

SECURITY

Unfortunately, over the last few years enhanced security dangers, especially the increased risks of terrorist attacks, have made the organization of major international summits far more complex and demanding. The security operation has arguably become the largest and most expensive organizational element for summit hosts. Every logistical aspect must be weighed against security risks. The Security division is therefore a vital part of any summit organization.

In the initial preparatory phase, and before the decision on the general location of the summit is made, negotiations with other levels of government should include discussions on the implications of security arrangements for the locale in question (eg. affects of street closures, motorcades, limited access to summit sites) and the extent of extra police resources required. Before committing to the location, agreement among the municipal/provincial/federal agencies on the provision of resources and the sharing of policing costs should be reached.

When the decision is made to take the summit out of the capital region, host security authorities will have to work with police forces who may have little or no experience with events of this complexity and involving high levels of VIP security. Combining the operations of two (or three) separate police forces is a major coordination job and challenge for the senior host security officer and his associates. It is critical from the outset that everyone understand who has the ultimate command and control.

Securing the Sites:

The general location chosen for the summit (city, resort, or other) will have a large impact on the total budget for security, and in turn on the total summit budget. It is particularly difficult and costly to secure an extensive number of sites in a densely urban environment. The decision to take the summit to a large urban centre must weigh these costs and risks against the logistical and political advantages of such a decision.

Extra security requirements impact on more than just the budget. The whole perception of the summit as a public event will change as the secure perimeters around events extend outwards and as access to the sites becomes more restrictive for everyone. The accreditation system becomes stricter. The need for "accreditation checks" ties up increasing resources and can lead to frustrations among the general public affected (eg. suppliers, tenants in site locations).