



State Department Travel Advisories





PRESENTER

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- With OSAC for 4+ years, worn multiple hats, currently team lead for major events
- Recently returned from Rio Olympics
- Spoke at GCTRM in 2013 on global travel hotspots





What is OSAC?



- The **Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)** is an office within the U.S. Department of State that provides the U.S. private sector with **security-related information** to help ensure the well-being and safety of their personnel and assets overseas.
 - “U.S. private sector” broadly defined
- **Main Tasks**
 - Private-Sector Engagement
 - Security Analysis
 - *Threat Warnings*
 - *Notifications & Travel Advisories*





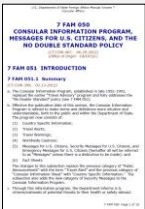

Travel Advisories



- Like many other governments around the world, the U.S. Government issues travel advisories for its citizens living or traveling to foreign countries when situations warrant.
- Often, though, OSAC finds that constituents do not know the difference between the products issued by the Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs—the agency charged with issuing these advisories.
- But first, it helps to understand the **No Double Standard policy**.

No Double Standard



- The State Dept applies a **No Double Standard policy** to important security threat information:
 - Generally, if the State Dept shares information with the official U.S. community (government), then it must make the same or similar information available to the non-official U.S. community if the threat applies to both.
 - How?
 - Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, Worldwide Cautions
 - Messages, Security Messages, Emergency Messages



Travel Warning

- Advise U.S. citizens about the risks of travel to countries where conditions are dangerous or unstable and/or where the U.S. government’s ability to assist its citizens is constrained.
 - Ex. Afghanistan, DRC, Iraq, Pakistan, Nigeria, Syria, etc.
 - Advise against travel.
 - Long-standing ones generally updated once every six months.
 - Encompass an entire country, even if the major security issue does not occur nationwide.

Travel Alert

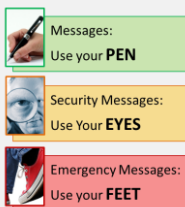
- Relatively short-term conditions posing security risks to U.S. citizens.
 - Terrorist attacks, coups, election-related violence, demonstrations related to an international conference or sporting event, disease outbreak, weather, etc.
 - Do not necessarily advise against travel.
 - When events are over, the Travel Alert is removed.
 - But oftentimes the Travel Warning will remain in effect due to other security concerns.

Worldwide Caution

- A perpetual travel advisory that provides information on the continuing threat of terrorism and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world.
 - For example, according to the current iteration, “recent terrorist attacks, whether by those affiliated with terrorist entities, copycats, or individual perpetrators, serve as a reminder that U.S. citizens need to maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness.”
- Due to constantly evolving transnational terror threats, the Worldwide Caution is updated regularly—at least once every six months.

Consular Messages

- There are three types of Consular messages:
 - Messages
 - Security Messages
 - Emergency Messages
- In practice there is less of a fine line when delineating between the types of Consular messages but the “Pen-Eyes-Feet” rule of thumb can help discern the meaning behind a message.



Where to Find USG Travel Advisories

- **Bureau of Consular Affairs website (travel.state.gov)** – Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and the Worldwide Caution
- **Embassy and Consulate websites** – Messages, Security Messages, Emergency Messages
- **OSAC website (OSAC.gov)** – Only U.S. government website with all security-related travel advisories in one place, including archives.
 - A search will allow any user — registered or otherwise — to access the **last five years’** worth of Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, Worldwide Cautions, and Consular Messages.
- **OSAC consultation** – Constituents can contact OSAC staff to ask about newly-issued messages.
 - We can help you understand why a product was issued, why language may have been changed, and what is going on in-country and/or regionally that might have had a bearing on the new message.

Do you OSAC? Roundtable

How can I get the most out of OSAC?

- Registration
- Information
- Consultation
- Participation

