

8 January 1980

CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE
ARMED PROTECTION FOR BRITISH GOVERNMENT
REPRESENTATIVES OVERSEAS

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for
Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

1. British Ambassadors, particularly those in Western Europe, are potential targets for attack by Irish terrorists. There are other threats of terrorism and violence from different groups elsewhere. To meet these threats Heads of Mission sometimes need armed protection. The responsibility rests on the host governments and we must always press them to discharge it properly. But problems arise when host governments are unable to provide adequate protection. At the beginning of 1979 we employed three UK-based bodyguards; we now employ 12.

2. The attached paper agreed between officials of the FCO, MOD and Home Office analyses the options. These are:

- (a) Continuation of our present policy of hiring from a private UK firm;
- (b) Provision by MOD, who do not consider this a military task and are short of trained men;
- (c) Provision by the Police, who consider this outside their responsibilities and are also short of trained men;
- (d) Establishment of a special FCO armed unit; inflexible in size, administratively cumbersome and involving the recruitment of a new special group of civil servants.

3. I am uneasy at our continuing and increasing dependence on a single UK commercial firm. The political risks are great.

4. The right answer, I am inclined to think, would be for the Police to take on this task on the basis of threat assessments agreed by the security authorities - or, failing them, the Armed Services. But this is something we should discuss.

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FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

8 January 1980

ARMED PROTECTION FOR BRITISH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES OVERSEAS -
ANNEX TO A MEMORANDUM BY FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY

Problem

1. To examine the options for personal armed protection of British Government representatives overseas.

The Threats

2. There is a threat from Irish terrorists to Heads of Mission and possibly other senior British Government staff overseas, principally in Western Europe. The Security Service have advised that it is prudent to provide a measure of personal armed protection in addition to other protective measures. Elsewhere in the world similar threats from other groups occur periodically.

Current Arrangements

3. Protection is in the main provided by host governments, which under the Vienna Convention are required to take all appropriate steps to prevent attack on diplomats. The FCO have however been obliged to hire armed guards in some posts. A current list is at Annex A.

4. The United States and some European countries also provide armed protection for some of their overseas missions. Illustrative examples are at Annex B.

Options

5. There is clearly every advantage in seeking to persuade host governments to discharge their full responsibilities, and in being prepared to offer them expert advice on training and equipment as appropriate. Only when host governments are unable to meet their obligations should supplementary arrangements, with their consent, be considered. Requests for reciprocity could cause difficulty since government and police policy has been firmly opposed to any foreign government providing its own armed guards for its representatives in the UK. Such requests could however be resisted on the grounds that the security situation differs and precautions are primarily a matter for the host government to decide.

6. The main options for such supplementary protection are:

- i commercial hiring, locally or from the UK;
- ii provision by HMG - (a) MOD;
- (b) Police;
- (c) the establishment of a special

Unit within the FCO.

Commercial Hiring

7. Where suitable bodyguards can be hired locally, this is usually a reasonably economic answer. In some countries armed guards cannot be hired for legal reasons (as in the UK) or their reliability cannot be guaranteed.
8. There is only one British firm which the Security Service consider suitable - KMS Limited. Their services are currently being used at Beirut, The Hague, Kampala and San Salvador.
9. There must be a doubt in principle about the wisdom and propriety of relying on one rather small private firm for the security of government representatives overseas. Conflicts of commercial or other interests may affect the protection provided. One indiscreet or dishonest individual could do a lot of harm. So far KMS have provided excellent guards at quite short notice (72 hours for 3 men in Kampala) but this has depended on their other commitments, nor could they supply more than 15 or 20 men in all at present. This is just sufficient to cover our present requirements. Because many of their staff have an SAS background, use of the firm's services could stimulate added hostility from Irish terrorists in some cases. On the other hand, the Security Service advise that the fact of a guard being a local citizen rather than a British ex-serviceman will not in itself inhibit such terrorists from making an attack.

Provision by HMG (MOD, Police or FCO)

(a) MOD

10. The Armed Services provide the Government's main force of trained armed manpower. They have occasionally provided short-term protection in emergencies for British Government representatives overseas on repayment by the FCO.
11. But there would be difficulties in establishing within suitable units the extra posts which would be needed to meet any larger and longer-term commitment. Both the SAS, trained to provide individual bodyguards and the Royal Military Police, trained to provide guarding teams, are substantially under strength. There could be difficulties in certain host countries in securing the necessary legal immunities. If servicemen were to undertake such duties it would, for man management reasons, have to be on a rather inflexible 'accompanied tour' basis probably of 18 months duration.

Bodyguarding is not a true military task. To employ personnel trained in a wide range of military skills for this purpose alone would be to misuse them. They would moreover be cut off from their normal chain of command, duties and training.

(b) By the Police

12. The pros and cons of using Police bodyguards are broadly the same as those relating to the Armed Services. But the Police are in some respects more trained to operate as individuals. They provide personal protection for the Prime Minister and for the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on overseas visits. But they have not hitherto provided protection even in emergency for the British Government representatives, Parliamentarians, etc overseas. The constitutional responsibilities of the Police, the threat from terrorism in London and elsewhere in the UK and the limitations on the resources of trained manpower militate against the direct provision of British armed police bodyguards.

(c) By the FCO

13. An FCO bodyguard unit would be available for deployment as required. The Ministry of Defence and Home Office would assist with recruitment and training. There would be no direct call on scarce military or police resources and no risk of over-dependence on commercial hiring. Possible terms of service for such a unit (about 12 officers would at present be called for) are attached at Annex C.
14. An FCO unit would, however, be a limited and somewhat inflexible tool with which to try to meet the varying volume and nature of posts' requests for bodyguarding, training and security advisory skills. There will be times when a small fixed unit could have too few men available and other times when it would have too many. Administrative overheads would be disproportionately great. As a general principle in the Civil Service, the establishment of a small new specialist cadre and recruitment of a new grade of government servant is a last resort.

Costs

15. Comparative cost estimates are at Annex D.

Conclusion

16. Ministerial guidance is sought on which of the foregoing options for the future provision, where necessary, of supplementary armed protection for British Government representatives overseas is in principle preferred.

ARMED GUARDS AT BRITISH MISSIONS OVERSEAS PAID FOR FROM FCO FUNDS
(NOVEMBER 1979)

Addis Ababa	One locally-engaged guard.
Beirut	Three KMS guards.
Bogota	Two guards supplied by Colombians but paid unsocial hours supplement from FCO funds.
Brasilia	One guard supplied by Brazilians but paid daily subsistence by FCO.
Buenos Aires	Six locally-engaged guards.
The Hague	Two KMS guards.
Kabul	One Gurkha.
Kampala	Four KMS guards.
Kuala Lumpur	Four locally-engaged guards.
La Paz	Five guards supplied by Bolivians but paid a supplement from FCO funds.
Mexico City	Three guards hired from Mexican Federal Security Service.
Rio de Janeiro	One guard supplied by Brazilians but paid daily subsistence by FCO.
Sana'a	Thirteen guards supplied by YAR Government but paid retainer by FCO.
San Salvador	Three KMS guards.
Santiago	Six locally-engaged guards.

EXAMPLES OF ARMED BODYGUARDING AT OVERSEAS EMBASSIES PROVIDED OR FUNDED BY SENDING GOVERNMENTS ADDITIONAL TO ANY PROVISION BY HOST GOVERNMENT

	Federal Republic of Germany	France	UK	USA
Addis Ababa	No personal bodyguard. Embassy gate and compound guarded by 18 locally-engaged guards.	No personal bodyguard. Two home-based gendarmes and locally-engaged guards protect Embassy.	1 locally-engaged.	2 locally-engaged (plus 6 Marines to guard Embassy).
Beirut	9 German Internal Security Police.	4 French soldiers. 4 French Police.	3 hired from UK (KMS).	5 FBI (plus 12 Marines to guard Embassy).
Buenos Aires	1 German border guard.	3 gendarmes responsible only for Embassy security.	6 locally-engaged.	2 locally-engaged (plus 12 Marines to guard Embassy).
Rome	10 locally-engaged.	4 home based.	1 unarmed home based security supervisor has been recruited.	24 hour guarding is provided at the Embassy, Residence and Deputy's Residence by 3 locally-engaged guard. In addition there is a full-time home-based unarmed security supervisor (plus usual Marine guard).

PROPOSED TERMS OF SERVICE FOR AN FCO ARMED BODYGUARD CADRE

The terms proposed for the employment of armed bodyguards on limited period appointments of 2-3 years are as follows:

- Salary: Around £9,000 per annum.
- Pension: Inclusion in PCSPS, with provision for the carry over of pension from the Armed Forces if appropriate.
- Allowances: Local allowance and accommodation equivalent to Grade 9 officers (with provision for officers to be accompanied and to draw full additional allowances etc).
- Outfit Allowances: There is a case for a special outfit allowance to enable the bodyguards to be fully equipped with outfits suitable to accompany an Ambassador to all sorts of functions and tailored to conceal the wearing of hip or shoulder holsters.
- Leave: As for Grade 9 with allowance for any appropriate seniority by reason of service in the Armed Forces.
- Insurance: Most private companies provide free life insurance of £25,000 on death and injury (current cost around £900 a year). We would not consider providing this but would regard inclusion in the PCSPS as partly meeting this and would expect the officer to make appropriate private arrangements out of his salary.

(The preference for short-term contracts is both to avoid the danger of guards becoming stale and to give some flexibility to meet the unpredictable variations of threat).

BODYGUARDING: INDICATION OF COMPARATIVE COSTS

1. Provision by Host Government: Nil.
2. Provision by commercial hiring locally or from the UK:
 - (a) Locally: the current Securicor (Luxembourg) rate is equivalent to about £20,000 per annum per man. (Three men would be required to give 24-hour coverage).
 - (b) from UK (KMS): £10,500 per man per year, plus overseas allowance and accommodation amounting to approximately £6,000 per man per year.
3. Provision by Armed Services/Police: the salary and full allowances of a senior NCO or equivalent police officer could amount to over £10,000; in addition travel and accommodation could be another £3-£4,000.
4. FCO Bodyguard Unit: the FCO would have to pay the going commercial estimated rate of £9-£10,000 to recruit its own drafted men; travel, overseas allowances and accommodation could add another £5-£6,000. There would be an estimated administrative overhead of over £15,000 per year (one Higher Executive Officer plus supporting services).