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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Praia,
Cape Verde

Report Number ISP-I-09-41A, June 2009

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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 Council of the Inspectors General 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 instances 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.



**United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors**

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its responsibility to promote effective management, accountability and positive change in the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office, post, or function under review. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

The recommendations therein have been developed on the basis of the best knowledge available to the OIG and, as appropriate, have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that these recommendations will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations.

I express my appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. W. Geisel".

Harold W. Geisel
Acting Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- Embassy Praia works out of an inadequate and unsafe office building with no room for staff expansion.
- Notwithstanding its limitations, the Embassy is functioning very well by focusing on a narrow set of goals and by closely integrating its small American staff and competent locally employed (LE) staff into its work.
- The Embassy's Ambassador and deputy chief of mission (DCM) are providing strong, focused, and caring leadership to the mission.
- The Embassy is making progress in its first goal to increase cooperation with the Cape Verdean Government to reduce illegal trafficking of narcotics and people.
- The Embassy needs to weigh carefully any proposals to increase staff against its limitations in space, funding, and management capacity.
- Some staff are stretched too thin, particularly the combined deputy chief of mission/management officer position. The Embassy can, and should, make a strong argument for the addition of a management officer position.
- The Embassy successfully accomplishes its overriding goal of safeguarding American citizens, as well as providing other consular services to large American-Cape Verdean communities both in Cape Verde and the United States.
- Security programs require more oversight.
- Morale among American and most LE staff is good.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between January 21 and February 6, 2009, and in Praia, Cape Verde, between March 12 and 21, 2009.

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CONTEXT

The Republic of Cape Verde is an Atlantic island nation located approximately 300 miles west of Senegal, off Africa's west coast. With a current population of

450,000 spread over nine islands comparable in total land size to Rhode Island, Cape Verde was a Portuguese colony from the 15th century until it gained independence in 1975. Toward the end of the 18th century, American whaling vessels from New England began calling on Cape Verde for trade, water, and crew, and from these willing crews came the first of many Cape Verdeans who immigrated to the United States. Driven by periodic, severe droughts, that migration has continued, and today there are an estimated 500,000 people of Cape Verdean descent living in the United States. In 2008, approximately 2,500 Cape Verdeans received

immigrant visas from Embassy Praia for relocation to the United States. There are approximately 5,000 American citizens permanently residing in Cape Verde, and, during the summer months, another 7,000 travel to visit.



With the adoption of a constitution in 1992, Cape Verde made the transition to a stable, multiparty democracy with one of the best governance and human rights records in Africa. Cape Verdeans directly elect their president, who is chief of state, as well as members of the national parliament. The last elections in May 2008 drew 78 percent of the electorate. There are no political prisoners, freedom of religion is respected, and there is an active media and internationally recognized freedom of expression. In 2007, Cape Verde obtained special partnership status with the European Union and in 2008 membership in the World Trade Organization.

Cape Verde has been attempting to revitalize and privatize its economy since 1991 but faces enormous challenges. Poor in natural resources, prone to severe drought, and with little arable land, the country is heavily dependent on imports, including over 90 percent of its food and all petroleum products. The economy is service-oriented, with commerce, maritime and air transport, tourism, and public services accounting for more than 70 percent of gross domestic product. Cape Verde

has high levels of poverty and unemployment, and continues to depend heavily on remittances from emigrants working overseas and on direct assistance, primarily from Portugal, the European Union, the United States, and increasingly from China.

The bilateral relationship between the United States and Cape Verde is longstanding and strong. The dominant interest of the U.S. Embassy in Cape Verde is the protection of the large number of American citizens in the country and the provision of consular services. The U.S. Government's principal policy goals are to decrease illegal trafficking, with emphasis on maritime security; to increase economic development, with emphasis on the transportation sector; and to strengthen democracy through investment in education. Over the past five years, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) committed \$110 million to assist in a number of key areas for economic growth. Cape Verde is strategically located on one of the main maritime and aerial routes for the transshipment of narcotics from South America to Europe and the United States. Although the total land mass of Cape Verde is relatively small, the country's territorial waters are enormous, encompassing almost 232,000 square miles; increasing attention and resources are directed to help Cape Verde combat that threat.

Embassy Praia is staffed by five American Department direct-hire employees and 78 LE staff. In addition, the MCC staffs one direct-hire position and four LE staff, and the Peace Corps staffs two direct-hire positions, three LE staff, and 53 volunteers throughout Cape Verde.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Ambassador and DCM shaped Embassy Praia's Mission Strategic Plan (MSP), in coordination with American and senior LE staff, to focus on reducing illegal trafficking by strengthening security and the rule of law, with particular emphasis on maritime security; increasing economic development, with special focus on the transportation sector; and strengthening democracy, principally through investment in education, in addition to its overriding goal of protecting and safeguarding the welfare of American citizens. The MSP correctly prioritizes American citizen services. Visa operations are also important for protecting U.S. borders and their resource implications, as well as in relating to the large American-Cape Verdean communities in both countries. The Ambassador and DCM successfully engaged the very small and hard working American staff and the competent Cape Verdean staff to achieve these objectives through weekly country team and weekly senior staff meetings, which included senior LE staff. The Ambassador and the DCM often work directly with the military, security, political, economic, and public diplomacy (PD) LE staff to good effect. The close collaboration among senior American and LE staff positively affects the morale of those engaged in implementing the shared goals, although some American and LE staff are stretched and spread too thin.

The Ambassador provides strong leadership to the Embassy and has moved quickly to fulfill the mission's representational responsibilities in this far-flung archipelago. She also works assiduously to promote morale among American and LE staff with frequent town hall meetings, social events, and regular interaction with all the staff. The DCM spends the largest portion of his time on Embassy management and on promoting the Embassy's first goal of reducing illegal trafficking. He works closely with the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the Cape Verdean Government and security forces, and senior LE staff to promote cooperative engagement and training to improve Cape Verde's capacity to reduce illegal trafficking. The DCM's responsibilities as management officer, post security officer, and coordinator of U.S. engagement on improving maritime security, stretch him very thin. This is particularly true, as U.S. engagement with Cape Verde has been increasing through U.S. ship visits, training activities, and assistance to Cape Verde's efforts to gather, analyze, and make effective use of information on illegal trafficking of narcotics and other goods, and people.

PROGRAMS AND INTERAGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

The Ambassador and DCM have good relationships with the two other U.S. agencies in the embassy, the MCC and the Peace Corps, which function with small U.S. direct-hire presence and 53 Peace Corps volunteers. There are no plans to increase the number of U.S. direct hires. The MCC and the Peace Corps are engaged in promoting two principal U.S. goals of economic development and strengthening of democracy through education. The Ambassador and the DCM coordinate well and support the Peace Corps and the MCC, ensuring that their programs are appropriately coordinated with other elements of Embassy activity. In addition, the Ambassador has encouraged the U.S. African Development Foundation to increase, substantially, its microfinance, business development, vocational training, and transportation improvement projects, which it carries out without any U.S. direct-hire staff.

The Ambassador and DCM maintain excellent relations as well with many other agencies that visit Cape Verde on an occasional basis, particularly those that contribute to the achievement of the goal of reducing illegal trafficking in Cape Verde, including AFRICOM, the Department of Homeland Security, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Ambassador and DCM seek and sometimes succeed in having those agencies develop continuing engagements in Cape Verde, provide funding for Embassy travel to remote island sites, and assign temporary duty (TDY) personnel and contractors to assist with installation and implementation issues. This is important in AFRICOM's training and equipping of the Government of Cape Verde to monitor and reduce illegal trafficking through its waters and ports, and for receiving ship visits, which often have a training function. The Executive Office is straightforward in advising AFRICOM and others of the need to charge and collect International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) costs from all agencies that benefit from ICASS services, including personnel assigned on a long-term temporary assignment. This is very important in Praia's small embassy.

The Ambassador and the DCM are sensitive to the need for any U.S. agency proposing a presence in Praia or a change in staffing to apply through the National Security Decision Directive 38 process in which administrative, security, and other factors are weighed carefully by the Department and the Embassy prior to approval of any request. Embassy Praia must factor space constraints in its current overcrowded chancery into any decision on increased staffing.

AFRICOM is considering proposing placement of a U.S. Coast Guard attaché in Praia, but no formal proposal has been made. The Ambassador and the DCM believe that the addition of such a position can help advance the first U.S. goal of

reducing illegal trafficking and also lessen the programming burden that currently falls on the DCM and the Embassy's LE specialist for security assistance and military-to-military coordination. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) team believes that the Department and the Embassy must approach any proposed staff increase with caution because of overcrowded working conditions, and because the increased engagement likely to flow from a U.S. Coast Guard presence will impose excessive management burdens on Embassy staff.

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The Embassy does a good job of managing the programs it currently oversees, notwithstanding its short staffing, difficult working conditions, and geographical challenges. However, the Embassy does not have the capacity to manage new programs without giving very careful consideration to the staffing, funding, and space constraints involved.

Public Diplomacy

The Ambassador and the DCM speak excellent Portuguese. The Ambassador receives frequent and positive coverage in the Cape Verdean press and electronic media underlining the close relations between the United States and Cape Verde, and the two countries' close cooperation on illegal trafficking, economic development and transportation, and democratic development and education.

Management

The DCM has an excellent understanding of management procedures, and plays a critical role in maintaining essential management operations. However, his other duties described above do not allow him enough time to carry out all the strategic planning, staff development, reorganization, and other measures that he believes are necessary to improve the quality of administrative operations. Only the assignment of a management officer with post security officer responsibilities would give the Embassy the depth to move beyond the essential to the necessary management

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Cape Verde's location at the crossroads of three continents, astride a major narcotics transit zone, presents Embassy Praia with program and reporting challenges that a mission of this size in a politically stable country would not normally face. Given the very sparse resources available for political and economic reporting, the Embassy is doing an admirable job of keeping Washington consumers informed.

Political

The political section consists of one part-time American direct-hire position and one experienced LE assistant. In addition to running the political section, the American officer supervises the PD section and works in the consular section. The American officer and LE staff assistant meet each morning to coordinate the day's calendar and meet at least once a week with the DCM to discuss the reporting plan.

With the guidance and hands-on engagement of the Ambassador and DCM, last year the section submitted eight congressionally mandated reports, including those on human rights, money laundering and trafficking, child labor, international narcotics control strategy, and trade. The Embassy produced several reports in recent months on the priority MSP goal of reducing illegal trafficking, which describe Cape Verdean efforts to control narcotics transshipments and money laundering. Recent reporting also focuses on Cape Verdean judicial reform efforts and internal political dynamics.

Economic

The economic section consists of only one LE staff assistant. The political LE staff assistant and the economic LE staff assistant work closely together and back each other up. The Ambassador and DCM provide guidance to the LE assistant on reporting priorities, contact work, and advocacy. The LE assistant has prepared a number of reports in recent months on Cape Verdean economic reform and trade

liberalization that led to World Trade Organization membership in 2008. Other topics include developments in maritime and aviation issues, off-shore banking, tourism, and weather data affecting the economy.

There is no Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) presence in Cape Verde, but the Embassy works closely with the Foreign Commercial Service office in Dakar, and the LE assistant has visited Dakar for consultations. Although the office in Dakar does not have funding to travel to Cape Verde, they provide valuable support through direct e-mail contact with the LE staff assistant as Embassy Praia attempts to move more aggressively into the area of trade development. During FY 2008, the Embassy received funding to lead a Cape Verdean delegation to a major U.S. construction trade fair. The program has already resulted in \$8 million in U.S. export sales to Cape Verde. The Ambassador, DCM, and LE staff assistant maintain close contact with the small, but growing, number of American investors in Cape Verde.

Foreign Assistance

The U.S. foreign assistance portfolio in Cape Verde is modest but growing. Embassy Praia does not have a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) presence, but within the process overseen by the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance during FY 2008, Cape Verde was allocated \$500,000 for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement programs, and \$100,000 for International Military Education and Training. Both programs focus on improving Cape Verde's capacity to deter and investigate trafficking in narcotics through training of Cape Verde military and law enforcement personnel. The primary implementing elements for these programs are the Department of Defense, the Department of Treasury, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Although all of these programs are funded through INL to the implementing agency, they still require close coordination with Embassy Praia. The DCM and one LE staff assistant must provide the majority of coordination required between the Embassy, INL, the U.S. program implementing agencies, and participating Cape Verdean organizations. With increased focus on reducing the flow of narcotics through Cape Verdean waters, there is potential for significant increases in these programs during the coming years. Such increases will add to the workload of the Embassy's already overburdened staff.

The Leahy amendment and policies developed to implement the amendment prohibit the use of foreign assistance funds to assist foreign security forces where there is credible evidence such forces have committed gross human rights violations. The Leahy vetting process determines whether there is such evidence prior to

providing assistance. Department offices expressed satisfaction with the Embassy's Leahy vetting practices. Embassy Praia manages an active and effective Leahy vetting program.

The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard units attached to AFRICOM in Stuttgart, Germany, provide onboard training for Cape Verdean Coast Guard units through joint exercises. U.S. ship visits usually include community service projects, which the Embassy helps coordinate. Some joint training exercises have included the actual interdiction of illicit narcotic shipments, with the Cape Verdean forces taking the lead.

The MCC signed a five-year, \$110 million compact with the Government of Cape Verde in 2005. The compact includes road and port infrastructure improvement, agricultural and water supply projects, and financial sector reform. All programs are managed by the MCC American direct-hire director and his staff from an office in Praia. MCC participates in preparation of the Embassy MSP, and coordinates closely with the Ambassador and DCM on implementation of the compact.

The U.S. African Development Foundation began funding projects in Cape Verde in 1993 and by the end of FY 2007 had provided \$4.88 million in funding for 35 projects. Total funding during the past two years was approximately \$800,000. The U.S. African Development Foundation is funded by direct appropriation and manages its staff and projects without embassy support. However, the Embassy has developed a collaborative relationship with the U.S. African Development Foundation in recent months, specifically in the area of project nominations.

Peace Corps has maintained operations in Cape Verde since 1988 and currently has 53 volunteers on seven of Cape Verde's nine islands working in two principal program areas—community development, and English teaching and teacher training. The country mission staff includes an American direct-hire country director, one direct-hire program director, three LE staff employees, and 13 personal services contract employees. The country director works closely with the Embassy to coordinate Peace Corps programs, where possible, with other Embassy program efforts in Cape Verde. Collaboration in the area of English teaching is particularly effective.

Embassy Praia also manages a small Special Self-Help grants fund, which was \$20,000 in FY 2008. The PD LE staff assistant coordinates the nomination process within the embassy and submits grant nominations to the USAID office in Accra for final approval and funding. The LE staff assistant provides project oversight and prepares the final reports. USAID Accra makes one trip a year to Cape Verde to perform a formal review of grant performance.

Visit Support

Embassy Praia hosts a significant number of visits by TDY personnel from various agencies, visits by U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships, and occasional congressional delegations, all of which draw heavily on the very limited staff resources. During FY 2008, the Embassy supported ten naval ship visits and three Congressional delegations. It also supported visits by 348 individuals from a variety of agencies, including 89 from the Department of Homeland Security, 81 from the Department of Defense, and 67 from the Department. The first half of FY 2009 shows a significant increase in TDY travel to Cape Verde, more than double the number during the same period the previous year.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Embassy Praia's PD effort is directed by one American part-time public affairs officer whose responsibilities are split between consular services, political affairs, and PD. The officer is assisted by one experienced LE staff assistant, who also serves as the Special Self-Help small grant coordinator. The American officer is consular core, and received no PD training before arriving in Praia. Nevertheless, she has made every effort to learn on the job, works well with her LE assistant, and is doing an excellent job in providing direction to the Embassy's growing PD effort.

As noted earlier in this report, the Ambassador and DCM are both active in PD. Both use their excellent Portuguese language skills in television interviews and discussions with the print media. The PD staff participate in all country team meetings and are actively involved in the MSP process. The PD staff maintains a work plan that is tied to specific MSP goals. Because the Embassy is classified by the Bureau of African Affairs (AF) as "public diplomacy-light," it does not receive an annual allotment for its PD. Nevertheless, it does receive funding for specific programs when available, and is developing a number of options to more effectively reach target audiences. The PD staff in Praia has had some success in developing programs for speakers sponsored by other embassies in the region, particularly by Accra and Dakar. They have also requested and received grants during the past two years totaling \$65,000 from the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation to assist in the renovation of Cape Verde's archeological museum, which reopened in October 2008. During FY 2008, the embassy sent two Cape Verdean participants to the United States under the International Visitor Leadership Program. The American officer is currently working with the Ambassador and DCM to develop a new English and Portuguese language embassy Internet website using the Department's content

management system. The LE assistant prepares a monthly PD highlight report that is shared with State Department elements by e-mail.

In recent years, there has been a growing demand within the Cape Verdean student community for reliable information about university study in the United States. The regional educational advising officer in Accra visited Praia in January 2008, conducted a survey, and recommended that the Embassy take steps to establish an educational advising program. The regional officer provided the PD LE assistant training in educational advising, and supplied her with a collection of reference books and CDs. The LE assistant began providing educational advising services out of her small office in the embassy and word spread. As more and more individual students sought advising services, the LE assistant found that she had less time to perform her other functions. Moreover, because the Embassy offices do not provide Internet service to the public, much of the information needed by students during the advising sessions is not accessible. The Embassy reviewed this program and is seeking advice from the regional advisor on how to proceed.

The Embassy's educational advising initiative identified a number of highly qualified undergraduate and graduate students who may be competitive for U.S. government-funded study opportunities such as the Fulbright program. The Embassy has not participated in these programs in the past, and is not familiar with application procedures, but would benefit from discussing current application procedures for these programs with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The OIG team made an informal recommendation.

In 2005, the Embassy established a small American Corner in collaboration with the Mosteiros city administration on the island of Fogo. The Embassy provides a small collection of books, some used computers, audio visual equipment, and other materials, and the city administration provides space, personnel, and an Internet connection. The facility serves approximately 40 people a day and the city seems to be upholding its side of the memorandum of understanding. Although the regional information resource officer visited Cape Verde and inspected the facility in June 2008, because of limited funding and workload, visits by Embassy personnel are rare. The regional information resource officer made several recommendations regarding the facility in Mosteiros; chief among them was that the Embassy should place its highest priority on developing its American program presence in the capital city of Praia. The OIG team agrees with this recommendation. The Embassy's largest and most important audience is in Praia, yet there is no facility, including the chancery itself, where the embassy can effectively engage that audience.

University of Cape Verde Partnership

In November 2007, Embassy Praia and the University of Cape Verde (UCV) signed a protocol to work together in a number of areas. Of immediate interest to UCV is the development of a quality English language program in its journalism, business administration, and medical departments. The Embassy obtained Department funding for an English Teaching Fellow who will work with UCV for several months in 2009 on curriculum development and teacher training. The Embassy also worked with UCV to establish a number of linkages with two universities in Massachusetts. UCV is enthusiastic about expanding its relationship with the Embassy, and the OIG team believes that the Embassy should work with UCV to develop two options. The Embassy's attempt to establish educational advising services for Cape Verdean students cannot be effectively developed by relying on the single PD LE assistant to provide those services in cramped office space with no public Internet access. The OIG team believes that the Embassy should discuss with UCV the development of an American educational advising capacity within the university itself, using university staff who could receive training from the regional educational advising officer and ongoing guidance from the Embassy's PD LE assistant. The OIG team also believes that discussions with UCV could also lead to the eventual establishment of an American Corner or similar program presence at the university. The OIG team made an informal recommendation.

CONSULAR OPERATIONS

Overview

According to Embassy Praia's FY 2011 MSP, protecting American citizens is the Embassy's prime consular objective. Visa functions make up the bulk of the consular section's work. The chief consular officer's clear managerial oversight and professional knowledge, coupled with enthusiastic and proficient staff performance, yield first-rate, timely service. The section maintains effective relationships with other embassy units, and with the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA). When the OIG team visited Praia, American citizens could request services on a walk-in basis, although specific office hours exist for them. People seeking visa services waited one to three days for an appointment; however, the section accepted emergency visa requests using liberal criteria. Designing, securing funds for, and implementing an outreach, travel, representation, and reporting plan targeting key individuals and sites within

the district would expand the section's potential and productivity. In addition to systematizing current consular efforts, this would enhance the section's nonmandatory reporting and expand the Embassy's scope. The OIG team made an informal recommendation.

The consular section consists of one full time American officer, a one-third time vice consul, and four LE staff assistants. The chief consular officer began to revise LE staff position descriptions in early 2009. The OIG team confirmed that position description modifications appear warranted and made an informal recommendation.

A regional consular officer based in Frankfurt, Germany, visits Praia about once a year to provide advice and staff training. Consular employees reported that these visits offered valuable input for the section. Cape Verde's geography, with inhabitants spread over nine islands, and infrequent, sometimes unreliable ferry and air connections, inhibits section capability and service potential. These conditions greatly reduce consular staff travel outside of Praia. Consular management develops personnel resources and encourages staff to complete Foreign Service Institute (FSI) distance learning courses and enroll in continuing consular education workshops. All staffers participated in training exercises within the past two years. The OIG team observed the consular staff providing effective and courteous service to American citizens and visa applicants.

American Citizen Services

Approximately 5,000 American citizens live in Cape Verde, and about 7,000 American tourists visit every year. Americans may encounter situations ranging from minor aggravations to death. The section maintains good relations with host country authorities to assist citizens in such circumstances. During FY 2008, the Embassy processed 160 passport requests, 75 federal benefit inquiries, about 40 consular reports of birth applications, and one American citizen death. The section's warden system informs U.S. citizens of useful information as well as potential problems. The section sends e-mail messages to key American residents and specific institutions to be forwarded to other citizens. Back-up options include telephonic and radio message distribution. Cape Verde, a transportation nexus between North America, Africa, Europe, and South America, hosts two active international airports. One airline offers nonstop flights to the United States, and another plans to introduce a similar service. Tropical storms and volcanic eruptions can ravage the country. CA endorses formal planning for large scale catastrophes like air crashes or tropical storms. A consular disaster assistance handbook is designed to describe such preparations,

providing immediate guidance when calamity strikes. (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
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Visa Services

Embassy Praia's consular officers demonstrate a commitment to legitimate and fair visa adjudication. In FY 2008, the section handled more than 2,100 immigrant and 4,000 nonimmigrant visa applications. Individuals must meet specific standards to qualify for visas. Consular staffers confirm that applicants satisfy these requirements and that family relationships conferring derivative benefits truly exist. Verifying claims requires careful candidate evaluation. At Embassy Praia, about 25 percent of immigrant visa seekers fail to qualify for visas. Limited economic opportunities contribute to the inability of about 40 percent of first time nonimmigrant applicants to meet visa issuance criteria. These situations cause some visa seekers to resort to fraud in their attempt to secure visas. The staff verifies information and investigates suspicious cases, but few opportunities to look into cases outside Praia exist. Historically, Cape Verdean visa fraud involves low numbers of relatively unsophisticated attempts. One LE staff assistant focuses on antifraud work.

Visas Viper Program

The visas viper program requires that information held by any mission element on "people who may threaten the welfare of the United States" be shared with the consular section. Consular officers submit that material to the Department, which reviews the reports to identify names for inclusion in the Automated Visa Lookout System. Embassy Praia's visas viper committee meets and submits reports regularly. The Embassy's location and population composition results in few submissions.

Consular Section Space and Access

The OIG team found consular office and waiting space to be inadequate for the present staff and workload. This report discusses general chancery building deficiencies elsewhere. The consular section staggers interview appointments to reduce client congestion. Applicants line up just outside the chancery's general doorway to enter the building. Wheelchair bound persons must be helped over several stair steps to enter the interior waiting space, which seats about 30 people. The clean but cramped interior waiting room adjoins a public toilet available to clients. Three ballistic-resistant teller windows supply interview security for consular staffers. Only one waiting room entry/exit passage via a narrow corridor exists. Should that pas-

sage be blocked, clients can evacuate the waiting room through the consular hard-line, but that option would compromise internal security. Telephone booth-type enclosures outside the two traditional fixed interview/teller windows provide clients with a modicum of interview privacy. Noncontiguous office space and load bearing walls hamper officer line-of-sight supervisory views. While the section has adequate computer and other resources, configurations limit efficiency. An obstructed, narrow path behind the interview windows further constricts movement. Steps between office spaces impede staff movement and can result in falls. A recommendation was made to address this issue in the management section of this report.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Embassy Praia – FY 2008

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding (000s)
State – DCP	4	2	8	14	\$ 826
State – ICASS	1	3	54	58	2,210
State – Public Diplomacy	0	0	0	0	26
State – Diplomatic Security	0	0	11	11	208
State-Representation	0	0	0	0	8
State – OBO	0	0	0	0	212
Millennium Challenge Corporation	1	1	3	5	
Peace Corps	2	1	2	5	
Total	8	7	78	93	\$3,490

- Staff counts include number of authorized positions.
- Source: Embassy Praia

EMBASSY FACILITIES

The chancery is a four-story building located in the Plateau section of downtown Praia. Originally an apartment building, the chancery was acquired by the U.S. government in 1978. With 780 gross square meters of usable space, the chancery interior is cramped and barely adequate for current staffing, with no space for such important features as conference rooms or dining areas. (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

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 (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2) Although these deficiencies have been acknowledged and well documented over the years, there are no near-term plans to relocate the Embassy to another existing building or to construct a new embassy compound. At the present time, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) has sched-

uled Embassy Praia for a new embassy compound construction project in FY 2020. However, the aforementioned problems with the current chancery are such that the Department should evaluate whether this planned construction should be moved forward or the chancery should be relocated to another office building.

With the limited space in the chancery, it was not possible to accommodate staff of the MCC, established in Praia in 2006. It was, therefore, necessary for MCC to lease space in a commercial office building, for which a colocation waiver was obtained. The Peace Corps also has offices in a separate building in the outskirts of Praia.

Some of the LE staff work at the general services office (GSO) compound located a few miles from the chancery. This property was acquired in 2002 under a short-term lease with an annual cost of \$37,000. It contains 1,259 gross square meters of space for warehouse and maintenance shops. The building is adequate, (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2) There was also some recent damage to the ceiling resulting from water leakage from the roof. The landlord is willing to undertake some repairs, but the embassy intends to look for an alternative compound before the current lease expires in October 2009.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Praia, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should survey the local market to determine if a more suitable facility can be leased to accommodate warehouse and maintenance shops. (Action: Embassy Praia, in coordination with OBO)

The U.S. Government also owns a recreation compound in a residential section of Praia. This property consists of 5,000 gross square meters, and features a swimming pool, tennis and volleyball courts, a building with kitchen and bathroom facilities, and a covered picnic area. It is an excellent and well-maintained facility, essential for promotion of fitness and morale in a city that lacks such amenities. The facility is also used for representation events.

MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Despite a challenging environment, Embassy management meets the most essential needs of this small mission and its staff. The management section is under the direction of the DCM, who serves in a dual capacity as management officer. He is an experienced and competent economic officer who has the confidence of the Amba-

sador and an excellent working relationship with his staff. He completed many of the management courses at FSI, including those for GSO, financial management, and human resources operations. He serves as the primary certifying officer and also holds a contracting officer warrant. Although this is his first assignment as a management officer, his performance received widespread praise throughout the Embassy.

At the same time however, there is a pervasive opinion—from the executive office, management staff, and customers—that management operations could be greatly improved with the assignment of a full-time management officer. The DCM is conscientious in carrying out his management duties, but he too recognizes that he cannot devote enough time to carry out strategic planning, staff development, reorganization, and other measures that he believes are necessary to achieve the desired standard of excellence in administrative operations.

In addition to his direct responsibilities as management officer, the DCM also supervises the consular, economic, political, PD, security, and military portfolios. AF acknowledges that it is nearly impossible for a DCM to manage these diverse functions to the fullest extent desirable. The DCM acknowledges that his management duties have prevented him from devoting the appropriate attention to his supervisory responsibilities for the other sections. This issue is discussed at greater length in the executive direction section of this report.

The Embassy vigorously presented its case for additional management staffing to the Department. Praia requested a general services officer/information management officer position in its rightsizing report in 2006, and again in a revised version in May 2008, but the Office of Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation did not approve the request. The Embassy then requested a management officer position in its FY 2010 MSP submission, and discussion continues with AF.

The OIG team believes that the Embassy request has merit, but competing demands for Department resources will require that the embassy prepare a strong case. Specifically, the need must be demonstrated through the performance metrics and uniform service standards contained in the Collaborative Management Initiative. Given the management demands on the DCM, the Embassy justification should also document the negative impact of his inability to carry out supervision, staff development, and other responsibilities in his portfolio.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Praia, in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs, should develop and submit to the Office of Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation quantitative evidence to support the request for a management officer. (Action: Embassy Praia, in coordination with AF and M/PRI)

Two other U.S. citizens also fill key roles on the management staff, including an eligible family member as community liaison office (CLO) coordinator and an LE staff member as a general services officer. The latter individual served with the Peace Corps in Cape Verde, possesses valuable language skills, and completed the GSO course at FSI, which qualifies her for a contracting warrant. Her performance is outstanding, but she may not remain in Cape Verde for much longer. Replacing this employee will be difficult and lends further urgency to the Embassy request for a management officer position.

The LE staff includes experienced Cape Verdean nationals in important leadership roles within several management subunits, including financial management, human resources, and general services. However, many of the subordinate staff are inexperienced, untrained, or lack requisite job skills, thus their performance does not always meet expectations of supervisors or customers.

As a small embassy, Praia depends upon regional support from neighboring embassies for advice and oversight in several elements of management operations. There is a formal arrangement under which Embassy Dakar provides support for the financial management office and a memorandum of understanding under which the human resource officer from Embassy Lisbon makes quarterly visits to provide guidance and assistance with human resources operations. Embassy Praia also receives medical support and periodic visits from the regional medical officer and regional medical officer psychiatrist assigned to Embassy Accra.

Facilities Management

The facilities management section is under the direction of the LE American general services officer, who supervises an LE facilities management assistant. The facilities management assistant supervises a staff of 11 tradesmen and laborers, including janitors. The age and condition of the chancery and its infrastructure pose a challenge to the maintenance staff. In addition to their routine maintenance responsibilities, the facilities management staff devotes much time and effort to supplementing feeble municipal services. Because of the erratic local power supply, the embassy provides all office and residential buildings with emergency generators, for which the facilities management staff provides maintenance and diesel fuel. The facilities man-

OBO performed a fire and life safety evaluation in January 2009, and the Embassy implemented the recommended improvements. Nevertheless, it cannot establish a fully functional SHEM program without trained, dedicated staff.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Praia, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should identify and train a post occupational safety and health officer to implement and manage an active safety, health and environmental management program based on the guidelines and principles contained in 15 FAM 933. (Action: Embassy Praia, in coordination with OBO)

General Services

One of the major management challenges facing Embassy Praia is that of providing quality support services in a difficult environment with limited American oversight and direction. Embassy management has made progress in tightening internal controls, reestablishing proper procedures, and improving compliance with U.S. Government and Department regulations. However, much remains to be accomplished, and the management officer recognizes the need to improve efficiency and effectiveness of general services operations.

Because Embassy Praia does not have a direct-hire general services officer, GSO operations are under the direction of the DCM/management officer. An LE American currently serves as the general services officer and has both the skills and training required for the position; however, she is overextended by the broad scope of her responsibilities. She has served in this position for three years, but her continued tenure is uncertain, and it would be difficult to recruit another LE general services officer with comparable abilities. In its 2006 rightsizing review, the Embassy requested a direct-hire general services officer position, but the Office of Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation did not approve the request.

Housing

The DCM/management officer is the Embassy's single real property manager and thus oversees the housing program. The general services officer manages the ongoing responsibilities for leasing. Embassy Praia has a housing board that includes three voting members and the general services officer as an ex officio member. The board assigns housing for all incoming personnel, considering special needs or expressed preferences, contingent upon the timing of arrivals and vacancies. The GSO issued a housing handbook covering all aspects of the housing program.

The small housing pool consists of one U.S. Government-owned residence and seven short-term leased residences, all located within a residential area in an outlying district of Praia. Among the latter units is the Ambassador's residence, a large house containing 504 square meters of indoor space, as well as a large patio suitable for representation. The owner of the Ambassador's residence has indicated that he does not want to extend the lease beyond the end of the current term, which expires in June 2011.

Motor Pool

Embassy Praia has a small motor pool that is adequate to meet the needs of the Embassy. The DCM/management officer provides overall direction, with the LE American general services officer responsible for daily operations. There is also a vacancy for an LE motor pool supervisor position. In addition to this position, there are four drivers, including one designated to drive the tanker truck, as well as a mechanic who services vehicles and generators.

The motor pool fleet consists of 13 vehicles, all Toyotas except for the water truck. The fleet is relatively new and in good condition, with six of the vehicles from model year 2006 or newer. The operating conditions for the motor pool are relatively benign because most trips are within Praia, where the primary roads have recently been paved and are in good condition. Traffic is relatively light, so there is less likelihood of delays or accidents.

The Embassy motor pool operation is in compliance with most Department regulations. A mission motor pool policy has been issued, outlining the regulations that apply to motor pool use and operation. However, a locally purchased nine-passenger van does not have seat belts for passengers in the rear seats. The OIG team made an informal recommendation for this safety issue.

Customs and Shipping

The DCM/management officer provides overall supervision for the customs and shipping subunit of the GSO, but the LE general services officer oversees the routine operations. The actual arrangements for shipping and customs clearance are handled by a senior LE staff member, who also functions as the facilities management assistant. He has 15 years of experience in this capacity and received training at the Department's European Logistics Support Office in Antwerp.

The Embassy does not experience major delays or other problems with receiving or clearing inbound cargo. The household effects and privately owned vehicles for incoming personnel are shipped via surface vessel to Antwerp, then ultimately to Cape Verde. Once the cargo arrives, the Embassy is usually able to clear it through customs within one day. Unlike many developing countries, corruption in official government operations such as customs is not a problem in Cape Verde.

Contracting and Procurement

The DCM/management officer has overall responsibility for contracting and procurement. He also serves as the alternate contracting officer and has a warrant for acquisitions up to \$250,000. The LE general services officer also has a contracting warrant that enables her to serve as backup contracting officer in the absence of the management officer. The newly established GSO clerk position performs routine tasks associated with procurement, although the incumbent will eventually take on these duties. Most of the local procurement involves petty cash for maintenance supplies, which are purchased by the maintenance staff designated to handle money.

Embassy Praia has no major contracts, but there are a few smaller ones, such as the \$20,000 gardening contract. There are others of lesser value for international parcel shipping and for the supply of water delivered to embassy residences.

Travel Services

The DCM/management officer is the authorizing and approving official for all embassy travel and his LE staff secretary carries out the actual tasks associated with travel. These include preparing travel orders and vouchers, making airline and hotel reservations for embassy and TDY travelers, picking up tickets from the travel agency, preparing necessary reports and documentation, and ensuring that travel is made in accordance with U.S. Government regulations. The LE staff secretary has about 16 years of experience in managing embassy travel, and has completed various formal Department training courses.

Despite the small number of Embassy staff, the DCM's LE secretary must dedicate a large amount of time to travel duties, which limits the amount of support she can provide to the DCM. Although she insists that she can handle the current workload, an increasing volume of TDY visitors is creating additional demands for travel support. There were 348 TDY visitors to Embassy Praia in FY 2008 and 242 during the first six months of FY 2009. If this workload continues to grow, the embassy will need to identify and train another staff member to assist with travel services.

The staff is well trained, and the DCM is satisfied with the services provided by the section. The section makes wide use of Department applications to perform more efficiently, including automated cashiering and electronic certification systems. These include the Regional Financial Management System Direct Connect program, which the LE financial specialist aggressively and successfully lobbied to install, making Embassy Praia the second AF embassy to have this program.

In FY 2008, Embassy Praia received \$826,000 in Program funds and \$2.2 in ICASS funds, which includes funding that AF provided to supplement the initial targets. The Embassy also received \$8,200 in representational funding. With Department appropriations only recently approved by the U.S. Congress, the final targets for FY 2009 have not been established.

Embassy Dakar's regional financial management office provides financial management support to Embassy Praia, with quarterly visits from the U.S. financial management officer and the senior LE staff financial management assistant. The latter individual also serves as an alternate certifying officer and provides considerable informal advice via telephone or e-mail. In addition to the regional support from Dakar, a senior LE financial management specialist from Embassy Paris also provides remote advice and on-site visits to AF posts and visited Embassy Praia in late 2008.

Embassy Praia uses the Banco Commercial Atlantico as its local bank for payroll and other expenses. The MCC also uses this bank for distribution of its funds. The Embassy is satisfied with the quality of services, although the bank assesses a fee on electronic fund transfers. The Embassy is negotiating with the bank to reduce or eliminate these transfer fees.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The DCM/management officer is responsible for overall direction of the Embassy human resources (HR) operation, and supervises one experienced LE staff HR assistant. The HR assistant has 26 years of experience in the position and has completed various formal training courses over the years. There are no other LE staff in the HR section.

Embassy Praia had been receiving regional support from the HR officer at Embassy Dakar until about one year ago, but this arrangement was becoming less viable as the HR workload for Embassy Dakar continued to increase. AF initially proposed that the regional responsibility for Praia HR support be shifted to Embassy Abuja, but this proposal was abandoned because of the excessive cost and time required

for travel to Cape Verde. Embassy Praia then suggested that Embassy Lisbon provide regional HR service, because of the relatively easy and inexpensive travel, as well as the common language and framework for labor law shared by the two countries. Although the arrangements for providing and funding this regional support were complicated by the fact that two geographic bureaus were involved, the issues were eventually resolved. The HR assistant at Embassy Praia is satisfied with this arrangement. The regional HR officer made the first visit to Embassy Praia in early 2009 and consults regularly via telephone and e-mail on various HR issues.

One of the major HR issues at Embassy Praia is the timeliness of performance evaluations prepared for LE staff. In December 2008, the Embassy reported a total of 25 delinquent evaluations, some overdue for nearly one year. In fact, there were 12 LE staff whose within grade increases were delayed because of delinquent evaluation reports. The Embassy has since taken assertive action to obtain these evaluations, including notation of such delinquency on the supervisor's own evaluation and denial of awards to those who have not completed all evaluations for their subordinates.

Compensation surveys for Embassy Praia LE staff are conducted by the Birches Group. The last LE staff salary increase was in FY 2007, in the amount of 1.5 percent. If the Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Overseas Employment, recommends any increase during FY 2009, the implementation would take place in July. At the time of this inspection, the survey results had not yet been conveyed to the Embassy.

Embassy Praia does not have an LE staff committee. The employees have tried to form such a committee in prior years but were not successful for various reasons. However, the small size of the staff, and the close working relationship between the LE staff and their U.S. supervisors contributes to a favorable climate for communication between the two groups. Embassy management has also taken several measures to foster good communications, such as including LE staff in social and recreational events.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

With the leadership of the DCM and the drive of the Ambassador's office management specialist (OMS), the Praia information management section provides adequate support for the entire mission. The Embassy has no American professional information management (IM) staff. The OMS and the DCM manage all IM responsibilities. The classified communication system consists of one stand-alone enhanced

alternate communications terminal and associated cryptographic equipment. The OMS received formal training. The fast and trouble free aggregate circuit supports no other agencies. The IM office has one secure telephone equipment unit loaded with the most up-to-date software version.

Information Systems

One LE staff assistant manages the information systems center OpenNet network of approximately 40 users. He provides server maintenance and user support and has one LE staff assistant. Responsiveness of unclassified IM support scored high on OIG's workplace and quality of life questionnaire.

The DCM is responsible for overseeing IM operations and providing direct American oversight of the information systems center. Although the DCM also serves as management officer and has numerous other responsibilities outlined earlier in this report, he spends the time needed to perform his information systems security officer (ISSO) duties. A professional IM rover makes quarterly visits to Praia to provide operations and systems security support and guidance.

Embassy Praia has requested and received other types of regional support including telephone and radio service.

The OIG team was impressed with the quality of the IM operation performed by such a small but competent staff.

Formal Training for the Praia Incoming Deputy Chief of Mission

The current DCM, who acts as the post information systems security officer, as well as the major user of the enhanced alternate communications terminal system, departs in six months. Because of the embassy's lack of professional IM personnel, it is important that the incoming DCM be formally trained in using the enhanced alternate communications terminal system and associated cryptographic equipment. If the DCM has not received this training, there is no backup when the OMS is absent and communications reliability is hampered. Furthermore, in order to keep systems standards high, Praia needs an American information systems security officer who has received the formal one week training.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of African Affairs should provide information systems security officer and enhanced alternate communications terminal training to the incoming deputy chief of mission before arrival at the embassy. (Action: AF)

Alternate Command Center

Embassy Praia does not have a high frequency radio at their alternate command center (ACC). According to the DCM, the ultra high frequency radio is ineffective in this area. The DCM's residence, which is designated as the alternate command center, has all other necessary emergency communications, Internet capability, phone, fax, and a two drawer safe. The Ambassador has a device to remotely access the Intranet. According to 12 FAH-1 H-261 a., b., c., the alternate command center should have appropriate equipment.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Praia in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs should request regional support to provide radio communications at its alternate communications center. (Action: Embassy Praia, in coordination with AF)

QUALITY OF LIFE

American staff morale ranges from moderate to high according to individual interviews and personal questionnaires completed by Americans working at Embassy Praia. Adverse quality of life issues include poor, cramped office facilities, isolation feelings stemming from living on a small island, increasing street violence, burglaries, sometimes dangerous roads, uneven LE staff performance, and high living costs in Cape Verde. However, most employees believe they are doing important work, and they appreciate CLO coordinator activity and believe that Embassy management is concerned for their well-being. At present, the Embassy does not have chancery cafeteria facilities, commissary, or a community association. The Embassy does not have adequate schools and no Embassy American dependants attend local schools. This condition results in family separations, and some children have to attend boarding schools.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

A CLO coordinator, who typically works 20 hours per week, helps sustain the Embassy Praia community. The CLO coordinator received training during September 2008. CLO activities include preparing and maintaining orientation materials, nominating sponsors for new arrivals, advising employees on local conditions, offering general guidance and a sympathetic ear, organizing social events for staff and family members, managing a lending film library, and contributing to emergency planning. The coordinator's weekly newsletter includes articles from various embassy sections and items of general interest. The coordinator serves on the emergency action committee, the housing board, and other embassy groups. The coordinator organized several trips for the community outside the capital, but limited excursion possibilities within Cape Verde and the high cost of travel outside the country severely limit options. Embassy employees rated the CLO as effective and positive in their personal questionnaires and interviews.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM

The EEO counselor, who completed the required training program in mid-September 2008, stated that no employees have registered formal EEO complaints or sought EEO counseling since she assumed her duties. The counselor publicizes general EEO provisions mission-wide via bulletin boards in all Embassy work spaces and hosts cultural events promoting diversity awareness. Embassy Praia is recruiting LE staff employees who will be trained to provide EEO type resources to the LE staff, as authorized by 97 State 53229. The size of this embassy precludes nomination of a Federal Women's Program (FWP) coordinator. Employees with FWP concerns may address themselves to the Embassy Lisbon FWP or other FWP coordinators. Embassy management fully endorses both programs. American employees rated mission EEO sensitivities as a positive quality on their workplace and quality of life questionnaires.

HEALTH UNIT

Medical care for staff and family members at Embassy Praia has been a major concern affecting the quality of life. Until about one year ago, Embassy staff were receiving medical care from a Peace Corps nurse practitioner, but this arrangement ended when Peace Corps management concluded that their nurse was unable to service both the Embassy and the volunteers throughout the archipelago. After searching for several months, the Embassy hired a local physician who had previously served as the Embassy medical advisor. The doctor is available at the health unit every weekday afternoon, as well as at other times for emergencies.

There is no available space in the chancery, so the Embassy medical unit has been set up in a small building adjacent to the Peace Corps offices; about a ten-minute drive from the chancery. The medical unit features a waiting room, an office for the doctor, an examination room, and a lockable storage room where supplies and medicines are maintained under appropriate conditions.

The doctor has worked closely with the regional medical officer from Embassy Dakar to set up the medical unit and has identified additional medicines and supplies that are needed for a fully equipped facility. There is a defibrillator and oxygen at the medical unit for cardiac emergencies, and the Embassy has ordered another defibrillator for the chancery. However, there is also a need for a defibrillator at the recreation center, where such emergencies might likely occur. The OIG team made an informal recommendation.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The DCM/management officer has been designated as the Embassy management controls coordinator, and executes these duties in a conscientious and effective manner. In the absence of a separate management officer however, the DCM serves as control officer or alternate for about 20 other specific functions relating to management controls. It is extremely challenging for him to carry out these oversight responsibilities, while at the same time being centrally involved with other embassy operations. The issue of creating a management officer position for Embassy Praia is discussed in another section of this report.

Embassy management completed risk assessment questionnaires in FY 2007, just prior to the arrival of the incumbent DCM/management officer. Most of the vulnerabilities identified involved training of LE staff and separation of duties. The Embassy has devoted considerable attention to resolving these vulnerabilities.

The chief of mission annual management controls assurance statement for Embassy Praia was submitted in August 2008. In this statement, four areas of vulnerability were cited, as well as the corrective actions taken or proposed. All vulnerabilities have been resolved.

Consular Affairs

As Embassy Praia's accountable consular officer, the consular section chief implements Consular Management Handbook policies governing fees, controlled equipment, sensitive blank document supplies, and restricted computer access controls. The Embassy has a correct nonimmigrant visa written referral policy explaining system parameters and use. The consular section expended considerable effort to improve management of its file holdings. This effort resulted in full compliance with mandated records management policies, a 67 percent reduction in overall record holdings, greatly improved ability to retrieve meaningful records, decreased space use, and improved morale.

Good management practice and CA guidance require that all nonimmigrant refusals be reviewed by a supervisory officer, even if that officer lacks a consular commission. The consular section chief informally vets the part-time vice consul's work daily. Review of Embassy Praia's Consolidated Consular Database reveals that

the DCM formally reviews both the consular section chief's and the part-time vice consul's decisions regularly.

Consular cash and receipt handling methodology within the consular section and the Embassy's class B cashier meet all requirements. The accountable consular officer and consular subcashier and their alternates are designated in writing, and they correctly perform their duties. Review of randomly selected consular accounts revealed no bookkeeping errors. The Embassy contracted with a Praia bank to collect machine-readable visa fees for most applicants; nonimmigrant visa application appointment scheduling uses an embassy controlled on-line arrangement. These CA-endorsed methods reduce consular fee handling and appointment scheduling workloads.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Embassy Praia, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should survey the local market to determine if a more suitable facility can be leased to accommodate warehouse and maintenance shops. (Action: Embassy Praia, in coordination with OBO)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Praia, in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs, should develop and submit to the Office of Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation quantitative evidence to support the request for a management officer. (Action: Embassy Praia, in coordination with AF and M/PRI)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Praia, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should repair the chancery stairs. (Action: Embassy Praia, in coordination with OBO)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Praia, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should identify and train a post occupational safety and health officer to implement and manage an active safety, health and environmental management program based on the guidelines and principles contained in 15 FAM 933. (Action: Embassy Praia, in coordination with OBO)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Praia should move the new furniture from the warehouses to the residences and stage a sale to dispose of the old furniture. (Action: Embassy Praia)

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of African Affairs should provide information systems security officer and enhanced alternate communications terminal training to the incoming deputy chief of mission before arrival at the embassy. (Action: AF)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Praia in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs should request regional support to provide radio communications at its alternate communications center. (Action: Embassy Praia, in coordination with AF)

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.

Public Diplomacy

Embassy Praia does not currently participate in Department educational exchange programs and is not familiar with application procedures for these programs. Given the level of interest in U.S. study in Cape Verde and the improving quality of English within the university student community, the embassy would benefit from discussing current application procedures for these programs with ECA.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Praia should seek current information and guidance about Department educational exchange programs and application procedures from the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Embassy Praia does not have sufficient space within its chancery to conduct an effective educational advising program or to provide information and program outreach to key audiences. The embassy is developing a very productive relationship with the University of Cape Verde that has potential for resolving both of these shortcomings.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Praia should pursue discussions with the University of Cape Verde toward jointly establishing within the university an American educational advising service and information program presence.

Consular

Embassy Praia's consular LE staff position descriptions appear to be inadequate. The consular chief has begun to review them for possible adjustment.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Praia should complete revision of locally employed staff position descriptions to accurately reflect job responsibilities, qualifications, and activity.

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Informal Recommendation 4: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

Embassy Praia does not have written consular outreach, representation, travel, and reporting plans.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Praia should develop, request funding for, and implement consular outreach, representation, travel, and reporting plans, and link the plans to the Consular Package narrative and the Mission Strategic Plan.

Management

The warehouse supervisor position has been vacant for several months, and all other personnel with responsibility for property management are located in the chancery.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Praia should intensify its efforts to recruit and hire a qualified warehouse supervisor to manage the staff and inventory at the warehouse compound.

Warehouse staff were not wearing appropriate protective gear such as safety shoes and hard hats.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Praia should ensure that appropriate personal safety equipment is available to all warehouse employees, and that they wear this gear at all times on the job.

One of the passenger vans in the motor pool did not have seat belts for all passengers, as required by Department regulations.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Praia should ensure that all vehicles are equipped with seat belts for all passengers, and that drivers require the passengers to use the seat belts before operating the vehicle.

Quality of Life

The embassy recreation center does not have a defibrillator and oxygen for treating cardiac emergencies.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Praia should purchase and install a defibrillator and oxygen unit for the recreation center.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Marianne Myles	08/08
Deputy Chief of Mission	Patrick M. Dunn	10/07
Chiefs of Sections:		
Consular	Lesley Hayden	07/08
Public Affairs/Political	Ruth Rudzinski	10/07
Regional Security		
Other Agencies:		
Peace Corps	Henry Weiss	07/07
Millennium Challenge Corp.	Stahis Panagides	07/06

ABBREVIATIONS

AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AF	Bureau of African Affairs
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CLO	Community liaison office
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
ECA	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
FWP	Federal Women's Program
GSO	General services office
HR	Human resources
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
ISSO	Information system security officer
LE	Locally employed
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OMS	Office management specialist

PD	Public diplomacy
SHEM	Safety, Health and Environmental Management
TDY	Temporary duty
UCV	University of Cape Verde
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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