

Confronting Global Risk

Collective knowledge, common purpose, and intelligent action are fundamental stepping stones for global risk mitigation. To that end, the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) convened stakeholders in Washington, DC, on November 18 and 19, 2009. Those gathered for the 24th annual briefing, hosted by co-chairs Jeffrey Culver, U.S. State Department director of diplomatic security service, and David Schrimp, 3M's director of corporate security services, took away a valuable experience.



By Francis J. D'Addario, CPP, CFE

Ironically, many of the best and brightest global risk mitigation leaders in attendance queued up on the public thoroughfare outside the U.S. Department of State for prevent security admission screening. One could not help but wonder if we have failed to learn the valuable lessons of the past eight years, or if we are unable to apply them to our-

selves. How many times must we witness a gathering outside a hardened target get hit before we get the message?

The speakers at the OSAC briefing shone a light on some of the evolving hazards business security leaders face as well as resources available to help track them.

The Overseas Advisory Council

OSAC (www.osac.gov) has been described as an "enormously successful joint venture" between the U.S. public and private sectors. In 1985, pursuant to the recognition of all-hazards global risk from natural and manmade events, a number of chief executive officers approached the U.S. State Department to collaboratively mitigate security concerns. Today, OSAC numbers more than 6,700 constituent companies, educational institutions, religious, governmental and non-governmental organization representatives. It provides a forum for practices and tools to cope with global security challenges.

With assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce, OSAC established the Research and Information Support Center in 1997. RISC staff interfaces and liaises with the private sector, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and other federal agencies, as well as U.S. diplomatic missions around the world, on matters of security involving U.S. firms and their employees. RISC gauges threats to U.S. private-sector investment, personnel, facilities and intellectual property abroad. Brad Brekke, Target Corporation's vice president of assets protection and a member of the OSAC Executive Working Group, invited both recognition and applause for the analysts whose capable ongoing regional assessments of natural and manmade hazards and events make a difference for at-risk organizations.

The dynamic global security interdependencies of nation

states, multinational corporations and non-governmental service organizations are increasingly served by just-in-time risk intelligence. Fraud drove worldwide consumer confidence to all-time lows. Resultant business failures, retrenchments, job losses, impaired tax revenue and underfunded public safety are accompanied by increased crime, corruption and violence. Economic shortfalls, food shortages and safety concerns erode government and institutional confidence, leaving insurgency, organized crime and terror.

NGOs Play a Role

Samuel Worthington, president and CEO of InterAction: the American Council for Voluntary International Action, discussed the plight of the non-profit non-governmental organizations that provide material aid and assistance to approximately one billion of the planet's most underserved. Suffering more casualties than U.S. armed forces, these intrepid community change agents bring the means of sustaining education, food, potable water, medical relief and hope to their clients. Operating literally under the gun in many of the globe's most contested regions, NGOs and their largely indigenous staffs and volunteers are at increasing risk for violence from adversarial forces. When they are disengaged for safety reasons, humanity is diminished, hope is lost and chaos reigns.

Becoming More Nimble

Those who wish to exploit us are more nimble than we are to protect ourselves. Moises Naim, author of the book *Illicit* and the article "Five Wars of Globalization," along with others, has chronicled the trafficking of arms, drugs, human beings, intellectual property and money. The common threads for organized crime and terror are undeniable. More important, their gray- and black-market activities leave trillions of untaxed currencies on the table that might otherwise be invested in resilient infrastructure to mitigate the consequences of natural and manmade disasters.

We are learning. OSAC promises improvement in global risk and mitigation intelligence dissemination. Its retooled secure Web site promises just-in-time, situational communications capabilities. Technological developments may make what one former government official deems "briefing cattle calls" obsolete. The ability to virtually convene global risk mitigation leadership without risk may not be far behind. Collective knowledge and actionable intelligence within trusted communities will be required to win the day. **SECURITY**

About the Columnist:

Francis D'Addario is emeritus faculty of the Security Executive Council and a Principal of Crime Prevention Associates, an all-hazards security risk and mitigation consultancy founded in 1986. He most recently served as the vice president of Partner and Asset Protection for the Starbucks Coffee Company. To purchase the book *Not a Moment to Lose: Influencing Global Security One Community at a Time*, by Francis D'Addario, visit <https://www.securityexecutivecouncil.com/surveys/fdbook/fdbook.html>.