

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Richard G. Lugar, Chairman
Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Ranking Member

TESTIMONY OF

AMBASSADOR FRANCIS X. TAYLOR

Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security
and the Office of Foreign Missions
United States Department of State

on

SAFER EMBASSIES IN UNSAFE PLACES

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Mr. Chairman, Senator Biden, and distinguished members of the committee - I am honored to appear before you today with my esteemed colleague to speak on the issue of security of our Embassies and Consulates abroad, and our efforts with both domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies to ensure the security of Americans abroad and to protect our borders. As Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, I am acutely aware of, and in many ways responsible for, countering the serious threats to Americans and American facilities operating overseas.

Congress has played an important role in the evolution of how the Department of State protects our operations overseas. As a result of attacks against our facilities in the 1980s and the problems associated with the first effort at building the new embassy in Moscow, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 1989 and 1990 included a requirement that the Secretary certify to Congress that adequate and appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the Department builds safe and secure facilities.

As a result of the 1998 embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar-Es-Salam, Congress passed new legislation, now referred to as the "Secure Embassy Counter terrorism and Construction Act", mandating 100 feet of setback and collocation of all Foreign Affairs agencies in newly constructed facilities overseas, unless a specific waiver was granted by the Secretary or myself.

The Department has faithfully complied with the certification requirement, and I can state unequivocally that this has resulted in the construction of safer more secure facilities overseas.

Safer Embassies

Congress also provided generous, and most necessary, funding in the form of an emergency security appropriation in the aftermath of the 1998 embassy bombings. This funding allowed us to install shatter resistant window film; duck and cover alert systems; and CCTV recording systems worldwide. We upgraded our technical security systems, power, and wiring. It allowed us to improve our perimeter security at our most threatened posts with better walls, public access control screening booths, and additional

anti-ram protection. And it provided us the means to purchase explosive detectors and X-Ray equipment for virtually every post in the world. Improvements made to the U.S. Consulate in Karachi with this funding undoubtedly saved many lives when a suicide car bomber struck in 2002.

However, I am not here this on this occasion to provide a discourse solely on actions we have jointly taken in the past. You have asked GAO to report on the state of diplomatic facility conditions. I think their presentation has fairly and accurately stated the depth of our requirements in order to meet the Department's diplomatic goals in a relatively safe and secure environment.

You have heard from General Williams, on his restructuring of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations to meet these requirements. He has outlined his goals, execution strategies, and budget requests. I think the success of his efforts is self-evident. His efforts, and more importantly his results, have built a new level of credibility with Congress, and convinced skeptics that the Department can adapt to new methods of management and utilize some of the best practices from industry. I support his efforts, and my offices within Diplomatic Security will continue to work closely with OBO.

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security is not standing still either. A highly focused development effort in our physical security office has successfully delivered new products and methods that will allow OBO to better mitigate our vulnerabilities. Department of State proprietary standards for forced entry and bullet resistant doors and windows, once the only standards in industry or government concerned with this type of security, have been supplemented by adoption of industry standards promulgated by Underwriters Laboratories and the American Society of Testing and Manufacturing. We have developed and commercialized a totally new lightweight laminated glass blast window that will lower costs and simplify installations. This material is now commercially available. We have pioneered new developments in anti-ram vehicle protection and provided new products more acceptable to foreign governments and architects. We have done this in partnership with other U.S. government agencies to leverage our work and provide better answers across our spectrum of needs.

DS Special Agents serving in Regional Security Offices anchor our overseas security efforts and provide a first line of defense for U.S. Diplomatic personnel, their families, U.S. Diplomatic Missions, and national security information. More than 420 DS security officers in 157 countries advise chiefs of missions on security matters, and develop and implement the programs that shield each U.S. Mission and residence from physical and technical attack. A little known fact is that DS also provides security professionals at OBO construction projects overseas for the entire duration of the construction. Known as Site Security Managers, these DS agents ensure that project security requirements are foremost in these important and complex efforts.

Our level of cooperation with OBO has never been as close as it is today. The Department's need for safe and modern facilities has never been more apparent. DS and OBO goals have never been as clearly aligned. We need your continued support to build upon the fine efforts the Department has made in the last three years to construct more new embassies and consulates. If General Williams says he can produce even more on an annual basis, then DS will be there supporting his effort.

While I have only been the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security since November, I was the Department's Coordinator for Counterterrorism. Before that, I spent 31 years in the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, serving as its Commander from July 1996 until my retirement in July in 2001. In all of these positions, I have had the privilege to work with the men and women of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Office of Foreign Missions. I am awed by the scope of their missions and the dedication and professionalism they demonstrate daily in protecting Americans and American interests worldwide. I was particularly proud, when recently, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA) recognized 12 of our people with the association's highest honor for courage demonstrated in rescues last March as they evacuated 15 Americans stranded in Ramallah " working literally meters away from Israeli-Palestinian firefights", and again last April when our agents rescued 18 Americans, including six children, along with nationals from Britain, Japan and Italy who had been trapped by fighting in Bethlehem.

In addition to supporting the overseas construction program we have a multi-faceted partnership with both domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies. These relationships ensure better security aboard for Americans and foreign national employees of the Department of State, and help to secure our national borders here at home. They have been built over time to provide a layered and secure environment for the conduct of American diplomacy and the promotion of American interests worldwide, as well as helping us increase security awareness among all Americans living, working and traveling abroad.

Investigations

In the area of investigations, during the 2002 calendar year, DS Special Agents investigated nearly 5000 passport and visa fraud cases and made over 400 arrests. These felonies are often committed in conjunction with more serious crimes by individuals looking to change their identities and conceal their activities and movements. DS has investigated passport and visa fraud cases that have been connected not only to terrorism, but also to drug trafficking, international organized crime, money laundering, pedophilia and murder. Our investigations help secure U.S. borders and protect the national security of the United States.

Securing our Borders

Domestically, DS is also actively involved in the border security effort. DS' eight Field Offices and fifteen Resident Offices coordinate with Consular Affairs Passport Agencies to vigorously investigate passport fraud cases. The DS Visa Fraud Branch is working collaboratively with the Department of State OIG Office of Investigations to examine all allegations of consular malfeasance and employee corruption that may compromise the integrity of the visa process. DS is represented on 19 Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) around the country, and works closely with the FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies to investigate any passport or visa fraud investigations with a possible terrorism nexus. DS, in partnerships with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and State OIG, plays an important role in helping to secure our nation's borders. It is because of this partnership that we will succeed.

Protective Intelligence

In addition, DS conducts protective intelligence investigations into threats made against the Secretary of State, other Department employees, facilities here and abroad, foreign dignitaries under our protection, and foreign missions in the United States. Since the East Africa bombings, DS has investigated thousands of threats directed at our missions and personnel around the world.

Rewards for Justice

DS also administers the interagency Rewards for Justice Program, which allows the Secretary of State to offer rewards for information that prevents or resolves acts of international terrorism against U.S. interests worldwide. There is no doubt that information received under this program has put terrorist behind bars, saved thousands of lives, and is a key component of the U.S. Governments fight against international terrorism.

Protective Operations

Diplomatic Security protects more dignitaries than any other agency in the U.S. Government. DS Special Agents guard the Secretary of State 24 hours a day, seven days a week, everywhere he goes in the world. DS also protects the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and foreign dignitaries who visit the United States (approximately 150 each year). Among those foreign dignitaries who have received DS protection are foreign ministers, former heads of state, members of the British royal family, representatives of the Middle East Peace Delegations, the Secretary General of NATO, Palestinian Authority Chairman Yassar Arafat, and the Dali Lama. DS coordinates this protection with state and local police and with other federal law enforcement agencies in the cities to be visited. The DS's Office of Foreign Missions also assists foreign Embassies and their Consulates in the United States with the security for their missions and personnel. I would like to thank the committee for the increased agent authorities provided last year that will assist us in the conduct of this mission.

Crisis Management

DS Special Agents serving in regional security offices anchor our overseas security efforts and provide the first line of defense for U.S. diplomatic personnel, their families, U.S. diplomatic missions, and national security information. DS Special Agents, in concert with other mission or post elements, formulate a number of subject specific action plans to deal with various emergency contingencies ranging from hostage taking to evacuations. Often in times of crisis and political instability, DS Special Agents rely on the U.S. military for assistance. Since the early 1990s, DS agents have worked closely with the military, especially the U.S. Marine Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Teams, which have provided emergency force protection support for Department of State operations in a number of countries throughout the world when the host government was unable to do so.

International Liaison

In addition, special agents are the primary liaison with foreign police and security services overseas in an effort to obtain support for U.S. law enforcement initiatives and investigations. Much of the investigative and law enforcement liaison work done by special agents abroad is on behalf of other Federal, State and local agencies. The Bureau receives more than 5,000 requests for overseas investigative assistance from U.S. law enforcement each year, and has achieved noteworthy success in locating and apprehending wanted fugitives who have fled the United States.

Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program

The war against international terrorism is one that the United States cannot wage alone. Through the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program, DS arranges for training in the United States for civilian security personnel from allied governments in police procedures focused on terrorism. Since the program's inception in 1983, more than 31,000 foreign students from 127 countries have received training in bomb detection, crime scene investigations, airport and building security, maritime security, and dignitary protection. These officials return

to their countries better prepared to fight terrorism and protect Americans overseas in times of crisis. DS has received numerous stories from foreign police officers who have utilized their ATA training successfully to counter terrorist situations in their countries.

The economic and national prosperity of the United States depends on a strong and vigorous private sector that is able to conduct business safely and securely throughout the world.

Overseas Security Advisory Council

In addition to protecting our people, information, and property, DS, through the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), works with the U.S. private sector on security issues abroad. The Council, one of the preeminent public-private partnerships in the United States today, was established in 1985 and is co-chaired by DS. It consists of representatives from the U.S. government and the U.S. business community on overseas security issues of mutual concern. Since its inception, over 2,300 U.S. companies have repeatedly sought assistance from the Council.

The Council operates an electronic database that can be accessed via the Internet by OSAC's constituency. This database contains a directory of all Foreign Services posts by country, including regional security officers, police organizations, State Department travel advisories, security and crime situations, terrorism profiles, significant anniversary dates, and messages highlighting information of interest to American business travelers. DS Special Agents also provide unclassified security briefings and other professional advice to U.S. businesses overseas.

Diplomatic Security and the Bureau of Consular Affairs are at the forefront of our nation's efforts to adequately secure our borders from possible terrorist threats. Those efforts begin at the consular interview window in each of our Embassies and Consulates around the world. DS is deploying additional agents overseas to expand our investigative efforts to identify fraudulent applicants and other individuals who attempt to compromise the integrity of our passport and visa process. DS agents and Consular Officers working at our embassies and consulates continue to work closely with numerous host government law

enforcement authorities to identify, arrest, and prosecute these individuals before they reach our shores.

I would like to thank the Committee for its continuing interest and support of the Diplomatic Security Service and the Office of Foreign Missions and would welcome any questions you might have.