 11 hours of compensatory time for travel: 5 hours of travel each way between Washington, D.C., and FLETC, and 1 hour roundtrip to the Townsend Bombing Range. Half of all students are at the GS-10 Step 10 level, and half are at the GS-12 Step 7 level.</li> </ul>
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Travel:</i> Five hundred students drive their personal vehicles to FLETC. All of the remaining students fly from DCA to JAX on YCA fares. In addition, all students that fly to FLETC receive \$200 in miscellaneous travel costs for baggage fees and ground transportation to and from the airports.</li> <li><i>Lodging:</i> All FACT students stay in hotels at the average of FLETC's negotiated lodging rates. Half of all other students, including DS agents, stay in hotels at the average of FLETC's negotiated lodging rates, and the other half stay in FLETC dormitories at the average of FLETC's owned and leased dormitory rates. The 500 students who drive to FLETC stay 1 night en route each way, at GSA's Rest of U.S. rate. Because of the limited capacity of flights to BQK and JAX, one-third of all students arrive at FLETC 2 days early (i.e., Friday for a Monday course start) and one-third arrive 1 day early. Students thus incur additional days of lodging.</li> <li><i>Meals and incidental expenses:</i> All students receive FLETC's meal rate of \$22.49, plus \$5.00 for incidental expenses, per day.</li> <li><i>Compensatory time for travel:</i> All students receive 13 hours of compensatory time for travel: 6 hours of travel each way between Washington, D.C., and FLETC, and 1 hour roundtrip to the Townsend Bombing Range. One-quarter of all students are at the GS-10 Step 10 level, and three-quarters are at the GS-12 Step 7 level.</li> </ul>

Source: GAO assumptions based on State, GSA, FLETC, Office of Personnel Management, and Google Maps data. | GAO-15-808R

We projected recurring costs over 10, 25, and 50 years, because State and OMB indicated that this project is expected to be operational for at least 50 years. According to FLETC and OMB officials, OMB directed agencies to use the following inflation and discount rates for the purposes of ensuring comparable cost estimates for FASTC and FLETC:

- 1.9 percent inflation rate for nonpersonnel costs,
- 3.9 percent inflation rates for personnel costs, and
- 2 percent discount factor to calculate the net present value of capital and recurring costs.

We used these inflation and discount rates as appropriate in our projections.

We provided our assumptions to State and FLETC for review and confirmation, and we revised our assumptions based on their comments where appropriate. We compared assumptions provided by State and FLETC to data on rates for travel, lodging, and meals from GSA, and calculated driving distances based on data from Google Maps. As a result, we determined that these data were reliable for the purposes of developing a range of estimates of student costs.

## **OMB Analysis**

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 was based on incomplete information in the fall of 2013 and therefore did not take into account subsequent events, such as the completion of the FASTC environmental impact statement or the obligation of funds for FASTC. We obtained updated data on requirements and costs from State, and our analysis includes 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 requirements and the reduction in scope of FASTC. FLETC did not incorporate plans for accommodating all of State's requirements or 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.

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We conducted this performance audit from November 2014 to September 2015 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.



## Enclosure IV: Map of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Existing Hard-Skills Training Sites, as of August 2015



Sources: Department of State; Map Sources (map). | GAO-15-808R

## Enclosure V: Assessment of Capital Cost Estimates for the Foreign Affairs Training Center and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers Proposals

To examine the extent to which the agencies' cost estimates for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) and Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) proposals were reliable, we evaluated whether each cost estimate was generated according to best practices outlined in the *GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide*.<sup>19</sup> We reviewed data provided by the Department of State (State), General Services Administration (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. After assessing State's, GSA's, and FLETC's procedures and cost estimates against each relevant best practice criterion, we calculated the average of the best practice assessment ratings to determine the overall rating for each of the four characteristics—comprehensive, well documented, accurate, and credible.

We determined the overall assessment rating by assigning each individual rating a number: not met = 1, minimally met = 2, partially met = 3, substantially met = 4, and fully met = 5. We then took the average of the individual assessment ratings to determine the overall rating for each of the four characteristics. The resulting average becomes the overall assessment as follows: not met = 1.0 to 1.4, minimally met = 1.5 to 2.4, partially met = 2.5 to 3.4, substantially met = 3.5 to 4.4, and fully met = 4.5 to 5.0. A cost estimate is considered reliable if the overall assessment ratings for each of the four characteristics are substantially or fully met. If any of the characteristics are not met, minimally met, or partially met, then the cost estimate does not fully reflect the characteristics of a high-quality estimate and cannot be considered reliable.

Tables 4 and 5 present our assessment of the cost estimates for the FASTC and FLETC proposals for consolidating diplomatic security training.

**Table 4: GAO's Assessment of the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) Cost Estimate against Best Practices**

Characteristic	Overall assessment	Related best practices for developing cost estimates	Detailed assessment of the FASTC cost estimate
Comprehensive	Fully met	The cost estimate includes all life cycle costs.	<i>Fully met.</i> The acquisition cost estimate includes all costs for the design and construction of the program.
		The cost estimate completely defines the program, reflects the current schedule, and is technically reasonable.	<i>Substantially met.</i> There is comprehensive information for the technical baseline document; however, those documents have not been updated regularly.
		The cost estimate work breakdown structure <sup>9</sup> is product-oriented, traceable to the statement of work/objective, and at an appropriate level of detail to ensure that cost elements are neither omitted nor double-counted.	<i>Fully met.</i> The cost estimate work breakdown structure is product-oriented and at an appropriate level of detail to ensure that cost elements are neither omitted nor double-counted.

<sup>19</sup>GAO, *GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide: Best Practices for Developing and Managing Capital Program Costs*, GAO-09-3SP (Washington, D.C.: March 2009).

Characteristic	Overall assessment	Related best practices for developing cost estimates	Detailed assessment of the FASTC cost estimate
		The estimate documents all cost-influencing ground rules and assumptions.	<i>Substantially met.</i> The estimate documents all cost-influencing ground rules and assumptions, but data on assumptions that would support a risk and uncertainty analysis were not collected during the development of this estimate.
Well documented	Substantially met	The documentation should capture the source data used, the reliability of the data, and how the data were normalized.	<i>Partially met.</i> Not all sources used to develop the estimate were documented.
		The documentation describes in sufficient detail the calculations performed and the estimating methodology used to derive each element's cost.	<i>Substantially met.</i> Estimate documentation did not identify the estimating methodology used to develop the estimates. However, it did describe in detail all the calculations used to derive each cost element.
		The documentation describes step by step how the estimate was developed so that a cost analyst unfamiliar with the program could understand what was done and replicate it.	<i>Partially met.</i> There was insufficient documentation showing the steps for the FASTC estimate.
		The documentation discusses the technical baseline description and the data in the baseline are consistent with the estimate.	<i>Fully met.</i> The technical baseline documents appear to be comprehensive and fully consistent with the data, clarifications, and assumptions that are in the cost estimate.
		The documentation provides evidence that the cost estimate was reviewed and accepted by management.	<i>Substantially met.</i> We confirmed through meeting minutes that the Department of State (State) and General Services Administration (GSA) project leadership team attended briefings, along with key members of the project team who have responsibility for the key performance metrics of the project. However, we found no documentary evidence of final acceptance of the cost estimate by management.
Accurate	Substantially met	The cost estimate results are unbiased, not overly conservative or optimistic and based on an assessment of most likely costs.	<i>Partially met.</i> Documentation did not demonstrate if the results were unbiased through a formal risk and uncertainty analysis. Therefore, we cannot determine the confidence level of the estimate. Without a confidence level we cannot determine whether the estimate is most likely, overly optimistic, or overly pessimistic.
		The estimate has been adjusted properly for inflation.	<i>Partially met.</i> Inflation values were listed in the master plan update and found in the cost model. However, the source of the indexes is unknown.
		The estimate contains few, if any, minor mistakes.	<i>Fully met.</i> A review of documentation found no errors.

Characteristic	Overall assessment	Related best practices for developing cost estimates	Detailed assessment of the FASTC cost estimate
		The cost estimate is regularly updated to reflect significant changes in the program so that it is always reflecting current status.	<i>Fully met.</i> The estimate is managed as detail develops. The estimates are fully reconciled and updated after 35, 65, 95, and 100 percent submissions. We were able to confirm that the schedule was updated recently.
		Variances between planned and actual costs are documented, explained, and reviewed.	<i>Not met.</i> There were no variances documented in the estimate of the actual costs incurred since design efforts began.
		The estimate is based on a historical record of cost estimating and actual experiences from other comparable programs.	<i>Substantially met.</i> Estimates were calibrated and validated with historical data, and some individual venue estimates were based on historical data.
		The estimating technique for each cost element was used appropriately.	<i>Substantially met.</i> Various appropriate estimating methods were used, but the estimate relies on expert opinion in some areas.
Credible	Partially met	The cost estimate includes a sensitivity analysis that identifies a range of possible costs based on varying major assumptions, parameters, and data inputs.	<i>Not met.</i> There was no sensitivity analysis conducted.
		A risk and uncertainty analysis was conducted that quantified the imperfectly understood risks and identified the effects of changing key cost driver assumptions and factors.	<i>Minimally met.</i> A risk register exists, but a cost risk and uncertainty analysis was not conducted.
		Major cost elements were cross-checked to see whether results were similar.	<i>Partially met.</i> The cost estimate was cross-checked in some cases to see whether applying a different method would produce similar results.
		An independent cost estimate was conducted by a group outside the acquiring organization to determine whether other estimating methods produce similar results.	<i>Fully met.</i> At various stages of the project, independent cost estimates were created and subsequently reconciled.

Source: GAO analysis of State and GSA data. | GAO-15-808R

<sup>a</sup>A work breakdown structure defines in detail the work necessary to accomplish program objectives.

The FLETC estimate included the cost of meeting the original full-scope plan for FASTC, including soft-skills training and life support functions. FLETC did not develop a proposal or estimate comparable to the reduced-scope plan for FASTC in part because, according to FLETC officials, FLETC never received the reduced-scope master plan for FASTC. FLETC subtracted from its full-scope estimate the costs of facilities it identified that State had planned to de-scope. While FLETC included a reduced-scope estimate in its November 2013 response to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), FLETC was never asked to develop a cost estimate based on State's reduced-scope plan.

FLETC officials noted that OMB directed FLETC to develop a detailed cost estimate within a 60-day time frame while State had been working on estimates for FASTC for 5 years. In addition, FLETC's estimate was prepared by FLETC's in-house staff, while State and GSA hired external contractors, who have developed multiple estimates for FASTC. Further, these FLETC officials said that they did not have complete information regarding State's requirements for its training

facility, which would have enabled them to develop a more comprehensive estimate. They said that because the administration did not select the FLETC proposal and because this proposal did not become a formal program at FLETC, they did not follow all of the processes they would have if the FLETC proposal had been selected.

**Table 5: GAO's Assessment of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) Cost Estimate against Best Practices**

Characteristic	Overall assessment	Related best practices for developing cost estimates	Detailed assessment of the FLETC cost estimate
Comprehensive	Partially met	The cost estimate includes all life cycle costs.	<i>Substantially met.</i> The acquisition cost estimate includes the majority of expected costs for the design and construction of the program, but it lacks estimated design and review costs and estimated management inspection costs because FLETC performs these activities in-house.
		The cost estimate completely defines the program, reflects the current schedule, and is technically reasonable.	<i>Partially met.</i> The acquisition estimate is based on the Department of State's (State) master plan but does not include changes from the master plan update because FLETC did not have access to the update.
		The cost estimate work breakdown structure is product-oriented, traceable to the statement of work/objective, and at an appropriate level of detail to ensure that cost elements are neither omitted nor double-counted.	<i>Minimally met.</i> FLETC did not develop a work breakdown structure because it lacked the necessary program data to develop a detailed level of tasks to support a work breakdown structure.
		The estimate documents all cost-influencing ground rules and assumptions.	<i>Partially met.</i> FLETC officials stated two ground rules in interviews but did not document those ground rules in their business case.
Well documented	Partially met	The documentation should capture the source data used, the reliability of the data, and how the data were normalized.	<i>Partially met.</i> The acquisition estimate included source data but did not document the data's reliability or show how the data were normalized.
		The documentation describes in sufficient detail the calculations performed and the estimating methodology used to derive each element's cost.	<i>Minimally met.</i> Estimate documentation, for the most part, did not describe the estimating methodology in detail. Where it did, data used to derive the estimate were not easily traceable.
		The documentation describes step by step how the estimate was developed so that a cost analyst unfamiliar with the program could understand what was done and replicate it.	<i>Minimally met.</i> The supporting documentation did not include explanations of how some element estimates were developed and used data that were not easily traceable.
		The documentation discusses the technical baseline description and the data in the baseline are consistent with the estimate.	<i>Fully met.</i> Documentation described FLETC's approach in analyzing State's requirements and relating them to existing FLETC capability.
		The documentation provides evidence that the cost estimate was reviewed and accepted by management.	<i>Partially met.</i> The FLETC business case did not show evidence of review but FLETC provided a separate cover letter that was initiated by an Assistant Director at FLETC.

Characteristic	Overall assessment	Related best practices for developing cost estimates	Detailed assessment of the FLETG cost estimate
Accurate	Partially met	The cost estimate results are unbiased, not overly conservative or optimistic and based on an assessment of most likely costs.	<i>Minimally met.</i> Documentation did not demonstrate if the results were unbiased because FLETG did not develop a risk and uncertainty analysis because of limited time.
		The estimate has been adjusted properly for inflation.	<i>Partially met.</i> FLETG officials said that they adjusted previous year cost data using factors approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), but we could not determine if proper normalization occurred because it was not documented.
		The estimate contains few, if any, minor mistakes.	<i>Fully met.</i> A review of documentation found no errors.
		The cost estimate is regularly updated to reflect significant changes in the program so that it is always reflecting current status.	<i>Not applicable.</i> There is no requirement to update the estimate because OMB told FLETG no additional work on this alternative was required after April 2014.
		Variances between planned and actual costs are documented, explained, and reviewed.	<i>Not applicable.</i> The FLETG alternative was not selected, so there are no actual costs to be compared to planned costs.
		The estimate is based on a historical record of cost estimating and actual experiences from other comparable programs.	<i>Partially met.</i> FLETG officials said they used historical facility construction costs; however, detailed information regarding the data was not documented.
		The estimating technique for each cost element was used appropriately.	<i>Substantially met.</i> FLETG officials generally described the different techniques used but did not document details, such as the scaling of estimates by analogy.
Credible	Minimally met	The cost estimate includes a sensitivity analysis that identifies a range of possible costs based on varying major assumptions, parameters, and data inputs.	<i>Not met.</i> FLETG did not conduct a sensitivity analysis because it had limited time to develop the estimate and lacked access to detailed program information from State.
		A risk and uncertainty analysis was conducted that quantified the imperfectly understood risks and identified the effects of changing key cost driver assumptions and factors.	<i>Not met.</i> FLETG did not conduct a risk and uncertainty analysis because it had limited time to develop the estimate and lacked access to detailed program information from State.
		Major cost elements were cross-checked to see whether results were similar.	<i>Substantially met.</i> FLETG cross-checked construction costs with commercial databases.
		An independent cost estimate was conducted by a group outside the acquiring organization to determine whether other estimating methods produce similar results.	<i>Not applicable.</i> An independent cost estimate was not performed because the purpose of the FLETG estimate was for comparison with State's FASTC estimate.

Source: GAO analysis of FLETG data. | GAO-15-808R

The Department of State provided this letter in response to an earlier draft of our briefing. After reviewing a draft of this report, State requested that we publish this letter in our final report.

## Enclosure VI: Comments from the Department of State

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

July 8, 2015

Dr. Loren Yager  
Managing Director  
International Affairs and Trade  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001

Dear Dr. Yager:

On behalf of the Department of State, I am forwarding our comments regarding the draft briefing, "DIPLOMATIC SECURITY: Options for Locating a Consolidated Training Facility" (GAO JC 100043).

As emphasized by Secretary Kerry, the Department is deeply committed to providing the best training possible to the men and women who serve our nation around the globe, often in highly dangerous and unstable areas. After years of research, we remain convinced that constructing the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett, Virginia will best meet the training needs of the Department, our personnel, and the United States for decades to come. Fort Pickett meets all of our requirements and those laid out by the Benghazi Best Practices Panel; it consolidates our security training in a location close to Washington, D.C. that gives us exclusive use.

The proximity of the Fort Pickett site to both Washington, D.C. and our critical operational partners is of the utmost importance. Additionally, the availability of FASTC for the exclusive use of embassy security training is necessary to provide flexibility and ensure that short-notice training can be conducted to support the Department's operations during unexpected crises. These factors reaffirm the substantial long term efficiencies of the Fort Pickett site.

I also would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the diligence and professionalism of the GAO team that conducted this engagement. Their work will prove invaluable as we move forward.

Sincerely,

  
Heather Higginbottom



**Department of State Comments on GAO Draft Report**  
**Diplomatic Security: Options for Locating a Consolidated Training Facility**  
**(GAO Job Code 100043)**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your draft briefing entitled “*Diplomatic Security: Options for Locating a Consolidated Training Facility*.” The Department commends the level of effort demonstrated by the GAO in thoroughly reviewing and vetting the facts presented by both the Department and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) and appreciates the report summation which scores Fort Pickett as the fully and substantially met site for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC). This report further affirms conclusions from the 2011 GAO report<sup>1</sup> that DS continues to maintain a high training standard despite inadequate facilities; a situation we have worked diligently to rectify for well over a decade. As the sole federal agency charged with ensuring a safe and secure environment for the implementation of foreign policy objectives overseas<sup>2</sup>, the Department of State accepts the grave responsibility to provide the highest caliber of training to our personnel, their families, and all those who fall under Chief of Mission authority. As Secretary Kerry testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April 2014, “the Department is 100 percent determined that Fort Pickett is the best site” to meet this mandate. GAO also notes the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) notified FLETC in May 2014 that the Administration had accepted the FASTC proposal. In addition to acceptance of the aforementioned, and the recommendations from the Best Practices Panel<sup>3</sup> and the DS Organization and Management Report<sup>4</sup> derived from the Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB), the Department interprets from the GAO statement of facts that FLETC is unable to fully meet any of the minimal requirements for the establishment of a consolidated, purpose-built, fully accessible training facility in proximity to irreplaceable partners. As the GAO report accurately points out, to date, the Department and GSA have obligated approximately \$82 million for the development of FASTC at Fort Pickett.

<sup>1</sup> Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts. GAO-11-780T. Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> 22 USC § 4801 et seq. P.L. 99-399 (Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986).

<sup>3</sup> Best Practices Panel Report, Recommendation 20. “The Department should, as a priority, establish a dedicated DS Foreign Affairs Security Training Center within a reasonable distance to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to cost-effectively train agents, Foreign Service personnel, members of the National Foreign Affairs community, and collaborate with training and exercise partners, and implement programs for foreign government security and law enforcement officers.”

<sup>4</sup> DS Organization and Management Report, Recommendation 35: “In order to meet the increased demand of training 10,000 students per year, the panel recommends that the Department establish a single, dedicated training center that is conveniently located and meets DS facility and high threat training standards.”

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**Requirement 1: Consolidation of Venues**

GAO outlines FLETC's lack of critical capacity for 300 and 800-meter ranges, inability to accommodate explosives at the required five-pound minimum, prohibition against use of live ammunition during training exercises, and lack of authority to unilaterally guarantee unrestricted training hours. As such, Department training would be forced to divide between multiple locations, one of which is a 45-minute drive from FLETC (Townsend Bombing Range). Therefore, FLETC does not meet the requirement for a consolidated training facility. The Department concurs the most fundamental requirement for a training facility – to consolidate – is not possible given the space limitations, ammunition, and explosives restrictions, as well as the noise and ordinance issues at FLETC.

The Department acknowledges FLETC has a mock-city based on a U.S. urban design, including a hotel, which is a good training venue for domestic law-enforcement officers. FLETC's U.S.-modeled, urban mock city serves little purpose in training foreign affairs personnel on how to protect, defend, clear, and evacuate personnel from non-standard structures such as those found in many high-threat countries in which our foreign affairs personnel and their families live and work. The Department notes the mock embassy and realistic urban training areas planned for Fort Pickett render a "mock hotel" superfluous for our specific training needs.

**Requirement 2: Proximity to Washington, D.C.**

GAO states that, according to FLETC, some agencies which operate overseas such as the U.S. Marshals Service and Naval Criminal Investigative Service train at FLETC, and DS would benefit from valuable synergies in working with these agencies.

In response, the Department accepts FLETC hosts many federal law enforcement agencies for the Basic Criminal Investigative Training Program and other domestic law enforcement courses. These agencies encompass a broad swath of personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the U.S. Marshals Service to the Protective Services Division of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The vast majority of these agencies are charged with enforcement of domestic laws and regulations. Many, such as the DHS subordinate agencies of the U.S. Secret Service, Federal Air Marshals, and U.S. Customs return from basic training at FLETC to their own agency-specific facilities for their advanced tactical

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training. The few agencies that train at FLETC and operate overseas have defined, agency-specific roles which do not include security operations in protection of Chief of Mission personnel or facilities. Our partners who in actuality share the responsibility for security operations, or have traditionally supported such operations, such as the U.S. Marine Corps, some members of the U.S. Intelligence Community, and other specialized DoD elements, do not train or maintain a presence at FLETC. These critical partners are located in the mid-Atlantic region – as is Fort Pickett, the selected site for FASTC.

**Requirement 3: Exclusive Use**

GAO states that, according to FLETC, DS would be assured of priority scheduling for those facilities that would be built for DS. GAO further notes OMB officials stated FLETC may not be able to accommodate all of DS' hard-skills training if FLETC student numbers or DS' training requirements increase substantially.

In response, the Department maintains FLETC is unable to accommodate our training needs for foreign affairs personnel, their families, and our critical foreign partners. The Department requires priority on **all** facilities which are used during training, not just those which are purpose-built for DS. World events dictate the need for urgent, time-sensitive training of Mobile Security Deployments teams, the ability to train jointly with designated DoD rapid response security elements, and flexibility to host ad hoc training for other DS elements in support of critical-fill temporary duty assignments. As an example, in May 2015, DS was tasked to provide security support for the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) to be held in Nairobi, Kenya in July. There was no way to anticipate this requirement one year ahead of time to reserve facilities, as would be required at FLETC. In fact, DS had only two months to meet the operational training requirement to support this high-profile event. As a result, DS training staff will conduct multiple tactical training sessions at two separate and inefficient facilities over the next several weeks for approximately 150 agents who will deploy to support the GES. Without the flexibility to prioritize venues, these critical response teams would not be able to prepare for such short-fuse missions. This same dynamic applies to foreign partners; a coup, political unrest, or act of terrorism can accelerate or delay a planned Anti-terrorism Assistance course for foreign police forces in countries deemed essential to the overall global counterterrorism effort. We must be able to shift our training schedule and venue availability to accommodate these incidents in support of foreign policy, counterterrorism, and capacity building objectives that are in the national interest.

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**Requirement 4: 24/7 Availability**

GAO states current night training concludes at 10:00 p.m. local time in Glynco, Georgia. GAO received conflicting information from local police and county officials about whether the current “gentlemen’s agreement” regarding training at night would accommodate DS training needs.

GAO properly notes the Department currently conducts nighttime training approximately 190 days per year, 140 of which would violate noise abatement or noise ordinance regulations as they involve gunfire, some helicopter operations, and explosives. In addition, the Department emphasizes FLETC cannot unilaterally authorize the conduct of nighttime operations at the FLETC campus, or at the Townsend Bombing Range, without concurrence from both Glynco County officials and residents, as well as the parallel vested parties surrounding Townsend Bombing Range.

**Acquisition and Construction Costs**

GAO rates the FLETC credibility for acquisition and construction cost estimates as “minimally met,” however it rates the FASTC estimate “fully” or “substantially” in meeting three of the four characteristics of a reliable cost estimate. The fourth requirement is rated as partially met in part due to GAO’s statement that neither a sensitivity nor a risk and uncertainty analysis was performed for FASTC.

The Department concurs with GAO’s finding that FASTC cost estimates were independently verified by a third party, deeming them comprehensive, well-documented, and accurate. The Department notes FLETC’s cost estimates have never been verified by an independent third party.

GAO cites a FLETC comment that FLETC relied on information provided by the Department, which they said was incomplete. FLETC officials further stated, according to GAO, “they never received DS’ reduced-scope plan for FASTC.”

In response, the Department notes the following information was provided to FLETC specifically regarding the reduced scope:

- The Program of Requirements outlining the reduced scope program;

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- A narrative description of each facility/venue in the reduced-scope program; and
- A redacted version of the complete cost-estimate for the reduced-scope program.

#### **Student Cost Estimates**

GAO states the cost estimate of sending students to FLETC over 10 years will be between \$44-123 million more expensive than sending students to FASTC. GAO assesses the costs of sending students to FLETC escalate dramatically over the projected life of the project at an additional cost to the government of \$316-744 million.

The Department notes GAO's conclusion that the FLETC acquisition and construction cost proposal was deemed "minimally" credible. In contrast, the cost estimates performed by the GAO for student travel, lodging, meals, and incidentals is fully credible and shows long term cost savings accrued at Fort Pickett. Any non-credible cost construction estimates are substantially offset by the actual savings totaling in the hundreds of millions over the OMB and the Department anticipated operational lifespan of this project.

In conclusion, the Department thanks GAO for its diligence and the opportunity to provide additional granularity to the facts supporting the Department and Administration's choice to establish a Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett. It is our highest priority to ensure our foreign affairs community and their families, as well as other government agency colleagues, are provided the most realistic, highest caliber of training available. It is through our continued construct of the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center in Fort Pickett that we can fulfill this obligation to the courageous men and women serving and supporting our nation abroad.

## **Enclosure VII: GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments**

### **GAO Contacts**

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### **Staff Acknowledgments**

In addition to the contacts named above, Thomas Costa (Assistant Director), Ray Sendejas (Assistant Director), Robert Ball (Analyst-in-Charge), Brian Bothwell, Juaná Collymore, David Dayton, Jill Lacey, Jason Lee, and Nancy Zearfoss made key contributions to this report. Richard Bulman, Tina Cheng, Leah DeWolf, Grace Lui, and Ben Nelson provided technical assistance.

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## **Related GAO Products**

*Countering Overseas Threats: Gaps in State Department Management of Security Training May Increase Risk to U.S. Personnel.* GAO-14-360. Washington, D.C.: March 10, 2014.

*State Department: Diplomatic Security Challenges.* GAO-13-191T. Washington, D.C.: November 15, 2012.

*Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts.* GAO-11-780T. Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2011.

*Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts.* GAO-11-460. Washington, D.C.: June 1, 2011.

*State Department: Challenges Facing the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.* GAO-10-290T. Washington, D.C.: December 9, 2009.

*State Department: Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review.* GAO-10-156. Washington, D.C.: November 12, 2009.

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