



**Hearing before the
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate**

Statement for the Record

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INTRODUCTION

Good morning, Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the facts of the misconduct that occurred in Cartagena, Colombia, the immediate actions taken, the results of our internal investigation and the corrective actions that have been implemented.

The Secret Service is an organization that maintains deep pride in the work it does on behalf of this nation. Throughout our long and proud 147 year history, the Secret Service has demanded service with honor and distinction by its officers, agents and administrative staff. All must adhere to the highest standards of professionalism, ethics and recognize that our agency's capacity to carry out our mission depends on the character and judgment of all of our employees.

The Secret Service has five core values: justice, duty, courage, honesty and loyalty. The overwhelming majority of the men and women who serve in this agency exemplify these values. On a daily basis, they are prepared to lay down their lives to protect others in service to their country. It is precisely because of these long standing core values that the men and women of this agency are held to a higher standard. This standard is one that our colleagues in the law enforcement community and the American people have come to expect. Clearly, the misconduct that took place on April 11, 2012, in Cartagena, Colombia is not representative of these values or of the high ethical standards we demand from our almost 7,000 employees.

SYNOPSIS OF INVESTIGATION

From the beginning of this incident, I have continually briefed Members of this Committee and other Congressional committees and Members on the facts in this matter in an effort to be as transparent as possible. The information provided in this testimony provides an overview of the findings to date and we will continue to keep you informed as our review continues.

Immediately upon learning of the allegations of misconduct in Colombia, I instructed Secret Service supervisory personnel in Cartagena to initiate a review of the hotel records and conduct preliminary interviews of any employees alleged to be involved in misconduct. Preliminary findings indicated twelve Secret Service employees were allegedly involved in misconduct. Subsequent information obtained ultimately cleared one of those individuals of any misconduct and that individual remained in Cartagena.

Once the initial interviews had taken place, I ordered that all individuals alleged to have been involved in misconduct immediately return to the United States on Friday, April 13, 2012, and report to the Office of Professional Responsibility (RES) on Saturday, April 14, 2012, to be interviewed. Subsequent to the interviews conducted by RES, all the employees alleged to have been involved with misconduct were placed on administrative leave, their security clearances were suspended, and all Secret Service issued equipment was surrendered.

The immediate removal of these individuals from Cartagena allowed sufficient time for the Secret Service to make necessary adjustments to the security plan.

Working with the Assistant Director of our Office of Protective Operations (OPO), the Assistant Director of our Office of Investigations (INV) and senior supervisory personnel in Cartagena, we ensured the logistical staffing changes had no negative impact on the overall operational security plan for the Summit of Americas, scheduled to begin Friday evening, April 13, 2012, and end on Sunday, April 15, 2012.

I received a comprehensive briefing from the senior supervisory personnel in Cartagena, AD INV and AD OPO concerning the additional personnel that would be brought into Cartagena to replace those individuals who had returned to the United States and other logistical alterations that had been made. After receiving the security operation briefing, I was confident that the staffing changes would not impact our protective mission. The security plan was extremely thorough and comprehensive, and no aspect of the security plan was compromised due to the misconduct. From Friday, April 13 to Sunday, April 15, no negative security related incidents occurred during the Summit of Americas.

By Friday, May 4, 2012 we had interviewed over 220 individuals in three weeks. During the course of this investigation, it was confirmed that Secret Service personnel were scheduled to receive their protective briefing on Thursday, April 12, 2012, concerning their upcoming assignments. Thus, at the time the misconduct occurred, none of the individuals involved in misconduct had received any specific protective information, sensitive security documents, firearms, radios or other security related equipment in their hotel rooms.

Additionally, during the course of our internal investigation we had one individual self report an incident, unrelated to the misconduct that occurred at the El Caribe hotel on Wednesday night April 11, 2012. This individual has been placed on administrative leave pending a full investigation into that matter.

We recognized the potential compromise related to the type of behavior engaged in by these employees in Cartagena. We reached out to the intelligence community as well to cast as wide a net as possible in determining if there was any type of breach in operational security as a result of the incident. No adverse information was found as a result of these inquiries.

There were approximately 200 Secret Service personnel in Cartagena, Colombia when the misconduct occurred. Ultimately, nine were found to have been involved in serious misconduct and three individuals were ultimately cleared of the most serious allegations.

In the midst of our internal investigation, allegations were made that similar misconduct may have occurred in other foreign countries on previous protective assignments. Specifically, allegations were made that Secret Service personnel had been involved in misconduct in San Salvador, El Salvador in March 2011. Although, no case of similar misconduct had been reported to our RES, I directed Secret Service Inspectors to travel to San Salvador, El Salvador to conduct a thorough investigation of the allegations made. After several days in San Salvador and conducting 28 interviews with hotel managers and employees, individuals from the U.S. Department of State, other government agencies and contract employees assigned to assist the Secret Service with the visit, no evidence was found to substantiate the allegations.

During our investigation in San Salvador several hotel managers and employees were interviewed, along with individuals from the U.S. Department of State and other government agencies. During those interviews, none of the 28 people interviewed had any personal knowledge, records or any other information to indicate that Secret Service personnel had been involved in misconduct while in San Salvador, El Salvador in March of 2011.

Additionally, while Secret Service Inspectors were in San Salvador they interviewed the owner of a business where purportedly Secret Service personnel had been involved in misconduct. The owner of the business provided a sworn written statement that he had no knowledge or any other information that any Secret Service personnel had been to his business or information about misconduct by Secret Service personnel. This individual informed Secret Service Inspectors that at no time had he told anyone that Secret Service personnel had ever been to his place of business.

I can assure this Committee that the Secret Service is committed to investigate any allegation of misconduct where witnesses are willing to come forward with facts, provide information, be interviewed and assist Secret Service Inspectors. If anyone has personal knowledge concerning misconduct by a Secret Service employee, I request that they contact our RES office directly or the Department of Homeland Security – Office of Inspector General (DHS-OIG).

From the onset of our internal investigation the Secret Service has been cooperating fully with the DHS-OIG. During the course of our investigation the Secret Service met with and provided numerous briefings and documents to the DHS-OIG concerning all investigative developments. The Secret Service is committed to fully cooperating with the DHS-OIG investigation and assisting in any way possible.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT / ETHICS TRAINING

The Secret Service regularly provides ethics and standards of conduct training to our employees throughout their careers. Below is a list of training courses and programs where this information is covered.

- Orientation for all new employees
- Special Agent Recruit Training Course
- Uniformed Division Officer Recruit Training Course
- Seminar for First Line Supervisors
- Emerging Leaders Seminar
- Seminar for Mid-Level Managers
- Emerging Executives Seminar
- Ethics in Law Enforcement
- Elicitation Briefing

This training is reinforced yearly with each Secret Service employee certifying on a Secret Service form (SSF) 3218 (“Annual Employee Certification”), that they have read and reviewed agency policies, to include the Secret Service’s “Standards of Conduct.”

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

ENHANCED CODES OF CONDUCT / NEW POLICIES

While the overwhelming majority of the men and women who serve in this agency exemplify the highest standards of professionalism and integrity, we wanted to ensure that the type of misconduct that occurred in Cartagena, Colombia is not repeated. Therefore, on April 27, 2012, several codes of conduct were enhanced, along with a few new policies.

- All laws of the United States shall apply to Secret Service personnel while abroad.

Standards of conduct briefings will be conducted for all protective visits, events and NSSEs, as well as prior to Secret Service personnel traveling aboard military aircraft prior to departure for a foreign country.
- The U.S. Department of State Regional Security Officer will work with the Secret Service advance team to provide intensified country-specific briefings immediately upon arrival in a foreign country. The briefings will update personnel on safety issues, off-limit zones and off-limit establishments for Secret Service personnel, and any country-specific rules imposed by the Ambassador.
- Foreign nationals, excluding hotel staff and official law enforcement counterparts, are prohibited from all Secret Service personnel hotel rooms.
- Patronization of non-reputable establishments is prohibited.
- Alcohol may only be consumed in moderate amounts while off-duty on a TDY assignment and alcohol use is prohibited within 10 hours of reporting for duty.
- Alcohol may not be consumed at the protectee hotel once the protective visit has begun.

The following measures relate to foreign car plane staffing:

- Car planes will now be staffed with two GS-15 supervisors - one from the Office of Professional Responsibility and one from the field.
- The car plane supervisors will be responsible for briefing the standards of conduct expectations prior to departure to the destination country, as well as for enforcing these standards while in the foreign country.
- All personnel traveling will have to have completed relevant on-line ethics training in order to be eligible for protective travel.

- The Security Clearance Division will intensify country-specific briefings covering all pertinent topics prior to departure for the destination country.

PROFESSIONALISM REINFORCEMENT WORKING GROUP

In April 2012, I established the Professionalism Reinforcement Working Group (PRWG). The PRWG will conduct a comprehensive review of the Secret Service's professional standards of conduct. This process will include evaluation of policy related to employment standards and background investigation; patterns of discipline related to misconduct; ethics training; and all law, policies, procedures and practices related to the same. Director John Berry of the Office of Personnel Management and Director Connie Patrick of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center will Co-Chair the PRWG.

The PRWG will:

- 1) Collect and analyze comprehensive information across broad categories related to organizational performance and accountability;
- 2) Benchmark against best practices; and
- 3) Prepare an action plan with recommendations for reinforcing professional conduct.

To assist the working group in completing its review, Secret Service personnel will serve as subject matter experts and will represent a cross section of the agency.

I am confident that this review will provide the Secret Service with an objective perspective on our practices, highlighting both areas in which we excel and identify areas in which we can continue to improve.

WORK ETHIC OF THE SECRET SERVICE

Over the past few weeks there have been questions about the culture of the Secret Service. Through the finite lens of the misconduct that occurred on April 11, 2012, I can understand how that question could be asked, but if you examine what the men and women of the Secret Service accomplish every day - I would submit to you that the officers, agents and administrative, professional and technical staff of the Secret Service are among the most dedicated, hardest working, self-sacrificing employees within the federal government. They spend countless days, and at times, weeks, away from their families, routinely working multiple shifts each day and frequently transitioning between their protective and investigatory responsibilities.

I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you about some of the Secret Service's significant accomplishments this year and give you some examples of the hard work of our Secret Service Special Agents and Uniformed Division Officers.

PROTECTION

Although we are only half way through the fiscal year, the Secret Service has worked diligently on multiple trips and events. Thus far in FY 2012, the Secret Service has successfully developed and executed security plans for 3,174 domestic protective trips and 236 foreign protective trips. Over the past five years, the Secret Service has conducted over 33,728 domestic protective trips and 2,414 foreign protective trips. These protective missions are successfully accomplished because of the dedication, hard work and sacrifices of the men and women of the Secret Service.

This past November, we successfully developed and executed our security plan for the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation conference (APEC) in Honolulu, Hawaii. As this event had been designated as a National Special Security Event, the Secret Service was the lead federal agency responsible for the security planning of this event. During the APEC, we were responsible for the safety and security of thirty-six protectees. Throughout this event, no security issues arose.

Later that same month, the Secret Service began protection for its first Presidential Candidate of the 2012 Presidential Campaign. Since November 2011, the Secret Service has provided protection to four Presidential Candidates. We were well-prepared to initiate the protection, as we had campaign details trained and assembled.

This past weekend, the Secret Service successfully provided security for two significant events with heads of state attending from more than forty countries at the G8 Summit at Camp David in Maryland and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit in Chicago, Illinois. In partnership with the local police departments from Chicago and the National Capital Region, and our other law enforcement partners, the Secret Service established a comprehensive security plan to keep the President, visiting heads of state and the public safe.

As I appear before you today, planning for the upcoming Democratic National Convention and Republican National Convention has been well underway for the past ten months. Each of these events has been designated as an NSSE. The Secret Service coordinators for these events have established an Executive Steering Committee with their respective law enforcement partners and emergency medical partners.

Additionally, security plans are now being developed for the upcoming Presidential Debates and Vice-Presidential Debate this fall. Lastly, planning for the 57th Presidential Inauguration has also begun with our law enforcement partners in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area.

INVESTIGATIONS

Over the past five years, the Secret Service has investigated over 17,000 protective intelligence threat cases around the world.

In the investigative arena, the Secret Service keeps American citizens safe from a variety of financial fraud schemes.

Thus far in FY 2012, we have arrested over 3,000 for identity theft, mortgage fraud, cyber crimes and 1,500 for the manufacturing and passing of counterfeit currency. From FY 2007 to the present, we have arrested over 30,000 criminals for various financial and cyber crimes.

In FY 2011 investigations of financial crimes prevented \$5.6 billion in potential losses and cyber crime investigations prevented an additional \$1.6 billion in potential losses. Domestically in FY 2011 \$7.5 million dollars of counterfeit U.S. currency was seized before entering public circulation; abroad, \$63.6 million was seized.

CAREER DEMANDS OF A SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Another significant challenge that specifically affects the special agent population of the Secret Service is the requirement to geographically relocate several times during their career.

Agents begin their career assigned to a field office conducting criminal investigations and working temporary protective assignments. After approximately six to eight years, the agent will likely be required to transfer to the Washington, D.C. area for a permanent protective assignment on the Presidential Protective Division (PPD) or the Vice-Presidential Protective Division (VPPD). Some agents are transferred to a Former President's Protective Detail in other geographic locations to fulfill their protective assignment requirement.

Agents serve on a permanent protective detail for approximately four to five years. During this assignment, agents live their lives week to week, depending on the schedule of their protectee.

Additionally, agents rotate shifts every two weeks – from day shift, to afternoons to the midnight shift. In addition to the rotating schedules, there is a constant requirement for personnel to travel on an “advance team” several days or weeks in advance for an upcoming protective trip or for the actual trip itself.

The constant travel and shift work associated with our protective mission, the long hours conducting surveillance, and the dangers associated with executing a search warrant and working undercover are daily challenges that law enforcement officers and special agents face.

Whether it is in conjunction with our investigative mission or our protective mission, the men and women of the Secret Service work tirelessly everyday to protect the citizens of this country from financial frauds and to ensure the safety of our nation's leaders. Clearly, the misconduct that took place on April 11, 2012 in Cartagena, Colombia is not representative of our core values or the high ethical standards we demand. Although this misconduct was an aberration, the Secret Service is committed to learning from this incident and has taken the necessary corrective measures to ensure that it will never occur again.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this Committee and I would be glad to address any additional questions you may have.