

USG Diplomatic Security: An Historical Overview

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1910's

- 1916: Secretary of State **Robert Lansing** formally established within the Department of State an office of security, headed by a Chief Special Agent reporting directly to the Secretary. Agents in Washington and New York operated on confidential funds from the Secretary's office, conducting sensitive investigations, especially on the **operations of foreign agents** and their activities in the U.S.
- 1918: Congress passed legislation requiring passports for Americans traveling abroad and visas for aliens wishing to enter the United States. The Chief Special Agent's office investigated **passport and visa fraud**, and special agents **protected distinguished visitors** to the U.S.
- World War I: the office interned and exchanged diplomatic officials of enemy powers and assisted in screening people repatriated from enemy-controlled areas.

1920's

- The Chief Special Agent began reporting to the **Assistant Secretary for Administration**, however he still reported directly to the Secretary on sensitive matters.
- With the help of U.S. Postal Inspectors, security at State expanded to include **immigration control** and control of **crime on the high seas**.

1930's

- Working as the investigative and identification arm of the Passport Office, the Chief Special Agent's office successfully exposed several major passport fraud activities worldwide involving Communists and Nazis, which in many cases led to the discovery of **Soviet and German espionage networks**.

1940's

- World War II: the office interned and exchanged diplomatic officials of enemy powers and screened Americans and those claiming American citizenship after they were forced to leave occupied territories.
- After the war, Secretary of State **Edward Stettinius** undertook a complete reorganization of the Department, requesting the FBI review and make recommendations on physical and personnel security. One important result of that report was the **separation of security functions** in the Department.
- A new **Office of Security (SY)** was set up separate from the Chief Special Agent's office. This new office had a program of regional security staffs in the U.S. and, for the first time, security officers at missions overseas.
- 1948: Foreign Correlations (an intelligence service) was incorporated into the office, and the Marine Security Guard Program was also inaugurated at U.S. embassies.

1950's

- The discovery of a listening device in the Great Seal at the Moscow mission was the catalyst for developing **countermeasures technology**. By the end of the 1950s, hundreds of

listening devices planted by foreign intelligence services were found in our embassies. Special assignments staff worked closely with CIA and FBI counterintelligence to investigate possible misconduct and contact with foreign intelligence services by Department personnel. SY **upgraded its technical security program**, began hiring engineers, and the **Seabee program** assigned teams to search for listening devices in the Moscow and Warsaw embassies.

- SY assumed responsibility for the security of Department of State **domestic facilities** which included information security, building passes, and the physical security.

1960's

- 1961: the **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations** states that the host country is responsible for taking appropriate steps to protect diplomatic missions, personnel, and their families, including protecting the consular premises against any intrusion, damage, or disturbances.
- During the late '60s, a rise in kidnappings and assassinations of ambassadors and Department officials highlighted the possible exploitation of U.S. diplomats for political purposes. To meet this new threat, SY increased its **protective capabilities**.

1970's

- In response to the emerging threat of **terrorism** to U.S. citizens and missions abroad, SY hired over a hundred new agents, trained security officers in new skills like defensive driving, and purchased vehicles, radios, and other support equipment. SY published handbooks on terrorism and provided travel and home safety advice for overseas personnel, and it began to survey U.S. embassies for vulnerability to attack.

1980's

- 1980: the Department of State and Congress initiated the **Security Enhancement Program** (SEP) to improve protection of mission personnel, U.S. government property, and classified information at posts where the foreign government was unwilling or unable to provide effective protection. Experts were sent abroad to assess certain embassy security needs where a high, medium, or low threat of mob violence had been determined, and then recommend improvements.
- 1979-1983 saw an **increase in the intensity of terrorist attacks**, with over 300 attacks during the time period, including the bombing of the U.S. facilities in Beirut. In 1984 alone, there were over 100 such attacks.
- 1984: the **Act to Combat International Terrorism** (P.L. 98-533) authorized reward payments for information leading to the arrest of individuals involved in terrorist acts against Americans or American property and \$356 million for enhanced embassy security.
- 1984: Secretary of State **George Shultz** formed an advisory panel to make recommendations on minimizing the probability of terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens and facilities. Headed by retired Admiral Bobby Inman, this commission was known as the **Advisory Panel on Overseas Security**, or the **Inman Panel**. It made its recommendations to the Secretary in a June 1985 report, *The Inman Report: Report of the Secretary of State's Advisory Panel on Overseas Security*. The findings, often referred to as "the Inman Standards" as modified by subsequent reviews, continue to be the standards for today's security measures. The report concluded that 126 posts failed to meet minimum security standards and estimated that these could be replaced or renovated for \$3.5 billion [various reports state that less than half of these posts were improved to meet standards by 2001, due in part to insufficient funding].

- November 4, 1985: the **Bureau of Diplomatic Security** (DS) and the **Diplomatic Security Service** (DSS) were officially established, based on the Inman Panel's recommendation to reorganize the Department of State offices responsible for security and counter-terrorism. It recommended that the diplomatic responsibilities related to international terrorism in the Office for Counter Terrorism and Emergency Planning (M/CTP) be transferred to Political Affairs, and that the remaining M/CTP responsibilities be transferred to the new DS. These responsibilities included two areas of heightened importance: Emergency Action Planning (EAP), which includes crisis simulation and contingency planning, and the Anti-terrorist Assistance Program (ATA).
- August 27, 1986: the **Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986** (PL99-399), was signed by President Reagan, based on Congress' strong support of the Inman Panel's recommendations. This Act became the permanent authorization for embassy construction and security programs. Per the legislation, the new Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) had a clearly defined mandate and was structured along the lines of other Federal law enforcement, security, and intelligence agencies.
- The **Diplomatic Courier Service** joined DS, no longer hand-carrying pouches of communications but protecting vast amounts of supplies, equipment, and construction materials bound for sensitive overseas posts.
- DS expanded to provide state-of-the-art security to the Department's **communications and information systems**.

1990's

- DS conducts **criminal and personnel security investigations**, and DS special agents investigate more than 3,500 **passport and visa fraud** violations each year. DS receives about 3,000 requests for **overseas investigative assistance** from U.S. law enforcement agencies annually, for example locating and **apprehending wanted fugitives** who have fled the U.S. In addition, DS provides **protective services** to distinguished dignitaries visiting the U.S., as well as 24-hour protection to the Secretary of State.
- 1992: the **DS Rewards for Justice Program** was initiated. More than \$49 million has been paid since then for information helping prevent acts of international terrorism and capture terrorists, including Ramzi Yousef, mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.
- 1996: the **Office of Foreign Missions** was added, and DS assumed responsibility for servicing and regulating the activities of all foreign missions in the U.S.
- 1998: following the August terrorist bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, Secretary of State **Madeleine Albright** and CIA Director **George Tenet** convened a panel to examine the circumstances regarding the embassy bombings. The panel, called the **Crowe Commission** and headed by retired admiral William J. Crow, Jr., made its recommendations in its January 1999 **Report of the Accountability Review Boards on the Embassy Bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam on August 7, 1998**. It recommended that \$1.4 billion be spent annually over the next ten years, in three areas: 1) enhancement of workplace security; 2) improvement of crisis management systems and procedures; and, 3) improvement of intelligence and information sharing and assessment.
- 1998: the State Department declared the protection of American personnel and facilities overseas a top priority. Congress passed a \$1.4 billion **Emergency Embassy Security Supplemental** (of which DS received about \$588 million).
- February 1999: Secretary of State Albright established the independent **Overseas Presence Advisory Panel** (OPAP) chaired by private sector lawyer, Lewis Kaden. OPAP reported nine general recommendations in its November 1999 report, **America's Overseas Presence in the 21st Century**. The panel concluded that many U.S. overseas facilities were insecure, overcrowded and "shockingly shabby," and it recommended major capital improvements and an acceleration of the process of addressing security risks. The panel also

called for establishment of an **Overseas Facilities Authority** (OFA) to be responsible for building, renovating, maintaining, and managing the Federal government's civilian overseas offices and residences by combining the best practices of the government and private sector.

- **Security engineering officers** (SEOs) design and manage security equipment programs at all posts, and they also work to detect and prevent the loss of sensitive information from technical espionage, a continuing challenge in light of rapidly changing technology.
- 1999: the Assistant Secretary for DS convened a panel of security experts from the FBI, CIA, Department of Defense, U.S. Secret Service, and DS to review all **domestic security** policies, programs, and procedures. The majority of recommendations, ranging from restricting traffic around buildings and creating a chemical/biological program, have been implemented.

Today

- 2001: after the September 11th terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Congress passed the **Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Recovery from and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States, FY2001** (PL107-38). The act includes funding for the Diplomatic and Consular Programs Account and for emergency communications technology, evacuations, and reward money to help apprehend terrorists.
- Based on the OPAP recommendations and momentum after September 11th, the Department of State is shifting its resources from **security upgrades at embassies and consulates** toward constructing new buildings and substantially retrofitting existing, newly acquired, or leased buildings. Funding for these capital projects has increased from \$9.5 million in FY1998 to a requested \$890 million in FY2004. Plans for FY2002 through FY2007 look at replacement of facilities at 81 posts, the majority of which are planned for Africa and Europe.
- The **Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary**, in its 2002 and subsequent reports, has urged State to formulate a strategy for addressing threats to locales abroad that are frequented by U.S. officials and their families. The subcommittee has focused its concern about **soft targets** on schools, residences, places of worship, and other popular gathering places. In FY2003 and FY2004, \$15 million per year was earmarked for soft target protection, particularly to address security vulnerabilities at overseas schools
- Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, DS has played an active role in the **global war on terrorism**. With more than 480 special agents assigned to diplomatic missions in 157 countries, DS is the most widely represented American security and law enforcement organization and has solid relationships with foreign police and security services worldwide.

Current DS activities and programs include:

- ✓ identifying, arresting and prosecuting potential terrorist suspects before they reach the U.S.;
- ✓ criminal investigations into passport and visa fraud, often connected with other more serious crimes and international terrorism;
- ✓ advertising reward offers that prevent or resolve acts of terrorism (**Rewards for Justice**);
- ✓ terrorism-focused police training to civilian security personnel from friendly governments through the **Antiterrorism Assistance** (ATA) program.
- ✓ working closely with the Administration, Congress and foreign governments on embassy security issues, encompassing all security aspects of life overseas.

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