

State Department issues worldwide caution announcement

The following statement was issued by the U.S. Department of State on July 29:

This supersedes the Worldwide Caution dated April 21, 2003. It is being issued to remind U.S. citizens of the continuing threat of terrorist actions that may target U.S. citizens and to update these potential threats. The U.S. Government remains deeply concerned about the security of U.S. citizens overseas. U.S. citizens are cautioned to maintain a high level of vigilance, to remain alert and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. This Worldwide Caution expires on January 26, 2004.

Tensions remaining from the recent events in Iraq may increase the potential threat to U.S. citizens and interests abroad, by terrorists and other groups. Terrorist actions may include, but are not limited to, suicide operations, hijackings, bombings or kidnappings. These may also involve commercial aircraft. Other potential threats include conventional weapons such as explosive devices, or non-conventional weapons such as chemical or biological agents. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. These may include facilities where American citizens and other foreigners congregate or visit, including residential areas, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels, outdoor recreation events or resorts and beaches. U.S. citizens should remain in a heightened state of personal security awareness when attendance at such locations is unavoidable.

U.S. Government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or suspend public services from time to time to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. Americans are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest American embassy or consulate.

As the Department continues to develop information on any potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threat information through its Consular Information Program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. In addition to information on the Internet, U.S. travelers can get up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 in the U.S. or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-317-472-2328. ■