The Challenge of International Oversight
UT-Austin’s Approach to High Risk Travel

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UT System Risk Management Conference 2012
A World of Challenges

- Provide Oversight
- Assess Risk
- Deliver Assistance
- Promote Awareness
- Create Access
Directive from Chancellor of UT System to review all travel to regions with US State Department Travel Warnings (May, 2010)

- International Oversight Committee (IOC)
- Suspension of travel, pending review by IOC
- Mandatory registration with International SOS
Providing Oversight

- **IOC Members**
  - Vice Provost for International Programs (Chair)
  - International Risk Analyst
  - Director, Travel Mgmt. Services
  - Deputy to the President
  - Representative, VP for Research
  - Representative, Dean of Students
  - Representative, Graduate School
  - Representative, Undergraduate Studies
  - Representative, College of Liberal Arts

- **IOC Advisory Council**
  - Associate VP for Campus Safety and Security
  - Director, Study Abroad Office
  - Representative, VP for Legal Affairs
  - Representative, University Health Services
  - Representative, UT System Office of Risk Management
The Restricted Regions List

- Category 1: Extreme Risk
- Category 2: High Risk
- Category 3: Variable Risk

Students, faculty/staff, and programs must be reviewed prior to travel to Restricted Regions

http://world.utexas.edu/risk/travelpolicy
May, 2010 to Present = Approximately 1,230 Trips

- Mexico: 57%
- Colombia: 10%
- Saudi Arabia: 4%
- Egypt: 9%
- Israel: 9%
- Other*: 11%

*Algeria, Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire, Georgia, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Yemen
UT Travel Policy to Restricted Regions

- **Review Process Collects:**
  - Traveler Details
  - Description of Travel
  - Emergency Contact Info
  - Detailed Itinerary
  - Safety/Security Assessment
  - Signatures of Chair & Dean

- For Students/Programs – Letter of Support from Faculty
  - Explaining academic purpose & goals
  - Providing compelling academic why travel should continue, despite risks
  - Explaining why these academic objectives cannot be achieved elsewhere
Assessing Risk

- Travel Resources Online
  - Emergency Medical Assistance
  - UT-Specific Resources
  - U.S. Department of State Links, etc.
    [http://world.utexas.edu/risk/travelresources](http://world.utexas.edu/risk/travelresources)

- Country-specific Information Online
  - Overview of Risks
  - Customized Country Map
  - Link to US State Department Travel Warning
  - Links to US Embassies & Consulates
  - Links to International News Sources
  - Links to Local/National News Sources
    [http://world.utexas.edu/risk/restrictedregions](http://world.utexas.edu/risk/restrictedregions)

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PREPARING FOR A SAFE TRIP ABROAD

[Click here for resources](http://world.utexas.edu/risk/restrictedregions)
Assessing Risk

- **IOC Considers:**
  - Content of Travel Warning
  - International SOS Recommendations
  - UT Ability to Respond in a Crisis
  - Peer Institutions
  - Input of UT Faculty Experts
  - Etc.

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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY 1</th>
<th>CATEGORY 2</th>
<th>CATEGORY 3</th>
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<td>Location presents such extreme risk that only UT <strong>faculty/staff on critical missions</strong> are allowed to travel.</td>
<td>An informed <strong>graduate student</strong> could reasonably mitigate risks involved with travel to this location. <strong>Undergraduate</strong> travel not considered.</td>
<td>Location presents low enough risk that all <strong>graduate student</strong> travel may continue. <strong>Undergraduate</strong> travel may be considered.</td>
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Assessing Risk

- Threat v. Vulnerability

High Threat
- “Murder capital of the world”
- Cairo Protests

High Vulnerability
- Inexperience
- Logistics

Low Threat
- Exceptional location
- Security provided

Low Vulnerability
- Area of expertise
- Travel sophistication
“Five Foreign Tourists Killed in Ethiopia”

Armed attackers killed five foreign tourists and may have kidnapped two more in a remote region of northern Ethiopia, according to reports.

Thanks to review process in place, UT was able to respond quickly.

The Afar region—known for ancient hot springs and other geologic rarities
Delivering Assistance

- 2011 Emergency Evacuations & Travel Suspensions
  - Egyptian Revolution (Jan/Feb)
  - Japan Earthquake/Tsunami (March)
  - Syrian Uprisings (April)
International Crisis Advisory Team (ICAT)

- International Risk Analyst (Chair)
- Director, Study Abroad Office
- Director, Travel Management Services
- Representative, University Health Services
- Representative, VP for Legal Affairs
- Representative, College of Liberal Arts
- Representative, Office of the President

These team members guide the University’s decision-making during international crises
Promoting Awareness

- Launch of UT Global Risk & Safety website

- **UT Safety Updates Blog**
  - Includes travel safety/security articles by International Risk Analyst
  - Informs readers of developing situations that may affect UT travelers abroad
  - Notifies readers of new State Department Travel Warnings/Alerts
  - Email notifications sent out via listserv each time site is updated

- **Risk Assessments Available Upon Request**
  - “If you are planning travel to a region and are not certain of the risk involved, contact the IOC at ioc@austin.utexas.edu and request a risk assessment”
Promoting Awareness

- Provides a review of general political and socio-economic conditions in areas of high risk in Latin America
- Speakers discuss their personal experiences working in unstable and insecure conditions
Promoting Access

- Dr. Vijay Mahajan
- Faculty member in Department of Marketing Administration, Red McCombs School of Business
- Traveled to 20+ countries in 2010-2011
- Including: The West Bank, Lebanon, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Mauritania, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya
Challenges & Lessons Learned

- Provide Oversight
- Assess Risk
- Deliver Assistance
- Promote Awareness
- Create Access
Thank you.

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