One Hell of a Year

A Retrospective by the Translating Division, Office of Language Services (LS), US Department of State
ILR T&I Committee – December 11, 2020
Conferences Galore!
More Travel than Ever!
Total Suite Refurbishment!
Perpetual Party!
One REAL Hell of a Year

A Retrospective by the Translating Division
Before the quarantine: three key gatherings

• Life cycle of the LS/T Contractor

• All-hands meeting with the Treaty Office

• Seminar on audio translation

THESE THREE MEETINGS ALL FED INTO THE LS/T STRATEGIC PLAN
March 2020: Adjusting to a new way of working

- All 26 LS/T staffers were teleworking 100% by the end of March 2020
  - LS/T telework goes back to 1997
  - Major expansion after c. 2012
  - F/T teleworkers in Austin, San Antonio, LA, Tokyo, and Halifax
- Connectivity conundrums and fob foils
- EMDs (GO Desktop) for 7 LS/T staffers in April 2020 (more are on the way)
- Suite access still needed for classified work
- Maintaining ClassNet access can be a challenge
- More USG IPhones (Fall 2020)
COVID-related work

• Medical journal articles Chinese to English
• Italian news reports
• POCs with NIH and CDC
• Countering disinformation on COVID
• Video for custodial staff - Spanish
• IVLP alumni video – Arabic
• Vaccine notices
Lots of comparisons – but no comparison

Before...

...and after
Outreach continues

- MIIS
  - MIIS meet-up Tokyo (Feb)
  - MIIS Job Fair (Mar)
- AATIA
  - “Getting at that Text” (May)
  - AATIA Job Fair (Sep)
- Princeton University
  - Lecture for a course by Dr. Bellos (Aug)
- ATA: 7 staffers attend from LS/T
  - Address to PM Special Interest Group (Oct)
  - Session: “Diplomatic Terms” (Oct)
- Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR)
  - “Business as Usual in Unusual Times” (Dec)
Continuing education

- INL/ABA International Law course
- ATA and NCATA Webinars
- TAUS
- InDesign
- Project Management
Annual reports on track

- 2019 Human Rights Reports (HRRs)
- 2019 International Religious Freedom (IRF) Reports
- 2020 Trafficking in Persons (TIP)
- 2020 Child Labor (Labor Department)
• Office of Legal Adviser files submissions with international tribunals every few years
• Direct LS project management (after years of delegation)
• Biggest filing ever: 1.5 million words
• Two-month deadline (client cut two months off the original deadline)
• LLD = small roster
• 20 translators recruited – onboarding vehicle for surge work
• 3-stage QC process
• Deadline met!
Commission on Unalienable Rights

(SecState tweet in March 2020)

• Documents of American Democracy
• Secretary’s Report
Virtual G7 Speakers’ Meeting
Technological advances

- Streamlined Term Base Management
- Pilot SYSTRAN and Trados Neural Machine (NMT) Translation Programs
- Expanded use of Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) tools on staff – Six Task Forces to coordinate:
  - Workflow
  - Training
  - Rates
  - Monitoring Progress
  - Term Base (TB) and Translation Memory (TM) maintenance
  - Multilingual DTP + CAT tools
- Major push for building an automated staff Translation Memory
- Pilot Lilt NMT Program (pending)
- First PM support for a virtual conference (ARCENT Land Forces Intelligence Conference)
- Previewed two remote testing platforms
Staffing advances

- Branch Chief
- French Translator
- Visiting French Translator
- New Project Manager (from MIIS, former intern)
- Two Project Managers moved from freelance to staffing contract
Awards

- Two honorable mentions at A/OPR Quarterly Meeting
- A Group Award for Romance Branch
- One individual award for LS/T
- One nomination for One Team Award
- One honorable mention for A/OPR most memorable project
New frontiers

• Next geopolitical hotspot: The Arctic Region
  Norwegian, Icelandic, Russian, Faroese...Greenlandic?

• Belarus erupts
Thank you!

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