

STATEMENT BY

Bill Miller
Deputy Assistant Secretary of High Threat Posts
Bureau of Diplomatic Security
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 embassy security. We appreciate and share your commitment to enhanced embassy security, as evidenced by the recently introduced “Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty Embassy Security and Personnel Protection Act of 2013.”

Threats and attacks against our diplomatic facilities and personnel have been a concern since the inception of embassy security almost 100 years ago. To counter these global threats, the Office of the Chief Special Agent, the forerunner of diplomatic security was formed in 1916. It was not until 1985, in the aftermath of the Beirut bombings, that Diplomatic Security (DS) became a Bureau within the State Department. The DS mandate was solidified when Congress passed the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986. When I was preparing to leave my position as a Marine Corps officer and wanted to continue my service to the U.S. government, the mission and vision of DS was a team that I wanted to join. In 1987, I became a DS Special Agent. Since then, I have devoted my 25-year career to fulfilling the mission of DS: providing a safe and secure environment for the conduct of foreign policy.

Early in my career, I was part of the Secretary of State’s protective detail. I have also served in our Washington field office, as the Chief of Security Training, Chief of Counterintelligence Investigations, and Director of Contingency Operations. I have managed security programs as a Regional Security Officer, also known as an RSO, in Iraq, Pakistan, Jerusalem, the Philippines, and Egypt. To demonstrate the depth of my experience and that of a DS Special Agent, I would like to highlight a few of my accomplishments. As an RSO, I dealt daily with possible terrorist acts that impacted the lives of Americans, including the kidnapping of Americans in the Philippines, as well as the capture of Ramzi Yousef, one of the main perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. When the United States returned to Iraq in 2003, I was asked to serve as the first RSO to manage the volatile security environment as we re-established our diplomatic presence. Most recently overseas, I was the RSO in Egypt during the Arab Spring; an experience that informs my decision making as I work to ensure adequate security resources during the ongoing transition in Egypt.

After the September 2012 attacks on our facilities in Libya, Yemen, Tunisia, Sudan, and Egypt, the Department reviewed its security posture and created my position, the Diplomatic Security Deputy Assistant Secretary of High Threat Posts, also known as HTP, along with a staff of security professional to support high-

threat, high-risk posts. The Department assessed our diplomatic missions worldwide and weighed criteria to determine which posts are designated as high-threat, high-risk – there are now 27 posts which fall under this designation. This designation is not a static process and the list will be reviewed annually, at a minimum, and more frequently as needed. As emergent conditions substantially change, for better or for worse, at any post worldwide, high-threat, high-risk designations will shift, and missions will be added or deleted from this category. The HTP Directorate I oversee will lead the security operations in these high-threat, high-risk posts around the world, coordinate strategic and operational planning, and drive innovation across the broad spectrum of DS missions and responsibilities. We continue to work closely with the Regional Bureaus to ensure that everyone has visibility of the security threats at our posts.

As the Deputy Assistant Secretary for HTP, I am responsible for evaluating, managing, and mitigating the security threats, as well as directing resource requirements at high-threat diplomatic missions. I closely follow developments, continually assess our security posture, and take all possible steps to mitigate threats and vulnerabilities. While the Department has created a position for high-threat post designations, we must continue to focus on embassy security worldwide. I coordinate closely with my colleagues in DS, the Department, and the interagency to ensure the threats and risk mitigation strategies are shared globally.

We can never truly eliminate all the risks facing our dedicated personnel working overseas to advance U.S. interests. However, as the Department has said, we place the highest priority on the security of our personnel and will continue to take steps, which in some instances includes extraordinary measures, to provide for their safety.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and to discuss the future of embassy security. I am available to answer any questions you may have.