

INTERNATIONAL **GLOCK**

Austria's Cobra Task Force: On Guard With **GLOCK!**

How Austria's Elite EKO Cobras handled security at the 'Summit.'

BY EKO COBRA

All officers of Austria's elite EKO Cobra Task Force carry the GLOCK 17 as a duty weapon. When special requirements arise, the GLOCK 19 and GLOCK 26 are also used.

The Cobra Task Force decided in 1992 to switch from the service weapon at the time—the French revolver, Manurhin MR 73 .357 Magnum—to a new weapon system. The decisive factor was that the revolvers had already reached their service life due to the extensive usage over approximately 10 years, and an acquisition of new weapons had become inevitable.

Skepticism was originally high among the Cobra officers during the switch from a reliable large-caliber revolver system to a pistol system. The light weight, high firepower and the re-

liability of the GLOCK pistol convinced critics, in relatively no time.

According to AI Klaus Lassnig, weapons technician and firearms trainer of the EKO Cobra unit, repairs of the weapons, which had each fired approximately 30,000 rounds during the last 13 years, were limited. Serious repairs were kept to a minimum, and despite the high round count the barrels didn't lose any of their precision.

Thanks to a reliable, precise weapon like the GLOCK, the EKO Cobra unit also does not need to fear competitors at international tournaments. This is indicated among other things by the success of a Cobra officer at the World Police and Fire Games in 2003 in Indianapolis/U.S.A. He won the "Match 1500" in the service weapon class and ranked an outstanding 3rd place in the Practice Pistol Course within the team.

All Cobra units consisted of civilian personal security components, as well as mobile intervention teams in full protective equipment.



Air Force One lands in Vienna. The Cobra unit was responsible for the direct safety of President George W. Bush, the First Lady and other officials and Ambassadors.

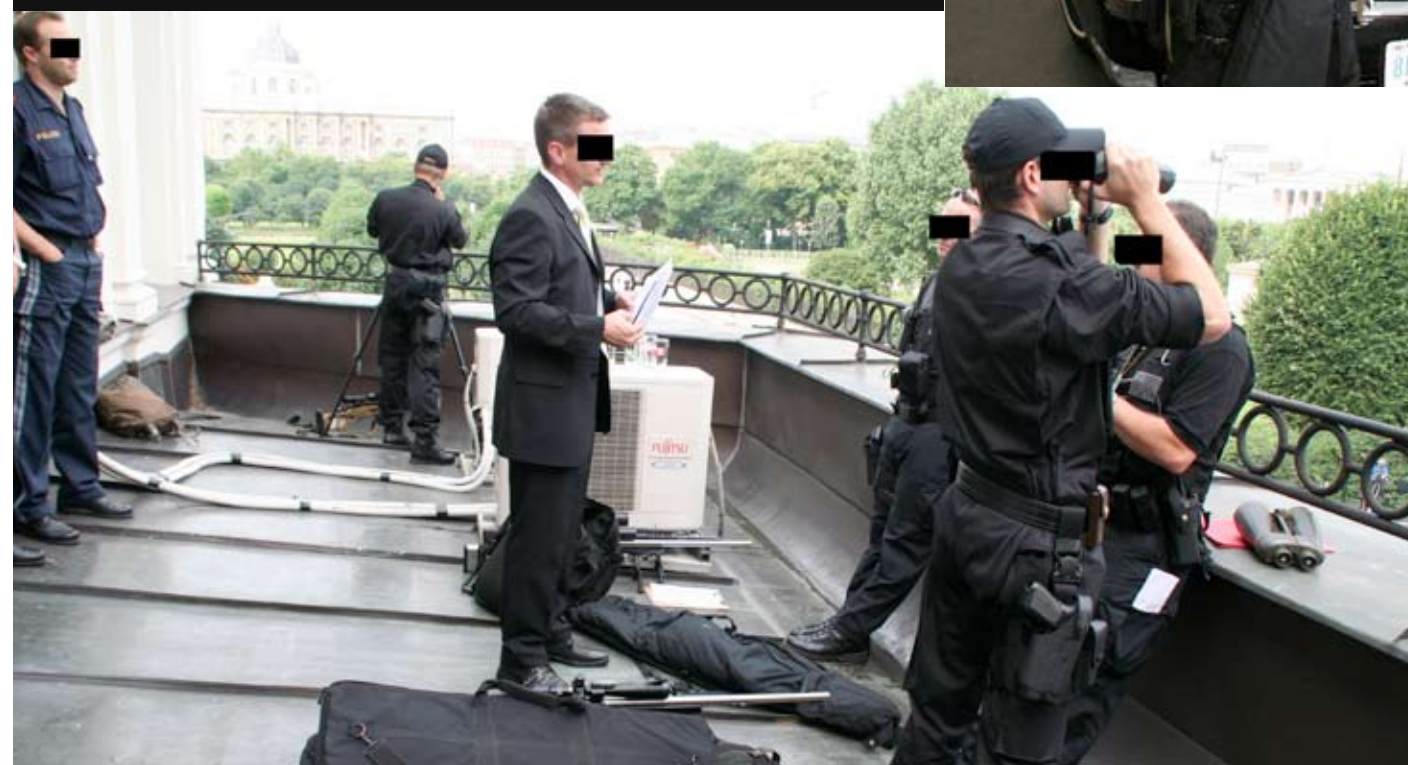
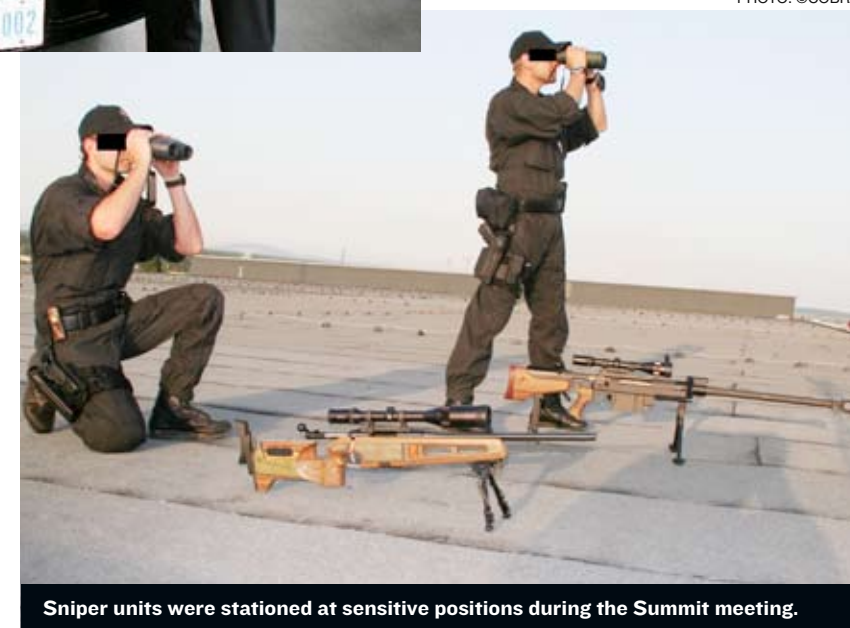


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Sniper units were stationed at sensitive positions during the Summit meeting.

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Protecting the 'Summit'

The visit of the U.S. President George W. Bush for the E.U.-U.S.A summit was a logistical challenge for the Cobra Task Force.

"One unit under uniform command." This was the philosophy of the Cobra Task Force in protecting the visit of the U.S. President, George W. Bush, and other high-ranking politicians at the E.U.-U.S.A summit on June 21 and 22, 2006 in Vienna, Austria. The operation was planned in a timely manner. The EKO Cobra unit presented a detailed concept to the U.S. Secret Service commanders, who were responsible for the security of the U.S. President. They accepted the Cobra plan in its entirety.

Transportation during the Summit meetings took place in armored vehicles.

Only some fine-tuning regarding tactical procedures was implemented.

"The cooperation with the American colleagues was very professional and affected by a distinctly positive atmosphere," emphasizes Rainer Wintersteiger from the EKO Cobra unit.

Some 217 Cobra officers were employed during the Bush visit. The security of the Guests of State was a logistical challenge for the Special Task Force. The Cobra unit was responsible for the direct safety of President George W. Bush and the First Lady; the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso; the E.U.-Secretary General Javier Solana;

the U.S.-Ambassador in Austria, Suzan McCaw; and the Israeli Ambassador in Austria, Ashbel Dan.

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The antiterrorism components consisted of units for the support of the regular units at the checkpoints of the Intercontinental Hotel and the Hofburg Palace. They secured the checkpoints, explored the surrounding area—especially with regard to "suicide bombers." In addition, there were quick mobile support units with special operation technology, as well as helicopter units for observation, convoy accompaniment and quick intervention.

The location of the "control" unit for the coordination of all Cobra officers was in the Rossauer Barracks, one of the buildings used by Viennese Police Administration. One unit acted as an "on site" direct contact source for neighboring manpower, for the American security and the coordination of local manpower at each particular location. Sniper units were positioned at sensitive spots.

Observation Units, consisting of U.S. Security Agents and Cobra officers, were responsible for observation, reconnaissance and profiling. ■