



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
*BUREAU OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY*

# THE DIPLOMATIC SECURITY SERVICE

U.S. DIPLOMACY'S  
GLOBAL FORCE



OUR MISSION: The Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) is the law enforcement and security arm of the U.S. Department of State. DSS bears the core responsibility for providing a safe and secure environment for the conduct of U.S. diplomacy and for conducting visa and passport fraud investigations around the world. DSS is a leader in mitigating terrorist threats to U.S. personnel and facilities, mounting international investigations, and generating innovations in cybersecurity and physical security engineering.

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DSS personnel travel the globe providing guidance, support, and leadership to protect American diplomats and U.S. national interests.

*Right: With an American flag in the background, a DSS special agent escorts the U.S. Secretary of State.*



#### PROTECTING PEOPLE, PROPERTY, AND INFORMATION

The men and women of the Diplomatic Security Service belong to one of the most distinctive global security teams in the world. They protect the people, places, and vital information that allow the United States to be a leader in world events.

- ★ *The Diplomatic Security Service conducts day-to-day law enforcement and security operations within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.*
- ★ *The DSS family includes special agents, security engineering officers, security technical specialists, diplomatic couriers, security protective specialists, uniformed protective officers, civil servants, contractors, locally engaged security professionals, U.S. Marine Security Guards, and a contingent of U.S. Navy Seabees.*
- ★ *DSS is the most widely represented U.S. law enforcement and security organization in the world, protecting people, property, and information at 275 State Department locations around the globe.*

# DSS PROTECTS

## Protecting People and Facilities

U.S. diplomats and their families, as well as Department of State facilities, can be targets for terrorists and international criminals, even at locations that might be considered low threat. U.S. embassies, consulates, and personnel overseas have been targeted by gunmen, terrorists, rockets, mortars, complex assaults, truck bombs, criminals, and violent mobs.

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## A Worldwide Presence

**The Diplomatic Security Service protects U.S. interests by sustaining strong partnerships with international law enforcement and security organizations.** These relationships allow DSS to assist and coordinate with U.S. federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. This includes locating fugitives from justice, identifying criminal evidence in support of U.S. prosecutors, and providing support to law enforcement in both the United States and abroad.

*Right: DSS special agents scan the room as the Secretary of State delivers remarks at a ministerial meeting in Washington, D.C.*



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**DSS provides continuous security for the U.S. Secretary of State, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and visiting cabinet-level foreign dignitaries when in the United States.** This includes foreign ministers and many former heads of state, as well as high-level delegates attending the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York City.

**DSS protects emissaries from international organizations and visiting royalty.** Notable protectees have included His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, members of Great Britain's royal family, the Chairperson of the African Union, the NATO Secretary General, and dignitaries visiting presidential inaugurations.



*Top: Diplomatic couriers prepare classified and sensitive air cargo for shipment from Washington, D.C., to U.S. diplomatic facilities overseas.*

*Right: A mobile video systems specialist (left) and two security engineering officers discuss temporary placement of a video surveillance camera near the United Nations headquarters in New York during the U.N. General Assembly.*

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**DSS coordinates U.S. government agencies supporting international special security events (ISSEs) abroad.** DSS leads the International Security Event Group, which coordinates security, law enforcement, and intelligence support for ISSEs overseas, including major athletic events and summits.

The **Diplomatic Courier Service** ensures the worldwide security and protection of classified diplomatic pouches. An expert cadre of approximately 100 diplomatic couriers transports classified and sensitive materials around the world. With regional courier offices in the United States, Germany, South Africa, Thailand, South Korea, Bahrain, Brazil, Cote d'Ivoire, and Senegal, couriers travel to diplomatic posts throughout the world, constantly trouble-shooting and innovating.



## Technical Expertise

DSS technical experts develop and put in place a wide range of technical security countermeasures to protect U.S. diplomats and sensitive information. **Security engineering officers** provide technical security support and engineering expertise to protect U.S. Foreign Service posts overseas and in domestic locations. Responsibilities include working with all aspects of security systems – from design, development and analysis to installation and testing. They conduct security assessments for U.S. overseas missions, conduct technical surveillance countermeasure inspections, implement computer security measures, and support dignitary travel.

**Security technical specialists** provide support and assist in worldwide technical security programs that provide protection for U.S. Department of State facilities and personnel from technical espionage, acts of terrorism, and crime. Their work is incredibly varied – managing projects and people, supporting dignitary travel, exploring the use of new technology, and installing, maintaining, and repairing a vast array of complex technical security equipment.

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6 *A DSS special agent with a Mobile Security Deployments team stands watch on the perimeter as a visiting Saudi Arabian diplomat prepares to travel to a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State in New York.*

The **DS Command Center** near Washington, D.C., monitors Department of State facilities and delegations around the world around the clock, using state-of-the-art technology and relaying two-way communication as events unfold. With links to other watch centers, including U.S. military combatant commands, the DS Command Center regularly shares critical information.

**More than 35,000 local guards protect U.S. overseas compounds.** The local guards patrol the grounds, inspect vehicles, visitors, and packages, and respond to alarms and requests for assistance. Local guards are usually citizens of the host nation and managed by Regional Security Officers.

**Mobile Security Deployments (MSD)** teams provide rapid tactical responses in emergency situations by deploying highly trained security personnel. These teams can deploy anywhere in the world within 24 hours to provide security support to posts under high-threat conditions and to enhance protective support for the Secretary of State and other diplomats.

**U.S. Marines – on duty protecting U.S. embassies.** Marine Security Guard (MSG) detachments are stationed at more than 175 U.S. embassies and consulates around the world, protecting U.S. diplomats and responding immediately to crises large and small. The Marines protect U.S. mission personnel, property, and classified information.

**DSS works in close partnership with U.S. military regional commands.** DSS closely coordinates with Department of Defense geographic combatant commands, which have the ability to temporarily deploy combat-trained troops to augment security at diplomatic posts.



*A Marine Security Guard patrols U.S. Embassy Bamako.*

DSS prepares the foreign affairs community and families to safely live and work overseas through its five-day Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course. The FACT course provides the practical skills necessary to recognize, avoid, and respond to terrorist threats. Participants learn planning and risk management, security awareness, personal resilience, emergency medical care, personnel recovery, improvised explosive device (IED) awareness, self-defense, response to fire as a weapon, ballistics and attack recognition, response to direct and indirect weapons fire, and counterterrorist driving.

On the final day of training, participants are involved in a three-hour reality-based culmination exercise that uses professional role players serving as host nation officials, bystanders, and attackers. The exercise ensures employees and family members can appropriately apply each of the skills they learned during the week while carrying out diplomatic functions in a high-threat and high-stress environment.

## Domestic Protective Services

More than 1,000 uniformed security officers protect Department of State facilities across the United States. They patrol facilities, screen visitors and packages, and monitor communications and security systems. When emergencies occur, they are often the first responders on the scene, taking control of the situation and, if necessary, providing first aid and preparing for follow-on assistance.

DSS uses specially trained canine security teams and their handlers to screen deliveries to Department of State facilities and during special and major events, such as the United Nations General Assembly and the Arctic Summit.



*In a training exercise, Diplomatic Security Uniformed Protective Officers respond during a Full-Scale Active Shooter Exercise outside a U.S. Department of State facility.*



*A DSS explosive detection canine team conducts a vehicle check during a training exercise.*

## REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICERS

# THE FACE OF SECURITY AT U.S. DIPLOMATIC POSTS OVERSEAS

Approximately 1,000 special agents are assigned around the world as **Regional Security Officers (RSOs)** in U.S. diplomatic posts. RSOs manage security programs and provide the first line of defense for U.S. personnel and their families, as well as diplomatic facilities and national security information. RSOs develop, implement, and manage a range of physical, cybersecurity, and personnel security programs to mitigate threats and provide safe living and working environments. RSOs also serve as the principal law enforcement and security advisors to U.S. Ambassadors and Chiefs of Mission.

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## The RSO and assigned staff:

- ★ *Protect U.S. diplomatic facilities, personnel, and information.*
- ★ *Serve as the U.S. embassy's law enforcement liaison to the host nation.*
- ★ *Arrange training for foreign law enforcement and security officers to combat terrorism.*
- ★ *Work with host nation police to pursue investigative leads on fugitives who may have fled overseas after committing crimes in the United States.*
- ★ *Advise U.S. citizens about safety and security abroad.*
- ★ *Share security information with the U.S. private sector through the Overseas Security Advisory Council.*
- ★ *Oversee the conduct of personnel security background investigations for the U.S. Department of State and other U.S. government agencies at posts overseas.*

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# DSS INVESTIGATES



*A cyber threat branch chief discusses how analysts track threats to the Department of State's critical IT infrastructure.*

## Investigating Misconduct and Violent Crimes

DSS investigates allegations of criminal and administrative misconduct involving Department of State employees, dependents, contractors, and other U.S. personnel serving in diplomatic communities. DSS also investigates administrative and criminal cases in the United States with a connection to Department of State operations.

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*Investigative specialists compare findings as they piece together a cohesive picture of a crime.*



## Confronting Cybercrimes

DSS investigators confront the dramatic increase in crimes involving computers and other electronic technologies affecting the Department of State. DSS personnel execute search warrants worldwide on electronic devices and storage media.

## Providing Cyber and Technology Security

As the premier law enforcement and security authority within the foreign affairs community, DSS executes its critical cybersecurity mission to ensure a safe digital environment for global diplomacy and the advancement of American national security interests. This involves protecting people, information, and technology assets worldwide against cyberattacks, data breaches, and information leaks. To effectively risk manage the Department's global cyber exposure, the Cyber and Technology Security (CTS) directorate leverages its cyber, technology, and related criminal investigative programs to detect, analyze, and respond to all forms of cyber-based threats in a holistic manner.

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# INVESTIGATING VISA AND PASSPORT FRAUD



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U.S. passports and visas are among the most valuable documents in the world. Terrorists and trans-national criminals make wide use of bogus identities and counterfeit or stolen documents as gateways to more serious crimes, while fugitives often seek to flee overseas and evade justice.

DSS investigates criminal organizations that profit by exploiting temporary foreign workers. When investigators uncover visa-crime kingpins in the United States, DSS also knocks out the source of numerous criminal visa applications at U.S. embassies and consulates.

DSS special agents conduct criminal investigations from major field offices in Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., as well as from resident offices throughout the United States, including Puerto Rico. These offices work closely with local, state, tribal, and federal authorities on a wide range of investigations.

## DSS special agents:

- ★ *Have a century of experience investigating passport and visa fraud.*
- ★ *Are federal law officers with authority to conduct investigations and make arrests.*
- ★ *Investigate the fraudulent issuance, acquisition, and use of U.S. passports.*
- ★ *Build close relationships with passport offices as well as local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies throughout the United States.*
- ★ *Are members of the federal Document and Benefit Fraud Task Forces (DBFTFs) in approximately 20 U.S. cities.*
- ★ *Deploy to U.S. embassies worldwide to investigate suspected visa and passport fraud.*
- ★ *Train thousands of foreign law enforcement, immigration, and other personnel to recognize fraudulent documents, leading to the revocation or denial of more than 50,000 visas and the arrest of well over 10,000 individuals by host nation partners for visa and passport-related charges.*

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# DSS COMBATS TERRORISM

DSS special agents deploy to major international events, such as the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York City and the summer and winter Olympic Games. Special agents investigate suspicious activities and potential threats against high-profile protectees and coordinate the flow of intelligence and law enforcement information throughout an inter-agency network.

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DSS participates in FBI-managed **Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs)** in more than two dozen U.S. cities. DSS special agents assigned to these task forces work with state, local, and other federal law enforcement organizations to investigate individuals and organizations suspected of planning or committing terrorist acts at home and abroad. DSS task force officers are repeatedly deployed alongside their FBI colleagues to further counterterrorism investigations throughout the world.



*DSS special agents from the Office of Mobile Security Deployments review satellite imagery while assigned to a high-threat protective detail during the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York.*

## Workforce and Information Assurance

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DSS works across the Department of State to properly vet and clear employees and contractors with access to the Department's information and facilities. As one of 24 U.S. government agencies with authorized investigative and adjudicative authority, as well as the third largest industrial security population, DSS is responsible for granting and maintaining an individual's access to classified material. Once entrusted, DSS works with all employees to ensure that reporting requirements are followed and security incidents are properly handled. With a focus on deterrence of issues, DSS strives to prevent any risk to Department employees, information, and facilities.



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**Top Left:** Tunisian police conduct hostage-rescue training in 2018 at the new Jordanian Gendarmerie Training Academy outside of Amman, Jordan. The facility, funded through the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, trains at least 22 nations.

**Top Right:** An ATA-trained crisis response team approaches a simulated mass-casualty incident during an annual East Africa Joint Operations exercise in Nairobi. Security officials from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda took part.

**Bottom:** An ATA-trained police bomb technician renders safe a simulated car bomb during an East African Joint Operations exercise in Nairobi, Kenya.

## Antiterrorism Assistance Program – Training Global Security Partners

The Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program aims to build counterterrorism capacity among international law enforcement and security partners. ATA provides advanced counterterrorism training and equipment grants to maintain and increase partners' abilities to find and arrest terrorists. Nearly all terrorists captured overseas have been apprehended by law enforcement authorities of partner nations, most of which are recipients of ATA training and equipment.

DSS special agents assigned as **Assistant Regional Security Officer-Investigators (ARSO-I)** are key components to protecting the United States by disrupting criminal and terrorist mobility through proactive overseas investigation, capacity building, and liaison with foreign partners. DSS deploys ARSO-Is to more than 100 embassies or consulates. Since 2005, the ARSO-I program has coordinated thousands of overseas arrests and fugitive returns. The program also has trained more than 150,000 foreign personnel to identify signs of fraudulent travel documents.

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The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) promotes security cooperation between U.S. private sector interests worldwide and the U.S. Department of State.

20 **DSS**  
**PARTNERS**

**Partnering with the Private Sector**

**THE OVERSEAS SECURITY ADVISORY COUNCIL**



The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) promotes security cooperation between U.S. private sector interests worldwide and the Department of State. OSAC identifies threats to U.S. companies, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, and members of academic communities operating around the globe. One of OSAC's main areas of focus is the quick sharing of unclassified security and safety information between the U.S. government and the U.S. private sector working overseas. **See [www.osac.gov](http://www.osac.gov)**

The [www.rewardsforjustice.net](http://www.rewardsforjustice.net) website provides information on Department of State rewards for information that leads to the arrest or conviction of anyone who plans, commits, aids, or attempts international terrorist acts against U.S. persons or property.

**REWARDS FOR JUSTICE**

Established by Congress, the **Rewards for Justice Program** allows the Secretary of State to offer financial rewards in excess of \$25 million for information that leads to the arrest or conviction of anyone who plans, commits, aids, 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 identification or location of a key terrorist leader; or that disrupts terrorism financing.

**See [www.rewardsforjustice.net](http://www.rewardsforjustice.net)**

The  
**Diplomatic  
Security  
Service**  
*is Present in*  
**OVER 170  
COUNTRIES**  
*Worldwide*



### DSS Field and Resident Offices

Atlanta, GA	Greensboro, NC	Portsmouth, NH
Boston, MA	Honolulu, HI	San Diego, CA
Bridgeport, CT	Hot Springs, AR	San Francisco, CA
Buffalo, NY	Houston, TX	San Juan, PR
Charleston, SC	Los Angeles, CA	Seattle, WA
Chicago, IL	Miami, FL	St. Albans, VT
Dallas, TX	Minneapolis, MN	St. Louis, MO
Denver, CO	New Orleans, LA	Tucson, AZ
Detroit, MI	New York, NY	Washington, DC
El Paso, TX	Philadelphia, PA	

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To contact DSS investigative offices in U.S. cities, see  
<https://www.state.gov/m/ds/about/18892.htm>

*For DSS offices overseas,  
contact individual U.S. embassies, consulates, or missions.*



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