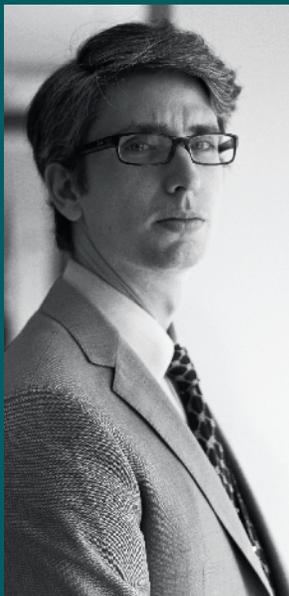
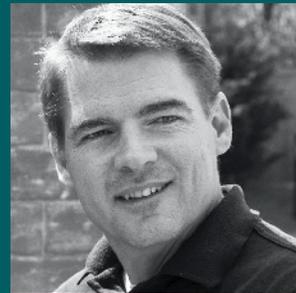




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
*BUREAU OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY*

# FACES OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY

YEAR IN REVIEW 2015



**On the cover:** *Highlighted in this edition of the DS Year in Review are nine Diplomatic Security (DS) personnel representing the diversity of skills that help DS fulfill its broad law enforcement and security mission. (U.S. Department of State photos)*

**OUR MISSION:** The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is the law enforcement and security arm of the U.S. Department of State. It bears the core responsibility for providing a safe environment for the conduct of American diplomacy. DS is the most widely represented U.S. law enforcement and security organization in the world and protects people, property, and information at 275 State Department missions around the globe. To achieve this mission, DS is a leader in mitigating terrorist threats to American lives and facilities, mounting international investigations, and generating innovations in cyber security and physical security engineering.

BUREAU OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY **YEAR IN REVIEW 2015**

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**The United States is engaged in every corner of the globe for the simple reason that we have important interests in every region. And we have learned from 9/11 but also many subsequent events that grave problems can originate almost anywhere, so we have to be nimble, and we have to be ready to lead.**

”

U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY  
OCTOBER 15, 2015



**GREGORY B. STARR**  
**ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE**  
**FOR DIPLOMATIC SECURITY**

02

One Friday morning in November, two men shot their way into a hotel lobby in the capital of Mali, in West Africa. They launched a rampage that would leave 22 people dead, themselves included. Among those who rushed into the fray were two Diplomatic Security Special Agents from U.S. Embassy Bamako. They and others fought past bullets and hand grenades to rescue an American hiding in the smoke-filled hotel kitchen. Then they went door to door, searching for and rescuing many others who needed a way out.

The hours spent risking lives to save lives in a place unknown to most Americans is what the people of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) are prepared to do every day. This report highlights employees who are only unique in that they are common among the many serving in DS. The requirement for courage, tenacity, and innovation arises from the fact that so many U.S. diplomats get up and go to work in

locations around the world where they might be murdered only because they are Americans or, occasionally, simply because they are convenient targets.

The role of DS in making diplomacy possible by keeping U.S. diplomats and others safe has never been more challenging. We say that every year, and it is true every year because terrorism evolves and finds new ways to threaten our personnel. Our job is to evolve faster, to anticipate the next challenge while dealing with the current one. DS has never been more ready.

Among the advances of 2015 was the expansion of Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat training where diplomats learn defensive driving, how to recognize an improvised explosive device, firearms familiarization, tactical medical skills, and surveillance detection. Right now this training is required for those assigned to two dozen posts where the threat is highest, and that list is growing toward universal

training for all State Department personnel deploying overseas. Moreover, the long-pursued goal of building a unique Foreign Affairs Security Training Center is, for the first time, within our reach.

After the 2012 attack in Libya, DS and the U.S. Marine Corps accelerated the activation of new security guard detachments at 21 posts around the world, including Beirut, Lebanon; Erbil, Iraq; and Lahore, Pakistan. Fourteen more new detachments are in the works and, in the meantime, we have increased the number of Marines in 143 existing detachments.

Insurgents with guns and bombs are not the only threat we face. Another comes silently and, if not countered, renders our people and nation's foreign policy open to great harm. In 2015, the news was full of the fact that U.S. government agencies are under sustained cyberassault from individual hackers, terror groups, and foreign intelligence services.

DS exists to protect both people and information, and we are continuing to develop robust capabilities to detect and repel cyber-attackers before lives can be put at risk when systems are destroyed or information is stolen.

Constant change is our norm, but some things about DS must never change. Among them is an organizational foundation constructed of strong leadership tenants, agile policy, innovative training, and personal courage. These are the things we demand of each other. They have been the hallmarks of DS since our founding nearly a century ago, and I am proud that they remain the core of who we are and what we do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gregory B. Starr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gregory" being the most prominent.

*Gregory B. Starr  
Assistant Secretary of State  
for Diplomatic Security*



Malian soldiers stand guard outside the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako on November 21, 2016, one day after two gunmen attacked the facility, took 170 hostages, and killed 20 people. (AP/Wide World Photos)



**EMBASSIES:**

# ON THE FRONT LINES

**COURAGE UNDER FIRE:  
THE MALI HOTEL RESCUES**

It was just half an hour past sunrise on a Friday in Bamako, Mali. The two men who had been lounging on some suitcases at a curb across the street from the Radisson Blu Hotel stood up, pulled AK-47s out of their luggage, and **started shooting people.**



06

**A man inside Bamako's Radisson Blu Hotel points to large holes in a wall made by automatic weapons fire during the terrorist attack three days earlier. (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali)**

The acting Regional Security Officer (RSO) for the U.S. Embassy — a Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) Special Agent — was just getting up when his phone rang a few minutes later. His Local Guard Force coordinator was calling with news that the popular hotel downtown had been invaded by terrorists. Before the morning of November 20, 2015, was over, the DSS agent would rally four other Americans and they would fight through smoke, bullets, hand grenades, and indecision to bring as many as 18 people out alive and unharmed.

The second bit of news the DSS agent got that morning was especially worrisome. A State Department contractor was inside the hotel, pinned down in an

area that was filling with acrid smoke. The terrorists had spotted him outside and gave chase as he fled back into the hotel and up to a second-floor restaurant. He hid beneath the breakfast buffet with only a tablecloth between him and the killers. The terrorists loosed bursts of bullets all around the dining room, then began piling furniture and anything that would burn in the center. They set the pile ablaze with Sterno cans taken from the buffet table and charged out, torching draperies as they left. In the kitchen area, the gunmen murdered people huddled in offices. One group fled into a service elevator. The gunmen found them there and fired bursts into the crowd until everyone seemed

“

**I said, ‘Guys, we’re ready to go.’ The five of us stacked up outside the door. No one else had gone inside that hotel when we went in the first time. You could smell smoke.**

”

dead. Fleeing the dining room a few minutes later, the contractor hid himself in the kitchen, where smoke was so dense that he could not see the bodies.

Outside the hotel, fire alarms wailed and bursts of automatic weapons fire could be heard. The acting RSO had grabbed his gear and assembled an ad-hoc team of five responders — himself, another Assistant Regional Security Officer (ARSO) from the embassy, and three U.S. Department of Defense personnel. While local police on the outside considered what to do and waited for reinforcements, the embassy responders went in. They crossed an open atrium that left them exposed to attack from above, then climbed the smoke-shrouded spiral staircase and pushed into the restaurant.

One member of the RSO’s team recalled what happened next: A team member flashed the light attached to his rifle into the smoke, hoping to signal to the hidden staffer. “We were yelling and couldn’t hear him. Smoke was too thick and we didn’t have emergency breathers with us. ‘Can you see the light? Can you see the light?’” No answer. “I called the embassy and said, ‘Can you patch me through to him?’ They did.”

“Where are you?”

“I’m in the office of the kitchen and my legs don’t work.”

“He’d been crunched in a position, hiding so long that his legs were asleep. ‘Need you to come out to where we are. Come towards me.’ He saw the light. We grabbed him, got him out, sat him down. ‘Gotta be ready to go. Hold on to the guy in front of you.’”

Moments later they were outside again and safe, but not done. Although the streets were crowded with more local police and Malian soldiers, only the DS/Department of Defense team had actually entered the building. Now came word that more Americans were still trapped. Embassy staffers had been working the phones furiously and had talked to many of them in their rooms. One of the agents used a pen from the Radisson to write their room numbers on his arm. Then the responders regrouped and went in for the second time. This time the team had to make their way to the fifth floor.

They were searching by room number. At first, they kicked in doors, then they used a ram borrowed from a Malian policeman, and finally were given a master key. A U.S. Defense Department employee was hiding in one room, two African women in another. Then, in a



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**Top:** A hotel patron (in orange shirt) is evacuated to safety as Malian police and soldiers establish a perimeter around the building, November 20, 2015. (AP/Wide World Photos)

**Bottom:** A Diplomatic Security Assistant Regional Security Officer who responded to the attack checks his weapon. Scrawled in ink on his arm are the room numbers of Americans trapped inside the hotel. The DSS-led team entered the building a second time to rescue them. (U.S. Department of State photo)

stairwell, the team ran into sustained automatic fire pouring down from above. They fired back, and the gunman above responded with two grenades lobbed down the stairwell. The potentially lethal stalemate ended for the Americans when Malian police were convinced to take over the position on the stair landing so the Americans could resume the search.

The team brought out everyone they found, including another American, a Turkish Airlines flight attendant, and a Russian. But they could not rescue all. Behind that door, wedged in tight in the spot where he fell, was the body of a foreign parliamentarian who had been shot point blank in the face.

The crisis ultimately was resolved late that afternoon when French special forces arrived and, along with Malian anti-terrorism units, killed the two terrorists in a final firefight on an upper floor.

One American development worker was among those who died when the gunmen opened fire in the kitchen. As many as 11 more Americans, both embassy staff and others, escaped that morning with the help of the DS-organized response team. An estimated five to seven foreign citizens were helped to safety, as well.

SPECIAL AGENT

# CARRINGTON JOHNSON



09



**“I had already passed the Foreign Service Officer exam and was doing my homework for the interview when I learned about the position of DSS Special Agent.”**

**Carrington came to DS in 2012. He had worked in China and came to DS with a spouse and five children (now six). “DS is my dream job, and it provides our children with a similar overseas experience where they gain a deep appreciation for America.”**

**His first assignment was in Los Angeles and “the first day I was put on a plane and sent to New York to join the protective detail for the visiting Palestinian prime minister.” On a single day in Cairo, he investigated two separate bomb explosions, checked out a missing-person alarm, and responded to a fire.**



U.S. Marines raise the U.S. flag over the newly reopened embassy in Havana, Cuba, August 14, 2015, as U.S. Secretary of State John F. Kerry (left) and other dignitaries stand at attention. Cuba and the United States officially restored diplomatic relations July 20, 2015. (AP/Wide World Photos)

## EMBASSY HAVANA REOPENS

On August 14, three U.S. Marines raised the same American flag on the same flagpole from which it had been lowered by their counterparts at the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba, half a century earlier.

That ceremony marked not only the end of a diplomatic breach that spanned a generation, but the culmination of a determined, DS-wide effort to make the reopening both safe and possible.

Diplomatic Couriers had delivered everything from communications gear to the Great Seal of the United States to the new old embassy. DSS Special Agents worked with Cuban law enforcement to plan and run security operations for the event and for U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to the island.

DS has maintained a small, long-term presence in Havana as part of the U.S. Interest Section of the Embassy of Switzerland. Before the reopening, it also handled one small, important job that had nothing to do with security. The American flag might have gone up on a pole that was rusted and pitted by decades of disuse and salty ocean air, but a DS security technician volunteered to restore it in time for the ceremony.

SPECIAL AGENT

# MICHELLE DUBE



Michelle was walking her personnel evaluation paperwork to the embassy human relations office in Bujumbura, Burundi, one Wednesday afternoon in 2015 when an attempted coup broke out. “It was a watershed event for the country, for the embassy and for my career. By the next day there was widespread fighting throughout the city — buildings burning, grenades exploding. The first evacuation took place three days later. We started bringing people back five months later and then there’s an attack on a military installation. Within two days, we evacuated again. I’ve learned so much from my tour in Bujumbura.”

Michelle came from college to DS in 2010 and most recently to Burundi as Assistant Regional Security Officer. “I had an interest in law enforcement,” she said. “The ability to travel, learn new languages, and do law enforcement overseas — it was the right fit for me. It was a great choice.”

## THE BIG ONE HITS, THEN HITS AGAIN

The first rumble of the 7.8-magnitude Gorkha earthquake shook Kathmandu, Nepal, just at lunchtime on April 25. Then, 17 days later, came a 7.3 magnitude aftershock. The two quakes claimed more than 8,600 lives, injured another 21,800, and destroyed 750,000 homes.



**Top:** A Diplomatic Security Assistant Regional Security Officer (rear center) provides protection for Acting USAID Administrator Alfonso Lenhardt (left) and USAID Nepal Mission Director Beth Dunford as they prepare to conduct an aerial reconnaissance mission to survey damage around Kathmandu on May 5, 2015. (U.S. Department of State photo)

Led by the Regional Security Office and the detachment of Marine Security Guards, Kathmandu's U.S. Embassy staff had drilled and trained for years to deal with just this scenario. As a result, the reaction was swift and thorough.

Inside, Marine Security Guards took up their positions and handled the initial assessment of the building's structural integrity. Outside, in anticipation of American citizens seeking help, a triage point and

prepositioned ambulance were ready and waiting. Radio calls went out to locate staff members and families, and DSS Special Agents went personally to check on them. Local guards stayed at their posts throughout the crisis.

As a result, all personnel were quickly accounted for and the embassy continued to provide services even during the chaos and vast damage that Nepal endured.

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**Right:** A U.S. Embassy Logistics Operations Center supervisor (left, in white dust mask and sunglasses) helps with rescue and recovery efforts in his native Nepal. (U.S. Department of State photo)



## SPECIAL AGENT **JASON WILLIS**



“I was going to Tripoli, but they evacuated while I was on leave, so I was without an assignment. I wanted to stay on this trajectory.” So Jason asked for Bamako, Mali, instead, and went there as the U.S. Embassy’s Regional Security Officer. “I think I’m probably one of the youngest RSOs in the world. It’s a high-threat post, but I felt like I could do the job. I was really excited to take this on.”

Jason joined DS in 2009. “Before joining the State Department, I was a security contractor at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, where I coordinated four Provincial Reconstruction Teams. And before that, I was a Marine Security Guard at U.S. diplomatic posts in South Africa and Burma. I speak Chinese, Russian, French, and a little bit of English.”

# 2015 ATTACKS

## **JANUARY 18** **Dili, Timor-Leste**

A hand grenade was thrown over the wall of a U.S. Embassy residential property and exploded in front of the house, damaging windows and a car. No one was hurt.

## **JANUARY 19** **Sana'a, Yemen**

An artillery round exploded in front of the U.S. Embassy, leaving a crater in the roadway. Houthi gun trucks had been seen in the vicinity.

## **FEBRUARY 5** **Dhaka, Bangladesh**

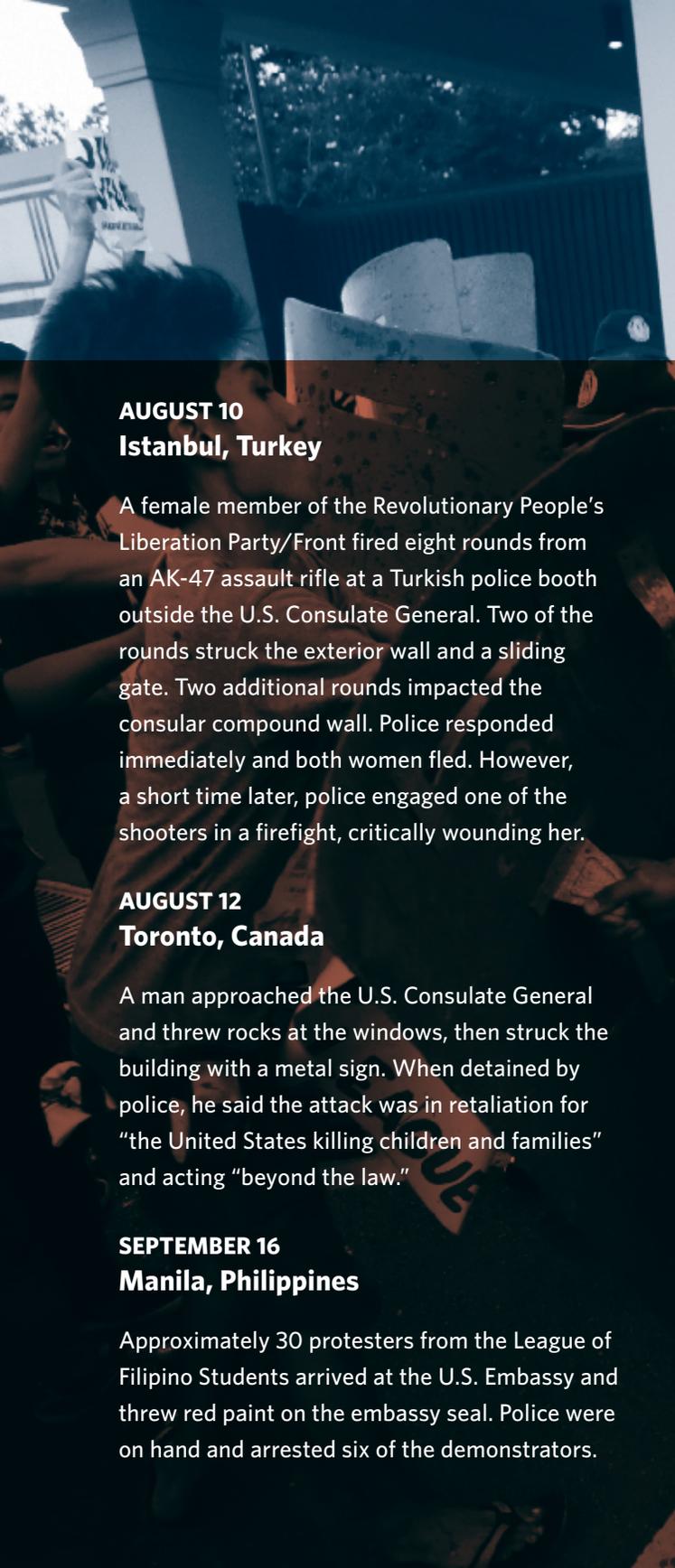
Several small, hand-thrown explosive devices were hurled onto one of the major thoroughfares in the Diplomatic Enclave. One struck a U.S. Embassy officer's personal vehicle while she was stopped in traffic, leaving the roof of the vehicle scorched and dented. The employee was uninjured.

## **MARCH 5** **Seoul, South Korea**

The U.S. Ambassador was attacked by a man wielding a knife at an event hosted by the Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation at the Sejong Center for the Performing Arts. The assailant struck from behind, shouting, "No war! The two Koreas should be unified." The Ambassador was cut on his face, hand, wrist, and leg, and was treated at a hospital. Police immediately arrested the attacker, who was later sentenced to 12 years in prison.

## **APRIL 17** **Erbil, Iraq**

A car bomb detonated outside the U.S. Consulate General. Two Turkish citizens were killed in the blast and 11 others injured, including a U.S. citizen, a local guard, and three host-country security officers who were posted outside. During the response phase of the attack, a U.S. contractor and an ARSO were injured.



**AUGUST 10**  
**Istanbul, Turkey**

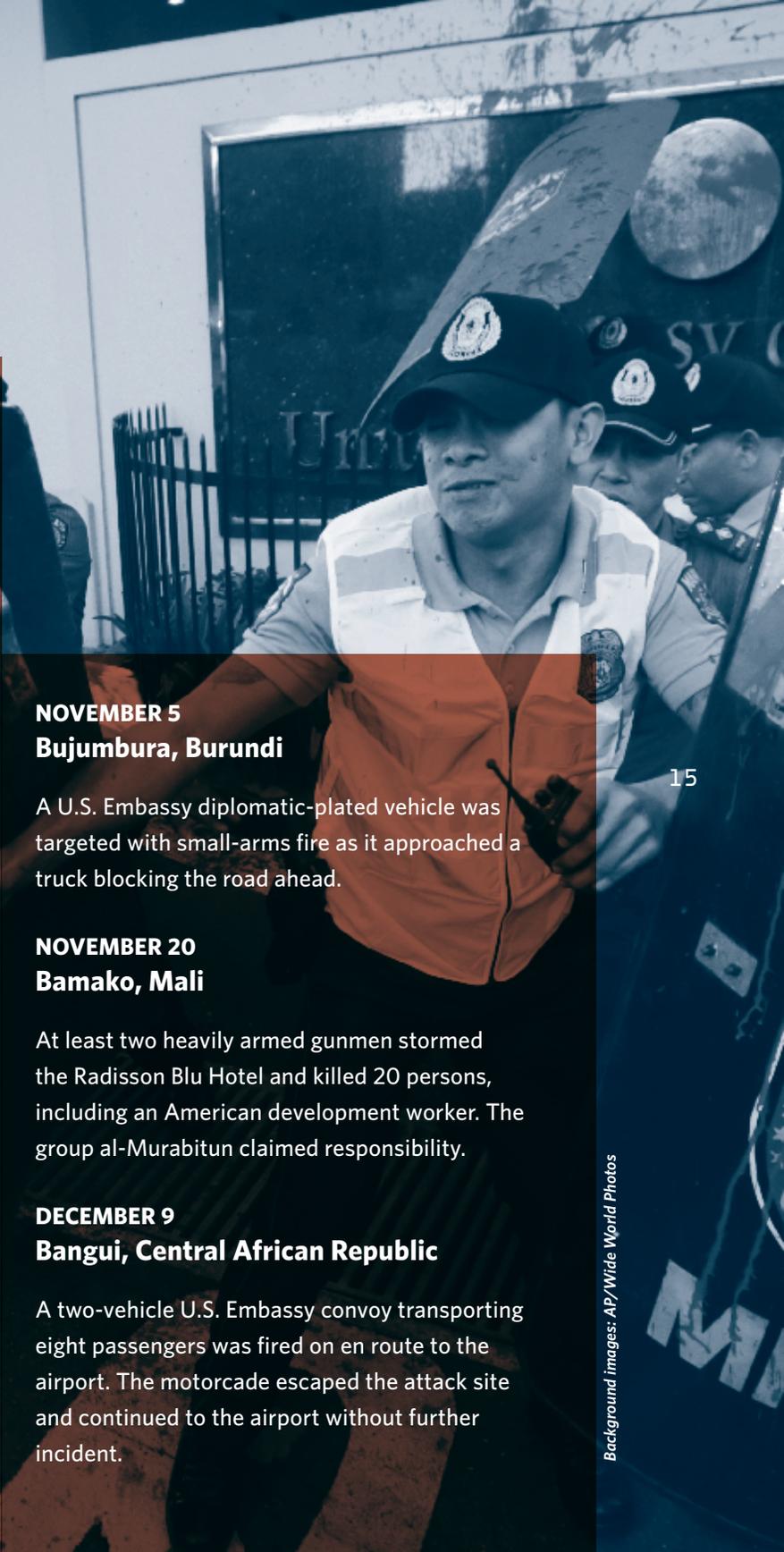
A female member of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front fired eight rounds from an AK-47 assault rifle at a Turkish police booth outside the U.S. Consulate General. Two of the rounds struck the exterior wall and a sliding gate. Two additional rounds impacted the consular compound wall. Police responded immediately and both women fled. However, a short time later, police engaged one of the shooters in a firefight, critically wounding her.

**AUGUST 12**  
**Toronto, Canada**

A man approached the U.S. Consulate General and threw rocks at the windows, then struck the building with a metal sign. When detained by police, he said the attack was in retaliation for "the United States killing children and families" and acting "beyond the law."

**SEPTEMBER 16**  
**Manila, Philippines**

Approximately 30 protesters from the League of Filipino Students arrived at the U.S. Embassy and threw red paint on the embassy seal. Police were on hand and arrested six of the demonstrators.



**NOVEMBER 5**  
**Bujumbura, Burundi**

A U.S. Embassy diplomatic-plated vehicle was targeted with small-arms fire as it approached a truck blocking the road ahead.

**NOVEMBER 20**  
**Bamako, Mali**

At least two heavily armed gunmen stormed the Radisson Blu Hotel and killed 20 persons, including an American development worker. The group al-Murabitun claimed responsibility.

**DECEMBER 9**  
**Bangui, Central African Republic**

A two-vehicle U.S. Embassy convoy transporting eight passengers was fired on en route to the airport. The motorcade escaped the attack site and continued to the airport without further incident.

“

**‘We happened to be in the right place at the right time.’**

”

# PROTECTION

16

The DSS Special Agent knew trouble when he saw it. Monitoring a stretch of Lake Ontario from a boat during a mission to protect U.S. athletes at the 2015 Pan Am Games, he spotted an Ecuadorian racing sailboat, its sails drooping for lack of a breeze. With no wind and no engine, the tall-masted racer was slow-motion drifting toward a menacing rock wall and potentially into the flight paths of aircraft landing on a Toronto City Airport runway. The two-person operations boat went to the rescue and towed the sailboat and its crew out of danger. “We happened to be in the right place at the right time to save their boat and possibly even save their lives,” he said.

DS protected not only Pan Am Games athletes, but also nearly four dozen dignitaries and delegations attending the 70th annual United Nations General Assembly in New York City as well as foreign

ministers from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden at the Glacier Summit in Anchorage, Alaska. The Combating Violent Extremism Summit, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and most notably, the 6th Global Entrepreneurship Summit each were protected by DS, too.

Held in Nairobi, Kenya, the Global Entrepreneurship Summit was both the largest overseas protective security event in DS history, as well as the first of its kind in a high-threat, high-risk environment. DS took responsibility for keeping 300 U.S. Government employees safe. Security operations at Nairobi covered 50 square miles and involved 192 motorcades, transporting delegates between the 13 hotels, the United Nations compound, and the Kenyatta International Convention Center.

## DS PROTECTIVE OPERATIONS

### BY THE NUMBERS

**234**

Total Protective Details

**350,000+**

Agent Hours Worked

**LONGEST SINGLE TRIP = 21,532 MILES\***

*\*Egypt, Qatar, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Washington, D.C.*

**48**

Countries  
Visited

**24**

U.S. Secretary of State  
Details Abroad

**2,400+**

Individual Agent  
Assignments

**6**

Major Events



Two DSS Special Agents (left and second from left, in sunglasses) and United Nations security personnel outside the UN compound in Nairobi detain a visitor who was trying to enter without a credential during the 6th Global Entrepreneurship Summit on July 26, 2015. (U.S. Department of State photo)

## TRAGEDY IN PARIS

An American in Paris on January 7 or November 13 would have been the prime recipient of the urgent messages going out from the U.S. Embassy. Those were the days Paris was scarred when terrorists committed mass murders, first at a magazine office and Jewish supermarket, and late in the year in multiple assaults on a rock music concert, several local cafés, and people outside France’s national soccer stadium.

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In both instances, the U.S. Embassy’s Regional Security Office and its Consular officers responded with real-time security warnings sent to Americans in the city.

Following the January murders at the office of Charlie Hebdo, a French satire magazine, RSO Paris also led the effort to account for approximately 1,200 U.S. personnel. Much the same happened in November, when a series of coordinated attacks around Paris involving mass shootings and suicide bombs killed 130 people. Achieving full accountability was an even more daunting task in the wake of the November

attacks considering the number of personnel, families, and visitors who were scattered throughout the city on what had been an ordinary Friday evening.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry later personally thanked the embassy staff for “the work you’re doing – most important work in the world right now.”

“I thank all of this Embassy in every regard: Regional Security Officers, Consular division, individuals who reached out and went to work immediately. I know that some of you were at ... the Bataclan and the restaurant when the shooting took

place. You had nowhere to go, and finally a Thai restaurant, Ya Lamai, opened its doors and some of you were housed there ‘til three in the morning. And there are all kinds of stories of individual courage and assistance. People have been working now four nights in a row, through the night,” he said.

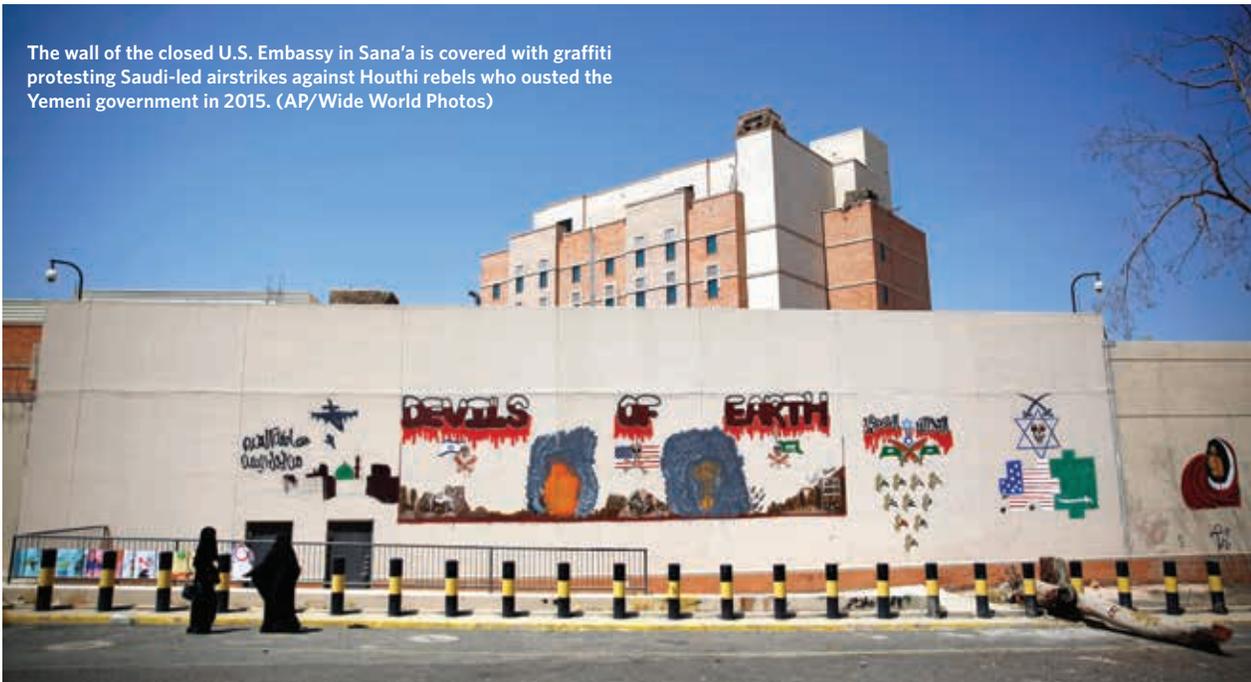
Following the November attack, DS headquarters expedited the arrival of additional DSS Special Agents and Marine Security Augmentation Units, that had been scheduled to come to Paris to provide additional security for the COP21 Climate Conference to bolster security measures at U.S. facilities.

## HIGH THREAT, AGILE RESPONSE

Yemen had boiled with crisis for years, fueled by the violent work of al-Qa'ida and abetted by the country's eroding political stability. Despite the worsening environment, the U.S. Embassy at Sana'a continued functioning. Then, in September of 2014, rebels aligned with various factions of Shia-dominated militias flooded into the capital and in early 2015, they seized the presidential palace and

drove the government from power. During one stretch of particularly heightened threat, U.S. diplomats lived for six months in their offices. As tensions rose and ebbed, gunmen fired 70 rounds at a vehicle driven by DS personnel, Yemeni police outside the embassy came under rocket attack, and locally hired embassy employees were arrested and jailed.

The wall of the closed U.S. Embassy in Sana'a is covered with graffiti protesting Saudi-led airstrikes against Houthi rebels who ousted the Yemeni government in 2015. (AP/Wide World Photos)





Left to right: U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. Special Representative for Somalia James McAululty, and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry (seated next to U.S. flag) meet with Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (second from right, seated next to Somali flag), Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke (right), and regional Somali leaders during a visit to Mogadishu, May 6, 2015. (U.S. Department of State Photo)

require the creation of a permanent, secure embassy structure in a challenging environment.

**Personnel Recovery:** DS's Personal Recovery Program expanded in 2015 to match the increase of hostage-takings by terrorists and ordinary criminals. One advance was creation of the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell, an interagency group staffed by the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Treasury, and the U.S. intelligence community. The fusion cell improves how the government develops hostage recovery plans, tracks specific cases, and shares information with families, Congress, and the news media.

**Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD):** The DS EOD program was fully established in Afghanistan and at the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center in 2015. DS EOD specialists responded to numerous calls for assistance and led several post-blast investigations that yielded vital evidence and expanded data on the use of explosives. Training and certification also have been established with support from the Department of Defense.

**Security Protective Specialists:** On February 2, 2015, the State Department authorized the phasing out the Security Protective Specialist Program through attrition and conversion of those positions to DSS Special Agents before Fiscal Year 2021.

**Lessons Learned:** DS created a computer-based Center for Lessons Learned in February. The center is a clearinghouse for sharing best practices, operation planning methods, and products of the Deliberate Planning Process in order to provide critical knowledge that supports DS and its partners in their complex and evolving work of mitigating threats and protecting people.

Through all this, the nine-person DS Regional Security Office and a 100-strong force of Marines shielded the embassy and its diplomats from harm. Ultimately, however, options dwindled to one – suspend operations and evacuate the staff.

The withdrawal of 200 U.S. diplomats from Sana'a took place on February 11, 2015. It was swift and, most importantly, without loss despite the volatile menace to life that surrounded it.

The complex closure operation was overseen by the DS High Threat Programs Directorate, an office created expressly to lead security operations in the 30-plus posts around the world where the threat is most acute. It coordinates strategic and operational planning, and drives innovation. Its work in 2015 saw high- and low-profile developments that both tested and reinforced the DS mission in hostile locations.

**Somalia:** During his May 5, 2015, visit to Mogadishu, Secretary of State John Kerry announced that the United States would begin the process of establishing a diplomatic mission in Mogadishu. The return to Somalia is at the forefront of DS planning and will

## INTELLIGENCE: WARN, ASSESS, MITIGATE, AND MANAGE WORLDWIDE THREATS

DS intelligence is keenly focused on supplying real-time threat analysis to support operational decision-making, as well as providing long-term trend analyses on terrorist incidents, political violence, and crime to guide DS mitigation programs.

In 2015, timely and authoritative threat analysis was crucial in dealing with ongoing security issues in Yemen, Afghanistan, East and Central Africa, and Europe. Worldwide, staff reviewed 1.8 million pieces of intelligence and generated 2,752 analytical reports. They dispatched more than 4,200 daily threat notifications, including accompanying analysis, to DS Regional Security Officers around the world and interagency terrorism experts and provided daily threat briefings to the leadership of

DS and the State Department's regional bureaus.

Intelligence support was also provided for DSS Special Agents assigned to protective duties at several large events around the world, including the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the Pan Am Games in Canada, and the Women's World Cup in Canada.

Contributing significantly to the Department's security goals, agents and analysts working with the interagency used all-source tactical-level intelligence to

complement the Secretary of State's 92 domestic and overseas trips and also investigate threats. DS investigated terrorist attacks in Buenos Aires, Bangladesh, East Timor, Egypt, Oman, South Korea, Spain, Tanzania, Turkey, and Uruguay. And, separately, DS Joint Terrorism Task Force agents and analysts were on the front-line of domestic and foreign counterterror operations and investigations in Boston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Uganda, Jordan, and Mali.

## ENGINEERING SAFETY

Physical security is more than a tall wall, thick windows, and a guard booth. It is a multi-layered, systematic method of separating U.S. diplomats from terrorists, and its parts are each conceived, created, tested, installed, and maintained by the small corps of DSS Security Engineering Officers and Security Technical Specialists. The constituent pieces can be as simple as a concrete traffic barrier and as complex as sense-and-warn radar to spot incoming rockets.

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In preparing for the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Kenya, DS built a separate radio network with relay stations throughout Nairobi for DSS Special Agents who would be using hundreds of handheld radios. Radios also were installed in the 65 vehicles shipped to Nairobi. DS put barriers at critical points after using 3-D modeling software to determine the best locations for them. The physical security effort in Kenya was augmented by new lighting and closed-circuit cameras installed in hotels where Americans would stay, and with specialized gear to detect trace amounts of explosives.

A DS project manager (left) and a DSS Security Engineering Officer (right) work on a radio transmitter used to livestream video from DS security cameras temporarily installed atop a building in downtown Manhattan during the 70th UN General Assembly. (U.S. Department of State photo)

## SECURITY ENGINEERING OFFICER **RALPH GASPARD**



“I worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a civil engineer. I joined DS for the opportunity to travel, promote diplomatic and cooperative initiatives, immerse into another culture, and protect facilities and personnel worldwide.” Ralph received the State Department’s Heroism Award for his actions as terrorists rained rocket-propelled grenades and recoilless rifle fire on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2011. “Just one thing went wrong that day, and it was caused by battle damage. The consular section was hit and one of the safe-haven doors stuck. (Marine Security Guard) Post 1 showed them how to override it. That night we knew that people were going to need food, so I went out to assist the Marines giving out MREs and to check the perimeter cameras.”

“Was DS the right move for me? Given my journey through my two domestic and six overseas tours and the wide array of experiences, there is nothing that I would change.”



A DSS Security Engineering Officer installs a long-range acoustic device on top of an armored vehicle that transports dignitaries. (U.S. Department of State photo)



**A DS project manager adjusts a temporary security camera setup that streamed images to DS Dignitary Protection Operations Center during the 70th UN General Assembly. (U.S. Department of State photo)**

Not all of the engineering expertise was focused overseas. In Washington, D.C., long-term renovation of the U.S. Department of State's headquarters at the massive, aging Harry S Truman Building was getting underway. The job required DS to design a perimeter that would not only provide safety for thousands of occupants and visitors, but also win acceptance from the National Capital Planning Commission, the U.S. General Services Administration, the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, and a gamut of 17 more organizations around the capital. The concept design was approved in November.

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Elsewhere, DS kept an eye on the 70th United Nations General Assembly with cameras looking down from the Manhattan skyline. DS also designed and tested a rapid-deploy wall system meant to resist everything from ramming by vehicles — a favored tactic among terrorists — to rocket impacts. These can be dispatched quickly to imperiled embassies and consulates, installed on sites with varying soil conditions and grades, and are made to be easily repaired.



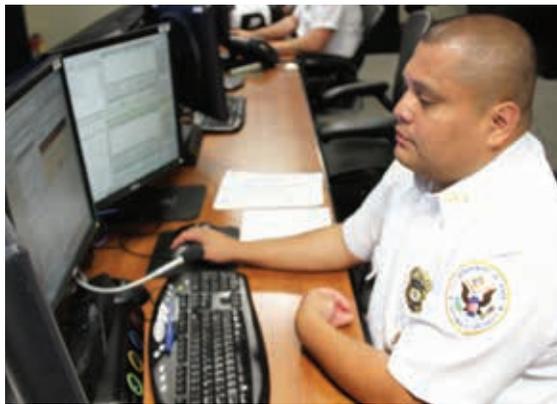
A Diplomatic Security Uniformed Protection Officer stands watch inside the main entrance of the U.S. Department of State headquarters building, July 2, 2015. (U.S. Department of State photo)

## IDS AND UNIFORMED PROTECTION

DS issued 31,669 ID cards in 2015, some through an innovative outreach program that reversed the usual order of business by taking services to the employees. “Badging teams” visited Lansing, Michigan; Williamsburg, Kentucky; San Antonio and El Paso, Texas; Patrick Air Force Base and Melbourne, Florida; and the Marine Security Guard School in Quantico, Virginia, where the ongoing expansion of Marine Security Guard detachments generates 1,000 ID badge requests a year.

Of the 1,200 DS uniformed officers serving nationwide — 275 are deputized as Special Deputy U.S. Marshals — they processed 178,983 visitors to State Department offices in the Washington, D.C., area and at the United Nations headquarters in New York. They also staffed eight major international meetings, including the White House Summit Countering Violent Extremism Conference, the G-20 Anti-Corruption Working Group, the Glacial Summit, and the annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. They also support numerous Dignitary Protection details in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere in the United States.

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DS Uniformed Protection Officers inside the domestic Security Control Center at State Department headquarters monitor security cameras and manage the flow of security-related communications 24/7. (U.S. Department of State photo)

### UNIFORMED PROTECTION

#### BY THE NUMBERS

**47,938**  
Offense Incident Reports

**8** Summit Meetings Covered

**2** K-9 Sweeps Overseas

**2** President Obama’s visits to the State Department

**244** Post Inspections

**162** K-9 Sweeps in Washington

**8** Vice President Biden’s visits to the State Department



SPECIAL AGENT

# KARYN GREY



“It’s been an amazing experience. Between Miami, the Secretary of State’s protective detail, Baghdad, Dublin, and now back here in Washington, I feel lucky. I think our organization does good work.” An attorney and former prosecutor in Florida, Karyn joined DS in 2008. She was in Miami when DS responded to an earthquake in Haiti. “We were running convoys between Santo Domingo and Port-au-Prince, and were also helping to protect the embassy and evacuate Americans. We assisted the U.S. Embassy by looking for missing people. There was disarray after the earthquake, and we were out there in teams of two agents, trying to ascertain their last known locations.” Now Karyn plans security operations for large events like the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil, the COPA America 2016 soccer tournament in South America, and the 2018 World Cup in Russia.



Diplomatic Couriers (second, fourth and fifth from left) work with other U.S. Department of State staff to load diplomatic pouches onto an aircraft at Miami International Airport, August 10, 2015. The pouches contained material needed for the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba. (U.S. Department of State photo)

represents substantial progress from the days of strapping diplomatic pouches into airline seats.

Sometimes the barriers to delivery are not airport tarmac restrictions, but people with guns. Couriers skirted rebels guarding the sea and air entrances to Yemen in order to deliver gear needed for the safe withdrawal of American staff at Embassy Sana'a. They also brought documents and material required to evacuate American citizens from hot spots overseas, put personnel-tracking devices into the hands of diplomats working in hazardous places, provided equipment for handling hazardous materials, and replenished empty shelves of badly needed medical supplies.

In addition, the Courier Service delivered 39 armored vehicles and protective gear for 150 DSS Special Agents, and operated the worldwide supply chain for personnel and the fleet of vehicles overseas. Moreover, the Service's creative shipment options and logistics expertise allowed Couriers to accomplish their work at a cost 30 percent lower than projected.

## DIPLOMATIC COURIERS DELIVER

It takes only 100 U.S. Diplomatic Couriers to transport everything from classified material to life-saving medicine to secure construction materials to hundreds of State Department posts around the world.

Operating out of distribution points in the United States, Germany, South Africa, Thailand, South Korea, Bahrain, and Senegal and meeting different levels of welcome

everywhere they land, the Courier Service is expert at innovating.

In 2015, the Couriers launched a regular, round-trip ferry run between Incheon, South Korea, and Tianjin, China, to provide an alternate means of supply for U.S. diplomatic facilities in China. This service is also used in conjunction with buses to move diplomatic pouches to Embassy Beijing and onward to U.S. Consulates in Chengdu, Shanghai, and Shenyang. It represents a backup method of making deliveries into China and

## REWARDS FOR JUSTICE

Through the Rewards for Justice (RFJ) program, the U.S. Secretary of State offers and pays rewards for information that either prevents or successfully resolves acts of international terrorism against U.S. persons and property. Offers of up to \$25 million have been authorized for information leading to the capture of key terrorist leaders.

The program bolstered the fight against international terrorism with several high-profile announcements in 2015, including reward offers totaling \$25 million for five key leaders of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

In September, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Threat Investigations and Analysis Robert Hartung announced a reward of up to \$5 million for the significant disruption of the sale and/or trade of antiquities and oil benefiting ISIL, the first reward of its kind.

The year also brought offers for information on two associates of the extremist group Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin and six more offers for leaders of al-Shabaab.

RFJ also honed domestic advertising strategies throughout the year. This straightforward program builds trust between the local communities and law enforcement, and it directly bolsters RFJ's core mission by communicating with the diaspora of diverse ethnic groups in the United States.



**SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1984, RFJ HAS PAID OVER \$125 MILLION TO MORE THAN 80 INDIVIDUALS WHO PROVIDED CREDIBLE INFORMATION.**

# INVESTIGATING TERROR AND CRIME

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## **INVESTIGATIONS: PASSPORT CRIME, FUGITIVES, BRIBES, AND FALSE VISAS**

“You earned every day of it,” an Illinois judge told the former middle school social studies teacher whom he had just imprisoned for 50 years. With that sentencing in September of 2015, DS closed the books on the 42-year-old onetime fugitive that agents tracked across Europe to a village in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He pleaded guilty to predatory criminal sexual assault on female students.

DS brought 318 international fugitives to justice in 2015, including the first fugitive brought back from Cuba since 2007. Also of note was a man implicated in a \$20 million telemarketing scheme who fled

in the face of accusations of conspiracy, international money laundering, and fraud. He was traced to Spain and arrested as he prepared to leave that country.

DS employs a multi-layered approach to identifying terrorists when they travel and individuals who smuggle and traffic human beings. “Operation One If by Land,” an investigation spearheaded by a DSS Special Agent in Tirana, Albania, resulted in the arrest of 15 smugglers by Albanian authorities for human trafficking as well as passport and visa fraud. The group allegedly sent nearly 600 Albanians into the United States through Mexico from 2012 to 2014.

## 'Operation Death Match' entered its 11th year

In a case that arose from training given to Turkish immigration officers to spot bogus travel documents, a U.S. citizen who had traveled to Syria was arrested and later pleaded guilty to terrorism-related charges. Six Indonesian citizens also were intercepted en route to Syria attempting to join the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

In 2015, DS closed the books on two major fraud investigations, including the August resolution of the largest visa corruption and bribery scheme in State Department history and, in October, the theft of personal information from 1,500 passport applications.

In the first, a former visa chief at the U.S. Consulate in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, confessed to accepting over \$3 million in bribes for issuing

hundreds of visas to unqualified Vietnamese. The court ordered the defendant and conspirators to forfeit \$8.1 million.

In the second case, a Houston Passport Agency contract employee and two conspirators pled guilty to stealing and misusing personally identifiable information from over 1,500 passport applications. Their network of runners assumed the stolen identities and used them to obtain hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of cellphones and electronic devices that were headed for resale overseas.

2015 also saw the first DS insider-threat case. A former contract systems administrator in the Bureau of Consular Affairs hacked U.S. Department of State systems to illicitly obtain sensitive passport

data, visa details, and other information. In October 2015, he pleaded guilty to conspiracy charges and was sentenced to prison.

In the meantime, the DS-led "Operation Deathmatch" entered its 11th year. The program generates investigative leads by cross matching passport and visa applications with death records, a favorite source of identity theft among people seeking travel documents under assumed names.

Multiple convictions resulted, including that of a Berkeley, California, man sentenced to prison and ordered to repay \$242,640 to the Social Security Administration.

### ARSO-I:

Entering its 20th year, the Assistant Regional Security Officer-Investigators program reached 122 positions at 107 U.S. diplomatic posts in 76 countries. One of its extraordinary cases involved a supposed New York visa broker whom no one could find in New York. When bank records showed money flowing through the broker's bank account via ATMs in the Republic of South Korea and an ATM camera recorded pictures of a woman making withdrawals and getting on a bus, police identified her and where she lived in Seoul. There, her husband was found to be posing to clients as a New York-based agency. Local detectives seized hundreds of records conveniently labeled "Fraudulent Applications," along with nearly \$100,000.

### Human Trafficking:

Early in 2015, DS concluded the first phase of an overseas training and awareness program focused on both U.S. law enforcement officials working in U.S. embassies, and also to consular staff who interview and adjudicate visas to possibly identify victims of human trafficking. DS also provided specialized training for domestic DS offices and co-located Passport Agencies.

### National Visa Program:

The four-year investigation of a South Dakota couple ended with a conviction for using their business to unlawfully acquire H-2B visas for bringing temporary workers to the United States from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Jamaica. The man received 14 months in prison while the woman got 60 months of probation, and they were ordered to repay \$154,000 to their foreign victims.

### Financial Analysis and Forfeiture:

The Financial Analysis and Forfeiture Program generated \$7.5 million in seized assets and money judgments. In addition, DS sponsored a multi-agency U.S. team to train Portuguese law enforcement agencies in conducting asset-forfeiture investigations.



SPECIAL AGENT

# MARCUS PURKISS

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Marcus' first years after joining DS in 2004 saw short-term assignments in Jerusalem and at the Winter Olympics in Italy, then some pretty robust criminal investigations at the Washington Field Office. That was followed by a stint on the Secretary of State's protective detail and tours in Baghdad, Paris, and the DS Office of Protective Intelligence Investigations.

"I knew from the start, because I did my homework, that agents are afforded more responsibility from the onset that most professions provide their newer people. Going in, I knew I would need to come to the table with flexibility and an understanding of how to apply common sense to complex situations that require your thinking to evolve. That's held true. We change so much that you are required to learn and pick up new skill sets regularly." Would he do it again? "Absolutely I'd do it again."

### Vetting:

In 2015, DS provided assistance to complex investigations throughout the world, including an inquiry into an attack on an embassy vehicle in the Central African Republic and a fuel-oil theft case at Tbilisi, Georgia. Also, the DS Identity Assurance Program detected insurgents who were attempting to enter embassies in Baghdad and Kabul.

### Computer Investigations and Forensics:

The DS digital forensic lab opened 139 examinations that examined 716 individual pieces of evidence containing over 142.4 terabytes of digital evidence from such sources as cell phones and emails. Nearly every major case DS investigates is supported in some way by the Computer Investigations and Forensics Division with online cyber investigative support, seizure assistance, or forensic analysis of computers, mobile phones, or recordings.

### Support for Victims:

The Victims' Resource Advocacy Program (VRAP) supported over 100 investigations globally of multiple types of crimes and provided operational guidance and direct support in 25 cases of human trafficking and related abuses. Some efforts by VRAP include providing comfort items and direction, identifying potential shelters for victims, coordinating logistics for mental health and support services, and drafting documents to obtain status, restitution and eligibility options. VRAP trained over 1,000 federal staffers on advocacy issues and sexual assault awareness. It also sent nearly 8,000 packets to families at diplomatic posts around the world to facilitate dialogue regarding crimes against children and offer guidance on abduction prevention.

## TWO “MOST WANTED” ARE WANTED NO MORE

Some 290 people in the United States and Canada say they picked up a ringing telephone and found Gregory Swarn on the line. He had a pitch about the profits to be made through buying homes that must have been engaging, because those people say they lost \$20 million in a monumental swindle.



Two DSS Special Agents escort fugitive Gregory Swarn through Los Angeles International Airport upon his return to the United States on November 14, 2014. (U.S. Department of State photo)

When the heat was on, Swarn stole an identity and used it to go on the lam with a false passport. Luck started to run out after he ended up on the DSS Most Wanted list. DSS investigators from the Miami Field Office and U.S. Embassy Bangkok traced him to a beach resort in Pattaya, Thailand. His passport was revoked and, having become an illegal immigrant, he was arrested by Thai authorities and deported. DSS agents escorted him home to face charges in the United States.

On May 27, 2015, Swarn pleaded guilty to passport fraud and identity theft at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

Another most-wanted man was Erez Arsoni, who was arrested by Spanish authorities in Marbella, Spain, on May 19, 2015. Arsoni was charged with making false statements in a passport application, aggravated identity theft, fraud, and money laundering. He was returned to the United States in September 2015.

## FIELD NOTES

The facts were complex and the case was cold. It began with an identity theft. Then, over 18 years, it mushroomed to involve passport fraud, a circular run through Central America and the South Pacific to Boston, an arrest at a Nevada casino, and an amnesia defense. The case closed for DS in 2015 with conviction after a trial that featured the rare sight of a defendant's mom testifying against him.

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The object of this attention was an Arizona man who assumed the name of a four-day-old infant who had died years earlier. At the time — 1997 — he was in the process of allegedly taking \$571,000 from the company where he had worked as computer consultant. He traveled to Costa Rica and on to the island of Vanuatu in the South Pacific, but ultimately settled in the Boston area under his assumed identity. His passport was up for renewal in 2012, but the Boston Passport Agency spotted something amiss with the Social Security number

and when DSS Special Agents looked into it, they discovered the complicated truth. The **Chicago and Los Angeles Field Offices** and the **Phoenix Resident Office** all pursued leads. **DS Regional Security Offices in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and San Jose, Costa Rica**, ran record checks on the identities, and the **Boston Field Office** obtained the arrest warrant. He was located at a casino in Las Vegas. His defense? He knew nothing because he suffered amnesia brought on by a scuba diving accident at Vanuatu.

## LOS ANGELES

**Los Angeles Field Office** agents cracked the remarkable case of an identity thief who created a second, fake version of himself. In a complicated scheme, he had assumed the identity of a deceased man and obtained a California driver's license in that name. Then he legally changed his borrowed name to his own birth name, producing two different Social Security numbers and birthdates attached to one name. Using his false self, he obtained student loans from the U.S. Department of Education and from at least six banks, then played

a shell game to evade repayment. The unraveling commenced when a passport office saw that one of the Social Security numbers actually belonged to a deceased person, and the DS investigation revealed the broader scheme. After it all came apart, he pleaded guilty to felony passport fraud and was sentenced to six months in prison, six months of in home detention, three years probation, and was ordered to pay back \$90,000 to his creditors, including \$41,000 to the Department of Education.

## GREENSBORO

A Florida businessman traveled to Venezuela to fake his death so his family could collect millions of dollars from life insurance policies. He then returned, assumed the identity of a retired U.S. Postal Service worker and settled deep in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, where he applied for a passport. Passport Agency staff suspected fraud, and an investigation led by the **DS Greensboro Resident Office** and involving officers from eight local, state, and federal agencies resulted in his arrest.

## SAN FRANCISCO

The CEO of a San Francisco Bay Area information technology company submitted \$400,000 in cashier's checks to the **San Francisco Field Office** as part of an asset forfeiture judgment connected to a large-scale visa fraud scheme. The executive had pleaded guilty in federal court to unlawfully profiting by placing 60 computer workers at unapproved work sites in violation of the visa rules for high-tech workers.

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## MIAMI

**Miami Field Office** agents conducted an investigation of a naturalized U.S. citizen who owned and operated an information technology staffing firm in Memphis, connecting him to 100 fraudulent applications for H-1B visas. Simultaneous search warrants were executed under the direction of the **DS Hot Springs, Arkansas, Resident Office**, yielding comprehensive payroll records and pejorative computer files and leading to guilty plea, forfeiture of \$500,000, and a federal prison sentence of a year and a day.

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**Inside, instead of brooms and cleaning supplies, they discovered an opening with a spectacular view of the podium.**

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# TRAINING

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## IT BEGINS WITH TRAINING

Two DSS Special Agents were inspecting nooks and crannies of the Kenyan compound that would host the Global Entrepreneurship Summit when they noticed a door. It was outside the core security perimeter and unguarded. And it was an odd sort of door, floor-to-ceiling tall but just inches wide and half-hidden at the end of a windowless corridor.

Inside, instead of brooms and cleaning supplies, they discovered an opening with a spectacular view of the podium where the President of the United States would stand and speak a few days later. When the President actually did mount the stage, the little door was shut tight and guarded by a DS detail.

There had been reason to expect trouble. The summit ran July 25-26, 2015, in Nairobi, Kenya, the crime-challenged capital of a nation that shares a border with Somalia, a place where Americans are high-value targets, and home to al-Shabaab terrorists who had promised to attack the meeting.

The two agents' discovery became part of the security payoff from DS training and equipping them and hundreds like them to help protect the summit. The mission was historic — the largest, most comprehensive overseas deployment in DS history, involving 200 personnel that included a tenth of the total DSS Special Agent corps. They provided protection or security



Top: DSS Special Agents and advisers discuss tactics with uniformed members of the Kenyan National Police Service's General Services Unit on July 18, 2015, following an antiterrorism exercise in preparation for the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi. (U.S. Department of State photo)

Bottom: DSS Special Agents qualify on M4 carbines, July 13, 2015, prior to deploying to the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, Kenya. (U.S. Department of State photo)

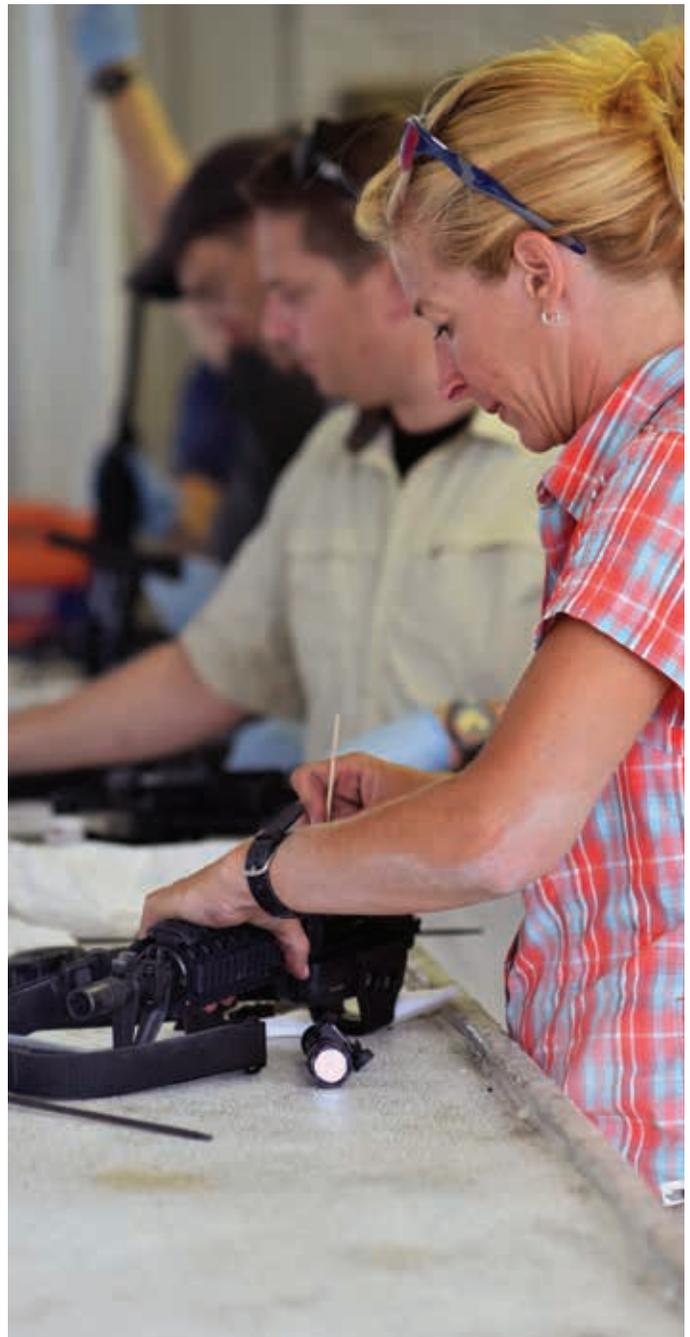
**DSS Special Agents clean rifles July 13, 2015, in preparation for the large deployment to Nairobi. (U.S. Department of State photo)**

support for 300 U.S. Government employees as well as 1,000 international entrepreneurs, investors, and private citizens from 120 countries, a quarter of whom were Americans.

The training began in May with creation of a unique instruction package for all deploying DS personnel, emphasizing firearms proficiency, driving, communications, and tactical medicine.

In other developments, DS and the Bureau of Consular Affairs offered online training in recognizing fraudulent travel documents, and the DS Operational Medicine Unit was accredited by three national emergency medical technicians organizations. Additionally, Foreign Affairs Counter Threat training prepared to accommodate attendance from employees headed to Africa. The week-long classes expanded to accommodate up to up 108 students per week during 2015, and were attended by 3,500 employees.

The Technical Espionage Awareness briefings were attended by officials from the Departments of State, Homeland Security, Defense, Justice, Commerce, and Agriculture, as well as the FBI, Office of Director for National Intelligence, Marine Corps Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Federal Communications Commission, and U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.



SPECIAL AGENT

# SHAWN SHERLOCK



Shawn encountered DS as a Marine Security Guard in Valetta, Malta, and Athens, and “I made up my mind then that this was the organization I wanted to go to.” After the Corps and college, he joined in 1998 and went to Africa. “Coming in, when I first went to Cameroon as a very junior agent, I had to go to a trial in Libreville, and there were death threats against me and the deputy chief of mission; and another time a Peace Corps nurse called on the radio and said, ‘We’re being shot at!’ You could hear the bandits shooting in the background. And another time they tried to carjack the ambassador.”

That was then. Now, as a senior member of the DS Training directorate, his job is “preparing foreign affairs personnel for the kind of craziness you face, and I have a growing appreciation of the caliber of the agents we are fielding. We’ve come very far in their training, and I am proud of the progress.”

## MOBILE SECURITY – HELP IS ON THE WAY

The Office of Mobile Security Deployments (MSD) deployed its fast-response teams 89 times in 2015 on missions to reinforce embassies facing a security crisis and to augment protection operations in high-threat areas, but also to train embassy personnel in places where the potential for violence is the daily norm.

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MSD's benchmark was its largest foreign deployment ever for the 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, Kenya. Forty-five DSS Special Agents and support staff arrayed in seven teams provided training to the local and national paramilitary police units.

They moved U.S. diplomats safely to and from summit meetings, and operated jointly and successfully with Nigerian law enforcement.

More generally in 2015, MSD's Security Support Teams went out 24 times, including a second mission to Nigeria where they brought

protection and enhanced medical and communications capabilities to U.S. election observers traveling in hostile areas. When U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry visited Kenya, Djibouti, and volatile Somalia, three Tactical Support Teams were on hand to keep him safe. It was one of 20 similar protection missions they performed in 2015.

Less well known are the Mobile Training Teams that brought specialized security instruction to embassies 45 times. The work included their own largest-ever deployment, that went into Mexico in February-March when violence outside U.S. border posts had reached critical levels.



**DS Mobile Security Deployments team members hold a briefing before transporting U.S. government officials to the 6th Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi. (U.S. Department of State photo)**

## ANTITERRORISM TRAINING PAYS OFF

The longstanding DS Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program helps others help themselves fight terrorism, and it generated substantive results during 2015 in hot spots from Southeast Asia to West Africa.

The 2015 East Africa Joint Operations exercise in Kenya tested the strategic, operational, and tactical skills of teams from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Rural border teams from the three nations took on an assortment of tactical scenarios, including a 24-hour joint response to a simulated cross-border attack mounted by al-Shabaab gunmen.

Five short hours after students of the Explosive Incident Countermeasures and First Response to Medical Stabilization and Terrorism Incidents courses finished their training, they were called to the scenes of two bombings in Abuja, **Nigeria**. In **Bangladesh**, Antiterror Units created and equipped by DS arrested six suspected terrorists and found 16 bombs.

New body armor provided by ATA helped **Chad's** Police Mobile Intervention Group execute multiple warrants and arrest seven alleged Boko Haram terrorists. And during November's terrorist rampage inside the Radisson Blu Hotel in **Mali**, a local squad from DS Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response deployed to the U.S. Embassy in anticipation of a follow-on attack, and then escorted students from the American School to the safety of the embassy compound.



Top: With resources provided by the DS ATA program, a Kenyan bomb squad member trains for antiterrorism operations on July 18, 2015, one week before the start of the 6th Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi. (U.S. Department of State photo)

Bottom: Kenyan border patrol officers carry a "victim" to a casualty control point during the September 6-7, 2015, East Africa Joint Operations training exercise conducted by DS's ATA program in Kanyonyo, Kenya. (U.S. Department of State photo)

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**A highly tempting target for hackers, professional spies, and other cyber intruders.**

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# CRITICAL INFORMATION

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## CYBER DEFENDERS

The U.S. Department of State's global computer system at the core of diplomats' everyday work is a highly tempting target for hackers, professional spies, and other cyber intruders who battered the doors with an unprecedented series of clever attacks in 2015. These new levels of cyber-invasion were repelled only by higher levels of creativity in detecting and defeating them.

Most notable was an aggressive adversary who had targeted the Department's users around the world. During an intensive

effort, the DS cyber team launched critical technical, managerial, and operational security responses overseen by an interagency task force made up of DS, the National Security Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, and industry experts. The Department emerged with a new capacity to stop suspicious emails and identify malicious attachments that are specially crafted to evade traditional security defenses.

On another front, multiple DS offices teamed to provide detailed cyber-threat analysis to Regional Security Officers at embassies and consulates, equipping far-flung diplomatic posts with the tools to confront cyber issues at their own front doors.

Cybersecurity officers also continued to deliver in-depth threat information and best practices. As a result, 102,000 Department users successfully completed Cybersecurity Awareness training, and more than 33,000 users visited the website for information on social media, mobile devices, and spear phishing. DS delivered 379 cyber-threat briefings to 7,700 overseas personnel.

Increased recognition of "insider" cyber threats resulted in DS reviewing and clearing 116 cases in 2015 and producing one arrest and conviction.

BRANCH CHIEF

# CHRIS BUCHHEIT

Cyber Threat Analysis Division

Cyber Threats to the U.S.  
Department of State



Chris is responsible for managing a team of analysts tracking the capability and intent of advanced cyber threat actors who target the State Department's critical IT infrastructure. This threat often touches personal data. "In October 2015, my team contained a widespread, advanced threat that was targeting Department users' personal e-mail and social networking accounts. We heavily engaged with affected personnel to regain and further protect access to these accounts," Chris said. He joined DS in 2010 as an intern after completing his degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in political science and Mandarin Chinese. He learned his trade as a cyber threat analyst and rose quickly. DS, he said, was "absolutely the right choice. I get to work on something different and exciting every day. I think it's fantastic."

## THE OPERATIONAL HEART OF DS: THE COMMAND CENTER

When gunmen burst into a hotel in Mali and launched a killing spree, a dark room in Virginia went on high alert. For the rest of that morning and afternoon, the DS Command Center became a life-saving link between Americans hiding in their rooms, the DS-led rescue team that went to save them, the U.S. Embassy in Bamako, and State Department leaders in Washington, D.C.

All in a day's work for Command Center staff, who operate 24/7 expressly to track events like the Mali hotel attack in real time and make certain information goes to the right people in time to make a difference. The Command Center's work was similarly evident during complex terror attacks in Paris in November and the April suicide attack by a car-bomb driver at the U.S. Consulate in Erbil, Iraq.

As the focal point for DS command and control operations, the Command Center also oversaw the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, the largest overseas protective operation in DS history, as well as the Pan American Games in Toronto and the 70th United Nations General Assembly in New York, among others.

The eyes of the Command Center are the cameras mounted on U.S. diplomatic facilities worldwide. In 2015, DS technicians began the replacement of aging analog cameras with low-light sensitive, digital equipment. The pilot installation in Zagreb, Croatia, worked, and technicians began a second pilot installation in Panama. Global deployment is planned for 2017.

The Command Center specializes in the reliable sharing of significant information. It assembled and disseminated thousands of security and threat-related cables, all the while maintaining permanent vigilance over U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel around the globe.

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The DS Command Center is the around-the-clock overseer and operational focal point for all DS activities worldwide. (U.S. Department of State photo)



PROGRAM ANALYST

**ANTHONY CORBIN**



“The best part about my job is the interaction I have with people. I love talking to and engaging people.” Anthony came to DS in 2010 with an MBA and a determination to complete his shift from technology administration to strategic planning and performance management. “In the Marine Corps I did data-base administration, and then I worked for the District of Columbia government for 12 years, where I led a staff of technologists in an IT Solution Center. Then I saw a performance management opportunity come up. I liked what I saw and applied and the rest, as they say, is history.”

## OSAC: PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECURITY PARTNERS

Diplomatic Security's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) identifies threats to the U.S. private sector and offers U.S. companies, non-governmental groups, faith-based organizations, and academics timely safety and security information via [www.OSAC.gov](http://www.OSAC.gov). In 2015, it conducted 3,000 security consultations with constituent organizations and produced more than 200 analytical security reports. It dispatched 82 notifications on specific and credible threats to organizations.

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OSAC's real-time threat reporting and in-depth security assessments were lauded as the primary sources for event security information by the private sector during several major events, including the Pan Am Games in Canada and the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Annual Briefing in Washington, D.C., marked OSAC's 30th anniversary and attracted 1,200 security professionals to participate in information-sharing on such matters as radicalization, hostage policy, and the terrorist attacks in Paris, as well as Europe's refugee crisis and America's restored diplomatic relations with Cuba. In his speech to the group, Diplomatic Security Service Director Bill Miller pointed out

that in the year of OSAC's founding—1985—the world saw 603 terrorist attacks, and by 2014, that number had grown to 13,500.

OSAC supports 143 country councils worldwide, where DS Regional Security Offices and American private-sector organizations operating overseas share information. During 2015, new councils were launched in Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Namibia, Australia, Italy, Albania, Germany, and El Salvador.

OSAC also made significant inroads in the use of social media with the launch of its first mobile application, now available on the Apple iOS platform. An Android version is scheduled to be ready in 2016.

DSS Director Bill Miller, chair of the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), opens OSAC's 30th anniversary annual briefing November 18, 2015, in Washington, D.C. (U.S. Department of State photo)



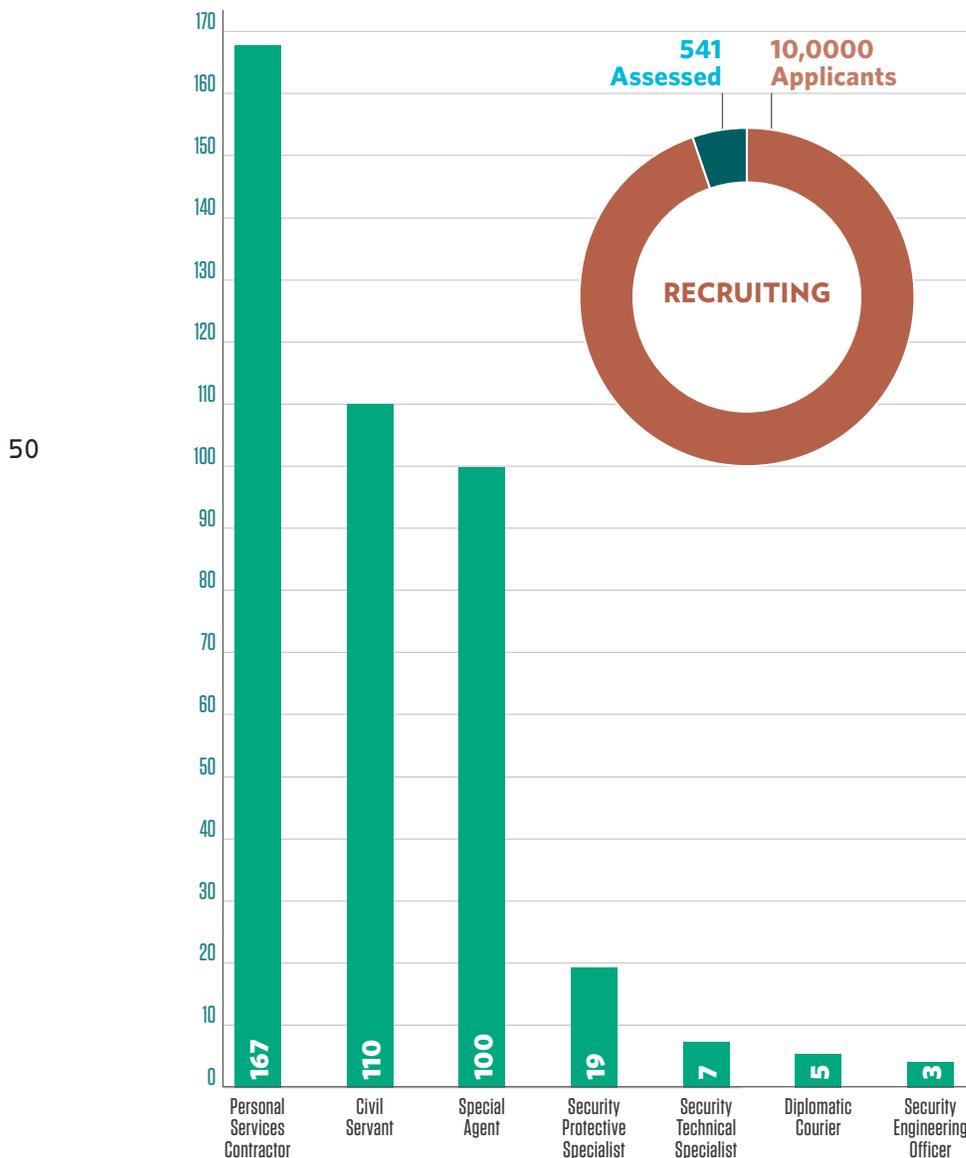
49

Left to right: Journalists Terry Anderson, Kimberly Dozier, Scott Michael Moore, and Tik Root recount their own life-or-death experiences abroad during a November 19, 2015, panel at the OSAC annual briefing. (U.S. Department of State photo)



## 2015 DS EMPLOYMENT: BY THE NUMBERS

### HIRING



### VETTING

**34,500**

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES, CANDIDATES AND CONTRACTORS\*

*\*1,000 more background investigations than 2014*

**140 Days**

ON AVERAGE TO COMPLETE TOP SECRET CLEARANCES (FASTEST 90%)\*\*

*\*\*98 days on average to complete Secret Clearances (fastest 90%)*

**4,000**

LOCAL STAFF, VENDORS AND CONTRACTORS SCREENED OVERSEAS

**52**

ALERTS GENERATED BY SCREENINGS

# COOPERATION WITH CONGRESS

**Congressional interest in DS operations remains high. In 2015, DS answered more than 500 official Congressional taskers ranging from embassy security briefings to official correspondence to annual reports to public hearings.**

**Frequent DS topics included the U.S. Embassy Sana'a evacuation, security at the U.S. consulates in Northern Mexico, and embassy construction. Perhaps most important was the debate over the creation of the Department's Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC), a topic that accounted for over 15 percent of all DS-related Congressional taskers.**





# IN MEMORIAM

The men and women of Diplomatic Security face risk every day, and rare is a year that passes without a loss. On November 9, 2015, contract instructor James Damon Creach, a former Virginia Beach, Virginia, police officer, lost his life in a sudden shooting attack at a training center in Amman, Jordan.



(U.S. Department of State photos)



***Their courage and devotion  
will never be forgotten.***

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security Memorial was dedicated on September 18, 2015, and is inscribed with the names of 137 who fell in the line of duty since the origin of DS in 1916. The memorial also includes a digital kiosk and an online version ([www.dsmemorial.state.gov](http://www.dsmemorial.state.gov)) that provide photographs and more information about the DS fallen. Their ranks include four Diplomatic

Security Service Special Agents, six Diplomatic Couriers, 12 Marine Security Guards and five other members of the U.S. armed services, 36 private contractors, 31 members of Local Guard Forces, 31 local law enforcement officers at U.S. diplomatic posts, six Foreign Service National employees, and six locally employed staff members.







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