

American Presence Posts (APPs)

Background

Ambassador Felix Rohatyn pioneered the American Presence Post concept in France in 1998. The Department endorsed the concept in 2000, under the guidelines described below. An APP is defined (2 FAM 111.2) as *“a special purpose post with limited staffing and responsibilities. It is established as a consulate under the Vienna Convention.”*

APPs are small, special purpose posts founded on three principles:

- Influence and advocacy require a presence in proximity to customers and target audiences which may not be in a country's capital.
- The focal point for U.S. interests abroad may increasingly be distant from capitals, and U.S. interests in a region may be important but involve 1-2 issues.
- Advances in communications technology enable special purpose posts to effectively pursue U.S. interests at proportionally lower cost than at traditional Foreign Service posts.

The Department of State has no “APP strategy,” rather it has a strategy for global presence, according to means and needs. The Department strategy is to make them available to limit the potential demand for general-purpose consulates, and to retain presence in locations where the USG requires diplomats but cannot afford, or does not require, a fully capable consulate.

Officers assigned to APPs make and maintain close contact with local government officials, media, opinion leaders, U.S. businesses, and the resident American community.

APPs provide very limited emergency American Citizen Services only, no visa or routine Passport/ACS operations.

The Department of State uses the following guidelines in evaluating when and where to establish APPs:

- APPs can be considered for regions where U.S. interests are important but limited or narrowly focused such as public outreach, business facilitation, and issue advocacy.
- APPs can be established only after approval by the Under Secretary for Management and consultation with Congress.
- APPs can be used in places where one or two American officers, supported by a small local staff, could significantly advance U.S. interests.
- APPs, like all other posts, must comply with appropriate security measures established by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

- APPs must be entirely unclassified operations, to limit cost and security requirements, and because holding classified information is not essential to attaining core APP objectives.
- APPs should be located where host country infrastructure is such that a small post may reasonably be expected to operate effectively using commercial office space, communications facilities, and other local services.
- Positions and recurring expenses for new APPs are generally reprogrammed from within the regional bureau. Where State (P) determines the need for an APP is overriding, funds or positions can be moved from another regional bureau.
- Start-up costs for APPs are provided from centrally managed funds.

Like all post opening proposals, the process for establishing an APP is decentralized. There is no centralized APP program or management-driven effort to identify potential APPs. Individual COMs and regional bureaus propose the establishment of APPs with final decisions made by senior Department management.

Establishing an APP requires a strong commitment by the COM and regional bureau to identify offsets in positions and recurring costs. APPs are not about new resources; they are about adapting existing resources to changing circumstances and priorities.

Security and Administrative Support

The security standards for consulates apply to APPs. There is no cost or efficiency gain associated with APP status per se. The Secure Embassy Counterterrorism and Construction Act, P.L. 106-113 (FY-2000) requires APPs to meet mandatory 100 foot setback requirements, or be granted a waiver. Other Overseas Security Policy Board security standards apply as well. To most efficiently contain costs, the expectation is that most APP facilities would be located in commercial office spaces, waivers to setback would be granted in accordance with the law, and security standards for an office in a tenant of commercial office space would be applied, providing adequate but lower cost security

APPs should receive most administrative support from the associated embassy, to keep local staffing as small as possible.

Any categorical cost containment is due to the very small presence, limited consular function, and the lack of classified infrastructure and maintenance.

Taken from:

- 1) M/P Background Info on APPs – No drafting info/date
- 2) Jay Anania/Grant Green Draft Info Memo, Subject: Department Strategy for American Presence Posts (APPs), Drafter: M/R:PRHayes. 11/18/04,