

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees

FROM: R. J. Dominic  
Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 03-1 (Worldwide Caution Public Announcement)

This Travel Advisory contains the latest Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, issued by the U.S. Department of State on February 6, 2003. It is being issued to remind U.S. citizens of the need to remain vigilant due to a heightened threat of terrorist actions that may target civilians, including the possibility of attacks by non-conventional weapons. It also reminds American citizens traveling or living overseas to avoid demonstrations and provides standard preparedness advice. This Worldwide Caution expires on May 4, 2003.

The Department of State reminds Americans that U.S. citizens and interests are at a heightened risk of terrorist attacks, including by groups with links to Al-Qaida. Terrorist actions may include, but are not limited to, suicide operations, assassinations or kidnappings. While conventional weapons such as explosive devices pose a more immediate threat in many areas overseas, terrorist use of non-conventional weapons, including chemical or biological agents must be considered a growing threat. These individuals and groups have proved that they do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. Because security and security awareness have been elevated within the United States, terrorists may target U.S. interests overseas. Private Americans should remain vigilant with regard to their personal security and exercise caution.

Attacks on places of worship and schools, and the murders of private American citizens and other westerners, demonstrate that as security is increased at official U.S. facilities, terrorists and their sympathizers will seek softer targets. These may include facilities where Americans or possibly other foreigners are generally known to congregate or visit, such as residential areas, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels, outdoor recreation events or resorts and beaches. Americans should increase their security awareness when they are at such locations, avoid them, or switch to other locations where Americans in large numbers generally do not congregate. There is a possibility that American citizens may be targeted for kidnapping or assassination.

Demonstrations in many parts of the world may have an anti-American character. Even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn into confrontational situations and possibly escalate into violence. U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad should avoid demonstrations and take commonsense precautions.

American citizens residing overseas should follow the standard emergency preparedness advice found on the Department of State's web site at: <http://travel.state.gov>. A summary of the principal points follows:

- Keep vital documents such as passports, birth and marriage records, medical, school, insurance and bank records in one readily accessible location. Keep copies of documents in a different secure place.
- Ensure that passports and visas are valid and that you are registered with the U.S. embassy/consulate. Immediate family members who are not U.S. citizens or resident aliens ("green card" holders) should keep U.S. visas current, and apply for visas as far in advance of travel as possible.
- Make or update a complete inventory of your household effects.
- If you reside in a region where political unrest, street demonstrations or other temporary disruptions are common, maintain an adequate supply of food, water, and necessary medications in your home. Keep your car in good working order with a full tank of gas.

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 for security reasons. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to American citizens. Americans are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest American embassy or consulate.

As the Department of State continues to develop information on any potential security threats to Americans overseas, it shares credible threat information through its Consular Information Program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>.