

The Honorable Carol Z. Perez
Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human
Resources
Bureau of Human Resources
U.S Department of State
Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
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Budget

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Zeldin, and distinguished members of the subcommittee for inviting me to discuss the FY 2020 State Department budget request. As Secretary Pompeo noted when he testified before the Committee at the end of March, our FY 2020 budget request “will fully fund State and USAID's current workforce levels, enabling us to take on emerging policy challenges.” In his words, “We have a remarkable workforce doing an important mission.” At a time of growing global complexity and competition, a strong Department is critical to our success as a nation.

That is why over the past year Secretary Pompeo has prioritized putting our team back on the field since his first day in office. Under his leadership, we’ve welcomed 10 Foreign Service classes (or 712 Foreign Service employees). We have set our Foreign Service and Civil Service staffing levels at 454 employees above the December 31, 2017 on board staffing levels for which the Congress specified funding in the fiscal year 2018 appropriations. We’ve also stepped up employee engagement and communication and taken steps to expand training and professional

development, fill vacancies, and reward the work being done by our employees.

As Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources, I will focus my remarks on the \$2.8 billion FY 2020 request for Human Resources and the Department’s global workforce, which is primarily within the larger \$13.0 billion ‘Diplomatic Engagement’ appropriations request Director Pitkin will discuss. Our people—Foreign Service, Civil Service, Locally Employed staff, and Eligible Family Members—are our greatest resource and they deserve our full support. These women and men work both at home and abroad in service to our country. Our American personnel swear an oath to protect and defend the Constitution, often at great sacrifice to themselves and their families. Our locally employed staff sometimes also incur great risks working with and for the United States.

The Human Resources budget request will support salaries for our 25,517 domestic and overseas American employees. Our almost 14,087 Foreign Service employees, both our officers and specialists, are our forward-deployed force doing everything from opening markets for American companies and helping American citizens overseas to preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Our over 11,430 Civil Service personnel are the Department's institutional memory, continuity, and subject matter experts, based mostly in Washington, but also at our passport, security, and foreign mission offices across the country. Our eligible family members are a vital source of talent at our embassies overseas. Leveraging their skills is good for morale and a force multiplier in carrying out the Department's mission.

I noted earlier the progress we've made in Foreign Service hiring and staffing. On the Civil Service side, we are on track to return to hiring levels significantly above the December 2017 level specified by Congress but it has been a little slower due to the decentralized nature of Civil Service hiring. The FY 2020 request will support continued

development of the talent and capacity of our Civil Service workforce that is better prepared to address the challenges of today's international environment.

Our 50,000 locally employed staff are the mainstay of our U.S. diplomatic operations abroad. We continue to look at ways to ensure we can attract and retain the best local talent.

Mr. Chairman, successful organizations share one characteristic: they adapt. The Department has been around for 230 years. And in order to remain an employer of choice, it must innovate and effectively compete with the private sector to recruit, retain and empower the best talent. As Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources, I have made innovation a key focus area. My team and I are looking closely at improvements to our policies and processes so we can better support our people. And we're removing barriers and streamlining processes so employees can focus on their core responsibilities.

The 75,000-strong Department workforce is a winning investment for our nation. They deliver results for the American people every day. And with this budget and your support, we'll give them the resources to continue doing so.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here today. I look forward to answering your questions.