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25th Anniversary of Foreign Service Institute

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

In Commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the
Foreign Service Institute

I think it is in order today to pay tribute to one of the most important, effective, and least well known of schools dedicated to the advancement of foreign affairs training. It is in a high-rise office building in Rosslyn rather than on a rolling campus but the educational job which it does is extraordinary.

Twenty-five years ago, the Foreign Service Act of 1946 established the Foreign Service Institute "to furnish training and instruction to officers and employees of the (Foreign) Service and of the (State) Department and to other officers and employees of the Government for whom training and instruction in the field of foreign relations is necessary, and in order to promote and foster programs of study incidental to such training."

The Institute was by no means the first attempt of the U. S. Government, or even the State Department, to organize training in foreign affairs for its foreign service employees. Indeed, institutional training in foreign affairs began as long ago as 1826, with selective language training in Turkish, Arabic, and Berber, among others.

The special significance of the present Foreign Service Institute is that in line with the expanded postwar role of the United States in world affairs, the Foreign Service Institute provides training not only for diplomatic personnel but also for the personnel of all U. S. agencies with overseas
responsibilities. This broadened student body and a broadened curriculum of study has had an immensely valuable impact on the character of the conduct of all of our official relations with other nations.

The Foreign Service Institute is not a constant, unchanging establishment with a rigid program of study and an inflexible organization chart. It has been responsive to the changing positions of the United States in an ever-changing world. It has shifted to meet the ever-changing needs of the nation's foreign operations.

The basic goals of the Institute, however, remain unchanged. As outlined in 1960, they were: 1. to provide a general introduction and orientation to the Service and its operations for all new officers; 2. to prepare officers when necessary in the language and culture of their next country of assignment; 3. to prepare officers for the next assignment by training them in the particular duty they will perform; 4. to broaden an awareness of the world around them for mid-career officers; 5. to deepen the understanding of national security affairs and policy formation for selected officers at the senior level; and 6. to enable a person to continue his education throughout his professional career.
One measure of the increasing importance of the Foreign Service Institute has been the enrollment which has risen from a handful in 1946 to several thousand full and part-time students in fiscal 1971. The Institute was once a kind of step-child of the foreign affairs community to be housed wherever a vacant room could be found. Its present facilities are designed with great specificity to provide the linguistic and other specialized training which is offered. Language studies, with 53 per cent of the enrollment remain the focus of the Institute. It is interesting to note that when the President went to China, he could draw instantly on an ample corps of excellent Chinese linguists and other specialists in Chinese affairs most of whom had received training at the Institute. That is the kind of alert and anticipatory management which has characterized this institution throughout its history.

The last few years have witnessed a dramatic increase in the area of Professional Studies, with economics and administration major new fields of importance. Several other attempts to broaden and deepen the background of foreign service officers are also noteworthy. For example, speakers from the nation's major universities constitute over half of the guest lecturers in course offered in Country and Area Studies, the Senior Seminar, and the National Interdepartmental Seminar. The American campuses provide consultants to the Institute and nearly 1200 Foreign Service Institute students are taking courses or acting as scholars in residence in many of our nation's leading colleges and universities.
The Foreign Service Institute has also been a forerunner in the development of in-depth training courses for its mid-level officers in several fields. A new technique of total immersion in subjects such as economics, enables foreign service officers to obtain the equivalent of an undergraduate degree in less than a year. And the methods of applying the new techniques of language study, which have often been pioneered and developed by the Institute have been widely admired and copied both in this country and abroad.

The Foreign Service Institute has provided twenty-five years of top quality, readily available, and relevant educational services to meet the ever expanding needs of international intercourse—diplomatic, economic and cultural. This is a time to commend the directors of the Foreign Service Institute who over these years have wisely directed the course of this outstanding training Institute as well as the Department of State, for giving it increasing support, and the Congress which has registered a continuing faith in the undertaking.

The Institute is headed during the present period of rapid and unpredictable change by Howard E. Sollenberger. Mr. Sollenberger has been associated with the school since its beginnings. He happens to be both an educator and a foreign affairs specialist. His outstanding experience in both fields, moreover, is associated with China. He is, himself, an exceptional Chinese linguist. It is a most fortuitous coincidence that Mr. Sollenberger is heading the Institute at a time when the President has initiated a new era of contact with the Chinese government. In meeting the requirements of that situation, as well as in many others there is every reason to expect that the Foreign Service Institute will continue to serve and to grow as the creative institution which it has been for the last twenty-five years.