

INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE)

MEETING OF EXPERTS TO EVALUATE THE
RESULTS OF THE PILOT PROJECT ON SECURITY
OF TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
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RESULTS AND EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT

**PRESENTATION BY MR. ELDON BREMNER, GENERAL MANAGER,
JAMAICA PEGASUS HOTEL**

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I would first of all like to thank the Organization of American States for the opportunity to have attend the Inter-American Tourism and Recreational facilities Security (ITRS) Programme in Trinidad and Tobago, December 4-8, 2006 in preparation for ICC World Cup Cricket 2007. The course which lasted for one week, was very intensive. Jamaica was also represented by two other hoteliers.

We gained first hand information on critical aspects of Hotel and Tourism Security. The topics covered were:

- Overview of the Tourism Industry
- The 21st Century Challenge: Terrorism
- Communications
- Risk Assessment Methodology/Security Awareness/Threats to the Industry/Overview of Equipment
- Interview & Investigative Techniques
- Bomb Threat Planning Management
- Development of Access Control & Patrol Procedures & Search Techniques
- Crime Scene Methodology
- Crisis Management/Special Events & Response
- Field Exercise – Assessment & Evaluation

We were also introduced to important websites with abundant information on the subjects.

On returning to Jamaica, we immediately implemented certain measures in preparation for the World Cup Cricket event which included the checking of all vehicles from the delivery areas both entering and exiting the premises. We also conducted a one day workshop on Tourism and Recreational Security in conjunction with the University of the West Indies and invited all hotels in Jamaica. During the event we played a critical role in supporting the World Cup Security which included the Ministry of National Security Personnel and the Police Force in ensuring the safety of guests and customers. Team officials and team members including the West Indies, Ireland, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Pakistan and Sri Lanka all stayed at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel.

In addition I was the Point of Contact (POC) for the Hotel Industry on the National Counter Terrorism Committee and this exposure served to enhance the learning and appreciation not only from the industry perspective, but nationally and regionally. I was able to share this experience with my colleagues in the industry.

The Jamaica Pegasus will continue to work with the University of the West Indies and Ministry of National Security and Justice, also spearheading the initiative to update our colleagues in the industry on security issues.

The course also afforded us a linkage with the national and international customs, immigration and other security agencies.

We had two incidents that tested our abilities to respond to emergencies.

1. The Bob Woolmer incident
2. The Fire

The Bob Woolmer incident

Because of the nature of the sporting event, we gained international focus and the Woolmer incident took on international proportions.

Cricket lovely cricket, became not so lovely after Sunday, March 19, 2007 when the Pakistan cricket coach was found unconscious on the floor of his bathroom the morning after Pakistan lost to “minnow” Ireland.

The integrity of the Jamaican and hotel security was in question.

The initial theory on finding Mr. Woolmer suggested it was a terrorist act, no one wanted to think of the possibility of illness, after all, this was what we were trained to look out for so it had to be something in that direction.

The newspapers had a field day being judge and jury:

NEWS HEADLINES

1. Jamaica Observer, March 27, 2007
PAKISTAN SENATOR BLAMES JAMAICA
Says security was lax at team hotel

“A Pakistani senator yesterday blamed lax Cricket World Cup security in Jamaica for the murder of former Pakistan national cricket coach Bob Woolmer”

2. Jamaica Observer, April 8, 2007
PEGASUS DEFENDS ITS SECURITY MEASURES

“Speaking with Sunday Finance earlier this week, the Pegasus’s head of security Fern Lewis-Hue said: ‘All of us at the Pegasus feel tremendous sorrow at the passing of Mr. Woolmer but we have utmost faith in the security arrangements we had in place and remain sure that his passing was not as a result of deficiencies in our security efforts.’

The Jamaica Pegasus’ general manager Eldon Bremner added that the hotel instituted intensive security training a year before the hosting of the Cricket World Cup (CWC) in the

Caribbean. Its management team even attended a course put on by the Organisation of American States (OAS) in conjunction with the government of Trinidad & Tobago in that country. The course was specifically designed for the hospitality industry.

'Many journalists from the international media have been deliberately trying to breach our security measures to test them and we have thwarted them at every turn.' ”

It was heartening to know that I got a call from one of the presenters in Trinidad, offering any help the hotel may require.

The tenets learnt during the course in Trinidad served us well in meeting these challenges.

The three rings of security proved to be effective, particularly the hotel security and we were able to prove all critics wrong, justifying that our security was more than adequate and also explaining our preparation for this event which started with the Trinidad training. Although the international press did not stay at the hotel, they moved into the lobby, BBC, CNN, FOX, Daily Telegraph, Times to name a few. Of course, as mentioned they tried to get access to the floor where the coach died, but could not due to our tight security. The press was impressed with the level of security for the event. Had they not been, we would have been severely criticized.

The Fire

The second incident occurred on August 21, 2007 after the Jamaican phase of the tournament was completed. In this test, the two critical systems necessary for communicating were the first to be damaged, i.e. the telephone switch board and the fire detector system. Despite this, we evacuated the 17th storey building within 20 minutes after which we secured accommodation for approximately 200 guests. As a result of the fire, the hotel's room division was closed for two months.

Security in the hospitality industry is critical in this time of increased terrorism and drug related activities and I commend the Organization of American States for good foresight in sponsoring these programmes to help with the protection of property, staff and guests.

Although we had a comprehensive procedure manual to deal with emergencies, the Trinidad conference training alerted us to the almost daily changes necessary to deal with terrorism, drug dealers etc.

We look forward to these updates at similar training sessions in order to be prepared for every possible challenge that may come our way.

Jamaica being one of the more developed countries in the CARICOM region has been host to a number of international events such as football (soccer), cricket, athletics, (the home of the world 100 metre record holder), netball, swimming etc. Of course, the hotel of choice is the Jamaica Pegasus, not to mention the many dignitaries and celebrities who visit Jamaica and stay at the preferred hotel.

While respecting guests' privacy, because of the fast change in terrorists threats, we are now more observant of unusual behaviour patterns, including "Do Not Disturb" signs on bedroom doors for extended periods, guests paying large bills by cash only and we also look at the frequency of non-residents loitering on the premises.

A few hotels that were actually bombed include the November 9, 2005 Amman bombing of The Grand Hyatt, Radisson SAS and the Days Inn. The Marriott Hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia on August 5, 2005 and as recently as January 14, 2008 the Hotel Serena in Kabul was bombed.

Of note however, there were terrorists attacks on hotels as far back as July 22, 1946 when the King David Hotel in Jerusalem was bombed.

Thank you.