

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

August 6, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

I understand that the State Department is interested in moving forward with plans to construct a new dedicated training center, known as the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FAST-C), at Fort Pickett in Blackstone, Virginia. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on State Department and USAID Management, I want to ensure that our improvements to diplomatic security training efforts safeguard our diplomats and Americans abroad. As a steward of taxpayer dollars, I want to make certain that these efforts are completed in a cost-effective, timely manner.

As you know, the State Department's initial proposal for the construction of FAST-C was estimated to cost over \$950 million. A reduction in scope later lowered the cost of the proposal to \$460 million, and subsequently to \$413 million. I have concerns that this scaled down version leaves critical infrastructure needs, such as boarding, medical, dining, and recreational facilities unaddressed. I am also concerned that costs would likely increase significantly after the initial groundbreaking to address these gaps in infrastructure, and potentially additional training needs. In April 2014, the Administration confirmed that it planned to adopt the State Department's proposal to build FAST-C in Blackstone, Va.

To fully understand the current proposal, I request that the State Department provide a description of what was lost or sacrificed in order to take the FAST-C master plan from an estimated cost of \$950 million down to the most recent estimate of \$413 million. Specifically, what capabilities and training needs, if any, were lost in the de-scoped plan? Were critical infrastructure needs, such as boarding, medical, dining, and recreational facilities removed from the master plan? If so, how does the State Department plan to address these gaps? Would this require additional funds for per diem and hotels?

In May 2015, the U.S. General Services Administration signed a Record of Decision (ROD), which identified Fort Pickett as the site to construct and operate FAST-C. Further, I have learned that land was purchased at Fort Pickett after the Environmental Impact Study was completed earlier this year. Congress has yet to appropriate funds for the construction of FAST-C. With that in mind, could you please let me know what amount has been spent on FAST-C at Fort Pickett, and with what funds? Additionally, what funds have been obligated but not initiated thus far on construction of FAST-C at Fort Pickett?

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter, and thank you in advance for your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David A. Perdue". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "P".

David A. Perdue

Chairman

Subcommittee on State Department and USAID Management, International Operations, and
Bilateral International Development

CC: Under Secretary Patrick Kennedy

Deputy Secretary Heather Higginbottom