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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Tripoli, Libya

Report Number ISP-I-09-01A, December 2008

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PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, as issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the BBG, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and the BBG. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; whether U.S. interests are being accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; whether instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this inspection, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on-site interviews; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- Embassy Tripoli's deputy chief of mission (DCM), now the chargé d'affaires, *a.i.*, has focused on the bilateral relationship and on embassy morale in a difficult working environment. He has provided a steady, decisive hand at the Embassy's helm and continuity and consistency in implementing policy. Naming the DCM as chargé was the best decision for the Embassy.
- Embassy Tripoli's political and economic reporting is impressive in quality and quantity, given a circumscribed reporting environment characterized by official harassment, stringent travel restrictions, and the capricious nature of Libyan Governmental and quasi-government contacts. The Embassy has received praise from Washington for reporting.
- While Embassy Tripoli's move from a downtown hotel to two sites, about 12 ½ miles apart was necessary, it is not ideal. The originally proposed timeline to renovate the Villas compound and unite the staff there has been extended. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) inspection team remains concerned that the timeline will change again and contracting for certain upgrades remains uncertain.
- Consular relations with Libya are poor and are not expected to improve until the Embassy's consular section begins processing and issuing all visas, not just official visas, in Tripoli. The Department of State (Department) anticipates that this will help to lift limits and delays on Libyan visas for American citizens and improve bilateral relations in other areas.
- The management section, located at the Chief of Mission residence (CMR), is providing full support to the embassy staff with a small and still inexperienced locally employed (LE) staff. Housing is spacious, repairs and maintenance are timely, and communications connectivity is effective.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between June 2 and July 8, and in Tripoli, Libya, between July 27 and August 14, 2008. Ambassador Marisa R. Lino (team leader), Andrea M. Leopold (deputy team leader), Charles A. Anderson, Andrea M. Farsakh, Michael R. Kirby, Christopher Mack, and Katherine M. Schultz conducted the inspection.

CONTEXT



In February 2004, U.S. diplomats arrived back in Tripoli after a 24-year hiatus. The United States withdrew its last Ambassador to Libya in 1972. All remaining U.S. Government personnel were withdrawn and the Embassy was closed after a mob attacked and set fire to the Embassy on December 2, 1979. A direct diplomatic presence resumed on February 8, 2004, with the arrival of U.S. personnel to the U.S. Interests Section in Tripoli. The mission was upgraded to a U.S. Liaison Office on June 24, 2004.

On May 31, 2006 the United States and Libya exchanged diplomatic notes confirming the upgrade of the U.S. Liaison Office to a U.S. Embassy. This exchange of notes followed Secretary of State Rice's announcement and report to the U.S. Congress, on May 15th of her intent to upgrade diplomatic representation with Libya.

From 2004 until May 2008, the U.S. Liaison Office and then Embassy Tripoli operated from the Corinthia Bab Africa Hotel in downtown Tripoli and at an annex, the Villas compound, in a commercial-residential neighborhood. In May 2008, the Embassy moved all operations from the hotel to the Villas site, which was expanded with the leasing of additional buildings, and to the vacant CMR. When the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) has completed a renovation project at the Villas site, scheduled for completion in 2009, operations at the CMR will move to the Villas site. The Embassy is searching for land for a new embassy compound. Construction would begin in 2011.

There were eight functional sections conducting operations. A Defense attaché office was added in 2006 and a Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) office became active during the inspection.

Libya has made great strides towards rejoining the community of nations by renouncing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and international terrorism, and

acting as a partner in the Global War on Terror. However, years of isolation and stagnation have taken their toll and Libyans face enormous tasks of political and economic reform and the basic institution-building necessary to make up for decades of underdevelopment.

The U.S. Government expanded its dialogue with the Libyan Government on dismantling and destroying its WMD programs and retraining former WMD scientists, on counterterrorism, African and Middle East regional issues, cultural and educational issues, and consular affairs. Embassy efforts to establish a dialogue with the Libyan Government on human rights have been less successful; however, the Government has permitted certain nongovernment organizations to engage with the United States on these issues.

Mission goals are straightforward: 1) sustain cooperation in the war on terror and in nonproliferation; 2) urge respect for human rights and the achievement of political reform; 3) expand educational and cultural engagement with Libyans; 4) assist economic modernization; and 5) expand commercial contacts especially in the interest of U.S. energy security. Establishing expanded visa services in Tripoli in 2009 is planned and is expected to contribute toward achieving overall mission goals.

The Embassy is staffed by 33 direct-hire Americans and 129 LE staff, including the 80 direct-hire local guard force. Embassy Tripoli's program budget for FY 2008, including diplomatic security, public diplomacy (PD), and representational budgets was approximately \$6.1 million. The embassy expects to receive an Interagency Cooperative Administrative Support Services budget for FY 2009. The OBO budget was \$5.8 million.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

In the absence of an ambassador, the DCM has performed as chargé since January 23, 2008. The chargé has substantial experience in the region, including postings in Riyadh, Cairo, Damascus, Tunis, and Jerusalem. He has also served as a Department fellow on the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and in positions in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the Office of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. The chargé, in addition to focusing on the primary U.S. Government objectives in Libya, has dedicated attention to morale and post management.

Developing good working relations with the difficult and closed Libyan Government has been the primary challenge. Competing official power centers and the lack of institutional frameworks for policy formulation and implementation complicate official contacts and make advance planning in every area difficult. For many in the host Government, 30-year-old habits of hostility are difficult to overcome.

With Embassy workplaces divided between two locations it would be easy for the chargé to lose sight of the administrative and consular sections while remaining visible in the three occupied villas. The executive office, political/economic, PD, Defense attaché, regional security, and FCS offices are located at the Villas compound. The management office; including general services, human resources, financial management, community liaison, health unit, information management, and the consular section; are located at the CMR. The chargé has made a point of regularly scheduling meetings at the CMR and walking around the Villas compound frequently.

The addition of the FCS position was achieved smoothly through the National Security Decision Directive-38 process, and the first FCS officer arrived during the inspection. The only other agency at the embassy has been the Defense attaché's office. The chargé has excellent relations with that office.

The chargé has paid close attention to PD at post, meeting weekly with the public affairs officer (PAO), as he does with each section chief, and has included PD issues in the Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) process. He has participated in PD events and has traveled at the suggestion of the PAO to accomplish PD objectives.

The chargé chairs the emergency action committee that meets regularly or when necessary. The committee met 14 times during the last year. The chargé focuses heavily on mission and personnel security, coordinating frequently with the regional

security officer (RSO) on issues affecting the security of American personnel and facilities, American citizens, and on security preparations for the renovation of the Villas site and issues involving the offices located in the CMR.

The chargé named an Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights coordinator. The designated coordinator has just completed training and is reaching out to local staff, posting notices and posters clarifying U.S. Government Equal Employment Opportunity tenets, and raising awareness on this issue.

MORALE

Prior to the designation of the current DCM as chargé, several individuals named as chargé came for temporary periods. Coupled with the lack of continuity, most American personnel lived and worked in the hotel where the host government's scrutiny was heavy-handed. A certain amount of friction and unhappiness under these circumstances is understandable. Today most American personnel move directly into permanent housing. Naming the DCM as chargé has provided for a steady hand at the helm.

The chargé has provided a clear and positive leadership role, dedicated to addressing Embassy shortcomings. He has made a concerted effort to tackling the greatest needs and, while issues and obstacles remain, his leadership has been important to improvements generally and in terms of morale.

With respect to morale, the chargé identified and named an active, engaged community liaison office coordinator. He meets with her regularly, approximately every two weeks, to discuss activities aimed at improving morale. These ideas included the first-ever American and local staff "Family Day" picnic – deemed a major success; a series of events the chargé hosted at his home for the American staff; and an outreach to the British Embassy's community liaison office coordinator equivalent in an effort to establish joint activities. Morale has markedly improved compared to a year or more ago and there have been no curtailments since last year.

MISSION STRATEGIC PLAN

The development of the MSP involved all section heads. The lead for coordination was the entry-level officer in the management section with the consular officer named deputy coordinator. After in-depth discussion of priorities, a schedule was set and all sections contributed to the final product submitted to Washington.

ENTRY-LEVEL OFFICER PROGRAM

The chargé has taken seriously his duties to mentor entry-level officers. The chargé met regularly with the mission's sole entry-level officer, following his progress and development closely, assigning him projects aimed at giving him breadth and depth of experience.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The PD section is enthusiastically attempting to promote a better understanding of U.S. policy objectives and values in Libya. However, the section—two American officers supported by a three-person local staff—has dealt with high turnover among its local staff and the absence of one of the two officers for a four-month period. At the time of this inspection, of the three local staff, one had worked for the Embassy for only two weeks, one had worked for two months, and the third was the sole longer-term employee, having worked for two years. Hiring and providing training for new staff has necessarily been an important focus for the American officers.

The energetic and capable officer has concentrated her efforts on exchanges and English language training. Libyans have not been receptive to other programs. For example, several musical performances and speakers were canceled at the last minute because the Libyan Government did not issue visas. Direct engagement with the media is difficult, if not actively discouraged. The section has initiated various information programs, an extensive exchange program, and active support for the Embassy's non-PD officers who engage in outreach and transformational diplomacy activities. In 2008, the PD section increased the number of its exchanges by 50 percent, from 23 in 2007 to 35 in 2008. This reflects adding new programs and increasing the number of exchange participants in existing programs.

The PD section's activities are well integrated into the MSP, and the public affairs officer is an active member of the country team. On a day-to-day basis, PD works very closely and cooperatively with the political/economic section. Despite restrictions stemming from the local security environment and heavy-handed controls Libyan officials impose on Embassy contacts, morale in PD is good.

Planning is difficult when the host government frequently cancels visits or programs at the last minute. Nevertheless, the inspection team suggests an operational plan would be helpful. The PD office already has an annual calendar document, a travel plan, and a representational plan. The PAO tracks the status of obligations' reports monthly and keeps a hand-written log of PD expenses. Combining these documents into a single overall PD operational plan would be a useful exercise, and an informal recommendation was made in this regard.

There is no American resource center or library. The plan for the Villas renovation includes a small library and a three-workstation information resources center. In the meantime, book donations to universities and other educational entities and an “American bookshelf” program represent a first step forward. The bookshelf program, as opposed to the more formal American Corners program, initiated by the former PAO, has continued with the current PAO. Some of the bookshelf recipients have posted signs indicating the source of the donation; i.e., the “American bookshelf” was donated by U.S. Embassy Tripoli; others have not, although distribution of the material is worthwhile in any case because the books are descriptive of the United States and our democratic system.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The political/economic section is currently fully staffed with competent and experienced officers. Both political officers are Arabic-language-qualified. An economic/commercial officer, an eligible family member economic assistant, an LE staff economic/commercial assistant, and an eligible family member who arrived during the period of the inspection comprise the section. The former environment, science, and technology officer left the Embassy for personal reasons and will be replaced by a new officer shortly. The political/economic section chief was formally designated acting DCM in July. By September 2008, a new political and a new economic officer will have arrived to replace rotating officers. A new FCS officer also arrived at post during the inspection. The officer is beginning to establish a full FCS operation.

Frequent absences which result in the need for officers to backup each other, a demanding schedule of official visits from Washington, and other move-in issues initially had a negative impact on reporting. The section has, however, produced an impressive amount of reporting based on a reporting plan that, while largely a retrospective of completed spot reporting based on MSP priorities, envisages reasonable future goals.

The political section has done timely work in its extensive coverage of African issues, particularly in tracking Libyan involvement on the Darfur conflict. The section also did superb work on a recent international cause célèbre: the case of Bulgarian nurses arrested and accused of infecting children with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in Libya. The case concluded with a conviction and, thanks to the French President’s intervention, the expulsion of the nurses and their return to Bulgaria.

Particularly noteworthy were several extensive and groundbreaking reports on distant and difficult regions of the country. Political officers took risks to report on domestic issues of great sensitivity to the host Government, and produced reporting of considerable value to Washington consumers. At the same time, several offices in Washington commented that more Embassy analysis and commentary in cables generally would be valuable and appreciated.

The inspection team believes a more forward-looking reporting plan would be desirable, and an informal recommendation was made in this regard. The inspectors realize considerable flexibility is required, given the difficult reporting environment, the capricious nature of official contacts, official harassment, and stringent travel restrictions targeting Embassy staff. Arbitrary and unpredictable Libyan visa policy toward U.S. visitors complicates post planning and arrangements for visitors. Of more than 65 visits fully planned and organized by the section, more than 40 had to be canceled at the last minute due to Libyan Government noncooperation in providing visas or other arrangements. The Embassy is hopeful that the tenor of the bilateral relationship will change in a positive way and that the general atmosphere in which the embassy conducts its business will improve.

Over the past two years, the economic/commercial officer has done prolific reporting on the significant, but sometimes sporadic, Libyan efforts at economic reform over the same period. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are active in Libya. The section has established a good informal working relationship with the primary set of International Monetary Fund delegation members who regularly travel to Libya.

Counterterrorism

Maintaining and enhancing Libya's cooperation in the Global War on Terror is one of the Embassy's principal priorities. This is an area where U.S. and Libyan interests coincide, because, in the Libyan view, our cooperative efforts enhance regime stability. The chargé and political officers regularly engage the government of Libya on the issues of foreign fighter flow, domestic terrorism, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba returnees, and terrorist financing. The Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism visited Libya in July 2007, and the Department's Coordinator for Counterterrorism traveled to Tripoli in November 2007 and continues to be actively in touch with post on various issues.

Terrorism reporting is usually coordinated through a group comprising the chargé, political officers, the RSO, and the Defense attaché. The consular section is brought into these discussions, as needed. There is close coordination between

consular and political officers on visa issues of particular concern, and on the Visas Viper program. The core group on counterterrorism holds weekly meetings to address the approach to reporting and related issues.

Law Enforcement

The RSO, in cooperation with the political/economic section, made the appropriate contacts within the Libyan Government to establish an initial training program funded under the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Antiterrorism Assistance program. The RSO and Embassy Cairo's legal attaché participated with him in interviewing and selecting the finalists for this training. The first-ever Libyan student, a police officer, completed a three-month course at the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Academy in the United States in June. He had some difficulties in finishing the coursework. The RSO made all arrangements for the police officer's U.S. travel and study.

An antiterrorism assistance team visited Tripoli in late March 2008 to prepare an assessment report and plan training for more Libyan officials in the United States. A reciprocal visit by a Libyan team to the United States was planned for June. The visit was postponed, rescheduled, and, ultimately, cancelled. The Embassy determined from its initial experiences that the program will require more intensive Embassy engagement with Libyan officials to make it succeed. The Embassy will encourage the Libyans to use the antiterrorism team's recommendations, once the report is provided to the Libyan Government. The Embassy plans to select the second finalist for training in 2009.

The Embassy hosted two programs under the Department's Export Control and Border Security auspices in 2008. These programs, sponsored by the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, have budgeted about \$300,000 for Libya in FY 2008. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security trained about 50 Libyan customs officers on maritime interdiction, container and port security.

In July, a team of airport experts conducted a three-day course at Tripoli's International Airport for about 30 officials on counternarcotics and interdicting terrorist travel. Discussions on a follow-up training program for airport officials in Benghazi are in process, with the possibility of a land border security program in the future.

Military-to-Military

Military-to-military relations are at a very early stage of development, and official interaction remains limited. The Defense attaché departed post in June; his

replacement arrives in August. The arrival of a new attaché will help to advance what should be an improving relationship with the Libyan military and Government. There is currently one operations coordinator in the office. A noncommissioned officer is expected in January 2009.

A Department of Defense team traveled to Tripoli in June to complete negotiations on a nonbinding memorandum of understanding on military cooperation. The draft memorandum outlines the basis for cooperation in principle. The Defense attaché office, at the time of the inspection, was coordinating the first U.S. ship visit in over 40 years, the visit of a U.S. Coast Guard cutter.

As for foreign military sales, there is a current legal prohibition on the sale of lethal materials to Libya. In late July, the Defense Department provided funding for two Libyan officials to attend a U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue training program in Malta; two groups of four Libyan students each will train at the U.S. Department of Defense's Marshall Center in Germany in the fall.

Human Rights

Resources to investigate human rights issues are limited and the Government of Libya is not interested in engaging on these issues. Under quite difficult conditions, both political officers have done excellent reporting on political dissent and detentions. Their attempts to gather information for these reports have met with negative reactions from the Government of Libya. The recent more stringent travel restrictions on the mission may be seen as retaliation for these activities.

Environment, Science, and Technology

The Embassy's objectives are keyed to ensuring implementation of the Libyan commitment to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction programs. Engagement on other environment, science, and technology issues has been limited. A major element of these efforts is the scientific engagement program, designed to facilitate the redirection and retraining of scientists formerly employed in WMD programs. This includes workshops in biological life sciences, mechanical engineering, nuclear medicine, and water desalination.

The U.S.-Libya Science and Technology Dialogue was initiated in 2006, and led to the signing of a formal science and technology agreement during Libyan Foreign Minister's visit to Washington in early 2008. In late July 2008, a chemical weapons team, accompanied by the chargé and a political officer, visited the former chemical weapons facility at Rabta. This facility is to be converted to a research and devel-

opment facility for pharmaceuticals. The mission seeks to develop a broader and deeper engagement in these areas over time. The Embassy's science officer departed post in 2007, leaving the other political officers to divide the portfolio. The newly engaged economic assistant, a petroleum engineer, is taking over much of the responsibility in this area.

Trade Promotion

The first-ever FCS attaché arrived at post in late July 2008 – a testament to the growing interest in both Libya and the United States in forging closer business relationships. Many large U.S. companies in the oil and gas sector are present in Libya, as well as other companies in the infrastructure development sector. Since the removal of UN and U.S. sanctions, U.S. oil and gas companies have invested billions of dollars in Libya. The construction sector is also booming as Libya prepares to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the current regime in September 2009. After the long break in relations, there is a strong desire on the part of Libyan consumers for American products. Major U.S. exports to Libya in 2007 included machinery, vehicles, agricultural products, and medical equipment. The total value of this trade was \$510 million; U.S. exports have doubled in the past two years.

The commercial environment in Libya is difficult. Significant pitfalls include a weak legal system and regulatory environment, lack of transparency in governmental decision making, and a clash of business cultures. Official policies discourage investment in the industrial, agricultural, and service sectors, and high nontariff barriers as well as extremely restrictive visa policies create significant obstacles. While reform measures have caused modest improvements in the commercial environment, this very reform process has led to confusion, with shifting regulations and procedures. Although there have been small steps taken toward privatization, the economy remains highly centralized.

The new FCS officer has been tasked by the Department of Commerce to work with the growing Libyan private sector by sending Libyan trade missions to the United States and organizing U.S. trade missions to Libya, particularly concentrating on small and medium-sized enterprises. Taking into account the fact of the presence and expanding number of large companies in the oil and gas fields, the FCS believes this will create a more congenial and safer environment for smaller U.S. companies to risk entering the Libyan market.

The economic/commercial officer has briefed potential American investors, and hosted numerous visiting delegations from the U.S. Departments of Energy, Commerce, Treasury, and the U.S. Trade Representative's office. The officer conducted

and reported on a number of meetings with official and private sector Libyan interlocutors, and has fulfilled all reporting required by U.S. Department of Commerce. The economic/commercial officer regularly posts an updated Country Commercial Guide and contact data base on the Embassy's website. The inspectors found the Country Commercial Guide to be exemplary. The Embassy sponsored a catalog show for several U.S. companies at the 2007 Tripoli International Fair, at Embassy Cairo's request. The Embassy has also been engaged in facilitating the opening of ongoing negotiations on the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement between Libya and the United States, working with the U.S. Trade Representative's office on this project.

The FCS officer has significant overseas experience. She will hire an LE staff commercial specialist and an administrative assistant for the section. She has completed job descriptions and plans to recruit for these positions shortly. Until the Villas' renovation is complete, the main constraint on her operations will be the issue of office space, as the OBO project for renovation of the Villas site must be completed before the officer can set up a full operation.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

The consular section is well integrated into the MSP goals. These goals center on reestablishing and solidifying relations with Libya. Facilitating travel between the two countries plays an important part in achieving these goals. For example, the section has created a business visa program for U.S. companies that allows member firms to alert the consular section about applicants who require expedited processing at Embassy Tunis. The section's ability to follow up on these applicants has drawn praise from the companies for this effort to speed up the visa process.

The section has moved to the CMR. The consular section will move to the Villas compound when renovations are completed on its designated villa. Until now, the CMR's consular offices lacked a hardline and sufficient public access control. Therefore, the section was closed to the general public and issued only diplomatic and official visas and provided American citizens services. All other visa applicants who require a personal interview must apply at another U.S. embassy; most Libyans apply at Embassy Tunis.

OBO, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, has developed plans to convert a large villa into an office building where the consular section will be collocated with the PD section and the FCS office. The plans call for a hardline with four consular interview windows. OIG's visit to the proposed offices confirmed they will

have ample workspace, an adequately-sized waiting room, and properly configured offices for the consular officer(s) to provide line-of-sight supervision of the interview windows and the visa and passports printers.

The Embassy is working with the OBO timeline for the renovation, which, according to new OBO information, projects completion by March 2009 as well as enabling full operations by May 2009. The renovation will be extensive and includes filling-in an indoor swimming pool and building numerous walls. In the meantime, the Embassy will provide funding, and Embassy Cairo will oversee installation of a hardline and four consular windows at the CMR. There is no certain completion date for that project at the CMR. The subject of public access control has not been resolved.

Consular Management

An experienced officer on his fourth consecutive consular tour manages the section very well. The section also includes two LE staff. One has completed, and the other is completing, on-line consular courses. In addition, the Bureau of Consular Affairs executive office has provided funding for the LE staff to undertake two weeks of training on the visa line at Embassy Cairo. The consular officer is planning for a staff of three fully cross-trained clerks to rotate among the consular functions: nonimmigrant visas, American citizens services, cashiering, biometric collection, and printing. The section is providing more support to the growing number of Americans resident in Libya. The OIG team concurs in the post's request for a third LE staff position.

Visa Processing

Since diplomatic relations were reestablished in 2004, visa issues have been a source of bilateral tension between the United States and Libya. The Embassy believes three problem areas related to visa processing have negatively affected and delayed progress in fully normalizing relations with the Government of Libya.

The first is the perception held by some American oil company employees and all Government of Libya officials in contact with the Embassy that delays in issuing visas to Libyans results in inordinate delays in issuing visas to Americans. The Embassy asserts there are few serious delays in issuing visas to Libyan nationals. The Embassy conducted a survey to gauge the time required for Libyan students to obtain visas during the first quarter of FY 2008. It found the average processing time

for over 90 percent of student visa cases processed at Embassy Tunis was just over six calendar days. Students can either remain in Tunis to await issuance or return a second time to collect the visa.

Similarly, two-thirds of the diplomatic visas issued at Embassy Tripoli were issued in less than six calendar days, and no Libyan diplomatic visa case took more than 30 days to process. Admittedly, there are few applicants whose security advisory opinions take more than 30 days to process. The small number of cases whose advisory opinions still take over two months to process are admittedly a problem. Thanks to the consular officer's and the Bureau of Consular Affairs' help in expediting sensitive cases, the visa system has been reasonably responsive to the needs of Libyan applicants.

The second and far more serious "rough patch" in bilateral relations centers on the mission's inability to issue other than diplomatic or official visas in Tripoli. The Government of Libya has retaliated by limiting visa issuances at its Washington mission to diplomatic and official passport holders and employees of U.S. firms operating in Libya. Private citizens sponsored by Embassy Tripoli, e.g., parents of mission staff or teachers at the American school, can also obtain visas in Washington. All other Americans must obtain their visas in Ottawa or elsewhere. Until Libyan visas are issued in Tripoli, it seems clear this bilateral irritant will not be removed.

The third area of consular discord is the question of visa reciprocity in diplomatic and official visas. The Government of Libya wants the validity of those visas extended to one year, with multiple entries. For its part, the Embassy would like multiple-entry visas for temporary duty personnel making frequent trips to Tripoli. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Embassy that it has begun issuing multiple-entry visas to some American officials. The Embassy is encouraged by this development, but notes that not all American diplomats get multiple entry visas.

The current reciprocity schedule does not provide multiple-entry visas for G visa applicants permanently assigned to the United Nations or other international organizations. OIG agrees with the Embassy's proposals to expand the schedule to include multiple entries for G visas. The consular officer wants to propose a response to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to offer expanded validity and multiple entries for G visas for Libya's UN diplomats as a start.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Tripoli should propose, and the Bureau of Consular Affairs should approve, an amendment to the current visa reciprocity schedule with Libya to provide multiple entries for G-2 and G-4 visas. (Action: Embassy Tripoli, in coordination with CA)

AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVICES

The consular section provides effective support for the welfare of the growing number, currently over 500 registered, of Americans resident in Libya. The warden program includes warden volunteers recruited from the growing expatriate community, mainly oil company employees and their families. The post contacts them by e-mail. Contact with, perhaps, thousands of dual nationals resident in Libya is a challenge, because these people do not want to be identified as American or be in contact with the Embassy. The Embassy, however, reaches them by recording a message at a telephone message center where they can call-in to hear recorded messages in English and Arabic regarding travel alerts and warden notices.

The passport workload consists of a continuing flow of first-time applicants who are the adult children of a group of over 6,000 Libyan students who studied in the United States between 1960 and 1980. The consular officer is requiring extensive documentation from these applicants to confirm birth in the United States. In those cases where the child received a U.S. passport in the United States prior to returning to Libya, extensive photographic evidence is required to match the identify of the adult with the childhood photograph. The consular officer now interviews eight to 10 citizenship claimants each week. They must make an appointment for an interview, and they are escorted onto the CMR grounds and to the consular section. Almost 300 were approved for passports in 2007.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Last year the post prepared a draft memorandum of understanding as a bilateral agreement for handling cases of international parental child abductions. The proposed memorandum, identical to those that led to agreements with the Governments of Egypt and Jordan, was forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over 18 months ago. The Ministry has not responded, despite follow-up by the consular officer.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Although the management section is presently located about 12½ miles from the chancery site, support is appropriate and timely. A knowledgeable management officer is constantly confronted with unusual questions and events. The Embassy's responses to the OIG's workplace and quality of life questionnaire indicate Embassy staff is reasonably well satisfied with administrative and related services.

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	Eligible family members	Locally-employed Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding
State – Diplomatic and consular programs	27	4	54	85	\$ 3,952,380
State-Representation					20,900
State – Public Diplomacy	2		3	5	370,185
Public Diplomacy representation					3,000
State-OBO					5,853,606
State- Diplomatic Security	2	1	71	74	1,764,129
Defense Attaché Office	2		1	3	406,320
Totals	33	5	129	167	\$12,370,520

The OIG team notes the timing of this inspection was not ideal. At the time of the inspection, there were several departures and absences that particularly affected the management section portion of the inspection. For example, the assistant general services officer departed post at the end of his tour of duty after only the first few days of the inspection period. Although the assistant general services officer believed procurement procedures were properly in place, the OIG determined some procurement processes are not appropriate or being correctly implemented. Elsewhere in this report, the inspectors note the overall guidance being provided to this entry-level officer by the chargé; however, it is clear the officer needed more training, and in-depth guidance from his direct supervisors. In another example, the local motor pool supervisor needs assistance and/or training to learn how to prepare his required reports. In addition, one of the three information management office staff began annual leave shortly after the information management inspector arrived and was absent during the rest of the inspection.

The financial management officer/human resource officer was not present during the entire inspection. That subsection of the management office has had some difficulties, and it is difficult to assess the support from the Charleston and Bangkok financial management centers without his opinion or participation. The scores for this subsection are among the lowest compiled from the results of the OIG questionnaire for this Embassy.

EMBASSY OPERATIONS AND LOCATIONS

In May 2008, embassy operations moved from the Corinthia Bab Africa Hotel to two leased compounds with several buildings located in different parts of Tripoli. The cost per quarter for occupying four floors of the hotel was approximately \$1.7 million. The cost for moving out of the hotel and restoring the hotel rooms to normal use after being used as offices was about \$130,575. Embassy operations at the hotel evolved from February 2004 to May 2008, starting with two rooms, then three, and quickly ramping up to 40 rooms on four floors.

Villas Compound

The main chancery is now located at a complex of eight villas and three vacant lots, known as the Villas compound. One villa will house the consular, FCS, and PD sections, and three others will house the management office and its subsections. Another villa will house the executive office, political/economic section, regional security office, and the Defense attaché office. The completion of the consular, FCS, and PD building, and the one which will house the executive office and others, is required to respond to the government of Libya's interest in having nonimmigrant visas issued in Tripoli, not Tunis where Libyan citizens now go. Although there is a consular section at the CMR, visitors have been limited because there is no hardline and inadequate public pedestrian access control. The slip in the construction schedule has resulted in plans to improve public access control at the CMR and to install a hardline and consular windows within the consular section at the CMR. This project will use Embassy-provided funding, and Embassy Cairo's facilities management staff will oversee the project. Establishing adequate public access control and a hardline at the CMR is expected to expedite the issuing of visas in Tripoli.

To provide timely motor pool services, there are elements of the motor pool now stationed at the Villas compound in a to-be-renovated building. Originally, the Embassy considered subcontracting for renovations directly on the local economy. The apparent lack of construction expertise that meets American standards and the

size of the project resulted in a plan that the OBO will implement. OBO is expected to provide a site manager for the project. According to new information from OBO, the regional procurement and support office at Frankfurt will conduct a prebid conference in Tripoli in August 2008, and ultimately award a construction contract. The cost for the renovations is estimated at about \$13.6 million

OBO anticipates the renovations will be complete by June 2009. However, potential unanticipated delays related to importing materials, hiring subcontractors, not to mention a major road construction project on the main road outside the Villas compound, lead the OIG team to believe the timeline may be ambitious and optimistic.

Chief of Mission Residence

The building originally leased for a CMR now serves as the administrative offices, housing not only most of the administrative subfunctions but also the health unit and the community liaison office coordinator's desk and library. There is no privacy for the community liaison office coordinator, and the management officer shares an office with the assistant RSO. Several out buildings accommodate the local guard force, maintenance shops, motor pool parking, and the consular section.

The Embassy is authorized to search for land for a new embassy compound. The current plans suggest that construction would begin in 2011, and a new compound would be ready in 2014. A rightsizing review is scheduled for 2009. Consequently, there is no estimate available at this time regarding the size of the new chancery.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A first-tour officer performs the human resources and financial management role. The officer had not performed these roles elsewhere in the Department. The OIG team was unable to discuss shortcomings or counsel him because he was on family leave during the entire inspection. Based on extensive discussions with LE staff, OIG did not find evidence of leadership within the section.

The OIG team discussed this matter with the management officer and suggested the management officer schedule additional regular counseling sessions to assist in developing the officer. After a year in the position, however, the officer is no longer new to the job and should have learned how to execute the required duties.

Human Resources

The human resource section, staffed by two LE staff and an eligible family member, struggles to provide service. The current LE staff is trained but lacks familiarity and knowledge of human resource management operations in an embassy setting. The officer has not provided needed guidance. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation for one of the LE staff to visit a neighboring embassy to observe the role of human resources in an established embassy.

In the interests of LE staff development, the more senior of the two LE staff should take supervisory training. The eligible family member employee is scheduled for training in the fall. The Embassy will be well-served when she completes this training. The eligible family member provides some leadership for the section and actively works to reduce LE staff differences, sometimes without the officer's guidance. For example, the section does not have a consistent policy regarding who should sign outgoing cables. Therefore, cable preparation is accompanied by disagreements. The OIG informally recommended that the section prepare and implement a policy on cable preparation addressing signature requirements.

Position Descriptions

Temporary duty assistance from American officers and local staff from other embassies helped to keep the section afloat after curtailments and related staffing gaps. The number of American officers working on these issues, and the current officer's lack of experience, has led the Embassy's LE staff to question the accuracy of their position descriptions and the subsequent computer-aided job evaluation grades and salaries. The LE staff executive committee echoed these concerns during its meeting with the OIG team and said that American officers ignored requests for review of position descriptions. Assuring LE staff that position descriptions and related grades and salaries are correct is essential to maintaining good morale, productivity, and ensuring staff retention.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Tripoli, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should request the services of an experienced human resource officer to review all locally employed staff position descriptions and use the computer-aided job evaluation application to grade the new position descriptions, as needed. (Action: Embassy Tripoli, in coordination with NEA and DGHR)

Medical Insurance

Embassy Tripoli is self-insured for the medical requirements and benefits it provides for LE staff. This means the Embassy funds and manages the program, guaranteeing up to \$8,000 annually for each employee and a limited number of family members. The plan does not cover medical needs outside of Libya unless a local physician specifies that the care is not available locally. In no instance does it cover the travel costs. LE staff and others working and living in Libya feel that local care is inadequate, but according to them, no Libyan doctor will specify this in writing. Many LE staff travel overseas or to Tunisia for medical care whether or not local physicians certify the lack of acceptable health care.

According to staff, there are several medical insurance companies serving Libya that could more economically and more fully cover insurance needs. It is not clear that the comparators looked at these plans. In addition, there has not been any recent investigations to determine if an insurance plan is available as a viable alternative to the self-insurance program the embassy is using. The human resource staff spends time on the process of reimbursing staff for medical bills.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Tripoli, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should determine the local options for a medical insurance policy contract, perform a comparator survey, and solicit for and award a medical insurance contract. (Action: Embassy Tripoli, in coordination with DGHR)

Financial Management

The financial management section's three LE staff attended off-site training for budgeting, voucher processing, and cashiering conducted by Bangkok and Charleston Financial Service Center trainers. The service centers are a key component of the financial section. Their post support units obligate funds and certify vouchers for Embassy Tripoli. Both the Bangkok and Charleston centers conduct these operations, with the Bangkok center heavily involved in obligations and voucher processing while the Charleston center maintains responsibility for overall operations.

The Embassy pays \$68,000 annually for post support unit services. The financial management officer completes monthly verifications of the Class B cashier's operations; however, there is little evidence the officer is involved in financial decisions. Embassy Tripoli expects to implement its first Interagency Cooperative Administra-

tive Support Services budget on October 1, 2008. The officer will need to assume a leadership role to ensure his staff meets performance standards in support of the service provider.

Each of the LE staff members in the subsection has had the basic financial courses but should attend the advanced courses for each specialty when the courses are next available. More training is essential to ensure the LE staff is fully cognizant of the requirements for these technical positions and has a complete understanding of the role of finance and how it fits into Embassy operations. The OIG team informally recommended that the financial assistant and the voucher examiner visit a neighboring Embassy to work with and observe how financial management is conducted in an established Embassy.

GENERAL SERVICES OFFICE

The supervisory general services officer has responsibility for the complete general services portfolio, because the assistant general services officer departed Embassy Tripoli after the first week of the OIG inspection. A replacement is not expected before January 2009, and there are concerns there may not be a bidder on the position. In this new, very busy, and growing Embassy, the absence of a second general services officer may be a problem. OIG discussed the value of recruiting and hiring local staff to fulfill some of the assistant general service officer tasks and provide long-term continuity. The embassy agreed to look into the prospect. The OIG notes that local staff could effectively save the U.S. Government more than \$400,000, the minimum cost for a Foreign Service officer overseas.

Motor Pool

The motor pool operates effectively despite being split between two locations. There are 12 motor pool vehicles with 11 drivers. There is also a shuttle to bring LE staff from the Villas compound to the CMR, because there is no other public transportation available. Other Embassy vehicles are dedicated to the chargé, the RSOs, maintenance, warehouse, etc. Five new vehicles and a minibus have arrived at post and will be put into service when the registration process is completed.

Housing and Maintenance

Housing in Tripoli is lovely and spacious. It is difficult to find small residences, because in the Libyan culture male children usually live together with their parents and siblings even after marriage. Hence, houses are large, often with two kitchens. The leasing agent, originally hired from the British Embassy, is well-acquainted with local realtors and highly regarded by landlords.

Wiring and other electrical requirements do not meet American standards and cannot support American-style appliances. Consequently, the need to rewire houses after the initial leasing often delays make-ready activities. The delays in some maintenance activities have been overcome by hiring additional LE staff and installing additional OpenNet terminals to enable American staff to contact maintenance directly.

The warehouses are distant from the maintenance activities located at the CMR. Consequently, the management officer has endorsed the maintenance supervisor's request to store some frequently-needed supplies at the CMR. The OIG team agrees this plan is logical and practical. The OIG also agrees with the maintenance supervisor that having easy access to parts inventories would be useful.

The OIG team also noted the urgency attached to scheduling and completing of make-ready efforts at residences when there is often less than one week between departing and arriving American staff.

Procurement

While procurement has been proceeding in a satisfactory manner, the OIG team's review of randomly-selected purchase orders revealed a need to use proper obligating documents, including blanket purchase agreements, for recurring needs. For example, two purchase orders for incoming and outgoing shipments were amended multiple times to add funds. A purchase order should be used for a single purchase, not multiple purchases or recurring requirements. In these instances, there was no negotiation or understanding regarding standard prices for weight, wrapping materials, cartons, etc. The LE staff indicated they were told not to use blanket purchase agreements which could serve in these cases, i.e., to meet recurring needs. Without the former assistant general services officer to question, it was unclear why no purchase agreements or contracts were used.

Two of the three procurement staff had commercial acquisition and contract administration training at Embassy Cairo. Embassy Cairo and Embassy Tunis staff have been helpful in the past but are not assigned regional support duties. The LE staff agreed that additional training and guidance would be quite beneficial now

that they have been implementing the basics they learned. The possibility of post's establishing a local guard contract also leads the inspectors to suggest there is a need for more training. The OIG team left an informal recommendation that Embassy Tripoli request further training for its procurement staff from a neighboring embassy or ask for a special acquisition visit.

Travel

One LE staff member is responsible for making travel arrangements. A travel agency not on a contract with the Embassy buys the airline tickets. Reimbursements require substantial cash outlays. Based on local impediments and certain ticketing restrictions a contract is not currently possible.

Facilities Management

The senior general services officer is the Embassy's designated safety and health officer. Although the Embassy has an occupational safety, health, and environmental management committee, it has not been meeting semi-annually.

Given that the Embassy has just moved from the hotel to separate facilities, and that the Villas renovation has not begun, it has been difficult to devote useful attention to all aspects of occupational safety. Individuals from OBO's Office of Fire Safety told the OIG they plan to visit Embassy Tripoli in January 2009 unless an earlier visit is necessary. OIG agrees a January visit is appropriate.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY

Embassy Tripoli operates an adequate information management program. The information management officer effectively manages the Embassy's information management and security requirements. The OIG team assessed standard operating procedures and systems documentation and assessed all of the Embassy's locations. The Embassy's information technology security posture is adequate.

The Embassy's information technology staff includes two direct-hire American employees and one eligible family member who provide unclassified and classified systems support for approximately 86 workstations, 10 servers, and 150 user accounts at the Villas complex and the CMR. Two LE staff provide unclassified

systems and mobile telephone support. One LE staff member assists in the mailroom, and another is the receptionist at the CMR. There is no connectivity at the warehouses.

In April and May of 2008, when the Embassy moved out of the hotel location, Embassy staff and information systems were divided between the Villas compound and the CMR. This move required installing a temporary infrastructure for OpenNet at both locations and establishing two external connections to the internet for virtual private networks back to Washington, DC. The extra workload to support these two locations continues, and the small staff has met it effectively.

OBO has developed a plan to consolidate the two locations at the Villas complex and to install new wiring and a telephone switch.

Wiring Infrastructure

Temporary wiring at the Villas and the CMR compounds is strung without protective covering. The temporary infrastructure was initiated until a more permanent solution is finalized. The absence of a protective covering leaves the wiring vulnerable to damage from daily activity inside the compounds' buildings. The cabling is also more accessible to unauthorized use. The OIG team found that the computer wiring needs greater protection to ensure reliability and security. The 5 FAH 9 H-221 provides standards for cabling run in conduits or raceways to protect it from damage, to help deter unauthorized access, and to facilitate easy installation or removal.

Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Tripoli, should replace the temporary wiring infrastructure during the Villas compound renovation. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Tripoli)

Server Room Location

OBO, in conjunction with Embassy Tripoli, has developed a plan to locate the information systems center (ISC) in the basement of a villa. In the initial consultations, post management determined this would be the best place for the ISC. According to 12 FAM 629.4-2 b: "...the general services officer and the senior information management officer, if abroad, must locate automated information systems processing facilities above ground and not beneath areas containing water pipes or subject to water penetration from upper floors, when possible." Locating the ISC in the lower level of a villa is not appropriate, and water penetration could cause a denial of service.

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Tripoli, should locate the information systems center above ground level during the Villas compound renovation. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Tripoli)

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Recommendation 6:

QUALITY OF LIFE

Morale is improving now that staff is no longer living in the hotel but in good leased housing, and the Embassy has obtained two rest and recuperation trips annually. The community has made attempts to overcome the difficulties in not having a club or recreational site by visiting each other's housing for movie nights, etc. Recreational facilities are limited, but beautiful beaches are less than an hour away, and ancient archeological sites are worth visiting. A hotel fitness and swim club is available, but most staff do not want to pay the fees for this privilege. Some believe traffic is a problem because the 12 ½-mile distance between embassy sites, which normally is a 20-minute drive but can stretch considerably during rush hour, presents frustrating delays. The American staff is pleased with the health unit, the school, and the community liaison office coordinator's services.

HEALTH UNIT

An experienced Foreign Service health practitioner provides health care from one room at the CMR. Examination space is limited, and some storage is located in several cabinets located outside of the health unit. The Villas renovation plan incorporates adequate space for an office, examination room, and storage for the health unit.

The recently updated Post Capability Database annual report notes that the Al Afia Hospital, the facility designated for medical emergencies, is located about 45 minutes from embassy locations and is not equipped with an ambulance.

The health practitioner told the OIG the quality of Libyan health care is improving and that two hospitals, one public and one recently privatized, are seeking international accreditation. This lengthy process may take up to five years to complete. Even so, the accreditation may require more English-speaking nurses, a challenge as few nurses in Libya speak English now.

Spousal employment is an important factor in maintaining positive morale at this embassy. New positions for eligible family members have been created, and there may now be more positions than spouses wanting to work. There is no bilateral work agreement with the Government of Libya. The Embassy has made several attempts to address this issue with the Libyan Government, but without success to date.



The Chief of Mission 2007 statement of assurance of management controls states the Embassy's actions, taken as a whole, provide reasonable assurance that control objectives are in place. The response to the Department's Internal Control Directive (2 FAM 020) attested to the adequacy of internal controls, assured personal property assets were inventoried, reconciled, and reported, and that procedures for the assignment of residential properties were in place. In addition, required submissions for OBO waivers and the real property application submission were timely and accurate.

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Time and Attendance

The human resources section is currently responsible for time and attendance. According to 4 FAM 511 c. supervisors and time keepers are critical to implementing payroll processes and the accuracy of pay and leave computations. Having only one timekeeper located in the human resources office at the CMR is not sufficient to assure correct and accurate time and attendance operations for the Villas compound and other offices at the CMR.

The OIG team discussed the need for the Embassy to designate timekeepers in each section who would have responsibility for verifying time and attendance submissions and sending the results to the human resources timekeeper to forward to the financial services center for processing. The management officer concurred with this suggestion, and was working to implement new timekeeping procedures during the inspection. The OIG team informally recommended the Embassy establish and implement a post policy for timekeeping.

Consular Affairs

The regional consular officer visited the Embassy just prior to the inspection (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2) The OIG team's review of more than a dozen recommendations made by the regional consular officer indicated compliance was achieved in all areas.

INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The PD office has an annual calendar document, a travel plan, and a representational plan.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Tripoli should combine the annual calendar document, the travel plan, and the representational plan into a single overall public diplomacy operational plan.

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC

The embassy's reporting plan is a retrospective of completed reporting and does not set out specific reporting goals for the future.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Tripoli should develop a reporting plan that addresses future goals that can be accomplished within a reasonable timeframe.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The junior human resource assistant has completed formal training but has not observed how the human resource section operates in an established embassy.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Tripoli should send the human resource assistant to visit an established embassy in the region to observe the functions of human resources.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Chargé d’Affaires, *a.i.* J. Christopher Stevens 06/07

Chiefs of Sections:

Administrative	Robyn Hooker	08/07
Consular	Gregory Segas	08/07
Political/Economic	John Godfrey	06/07
Public Affairs	Jennifer Hall-Godfrey	06/07
Regional Security	James Eisenhut	07/07

Other Agencies:

Foreign Commercial Service	Diane L. Jones	08/08
Defense Attaché Office	Kim DeYoung	06/08

ABBREVIATIONS

CMR	Chief of mission residence
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DS	Bureau of Diplomatic Security
FCS	Foreign Commercial Service
ISC	Information systems center
LE	Locally employed
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	Public affairs officer
PD	Public diplomacy
RSO	Regional security officer
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction

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