

**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR RICHARD J. GRIFFIN
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
BUREAU OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
OCTOBER 2, 2007**

“PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTING IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN”

Good morning Chairman Waxman, Ranking Member Davis, and members of the Committee.

It is my honor to appear before you today with my colleagues from the State Department. I would like to thank you and the Committee members for your continued support and interest in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's (DS) worldwide mission. Through Congressional support, DS safeguards American diplomats, facilities, and information around the world to allow the Department of State and other agencies to conduct America's mission overseas to create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community.

Posted to U.S. embassies and consulates in 159 countries, DS is the most widely represented law enforcement organization globally and is the primary U.S. law enforcement contact for foreign government and law enforcement authorities overseas. DS special agents serve as Regional Security Officers responsible for embassy security at posts around the world and participate in a robust worldwide criminal program to combat visa and passport fraud and other related offenses. Our global presence includes over 1,450 Special Agents posted overseas and dispersed among 25 field and resident offices domestically. In addition, DS agents provide a wide range of protective services for the U.S. Secretary of State, U.S. Ambassador to the UN, and foreign dignitaries visiting the U.S.

To fully appreciate the context of both DS's current staffing and its mission requirements, one should start with the recommendations of Admiral Bobby Inman's "Report of the Secretary of State's Advisory Panel on Overseas Security," commonly known as the "Inman Report." When the report was released in 1985, the panel recommended that DS would require 1,156 agents "at home and abroad

to carry out all of the recommendations in this report.” With the opening of additional embassies overseas and the increased threat to our personnel, it is safe to say that those mission requirements have significantly increased in the intervening 22 years. Due to the sheer scope of our protective operations in Iraq and the limited number of DS agents worldwide, DS has been required to utilize alternate methods to meet the expanding roles and responsibilities of protecting Department personnel in non-permissive environments.

The employment of security contractors has become a critical Department tool for providing services necessary to protect U.S. embassies, consulates, mission housing areas, Foreign Service personnel and ambassadorial residences in more than 111 countries worldwide (155 diplomatic posts). For the past 20 years, the State Department has successfully used contractors to assist DS in meeting our protection requirements. In the mid-1980s, after the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut and in conjunction with the Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986, private companies were afforded the opportunity to compete for security contracts at U.S. overseas missions. In these contracts, the Department sought to standardize the way posts contracted and paid for guard force services, to enhance uniform fiscal reporting, and to streamline security management.

Over the last decade, conflicts, wars, political unrest, and terrorist activity have required the deployment of diplomats to areas that have become extremely dangerous places to live and work. As the U.S. Government continued its diplomatic efforts in those critical areas, the assets and resources needed to ensure the safety and security of U.S. diplomats and other government representatives have also increased. As a result, DS began using civilian contract personal security specialists (PSS) to fulfill this immediate Department priority. DS first deployed PSS contractors in September of 1994 during a prolonged period of unrest in Haiti. In the intervening period, the Department has fielded PSS contractors in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Israel, Haiti and Iraq. Some examples include:

- Protecting U.S. ambassadors implementing the Dayton Peace Accords (1995)
- Protective services in the former Yugoslavia (2000)
- Protecting the U.S. Senior Security Coordinator for Gaza and the West Bank (2002)
- Protecting President Karzai in Afghanistan (2002)

The use of PSS contractors has allowed DS to rapidly expand its capability to meet the increased protective duties and to support national-security initiatives

without the delay of recruiting and training full-time personnel. PSS contractors can be recruited, vetted, hired, trained, and deployed in approximately 90 – 120 days, compared to the two-year-long recruitment, hiring, and training process for a DS Agent. Additionally, the contract mechanism allows the Government to quickly hire a skilled cadre of security professionals for emergency needs as world events unfold, usually with little notice. Utilizing contract personnel also allows the Department the flexibility to rapidly expand or reduce the level of security personnel deployed based on changing requirements.

In March 2000, recognizing that there was a consistent and sustained need for PSS contractors, the Department developed and awarded the first iteration of the Worldwide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contract. The WPPS initiative was a proactive effort by the Department to pre-plan, organize, deploy, and oversee PSS contractors for the protection of U.S. and/or certain foreign government officials as required by the security and threat environment. WPPS I was awarded to DynCorp International to provide services in the former Yugoslavia and was subsequently used for deployments in the Palestinian Territories beginning in July 2002 and in Afghanistan for the Karzai Protective Operation in November 2002. The program continued to expand to provide PSS staff in Kabul for the Ambassador's protective detail and for the Afghan Reconstruction Group in early 2004. In 2005, the program began operating in Haiti protecting the Haitian President and U.S. Embassy personnel.

In early 2004, additional task orders were added to the WPPS contract to provide PSS support for Embassy Baghdad when it opened on July 1, 2004. DynCorp was unable to meet the full requirements of the expanding mission and a second service provider was established through a contract with Blackwater USA. Another company, Triple Canopy, was subsequently awarded a contract to protect the Regional Embassy Office in Basrah, Iraq. Concurrently, the Department drafted and released a competitive contract covering the ever-increasing requirement for protective services throughout the world.

In June of 2005, DynCorp, Blackwater USA, and Triple Canopy were awarded contracts under what is now known as the WPPS II contract. Personnel qualifications, training, equipment, and management requirements were substantially upgraded under WPPS II, due to the ever changing program requirements in a combat environment such as Iraq.

An Overview of the WPPS II Contract

Contractors were selected through a competitive bidding process, and the current contract was awarded in July 2005. DS utilizes the WPPS II umbrella contract under which it issues task orders to the three qualified companies – Blackwater USA, DynCorp, and Triple Canopy. The contract has a ceiling of \$1.2 billion per contractor over five years (one base + four option years). There are currently seven active task orders under WPPS II: Jerusalem, Kabul, Bosnia, Baghdad, REO Basrah, REO Al Hillah, and REO Kirkuk (including USAID Erbil). An eighth operational task order for aviation services in Iraq was awarded to Blackwater USA on September 4, 2007. Performance under this task order should begin in late November 2007. Task Order 1 covers the contractors' local program management offices in the Washington, D.C. area.

Security contractors perform a narrow range of tactical duties, including protection of certain foreign heads of state, high-level U.S. officials (including members of Congress), and U.S. diplomats under Chief-of-Mission authority. As such, the Department requires that security contractors working for DS must meet stringent requirements for employment and sustain high performance standards once employed. Candidates undergo a screening process by their employer/contractor before submitting their applications to the State Department. After the applications are submitted, the Department of State performs a background investigation on each American-citizen contractor employee, who must qualify for a U.S. Government security clearance at an appropriate level. The Department requires a similar process for foreign national contractors, who, likewise, must qualify to receive a clearance appropriate to their assignments. DS Special Agents oversee security contractors who are trained to DS specifications by DS-vetted trainers. Before deploying, the PSS contractors receive 164 hours of DS-approved instruction and training. Only successfully trained and qualified contractors are deployed.

WPPS II PSS Contract Requirements and Training

The Department of State requires in each private security firm contract it awards that each person working on the contract meet specific experience requirements delineated by position title/description. The security firm contractor must verify that each person proposed possesses the requisite experience and training required by the contract before that individual is approved to enter the program. The DS High Threat Protection (HTP) Program Office (in Washington) individually reviews and approves candidates for key leadership positions. The

contractor certifies that all other personnel meet the requirements. The Program Office may review qualifications and remove individuals not meeting contract requirements at any time.

Qualification statements for a Protective Security Specialist (PSS) require a minimum of one year of experience in protective security assignments. This experience and background may have been gained in any of the following assignments:

- U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security Service
- U.S. Secret Service
- U.S. Federal Agencies, e.g., FBI (former Special Agents with protective-security background)
- U.S. Special Forces or Special Operations
- U.S. Military Infantry (Army or USMC)
- Commercial Executive Protection Services with Military or Police Background
- Law Enforcement Experience (U.S. Military Police/Criminal Investigation Division or in an Emergency Services, Special Weapons, or Tactical Operations Type Unit of a Local or State Law Enforcement Agency)

All PSS personnel are trained in accordance with the requirements in the WPPS II base contract. The contract contains the qualifications and requirements for both facilities and instructors providing PSS training. PSS personnel must attend and successfully complete pre-deployment training that consists of 164 hours of instruction delivered by instructors previously vetted by DS. PSS training covers the following topics:

- Terrorist Operations
- Organization of a Protective Detail
- Protective Services Formations and Standard Operating Procedures
- Protective Security Advances
- Driver Training
 - Vehicle Dynamics
 - Evasive Maneuvers
 - Armored Vehicle Dynamics
 - Basic Motorcade Operations
- Radio Procedures

- Countermeasures
- Emergency Medical Training
- Firearms
- Defensive Tactics
- Land Navigation

In addition to DS-provided course materials, contractor-developed lesson plans must be approved by the DS HTP program office and the DS Training Center. DS HTP personnel visit contractor facilities and observe training to ensure compliance with contract requirements.

WPPS II Staffing and Costs

There are a total of 1,433 personnel, excluding sub-contractors, currently working under the WPPS II contract. Of that total, 833 work as personal security specialists, 410 as guards, and 190 as support personnel. In Iraq alone, there are 716 personal security specialists, 390 authorized guards, and 155 support personnel. The aviation task order will add at least 241 personnel in Iraq. The approximate current annual costs under WPPS II contracts for all areas of operation (Afghanistan, Bosnia, Israel, and Iraq) are as follows:

Blackwater	\$360,123,994
Blackwater Aviation	\$112,581,657
DynCorp	\$38,862,060
Triple Canopy	<u>\$59,315,251</u>
TOTAL WPPS	\$570,882,962

The approximate total costs for Iraq only, inclusive of all contractors (and including aviation) is \$519,938,634.

Oversight of WPPS II Contractor Operations

DS utilizes a two-part (parallel and mutually supportive) oversight structure. It is composed of a post mechanism and a Washington (via contract office) mechanism.

The DS Regional Security Officer (RSO) at post provides general oversight and manages the operations of security contractors. The post's high threat protection office is responsible for all protective operations under Chief of Mission

authority. A number of DS Agents are assigned to provide oversight of the protective operations, including the PSS contractors. This supervision includes the “embedding” of DS Agents within PSS protective details to observe/participate in training and accompany the details on actual movements.

The DS HTP program office (in Washington) meets weekly with contractor management and conducts periodic Program Management/Contract Compliance Reviews of task order operations at posts. In addition, the HTP office conducts announced and unannounced visits to contractor training facilities to monitor compliance with contract-training requirements.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

The RSO is responsible for developing and maintaining SOPs for each section of post’s security program. The SOPs for the high threat protection office cover a wide range of policies that include, but are not limited to, radio communications, protective operations, after-action review—and-reporting procedures, pre-mission briefings, standards of conduct, firing-range procedures, and operational security.

The “Use of Force” Policy

The WPPS base contract requires all PSS personnel to follow the Mission Firearms Policy of the post to which they are assigned, in this case Embassy Baghdad. Any use of force by a PSS in the course of operations must comply with this policy.

Embassy Baghdad’s Mission Firearms Policy is defensive in nature, while at the same time taking into account specific circumstances surrounding our security operations in an active war zone. The Mission Firearms Policy is founded upon the Department of State’s respect for the paramount value of all human life, and our commitment to take all reasonable steps to prevent the need to use deadly force. Accordingly, the touchstone of the policy is necessity; deadly force can only be used in situations where there is no safe alternative to using such force, and without which the PSS, the protectee, or other individuals would face imminent and grave danger.

The policy utilizes an “escalation of force” continuum to ensure that the proper level of force is applied in each unique situation. This “escalation of force” policy utilizes a seven-step process that must be utilized as appropriate under the

circumstances: (1) English/Arabic visual warning signs on vehicles; (2) hand/verbal warning signs; (3) use of bright lights; (4) use of Pen flares; (5) weapon pointed at offending vehicle; (6) shots fired into engine block of vehicle; and (7) shots fired into windshield of vehicle. It should be noted that deadly force can be immediately applied provided that it is necessary under the specific situation's circumstances.

Incident Reporting Requirements

All PSS contractors are required to immediately report to the RSO any operational incidents of weapons discharges, attacks, serious injury, or death. Contractors are also required to report any incident that would reflect negatively on the United States, the Department, the Embassy, or the contractor. Significant incidents involving PSS personnel are reviewed by the RSO and by relevant management and oversight offices within the Department to ensure that specific use of force incidents are consistent with Department policies. Incidents of PSS personnel misconduct are addressed through procedures in accordance with our contractual arrangements.

Contractor Discipline

The WPPS base contract establishes minimum standards of conduct not only regarding the use of firearms, but also covering areas such as dress and appearance, performance of duties, disorderly conduct, drugs and alcohol, and criminal activity. All PSS personnel acknowledge that violation of these policies may result in termination from the program. Depending on the nature of a given incident, the Department may require remedial training, request the contractor to reassign personnel to duties not requiring a firearm, remove the personnel from the project, or to make referrals to law enforcement authorities. Should the facts of an incident indicate potential criminal acts, further action is determined in consultation with the Department of Justice. The DS HTP program office (in Washington) maintains records of personnel terminated for cause from the WPPS program in order to prevent them from re-entering the program with another contractor.

Incidents Involving PSS Personnel

DS provides security for nearly 1,000 U.S. Embassy personnel located in Baghdad and a number of regional locations throughout Iraq, in support of reconstruction efforts. DS PSS contractors are used on a daily basis to provide

security for those personnel, as well as visiting dignitaries such as U.S. Cabinet members and Congressional delegations.

PSS personnel must follow stringent procedures aimed at avoiding the use of force, for which they are extensively trained and which the standard SOP require they are briefed on before each mission. From January 1 to September 18, 2007, PSS contractors conducted 3,073 missions in which they escorted American diplomats or visitors to locations within Iraq. Out of those 3,073 missions, there were 77 incidents involving PSS personnel that resulted in the use of weapons. These missions occurred during a period in which there were 54,236 recorded attacks (an average of 6026 per month) throughout Iraq; almost 208 attacks per day during which PSS contractors must safely transport Department personnel.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to note that protecting the Department's most precious asset – our people – has come at great cost to both DS and our security contract personnel. Since 2004, two DS agents and 40 security contractors have lost their lives and 76 security contractors have been wounded in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Israel while protecting Department personnel.

Chairman Waxman and Ranking Member Davis, I thank you and the other members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear here today. I would now be happy to answer any questions you or any other members may have.

