

**STATEMENT BY**

**Gregory B. Starr**

**Acting Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, Principal Deputy  
Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, and Director of the Diplomatic  
Security Service  
Department of State**

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

July 16, 2013

Good morning Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and distinguished Committee members. Thank you for your invitation to appear here today to discuss the future of diplomatic security. We appreciate and share your commitment to enhanced embassy security as evidenced in the recently introduced “Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty Embassy Security and Personnel Protection Act of 2013.”

### ***Today’s Diplomacy***

The attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities last September, and subsequent attacks this year against diplomatic facilities and personnel, remind us that the world remains a dangerous place for diplomacy. Unfortunately, this is nothing new. Being on the front lines of U.S. national security has always been inherently risky; however, we strive to mitigate this risk to the maximum extent possible. The fact remains that we will not, even with the most willing and capable governments as our partners, stop terrorists or extremists from attacking us in every instance. Rather, we must carefully balance this risk against the value of pursuing our national interests. We have learned some very hard and painful lessons in Benghazi. We are already acting on them.

The State Department carries on the business of the American government and its people at 284 locations, many in challenging security environments where key U.S. national security interests are at stake. Every day, the Department works to protect our people and missions by constantly assessing threats and our security posture. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) advances American interests and foreign policy by protecting people, property, and information. We do this by maintaining a security program that includes analyzing threats, managing the security situation, and mitigating risks.

### ***Analyzing Threats***

DS constantly researches, monitors, and analyzes threats against Americans, our diplomatic facilities, and U.S. diplomatic personnel. This information, along with trend analyses and case studies of political violence, terrorist acts, and crime form the basis of threat assessments that are provided to Department senior managers to support operational and policy decision making. From this analysis, we determine what additional security measures, short-term or long-term, should be taken to mitigate potential threats against our diplomatic assets.

## ***Managing the Security Environment and Mitigating Threats***

From DS analysts in Washington D.C. monitoring threats against our posts to Regional Security Officers abroad managing security programs at those posts, we strive to provide the most secure platform for conducting American diplomacy. Building on the recommendations of the independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board, the Interagency Security Assessment Teams, and our own considerable experience and expertise, the Department is diligently working to improve the way we protect our diplomats not only at high-threat, high-risk posts but at all of our facilities worldwide.

Thanks in large part to your generous support in the FY2013 Continuing Resolution, progress is well underway.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the independent Benghazi ARB, DS plans to train more of the U.S. foreign affairs community to deal with high-risk environments through our Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat course. We are expanding the duration of the DS high-threat tactical training course and incorporating elements of that training into other DS courses so that regardless of a DS special agent's assignment, we have a flexible cadre of agents trained to operate in varying security environments.

DS is hiring 151 new security professionals this and the next fiscal year, many of whom will directly serve at or provide support to our high-threat, high-risk posts. We are also working very closely with the Department of Defense (DOD) to expand the Marine Security Guard program, as well as to enhance the availability of forces to respond *in extremis* to threatened U.S. personnel and facilities. We recently worked with DOD and the U.S. Marine Corps to elevate personnel security as a primary mission of the Marine Security Guards. Each of these efforts enhances the Department's ability to supplement, as necessary, the host government's measures in fulfilling its obligations under international law to protect U.S. diplomatic and consular property and personnel.

The increased security funds you have provided will also support our colleagues at the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations in providing facilities for additional Marine Security Guard Detachments, as well as the construction of new facilities and security upgrade projects at some of our most critical posts.

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security realizes our work in securing our posts and protecting our people will never be done. We take great pride in our accomplishments, apply lessons learned, and look forward to working with Congress on embassy security. I will be glad to answer any questions you have.