
Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the Foreign Service Institute

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The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) is, after all, nothing less than the portal to American diplomacy. This is where our professionals first enter the ranks of the foreign service and the Department of State (DoS), and this is where they update and strengthen their diplomatic skills as their careers advance ahead of the curve, and keep in mind that the men and women we bring into America's service are its greatest strength.

My perspective on FSI is, shall we say, a long one. When I joined the DoS in 1960, FSI had just moved to Rosslyn, D.C., having decamped from an old 21st Street row house to make way for what would become the Harry S. Truman building. The Rosslyn training facilities that many of us remember were a hodgepodge of crowded office cubicles. We did what we had to do there, but no one can say FSI Rosslyn was an optimal arrangement. The contrast between Rosslyn and this spacious campus could not be more striking. Here we enjoy a splendid learning environment, set apart from the press of day-to-day business in a way that encourages study and reflection. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who steered the acquisition and construction of this site, and particularly to Secretary George Shultz, who was its strongest proponent. Even more important, the quality of the foreign service, civil service, and foreign service national students who study at FSI could not be better. Each time I visit FSI, I am struck by the diversity of our classes and the enormous fount of knowledge and experience each student brings to the diplomatic challenges that face us as a nation. We educate our incoming colleagues here, but we also learn from them.

Like Foreign Service Institute Itself, America and the World Have Changed

In 1947, America was grappling with its prominent new role in world affairs. Secretary Marshall and his team confronted a divided Europe in economic ruins. They faced emerging Cold War competition fueled by an aggressive communist ideology. Colonial rule in the developing world was giving way to the powerful forces of repressed nationalism. China was isolated. Our diplomacy at the time was quite traditional. We had not entered the Information Age and were still operating in a relatively (by today's standards) slow-moving, closed-door fashion. Understandably, our diplomatic training was matched to our diplomatic practices. When FSI opened its doors, it offered instruction in only thirteen languages. Only a dozen or so professional study courses existed. And little thought was given to instilling the best leadership and management practices to meet the needs of a rapidly growing platform of embassies worldwide.

By the time Arlington Hall opened its doors to FSI in the fall of 1993, the Cold War had given way to the march of freedom. The powerful impact of global economic interdependence had left its mark on our diplomacy. Dozens of countries once subject to colonial rule had become important international players. Europe had united. The Soviet Union had disappeared. And China, no longer isolated, was fast becoming integrated into the global community. These profound changes, each in its way a long-standing goal of American diplomacy, benefited the American people. Our diplomats did not cause the transnational trends that swept the world during the last decades of the 20th century, but they recognized them, helped shape and guide them in conformity with our political, security, and economic interests and values.

For all the good we achieved, new challenges emerged. I would cite three in particular:

- First, the scourge of international terrorism, which is more complex than al Qaeda alone (far more complex) but which al Qaeda has done so much to fuel, orchestrate and implement terrorism's extremist ideology, commitment to violence, and ruthless tactics plague a large large swath of the globe. We must work closely with all of our international partners to put an end to terrorism.
- Second, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Perhaps the most notorious example of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation centered on the infamous A.Q. Kahn network, but there are other WMD proliferation threats. Today it is incumbent on the United States and our partners to bring an end to the nuclear weapons programs of North Korea and Iran, for example, as we did in the case of Libya. This requires tenacious, skillful, highly technical diplomacy.
- Third, I would cite the well-documented dangers the world community confronts when fragile states become failed states, allowing criminal and extremist organizations operational sanctuary. Globalization and the information age notwithstanding, the well-governed, law-abiding nation state remains the fundamental building block of the world order. It is in our national interest that we respond to this third challenge with creative diplomacy, supporting good governance, the rule of law, and economic policies that offer constructive and transformational alternatives to criminality and extremist violence.

We in the DoS are all grateful that FSI has been at the center of our efforts to train America's diplomats to operate safely and effectively in this changed and changing world. Seventy languages are now taught at FSI, building on FSI's tradition of superb language and area studies, a core competence of the foreign service. FSI offers almost 250 tradecraft and professional area studies courses. Employees from all federal agencies are trained in how to operate effectively within our embassies, with special attention paid to the question of ensuring thorough security training. The fact is that much of what FSI does today bears little resemblance to the training it provided in 1947. Public diplomacy is a major field of practice. A whole school is devoted to the needs of our information technology specialists.

The FSI Leadership and Management School is Shaping Our Men and Women to be More Effective Leaders at Every Level

These and other changes dramatically reflect the requirements of practicing diplomacy in a world not as it was, but as it is and as we wish it to be. Secretary of State Rice's encompassing vision for this assignment is to make our diplomacy transformational. The FSI that we celebrate today has taken the lead in explaining how every one of us can be transformational in our actions and impact, through

- Better leadership skills
- Stronger public speaking skills
- More active, results-oriented outreach to those outside government who exert so much influence on national policies everywhere

I am very pleased by the way FSI has stepped up to the challenge of training our Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and helping provide tools to those assigned to American Presence Posts. By the same token, FSI has done pioneering work in developing a whole new range of initiatives in distance learning. Now every desktop is a learning platform, and every employee can acquire the knowledge and skills needed to advance America's interests regardless of where one is assigned.

This is Visionary Training

So while FSI's past is as grand as the oaks that surround us on this campus, it is FSI's future that we applaud today. And we are especially proud of FSI's devoted staff. They work selflessly, effectively, and hard. It is because of them that FSI will continue to innovate in ways that will help America achieve a more stable and peaceful world.