



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Finance Office

September 20, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees

FROM: Jon P. Alexander 
Director Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 12-7
Guidance on International Travel/Terrorist Attacks

DATE: September 20, 2012

The purpose of this advisory is to provide access to information on international travel in light of recent terrorist attacks on our U.S. Embassies overseas. In this environment of increased tension and concern, the Department of State (DOS) urges Americans traveling abroad to review their circumstances carefully and to take any necessary precautions to ensure their personal safety.

As demonstrations continue, American Diplomatic facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. Americans traveling or residing abroad should avoid demonstrations and take commonsense precautions as seemingly peaceful demonstrations can turn into confrontational situations, possibly escalate into violence.

The DOS urges Americans traveling abroad to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest American Embassy or Consulate. Travelers should be cognizant of the fact that those facilities may temporarily close or suspend public services from time to time for security reasons. In those instances, American Embassies and Consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to Americans.

The DOS requires all government agencies to process country clearance cables for their employees who travel abroad on official government business. Country clearance cables are an important means of communication within the foreign diplomatic network that notifies DOS officials in Washington, D.C., and embassy and post officers abroad, of an employee's presence, location, length of stay, and point of contact in a foreign country. The clearance cable process is a vital step for ensuring that our employees are provided assistance from the DOS in situations including, but not limited to, political unrest, health emergencies, and crime. U.S. citizens inquiring about a citizen traveling abroad or about a situation in a particular country are urged to contact the appropriate Desk Officer within the DOS.

Within NOAA, each Line/Corporate Office has an International Affairs Liaison who is responsible for preparing country clearance cables for their employees. These contacts are also responsible for reaching out to employees who are performing official business in countries where there is unrest, making sure that they are aware of the unrest, and that they have embassy support, if needed. Please note: travel authorizations, the defensive travel briefing, and country clearance cables are required for invitational travelers.

Occasionally, a clearance is denied based on the embassy's knowledge of reasons or situations, which might endanger an employee's life. In these situations, employees will be denied a clearance to travel to the country in question. It is crucial that employees verify the status of their clearance prior to travel.

In order to ensure that a cable is processed, employees must provide at least 2-weeks processing-time and they must ensure that the following essential information is provided:

- 1) Traveler's name, title, and affiliation;
- 2) Purpose of travel;
- 3) Travel destination and flight itinerary (specify dates in each city within each country);
- 4) A contact name in the foreign country, name of the inviting office, hotel name and address and phone numbers (especially cell phone numbers);
- 5) Indication of whether embassy assistance is requested;
- 6) Current Official Passport Information; and
- 7) Emergency Contact Information.

As the DOS continues to develop information on any potential security threats to Americans traveling abroad, it shares credible threat information via its website, under 'Current Travel Warnings': http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html. Travel warnings are issued when a country is considered too dangerous or unstable or when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained. Please visit this site, where over 30 countries are currently listed, for up-to-date information.

Please also visit:

- DOS's Recent Worldwide Caution:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4787.html;
- Country Specific Information: http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html;
- A Safe Trip Abroad: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html;
- What the DOS Can and Can't Do in a Crisis:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html; and
- The NOAA Travel Website, Foreign Travel:
<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/FT.html>

If you have any questions regarding this travel advisory or in regards to your safety while traveling abroad, please contact your International Affairs Liaison.