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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AND THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

ISP-I-13-23

Office of Inspections

March 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: DS – Gregory B. Starr, Acting
OBO – Lydia J. Muniz

FROM: OIG – Harold W. Geisel 

SUBJECT: Review of Department of State Implementation of Jeddah Accountability Review Board of Recommendation to Consider Remote Safe Areas at Missions Worldwide

Summary

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted a review of the Department of State's (Department) worldwide compliance with the 2005 Jeddah Accountability Review Board (ARB) recommendation to consider remote safe areas¹ at compounds where employees outside office buildings can seek immediate refuge during an armed attack. The Department concurred with the recommendation, stating that over the short term, posts with critical and high terrorism threat levels would be the first priority for safe area construction projects. Over the long term, the Department proposed that the Overseas Security Policy Board (OSPB) address compound safe areas as a formal security standard.

¹ **Safe area:** A designated area within a building that serves as an emergency sanctuary and provides at least 15-minute forced-entry and ballistic-resistant (FE/BR) protection, emergency power, ventilation, communications, and emergency egress (12 FAH-5 H-040, Glossary).

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During post management inspections conducted in 2012, OIG found that more than half of the posts inspected did not provide a safe area for employees working outside the main office buildings. Inspectors identified 11 posts out of 17 that needed additional safe areas on the compound, including 4 missions rated high or critical for political violence and/or terrorist threat. Inspectors also found that new embassy compounds constructed after the Jeddah attack did not include remote safe areas. OIG subsequently learned that the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) will implement the standards for all new embassy compound projects planned after FY 2012.

In October 2012, the Department published physical security standards in the *Foreign Affairs Handbook* (12 FAH-5 H-460) for remote safe areas, which are referred to as compound emergency sanctuaries.² The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) also drafted an update to the OSPB standards for compound emergency sanctuaries, in 12 FAH-6 H-520, which is still in the clearance process.

Scope and Methodology

In the course of inspecting the management of overall security programs at embassies, the OIG inspections had three complementary goals. First, identify all designated safe areas and safe havens³ at each overseas facility. Second, determine whether embassy employees are working on a full-time basis on the facility compound without reasonable access to a designated safe area. Third, determine whether designated safe areas provide sufficient protection against intruders.

Security inspectors examined OIG inspection reports issued between 2006 and 2011 to identify recommendations pertaining to safe areas for employees working on facility compounds but outside an office building. OIG then created a questionnaire for security inspectors to use during FY 2012 to ascertain the level of compliance with the Jeddah ARB. During 2012, security inspectors visited 17 missions and completed the questionnaires at each post.

The questionnaire addressed only protected areas provided for employees outside the compound office buildings, as separate OSPB physical security standards already require safe areas for

² **Compound Emergency Sanctuary:** A compound emergency sanctuary is a protected building or room, within or adjacent to an on-compound, unprotected functional area, that is used as a temporary shelter during an attack or other crisis for personnel unable to reach or find accommodations in a safe haven, safe area, or 15-minute FE/BR-protected building. It provides 15-minute FE/BR protection for walls, windows, and doors, emergency power, ventilation, telephone, connectivity to the emergency notification system, and where feasible and reasonable, an emergency escape. (12 FAH-5 H-040, Glossary).

³ **Safe haven:** A designated area within a building that serves as an emergency sanctuary and provides at least 60-minute FE/BR protection, emergency power, ventilation, communications, and emergency egress. (12 FAH-5 H-040, Glossary).

employees working in an office building. The questionnaire focused on construction of remote safe areas and on the protection of employees working in similar conditions to those killed in the Jeddah attack, such as driver's lounges, motor pools, general services workshops, and on-compound warehouses. Security inspectors did not look at non-Department agencies or warehouses located off the embassy compound.

The variety of missions inspected provided a good cross-section for assessing the Department's compliance with the Jeddah ARB. The 17 missions inspected covered 4 geographic bureaus. Seven posts were rated high or critical for terrorist threat and/or political violence. The compounds varied in size from the standard secure mini-compound in (b)(5)(b)(6) to the large embassy compound in (b)(5)(b)(6). Seven posts were new embassy compounds while some compounds had buildings hundreds of years old.

Background and Findings

During the December 6, 2004 terrorist attack at the U.S. consulate in Jeddah, gunmen killed four locally employed staff members and injured nine others working outside the consulate building. An ARB determined that these employees were killed or injured because the general services annex building did not have a safe area to which the employees could retreat. The Department concurred with the ARB recommendation to construct safe areas throughout compounds at posts worldwide. It planned to address first the most vulnerable posts with critical and high terrorist threat levels and proposed that the OSPB address compound safe areas as a formal security standard for all posts.

Beginning in 2006, OIG security inspectors started identifying warehouses, general services annexes, and other buildings on embassy compounds that did not provide protection for employees working in them. During the following 5 years, OIG security inspectors included formal and informal recommendations for the construction of remote safe areas on compounds. These recommendations were included in the classified annexes to OIG inspection reports of 27 posts. When security inspectors noted the frequency with which the recommendation occurred, OIG made remote safe areas the subject of an area of emphasis for FY 2012.

During four inspection cycles in 2012, security inspectors visited 17 missions and made several significant observations. The inspectors identified 11 missions that did not have remote safe areas and made formal or informal recommendations to construct compound emergency sanctuaries on the compounds. Of the remaining six posts, three had sufficient safe areas and three were small enough that employees could quickly access the chancery safe areas during an emergency. Security inspectors noted the lack of a compound emergency sanctuary at each of four missions rated high or critical for terrorist threat or political violence. In addition, none of

the regional security officers in the 17 posts could identify a safe area that was constructed as a result of the Jeddah ARB.

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should provide compound emergency sanctuaries for employees who work in buildings that do not have an approved safe haven or safe area. (Action: OBO, in coordination with DS)

The Department has made progress on its proposal to address compound emergency sanctuaries as a formal security standard in both the Department's physical security standards and those approved by the OSPB, which apply to all agencies under chief of mission authority. In September 2011, the Security Standards Committee for OBO and DS signed an action memorandum, which approved changes to 12 FAH-5, Physical Security Handbook, and 12 FAH-6, OSPB Security Standards and Policy Handbook.

The Department updated 12 FAH-5 in October 2012 to include standards for a compound emergency sanctuary. According to 12 FAH-5 H-460 and Appendix H, a compound emergency sanctuary will provide 15-minute FE/BR protection like a safe area but does not include some of the other features of a safe area, such as potable water and sanitary facilities. As stated in the standard, a compound emergency sanctuary is not a replacement for a safe area but is an area to protect employees from a terrorist or mob attack that occurs with little or no warning.

DS drafted an update to 12 FAH-6, OSPB Security Standards and Policy Handbook, which requires a compound emergency sanctuary for on-compound employees, in unprotected functional areas, that are not within buildings constructed to 15-minute FE/BR standards or have an approved safe haven or safe area. The complete standard, drafted as 12 FAH-6 H-524, is currently under review within DS and will be presented to the OSPB for approval and inclusion in 12 FAH-6.

After past terrorist attacks on embassies, Congress allocated funds to the Department to construct new embassies and to upgrade security at existing facilities. OBO obligated approximately \$1.2 billion between FY 1999 and FY 2007 for the Compound Security Upgrade Program (CSUP), "to enhance physical security protection for vulnerable facilities until they are replaced by improving perimeter security measures and installing [FE/BR] doors and windows, among other security upgrades." According to a Government Accountability Office report presented to Congress in 2008, "Completed CSUP projects have achieved their objective of enhancing the security at posts by bringing posts in better compliance with security standards."

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The FY 2013 Department budget request to Congress included \$688 million for security upgrades, including \$87.7 million for CSUP. According to the budget request, the program funds comprehensive security upgrades, major FE/BR door and window replacements, chemical/biological retrofit projects, emergency egress projects, and security upgrades for soft targets. The budget request does not specifically mention compound emergency sanctuaries as one of the projects; however, the action memorandum signed in 2011 indentified CSUP as the source of funding for the estimated \$200 million necessary to upgrade 283 compounds. The memorandum also notes that funding for compound emergency sanctuary upgrades would be provided in competition with other worldwide priorities.

Funding for CSUP has declined over the past 5 years from a high of \$108 million in FY 2008 to the current level of \$95 million under the continuing resolution. Adding another \$200 million security program to the CSUP without a corresponding increase in funding will likely result in many embassies not receiving a compound emergency sanctuary upgrade for many years.

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should request an increase in funding for the Compound Security Upgrade Program to reflect the additional requirement for compound emergency sanctuaries. (Action: OBO)

You should advise us on actions taken or planned on the recommendations within 30 days of the date of this memorandum. Actions taken or planned are subject to OIG followup and reporting. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this matter further, or your staff may contact Robert Peterson, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections, on (b)(2)(b)(6)

Enclosures:

Compliance Sheet
OIG Resolution Procedures