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THE DIPLOMAT'S SHIELD: DIPLOMATIC SECURITY IN TODAY'S WORLD

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

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THE DIPLOMAT'S SHIELD: DIPLOMATIC SECURITY IN TODAY'S WORLD

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2009

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel K. Akaka, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Akaka and Voinovich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA

Senator AKAKA. I call this hearing of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia to order.

I want to welcome our witnesses and thank you for being here today. Today's hearing, "The Diplomat's Shield: Diplomatic Security in Today's World," will examine the results of a Government Accountability Office (GAO) review of the Department of State's Diplomatic Security Bureau, which provides security for the State Department worldwide so our diplomats can advance U.S. interests.

Since the terrorist bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Diplomatic Security's (DS) responsibilities have grown and evolved. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan further increase the challenges of keeping our diplomats safe.

Last week, President Obama announced his new Afghanistan strategy. Thirty-thousand U.S. troops will deploy in support of this effort. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that the number of civilians in Afghanistan will triple by early next year. DS must be fully prepared to support an even greater role in protecting our civilians.

Over the last decade, DS's budget has increased almost 10-fold, to about $2 billion, and its direct-hire staff has doubled. Unfortunately, these extra resources have not guaranteed DS's readiness. In particular, I have concerns in three areas that I hope will be addressed today.

First, the State Department must address the ongoing staffing challenges. GAO identified key workforce gaps that hinder DS in

carrying out its duties. Less than half of Regional Security Officers serving in language-designated positions meet their proficiency requirements. More than one-third of diplomatic security positions are filled by officers below the appropriate grade. And, there are personnel gaps at domestic offices and at key posts overseas. I believe that DS should invest more in its workforce by having enough people with the experience and language skills necessary to fully support its critical missions.

Understaffing leads to an over-reliance on contractors. GAO found that there are 36,000 contractors that work in DS, which is about 90 percent of Diplomatic Security's total workforce. According to GAO, some DS employees are not prepared to manage this large contractor workforce. Recent security lapses at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul have illustrated the need for better contractor oversight.

Second, the State Department must better manage the tension between fulfilling its diplomatic operations and providing strong security. Today, State Department employees serve in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other posts where they would have previously been required to evacuate. These diplomatic operations are critical to U.S. interests, but providing security for such dangerous missions places a great burden on DS.

Because of these dangers, some of our overseas posts resemble fortresses and, for security reasons, may not be in locations considered most appropriate and accessible for diplomatic operations. GAO reported that some diplomats are concerned that security measures make it more difficult for visitors to attend U.S. embassy events, making person-to-person engagement less likely. We must be mindful that the way our diplomatic presence is seen and felt in other countries may reinforce or undermine our broader diplomatic goals. It is certainly critical that the United States protect its personnel from threats, both on and off-post. Security, however, must be carried out in concert with our diplomatic mission.

Finally, I want to emphasize the need for improved strategic planning efforts within DS. I support GAO's recommendation for the State Department to conduct a strategic review of Diplomatic Security. The Department has already stated that DS will benefit from the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. I am looking forward to hearing more about this from our State Department witness and how strategic planning for DS can become a part of its culture.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today.

But first, Senator Voinovich, your opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR VOINOVICH

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you, Senator Akaka, and I appreciate your holding this hearing today. I have been concerned about the management of the State Department, not only as a Member of this Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia Subcommittee, but also as a former member of the Foreign Relations Committee and now on the Appropriations Committee on the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations.

I think that, too often, the management of some of our agencies hasn't been given the consideration that they should have been given. I know that Secretary Clinton has indicated that she wants to move forward and improve the management, and there is going to be a large number of people that are going to be hired by the State Department. We are anxious to make sure that they get the right people on board to get the job done, and I think that is one of the reasons why we are here today because we are concerned about the issue of diplomatic security.

I move around the world and visit some of our embassies and am very impressed with some of what I have seen and in other instances, after reading this report, a little bit concerned. It appears that the Bureau lacks the strategic planning and with little capacity to prepare for future security needs. I have talked this over with my staff and it seems that we just have too many people that are under contract, although from what we can tell, those that are under contract do a pretty good job.

I know when I was in Iraq, I had Blackwater—and I asked them who was the security. I was in a helicopter. I thought maybe it was our guys. No, it was a private security operation. I got out of the helicopter and got into a SUV and I wanted to know, who is the security, and it is another private operation. And I wanted to find out who was training the Iraqi government's folks in the special unit and they were also hired people. Of course, that was the Department of Defense.

So we would just like to look into how this is being looked at by the State Department. I think the thing that bothers me the most, and I think, Senator Akaka, you did a good job of laying it out, is that it appears that the people that have been brought on don't have the training that they need to get the job done.

I know I spent a couple of hours over at the State Department with Richard Holbrooke and visited with the people, the team he is putting together to go to Afghanistan, and I was impressed that he is taking his time and trying to make sure he gets the right people and they are not in a big rush to just bring people on, but try and find the right ones.

So I really would like to know just what percentage of the people that are going to be doing this ought to be on the government payroll and not private contractors. Are there too many that are on the private payroll?

Second of all, can we do a better job of preparing those individuals that we are asking to do this job? I understand that it takes about 3 years to train somebody up for one of these jobs.

And the other thing I am interested in is who decides whether or not the private contractor is doing the job that you are paying for? I have found that, too often, they have private sector people on, and the question is, does the agency know whether or not they are getting a return on the investment that they are putting into that private sector.

So I am anxious to hear your testimony and the other two witnesses to follow.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Senator Voinovich.

I want to welcome our first panel of witnesses to the Subcommittee today, Ambassador Eric J. Boswell, the Assistant Sec-

retary of State for Diplomatic Security, and Jess T. Ford, the Director of International Affairs and Trade at the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

As you know, it is the custom of the Subcommittee to swear in all witnesses and I would ask you to please stand and raise your right hand.

Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give this Subcommittee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

Ambassador BOSWELL. I do.

Mr. FORD. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Let it be noted in the record that the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Before we start, I want you to know that your full written statements will be part of the record. I would also like to remind you to please limit your oral remarks to 5 minutes.

Ambassador Boswell, will you please proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF AMBASSADOR ERIC J. BOSWELL,[1] ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DIPLOMATIC SECURITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ambassador BOSWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon to you, sir, and to the Members of the Committee, Senator Voinovich, as well. I am very honored to appear before you today. I would like to thank you and the Committee Members for your continued support and interest in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's programs. With Congressional support, Diplomatic Security has been able to safeguard American diplomats and facilities for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy and maintain our robust investigative programs which serve to protect the borders of the United States.

With your permission, I will make this brief statement. While Diplomatic Security continues to provide the most secure environment possible for the conduct of America's foreign policy, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, in your opening remarks, the scope and scale of DS's responsibilities and authorities have grown immensely in response to emerging threats and security incidents. Increased resources were necessary for the Bureau to meet the requirements of securing our diplomatic facilities in the extremely high-threat environments of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other locations. The Department currently operates diplomatic missions in locations where, in the past, we might have closed the post and evacuated all personnel when faced with similar threats.

As you may know, Mr. Chairman, I also served as Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security from 1995 to 1998. This is not the same organization as when I left. It is far, far more capable. Not only has DS grown in personnel and resources, it has developed the organizational structure necessary to meet all of the current challenges as well as those of the future.

The recently released Government Accountability Office review of my Bureau correctly assesses that DS must do more to anticipate

[1] The prepared statement of Ambassador Boswell appears in the Appendix on page 37.

potential and emerging global security trouble spots in order to create risk management and mitigation strategies that best focus our limited resources and prioritize security needs. Such plans must also incorporate the strategic management of the resources available for our Bureau to fulfill its mission, both currently and in the future.

Two years ago, Diplomatic Security created the Threat Investigations and Analysis Directorate to enhance our intelligence analysis capability. This directorate concentrates our threat analysis and intelligence gathering efforts under one streamlined command structure and fosters closing working relationships among all our analysts and those responsible for investigating, deterring, and mitigating threats.

Our next challenge is to sharpen our focus, as you mentioned, sir, not only on predicting future security threats, but on planning in advance for the security solutions and resources needed for tomorrow's crises and foreign policy initiatives. Over the coming months, we will begin working toward the development of a strategic planning unit charged with ensuring that DS is even better positioned to support future foreign policy initiatives and manage global security threats and incidents.

At the same time, we must balance our resources and security requirements to achieve an effective mix of highly-skilled personnel while controlling costs associated with requirements that have grown tremendously over the last 20 years. We are embarked on a new Bureau-wide planning process that will allow us to better measure the performance of our 120-plus existing programs and utilize data to make better and more informed resource decisions. Having decision-supported data available will enable DS to determine how well current programs and resources align with the Bureau's and the Department's strategic goals.

DS is actively participating in the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, (QDDR), that Secretary Clinton has focused on improving the Department's resources and training to ensure the right people for the right job at the right time are in place to conduct diplomacy around the world. We are also participating in the QDDR working group responsible for the foreign affairs community's activities and contingency response environments.

The Department of State operates increasingly in dangerous locations, and this requires extensive resources to mitigate the risk. Although DS's workforce has grown substantially over the past decade, the fluid nature of the security environments in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan presents an ongoing challenge to our program and staffing structures in those and other posts.

To meet the challenge of securing U.S. diplomatic operations under wartime conditions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other high-threat zones, DS relies on Worldwide Personal Protective Services contract (WPPS), to provide protective security, aviation support, and fixed guard services. These contracts allow the scalability required for increased threats or new operational requirements and provide specialized services in extraordinary circumstances.

In recognition of the early challenges DS experienced in contract oversight, specifically in Iraq, we have improved contract officers

representative training for all security officer personnel and increased agent staffing in Iraq and Afghanistan to directly supervise the personal security contractors.

In addition, DS has established a new Security Protective Specialist skill code, a limited non-career Federal employment category designed to augment DS special agents by providing direct oversight of WPPS protected motorcades in critical threat locations where such resources are needed most. We are similarly evaluating other staffing options to adequately cover this important oversight function.

Although the Bureau is experiencing a surge in new positions, uneven staff intake in the 1990s has resulted in significant experience gaps in our agent and security engineering corps. To limit the effects of this experience gap, we have increased training and mentoring programs and carefully identified personnel capable of serving in what we call stretch assignments.

Over the past 10 years, the Bureau has embarked on an ambitious recruitment and hiring program. We have increased our outreach to colleges and universities with an eye toward building a professional service that reflects America's diversity. In order to quickly deploy highly-qualified personnel into the field, we have revamped some of our training programs and are carefully evaluating our entire agent training program to ensure that the instruction provided to new and existing DS special agents is relevant to the new realities of our Bureau's mission.

DS continues to strive to meet the security needs of the Department in increasingly dangerous locations by anticipating needs and dedicating appropriate resources to accomplish our mission. Through these changes, DS remains one of the most dynamic agencies in the U.S. Federal law enforcement and security community.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to brief you on the global mission of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and on our unique ability to safeguard Americans working in some of the most dangerous locations abroad and the taxing requirements that we face. With your continued support, we will ensure Diplomatic Security remains a valuable and effective resource for protecting our people, our programs, facilities, and interests around the world.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ambassador Boswell, for your statement.

Mr. Ford, will you please proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF JESS T. FORD,[1] DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRADE, U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Mr. FORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Senator Voinovich. I am pleased to be here today to discuss the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, which is responsible for protection of people, information, and property at over 400 embassies, consulates, and domestic locations.

Since 1998, and the bombings of the U.S. embassies in East Africa, the scope and complexity of threats facing Americans abroad and at home has increased significantly. Diplomatic security must

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Ford appears in the Appendix on page 44.

be prepared to counter such threats, such as crime, espionage, visa, passport fraud, technological intrusions, political violence, and terrorism.

My statement today is based on our report, which we released 2 days ago, and was requested by this Subcommittee. I am going to briefly summarize our findings.

We found that since 1998, DS's mission and activities, and subsequently its resources, have grown considerably in reaction to the security threats and incidents that I just outlined. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the need to enhance the physical security of our embassies and our facilities domestically, the increased protection missions that DS has to undertake, investigations of passport fraud and visa fraud, have all led to significant budgetary and personnel growth.

Diplomatic Security's budget has increased 10-fold since 1998, from approximately $200 million to about $2 billion today.

In addition, the size of DS's direct-hire workforce has doubled since 1998. The number of direct-hire security specialists, special agents, engineers, technicians, and couriers has increased from approximately 1,000 in 1998 to over 2,000 today.

At the same time, the Diplomatic Security Bureau has increased its use of contractors to support its security operations worldwide, specifically through increases in their guard force and the use of contractors to provide protective details for American diplomats in high-threat environments.

As a consequence of this growth, Diplomatic Security faces policy and operational challenges. First, DS is maintaining missions in increasingly dangerous locations, necessitating the use of more resources and making it more difficult to provide security in these locations.

Second, although DS has grown considerably in staff over the past 10 years, it still faces significant staffing shortages in domestic offices. It still has a number of language deficiencies of its staff. And it still has experience gaps, as well as other operational challenges which need to be addressed.

Finally, State has not benefited from good strategic planning for the Bureau, which is an area that we made recommendations for in our report.

We identified several operational challenges that impede DS from effectively carrying out its missions. Just to cite some examples, staffing shortages in its domestic offices. In 2008, about one-third of DS's domestic offices operated with a 25 percent vacancy rate or higher. Several offices reported that this shortage of staff affected their ability to conduct their work, resulting in case backlogs and inadequate training opportunities.

Foreign language deficiencies. As you cited in your opening statement, Mr. Chairman, we found that about 53 percent of the Regional Security Officers overseas do not speak or read at the level required of their positions, and we concluded that these foreign language shortfalls could negatively affect several aspects of U.S. diplomacy, including security operations. To cite an example, an officer at one post told us that because she could not speak the language, she had to transfer a sensitive phone call from an informant on a potential criminal activity to one of her locally-engaged staff.

Experience gaps. Our analysis showed that about 34 percent of DS's positions, not including Baghdad, are filled with officers below the position grade. For example, several Assistant Regional Security Officers with whom we met in the course of our work indicated that they did not feel adequately prepared for their jobs, particularly with the responsibility to manage large security contracts. We previously reported that experience gaps can compromise diplomatic readiness.

Balancing security and diplomatic missions. DS's desire to provide the best security possible to its staff overseas has at times resulted in tension within the Department over its diplomatic mission versus its security needs. For example, Diplomatic Security has established strict policies concerning access to facilities that usually include both personal and vehicle screening. Some public affairs officers that we met with indicated that they were frustrated that they could not operate as freely as they would like, and this continues to be a challenge within the Department in terms of balancing appropriate security versus enhancing our diplomatic posture outside the embassy walls.

In our view, the increasing growth and expanded missions and operational challenges facing the Bureau require a strategic review of the Department. While DS has undertaken some planning efforts, we found that they had not adequately addressed the resource needs or management challenges that we outlined in our report. Several senior Diplomatic Security officers indicated that DS remains largely reactive in nature, stating that several reasons for the lack of long-term planning was that they had to react to policy decisions made elsewhere in the Department or in the White House or in the Congress.

Finally, past efforts to strategically plan at DS have not resulted in good, solid strategic planning. We cited an example in our report. In fiscal year 2006, DS indicated that it needed to develop a workforce planning strategy to recruit, sustain efforts, and find highly-skilled personnel and that they needed to establish a training flow, which I can discuss later, to help deal with staff shortages. We found, as of 2009, that these issues had not yet been resolved.

In our report, we recommend that the Secretary of State, as part of the Quadrennial Diplomatic Review, conduct a strategic review of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to ensure that its missions and activities address the Department's priority needs and address the challenges that we outline in our report.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be happy to answer any of your questions.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Ford.

Ambassador Boswell, last week, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton testified that the United States is on track to triple the number of civilian positions in Afghanistan to 974 by early next year. How will this large increase impact DS operations in Afghanistan, and how much additional DS staffing will be required?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Mr. Chairman, that will be a great challenge to DS, as the surge in Iraq was some years ago. But we have the advantage this time of having a little more advance notice. We are going to be doubling the staff of our security office in Kabul

and we have, shall we say, a large resource package included in the discussions that will go forward regarding the budget for 2011. But it is a very significant change.

At the moment, the DS agents in Afghanistan largely protect the U.S. mission in Kabul. They do not have responsibilities outside of Kabul. We, the U.S. Government, are going to be opening up two new consulates in Afghanistan this year—next year, I should say, in 2010, one in Mazari Sharif and another one in Herat in the West. Those consulates will be protected by DS agents. The civilian personnel that are further in the field, mostly in the south and the east, are under the protection of the military.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Boswell, the State Department just announced its intention to find a new contractor to provide security at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul after reviewing allegations of misconduct and security lapses by the current contractor. A prominent government watchdog group questions whether embassy security in a combat zone should be handled by the private sector instead of by government employees. Has the State Department considered whether these positions in combat zones should be performed in-house?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Yes, sir, we have. That contract, which as you mentioned the Department has decided not to exercise a renewal, an option year in that contract, is going to be recompeted. It is going to be recompeted among guard companies. I have to clarify that what we are talking about here are the guards that provide the static security around the embassy in Kabul. They man the guard posts around the embassy in Kabul. They check the vehicles. They man the checkpoints. They screen the people that are admitted to the compound. These are not the people that provide bodyguard services that protect our people when we move. These are the fixed-post guards.

Around the world, that function has been provided by contractors for many years. I don't see any real chance that they could be provided by direct-hire U.S. Government employees or military simply because there are so many. You mentioned the number of people we have in DS, and the proportion of which are contractors. Out of the 34,000 people that you mentioned, something like, I think, 32,000 are these fixed-post guards that guard embassies around the world, just like the fixed-post people that stand outside the Capitol or around the State Department, and that has been a successful program for many years.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Boswell, according to the GAO report, DS is planning to replace some contractors with Federal employees. Please tell us more about DS's plans for reducing the number of contractors.

Ambassador BOSWELL. Yes, sir. I think it is fair to say that the civilian surges in Afghanistan and Iraq, and also in Pakistan, which we haven't mentioned quite yet, severely challenge DS from the point of view of stretching us and making very great demands on our resources. And I think DS did extremely well in stepping up to the plate and meeting those challenges. But I think one of the places where we could have done better and we didn't was in the administrative—in providing the administrative tail that supports the teeth, the agents in the field.

And this was pointed out in a recent State Department inspection, also, of DS, that we had under-resourced the administrative management end, mostly in the States, in both headquarters and our field offices. So we are significantly increasing the number of direct-hire people for positions that have in the past been filled by contractors.

By contractors, I don't mean guards. I don't mean bodyguards. I mean, these are administrative and technical kind of positions—secretaries, analysts, this sort of stuff.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Ford, your report states that when the United States removes its remaining forces from Iraq by the end of 2011, it will impact Diplomatic Security's operations. What specific challenges do you foresee?

Mr. FORD. Well, we haven't seen the plan yet for exactly how that withdrawal is going to be—how it is going to be impacted in terms of the civilian side. As the military withdraws, DS already has a very large presence in Iraq. We believe that it will affect DS because some of the protective services that the military may be providing currently could be transferred over to DS, but we don't have any specific information with regard to what the staffing implications of that might be.

In our report, we had indicated that DS had 81 special agents in Iraq, which is by far the largest number of any overseas post. So the point we were making in our report is there is likely to be some implications for DS as we withdraw our forces from Iraq, just like there will be as we surge into Afghanistan. But we have not yet been briefed on what the actual numbers will be and what the resource implications might be for providing protective services in Iraq once our military starts to withdraw.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Boswell, would you have anything to add to that question?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Only to say that it is certainly a major challenge facing us. As the military withdraws, we, the Department, will take over certain functions that are now performed by the military, and I can give you an example. The police training function, which is currently done by the military, will be handled by the Department. That will mean a significant increase in the number of direct-hire U.S. Government employees and contractors that will be assigned to the embassy in Baghdad and also around the country, and that will be a big challenge for us because they will have to be protected. This is a significant staff increase and these folks' business is not in Baghdad. It is out in the countryside, and we will have to protect them. We are seeking the resources necessary to do that.

There is a very active planning operation regarding Iraq in 2010. It is department-wide. We are very much a part of it and this aspect is one of the things that we are considering very closely.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH. One of the things that always bothered me about Iraq was the lack of planning documented in several books, *Assassins Gate, The Fiasco,* and a few others. We were lucky that toward the end, we got our act together, and it seems to me that we are doing a much better job of preparing for the mission in Afghanistan.

Do you have a critical plan put in place? You mentioned that you know in terms of Iraq who is going to leave; so you are in a green zone and you know how much security is being provided by the military, but when they are gone, how are those people going to be taken care of. I don't think very much was said about the number of people that we are going to leave in Iraq that may continue with provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). But has somebody really sat down on a piece of paper and scoped it out so that you have confidence that once troops are received in 2011, that you are going to be able to take care of your folks?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Yes, we are, Senator. As I mentioned, there is a very active planning program that is going on, not only in the Department, but involves Ambassador Chris Hill's staff in Baghdad, as well. I think it is reasonable to say here that the Department will have a significant presence in the countryside. It is likely that we will open up new consulates which do not exist now. And it is also likely that there will be some, what we are going to call Enduring Presence posts, which is where State Department employees will be out in the countryside, and we are very actively planning, one, for that, and two, how we are going to protect them.

Senator VOINOVICH. Is there any paper anywhere that we could look at that would kind of give us the long-range plan and the commitment in Iraq so that we have some idea of where folks are going and how long we anticipate their being there?

Ambassador BOSWELL. I am not aware of any paper that exists. This is a planning process that is going on. I don't think I could tell you that there is a formal roadmap out there yet, but I do know that the planning is going on and is being factored into the President's 2011 budget request.

Senator VOINOVICH. Mr. Chairman, I think it would be a good idea for us to talk maybe with Foreign Relations or to really get an idea of just what the commitment is going to be made in Iraq once the troops leave there.

The other thing that I think that hasn't been underscored in the President's presentation, or quite frankly, I don't think it has been brought up. I have seen some of the other hearings. What are the plans that we have to move folks out to do the PRTs and the government infrastructure building and so forth that we have in Afghanistan? How long do we think that we are going to need to do that in order to stabilize those communities? It is a big part of it, I think. We talk about the military side of this, but I think that we may not be as candid as what we should be.

In other words, the information that I got was that we are probably going to have to have folks there for a longer period than what the President presented, though I wholeheartedly support the idea of putting the pressure on them to get them to do the things that they are supposed to be doing. But this recent comment by Karzai about the fact that we are going to have to be there for a long time, and one of the things that we are not talking about is if we have an Afghanistan army, we are going to have to pay for it. They haven't got the money to pay for it. It is a little bit different than Iraq.

But beyond that—you are going to have a lot of people over there, and I would be very interested in knowing, because of this

very good plan that was shared with me, what are you going to do to make sure that when they get out in the boonies, that they are being taken care of?

I did hear that you are going to initially rely on the military, is that right?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Yes, sir. The arrangement that has been made is that the Diplomatic Security are responsible for the staff that are at the embassy in Kabul and associated missions in Kabul and also our two consulates, the two future consulates. And as you said, sir, I think we are going to be there quite a long time.

But the protection for the civilians that are embedded with the military in the field is provided by the military. I think the rule of thumb is something like about 10 civilians per battalion out there, 8 to 10, something like that. I am sure it is not cookie-cutter, but that is roughly the number, and those people will be protected by the military.

Senator VOINOVICH. You indicated that you have done an analysis of the people that should be governmental and replacing contractors. Do you have that anywhere written down, about what somebody did? Have you made some decisions to say, we are going to have people that are going to be on the Federal payroll rather than have contractors, is that correct?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Yes, sir. I want to clarify that is not wholesale replacement of a lot of contractors. What has been the subject of controversy is the degree to which the U.S. Government relies on contractors, largely in the field, and that, I am afraid, is not going to change from a security point of view. We really have no alternative to using contractors both as our fixed-post guards, and I don't think really any substantive reason not to use contractors for that purpose, but also as a sort of force multiplier for us so that we can deal with protecting our people when we get surges like this.

For example, there are something like 1,000 bodyguards, including the ones who protected you when you were there, in Iraq right now. That number can go up and down and change. I don't see any way that those contractors will be replaced by direct-hire people. The Commission on Wartime Contracting is looking at that, among other things, and I don't imagine that they are going to come up with an alternative to that.

Senator VOINOVICH. May I ask you something?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Sure.

Senator VOINOVICH. You say it has been happening for a long time, and you might comment on it, but has somebody really sat down and looked at a piece of paper and said, these folks are costing us X number of dollars, they have certain competencies that we need, compared if they were direct hires, and how does that work out from a dollars and cents point of view? In other words, you are saying, basically, we are going to stay with those people. We have been with those people. Has anybody ever thought of developing a cadre of individuals within the Department that could do the same thing, and is there a reason that you don't want to do that in terms of recruitment or cost? Is it really cheaper to hire these people?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Yes, sir. I want to—that is a long and complex subject, but I will do my best to answer it. And right off

the top, I need to make very clear the differentiation between fixed-post guards, to man a perimeter, and the bodyguards, who are much more controversial, the Blackwaters of this world.

There is no question—I don't think I need a study to tell you that hiring Ghanaians to stand fixed-post around our embassy in Accra—which is what happens in every single country in the world except the combat zones, that is, except for Afghanistan and Iraq—that hiring local nationals is far cheaper than trying to hire some American contractor who will put Americans in there. Not only that, it is not necessary.

These are contractors who—and some of them are under personal services agreements, they don't work for a guard company.

Senator VOINOVICH. And, by the way, that has reminded me. Senator Akaka, when you have traveled, you are right. They have a lot of folks, professionals that have been attached to the embassies for years that are nationals that are providing security. Thanks for reminding me of that.

Ambassador BOSWELL. Yes, indeed, and that is the great bulk of the contractors. They go home at night. They don't go into some guard camp somewhere.

Senator VOINOVICH. So the fact is, it is cheaper.

Ambassador BOSWELL. It is much cheaper, infinitely cheaper. Now, the second category is the security guards, the bodyguards—Blackwater, DynCorp, and Triple Canopy. There has been a question of whether it is cheaper to do it with Americans on contract, or perhaps U.S. military—and I believe the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) came out with a study last year in which they put up the true cost, or as best they could get to it of the true cost of a civilian contractor, bodyguard, and a military person, and when it came out, it was very close to the same.

Obviously, if we substituted military, that is 1,000 new military in Iraq at a time when we are drawing down the military, it is really not very practical.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Senator Voinovich.

Mr. Ford, you testified that GAO identified both domestic and overseas DS offices with significant staffing gaps. I want to set the stage for why this issue is so important. Would you please describe how these staffing shortfalls could affect our diplomatic missions and the security of State Department personnel? And I would like to ask for any additional remarks from Ambassador Boswell, as well, on this.

Mr. FORD. Most of the staffing gaps that we identified in our work tended to be in the domestic offices here in the United States. I think, typically, what was happening was that DS would receive protective missions for things like the Olympics, or they needed to staff positions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which was their highest priority, and they tended to use agents that were here on domestic assignments. And so the domestic offices here that are responsible for things like passport fraud, visa fraud, other investigatory-type missions that DS has, those were where the shortfalls tended to be in terms of the mission.

So we had some examples we cited in our report. I think one of the examples, as I recall, was in the Houston field office, which we

indicated they had about a 50 percent staff vacancy last year. When we consulted with them about what the implications of that, they told us that it resulted in case backlogs on such things as the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

So some of the implications of the DS having to shift resources to conduct, say, work in Afghanistan and Iraq by taking people from the domestic offices, resulted in mission shortfalls here domestically, and that is probably where most of the impact occurred, based on our analysis.

Now, we also visited a number of overseas locations in which we talked to a number of DS folks and other embassy employees at various overseas missions that were not necessarily the highest priority, compared to Pakistan, Iraq, and places like that. DS officials told us a lot of their folks were shifted over to work in those locations which had some negative implications in terms of what Regional Security Officers (RSOs) wanted to do with their individual locations.

We also found that it impacted DS's ability to provide sufficient training for all of its staff because there isn't a sufficient training float within DS—and, by the way, this is a State Department-wide problem, it is not unique to DS—where staff are not able to get the training they need because they need to go overseas and immediately fill a position, which in some cases resulted in people that may not be as experienced as they should be to fulfill that mission, and we cited some examples in our report of people telling us, I am not sure I am fully trained to do my job. I am going to have to learn from the job training what I need to do here.

So those are some of the, I guess you could say, negative implications of staffing shortages that DS is faced with because of these other higher priorities.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Boswell, do you have anything to add to that?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Yes, sir. I think it is true, as I mentioned earlier, that the challenge, the stress of trying to staff up major initiatives in Iraq and Afghanistan had a downstream effect, or backstream effect. We were dealing with our highest challenge. We were dealing with our highest priority.

It is true that it caused some vacancies in domestic field offices. I think we have gone a long way toward addressing that. Our vacancy rate in the field offices is much lower now than the figures used in the GAO report, which were, I think, for 2008. We have a vacancy rate in the domestic field offices now of 16 percent Foreign Service and Civil Service and we are working to close that last remaining gap.

I would like to take a little issue with what Mr. Ford said in terms of training. I don't think any DS agent had their training cut short, that is, their agent training cut short to go to any assignment overseas. We just wouldn't do that. But I think where we did fall short is on the issue of language. And I know, Senator Voinovich, this is something that you are very interested in and that the Director General testified about before this Committee several weeks ago.

The GAO report accurately points out that we have about 50 percent of the DS jobs overseas that are language designated that do

not have people that have tested at that level. And I think there was some curtailment of language training or waivers put into place to get people out.

Having said that, as I mentioned at the top, I was in this job 10 years ago at a time when there were very few Diplomatic Security positions overseas that were ever language-designated. It was just not part of the deal. And I am very pleased now to see that the Bureau and the corps of agents has evolved in a good direction in the sense that many more agents are getting language training, including hard language training—Chinese—over a long period of time. That had not been done in the past.

Now we are still catching up. There are a lot of positions that were language-designated that we haven't had the chance or the time—they haven't been designated long enough for us to be able to put people with that kind of training in. But I can assure you that it is a very high priority of mine of making sure that agents get the right kind of language training to go to their posts. The human resources people at the State Department are very much adhering to this, as well. There are much fewer language waivers that are being approved. But we have a certain amount of catching up to do in that regard.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador, senior diplomats worldwide have been provided fully-armored cars to protect them from terrorist attacks. Both Ambassador Neumann and Ms. Johnson state that in some situations, the use of high-profile armored vehicles may put our diplomats at greater risk. Also, in some cases, these vehicles may not be the correct ones for the local terrain.

Is Diplomatic Security also hearing these concerns, and are there steps DS can take to provide more flexible, lower-profile security wherever it is appropriate?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Yes, sir. One of the other bits of culture shock I had coming back to this job after 10 years' absence was to find, as is mentioned in the report, that whereas 10 years ago, there were a very relatively small number of armored vehicles out in the field—there are a relatively small number of embassies where the ambassador rode in an armored vehicle—now it is thousands of armored vehicles, and certainly every ambassador is required to have an armored vehicle, and in many places it is more than one. I think we have 3,000 armored vehicles, maybe more than that, in the field, mostly in the combat zones, as is appropriate.

In terms of what kind of vehicles, I think it is a fair criticism. We are to some degree limited, I have to remind the panel, we are limited by America. The kind of American vehicle that you can put heavy armoring on is a Chevy Suburban, and that is a lot of what is out there.

I think we have made a good deal of progress. We do have some other kinds of vehicles, particularly in places where we are exempt from Buy America because of right-hand drive, for example—Pakistan is a place like that—but also we are, I think, making a lot of progress in mixing up the kind of vehicles that we are using, a combination of high-profile, low-profile vehicles, and vehicles much better adapted to the terrain, as you mentioned. I think that is a

fair criticism, but I think we are moving in the right direction on that.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Thank you, Ambassador Boswell. Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH. Yes. I would just like to get back to the issue of the training float. How is the Department coming on that? I mean, that impacts you, but it impacts everybody else, too.

Ambassador BOSWELL. The training float has been a dream of department managers for many years. I think the Department got some training positions on a one-time basis in 2009 and DS got its share of those positions, but that is a one-time shot. We have never been able to maintain, you could call it a training float—it has had many other names over the years—Man in Motion. It is not just training. There are always gaps between assignments in the Foreign Service. It is just the nature of the game. There are leaves. There is training. There is home leave. And there are the complications that result from trying to match up a departure date with an arrival date. And so those gaps exist and it would be nice to have that kind of float, but I don't think—we have never seen it.

Senator VOINOVICH. In terms of the language gap, either you hire new people that have the languages or you take the people that are there and you upgrade their language skills. In order to do that, you have to give them time off for that to occur, which means that if they are not doing their job, then somebody else has to do it. You are saying that, still, you are not to the point where you are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Ambassador BOSWELL. No, sir. I didn't mean to imply that at all. The Department has always had it as a matter of principle that we will train our people. If people come on board with languages, that is fine. That is great. But we will train our people, including the DS agents, and we intend to train our people to the language required by the position.

We have taken steps such as, for example, advertising world language—advertising means putting out a list that DS agents can compete for, can express their preferences for jobs, in which we have world language lists advertised well ahead of time so that we can properly put people into training to fulfill a language requirement.

Senator VOINOVICH. Just one other thing, just for information purposes. You have an embassy and they have people with various jobs. You have people from the CIA, and you have people from the military. Then is there somebody that has a special slot for your operation in each of the embassies, that is kind of the security coordinator?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Almost every embassy in the world has what is called a Regional Security Officer. That is the chief security officer for the embassy. It is always a DS agent. Some of them are very senior and manage enormous operations. Some of them are very small. But there is a RSO at virtually every post.

My dad was the head of Security years ago for the State Department when there were, in the 1960s, probably 20 security officers in the field in the Department, in the Foreign Service, and they were truly regional because there were only about 20 of them. But there is nothing regional about the jobs now. There are very few

security officers that are responsible for more than one country. Regional Security Officers are the chief security official and the chief——

Senator VOINOVICH. And they are State Department employees that are——

Ambassador BOSWELL. Always.

Senator VOINOVICH. Yes. So really, in effect, if that is the case, that is the group of people that you are trying to bring on board and train up to take on these positions, would that be——

Ambassador BOSWELL. That is right. We have about 700 agents in the field, security officers in the field. About a little under half of our entire agent population is in the field, and the ones that are stateside spend a lot of time doing temporary duty (TDY) in the field.

Senator VOINOVICH. I don't have any other questions.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Boswell, in August my staff traveled to U.S. embassies and consulates in the Near East and Central Asia and saw firsthand posts that looked like fortresses. Of course, strong security measures are necessary to protect embassy personnel. Nonetheless, our diplomats informed my staff that these posts make it more difficult to build relationships with the local population, either due to stringent security standards or the relative inaccessibility of these posts.

How do we build better relationships and increase our public diplomacy while ensuring that posts are well protected?

Ambassador BOSWELL. Mr. Chairman, my responsibility is the security part of the balance, but it is a balance that we are trying to reach and we in security try to play our part in helping the Foreign Service, the rest of the Foreign Service, achieve that balance.

Having said that, I think if somebody was here from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operation that is responsible for building embassies, they would tell you that they work very closely with Diplomatic Security to try to produce designs and buildings and standards that are more, what shall I say, approachable, humane, a little less of the fortress.

But you have got to understand, also, that in the wake of the terrorist attacks on our embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania in 1998, the Congress mandated new standards for buildings and the Department went through an incredibly intense building program. I think we built 50 new embassies, or maybe it is 60—65 new embassies, thank you, in the last several years. And to do that in an economical way, much use was made of something called a standard embassy design. A standard embassy design is not very pretty, I will tell you that right now. It is very functional. And many of the embassies that your staff saw in Central Asia were certainly of that kind of design.

I do think that we have made a lot of effort in the Department, have made a lot of effort to make these buildings a little less fortress-like, but, Senator, I am a big fan of very secure buildings. When I get a threat, when I sit in my morning meeting and look at threats in new places, one of the first questions I ask is, what kind of building do we have there to protect our people? And I am very reassured when it is one of these new buildings.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ambassador Boswell, Ambassador Neumann stated in his written testimony that the State Department needs to give its deploying officers secure communication devices to be used in the field, because officers currently rely on the military for these capabilities. Is the Department considering doing this, and are there any obstacles to moving forward on this?

Ambassador BOSWELL. We have a capability, fly-away packages that we use for secure communications in certain instances, for example, when the Secretary travels. But they are not in general use, as Ambassador Neumann pointed out in his statement.

The State Department personnel in the field in Afghanistan, for example, as I mentioned, are closely linked to the military and do use the military communications. We need to do some more on our side, though. I think some things are being done. We have just, for example, in Afghanistan, made available our open net, which is not classified—it is sensitive, but unclassified, but nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction—to all the people that we have in Afghanistan.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Ford, the GAO report identified the challenges DS faces of balancing security with State's diplomatic mission. Do you have any recommendations on how DS and State's diplomatic corps can best achieve this balance?

Mr. FORD. Well, we haven't got a report that has a recommendation in it on this issue. I think, based on working in this area for many years, I think the key thing here is communication. There is sometimes miscommunication that occurs between security folks that work for DS and the diplomatic side of the house, which is trying to accomplish an outreach mission or reach a broader audience in an individual country, and in many cases, there is just a lack of communication about what types of security is necessary for them to conduct their work and how to get outside the building.

So, I mean, I would say, at a minimum—and this may be a training issue—we need to make sure that our security folks are sensitive to what the diplomatic mission is and we need to make sure our diplomatic folks are sensitive to security, the security mission that DS has.

When you talk to both DS officials in the field and State Department employees in the field, I often hear perceptions that indicate that one doesn't really understand what the other's job is, and as a consequence, there are sometimes some negative viewpoints on both parts with regard to what the mission is overseas. So I think the main thing is to make sure, through training and through other communication mechanisms, that the Department makes it clear there are certain reasons why we have security standards in our embassies and in our packages for people that want to go outside the embassy. And I think on the DS side, there needs to be an understanding that we want to outreach to the local population there because we have other diplomatic objectives. So in my mind, communication is the key.

Senator AKAKA. Well, thank you very much. That was my final question.

Senator VOINOVICH. Do you have a criterion that you use in terms of where you are going to build the new embassies? By that, I mean I was in China in 2005 and they were building a new em-

bassy 45 minutes outside of Beijing and it is just a long distance away. Currently—or maybe they have already moved—it was downtown, very close to other embassies. So it is now way out somewhere else. Is there something that you could go to to say that we made the decision to move it there for 10 different reasons, or is there a standard? In Macedonia, they got one of the prize pieces of property in the area way out, I think in a residential area, to build their new—it is probably built, too, but what is the criteria that you use about where you put these places?

It gets back to something I am going to ask the next panel about, is that you get them way out someplace where you are not close to the business area or maybe other embassies. Does anybody weigh that in terms of its location and the image that it is going to create?

For example, the biggest one was the one we built in Iraq. I mean, who in the devil ever figured to build that thing? What was the basis for their building it?

Ambassador BOSWELL. The short answer to your question, Senator, is that there is a standard and it does govern, to a large degree, where we put our embassies, and that is the requirement, the classic requirement, well known, for a 100-foot setback between our buildings, buildings occupied by Americans, and the edge of the property where the wall is. That is an essential, in fact, probably the most important security measure that I can put into place is that 100-foot setback.

And, of course, that means if you are going to have a significant embassy, that means you need a significant piece of land, and a significant piece of land of that size is often very difficult to find. So it is true that new embassies, and as I mentioned before in my testimony, there have been an awful lot of new embassies built, that many of them are not right in the downtown core. I would put in parenthetically that the one in Beijing is in the downtown—Beijing is a pretty big city, but it is not in some field. It is in town and is, in fact, in an area where a lot of other embassies are being developed.

Senator VOINOVICH. You are talking about the new one?

Ambassador BOSWELL. The new one. I am very intimately familiar with it.

Senator VOINOVICH. OK. Well, that is good news to me, because I was told that they were building it way out and it would take the ambassador 35 or 40 minutes to come down to meetings and——

Ambassador BOSWELL. I think, it was not being built way out. It is just that Beijing is a very big city and it has been built in a different part of town. And it is true that it is farther away from the ambassador's residence. But in terms of where it is in Beijing, it is in a very active area—the Intercontinental Hotel is right across the street from it, and several other embassies.

It is also true, I think, that while we do have embassies that are distant—that has been one of the byproducts of building these new embassies—towns and cities grow up around embassies. I was part, years ago, of putting together the real estate package for our embassy in Oman, a critical high-threat post at the time, brand new embassy. We got a lot of criticism for having to put together a site that was half-an-hour away from the downtown location where the

old, very difficult to defend embassy was. And the site was in a bunch of tomato fields owned by local farmers, and it was a 13-acre site. And I went back to that site last year where the new embassy has been in place for 15 years and the town has grown up around it. It is a highly prestigious area of Oman with an enormous number of other buildings around it, including prestigious buildings.

So I am not saying that happens in every case, but that certainly happened there.

Senator VOINOVICH. And some, like in the U.K., in London, that prized piece of property, the State Department folks said, we are going to get so much money for this that it will help pay for the new embassy.

Ambassador BOSWELL. That is right, sir. But the reason for the new embassy was simply that the existing embassy is extremely——

Senator VOINOVICH. Too close to the street.

Ambassador BOSWELL [continuing]. Difficult to protect, almost impossible to protect well. About as much unattractive barbed wire and barriers and things have been put around that rather classic, famous embassy, and there is a real threat in London, as we have witnessed in the last few years. So that embassy is being sold—I think it has been sold, though we are still in it. A rather remarkable new site has been found.

Senator VOINOVICH. I have seen it.

Ambassador BOSWELL. Centrally located and expensive.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much.

I want to thank our first panel for being here today. Your responses will be helpful as we continue to review DS. And again, I thank you and wish you well in your positions. Thank you.

Now, I would like to call up panel two. Our second panel of witnesses are Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann, the President of the American Academy of Diplomacy, and Susan R. Johnson, the President of the American Foreign Service Association.

As you know, it is the custom of the Subcommittee to swear in witnesses and I will ask you to stand and raise your right hand.

Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give the Subcommittee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

Ms. JOHNSON. I do.

Ambassador NEUMANN. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Let the record note that the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Before we start, I want you to know that your full written statement will be part of the record. I would also like to remind you to please limit your oral remarks to 5 minutes.

Ambassador Neumann, will you please proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF AMBASSADOR RONALD E. NEUMANN (RET.),[1] PRESIDENT, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DIPLOMACY

Ambassador NEUMANN. Chairman Akaka and Senator Voinovich, thank you for inviting me to appear again before you. As you know, I am not a security specialist. Rather, I speak to you as one who has lived with security issues, been under fire, and served in three critical threat posts, two as Ambassador.

First, however, I would like to pay special tribute to the brave and hard-working RSOs and ARSOs, security officers, who have protected me and my mission in dangerous times. I also would like to acknowledge my respect for the people of DynCorp and Blackwater, who protected me in Iraq and Afghanistan. They performed with courage, judgment, and restraint, and one lost his leg in the process. Whatever fault now attaches to others, I owe all those gallant men, State Department and contractor employees, my gratitude, and I wanted to have this moment to express it.

To sum up, the problems that I wanted to talk about are the inadequate security communications that you referred to in the previous panel; security mobility issues, especially the need for expanded air assets that may be required; utilizing local security forces for PRTs and branch posts; and accepting some greater degree of risk when the gains warrant; and finally, the consideration of funds for security emergencies.

The GAO report observed the changing security conditions that govern our life, and that has produced a vast expansion of security facilities and resources. But there are still gaps between some of our standards and practices and the needs that we have to serve. We lack the standards, not the equipment, to provide secure, deployable, computer-based communications. We have had this problem for years and we have never solved it. We have delegated it to the military, but that is going to be a problem as they go away. And, frankly, we have people serving with allied militaries that don't have compatible, secure communications.

This is a bureaucratic issue. This is an issue of willpower. The military protects the exact same secrets in deployable circumstances. It is time for State to summon the willpower to resolve the bureaucratic problems involved and find a way to send deployable secure computers to the field with our officers. I would add, this is not exclusively a DS problem. This is a problem between bureaus and standards.

You raised the comment in the previous panel from my testimony about our vehicles. I think we have made progress in Afghanistan and Iraq on the mix of vehicles. I think we still have a problem in some areas. I am probably a little out of date. I know DS has made a good deal of progress on that and I think it is something that needs close attention and further follow-up work.

I would note that part of the problem is also a congressionally-mandated problem. That is the Buy America standards. But Congress has supported waivers and changes and I hope you will continue to do that.

As the military redeploys from Iraq, we are going to face complex issues of how to handle protection for our movements. State may

[1] The prepared statement of Ambassador Neumann appears in the Appendix on page 55.

need much more robust vehicle maintenance capabilities than it now has, and I think State should consider having greater air assets of its own, both fixed and rotary wing, in these critical threat areas.

I understand there is some planning going on for this, but many issues remain to be settled and future funding is a significant issue. These resources and the authorities to use them wisely need to be thought about now and budgeted for. Supplemental budgets are not the answer. They are neither sustainable nor dependable for year-to-year operating costs. This problem, as you well know, goes to everybody, Administration and Congress alike, but really, it is time to stop flinching from the requirement to pay for the mitigation of the dangers we ask our personnel to accept.

Operating in areas like Afghanistan and Iraq requires we adopt new ways of thinking about risk. Our Foreign Service officers are not soldiers, but our Nation's need for informed judgments on complicated economic and political subjects does not end when risk arises. And you cannot coordinate effectively over the telephone with foreigners that work on face-to-face and personal relationships.

We are hampered not only by issues of numbers of vehicles and shortages of RSOs, but by our self-imposed standards, often described informally as zero tolerance. We have avoided the problem in the field by turning over the security to the military so that our people are moving on different standards than those which we would use if they were secured by RSOs. But as the military withdraws from Iraq and we are on our own, or as we establish branch posts in Afghanistan, we are going to face increased problems.

I want to be clear. I do not advocate that we easily assume high levels of risk for civilians, and I absolutely would be opposed to ordering officers to take risks they consider unreasonable. But we must find better answers than we have to date. We have made progress in Iraq. We have too many places where we have 48-hour requirements still for movements in cultures that don't make appointments 48 hours in advance for necessary work.

We have to have standards that allow for the use of judgment in weighing the risk of doing something against the grain to be derived from the action. I want to be clear. I am not criticizing the excellent RSOs who worked for me. They did a fine job. I hope we are beyond the issues of the past in which dedicated officers frequently pushed the bureaucratic boundaries to accomplish what they often correctly believed to be essential tasks. These were not matters of officers necessarily taking foolish risks or using bad judgment—although I have known that to happen. Rather, the point is to note the tension between security standards and what we need to know and do.

I believe we have made progress, but I believe we are going to find this problem coming back in spades. And so we do need to focus on it.

Some speak of risk management. It is an antiseptic and bureaucratic term to avoid saying that someone may get killed or hurt taking a risk that seemed sensible at the time. But it is the flexibility to make such difficult decisions that we need to strengthen on two different levels.

One is in the field. You talked in the last panel about security officers and regular officers not understanding each other. I think that is true. I think we need to move to having this kind of training be a part of regular training for all State Department officers, not just senior officers and security officers. There is no telling when you go to a quiet, sleepy post whether you are going to have the next coup in the world. So this needs to be part of the training that we don't do anyway.

The second issue concerns Washington. We need a more systematic policy on where the balance should lie between local responsibility and Washington responsibility. I believe we have made some progress. I think it is probably too dependent on individual officers. And I think that if we are going to ask people to take risks, they need to know that they are going to have some bureaucratic backup if they get unlucky.

As we go to the PRTs, branch posts, we have repeatedly had problems for the last 8 years on how we secure these people and we have not done well with our answers historically. Delegating the protection of civilians to the military has been only partially successful, in my judgment. I, frankly, do not believe that our military will be able—that is not willing, I don't question their willingness—but I do question that they will have the resources to secure all our people and allow them to move with the frequency required of their mission.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Neumann, will you please summarize your statement?

Ambassador NEUMANN. Yes, that is about it. I think we can use local security. I think we know how to do it, but we have to make decisions. We have to fund it.

And finally, I would just make two last points, Mr. Chairman. One is we need some kind of financial reserve, because the State Department does not have the resources—the Defense Department does—to swing money in a crisis. That would take a lot of work with Congress to design in a way that wouldn't be a slush fund.

The last thing is strategic planning. We haven't done nearly enough. We need to do a lot more. It is hard. We don't have enough people. But I think we are still playing catch-up in the strategic planning. Thank you, sir.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you, Ambassador Neumann. Ms. Johnson, please proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF SUSAN R. JOHNSON,[1] PRESIDENT, AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Chairman Akaka and Senator Voinovich. Thank you again for inviting the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) to testify on this important and complex issue. I welcome the opportunity to share some of our perspectives and to be testifying again along with Ambassador Neumann, with whom we almost always agree.

AFSA is proud to represent Diplomatic Security Specialists at the State Department. They make up about 10 percent of our total membership, and we are proud to salute their dedication, courage,

[1] The prepared statement of Ms. Johnson appears in the Appendix on page 70.

and hard work to protect both our overall mission and our personnel.

The challenges and demands facing the Foreign Service abroad, as well as concern for security and safety of our diplomatic personnel, have grown exponentially over the last two decades. For reasons of security, centrally located and accessible embassies and missions seem to be largely a thing of the past. Our ability to travel throughout many of the countries we are assigned to is far from what it used to be.

As the young daughter of a career Foreign Service Officer, I recall traveling into remote areas of the Sahara, and later in what was then Ethiopia, going horseback riding after school with friends from the U.S. base at Kagnew Station, many miles into the country outside of our consulate general in Asmara. These now seem like distant memories.

The need for increased vigilance and better security measures has led to new and tougher security standards, constricting access to and travel outside of our embassies and missions. We can no longer rely primarily on the ability of host countries to provide adequate security. Finding the right balance between prudent and effective security measures and policies, and the ability to do our jobs as diplomats effectively is more challenging than ever.

AFSA welcomes the GAO report calling for strategic review of the recent growth in the mission and the resources required by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. We support the GAO recommendations. We also concur with Ambassador Neumann's points and recommendations.

Within the last 6 years, I served in Iraq as a senior advisor to the Iraqi Foreign Ministry from July through December of 2003, and then for the next 3 years in Bosnia as a Deputy High Representative and supervisor of Brcko District, a high-profile position that came with a full security detail—armored vehicle, lead and follow cars, a U.S.-led team of local security personnel provided for under a DynCorp contract. This Close Protection Unit, as it was called, was dedicated, highly professional, and if I had to have security 24/7, I couldn't have had better people. But along with many others I questioned then, and I still do today, whether that particular security package was needed in Bosnia 10 years and more after the Dayton Peace Accords. It seemed that it was either an all or nothing proposition. Either you have the whole package or you have nothing, and nothing was not the right answer, either.

In Iraq in 2003, as I have described in my written testimony, the stated policy was all travel outside the Green Zone required full military escort. I arrived with the first induction or surge of civilian advisors and it was quickly apparent that such escort was not available to the majority of the civilian advisors, although we needed to travel to our respective ministries, especially in this early and chaotic period. Many of us considered a several-vehicle military convoy, with civilians wearing armored vests and helmets, projected a high-profile potential target and that it was safer and more effective for us to travel quietly under the radar, avoiding regular time tables and taking other prudent security measures. So we did that in order to do our jobs, and fortunately, no disaster occurred.

My personal experiences there and in other posts lead me to suggest, first, the need for more and better internal dialogue or communication between the policy and security sides of the State Department on what is the best security posture.

Second, that the one-size-fits-all approach is not the best one for us today.

And third, that senior officials on the ground in country should have more flexibility and take more responsibility to determine which mix of security measures is most appropriate in a given situation at a given point in time. I second the remarks that Ambassador Neumann made that this can't be left to personal decisions of individuals ambassadors of deputy chiefs of mission (DCMs). There has to be some bureaucratic support. There has to be some consensus that lays out guidelines for this, because you can't expect someone to take a position that I am going to authorize or have somebody take on a risk when the other side of it is, you take all responsibility if anything goes wrong. There has to be a better way.

Finally, the increased prominence of security issues today underscores the need to do more to avoid the experience gaps highlighted in this and other GAO reports prepared for this Subcommittee. Lack of experiences, from my perspective, increases security risk at both the personal and the mission level, and having season, experienced veterans in the right positions decreases those risks. The training now offered at Foreign Service Institutes (FSI) certainly heightens security awareness, but it cannot be expected to substitute for years of accumulated experience.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am happy to respond to any questions that you may have.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much.

As you know, GAO found that over half of the Regional Security Officers do not have the language competency that they require. What impact could this have on overseas security for our diplomats, and what recommendations do you have to improve their language competency?

Ambassador NEUMANN. I will go first.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Neumann.

Ambassador NEUMANN. It is a help when they have language. Regional Services Offices are not only responsible for protection, they are also responsible for negotiating and working out a lot of security arrangements with the host government. Being able to do that directly rather than depend on translators that may be inadequate is a big advantage. I don't think we are hurting in a fatal way, but we need to do it.

It goes back, however, to this issue of training float questions, Senator Akaka and Senator Voinovich, you were raising earlier. First, State has to have enough people to be able to take them off the line and train them. Otherwise, we are just flapping our gums.

Second, they have to have a strategic plan for how they are going to use the training. I don't yet see that emerging, and it is something that is of quite a bit of concern to me. State management is drinking out of a fire hose, trying to assign the people they are getting. It is a good problem to have, but I am concerned that if we don't have the plan and the budget—as you and I have talked about, it gets more difficult next year—you are not going to have

a template to fill in against for the long term. So I see that need to lay out the strategic plan as the next critical piece beyond getting the bodies.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ms. Johnson.

Ms. JOHNSON. I would agree that there is an impact, but it is felt most greatly in the most difficult or dangerous countries. The lack of language skills really depends on which country. In some places, it is important. In others, less so.

I think that as part of this planning effort that Ambassador Neumann has mentioned and others have mentioned, there needs to be a review of the criteria for designating language-designated positions in general, and certainly for DS officers, and the levels at which those languages should be, taking into consideration that we need higher levels of proficiency in sensitive, difficult, dangerous countries and maybe lower levels in countries where that is not the case and where use and knowledge, good command of the English language is much greater.

I think to do that—DS is now recruiting many people who don't have any experience with learning languages and don't necessarily have any aptitude for learning languages, and I think we need to recognize that it may take longer and we may need to review the approach we have to the language training and then reinforcing it once we have given it. So I think that whole approach of the Department to language training needs to be more carefully targeted and a little more creative in the way we give the training, particularly to differentiate more between those people who have strong language aptitude and experience with learning languages and those who don't. And right now, we don't. We mix everybody together to the advantage of both groups.

Ambassador NEUMANN. But don't look at me when you talk about strong language aptitude. [Laughter.]

Senator AKAKA. To both of you, GAO testified that Diplomatic Security's workload likely will increase as the military transitions out of Iraq. Ambassador Neumann, you mentioned that, also. What should the State Department be doing to ensure that the transition is a smooth one?

Ambassador NEUMANN. There are several things. Some of them, they may be doing. Remember, I am now out of the Department for a couple of years, so I may be behind.

The first thing is they need to plan for what the post is supposed to do. What are the missions you are going to have to accomplish, in broad terms, how much you are going to have to move as well as to protect the base. Then you backplan from that and say, OK, what does that mean that I need in terms of people for security details, facilities, and vehicles. And then from there, you go to looking at your choices for how you are going to fill those needs.

I doubt that the process is yet well advanced. They should be doing it right now because they have to give you the budget because those things are not going to be there, I am reasonably sure, in the current budgets because we didn't have to pay for them, the military paid for them. So that whole planning process needs to take place at a pretty high level of detail in order to come to the Congress with a request for the requisite assets that is really solidly documented, and I think there is work on that now. I don't

mean that they are asleep at the switch, but I think that they are probably not up to the speed they themselves would like to be.

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Johnson.

Ms. JOHNSON. Well, I would agree with the points that Ambassador Neumann just made. I guess one consideration for me, representing rank-and-file or the people, is that whatever planning is going forth or might go forth in the future, that perhaps AFSA have a role or a seat at the table in some of this so that we can provide a constructive value-added to this process factoring in the unfiltered views of people who have served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and who have practical, first-hand experience and views on what are likely to be the problems, the conditions. It is a little hard to look ahead and see what analysis we are going to make as to what are going to be the conditions on the ground after our military withdraws and, therefore, what can we take on as civilians.

But this is another area where I am not sure what the Department is doing. I would agree that if the planning is not very far along, and I would like to work with management to see that AFSA is somehow involved in an ongoing basis in this and that we can figure out a role together as to how we can add to the process so that the end product is, in fact, better, and better understood by the people who are going to have to implement it.

Senator AKAKA. Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH. Yes. I sit at these hearings, and it is my 11th year—Senator Akaka, you have been around longer than I have and you will be around longer than I have, because I am leaving the end of the next year—and I always wonder about these hearings and what comes out of it. I have asked my staff, Senator Akaka, to go back over some of the hearings that we have had and the questions that we have had and these folks that are here to testify today.

In terms of the practical things that the two of us can do and the Subcommittee can do, when I think about Iraq—and I was on Foreign Affairs and I look back on that—we assumed, based on what was told to us, that they had figured this out, and the fact is, they didn't and we thought they did. Now, I met with Richard Holbrooke and his team. I was very impressed with what it was, and he was saying that people are complaining because we are not bringing people on fast enough, but I am trying to do this thing in a way that we can get the best people and so forth. I was impressed with that.

But if you were in our shoes, how would you go about making sure that the plan in terms of Iraq has been well thought out in terms of human capital and security and the other things, kind of a critical path about the things that we need to do, and to get an idea of just how long we are going to be in Iraq, because we are not talking about that. It is the same thing that I mentioned earlier, Mr. Chairman, in terms of Afghanistan. I mean, to my knowledge, nobody has talked about the commitment that we are going to make towards nation building, and anybody that knows what is going on has got to understand that is as much important or more important than the military side. But very little attention has been paid to that.

How do we get a guarantee that, in fact, Holbrooke has got it figured out, the State Department has got it figured out, about how many people and how long and where they are going to be and all the other details to make sure that 2 years from now, when I am no longer in the U.S. Senate, I don't read about some fiasco over there where somebody didn't do their homework and we are in real trouble because the planning wasn't done? How do we get that information?

Ambassador NEUMANN. The best realism I can give you—and I certainly agree with your going in proposition. I came to Iraq just after Ms. Johnson did and I drove the same unarmored vehicles in the same fashion with the same dubious adherence to regulation because they had not thought out these issues.

I would segregate my answer into two pieces. They are not going to think of everything. Afghanistan is too much in flux and too changing. You will read of something that is not thought of. So part of what we have to do is to look at our capacity to react when we become aware of the thing, whatever it is, that we didn't think of.

Senator VOINOVICH. But you ought to have a plan, at least——

Ambassador NEUMANN. You ought to have a plan. You ought not to be guilty of not having thought of the things that were squarely in front of your nose and which we have seen ourselves mess up before.

Senator VOINOVICH. Now, is that ordinarily somebody, if I got a hold of Richard Holbrooke and said, do you have something written down that shows that you have thought, and here is the plan, how many people, human capital, etc., do you think that is in place?

Ambassador NEUMANN. I think it is in place in theory. I think that some of that theory will be very thin, I mean, especially when you talk about—and I want to be realistic here. When you talk about putting new people on the job to do jobs that have never been done, there is going to be a limit to how much you can think that through in a vacuum. So when those people arrive, there is always going to be a certain amount of muddle, quite frankly, while real humans work out what they can really do in a complex place.

I, frankly, have every expectation that there is going to be a huge amount of muddle, particularly on the civilian surge, when we actually get people. And we don't own enough people who have the requisite qualifications. I mean, not just we don't own them in the State Department, they don't exist in America.

So part of the planning is going to be, how are you going to learn from your mistakes? How is the plan going to be flexible enough that you can adapt instead of having to just come up here on the Hill and defend what may have been an inadequate plan because you didn't see something and say it was right when, in fact, what you really want to say is, I learned something and am fixing it.

The other piece is the detail of planning, which I think your staff is going to have to work on. What are the questions—I think, sir, you have got to go beyond does the plan exist to say, what are the questions you are trying to answer in your plan, and it needs to get down to a level of detail on numbers of—not just numbers of people, but how many people are going to secure them.

Right now, the answer that is being given, as I understand it, to how you are going to handle security and movement of your civil-

ian surge is the "military is going to do it." I am very skeptical that the answer is going to be adequate to the job. But I think that goes beyond people just arguing about views and saying, OK, what is it you are going to have to do and how are you going to do it, and why do you think the military can do this? And I think it is just going to be a lot of grilling from you all, frankly.

Senator VOINOVICH. Ms. Johnson.

Ms. JOHNSON. I hope I am not going out on a limb here, but as I reflect on this question, I know that you have been asking and urging the Department to produce various plans on various things, and those plans may or may not be in the works and may or may not be forthcoming. So it is possible you will have to—and the only thing I know of that sort of ensures that you will get a product is to tie it to money.

The other question is the quality of the plan. I think the thinking and planning up front is critical, and one of the weaknesses in State Department planning from my perspective is that it is insufficiently inclusive, if it is done at all. Not enough people get to have input. Not enough people get to see it and critique it or "Red Game" it.

Second, once you have your plan, and as Ambassador Neumann says, it is not going to be perfect and it is not going to foresee everything and there will be some unexpected things that happen, so make sure that you have two critical factors addressed, and that is good communication and good mobility.

And then, third, try to get the best people you can into those dangerous places. And if you have those mix of things there, I think our chances of avoiding any sort of catastrophe and dealing with the unexpected emergencies are rather good. But we often don't have—in fact, right now, we are missing most of those ingredients.

Senator VOINOVICH. I have some more questions, Senator Akaka, but it is your turn.

Senator AKAKA. Fine. Ambassador Neumann, in your testimony, you mention that the State Department needs more people to do strategic planning, and that is one of your priorities. This may impact the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review and perhaps later efforts. Along with adding more personnel, how will the State Department's culture need to change to support ongoing strategic planning?

Ambassador NEUMANN. Clearly, there are cultural changes. Some of that, I think, is that we have to get a plan right for professional growth in the Service as a whole. We have not had that in the past, or we haven't had the choice, frankly, because we didn't have the people. Now, we are getting with thanks for what the Congress has done, what this Committee has supported, they are getting large numbers of people. The numbers are going to change the complexion of the Department. We have worked on the basis of the old training the young, but the old are retiring and the young are multiplying, and so the result is that more and more people are going to be trained more often by people that don't have nearly as much experience and seniority as they used to have.

So I think we have got to grow—we have got to create a new paradigm, a new plan that looks at professional development—not just

formal training at FSI, not just language training, but professional development writ large, as our military colleagues have managed to think about it for some time. I think if we get that plan in place, although it will change and shift over the years, that we will then begin to grow people with somewhat different attitudes toward a number of the things you are concerned about.

If we don't have a strategic plan for professional development, then I think it will all be ad hoc. I think you will get pieces of what you want, but you will always be kind of cramming it down against the grain.

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Johnson, you testified that some U.S. embassies have become less accessible, and Senator Voinovich was speaking about this, moved to the outskirts of capital cities and have a fortress profile that may send the signal of a militarized America. What needs to happen to make our embassies more accessible while continuing to meet security requirements?

Ms. JOHNSON. Well, that is a tough question because we have embarked over the last decade in this direction that we are currently on of building already 65 or more of these kind of fortress-like embassies outside the center, and we often see that the properties that we sell are taken over by other European powers and they use it for an embassy. I am thinking of Zagreb right now.

One concern is that in trying to defend ourselves from attack and trying to address the security of our diplomats and our people overseas, we are always going to be fighting the last technology. We are now working with this 100-foot setback and it is my understanding that this might have been either imposed by Congress or perhaps was in the Inman report, but it was something that now appears to be cast into law or cast in stone.

But I think we are reading now about suicide bombers and attacks that are taking place at 500 feet detonated and are still blowing up entire buildings, and so it is very possible that the technology in the hands of the people who are setting off explosions is going to make the 100-foot setback obsolete. So I am not sure that particular defensive tactic is going to serve us well over the long term and we may find that we have spent a great deal of money to fight the last war and we will just be confronted with a new set.

So I am not sure that I have the answer to that, but I know that it is a problem for conducting diplomacy, and from where I sit, in many of the posts I have been in in the last decade, I am finding that the business world and the non-governmental organization (NGO) world is becoming better informed and more knowledgeable about what is going on in the country where they are living and working than many of the people in our fortresses, who are handicapped by many constraints that make it impossible for them to get out, form the relationships, and get their finger really on the pulse of the country that they are in.

And I think we need to think about this as we develop a vision for what is going to be the mission of the Diplomatic Security of the United States in the coming years. What is the vision? Is the vision that we are going to be increasingly involved in nation building, in post-conflict or even continuing conflict, fragile or failed states, and that we are going to build up for that, or is there some other notion?

And how does the role of the U.S. Government fit with what the private sector is now doing? And how do we, in looking at public-private partnership models, how do we get a better grip on what is the appropriate and optimal role for the public part of that, let us say the embassy, and what is the appropriate role for the private part, the private sector? And who should be coordinating? Should the embassy play some sort of clearinghouse role, or what should be the role of the embassy in all of this?

I think many of these questions are not really being addressed in the "public square," are not being addressed with sufficient thought. We may end up spending a lot of money and training even for the wrong things if we don't figure this out.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ambassador Neumann, you recommend that Foreign Service Officers at the State Department and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) should be given risk management training. How do you suggest the Department implement this training, and who should be in charge of providing it?

Ambassador NEUMANN. New curriculum will have to be developed. Right now, this is, I think, primarily a mid-level and senior-level training issue. It is not a junior level one. But it does go to this question of people not understanding each other. That came up with GAO and what you talked about in the first panel, Senator Akaka.

So I think it is not that hard to have professionals invent role-playing scenarios, curriculum, training, but right now, we are not even doing much—we are doing mid-level training in a series of postage stamp modules that we try to cram into people's transfer summer. I think this is the kind of thing that you need in-service training to expose officers to very broadly across the Foreign Service.

For instance, the State Department has done team exercises, crisis exercises, for years, where they have teams that travel out to embassies and they do simulations and go through a crisis. So you could build some of this kind of training into that. You could build it into training here. But right now, we are not doing it, so we are getting past the question of misunderstanding that you raised only by accident, or by officers who live both of the different worlds, but not everybody needs to do four wars the way I did.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH. I really didn't understand, Ambassador Neumann. You are talking about communications and computers that are secure, and tell me about that. I am not clear.

Ambassador NEUMANN. I am trying to be a little careful, because there are some issues that are still forward projection and have security implications.

Senator VOINOVICH. OK.

Ambassador NEUMANN. But basically, when we first sent officers to Iraq, we gave them no deployable secure computers. Until they got on the military net, they had only unsecure methods of receiving information, which means they were blind to a lot of threat information and they could not report appropriately—with appropriate classification, in all cases, developments in their own areas.

That problem has not really been fixed. Right now, what we have done is we have done a workaround. We send them out with the U.S. military. They are using the military computers. I know it is the same government, but they have completely different standards from the State Department on what they can take to the field and how they can use it.

As long as we are with them, our officers can use their computers or similar computers. They can talk to our computers. As soon as they go off on their own, its different. If you have big groups like the team you send out if an embassy is bombed, they do have a communications package. But when you are talking about a few officers going someplace, the State Department does not own any releasable, usable technology they can give an officer to put him in secure contact with his embassy. He can use his private account. He can use his Yahoo!. I don't think that is a very good way to handle what we need to control, and so either we don't control or we don't have enough protection on what we control, and we haven't figured this out.

So right now, take North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), for instance or another problem. In Afghanistan about half of the PRTs, as you know, are NATO PRTs. We have State and USAID people in a lot of those PRTs. They work on a functionally different computer system that does not talk—I mean, you cannot cross-communicate secure communications between NATO communications and either the American military or our computers.

So I can get a State officer out in a PRT with a NATO force and they can be friendly and give him their computer, but he can't send to my account in the embassy. We were physically dealing with this in Kabul. We actually were running fiber optic cable off the telephone poles, down the street, to connect my office with General McNeil's so that we had a NATO communication. He had the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) so he and I could talk to each other. But the headquarters didn't. So we had to go out and buy computers that aren't in the State Department's system, run fiber optic cable off of telephone poles, and connect—and then we had to physically handle data because you can't electronically move it from one system to the other. I think this is ridiculous.

Senator VOINOVICH. So the point is that there needs to be a lot more coordination, to start off with, that you would have these secure computers, and they probably are going to have to talk with the military part of this——

Ambassador NEUMANN. Exactly. But it is a bureaucratic issue of what standards are acceptable.

Senator VOINOVICH. All right. So what you try to do is have uniform standards. You have got consistency there and you can talk. It really gets back to the other thing about—I will never forget, when I was in Iraq, we went out to one of the camps, and I don't even know if there are any State Department people that were there. There will always be military people. But the fact of the matter is that they had developed a very good relationship with these sheiks. You could just tell. They were talking. There was like kind of a little celebration and it was that kind of thing that makes a difference.

It seems to me that if you are going to do the Afghanistan and you are going to have your military out there, that one of the things you are going to make sure is that they are trained in counterterrorism and they are trying to make friends. But then that kind of segues in with your State Department people, so there is a movement there from one to the other that probably is as effective as anything that we can do.

Lots of challenges.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Yes, sir.

Senator VOINOVICH. You talk about the whole concept of having an overall plan for human capital and training and the rest of it. So often, what we do is we spend all our time putting out fires and never have time——

Ambassador NEUMANN. That is, I think, part of what is happening right now in the State Department. I mean, in one way, it is a good problem. I would rather they have the problem of suddenly having a lot of people to deal with than not having that problem. But the fact is, or my impression—remember, I am on the outside, I don't speak for the Administration—but my impression is that they are now so beleaguered trying to get people assigned that they are having a lot of trouble dealing with the sort of out-year big strategic issues.

How do you fill the knowledge gap between bringing people in at the bottom and the fact that a lot of what we need is not just bodies, but a certain level of experience, and what is your long-term training? Your staffs were both involved with us in preparing the report of the Academies on the budget. And we made a big deal in that of the need for a training and transition float. In my judgment, the State Department needs, though, to come up with a strategic plan for training.

Senator VOINOVICH. Let me just ask you one other thing. The last time around, I was disappointed in Secretary Rice because she had Mr. Zoellick in there and then she had Mr. Negroponte in there, and then they finally got Mr. Kennedy, and then they had the lady that was there trying to focus on management, similar to Colin Powell and Mr. Armitage, who it seemed to me had a really good focus on human capital planning.

Where do you think we are right now? Ms. Johnson, they have the new organization. Secretary Clinton has decided to have one person in charge of policy, and the other in terms of management. Is there anybody over there, from your observations, that is getting up early in the morning and staying up late at night working on management, working on developing the human capital, the training, and looking at the big issues that the Department has to undertake if you are really going to get the job done overall?

Ambassador NEUMANN. I think they are all getting up early in the morning and staying late at night. Whether they are thinking about the correct issues—I think they are trying to. I don't think, actually, I can answer the question and I think we will have to see what comes out——

Senator VOINOVICH. Who is in charge of that?

Ambassador NEUMANN. QDDR? Well, it was under Mr. Lew, I believe——

Ms. JOHNSON. Yes. I mean, we have two deputy secretaries, and Mr. Lew is doing that with Anne-Marie Slaughter of Policy Planning. The two of them are co-chairing the QDDR effort, and there are five or six working groups under it that are working on different things. And, in fact, we at AFSA are trying to see how we might relate to those different working groups. Some of them affect USAID in particular, and we are concerned with getting our USAID folks in touch with the people who are doing that kind of planning.

Senator VOINOVICH. In terms of the plan, the recommendations that you made, do you know if anybody is spending any time looking at those recommendations from the Academy to see if they are implementing them or following through or responding?

Ambassador NEUMANN. Not very much. They are certainly interested in the numbers. I don't think they are using the plan. We are talking to the Director General's Office about having the Academy take on another planning effort; that is try to help; don't feel proprietary about it. If they could do it without us, we don't need to be horning in, but we have got an awful lot of experience in the Academy, an awful lot of knowledge, and we would like to find a way to work with them to make some of that knowledge useful—Tom Pickering's favorite joke, we are 200 members with 7,000 years of experience and we would like to make some of that available to help with this effort.

Senator VOINOVICH. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you very much for having this hearing. I don't have any other questions. But this has been a great hearing and I am fired up, Mr. Chairman.

Senator AKAKA. Well, thank you very much, Senator Voinovich.

What are your top three recommendations for improving our diplomatic security efforts within the State Department?

Ambassador NEUMANN. Ms. Johnson, I will let you go first for a change.

Ms. JOHNSON. I listened with great interest to Assistant Secretary Boswell give his testimony and talk about what they are planning and what they are trying to do. I would go back to, I think, the suggestions that I made in my oral testimony earlier, is consistent with what Mr. Ford from GAO was saying.

The need for more, and I say better, communication between the policy side and the Diplomatic Security side, because all of these either misunderstandings or miscommunications. And I think that communication has to happen at multiple levels, and some of it could be by having more joint training, where DS people and other officers are taking or addressing the same issues together in the same room from their different perspectives. I think that always adds value to both sides.

So first is just to find ways to pay more attention to that dialogue, because I don't think it really exists in any kind of consistent systematic or formal way. It is ad hoc and unrecorded and out of date and we need a new one.

Second, I think, would be some discussion about whether this basically one-size-fits-all approach needs to be changed, and the fact that we have these unique situations in Iraq and Afghanistan, I think, give a good opportunity to reassess that and to say we need a more differentiated approach.

And the last thing has to do with finding a way to take advantage of AFSA's connection and ability to get the unfiltered views of our members, because—and compare those unfiltered views with whatever else is coming up through the more hierarchial system. We often hear very different things from our members than what apparently management is hearing when they ask the question. So I think we need to confront that a little bit and see what is happening.

Why is it that people feel that they can say—and do say—one thing to us where it is not necessarily for attribution and another thing in their more official capacity? We need to narrow that gap. There will always be a little bit of a gap there, but I think we need to narrow it a bit. If it gets too far out of whack, it is a signal that we need to open the discussion and management needs to send a signal, as Secretary Clinton has said and said early on, that she encourages and wants to hear different points of view. But I don't think people have internalized that yet.

I will turn it over to you.

Ambassador NEUMANN. Well, you know the real estate joke about three things that are most important, location, location, and location. I think in this case, I would say plan, plan, plan. We have got a lot of big issues. It also picks up Ms. Johnson's issue of the need to talk across functional and substantive lines. But if one doesn't plan, then you are always reacting and our budget cycle is not conducive to acting in a reactive mode, because then you can't get the resources to, in fact, react. Then you have to pull from someplace else. You just cascade your problems. You shuffle them from one place to another. So of the things I laid out, I think planning is my overall priority.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Well, I want to thank you both very much and thank all of our witnesses today.

Our diplomats repeatedly have been targets of attacks and DS is charged with keeping them safe so they can advance U.S. interests abroad. You have provided key insights in support of this effort.

Additionally, I am hopeful that Diplomatic Security will begin taking a strategic approach to addressing its staffing and operational challenges. This is critically important, since the Department must be fully prepared for new challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other crises that may emerge.

The hearing record will be open for one week for additional statements or questions other Members may have.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:45 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STATEMENT
OF
ERIC J. BOSWELL

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DIPLOMATIC SECURITY
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BEFORE THE
SENATE HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HEARING
ON
THE DIPLOMAT'S SHIELD: DIPLOMATIC SECURITY IN TODAY'S
WORLD

DECEMBER 9, 2009

Good Morning/Afternoon, Chairman Akaka and members of the committee -- I am honored to appear before you today. I'd like to thank you and the Committee members for your continued support and interest in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's (DS) programs. With Congressional support, Diplomatic Security has been able to safeguard American diplomats and facilities for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy and maintain our robust investigative programs which serve to protect the United States borders. With your permission, I will make a brief statement.

While Diplomatic Security continues to provide the most secure environment possible for the conduct of America's foreign policy, the scope and scale of DS's responsibilities and authorities have grown immensely in response to emerging threats and security incidents. Increased resources were necessary for the Bureau to meet the requirements of securing our diplomatic facilities in the extremely high-threat environments of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other locations. The Department currently operates diplomatic missions in locations where, in the past, we might have closed the post and evacuated all personnel when faced with similar threats.

As you may know, I also served as the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security from 1995 to 1998. This is not the same organization as when I left. It is far, far more capable. Not only has DS grown in personnel and resources it has developed the organizational structure necessary to meet all of the current challenges as well as those of the future.

Strategic Threat Analysis and Resource Planning

The recently released Government Accountability Office review of my bureau correctly assesses that DS must do more to anticipate potential and emerging global security trouble spots in order to create risk management and mitigation strategies that best focus our limited resources and prioritize security needs. Such plans must also incorporate the strategic management of the resources available for our bureau to fulfill its mission both currently and in the future.

Two years ago, DS created the Threat Investigations and Analysis Directorate (TIA) to enhance our intelligence analysis capability. The new TIA Directorate concentrates our threat analysis and intelligence gathering efforts under one streamlined command structure and fosters closer working relationships among all our analysts and those responsible for investigating, deterring, and mitigating threats. In an effort to further strengthen our successful security partnership with the American private sector, the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), created in 1985, was incorporated within the TIA Directorate to provide seamless information coordination between our threat analysts and the OSAC staff responsible for relaying both general and specific threat information to over 6,700 constituents from the U.S. business, NGO, faith-based and academic sectors. Just last month, we held a highly successful 24th Annual OSAC Briefing at the Department with nearly 1,000 representatives from member organizations.

A recent example demonstrates DS success at streamlining intelligence information and relaying it rapidly to Americans overseas. In late 2008, with narco-traffickers battling for control of the Mexican drug trade, extreme violence was spilling onto the streets of Mexican towns adjacent to our border. In response

to a hand grenade attack at one of our consulates, TIA worked with the post security staff and other U.S. Government agencies to investigate possible perpetrators, disseminate incident reports that assessed the increased threat to American interests, and warn individuals who may have been at risk.

Our next challenge is to sharpen our focus on not only predicting future security threats, but planning in advance for the security solutions and resources needed for tomorrow's crises and foreign policy initiatives. Over the coming months, we will begin working toward the development of a strategic planning unit charged with ensuring that DS is even better positioned to support future foreign policy initiatives and manage global security threats and incidents.

At the same time, we must balance resources and security requirements to achieve an effective mix of highly-skilled personnel while controlling costs associated with requirements that have grown tremendously over the past 20 years. We are embarking on a new Bureau-wide planning process that will allow us to better measure the performance of our 120 plus existing programs and utilize data to make better and more informed resource decisions. Having decision-supporting data available will enable DS to determine how well current programs and resources align with the Department and Bureau's strategic goals.

DS is actively participating in the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) that the Secretary has focused on improving the Department's resources and training to ensure the right people for the right job at the right time are in place to conduct diplomacy around the world. We are also participating in the QDDR working group responsible for the foreign affairs community's activities in contingency-response environments.

Staffing & Training Challenges

The Department of State operates increasingly in dangerous locations, and this requires extensive resources to mitigate the risk. Although DS's workforce has grown substantially over the past decade, the fluid nature of the security environments in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan presents an ongoing challenge to our program and staffing structures in those and other posts.

To meet the challenge of securing U.S. diplomatic operations under wartime conditions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other high threat zones, DS relies on the Worldwide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contract to provide protective security, aviation support, and fixed guard services. These contracts allow the scalability required for increased threats or new operational requirements, and provide specialized services in extraordinary circumstances. In recognition of the early challenges DS experienced in contract oversight specifically in Iraq, we have improved contract officers representative training for all security officer personnel and increased agent staffing in Iraq and Afghanistan to directly supervise the personal security contractors. In addition, DS has established a new Security Protective Specialist (SPS) skill code, a limited non-career federal employment category designed to augment DS Special Agents by providing direct oversight of WPPS-protected motorcades in critical-threat locations where such resources are needed most. We are similarly evaluating other staffing options to adequately cover this important oversight function.

Although the Bureau is experiencing a surge in new positions, uneven staff intake in the 1990's has resulted in significant experience gaps in our agent and security engineering corps. To limit the effects of this experience gap, we have increased

training and mentoring programs, and carefully identified personnel capable of serving in what we call stretch assignments. Over the past ten years the Bureau has embarked on an ambitious recruitment and hiring program. We have increased our outreach to college and universities, with an eye toward building a professional service that reflects America's diversity. We have also taken steps to better market DS through the use of social networking applications, targeted advertising both online and in traditional trade, military, and diversity periodicals.

In order to deploy highly qualified personnel into the field quickly, we have revamped some of our training programs and are carefully evaluating our entire agent training program to ensure that the instruction provided to new and existing DS special agents is relevant to the new realities of our Bureau's mission.

Physical Security

DS and the Overseas Security Policy Board (OSPB) have worked closely on the physical vulnerability list that informs the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) "Top 80" Capital Security Improvement List to ensure that the Department's new, more secure diplomatic facilities are constructed based on a risk-driven prioritization that takes into account the threat we face at each post where such construction is required. We also remain focused on developing security enhancements that improve security and life safety for existing current facilities while honoring their architectural character and preserving the public accessibility required for a successful diplomatic installation.

Conclusion

DS continues to strive to meet the security needs of the Department in increasingly dangerous locations by anticipating needs and dedicating appropriate resources to accomplish our mission. Through these changes, DS remains one of the most dynamic agencies in the U.S. federal law enforcement and security community.

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you on the global mission of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and on our unique ability to safeguard Americans working in some of the most dangerous locations abroad, and the taxing requirements we face. With your continued support, we will ensure Diplomatic Security remains a valuable and effective resource for protecting our people, programs, facilities, and interests around the world.

United States Government Accountability Office

GAO

Testimony

Before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

For Release on Delivery
Expected at 2:30 p.m. EST
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STATE DEPARTMENT

Challenges Facing the Bureau of Diplomatic Security

Statement of Jess T. Ford, Director
International Affairs and Trade

GAO-10-290T

December 9, 2009

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be here to discuss the Department of State's (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (Diplomatic Security), which is responsible for the protection of people, information, and property at over 400 embassies, consulates, and domestic locations. Since the 1998 bombings of U.S. Embassies in East Africa, the scope and complexity of threats facing Americans abroad and at home has increased. Diplomatic Security must be prepared to counter threats such as crime, espionage, visa and passport fraud, technological intrusions, political violence, and terrorism.

My statement today is based on a GAO report that was issued on November 12, 2009.[1] I will discuss (1) the growth of Diplomatic Security's missions and resources and (2) the challenges Diplomatic Security faces in conducting its work.

To address these objectives in our report, we (1) interviewed numerous officials at Diplomatic Security headquarters, several domestic facilities, and 18 international postings;[2] (2) analyzed Diplomatic Security and State budget and personnel data; and (3) assessed challenges facing Diplomatic Security through analysis of interviews with personnel positioned domestically and internationally, budget and personnel data provided by State and Diplomatic Security, and planning and strategic documentation. We conducted this performance audit from September 2008 to November 2009, 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.

[1]GAO, *Department of State: Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review*, GAO-10-156 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 12, 2009).

[2]We visited 15 diplomatic posts in nine countries: Egypt (Cairo and Alexandria), Germany (Frankfurt), India (New Delhi and Mumbai), Mexico (Mexico City, Tijuana, and Merida), Tunisia (Tunis), Turkey (Ankara and Istanbul), Saudi Arabia (Riyadh and Jeddah), the Philippines (Manila), and Indonesia (Jakarta). We also conducted video-teleconferences with Diplomatic Security officials in 3 additional posts: Iraq (Baghdad), Afghanistan (Kabul), and Pakistan (Islamabad).

In brief, Mr. Chairman, we found that, since 1998, Diplomatic Security's mission and activities—and, subsequently, its resources—have grown considerably in reaction to a number of security incidents. As a consequence of this growth, we identified several challenges. In particular (1) State is maintaining a presence in an increasing number of dangerous posts, which requires additional resources; (2) staffing shortages in domestic offices and other operational challenges—such as inadequate facilities, language deficiencies, experience gaps, and the difficulty of balancing security needs with State's diplomatic mission—further tax Diplomatic Security's ability to implement all of its missions; and (3) Diplomatic Security's considerable growth has not benefited from adequate strategic guidance. In our report, we recommend that the Secretary of State—as part of the agency's Quadrennial Diplomatic and Development Review (QDDR) or separately—conduct a strategic review of Diplomatic Security to ensure that its missions and activities address its priority needs.

Diplomatic Security's Mission and Resources Have Grown Considerably Since 1998

Because of a number of security incidents, Diplomatic Security's missions and resources have grown tremendously in the past decade. The growth in Diplomatic Security's mission includes key areas such as enhanced physical security and investigations. Following the 1998 attacks on U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, Diplomatic Security determined that more than 85 percent of U.S. diplomatic facilities did not meet its security standards and were therefore vulnerable to terrorist attack; in response, Diplomatic Security added many of the physical security measures currently in place at most U.S. missions worldwide, such as additional barriers, alarms, public address systems, and enhanced access procedures. Since 1998, there have been 39 attacks aimed at U.S. Embassies, Consulates, or Chief of Mission personnel (not including regular attacks against the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad since 2004). The nature of some of these attacks has led Diplomatic Security to further adapt its security measures. Moreover, the attacks of September 11, 2001, underscored the importance of upgrading Diplomatic Security's domestic security programs and enhancing its investigative capacity. Furthermore, following the onset of U.S. operations in Iraq in 2003, Diplomatic Security has had to provide security in the Iraq and Afghanistan war zones and other increasingly hostile environments such as Pakistan.

Diplomatic Security funding and personnel have also increased considerably in conjunction with its expanding missions. Diplomatic Security reports that its budget has increased from about $200 million in 1998 to $1.8 billion in 2008. In addition, the size of Diplomatic Security's

direct-hire workforce has doubled since 1998. The number of direct-hire security specialists (special agents, engineers, technicians, and couriers) increased from under 1,000 in 1998 to over 2,000 in 2009, and the number of direct-hire civil service personnel increased from 258 to 592. At the same time, Diplomatic Security has increased its use of contractors to support its security operations worldwide, specifically through increases in the Diplomatic Security guard force and the use of contractors to provide protective details for American diplomats in high-threat environments.

Dangerous Environments, Staffing Shortages, and Reactive Planning Challenge Diplomatic Security

Diplomatic Security faces several policy and operational challenges. First, State is maintaining missions in increasingly dangerous locations, necessitating the use of more resources and making it more difficult to provide security in these locations. Second, although Diplomatic Security has grown considerably in staff over the last 10 years, staffing shortages in domestic offices, as well as other operational challenges further tax Diplomatic Security's ability to implement all of its missions. Finally, State has expanded Diplomatic Security without the benefit of solid strategic planning.

Maintaining Missions in Iraq and Other Increasingly Dangerous Posts Significantly Affects Diplomatic Security's Work

Diplomatic Security officials stated that maintaining missions in dangerous environments such as Iraq and Afghanistan requires more resources and increases the difficulty for Diplomatic Security to provide a secure environment.

Keeping staff secure, yet productive, in Iraq has been one of Diplomatic Security's greatest challenges since 2004, when security for the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad transferred from the U.S. Department of Defense to Diplomatic Security. The U.S. mission in Baghdad—with 1,300 authorized U.S. civilian personnel—is one of the largest in the world. Maintaining Diplomatic Security operations in Iraq has required approximately 36 percent of its entire budget each fiscal year since 2004 and, as of September 2008, required 81 special agents to manage security operations. To support security operations in Iraq, Diplomatic Security has had to draw staff and resources away from other programs. Earlier in 2009, we reported that Diplomatic Security's workload—and thus its resource

requirements—will likely increase as the U.S. military transitions out of Iraq.[3]

U.S. policymakers' increased focus on Afghanistan poses another significant challenge for Diplomatic Security. The security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated since 2005, and the number of attacks there increased from 2,388 in 2005 to 10,889 in 2008. Afghanistan is Diplomatic Security's second largest overseas post with a staff of 22 special agents in 2009. Diplomatic Security plans to add an additional 25 special agents in 2010, effectively doubling the number of agents in Afghanistan.

In addition to operating in the Iraq and Afghanistan war zones, State is maintaining missions in an increasing number of other dangerous posts—such as Peshawar, Pakistan, and Sana'a, Yemen—some of which State would have previously evacuated.

Diplomatic Security Faces Operational Challenges That Affect Its Ability to Implement Important Activities

Diplomatic Security's ability to fully carry out its mission of providing security worldwide is hindered by staffing shortages in domestic offices and other operational challenges such as inadequate facilities and pervasive language proficiency shortfalls.

Some Diplomatic Security Offices Operate with Severe Staff Shortages

Despite Diplomatic Security's staff growth over the last 10 years, some offices have been operating with severe staffing shortages. In 2008, approximately one-third of Diplomatic Security's domestic suboffices operated with a 25 percent vacancy rate or higher. Several offices report that this shortage of staff affected their ability to conduct their work. For example:

- The Houston field office reported that, for 6 months of the year, it operated at 50 percent capacity of nonsupervisory agents or lower, and for 2 months during the summer, it dipped down to a low of 35 percent. This staffing gap happened while the field office was experiencing a significant increase in its caseload due to the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

[3]GAO, *Iraq: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight*, GAO-09-294SP (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 24, 2009).

As a result, the Houston field office management reported that this combination overwhelmed its capabilities and resulted in a significant backlog of cases.[4]

- The New York field office reported that the number of special agents there dropped to 66 in 2008 from more than 110 agents in 2007. As a result, the office had to draw special agents from other field offices to cover its heavy dignitary protection load.

- In 2008, the Mobile Security Deployment (MSD) Office was authorized to have 94 special agent positions, but only 76 were filled. Furthermore, Diplomatic Security officials noted that not all staff in filled positions are available for duty. For example, in 2009, 22 agents assigned to MSD were in training. As a result of the low level of available staff, Diplomatic Security reported that many posts go for years without updating their security training.[5] Officials noted that this lack of available agents is particularly problematic given the high number of critical threat posts that are only 1-year tours that would benefit from frequent training.

State officials attributed these shortages to the following three factors:

- *Staffing the Iraq mission:* Staffing the Iraq mission in 2008 required 16 percent of Diplomatic Security's staff. In order to provide enough Diplomatic Security special agents in Iraq, we reported that Diplomatic Security had to move agents from other programs, and those moves have affected the agency's ability to perform other missions, including providing security for visiting dignitaries and visa, passport, and identity fraud investigations.[6]

- *Protection details:* Diplomatic Security draws agents from field offices, headquarters, and overseas posts to participate in protective details and special events, such as the Olympics. Recently, Diplomatic Security's role

[4]Houston field office planned to use an increased number of agents scheduled to arrive in early 2009 to address the backlog of cases.

[5]Currently, the MSD Office has two teams posted in Peshawar, Pakistan, and one in Iraq supplementing security. The office must use its four remaining teams to (1) prepare to relieve one of the sitting teams in Peshawar and Baghdad and (2) cover the other parts of its mission.

[6]GAO, *Rebuilding Iraq: DOD and State Department Have Improved Oversight and Coordination of Private Security Contractors in Iraq, but Further Actions Are Needed to Sustain Improvements.* GAO-08-966 (Washington, D.C.: Jul. 31, 2008).

in providing protection at such major events has grown and will require more staff.

- *Normal rotations:* Staff take home leave between postings and sometimes are required to take training before starting their next assignment. This rotation process regularly creates a labor shortage, which affects Diplomatic Security's ability to meet its increased security demands. In 2005, Diplomatic Security identified the need for a training float—additional staff that would allow it to fill critical positions and still allow staff time for job training—but Diplomatic Security has not been able to implement one. This is consistent with our observation that State has been unable to create a training float because its staff increases have been absorbed by the demand for personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Diplomatic Security requested funding to add over 350 security positions in fiscal year 2010. However, new hires cannot be immediately deployed overseas because they must meet training requirements. In addition to hiring new special agents, Diplomatic Security established the Security Protection Specialist (SPS) position in February 2009 to create a cadre of professionals specifically trained in personnel protection who can provide oversight for the contractor-operated protective details in high-threat posts. Because of the more targeted training requirements, Diplomatic Security would be able to deploy the SPS staff more quickly than new hire special agents. However, Diplomatic Security has had difficulty recruiting and hiring a sufficient number of SPS candidates. According to senior Diplomatic Security officials, it may cancel the program if it cannot recruit enough qualified candidates.

Other Operational Challenges Impede Diplomatic Security's Ability to Fully Implement Its Missions and Activities

Diplomatic Security faces a number of other operational challenges that impede it from fully implementing its missions and activities, including:

- *Inadequate buildings:* State is in the process of updating and building many new facilities. However, we have previously identified many posts that do not meet all security standards delineated by the Overseas Security Policy Board and the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999.[7]

[7]For GAO's review of the State's Compound Security Upgrade Program, see GAO, *Embassy Security: Upgrades Have Enhanced Security, but Site Conditions Prevent Full Adherence to Standards,* GAO-08-162 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 18, 2008).

- *Foreign language deficiencies:* Earlier this year, we found that 53 percent of Regional Security Officers do not speak and read at the level required by their positions, and we concluded that these foreign language shortfalls could be negatively affecting several aspects of U.S. diplomacy, including security operations.[8] For example, an officer at a post of strategic interest said because she did not speak the language, she had transferred a sensitive telephone call from a local informant to a local employee, which could have compromised the informant's identity.

- *Experience gaps:* Thirty-four percent of Diplomatic Security's positions (not including those in Baghdad) are filled with officers below the position's grade. For example, several Assistant Regional Security Officers with whom we met were in their first overseas positions and stated that they did not feel adequately prepared for their job, particularly their responsibility to manage large security contracts. We previously reported that experience gaps can compromise diplomatic readiness.[9]

- *Host country laws:* At times, host country laws prohibit Diplomatic Security from taking all the security precautions it would like outside an embassy. For example, Diplomatic Security officials said that they prefer to arm their local guard forces and their special agents; however, several countries prohibit this. In cases of attack, this prohibition limits Diplomatic Security's ability to protect an embassy or consulate.

- *Balancing security with the diplomatic mission:* Diplomatic Security's desire to provide the best security possible for State's diplomatic corps has, at times, been in tension with State's diplomatic mission. For example, Diplomatic Security has established strict policies concerning access to U.S. facilities that usually include both personal and vehicle screening. Some public affairs officials—whose job it is to foster relations with host country nationals—have expressed concerns that these security measures discourage visitors from attending U.S. Embassy events or exhibits. In addition, the new embassies and consulates, with their high walls, deep setbacks, and strict screening procedures, have evoked the nickname, "Fortress America."

[8]For GAO's review of language training at State, see GAO, *Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls*, GAO-09-955 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 17, 2009).

[9]For GAO's review on experience gaps at hardship posts, see GAO, *Department of State: Additional Steps Needed to Address Continuing Staffing and Experience Gaps at Hardship Posts*, GAO-09-874 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 17, 2009).

Although Some Planning Initiatives Have Been Undertaken, Diplomatic Security's Growth Has Been More Reactive Than Strategic

Although some planning initiatives have been undertaken, neither State's departmental strategic plan nor Diplomatic Security's bureau strategic plan specifically addresses its resource needs or its management challenges. Diplomatic Security's tremendous growth over the last 10 years has been reactive and has not benefited from adequate strategic guidance.

State's strategic plan does not specifically address Diplomatic Security's resource needs or management challenges, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and other standards.[10] While State's strategic plan for 2007-2012 has a section identifying security priorities and goals, we found it did not identify the resources needed to meet these goals or address all of the management challenges we identified in this report.

Diplomatic Security has undertaken some planning efforts at the bureau and office level, but these efforts also have limitations. First, Diplomatic Security creates an annual bureau strategic plan.[11] While this plan lists priorities, goals, and indicators, these elements are not always linked together. Further, the plan does not identify what staff, equipment, or funding would be needed. Second, Diplomatic Security has created a Visa and Passport Security Strategic Plan to guide its efforts to disrupt individuals and organizations that attempt to compromise the integrity of U.S. travel documents. Third, Diplomatic Security reported that it is currently examining all of its security programs to determine how funding and personnel resources are distributed and support its goals. Finally, Diplomatic Security uses established security standards and staffing matrixes to determine what resources are needed for various activities. However, while these various tools help specific offices or missions plan their resource requests, they are not useful for determining overall bureau needs.

[10]GPRA requires that a strategic plan contain six elements. The six elements are: (1) Mission Statement, (2) General (also known as Strategic or Long-Term) Goals and Objectives, (3) Approaches or Strategies to Achieve Goals and Objectives, (4) Relationship between General Goals and Annual Goals, (5) External Factors, and (6) Program Evaluations. The committee report accompanying GPRA also states that a multiyear strategic plan should articulate the fundamental mission of an organization and lay out its long-term general goals for implementing that mission, including the resources needed to reach these goals. GAO has further suggested that addressing management challenges, in addition to other factors, would enhance the usefulness of agencies' strategic plans.

[11]Bureau strategic plans were previously called bureau performance plans. State changed the name of these documents in fiscal year 2009.

Several senior Diplomatic Security officials noted that Diplomatic Security remains reactive in nature, stating several reasons for its lack of long-term strategic planning. First, Diplomatic Security provides a support function and must react to the needs of State; therefore, it cannot plan its own resources until State determines overall policy direction. Second, while State has a 5-year workforce plan that addresses all bureaus, officials stated that Diplomatic Security does not use this plan to determine its staffing needs. Finally, past efforts to strategically plan Diplomatic Security resources have gone unheeded. For example, Diplomatic Security's bureau strategic plan for fiscal year 2006 identified a need to (1) develop a workforce strategy to recruit and sustain a diverse and highly skilled security personnel base and (2) establish a training float to address recurring staffing problems. However, as of September 2009, Diplomatic Security had not addressed either of those needs.

Diplomatic Security officials stated they hope to participate in a new State management initiative, the Quadrennial Diplomatic and Development Review (QDDR). This review, which will be managed by a senior leadership team under the direction of the Secretary of State, is designed to provide the short-, medium-, and long-term blueprints for State's diplomatic and development efforts and offer guidance on how State develops policies, allocates its resources, deploys its staff, and exercises its authorities.

Recommendations for Executive Action

In our report, we recommended that the Secretary of State—as part of the QDDR or as a separate initiative—conduct a strategic review of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to ensure that its missions and activities address State's priority needs. This review should also address key human capital and operational challenges faced by Diplomatic Security, such as

- operating domestic and international activities with adequate staff;
- providing security for facilities that do not meet all security standards;
- staffing foreign missions with officials who have appropriate language skills;
- operating programs with experienced staff, at the commensurate grade levels; and
- balancing security needs with State's need to conduct its diplomatic mission.

State agreed with our recommendation and noted that, although it is currently not planning to perform a strategic review of the full Diplomatic Security mission and capabilities in the QDDR, the Under Secretary for Management and the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security are completely committed to ensuring that Diplomatic Security's mission will benefit from this initiative.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have at this time.

GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

For questions regarding this testimony, please contact Jess T. Ford at (202) 512-4128 or fordj@gao.gov. Individuals making key contributions to this testimony include Anthony Moran, Assistant Director; Miriam Carroll Fenton; Joseph Carney; Jonathan Fremont; and Antoine Clark.

Testimony of Ronald E. Neumann
Ambassador (retired)
December 9, 2009
Before
The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich thank you for inviting me to appear again before you. As you know, I am not a security specialist. Rather, I speak to you as one who has lived with security issues in the practical realm. I have been under threat of assassination in Yemen, had my embassy stormed by mobs in Bahrain, traveled armed in Iran in the days of yearly terrorist assassinations of Americans, been shot at as both a soldier and diplomat by small arms, rockets and mortars, and served in three critical threat posts, two as Ambassador. On the basis of that experience I would like to offer some ideas, a few of which coincide with the GAO report but several of which address other matters; some of which require legislative attention.

Before doing so however, I would like to pay special tribute to the brave and hard working personnel, RSOs and ARSOs, who have protected me and my missions in dangerous times. I would also like to acknowledge my respect for the men of DynCorp and Blackwater who ran my personal protection details in Iraq and Afghanistan. They performed with courage, judgment and restraint and one lost his leg in the process. Whatever opprobrium now attaches to others I owe all those gallant men—State Department and contractor employees--my gratitude and I am glad to have a public forum in which to express it.

Changed Conditions need Changed Concepts—technical issues

The GAO report observes correctly that we now maintain diplomatic personnel in security conditions from which we would previously have evacuated our personnel. And it is correct that this has required a vast expansion of secure facilities, vehicles, and personnel. There are still gaps between some of our standards and practices and the needs of the service under these new conditions. These gaps affect communications, protection standards, who carries out protection, and movement security. Some have made progress but are still worth noting because the problems may reemerge. Some have needed attention for more than a decade. Let me enumerate the challenges I know of.

Communications security standards

We lack the standards—not the equipment—to provide secure, deployable computer based communications to our personnel in rapidly evolving situations. In both Iraq and Afghanistan we have and do deploy State personnel into the field with our military colleagues and those of allied forces. We did so under the Coalition Provisional Authority as well as Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan-OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and NATO/ISAF PRTs in Iraq. Secure communications are a must to alert our personnel to intelligence generated threats, share communications between provincial areas, and allow them proper means for reporting sensitive information. Our military colleagues have the equipment to do this. They protect the same US government secrets that the State Department protects. Yet State has never accepted and fielded deployable secure

computer technology for use outside posts because it does not fit our standards adopted and designed for fixed locations.

In some cases we have been able to work around the problem with the cooperation of our military colleagues. In Afghanistan, then General Eikenberry generously authorized all State personnel deployed with US units to use military (Sipernet) communications. I believe our regional posts are now using Sipernet in Iraq as well although that was not the case when I left in June 2005. However, this is a temporary fix that has neither solved all our current problems nor prepared a solution for the future.

It is past time for State to summon the willpower to resolve the bureaucratic problems involved and find a way to send deployable secure computers to the field with our officers. Begging from our military friends is not a solution and the problem is still with us. That is because we are now deploying officers to work with non-US NATO forces and NATO works on a communications system that—unlike the US military's Sipernet—is not compatible with State secure systems. In my time in Kabul we had to install a few separate computers with separate technology to receive classified material from NATO/ISAF and our officers serving with NATO units. However, techniques for migrating information from one system to another were imperfect and slow. Deployments to dangerous or difficult areas in the future will not always be with US forces. The limited secure communications we have for deployment of larger groups, i.e., teams rather than individuals, do not permit receipt of all levels of classified information. To repeat, *State needs to give its deploying officers secure communication devices and standards that allow them to be used in the field.*

Secure Mobility

The need to move with relative security is well known. In the past many of our problems centered on vehicles. When the buy American standards that Congress has mandated were applied to security they have caused problems in the past. In recent years I am told that we have made great progress. It is important that this progress be maintained because it took a long time to deal with the issues of profile and sustainability.

In some countries no one but us uses American SUVs. This makes it easy for an ambush to recognize an approaching American target at a greater distance. When I served in Algeria the US Ambassador's convoy was distinct from that of every other diplomat in the city. When stuck in traffic, as we often were, I could have foregone the honor of being the most easily identified senior US official in a country with a blanket death threat against all foreigners.

In Iraq in the early period of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) we had no armored vehicles. Because of these same regulations we had to use highly identifiable vehicles with no armor. That no State personnel were killed in that period of shooting on the street was due far more to luck than the deficient security provided by the Department and military. Later we did get armored Suburbans, and just in time as the road ambushes of my colleagues in the provinces began to increase very shortly after the first armored vehicles were issued.

However, that brings up the second issue, vehicle maintenance. This is a problem when the vehicles are basically unsupportable in or unsuitable for the countryside where they are used. The US Army has a massive logistics chain to maintain its equipment in environments like Iraq and Afghanistan and even so faces many challenges. State has no equivalent support system in the field. When the new armored vehicles broke down in some PRT in Iraq or Afghanistan they could be deadlined for long periods in the absence of parts or mechanics who knew how to repair them.

In Afghanistan we compounded the problem by sending long wheel-base armored Suburbans to PRTs in areas marked by steep sided gullies and few roads. So the wonderful and expensive armored vehicles stayed inside the compound and the State and USAID officers drove unarmored Nissans or Toyotas or bummed rides in military vehicles.

Diplomatic Security (DS) has made considerable progress and is now fielding a much better mix of foreign and domestic vehicles. I commend their progress and the Congressional support. I hope that the Congress will continue to support State with the authority and funding flexibility to meet the need for secure and maintainable vehicles. However, as the US military re-deploys from Iraq we are going to face complex issues of how to handle protection for our movements. There are no simple solutions.

The State Department may need much more robust maintenance capabilities. Additionally, State may need to consider having air assets of its own, both fixed and rotary wing, for the future in Iraq if we maintain regional posts there without military support. I understand that there is some planning going on for this but many issues

remain to be settled and future funding is a significant issue. These resources and the authorities to use them wisely need to be thought about now and budgeted for. Supplemental budgets are not the answer since by their nature they are neither sustainable nor dependable for year to year operating costs. Supplemental budgets impede sensible planning and rational budget execution. The Administration—State, OMB, and the White House share with Congress the need to stop flinching from the requirement to pay for the mitigation of the dangers we ask our personnel to accept.

Changed Conditions need Changed Concepts—Risk vs Gain

Operating in areas like Afghanistan and Iraq requires that we adopt new ways of thinking about risk. It is true that Foreign Service officers are not soldiers. They did not sign up to fight the nation's wars, although increasingly they signed up knowing that they might be sent into the midst of conflict as they were in Vietnam and are today in Iraq and Afghanistan and a number of other countries. But our nation's need for sophisticated judgments on complicated economic and political subjects does not end when risk arises. Good political judgments will not be made on the basis of poor information. Effective coordination with foreign partners will not take place over the telephone alone, particularly not in countries where personal relationships and one-on-one discussions are essential to deal with difficult subjects. In short, we have to be able to move.

And moving, Mr. Chairman, Senator Voinovich, is hampered not only by danger and by shortage of RSOs, and ARSOs, and vehicles but by our self imposed standards. Those standards, often described informally as zero tolerance, made our jobs in Kabul and

Baghdad even harder than they needed to be. We avoided the problem in the field largely by turning security over to the military and living by different standards. However, as we convert from PRTs to State branch posts and Diplomatic Security (DS) assumes responsibility for security in the field we are likely to face again the potentially crippling problems of putting people in a dangerous country and then keeping them from being usefully employed.

I want to be clear:

- I do not advocate that we blindly or easily assume high levels of risk, and
- I absolutely would be opposed to ordering officers to take risks they considered unreasonable.

But we must find better answers than we have to date. Because of danger we have often limited officers in such situations to moving only with a full convoy and because of the limitations of equipment and personnel that required scheduling movements 48 hours in advance. But we are applying this to societies where the vast bulk of social and bureaucratic actions are decided without such advance preparation so the result is our officers don't see the people they need with the frequency they need under the conditions needed to be effective. In short, we limit our access to knowledge and coordinate ineffectively when we can't move about. We have to have standards that allow for the use of judgment in weighing the risk of doing something against the gain to be derived from the action.

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, I want to be clear that I am not criticizing the excellent RSOs who worked for me. I was clear that I had a job to do and they had to help

me find ways to do it safely. Because they accepted that approach I went to most of the places I needed to go and generally saw the people I needed to see. And when an RSO who accepted that his or her job was not just to keep me safe, but to keep me safe while doing my job, came to me and advised against an action I listened.

However, it is one thing for an RSO to make such judgments under direct orders of the Ambassador with the latter's delegation of Presidential authority and quite another to ask the RSO to go outside current tolerance standards completely on his or her own or with the varying judgment of other officers. That is asking the RSO to accept both greater physical risk and greater risk to career in a system that in the past has given no bureaucratic protection in the event that someone is hurt or killed. I am told by those still in the service that in Iraq, and perhaps in Afghanistan, our posts have made some progress in using "low profile" movements and more flexible ways of handling risk.

I hope that we are beyond the issue of the past in which dedicated officers frequently pushed the bureaucratic boundaries to accomplish what they, often correctly, believe to be essential tasks. I know of State and AID officers who regularly travelled to dangerous areas to collect essential political information necessary for my judgments as ambassador or to oversee projects essential to development and counter-insurgency alike. In many cases they travelled under different military rules but that only illustrates that State has abdicated a responsibility it cannot discharge in the field. In some cases, I have learned of officers who waited months or in some cases never reported to the Embassy that they had been ambushed. They did not report because they were concerned that they would

be ordered to leave or remain at base and therefore be crippled in their mission. By not reporting they also limited the RSOs understanding of the regional risks.

These were not matters of officers necessarily taking foolish risks or using bad judgment. Rather the point is to note the tension between security standards and professional responsibilities that do not connect well. I recognize that there has been progress. But I believe that that some point the problem is going to reappear.

Some speak of "risk management;" an antiseptic and bureaucratic term to avoid saying that someone may get hurt or killed taking a risk that was sensible on the basis of what was known and worth taking for a specific gain. But it is exactly the flexibility to make such difficult decisions that we need to strengthen. There are two levels of decision making to consider.

One is in the field. Senior officers with policy responsibility together with RSOs must continually weigh the risks of any movement against the need for the mission. Agencies need to work harder at coordinating moves to the same locations when they compete for security assets. These are difficult decisions and there are neither simple solutions nor "right answers." I have known RSOs who were too cautious to allow proper mission performance and senior officers who erred on the other side, being too cavalier and reckless in their judgments. It is therefore necessary that the issue of how to make these judgments needs to become part of regular Foreign Service and USAID officer training as well as that of RSOs. Officers should be exposed to roll playing and risk vs. gain trade off thinking in training for all officers, not just those deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan.

That brings us to the need to deal with the issue of security judgments at the policy level in Washington. We need a more systematic policy view of where the balance should lie between local responsibility and Washington review, weighed in favor of the field but maintaining room to examine whether judgments were reasonable when things go wrong. If the nation's interest requires us to send Foreign Service and AID officers into dangerous situations, and I believe it does, then it is up to our leaders to resolve these issues just as it is up to Congress to support reasonable flexibility to keep our people safe. We seem to be moving toward that balance in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am less persuaded that we have achieved the same balance in other dangerous areas of the world or that the balance will be maintained with future changes in senior personnel. The issue merits continuing study.

PRTs and Branch Posts—Back to local security

Ever since we began deploying civilians into the field in Iraq and Afghanistan we have encountered the problem of how to provide protective security for their essential movements. In the past we have not done well with the answers. In Iraq we made the decision to deploy civilians to PRTs without knowing how we would solve the movement protection issue and then wasted a prodigious amount of time and effort on an entirely foreseeable problem. In Afghanistan we have delegated the protection of our civilians in the provinces to the military. That has been only partially successful. Protection has been good but restrictions on movements caused by a shortage of force protection personnel,

and hence on civilian ability to do their work limited has the utility of the civilians. Strains between civilian and military personnel generated by friction over access to available security escorts were a frequent source of tension.

AS we go forward with the increase in civilians now projected for Afghanistan I predict that the problem will get much worse and the lack of adequate protective escorts will force civilians into a zero-sum game as to who gets to work and who twiddles their thumbs back at base. I am not convinced that our military will be able—not willing but able—to devote sufficient resources to the issue as the civilian presence expands. And in any event, the US military cannot handle the protection requirements for State and AID officers based with non-US NATO/ISAF PRTs where issues of adequate security for frequent movements remain unresolved.

This problem is likely to get significantly worse in Iraq as our military withdrawal proceeds and in Afghanistan as we set up branch posts outside the perimeter of military bases. If we do not make decisions early on how to provide adequate movement security we will find ourselves with posts that are secured at base but incapable of discharging their larger missions. We have done this before and it is likely we will do it again if the thinking and the budgets are not prepared now.

There are solutions but choices must be made early. In some parts of Afghanistan protection requires such heavily armed escorts that only the military can move our personnel. But in other areas lighter security could do the job. This could go to

contractors but that is very expensive and the problems of expanding bases to take additional contractors as well as civilians will be large.

Another possibility is to use Afghans trained and led by Americans, preferably RSOs. We have done that successfully in many countries and under dangerous conditions. Such forces provided security in Lebanon for many years. My security in Algeria resided with very courageous Algerians trained, led and supervised by diplomatic security agents. We could do this again in Iraq and parts of Afghanistan, at somewhat lower cost than contractors and with great expansion of our broad mission effectiveness.

In Iraq I understand that we are making strides in integrating Iraqi police into our mobile and static security programs in some selected areas. It is a painstaking process that is being done with great attention to detail. This model needs study and may require additional funding in the future. Plans to use more local forces in Afghanistan need to be completed and funded.

Depending partly on local security will pose problems in the midst of an insurgency. There are real risks including deciding to vet Iraqis and Afghans for security tasks. But DS has solved those problems before. We mitigated threats in Algiers by providing very specific steps concerning when guards were armed, briefed and so on. We have Afghans available who have worked extensively with our military and other organizations thereby providing the most solid vetting possible; the survival of their American counterparts. Situation specific solutions are being worked on in Iraq. In short, if we choose to use such methods then we have the knowledge, the training skills and the personnel to provide a

reasonable solution for part of the coming problem at a more manageable cost than contract security. I believe the Department should make, or where it has begun continue to make a very serious study of selectively expanding the use of Afghan and Iraqi guards.

Expand the resource reserve

Finally, I would like to call to your attention the need for a financial reserve for Diplomatic Security. The military has very large operating and maintenance (O&M) funds from which funds can sometimes be drawn under particular authorities to deal with some deployment crises before a supplemental budget is available. The State budget does not have equivalent resource flexibility. In my experience, this is a very significant but unacknowledged drag on Diplomatic Security decision making. If a guard contractor is not performing the cost of firing one contractor, providing for security and rebidding the contract can be very high. Where is that money to come from? State, largely DS, is going to have to find it by delaying or scrapping other projects to find the funds. I cannot testify to exactly how this makes Washington officials hesitate to make necessary security decisions but I am convinced it has and will happen.

I recommend that Congress work with the State Department to design some form of reserve or emergency drawdown authority to allow State to meet new and critical security contingencies. Definitions and terms would have to be designed to make sure such authorities or reserves did not become simply bureaucratic slush funds. But with good will on both sides this could be done.

Summing up—Where is the strategic plan?

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, thank you again for inviting me to appear. I have raised major issues drawn from my field experience. Each one is fairly long standing. Some are showing progress and others, like communications, remain unaddressed. Some issues reside in DS, some in Department leadership (and OMB where money is concerned), and some problems require cooperation of the Congress. To sum up, the problems are:

- Inadequate secure computers for deployment;
- Secure mobility, especially in the future when significantly expanded air assets may be required;
- Utilizing local security forces for PRTs and branch posts in conflict areas;
- The need to accept some greater degree of risk when the gains warrant such risks; and
- The need for an enhanced ability to draw on funds for security emergencies.

Lurking behind the individual problems is the lack of a strategic plan. The GAO report has noticed this and recommended corrective action. I strongly endorse that recommendation. Strategic planning is not a strong point in the State Department. Some of this is cultural and some is the fault of a miserly allocation of personnel to State. The fact is, unless State gets more people it will not be able to do strategic planning. My organization, The American Academy of Diplomacy, documented this in our report with the Stimson Center, *The Foreign Affairs Budget of the Future.*

But it is also a fact that State must adopt a more serious approach to strategic planning if it is to use its new resources well and justify their continuation by the Congress. Secretary Clinton has decreed a new process of planning, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. I believe this to be an excellent and necessary step. But I also recognize that in the short term the Department is being asked to undertake considerably expanded strategic planning in a very short time frame without having yet added the staff to do the planning. This will be a strain. The strain will be larger where it works against the grain of old habits. But the grain must adapt, planning is essential to meet the future needs of American diplomacy broadly as well as in security. I hope State will meet Secretary Clinton's requirements and your demands and thus foresee the need for programs and funding for future challenges. I hope you in the Congress will continue to press them for the long term strategic thinking they must learn to do; and then support the conclusions including regular appropriations for personnel and equipment.

Thank you and I am happy to take your questions.

File: Testimony on DS of Dec 2009 Final

Testimony of Susan Rockwell Johnson
President, American Foreign Service Association
December 9, 2009
Before
The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia
On
The Diplomat's Shield: Diplomatic Security in Today's World

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, thank you for once again inviting the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) to testify before you. We are pleased to offer our views on the current state of diplomatic security, and are happy to once again share the panel with Ambassador Ronald Neumann. AFSA is proud to represent the brave men and women who serve as diplomatic security specialists at the State Department. Their dedication, courage and hard work have saved countless lives, not only of Foreign Service employees but other civilians. Like many of my Foreign Service colleagues, I have personally benefited from their service during my assignments abroad, especially in Iraq and Bosnia.

The challenges and demands facing our diplomats and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) have grown exponentially over the past decade. The tragic bombings of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, the 9/11 attacks, the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and all the other attacks carried out or threatened against our overseas missions have all required a substantial increase, both in the number of security measures that we must take and in their sophistication. These safeguards have not only been for personnel, but also for vehicles, communications and the physical structures of our missions.

The call for increased vigilance at missions and governing travel outside the mission, along with the high standards for building security and access identified by the Inman Report and other

studies, has strained the Diplomatic Security Bureau's resources and personnel. DS must constantly reassess the balance between providing adequate protection and allowing the day-to-day work of diplomacy to proceed.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, *Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review,* accurately highlights the difficult choices that DS currently faces. We strongly agree with and support the GAO's recommendations. AFSA also supports the proposals Amb. Neumann and the American Academy of Diplomacy presented in their testimony. I will do my best to not be repetitive in AFSA's recommendations, focusing mainly on the importance of the need for the State Department' need to find an optimal balance between securely protecting our diplomats while still giving the members of the Foreign Service the flexibility to perform their assignments.

Another term for this dilemma is "risk versus reward." Some risks in carrying the U.S. mission in a country are unavoidable, but like Amb. Neumann, AFSA is *adamantly opposed* to underestimating or minimizing those threats. Nor do we support requiring officers to take unnecessary risks.

As the GAO report highlights, the "Transformational Diplomacy" initiative has required the United States to maintain a diplomatic presence in countries we would have otherwise evacuated, escalating the amount of risk Foreign Service personnel' face when deployed. Members of the Foreign Service understand and accept that at any point during their career they may be posted to a country that is dangerous, but they remain committed to fulfilling their duties as professionally as possible. People are willing to accept risk if they believe what they are doing matters and they can accomplish the job they were sent to do.

As the State Department embarks on establishing a 21st-century diplomatic corps, AFSA believes that it must perform a comprehensive review of worldwide security requirements that will provide for more flexibility at individual posts, while still maintaining a high level of protection. At a time when our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq continue to grow, State needs to have a strategic plan for how it will meet these growing demands and to address staffing and training shortages by giving Diplomatic Security the resources to be proactive, rather than reactive. The goal should be responsible risk management, not a zero tolerance policy.

A one-size-fits-all approach does not take into account the dynamic nature of diplomacy and the different situations on the ground. This approach often tie the hands of the Foreign Service and compromises the ability to do its job successfully. Again, let me be clear that this is about finding a balance that works for the unique nature of the jobs performed by members of the Foreign Service, which often require face-to-face meetings with local nationals at all hours. Let me give two examples from my personal experience.

I served as a senior adviser to the Iraqi Foreign Ministry from July through December 2003. Broadly stated, my mission was to rebuild the Iraqi Foreign Ministry as a genuine diplomatic force, rather than allowing it to be nothing more than a state security/underground banking operation for the State Security Ministry. In the process our goals included rebuilding the heavily damaged headquarters and recovering its records; regaining financial assets stashed in Iraqi embassies abroad; re-establishing limited U.S. consular operations in Iraqi consulates in the region to deal with problems of Iraqi refugees in the diaspora; issuing official passports to Iraqis working with us in the Governing Council; developing and implementing a strategy for ensuring that the Iraqi Interim Government would be seated and allowed to speak at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA); dealing with the rising security concerns of other embassies in Baghdad, including their ability to carry weapons to defend themselves; and establishing and managing a Coalition Provisional Authority task force to oversee the first post-Saddam Hajj. I mention these details to explain why our diplomatic "mission" required travel outside of the Green Zone to the Foreign Ministry in order to build effective relationships and cooperation with the Iraqi ministry officials. All of these goals were partially or fully achieved, including that of getting the Iraqi Delegation seated at the U.N. with the right to address the UNGA.

The security policy at the time was that travel outside the Green Zone required a military escort composed of several vehicles, wearing of standard-issue camouflage uniform, armored vest and helmet, and at least 48 hours' notice to the military that included justification of the importance of meeting outside the Green Zone. To be effective as senior adviser required, at a minimum, the ability to visit the Foreign Ministry on a regular basis, as well as to be able to travel to other embassies. Due to the enormous demand placed on our military, it became understandably apparent to me and to my colleagues that the military simply did not have the capacity (either in terms of vehicles or personnel) to provide regular escorts to U.S. civilian advisers at the various

Iraqi ministries. So our choice was to stay in the Green Zone and not do the jobs we had come to do – or to find other ways to visit our ministries and interact with Iraqis.

I concluded that I would in fact be safer if I traveled to the ministry, usually a five-to-seven minute drive from the Green Zone checkpoint, in an Iraqi government vehicle with local plates, rather than in a U.S. military escort convey (which, in any case, was seldom available). For travel to other embassies, I relied on transport provided by each country's chargé d'affaires, usually in their government-provided armored vehicle, with one or more bodyguards.

By November 2003, the security equation had shifted and the risk of traveling anywhere outside the Green Zone was rising steadily. I curtailed official travel but continued to venture out informally beneath the radar. That flexibility was the only way I could do the job I'd been sent there to do. This practice was widespread among advisers, but despite individual and collective efforts, we were unable to persuade post management to address the situation formally through real dialogue between the policy and "security" sides of the country team.

That experience highlights the serious issue of insufficient planning and resources to provide timely, adequate and secure mobility for diplomats and other civilians. Amb. Neumann made the same point in his testimony, and it is one that State must address as we begin a huge influx of personnel into Afghanistan. It also highlights the need for more thoughtful consideration of what sort of mobility is most appropriate.

Following my six months in Iraq, I served as Deputy High Representative and Supervisor of Brcko District in Bosnia, with the Office of the High Representative (OHR). This was a high-profile position that came with a 24/7 Close Protection Unit headed by a rotating American team leader and deputy and seven local security personnel, provided via a Dyncorp contract. I want to pay tribute to the professionalism, dedication and hard work of this unit, both its locals and Americans.

However, I served in Bosnia at a time when this particular configuration and the 24/7 rules it came with did not seem appropriate, necessary or cost-effective. In fact, they interfered with the mission. The fully armored vehicle was old and had repeated brake and steering wheel problems. Our main security concern was avoiding a dangerous road accident during frequent travel over the mountains on the four hour drive from Brcko to Sarajevo, where the OHR

headquarters and the U.S. Embassy were located. The single most dangerous incident during my three years in Bosnia was not the result of a security threat. In 2005, during an early morning drive to the Belgrade Airport, from where I was to fly to Brussels for a Peace Implementation Council meeting. My armored vehicle hit a patch of black ice, skidded and overturned into a deep, snow-filled ditch. Fortunately no one was injured.

Both in Brcko and throughout Bosnia, this standard security configuration raised my profile to the point that I could not visit anyone discreetly Any time I left my office compound, where my small apartment residence was co-located, I had to travel with my full CPU escort. So if a contact called to invite me for a coffee or to have dinner, I had to tie up the entire unit after hours, often pulling them away from their families and adding to their already long working hours.

This also meant that I had to forgo opportunities to build relationships, hear from a wider range of contacts, and strengthen my language skills. In short, it handicapped me as a diplomat. After six months in country, I explored the possibility of a different, more flexible and lower-profile approach that would not always require an armored vehicle (which was highly identifiable, of course) and deployment of the full team. Regrettably, the rules did not allow for a more customized approach.

These two examples are to me, symptomatic of a twofold problem. 1) The need for more internal dialogue between the policy side and the security side in each post to develop more customized security approaches. 2) The value of giving the ambassador and senior diplomats who have the appropriate situational experience in country the flexibility to take into account the situation on the ground and recommend an appropriate security postures. This philosophy should apply to both building security and personal security issues.

Another issue which would benefit from more genuine internal dialogue has to do with the decisions on where to locate new embassies that meet the rigorous security standards that we have established. U.S. embassies -- once centrally located and accessible -- have increasingly become located on the outskirts of capital cities and much less welcoming. This now-familiar "Fortress America" profile sends a signal of a militarized America, on the defensive.

Diplomatic Security personnel must have the adaptability to adjust to the soft skills of the diplomatic mission. There are times and countries where an big black SUV may not be the safest or most secure method of transportation, both because it makes clear that it is carrying an American diplomat and because it could compromise the identity of a contact providing key information.

One critical part of this systemic review and strategic planning should include input from the affected individuals who must live out these security requirements at missions with various threat ratings. These officials include Regional Security Officers and their assistants, Ambassadors, Deputy Chiefs of Mission and Senior Foreign Service officers. In particular, those who have served in some of our most high-risk posts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan have valuable insights to contribute.

We at AFSA encourage the State Department, particularly officials in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, to utilize us as a resource to survey these individuals to provide unfiltered feedback. In order to better develop and advance diplomatic security, we need to find out whether members of the Foreign Service believe there is enough security for them and their family members at post, whether they feel physically safe, what aspects of security help or hinder their ability to fulfill their mission, and what recommendations they would make to improve security.

On a related note, AFSA remains concerned about the high cost of using contractors and encourages State to continue to explore the idea of hiring and training local employees to perform those functions in some of the more dangerous countries. This must obviously be done with a high level of vetting and coordinated training by Diplomatic Security, but it offers two clear benefits. First, local employees are more cost-effective than contractors. Second, they possess unique, invaluable "on the ground" knowledge -- insider information. During my time in Bosnia, it made a huge difference having locals who knew the language and the customary. However, this should not be seen as a alternative to Diplomatic Security agents having the necessary language skills, which a majority does not have.

Finally, State must work with Congress to enhance their ability to be flexible in their funding mechanism. As Amb. Neumann pointed out, DS's budget – specifically, their lack of a dedicated reserve -- ties its hands and, in the long run, leaves them with few or not options when

contractors are not performing well. It also prevents them from making timely repairs or improvements to vehicles or structures. As the Foreign Service serves side by side with the military in Iraq and Afghanistan, unforeseen problems will arise, and State must have to financial tools to address these problems. Any congressional action on this should come with clear parameters for use of these funds and a transparent review of its use.

I would like to thank you once again, Chairman Akaka and Senator Voinovich, for the invitation to testify. The GAO report and the on-the-ground experience represented by this panel have clearly highlighted major issues within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security that need to be addressed. In that regard, I testified last month at a hearing to discuss another GAO report highlighting serious staffing and language gaps that exist among Foreign Service generalists and recommending that the State Department create a strategic, long-term plan to solve these two serious issues. These issues also affect DS specialists.

In particular, AFSA is seriously concerned at the GAO finding that some 34 percent of diplomatic security positions are being filled by officers below grade, and 53 percent of Regional Security Officers lack adequate language skills to do their jobs. This not only hinders the professional development of these individuals, but can compromise the quality of their work and the security of the mission.

While we understand the pressure that State is currently under, both with staff and resources, these issues cannot be handled as they have been in the past. With the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review currently under way, we hope that this will move State in the right direction, toward long-term strategic planning. We appreciate Congress' continued effort to hold State and other foreign affairs agencies accountable to the GAO recommendations.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to testify. I will be happy to answer your questions.

BACKGROUND
THE DIPLOMAT'S SHIELD: DIPLOMATIC SECURITY IN TODAY'S WORLD
DECEMBER 9, 2009

Background

The State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security is responsible for the protection of people, property, and information at more than 285 State Department missions overseas and 122 domestic facilities. Since the attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the U.S., DS's mission, resources, and personnel have grown significantly.

GAO Report on Diplomatic Security

GAO reviewed how DS's role has changed over the past decade and the challenges it faces today.[1] GAO found that DS's mission, personnel, and financial resources have expanded in reaction to numerous security incidents on embassies, consulates, and U.S. officials. DS's budget increased from $200 million in 1998, the year of the embassy bombings, to $1.8 billion in 2008, of which over $300 million went toward security in Iraq. During that period, DS also added increased security measures to diplomatic facilities, established surveillance detection teams at almost all diplomatic posts, provided each Chief of Mission and Principal Officer with a fully armored vehicle, and performed additional steps to improve security for overseas missions. DS has also upgraded its domestic technical and procedural security programs and counterintelligence program. GAO also found that DS has doubled its direct-hire workforce and has become more reliant on contractors to fill critical needs positions, especially in high-threat environments.

GAO found that DS is facing several challenges. First, the State Department has recently been operating in dangerous environments where it would previously have evacuated personnel. Maintaining missions in hostile environments requires additional DS personnel and resources. Second, staffing shortages have limited the effectiveness of domestic offices and prevented DS personnel from receiving updated security training. Third, operational challenges, such as posts not meeting security standards, foreign language deficiencies, experience gaps, and balancing security needs with the Department's diplomatic mission, make it difficult for DS to fulfill its mission. And fourth, the State Department has failed to use strategic planning to address DS resource needs or management challenges despite expanding DS's budget and personnel.[2]

GAO recommended that the Secretary of State review DS, either as part of the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) or separately. Specifically, the review should

[1] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review*, Report to the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, U.S. Senate, GAO-10-156, December 2009.
[2] *Ibid.* at pg. 23.

examine operating with adequate staff, securing facilities that do not meet security standards, staffing foreign missions with personnel who possess the appropriate language skills, operating programs with experienced staff, and balancing security needs with the Department's diplomatic mission. The State Department agreed with GAO's recommendation and stated that the Department's Under Secretary for Management and Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security are committed to ensuring that DS will benefit from the QDDR.[3]

Key Challenges

Language Proficiency

Earlier this year GAO found serious language capability gaps in DS. Most significantly, 53 percent of Regional Security Officers (RSOs), who are the lead security representatives at the State Department's overseas missions, do not speak and read at the level required by their positions. Language training is often cut short because the Department is unwilling to leave security positions vacant. GAO found that language capability shortfalls among RSOs could negatively impact U.S. diplomacy, in part because sensitive information in a language other than English may be improperly handled.[4]

GAO has reported on language proficiency gaps at the State Department three prior times since January 2002. In its first report, GAO found that the Department had a shortage of Foreign Service officers (FSOs) who met the language proficiency requirements of their positions and recommended that the Department adopt a strategic approach to its human capital management and workforce planning.[5] In 2006, GAO reviewed the State Department's progress in meeting its foreign language capability requirements and found that its recommendation to the Department to take a strategic approach for human capital management was not fully addressed.[6]

GAO's September 2009 report demonstrated that the State Department continues to struggle in meeting its language capability requirements. Despite large remaining language gaps, the Department had not taken a comprehensive, strategic approach to addressing language proficiency. GAO found that the State Department's effort failed to provide a linked, strategic focus, relying on a large number of separate policies and initiatives to address different aspects of this challenge. GAO recommended that the Department develop a strategic plan to link all of its efforts to meet foreign language requirements, including measurable performance goals, a comprehensive process to identify foreign language requirements based on objective criteria, and

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[3] *Ibid.* at pg. 38.

[4] GAO-10-156, at pp. 33-34, discussing findings of U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls*, Report to the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, GAO-09-955, September 2009.

[5] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Foreign Language: Human Capital Approach Need to Correct Staffing and Proficiency Shortfalls*, Report to Congressional Requesters, GAO-02-375, January 2002, at pp. 9-10 and 27.

[6] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Staffing and Foreign Language Shortfalls Persist Despite Initiatives to Address Gaps*, Report to the Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, GAO-06-894, August 2006, at pp. 3-5.

a more effective mechanism to gather feedback from FSOs on the effectiveness of their language training.[7]

Staffing Challenges

Staffing shortages and experience gaps are an ongoing problem at DS. In 2008, approximately one-third of DS's domestic offices operated with a 25 percent vacancy rate or higher, and 34 percent of DS positions were filled with officers below the position's grade. State officials attributed the staffing shortages primarily to protection details, the annual staffing cycle, and staffing the Iraq mission. DS draws special agents from field offices, headquarters, and overseas posts for protection details at special events. These details require a great deal of resources and temporarily remove agents from their duty assignments. Normal rotations of officers create a staffing shortage because officers often take annual leave and are required to undergo training before beginning their next assignments, which causes a shortage of agents to fill positions. Staffing the U.S. Embassy in Iraq has drawn personnel from other missions and has left other missions and posts shorthanded.[8] Although the staffing shortages are most severe in domestic offices, in 2008 three overseas posts (India, Tunisia, and Nigeria) reported staffing shortages of special agents, which may have compromised DS's mission.

DS has taken steps to address the staffing shortages, which include doubling its staff size since 1998; requesting funding to hire over 350 security positions in fiscal year (FY) 2010; creating the security protection specialist position to provide oversight to protection details in Iraq; filling all positions in Iraq and Afghanistan before filling other positions; restricting employees' annual leave on a limited basis; and identifying positions it would not fill in this year's staffing cycle.[9]

Foreign Service officer staffing shortages more generally have been an ongoing problem at the State Department in recent years. In 2006, GAO found that the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative, which was meant to increase the number of FSOs during former Secretary of State Colin Powell's tenure at the Department, helped address some staffing shortages, but the initiative failed to meet its goals and mid-level vacancies at a number of critical posts remained. As a result, mid-level positions were being staffed by junior FSOs, who often had little guidance and experience to handle the full scope of their duties. GAO's top recommendations were for the State Department to consider using directed assignments to fill critical positions, evaluate its incentive programs for hardship post assignments, and consider changing the assignment system to allow for longer tours and more regional specialization.[10]

In its September 2009 report on staffing and experience gaps at hardship posts, GAO found that the State Department's diplomatic readiness remained at risk. GAO attributed this to an

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[7] GAO-09-955, at pp. 3-5.
[8] GAO-10-156, at pp. 29-35
[9] *Ibid.* at pp. 32-33.
[10] GAO-06-894, at pp. 2-5.

insufficient number of FSOs, an ongoing mid-level experience gap, and assignment system that does not specifically address the continuing experience gaps at hardship posts.[11]

Balance of Mission and Security

In 2007, the Center for Strategic and International Studies released a report entitled, "*The Embassy of the Future.*" The report made 10 recommendations to modernize and reform the U.S. diplomatic presence abroad. One recommendation suggested that, "the department's security culture and practices must continue to transition from risk avoidance to risk management... Any security philosophy that is based on zero-risk and that judges security-related decisions only to that standard will fail."[12] The report emphasized the point that risk can never be eliminated and that managing risk requires a balance between protecting assets and effectively carrying out the mission. The American Academy of Diplomacy likewise endorsed transitioning from risk avoidance to risk management in its report entitled, "*A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future: Fixing the Crisis in Diplomatic Readiness*," which was released in 2008.[13]

Embassy Security

In January 2008, GAO provided an updated status of Compound Security Upgrade Program (CSUP) efforts. GAO found that CSUP projects have enhanced posts' compliance with physical security standards. For example, CSUP projects have constructed compound access control facilities, safe areas for post personnel, and compound walls and barriers. However, at some posts, site conditions prevented adherence to security standards. As a result, many buildings and the staff stationed there remain vulnerable to attack.[14]

Relevant Legislation

Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations (S.1434) – This bill was reported out of the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 7, 2009. It recommends $1.595 billion for the Worldwide Security Program, which funds DS. This is $53 million less than the Obama Administration's FY 2010 request. Also, in the accompanying

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[11] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Additional Steps Needed to Address Continuing Staffing and Experience Gaps at Hardship Posts*, Report to the Chairman and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, GAO-09-874, September 2009, at pp. 28-29.

[12] Center for Strategic and International Studies, *The Embassy of the Future*, 2007, at pg. 50.

[13] American Academy of Diplomacy, *A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future: Fixing the Crisis in Diplomatic Readiness*, October 2008, at pp. 16-17.

[14] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Embassy Security: Upgrades Have Enhanced Security, but Site Conditions Prevent Full Adherence to Standards*, Report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, U.S. House of Representatives, GAO-08-162, January 2008, at pp. 14-17.

committee report (111-44), the State Department is encouraged to address management challenges within DS that were identified by the Department's Office of Inspector General.[15]

Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 (H.R. 2410) – This bill passed the House on June 10, 2009. It set the authorization level for the Worldwide Security Program at $1.648 billion for FY 2010 and such sums as may be necessary for FY 2011. In Section 213, after taking into account security needs, the Secretary of State is directed to consider placing public diplomacy facilities in areas that are well-trafficked by a cross-section of people in other countries.

Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (Public Law 108-458) – Section 7218 (22 U.S.C 4807) required the establishment of a Visa and Passport Security Program within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. Required program components include the analysis of methods to alter or falsify travel documents; identification of individuals who facilitate travel by creating altered or false documents; and the identification of countries that need technical assistance to address the use and production of altered or false documents.

Security Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act (Public Law 106-113) – Provided authorization of appropriations for strengthening the security of U.S. diplomatic facilities, established security requirements for those facilities, amended the requirements for Accountability Review Boards, and increased antiterrorism training in Africa.

Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act (Public Law 99-399) – Created the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, established the Diplomatic Security Service, and put in place the requirement to conduct an Accountability Review Board in the event of serious injury, loss of life, or significant destruction of property at a U.S. overseas mission.

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[15] U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Report of Inspection: The Executive Office, Bureau of Diplomatic Security,* ISP-I-09-16, April 2009.

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Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Daniel K. Akaka (#1)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

In September 2009, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that 53 percent of Regional Security Officers (RSOs) do not speak and read the relevant foreign language at the level required by their positions. This could put our diplomats at higher risk since communication about threats may be incomplete.

a. What is Diplomatic Security (DS) doing to increase language proficiency among its RSOs?

b. When will all RSOs have the language proficiency required for their positions?

c. The State Department convened an inter-bureau language working group, to address language proficiency-related issues. Has DS been a participant in this working group? If not, why not?

Answer:

a. The Department of State recognizes the importance of language training and proficiency for its security personnel. In large part, the current deficits are due to an increase in the number of language-designated positions. For operational reasons, the decision was made to fill these positions quickly with employees who may not have had the established level of language proficiency. Future incumbents will be assigned to language training and expected to attain the designated proficiency level. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) has elected to participate in the Department's initiative to advertise and fill language positions on an out-year basis, meaning that officers filling certain language-designated positions will be moved into their assignments a year before their time at post begins in order to give the officers the opportunity to attend language and other required functional training. The out-year positions will be limited to those requiring at least six months of language training to gain proficiency.

b. Although DS is making every effort to ensure agents assigned to a language-designated position have the required proficiency, it is difficult to predict when all candidates will meet this goal. We can foresee some instances when a language waiver may still be required. For example, if there is an unexpected curtailment from post by the language student's predecessor due to a medical or family emergency, it may not be practicable to allow the position to remain vacant while the incoming officer completes his/her language training.

c. The Department also has established a working group, with the Director General's staff, DS staff and the staff of the Foreign Service Institute to continue to focus on these issues.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Daniel K. Akaka (#2)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

In April 2009 the State Office of Inspector General recommended attaching a redesignated Strategic Planning and Coordination unit directly to the DS Executive Office to strengthen strategic planning within and across DS directorates. You testified that you plan to do this.

Please elaborate on these plans, including when you believe this unit will be operational.

Answer:

In late 2009, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) began working to establish a more operationally oriented strategic planning component independent of, and with a distinct mission from, the Policy and Planning Division. This strategic planning component would focus on mapping the DS response to evolving threats and evaluating possible approaches for creating the most secure possible environment to support American diplomacy for future initiatives in countries or regions currently lacking a permanent U.S. diplomatic presence. Reflecting this unit's operational, rather than management-focused, orientation it will be housed within the Threat and Intelligence Analysis Directorate (DS/DSS/TIA).

Separately, to address management-focused strategic planning and coordination issues as recommended by the Office of the Inspector General, DS will establish an ad hoc committee comprised of experienced DS consultants (e.g., a former DS/EX Director, resource management experts, etc.), under the responsibility of the Executive Director. The committee will meet several times per year to evaluate planning and performance compiled in coordination with the Bureau's Directorates. Based on its analysis, the committee will make formal recommendations to senior DS management regarding allocation of resources and other operational changes.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Daniel K. Akaka (#3)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

You testified that DS has had difficulty hiring a sufficient number of security protection specialists to serve as supervisory agents on protective details in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

a. Please elaborate on the challenges you are encountering in recruiting and hiring these specialists.

b. What steps you are taking to address these challenges?

Answer:

The Security Protective Specialist (SPS) program was created in late 2008. It was designed to develop a cadre of Diplomatic Security (DS) employees whose primary function is to supervise independent contractors protecting U.S. officials at high-threat posts overseas. Since its inception, four vacancy announcements have been posted with approximately 1,580 applicants. Of this number, only 200 were found to possess the basic qualifications for the position.

To date, there are 10 SPSs on board and assigned to Embassy Kabul. On February 8, 2010, five additional SPSs will enter on duty and be assigned to either Kabul or the U.S. Consulate in Peshawar. There are approximately 25 additional candidates in various phases of hiring/clearance with approximately 35 more to go through the testing/assessment process. The balance have withdrawn or failed to proceed with their applications.

The challenges which we have experienced in recruiting and hiring include difficulty in attracting candidates who possess the requisite highly specialized experience in conducting protective operations in high-threat environments. The majority of those candidates who do qualify are either current or former employees of private security companies engaged in security operations abroad. While many express interest in the SPS position, there is reluctance to move from lucrative private sector employment to what is perceived as a lower salary offered in the public sector. Additionally, the SPS position is currently a Limited Non-Career Appointment (LNA) which limits the employee to an annually renewable appointment with a maximum of five years. Many potential applicants have expressed concern about this limitation in their career development.

To address these two primary issues, DS has focused upon and highlighted remuneration issues in our recruitment efforts. The latest vacancy announcement, for example, provided a highly detailed outline of pay and allowances available to all SPS employees. This has achieved its intent and salary issues are now, reportedly, less of an impediment to those considering applying for the position, although anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that would-be SPS candidates have been disincentivized by the absence of tax exemptions for income earned overseas, as is the case in the private sector. Additionally, as we now have SPS employees on the ground in Afghanistan, feedback about the SPS position is being generated and circulated within the private security community. We expect this to have positive results in our recruiting efforts.

With regard to the perceived limitation in career development, DS is exploring available options to include a restructuring of the position. Furthermore, those SPS employees who are otherwise qualified for the DS Special Agent position are being encouraged to view that as an option and apply accordingly.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Daniel K. Akaka (#4)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

In 2006, DS submitted to Congress a strategic plan for targeting individuals involved in providing forged U.S. travel documents.

How have DS's staffing shortages affected its ability to carry out this strategic plan?

Answer:

Through the Visa Passport Strategic Security Plan (VPSSP), DS has developed and implemented a clear methodology to better safeguard Department of State-issued travel documents. Consistent Congressional and Consular Affairs funding has aided this effort and supported execution of the VPSSP as intended.

The success of the plan depended upon DS's ability to increase the number of its Special Agents dedicated to criminal investigations. Beginning in 2006, DS added 267 Special Agents assigned domestically and overseas who concentrate on criminal investigations related to visa and passport fraud.

To support a growing investigations program, DS improved analytical capabilities to assist in pinpointing visa and passport fraud trends. Increased manpower also enabled DS to enhance its asset forfeiture program, which aims to dismantle the financial networks that often sustain criminal syndicates after the main players have been arrested.

By the summer 2010, DS will have 100 Agents working directly with Consular Affairs partners overseas to indentify and investigate suspicious travelers during the U.S. passport and visa application process.

In FY 2009 alone, DS was involved in the arrests of 1,240 individuals for visa- and passport-related crimes. Working with Consular Affairs in U.S. embassies abroad, we aided in denying visas to 2,469 applicants and 199 passports. In addition to the visa- and passport-related investigations, we located and returned 36 fugitives to U.S. law enforcement authorities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Daniel K. Akaka (#5)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

In April 2009 the State Office of Inspector General reported that the U.S. is not providing adequate compensation for some Locally Employed Staff (LES). In some cases, that means we may not attract employees with the skills we need. More disturbingly, some staff reported that low pay forced them to cut back on meals or to take their children out of school so they could work. LES provide critical continuity and institutional knowledge for the RSOs at posts.

What steps has DS taken to improve LES compensation and benefits to ensure it attracts and retains well qualified staff?

Answer:

Following the 2009 OIG report, the Department established a Locally Employed (LE) Staff Compensation Working Group to formulate options to improve the synchronization of annual compensation reviews with funding estimates and Bureau budgeting decisions. One result was the Department's 2009 decision to provide funding for a mandatory minimum 2.9% wage increase when such an increase also was supported by the Office of Overseas Employment's (HR/OE) annual compensation review. An additional 1% was made available to bureaus with posts whose survey analysis reflected the need for an even greater increase.

The U.S. government strives to be a model employer overseas. Section 408 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 states that LE staff salaries shall be established based on locally prevailing practice among leading employers in each country. Establishing LE staff salaries and benefits is a combined annual effort between HR/OE, the Bureau of Resource Management, regional bureaus, and overseas posts.

Each post provides input pertaining to the local labor market, recruitment and retention statistics, unemployment rates, and other factors that affect the post's ability to recruit and retain qualified staff. HR/OE couples this information with annual compensation surveys that use comparative wage data in order to ensure that each post's Local Compensation Plan (LCP) remains appropriate to recruit, retain, and motivate LES. Where a post's LCP does not provide adequate compensation to attract and retain a well qualified staff, LCPs may include additional provisions such as Exception Rate Ranges (ERR) and other allowances (e.g., unique conditions of work allowances, transportation,

housing, family education, and meal allowances), in order to provide additional compensation for LES members.

Over the last two years, the Department has improved its forecasting of anticipated LES wage increases for inclusion in its annual budget requests. These efforts have streamlined the process for approving wage increases, and will help manage expectations, improve transparency, and ultimately mitigate LES salary gaps to achieve greater parity with market conditions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Daniel K. Akaka (#6)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

You testified that DS has embarked on an ambitious recruitment and hiring program, including greater outreach to colleges and universities and a focus on diversity.

a. Please elaborate on this program's specific goals.

b. Has does this program increase diversity within DS?

Answer:

During the past 10 years, Diplomatic Security has increased its diversity outreach to colleges, universities, and professional organizations with a goal of building a professional service that reflects America and its diversity.

We target historically black colleges and universities, schools with a high Hispanic population particularly in Florida and Texas, and schools with a high Asian population including the University of Hawaii.

We attend numerous career fairs and conduct informational sessions at colleges and universities to help provide name recognition for both Diplomatic Security and the Department of State. This provides a very structured and targeted approach to our recruiting efforts and allows us to increase awareness of job openings in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. We have worked with institutions such as:

1. Thurgood Marshall Fund
2. Florida International University
3. Florida Memorial University
4. Virginia Commonwealth University-continuing relationship
5. Howard University-Rangel Fellows-continuing relationship

In partnership with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), we post our engineering vacancy announcements through their association to target approximately 1,300 U.S. colleges and universities with diverse populations.

We continue to target and place job announcements and ads in diversity publications and websites, which include:

1. Black Collegian
2. Asian Life

3. National Society of Black Engineers
4. Black Engineers.com
5. Hispanic Engineers
6. WesPACS Consortium (U.S. military)
7. Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association
8. New Mexico State Career Planning Guide.

We also published articles which highlighted DS minority personnel and their stories.

We are now in the developmental stages of working with Monster Government Solutions to begin data mining resumes, utilizing targeted advertisements to reach active and passive job seekers, and identifying diversity groups for job postings and banner ads.

Diplomatic Security strongly believes that the development of a robust diversity program must include partnership with targeted minority and gender groups to include American Indians, native Hawaiians, Hispanics, Asians, Blacks, women support groups, professional organizations, and academic institutions. This relationship leads to meaningful internships and mentoring programs for diversity groups by making them aware of employment opportunities not only with Diplomatic Security but with the Foreign and Civil Service as well.

Within the last few years, we have experienced an increase in our overall numbers of minority and female applicants, and we attribute this to the targeted increase of our outreach program.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Daniel K. Akaka (#7)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

Ms. Johnson testified that the 100 foot setback requirement for U.S. Embassies may be obsolete since terrorists may be able to severely damage buildings from distances as far away as 500 feet.

a. Do you agree with her?

b. If so, is DS looking into changing its setback requirements?

Answer:

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) does not agree. The Department's experience with the science of blast effects is that the 100-foot setback, which is the minimum requirement enacted by Congress in the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999, is not obsolete. DS is confident that facilities constructed at this distance will provide adequate protection for U.S. government employees and visitors to our embassies and consulates. Buildings that have been severely damaged by terrorists at distances greater than 100 feet are commercial-grade office buildings not designed to withstand these types of attacks. Current U.S. embassy construction is far more robust and incorporates design features for blast, forced entry and ballistic resistance, and other security requirements that provide protection. DS believes the 100-foot setback is necessary and effectively ensures our diplomatic facilities are provided maximum protection.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Claire McCaskill (#1)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

The State Department decision not to renew its private security service contract with Armor Group North America (AGNA) when it expires in June of next year was long overdue. What concerns me is the length of time it took for the Department to take action against continued performance problems, some so severe the security at U.S. Embassy Kabul may have been placed at risk as far back as June 2007. At the hearing I chaired this June, before the Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Logistics Management William Moser, in reference to the AGNA contract, stated it was not a close call to exercise the second option year. Yet just a few months later, the Department changed its position. I recognize that contracting in a war zone is a difficult balance, but despite continued warnings of mismanagement, why was the Department so slow to move?

Answer:

The decision to exercise the second option year of AGNA's contract was carefully weighed prior to the commencement of the current option year on July 1, 2009. AGNA's operational performance and progress in addressing administrative deficiencies identified in its corrective action plan were important considerations in the decision. As Deputy Assistant Secretary Moser noted during the hearing, AGNA's administrative deficiencies had not prevented it from providing adequate security services to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. Since AGNA's deficiencies were correctible and due to the required timeline, expense, and disruption to Post operations that would have occurred in transitioning to a new service provider on such short notice, the Department elected to exercise the option at that time. AGNA's performance did not compromise the security of the Embassy or its personnel, and, overall, AGNA has responded well to the heightened threat environment in Kabul.

When evidence surfaced in September 2009 of unprofessional and inappropriate off-duty conduct by AGNA guards employed on the Kabul Embassy Security Force contract, the Department took swift action to investigate. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) and the Office of Inspector General conducted over 200 interviews of AGNA, subcontractor employees, and other personnel who may have witnessed the reported behavior. AGNA and Embassy records were also reviewed. The results of a senior-level Department review of the circumstances and investigative findings, combined with AGNA's history of contract compliance deficiencies, led the Office of Acquisition Management (AQM), DS, and U.S. Embassy Kabul to conclude that it was in the best interest of the Government to compete a new contract.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Claire McCaskill (#2)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

In testimony you mentioned your office is evaluating options for improved oversight of private security contractors and contracts. As the State Department prepares to solicit new bids, what control measures are you taking to ensure similar waste and fraud does not occur? More specifically, how is the Bureau of Diplomatic Security working with procurement officials to make certain this does not happen again?

Answer:

The allegations of waste and fraud are the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Office of the Inspector General and Department of Justice. Accordingly, until the investigation is complete and the Department can review the findings, we are unable to assess what preventive measures should be taken beyond those already discussed with staff members from the Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight and in documents provided to the Subcommittee. Specifically, the Department will continue to maintain a schedule of quarterly program management reviews, meet weekly with AGNA management in Kabul and in Washington, and carefully document and require corrective action for all contract compliance deficiencies. As a result of the Diplomatic Security (DS) investigation into the allegations of misconduct, DS temporarily assigned a DS Special Agent to reside at Camp Sullivan, where the AGNA guards reside, to augment the Regional Security Officer's (RSO's) contract oversight efforts in Kabul. As part of the long term solution, DS has conducted interviews and is now in the selection and hiring process for a personal service contractor (i.e., an employee engaged directly by the government rather than a third-party contractor) who will reside at Camp Sullivan and further augment the RSO's contract oversight responsibilities. Should the OIG's investigation produce evidence of waste or fraud, DS and procurement officials from the Office of Acquisitions Management will conduct a thorough review to determine how they can further enhance their contract oversight regime to ensure similar activity does not take place.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Claire McCaskill (#3)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

What is the value of the 6-month bridge contract extended to AGNA to provide for the contractor transition?

Answer:

The Department does not plan to award a bridge contract to AGNA. However, due to the complexity of the requirements, it will be necessary to exercise the Department's unilateral right under Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 52.217-8 to extend AGNA's performance for up to six months to allow for an orderly transition between contractors. The Department estimates the cost of the extension will be approximately $3.7 million per month. There will be no change in contract price under the extension.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Claire McCaskill (#4)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

Diplomatic Security's staff in Kabul will soon double to protect the surge in officers at the U.S. mission. GAO has reported that approximately 90 percent of all State Department Diplomatic Security personnel are contractors. Approximately what percent of this staff increase will be private security contractors? Will these guards be acquired in the new contract which will replace AGNA?

Answer:

The increase in civilian staff will add over 400 direct-hire government personnel throughout the country in support of the President's strategy for Afghanistan. The Department currently plans to assign approximately 180 of this total to Kabul to work at the U.S. Mission. In order to protect this increase in staff and manage the mission's security programs and inclusive in this total of 180, DS is adding 24 Special Agents to the Regional Security Office.

The Department currently plans to add 56 new guard positions under the AGNA contract that can be attributable to the increase in civilian personnel in Kabul. These positions consist of both U.S. and third-country national guards and primarily support the U.S. Mission's acquisition of off-compound housing and construction projects designed to accommodate the additional government staff. The Department is incorporating these guard positions into the scope of work for the new Kabul Embassy Security Force contract.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Eric Boswell by
Senator Claire McCaskill (#5)
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
December 9, 2009

Question:

In your written testimony, you indicated that:

> [t]o meet the challenge of securing U.S. diplomatic operations under wartime conditions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other high threat zones, DS relies on the Worldwide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contract to provide protective security, aviation support, and fixed guard services [and that in] recognition of the early challenges DS experienced in contract oversight specifically in Iraq, we have improved contract officers representative training for all security officer personnel and increased agent staffing in Iraq and Afghanistan to directly supervise the personal security contractors.

Does the State Department plan to rewrite the terms and requirements of its contracts to guard Kabul and other embassies? What changes, if any, will be made for language sufficiency, training, and guard post and hours requirements in these contracts? What permanent changes to direct supervision of personal security contractors by agents have been made in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, in addition to the temporary measures put in place on the Kabul Embassy contract this past September?

Answer:
Diplomatic Security and the Office of Acquisitions Management (AQM) have concluded a review of the terms and requirements of the contract to guard Embassy Kabul and made recommendations for changes that are under review by the Department's senior management. Once these recommendations are approved and we prepare to re-solicit these requirements, the Department will notify the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House, Committee on Foreign Relations in the Senate, House and Senate Appropriations Committees as required by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010. We will ensure that the Senate Sub-committee on Contracting Oversight is similarly notified.

DS and AQM are in the process of reviewing language, training, and guard post and duty-hour requirements for the aforementioned IDIQ contract. Also, similar to existing requirements in the WPPS II contract, the BESF and KESF contracts are currently being modified to include mandatory cultural awareness training for all guard force personnel. All course material, which is country specific, for the cultural awareness training have been provided to Triple Canopy (BESF - Iraq) and AGNA (KESF -

Afghanistan) so that the contractors can begin planning implementation pending finalization of the respective contract modifications.

DS has conducted interviews and is now in the selection and hiring process for personal service contractors (i.e., employees engaged directly by the government rather than a third-party contractor) who will reside at guard camps in Iraq and Afghanistan and assist the RSO with contract oversight responsibilities. This initiative is being implemented at all posts with expatriate/third country national security contractors living in camps. The personnel must have experience in managing overseas protective security programs; experience in high threat locations (preferably); and experience in contractual issues related to security operations and regulations governing the use of private security contractors. Additional contract oversight training will be provided. Until the personal service contractor for Kabul is hired and in place, a DS Agent will remain assigned to the U.S. Embassy's guard camp 24 hours/7 days a week.

Additionally, a thorough review of the standards of conduct clauses of the WPPS II, BESF, and KESF contracts was recently completed. The review resulted in the development of a revised set of standards that includes: a prohibition of alcohol consumption in all places where expatriate/third country national security contractors live in camps; a section regarding the trafficking in of persons; an update of drug testing requirements; and a more comprehensive set of reporting requirements to address incidents of misconduct.

The DS Program Office will also continue its practice of performing quarterly program management reviews and maintain close coordination with AQM to ensure that contract compliance deficiencies are immediately addressed and properly documented.

Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann
From Senator Daniel K. Akaka

"The Diplomat's Shield: Diplomatic Security in Today's World"
December 9, 2009

1. You testified that incorporating more local employees into the diplomatic security effort, especially in Afghanistan, should be a priority.

   How should the State Department go about doing this?

Response: In many countries locals are already used for protective security details. Afghanistan and Iraq each present different risks in using local nationals. The Department should and my already be studying, those risks, analyze what mitigation measures could be taken and prepare both judgments as to whether such measures would be acceptable and what the costs would be of using locals. Such a study would form the basis on which responsible decision can be taken.

2. In your testimony, you stated that access to available security escorts in Iraq and Afghanistan has been a source of tension between civilian and military personnel.

   a. Who decides, and with what criteria, how these security escorts should be used?

Response: The decisions are made locally by the military officer in charge on the basis of mission priorities. Views may differ on priorities. The commander has the final decision.

   b. Do you believe that diplomatic concerns are given the same attention as military concerns when these decisions to provide security escorts are made?

Response: I think diplomatic concerns sometimes do not get equal attention but there are so many individual decisions made at local levels that it is difficult to prove such a claim. Further, the situation has evolved and I may be out of date. The basic problem is that without more security escorts even top priorities cannot always be met.

3. In your testimony, you advocated for the creation of a Diplomatic Security financial reserve, which would provide a pool of funds similar to what the military has for dealing with short-term crises that emerge outside the budget cycle.

   a. What are the necessary elements that should be in place for this reserve?

Response: I do not know that I can give a fully adequate response. However, one approach might be for the Department to survey major, unanticipated funding requirements that have occurred over some period of time, for example five years, and derive an average figure that could serve as a basis for a financial reserve such as I described.

b. What is the recommended funding level for this reserve?
Response: Without detailed study I could not responsibly offer a figure.

Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Ms. Susan R. Johnson
From Senator Daniel K. Akaka

"The Diplomat's Shield: Diplomatic Security in Today's World"
December 9, 2009

1. You testified that incorporating more local employees into the diplomatic security effort, especially in Afghanistan, should be a priority.

   How should the State Department go about doing this?

   I would like to clarify that while generally incorporating more local employees has worked well, and worked in Bosnia, I did not mean to say or imply that this would work in Afghanistan at this point in time. I would defer to those who are on the ground now as to whether that is realistic or not at this stage.

2. Ambassador Neumann testified that access to available security escorts in Iraq and Afghanistan has been a source of tension between civilian and military personnel.

   a. Who decides, and with what criteria, how these security escorts should be used?

      I would have to suggest that you refer this question to Eric Boswell, Assistant Secretary for DS, as we at AFSA are not likely to be the most up to date or authoritative source on current policy.

   b. Do you believe that diplomatic concerns are given the same attention as military concerns when these decisions to provide security escorts are made?

      My experience suggests to me that these are the kinds of decisions that are made on the ground by those directly concerned, where the balance between priorities and resources available to meet them should be clearest. I can't speak to this issue on the basis on any first hand knowledge.

3. Ambassador Neumann advocated for the creation of a Diplomatic Security financial reserve, which would provide a pool of funds similar to what the military has for dealing with short-term crises that emerge outside the budget cycle. I have no issue with Ambassador Neumann's recommendation but would

again refer you to Assistant Secretary Boswell for response as it is not an issue on which AFSA has become engaged.

a. What are the necessary elements that should be in place for this reserve?

b. What is the recommended funding level for this reserve?

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