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May 21, 2018

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Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and Members of the  
Committee,

American national security depends heavily on both effective diplomacy and a strong military. Both are essential but diplomatic strength has been declining in a myriad of ways. Now there are critical issues that must urgently be addressed. On behalf of the non-partisan, non-governmental American Academy of Diplomacy, an organization of experienced diplomatic practitioners, we hope you will stress the following issues during Secretary of State Pompeo's May 24 testimony.

Above all, an adequate budget is a necessity. Over the last decade, even as the State Department's budget increased, funding for core diplomatic activities declined. That is, the budget for State's essential missions, the reason the Department exists, had declined to make way for support, particularly security. The increase in diplomatic security is a reflection of today's world, but if we arrive at a point where there is less and less scope for diplomatic action because of what we pay for security support, we will have lost direction and purpose. That is where we have been going. According to figures of the American Foreign Service Association, "if we spent one dollar in 2008 on core diplomatic capacity, by 2016 and 2017 that number had fallen to 76 cents, in nominal non-inflation adjusted terms."

Congress needs both to keep budget levels up, as it has been doing, and it needs to reverse the downward direction in core diplomatic funding. Secretary Pompeo should be asked for clarity and focus on this issue.

The past year has been a disaster for diplomatic staffing. The decision to reduce staffing without any clear notion of what the work force should look like and how it should be aligned with State's mission has been devastating to performance, in addition to catastrophic for morale. The details have been reported extensively but we would note four personnel aspects in particular because of the long term consequences.

Foreign Service intake has greatly slowed. Like the military the Foreign Service recruits at the bottom and builds officers over a career. This is essential for a top quality professional career service. But, like the military, if an inadequate number of lieutenants are brought in now, the majors necessary in ten years or the colonels in 20 will not be available.

Strengthening American Diplomacy

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We congratulate Secretary Pompeo for lifting the hiring freeze on Foreign Service and Civil Service personnel. This will still not make up for the excessive cuts in personnel of the last year, but it is a very positive step. The State Department does need reform but it needs to be done sensibly and carefully.

Secretary Pompeo should be asked how he expects to resume proper work force planning and size the work force to the needs of American diplomacy.

Will the lifting of the hiring freeze also restore the hiring of entry level Foreign Service Officers from the disastrous levels of the past year?

Second, the Foreign Service has an up or out promotion system. As the Department has held down promotions into the senior ranks, it is forcing qualified officers out of the Service because they cannot remain in their current rank even, though they would be qualified for promotion under normal circumstances. The result will be that these experienced 20 plus year veterans will not be available to meet the crises of the next decade when they might otherwise have been on duty.

What does Secretary Pompeo intend to do to preserve the high quality staff that should be available to him but that are being forced out by very limited promotions in a system that is fairly based on an up or out arrangement?

Third, the unusually rapid departure of senior officers has dangerously diminished State's pool of officers qualified for the most demanding leadership roles. In addition, many qualified officers have been shunted into make work assignments or stuck on temporary details. In a word, State has a very limited "bench" and is not using all the qualified officers it has. The good officers need to be used. Additional work will be needed to rebuild experience as well as numbers.

Secretary Pompeo should be asked whether qualified senior officers are going to be utilized and his assessment of gaps in the numbers of experienced senior Foreign Service and Civil Service Officers. He should explain his plans to repair the damage of the past year.

Fourth, a career Foreign Service will not meet professional standards without adequate education and training. There are serious needs for increased professional education as the Academy has documented in several reports, most recently *American Diplomacy at Risk*. The Foreign Service Institute has well over 100 vacancies currently.

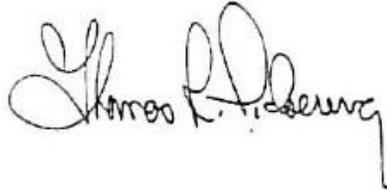
Secretary Pompeo should explain how he plans to promote adequate professional education for a professional work force.

Finally, there is the issue of balance between senior career and non-career officers at senior levels. Both enrich American diplomacy. However, it is most important that senior levels have adequate numbers of officers who have actual experience in what is required to implement policy with foreigners. Without this balance, foreign policy becomes divorced from reality; a separation that encourages failure. While there have been few nominations as yet to senior policy ranks in Washington, the perception is growing that the Administration may be hostile to career professionals. If the result were to be few to no career officers at the undersecretary and assistant secretary level, the result would be both a loss of diplomatic capability and the reversal of years to develop a career service.

Secretary Pompeo should be asked whether he is committed to a traditional balance between career and non-career officers in senior appointments.

In closing, we commend the recent moves by the Department to lift the freeze on employee and family member (EFM) employment. These are important steps. The Academy supports sensible reform in State, not simply putting back things as they were. Secretary Pompeo has made several statements recently in terms of rebuilding diplomatic excellence, which are very positive. We hope this trend will continue at the hearing. But Congress will need to be vigilant to repair the damage of the recent past.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Pickering  
Chairman



Ronald E. Neumann  
President