

REFERENCE 1.1: OFFICE OF ANTITERRORISM ASSISTANCE OVERVIEW

This document provides an overview of the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) and its training programs.

The Office of Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA)

Purpose

In 1983, the United States Congress authorized the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance as a major initiative against international terrorism. The Office of Antiterrorism Assistance, Bureau of Diplomatic Security provides training and related assistance to law enforcement and security services of qualified countries worldwide. The State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism provides policy guidance for ATA.

United States embassies play a continuing role in the implementation, development, and oversight of all ATA-provided assistance. The embassy regional security officer manages program effectiveness and the selection of training candidates.

Regional security officers are Diplomatic Security Service special agents assigned to United States diplomatic missions overseas. Every diplomatic mission operates under a security program designed and maintained by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. Diplomatic Security is the most widely represented United States security and law enforcement organization, with representation in nearly every country around the world.

Regional security officers serve as personal advisors to the ambassador or chief of mission on all security issues and coordinate all aspects of a mission's security program. They develop and implement effective security programs to protect our employees from terrorist, criminal, and technical attacks both at work and at home. Regional security officers serve as the primary liaison with foreign law enforcement and security services overseas.

In the United States, Diplomatic Security Service special agents investigate passport and visa fraud, conduct personnel security investigations, and protect the Secretary of State and high-ranking foreign dignitaries and officials visiting the United States.

Training Assistance Programs

Since its inception, ATA has delivered antiterrorism training to over 60 partner nations. These officials are now better prepared to fight terrorism and protect their citizens. Diplomatic Security has received numerous accounts from law enforcement officers who use their ATA training to successfully counter terrorist situations in their countries.

Assistance focuses on the following major objectives:

- Enhancing the antiterrorism skills of partner nations by providing training and equipment to deter and counter the threats of terrorism
- Strengthening the bilateral ties of the United States with the governments of United States allies by offering specific assistance in areas of mutual concern
- Increasing respect for human rights by sharing with civilian authorities modern, humane, and effective antiterrorism techniques

Assistance is designed to meet identified needs and enhance recipients' antiterrorism capabilities by providing valuable training in a wide range of law enforcement skills, relevant support equipment, and technical advice.