

Ex-Bush Official: Secret Service a "Scapegoat" in Salahi Case

Posted by Mark Knoller



(AP)

Former U.S. Chief of Protocol Donald Ensenat, who served in that post for most of President Bush's 8 years in office, says "the Secret Service is being made the scapegoat" in the party crasher incident.

Ensenat is seen at left with former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2004.

In an e-mail to **CBS News**, Ensenat blames the Office of the White House Social Secretary for not having staffers with the invitation list at each of the

access checkpoints for guests. Ensenat thinks it's the Social Secretary's job to have refused entry to anyone not on the guest list.

"The Secret Service are not bouncers," writes Ensenat. "Their job is security which they perform superbly putting their life on the line everyday."

In prior administrations, it has been standard practice for staffers from the Social Office to be physically present at access checkpoints to provide guidance to the Secret Service.

But ultimately, it's the responsibility of the Secret Service to ensure that individuals not on the guest list are not permitted entry to the White House. And Secret Service Director Mark Sullivan acknowledged this in his public statement last Friday.

5780962" That failing is ours," he said of the ability of Michael and Tareq Salahi, at left, to be admitted to the State Dinner last Tuesday, even though they were not on the guest list.

"Our internal investigation have determined established protocols were not followed at an initial checkpoint, verifying that two individuals were on the guest list," said Sullivan.

He said both of the individuals were subjected to security checks and required to pass through metal detectors, but "they should have been prohibited from entering the event entirely."

But other officials from past administrations share Ensenat's view that representatives of the White House Social Office should have been at each checkpoint to guard against uninvited guests gaining access.

White House Social Secretary Desiree Rogers told the Associated Press last week that she did not assign staffers with guest lists to the entry checkpoints.

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(CBS)

Mark Knoller is a CBS News White House correspondent. You can read more of his posts in Hotsheet [here](#). You can also follow him on Twitter here: <http://twitter.com/markknoller>.

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