



JULY 16, 2013

# HEARING ON S.980: THE EMBASSY SECURITY AND PERSONNEL PROTECTION ACT OF 2013

UNITED STATES SENATE, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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## HEARING CONTENTS:

WEBCAST [\[view\]](#)

### WITNESSES

**Gregory B. Starr** [\[view pdf\]](#)

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

**Bill A. Miller** [\[view pdf\]](#)

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for High-Threat Posts, Department of State

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**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.

**STATEMENT BY**

**Bill Miller**  
**Deputy Assistant Secretary of High Threat Posts**  
**Bureau of Diplomatic Security**  
**Department of State**

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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.