

June 2011

# DIPLOMATIC SECURITY

## Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts



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Highlights of [GAO-11-460](#), a report to the Chairman of 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

## Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of State's (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (Diplomatic Security) protects people, information, and property at over 400 locations worldwide and has experienced a large growth in its budget and personnel over the last decade. Diplomatic Security trains its workforce and others to address a variety of threats, including crime, espionage, visa and passport fraud, technological intrusions, political violence, and terrorism. To meet its training needs, Diplomatic Security relies primarily on its Diplomatic Security Training Center (DSTC).

GAO was asked to examine (1) how Diplomatic Security ensures the quality and appropriateness of its training, (2) the extent to which Diplomatic Security ensures that training requirements are being met, and (3) any challenges that Diplomatic Security faces in carrying out its training mission. GAO examined compliance with accreditation processes; analyzed data and documentation related to the agency's training efforts; and interviewed officials in Washington, D.C., and five overseas posts.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that State enhance DSTC's course evaluation and tracking capabilities. GAO also recommends that State develop an action plan and time frames to address proposed increases in high-threat training. State reviewed a draft of this report and agreed with all of the recommendations.

View [GAO-11-460](#) or key components. For more information, contact Jess Ford at (202) 512-4268 or [fordj@gao.gov](mailto:fordj@gao.gov).

# DIPLOMATIC SECURITY

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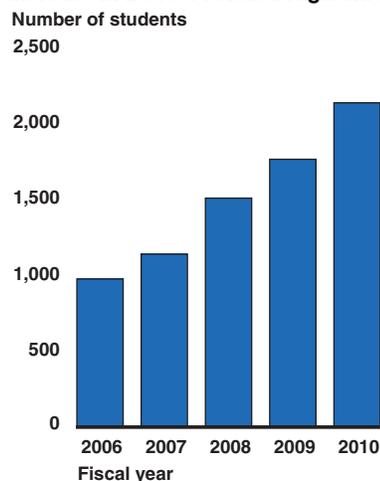
### What GAO Found

To ensure the quality and appropriateness of its training, Diplomatic Security primarily adheres to Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation (FLETA) standards, along with other standards. Diplomatic Security incorporated FLETA standards into its standard operating procedures, using a course design framework tailored for DSTC. To meet standards, DSTC also integrates both formal and informal feedback from evaluations and other sources to improve its courses. However, GAO found DSTC's systems do not have the capability to obtain feedback for some required training, including distributed learning efforts (interactive online course content). Without feedback, DSTC is less able to ensure the effectiveness of these efforts.

Diplomatic Security developed career training paths for its personnel that identify the training required for selected job positions at different career levels. It uses various systems to track participation in its training, but DSTC's systems do not have the capability to track whether personnel have completed all required training. DSTC systems also are not designed to track training delivered through distributed learning.

Diplomatic Security faces significant challenges to carrying out its training mission. DSTC must train Diplomatic Security personnel to perform new missions in Iraq as they take on many of the protective and security functions previously provided by the U.S. military. DSTC also faces dramatic increases in high-threat training provided to State and non-State personnel (see fig. below), but State does not have an action plan and time frames to manage proposed increases. These expanded training missions constrain DSTC's ability to meet training needs. In addition, many of DSTC's training facilities do not meet its training needs, a situation that hampers efficient and effective operations. To meet some of its needs, in 2007, DSTC developed an Interim Training Facility. In 2009, State allocated funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and other acts to develop a consolidated training facility; State is in the process of identifying a suitable location.

**Increase in DSTC-Provided High-Threat Training from 2006 to 2010**



Source: GAO analysis of DSTC data.

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## Abbreviations

ARSO	Assistant Regional Security Officer
ATA	Office of Anti-Terrorism Assistance
CAST	Center for Antiterrorism and Security Training
DSTC	Diplomatic Security Training Center
FACT	Foreign Affairs Counter Threat
FAM	<i>Foreign Affairs Manual</i>
FASTC	Foreign Affairs Security Training Center
FLETA	Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
HTT	High Threat Tactical
ISO	International Organization for Standards
ITF	Interim Training Facility
MRAP	Mine-Resistant/Ambush Protection
MSD	Mobile Security Deployment
QDDR	Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review
RSO	Regional Security Officer
SA	State Annex
SEO	Security Engineering Officer
SNOE	Security for Non-traditional Operating Environment
STS	Security Technical Specialist
TPS	Office of Training and Performance Standards

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United States Government Accountability Office  
Washington, DC 20548

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June 1, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,  
the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department of State's (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (Diplomatic Security) is responsible for the protection of people, information, and property at over 400 foreign missions 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 have increased. Diplomatic Security must be prepared to counter threats such as crime, espionage, visa and passport fraud, technological intrusions, political violence, and terrorism. As we previously reported, Diplomatic Security has experienced a large growth in both its budget and personnel to meet these growing threats.<sup>1</sup> Diplomatic Security's responsibilities are expected to further increase given the planned U.S. troop withdrawal in Iraq.

Diplomatic Security trains its workforce of agents, investigators, Security Protective Specialists, engineers, technicians, and couriers not only to provide protection and counter an increasing number of threats, but also to manage a growing number of security contracts and contractors. To meet the training needs of its workforce, Diplomatic Security relies primarily on its Diplomatic Security Training Center (DSTC), housed within its Training Directorate. Diplomatic Security also increasingly provides information technology security awareness training to non-State personnel and enhanced personal security training to non-Diplomatic Security personnel being posted to high-threat posts such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, as well as Sudan, Yemen, and parts of Mexico.

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

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In response to your request, we (1) determined how Diplomatic Security ensures the quality and appropriateness of its training, (2) examined the extent to which Diplomatic Security ensures that training requirements are being met, and (3) assessed any challenges that Diplomatic Security faces in carrying out its training mission.

To address these objectives, we reviewed past GAO reports on both Diplomatic Security and training, Office of Personnel Management guidance, State and other legislative and regulatory guidance and policy, and education standards and processes of established educational organizations. We interviewed and corresponded with a key official from Federal Law Enforcement and Training Accreditation (FLETA). We also reviewed and analyzed data and documentation related to Diplomatic Security-provided training efforts, such as standard operating procedure, planning, performance, course development, course evaluation, accreditation, and career development documents; information and data on recent DSTC and other Diplomatic Security-provided course offerings; and overall funding for training from 2006 to 2011. We interviewed officials and instructors at Diplomatic Security headquarters, several training facilities, and several overseas posts, including Diplomatic Security agents in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and the Washington, D.C., field office, and engineers and technicians in Germany, South Africa, and Florida. We observed classroom- and exercise-based training at several Diplomatic Security training facilities and viewed examples of other types of DSTC-provided learning. We also interviewed officials from several other State offices, as well as officials from the U.S. General Services Administration.<sup>2</sup>

We conducted this performance audit from June 2010 to May 2011, 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

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<sup>2</sup>Because GAO recently carried out a review of training provided by the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), this report does not include an assessment of the training that Diplomatic Security personnel receive through FSI. See GAO, *Department of State: Additional Steps Are Needed to Improve Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Training for State Personnel*, GAO-11-241 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 25, 2011) and GAO, *Department of State: Additional Steps are Needed to Improve Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Training for State Personnel*, GAO-11-438T (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 8, 2011). GAO made several recommendations for State to improve strategic planning and evaluation of the department's efforts to train personnel, including improvements to State's efforts to assess training needs and efforts to ensure that training achieves desired results.

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obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. Appendix I contains additional details about our scope and methodology.

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## Background

The core mission of Diplomatic Security is to provide a safe and secure environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Diplomatic Security is one of several bureaus that report to the Undersecretary for Management within State and contains several directorates, including Diplomatic Security's Training Directorate (see app. II).

To implement U.S. statute,<sup>3</sup> the Diplomatic Security Training Directorate trains or helps train Diplomatic Security's 1,943 law enforcement agents and investigators, 340 technical security specialist engineers and technicians, 101 couriers, and a growing number of new Security Protective Specialists, as well as other U.S. government personnel, and runs several specialized programs designed to enhance Diplomatic Security's capabilities. In fiscal year 2010, DSTC conducted 342 sessions of its 61 courses and trained 4,739 students.

The training directorate is headed by a senior Foreign Service Officer and has three offices, the Offices of Training and Performance Standards, Mobile Security Deployment (MSD), and Antiterrorism Assistance, which do the following:

- The Office of Training and Performance Standards' mission is to train and sustain a security workforce capable of effectively addressing law enforcement and security challenges to support U.S. foreign policy in the global threat environment—now and into the future. The office's mission has grown along with the expanding mission of Diplomatic Security. The Office of Training and Performance Standards encompasses DSTC and is often referred to as DSTC. The office is the primary provider of Diplomatic Security's training, and its entire mission falls within the scope of this report; its efforts are the focus of our review. The office also provides personal security training to Diplomatic Security and non-Diplomatic Security personnel posted to the high-threat environments, including the 5-week High Threat Tactical (HTT) course designed for Diplomatic Security special agents and Security Protective Specialists operating in high-threat or hazardous environments, the 3-week Security for Non-traditional

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<sup>3</sup>22 U.S.C. § 4802 broadly and 22 U.S.C. § 4802(a)(2)(f) more specifically.

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Operating Environment (SNOE) course designed for Civilian Response Corps and Provincial Reconstruction Team personnel operating in remote areas, and the 1-week Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course designed for all U.S. personnel under Chief of Mission authority at high-threat posts such as Afghanistan, Iraq, or Pakistan.

- The Office of Mobile Security Deployment’s mission is to provide security training and exercises for overseas posts, enhanced security for overseas posts, and counterassault capability for domestic and overseas protective security details. The first of these missions—to provide training to U.S. government personnel and dependents at posts abroad—falls within the scope of this report.
- The Office of Antiterrorism Assistance’s mission is to build the counterterrorism capacity of friendly governments, enhance bilateral relationships, and increase respect for human rights. Because of its exclusive training of non-U.S. government personnel, the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance falls outside the scope of this report.<sup>4</sup>

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## Growth in Diplomatic Security Training Budget and Personnel

Diplomatic Security’s training budget grew steadily from fiscal years 2006 to 2010—increasing from approximately \$24 million in fiscal year 2006 to nearly \$70 million in fiscal year 2010 (see table 1). During this period, Diplomatic Security’s training budget increased from 1.5 percent to 3 percent of the bureau’s total budget.

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<sup>4</sup>GAO has issued several reports about the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance in the past, most recently in 2008. GAO, *Combating Terrorism: State Department’s Antiterrorism Program Needs Improved Guidance and More Systematic Assessments of Outcomes*, [GAO-08-336](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 29, 2008), and its corresponding testimony, *Combating Terrorism: Guidance for State Department’s Antiterrorism Assistance Program Is Limited and State Does Not Systematically Assess Outcomes*, [GAO-08-875T](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 4, 2008).

**Table 1: Diplomatic Security Training Financial Plan by Program, Fiscal Years 2006-2011**

(Actual dollars in thousands)

<b>Program</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011<sup>a</sup></b>
Office of the Assistant Director for Training	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$52	\$53	\$53
DSTC <sup>b</sup>	12,823	12,823	25,030	34,166	47,414	50,000
CAST <sup>c</sup>	5,325	5,139	1,489	0	0	0
Mobile Security Deployment	3,261	3,100	3,100	4,156	5,488	5,208
Iraq Supplemental training	2,450	1,000	6,240	12,564	16,607	21,580
<b>Total Diplomatic Security training</b>	<b>\$23,909</b>	<b>\$22,112</b>	<b>\$35,909</b>	<b>\$50,938</b>	<b>\$69,562</b>	<b>\$76,841</b>

Source: GAO review of data provided by Diplomatic Security.

Notes: Financial plan amounts do not include funds that other agencies pay for training that their personnel receive at DSTC, such as high-threat or information awareness and cybersecurity training.

<sup>a</sup>Fiscal year 2011 budget numbers reflect the interim budget.

<sup>b</sup>The DSTC funds are reported to the Office of Personnel Management as part of State's training budget.

<sup>c</sup>The Center for Antiterrorism and Security Training (CAST) program was an earlier effort to develop a consolidated training facility that began in 2003 and was aborted when it was determined that the site being considered would not fulfill Diplomatic Security's training needs. The remaining funds were used to expand Diplomatic Security's use of the Bill Scott Raceway, one of DSTC's leased training facilities, and develop its Interim Training Facility (ITF).

The Diplomatic Security Training Directorate is responsible for training Diplomatic Security's over 3,000 direct hires to carry out various security functions (see table 2). The size of Diplomatic Security's direct-hire workforce has more than doubled since 1998. Recently, Diplomatic Security's reliance on contractors has grown to fill critical needs in high-threat posts. According to DSTC officials, they also rely on contractors to support course development and serve as instructors in many of their courses. In addition to training Diplomatic Security personnel, the Training Directorate also provides training to non-State personnel supporting embassy security functions such as the Marine Security Guards and Navy Seabees, as well as to personnel from other federal agencies through its high-threat training and information security awareness courses.

**Table 2: Overview of Diplomatic Security Personnel, Fiscal Year 2011**

<b>Direct hires<sup>a</sup></b>		
<b>Position</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
Special agents	1,795	Special agents are the lead operational employees of Diplomatic Security. About 40 percent serve as Regional Security Officers (RSO) and Assistant Regional Security Officers (ARSO) overseas, managing all post security requirements. About 60 percent serve domestically, conducting investigations and providing protective details to foreign dignitaries. Special agents also serve in headquarters positions that support and manage Diplomatic Security operations.
ARSO-Investigators	75	ARSO-Investigators are special agents that focus on investigations into passport and visa fraud at posts with high levels of fraud. ARSO-Investigators also augment post security as needed.
Criminal Investigators	73	Diplomatic Security posts civil service Criminal Investigators at domestic field offices to conduct criminal investigations—including visa and passport fraud cases.
Security Engineering Officers (SEO)	207	Engineers and technicians are responsible for technical and informational security programs domestically and at overseas posts. They service and maintain security equipment at overseas posts, such as cameras, alarms, and screening systems that help to secure posts, among other responsibilities.
Security Technical Specialists (STS)	133	
Couriers	101	Couriers ensure the secure movement of classified U.S. government materials across international borders.
Security Protective Specialists	38	Security Protective Specialists serve as supervisory personnel on protective details in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.
Management support staff	600	Management support staff includes nonagent civil service employees who provide managerial and administrative services.
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,022</b>	
<b>Other U.S. government support staff</b>		
Marine Security Guards	1,170	Marine Security Guards' primary role is to protect classified information at posts. They also control access to many State facilities overseas.
Seabees	116	Seabees are active duty Navy construction personnel with skills in building construction, maintenance, and repair essential to State facilities and security programs worldwide.
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,286</b>	
<b>Contract and support staff</b>		
Private security contractors	1,377	Private security contractors provide protective services for dignitaries in critical threat environments in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Israel.
Diplomatic Security guards and surveillance detection	35,150	Diplomatic Security guards provide perimeter security to post compounds, as well as residential security. Surveillance detection teams augment post security by identifying suspicious activity outside of post compounds.
Support contractors	1,680	Contractor support staff include both personal-service and third-party contractors at headquarters who provide administrative support.
Uniformed protective officers	848	Officers provide security at domestic facilities, such as State's headquarters.
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>39,055</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,363</b>	

Source: GAO review of data provided by Diplomatic Security.

<sup>a</sup>These numbers do not include locally employed staff. Diplomatic Security was unable to provide a definitive number of all locally employed staff, but noted there were 488 Foreign Service National-Investigators that assist with criminal investigations.

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## Diplomatic Security's Training Development Process Generally Adheres to Standards, but Evaluation Component Has Weaknesses

To ensure the quality and appropriateness of its training, Diplomatic Security primarily adheres to Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation standards, along with other statutory and State standards. In 2005, Diplomatic Security incorporated the FLETA standards into its standard operating procedures, using a course design framework tailored for the organization. To meet the combination of FLETA and other standards, DSTC integrates both formal and informal feedback from evaluations and other sources into its courses. However, DSTC does not have the systems in place to obtain feedback from its entire training population.

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## Diplomatic Security Complies with Multiple Sets of Standards to Ensure Quality and Appropriateness of Its Training

Diplomatic Security's training responsibilities are established by a number of statutory standards and State Department policies. The Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986, as codified at section 4802 of title 22 of the United States Code, provided the security authorities for the Secretary of State.<sup>5</sup> The Secretary of State delegated these security responsibilities, including law enforcement training, to Diplomatic Security and granted it authority to establish its own training academy.<sup>6</sup> Diplomatic Security also follows policy guidance and procedures found in State's *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM) and its *Foreign Affairs Handbooks*, which also establish Diplomatic Security's Training Directorate.<sup>7</sup>

Diplomatic Security is accredited by and relies primarily on the standards of the FLETA process. The FLETA Board was established in 2002 to create and maintain a body of standards to enhance the quality of law enforcement training and to administer an independent accreditation process for federal law enforcement agencies.<sup>8</sup> The voluntary accreditation

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<sup>5</sup>Pub. L. No. 99-399, Title I, § 103, 100 Stat. 856, codified as amended at 22 U.S.C. § 4802.

<sup>6</sup>22 U.S.C. § 4802(a)(2)(f) and Delegation of Responsibilities Under the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995, and Certain Related Acts, 59 Fed. Reg. 50,790 (Oct. 5, 1994).

<sup>7</sup>For example, 1 FAM 261.1(b)(16) provides the State guidance for development of facilities, methods, and materials to develop and upgrade necessary skills, and 1 FAM 262.4-2 describes the Training Directorate's Office of Training Performance and Standards, and its components.

<sup>8</sup>The FLETA Board is composed of senior law enforcement and training professionals from federal and independent agencies or organizations, including members from the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice, as well as the head of DSTC.

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process provides assurance that every 3 years, the agency carries out a systematic self-assessment to ensure the standards established by the law enforcement community are met; each self-assessment must be verified by FLETA's external peer reviewers, whose findings are then reviewed by a committee of the FLETA Board. FLETA standards are designed to describe what must be accomplished; however, it is up to each agency to determine how it will meet the standards. Agencies may submit applications to have their basic agent and instructor development courses accredited, and if they obtain accreditation for both courses, they can apply for academy accreditation. In 2010, FLETA revised its standards.<sup>9</sup> (For more details on the FLETA process see app. III.)

Beginning in 2005, DSTC established standard operating procedures in order to comply with FLETA and other standards. In 2005, Diplomatic Security began hiring training professionals and created the Instructional Systems Management division to formalize course development, instead of relying solely on the knowledge of experienced personnel and subject matter experts. According to DSTC officials, the formalized process resulted in greater consistency in how courses are developed and taught. Diplomatic Security was the first federal agency to ever receive accreditation through the FLETA process, in 2005, and was reaccredited in 2008. (For more details on DSTC's accreditation results see app. IV.) DSTC is currently undergoing a new cycle of reaccreditation.<sup>10</sup> DSTC officials expressed confidence that their courses and the academy would be reaccredited.

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<sup>9</sup>Currently, for an academy to receive accreditation, the academy has to demonstrate that 50 percent of all its courses or five courses—whichever number is smaller—meet FLETA course standards. In addition, the basic agent and instructor development courses cannot be included, but they still require separate accreditation. This change was made retroactively so that the academies will have to produce evidence that the courses have met all the standards since the previous academy accreditation. For Diplomatic Security, this means that evidence of compliance for the courses must be produced for the years 2009, 2010, and 2011. DSTC has chosen to use the HTT, SNOE, FACT, Information Assurance for System Administrators, and Construction Surveillance Technician/Cleared American Guard as its five courses.

<sup>10</sup>In May 2011, DSTC will undergo the self-assessment and prepare for the FLETA assessment in October 2011 to be able to receive its second round of reaccreditation.

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## DSTC Uses a Training Framework to Meet Accreditation Standards and Training Needs

To meet accreditation standards and its training needs, DSTC uses an industry-recognized training framework for course design and development.<sup>11</sup> According to a senior FLETA official, 44 percent of FLETA standards are based on this training framework. The seven-phased DSTC framework is applied to new courses or course revisions (see fig. 1 and app. V for examples of the documents and reports created during the different phases of the framework and hyperlinked to the figure). Throughout the process and at each phase, DSTC involves division chiefs, branch chiefs, subject matter experts, and its instructional staff. At the end of each phase, a report is produced for a DSTC training advisor to approve, before the process progresses to the next phase.<sup>12</sup> The seven phases are

- **Proposal phase:** DSTC staff analyzes the request for development or revision to a training course and makes recommendations to senior management on whether to proceed.
- **Analysis phase:** DSTC staff examines the audience, identifies job tasks and job performance measures, selects the instructional setting, and validates cost estimates. A task list is developed to guide initial course development, which involves subject matter experts in verifying the job tasks.
- **Design phase:** DSTC staff determines the training objectives, lists course prerequisites, identifies needed learning objectives, and establishes the appropriate performance tests.
- **Development phase:** DSTC staff develops the appropriate instructional materials, reviews and selects existing course materials, and develops the necessary coursework.
- **Implementation phase:** A pilot course is created and taught by an approved instructor to a targeted audience. The pilot course is tested and observed by both subject matter experts and instructional design staff.

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<sup>11</sup>DSTC uses a modified version of Instructional Systems Design, the industry-recognized training framework. DSTC's version, the "PADDIE+R" model, includes two additional course design and development phases, a proposal phase and a revision phase.

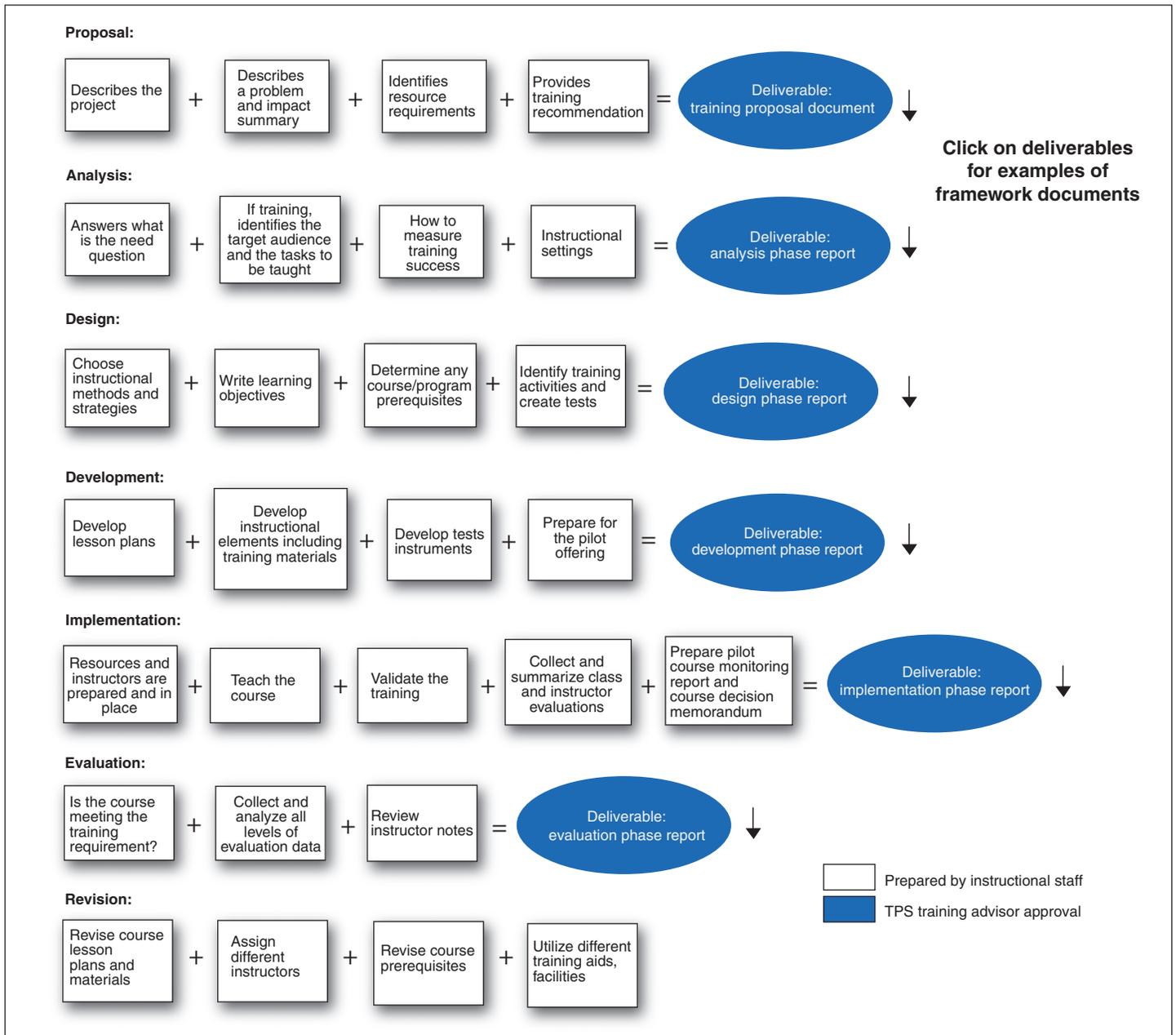
<sup>12</sup>The revision phase does not have a defined deliverable at the end of the phase. The deliverable varies depending on the analysis done throughout the course development process and whether significant changes are made to course content.

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- **Evaluation phase:** DSTC staff and the students evaluate the effectiveness of the training. DSTC conducts three types of evaluations:
    1. tier-1 evaluations of the training and the instructors by the students shortly after taking the course,
    2. tier-2 evaluations to check extent of knowledge and skills transfer to the students during the course, and
    3. tier-3 evaluations of the students' ability to apply the training on the job 6 to 12 months after training depending on when the skills are used.

According to DSTC officials, tier-1 and tier-3 evaluations are generally made up of survey questions with some short answers, while tier-2 evaluations involve testing students through either a practical or written exam, or both.

- **Revision:** Courses go through the revision process at least every 5 years, prompted and guided in part by evaluations and feedback from students, supervisors, and other stakeholders.

**Figure 1: DSTC Training Framework**



Source: GAO analysis of DSTC data.

Note: Examples are also shown in appendix V.

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DSTC applies its training framework to all courses, not just the courses for which it seeks accreditation through the FLETA process. We previously reported that agencies need to ensure that they have the flexibility and capability to quickly incorporate changes into training and development efforts when needed.<sup>13</sup> According to DSTC, its training framework allows for flexibility and supports frequent evaluation, giving Diplomatic Security the ability to respond to changes in its mission and its customers' requirements. Moreover, agency officials noted that because DSTC's training framework model is well established for developing courses, Mobile Training Teams<sup>14</sup> and Diplomatic Couriers<sup>15</sup>—both of which provide training to meet their own organizational needs outside of DSTC—use the model as a foundation for tailoring their courses.

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## DSTC Uses Various Methods of Collecting Feedback

DSTC uses a variety of methods to collect feedback from students, supervisors, and other stakeholders. FLETA standards and DSTC's standard operating procedures require DSTC to collect feedback and use significant feedback to shape and revise courses. According to DSTC, feedback is valued because it demonstrates the extent to which the training is yielding the desired outcomes in performance and helps instructional staff identify what should be modified to achieve the outcomes more effectively. DSTC receives feedback from multiple sources, including tier-1, tier-2, and tier-3 evaluations, as well as focus groups, in-country visits, inspection reports, counterparts across the government, and directives from senior officials—such as ambassadors. For instance, following the 1998 embassy bombings, DSTC implemented the State-convened Accountability Review Board recommendation to

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<sup>13</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: A Guide for Assessing Strategic Training and Development Efforts in the Federal Government*, [GAO-04-546G](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 1, 2004).

<sup>14</sup>The Mobile Training Teams are a component of the Office of Mobile Security Deployment that delivers security training at overseas posts. The Mobile Training Teams most often work with local guard forces, embassy drivers, and the Marine Security Guards and tailor the training they provide to the needs of the post.

<sup>15</sup>The Diplomatic Courier Service is a small organization within Diplomatic Security whose members travel constantly; Diplomatic Courier Service officials noted that they had unique training challenges—particularly with regard to the travel logistics to attend training—and have taken responsibility for training their own personnel. The service adopted International Organization for Standardization quality management structures (ISO 9000) in 2008 to streamline and standardize its training and other practices. As a result, the service requested and received DSTC assistance to develop its courses in compliance with the service's new quality management standards.

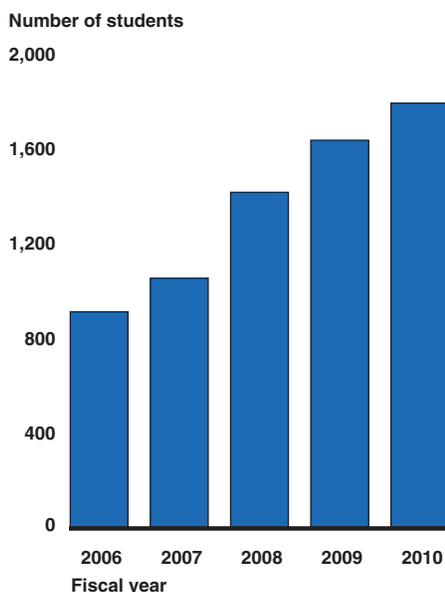
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enhance surveillance detection and crisis management training provided to the Regional Security Officers.

In addition, DSTC regularly meets with other State offices and bureaus to discuss how to maintain effective training or identify needed changes to course material. For example, DSTC meets quarterly with the Office of International Programs, which is responsible for managing the RSOs posted overseas, to ensure that the basic Regional Security Officer course materials remain relevant. HTT provides another example of course revision. HTT was initially 39 days long but was shortened to about 27 days in response to senior management's need to get more people overseas faster, as well as feedback from agents indicating that they were not extensively using certain aspects of the course such as land navigation and helicopter training. (See the fig. 2 text box concerning revisions to the FACT course for more examples of how feedback is incorporated into course revisions.) On the basis of interviews with Diplomatic Security personnel at nine posts and training sites, we found that DSTC's overall training was viewed as high-quality and appropriate. Diplomatic Security personnel we interviewed generally agreed that DSTC's training was a significant improvement compared with the training they received prior to DSTC's accreditation.

**Figure 2: FACT—An Example of Course Revisions**

FACT began in 2003 as the Diplomatic Security Antiterrorism Course-Iraq. Diplomatic Security envisioned a comprehensive antiterrorism course that would be taken once every 5 years and would familiarize participants with the skills and techniques most likely to be needed by those assigned to high-threat environments. That course was designed to focus on the threats facing personnel in Iraq. In 2006, the course was revised to produce the current FACT, which was designed to address the threats that personnel might face in a number of high-threat posts.<sup>a</sup> Initially, FACT was required for those assigned under Chief of Mission authority—including non-State personnel—in Iraq. Personnel assigned to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sudan were required to attend FACT beginning in 2008. In 2010, the one post in Yemen and the six Mexican border posts were added to the list of posts requiring FACT training. The increase in the number of posts has also led, in part, to an increase in the number of students taking FACT from 912 in fiscal year 2006 to 1,794 in fiscal year 2010 (see figure below).



Source: GAO analysis of DSTC data.

Note: The 2006 and 2007 statistics combine the number of students who took the FACT predecessor courses, the Diplomatic Security Antiterrorism Course and the Diplomatic Security Antiterrorism Course-Iraq, during that same year.

FACT and its predecessor courses have undergone regular content revisions as the threats have changed. For example, a 2005 State Office of Inspector General report noted that U.S. government personnel were not expected to drive themselves in Iraq, but regularly did so, contrary to expectations. As a result, DSTC added driving skills to the FACT course. According to DSTC, over a 9-month period in 2009, 23 students reported using counterthreat driving techniques in Afghanistan. In 2009, as a result of indirect fire attacks, the Ambassador to Iraq noted that personnel needed to know what the sirens announcing a rocket attack sounded like and what the protective bunkers looked like, in part because personnel were injuring themselves entering the bunkers. In response, DSTC built two bunkers at one of its leased facilities, and used them in conducting duck-and-cover exercises to recorded sirens as part of the FACT course. According to Diplomatic Security, other additions to FACT included personnel recovery and medical training because of a signed presidential directive and meetings with State's Foreign Service Institute respectively. In addition, DSTC also conducted in-country team visits to obtain information approximately once a year, and these have resulted in other changes to the course. DSTC officials noted that FACT is very well received by the students. For example, in one instance, a State official noted that the reason for her surviving a bombing attack in Islamabad was because of her FACT training.

<sup>a</sup>Under Secretary Henrietta Fore signed a memorandum creating the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat course in July 2006. FACT's predecessor, Diplomatic Security Antiterrorism Course-Iraq, was designed in late 2003 in response to the need to provide training to State personnel who were deploying to Baghdad in support of the Coalition Provisional Authority.

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## DSTC's Systems Do Not Have the Capability to Obtain Comprehensive Feedback on All Training

Because of difficulties obtaining satisfactory response rates for some evaluations, identifying users of its distributed learning efforts,<sup>16</sup> and contacting non-State students, DSTC officials acknowledged that their systems do not have the capability to obtain a comprehensive evaluation of all of their training as required by their training framework. However, DSTC officials said they are exploring ways to address identifying users of its distributed learning efforts and contacting non-State students. We previously reported that evaluating training is important and that the agencies need to develop a systematic evaluation processes to assess the benefits of training development efforts.<sup>17</sup> According to DSTC officials, the tier-1 response rate for most courses averages about 80-90 percent, and the tier-3 evaluations response rate for its courses averages about 30 percent for 6-month feedback.<sup>18</sup>

DSTC officials acknowledged that they currently do not have a system in place to identify who has accessed distributed learning and certain other learning tools, and thus they have few effective options for soliciting student feedback on those tools. According to DSTC officials, distributed learning efforts are growing as part of DSTC efforts to save costs and reach people in the field. DSTC is exploring several different ways to deliver distributed learning efforts. For example, Diplomatic Security is expected to provide personnel recovery training to about 20,000 people—many of whom are non-State personnel. This training will be done primarily through online distributed learning as well as classroom instruction. In addition to its distributed learning efforts, DSTC sends out to posts its “Knowledge from the Field” DVDs, an information and professional development product that includes lessons learned from attacks and other incidents at consulates and embassies. DSTC is also developing new interactive computer-based training simulations. However, DSTC’s systems do not have the capability to track who is accessing its online materials or who is accessing the DVDs. Without

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<sup>16</sup>DSTC defines “distributed learning” as interactive online content for its courses, including computer scenarios or games. Students can interact with the content before, during, or after a class.

<sup>17</sup>[GAO-04-546G](#).

<sup>18</sup>According to DSTC officials, a 30 percent response rate for tier-3 evaluations equals or exceeds education industry norms for tier-3 evaluation response rates. DSTC officials added that they find value in analyzing the information from tier-3 evaluations to determine if there are notable comments or common themes that may support course revisions or suggest the need for new courses.

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knowing who to send evaluations to, DSTC cannot solicit feedback to see if these efforts are helpful or effective.

According to DSTC officials, DSTC also has difficulty obtaining feedback from non-State personnel, which constitute a growing portion of its student body because of DSTC's provision of training to multiple agencies. For example, DSTC provides information awareness and cybersecurity training to State, as well as the Department of Homeland Security and National Archives and Records Administration, among others.<sup>19</sup> In addition, as noted in figure 2, the number of students taking FACT training, which is provided to non-State personnel, has increased significantly. While DSTC collects feedback after each lesson and course via tier-1 evaluations and makes efforts to collect tier-3 evaluations, according to DSTC officials, it is the responsibility of the students' home agencies to send out evaluations to their personnel on the training that DSTC provides. According to DSTC officials, evaluations conducted by other agencies are not automatically shared with DSTC. Instead, to measure the effectiveness of its training for non-State personnel, DSTC relies on voluntary comments from the agencies or individual students from those agencies.

DSTC officials noted that they are pursuing access to a more robust learning management system to address some of the difficulties with their existing systems. Learning management systems are software applications for the administration, documentation, tracking, and reporting of training programs, classroom and online events, e-learning programs, and training content. DSTC officials stated that their current suite of software, including Microsoft Office SharePoint and several State-specific systems, does not provide all the functionality they need to effectively evaluate all of their courses. DSTC has increased its reliance on using Microsoft Office SharePoint to store current learning materials for DSTC courses on its intranet, but the software does not have an evaluation mechanism in place.

According to DSTC officials, they were interested in procuring a learning management system that would cost about \$284,000, with additional maintenance and technical support costing about \$28,500 a year. In 2009, DSTC officials conducted a cost-benefit analysis by examining the savings from converting two existing courses into courses delivered entirely

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<sup>19</sup>In 2010, DSTC was recognized as a Center of Excellence by the Department of Homeland Security for its provision of information awareness and cybersecurity training.

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online. The analysis indicated that State would save about \$2 million a year in travel costs alone as well as give DSTC a number of additional functionalities. According to DSTC, as of May 2011, its request to purchase the system is under review, and DSTC was advised to explore FSI's learning management system. According to FSI and DSTC officials, DSTC began discussions with FSI about the use of FSI's learning management system. FSI officials noted that FSI's learning management system has or can be modified to have several of the capabilities DSTC is looking for, including the ability to limit access to specific groups (such as Diplomatic Security personnel or non-State personnel), to distribute and evaluate distributed learning, and to e-mail evaluations to non-State students. According to DSTC officials, DSTC and FSI are working to create a subdomain in FSI's learning management system for DSTC content. They are also discussing the process for using the learning management system for classified material. As of May 2011, these matters are still under discussion.

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**Diplomatic Security Generally Ensures That Personnel Follow Established Career Training Paths, but DSTC's Systems Do Not Have the Capability to Track All Its Training**

Diplomatic Security developed career training paths for its personnel that identify the training required for each major job position at different career levels. Using various systems, Diplomatic Security can track instructor-led training that its personnel take. However, DSTC's systems do not have a way of accumulating the names of personnel who have not taken required courses. DSTC also faces difficulties tracking everyone who receives training through its distributed learning and its courses for non-State personnel. However, DSTC is working to address these difficulties.

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## Diplomatic Security Developed Training Requirements for Its Career Paths

DSTC established career training paths that specify the required training for entry-level, midlevel, and in some cases senior-level personnel according to their career specialty (see fig. 3, and for a description of the specialty positions, see table 2 above).<sup>20</sup> All Diplomatic Security Foreign Service career specialists attend required State orientation for Foreign Service personnel provided by FSI. (For additional information on training at FSI, see our recently issued report on State training.<sup>21</sup>) As they progress from entry level to midlevel, and in some specialties to senior level, Diplomatic Security personnel follow their career training paths.<sup>22</sup> For example, after orientation, the Security Engineering Officers take technical and fundamental training. As the SEOs move on to midlevel positions, they complete a variety of in-service training courses. All midlevel and most senior-level positions require leadership and management training provided by FSI.<sup>23</sup> DSTC officials noted that all DSTC training fulfills either a career training path requirement or some other training requirement. For example, outside of standard training courses, DSTC provides specialized training to meet evolving threats, such as HTT, that is required for special agents at high-threat posts. See appendix VI for additional details on the training requirements for different career paths.

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<sup>20</sup>Security Protective Specialists are hired as limited, noncareer appointments. Although they are considered State employees, their limited appointment is for a 5-year period, and as noncareer appointees, there is no career development program (i.e., training continuum).

<sup>21</sup>[GAO-11-241](#).

<sup>22</sup>The DSTC training career paths do not apply to the Diplomatic Courier Service, since it is outside of the Diplomatic Security Training Directorate.

<sup>23</sup>The exceptions are the Diplomatic Couriers, who do not have senior-level training, and the STS, who are not considered for senior-level positions.

**Figure 3: Selected Career Training Paths**

Career paths	Senior-level training	
	Entry-level training	Midlevel training
<b>Special agents</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSI-provided orientation</li> <li>• Basic special agent course</li> <li>• Basic Regional Security Officer course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special agent in-service course</li> <li>• Regional Security Officer in-service</li> <li>• FSI-provided administrative, leadership, and management courses</li> </ul>
<b>Security Engineering Officers</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical training and SEO fundamentals</li> <li>• Technical surveillance countermeasures courses</li> <li>• FSI-provided orientation and administrative courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical and equipment in-service training</li> <li>• Investigative skills training</li> <li>• Various information and computer security training</li> <li>• FSI-provided leadership and management courses</li> </ul>
<b>Security Technical Specialists</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical training and STS fundamentals</li> <li>• FSI-provided orientation and administrative courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical and equipment in-service training</li> <li>• FSI-provided leadership and management courses</li> </ul>
<b>Diplomatic Couriers</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diplomatic Courier (initial training)</li> <li>• Diplomatic Courier hub training</li> <li>• Diplomatic Courier in-service training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midlevel courier manager training</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special agent in-service course</li> <li>• Basic Regional Security Officer in-service</li> <li>• FSI-provided leadership and management courses</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSI-provided administrative, leadership and management courses</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STS do not have senior-level training</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Couriers do not have senior-level training</li> </ul>

Source: GAO analysis of DSTC data; Art Explosion; Adobe Illustrator (symbols).

### DSTC Uses Various Systems to Track Participation in Its Training

DSTC uses various systems to track participation in its training. DSTC relies on State’s Career Development and Assignments Office and its registrar database to keep records, in addition to an internal tracker for participants in FACT training. State’s Career Development and Assignments office also provides career development guidance and is responsible for ensuring that State personnel attend training required for

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upcoming assignments. For example, when an agent is assigned to a high-threat post, the office checks to make sure the agent has taken the HTT course; an agent who has not taken the course is scheduled for training, and must complete the course prior to deploying. Both the DSTC registrar and the Career Development and Assignments office use the Student Training Management System to track the training completed by State personnel. This system is State's registrar system for maintaining personnel training records; it records enrollments, no shows, and completions. The Student Training Management System regularly provides updated data directly to the Government Employee Management System, State's human resources management system, which populates training information into employee personnel records. The DSTC registrar office and State's Career Development and Assignments office work together to confirm completion of training before personnel move on to their next assignment. However, if State employees need to demonstrate course completion, they can access the Student Training Management System online to retrieve a copy of their training record from their personal records and print out an unofficial transcript for their supervisor; alternatively, their supervisor can contact the DSTC registrar's office to verify that the student has completed the course.

The registrar database has the ability to verify personnel who have taken high-threat training, but does not have a way of accumulating the names of these personnel. Because State is responsible for the safety and security of U.S. personnel under Chief of Mission authority and requires high-threat training for all personnel at high-threat posts, DSTC officials noted that they have instituted unofficial methods of tracking completion of the training for those going to these posts. DSTC designed and implemented the FACT tracker on its internal web site to log in all personnel who take the class. The FACT tracker provides a continuously updated unofficial document listing all personnel who have taken the FACT course—which includes non-State students. The RSOs in high-threat posts can access the FACT tracker to check on new arrivals to see if they have taken the course. Those who have not completed FACT must remain within the safety of the compound until they are sent home. DSTC officials acknowledged that in the past—before the FACT tracker—they used graduation photographs of FACT graduates to ensure that personnel completed the required training. This was a flawed verification process since students could opt out of having their photos taken. In addition to the FACT tracker, Diplomatic Security maintains a separate spreadsheet of over 700 agents who have taken HTT, which is always available for the director of Diplomatic Security to consult. This enables the director to

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quickly determine which agents are eligible for assignments to support temporary needs at high-threat posts.

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### DSTC Is Working to Improve Its Ability to Track Required Training and Participation in Distributed Learning

According to DSTC officials, DSTC faces challenges in ensuring that personnel complete all required training, particularly in tracking personnel who use distributed learning efforts. However, DSTC has initiatives in place to address some of these issues. The challenges stem from a combination of factors, including training schedules that are constrained by the lack of resources and staff. This creates an obstacle for personnel who cannot fit the training into their work schedules or whose jobs take priority. According to several Diplomatic Security personnel, staff often do not have the time to take in-service training when required, in part because of scheduling constraints. For example, staff could be on temporary duty or travel when in-service training is offered. In addition to the costs for travel to attend in-service training at other posts, several posts are understaffed. According to the Diplomatic Security personnel, they often do not have enough personnel to support the post when staff go to in-service training.

Even though DSTC relies on the Student Training Management System, the system does not allow DSTC to effectively track who has or has not taken what course, when, and also be able to schedule a person for the next available course. According to DSTC officials, their system does not have the ability to automatically identify how many people required to take a given course have not yet taken it. Additionally, agents are required to pass a firearms requalification every 4 months when they are posted domestically and once a year if posted overseas.<sup>24</sup> It is the agents' and supervisors' responsibility to keep track when their next requalification is due. According to DSTC officials, when agents are posted overseas at certain posts where firearms training is restricted, they often fall behind on their requalification because this can be completed only at a limited number of facilities. As a result, according to Diplomatic Security officials, some personnel fail to maintain weapons qualification, especially if they have been overseas for a number of years.

DSTC has increased its use of distributed learning to enhance training of its workforce, but it does not have a way to keep records of participation or

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<sup>24</sup>12 FAM 023 (2.4B-1 and 2.4C-1) Department of State Deadly Force and Firearms Policy, Frequency of Qualification.

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performance of personnel who take training through distributed learning. For example, DSTC shares interactive online content on Microsoft Office SharePoint for personnel to use, but according to DSTC officials, SharePoint does not have a tracking mechanism to see who has accessed the content. In another example, DSTC provides distributed learning on OC Spray (also known as pepper spray) that is required every year. However, DSTC cannot say for certain if its personnel have accessed the training and does not have the systems in place to track distributed learning efforts.

DSTC is working to develop the ability to ensure that personnel complete all required training and to keep track of who completes DSTC training through distributed learning. DSTC officials stated that their current suite of software systems does not include the capabilities needed to track all their training efficiently and effectively, in particular training delivered through distributed learning. As noted above, DSTC has begun discussions with FSI about the possibility of using FSI's learning management system or procuring its own system to help DSTC improve its ability to track training. As of May 2011, it appears that some of DSTC's tracking and evaluation needs may be met through FSI's learning management system. DSTC is in the process of working with FSI to determine how to meet these needs.

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## DSTC Faces Significant Challenges to Carrying Out Its Expanded Mission

DSTC faces several challenges that affect its operations. In particular, DSTC is faced with training Diplomatic Security personnel to meet their new roles and responsibilities in Iraq as the U.S. military transfers to State many of its protective and security functions for the U.S. diplomatic presence. In addition to this expanded training mission, State has proposed a fivefold increase in the amount of training DSTC provides to non-Diplomatic Security personnel. At the same time, many of DSTC's training facilities pose additional challenges. DSTC lacks a consolidated training facility of its own and therefore uses 16 different leased, rented, or borrowed facilities at which DSTC's training needs are not the priority. Moreover, several of the facilities do not meet DSTC's training needs and/or are in need of refurbishment. According to Diplomatic Security officials, this situation has proven inefficient; it has expanded training times and likely increased costs. To meet some of its current needs, in 2007 DSTC developed an Interim Training Facility, and in 2009 State allocated funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and other acts to begin the process of building a consolidated training facility. State is in the process of identifying a suitable location for the facility.

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## Expanding Diplomatic Security Missions in Iraq and Other High-Threat Posts Constrain DSTC's Ability to Meet Training Needs

With the planned withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq in December 2011, Diplomatic Security is expected to assume full responsibility for ensuring safety and security for the U.S. civilian presence. As part of its new responsibilities, Diplomatic Security plans to add critical support services that the U.S. military currently provides, and which Diplomatic Security has had little or no experience in providing, including downed aircraft recovery, explosives ordnance disposal, route clearance, and rocket and mortar countermeasures, among others. Consequently, Diplomatic Security is leveraging Department of Defense expertise and equipment to build the capabilities and capacity necessary to undertake its new missions. For example, the Department of Defense is assisting Diplomatic Security with the operation of a sense-and-warn system to detect and alert to artillery and mortar fire. As a result of its increased security responsibilities, Diplomatic Security anticipates substantial use of contractors to provide many of these specialized services. Nevertheless, Diplomatic Security personnel will still need training in order to properly manage and oversee those contractors and to perform those services for which contractors are not being hired.

DSTC noted that it is following events in Iraq, seeking feedback from Embassy Baghdad, and evaluating and updating its training programs to ensure they remain relevant to the needs of post personnel and conditions on the ground. To identify training needs, DSTC is collaborating with multiple offices on various contingency plans. DSTC is a member of the Diplomatic Security Iraq Transition Working Group. The purpose of this working group is to identify and analyze the structural, logistical, personnel, and training impacts of the transition on Diplomatic Security and the Regional Security Office in Baghdad as U.S. military forces draw down in Iraq. Additionally, DSTC is an active participant in the Contingency Operations Working Group, whose purpose is to improve collaboration within Diplomatic Security to support RSO operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Sudan. DSTC also is a member of the Iraq Policy and Operations Group, chaired by State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and the Iraq Training Course Advisory Group, chaired by FSI.

DSTC is developing training plans to address various contingencies arising from anticipated Diplomatic Security personnel increases in Iraq and introduction of new equipment. Regarding personnel increases, DSTC is identifying resources and planning to train additional security personnel to

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meet Embassy Baghdad's goal of filling 84 Security Protective Specialist positions and 25 new special agent positions in Iraq.<sup>25</sup> High-threat courses are also being added to accommodate additional Diplomatic Security personnel being assigned to Iraq and other high-threat locations. For example, an additional four HTT courses were added to the DSTC training schedule, making a total of 13 course offerings in fiscal year 2011 compared with 9 in fiscal year 2010.

According to DSTC, it is endeavoring to meet the need for new capabilities and equipment. DSTC, in coordination with the Diplomatic Security Mine-Resistant/Ambush Protection (MRAP) armored vehicles working group, is developing ways to integrate MRAP training into Diplomatic Security courses, and as of March 2011 had completed the design and development of a training course. This effort includes acquiring an MRAP egress trainer at the ITF in West Virginia and one at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad.<sup>26</sup> To address expanding RSO air operations, DSTC acquired UH-1 and CH-46 nonflyable helicopter airframes from Cherry Point Marine Air Station in order to improve air operations training. An additional helicopter airframe, a CH-53, is also being acquired from the same location. For FACT students, protective vests and helmets were obtained to better accustom students to working conditions on the ground. Other HTT additions will include personnel recovery, tactical communications, and tactical operations command training. DSTC is working closely with the Iraq Training Course Advisory Group to develop a new Iraq predeployment immersion training course for civilian employees, as well as special agents, which will combine both security and operational exercises. According to Diplomatic Security officials, this training will likely increase the time needed to get trained Diplomatic Security personnel into the field.

Despite these efforts, Diplomatic Security noted that the locations, personnel numbers, and resources that Diplomatic Security will require in Iraq are being finalized through the various transitional working groups mentioned above, as well as by Embassy Baghdad and U.S. Forces-Iraq. However, according to State's Inspector General, Diplomatic Security does

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<sup>25</sup>We previously reported that Diplomatic Security was having difficulty recruiting and hiring a sufficient number of Security Protective Specialists (GAO-10-156). As of January 2011, Diplomatic Security officials reported that 38 of 77 existing positions were filled. State expects to fund a total of 148 positions by the end of 2011.

<sup>26</sup>An MRAP egress trainer is an MRAP armored vehicle cab mounted on a rotating platform to simulate rollovers.

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not have the funding, personnel, experience, equipment, or training to replicate the U.S. military's security mission in Iraq.<sup>27</sup> Similar concerns were raised by the Commission on Wartime Contracting and a majority report issued by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.<sup>28</sup> Diplomatic Security acknowledged it is not designed to assume the military's mission in Iraq and will have to rely on its own resources and the assistance of the host country to protect the U.S. mission in the absence of the funding, personnel, equipment, and protection formerly provided by the U.S. military. Furthermore, with clear deadlines in place for the U.S. military departure from Iraq, delays in finalizing State's operations in Iraq could affect DSTC's ability to develop and deliver any additional required training.

#### Future Training Requirements May Further Strain DSTC Resources

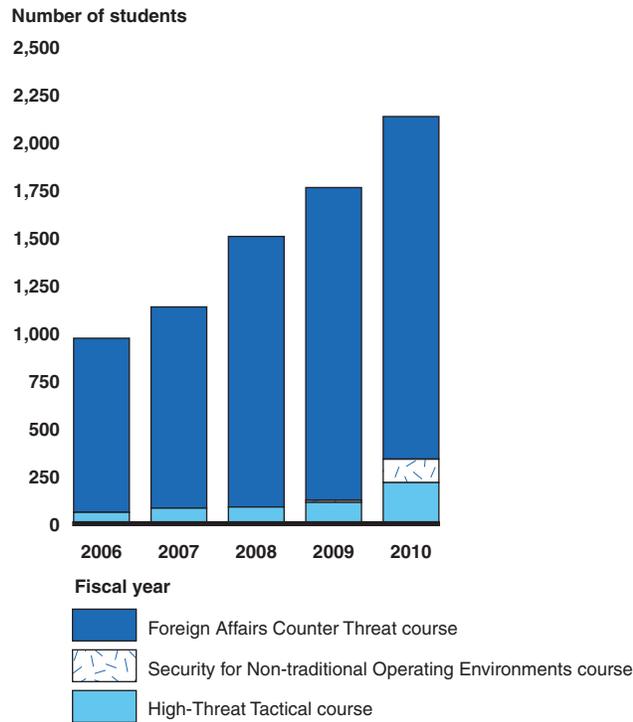
In addition to the resource demands placed on DSTC by the pending drawdown of U.S. military forces in Iraq, DSTC has seen a significant increase in the number of U.S. personnel to whom it provides training, especially high-threat training such as FACT, SNOE, and HTT (see fig. 4). Most notable is the increase in the number of non-Diplomatic Security personnel to whom Diplomatic Security must provide training since both FACT and SNOE are designed for nonagents. For example, the number of U.S. personnel taking high-threat training in fiscal year 2006 was 971. That number more than doubled in fiscal year 2010 to 2,132.

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<sup>27</sup>United States Department of State and Broadcasting Board of Governors Office of Inspector General, *Report of Inspection: Compliance Follow-up Review of Embassy Baghdad, Iraq*, Report Number ISP-C-11-08A, October 2010.

<sup>28</sup>Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, *Special Report on Iraq Transition Planning: Better Planning for Defense-to-State Transition in Iraq Needed to Avoid Mistakes and Waste*, CWC Special Report 3, July 12, 2010, and United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Iraq: The Transition from a Military Mission to a Civilian-Led Effort*, S. Prt. 112-3, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session, January 31, 2011.

**Figure 4: Increase in DSTC-Provided High-Threat Training from 2006 to 2010**



Source: GAO analysis of DSTC data.

In addition to the significant increase in students, State has levied additional training requirements on DSTC that may further strain DSTC's resources. State's 2010 *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (QDDR) stated that all personnel at high-threat posts, as well as those at critical-threat posts, will now receive FACT training.<sup>29</sup> According to Diplomatic Security officials, this change in policy would increase the number of posts for which FACT is required from 23 to 178, increasing the number of students taking FACT each year from 2,132 in fiscal year 2010

<sup>29</sup>Department of State, *The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Leading Through Civilian Power*, 2010. The QDDR was intended to set State's priorities and provide strategic guidance on the capabilities State needs, as well as the most efficient and effective allocation of resources. In our previous work (GAO-10-156), we recommended that State use the QDDR as a vehicle to conduct a strategic review of Diplomatic Security to ensure its mission and activities address priority needs, as well as address key human capital and operational challenges. State agreed with this recommendation; however, Diplomatic Security officials told GAO that the QDDR was not used to conduct such a review.

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to over 10,000. DSTC officials noted that they lack the capacity to handle so many students and that current FACT classes are already filled to DSTC's capacity. DSTC would need to locate or build additional driving tracks, firearms ranges, and explosives ranges, as well as obtain instructors and other staff to support such a dramatic increase in students. At a cost of almost \$4,000 per student, not including the need to develop additional facilities, this requirement could cost government agencies over \$30 million. The QDDR did not identify additional resources or facilities to support this decision. According to Diplomatic Security officials, State has not completed an action plan or established time frames to carry out the QDDR recommendation. Given these difficulties, Diplomatic Security officials noted that they did not see how the new requirement could be implemented.

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### Existing Facilities Hamper Training Efforts and Strain Resources; However, DSTC Has Taken Interim Steps and Has Long-Term Plans to Address These Challenges

The Diplomatic Security Training Directorate's three offices, including DSTC, use 16 facilities to accomplish their training missions (see app. VII), which DSTC officials believe is inefficient and more costly than a consolidated training facility would be. For example, DSTC maintains a fleet of vehicles to transport students from one training facility to another. In 2009, DSTC officials estimated that students spent 1 week of the then 8-week HTT course in transit. According to DSTC officials, until recently the Training Directorate used four additional facilities, including three other military bases, but military officials at those bases decided that they could no longer accommodate DSTC and still meet their own training needs. This forced DSTC to find or make use of alternative training sites.

Diplomatic Security leases, rents, or borrows all the facilities it uses, and the number of facilities in use at any given time and how they are used will vary based on training requirements and facility availability. For example, although Marine Corps Base Quantico is primarily used for firearms training, Diplomatic Security also uses its ranges for land navigation and its mock villages for scenario training with nonlethal ammunition. According to DSTC officials, because Diplomatic Security does not own the facilities it uses (or the land on which they are built, in the case of its ITF), its access to some facilities may be constrained by the facility owners. For example, Diplomatic Security uses the firearms ranges at Marine Corps Base Quantico to train with heavier weapons that none of its other facilities can accommodate (see fig. 5). However, according to Diplomatic Security officials, the Marines occasionally force Diplomatic Security to change its training schedule, sometimes with minimal notice, which increases costs and makes it difficult for DSTC staff to meet training objectives within the time available. DSTC noted, however, that

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the Marines work with them to minimize the disruptions to Diplomatic Security training at Marine Corps Base Quantico.

**Figure 5: Diplomatic Security Use of Marine Corps Base Quantico Firing Range**

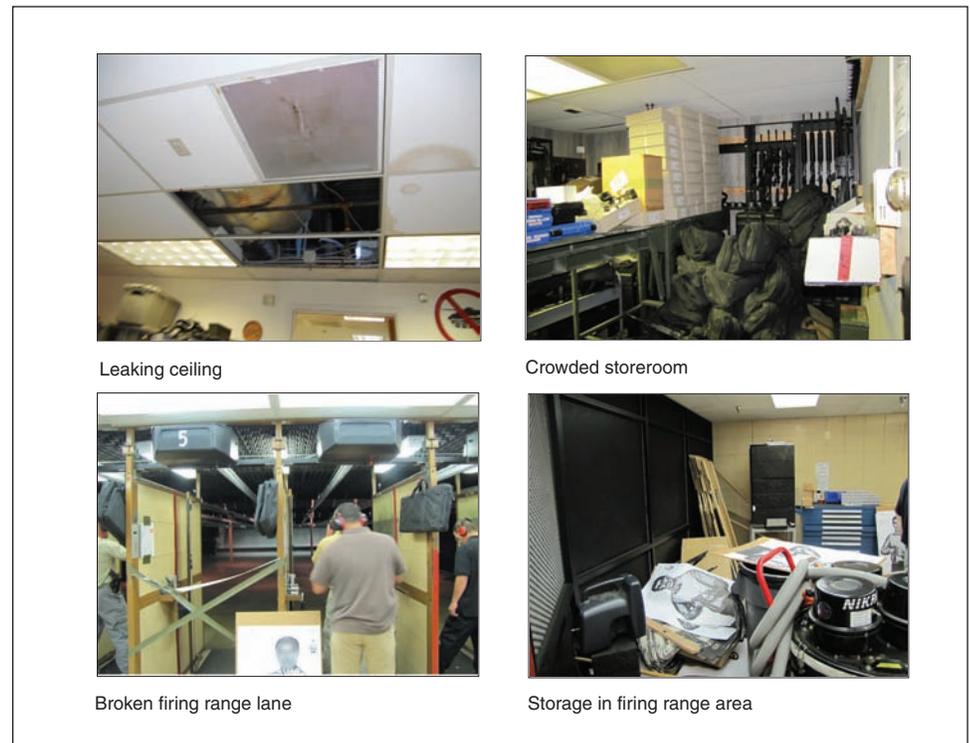


Source: GAO.

Several of the leased facilities, notably the State Annex (SA) buildings, do not meet DSTC's needs. For example, SA-7, in Springfield, Virginia, was originally leased commercially in the 1970s when, according to Diplomatic Security officials, Diplomatic Security had fewer than 500 special agents, less than one-third of the approximately 1,900 it has now. Both SA-7 and SA-31 are overcrowded and need various repairs, according to Diplomatic Security officials, in part because of disputes between Diplomatic Security and its lessor over which party is responsible for structural repairs such as leaks in the ceiling, repairs to water pipes, and repairs to the ventilation systems (see fig. 6 for pictures of SA-7). DSTC's main firearms ranges are located in these buildings, but according to DSTC officials, the ranges are small and have some unusable firing lanes (see fig. 6). Because of the limitations of its facilities, Diplomatic Security has had to improvise with makeshift solutions to provide some types of training, for example, placing tape on the floors of its garage at SA-11 to simulate walls for conducting

room-entry training (see fig. 7). DSTC officials commented that this was not the most effective way to conduct training.

**Figure 6: Disrepair and Crowding at State Annex-7**



Source: GAO.

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**Figure 7: Simulated Tape Walls Used in Training**



Source: GAO.

To help meet the training demands of its growing mission, DSTC has identified alternate sites as backup training locations and used them in the past year when other facilities could not be used to meet training requirements. For example, the HTT course used a paintball park in 2010 when Marine Corps Base Quantico could not accommodate DSTC's final practical exercise. As noted below, with the increased capability at the ITF, Diplomatic Security has been able to consolidate some functions and reduce, but not eliminate, the need for other facilities. In April 2011, Diplomatic Security officials stated that DSTC began firearms training and requalifications at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center's Cheltenham, Maryland, facility. Diplomatic Security now has access to the firing ranges at Cheltenham to conduct agents' firearms requalifications, as well as support office, classroom, and storage space—allowing them to use the small SA-7 firing range as a backup range.

Diplomatic Security Is Developing an Interim Training Facility to Address Some Current but Not Future Needs

Recognizing that its existing facilities were inadequate, in 2007, according to DSTC officials, Diplomatic Security signed a 5-year contract with one of its lessors, Bill Scott Raceway, to fence off 12.5 acres of land and build a modular Interim Training Facility in Summit Point, West Virginia, for approximately \$10 million (see fig. 8). The facility includes a number of training features that Diplomatic Security needs, including a gymnasium with mat rooms, a two-story indoor tactical maze, an indoor firing range, a video-based firearms simulation, and a mock urban training area. As the ITF is located on Bill Scott Raceway land, it is colocated with the facilities Diplomatic Security leases to provide driver training, some small arms training, bunker training, and small explosives demonstrations (see fig. 9).

Figure 8: The Interim Training Facility



Source: GAO.

**Figure 9: Diplomatic Security Use of Bill Scott Raceway Facilities**



Source: GAO.

Diplomatic Security acknowledged that the ITF is helping it meet several of its training needs, including most defensive tactics training and scenario training with nonlethal ammunition. Nevertheless, Diplomatic Security officials noted that the ITF is only a stopgap solution with inherent limitations and cannot meet a number of Diplomatic Security’s training needs such as the firing of heavier weapons, the use of more powerful explosives to train agents in incident management, and the integrated tactical use of driving and firearms training in a mock urban environment. The ITF also lacks space for Diplomatic Security to train its personnel for many of the additional missions that they are expected to take over from the U.S. military in Iraq, such as land navigation and downed aircraft recovery, among others. In addition, the ITF lacks many of the support services that a training academy might otherwise have, such as campus housing; adequate classroom, office, and dining areas, and storage areas for the explosives used in training.

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## Diplomatic Security Is Pursuing Construction of a Consolidated Training Facility

After years of unsuccessful funding efforts, in 2009 State allocated \$118.1 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Worldwide Security and Protection funds to acquire a site for, design, and build the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC), a consolidated training facility (see table 3). State began the search for a dedicated training facility in 1993 and revisited the need in 1998 following the embassy bombings in Africa prior to developing the Interim Training Facility. In 2004, State received funding to develop the Center for Antiterrorism and Security Training. In 2006, when the plans for locating such a center at Aberdeen Proving Ground were not successful, the development of CAST was abandoned and Diplomatic Security sought guidance from State's legal office. According to Diplomatic Security officials, based on the legislative language, State's legal office stated that no specific site was indicated. Therefore, according to officials, based on Diplomatic Security's critical need for an antiterrorism training center, the funds could be spent on a temporary facility. Consequently, the remaining funds were used to expand Diplomatic Security's use of the Bill Scott Raceway facilities and develop the ITF. State also informed us that congressional staff were briefed regarding the use of funds appropriated for CAST.

In June 2009, the U.S. General Services Administration announced that it had initiated the search on behalf of State for an appropriate space to build the FASTC, thereby initiating development of the consolidated facility. According to State and General Services Administration officials, State obligated approximately \$10.6 million of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds on architectural planning and project management. State obligated the remaining Recovery Act funds by transferring them to the General Services Administration to continue the identification and development of the FASTC. State also allocated about \$48.1 million of fiscal year 2009 and fiscal year 2009 supplemental Worldwide Security and Protection funds and an additional \$17.6 million of fiscal year 2010 Worldwide Security and Protection funds,<sup>30</sup> all of which were obligated to the General Services Administration to build the FASTC. Subsequent phases of the project are expected to be wholly funded through Worldwide Security and Protection funds. Diplomatic Security

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<sup>30</sup>State allocated funds for Worldwide Security and Protection from appropriations in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-117, Div. F, 123 Stat. 3034, 3312 (2009); Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009, Pub. L. No. 111-32, Title XI, 123 Stat. 1859, 1890; and Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009, Pub. L. No. 111-8, Div. H, 123 Stat. 524, 831. The appropriating acts set aside funding for Worldwide Security Protection, and State refers to these funds as Worldwide Security and Protection funds.

expects future costs to be approximately \$30 million annually.<sup>31</sup> Diplomatic Security received no additional funds in the fiscal year 2011 budget, and the administration did not include additional funds in its fiscal year 2012 budget request; nevertheless, State and the General Services Administration continued development of the FASTC.

**Table 3: Foreign Affairs Security Training Center Funding, Fiscal Years 2009-2012**

(Dollars in thousands)

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Estimated 2012</b>	<b>Total</b>
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act	\$70,000	NA	NA	NA	\$70,000
Worldwide Security and Protection base budget	34,676	17,551	0	0	52,227
Worldwide Security and Protection base budget as increased by supplemental appropriation	13,375	0	0	0	13,375
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$118,051</b>	<b>\$17,551</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$135,602</b>

Source: GAO analysis.

NA = not applicable.

After going through a formalized process of identifying a location and working with the General Services Administration, State identified a potential location for the FASTC in Queen Anne’s County, Maryland. State had planned to begin building by early 2011; however, on June 28, 2010, State and the General Services Administration determined that the site would no longer be considered, because of local concerns regarding environmental and other land use issues that could delay the project for several years.

State subsequently expanded its FASTC criteria, most notably increasing the acceptable distance from Washington, D.C., and—because of a presidential memorandum issued in June 2010 requesting that agencies try to use existing federal land instead of purchasing new property—focusing the search on publicly owned properties. The General Services Administration evaluated approximately 40 sites against the revised site

<sup>31</sup>According to Diplomatic Security and General Services Administration officials, total costs for the FASTC will be dependent on the conditions of whatever site is chosen for the facility.

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criteria, which include four steps to determine the viability of the site for placement of the FASTC project. Step 1 evaluates the site regarding public ownership, size, the ability to support 24/7 operations, climate conditions, and proximity to Diplomatic Security headquarters. A site that meets Step 1 criteria continues on to Step 2, which evaluates the site's developable area, compatible surroundings, ease of acquisition, life support and community support, and suitable climate, and includes performing initial test fits of the site. A site that meets Step 2 criteria will move on to Step 3, in which a feasibility study is conducted on the site. The feasibility study takes into consideration the mission, program requirements, phasing, risk, cost, procurement, environmental assessment, and utilities. Step 4 of the criteria is to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 for the preferred site.<sup>32</sup>

Two of the evaluated sites met the Step 1 criteria. One site also met Step 2 criteria, and moved on to Step 3 in which a feasibility study was completed. The second site under consideration is currently being evaluated under Step 2 criteria. If the site meets Step 2 criteria, the process will continue to Step 3 and a feasibility study will be conducted. Once both sites have been assessed, senior department officials will make a recommendation on which site will proceed to Step 4. Environmental studies will be conducted on the selected site, and the master plan and construction documents will be completed. Step 4 environmental studies are estimated to take 18 to 24 months to complete. Construction could begin, pending funding availability, after the studies and construction documents are complete. State officials noted that in an ideal situation they could begin building the FASTC by the end of 2013; however, they said it was difficult to know what environmental obstacles, if any, they might encounter and how those obstacles might affect the FASTC's development.

State expects the FASTC will include state-of-the-art classrooms, simulation and practical applications laboratories, administrative support offices, and a fitness center to meet soft skill training needs.<sup>33</sup> State plans to construct a series of indoor and outdoor weapons firing ranges, an

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<sup>32</sup>Pub. L. No. 91-190, 83 Stat. 852 (1970), codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347.

<sup>33</sup>Hard skills include the hands-on training that DSTC provides in areas such as firearms, driving, defensive tactics, and room entry techniques. Soft skills include training that is classroom-based in areas such as law, cybersecurity, counterintelligence, physical security, and criminal investigations.

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explosives demonstration area, several mock urban environments designed to simulate a variety of urban scenarios, and driving tracks to meet its hard skill training needs. State also expects to provide various support elements, including dormitories, a dining facility, physical fitness facilities to include an athletic field and track, bike and jogging trails, and on-site medical and fire emergency services. State expects to build, enhance, or rely on existing infrastructure, such as power, potable water, wastewater treatment, and telecommunications capabilities.

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## Conclusions

U.S. diplomats and other personnel at overseas diplomatic posts face a growing number of threats from global terrorism to cyberattacks and, in some countries, from constant dangers due to the violence of war or civil unrest. To counter these growing threats, State has expanded the mission of its Bureau of Diplomatic Security, with a corresponding rapid increase in its staffing. As a result, DSTC has had to meet the challenge of training more personnel to perform additional duties while still getting Diplomatic Security's agents, engineers, technicians, and other staff—as well as a growing number of personnel outside of its workforce—into the field, where they are needed. DSTC has largely met this challenge. Certain issues, however, constrain the effectiveness of DSTC's systems. First, DSTC is shifting more of its training online to better serve its student population, but does not have the systems needed to evaluate the training's effectiveness despite its own standards to do so. Without this feedback, DSTC will be less able to ensure the effectiveness of and improve the training it provides. Second, DSTC systems do not accurately and adequately track the use of some of its training. For example, DSTC cannot identify who has not taken required training. Consequently, DSTC cannot be assured that all personnel are adequately trained to counter threats to U.S. personnel, information, and property.

DSTC also faces a number of challenges as a result of an increasing number of training missions, particularly in Iraq, and inadequate training facilities. These challenges should be addressed strategically; however, State's recent effort to conduct a strategic review, the QDDR, added to DSTC's training missions. Specifically, the QDDR levied a requirement on Diplomatic Security to quintuple its student body by providing FACT training to an additional 8,000 students without addressing necessary resources. Without an action plan and associated time frames to meet the new requirement, it is unclear to what extent State can accomplish its training mission and ensure the security preparedness of civilian personnel assigned overseas.

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## Recommendations for Executive Action

We recommend that the Secretary of State

1. develop or improve the process to obtain participant evaluations for all of DSTC required training, including distributed learning efforts;
2. develop or improve the process to track individual DSTC training requirements and completion of DSTC training; and
3. develop an action plan and associated time frames needed to carry out the QDDR recommendation to increase the number of posts at which FACT is required.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to the Department of State. State provided written comments, which are reproduced in appendix VIII.

State agreed with all three recommendations, and noted several steps it is taking or is planning to take to address the recommendations. In particular, DSTC noted that it will seek an electronic survey tool to enhance its evaluation efforts and is exploring ways to modify existing State computer systems to enhance its ability to track training. In addition, Diplomatic Security is working with the other State offices to set parameters for expanding FACT training to additional personnel. State also noted that existing Diplomatic Security training facilities and instructor resources are at maximum capacity, and emphasized DSTC's need for a consolidated training facility to meet its expanded training mission.

We also provided relevant portions of the report to FLETA and the General Services Administration for technical comments. We incorporated technical comments from both agencies and State throughout the report, as appropriate.

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As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the report date. At that time, we will send copies to interested Members of Congress, the Secretary of State, and relevant agency heads. In addition, this report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

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If you or your staff have any questions, please contact me at (202) 512-4268 or <mailto:fordj@gao.gov>. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contribution to this report are listed in appendix IX.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jess T. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a distinct "T" and "F".

Jess T. Ford  
Director, International Affairs and Trade

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# Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

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We (1) evaluated how Diplomatic Security ensures the quality and appropriateness of its training, (2) examined Diplomatic Security's training strategies for its personnel and other U.S. government personnel and how Diplomatic Security ensures that training requirements are being met, and (3) assessed the challenges that Diplomatic Security faces in meeting its training mission.

To address these objectives and establish criteria, we reviewed past GAO reports on both Diplomatic Security and training, Office of Personnel Management guidance, State and other legislative and regulatory guidance and policy, and education standards and processes of established educational organizations. To understand the accreditation process to which Diplomatic Security was subject, we obtained information from a key official from Federal Law Enforcement and Training Accreditation. We also reviewed and analyzed data and documentation related to Diplomatic Security-provided training efforts, such as standard operating procedure, planning, performance, course development, course evaluation, accreditation, and career development documents; information and data on recent Diplomatic Security Training Center (DSTC)- and other Diplomatic Security-provided course offerings; and overall funding for training from 2006 to 2011. To assess the reliability of registrar data for detailing the increase in students taking high-threat courses, Diplomatic Security training budget data, and Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) funding data, we discussed with Diplomatic Security officials the quality of the data and how they were collected, and corroborated the data by comparing them with data supplied by or interviews with other officials. We determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

We interviewed officials and instructors at Diplomatic Security headquarters, several training facilities, and several overseas posts. Among others, we interviewed DSTC officials, including DSTC instructors and contractors at several training facilities and officials from all of DSTC's divisions and branches (see app. II). We interviewed other Diplomatic Security Training Directorate officials, including officials from the Offices of Mobile Security Deployment and Antiterrorism Assistance. We also interviewed officials from the Diplomatic Courier Service. We asked a standard set of questions through in-person and videoconference interviews with Diplomatic Security agents in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and the Washington, D.C., field office, as well as engineers and technicians in Germany, South Africa, and Florida, to get feedback from supervisors on the quality of their staff's training and any unmet training needs. These posts and offices represent a judgmental sample selected because of their

regional coverage and relatively large number of personnel compared with that of personnel at other posts and offices. We observed a wide variety of both classroom-based and exercise-based training at six Diplomatic Security training facilities in Virginia and West Virginia and viewed examples of other types of DSTC-provided learning. In addition, we interviewed officials from State's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to discuss their course registration and learning management systems, as well as how they coordinate with DSTC, and States' Career Development and Assignment office on how it tracks training. We interviewed Diplomatic Security officials from a variety of offices concerning the transition in Iraq, results of the *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (QDDR), and how the purchase of new security technology is coordinated with DSTC. We also interviewed officials from State headquarters and the General Services Administration to discuss the status of the project to develop a consolidated training facility. We evaluated the information we received from both documentation and interviews against the identified criteria.

Our review focused on the efforts of the Training Directorate's Office of Training and Performance Standards and to a lesser extent the Training Directorate's Office of Mobile Security Deployment and other offices within Diplomatic Security, such as the Diplomatic Courier Service—which has called upon the expertise of DSTC to help develop its own training. Because the Training Directorate's Office of Antiterrorism Assistance provides training to non-U.S. personnel, it fell outside the scope of our work. In addition, because we recently reviewed training provided by FSI, this report does not include an assessment of the training that Diplomatic Security personnel receive through FSI.<sup>1</sup>

We conducted this performance audit from June 2010 to May 2011, 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.

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<sup>1</sup>[GAO-11-241](#).

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# Appendix II: Organization of the Diplomatic Security Training Center

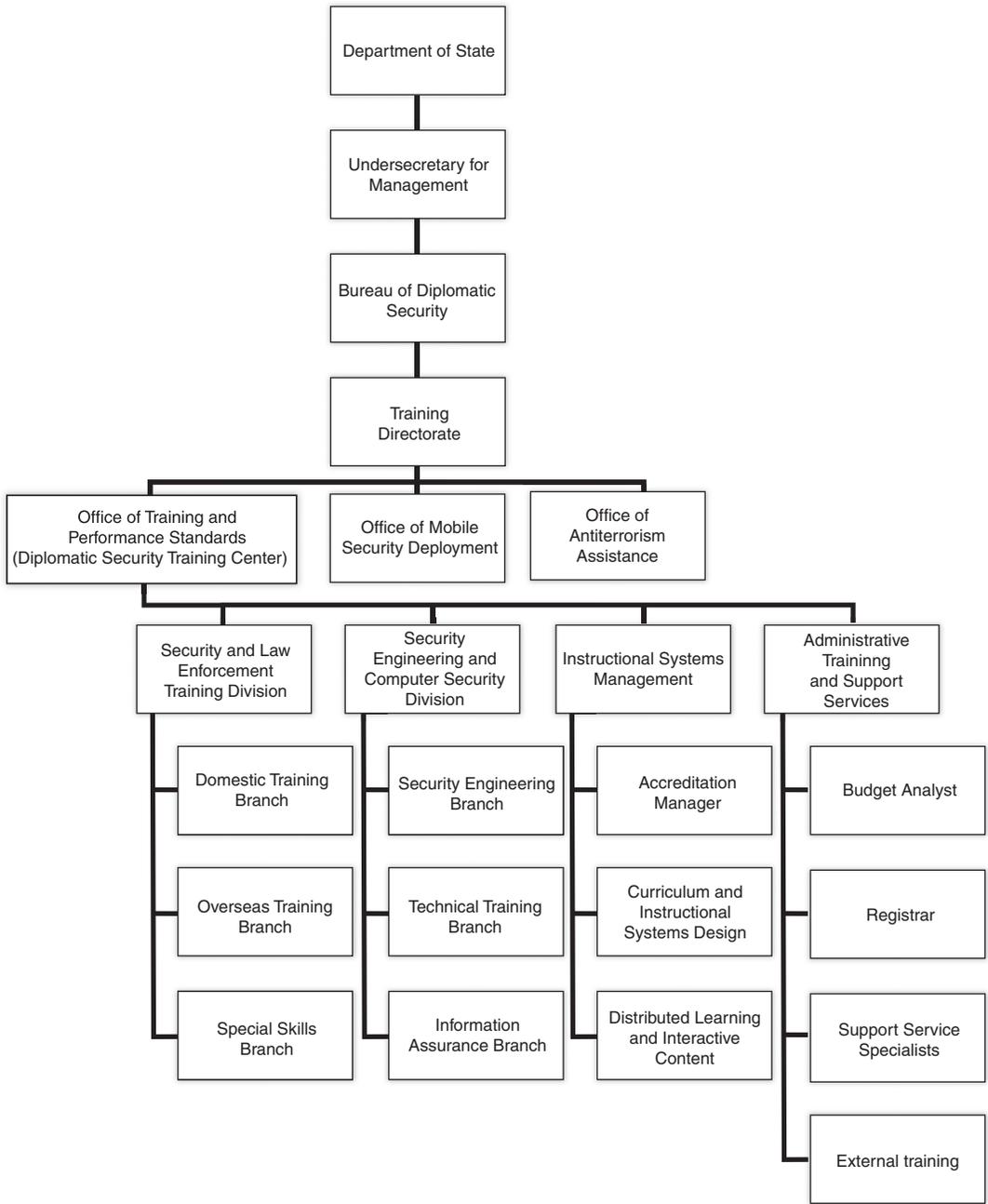
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The Office of Training and Performance Standards, also known as DSTC, is the primary provider of Diplomatic Security's training. To carry out its mission, DSTC is organized into four divisions, each with three or four branches (see fig. 10).

- The Security and Law Enforcement Training Division consists of three branches: Domestic Training, Overseas Training, and Special Skills. The division is primarily responsible for training Diplomatic Security's agents, investigators, and Security Protective Specialists. The division is also responsible for providing personal security training to Diplomatic Security and non-Diplomatic Security personnel posted to the high-threat environments, including the High Threat Tactical (HTT), Security for Non-traditional Operating Environment (SNOE), and Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) courses.
- The Security Engineering and Computer Security Division consists of three branches: Security Engineering, Technical Training, and Information Assurance. The division is primarily responsible for training Diplomatic Security's security engineers and technicians, as well as providing information technology security awareness training to a number of U.S. departments and agencies such as the National Archives and Records Administration and the Department of Homeland Security.
- Instructional Systems Management ensures that the Diplomatic Security Training Center meets independent Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation (FLETA) standards by providing course needs analysis and course design and development for both the Security and Law Enforcement Training Division and Security Engineering and Computer Security Division, creating and posting learning tools, obtaining and analyzing student feedback, and providing instructor training. In addition, Instructional Systems Management assists other offices within Diplomatic Security, such as the Diplomatic Courier Service, with non-DSTC course development and learning tools, as needed.
- Administrative and Training Support Services manages the DSTC registrar and student records, coordinates with FSI, manages external training, and provides a variety of other support functions such as managing DSTC's budget and maintaining training facilities and equipment.

**Appendix II: Organization of the Diplomatic Security Training Center**

**Figure 10: Organization of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Training Directorate**

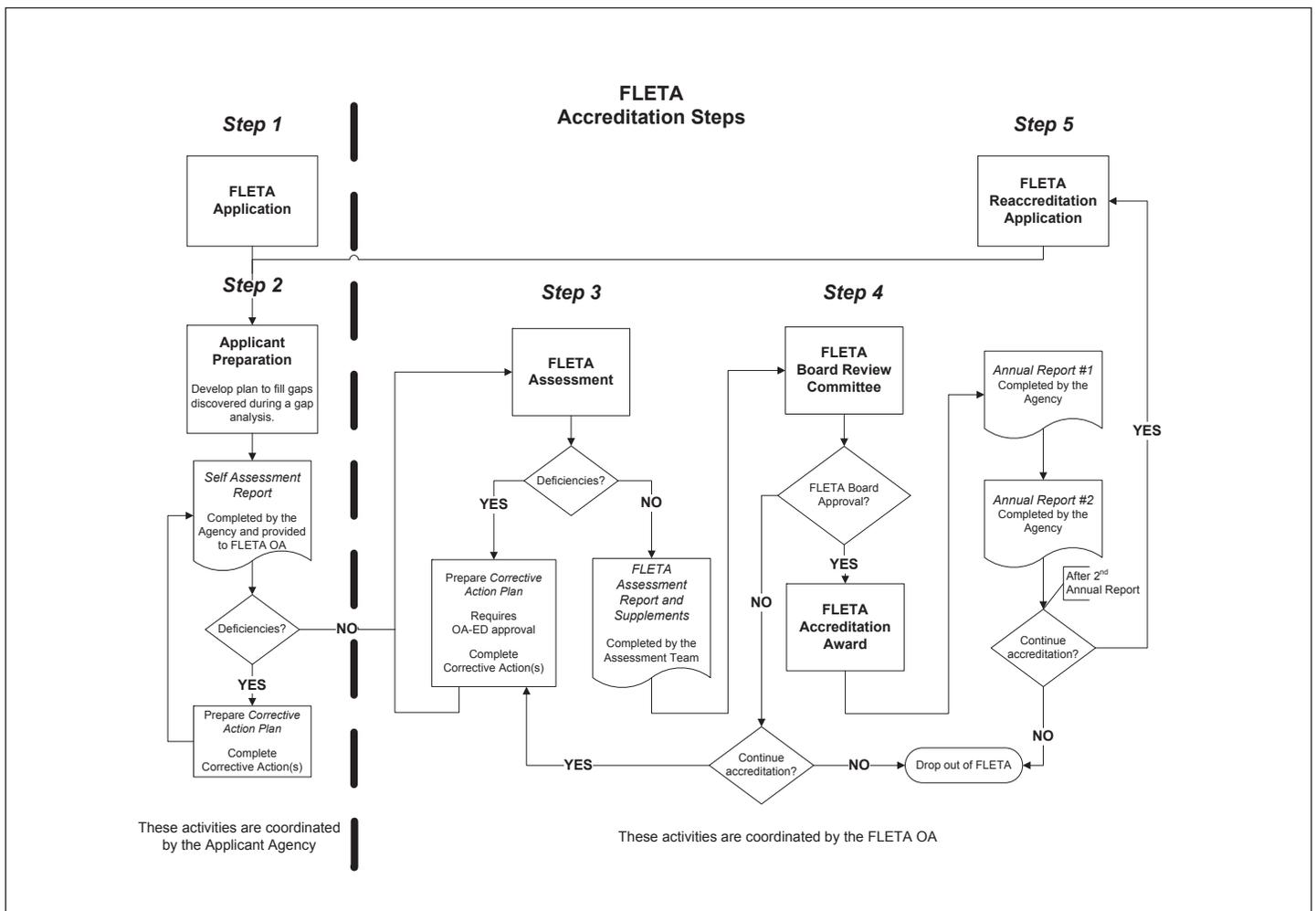


Source: GAO analysis of DSTC data.

# Appendix III: Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation Process

To ensure the quality and appropriateness of its training, Diplomatic Security relies primarily on the standards of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation process. Generally, the process involves the five steps summarized below (see fig. 11).

Figure 11: FLETA Process for Obtaining Accreditation



Source: Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation.

1. **Application:** An agency can apply for accreditation of a program, an academy, or both. However, a separate application must be submitted for each program and academy. In most cases, agencies first submit applications for their basic agent training and instructor training first. Once those have been accredited, the agency submits an application to have its academy accredited.
2. **Agency preparation:** The agency conducts a self-assessment and gap analysis to identify which of the FLETA standards it does not meet; identifies corrective steps, if necessary; and reports its results to FLETA's Office of Accreditation.
3. **FLETA assessment:** FLETA carries out its assessment. The assessment teams visit training locations, review files documenting the agency's compliance with standards, observe training, and interview administrators and trainers. If deficiencies are found during the assessment process, the agency must prepare a corrective action plan. The assessment team prepares the final report of the FLETA assessment, which is submitted to the FLETA Board Review Committee.
4. **FLETA accreditation:** A FLETA Board Review Committee reviews the findings before FLETA awards accreditation to the submitted course, academy, or both. Afterward, the agency provides annual updates to FLETA in order to maintain the accreditation. The updates include information that would modify the previous submissions to ensure continued compliance with current FLETA standards.
5. **Reaccreditation:** Reaccreditation is a fresh look at a course or academy to ensure continued compliance with the FLETA standards. Reaccreditation occurs every 3 years. The course or academy submits supporting evidence for each year since the previous accreditation.

FLETA thoroughly assesses the agency's program or academy using the FLETA guidelines and professional training standards for program and academy accreditation. For a program to receive accreditation, an agency must demonstrate that the program's policies and procedures, facilities, and resources comply with applicable FLETA standards.<sup>1</sup> In general, the academy meets the same FLETA standards as the programs, but the

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<sup>1</sup>Facilities must be safe from hazards and address the needs of the courses, and the resources must be based on the needs of the programs to both estimate the costs and ensure consistent training.

standards are applied to the organization as a whole. As of 2010, agencies applying for accreditation must provide evidence that at least five other programs, in addition to the basic agent training and instructor development training, comply with FLETA standards.

FLETA standards are designed to describe what must be accomplished; however, it is up to each agency to determine how it will meet the standards. FLETA has one set of academy standards and four sections of program standards, which include: (1) program administration, (2) training staff, (3) training development, and (4) training delivery. Each set or section of standards has 7 to 23 individual standards. For example, 1 academy standard requires that the academy establish a vision, mission, goals, and objectives, while 1 training staff standard requires that new instructors are monitored and mentored.

A FLETA Assessment Team reviews all documented administrative controls and supporting evidence submitted, including academy policies, procedures, and operations, and the team also conducts interviews with key personnel. To further support documentation, site visits are conducted at the agency's training facilities. Live training scenarios are also observed.

# Appendix IV: DSTC Accreditation Results

DSTC has gone through the accreditation process for the basic special agent and the instructor development programs and for its academy, DSTC. In 2005, DSTC opted to have the academy accredited first—an option no longer available under current FLETA standards. DSTC then sought accreditation for two programs—the basic special agent course and the instructor development course—which were accredited in 2006. In 2008, DSTC opted to have those programs and the academy go through the accreditation process simultaneously. (See table 4.) DSTC is currently undergoing reaccreditation for its programs and academy and expects that this process will be completed in 2011.

**Table 4: Findings of FLETA’s Assessments of DSTC**

Year	Type of accreditation	FLETA findings
2005	Academy accreditation	DSTC received its accreditation. The review of the accreditation files revealed that they were complete and accurate. DSTC was found to be in compliance with all standards.
2006	Instructor Development Course (program)	The Instructor Development Course received its accreditation. A review of the accreditation files revealed they were complete and accurate. The program was found to comply with all standards. Three best practices were identified: (1) DSTC used web survey software that allows users to design level 1 and level 3 (tier-1 and tier-3) survey instruments for participants and past graduates. (2) DSTC created computer-based training modules to provide orientation to new instructors and training staff members. (3) DSTC utilized a database to manage all program-related files, storing both current and archived files.
	Basic Special Agent Course (program)	The Basic Special Agent Course received its accreditation. The review of the files revealed they were complete and accurate. DSTC had documented administrative controls to effectively direct program operation, and the program was found to comply with all standards.
2008	Instructor Development Course (program)	The Instructor Development Course received its reaccreditation. The review of the accreditation files revealed that most files were complete, accurate, and in compliance with FLETA standards. However, the assessment team found two weaknesses. The team found that DSTC did not have a clear mechanism in place to standardize how the course materials were being taught. In addition, the assessment team found that students did not have an opportunity to provide tier-1 feedback on administrative and support elements of the training received. DSTC responded by amending its standard operating procedures, specifying that instructors cannot deviate from lesson plans and must notify DSTC of needed changes. DSTC also now asks for evaluations at the end of every course, including questions about the training environment.
	Basic Special Agent Course (program)	The Basic Special Agent Course received its reaccreditation. However, the review of the accreditation files revealed that two files were incomplete and not in compliance with FLETA standards—the same two standards identified in the Instructor Development Course above. However, the assessment team found DSTC had documented administrative controls that efficiently and effectively directed academy and training program operations.
	Academy accreditation	DSTC received its reaccreditation. A review of the accreditation files revealed compliance with all but the two standards, summarized above in the findings for the Instructor Development Course.

Source: GAO analysis of DSTC data.

Note: For additional details on the accreditation standards, see the FLETA Web site: <http://www.fleta.gov/>.

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# Appendix V: DSTC Training Framework Example Documents and Reports

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DSTC uses a seven-phase training framework for course design and development. Examples of the documents and reports created during the different phases of the framework, and hyperlinked to figure 1 on page 11, can be found below

**Proposal**  
[Back to figure](#)



U.S. Department of State – Diplomatic Security Service  
Office of Training & Performance Standards (TPS)



**Training Proposal**

**Project Title:** Redesign of the Basic Regional Security Officer (BRSO) course

**Source:** Tom Haycraft      **Phone:** 703-204-6180  
**Office:** DS/TPS/OTB      **E-mail:** HaycraftT@state.gov  
**ISM Rep.:** Meredith Cross      **Phone:** 571-226-9514

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**Section 1. Description of the Training Project**

The Basic Regional Security Officer (BRSO) course (OT101) has been identified as needing to be reviewed and revised. Its last major revision, based on a formal job task analysis, was in 2005 and it is the training centers goal (per SOP) to review a course at least once every five years. In addition, this review is designed to prepare the BRSO course for separate program accreditation through the Office of Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation (FLETA), with the ultimate goal of achieving graduate level college credit for graduates through a college or university.

This course is part of the Overseas Training Branch (OTB) and is offered approximately six times per year. It is currently eleven weeks long and is mostly taught at SA-11, the Diplomatic Security Training Center (DSTC). Some modules are taught at AP Hill, SA-7/31, the ITF (Mat Room, Driving Track and Tactical Maze), and the Fraudulent Document Lab (FDL). Field trips are also taken to the National Security Agency (NSA) and DS Command Center.

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**Section 2. Problem & Impact Summary**

The BRSO course was last reviewed in 2005. The Level I and Level III evaluations have suggested the need for a review of how content is being delivered and the pertinence of the content. Management has also requested a review of the course length and identification of opportunities to cut back on course time. Another aspect that will be reviewed is the necessity of managing the logistics involved with maintaining the large number of guest instructors from outside program offices (roughly 35 guest speakers in addition to the multitude of training center instructor staff used).

There is no alternative to conducting this course. The BRSO course contains State Department specific information which has no commercial equivalent. Agents do not receive any other training to prepare them for the differences in responsibilities that they will have when serving overseas for the first time. RSOs are expected to be able to perform a high volume of tasks from the very beginning of their assignment and they need to be trained prior to arriving at post. However, there are aspects of the course (i.e., certain lessons or

Proposal: BRSO Redesign      Page 1      3/14/2011

Proposal  
[Back to figure](#)

topics) that may be able to be replaced with an alternative to training (ex., job aid, online resource center, etc.) or alternative training strategies.

The audience for this course is agents going overseas for their first assignment as an Assistant Regional Security Officer (ARSO), Deputy Regional Security Officer (DRSO) or a Regional Security Officer (RSO).

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### Section 3. Resources & Planning

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The BRSO will remain mostly at SA-11 in room 260 and will continue to be taught as often as is necessitated by the volume of assignments of agents overseas. The current BRSO course will remain unchanged until the revised BRSO is completed. There is no required due date for the revised course at this time. Estimations on completion will begin to formulate more with the next phase of design.

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Directorate of International Programs (DS/IP) will have an interest in this training since RSO's have a direct working relationship with IP. The FAM (Foreign Service Manual) will be reviewed for agent job requirements as well as prior survey results and feedback from those currently serving in the field.

The course, as it stands now, is mostly instructor-lead with several required computer-based training (CBT) modules. It already employs some group work, presentations and activities. The review will consider all methods of delivery and will take into account the years of feedback from students, graduates and instructors on what does and does not work well. Ways of adding more realism into the course will be a priority to better prepare course participants for the problem solving that will be required of them in the field.

RSO's are required to complete the Contracting Officer Representative (COR) course, which is offered as part of BRSO. It should be noted that the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and the Office of Overseas Protective Operations (DS/IP/OPO) are working on developing an online module to replace this with an expected delivery date of March 2011. This module, in either format, will need to remain and will not be part of this review.

#### *Instructional Facilities & Resources*

This course is already being taught and there are no additional facilities and extraordinary resources anticipated at this point.

It may be determined that hiring a full-time instructor with the background of having recently been an RSO in the field is the most effective means of teaching and would eliminate the need for many of the guest instructors and help to make the curriculum more consistent. This new position would require funding if it is determined to be necessary.

#### *Estimated Development Costs*

It does not appear at this time that there will be any travel costs incurred in the development of this course. It is anticipated that further collaboration, review and approvals can be completed via email, telephone, fax and travel via the DoS shuttle.

Analysis  
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TASK LISTING: DS INSTRUCTOR		See Key below on L, M, H and H+		Sub-tasks/Steps	Frequency	Learning Difficulty	Importance	Job Experience	Priority
Tasks	Instructional Systems Design (ISD)								
1. Prepare Course Proposal	1.1 Write Section 1: Description of the Training Project 1.1.1 Explain what the course will provide 1.1.2 Explain why the course is necessary 1.1.3 Explain where the course will be taught, by whom 1.1.4 Identify who requested the course 1.1.5 Identify when the course will be ready to pilot 1.1.6 Identify the project POC 1.2 Write Section 2: Problem Analysis and Impact Summary 1.2.1 Describe the problem(s) the course will solve 1.2.2 Identify the target audience 1.2.3 Explain how training is the right answer 1.2.4 Identify any course prerequisites 1.3 Write Section 3: Resources and Planning Requirements 1.3.1 Identify any existing training programs that could help meet the need and lessen costs 1.3.2 Identify the resources needed to develop and offer the course on an on-going basis 1.4 Write Section 4: Training Request Recommendation 1.4.1 Provide a Project Manager recommendation to go or no-go on the project 1.5 Write Section 5: Training Proposal Authorization 1.5.1 Identify staff involved in proposal writing 1.5.2 Obtain approval signatures 1.6 File the approved proposal in the Oracle Database	H	L	H+	L	L	5		

Design  
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TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE SUPPORT

Task-to-Objective Matrix  
Instructor Development Course  
Instructor Responsibilities – Steve Swanson  
All Tasks & Objectives are taught in the “Instructor Responsibilities” lesson.

Task #	Task Statement	Objective #	Objective Statements	Level of Learning (Competencies)
	<b>Terminal Objective</b>	T1	Given a requirement to teach a course of instruction, the student will follow the appropriate TPS policies and procedures related to the course such that all policies are followed and administrative actions are performed following guidance in the TPS SOP.	
1.	Explain the instructor qualification process.	1.1	In order to provide guidance to other instructors, the student will be able to briefly explain the instructor qualification process as written in the TPS SOP.	Comprehension
2.	Explain the course administration procedures related to student records.	2.1	The student will correctly explain the course administration procedures related to student records as outlined in the TPS SOP.	Comprehension
3.	Explain the policies related to suspending training.	3.1	To ensure a clear understanding of TPS policy, the student will properly explain the policies related to suspending training.	Comprehension
4.	Explain TPS copyright policies.	4.1	Given a question regarding the use of public printed materials for a class, the student will be able to correctly explain TPS copyright policies as written in the TPS SOP.	Comprehension
5.	Explain TPS policies related to the impact of incident and adverse weather on training.	5.1	When required to make a decision as to whether or not a class should be cancelled due to weather, the student will be able to explain the TPS policies related to the impact of incident and adverse weather on training as written in the TPS SOP.	Comprehension

Design  
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TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE SUPPORT

Objective-to-Test Matrix  
Instructor Development Course  
ISD (updated 12/27/07)

Objective #	Objective Statements	Level of Learning (Competencies)	Test/Exercise/Application
1.1	Given a 45-minute student presentation, the student will write a sample proposal for the presentation that contains all the necessary information required of a course proposal as identified in the TPS SOP.	Application	As a part of the 45-minute student presentation, the student will be given preparation time to write a sample proposal for the module he/she will give to the class.  The proposal will contain all the parts of a standard proposal giving each requirement at least one or two sentences. Proposals will be given to another student who will read it and critique it for a simulated approval process.
2.1	Given a 45-minute student presentation, the student will write sample analysis phase documentation to include target audience description, task analysis sheets, job performance measures, and instructional setting description.	Application	As a part of the 45-minute student presentation, the student will be given preparation time to write a sample analysis documents for the module he/she will give to the class.  The documentation will contain a target audience description, task analysis sheet, job performance measures, and instructional setting description. Documentation will be reviewed in class.
3.1	Given a 45-minute student presentation, the student will prepare sample design phase documentation to include objectives, test items, and instructional strategies.	Application	As a part of the 45-minute student presentation, the student will be given preparation time to write a sample design phase documents for the module he/she will give to the class.  The documentation will contain objectives, test items, and instructional strategies. Documentation will be reviewed in class.

Development  
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<b>United States Department of State – Diplomatic Security Service</b> <b>Diplomatic Security Training Center</b> <b>Lesson Plan Cover Sheet</b>		
<b>Course:</b>	Instructor Development Course	<b>Course Code:</b> DS-103
<b>Lesson:</b>	06 - Instructor Responsibilities	<b>Version:</b> 03 - 10/22/09
<b>Classification Of Lesson:</b>	Unclassified	
<b>Description:</b>	This lesson covers specific policies and procedures which instructors are responsible for following to ensure that the training center complies with accreditation standards.	
<b>Audience:</b>	New instructors	
<b>Duration:</b>	One _hour (01.0)	
<b>Method(s) of Instruction:</b>	Lecture (1.0)	
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b>	A. Given a requirement to teach a course of instruction, the student will follow the appropriate TPS policies and procedures related to the course as outlined in the TPS SOP.  1. Explain the TPS instructor approval process.  2. Explain the course administration procedures related to student attendance and records.  3. Explain the policies related to suspending training.  4. Explain TPS copyright policies.  5. Explain TPS policies related to the Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and classified material.  6. Explain the TPS testing policies and explain the use of the SCANTRON testing system.  7. Describe the FLETA Accreditation process.	
<b>Prerequisite Assignments:</b>	To effectively participate in this lesson, the student must complete the following items prior to class: No prerequisites	
Lesson Name: Instructor Responsibilities Page 1 of 2		

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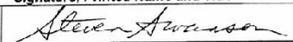
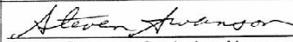
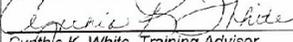
**Lesson Equipment:** Standard classroom A/V

**Student Materials:** TPS Instructor Desk Guide  
 TPS SOP

**Instructor Materials:** TPS Instructor Desk Guide  
 TPS SOP

**Method(s) of Evaluation:** Class participation, final exam questions

**Instructor Guidance:** This lesson will provide an opportunity for the students to use the TPS SOP as a reference and to understand their role in accreditation.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL		
	<i>Signature, Printed Name and Title</i>	<i>Date</i>
Submitted:	 Steven Swanson (DS/T/TPS/ISM/CISD)	10/21/09
Reviewed:	 Steven Swanson, Curriculum Manager	10/21/09
Design Approval:	 Cynthia K. White, Training Advisor	11/15/09

Lesson Name: Instructor Responsibilities  
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U.S. Department of State – Diplomatic Security Service  
Office of Training and Performance Standards

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A. **Lesson Introduction** *(Slide 1)*

1. **Instructor Background** - Instructor provides a quick background, emphasizing their qualifications to teach this lesson. This is only done if the instructor has not been previously introduced.
  
2. **Purpose of Lesson/Establish Rapport** - The purpose of this lesson is to describe the TPS policies and procedures that are applicable to the new TPS instructor. In order to function effectively within the TPS system. It is important that the new instructor be familiar with his/her responsibilities to the training center, the staff, and the students, especially where accreditation is concerned.
3. **Method of Evaluation** - Students will be evaluated through their participation in class and through final exam questions.

B. **Lesson Objectives** *(Slide 2-3)*

1. **Explain the TPS instructor approval process.**
2. **Explain the course administration procedures related to student attendance and records.**
3. **Explain the policies related to suspending training.**
4. **Explain TPS copyright policies.**
5. **Explain TPS policies related to the Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and classified material.**
6. **Explain the TPS testing policies and explain the use of the SCANTRON testing system.**
7. **Describe the FLETA Accreditation process.**

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Lesson: Instructor Responsibilities V3.0 Page 1

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U.S. Department of State – Diplomatic Security Service  
Office of Training and Performance Standards

C. Explain the TPS instructor approval process. *(Slide 4)*

1. What is the difference between an instructor who is “Qualified” versus “Approved”?
  - a. A “Qualified” instructor is one who has successfully completed formal instructor training, but has NOT completed the audit of lessons and the teaching under supervision.
  - b. An “Approved” instructor has completed all three steps and received the written approval of the TPS Training Advisor.
2. First step: *(Slide 5)*
  - a. The first step toward TPS instructor approval is to receive some type of **formal instructor training**. If the new staff member has not received any type of instructor training from other sources, the TPS staff member **must** attend the Instructor Development Course (IDC) as soon as possible after arrival.
  - b. TPS will accept formal instructor training from other sources. Some examples include FLETC LEITP, military service certificates, commercial training, and college teaching certifications.
  - c. If TPS is unfamiliar with a particular program, the staff member may be asked to present a class curriculum and/or syllabus for the training they attended.
  - d. The staff member must present a completion certificate for review by the TPS Training Advisor.
3. Second step: *(Slide 6)*
  - a. Upon completion of formal instructor training, the prospective instructor is required to audit TPS lessons as an observer to become familiar with procedures and classroom management. The number of lessons observed is decided by the Branch Chief.
  - b. Normally, the lesson(s) being observed should be the lesson(s) that this instructor will be eventually expected to teach. However, class schedules

Implementation  
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### Pilot Course Monitoring Report

#### Part 1. Course Data

Course Title: DS Media Training Course  
Pilot Course Date: June 28 and August 14, 2006 (two classes)  
Pilot Course Location: DS Training Center, Dunn Loring, Virginia  
Pilot Course Instructors: Grace Moe, Jack Warner, Jill Olmstead, Tom Hendrick, Rosemary Reed  
Pilot Course Observers: Steve Swanson, Curriculum Manager

Pilot Course Methodology: The pilot of the DS Media Training course was conducted during the first two offerings of the course. It was taught to 16 members of DS who are either senior staff or Special Agents in Charge at field offices. The course is an adaptation of a course conducted by Jack Warner, who was asked by Ambassador Griffin to provide the course to DS personnel. A copy of the pilot course schedule is at Attachment A.

#### Part 2. Pilot Report

##### General

The course is designed to provide senior DS members with DS public affairs policy, fundamental of conducting certain types of interviews with the media, and critiqued practical exercises. During the course, students are required to participate in two mock television interviews, a mock radio interview, a mock press conference, and a prepared speech. These exercises are videotaped and critiqued immediately afterwards by the instructors.

With the exception of the initial briefing on DS public affairs policy by DS/PA, the entire course is conducted by Jack Warner and a group of professional journalists that assist him.

##### Observer Feedback Summary

Jack Warner has conducted this course for many years and it shows in his confidence and depth of knowledge. The journalists that assist him add their knowledge and experience to the course, making it a very beneficial experience for all students. The use of practical/mock exercises help to reinforce his comments and provide the student with experience to bolster their ability to handle real media situations should they occur.

## Implementation

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Given that, Jack Warner mentioned several times his desire to retire from doing this. If we plan to continue this course for the long term, we need to think about other instructors who can conduct a similar level of training.

This course is very labor-intensive for the TPS staff. It requires the use of two, sometime three multimedia specialists for most of the practical exercises. The press conference requires 6-8 volunteers from within the TPS staff for about an hour. To date, some of these volunteers have been the summer interns and injured BSAC students. Continued support of this course will require the cooperation of all TPS division chiefs.

During the initial discussions regarding this course, a field of approximately 24 potential students was identified. With four more class of eight students scheduled for FY-06 and FY-07, we need to identify who we want to expand the availability of this training to. There is interest in this course from the general DS population and since it is listed in the catalog, we will start receiving requests to attend. DS/PA will need to screen these applications.

### Student Critiques (Level I)

Attachment B contains summary data derived from the 14 (out of 16) completed Student Critique surveys. We will conduct a Level III for this course in December 06.

Jack Warner and his assistants received many compliments for the professional way they conducted the training.

Specific comments/suggestions from the student critiques include:

- The students did not feel the prepared speech was useful as most of them have given speeches and it was critiqued like the other exercises. Substituting a mock ARB or Hill testimony session was suggested as an alternative.
- The students required additional handouts on topics such as interview techniques, a DS fact sheet, or DS press bullets that would be effective in each type of media scenario.
- Some examples of good and bad media events, from press conferences or television public affairs shows (i.e. Meet the Press) were requested.
- The need to include this type of training at earlier points in the career of a DS agent, such as during BSAC and RSO training, was recommended.

### Part 3. Pilot Report Action Plan

The next offering of the Media Training course is scheduled for September 6. Action items have been identified and assigned to staff with due dates for the completion of the assigned action.

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Action Item 1. Examine the development of additional handouts as suggested by the students.

Assigned To: Steve Swanson, ISM and DS/PA staff  
Due Date: 09/01/06

Action Item 2. Research the availability of appropriate video clips to use in class of examples of good and/bad interviews.

Assigned To: Steve Swanson, ISM and DS/PA staff  
Due Date: 09/01/06

Action Item 3. Explore the development of media lessons for BSAC, RSO and other classes to expand the availability of media training to other points in the career of DS agents.

Assigned To: Steve Swanson, ISM and DS/PA staff  
Due Date: 10/2/06

Action Item 4. Purchase backdrop curtain for the Training Center to eliminate the need to rent this curtain for each class.

Assigned To: Multimedia staff, ISM  
Due Date: 09/01/06

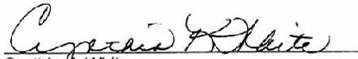
Action Item 5. Identify the audience for future classes.

Assigned To: DS/PA staff  
Due Date: 09/01/06

**Part 4. Review and Approval**

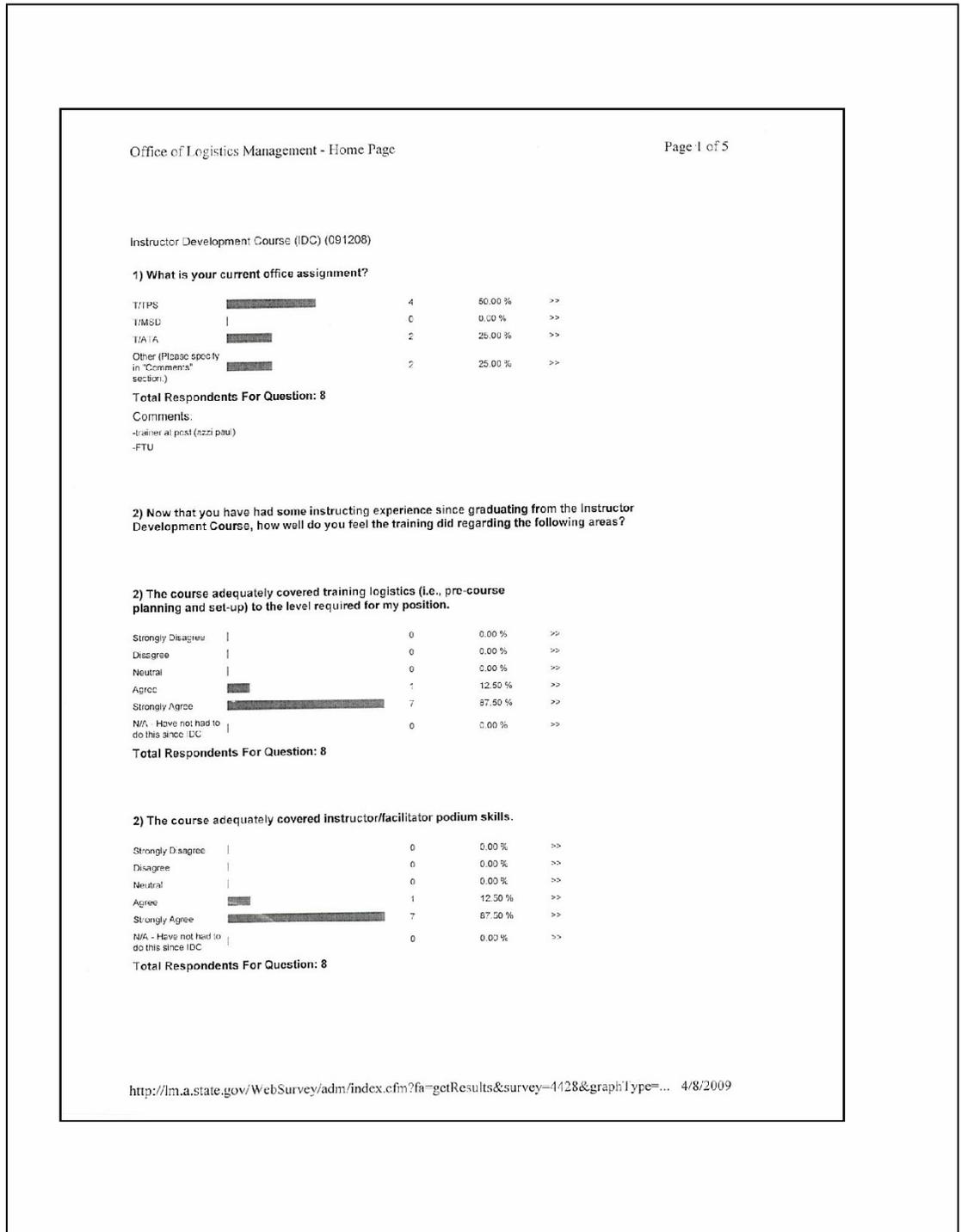


Steven R. Swanson  
Curriculum and Accreditation Manager



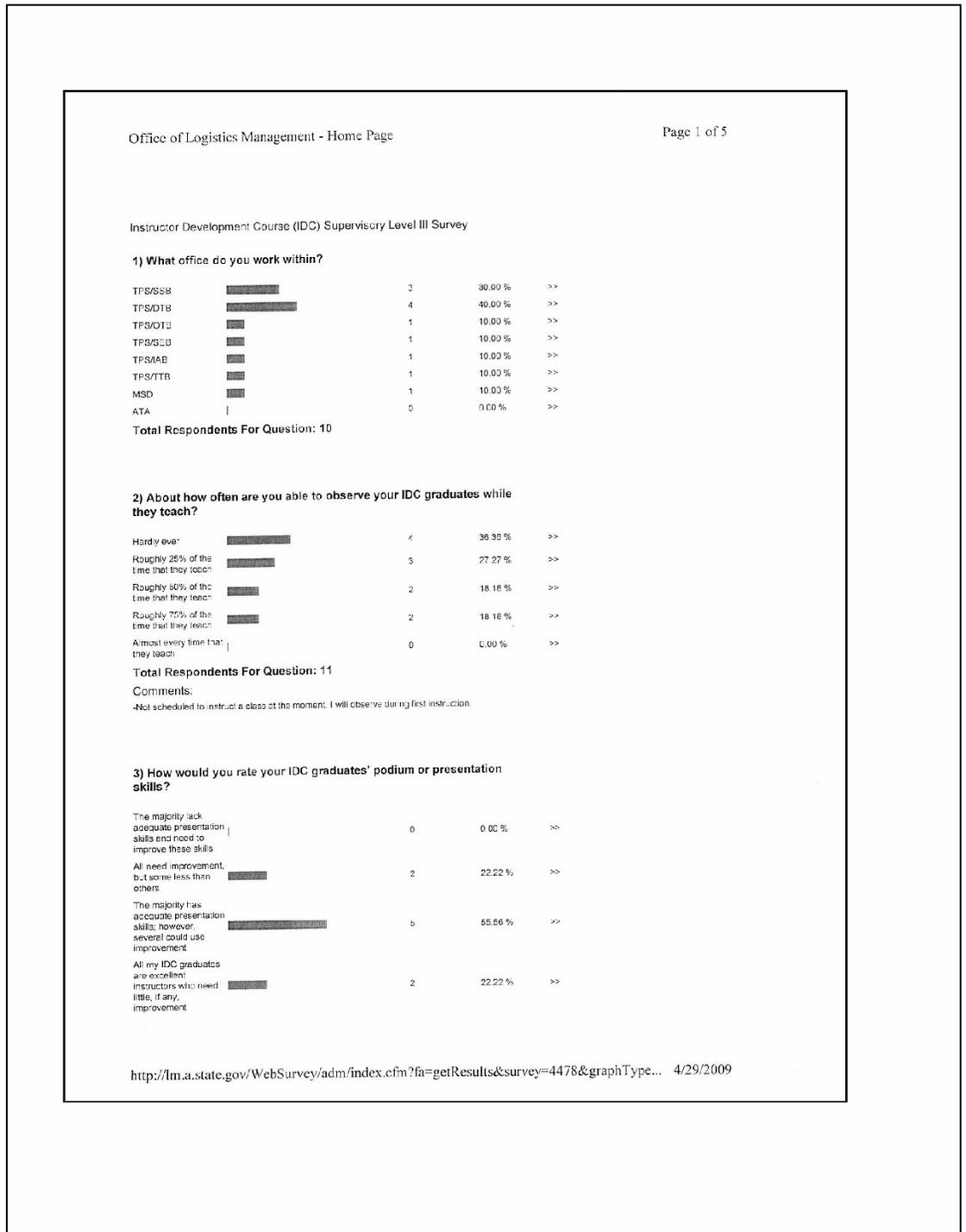
Cynthia K. White  
Training Advisor

**Evaluation**  
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**Appendix V: DSTC Training Framework  
Example Documents and Reports**

**Evaluation**  
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AN: As shown on figure 1, there is no Revision phase document

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# Appendix VI: DSTC Career Training Paths by Diplomatic Security Position

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## Special Agents

Special agents are the lead operational employees of Diplomatic Security. In general, when special agents are overseas, they manage post security requirements; when they serve domestically, they conduct investigations and provide protective details. New special agents follow an entry-level career training path designed to equip them to fulfill the basic responsibilities of the job. For example, after the 3-week orientation provided by FSI, special agents go through the basic special agent course. It includes about 12 weeks at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and is followed by about 12 weeks of additional DSTC training. Upon assignment to an overseas post, special agents must take the basic Regional Security Officer course, the basic field firearms officer course, and the security overseas seminar. If special agents are posted to a designated high-threat post, they must also take the high-threat tactical training course. In addition, at all career levels, depending on the post, special agents may have to take language training.

Once special agents are in a supervisory role, both midlevel and senior-level agents have additional required training. For example, they are required to attend FSI-provided leadership and management training. If agents are posted to a designated high-threat post at this level, they must take the HTT course if they have not taken HTT within the previous 5 years. Special agents are also required to take Regional Security Officer in-service training every 3 years, to keep up to date on current policies and procedures.

In addition to following the standard special agent career path, special agents have the option of specializing in different areas—for example, in providing security protection and training or in focusing on investigations into visa and passport fraud, human trafficking, smuggling, and internal malfeasance. Each specialty has its own required training. Those opting to specialize in security protection and training can apply to join the Mobile Security Deployment Division (MSD) for a 3-year tour. When they become MSD agents, special agents receive 6 months of additional training. Similarly, those who opt to focus on investigations, becoming Assistant Regional Security Officers-Investigators, must also take additional training.

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## Security Engineering Officers (SEO)

Security engineers are responsible for the technical and informational security programs at diplomatic and consular posts overseas. While both SEOs and Security Technical Specialists (STS) share similar tasks at posts, SEOs are expected to be more engineering and design oriented, while STS are expected to be hands-on technicians. To become SEOs, personnel

must have specific types of engineering or technical degrees. SEO training was recently restructured. Following the 3-week FSI-provided orientation, SEOs go through technical training and SEO fundamentals courses for about 107 days while assigned to a domestic office for 12 to 24 months. SEOs also go through technical surveillance countermeasures training, in addition to administrative training. If assigned to a technical security overseas position, the SEO then takes the Overseas SEO training course, which takes 25 days. During training, SEOs (if budget and resources are available) can complete a 3- or 4-week temporary duty training program at an Engineer Service Center or Engineer Service Office to get practical on-the-job experience. In addition, at all career levels, depending on the post, SEOs may have to take language training.

Once SEOs achieve a supervisory role (both midlevel and senior-level positions), they are required to take additional FSI-provided leadership and management courses. SEOs at the midlevel are also required to take additional in-service training, which may include a focus on computer network and operating systems, access control systems, investigation skills, and video surveillance systems, among others. SEOs are required to take in-service training every 2-3 years, depending on the needs of the post and available resources.

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## Security Technical Specialists

Security Technical Specialists are assigned throughout the world to develop, implement, and maintain technical security programs at posts overseas. As noted above, despite the different career paths, in practice their work is often similar to that of the SEOs. STS generally have a technical background. Following the 3-week FSI-provided orientation, STS are required to take technical training and STS fundamentals at DSTC. During training, STS (if budget and resources are available) can complete a 3- or 4-week temporary duty training program at an Engineer Service Center or Engineer Service Office to get practical on-the-job experience. STS also have to take FSI-provided administrative training. In addition, at all career levels, depending on the post, STS may have to take language training.

Once STS achieve midlevel positions, they have additional required training. STS are required to take FSI-provided leadership and management training. In addition, STS are also required to take various in-service training that includes video surveillance, access control systems, and explosives detection, among others. This is similar to the in-service training that SEOs take. The STS career path, however, does not have

senior-level positions, so STS do not take senior-level administrative, leadership, and management training.

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## Diplomatic Couriers

Couriers ensure the secure movement of classified U.S. government materials across international borders. The Diplomatic Courier Service is a small organization within Diplomatic Security whose members travel constantly; Diplomatic Courier Service officials noted that they had unique training challenges—particularly with regard to the travel logistics to attend training—and have taken responsibility for training their own personnel. Couriers first go through a 3-week orientation to the State Department that is identical to the FSI-provided orientation but is provided by the Diplomatic Courier Service; the new hires then undergo 3 weeks of functional introductory courier training. This is the only required course for couriers. However, the couriers also have a midlevel courier manager training course that prepares couriers for the manager position, focusing on supervisory and managerial issues. In addition, the Diplomatic Courier Service is developing its own in-service training and hub training courses. The in-service course will act as a refresher to the initial training, and the hub training would be a 1-day module on how overseas courier hubs function. No additional training is required for senior-level couriers.

# Appendix VII: Diplomatic Security Training Facilities

The Diplomatic Security Training Directorate's three offices, including DSTC, currently use 16 facilities to accomplish their training missions (see table 5).

**Table 5: Diplomatic Security Training Facility Use**

Facility	Use <sup>a</sup>	Facility utilization <sup>b</sup>		
		TPS	MSD	ATA
Diplomatic Security Interim Training Facility, Summit Point, WV	Hard skills	✓	✓	
Bill Scott Raceway, Summit Point, WV	Hard skills	✓	✓	
Virginia Ki Society, Fairfax, VA	Hard skills	Δ	✓	
AirSoft Training Facility, Manassas, VA	Hard skills	Δ	✓	
Marine Corps Base, Quantico, VA	Hard skills <sup>c</sup>	✓	✓	
Fort A. P. Hill, VA	Post blast training	✓		
Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Glynco, GA	Criminal investigator training program, advanced law enforcement training, analysts	✓		
Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Cheltenham, MD	Firearms	Δ		
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Canine Training, Front Royal, VA	Canine			✓
Camp Dawson, WV (West Virginia Army National Guard Training Site Command)	Hard skills			Δ
National Guard Training Base, San Luis Obispo, CA	Hard skills			Δ
U.S. Training Center, Moyock, NC	Hard skills		✓	✓
Department of State Annex 7A, Springfield, VA	Firearms, soft skills, security engineering and computer security labs	✓	✓	
Department of State Annex 11A, 11B, 11C, Dunn Loring, VA	Soft skills	✓	✓	
Department of State Annex 31, Springfield, VA	Security engineering and computer security labs, special skills	✓		
Interagency Training Center, Fort Washington, MD	Technical surveillance countermeasures	✓		

Source: DSTC.

Notes: ✓ = general utilization; Δ = backup utilization.

<sup>a</sup>Hard skills include the hands-on training that DSTC provides in areas such as firearms, driving, defensive tactics, and room entry techniques. Soft skills include training that is classroom-based in areas such as legal, cybersecurity, counterintelligence, physical security, and criminal investigations.

<sup>b</sup>TPS = Office of Training and Performance Standards; MSD = Office of Mobile Security Deployment, ATA = Office of Anti-Terrorism Assistance.

<sup>c</sup>Quantico Marine Base is most frequently used for firearms training but has been used for land navigation and other training.

# Appendix VIII: Comments from the Department of State



United States Department of State

Chief Financial Officer

Washington, D.C. 20520

Ms. Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers  
Managing Director  
International Affairs and Trade  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001

MAY 18 2011

Dear Ms. Williams-Bridgers:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your draft report, "DIPLOMATIC SECURITY: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts," GAO Job Code 320792.

The enclosed Department of State comments are provided for incorporation with this letter as an appendix to the final report.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Nancy Stout, Deputy Director, Bureau of Diplomatic Security at (703) 204-6182.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Millette".

James L. Millette

cc: GAO – Jess T. Ford  
DS – Eric J. Boswell  
State/OIG – Evelyn Klemstine

**Department of State Comments on GAO Draft Report**

**DIPLOMATIC SECURITY: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities  
Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts**  
(GAO-11-460, GAO Code 320792)

The Department of State appreciates the opportunity to comment on GAO's draft report entitled "*DIPLOMATIC SECURITY: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts.*"

GAO recommends that the Secretary of State:

Develop or improve the process to obtain participant evaluations for all of DSTC required training, including distributed learning efforts;

**Response:** The Diplomatic Security Training Center (DSTC) agrees with the recommendation and will seek an automated electronic survey tool that can reach State and non-State students in order to obtain training feedback.

Develop or improve the process to track individual DSTC training requirements and completion of DSTC training; and

**Response:** DSTC agrees with the recommendation. DSTC currently tracks student completions (for State and Non-State personnel) and course information in the Foreign Service Institute's (FSI) Student Training Management System (STMS). Reports may now be run to parse by course or by individual student transcript. STMS does not have the capability to automatically schedule students in courses, but we are exploring the capacity it has to produce reports that show who has not taken courses or automatic notification for those due to enroll in a course. DSTC is also exploring with FSI the capabilities of their learning management system.

Develop an action plan and associated timeframes needed to carry out the QDDR recommendation to increase the number of posts at which FACT is required.

**Response:** The Department of State agrees with the recommendation. This portion of the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) is being coordinated by the Policy Planning Staff (S/P) and the Office of

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Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation (M/PRI) as part of the task to revise the risk management framework. Diplomatic Security (DS) is participating actively with the Department and setting parameters for what additional posts should be added to the Foreign Affairs Counter Treat (FACT) requirement. Existing DS training facilities and instructor resources are now at maximum student capacity capabilities. It is imperative that the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) be constructed in order to expand the delivery of FACT training for U.S. Government employees working in high threat overseas locations.

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# Appendix IX: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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## GAO Contact

Jess T. Ford, (202) 512-4268 or [fordj@gao.gov](mailto:fordj@gao.gov)

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## Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Anthony Moran, Assistant Director; Thomas Costa; Anh Nguyen; David Dayton; and Daniel Elbert provided significant contributions to the work. Martin de Alteriis, Miriam Carroll Fenton, Cheron Green, Lisa Helmer, Grace Lui, and Jamilah Moon provided technical assistance and other support.

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## GAO's Mission

The Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

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