**Introduction**

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is the security and law enforcement arm of the U.S. Department of State. DS dates back to 1916 with the appointment of a single Chief Special Agent who reported directly to the U.S. Secretary of State on special matters. Today, Diplomatic Security is a global force of 40,000 professionals dedicated to ensuring that the United States can conduct foreign policy safely and securely.

Diplomatic Security conducts criminal investigations of passport and visa fraud; protects U.S. secretaries of state and official representatives of foreign governments while in the United States; secures information systems; and safeguards U.S. diplomatic facilities throughout the world. Operating from a worldwide platform in more than 185 countries, Diplomatic Security is a world leader in international investigations, threat analysis, cyber security, dignitary protection, security technology, counterterrorism, and more.
Diplomatic Security is represented throughout the world by Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) special agents assigned to Regional Security Offices in every U.S. embassy and in most U.S. consulates.

The Regional Security Office provides a range of services to U.S. citizens, the U.S. private sector, U.S. domestic law enforcement, and foreign law enforcement organizations. Each office is managed by the senior DSS special agent who also serves as the U.S. Ambassador's principal U.S. law enforcement and security advisor. When assigned to a Regional Security Office, DSS special agents assume the title Regional Security Officer (RSO).

**Facilities, Personnel, and Information Protection**

U.S. diplomatic facilities overseas can be targets of terrorists and other criminals. To mitigate threats, the Regional Security Office develops, implements, and manages a range of physical, cyber, and personnel security programs. For example, in 2011, during the dangerous and unstable conditions of Arab Spring transition events and, in 2013, during the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Herat, the DSS special agents and personnel assigned to the Regional Security Office played an integral role in the defense, protection, and—where necessary—the safe evacuation of U.S. diplomatic personnel.

**Marine Security Guards**

Regional Security Officers direct U.S. Marine Security Guards (MSGs) who help to secure most U.S. embassies and consulates. Marine Security Guards buttress safety of diplomatic personnel, as well as support the physical protection of classified information. During some crises, they help evacuate Americans living in the region.

**Local Guards**

Regional Security Offices also lead and manage more than 32,400 local guards, a worldwide force that serves as the first line of defense and secures the perimeters...
of U.S. diplomatic facilities. Local guards, usually citizens of the host nation, patrol the grounds and inspect vehicles, visitors, and packages. They also respond to alarms and requests for assistance.

**Law Enforcement Liaison**

As the State Department’s primary point of contact with law enforcement and security agencies of the host nation, the Regional Security Office works with foreign police and security organizations to coordinate U.S. law enforcement initiatives, investigations, and, in some cases, training.

In addition to DSS special agents, Regional Security Offices are staffed by expert host-nation citizen investigators, known as Foreign Service National-Investigators (FSNIs). FSNIs maintain strong relationships with host nation law enforcement organizations and provide assistance regarding fugitive apprehensions, counterterrorism, and transnational crime cases.

**Visa and Passport Fraud**

Travel document fraud represents a serious and growing threat to the security of all nations. Criminals who obtain a fraudulent travel document often use it to commit crimes such as terrorism, financial fraud, narcotics trafficking, alien smuggling, and identity theft. Fugitives often seek to change their identities and travel internationally as part of their criminal activities.

DS Regional Security Office agents conduct international document fraud investigations. Working with foreign law enforcement agencies, Regional Security Offices investigate and coordinate hundreds of international visa and passport fraud cases each year. Cases include allegations of corruption by American and locally employed staff, fraudulent document vendors, bribery, alien smuggling, and trafficking of U.S. visas.
Transnational Crimes

The Regional Security Office works with its law enforcement counterparts abroad to pursue investigative leads on U.S. fugitives wanted for crimes such as homicide, pedophilia, narcotics trafficking, parental kidnapping, financial and Internet fraud.

The close working relationships between DSS special agents and their foreign counterparts—combined with the expertise of locally hired investigators—have resulted in locating U.S. fugitives worldwide. These fugitives are often found to have continued their criminal activities in their newly adopted countries.

In 2003, the U.S. Congress passed the PROTECT Act, making it a crime for U.S. citizens to sexually exploit or abuse children in a foreign country. As a result, demand for Regional Security Offices’ investigative assistance overseas has increased, as U.S. law enforcement seeks to apprehend U.S. pedophiles who prey on children around the globe.
Training for DS Personnel and Partner Nations

Many Regional Security Office personnel who live and work in hostile environments overseas now undergo special training that includes a basic high-threat operations course for DSS special agents. The training includes how to deal with complex attacks against protective details and diplomatic facilities—including in high-stress scenarios at a simulated U.S. consulate.

Diplomatic Security's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program builds the counterterrorist capacity of America's partner nations by enhancing the skills and abilities of their civilian law enforcement personnel. ATA programs are tailored to meet the needs of the host country by developing courses and providing training on topics such as bomb detection and disposal, crime scene investigation, VIP protection, and cyber security.

Participants in the ATA program have used their new skills to deter and prevent terrorist attacks, rescue hostages, dismantle terrorist cells, and apprehend terrorist operatives and leaders.

Since its inception in 1983, the program has trained and assisted more than 100,000 foreign security and law enforcement personnel from more than 150 countries.

International Law Enforcement Academy

Each year hundreds of police officers from member countries are invited to participate in training at the International Law Enforcement Academies in Bangkok, Budapest, Gaborone, and San Salvador.

These programs offer non-U.S. mid-level civilian police officers courses on management skills and a variety of other specialized classes. Core programs are conducted by Diplomatic Security and other U.S. federal law enforcement agencies.
Major International Events

Diplomatic Security is the lead U.S. law enforcement organization working with foreign law enforcement and security agencies to protect American citizens and U.S. interests at major public events overseas, such as international trade expos and sports competitions.

For example, Diplomatic Security personnel have worked with their foreign counterparts to coordinate protection at the World Cup, the Pan American Games, the Cricket World Cup, and all overseas Olympic Games since 1984.

Rewards for Justice Program

Diplomatic Security administers the Rewards for Justice (RFJ) program, a key weapon in the U.S. war on terror. Through this program, the U.S. Secretary of State may offer substantial rewards for information that leads to the arrest or conviction of anyone who plans, commits, or attempts international terrorist acts against U.S. persons or property; that prevents such acts from occurring in the first place; that leads to the location of a key terrorist leader; or that disrupts terrorism financing.

Since the program began in 1984, the United States has paid more than $125 million to at least 80 persons who provided information that put terrorists behind bars or prevented terrorist acts against Americans around the world.

Some of the Rewards for Justice program’s notable success stories include the DS–assisted arrest of international terrorist Ramzi Yousef, convicted for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, and developing a source who was ultimately able to provide the location of Saddam Hussein’s sons, Uday and Qusay Hussein. All were located with information provided by RFJ sources. The identities of RFJ sources and the information they provide are kept strictly confidential.
Rewards for Justice campaigns are internationally advertised with posters; matchbook covers; newspaper, radio, and television ads; and on the Internet at


People wishing to provide information to the Rewards for Justice program should contact the Regional Security Office at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, or use the following contact information:

**Mailing address:**

RFJ, Washington D.C. 20522-0303, USA

**Toll-free telephone number**  
(for callers in Canada and the United States only):

1-800-US-REWARDS

**E-mail:**

Info@RewardsforJustice.net

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**Safety for Americans Abroad**

Working closely with the U.S. embassy’s consular affairs office, the Regional Security Office is a resource for U.S. citizens living, working, and traveling overseas. Regional Security Offices provide the latest information on safety and security conditions specific to the country of residence, as well as recommendations on how to protect against crime, civil unrest, terrorism, or other threatening situations. Regional Security Office personnel may also be called upon to provide assistance to U.S. citizens before, during, or after emergencies overseas.

**Emergency Response**

To improve the delivery of assistance and information to U.S. citizens during or following terrorist attacks, natural disasters, civil disorder, and other emergencies, the State Department encourages all Americans abroad to register with the closest U.S. embassy or consulate.

When the embassy is aware of an impending emergency, the Regional Security Office assists in producing
Americans abroad may be targeted by criminals. When an American abroad becomes a victim of crime, the Regional Security Office can help the victim file criminal complaints, obtain police reports, and deal with the host country judicial system.

**Schools and Recreational Organizations**

As Diplomatic Security and other U.S. agencies have improved security at U.S. facilities overseas in recent years, terrorists have begun to pursue less protected targets in which the United States has an interest. These “soft targets” include overseas schools and recreation associations at which U.S. citizens or their children study or socialize.

To reduce the threat of terrorist attack against these educational institutions and recreational organizations, the State Department awards “soft target” grants for the purchase and installation of security upgrades at these facilities.

Although these facilities are not under the authority or the responsibility of the U.S. embassy, the Regional Security Officer often serves as an informal advisor on security matters.

The U.S. embassy’s consular affairs office uses its notification system to invite registered U.S. citizens to U.S. embassy town hall meetings at which mission personnel, including DSS special agents assigned to the Regional Security Office staff, provide country-specific security briefings.

“warden messages” and other advisories or warnings that are disseminated to registered American citizens via e-mail, fax, or telephone by American Citizen Services within the embassy.

If an emergency requires the evacuation of Americans, the Regional Security Office assists in disseminating information on evacuation times and locations. Regional Security Office personnel may also coordinate with host nation law enforcement and security agencies to ensure safe passage of Americans to evacuation points and to provide and coordinate security at the points of departure.

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Overseas Security Advisory Council

The Regional Security Office shares security information with the U.S. private sector through the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC). OSAC is a public-private partnership that promotes security through cooperation and information-sharing between the State Department and U.S. companies, educational institutions, religious groups, and nonprofit organizations overseas.

OSAC has more than 140 country councils in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Western Hemisphere. These country councils provide a forum for effective communication between the U.S. embassy and the American private sector in a given country.

They also provide participants with timely unclassified safety and security information, educational seminars, and, in some cases, training exercises to confront today’s security threats.

Contact Us

For more information about Regional Security Offices or Diplomatic Security, contact your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate or visit:

www.diplomaticsecurity.state.gov.

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