

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
Office of Inspector General

Report of Inspection

Embassy Paris, France, and Constituent Posts

Report Number ISP-I-05-06A, February 2005

~~IMPORTANT NOTICE~~

~~This report is intended solely for the official use of the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, or any agency or organization receiving a copy directly from the Office of Inspector General. No secondary distribution may be made, in whole or in part, outside the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, by them or by other agencies or organizations, without prior authorization by the Inspector General. Public availability of the document will be determined by the Inspector General under the U.S. Code, 5 U.S.C. 552. Improper disclosure of this report may result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.~~

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY JUDGMENTS 1

CONTEXT 3

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION 7

 Mission Performance Plan 9

 Morale 10

 Entry-Level Program 11

 Equal Employment Opportunity 11

 Constituent Posts 11

 American Presence Posts 12

 Space and Facilities 14

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION 19

 Political Affairs 19

 Economic Cluster 21

 Economic and Financial Affairs Section 22

 Environment, Science, and Technology Section 24

 Consular Operations 26

 Public Diplomacy 34

 Consulate General Marseille 38

 Consulate General Strasbourg 44

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT 49

 U.S. Missions in Paris 49

 Real Property 51

 Financial Operations 53

 Human Resources 56

 General Services Operations 57

 Information Management and Information Security 62

QUALITY OF LIFE 69
MANAGEMENT CONTROLS 73
FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS 75
INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS 79
PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS 91
ABBREVIATIONS 93

KEY JUDGMENTS

- Embassy Paris has charted a very effective course in strengthening the trans-Atlantic partnership and the bilateral relationship across a vast spectrum of priority activities despite the tensions between the two countries over Iraq.
- The establishment of American presence posts (APPs) in five French provincial cities has effectively expanded public diplomacy, trade promotion, and American citizen services activities throughout the country at relatively low cost to the U.S. government. Efforts to strengthen the links in all these fields between the APPs and Embassy Paris are ongoing, with a particular emphasis on minimizing administrative tasks performed at the APPs.
- Property issues dominate Embassy Paris operations and remain in flux. Security of our facilities is at the center of current thinking. Some assets have been sold, and others are slated for refitting. Despite significant attention by post management, the current state of play is not entirely satisfactory with many problems still to be addressed. Further, when the historic Talleyrand building has been vacated, the Department of State (Department) must determine the best use of this historic structure while continuing access to the Marshall Center.
- The severely reduced and poorly configured space available to the consular section due to security concerns since September 11, 2001, affects Paris's ability to provide requested services and to maintain standards of oversight and training for its consular staff. This situation will continue until the section is moved to more secure and appropriately designed space, not anticipated before 2006.

- Embassy Paris agreed to develop a joint management structure that provides full services for the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (USOECD) and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (USUNESCO), through the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS). This structure will reduce overall administrative costs for the U.S. government and further right-size local staff in Paris.
- The public affairs section carries out active and coordinated countrywide activities and provides major support to constituent posts. The section needs to work with mission leadership to confirm priorities and ensure the best use of its scarce resources.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 15 and 30, and in Paris, France, between October 4 and November 19, 2004. Ambassador Vincent Battle (team leader), William Cavness (deputy team leader), Joseph Catalano, Leslie Gerson, Deborah Klepp, Andrea Leopold, Cheryl Martin, Robert Mustain, Robert Torres, Timothy Wildy, and Matthew Worner conducted the inspection.

CONTEXT

The relationship between the United States and France is among the oldest and most important that the United States has worldwide. The reality of this trans-



Atlantic partnership is reflected in the large and complex U.S. government presence in Paris and throughout France, with 40 U.S. government agencies and offices on the ground, 342 (143 Department) direct-hire Americans assigned to the country, and a Department annual budget of just under \$50 million. France is a true global player that uses its UN Security Council seat, its leadership role in the European Union and Group of Eight, and its activism in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to promote and

protect its interests. It is also both a global military power with capacities for deployment throughout the world and an economic powerhouse with the world's fifth largest industrialized economy. Furthermore, France takes effective advantage of its traditional regional linkages: its historic colonial ties with Africa, and its close political and commercial ties with the Arab world, particularly the Maghreb and the Levant.

France and the United States work together on a broad range of issues. The U.S. government has been able to turn worldwide French outreach and engagement to its own benefit in seeking to resolve or stabilize regional issues and conflicts. France also is among our most steadfast allies in the war against terrorism. Since September 11, 2001, it has worked closely with the United States to focus attention and resources on identifying and eliminating terrorist activity, containing the financing of terrorism, implementing border security initiatives and protecting U.S. government facilities and personnel.

Framing these areas of cooperation, however, is a French nationalist pride in its global stature that has often manifested itself in a resistance to what it perceives as American hegemony. The French have long favored strengthening global institutions to rein in the world's superpowers. Important French leaders would like to see French-dominated European solidarity replace the U.S.-led trans-Atlantic alliance. As a result, bilateral relations have often been difficult. Nonetheless, differences in policy perspectives and tactics are discussed openly.

In particular, U.S.-French ties have been strained for the last two years because of France's robust opposition to U.S. policy in Iraq. France used its UN Security Council veto to attempt to thwart U.S. actions, and has refused to participate in coalition activities, although it did open an embassy in Baghdad. These tensions poisoned the atmosphere in which interaction on many other issues took place. For example, the Department of Defense took a hard line on the future of our military relationship. On both sides, the press and others have popularized criticism of the society and values of the other, presenting significant challenges to U.S. government public diplomacy. The consular section reported some instances of attacks against Americans that appear to have been based on national origin.

Despite the scratchy tone of bilateral relations engendered by public disagreements over Iraq, Embassy Paris and its many constituent posts ably implemented an energetic program of diplomatic initiatives and activities across the full range of mutual interests in addition to the focus on terrorism and regional stability outlined above.

- The Washington audience for the embassy's political reporting and analysis gives it the highest possible marks for comprehensiveness, timeliness, and policy relevance - all evidence of effective outreach by embassy staff to all segments of the French society and polity.
- In-depth cooperation in an impressive array of scientific endeavors is second-to-none worldwide.
- France is a major partner with the United States in the global campaign to put a halt to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to enhance nuclear scientific collaboration and safety.
- In an expanding European Union, the United States looks to France to garner support among the new members for a commitment to market liberalization. The embassy works with success on sectoral disputes such as steel, and helps U.S. firms expand into French regional markets, including through American presence posts in five key cities.

- The embassy's public outreach focuses more and more on the successor generation, using unfettered access to the French media, growing linkages with the Ministry of Education, U.S. government exchange programs, and its five American presence posts to craft more positive views of American society.

Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Consulate General in Strasbourg, is responsible for monitoring U.S. government relations with the Council of Europe. The consul general in Marseille is accredited to the Principality of Monaco and oversees this bilateral relationship from there, although the Ambassador deals directly with Monegasque authorities from time to time. A Franco-Monegasque treaty now in the ratification process may allow accreditation of ambassadors to the principality in the future. The U.S. Department of Agriculture participates, with a full contingent of specialists, at the European Biological Control Laboratory near Montpellier.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Both the Chief of Mission (COM) and the deputy chief of mission (DCM) have been at Embassy Paris since 2001. They make up a strong, well-respected professional team. The non-career Ambassador brings his broad experience in corporate management to bear on his approach at the mission. He demonstrates a solid knowledge of issues across the spectrum of both policy and management priorities at the embassy. He is cognizant of the value and role of the numerous outlying offices (consulates general, American presence posts, consular agencies, and others) that report to him, and follows their activities attentively. The DCM, an experienced career officer, has a combination of focus, energy, knowledge, and bureaucratic savvy that makes him an effective chief executive officer. He has an intelligent grasp of even the smallest issues on his plate and parlays that comprehensive approach into close oversight of the embassy's programs and resources. The relationship between these two professionals is based on mutual respect and open discourse. In a word, the front office works well. A small team of staffers works collegially to support the leadership. With the very recent departure of the Ambassador's senior assistant, the front office will realign responsibilities to maintain the flow of taskers and information to all embassy sections. Communication between the front office and the senior staff across sections and agencies is strong. Employees at mid-level grades or in specialist functions have much less contact with the front office. They sometimes feel disconnected from policy and resource decisions or ill informed about the overall mission of the embassy. Both the Ambassador and the DCM participate actively in the mission's awards program. The Ambassador's lack of French has limited his public role in some arenas, but his outreach is still excellent, and his use of the Ambassador's residence for representational purposes is generous and effective.

The lengthy joint tenure of the Ambassador and the DCM has witnessed mighty upheavals in the U.S.-French relationship as well as in the life of the embassy itself. Embassy Paris is weathering the storms. The leadership of these two professionals has brought focus and energy to the policy dialogue. Despite major differences between the United States and France on Iraq and French hesitations to fully engage during the long lead up to the U.S. presidential election, the two countries have continued to nurture strong bilateral ties on an impressive range of U.S. government policy priorities. On the differences, without minimizing the depth of their impact, the front office has stayed on message and exerted care and

attention to managing unwarranted static generated by discordant or careless voices from either side of the Atlantic. This successful balancing act has given the mission the space to pursue intensively the full U.S.-French agenda. The presence of as many as 40 federal agencies and offices in Paris attests to the breadth and heft of this agenda. The front office, through effective coordinative mechanisms, has its hand on the pulse of each agenda item, ranging from strong joint action on counterterrorism and U.S. border security, collaboration in support of regional instability across the globe, and a robust trade relationship, to broad based collaboration in science, international and interagency efforts to stem transnational crime, and joint orchestration of the moving celebrations honoring the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of France.

Real estate issues have absorbed the efforts, and tested the imagination and talents, of the front office team in greater length and intensity than either the COM or the DCM anticipated. This time-consuming focus continues as the property issues remain in flux. The embassy's communication with the Washington bureaucracy on these issues has been comprehensive and timely. Despite this attention, the current state of play is not entirely satisfactory. While mission management is moving to implement the solutions deemed suitable by the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO), the sense remains among them that these solutions present as many problems as they answer.

Managing the growing law enforcement function in Paris has presented its own challenges. The need for effective cooperation was on display during the inspection when the diplomatic facility of a third country suffered some damage and casualties in a suspicious explosion. The DCM ably chaired the mission's Emergency Action Committee, asking the right questions and eliciting a constructive mission response that drew in all the appropriate players. The front office also has in place an effective working group that periodically brings together all elements of the mission with a law enforcement focus. Less formal links between the same agencies also abound and reinforce the working relations between them, with impressive results.

The front office led the mission through recent upheavals in staffing levels by implementing a well thought out, coordinated and compassionate strategy. First came the massive transfer of the Financial Services Center (FSC) to Charleston with the loss of more than a hundred positions, both American and locally employed staff (LES). A reduction in force among the ICASS staff followed the next year to right size the staffing of the service provider. The absence of legal challenges to these reductions-in-force in the litigious French labor environment is a

testament to both the care with which the embassy implemented them and the appeal of the separation incentive packages that accompanied them. Less traumatic, but certainly resource intensive and efficiently managed, was the requirement to house the newly established USUNESCO at the embassy for nearly a year and then assist in the transfer of that mission to its new facilities when they were ready.

MISSION PERFORMANCE PLAN

The Mission Performance Plan (MPP) developed this cycle provides a reasonably accurate road map for the priority activities of the embassy. The preparation of the document depended on input mostly from Department section heads and a small pool of decision makers from other agencies at post. The quality of sections of the document varies in its precision and usefulness. With such a large number of other agencies at the mission, the concentration on Department programs and resources limits the overall utility of the document for front office managers as a basis for resource planning. Their purview obviously encompasses other agencies, each with its own planning and resource profile. Wedding what is essentially a Department exercise with the planning needs of the entire mission presents challenges. Officers at the consulates general and APPs do not appear to have been closely tied into the preparation process of the MPP, although their participation in achieving three priority goals of the mission is active and coordinated.

Mission leadership uses the MPP effectively as an internal guide for the embassy's work program and periodically reviews progress against the goals set. The embassy's public diplomacy section is also developing an information strategy tied to MPP goals. At the same time, mission management believes that assessments of performance ought not to be based primarily on the indicators laid out in the MPP. These indicators are often quantitative and mechanistic whereas real performance may best be evaluated on the basis of qualitative judgments. What they characterize as the "micromanagement" of the MPP process by the multiple Washington audiences sometimes leads to a back-and-forth exchange of views that stresses a specific bureau's agenda for Paris and adds little to the overall planning process on the ground. The MPP also fails to account for the significant amount of time spent on unsolicited and uncoordinated Washington taskers not necessarily tied to MPP priorities.

MORALE

The Embassy Paris experience with morale parallels that at many large embassies. In general, morale is good with the attraction being the city of Paris itself and access to the many facilities living in France offers. The flip side of that coin is that some at the embassy decry a lack of a sense of community and an absence of community-based activities. Individuals with a curiosity to explore their environment, the resources to do so, and the language skills that facilitate maneuvering in France do best. The reality is, however, that access to many of the attractions in France is expensive and sometimes beyond the reach of lower paid staff. Many in the community also do not speak French, and satisfaction with the post language program is relatively low. Complaints sometimes elicit the dismissive notion that no one with the chance to live in Paris has the right to complain, a response that serves to irritate the complainants further. The Marines have an active program, which the front office fully supports, but the Marine house is located some distance from where most staff members live. Marine activities at embassy facilities are popular as was the Marine Ball that took place during the inspection. Some community sports teams have also begun to form. This trend toward institutionalizing out of office activities for employees should continue.

Housing, as in many places, is a heated topic of conversation. Those employees who had to stay in temporary quarters on arrival were almost unanimous in their criticism of the quality of these quarters that often lacked common amenities. Those who were able to move into their permanent quarters directly upon arrival are by and large satisfied with these residential accommodations. There are two small compounds of 44 government-owned housing units, located further into the suburbs than most leased quarters. The availability of these compounds complicates the allocation of residential assignments for new arrivals. The mission is within regulations in assigning individuals to these government-owned units before making assignments to leased units. Such assignments often come despite the expressed wishes of the employee for in-city living. Within the community the Office of Inspector General (OIG) found perceptions that this process was not transparent and that certain categories of employees were more likely than others to be assigned to the compound. The front office is grappling with the requirement both to fill its government-owned units expeditiously and ensure that the assignment process is transparent.

ENTRY-LEVEL PROGRAM

The DCM provides a formal mentoring environment in which entry-level generalists come together with him periodically for discussions about subjects pertinent to career development, integrating into the Foreign Service work force, and understanding the culture of the Foreign Service. OIG participated in a session that grouped most of the entry-level generalists around the subject of bidding for onward assignments. The discussion was lively and useful. The DCM has proposed a formal program that will allow and encourage entry-level generalists to seek short-term opportunities in other sections of the embassy. In addition to this formal mentoring at the hands of the DCM, each section with untenured officers provides very effective informal mentoring using its chain of command. The generalists express a high level of satisfaction with the way the formal and informal channels for seeking advice are working in Paris and complement one another.

Entry-level specialists receive less direct attention from the front office. This distinction can lead to resentment. The front office is examining ways it can be more inclusive in the mentoring of all untenured employees, including specialists.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The equal employment opportunity counselor has not had formal training and travels frequently. The counselor needs to request equal employment opportunity counselor training, and OIG believes that more than one counselor may be needed to maintain an effective program. This large embassy staff, including USOECD and USUNESCO, should have access to a counselor as needed.

CONSTITUENT POSTS

The embassy is responsible for the oversight of all the work at two consulates general (Strasbourg and Marseille), five APPs (Lyon, Lille, Rennes, Bordeaux, and Toulouse), and a consular agency in Nice that is tied administratively to Marseille. OIG visited all of these offices except Toulouse, which currently has a staffing gap with no American officer in residence. Information on the two consulates general

is found elsewhere in this report. The nature of the portfolios of the two consuls general, however, calls into question the current supervisory chain of command. In both locations, the designation of the consul general in Paris as the supervisor and rating officer for these two officers appears to reflect a time when the positions were primarily focused on consular activity. While both officers retain some oversight of the consular function in their respective regions, neither of them is primarily a consular officer with major links to the consular section in Paris. Both officers devote greater attention to bilateral issues, commercial advocacy, and public diplomacy, and in the case of Strasbourg, to multilateral diplomacy. OIG believes the involvement of the front office with these consulates would be enhanced with direct supervision and evaluation of the consuls general coming from the DCM.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Paris should realign all supervisory responsibilities for the consuls general of Strasbourg and Marseille positions and designate the deputy chief of mission as the rating and supervisory officer and the Ambassador as reviewing officer. (Action: Embassy Paris)

AMERICAN PRESENCE POSTS

The role of the APPs in France is almost unique. The opening of these APPs in French provincial cities began in 1998 at the behest of the then ambassador. The APP in Lyon came first, and four others followed, each with one American officer and LES ranging from only one at Lille to four at Lyon. Resources to cover this expansion came from Embassy Paris. The embassy has devoted care and attention to selecting first-rate officers to head up these operations. This experiment is a success and the U.S. government is well served by these offices. In the absence of any worldwide strategy for establishing APPs, the French experience may provide a useful model for future growth.

The inspection team members visited four of the five APPs - Lille, Bordeaux, Lyon, Rennes - and also participated in Paris in a two-day conference of officers in charge of these operations. Such conferences occur two times per year. The minister counselor for economic affairs, who has direct responsibility for overseeing the work of the APPs, chairs these gatherings, and both the Ambassador and the DCM take an active part in the group's deliberations. Each of the embassy counselors responsible for a part of the triple agenda of the APPs - export promotion,

public diplomacy, and consular services to Americans - meets with these officers to exchange views on how things are going and how collaboration with Paris can be harnessed to maximize the productivity of their work. The exchange of ideas is dynamic and contributes to the success of the APPs.

The sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of France provided each of the APPs, as well as the consulates general, with an exciting opportunity to demonstrate their value as outposts for U.S. public diplomacy and, without exception, they all jumped into this activity with enthusiasm and effect. Their participation in literally hundreds of events staged throughout their districts, and for months after the June celebration of D-Day, accrued great value for the United States in underscoring a shared history and shared values. In some cases, the activism on these occasions overwhelmed much of the other work the officers in charge would otherwise have been doing, demonstrating the need for clear prioritization. Funding for the public diplomacy work of the APPs comes from the countrywide public diplomacy budget. The public affairs section, therefore, has direct interest in working with the APPs to enhance their productivity.

The U.S. Commercial Service of the Department of Commerce (Commerce) shares in the funding of Foreign Service national (FSN) salary costs at two of the APPs (Toulouse and Lyon) and provides all costs and an officer to staff the APP at Toulouse. LES who do trade promotion at the other three APPs are Department employees. Commercial Service participation attests to the important role the APPs can play in trade promotion. The oversight of this function at the APPs by two separate agencies, however, is not simple and has been the subject of joint agreement between the two agencies. Commerce's focus is on success stories and matchmaking. Officers in charge of the APPs, and both American and binational clubs and chambers of commerce that spoke to OIG, assess success by the effective links forged with the American private sector communities in their districts and the active support of American corporate participation in trade shows and other promotional activities.

Commerce's staffing of the American position in Toulouse is problematic, and the attempt to find a solution has exposed doubts about the long-term commitment of Commerce to the APP program. The position in Toulouse is currently vacant. The Commercial Service has indicated it is unable to fill the position. The Department has found a qualified officer for the job and is currently attempting to work out the arrangements with Commerce for assigning the officer to Toulouse on a reimbursable detail. Arranging the reimbursable detail has proven difficult. Commerce is reluctant to fund an officer who will focus only part time on trade promotion. Even if this obstacle is overcome now, Commerce has signaled its

unwillingness to continue funding and staffing this position beyond the incoming incumbent, i.e., beyond three years. Short-term arrangements for staffing of this position are an urgent priority for the mission, and negotiations with the Commercial Service reflect this urgency. The embassy must also look to the future and identify the source of staffing.

Voter registration assistance alone has absorbed hefty amounts of the time of the APPs in this election year. This, of course, is only one aspect of the consular services provided to American citizens. Notarials, passports, reports of birth abroad, prison visits, emergency welfare, and other services to Americans make up the daily menu for the time APP officers and LES spend on consular services. Even with an increased staff, it is doubtful that Paris could provide these services as efficiently or at a similar cost. As the APPs have become better known, the number of services performed has increased. In concert with the embassy's consular section, the consulates general, and the consular agency in Nice, these APPs provide a level of service perhaps unparalleled elsewhere today. Many individuals clamor for the addition of a visa service to the APPs, but this function remains appropriately centralized in Paris.

Mission management continually assesses the cost benefit to the U.S. government of the APPs and believes their continued existence is critical to the mission's outreach and to the strength of the consular, commercial, and public diplomacy programs. This assessment is on the mark. Administrative support from Embassy Paris is generally satisfactory. Day-to-day administrative burdens are light and do not absorb more than ten percent of the time of any of the officers. Occasionally requirements for documenting petty cash expenditures or motor pool mileage logs seem excessive, but post management is working to centralize these tasks away from the APP officer in charge as much as possible. OIG identified a handful of necessary security and information arrangement upgrades at APPs that are addressed elsewhere in this report.

SPACE AND FACILITIES

Embassy Paris is in the throes of major upheavals involving its office facilities. The executive office is, and has been, a major player in attempting to effect appropriate outcomes from these changes. The facilities in question are spread across five buildings in downtown Paris. The warehouse and residential buildings are not part of this analysis. Of these five buildings, three are owned (chancery buildings A and B, and the Talleyrand building), and two are leased (D building and the NEO Haussmann building).

The U.S. government sold the D building in 2002, three years after the embassy and OBO agreed to the sale. The delay stemmed from the need for the one hundred plus Paris Financial Service Center employees to vacate the building. Six U.S. government offices (two from the Department and four from other agencies) remain as occupants in the building, which is now under lease back, with a stiff penalty clause effective in November 2004. The sale of the building was controversial, with the mission leadership arguing the value of keeping the building particularly as a secure home for the consular section that was in need of new facilities. The sale is now complete, however, and the U.S. government has a strong interest in moving the six tenant offices out as quickly as possible to avoid hefty leasing penalties. Three of these offices are slated to move to the newly leased NEO Haussmann building by February 2005. The front office is monitoring this move closely, and it appears on track.

The three remaining agencies plan to move to chancery building A but only after the completion of renovations to accommodate the move (Phase I). However, penalty payments began accruing in November 2004, (\$75,000) to double every month thereafter. To avoid ever larger penalty payments, renovation of chancery building A must move forward as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the plans for these Phase I renovations have not yet received U.S. government certification, and although a contract has been awarded work has not yet begun. Delays in refitting chancery building A may, therefore, affect the transfer of the last tenants out of building D. In the event of unavoidable delays, the mission should explore using swing space to accommodate the three remaining tenant agencies from building D to guarantee that building D is totally vacated no later than mid-March 2005.

The Talleyrand building houses five U.S. government offices, two from the Department, including the consular section, and three from other agencies. Following an interior space reconfiguration, the agencies housed in this building have had to make do with greatly reduced space. This has affected them all negatively, but the impact has been greatest on the consular section whose working space is no longer adequate to allow all of its complex functions to be carried out simultaneously.

The consular section and two other agencies are slated to move to chancery building B following a major refit of the building (Phase II), scheduled for completion no sooner than mid-2006. This was a controversial decision since it affects space utilization and accessibility to the chancery of the large visa applicant population. French authorities have not yet approved the design for a projected external

access control facility, nor has U.S. government certification for the refit been granted. Under the most optimistic scenario, the shift of the consular section and others from Talleyrand will not occur until mid-2006. The U.S. government has an interest in moving all tenants out of the Talleyrand building as quickly as possible, and the embassy is doing all it can to keep the Phase II renovation of chancery building B on track to make room for these tenants. In conjunction with the eventual consular move to chancery building B, it is incumbent upon the mission to manage the daily flow of visa applicants as efficiently as possible. This challenge will require attention to the visa appointment system, as discussed in the Consular Operations section of this report, and coordination with French authorities on the police/guard presence to monitor access.

The mission is working closely with OBO to determine the future use of the historic government-owned Talleyrand building. In October 2004, OBO initiated a real estate feasibility and valuation study for the building. OBO's stated intention is not to sell the building. The study will examine valuation issues, leasing possibilities, and requirements for historic preservation of both the exterior and interior of the building. Future use of the building must also take into account the rights and use of the Marshall Center. The center is a 600-square meter portion of the building that is currently being restored to its former glory in a preservation project begun in 1999, funded by private contributions at a cost projected to exceed \$4 million. OBO's actions on the Talleyrand building move forward the U.S. government interest in determining the "highest and best" use of this magnificent property now and ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are in place to manage the future use of the property cost effectively and within the law.

Rightsizing

Embassy Paris is a leader in the field of rightsizing, having recently eliminated 115 FSN positions and 10 direct-hire American positions with the consolidation of most of the functions at the FSC in Charleston. Such a cataclysmic reduction in force will inevitably leave an impact on the psyche of the workforce, and we found a certain anxiety among the LES about their own job security. The strong and effective oversight of this reduction in force by the executive office and senior management, however, mitigated the negative fallout. Mission management also had to take a hard look at the impact of the departure of a major component of the embassy's work force on the human resource requirements for providing ICASS support to the whole community. Embassy Paris decided that it needed to reduce the ICASS work force by 12 positions. Initially, the ICASS council believed it

would be possible to meet the needed reductions through attrition. Then came instructions from the Department that the separated employees were to be off the rolls by the last day of FY 2004. Once again, mission management, working closely with the front office, met its ICASS targets with virtually no upheaval. The front office has worked hard to assure remaining LES personnel that the recent upheavals do not portend further reductions in force. Implementing a joint management structure that encompasses the administrative and information management requirements of all three missions in Paris will further enhance the effectiveness of the management structure.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

The political section uses its considerable human resources to consistently produce sound reporting, to skillfully advocate U.S. positions in a difficult policy environment, and to handle a steady flow of high-level visitors and delegations.

Headed by a minister counselor for political affairs and a deputy, the section includes eight other officers, two office management specialists (OMS), and four LES. The minister-counselor maintains high-level contacts, provides direction and oversight to the section, and in his relatively short tenure has established a professional but warm and collegial working environment for his staff. The deputy directs the day-to-day administrative management of the section and handles the important European Union reporting portfolio. He also works closely with the six officers who cover external and politico-military affairs, and mentors the more junior officers in the section. A newly arrived officer reports on developments in the labor sector and, along with an entry-level officer and a local hire American, covers French internal politics. Communication within the section is constant and often informal, and cooperation and collaboration appear natural and unforced. Weekly section meetings, and a weekly meeting with the DCM, help coordinate reporting and advocacy.

The United States has a vast range of interests that intersect with those of France; the section's reporting on bilateral and shared global political issues is notable for both its quality and quantity. Washington readers universally view their reporting as informed and influential. Political officers and the embassy leadership cultivate contacts in the highest levels of French government and society, and the insights and frank opinions exchanged in their interactions, according to Washington consumers, add a particularly authoritative note to their reporting. Biographic information is gathered systematically and reported, often with insightful comments, to Washington. After the recent arrival of two new entry-level officers, the new minister-counselor rearranged portfolios to emphasize the growing importance

of reporting on, particularly, counterterrorism, human rights, and the significant Muslim minority in France. As noted in the section of this report on Consulate General Marseille, OIG believes reporting in these areas, at present Paris-centric, could be usefully supplemented by occasional working visits to the consulate by the officers responsible for reporting in those areas.

"France is relationships" is an often-heard truism and one shared by both the embassy and Washington France-watchers. There is a tradition of political officers serving in Paris and returning to the section later to renew old ties; three of the current officers, including the minister-counselor, served in Paris earlier in their careers. In addition, each year the Department chooses a mid-level officer for a year's placement in the Ministry for External Affairs under the Fellowship for Hope program and a second officer to attend the Ecole Nationale d'Administration, the premier French institution for future government and business leaders. Both then proceed to regular tours in the embassy. The personal ties made during these training opportunities, and the chance to view French society and policy from the inside, enrich the analysis these officers bring to their eventual reporting. Another important element in forging relationships and becoming an effective officer in Paris is strong French language ability. The two training opportunities, and multiple assignments in Paris or other francophone posts, are important in establishing a core of professional-level French speakers with sufficient proficiency for making and maintaining contacts, for effective outreach, and for persuasive advocacy. All section officers in fact have tested at or higher than the minimal professional proficiency language scores (3/3, on the Foreign Service Institute evaluation system) than are officially required for their positions.

Two officers serve as "watchers" for, respectively, Africa and the Middle East, areas of long-term French involvement and interest. They report on French government relations with those areas and also review a large volume of regional reporting. In addition they serve as connection points with U.S. embassies in those regions and with the Department's African and Near Eastern Affairs bureaus; one high-level source viewed the "watcher" position as absolutely critical. Both officers juggle their section reporting responsibilities with a steady stream of information and operational requests from the two bureaus and their missions. They also serve often as control officer and arrange schedules for Department visitors and, particularly in the case of Africa, for ambassadors to countries with significant ties to France or where France contributes elements to multilateral forces.

The personal relationships noted earlier have also been instrumental in the important responsibility to advocate U.S. positions to French decision makers and make a persuasive case for their adoption. There are at present some profound

differences in outlook that have frayed the traditional Franco-American dialogue; even the most skilled American diplomacy may not be sufficient to move France closer to U.S. positions. There are, however, many areas of bilateral cooperation, for example Afghanistan and counterterrorism, that continue to thrive. The section maintains the working level exchanges with French government officials and opinion makers that advance the areas of agreement and joint action and thus the long-term bilateral relationship and larger U.S. goals.

Paris is a magnet for visitors, both as a destination and transit point. The political section provides control officers, responsible for scheduling, note taking and escort duty as well as administrative support for the many individuals and delegations in Paris for bilateral consultations, multilateral meetings, and negotiating sessions. These duties provide opportunities for many of the officers, both seasoned and entry level, to interact with senior U.S. government officials and see high-level diplomacy in action.

ECONOMIC CLUSTER

The role of the minister counselor for economic affairs in Paris is complex. The head of the embassy's economic cluster, the minister counselor, draws from over 25 years of Department experience, including as a DCM, to integrate the efforts of each agency and section in the cluster. He directs the Economic and Financial Affairs section (ECON) and the Environmental, Scientific and Technological section (EST), oversees the work of embassy representatives from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, the Federal Aviation Administration, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the National Science Foundation and coordinates closely with the Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration and Customs and Border Protection. Although few minister counselors have this degree of coordinating responsibility, the arrangement is effective. These agency heads all praised his skilled guidance, information sharing, and assistance to accomplish their missions. The minister-counselor also supervises the principal officers at the five APPs. His coordination and advice improves their effectiveness. He is supported by a third tour OMS and an experienced protocol LES.

The cluster successfully implements policy, but the unremitting pace and the broad range of issues make it hard for the cluster to be fully proactive. Greater strategic planning would increase the impact of the cluster's efforts. The MPP provides little strategic direction. OIG suggested that the minister-counselor work

with embassy officers and relevant Washington officials to produce a written plan that defines priority economic cluster issues and strategies to advance them. Regular meetings with the executive office to review progress would help the cluster refine these strategies. The economic cluster would distill the refined plan into next year's MPP and take the opportunity of the annual revision of position descriptions to target efforts on priority issues. The minister-counselor would have more time to devote to this greater strategic leadership if he devolved increased authority to his deputy to manage ECON. Regular pulse-taking with ECON staff would allow the minister-counselor and ECON counselor to ensure that their division of authority and responsibility is implemented consistently.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS SECTION

France is the world's fifth largest economy with a gross domestic product of \$1.4 trillion and the fifth biggest investor in the United States with \$143 billion of foreign direct investment, generating jobs for hundreds of thousands of Americans. Almost seven percent of French exports go to the United States, while over five percent of France's imports originate in the United States. As democratic, industrialized countries, the United States and France share similar goals on many economic issues. However, French foreign policymakers often see French and U.S. economic and commercial interests in third countries in zero-sum terms, necessitating continuous U.S. outreach to French government officials to set the record straight. ECON manages the very public trade disputes that periodically roil bilateral economic relations, most recently over subsidies to Airbus and Boeing. ECON also seeks to increase U.S. exports by improving French implementation of international trade commitments and regulatory standards and by obtaining French support for U.S. positions in the European Union, World Trade Organization, the Group of Eight, and elsewhere. France shapes many European Union policies, particularly in agriculture. As Europe's economic center of gravity increasingly shifts to the European Union, ECON's task is more challenging. On each issue, embassy officials identify whom to engage in the French government, determine the most effective timing of that engagement to influence the decision, and try to address French concerns. This advocacy has been complicated by the sharp decrease in high-level U.S. consultations when bilateral tensions arose over Iraq.

In addition to economic, trade, investment, commercial, and agricultural advocacy, ECON helps to protect the United States from terrorist attacks by engaging French counterparts to identify and block financial assets of terrorists and terrorist organizations and by working intensively with U.S. interagency partners

and the French to improve transportation security for civil aviation, civilian aircraft, and maritime transportation. ECON was instrumental in revamping civil aviation and aircraft standards after September 11, 2001, facilitated the U.S. Container Security Initiative, and coordinated closely with French officials to report on French compliance with International Maritime Organization standards and to implement the U.S. Port Security Initiative. Although the minister-counselor and ECON already work closely with the Transportation Security Administration, OIG believes that including the Transportation Security Administration in the economic cluster would enhance communication. An ECON officer is part of the U.S. delegation's monthly negotiations of the Paris Club, a group of nineteen creditor governments of industrialized countries chaired by the French Treasury that, in conjunction with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, reschedules official debt repayments of developing countries. Two Department action officers participate in the negotiations. ECON should coordinate with U.S. delegation members on who will be responsible for drafting which sections of the telegrams reporting on negotiations. It is a more effective use of ECON resources for Department delegation participants to share drafting of the reporting cable as much as possible, clearing input with Embassy Paris. This would allow ECON to spend more time advancing other important macroeconomic issues, including terrorist financing.

ECON is expertly managed by an FS-01 deputy who supports ECON's five FS-02 officers and who has served as overall control officer for two Presidential visits to France. ECON's staff unanimously commended his open, empowering management style, attention to morale and organization, and skilled and sensitive counseling. OIG was impressed with ECON's spirit of collegiality and effective organization. All ECON members have strong professional skills. Three of ECON's five FS-02 officers spent one year before joining ECON either working at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Fellowship of Hope program or studying with mid-level French and other foreign government officials at France's prestigious Ecole Nationale d'Administration. This training gave the three officers insights, contacts, superb French, and the confidence to know how to engage with and influence French officials and the French public, allowing them to advance policy more effectively. The deputy and the other two officers have worked in French-speaking countries, the third-tour OMS has conversational French, and the two LESs have worked for the U.S. government for 22 and 15 years respectively.

ECON's work primarily consists of operational advocacy. Officers are in daily e-mail contact with Washington interagency counterparts, periodically recording in front channel cables the agreements reached. Washington officials singled out for particular praise ECON's work to advance transportation security, its trade liaison

efforts, and its reporting on French compliance with the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. ECON provides first-rate support to Washington visitors. OIG observed that in internal meetings, ECON staff knowledgeably discuss the factors and personalities shaping French economic policy and the implications for the United States. OIG encouraged ECON to report these policy and biographic insights more regularly in front channel cables so that Washington policymakers and analysts can benefit from them. Adjusting LES portfolios and supervision would facilitate this.

Aided by close collaboration with the public affairs section, ECON officers and visitors frequently address a variety of French public and private audiences. OIG commended this extensive public diplomacy, officers' efforts to hone their already very strong language skills, and ECON's reaching out to program high-level visitors to USOECD and USUNESCO. ECON is working with the public affairs section to target better this public advocacy by identifying which venues and audiences would yield the most impact.

ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY SECTION

The United States has more scientific cooperation with France than with any other country in the world. EST is charged with supporting this growing collaboration. The U.S. preserves its nuclear option through France, a world nuclear technology leader. The 2000 Advanced Nuclear Reactor Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement gave the Department of Energy access to French research and development, saving the United States tens of millions of dollars. In 2003, EST coordinated the travel of 2263 Department of Energy officials to France, an increase of 30 percent from 2000, while 869 French nationals visited U.S. laboratories. Because the United States no longer possesses fabrication facilities, the United States in October shipped surplus weapons grade plutonium to France for the fabrication of nuclear power fuel assemblies. EST is advancing the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's and the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration's plans to strengthen bilateral collaboration on nuclear security. EST also supports the growing bilateral health collaboration with the National Institutes of Health, whose \$14.3 million funding in France increased 122 percent from 2000 to 2003. EST promotes important bilateral cooperation on bioterrorism prevention, earth observation, earth sciences, and environmental protection. In addition, EST supports one of the embassy's MPP goals by working with France to strengthen international nuclear, chemical, biological, and missile nonproliferation regimes. On average, EST coordinates the visit of a Washington agency head or congressional delegation every month.

Although France is the U.S.'s most important partner in scientific collaboration, there are major bilateral policy disputes over climate change/Kyoto, genetically modified organisms, the International Thermonuclear Reactor project site, approaches to fight HIV/AIDs, UN environmental governance, and the UN treatment of human cloning. EST strives to change the policy debate by stressing common ground and increasing the French government and public's understanding of the science and U.S. initiatives. As the senior U.S. science officer in France, the EST counselor coordinates with the science officers at USOECD and USUNESCO, the two Centers for Disease Control scientists in France, and the U.S. representative at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Paris-based Research and Technology Agency.

EST's recently arrived science counselor who has 29 years of Department experience has only a newly arrived officer who handles cooperation on the international nuclear, chemical, biological and missile nonproliferation regimes, a recently arrived third tour OMS, who also supports visitors' logistical arrangements, an LES who has worked in EST for 11 years, and a part-time scientist on a Department internship ending at the end of 2004 to manage this broad and deep EST agenda. EST clearly does not have enough staff to advance vital U.S. EST policy interests. OIG's 1998 inspection report noted that EST "is staffed adequately to handle [its] workload, but would be hard pressed should it lose an officer or a secretary."¹ Unfortunately, one science officer position was eliminated a few years ago, and the EST workload has increased significantly. The technical nature of the EST issues that need to be advanced, the rank of the French and U.S. officials who must be engaged to promote them, and the significant amount of delicate and potentially hostile public affairs work do not make the EST portfolio a good fit for a first or second tour officer as requested in the embassy's FY 2005 MPP. There is, however, an FS-02 ECON officer whose portfolio is devoted to promoting secondary and tertiary U.S. ECON interests. This officer, who already backs up the science counselor, handles ECON issues that could be covered in EST and has demonstrated significant skill in policy advocacy, reporting, and public diplomacy.

¹Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Information Agency, "Report of Inspection, Embassy Paris, France and Constituent Posts and U.S. Information Service France," ISP/I-98-42, (September 1998), p. 13.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Paris should adjust the portfolios assigned to the officers in the economic and financial and the environment, science, and technology sections to ensure that all priority environmental, science, and technology issues are covered and that rating relationships are logical and effective. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Just as for ECON, the MPP is not a usable strategic plan for environment, science, and technology issues. In coordination with the embassy and a wide array of Washington officials, the counselor is charting out EST's strategic priorities. OIG suggested that the counselor redraft the EST-related sections of the MPP to reflect accurately EST's priorities and strategies. EST members appreciate the counselor's collegial management style. He has already begun an impressive advocacy plan with French officials, complemented with public diplomacy he has solicited from Washington officials. Given its small staff, EST's front channel reporting is impressive in both its volume and comprehensiveness. EST also e-mails a weekly newsletter on EST developments to hundreds of contacts. Because a customer satisfaction survey produced few responses, OIG suggested that EST spend less time preparing the newsletter.

CONSULAR OPERATIONS

The Paris consular operation is a busy and complex one, struggling to maintain high levels of customer service while remaining vigilant to stringent processing guidelines for its diverse client base. After September 11, 2001, the mission grew concerned about employee and public safety in the historic Talleyrand building where the consular section is located and radically reconfigured the space available to the section. As a result, for the past three years, reduced space for public service has affected the volume of consular services and the efficiency of consular management. Significantly, with the exception of waiting room and window issues mentioned below, the consular section in Paris has continued to provide top quality services to the public, while absorbing the effects of the space problems. All concerned are to be commended. The embassy and OBO have identified alternative space, but they envision no move before 2006.

Consular Space

The reduced space has affected every aspect of the consular section's work. Two of the three waiting rooms were eliminated, and the remaining one is inadequate. Eleven interview windows remain of the original 24. Consequently, American infants waiting to be documented with reports of birth or passports vie for space with elderly social security beneficiaries and families of visa applicants. The officers and local staff are equally frustrated trying to find available client service space, especially for emergency or sensitive cases. There simply are not enough windows for the volume of consular services, even though consular management has resorted to rotational use of the windows by different sections throughout the workday. Ten-print National Crime Information Center fingerprinting, taxpayer assistance, and emergency American citizens services (ACS) cases requiring privacy and seating are handled face to face in a stairwell lobby, as no other space is available.

Backlogs of nonimmigrant visa (NIV) applicants have grown to levels not previously seen in Paris, and the demand to expedite student and business visas outside the normally available allocation of appointments has grown exponentially. Supervisory consular officers are located well out of the line of sight of most of the LES and the entry-level officers they supervise with the exception of the small immigrant visa (IV) unit. In some cases, staff must access their supervisors on another floor after navigating a labyrinth of corridors.

Staffing

Paris is authorized 16 officers and 33 LES, including two consular associates, two eligible family members and one half-time "when actually employed" (WAE) contract employee. The Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA), through the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative, provided two new officer positions to replace the two consular associates who are departing in 2005 and who cannot be replaced as consular associates under new guidelines limiting that role. CA also provided post three new LES positions to compensate for hours lost under recent French legislation mandating a 35-hour work week.

Both the ACS and the visa chiefs bid on their FS-01 jobs with the understanding that they would be the deputy to the consul general. The visa chief is serving in that role, and the other officer is now serving in a job that includes fewer high level tasks. Consular section management has agreed to review the job assignments and update the position descriptions to redress this situation.

The time available for entry-level officer training, workload planning, informational staff meetings, and oversight of the constituent posts lessened during the summer of 2004. Officer staffing levels fell below 50 percent, and three entry-level positions still remain vacant, although incumbents have been identified. Although CA provided some WAE support, no consular section can operate during peak season with half its officer staffing, even Paris, which is fortunate to attract many second-tour consular officers who already have basic skills. Since the consular section began the required 100 percent interviewing and biometric implementation procedures during this same period, all available officers, including the consul general, interviewed visa applicants to keep abreast of demand, especially with time-sensitive student and business cases. This phenomenon is not confined to Paris, and many consular sections worldwide are forced to sacrifice training and oversight priorities when staffing falls to unacceptably low levels.

The newly arrived deputy consul general/visa chief designed an internal rotation program to allow all officers to experience IV and ACS work, although each entry-level officer will spend about half of the two-year tour doing NIVs. Only one specially designated position rotates outside the section, serving a year at a time as the front office staff aide responsible for visas viper coordination. Even with the internal rotation program, some of the thematic responsibilities, such as accountable consular officer and anti-fraud officer, will remain with the officers when they rotate among units, ensuring continuity in critical areas while permitting officers to gain a variety of experience in other areas.

Like other countries with generous maternity and parental leave policies, French LES employees are entitled to three years of reduced work hours over and above the six or more months of maternity leave and accrued annual leave taken at the time of birth. The ACS unit, for example, currently has three LES making use of parental leave reduced hour provisions, but the embassy has not filled these gaps with contract employees, despite savings from reduced salary costs for the absent or part-time LES staff. Section management intends to work with the embassy's human resources (HR) office to determine if these gaps can be filled routinely with contract hires to avoid recurring losses of work hours that can add up to several positions per year.

The consular section takes full advantage of an intern program with French universities in addition to the Department intern program and the mission's summer hire program. The French "stagiaires" work for periods of six to eight weeks in most cases. Although these unpaid employees provide much-needed assistance to

the consular section, to take maximum advantage of their skills senior LES employees devote many hours to train them only to lose their skills a few weeks later. The consular section has come to rely on this program and is evaluating the need for additional permanent staff.

Workload

Following September 11, 2001, the demand for NIVs in Paris decreased significantly. In FY 2001, NIV volume reached 71,000. In FY 2002, the embassy adjudicated almost 57,000 cases. In FY 2004, that number has fallen to just over 48,000. These statistics are misleading, however, because significantly increased work hours are required to interview and collect biometrics from nearly 100 percent of the visa applicants. Enhanced security processing of a substantial number of applicants also requires more officer and LES time per case. NIV work in Paris is substantially different from pre-September 11, 2001, conditions. Officer and LES staff time spent per case is now more reminiscent of the situation before France joined the visa waiver program. Consular management is aware that it will need to reevaluate staffing levels if there is a return to the earlier NIV application level.

ACS and IV workloads have remained relatively steady in the past few years. The recent requirement for the personal appearance of minors for passport renewal and security advisory opinion requirements for certain IV applicants have, as with NIVs, added time spent per case and increased the number of persons entering the waiting room.

Consular Management

The consul general arrived in July 2003 after a prolonged gap in that position. The visa chief, who also serves as deputy consul general, arrived three weeks prior to the inspection. Staff satisfaction with the openness and availability of senior consular management appears high.

Repeated moves to increasingly reduced space and staffing shortfalls have, however, diverted attention from staff training and the maintenance of essential lines of communication, particularly between officers and LES. In some cases, LES staff admitted to not being sure which officer they report to. The NIV chief has been unable to meet regularly with the interviewing officers, although she formerly had such a system in place. She does not meet with the LES, leaving that task to the NIV LES supervisor. Several other LES are not assigned to units that

meet regularly. The anti-fraud LES, the investment visa (E visa) LES, the part-time WAE responsible for security advisory follow through, the public inquiries unit, the federal benefits unit (FBU), and the special consular services unit do not interact systematically with the units whose work they support or, in the case of FBU and special consular services, with the units where there may be cases of overlapping interest.

In response to OIG guidance on the web gram cable resource, the embassy developed a system for ensuring LES access to telegrams in real time via the web gram system. Previously, LES staff managing a case or maintaining the file often did not see responses or comebacks for inclusion in the file or follow up. Staff satisfaction at being included in the program is palpable.

The accountable consular officer role has been rotated regularly among entry-level officers for the past several years. As a result, the procedures and files are not up to date, and there appears to have been very little guidance given to the various accountable consular officers in the past.

Management of Constituent Posts

The two constituent posts, the five APPs, and the Nice consular agency all commented favorably on their relationship with the Paris consular section, particularly regarding access to the considerable Paris LES expertise. The same posts also expressed regret that there were not more frequent opportunities to train or retrain in Paris or to receive visits from more experienced Paris LESs at their posts. Those face-to-face training opportunities that did occur, even if very brief, were particularly valuable in ensuring consistency and best practices. The Paris consular section would like to have sufficient travel funds available to institutionalize travel to the constituent posts.

Staffing and space constraints in Paris have also taken their toll on the consular section's ability to support and oversee the consulates general. Marseille required temporary peak season assistance during the absence of its consul general, for example. Normally, the assistance would be provided by an officer from Paris, but Paris itself was severely understaffed during that same period and was unable to provide a temporary duty (TDY) officer.

Public Access Controls

The existing system for the admission of the public to the consular section causes confusion and frustration for the public and stress for the local guard force attempting to serve clients with competing priorities and demands. Long lines outside the consular entrance throughout the morning call attention to the U.S. presence. The wait also exposes the public to the elements year round for prolonged periods of time.

NIV applicants are scheduled in groups of 25 at 15-minute intervals between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Each case could include multiple family members. By the time the public access gate opens at 8:00 a.m. there are usually between 50 and 75 persons waiting in line for admission, and it is impossible to reduce the length of the line as the morning develops. As clients arrive for nonvisa services, they form a second line, while general inquirers also crowd the entrance to the property. Applicants who have been appointed for later interviews routinely arrive so early that they are admitted along with or before applicants with appointments in a much earlier time slot. Section management is working now with the appointment center, the regional security officer's office and the guard force to address this issue.

Nonimmigrant Visas

France has participated in the visa waiver program since 1989. An estimated one million French citizens travel to the United States each year, either with visas or using the visa waiver program. The consular section estimates that it deals with 170 different nationalities, many requiring security advisory opinions before visas can be processed to conclusion. Paris changed from an application system that relied heavily on mail-ins to an all-interview system in August 2004. As a result, there is a waiting list for NIV interviews of approximately one month at the time of this inspection, and that wait went as high as 65 workdays during the peak season.

The embassy uses a pay-for-use appointment center to schedule appointments and provide some visa information. That contractor also funds one appointment center employee who actually works in the consular section to coordinate urgent appointments outside the contractor's purview to include students, time-sensitive business travelers, and performers. The system in place to address time-sensitive travel is very responsive.

Few applicants use the electronic visa application form; therefore, data entry is very time consuming. Section management plans to encourage aggressively the use of the English electronic forms until the French version is available. Once the electronic visa application form is available in French, the consular section will intensify efforts to increase the percentage of applicants using the electronic form so that their application details can be scanned into the system via barcode.

Immigrant Visas

The IV unit is currently staffed with one entry-level officer and four LES employees, one a half-time consular associate who will be departing in 2005. The IV officer position is part of the entry-level rotational program, and the incumbent needs to rely heavily on the visa chief and the experienced LES staff for guidance and training. She also adjudicates E visas for treaty traders and investors, but the IV workload is heavy enough that there is often a backlog of E visa cases that need processing. When the consular section is fully staffed, it plans to assign a second entry-level officer to the IV unit to serve as backup IV officer and primary E adjudicator. Additionally, there is currently only one E visa LES, providing no backup during periods of absence and allowing backlogs to develop in an area of keen interest to U.S. business. There are also plans to cross train additional LES resources in the E visa function.

American Citizen Services

France - Paris in particular - remains one of the foremost tourist destinations in the world. The demand for consular assistance by Americans, both resident and temporary, is constant and often emergent. The five APPs provide considerable assistance to Paris in the ACS area. With their help Paris is able to provide more responsive emergency services on site, regular prison visits within a restricted budget, and more routine services to the important American business community. Reports prior to initiating the onsite inspection ranked emergency services provided by the Paris ACS section exceptionally high, citing both officer and LES staff for their responsiveness, sympathetic victim assistance, and thorough reporting.

The American services section is divided into three distinct units, passports, overseas American services, and the FBU. The three units report to the ACS chief, an FS-01 position, and through her to the consul general. The three units operate almost independently with little cross training or exchange of personnel. Three officers, two half-time consular associates, and 11 LES staff perform all the functions except federal benefits and are supported by American and French interns

who work in the consular section for varying periods throughout the year. Despite the space limitations, service to the public is prompt and efficient. LES, however, suffer from the subtle pressures of trying to serve their clients in such a difficult physical situation. Morale is lower than it once was, and there is an increased use of sick leave.

Paris maintains a guide for U.S. citizens resident in France called The Blue Book. This nearly-200-page product is now available on line. It addresses the most frequently asked questions on working, marrying, traveling, and studying in France and advises on the full range of consular services for Americans in France. The provision of useful information in a one-stop format is a valuable service to citizens abroad and also reduces the demands on consular staff for telephone or in-person information on routine topics.

Federal Benefits Unit

The five person FBU is staffed and funded by the Social Security Administration and participates in the ICASS program. It reports to the chief of the ACS unit. Their physical separation from the rest of the ACS unit has led to a sense of isolation. Recently the Social Security Administration has provided a new secure computer system that has significantly improved service delivery. An FSN at the consular agency in Nice also serves as a claims representative but is paid and supported exclusively by the Department. The Social Security Administration regional officer in charge in Rome is currently re-evaluating staffing and workflow in both Paris and Nice in light of the departure of the current Paris Social Security Administration supervisor and excess regional capacity in other posts that take benefit claims.

Anti-Fraud Unit

The fraud prevention program in Paris is relatively new. In a recent reorganization, an experienced LES was designated as the senior fraud prevention specialist. This summer a newly arrived entry-level officer, with prior consular and anti-fraud experience, was named fraud prevention manager (FPM). Both the FPM and the LES specialist received Department anti-fraud training, and both show obvious enthusiasm for the work. As is often the case, the FPM is also a full time line visa officer. The challenge for her and the mission will be to create enough time for fraud prevention duties, especially to assist other units including the passport unit and the FBU. FBU in particular is struggling to respond to new Social Security

Administration efforts to make the social security number application process more secure. Cooperation with the regional security officer and other law enforcement agencies at post seems good, and all the elements are in place for a strong fraud prevention effort if the FPM is afforded the opportunity to develop the unit. An informal recommendation was made to establish written guidelines for referral of cases involving potential fraud to the anti-fraud unit so that all units, including federal benefits, are aware of the resources available in that office.

Visas Viper

The visas viper program has undergone some refinement since July 2004 when the Department requested that the embassy cease entering names directly into the consular lookout and support system before post-generated information could be evaluated and coordinated in Washington. The actual structure of the viper program in Paris is atypical. A consular section officer coordinates the viper program during his or her rotation to the DCM's office as staff aide. This facilitates the handling of classified viper material and also ensures the ongoing involvement of the DCM in viper issues. Law enforcement agencies and public affairs play active roles in the viper program, and offices provide their input directly to the staff aide who coordinates the reporting telegrams and maintains the files.

At the monthly country team meeting, the DCM specifically asks the participants if they have a topic for a separate viper meeting. When there is a positive response, the viper committee remains after the country team for a dedicated session.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY²

Embassy Paris's public diplomacy team carries out a coordinated and active public diplomacy agenda in the face of serious trans-Atlantic divisions. Strong disagreement with U.S. policy in Iraq across the spectrum of French public opinion has generated a new level of anti-U.S. sentiment in a bilateral relationship that can be contentious. Nevertheless, some public opinion polls in France continue to indicate positive attitudes toward the United States. The wide range of activities undertaken by the post to support mission objectives provides strong evidence that

² In this report, public diplomacy refers to the function of engaging, informing, and influencing key public international audiences. The public affairs section at an embassy directs public diplomacy.

public diplomacy plays a role in maintaining and developing productive relationships in a difficult environment. Intensive involvement by the public affairs section in such major upcoming events as the tricentennial anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin, an iconic figure in France, and the bicentennial of the birth of Alexis de Tocqueville, author of the classic *Democracy in America*, builds on a long tradition of interaction between our countries. This summer's country-wide commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of France, another high point of public diplomacy activity, afforded an excellent opportunity to focus attention in both countries on that great accomplishment and on the underlying ties that bind our two countries.

The public affairs section is well integrated in the daily conduct of mission activities as well as in the mission's strategic planning. The public affairs staff participates actively in the development of the MPP, which contains numerous examples of the contribution the section can make toward the achievement of mission goals. The COM statement covering the MPP highlights the role of public diplomacy across a range of policy issues. The public affairs officer (PAO) participates in all country team and senior staff meetings, and she and her American officers meet at least weekly with the Ambassador's staff to review public affairs requirements for events involving the Ambassador. The press section prepares daily media reactions for use by Washington readers and neighboring posts, briefs the mission's senior staff on major press items in daily meetings, and develops media strategies for the mission. The information resource center provides extensive research service to mission elements in need of specialized information. Mission officers, especially from the economic section, make themselves available for speaker programs throughout France and constitute an important element in mission outreach. There is widespread mission involvement in nominating participants for the International Visitor Program. The five American presence posts and two consulates general can rely on a substantial level of program support in the conduct of their vigorous public diplomacy and gave high marks to the Paris staff for responsiveness.

In the course of the inspection, OIG observed the prominent role of exchange activities in the mission's work and the Ambassador's commendable role in highlighting exchanges. The Ambassador hosted a large reception for new U.S. Fulbright grantees and French Fulbright alumni, during which OIG had an opportunity to discuss the Fulbright experience with former grantees who spoke readily on the profound impact of that program on their personal and professional lives. This event was preceded by another large reception hosted by the Ambassador for

returned International Visitor Program grantees who have joined an alumni association, the "Cercle Jefferson." This is a private initiative taken in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks to create an ongoing forum for International Visitor Program alumni to discuss Franco-American relations and participate in a variety of other program activities. The "Cercle Jefferson" membership now exceeds 300 international visitor alumni across France and counts among its participants leading figures in France's government, business, and professional sectors. The "Cercle" values its independent status, which gives it a local legitimacy that an officially sponsored U.S. embassy organization would not have, but there are ongoing contacts with the embassy's public affairs section, and the Ambassador's annual reception is a high point for the group. The quality of the members and their visible interest in promoting Franco-American relations is a very strong indicator of the value of exchange programs conducted by the public diplomacy staff.

Public diplomacy outreach includes a broad representation of French society. The constituent posts work closely with the Paris public affairs office to reach audiences in the dynamic and diverse provincial regions that play an increasingly important role in national development and so have policy significance for the U.S. government. The section has made a special effort to develop contacts in France's growing Muslim community through programs focusing on the American experience with immigration and assimilation issues. Many pan-Arab print and broadcast media have representatives in France and communicate with audiences in France and throughout the Middle East. The press office is increasing contacts with those organizations to improve their coverage of American political and security policies. Sponsorship of an upcoming North Atlantic Treaty Organization tour for Arab journalists based in Paris is an excellent example of outreach.

The busy agenda for the public affairs office means that it runs constantly at full speed. This places great strain on the five U.S. officers and 28 local employees in Paris, but the American and local employees display a high level of determination to meet program objectives. Several factors, however, have affected staff morale. The sudden death of the highly regarded press officer shortly after the outbreak of the Iraq war dealt the public affairs section a blow from which it has not fully recovered. There is widespread apprehension among local staff about the outcome of the recent position classification exercise and the imminent installation of all public diplomacy staff in constricted space in the chancery.

There are additional morale issues stemming from the fact that much time and energy goes into tasks that are not central to the public diplomacy agenda, such as organizing social events not clearly connected to MPP priorities. This leads to

questions in the cultural section about the role and value of public diplomacy to the mission. The information resource center specialists provide excellent service to mission elements in need of research assistance, but this means they have less time to maintain and expand their ties to key contacts. The press specialists are fully occupied with daily preparations for press briefings and media reporting but want to pay more attention to increasingly popular electronic media and Internet news sites; their current media reporting and analysis, they fear, presents an incomplete picture of public opinion for mission and Washington readers. These dedicated employees believe that the time and resource pressures on the section will inevitably diminish their ability to contribute to mission objectives. OIG discussed these concerns with the PAO and other American staff (among whom is a newly arrived information officer), and they concur that the time is ripe for a fresh look at these aspects of the section's work.

Recent organizational changes in the front office also present a good opportunity to tackle some of these problems. The PAO has begun to engage the Ambassador directly on the full range of the public affairs section's capabilities and its contributions to the achievement of mission objectives and to enlist his support in ensuring that the section's limited resources advance the mission's strategic plan. The PAO should reinforce this interaction through regular meetings involving other public diplomacy staff when appropriate. The regular meetings will give the Ambassador an opportunity to convey his priorities directly to the PAO. OIG notes that this regularly scheduled meeting is now on the front office calendar.

The transfer of one PAO position to an American presence post was a significant loss to an already overstretched staff, while the requirement to provide program support to the new posts came without any increase in resources. The mission requested a new assistant cultural affairs officer position to increase the section's outreach efforts. This new position could enhance the effectiveness of the countrywide public diplomacy program.

The size of the public affairs section reflects years of gradual staff attrition. The section is now top heavy with senior staff in comparison to other much larger mission sections. In the five-officer complement, two positions are designated for senior officers (a minister-counselor PAO and counselor cultural affairs officer), one is FS-01, and two are FS-02. The political section, with 17 direct-hire Americans, has one senior officer and one FS-01. The economics section has 10 direct hires, with one senior and one FS-01 position. The public affairs section's grade levels are substantially out of line with other mission sections. In view of the impending departure of the incumbent cultural affairs officer, OIG believes that the section and the mission should reclassify the cultural affairs officer position at

the FS-01 level and should place a hold (2 FAM 037.1-2) on the assignment of a new officer until the required classification review is completed. OIG believes that the PAO minister-counselor grade appropriately demonstrates the importance the Department attaches to the role of U.S. public diplomacy in France.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, should submit a revised position description for the cultural affairs officer position to the Bureau of Human Resources for classification review and determination of the appropriate grade level for the cultural affairs officer position before a selection is made for a replacement cultural affairs officer. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with EUR and DGHR)

The FY 2006 MPP requests funding for an "events planner" to improve the mission's ability to plan and carry out events that now require substantial involvement of public diplomacy personnel. OIG supports the embassy's request. Approval of the new protocol position would enable the protocol section to work more closely with the staff at the Ambassador's residence and reduce the level of involvement required of the public diplomacy staff.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Paris should request, and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs should approve, authorization to hire an additional locally employed staff position in the protocol section. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with EUR)

CONSULATE GENERAL MARSEILLE

The area of responsibility of the consulate general in Marseille covers virtually all of southern France. It has oversight responsibility for the consular agency in Nice. The consul general currently is also accredited as the U.S. representative to the Principality of Monaco in line with a treaty between Monaco and France that does not permit the accreditation of ambassadors to the Monegasque government. An amendment to this treaty is currently in the ratification process in France, and this arrangement with Marseille may change in the future. To accomplish these tasks, the consulate general has a staff of two American officers, 13 LES, and two Americans from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. The LES staff is professional, and most of them have long years of experience in U.S. government service.

Two LES members have recently begun their employment. Despite a problematic hiring process, two experienced people with the skills and enthusiasm that will guarantee success have been hired.

Both American officers have busy portfolios. The consul general provides overall management of the mission. For the Department, he implements a robust program of public diplomacy, provides analytical insights on political and economic subjects of interest to the embassy, and supports official visits and congressional delegations as required. He also oversees the trade advocacy program of the U.S. Commercial Service. The second position covers the consular, administrative, and security functions. No visas are issued in Marseille, but both the consular section and the consular agency in Nice provide virtually the full range of services to Americans abroad. Support from Embassy Paris during gaps is episodic. The MPP has requested two additional positions, one American and one LES. In the view of OIG, the mission's current staff should be adequate to meet its main goals. However, several initiatives - some technical, some concerned with internal assignment of responsibilities, and some concerning the kind and degree of Embassy Paris support - could make the mission more effective and productive. OIG left several informal recommendations.

Reporting and analysis at present forms only a relatively small part of the work of the consulate general, but personnel in Marseille are uniquely qualified to gain insights and information on the dynamics of the large Muslim community, said to make up more than 20 percent of Marseille's population. Except for a limited number of speaking engagements, no reporting officers have come to Marseille in the collective memory of the two officers at post and the veteran political/economic local staff member. The U.S. government has interest in greater coordination between Marseille and Paris to maximize outreach to France's Muslim communities.

Managing the Monaco relationship is unique to Marseille. While the consul general is accredited to the principality and presents letters of credence, he is neither confirmed by the Senate nor "designated" as COM. EUR's executive office may wish to explore the merit of "designating" the Marseille consul general as COM for Monaco in cooperation with the Under Secretary for Management. The portfolio, as presently construed, consists largely of delivering demarches and preparing required documents such as the human rights report and the religious freedom report. Marseille did some reporting on Monegasque elections. On one issue of particular sensitivity, the Ambassador in Paris intervened directly with Monegasque authorities, but as currently organized he has no official role in Monaco. The Franco-Monegasque treaty that governs diplomatic relations with the

principality is currently being amended and is awaiting ratification. Such an amendment may allow for direct accreditation of ambassadors, in which case the Marseille connection would also change.

The consul general in Marseille currently receives supervision and evaluation from the consul general in Paris. This relationship appears to reflect a time when the position in Marseille was primarily focused on consular activity. In fact, the consul general is most often tasked directly from the executive office, not from the consul general, in Paris. The consul general in Marseille often triangulates taskings between the front office and his direct supervisor. OIG believes the direct supervision of the consul general position rests appropriately with the DCM. This supervisory relationship is addressed elsewhere in this report.

Consular Services

This is a small consular operation that provides American citizens services but no visa services. One FS-02 consul and two LES provide services. The consul is supported by the consul general who provides essentially only emergency services. When the consul is absent on business or leave, routine work is postponed or rescheduled.

The section has office hours by appointment on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and provides services on an emergency basis the rest of the week. The workload does not appear to be excessive except when the consul is occupied with work outside the section, either standing in for the consul general or performing administrative duties. The consular district is large, and the American citizen population is estimated at over 25,000 with over 13,000 registered. During the summer tourist season that number could be much larger. Although the post has an active registration system there is no real warden system. When the post wants to contact the American resident population it relies on faxes to several organizations, a system that appears to work well. The post oversees consular work at the APP in Toulouse (currently vacant) and the work of the consular agency in Nice. The agent position in Nice is also currently vacant.

The work of the section is going smoothly. The staff reports good cooperation with the consular section in Paris, although there are two areas - technical support for the new cash register and agreement on TDY staffing - that need attention. The Marseille consular section appears to be appropriate in size if the work is shared more equitably and if appropriate TDY assistance is available.

Reporting and Advocacy

Drawing on his extensive experience as a PAO, the consul general devotes most of his time to public outreach, including the cultivation of major regional figures in government, business, the media, the arts, and academia. Working with the public affairs section in Embassy Paris, and indirectly with the Bureaus of Educational and Cultural Affairs and International Information Programs, the consulate sponsors a steady stream of U.S. speakers and international visitor exchanges and provides information and materials about the United States to individuals and institutions. Both the consul general and, on occasion, officers from Embassy Paris speak at and participate in discussions on U.S. political and social themes. The experienced public diplomacy LES maintains continuous contact with both the embassy and colleagues at the American presence posts and provides the administrative and organizational support that make outreach possible.

At present the political/economic LES produces the majority of reporting from the consulate, with assistance from occasional French and American interns. This staff member, without any formal training, has become responsible for both reporting and press analysis, the latter a duty that could perhaps better be shared or reduced to free her for more time to develop contacts outside the embassy and eventually more reporting. Consulate reporting has correctly focused on subjects of particular Washington interest, including developments among the significant Muslim population in Marseille, the drug problem in the region, law and order issues in Corsica, and election issues in Monaco.

There appears at present limited coordination between the political, economic, and EST sections in the embassy and the consulate. It would add to the productivity of both if there could be occasional working TDY visits by the officers from Paris who cover French internal politics and/or the French Muslim minority, human rights, and counterterrorism, and who could benefit from the regional perspectives provided by Marseille. The consul general should consider more widely documenting and reporting on his conversations with his wide range of contacts whose views could also broaden the information base on regional, particularly minority, affairs.

A commercial LES, presently on a personal services contract, who is employed by the Commercial Service and who reports to the Commercial Service section in Paris, keeps the consul general apprised of her work and on occasion accompanies him for meetings with representatives of both U.S. firms in the Marseille region and

local business leaders. She encourages U.S. exports to France through various programs linking potential suppliers and buyers, both through direct contact and through market analyses and attendance at trade shows.

Information Management and Information Security

Consulate General Marseille has an information management program that in most areas meets the needs of its 16 authorized users. However, OIG found that Consulate General Marseille is not properly administering its classified system. In addition, its separate computer domain is unnecessary.

(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

Recommendation 5: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Paris should determine the need to continue classified processing in the Consulate General Marseille. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Consulate General Marseille's separate computer domain requires additional information management resources and does not meet Department 12 FAM requirements to maintain an information systems security plan, an information systems contingency plan, and perform information systems security officer duties regularly. The information systems security officer stated that she has not been trained in her security responsibilities.

Embassy Paris' information management officer told OIG that there is no need to maintain a separate domain for Consulate General Marseille. Merging consulate general Marseille's domain with that of Embassy Paris would ensure that security requirements were met.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Paris should integrate Consulate General Marseille's unclassified information system into the Embassy Paris computer domain (Action: Embassy Paris)

Management Operations

LES at Consulate General Marseille perform administrative functions very well, and staffing is appropriate and adequate to manage operations. At the same time, Embassy Paris provides nearly all of the oversight and supervision. The administrative assistant who worked in Paris before coming to Marseille is particularly well qualified to understand and handle HR and building operations and maintenance issues, the areas where she worked in Paris. She consults staff there, as needed, and received critical assistance to effect recent terminations. Embassy Paris performs recruitment and hiring activities for Consulate General Marseille and has not assessed the local market to determine where advertising should be placed to get the best-qualified applicants.

The administrative assistant meets customs and shipping needs, travel requirements, and also manages procurement needs. Consulate General Marseille does not have an impact (credit) card. Consequently, the majority of low dollar value, up to \$500, purchases are made using petty cash, and purchases between \$500 and \$2500 are made using purchase orders. Using an impact card would reduce the cash advance, expedite local purchases, and allow purchases through the U.S. General Services Administration catalogue.

Procurement requests must be approved, and purchase orders must be signed by Embassy Paris and copies returned to Marseille before purchases are completed. These transactions are accomplished via facsimile, a slower medium than e-mail or other Department provided procurement applications. Until Consulate General Marseille and Embassy Paris operate within the same communications domain, procurements could be expedited by using e-mail to attach procurement requests and send them to Paris for funds availability confirmation and contracting officer's signature.

Embassy Paris provides oversight and supervision for the Class B cashier. While she performs her functions very well, OIG believes cashiering could be improved by using the impact (credit card) to reduce the cash advance.

CONSULATE GENERAL STRASBOURG

The United States has had diplomatic representation in Strasbourg since 1866, which makes our consulate general one of the oldest - if not the oldest - diplomatic missions there. The consular district includes the regions of Alsace, Lorraine, and Franche-Comte, historically contested by France and Germany, and, in World War II, annexed by Germany. The Strasbourg principal officer has two major functions: management of all aspects of the embassy's bilateral activities (consular, public affairs, etc.) in the consular district, and diplomatic representation in a multilateral capacity as the U.S. government's Deputy Permanent Observer to the Council of Europe, which has its headquarters in Strasbourg. In this role, the principal officer represents the U.S. Ambassador in Paris, who is designated as the permanent observer. The principal officer directs a staff of five local employees, four from the Department and one from the Department of Commerce's Commercial Service. The LES staff is highly professional, and most of the employees have long years of U.S. government service. The public affairs assistant, for example, has conducted public diplomacy programs for nearly 30 years.

The location of the Council of Europe (CE) headquarters in Strasbourg makes the city a capital for all Europeans. The selection of this city for CE headquarters in the aftermath of World War II was a weighty symbol of Franco-German reconciliation, and, by extension, Europe-wide reconciliation. The presence in Strasbourg of the Council's Parliamentary Assembly and the European Court of Human Rights adds additional importance to the city's European role. The CE recognizes nearly 50 diplomatic missions in the city. There are also some consulates with bilateral responsibilities. The American principal officer represents the United States to these many diplomatic entities and to the huge CE permanent secretariat. At the same time, the principal officer responds to requests from various U.S. government elements for information on CE deliberations and initiatives of interest (e.g., human rights issues, counterterrorism and anticorruption programs). This is a considerable portfolio. The principal officer must have a command of U.S. positions on issues before the CE ranging from the death penalty to promotion of democracy among new CE member states, fluency in French, diplomatic finesse, and reporting skills.

At the bilateral level, Consulate General Strasbourg carries out an agenda similar to the other constituent posts in France: providing American citizens services to the approximately 3500 U.S. citizens resident in the district, assisting tourists in distress, working with the Commercial Service office to promote U.S. business interests, reporting on issues of concern to the embassy and the Department, and planning and implementing a public affairs and public diplomacy

program directed at selected audiences in the region. As an example of public diplomacy programming, the post is currently working closely with the embassy public affairs section to increase interaction with leaders of the region's nearly 70,000 Muslims. In another public diplomacy area, the inspection team had an opportunity to observe the principal officer lead a seminar on the U.S. elections for a group of approximately 100 American civilization students at a local university. This is a rich environment for an energetic and language-qualified officer.

The extent of the principal officer's portfolio brings into question the nature and level of supervision and evaluation by Embassy Paris. As is also the case in Marseille, the designation of the Embassy Paris consul general as the rating officer seems to reflect the activity and responsibilities of a different era. The CE approved the U.S. Permanent Observer status in 1995, and the nature of the principal officer's responsibilities changed at that time. While the principal officer does have consular responsibilities for U.S. citizens, the time and attention devoted to CE matters, bilateral issues, and public affairs constitutes most of the workload. OIG believes the direct supervision of the consul general position rests appropriately with the DCM, and has addressed this issue elsewhere in this report.

The inspectors took note of the impact of the abolition of the principal officer's local hire secretary position in 2002. Embassy Paris timed that personnel decision to coincide with the arrival of the new principal officer. All employees at the consulate general, including the principal officer, have shared in dividing up the workload for the lost position, but the process has been difficult. Indeed, the principal officer has to spend time on such tasks as drafting replies to incoming correspondence and managing the office paper flow. This is not a good use of the talents and professional capabilities of the principal officer.

Consular Operations

During the inspection of Consulate General Strasbourg, the consular inspector interviewed and observed the work of the consular/political assistant and the receptionist/driver/backup consular assistant. They both provide informed and dedicated service to the consulate staff itself and to the American public. The consulate general is open for walk-in service on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, but the inspectors saw the staff providing voting assistance on a walk-in basis on other days as well. Telephone service is provided whenever requested. The inspectors were satisfied that no American is turned away at any time if service is requested. Both employees are enthusiastic and eager to learn more

about the consular function. All of the consulate staff serve as after-hour duty officers and are well informed about emergency procedures and local contact numbers, as well as numbers in Paris and the Department.

Real Property

The consulate general office building, opened in 1950, is a fully functional, well-maintained government-built and government-owned building. The building's original slate roof needs urgent repairs as some slates have moved from their anchored positions and present a safety hazard to people on the ground. OBO put a contract for the repair work on hold owing to the possible sale of the building and relocation of the office. OIG believes that the consulate general should remain in this government-owned building and recommends that OBO move ahead on the necessary roof repair and complete the security upgrades (addressed separately in the security management review) recommended in 1998. The main entrance steps will undergo a minor correction to the bottom step to bring it in line with the height of the other steps.

As noted in the February 2004 OBO Fire and Life Safety Inspection report, the first-floor Commercial Service office has only one exit out of its area, the interior hallway. The report's recommendation to install a movable window grate will correct this safety deficiency. An exterior fire escape, built several years ago, provides an escape route from all floors. A 1998 OBO report addressed the very limited presence of asbestos in both the consulate office building and the principal officer's residence. The consulate office building's only identified asbestos, found on the attic incinerator vent pipe, was determined to be in good condition. This asbestos poses no threat in the low traffic area and does not require removal. On the other hand, the report found that the asbestos paper radiator box lining in the living room and second floor study of the principal officer's residence should be repaired or removed using approved methods. To date, no action has been taken on this recommendation. Action to close out this recommendation is necessary.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should give high priority to funding the roof replacement for Consulate General Strasbourg. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with OBO)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should repair or remove the asbestos in the living room and second floor study of the principal officer's residence in Strasbourg in accordance with prescribed Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations procedures. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with OBO)

When it was built, the consulate office building provided sufficient office space for the American and local staff. The number of employees working in the building has diminished over the years, freeing up space for other purposes. The recent installation of new digital video conferencing equipment, for example, opens new possibilities for the use of the attractive program space on the second floor. The embassy will also benefit from use of living space in the building for the annual extended TDY of an embassy officer studying at the prestigious Ecole Nationale d'Administration and for a cleared intern.

The Federal Republic of Germany purchased a building next door to the consulate general office building intended to become its German chancery. Following its purchase, the German Consulate General expressed interest in buying approximately 146 square meters of U.S. government property between the two buildings to build a fence. Post management concurs in construction of the fence. OBO has given the post permission to enter into negotiations to sell the property.

Management Support From Paris

Consulate General Strasbourg praised the management support provided by Embassy Paris. While Paris handles the vast majority of Strasbourg's procurement needs, the post does use its imprest fund for petty cash purchases up to the petty cash limit of \$500. Above this amount, the post has to rely on Embassy Paris to handle the purchase through preparation of a purchase order or other means. For the vast majority of procurement requirements this system works fine. However, if the post needs to procure an authorized good or service quickly, a Department impact card, preferably with bulk funding, would be beneficial.

Locally Employed Staff Morale Issues

The inspection team met with the LES in a group and then individually. Morale seemed to be good. The computer-aided job evaluation (CAJE) project generated some anxiety for two employees, mainly as the result of the suspension of promotions that conflicted with CAJE instructions regarding promotions preceding the

CAJE processing. The loss of the principal officer's secretary meant that each employee (including the principal officer) had to pick up parts of that workload. This has had a negative impact on an already very busy staff.

Information Management and Information Security

Consulate General Strasbourg has an information management and security program that in most areas meets the needs of its five authorized users. Owing to time constraints, OIG could not determine the local area network's compliance with Department operating system guidelines. Consulate General Strasbourg's local area network technician is also the consulate's driver. The employee needs training on the Department's Unclassified Alternate Communication Terminal in order to effectively operate the system.

(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Embassy Paris' outstanding management office has highly qualified and competent officers and local employees who provide excellent customer service that gets exceptionally high marks on OIG's workplace and quality of life questionnaire. The local staff just experienced a small reduction-in-force, precipitated by a larger reduction-in-force associated with the closing of the Paris Financial Management Center. Merging administrative staff from the U.S. Mission to USOECD with ICASS staff will reduce costs and further rightsize Paris local staff. Security-related property issues require continuing management attention. The HR office will complete the CAJE process by December 2004. General service operations are excellent, and maintenance meets users needs. Information management has not fully implemented system security requirements.

There are 43 U.S. government entities, including the Department, the U.S. Departments of Defense and Justice, and many other agencies employing a total of 927 people. The Department employs over 550 people including 143 direct-hire staff members, 398 LES, and 12 eligible family members. The embassy's \$46.4 million budget includes \$28.1 million for ICASS and a \$18.3 million program budget that includes \$3.3 million for public diplomacy and \$4.7 million for diplomatic security.

U.S. MISSIONS IN PARIS

Management operations at USOECD duplicate ICASS functions, reconfirming a recent U.S. Government Accountability Office report³ that concludes duplicative administrative structures increase overall cost to the U.S. government. Local staff salaries for employees with administrative responsibilities are nearly \$285,000 annually in program funds. The direct-hire Foreign Service management officer's salary with benefits is over \$250,000. At the same time, USOECD pays over \$3.5 million in ICASS charges.

³U.S. Government Accountability Office, Embassy Management: Actions Are Needed to Increase Efficiency and Improve Delivery of Administrative Support Services, (A-04-511 dated September 2004)

In addition, USOECD has a memorandum of understanding with USUNESCO stating USOECD will provide certain limited services for which it will be compensated in equipment and staff. The memorandum of understanding also prompts USUNESCO to participate and pay for the full range of ICASS services. USUNESCO pays \$1.6 million in ICASS charges and about \$50,000 in salary for a locally employed information management assistant who is supervised by USOECD. OIG is recommending the termination of the memorandum in its reports of the inspections of USOECD and USUNESCO.

OIG has discussed a joint administrative structure with Embassy Paris and understands, through ICASS, the embassy is prepared to provide the full range of management and administrative services to USOECD and USUNESCO. OIG recommended in its inspections of those missions that they participate in ICASS fully and that USOECD discontinue its separate and duplicative administrative structure.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Paris, in coordination with U.S. Missions to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, should develop a joint management structure to provide administrative services, through the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services system, for those missions. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with USOECD and USUNESCO)

Information Management

Embassy Paris' direct-hire information management officer does not supervise USOECD's information management staff. According to 5 FAM 121.1, Embassy Paris' information management officer is the senior information management employee. The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs has a practice in all countries with multiple missions requiring the senior information manager to supervise all information technology employees.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Paris should, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, direct the embassy's information management officer, in compliance with Department regulations, to supervise the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's locally employed information management staff. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with USOECD)

REAL PROPERTY

Resolving property issues is difficult. The U.S. government owns the chancery, including buildings A and B, and the Talleyrand building.

Until 2003, the U.S. government also owned the D building. It was sold in 2002 for about \$40 million and immediately leased back at \$400,000 annually. Penalty payments, costing nearly \$90,000, began to double monthly, in November 2004.

To move some tenants from the D building, Embassy Paris leased one floor of a commercial building known as the NEO building. To accommodate other D building tenants, portions of the A building will be renovated.

Therefore, renovations to the B building are planned to accommodate Talleyrand occupants, including the consular unit. The government of France must, however, approve plans for exterior changes to the B building. A contractor has been selected for construction requirements in the A building and to develop plans for the B building. A contract for B building construction has not been awarded.

The Talleyrand building, a historic property, was the venue for signing the Marshall Plan following World War II. Private contributions have financed renovations to about 10 rooms in this building. These beautifully renovated rooms contain photographs and other memorabilia related to the Marshall Plan. One or two of the rooms are used for conferences and representational events. The embassy receives compensation for maintenance and local guard costs related to these events.

There have been a number of suggestions regarding how to use the Talleyrand building once the consular section and other occupants leave the building. OBO's current efforts center around determining the best outcome for leasing the building. The plan for leasing, however, would either exclude the Marshall Center or ensure the U.S. government's access to it.

Residential Property

Embassy Paris maintains six properties that serve as residences for the COMs and DCMs for Embassy Paris and the other two missions in Paris. These properties are beautiful and well maintained. The huge main residence on the Faubourg St. Honore, with many elegant reception rooms and a large private apartment, requires daily attention. The kitchen, located in the basement, a typical location in older Parisian buildings, has deteriorated but is still quite functional.

Parking Lot

A small portion of the Ambassador's residence garden serves as the parking lot for official embassy vehicles and a mail-sorting trailer. OIG's 1998 inspection report recommended selling this parking lot, noting the land was too valuable to use for a parking lot. The lot sold for about \$20 million. However, the purchaser's three-year contract, expiring in July 2005, is contingent on the government of France's approval of construction on the site. If approval is not granted, and the sale not completed, the embassy will need to revisit the parking lot issue. OIG notes that the area has been rezoned, and any new construction may be denied. Consequently, the lot may either remain available for parking or returned to the garden.

USOECD's DCM occupies the Delfiner apartment. This apartment and its valuable contents were a gift showing appreciation for U.S. assistance during World War II. The U.S. government also owns several other houses and leases more than 270 residential properties, a warehouse, and a maintenance workshop.

The U.S. government also owns two residential compounds, located in the Neuilly and Bologne suburbs. These complexes include 44 apartments and a new Marine security guard residence. (The Marine security guard unit was formerly housed closer to the embassy in the D building.) Some of these apartments were recently renovated, and others are still under renovation. At this point, two bedroom units are being combined to create larger units to accommodate larger families. The apartment buildings are on three levels, with elevators, storage, and common recreational areas. They are the closest locations to the schools American dependent children attend.

Housing at the Compounds

Employees are assigned to live in the compound apartments based on family size, rank-in-position, and, quite correctly, the space available at the compounds when they are expected to arrive. The housing board reviews housing questionnaires and compares the stated preferences with available housing. The housing board, not the embassy's housing unit, makes the assignment. Staff may request furnished apartments only at the compounds. A number of office management staff and entry-level officers complained about these assignments. They told OIG the housing questionnaire led them to believe they would get apartments in central Paris. The welcome cable clearly states that if U.S. government-owned housing is available, regulations require it to be assigned to incoming staff.

OIG found the questionnaire is not misleading. It states unequivocally that assignments will be based, *where possible*, on personal preferences but that there will be no assignments to leased apartments if a government-owned apartment would be vacant. OIG discussed the questionnaire with embassy management. The embassy plans to manage expectations by rewording the questionnaire to state that staff should expect to be assigned to compound housing unless there is no space available.

Raphael Building

The U.S. government signed the short-lease for the Raphael building in November 2002. USOECD and USUNESCO moved into the six-story, including a basement level, building in August 2004. The annual lease cost, about \$1.4 million, includes the cost for renovations. OIG noted in reports of inspection for the two missions that space is not allocated fairly. After moving administrative staff in connection with merging more closely with ICASS, Embassy Paris will assist with a space allocation review.

FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

The financial management section provides excellent support to three missions and over 54 ICASS subscribers. The section's scores on all of the financial management categories on OIG's questionnaire were very high. The section is one of several financial sections testing the Department's new initiatives designed to improve the overall functioning of embassies and consulates worldwide.

These initiatives include the paper check conversion facility that converts a paper check immediately into an electronic debit in the check writer's account, real time processing of financial transactions through direct electronic access to the Department's Regional Financial Management System that eliminates the former one to two day delay in processing, and one payment travel that allows travelers to receive 100 percent funding prior to travel with the associated benefit of not needing to complete a voucher after travel is completed.

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

The ICASS system allows the Department, the principal service provider and landlord, to provide services and share the cost for its management and common administrative services to the many agencies at diplomatic missions and consular posts. Embassy Paris provides services to 54 ICASS subscribers. Eleven of the subscribers are Department entities.

Banking

four class B cashiers at Embassy Paris have a cash advance
(b) (2) This cash is primarily used to provide accommodation exchange services for about 300 direct-hire Americans working at Embassy Paris. Although the U.S. disbursing officer, located at Charleston's FSC, has approved (b) (2) (b) (2) OIG believes that there may be alternatives (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2) (b) (2)

Other exchange services are available, including electronic funds transfers from domestic bank accounts into foreign bank accounts at the same rate of exchange the cashier offers and without additional service fees. However, there are several problems with the current version of the Windows-based automated cashiering system that must be resolved before greater utilization of cashier electronic fund transfers can occur. Also, wider usage of automated teller machines could be encouraged among mission personnel.

The Bureau of Resource Management generally prefers employees to get accommodation exchange services through commercial banks; however, this is a problem for posts in some European countries. Previously, a commercial bank provided accommodation exchange services at Embassy Paris. However, the bank terminated its agreement with the embassy because it sustained financial losses, in

part due to salary costs. Embassy officials say that, in general, commercial banking institutions find that providing accommodation exchange services is not profitable. OIG notes the commercial bank rate is the same as the automated teller machine rate.

Bureau of African Affairs Financial Management Rovers

The Bureau of African Affairs (AF) employs five local financial management staff, known as AF rovers. These employees, resident in Paris, fluent in French, highly experienced, and vital to assisting African posts where there are no direct-hire financial management officers, provide onsite financial management support to African posts, primarily in Francophone countries. According to a recent OIG report⁴ the Frankfurt Regional Support Center has financial management officers, resident in Frankfurt, who provide onsite financial management support to the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs posts. In that report, OIG recommended transferring like functions to Frankfurt, including those that the AF rovers in Paris provide. However, AF rejected the idea of transferring the rovers to Frankfurt. Further, the functions Frankfurt performs are somewhat different from the functions the AF rovers perform because Frankfurt staff is composed of trained financial management officers who may take greater responsibility for the outcome of their assistance.

Prior to this inspection, OIG again discussed the AF rovers with the bureau's financial management staff. They believe these rovers whose expertise could not be duplicated by untrained local staff in Germany, would not move to Frankfurt. Further, their ability to communicate with the Francophone posts in Africa is invaluable. AF also mentioned that replacing these local staff by direct-hire American financial management officers would be far more expensive than keeping the AF rovers in Paris. These knowledgeable rovers are familiar figures in Africa while the financial management officers located in Frankfurt assist only European and Eurasian posts.

In light of these arguments, OIG has decided to close this recommendation in the Frankfurt report. The recommendation in question also raised several other issues, which have been satisfactorily addressed. OIG left open the possibility, however, that moving the AF rovers to Frankfurt might be considered at some time in the future.

⁴Memorandum ISP report: Regional Support Center Frankfurt, Germany-September 2004 (Report No. ISP-I-04-45)

HUMAN RESOURCES

The HR office supports Embassy Paris, Consulates General Marseille and Strasbourg, five American presence posts, USOECD, and USUNESCO with one direct-hire American and 13 local staff. In the last three years, the staff completed complicated reductions-in-force for 110 FSC employees and, just recently, 12 ICASS employees. The office also supervises three rover secretaries. A second direct-hire American officer is expected in January 2005. Although Embassy Paris believes the second position should be permanent, OIG sees no need for a second direct-hire position. The workload does not support this request.

The office needs to improve customer service. Local staff is not pleased with follow-up on requests for information, and some performance evaluations for eligible family members were not prepared in a timely manner. Further, mission-wide policies and standard operating procedures need to be updated. OIG left informal recommendations.

Performance Evaluations and Work Requirements Statements

The system designed to track evaluations and remind supervisors to complete them is not effective. At the time of the inspection, there were LES who had not received performance evaluations or updated work requirements statements since 2002. Work requirements statements must be updated when there are changes to ensure employees are held accountable for their performance. The HR officer sent delinquent supervisors an "ultimatum" letter stating the office's intention to report the failure to agency heads, DCMs, and COMs. The delinquency continues, and supervisors are not rated on this supervisory responsibility. Embassy Paris has agreed to evaluate supervisors on their timeliness in updating work requirements statements and submitting performance evaluations.

Awards Programs

Incentive awards are intended to recognize and reward employees for significant contributions and outstanding performance. A good awards program is critical to mission morale and motivates employees. Embassy Paris, however, holds awards ceremonies quarterly, a practice that may encourage employees to see awards as bonuses and not rewards for exceptional performance. Further, the awards committee has not been reviewing performance evaluations before approving awards.

According to 3 FAM 4812, awards programs should encourage employees to participate actively in improving U.S. government operations and service to the public and recognize and reward employees for their accomplishments. Embassy Paris, however, has recognized employees who do not have performance evaluations. In one case, an employee got an award despite having a less than fully successful performance rating. This practice diminishes the value of an awards program. Good management practice indicates supervisors should certify that employees' performance warrants an award.

In addition, the awards committee has approved nominations without reviewing nominees' work plans or performance evaluations, or verifying the number of awards an individual gets. Last year, over \$80,000 was awarded to Embassy Paris personnel. In some cases, employees received two awards in the same quarter. An informal recommendation addresses this.

Computer Aided Job Evaluation

Embassy Paris missed the Office of Human Resources, Overseas Employment's September 30, 2004, deadline for implementing CAJE project. The HR office believes its focus on the reductions in force delayed its work on CAJE. Embassy Paris has received an extension and expects to complete CAJE by December 30, 2004. At the time of the inspection, CAJE reviews were 76 percent completed. Approximately 18 percent of the CAJE'd positions show upgrades, and five percent show downgrades. The HR officer will continue to monitor these changes.

Embassy Paris has not recently updated employees on CAJE processes and implementation. In some cases, positions have gone through the CAJE process twice; however, neither the supervisors nor the employees understood the need for this repetition.

GENERAL SERVICES OPERATIONS

An experienced general services officer leads the general services section. The section provides quality services to the embassy, its constituent posts, USUNESCO, and USOECD. Facilities maintenance is also led by a true professional who supervises the largest general services component, about 134 local staff members. For the most part, the local staff is fully invested in the work, working smartly, and is among the best in the service.

French Language Instruction

Embassy Paris employs seven language instructors using blanket purchase agreements to provide French language instruction for embassy staff. The head of the procurement office said that the Office of the Legal Adviser and the Office of the Procurement Executive approved this method of employment at the outset. The Office of the Legal Adviser advised the embassy that it needed insurance for those working above a certain number of hours. The procurement office has complied.

However, the Office of the Procurement Executive also warns that if a teacher is working on U.S. government premises, using U.S. property and supplies, the individual may be more properly a personal service employee. Furthermore, if the teacher only teaches for the U.S. government and for no one else, the relationship could be an employer-employee relationship. The improper use of purchase orders to employ U.S. citizens and foreign nationals is to be strictly avoided.

The blanket purchase agreement with one of the language instructors may be an improper use of a purchase order to hire a foreign national. The employee in question has worked for the embassy as a language instructor for approximately 10 years, and she is also responsible for managing the language program. She averages only 20 hours per week, but she does work longer hours occasionally. The appropriateness of this blanket purchase agreement may hinge on hours worked, and the decision to use such a mechanism should be reviewed.

Automobile License Plates

The customs and shipping section's motor vehicles office obtains vehicle license plates for government-owned and privately owned vehicles. The office obtains both diplomatic and French national license plates for privately owned vehicles. The diplomatic plates are generally placed in glove compartments to be accessible if needed.

The motor vehicle office's chief interlocutor in this process is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A few improvements in the current procedures the French authorities use could expedite vehicle license plate delivery. After an employee gets a diplomatic identification card, about six weeks after applying for it, the motor vehicle office requests diplomatic plates. It takes approximately six weeks to process the request for diplomatic license plates.

The diplomatic plates must be issued before the processing for the French national plates commences. The request for French national plates generally takes an additional six weeks to process. An average of three months is needed to get French national plates for privately owned vehicles. Further, the motor vehicle office must process the requests separately. The multiple steps in the process call for stops at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the customs office (twice), police headquarters, and an accessories shop to order the plate

The situation is even more dire for USOECD, USUNESCO, Consulates General Strasbourg and Marseille, and the five APP employees where it takes about five months to receive French national license plates, an unacceptable delay. The embassy, concerned about employee safety, would like the plates sooner. To date, the embassy has not sent diplomatic notes on this subject to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Processing applications for both diplomatic and French national plates simultaneously should be an embassy goal.

Interiors and Furnishings

The interiors and furnishings division of OBO, responsible for the furnishings at ambassador, DCM, and principal officers' residences, maintains a large inventory of residential furniture and furnishings at Embassy Paris' warehouse. There is a total of 170 individual pieces including tables, chairs, mirrors, armoires, cabinets, sofas, buffets, and chests. Two Louis XVI wingback chairs are designated as antiques. Of the 170 pieces, 101 need refurbishment. Eighty-six of the 170 pieces have remained unused in the warehouse in the last 10 years. The Residential Design Branch has responsibility for expenditures and design quality. The store of interior furnishings in Paris is one of a very few interiors and furnishings division sites.

Embassy Paris has maintained, preserved, and inventoried the interiors and furnishings division furniture and furnishings at its warehouse. Although the Residential Design Branch of OBO has a substantial number of residences to manage in France, nearly all of these residences are furnished. Consequently, the furnishings currently at the warehouse are close to being surplus to their needs. Three pieces are destined for the USUNESCO DCM residence. Selected pieces of furniture and furnishings are used to fill the private rooms of newly arrived ambassadors until their private items arrive.

Considering the substantial value of the interiors and furnishings division furniture and furnishings in the warehouse, the substantial costs required to refurbish more than half the pieces, and the fact that half the pieces have not been in a residence in the last ten years, the interiors and furnishings division needs to formulate a plan for the future use, refurbishment, storage, and disposal of these items.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should formulate a plan for the use, refurbishment, storage, and disposal of interiors and furnishings division furniture and furnishings at Embassy Paris' warehouse. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with OBO)

Print Shop

Three local employees work in the print shop. One handles reproduction services, one desktop printing, and the third offset printing. Reproduction services consist of black and white photocopying. Desktop printing makes use of a computer and a four-color printer. Offset printing makes use of camera/development/plate and lithographic printing techniques.

Eighty percent of the print shop's work is photocopying. Of the remaining 20 percent, 80 percent is devoted to desktop printing, and 20 percent is devoted to offset printing. The print shop charges ICASS customers about six cents per page for either black and white or color printing, with two exceptions. Because the offset printing process requires four separate runs, one for each color, the cost is 24 cents per page. Similarly, if the required page is larger than a standard page, the price is doubled. A comparison of the print shop's prices with those of the Department's Multi-Media Services shows the prices are in line for photocopying but not for offset printing.

As presently configured, the print shop appears to have enough work for two people, because there is little demand for offset printing. With some operational adjustments and fewer services one person could handle the offset printing and photocopying, and the other could handle desktop printing.

Travel and Visitors Unit

There are five LES working in the travel and visitors unit. The travel contractor's employees share the workspace. This unit provides travel services to the embassy, USOECD, USUNESCO, constituent posts, and visitors. It is especially busy arranging for the large numbers of high-level visitors from the President to Deputy Assistant Secretaries from multiple U.S. government agencies. The unit makes hotel reservations; prepares diplomatic notes for landing clearances for military aircraft; handles customs, immigration, and quarantine issues regarding military aircraft; provides expediting services; and assists in setting up and staffing control rooms. In the last year, the travel unit booked 3,571 rooms for a total of 15,106 nights that cost nearly \$3 million.

At present, the travel unit provides outstanding service despite staffing difficulties that diminish the unit's potential for providing even higher quality work. For approximately the last three years, the travel unit's supervisor has been unable to work full time. According to key staff members, his contributions have diminished as a result. Performance evaluations for this individual have not been prepared for the last three years.

During this period, the deputy travel unit supervisor has been managing day-to-day operations but has been hesitant to make operational changes. Further complicating matters are the ongoing communications problems among several staff members. The unit urgently needs a full-time manager.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Paris should complete the delinquent performance evaluation for the travel unit supervisor and establish work requirements for the current rating period. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Paris should realign travel unit management responsibilities and reflect them in the work requirements statements for the travel unit supervisor and his deputy. (Action: Embassy Paris)

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SECURITY

Embassy Paris operates a comprehensive information management program that meets the needs of its approximately 800 authorized users in most areas. Information technology, telecommunications, and Internet services all received above average scores in the OIG management questionnaire. Embassy Paris has also developed a best practice in training new information management specialists. However, OIG found several areas that require management attention including an absence of documentation for emergency and evacuation radio tests, incomplete waivers for stand-alone Internet access workstations, and lack of accessibility to the mission's web site for individuals with disabilities. Embassy Paris has not implemented fully the Department's information security program and directives. OIG believes the mission's information technology security problems result from management's fragmented approach to implementation and oversight. The Embassy Paris information security program has several key areas that require immediate attention, including the information systems security officer program (ISSO), software security patch management, systems security documentation, and network protection. These issues must be corrected at the embassy and its constituent posts.

Information Management

The Embassy Paris information systems staff of 50 consists of an information management officer who oversees the operations of the information systems center and the information programs center (IPC). The information systems center has three direct-hire American information systems officers and 15 LES system administrators that manage applications on the Department's OpenNet Plus network as well as administer the sensitive but unclassified network. The Army/Air Post Office mailroom has three LES. The IPC has an information programs officer who supervises 10 information management specialists (one position is currently vacant) who are responsible for the administration of the classified network, the emergency and evacuation radio program, the unclassified (which includes 11 LES) and classified diplomatic pouch services, and six mission telephone operators. The IPC staff also manages Webgram, the Department's sensitive but unclassified Intranet telegram retrieval system.

Embassy Paris fully participates in the Department's information management programs. In September 2003, the mission developed and implemented a local information technology configuration control board that considers software applications and hardware components for local use only. Standard operating procedures have been developed for the classified system. In addition, the mission's unclassified and classified information systems are generally compliant with the Department operating system guidelines. OIG did not identify any inappropriate material on the mission's servers or workstations. In June 2004, the mission completed the convergence of the public diplomacy network with the Department's OpenNet Plus network and completed the upgrade on the mission's classified network. The sensitive but unclassified OpenNet Plus computer network is scheduled for an upgrade through the Department's global information technology management upgrade program in January 2005.

The Embassy Paris information management staff members are well trained in some areas. Many have obtained the A+ certification, two information systems center and eight IPC employees also hold the Microsoft certified professional designation, some have the Microsoft systems administrator certification, and one IPC employee is certified as a Microsoft systems engineer. OIG identified a best practice relating to the training of information management employees within the mission IPC. Because Embassy Paris has many first-tour employees, it is widely regarded in the Foreign Service as a training post. The IPC information management specialists follow a structured eight-week scheduled duty rotation program. Duties rotated include the opening and closing of the IPC operations, mail and pouch, quality control, mission customer service, and regular day shift duties covering the full range of information technology responsibilities with additional time to focus on specific assignments and projects. In addition, each person is assigned a specific IPC area to learn, and once a year the information management specialist job requirements are updated to include a different area to learn. Embassy Paris also has a mentor program in which senior information management specialists are paired with the first tour IPC employees.

Best Practice: Structured Training Program for New-Hire Information Programs Center Employees.

Issue: Embassy Paris has a large number of first or second tour information management specialists. Upon completion of this tour, many of the information management specialists are assigned as the information programs officer or information systems officer at much smaller diplomatic missions where they must perform the full range of duties within an information programs center or information services center.

Response: The Embassy Paris information programs center has set up a regularly scheduled training program in which duties are rotated every eight weeks.

Result: Individuals receive training in every critical IPC function and are therefore better prepared for their next overseas tour as information management specialists.

Embassy Paris information management staff provide customer service support, and diplomatic mail and pouch services to all APPs in France including APP Lyon. APP Lyon's information technology infrastructure is five computers connected to the Department's sensitive but unclassified network. APP Lyon does not receive quarterly visits from the embassy's information systems officer because of inadequate funding for customer support. Poor network communications inhibit effective and efficient employee use of the information technology resources at the mission. The information systems officer informed OIG that this slow connection is the same at every APP, because the APP missions connect to Embassy Paris through an asynchronous digital subscriber line. Therefore, when Embassy Paris systems are down, the APP systems are also down. The Embassy Paris information systems officer stated that increased bandwidth from each APP to Embassy Paris would immediately improve connection speed; however, funding constraints prohibit the purchase. The mission requested funding in the FY 2006 MPP to increase the bandwidth.

OIG found that Embassy Paris has not tested its emergency and evacuation radios that are part of the overseas wireless program. 5 FAM 542.3 requires the regional security officer to conduct testing and local emergency and evacuation radio checks. The regional security officer told OIG that the tests are performed by the Marines but are not documented. He concurs with OIG and stated that the future tests will be documented.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Paris should document the execution of the emergency and evacuation radio tests. (Action: Embassy Paris)

In addition to OpenNet Plus, Embassy Paris and its constituent posts have 15 stand-alone Internet connections. Only two waivers, for public diplomacy and the African rover service, exist as required by 5 FAM 874 for the additional Internet connections. The stand-alone Internet connections were installed for contingency purposes for financial and passport operations, the community liaison office, the crisis room, and the information systems center. These stand-alone Internet connections are also the primary emergency Internet access source for the five APPs. Nonetheless, once OpenNet Plus service has been provided to a bureau or a mission, the Department will not provide funding for dedicated Internet networks or service unless a waiver has been submitted to, and approved by, the Bureau of Information Resource Management. The information systems officer is completing the waiver requests.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should terminate the stand-alone Internet connections or obtain waivers from the Bureau of Information Resource Management. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with IRM)

Paris information management should also address the accessibility of the Internet web site and storage of electronic records. OIG found that the Embassy Paris public Internet web site is not in compliance with 5 FAM 776.4 for access by individuals with disabilities. OIG also found that Embassy Paris has not instructed mission employees on their responsibility to preserve electronic messages that qualify as official records, as required by Department Notice 2000_07_40, an update of 5 FAM 443. OIG left informal recommendations to address these issues.

Information Systems Security

Embassy Paris has not implemented a proactive information systems security program that assures management that Department information resources maintain their confidentiality, are protected from inappropriate manipulation, and are available when required. Management needs to address the information systems security function, the patch management process, the systems security documentation, and the protection for the OpenNet Plus network.

Embassy Paris's implementation of the ISSO program needs improvement. The ISSO recently returned from six weeks of leave, and the alternate ISSO did not have the required system access or the training to complete the required duties per 12 FAM 622.2, 12 FAM 632.2, and 12 FAM 622.1-13d. No other alternates are identified or assigned information systems security duties during periods of absence. Additionally, the ISSO does not conduct monthly reviews of user directories and emails or review system audit logs as required by 12 FAM 622.1-8, 12 FAM 622.1-14, 12 FAM 629.2-7, 12 FAM 632.1-8, 12 FAM 632.1-11, and 12 FAM 637.1-9. The ISSO also serves as an information systems officer. Two problems exist. The assignment of the information systems security functions as a collateral duty at this post has not produced the desired program outcomes. Furthermore, an inadequate separation of duties between the security monitoring and network operations creates an internal control weakness. The ineffective implementation of the mission's ISSO program places the Embassy Paris systems at risk of inappropriate access and inappropriate use of government equipment.

Embassy Paris has difficulty managing the process involved in revoking system access privileges for personnel who leave the mission. The information systems officer and the ISSO are not informed by the personnel office when temporary duty employees, Marines, and interns depart the mission, as required by 12 FAM 621.3-3. Consequently, it may take weeks before the accounts are removed from the system. The lack of expeditious removal of inactive accounts could leave the unclassified system vulnerable to unauthorized access of information technology resources.

As discussed previously, the majority of the workstations are in compliance with the Department's Windows security guidelines; however, the local administrator passwords on the workstations have never been changed. This complicates her responsibilities of ensuring that unapproved hardware or software is not installed on the mission's unclassified and classified information systems.

Approximately three percent of mission computer users have administrative rights to the unclassified information systems, including two programmers - another internal control weakness that further complicates information systems security oversight at Embassy Paris. Two of the employees who have administrative rights are not part of the Embassy Paris information management section. The employees work in the budget and finance section and the African Rover Service. There is no documented rationale for this high number (which presents a significant security risk) of staff with administrative rights to the unclassified information systems.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Paris should conduct and document the review of randomly selected libraries, audit logs, user files, and operational practices, implement the appropriate separation of duties necessary for information systems security oversight or ensure the requisite separation of duties through additional management oversight, ensure the prompt removal of inactive accounts, make sure that its unclassified systems are compliant with the Windows security guidelines, and provide justification for the number of users who have administrative rights to the unclassified information systems. (Action: Embassy Paris)

(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2) A request has not been made to the Bureau of Information Resource Management Enterprise Network Management office to resolve the problem nor has a ticket been opened with the Bureau of Information Resource Management InfoCenter. System management server training is available online through the enterprise network management web site and the Bureau of Information Resource Management program office is available to provide assistance once the post makes a request.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Paris should ensure the information systems officer and selected locally employed staff receive System Management Server training. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Embassy Paris has inadequate systems security documentation. The mission lacks an information systems contingency plan, systems security plan, system standard operating procedures, an annual security self-assessment, and a configuration management plan. Without these key documents, the mission is at risk of not being able to recover from vulnerabilities ranging from basic network disruptions to natural or man-made catastrophes. For example:

- Embassy Paris has not completed the information systems contingency plan for its sensitive but unclassified information systems in accordance with 5 FAM 851, 5 FAM 867, and 12 FAM 622.3-2. The ISSO said that the plan is about 75 percent completed.

- Embassy Paris has not completed the information systems security program plan for its unclassified and classified information systems as required by 5 FAM 867, 5 FAM 842, 12 FAM 622.4, and 12 FAM 632.4.
- Embassy Paris has not documented standard operating procedures for its sensitive but unclassified information systems (5 FAM 121.3) including backup procedures (5 FAM 852 and 12 FAM 622.3-1).
- Embassy Paris has not completed its annual self-assessment of the security of its sensitive but unclassified and classified information systems, as required by 5 FAM 867.
- Embassy Paris does not have an information system configuration management plan, as required by 5 FAM 867 and 5 FAM 861.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Paris should complete and implement the systems security documentation as required by the Foreign Affairs Manual. (Action: Embassy Paris)

(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)

Recommendation 20: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

QUALITY OF LIFE

High scores on OIG's questionnaire indicated that the health unit, schools, the employee association, and the community liaison office offered good services. Morale, however, was affected by the large size of the mission where people were often on their own to find recreational opportunities throughout France and not rely on colleagues.

Occupational Health Unit

The occupational health unit provides referral services and limited medical care. The health unit's staff includes a full-time LES nurse and a part-time eligible family member nurse. The unit offers good support, but employees are surprised when they find that occupational health units provide only limited care but offer robust referral services. The health unit refers employees to U.S.-trained medical professionals who meet specific medical needs.

(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)
(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)
(b)(2)(b)(6)
(b)(2)(b)(6) The Department's Office of Overseas Schools has been providing grants to the school for years. These grants primarily support the U.S. teachers' salaries and fund the purchase of educational materials. A board of trustees governs the school. There are two embassy representatives on the school board: one is a voting member and the other, the Ambassador, is not. At present, approximately 50 embassy dependents attend classes at the (b)(2)(b)(6). Another 50 attend classes at (b)(2)(b)(6).

The (b)(2)(b)(6) had its share of critics. Attention to children with special needs is improving. This year, two specialists were hired to assist special needs students to enable them to attend regular classes, called mainstreaming. One specialist helps students in grades one through six; the other helps with grades seven through 12. There are individual consultations for elementary and middle school students and small group consultations for high school students.

The (b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6) . It is not an overstatement to say the school's physical plant needs a great deal of work. It appears to have been neglected for years. There are plans for improvements. These include building a new cafeteria, entrance, music and art centers, special needs classrooms, covered walkways, and parking lot. (b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6) . Funds for the building improvements are based on student assessment fees.

Dependents and embassy employees are generally pleased with the (b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6) . Billing for the cost of mandatory field trips is a concern, however. The school bills for field trips but does not specify the exact cost for each trip; consequently, the financial management section prices the trips. The embassy pays the total tuition and bills parents for the cost of field trips. This is a problem when the field trips are cancelled, and the cost of the trip is not refunded.

Since 1999, the (b)(2)(b)(6) has been bundling all curriculum related fees. Before 1999, some were identified separately but included in the overall tuition rate. These fees include retreats, field trips, and guest speakers. Section 277.1 of the Department's standardized regulations states that fees for field trips are not an allowable education allowance. The cost of field trips should be unbundled. Further, parents should only pay for field trips that take place.

Embassy Association Services for Employees

The Embassy Association Services for Employees in Paris provides a commissary, cafeteria with catering services, lounge/bar, gift shop, gymnasium, gasoline coupon sales, and other services. For the past three years, association operations have lost money, and its retained earnings cannot sustain these results. Declining sales in the gift shop, declining patronage in the cafeteria, and high salary costs account for some of these losses. As of August 2004, the association was operating in the red for the year.

The new general manager, the board of directors, and embassy management are focused on the association's financial viability and have taken positive steps to stem losses and move the operations towards profitability. In 2003, one full-time and two part-time positions were eliminated when the association discontinued its in-house cafeteria services.

Cafeteria

In July 2004, a new food service contractor began managing the cafeteria. Making this change was apparently a good decision as the number of cafeteria patrons is rising. Keeping the current contractor is key to cafeteria operations at this juncture. Using the contractor to cater representational events, where appropriate, would have a positive outcome for the Embassy Association Services for Employees because it will earn 10 percent of catering revenues. Therefore, promoting catering services should be a management priority. Embassy management has committed to replace the cafeteria's aged equipment and maintain the equipment.

Convenience Store and Gift Shop

Changes in the convenience store and gift shop have not been so dramatic, but there have been improvements with more planned. To minimize inventory costs and address its low inventory turnover rate, the convenience store plans to rely on purchasing from the U.S. military base located in Chievres, Belgium. To improve internal controls, a point-of-sale inventory system has been installed. The gift shop is also focused on controlling inventory levels and eliminating slow-moving stock. The challenge is to increase patronage and maintain the gift shop's offering of expensive French-branded items, a proven appeal.

In October 2004, staff from the Commissary and Recreation Staff visited the association and recommended improving internal controls, financial statements, inventory levels, safety and health, and preparing employee agreements for the local national employees. These recommendations are aimed at addressing financial losses.

Community Liaison Office

The newly reorganized community liaison office is a four-person operation staffed by a community liaison office (CLO) coordinator, two assistant CLOs and a newsletter editor who, collectively, work 115 hours a week. The second assistant CLO position is currently vacant and replaces an abolished Co-CLO position. The CLO position was recently upgraded.

Overall, embassy employees are satisfied with the CLO. The CLO has emphasized family member employment and its importance. In this regard, CLO has attempted to persuade the HR office to discontinue requiring French language capabilities for jobs where it is clearly not needed or to relax strict requirements where it is needed. The CLO now reviews vacancy announcements before they are advertised. While family member employment opportunities are few, there is also not a large demand for jobs. Several vacancies have not had any applicants, and others received only a few applicants.

The *Franco-File*, the weekly CLO newsletter, is available via e-mail. To contain costs the number of printed copies, available in the office, has been reduced from 700 to 120. The *Franco-File* reproduces the bi-weekly duty roster, monthly activities calendar, CLO news, embassy news, Paris events, essay contributions, and classified and Embassy Association Services for Employees ads. The newsletter editor works a 20-hour workweek. The *Franco-File* actually does not provide a significant amount of new information in its weekly format. Consequently, it is possible that bi-weekly publication would be sufficient. This reduction could serve to broaden the *Franco-File* editor's duties and reduce the assistant CLO's weekly hours to 24. Then, the two assistant CLOs would have the same number of hours, and the embassy would save about 11 hours of CLO employment weekly.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The June 2004 COM Management Controls Statement noted that, taken as a whole, the systems of management controls was effective and provided reasonable assurance that management control objectives were achieved. OIG found a weakness in the implementation of overtime.

Overtime

Embassy Paris' employees work thousands of overtime hours especially during special visits. During the inspection, the embassy issued a written overtime policy. Most embassy employees, especially during visits, accept the need to work overtime. However, contrary to requirements, many American supervisors do not always approve overtime in advance.

Most employees keep a daily log of overtime for the supervisor to approve and sign at the end of each pay period. A review of payroll records covering the past six months shows that the embassy's local staff worked thousands of hours of overtime each month. Thus, the U.S. government spends hundreds of thousands of dollars for overtime each year. Although the review demonstrated that overtime is at its highest level during special visits, the number of overtime hours worked does not necessarily decline when the visits end. Overtime hours and employees authorized to work overtime should be planned in advance. Firm procedures should be established to prevent abuse of overtime.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Paris should establish oversight procedures to reduce overtime, especially during special visits. (Action: Embassy Paris)

FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Embassy Paris should realign all supervisory responsibilities for the consuls general of Strasbourg and Marseille positions and designate the deputy chief of mission as the rating and supervisory officer and the Ambassador as reviewing officer. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Paris should adjust the portfolios assigned to the officers in the economic and financial and the environment, science, and technology sections to ensure that all priority environmental, science and technology issues are covered and that rating relationships are logical and effective. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, should submit a revised position description for the cultural affairs officer position to the Bureau of Human Resources for classification review and determination of the appropriate grade level for the cultural affairs officer position before a selection is made for a replacement cultural affairs officer. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with EUR and DGHR)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Paris should request, and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs should approve, authorization to hire an additional locally employed staff position in the protocol section. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with EUR)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Paris should direct Consulate General Marseille to assign systems administration of its classified processing system to a Department employee. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Paris should determine the need to continue classified processing in the Consulate General Marseille. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Paris should integrate Consulate General Marseille's unclassified information system into the Embassy Paris computer domain (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should give high priority to funding the roof replacement for Consulate General Strasbourg. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with OBO)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should repair or remove the asbestos in the living room and second floor study of the principal officer's residence in Strasbourg in accordance with prescribed Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations procedures. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with OBO)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Paris, in coordination with U.S. Missions to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, should develop a joint management structure to provide administrative services, through the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services system, for those missions. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with USOECD and USUNESCO)

Recommendation 11: Embassy Paris should, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, direct the embassy's information management officer, in compliance with Department regulations, to supervise the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's locally employed information management staff. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with USOECD)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should formulate a plan for the use, refurbishment, storage, and disposal of interiors and furnishings division furniture and furnishings at Embassy Paris' warehouse. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with OBO)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Paris should complete the delinquent performance evaluation for the travel unit supervisor and establish work requirements for the current rating period. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Paris should realign travel unit management responsibilities and reflect them in the work requirements statements for the travel unit supervisor and his deputy. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Paris should document the execution of the emergency and evacuation radio tests. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 16: Embassy Paris, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should terminate the stand-alone Internet connections or obtain waivers from the Bureau of Information Resource Management. (Action: Embassy Paris, in coordination with IRM)

Recommendation 17: Embassy Paris should conduct and document the review of randomly selected libraries, audit logs, user files, and operational practices, implement the appropriate separation of duties necessary for information systems security oversight or ensure the requisite separation of duties through additional management oversight, ensure the prompt removal of inactive accounts, make sure that its unclassified systems are compliant with the Windows security guidelines, and provide justification for the number of users who have administrative rights to the unclassified information systems. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Paris should ensure the information systems officer and selected locally employed staff receive System Management Server training. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 19: Embassy Paris should complete and implement the systems security documentation as required by the Foreign Affairs Manual. (Action: Embassy Paris)

Recommendation 20: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

Recommendation 21: Embassy Paris should establish oversight procedures to reduce overtime, especially during special visits. (Action: Embassy Paris)

INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover operational matters not requiring action by organizations outside the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau. Informal recommendations will not be subject to the OIG compliance process. However, any subsequent OIG inspection or on-site compliance review will assess the mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

Constituent Posts

The officers at the consulates general and the APPs were not tied into the embassy's preparation of the MPP.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Paris should actively engage principal officers at consulates general, and officers in charge of American presence posts, in the annual preparation of the Mission Performance Plan.

The Department of Commerce, in negotiating a short-term fix for staffing the APP Toulouse, has signaled its lack of interest to continue funding and staffing this position beyond the incoming incumbency.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Paris should ascertain Department of Commerce's intentions to fund and staff American presence post Toulouse beyond 2007 and take steps to identify alternative out-year staffing requirements from embassy resources.

There is little consular travel to either the constituent posts or the APPs for training or oversight.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Paris should work with consular management to identify travel funds for both working level consular officers and senior locally employed staff to travel on a regular schedule to the American presence posts and constituent posts for passport and citizens services training and coordination.

Marseille

Occasionally staff shortages in Paris inhibit sending an embassy officer to cover absences of either the consular officer or principal officer in Marseille.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Paris should work with the Bureau of Consular Affairs executive office to secure temporary duty coverage for Marseille when Paris is unable to provide coverage from its own resources.

The new consular cash register, installed in May, is still not operational. The Paris consular systems manager has been asked to come to help but nothing has been scheduled.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Paris should send the consular systems manager to Marseille to resolve the problems with the new consular cash register and enable Marseille to convert to the new system.

Embassy Paris has not accessed the local employment market to determine where recruitment advertising would be most effective.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Paris should consult with Consulate General Marseille to determine where to advertise for new staff and allow Consulate General Marseille to be more involved in the interview and hiring process.

Consulate General Marseille does not have an impact (credit) card.

Information Recommendation 7: Embassy Paris should arrange for the Department to supply a credit card to Consulate General Marseille and should provide appropriate training.

Consulate General Marseille uses fax instead of e-mail or Department procurement applications to request procurements.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Paris should direct Consulate General Marseille to use e-mail attachments for procurement until it is on the same domain as Embassy Paris. Then it should use the Department-provided procurement application.

Consulate General Marseille does not have a logical supervisory structure within its administrative unit.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Paris should direct Consulate General Marseille to review the administrative management and supervisory structure and the position descriptions to ensure they reflect appropriate supervision.

Strasbourg

The elimination of the executive secretary local hire position in 2002 in Consulate General Strasbourg has complicated the management of massive amounts of material sent by the Council of Europe, hampered phone coverage, and delayed replies to incoming correspondence.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Paris should include an executive secretary local hire position for Strasbourg in its next Mission Performance Plan submission.

Consulate General Strasbourg rotates the duty among all of its staff members, but there is no uniform list of important phone numbers or procedures.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Paris should direct Consulate General Strasbourg to prepare a brief duty officer pamphlet for use by its staff as an adjunct to the Paris duty officer book and the Blue Book.

Consulate General Strasbourg does not have a purchase card and cannot make unplanned urgent procurements above \$300 without assistance from Embassy Paris.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Paris should arrange with the Department for issuance of a purchase card to Consulate General Strasbourg and provide appropriate training.

Consulate General Strasbourg's local area network technician has not been trained to operate the mission's unclassified alternate communication terminal.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Paris should arrange training to ensure that Consulate General Strasbourg's local area network technician can operate the unclassified alternate communication terminal.

Embassy Paris

Economic Cluster

Economic cluster sections and agencies have no regular scheduled meetings with the executive office to review policy progress.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Paris should institute regular executive office meetings with the economic cluster to review progress on issues and refine strategies and engagement.

The MPP does not provide the economic cluster with effective strategic direction. The range and pace of economic cluster issues make it difficult for the cluster to be proactive.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Paris should produce a written strategy that defines priority economic cluster issues, lays out strategies to advance them, and identifies who at the embassy and from Washington should engage key French decision makers and shapers of public opinion. Embassy Paris should periodically review these strategy action plans to assess progress, readjust effort, and distill the priorities, strategies, and results into next year's Mission Performance Plan.

The minister-counselor would have more time to devote to greater strategic leadership if he devolved increased authority to his deputy to manage ECON.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Paris should regularly take the pulse of economic section staff to ensure that the division of authority and responsibility between the minister-counselor and economic counselor is implemented consistently.

The Transportation Security Administration is not included in the embassy's economic cluster, so the minister-counselor for economic affairs and economic officers have created duplicative coordinating and communicating mechanisms with the Transportation Security Administration.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Paris should include the Transportation Security Administration in the economic cluster to streamline communication and coordination.

An embassy economic officer spends days each month drafting lengthy reporting cables on Paris Club negotiations, taking time away from his work to advance other important macroeconomic issues, including terrorist financing.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Paris should coordinate with U.S. delegation members on who will be responsible for drafting which sections of the telegrams reporting on negotiations. It is a more effective use of Embassy Paris' resources for Department delegation participants to share drafting of the reporting cable as much as possible, clearing input with Embassy Paris.

Consular Section

Communication and training at all staff levels have eroded as a result of space and workload pressures. Some LES do not interact regularly in any unit meeting or with their American supervisors. Morale has suffered and staff resources are underutilized as a result.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Paris should direct consular management to set up a regular unit meeting schedule for all consular units with their American supervisors and should ensure that each locally employed staff member, in fact, belongs to a unit.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Paris should instruct senior consular management to attend regular unit meetings on an ad hoc basis as appropriate.

Both the ACS and the visa chiefs are in FS-01 positions, but only one serves as deputy to the consul general. This leaves the other FS-01 with fewer high-level responsibilities for career development and promotion opportunities.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Paris should update the position descriptions and the summaries in the bidding tool for the jobs of visa chief and American citizens services chief to clarify that in fact the American citizens services and visa chief incumbents exchange roles midway through their assignments and that the person serving in the American citizens services position also serves as the deputy to the consul general during that rotation.

The nascent anti-fraud unit is not yet well integrated into the work of the whole section.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Paris should direct consular management to establish written guidelines for referral of cases involving potential fraud to the anti-fraud unit so that all units, including federal benefits, are aware of the resources available in that office.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Paris should direct that the anti-fraud specialist be included in all unit meetings where feasible or advised in writing of relevant issues arising at those meetings.

The accountable consular officer position has rotated frequently among entry-level officers.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Paris should assign the accountable consular officer to that position for at least one year.

There has been no senior oversight of the entry-level accountable consular officer.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Paris should ensure that a senior officer supervise the accountable consular officer position to ensure continuity.

The yellow copies of the cashier receipts remain with the completed files and are not returned to or retained by the ACO as required.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Paris should direct the accountable consular officer to meet with the appropriate representative of each unit to advise on the correct disposition of the consular receipts.

French legislation regarding maternity and parental leave has generated numerous, lengthy staffing gaps among LES employees.

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Paris should work with the human resources office to determine how contract employees can be used to fill in the work hours lost to the section during the three years of parental leave as well as during the six or more months of maternity leave.

The consular LES resources at the APPs, and the French interns who volunteer their services to the consular sections, are not clearly reflected in the Paris consular package statistics.

Informal Recommendation 28: Embassy Paris should include all American presence post work hours spent on the consular function in the consular package, including those of the locally employed staff and the consuls, as well as the volunteer hours of the French and other interns.

Informal Recommendation 29: Embassy Paris should direct that the narrative of the consular package should clearly describe the reliance on both the American presence post and volunteer resources.

Lines outside the consular section form early and move slowly. There is little flexibility for applicants to book appointments at times convenient to their schedules. The call center appears to be underutilized.

Informal Recommendation 30: Embassy Paris should assign the deputy consul general to take over liaison with the call center and continue efforts to expand services to include more detailed information to the applicants prior to their interview, greater flexibility in appointment dates, targeted appointments for high priority groups, and other measures to minimize wait times and maximize efficiency.

Informal Recommendation 31: Embassy Paris should establish regular planning and monitoring sessions between the regional security office and consular management to reduce outdoor waiting for applicants for consular services even as the number of applicants increases.

Resource Management

The permanent move of three small government offices out of the D building by early 2005 is dependent on the timely completion of renovations at the chancery A building. These renovations are behind schedule, and if any delay ensues stiff lease back penalties will kick in.

Informal Recommendation 32: Embassy Paris should develop contingency plans for swing space in either the chancery A or B buildings to house temporarily the three offices whose move from the D building cannot be delayed with stiff leasing penalties looming.

The blanket purchase agreement with a specific language instructor may be an improper use of a purchase order to hire a foreign national. She has worked for the embassy as a language instructor for approximately 10 years, and she is also responsible for managing the language program.

Informal Recommendation 33: Embassy Paris should seek assistance from the Office of the Procurement Executive and the Office of the Legal Adviser to determine whether the blanket purchase agreement for the instructor who teaches and manages the language program is appropriate.

Informal Recommendation 34: Embassy Paris should rewrite the blanket purchase agreement, if it is appropriate to use this employment vehicle, to include the local staff's responsibilities for managing the French language instruction program.

Getting motor vehicle license plates is a lengthy process that could be expedited if the embassy pressed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to issue diplomatic and French national license plates simultaneously.

Informal Recommendation 35: Embassy Paris should request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to process requests for diplomatic and French national license plates simultaneously.

Informal Recommendation 36: Embassy Paris should request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also to issue license plates for constituent posts and other U.S. missions in Paris in the same length of time as processing is accomplished for Embassy Paris staff.

As presently configured, the print shop appears to have enough work for two people because there is little demand for offset printing.

Informal Recommendation 37: Embassy Paris should redefine the role of the print shop in light of available outsourcing capabilities, including Department sources.

The print shop staff is excessive.

Informal Recommendation 38: Embassy Paris should review the need for a third position in the print shop.

Human Resources

Embassy Paris, with a staff of over 500 employees, has one equal employment officer who travels frequently.

Informal Recommendation 39: Embassy Paris should assign another staff member to serve as an equal employment opportunity counselor.

The current equal employment counselor does not have training.

Informal Recommendation 40: Embassy Paris should ensure that the equal employment opportunity counselor receives the required training.

There is no equal employment opportunity information posted in embassy and missions' buildings.

Informal Recommendation 41: Embassy Paris should post equal employment opportunity materials and the missions' program on bulletin boards throughout the embassy and other mission buildings.

The Federal Women's Program coordinator position is not filled.

Informal Recommendation 42: Embassy Paris should ensure that the Federal Women's Program coordinator position is filled.

Performance evaluations for eligible family members are not prepared in a timely manner.

Informal Recommendation 43: Embassy Paris should ensure timely performance evaluations for eligible family members.

Several mission-wide policies on training and family member employment and standard operating procedures are outdated.

Informal Recommendation 44: Embassy Paris should review and update all mission-wide human resources policies and standard-operating procedures.

Some performance evaluations for LES are overdue.

Informal Recommendation 45: Embassy Paris should establish procedures to ensure complete and timely preparation of evaluation reports for locally employed staff.

Supervisors whose performance evaluations are late are not held accountable.

Informal Recommendation 46: Embassy Paris should hold supervisors accountable for preparing annual performance evaluations and rate them on this element in their evaluations.

Work requirements are not being prepared or discussed at the beginning of the rating period.

Informal Recommendation 47: Embassy Paris should ensure that mission supervisors develop and discuss work requirements with employees at the beginning of the rating period.

Embassy Paris holds four awards ceremonies annually.

Informal Recommendation 48: Embassy Paris should reduce the number of awards ceremonies.

The awards committee is not reviewing work requirements statements or performance evaluations when deciding on awards.

Informal Recommendation 49: Embassy Paris should follow Department requirements and employ standardized criteria for the awards committees and embassy management.

Awards citations are not kept in HR files.

Informal Recommendation 50: Embassy Paris should place awards citations in individual human resources files.

Follow-up information about the CAJE process has been minimal, creating anxiety among LES.

Informal Recommendation 51: Embassy Paris should hold informational sessions to address employees' questions and concerns about the computer assisted job evaluation system.

Financial Management

Embassy cashiers process monthly U.S. Treasury checks for over 300 FSNs retired under the Civil Service system. Processing involves taking the checks and arranging for electronic funds transfers into euros from the Charleston FSC. Check processing is permitted under 4 FAH-3 H-362.1-2 when "local commercial banks charge excessive fees for exchange transactions or unreasonably delay credit of deposits to personal accounts."

Informal Recommendation 52: Embassy Paris should determine whether locally employed staff retirees will encounter adverse conditions when processing U.S. Treasury checks and whether annuity payments can be made directly to bank accounts by electronic funds transfers.

Embassy Paris staff do not always submit travel vouchers within five working days after completion of authorized travel as required by 4 FAH-3 H-465.1-1.

Informal Recommendation 53: Embassy Paris should ensure employees submit a voucher for reimbursement of travel expenses within five workdays after completion of authorized travel.

In some instances, obligations have remained unliquidated for over two years.

Informal Recommendation 54: Embassy Paris should review procurements to determine if funds can be deobligated.

In some instances, mission personnel do not fully understand the regulations and responsibilities governing official residence expenses.

Informal Recommendation 55: Embassy Paris should issue and post to its web site an administrative memorandum that explains the rules and procedures for claiming official residence expenses.

(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6) bills for all proposed trips with the original tuition payment. When the trip is cancelled, there is no reimbursement.

Informal Recommendation 56: Embassy Paris should work with (b)(2)(b)(6) (b)(2)(b)(6) to ensure that parents pay only for field trips that occur and receive reimbursement for those that are cancelled.

(b)(2)(b)(6) is bundles items in the tuition bill that are not allowed because they are not usually free in the United States.

Informal Recommendation 57: Embassy Paris should ensure that (b)(2)(b)(6) (b)(2)(b)(6) tuition does not include items not ordinarily provided free of charge by public schools in the United States.

Information Management

OIG found that the Embassy Paris public Internet web site is not in compliance with 5 FAM 776.4 for access by individuals with disabilities.

Informal Recommendation 58: Embassy Paris should ensure that its web site is compliant for access by individuals with disabilities.

OIG also found that Embassy Paris has not instructed mission employees on their responsibility to preserve electronic messages that qualify as official records, as required by Department Notice 2000_07_40, an update of 5 FAM 443.

Informal Recommendation 59: Embassy Paris should instruct mission employees on their responsibility to preserve electronic messages that qualify as official records, as required by a Department notice and Department regulations.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Ambassador	Howard H. Leach	07/01
Deputy Chief of Mission	Alejandro D. Wolff	05/01
Chiefs of Sections		
Management	Elizabeth J. Agnew	07/04
Consular	Donald E. Wells	09/04
Political	Josiah B. Rosenblatt	07/04
Economic	Thomas J. White	08/03
Public Affairs	Renee Earle	07/02
Regional Security	Kevin W. Bauer	08/02
Consulate General Marseille	Leslie W. McBee	09/02
Consulate General Strasbourg	Christopher R. Davis	08/02
Other Agencies		
American Battle Monuments Commission	BG William J. Leszcynski	02/01
U.S. Department of Agriculture		
Foreign Agriculture Service	Besa L. Kotati	08/01
U.S. Department of Defense	Col. Ralph R. Steinke	08/02
Department of the Army	vacant	
Department of the Air Force	Col. Jeffrey A. Jackson	06/01
Department of Navy	Capt. A. Durnan	04/04
Office of Defense Cooperation	Col. Ernest J. Herold	07/04
U.S. Department of Homeland Security		
Customs and Border Protection	Deirdre L. Mahon	11/02
Transportation Security Administration	Nouri Larbi	06/04
Secret Service	Michael P. Merritt	12/02

U. S. Department of Justice		
Drug Enforcement Administration	Eugene D. Habib	07/99
Federal Bureau of Investigation Attaché	Lauren C. Anderson	04/02
Office of International Affairs	Kenneth J. Harris	08/04
Department of Health and Human Services		
Center for Disease Control & Prevention	Dr. Paula I. Fujiwara	04/02
U.S. Department of Commerce	Robert Connan	08/04
U.S. Commercial Service	James Koloditch	10/03
Internal Revenue Service	Kathy J. Beck	06/04
National Aeronautic and Space Administration		
	Donald J. Miller	09/03
National Science Foundation	Mark Suskin	08/04

ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American citizens services
AF	Bureau of African Affairs
APP	American presence post
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CAJE	Computer-aided job evaluation
CE	Council of Europe
CLO	Community liaison office
COM	Chief of Mission
Commerce	Department of Commerce
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
Department	Department of State
ECON	Economic and Financial Affairs section
E visa	Investment visa
EST	Environment, science, and technology
FBU	Federal benefits unit
FPM	Fraud prevention manager
FSC	Financial service center
FSN	Foreign Service national
HR	Human resources
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IPC	Information programs center
IRM	Bureau of Information Resource Management

ISSO	Information systems security officer
IV	Immigrant visa
LES	Locally employed staff
MPP	Mission Performance Plan
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMS	Office management specialist
PAO	Public affairs officer
TDY	Temporary duty
USOECD	U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
USUNESCO	U.S. Mission to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WAE	When actually employed

FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE, OR MISMANAGEMENT
of Federal programs
and resources hurts everyone.

Call the Office of Inspector General
HOTLINE
202-647-3320
or 1-800-409-9926
or e-mail oighotline@state.gov
to report illegal or wasteful activities.

You may also write to
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of State
Post Office Box 9778
Arlington, VA 22219
Please visit our Web site at:
<http://oig.state.gov>

Cables to the Inspector General
should be slugged "OIG Channel"
to ensure confidentiality.