



WorldReach Software Newsletter

CONSULARIS

Consularis is derived from the Latin word, Consul. It referred to the Roman governors of provinces as far back as 400 A.D.



SPOTLIGHT SERIES: In this issue, Gar Pardy, Former Director General, Consular Affairs Bureau, DFAIT Canada, is sharing his vast Consular Affairs experience from a Canadian perspective with the readers of Consularis.

INSIDE CONSULARIS
Spotlight Series
Gar Pardy

Capturing Live Biometrics at Missions Abroad

Handling Prisoners Using AssistReach®

Consularis welcomes article submissions from those in the consular world. For more information on how to submit an article or suggest a story idea, please send us an email at: marketing@worldreach.com

THE CONSULAR GAME

For the past several weeks, the Canadian media has provided a rich broth of the problems Canadians encounter in foreign countries. The number of such stories has caused many in the media to suggest there is an unusual catenation of events leading to the dire straights that many Canadian have encountered. Most of the events have involved the arrests of Canadians and their struggles with unknown or misunderstood judicial systems. The reactions of the media in most instances have been to accept that Canadians have been badly done by and the problems can be attributed to malicious or mal-intended foreign governments.

However, for anyone familiar with the world of consular the recent stories have a déjà vue quality. The stories have happened before and they will happen again. In between, the shortness of memory and the inability of the media to provide some measure of perspective cause reactions to be overdone and the remedies short-sighted.

The stories have run the gamut: two death penalty cases, one in the United States, the other in Saudi Arabia; a middle-aged woman in a Mexican prison

for over two years awaiting the conclusion of her case; a woman sentenced for murder in Chang Mai, Thailand; a businessman jailed for ten months in northern India on visa problems; and numerous others in the far corners of the world.

A common thread in all of the stories is the quality of the help provided by the government of Canada and especially consular officers. An added factor has been whether the government itself is sufficiently committed or able to provide the assistance that Canadians and their families and friends demand in these circumstances.

Last fall, Professor Hugh White a Visiting Fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy in Sydney (see the Nov 2007 issue of Consularis) detailed similar issues in Australia. Professor White's paper written in the aftermath of the Israeli-Lebanese war and the evacuation of civilians on a massive scale provided a variety of observations for reflection and consideration. His analysis of the source of the problems, more travellers to more destinations and increasing residence abroad, is reflected in Canadian numbers that have been available to Canadian poli-



THE CONSULAR GAME [CONTINUED]

cy makers since the early days of the deployment of the COSMOS system (Editor's note: Known as AssistReach®, CrisisReach® and PassportReach®) and its associated mechanisms for measuring consular work in all of its manifestations. It was in the full understanding of those constantly increasing numbers that a number of steps were taken in Canada to avoid the problems that are now of concern in Australia.

Professor White's prescriptions for policy changes in Australia were all considered in Canada and were discarded as not being workable in the Canadian context. His concern that the resources needed for consular services should "not detract from the ability of Australia's Foreign Service to undertake critical diplomatic work." establishes a hierarchy of "services" that has little relevance in our democratic and demand driven political systems.

Many have sympathy for foreign services that could be resourced to meet all needs; however, there is little expectation this is a prescription that governments are ready to meet over time or for all situations. Rather, crisis management has become the norm and those of us who have lived and walked the talk, believe there will not be a magical point when the resources needed for all foreign service tasks will ever be available. Rather there will always be tensions within foreign services on the allocation of available resources, and in a world as troubled as today's it is not surprising that consular services are obtaining an increasing share of the available resource pot. Anyone with a longer term perspective would understand that this rebalancing is more the result of past inequities when consular services were the poor cousins in all foreign services. Professor White is right when he states that there is a need for more resources for foreign services, but he is incorrect to suggest that this is as a result of politicians pandering to the needs of their constituents when in trouble in foreign lands.

I would also take issue with Professor White's suggestion that the demand for consular services can be moderated by governments by informing their travelling citizens that "the safety of Australians abroad is the primary responsibility of the individuals concerned and of the governments of the countries they are visiting. Canberra should be forthright in making clear that there can be no automatic expectation that the Australian government will rescue citizens in trouble overseas."

This is a fine sentiment but of no practical value. Governments who, in the abstract, make such declarations are the first to discard them when faced with the demands of injured or endangered citizens irrespective of the circumstances. Many consular services a decade or two ago were premised on such declarations and it was in reaction to the unacceptability of such that led governments to become more forthcoming and to offer a wider range of services. To suggest otherwise would be similar to turning patients away from our hospitals because their life styles contributed to their medical problems.

There have been enormous changes in the world since the end of the Second World War. One of the most far reaching has been the migration of people both on a temporary and longer-term basis. Unfortunately, while there has been considerable effort expended by governments to deal with the worlds of economic goods and services, little attention has been made to create an appropriate regulatory environment in which travellers are accorded appropriate attention. Until that happens then governments must and will ensure that the protection of citizens extends to the far reaches of this troubled planet.

Gar Pardy retired from the Canadian Foreign Service in 2003. He served in India, Kenya and the United States and was Ambassador to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. From 1992 to 2003 he headed Canada's consular service.

ASSISTREACH

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CAPTURING LIVE BIOMETRICS AT MISSIONS ABROAD

As countries adapt to mounting security challenges, the usage of biometrics is becoming more and more prevalent and prominent, notably evidenced by the high-profile evolution of passport documents. Passports have evolved from a well-established and long-carried format of picture and biographical information to a next breed of passport document that augments the previous format with machine-readable text and the inclusion of a chip containing additional electronic information, called an ePassport. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) did numerous tests on the choice of biometrics before determining that facial recognition should be the primary biometric measure with fingerprint and iris recognition as suitable options for the secondary biometric component.



The requirement for the inclusion of a secondary biometric has led to significant change in the manner in which secure travel documents (visa and passports) are handled not only in-country but abroad.

What is driving live-biometric capture abroad?

In addition to all the reformations with passport documents, visa documents have been undergoing a significant change. It can be argued that visas have actually been a driving force behind the increased need for live biometric capture being conducted abroad at embassies and consulates. The visa reformation effort is part of wider overhaul of border security that is happening across the world with current initiatives such as the US-VISIT and UK Visa Waiver program, the establishment of the EU Visa Information System and the Schengen Agreement.

The situation that is occurring with visas will serve as a likely precursor to the changes that will soon affect passport applications in the same type of manner. In January 2005, the European council passed a regulation dealing with passports and secure travel documents and the use of biometrics. This regulation specifies that passports issued by the EU Member States must have an embedded chip with two types of biometric data stored on it, facial image and fingerprints. The regulation specifies two phases, the first that dictates that all passports issued after August 2006 will contain a stored facial biometric and the second phase in August 2009 that will introduce the inclusion of fingerprint biometrics to all EU member state issued passports.

What types of challenges do the collection of biometrics at missions present?

Passport and Visa applications are a recurring service request that embassies and consulates across the world handle with great regularity. The addition of a secondary biometric to these documents addresses the global increase in the level of travel and border security that

is needed but it also puts a new burden on missions. The challenges of relying on consulates and embassies to collect biometrics from visa and passport applicants are numerous. Extending the same level of security integrity that passport and visa applicants are privy to in-country to missions abroad is paramount. Then there's the challenge of equipping missions abroad with the necessary hardware needed to capture biometric as well as the infrastructure; this is an added expense that not only requires the acquisition of new hardware but also training of staff.

One of the biggest challenges of capturing biometrics at a missions level is the live component. Passport and visa applicants will physically need to step foot into a brick-and-mortar consulate or embassy if they wish to apply for these travel documents abroad. With facial recognition a proper picture that can be taken at numerous locations suffices the biometric requirement but when it comes to the matter of fingerprint biometric capture this is not an activity that can be done at a local photo shop. The shift in requiring citizens to apply for a secure travel document in person significantly affects and raises questions for those living in remote areas of a country where the closest consulate or embassy may be a plane ride away. Some countries have tried to address this concern by establishing agreements with other government agencies that may have a greater presence and convenience for citizens to capture their biometrics.

What secondary biometric is most readably being adopted?

Fingerprint identification is the most universally adopted secondary biometric however the manner of fingerprint biometric capture is changing. The US-VISIT program is shifting from capturing two-print biometrics in 2004 to a deployment plan that includes 10-print capture at all U.S. embassies and consulates. The shift from two fingerprint capture to a full set of 10 capture is happening due to the inherent security benefits. A capture of 10-print simply reduces the chance of mismatch and misidentification. Other countries like the UK and several EU nations are also addressing their visa programs to incorporate a 10-print capture standard.

Conclusion

The inclusion of secondary biometrics in secure travel documents is a significant stride in addressing global traveler safety concerns. However the effectiveness of the security initiatives are only as effective as the resources given to those on the ground level in embassies and consulates, enabling them to carry out and adhere to the policies and procedures that have been put in place.

HANDLING PRISONERS USING ASSISTREACH®

The screenshot displays the 'Prisoner' record for 'Nelson Imprisonment'. The interface includes a navigation menu on the left with options like 'Common Tasks', 'Recent Cases', and 'Options'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Personal Information:** Surname: Nelson, Prisoner number: 2354, Gender: Male, Charge: Armed Robbery, Sentence: 8 - 10 years, Detention status: Medical facility.
- Visits:** Last visit: 03-Mar-2008, Planned visit: 03-Aug-2008, Visited by: Mission, Type of visitor: Mission.
- Prisoner Transfer Information:** PTA: No, Transfer requested: Yes, Date: 01-Jan-2008, Status: Approved.
- Financial Assistance:** Public: Conditional, Amount (C\$): 1000.000.
- Lawyer:** Name: Mr smith, Telephone, Fax, E-mail, Case contacts.
- Facilities:** Country: Iran, Province/Subnational Unit: Not Applicable, Name: Abu Dabba, Detention date: 01-Mar-2000, Detention end date, City, Telephone.

The international law of consular work has come a long way since the 5th UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders in Geneva in 1975. At the time, the Chair of the National Parole Board of Canada, Mr. William Outerbridge, started a major trend when he suggested that countries should agree on a system of how to facilitate transfers of offenders.

When finally accepted by the international justice community, the transfer of offenders would mark an important enhancement to the already established Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963). Article 36 of the Vienna Convention gives nationals arrested on foreign soil certain rights, such as notification of an arrest to the consular post of the sending State, as well as the right to receive visits from and communication with a Consular officer. What was now to be added by bilateral treaties and multinational conventions is the possibility of nationals to serve prison sentences in their respective home country.

Today almost all major nations in the world have entered some sort of treaty to deal with Transfer of Offenders, being bilateral treaties or through one of the three Transfer of Offenders treaties:

- The Council of Europe's Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (1983),
- The Inter-American Convention on Serving Criminal Sentences Abroad (1993),
- The Scheme for the Transfer of Convicted Offenders within the Commonwealth (1990).

By working with our clients for over 15 years, WorldReach has created a dedicated function in AssistReach® that deals with imprisonment of nationals on foreign soil.

As evidenced by the screenshot to the left, the prisoner function handles all aspects of imprisonment cases, ranging from details surrounding the detention, visits to the prisoner, and transfer back to home nation.

All interactions with the individual as well as media, lawyers, family and foreign authorities are logged and made available for later reporting and audit checks.

For each imprisonment case, the consular officers are able to create notifications for upcoming visits, specialised monitoring alert function for case changes as well as workflow approvals for each interaction.

Working with the AssistReach® Prisoner function to take care of all routine work, empowers consular officers to focus all their efforts on things that really matter, namely providing the best services to their citizens.

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About WorldReach

WorldReach Software offers solutions to extend a government's reach of assistance across geographic borders and time zones to citizens in need. For more information on any of our solutions, please contact Mark Stoochnoff at mark.stoochnoff@worldreach.com.

Open Invitation

WorldReach Software welcomes article submissions from the consular world. For more information on how to submit an article or to suggest a story idea, please send an email to marketing@worldreach.com.

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