

**(U) Management Assistance Report: The Bureau of Diplomatic Security Did Not Always Conduct Post Security Program Reviews Within Required Timeframes, AUD-SI-21-03, December 2020**

**(U) Summary of Review**

(U) The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is the federal law enforcement and security bureau of the Department of State (Department) and has the largest global reach of any U.S. federal law enforcement agency. DS has 253 regional security offices led by a U.S. direct-hire regional security officer (RSO) with oversight responsibility for more than 280 locations around the world. One method used by DS to oversee the regional security offices located at overseas posts is the Post Security Program Review (PSPR) program. A PSPR consists of consultations with relevant DS offices, document reviews, observations at post, and interviews with post personnel to evaluate a regional security office's level of compliance with selected requirements on topics such as life safety and emergency preparedness.<sup>1</sup> Two DS directorates conduct PSPRs using the same overarching policies: (1) the High Threat Programs Directorate (HTP) for high-threat, high-risk (HTHR) posts<sup>2</sup> and (2) the International Programs Directorate (IP) for non-HTHR posts.<sup>3</sup>

(U) During an audit of the PSPR program, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that DS did not always conduct PSPRs within required timeframes as set forth in Department policy.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, OIG found that between FY 2016 and February 2020, HTP did not always conduct PSPRs within the required timeframe for 22 of 27 (81 percent) HTHR posts. For example, one post did not undergo the required annual PSPR in 2016 or 2017. In addition, OIG found that IP did not conduct PSPRs within the required timeframes at 84 of 222 (38 percent) non-HTHR posts. For example, a non-HTHR post that required an annual PSPR did not undergo a PSPR in FY 2016, FY 2018, or FY 2019. In another example, OIG found two non-HTHR posts that were to have a PSPR on a 3-year cycle had a PSPR conducted in FY 2016, but neither had a PSPR in FY 2019 and, as of February 2020, were both overdue for a PSPR by 12 months.

(U) HTP and IP officials stated a variety of reasons why the established timeframes for PSPRs had not been met. For example, HTP officials cited regional security officer staffing gaps, the

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<sup>1</sup> (U) 12 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 413.2(a), "Preparation – PSPR Pre-Deployment Review," and 12 FAM 413.3, "Conducting a PSPR."

<sup>2</sup> ~~(SBU)~~ 12 FAM 493, "High Threat, High Risk (HTHR) POST REVIEW Process," states that DS determines which posts are designated as high-threat, high-risk (HTHR) annually based on the following risk factors: (1) the host government's capabilities, (2) the post's security capabilities, (3) the post's political violence and terrorism threat levels, (4) the host country's political will, and (5) facility vulnerability. HTHR posts are supposed to receive priority with respect to the distribution of security assets, such as enhanced regional security officer training, larger Marine security guard detachments, and greater access to financial and security-related resources to mitigate risk. HTHR posts may also receive additional, unique resources, such as enhanced surveillance detection teams, above-standard physical security, and sense and warn radar systems to detect incoming threats.

<sup>3</sup> (U) 12 FAM 413.1-1(a)(b), "PSPR Frequency."

<sup>4</sup> (U) 12 FAM 413.1-1 states that the PSPR schedule is based on the type of post and the post's Security Environment Threat List (SETL) ratings. The Background section of this report provides details on the scheduling requirements.

local security environment, and Foreign Service Officer rotations as reasons for not meeting the established timeframe for conducting PSPRs at HTHR posts. IP officials stated that the primary reason it has not met established timeframes for conducting PSPRs at non-HTHR posts is staffing shortages. By not conducting PSPRs within required timeframes, DS has limited assurance that posts are competently managing life safety, emergency preparedness, and information security programs. Therefore, OIG made two recommendations to DS that are intended to improve the timeliness of PSPRs in both HTP and IP. In response to a draft of this report, DS concurred with the recommendations offered. On the basis of DS's concurrence with the recommendations and planned actions, OIG considers the two recommendations resolved, pending further action. A synopsis of DS's response to the recommendations offered and OIG's reply follow each recommendation in the Results section of this report. DS's response to a draft of this report is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix A.