



AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

AFSA Speakers Bureau Talking Points for Military Audiences

- The men and women of the U.S. Foreign Service are proud to *serve the American people*, promoting our country's security and prosperity. We are deployed worldwide to protect and serve America's people, interests and values. The State Department and U.S. armed forces work together closely on all matters of policy; neither one could be effective without the role played by the other. Our work not only helps to prevent war, but allows us to confront our adversaries and collaborate with our allies with a smarter, better-informed strategy.
- The Foreign Service and the armed forces collaborate out in the field, in many dangerous and challenging places. Marine Guards protect American embassies around the world. Our services are two sides of the same coin.
- We are forward-deployed, everywhere. The U.S. is the only country that sends its Foreign Service to all but three nations in the world. We thus have a unique ability to gain understanding of the world's events and pass that knowledge back to policymakers in Washington. We also have a unique ability to explain the U.S. and its policies to people worldwide, which is vital to our security in a post-9/11 world.
- We do our work by engaging with the local people, whether with government officials or average citizens. Our work to stabilize countries and influence foreign opinion translates into untold savings of both money and American lives otherwise lost to war. As Gen. James Mattis, Commander of U.S. Central Command, told the Senate in March 2013, "If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition."

- We are proud to serve our country, including putting ourselves in harm's way when necessary. 89 percent of current Foreign Service members have served in a hardship posting, and 10 percent of positions are unaccompanied, meaning they are in war zones and you can't take your family with you. If you come to the State Department or USAID in Washington, you will see carved into the walls the names of the hundreds of brave men and women who gave their lives overseas in service of their country.
- The work of the Foreign Service creates jobs. U.S. commercial advocacy abroad has achieved record exports for five consecutive years, with exports reaching an all-time high of \$2.34 trillion in 2014, supporting 11.7 million American jobs. Furthermore, the foreign students and tourists whose travel we facilitate contribute \$275 billion to the U.S. economy every year.
- The work of the Foreign Service helps American individuals. If you or your loved ones are traveling abroad and you are the victim of a crime, or you have a run-in with law enforcement, the U.S. Embassy is there to provide assistance. This is also true for families attempting to adopt children from overseas.
- The Foreign Service isn't just the State Department. Our colleagues at the U.S. Agency for International Development deliver food aid and disaster assistance while advancing democracy around the world. The Foreign Commercial Service promotes American businesses and exports abroad, while the Foreign Agricultural Service develops markets for U.S. agricultural products and works on food security. The Broadcasting Board of Governors brings America's values right to your radio or wireless device, without the interference of local propaganda. There are no cocktail parties in the job description of a modern diplomat.
- When we return from dangerous places where we have served our country, we do not expect public recognition. We find our work fulfilling in its own right. But we do want our fellow Americans to know about the work that we do. Above all, we want to make sure that our fellow Americans are educated about the complex political, historical, and cultural tapestry with which we engage worldwide. America remains the most powerful country in the world, and as such, we are constantly in contact with the world. It is vital for any democracy to have an informed citizenry, but all the more so in this context, given our country's unique role in the world. If you take nothing else away from my talk today, please take it as a call to continue your efforts to learn everything that

you can about foreign affairs, and to exhort your friends and family to do the same.

- Let me take this opportunity to remind all of you that while we have been sharing views, 8,000 Foreign Service officers and specialists are on watch at some 265 American Embassies and Consulates all over the world. They are our first line of defense. I hope you will think of them as they perform their duties often in dangerous and difficult places. I also hope you will urge your Senators and Representatives to also think of them and to provide the moral and financial support necessary for a successful foreign policy. Thank you.