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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Riyadh and Constituent Posts, Saudi Arabia

Report Number ISP-I-10-19A, March 2010

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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 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.



**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
Deputy Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- The recently arrived Ambassador values leadership, a much-needed commodity at the mission, and has made a start on articulating a clear vision of U.S. interests and the mission’s role in advancing them. The deputy chief of mission (DCM), who is also new, shows all the signs of an effective coordinator and implementer. Together they promise to make a strong and effective team.
- The lack of clear lines of communication within, between, and among the embassy and the consulates general has led to policy inconsistency and waste of resources. All mission elements need to improve the regularity and transparency of communication overall.
- Mission Saudi Arabia faces challenges that will tax its resources. These include supporting a large influx of personnel to support a joint U.S.-Saudi critical infrastructure protection program, meeting its target to double visa issuances, accommodating the return of families after several years in unaccompanied status, moving to the new housing and consulate compound in Jeddah, and locating property for and constructing a new housing and consulate compound in Dhahran.
- Limiting tours of duty to one year has undermined the effectiveness of Mission Saudi Arabia and hampered its outreach. The recent approval of two-year, fully accompanied tours of duty, mission-wide, should permit the United States to increase its influence in Saudi Arabia and deepen its engagement with the population.
- Security remains a major concern and could constrain outreach efforts.
- Adherence to Saudi local practice has led Mission Saudi Arabia to run afoul of Equal Employment Opportunity precepts and complicates monitoring contractors’ compliance with their obligations regarding basic worker protections and freedom of movement.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 14 and 30, 2009; in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, between October 1 and November 8, 2009; in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, between October 14 and 21, 2009; and in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, between October 21 and 28, 2009.

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CONTEXT



The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia plays a key role in the Middle East region, with an estimated one-fourth of the world's total petroleum reserves, an economy the size of the five other Gulf Cooperation Council economies combined, and a population of 24 million (including 6 million guest workers) that is growing at one of the fastest rates in the world. Its shared interests with the United States include combating threats of terrorism and extremism, addressing the challenges of Iran and Pakistan, and promoting global financial and energy stability. It has a central role in the Middle East peace process, and will be an essential supporter of any comprehensive outcome. Sitting beside waterways through which most of the world's oil passes and controlling airways and land space vital to U.S. military forces, Saudi Arabia provides crucial support for regional stability.

The site of Islam's two most sacred cities, Saudi Arabia is the center of the Islamic world and the religious focal point for the world's 1.2 billion Muslims. According to estimates, over 50 percent of Saudi citizens are under 18 years of age and 75 percent are under 25. U.S. outreach to Saudi youth is a key element in the effort to promote stability in the region.

More than a strategic partner to the kingdom, the United States is a guarantor of Saudi Arabia's security, as well. The royal family has turned to the United States to train its security forces to safeguard the kingdom's oil infrastructure, and to build capacity for diplomatic, maritime, and cyber-security. In this effort, Mission Saudi Arabia will stand up a large, Saudi-financed joint unit to oversee this program, whose structure will likely be a model for other efforts of its kind in the region.

The new Ambassador and DCM have made opening to Saudi society a top priority. This has implications for operations across the board, from consular, to public diplomacy, to representational activities. As part of this effort, the front office has focused on bringing families back to Saudi Arabia, with some early successes. During the inspection, the Under Secretary for Management approved the request to

transition all three locations (the embassy and two consulates general) to two-year, fully accompanied tours. Challenges remain, as the threat level will continue to constrain outreach efforts.

Mission Saudi Arabia consists of the embassy in Riyadh, with authorized staffing of 151 direct-hire and 232 locally employed (LE) staff, a consulate general in Jeddah (42 U.S. direct-hire and 135 LE staff), and a consulate general in Dhahran (22 U.S. direct-hire and 81 LE staff members). Its aggregate budget is on the order of \$45 million. The mission's only assistance program is a nominal \$15,000 International Military Education and Training (IMET) grant.

CONSULATE GENERAL JEDDAH

An important port on the Red Sea, Jeddah has long been a regional commercial and cultural center. It hosts the Saudi Government during the summer months every year and is also the prime staging point for the Muslim faithful on their pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj). A considerable number of American citizens work for U.S. businesses in the consular district, including Raytheon and Boeing, in addition to a number of smaller international and Saudi companies. The consulate general's consular services have been minimal since the terrorist attacks on the consulate compound on December 6, 2004, in which five LE staff members were killed and 11 injured.

CONSULATE GENERAL DHAHRAN

Consulate General Dhahran is located in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, the center of Saudi Arabia's oil industry. Site of the first U.S. diplomatic presence in the Kingdom, today the consulate general is the province's only officially recognized diplomatic entity. The consulate general provides consular services to approximately 13,000 Americans, most of whom are affiliated with the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO). Consulate General Dhahran's reporting focuses on the oil and gas industry, commerce, and the large Shi'a minority population resident in the Eastern province.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Mission Saudi Arabia struggled through a five-month transition between the departure of the previous Ambassador in April 2009 and the arrival of the current Ambassador in September. During that period, the chargé d'affaires position changed six times, rotating among the DCM, management counselor, and a when-actually-employed (WAE) retired ambassador. A number of employees commented in their OIG questionnaires that they felt a lack of front office direction and sometimes did not know who was in charge during that period.

The Ambassador and DCM, both of whom arrived a few days in advance of the OIG inspection team, have made a strong start in providing executive direction. The Ambassador brings with him management and leadership experience from the private sector, as well as from a career in the military service. He is a retired Air Force general officer. The DCM is a career Foreign Service officer who has extensive experience in the area, including a previous tour as DCM in Bahrain. She is a fluent Arabic speaker.

The Ambassador intends to employ a classic, inside-outside style of executive direction. He will leave to the DCM the day-to-day management of the embassy as executive officer. The Ambassador will concentrate on outreach to the Saudi Government, society, and business community. This arrangement should work well, in view of the backgrounds and strengths of the two officers.

While concentrating on outreach, the Ambassador also plans to provide overall policy direction and guidance. The OIG team observed a reporting conference attended by all mission reporting officers, in which the Ambassador engaged with the officers, challenging them to define U.S. policy goals in Saudi Arabia and the means by which to achieve them. By the end of the conference, the officers had developed a mission statement. Reporting officers with whom OIG spoke were energized by the exercise and valued the opportunity, together with the ambassador, to think about what their mission was in Saudi Arabia, and how they could accomplish it.

The DCM quickly and effectively assumed oversight of embassy operations. She revised the schedule of staff-wide meetings to provide the opportunity for greater interchange among sections to prevent insularity and encourage synergistic cooperation. After going around to each section to meet all the staff and discuss their work, she has a one-on-one lunch with each section head.

Mission staff members have welcomed the strong, new leadership and direction, after a period of perceived drift. At the same time, the OIG team counseled both the Ambassador and the DCM to be aware of how meetings and taskings from the front office are affecting the sections' work pace. The team also advised that bottom-up initiatives be encouraged and sufficient time allowed for offices to fulfill their ongoing work requirements, including Department of State (Department)-mandated reports.

The Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) was rarely mentioned in interviews by the OIG team, and it appears to be little used as an ongoing guide to operations. Whether it is or is not using the MSP, the mission will need to update the next MSP in light of new opportunities which may arise as a result of the Department's decision to transition from the post's present policy of one year, unaccompanied tours to two-year, accompanied tours (effective with the next assignment cycle). One-year tours, imposed after the terrorist attack on Consulate General Jeddah in 2004 and other incidents, led to personnel shortages and staffing gaps; it also impeded the development of productive contacts with the mission's counterparts in Saudi Arabia – a society in which personal relationships are extremely important.

CONSTITUENT POSTS

Jeddah

Consulate General Jeddah is headed by a senior Foreign Service officer who speaks Arabic and has wide experience in the region. Since arriving 13 months ago, he has done an exceptional job rebuilding a consulate general that was traumatized by the terrorist attack in 2004, which killed five LE staff members and wounded 11. In the five years since then, Consulate General Jeddah has hunkered down, for security reasons, into a bunker mentality. The consul general has worked steadily over the past year to reduce this state of isolation, by appearing and traveling widely in the consular district, and encouraging his staff to do the same, within security constraints.

For four to five months a year, the Government of Saudi Arabia, including the king and his entourage, move to Jeddah, the former capital and still the cosmopolitan business hub of the kingdom. The Ambassador and one or two officers from Riyadh also move to Jeddah for much of that period. The consul general and his staff support the increased workload with minimal assistance from the Embassy, a mark of the Ambassador's confidence in the consul general and his team. The con-

consulate staff, composed largely of entry-level officers (ELOs), many of whom are on their first tour, work collegially and effectively in advancing U.S. mission goals in the consular district.

A new consulate compound for Jeddah is in the latter stages of construction, with occupancy planned for the fall of 2010. The OIG team's inspection of the site is discussed in the classified annex.

Inadequate communication between the Embassy and the consulate general, as well as insufficient attention by the embassy to Jeddah's needs and resources, was a theme the OIG team heard frequently, in both Jeddah and Dhahran. This topic is discussed further in the management section of this report.

Dhahran

Dhahran's consular district is in the Eastern Province, which includes most of Saudi Arabia's oil, gas, and petrochemicals industry, which generates the bulk of the kingdom's wealth. Reporting on energy, business promotion, and the large Shi'a population is one of the consulate general's major activities.

Consulate General Dhahran is headed by a Foreign Service officer with wide experience in the region. In his 13 months as consul general, he has proven to be a strong manager with a thorough knowledge of all aspects of the consulate general's operations. The staff is relatively small (22 U.S. direct-hire positions) and composed largely of entry-level officers. The consul general provides effective leadership and guidance.

The U.S. consulate general offices in Dhahran, scattered over a large compound, are small and extremely overcrowded. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) has scheduled Dhahran for a new consulate compound (NCC), with construction scheduled to begin in 2011. The consul general was evaluating possible site locations with OBO and Embassy Riyadh at the time of the OIG inspection.

ENTRY LEVEL OFFICERS

Riyadh

The newly arrived DCM has expressed the intention to be an effective mentor for ELOs in terms of both professional development and career advice. During the

time of the inspection, the DCM had a group meeting with the ELOs, to communicate her accessibility and her intention to meet with them regularly, both as a group and individually. She has developed a draft of the ELO mentoring program and is encouraging ELOs to provide comments and additional ideas, an initiative which ELOs enthusiastically welcomed.

A number of the ELOs are working in positions outside their cone. To address this, the DCM has set up a system whereby ELOs are mentored not only by their supervisors, but also by a second officer outside their work area who shares the same cone. ELOs told inspectors, both in individual interviews and in a group meeting with OIG, that they were positively impressed by the DCM's commitment to mentoring. In her initial weeks at the embassy, she has communicated a caring attitude and a desire to support ELOs in settling in, learning their jobs, and developing their careers.

Those working outside their cones are gaining broader experience, but they need to be given a better perspective on how their efforts fit into overall mission operations. The OIG team has informally recommended that the unclassified email distribution list of reporting officers include all ELOs and mid-level officers, to integrate them better into overall operations and to increase their understanding of the broader policy context.

In Riyadh and Dhahran, the majority of ELOs are consular officers. This will be the case for Jeddah, as well, once it moves to a new consulate compound next year and resumes providing visa services. With the preponderance of ELOs serving as consular officers, it would be possible to occasionally rotate ELOs among the embassy and two consulates general, both for career-broadening purposes and to strengthen the links among the three locations. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation to this effect.

Jeddah

ELOs used words such as “caring,” “mentoring,” “engaged,” and “accessible” repeatedly in describing the consul general in Jeddah, for whom they have high respect. Relatively new to the consulate general and serving one-year tours, the ELOs have quickly bonded with each other, as well as with the consul general, into an effective team. They reported that the consul general has been a consistently helpful mentor.

Dhahran

As in Jeddah, the recently arrived ELOs have bonded well into a collegial team. The consul general mentors ELOs effectively by including them in many activities – e.g., making them note takers in meetings or control officers for visits. He invites ELOs for lunch at his residence once a month, and is accessible to them individually.

Several ELOs commented to the OIG team that eight or nine months of Arabic language training is insufficient, and should either be lengthened to bring officers up to at least a 2-2 proficiency level; or else skipped entirely to provide time for other training. Other ELOs, especially at the consulates general, agreed that additional Arabic training is desirable, but believed that even an initial grounding in Arabic is helpful with Saudi contacts.

MORALE

Maintaining morale at Mission Saudi Arabia can be a challenge, in view of the security concerns, difficult climate, heavy office workload, limited recreational opportunities, and the highly conservative Saudi culture, in which norms are enforced by the religious police. It can be a particular challenge for women, since they are not allowed to drive or ride bicycles and—although not required by embassy regulations—they are expected, by Saudi culture, to wear a floor-length, black abaya whenever they go out in public.

Despite these strictures, the OIG team found morale throughout the mission to be relatively good, with a few individual exceptions. Part of this may be owing to the fact that, given the policy until now of one-year tours, the large majority of staff members had recently arrived at the time of the inspection, and most had bonded well with each other. ELOs in particular were eager and enthusiastic about their jobs and the adventure of coming to Saudi Arabia to work. Community liaison office (CLO) efforts to offer recreational activities were helpful. Strong leadership at all locations also contributed to a sense of mission. The reversion next year to two-year tours with accompanying families should allow posts gradually to return to a more normal demographic profile, although security concerns about the school in Riyadh may delay this.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

The security threat posture in Saudi Arabia restricts arrangements for appointments and events, and reduces access to the local population. In 2009, the mission relaxed security guidelines, so that male officers may now drive nonarmored, private vehicles. However, as noted above, Saudi law prohibits all women from driving. Saudi officials require diplomatic notes in Arabic for virtually all communication, including invitations, which consumes considerable time and resources. Saudi officials require diplomatic notes even for access to academic contacts and to schools that are under the purview of the Ministry of Education. This Saudi requirement inhibits the mission's ability to engage with youth, who form the majority of the population. The consulates general in Dhahran and Jeddah conduct outreach more easily, such as with private sector entities and influential Saudi families. Despite these limitations, mission officers are able to build and maintain access to key Saudi officials and influence-makers.

Annually, the mission conducts a day-long conference of all political and economic reporting officers to prepare a reporting plan and set priorities for the upcoming year. The embassy and consulates general communicate closely to integrate substantive reporting and analysis. Comments during the inspection indicate that the mission does not align the reporting plan to the MSP and resource requests, and does not monitor progress on the reporting plan over the course of the year.

Inexperienced ELOs serving in mid-level grade positions and extended vacancies characterize mission-wide staffing, hampering policy advocacy and program operations. Supervisors give serious attention to training ELOs, diverting their time from conducting regular operations. The transition from one-year to two-year tours should improve the officers' ability to build and apply new skills and to cultivate relationships with Saudi contacts.

Officers have not implemented Departmental procedures on information sharing and document management, as is required by Foreign Affairs Manual (5 FAM 400) and the Foreign Affairs Handbook (5 FAH-1 H-300). Instead, officers retain material in personal email folders that are not accessible to colleagues when an officer is

find this analysis valuable. The section uses email extensively to exchange information with individuals in Washington. The OIG team informally recommended that, mission-wide, the embassy convert email information into cables, for wider distribution to interested parties in Washington.

A well-organized counselor, fluent in Arabic and with prior experience as the section's deputy chief, leads the section. The counselor works closely with counterparts in other sections. She is attentive to training and mentoring a staff comprised of first-tour ELOs and one political cone, mid-level officer serving for the first time in a political position. In addition, the counselor mentors ELOs in the consulates general, helping to guide their work in conjunction with the consuls general, who are their direct supervisors. The ELOs in the section have limited Arabic skills. The counselor regularly employs the skills and experience of the LE staff and acknowledges their contributions. The section conducts weekly staff meetings, supplemented by brief standup meetings to coordinate daily activities and convey front office priorities. The OMS and political deputy positions have been vacant for a year. Recruitment is underway for a mid-level deputy, who is due to arrive in summer 2010. Until the political OMS vacancy can be filled, the section should formally arrange with the economic counselor to obtain part-time support from the economic section OMS. (This topic is addressed in further detail in the political-military section, below.)

The political section—and the mission generally—holds biographic files, for internal use and to brief U.S. official visitors. It does not, however, submit biographic reporting and leadership analysis formally and on a regular basis for wider use by Washington consumers. This results in repeated requests to Embassy Riyadh for information and a failure to build the Department's biographic database, which is used for archival and other purposes.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Riyadh should submit biographic reporting and leadership information to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research on a regular basis. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

POLITICAL/MILITARY SECTION

The political/military section labors under the mission-wide constraints of short tours in difficult-to-fill positions, working with a government that requires the formal exchange of notes to schedule even the most routine appointments and a security

situation that further limits access. Despite this, the section has developed good relations with the Saudi foreign ministry, defense ministry, and national guard, as well as with the U.S. military elements that are present in Saudi Arabia.

The section's counselor is an experienced Arabist in his second year at the embassy. The section he heads is relatively small and has struggled with continuity, due to a series of one-year tours among its officers. The recent decision to make Riyadh a fully accompanied, two-year tour will go a long way toward relieving this disadvantage. In the meantime, the section will deal with a staffing gap in the deputy position—an FS-03 position—by arranging for short-term temporary duty (TDY) personnel assigned from Washington.

The only assistance the section oversees is a small (\$15,000) IMET program. Its purpose is to permit the Saudi Government to purchase additional military training at considerably lower cost than what normally is charged for countries that are not eligible for military, education, and training funds. This amount is sufficient to cover the cost of providing IMET training for one person. The Leahy vetting this small program calls for is minimal, and well within the capacity of the section.

Contact development, overall reporting, and biographic reporting are the casualties of this section's small staff and lack of an OMS. Nonetheless, the section has set an ambitious reporting agenda, as part of the mission-wide reporting coordination exercise. Realizing this agenda will call for greater mutual efforts among the political-military, political, and economic sections. Section chiefs and their deputies could enhance communication among their sections by meeting jointly and regularly monitoring progress on the reporting agenda. The OIG team has left an informal recommendation along these lines.

More important to the section's operations is OMS support. Managing the numerous online tools (such as eClearance and E2 Solutions) and addressing the section's ill-tended filing system divert the officers' efforts from high priority reporting and advocacy. While there is probably insufficient work to justify staffing a fulltime OMS, the section needs reliable OMS support.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Riyadh should amend work requirements of both the political section office management specialist and economic section office management specialist to include providing part-time and back-up support to the political-military section. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

ECONOMIC SECTION

A newly arrived counselor with previous economic experience in Riyadh leads the section. The counselor is quickly building positive relationships with the heads of other sections and agencies. The section holds weekly staff meetings, supplemented by frequent consultations within the section. The deputy economic chief has been extended for a second year, which should improve the section's ability to forge stronger relationships with Saudi contacts and delve more deeply into issues.

None of the economic officers speak Arabic. This has not been a large impediment to effectiveness, because virtually all Saudi interlocutors on economic topics speak fluent English.

The counselor, deputy chief, and mid-level officer are mentoring ELOs mission-wide, including ELOs at the consulates general. In addition, Embassy Riyadh's economic officers regularly visit the consulates general, a practice which should be sustained. Consulate general ELOs performing political-economic work travel to Riyadh for specific meetings: it could be useful to extend such visits for additional days in Riyadh.

In addition to her duties in the economic section, the OMS provides support to the executive office, to the director of the Office of Program Management-Ministry of Interior (OPM-MOI, see below), and to the political section. The mission arranges occasional WAE OMS support, a practice which it should continue.

In 2009, the Department downgraded the mid-level officer position covering the banking and finance portfolio to an ELO-level position. A first-tour officer will fill the position in summer 2010. Rank conscious Saudis are unlikely to work extensively with a first-tour ELO on sensitive banking and finance issues. This means that the counselor and the deputy will need to plan on devoting more of their time to banking and finance issues, in addition to the existing demands that already generate substantial overtime.

The section's sole locally employed (LE) economic specialist is closely integrated into the section's activities. She has excellent contacts and deploys skills she developed in economic training at the Foreign Service Institute to draft serviceable reports. The specialist often undertakes assignments, especially translations, from the front office and other parts of the mission. Translation work detracts from her ability to monitor the media and websites and conduct research to augment section reporting.

Inspectors found inefficient, duplicative effort spent translating démarche texts into Arabic. The OIG team informally recommended that Embassy Riyadh explore various ways to alleviate the volume of translations assigned to the Riyadh economic and political specialists. The OIG team encouraged the counselors to make use of the Office of Language Services (LS) website for démarches in Arabic. LS procedures require that translation requests originate with desk officers or the Department office issuing the instruction cable, in order to avoid duplicate requests to LS. Desk officers at the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) can ensure that démarche instruction cables are sent for translation just before or at the time a cable is transmitted. The daily Rapid Response site on the Intranet is available to provide the official Arabic translation of U.S. positions on current topics. The Rapid Response Arabic web link can serve as a ready reference for the Department's preferred vocabulary, to ease translation work. Additionally, the position description for the second new protocol assistant position should include translation qualifications, in order for that individual to assume the bulk of executive office translating duties.

The counselor is focusing on ways to elevate the bilateral economic dialogue and to increase formal reporting. The section remains actively engaged in efforts to have the Saudi Government implement effective protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), with a view to removing Saudi Arabia from the IPR Watch List. During the OIG team visit, the section had already begun integrating biographic material into formal reporting. The counselor is also cognizant that Washington consumers seek more reporting and analysis on Saudi Arabia's energy policy and production activities. The previous OIG report also raised this.

Saudi Arabia is a member of the Group of 20 leading economies. Embassy Riyadh has intensified efforts to enlist Saudi support for U.S. objectives in the G-20 context. These include promoting financial stability, seeking multilateral consensus on sustainable energy and environmental policies, enhancing food security, and mitigating diseases and improving health.

The economic section's workload and volume of visitors are increasing substantially, as it supports such U.S. technical agencies as the Patent and Trademark Office, Energy Department, National Science Foundation, and National Institutes of Health.

The economic section interacts extensively with the U.S. Department of the Treasury attaché resident in Dubai and its deputy attaché resident in Riyadh. U.S.-Saudi counterterrorism efforts have generated good progress; the mission is tracking and advocating stronger Saudi Government actions against a broad group of entities engaged in foreign transfer of funds that are suspected to be linked terrorism. The

terrorism finance coordinating officer in the economic section chairs regular inter-agency meetings, which include the legal attaché, Department of the Treasury and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) attachés, regional security officer (RSO), and other mission elements.

Assistance

U.S. agencies are not providing assistance funding to Saudi Arabia, with the exception of a nominal amount in the area of military training.

ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND HEALTH AFFAIRS

An ELO handles the trade, telecommunications, aviation, environment, science, technology, and health portfolios. She readily seeks and obtains guidance from colleagues in the section. In gender-restricted Saudi Arabia, she reports that she does not encounter significant impediments interacting with her male Saudi counterparts, who are technocratic rather than policy-level officials. She supports many U.S. technical agencies, which contribute expertise and personnel (but not funding) to cooperative U.S.-Saudi activities. The volume of work on joint health activities, including H1N1 preparedness and global polio eradication, has led to the approval of one full-time medical expert from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), who will be assigned to the embassy in early 2010. Given the extensive bilateral health cooperation with the Saudis, the CDC has submitted a request for a second National Security Decision Directive (NSDD)-38 position, which is under review by the mission and NEA. The environment, science, technology, and health portfolio is appropriately managed.

LABOR

The economic section's ELO is also the designated mission labor officer. In consultation with the embassy's political section and staff from the consulates general, she produces labor reporting, including the labor portion of the annual Human Rights Report. In law and in practice, labor problems in Saudi Arabia are most egregious regarding the treatment of the large population of third country nationals, who have few effective protections in country. The labor law outlines penalties for certain abuses, including trafficking in persons, but the government rarely enforces fines or

penalties on abusive employers. The Saudi Government provides trafficking awareness programs and technical training for prosecutors, investigators, and judges, but it is not clear how many Saudi officials participate in such training. The labor minister is taking steps to improve labor conditions, and the mission has offered training to Saudi investigators on anti-trafficking measures.

COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

In 2008, U.S. exports to Saudi Arabia rebounded above the 1998 peak level, recovering from that of 2002—the lowest level in decades. During the 2009 global economic decline, Saudi economic performance has remained stable; therefore, market opportunities are strong for growth in the areas of U.S. goods and services exports and joint ventures. This is especially the case for sectors in which U.S. companies are competitive, such as high-technology equipment, transportation, energy, and petrochemicals. In the Eastern Province, where Consulate General Dhahran is located, individual petrochemical projects alone are expected to lead to tens of billions of dollars' worth of contracts with foreign partners in the next five years. Mission-wide elements combine efforts to assist U.S. companies, secure official Saudi cooperation on resolving commercial dispute settlements, extract delayed payments to U.S. companies (a persistent problem), and protect IPR.

The mission has a Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) presence of American and LE staff at all three locations. FCS provides the full range of commercial services. Experienced American FCS officers encumber five of the six authorized FCS direct-hire positions. The FCS attaché, an Arabic speaker who arrived in August 2009, plans to maintain an FCS presence for a second year and expressed the intention of applying a more strategic focus to programming in support of U.S. companies. FCS coordinates its efforts with other sections within the embassy and the consulates general. It works jointly with the economic section and the consuls general to brief U.S. business representatives, conduct advocacy, and intervene to resolve problems. FCS regularly arranges trade missions in both directions (American firms to Saudi Arabia, and Saudi firms to the United States). FCS occupies space in the cramped Dhahran Consulate General compound, which has strict security access measures. As a result, about half of the FCS meetings with both U.S. and Saudi business representatives are held in hotels or local private sector offices. (The consulate general's management is working with OBO to identify a site for a new compound in Dhahran.)

The Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) withdrew its American officer in 2002 for security reasons. In 2006, FAS resumed assignment of an American officer. The

agriculture attaché, who arrived in August 2009, is fluent in Arabic and experienced in the region. He oversees three LE specialists. The FAS office focuses on increasing exports of U.S. processed food products and bulk commodities, especially wheat, in the growing Saudi market. It coordinates well with the economic and FCS sections.

LAW ENFORCEMENT, COUNTERTERRORISM, AND NARCOTICS

The economic, political, political-military, consular, and regional security officers—as well as the legal, Department of the Treasury, Department of Defense, and Department of Homeland Security attachés—handle various responsibilities related to law enforcement and counterterrorism. Topics of concern include financial fraud, IPR violations, bulk cash smuggling, arms smuggling, and nonproliferation. The new OPM-MOI initiative, dealing with Saudi critical infrastructure protection, engages some of the same Saudi offices with which the mission has law enforcement and counterterrorism cooperation. It is important for mission elements to understand the scope and status of each other's work clearly in order to avoid the risk of duplication of effort and to help present a unified U.S. approach to Saudi counterparts.

There is no assistance funding from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Saudi authorities under-report narcotics trafficking. The potential growth in the Kingdom of narcotics crime with possible links to terrorism financing warrants additional mission attention. The Department of Homeland Security/Immigration and Customs Enforcement (DHS/ICE) attaché maintains liaison with DHS Customs and Border Protection colleagues, and with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration representative in Amman, Jordan. The law enforcement working group should include in its agenda information and activities on narcotics crime.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Riyadh should establish a law enforcement working group led by the deputy chief of mission, involving all relevant mission elements; the working group should include narcotics, counterterrorism, and nonproliferation as issues of concern. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

OFFICE OF PROGRAM MANAGEMENT-MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

Mission Saudi Arabia's greatest logistical challenge in the period ahead will be the implementation of the U.S.-Saudi Arabia Technical Cooperation Agreement. Under this agreement, the OPM-MOI will coordinate the transfer of technical knowledge, skills, and resources from the United States to help the Kingdom protect its critical infrastructure and public security. Already, the Department of Defense is training a 35,000-member Facility Security Force, to protect up to 294 industrial sites in Saudi Arabia, while the Department of Energy is assessing the vulnerabilities of Saudi industrial sites and providing technical assistance to the Saudi Ministry of the Interior. Cooperation on diplomatic security is under way, and in time, U.S.-Saudi cooperation will extend to maritime and cyber-security, as well.

The Department has placed a retired major general in limited, non-career appointment status in Riyadh, to oversee implementation of OPM-MOI. A three-person contract staff in the Department supports OPM-MOI in Washington. The Department soon will issue a Request For Proposal to staff approximately 12 positions in Riyadh, with a target of December 2009 to fill these positions. In the interest of rapid staffing, the key positions of deputy director, management officer, financial management officer, and procurement officer initially will be filled by contractors. The director has requested that the Department staff these inherently governmental positions with direct-hires within a year.

The Saudi Government is defraying all expenses for OPM-MOI, including salaries, housing, transportation, and security. It has transferred \$37 million to the U.S. Treasury for start-up financing in 2009. Annual expenditures in future years will be on the scale of hundreds of millions of dollars.

OPM-MOI personnel will initially occupy a building that the Saudis are renovating for the purpose in Riyadh's diplomatic quarter. Within two to three years, OPM-MOI will consolidate its operations in a compound that the Saudis will construct, also in the diplomatic quarter. At that time, it will be possible to co-locate all elements of the program in the compound, in close proximity to the Saudi Interior Ministry. Doing so would be a prudent means of maximizing the effectiveness of resources at OPM-MOI's disposal and aligning all elements' operations in pursuit of common goals.

The OIG team assesses that Riyadh- and Washington-based principals are proceeding with full attention to management controls and policy coherence. The priority the Ambassador has given to the project and the support it is receiving from the embassy bode well for the program's successful establishment. A steering

group comprised of senior level representatives from the Department and the Saudi Ministry of the Interior meets periodically. In addition, the Saudi Arabia desk in the Department monitors OPM-MOI's operations and reports periodically to principals as OPM-MOI stands up. It will be critical to the program's success that the Department maintain substantive focus, senior-level oversight policy support.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Riyadh, should designate and amend work requirements for an action officer within the bureau to monitor Office of Program Management/Minister of Interior activities and provide support to senior level steering group members. (Action: NEA, in coordination with Embassy Riyadh)

Even with the influx of staff, OPM-MOI requirements may burden embassy staff in the short term. Operating on the model of a consulate, OPM-MOI has planned training with embassy personnel, who are comprised of both LE and contract staff. While this will accelerate the new staff's ability to assume their functions, program requirements will likely outpace their deployment, further burdening management personnel.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The public affairs section (PAS) in Riyadh and its counterparts in Jeddah and Dhahran carry out a coordinated program of speakers, performances, exhibitions, exchanges, and educational advising. Officials in Washington praise their accomplishments, which they have achieved in spite of the cultural and bureaucratic obstacles they face. Building on and expanding this program base is the challenge for public diplomacy in Saudi Arabia.

Ten Foreign Service officers are assigned to public diplomacy positions in Saudi Arabia—six in Riyadh, three in Jeddah, and one in Dhahran. This is sufficient to handle the present level of program activity. The American staff is at full strength, but it is new on the ground. Only the embassy public affairs officer (PAO) has been in country for more than a year; the others, three months or less. Short-term assignments preclude long-term relationships with Saudi contacts.

Seventeen third-country national and American LE staff support the American officers. An eligible family member OMS also works for the PAO in Riyadh.

The public diplomacy effort in Saudi Arabia would benefit from the addition of an English language officer specialist position. The government closure of the PAS-affiliated English program deprived PAS of a tool for reaching the important Saudi youth cohort. The PAO believes an English language officer will greatly help mission efforts to promote education reform, increase programs to nongovernmental organizations and underserved areas of Saudi society, and serve as an anchor for contacts with the academic community.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should develop quantitative evidence documenting the need for an English language officer, and should use that documentation to request an English language officer position in the 2012 Mission Strategic Plan. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with NEA and HR)

Planning and Assessment

The PAO told OIG that, while the Mission Strategic Plan outlines goals, he did not find it useful for tactical planning. The PAS did not have its own operational strategy during the past year, and it continues to lack a road map for long-term planning. The embassy's new leadership has given the PAS a clear sense of direction, but the public affairs strategy is a work in progress.

There is a need for a written institutional analysis. Rapid turnover of American staff has reduced the section's knowledge of and familiarity with the major players at key Saudi organizations. The OIG team informally recommended that Embassy Riyadh finalize a mission-wide written institutional analysis.

The public affairs sections in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran use the software program Mission Activity Tracker to track public diplomacy programming. In general, the system works well.

Administrative Issues

The PAO in Riyadh deals with budget and administrative matters, at the expense of planning and programming. He distributes program and representation funding to Jeddah and Dhahran, as well as to Riyadh. He must approve even minor expenses and addresses issues such as year-end procurement. Adding administrative duties to

the OMS position description, together with devolution of some financial management responsibilities to the consulate general PAOs, would lessen his administrative load.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Riyadh should direct the public affairs officer to rewrite the Riyadh office management specialist position description to include relevant budget and administrative responsibilities. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Space is an issue for PAS Riyadh. In a reconfiguration of offices, the section will lose two offices to a new section. The overall reduction of space will reduce the area available for periodic storage of items such as printed material used in support of the Riyadh International Book Fair. Therefore, the OIG team has informally recommended that the PAO work with the general services office (GSO) to identify appropriate warehouse space for short- and long-term PAS storage.

Information Advocacy and Media Outreach

The information officer serves as the press attaché. The embassy has a written media policy that designates him as the embassy's point of contact with Saudi and foreign media. He supervises two Americans and five LE staff. Lines of responsibility are clear. Consumers in Saudi Arabia and in Washington value the information unit's regular reporting and analysis.

An LE staff member heads the information resource center. Most reference work is limited to electronic requests. The director does outreach to Saudi media. The information resource center represents the embassy at the Riyadh International Book Fair, which is a major program focus.

The PAS in Riyadh maintains the embassy's English-language Internet site at <http://riyadh.usembassy.gov>. The webmaster also maintains the Internet site for Dhahran; Jeddah's PAS is responsible for its own Web site. For technical reasons, these web sites appear only in English. A separate, Arabic-language embassy Internet site is under construction.

Social Media

Social media have the potential to be important outreach tools for public diplomacy in Saudi Arabia. The PAS in Riyadh maintains an Arabic-language embassy

Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/USEmbassySaudiArabia>. The section has opened a YouTube account that is not yet active, although it has written and produced a video on education advising. The PAS also has a Twitter account, but has not started to use it.

The section is making good progress incorporating Facebook into its mix of outreach tools. YouTube video outreach in Arabic holds promise for increasing awareness of services of the education advising offices. Over time, the PAS may find that the usefulness of Twitter as a way to inform Saudi contacts about programs is hampered by embassy security requirements regarding public announcements of cultural or other events.

Public Diplomacy Outreach

The cultural affairs officer supervises an assistant cultural affairs officer and five LE staff. The cultural unit engages with high priority audiences through a variety of traditional program tools. However, in many cases the Saudi Government does not approve visas or give permission to hold programs until the last minute. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' insistence that staff of a foreign mission receive permission via a diplomatic note, even to call an official Saudi contact, will add hours to what is already a long program process.

PAS makes excellent countrywide use of the International Visitor Leadership Program. A mission selection committee, involving the embassy as well as the consulates general in Jeddah and Riyadh, nominates candidates. PAS also makes use of the Voluntary Visitor Program.

PAS maintains a small noncommission Fulbright program. Security and other recruiting issues have reduced American participation. Saudi Fulbright scholars and graduate students will attend U.S. universities this year. PAS and Washington elements are satisfied with the program at its present level. PAS makes good use of the Humphrey Fellowship Program.

Education is a societal preoccupation in Saudi Arabia. The number of students seeking an education in the United States is growing rapidly. The LE education advising office staff in Riyadh, and their counterparts in Jeddah and Dhahran, provide thousands of prospective students with information that is unavailable elsewhere on U.S. study opportunities. The recent trebling of one popular government scholarship program alone will add to their work.

Grants Management

There are three warranted grants officers in PAS Riyadh. PAS wrote grants totaling approximately \$56,000 in FY 2009. Record-keeping is good.

The PAOs in Jeddah and Riyadh both completed grants officer training. Despite the fact that grants could be issued more quickly and efficiently by the PAOs in those consulates general, the PAO in Riyadh has not approved their warrant applications, because he prefers that the assistant cultural affairs officer handle all grants.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Riyadh should direct the public affairs officer to approve the grants officer warrant applications of the public affairs officers in Jeddah and Dhahran, so that they may handle grants in their consular districts. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

The public diplomacy officer is Embassy Riyadh's point of contact for all Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) activities in Saudi Arabia. She is a warranted grants officer and functions as the sole MEPI grant project officer in Saudi Arabia. The public diplomacy officer has a grant project officer memorandum for grants on record in the MEPI office in Abu Dhabi, but has no copies of the grant project officer memoranda. The OIG team informally recommended that she obtain a copy of each memorandum for her own records.

Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy – Consulate General Jeddah

The PAO position in Jeddah was vacant for three years. The newly arrived PAO supervises two American officers and an LE staff of five. PAS Jeddah carries out an ambitious range of program activities throughout the country's western provinces.

PAS Jeddah oversees the sole American Corner in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi partner has not promoted it well, and access to it has been limited. Reporting on its activities has been spotty. The new PAO has yet to evaluate the partner's support and the Corner's usefulness. The Bureau of International Information Programs provides oversight of and funding for all American Corner operations, and the regional information resource officer should be part of the evaluation.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Riyadh, through the public affairs officer in Jeddah and in consultation with the regional information resource officer, should evaluate the American Corner in Jeddah to determine if its operations should continue. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with IIP)

The PAO of Consulate General Jeddah told the OIG team that he had a “handshake” agreement with the embassy’s PAO regarding program funding for PAS Jeddah. The OIG team has recommended informally that he negotiate a written agreement.

PAS Jeddah should have more space in the new consulate building, which is scheduled for occupancy in 2010. The planning of the new facility was done in a different security and programming environment. There may be a greater need for public access space for education advising, among other activities than was anticipated during the facility planning. The OIG team has recommended informally that the PAO start planning the section’s move now, and work with the consulate general’s management officer to firmly designate public access program space.

The locally employed staff member in charge of education advising in PAS Jeddah has the same or similar responsibilities as her counterparts in Riyadh and Dhahran. However, her job title (education assistant) differs from theirs (education advisors), even though the job description seems to be the same. The OIG team has left an informal recommendation that the PAO consult with the human resources office there, to make sure that her job description, grade, and title conform to her actual job situation.

PAS Jeddah has television receive-only equipment in its conference room, but the equipment is not operating and has not been used for at least five years, and perhaps longer. This equipment is not attached to a satellite dish antenna, and it did not appear on any inventory shown to the OIG team. The team recommended informally that the PAO in Jeddah work with the management officer there to determine the status and proper disposition of this equipment.

Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy – Consulate General Dhahran

The PAO in Dhahran supervises a public affairs assistant and an education advisor. The small operation outperforms its size. Not long after her arrival, the PAO arranged for the first PAS-sponsored performance held off the consulate general’s property in more than a decade. The section also has started to contribute to mission media reporting.

The public affairs assistant, the sole LE staff member, works on all cultural and information programs. He has worked for PAS for six years and is on his own for extended periods of time, but has never had U.S.-based public affairs training. The OIG team recommended, informally, that the PAO identify appropriate training for the public affairs assistant and support his application.

The education advisor's meeting and reference area shares space with the commercial section's library. There are no written rules about using the space for meetings with clients. The advisor also does not have a working computer for web-based testing or Internet access. The OIG team has left an informal recommendation that the PAO work with the economic-commercial officer to set up a shared Outlook calendar for joint scheduling. The team also recommended informally that the PAO obtain a working computer, printer, and appropriate furnishings for the advisor as soon as possible.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Embassy Riyadh offers a full range of consular services: Non immigrant visa (NIV) and immigrant visa (IV) processing, and American citizen services (ACS). The consulates general in Dhahran and Jeddah also handle NIVs and ACS, and accept IV petitions. As mentioned previously, however, Consulate General Jeddah's consular services have been minimal since the terrorist attacks there in 2004.

While the consular sections are well integrated into the embassy's operations, the entire mission will need to work together to achieve the Ambassador's wish to double NIV production in the next four years. The embassy's consul general regularly attends emergency action committee meetings and coordinates the monthly Visas Viper meeting, which the DCM chairs. The consul general has regularly scheduled, one-on-one meetings with the DCM and has access to the Ambassador.

Provision of ACS in an extremely difficult environment is commendable. In contrast, visa processing in Saudi Arabia is inefficient. Visa appointment wait times for Dhahran and Riyadh are the third and fourth longest in the world, while the adjusted NIV refusal rate for Saudis is only 3.5 percent. Because of the pressure of appointment backlogs, this section's management is focusing on short-term production of visa interviews, rather than activities that provide long-term benefits (such as training and public outreach). At a highly successful offsite meeting held in Riyadh October 21, 2009, the mission consular team discussed ways to work together better and increase efficiency.

To follow up on the results of this offsite meeting, and to increase communication among consular sections, the OIG team has informally recommended that Embassy Riyadh communicate with the consular managers throughout the mission at least monthly, via digital video conference or telephonic conference calls.

Consular Management

The consul general in Riyadh, who has countrywide responsibilities, arrived three months before the inspection. He visited Jeddah for just one day, and has not yet gone to Dhahran.

Staffing gaps have affected the section's ability to provide efficient, high quality services. The deputy consul general/NIV unit chief is an FS-2 position filled by an FS-3 officer, and the FS-2 ACS/IV position has been vacant since December 6, 2008. A GSO specialist has encumbered the FS-3 consular management position, but actually is filling the vacant FS-2 ACS/IV slot. Despite these apparent mismatches, both officers are doing excellent work. As of mid-October 2009, none of the ELOs had handle visas before arriving in Riyadh. The lack of seasoned consular management and experienced line officers has significantly affected Riyadh's productivity.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and Human Resources, should fill Embassy Riyadh's FS-2 ACS/IV unit chief position with experienced temporary duty consular officers, until an experienced officer can be assigned permanently. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with CA and DGHR)

At both Jeddah and Dhahran, all of the LE staff members report directly to the consul. Therefore, the consul has to personally supervise and rate all of the employees in the section, including both US and LE personnel. The OIG team has left an informal recommendation that Embassy Riyadh establish supervisory LE staff positions at the consulates general in Jeddah and Dhahran, to take on this function.

American Citizen Services

American citizen services (ACS) in Saudi Arabia are critically important, as there are a large numbers of Americans living and working in a high terror-threat environment. The plight of American women and children who are held against their will by Saudi husbands and fathers further raises the visibility of ACS' work. The

2011 Mission Strategic Plan lists an ACS goal that focuses on improving emergency communications and gaining freedom of movement for American citizens who are involved in family disputes.

Consular sections are handling both routine and extraordinary cases well, as consular sections in Saudi Arabia have directed adequate resources to this critical activity.

Consular/Public Diplomacy

The public diplomacy side of consular work in Saudi Arabia is important, as long wait times for visa appointments and perceived discriminatory processing send a signal to the Saudi traveling public that the United States does not respect them. The Ambassador is concerned that the United States is losing its market share Saudi education and travel business.

Consular operations offer an outstanding opportunity to positively influence the tens of thousands of Saudi citizens who must come personally to the U.S. mission's consular sections for services. With this in mind, the OIG team has recommended informally that the embassy ensure that consular signage is clear, accurate, and welcoming, and that the embassy meet with all involved parties to discuss better coordination and communication regarding the provision of visa services.

The quality of consular services online is equally important. Consular web pages are out of date, contain expired and incorrect links, and are not presented in Arabic. The appointment provider uses inaccurate data for visa appointment wait times. Therefore, the OIG team has recommended informally that Embassy Riyadh review the embassy's and consulates general's consular web pages for completeness, functionality, and accuracy, including visa information in both English and Arabic.

Fraud Prevention Management

Saudi Arabia is not currently a high-fraud environment. Some 86 percent of all NIV cases are Saudi nationals, who historically have neither overstayed their visas nor used fraud to procure immigration benefits. Most third-country nationals do not intend to become immigrants, as they usually are traveling with their employers and must rely on local sponsors to obtain a Saudi visa.

Fraud prevention management is a growing concern, however, due to rapid population growth and low employment growth, as well as the continuing fear that terrorists might use false travel documents to gain entry into the United States. Nonetheless, an assistant regional security officer-investigator is not warranted at this

Recommendation 14:

Visa Security Units

The Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement manages visa security units in all three visa issuing locations. The office in Riyadh has six full-time positions: five U.S. citizens, and one LE investigator. It has sent a full-time officer to Dhahran to support NIV operations there, and an officer to Jeddah as needed to process visas there. According to the officer in charge, only about 60 per cent of their resources are being used for visa review, although he noted that visas were his first priority and said that he would scale up to 100 per cent, if needed.

Relations between the consular sections and their visa security units were uniformly positive. Turnaround on most cases is within 24 hours, so that consular processing is not unduly delayed.

In the rare instances in which the Department of Homeland Security disagrees with the vice consul's decision, the visa security units do not recommend issuance. This puts the consular officer in the difficult position of issuing the visa against informal advice of the Department of Homeland Security – absent a legal basis for the refusal – or refusing the visa, when the facts of the case support issuance. The

Experienced LE staff members in Jeddah provide prompt and efficient ACS. For example, they already had created a plan to deal with possible contingencies related to a possible H1N1 outbreak during the Hajj pilgrimage. Because of the generous staffing levels, the ACS assists with processing NIVs on the two days per fortnight that the section interviews visa applicants.

The consul essentially works alone, in an environment that has a full range of difficult and sensitive cases, with an entry-level officer devoting ten per cent of his time to consular work in support. As a result, the OIG team found several anomalies (related to the referral program, adjudication review, and cash accounting) that would have been less likely, had there been a second, full time officer at post.

The consular section in Jeddah presently is utilizing a small fraction of its physical capacity, because the security office limits the number of visa applicants it allows on the compound each day. While security concerns will always limit production, NIV appointments could increase by up to a factor of four, if additional personnel resources were directed to visa processing. If more staff were dedicated to visa duty, the section would better utilize the space in Jeddah and could reduce internal controls vulnerabilities, reduce pressure for referrals, make better use of an existing U.S. government facility, and reduce visa appointment backlogs to the Bureau of Consular Affairs' standard of 20 days.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should develop a plan to increase visa production in Jeddah. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with CA and DGHR)

The consul in Jeddah is essentially working alone, and would benefit from additional contact from other experienced officers. The OIG team has informally recommended that, as long as there is only one full time officer at the Consulate General Jeddah, Embassy Riyadh should visit Jeddah at least twice quarterly, to provide consular oversight and guidance.

Consulate General Dhahran

The energetic FS-03 consular section chief in Dhahran leads a team of one full time vice consul and a ten percent part time officer. The workspace is cramped, but Dhahran management is considering strategies for expanding both the workspace and the number of interview windows. The proposed expansion into the spacious

waiting room has the added benefit of creating a cashier work area where access should be limited only to employees having official reasons for it, which would solve a long-standing management control vulnerability.

As in other Saudi consular sections, Dhahran is providing excellent ACS. The part time officer clears ACS workload first thing in the morning, freeing the consul to conduct interviews in the morning and handle more complex visa cases in the afternoon. When Dhahran sent out a warden message about violence along the Al-Khobar Corniche, it posted the information in the news section of its website, which was an innovative way to increase the visibility of the information.

Dhahran's NIV unit has good morale. The OIG team found no anomalies in its review of accountability and adjudication, aside from the consul's adjudications of three referrals from his spouse, the management officer. While the cases were all above board, the OIG team advised the consul not to adjudicate his spouse's visa referrals to avoid an appearance of a conflict of interest.

At 111 days, Dhahran's NIV appointment backlog is the third longest in the world (after Havana and Caracas), and this is a serious public relations concern. Responding to the staffing deficit, Consulate General Dhahran justified another full-time officer position through the MSP and NSDD-38 process. Filling this position will help reduce the backlog to the Bureau of Consular Affairs' 20-day standard, and it will help mitigate the negative perceptions of the United States caused by years of poor visa appointment availability. The OIG team has recommended informally that Embassy Riyadh act expeditiously on the request to make Dhahran's position number 100005 full time. The team feels that this request is justified, not only for the abovementioned reasons, but also because the current incumbent often works full time, although it is currently designated as a half-time position. Making this position fulltime would clarify the employee's status, while more accurately reflecting the needs of the consulate general.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureaus of Consular Affairs and Human Resources, should fill expeditiously Embassy Dhahran's newly justified entry-level officer position. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with CA and DGHR)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-hire Staff	U.S. Local-hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff⁴	Total Funding FY 2009 (US\$)
State – Diplomatic and Consular Programs ¹	115	4	45	164	\$6,425,838
State - ICASS	13	9	284	306	23,516,098
State - Public Diplomacy	10	1	20	31	1,666,374
State – Diplomatic Security ²	37	4	54	95	2,489,967
State – Office of Overseas Buildings Operations	7	None	13	20	7,245,559
State – Representation ³	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	239,414
Defense Attaché Office	10	None	5	15	454,912
Agricultural Trade Office	1	None	2	3	203,673
Foreign Commercial Service	6	None	24	30	1,362,351
Dept of Homeland Security - ICE	6	None	1	7	117,000
Dept of Justice – LEGATT	7	None	None	7	332,000
Dept of Treasury	2	None	None	2	240,000
OPM-MOI	1	None	None	1	16,569
NADR-EXBS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	350,000
IMET	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	58,000
TOTALS	215	18	448	681	\$44,717,755

1 – Includes DV and MRV funding.

2 – Includes MSG funding.

3 – Includes gift funds of \$168,614.

4 – Authorized positions

OVERVIEW

Management sections in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran function in a generally effective manner, and management personnel offer good service to their customers. There is sufficient American staffing to provide appropriate oversight in all management sections. The sections face the unique challenges of managing employees in this part of the world, with a diverse LE staff comprised of over 30 nationalities, few of whom are Saudis—and even the Saudis are diverse, including both Shi’a and Sunni Muslims. Despite the challenges, the LE personnel work together as an effective team, and in some cases even identify themselves as “family.” Many LE staff members have worked for the mission for many years and possess a great deal of knowledge and expertise; all take great pride in their work and in their loyalty to the United States Government. LE staff members in Jeddah and Dhahran are in regular communication with their counterparts in Riyadh, and they praised the cooperative nature of their relationship.

Management challenges include providing support for the newly created OPM-MOI operation (see discussion above), which will see up to 75 Department of State, Department of Energy, and Department of Defense direct-hire and contractor personnel arrive during the next year. OPM-MOI plans to have a separate support operation. However, the embassy management section has spent many hours assisting the current OPM-MOI staff and identifying long-term personnel support requirements for the program – and it will continue to do so until OPM-MOI’s team is in place. The mission also must begin planning now for the return of families, after the mission has spent several years with few dependents and no children in country. This change in the character of the embassy and the consulates general will have ramifications for housing assignments, GSO support, and motor pool usage—including support for female family members, who are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia. In Jeddah, the construction of a new housing and consulate compound is underway and will conclude in 2010. The move will result in some increases and some decreases in LE staff; planning is beginning now for the staffing changes which will take place after the move.

One-year tours and challenging workloads have resulted in some communication deficiencies within management, between management and other sections of the embassy, and between Embassy Riyadh and the two consulates general. In the case of the consulates general, this has resulted in misunderstandings about the reasons for policy changes; it also has caused a feeling among consulate personnel that embassy management does not take account of their concerns and differences. Visits have taken place in both directions between management personnel from the embassy and the consulates general, but these visits have been infrequent and ad hoc.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Riyadh should include on a regular basis the Consulates General Dhahran and Jeddah management sections in management staff meetings, via digital videoconference, and include the consulates general management staff in all meetings at which major management policy changes are discussed. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 21: Embassy Riyadh should institute a formal schedule whereby the embassy's key management section personnel (including American and locally employed staff) regularly visit their compatriots at Consulates General Dhahran and Jeddah, and the key management personnel at each of the consulates general regularly visit the embassy. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Embassy Riyadh's financial management unit (including the class B cashiers in the Consulates General Jeddah and Dhahran) is doing an admirable job providing services to its International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) customers. An American financial management officer (FMO), whose previous tour was as post management officer in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, supervises 14 LE staff members in the financial management unit. The LE staff was responsible for FY 2009 Department allotments of approximately \$41.6 million and provides financial services to the agricultural trade office, Foreign Commercial Service, and Defense attaché office.

Results of the 2009 ICASS customer satisfaction survey showed a drop in four of the five measured financial operations, as compared to 2008. When compared to NEA and worldwide averages for 2009, Embassy Riyadh exceeded both in three categories but showed mixed results in the other two. While there appear to be no discernable reasons for the survey results, dissatisfaction with E2 Solutions by both American and LE staff could have played a role.

During the OIG team's review of consulate general operations in both Jeddah and Dhahran, both consuls general complained of a lack of discretionary funding (such as travel, training, supplies, equipment, awards, and overtime) they receive from Embassy Riyadh. The OIG team informally recommended that Embassy Riyadh provide an operating allowance to each of the consulates general and continue to provide oversight.

While all three of the class B cashiers appear to be experienced, knowledgeable, and well trained, Jeddah's cashier needs assistance. This individual's lack of organization made it difficult for the team to verify his accountability and day-to-day operations. During the inspection, the embassy sent its alternate class B cashier to Jeddah to provide on-the-job training to both the cashier and his alternate, and the cashier will undergo a further week of training in Riyadh. This training is the first step in ensuring that the class B cashier in Jeddah has the level of expertise necessary to fulfill his responsibilities. The OIG team was impressed with Dhahran's cashier operations and informally recommends that the Dhahran cashier provide continuing oversight of Jeddah's cashier operation. Jeddah's alternate class B cashier has not received any formal cashier training and is scheduled to attend the Basic Cashiering course being offered by Financial Services Center Charleston in March 2010. The OIG team informally has recommended that Riyadh provide Jeddah with funding for this training.

Per Chapter 15 of the *Cashier Users Guide*, in-transit documents corresponding to each line on the cashier reconciliation statement are to be stored in the class B cashier's safe. Both Riyadh's and Jeddah's cashiers failed to do so. The OIG team informally has recommended that *Cashier Users Guide* be followed for the safekeeping of in-transit documents.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The mission's ICASS council includes representatives of the Departments of State, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, and Treasury. The Department of Energy and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also will join shortly. The commercial attaché chairs the council, having been elected to the position in May 2009. An experienced ICASS council chair, he found that Riyadh's ICASS council needed some organization.

Under the current ICASS council chair, the council has been revitalized. ICASS council meetings were held in August and October 2009 and will continue to be held quarterly. Participation is up, and the council is discussing ICASS issues that arise and taking and distributing meeting minutes.

The membership of the ICASS council at Embassy Riyadh does not conform to the revised guidance that the ICASS executive board issued in 2006. Per guidance from the Department, Embassy Riyadh has limited membership on its ICASS

council to reflect that of the Department's ICASS Executive Board, although it has retained two State and Homeland Security nonvoting members. These nonvoting members should become members of the newly established budget committee. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation to this effect.

The previous council did not fulfill its responsibility to provide input for the management counselor's evaluation. The OIG team informally recommended it do so.

Many ICASS participants do not believe that several agencies' long-term or serial TDY personnel are paying their full cost for ICASS services. The financial management center (FMC) told the OIG team that TDY workload was being captured under the parent agencies, without regard to whether the TDY in question was to fill an agency's vacant, direct-hire position, or to augment that agency's staff. The OIG team informally recommended that the FMO make a presentation at the next ICASS council meeting, detailing how it captures costs for TDY personnel. In addition, due to turnover of mission staff, many employees are unaware that a mission TDY policy exists. Therefore, the OIG team also recommended informally that Embassy Riyadh make incumbents aware of its mission-wide TDY policy, by reissuing its March 2009 announcement on the subject.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The human resources (HR) section has a unique and complex set of issues to manage. One-year, unaccompanied tours for Americans have just changed to two-year, accompanied tours for the next assignments cycle. The diverse LE staff includes employees from over 30 countries. The section must navigate two leave plans, two consulates general, and Saudi local and labor law practices. The embassy acts in a sponsorship capacity for most employees who work in the mission. The mission then becomes responsible for their work life in Saudi Arabia, and for paying their repatriation expenses at the end of their employment. The HR section also handles work visas for LE staff members and visas for Americans, so these employees can get in and out of the country for the duration of their assignment.

The HR section has a mixed reputation. The awards program and the process of employee evaluation reports both are well run. Sufficient training funds are available, few training requests are denied, and many employees have attended training outside the country. However, the HR section's communication on recruitment, employee benefits, and staffing issues often has been strained. Both direct-hire and LE staff

members told the OIG team about the previous human resources officer's lack of respect and their general lack of trust in the HR office. The report discusses this further in the section on locally employed staff (below).

Workforce Planning

In 2006, Mission Saudi Arabia participated in a rightsizing exercise with the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation (M/PRI); it subsequently updated the rightsizing report in March 2009. While many of the rightsizing report's staffing recommendations remain valid, significant changes have occurred in the focus of mission activities. For instance, there is a renewed focus on ramping up consular operations; OPM-MOI is increasing in scope; and the mission has just received approval for the return of families, after five years with few spouses and no school age children.

In response to rightsizing report recommendations, the embassy centralized recruitment functions and some procurement activities. However, procurement staffs in both consulates general remain too large for the volume of work they currently perform.

M/PRI also recommended that FMC reduce its LE staff by six positions, by transferring vouchering services to the post support unit located in Charleston, South Carolina and Bangkok, Thailand. FMC has lost three positions to attrition that it has not refilled. The processing of E2 Solutions (E2) travel vouchers for ICASS staff members has been transferred to the post support unit. With the implementation of E2, however, the FMC workload has not decreased, as envisaged. This is largely because the E2 system is complex; even though the FMC has trained various mission members to serve as E2 travel arrangers, the members require constant assistance. The FMO believes that reducing her staff by an additional position would not be manageable.

Poor communication between the embassy and the two consulates general has resulted in less than full cooperation on the workforce planning issues noted above. The consulates general are reluctant to eliminate positions, while Riyadh has sought to direct, rather than to coordinate, staffing issues there. As a result, positions which the mission should eliminate remain in place.

Recommendation 22: Embassy Riyadh should chair a mission-wide review of staffing with the consuls general and the management officers; this review should result in a workforce implementation plan. The Embassy should use the rightsizing report as the starting point for the discussion and update the report as necessary. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Locally Employed Staff

The OIG team met with the LE staff committees at each of the three locations in Saudi Arabia. All three had diverse representation and included LE staff members from different sections and varying grade levels and nationalities. Female employees were well represented on all committees. The committees put together impressive presentations and were candid in their assessments and comments. Each committee voiced appreciation for senior leadership's support, expressed concern about a perceived lack of respect from the embassy's HR operation, and expressed concerns about employee morale issues were similar across all three locations.

For budgetary reasons, LE staff members often are required to work for compensatory time, in lieu of overtime. Current guidance from the Department's Office of Human Resources/Overseas Employment (HR/OE) provides LE staff members with only eight pay periods in which to use compensatory time. The mission's workload often prevents LE staff members from using their earned compensatory time in that short timeframe, and as a result, they lose it. This dilemma is not unique to Embassy Riyadh, and the Bureau of Human Resources (HR) is aware that it is a worldwide issue. HR currently is developing a global policy to allow LE staff 26 pay periods to use their earned compensatory time.

The mission's local leave plan provides that LE staff members can use only annual leave, not sick leave, to attend to an ill family member. Because women are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia, often both men and women stay home with sick children or spouses. In addition, even with a nonworking spouse, men must stay home in order to drive a wife or child to the doctor. As with the issue of LE compensatory time cited above, the Department is aware that this problem is not limited to this particular mission; HR currently is developing a global policy to allow LE staff to use sick leave to care for family members.

The mission previously gave employees a monetary homeward passage allowance as a monetary payment with no strings attached. However, as a cost-saving measure, the embassy changed course a year ago, and employees now receive a ticket from

the embassy's travel contractor and must use it within a short timeframe. LE staff members believe that the current homeward passage requirements are too restrictive. The embassy has agreed to review the revised homeward passage benefit in a year, to determine how well it has worked and whether to retain or change the policy.

Recommendation 23: Embassy Riyadh should include locally employed staff members from Riyadh, Dhahran, and Jeddah in its discussions regarding changes to the locally employed staff benefits before making any final decisions and before transmitting information related to benefits to the Bureau of Human Resources in Washington; the embassy also should discuss any changes in benefits with locally employed staff as far in advance as possible. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

LE staff noted that the embassy's exit visa policy currently requires an American supervisor to sign an employee's request for an exit visa, allowing that employee's spouse or child to travel out of Saudi Arabia. This requirement imposes an unnecessary restriction on freedom of movement.

Recommendation 24: Embassy Riyadh should change the exit visa request form to eliminate the requirement for an American supervisor's signature before an employee can request an exit visa for his/her family to travel out of Saudi Arabia. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

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The mission recently switched its health insurance policy for LE staff from Alico to Malath. Alico had the contract for at least 20 years. The new insurer is a Saudi company and, as a relative newcomer to the market, is not well known, even in the local hospitals. LE staff members complain that the company is slow to give necessary approvals for medical services and follow up visits. The embassy has brought these issues to the attention of the company and has organized town meetings with Malath officials in Riyadh and at the consulates general. The OIG team informally recommended that Embassy Riyadh closely monitor contractor performance and take remedial action if problems persist.

GENERAL SERVICES

Across the board, consistently high ICASS customer satisfaction survey scores attest to the high quality of services that the GSO in Riyadh delivers. Much of the credit goes to the LE staff's conscientiousness and commitment, despite the frequent rotations of American officers. The supervisory general services officer departed post during the inspection; in the interim, two assistant general services officers, who are on their first tours, managed the section's efficient operations. The new supervisory general services officer was well received and is open to guiding and sharing knowledge with the staff.

Procurement

Riyadh's seven-person procurement team employs the full range of available means to acquire goods and services to the satisfaction of users. One of NEA's top LE procurement specialists leads the staff, and travels around the region training and assisting neighboring posts. Embassy Riyadh administers all contracts for the mission (except for the gardening and air conditioning maintenance contracts, which the embassy let in 2006), including the local guard contract. In mid-2009, mission management also centralized all procurement actions with a value of \$3,000 or more at Embassy Riyadh.

Consulate General Jeddah has four LE staff purchasing agents; Consulate General Dhahran has two. Procedures often result in wasted effort and weak controls. Dhahran has been without a general services officer for more than ten years, and it has no standard operating procedures or effective systems in place for monitoring the status of procurement actions. Spreadsheets for tracking procurements provide a less than full picture. Annotations are missing regarding when the consulate general requested funding from FMC Riyadh or when the funding was received; also

missing are annotations regarding whether actions were partially or fully completed, and when payments were issued to vendors. Consulate general staff complained about delays. Actions go directly to FMC for funding, without the benefit of Embassy Riyadh reviewing procurement, and they frequently do not comply with the \$3,000 limitation. Files are often incomplete and sometimes duplicative. Purchasing agents prepare multiple purchase orders for the same vendor, instead of one with multiple lines of fiscal code. The staff frequently creates several folders for credit card transactions, when one would do.

It is likely that the procurement staffing at both consulates general will exceed the needs once procedures are established and implemented, and once operations are running smoothly. Until Embassy Riyadh is able to review staffing among the three locations, the staff will continue procuring goods and services for the consulates general, and they will continue to need training and support. The ICASS workload counts show that Riyadh's seven procurement employees process three times the number of actions than do the consulates general's six procurement staff members. Centralizing procurement (other than petty cash transactions) in Riyadh is appropriate, will reduce cost, and will improve oversight and consistency.

Recommendation 26: Embassy Riyadh should send the locally employed procurement and contracting supervisor to review operations, establish procedures, and train the staff at the consulates general. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 27: Embassy Riyadh should include in the abovementioned training the general service officers at the consulates general so they can learn how to supervise locally employed procurement staff properly, make recommendations for process improvements, and implement better procedures. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Ensuring that contractors comply with the intent of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, as it relates to the protection and treatment of contractors' employees, is a significant challenge for Mission Saudi Arabia. The United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended, guides efforts to combat human trafficking. To prevent trafficking in persons from occurring in connection with U.S. Government-funded contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, Congress authorized agencies to terminate any such agreement, if the recipients engage in forms of trafficking in persons during the period of time the award is in effect.

contract, under which the mission elected to use Carlson Wagonlit Travel's onsite services as part of the task order that the Department is using as its contract vehicle for Travel Management Center support. The services and price information in the task order include transaction fees and hourly labor costs, but it does not include a management fee, as was specified in the expired GSA master travel contract. The OIG team confirmed with the embassy's transportation and travel division that the mission has a valid contract vehicle in place. However, the mission (likely due to frequent officer rotations) was unaware that the old contract had expired and was continuing to pay the management fee, which cost \$115,600 in FY 2009. (It is unclear whether Mission Saudi Arabia would have paid more or less under the terms and conditions of the new travel contract.) It appears that the embassy and Carlson Wagonlit Travel are not yet complying with the terms and conditions required under the new contract. During the inspection, the transportation and travel division initiated corrective action to bring both the mission and the travel company into compliance with the Department's task order.

ACE Travel submits monthly invoices and supporting documentation (for Riyadh only) to the GSO. The GSO approves the invoices for payment, without reconciling the supporting documents, and forwards them to the FMC for voucher processing and certification. The FMC does not verify the invoices for accuracy and correctness before certifying the vouchers for payment. Virtually every step of the process needs correction.

American supervisors do not fully understand their role in the payment process, nor are they providing proper supervision of the LE staff in both the GSO and the FMC. The LE staff members are doing what they think is correct, but they have not received adequate guidance. The frequent American staff turnover has exacerbated the lack of controls over payment for travel services.

No one in the mission knows whether they are paying too much or too little for travel services. Fixing these control issues will be especially important as the new pricing structure comes into force.

Approving or receiving officers are responsible for the completeness, validity, and quality of services covered by a voucher, 4 FAM 424. The certification and payment of vouchers require verifying the accuracy and correctness of information contained not only in the vouchers but also in the supporting documents, to ensure there are no discrepancies, according to 4 FAH-3 H-433.2. In addition, 4 FAH-3 H-065.2-2 indicates that American FMOs in missions with an LE certifying officer should conduct unannounced reviews of the vouchers that have been certified by LE staff.

Certifying officers, especially LE certifying officers, may not be required to certify a voucher. When a certifying officer has concerns with certifying a payment, the certifying officer should transmit the questionable voucher promptly to the Bureau of Resources Management (RM/GFS/OMA) for review and guidance. The OIG team informally recommended that, in the future, when ACE Travel invoices are submitted for payment without supporting documents, they should be transmitted to RM/GFS/OMA for their review and guidance.

Recommendation 30: Embassy Riyadh should review the process for receipt, verification, approval, and certification of invoices. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 31: Embassy Riyadh should conduct unannounced reviews of vouchers certified by locally employed staff, as prescribed in 4 FAH-3 H-065-.2-2 (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Motor Pool

Motor pool operations in Riyadh and Dhahran, which have experienced LE supervisors, run smoothly and receive high marks for service and reliability. Consulate General Jeddah's customers, however, complained of poor service and rudeness. In discussions with the motor pool supervisor about problems in the section, the team found his answers were often confusing. There were allegations of discrimination against non-Arabs (the minority in the motor pool) related to training, assignments, and opportunities to earn overtime. The motor pool supervisor earned the most overtime, followed by five others, based on time and attendance records through mid October. There may be valid reasons to assign certain chauffeurs to specific assignments. However, allegations of favoritism merit the recently arrived general services officer's attention.

Recommendation 32: Embassy Riyadh should send the motor pool supervisor and assistant general services officer to Consulate General Jeddah to review operations, investigate allegations of discrimination and favoritism, and establish operating procedures. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

The OIG team conducted a physical inventory of Department of State vehicles and compared the count to the inventory of the mission's on-hand vehicles, reported via the Department's integrated logistics management system.

Embassy Riyadh: The report dated October 4, 2009, lists 96 vehicles on hand. During a review of the inventory, the motor pool supervisor expressed frustration over inconsistencies in reports. For example, a vehicle missing from that report was listed on the same inventory report generated on October 30. Another vehicle was found on the data questionnaire report; and, a non-Department of State vehicle, previously not included in the Department's inventory, showed up on October 4. Five vehicles that were transferred to Dhahran and reported to the Department in December 2008 remain in Riyadh's inventory, due to a systems error. The OIG team also noted several alphanumeric discrepancies in the vehicle identification numbers. The team could not identify the vehicle identification numbers for two vehicles because they were in transit at the time.

Consulate General Jeddah: The report dated February 16, 2009, lists 49 vehicles on hand. The OIG team noted some alphanumeric discrepancies in the VIN numbers, and accounted for three vehicles by reference to disposal documentation.

Consulate General Dhahran: The report dated February 8, 2009, lists 24 vehicles. Four vehicles of the five transferred from Riyadh, as well as the consul general's new vehicle, were not included on the report. Five vehicles (one of which was transferred from Riyadh) were accounted for in disposal documentation.

Recommendation 33: Embassy Riyadh should review Consulate General Jeddah and Consulate General Dhahran vehicle inventory discrepancies and make the necessary corrections in the integrated logistics management system. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 34: The Bureau of Administration, in coordination with Embassy Riyadh, should correct errors in the integrated logistics management system, in order to accurately document the transfer of vehicles from Embassy Riyadh to Consulate General Dhahran's inventory. (Action: A)

Property Management

Property management operations are well organized and well run. The Riyadh LE supply supervisor prioritizes and tracks the work, which includes conducting inventories, inspections, make-ready cleaning of residences, and the delivery of furnishings.

The property management unit conducts its annual inventory and submits results to the Department, as required. Missing property in FY 2008 totaled \$18,688, or 0.18 percent of the total nonexpendable inventory. The monetary amount was well below the 1 percent threshold that requires special action by the embassy, but the losses are of concern nonetheless, since many of the items were located in controlled access areas. The OIG team informally recommended that the information program center and property management staffs work closely to improve accountability of equipment.

With an eye toward thriftiness, the embassy has retained older property that takes up limited storage space. The nonexpendables warehouse, located about a 15-minute drive from the chancery, is neat but full. Items, including public diplomacy equipment and official U.S. Government residence property, are stored in a separate building on the annex compound. The change in tour-of-duty length, and the pending increase in weight allowance to a full shipment of effects, may further strain storage capacity. The OIG team informally recommended that the assistant general services officer in charge of property spend more time at the annex to manage property and to determine whether items should be disposed of or reconditioned.

Housing

No one raised housing issues. As a matter of fact, the housing board chair praised the assistant general services officer in charge for responsiveness, willingness to work with board members, and the ability to hold errant landlords accountable. This amiable relationship bodes well for the future, when the mission welcomes back dependents.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Embassy Riyadh's facility management ICASS survey scores were among the highest in the world. Until recently, two facility managers in Riyadh managed the facility maintenance workload for the embassy and both consulates general. The expe-

rienced senior facility manager has been in Riyadh for a year, and has been extended for a second year. The junior facility manager position recently shifted to Jeddah in preparation for the move to the new consulate compound (NCC). Facilities LE staff members in all three locations are responsive and handle changes to task orders with ease.

The facility manager in Riyadh has just received approval from the ICASS council to hire a fulltime LE occupational safety and health assistant, and hiring will proceed once funding is received. The facility management section is in the process of establishing semi-annual safety checks and quarterly preventive maintenance checks of all residences. Some windows in Saudi houses are too small for proper egress, in the case of fire, and the facility manager has worked with landlords to replace them with windows that meet occupational safety and health standards.

All of the mission's property is under long term lease from the Saudi Government. The chancery and all embassy housing are located in the diplomatic quarter in Riyadh. Housing is a mix of long term and short term leased units. Several units are within easy walking distance of the chancery. There is a warehouse and maintenance shop space on a separate compound, located a 15-minute drive from the embassy. The alternate safe haven is also located on the warehouse compound, as are recreation facilities.

The current consulate in Dhahran has many small buildings spread across a large compound. Some of these spaces are under-utilized; others are very cramped. Dhahran needs to identify space for gardeners and char force contractors to eat lunch, get out of the sun, and have access to a refrigerator for food storage. The consular section needs expansion space. The recreation center is under-utilized. The OIG team informally recommended that the consulate make better use of the recreation facility and work a solution for the consular section. A new consulate compound in Dhahran is slated for FY 2011 on OBO's priority list. Work is underway to locate and procure a site for that purpose.

Construction has begun on a new consulate and housing compound (NCC) in Jeddah. The Jeddah compound is scheduled for completion in July 2010, but that date may slip. The mission worked with OBO to identify eight new LE staff positions to maintain the NCC's utility systems. The ICASS council has approved the hiring for these positions. The senior facility manager in Riyadh has technical expertise and experience that Consulate General Jeddah could tap into, in order to assist in hiring the new facilities management staff for the new consulate compound. Therefore, the OIG team informally recommended that Riyadh's facility manager participate in all interviews and hiring decisions for the new maintenance staff.

Recommendation 36:

Dedicated Internet Network

The embassy has a dedicated Internet network connection that is used for re-
search on the Internet. The dedicated Internet network is connected to an external
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Server Room Temperature Sensor

The embassy and consulates general do not have a device to determine overheating in the server rooms. The server rooms were not built to specification. According to 12 FAM 629.4-4c “abroad, the senior information management officer, the data center manager or system manager, in conjunction with the GSO, ensure that air conditioning and humidity controls and gauges are installed in the computer room,

as appropriate, to ensure that the environment in the computer room is maintained within the specifications established by the AIS equipment manufacturers.” The information systems center room needs some type of device to notify the marine guard on duty in the event of an overheating condition. If the server room overheats, the equipment may malfunction, unnecessarily causing costly damage and loss of access to the intranet, email, and Internet.

Recommendation 38: Embassy Riyadh should install a temperature monitoring device that notifies Post One or a person in the event of overheating of the information systems center in the embassy and consulates general. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

The information management staff members of Embassy Riyadh do not have individual development plans. Personnel have been serving one-year tours until recently, and individual development plans have been overlooked. 5 FAM 121.1 b. (3) (d) states: “The IMO works with subordinates to develop an individual development plan (IDP) that ensures that their training and development needs are met.” If individual development plans are not created, personnel will not receive the training they need to progress in their careers. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the embassy resolve this situation.

Embassy Riyadh does not have host nation approval for the radio frequencies it uses. The files contain a letter requesting host nation approval, but there is no response from host nation. According to 5 FAM 541 c., “The Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations and customary international law require host country consent before installing and using wireless transmitters.” In order to comply with the Vienna Conventions, host nation approval is required. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation along these lines.

Embassy Riyadh and the consulates general have not fully completed all their information management-related standard operating procedures (SOPs). Until recently, Embassy Riyadh has been a one-year assignment, and SOPs have not been developed due to time constraints. The section should develop SOPs for all standard tasks performed by the information management staff. Standard tasks include, but are not limited to: account creation and deletion, backup of servers, patching, and antivirus deployment. SOPs prevent the loss of corporate knowledge that occurs with a transient staff. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation along these lines.

Best Practice: Maintaining Cyber-Security Awareness

Issue: It is mandatory that all personnel having login credentials on the OpenNet complete a cyber-security course once a year. The issue of keeping personnel current is a constant logistical problem for the information systems center. Embassy Riyadh also has problems with processing checkout of personnel from other agencies. They do not always check out with the embassy and this leaves login credentials that are inactive and pose a security risk if they are not disabled or deleted.

Response: The information systems security officer implemented a procedure at check in whereby the staff member has to present his or her cyber security awareness completion certificate, with its expiration date. When the system administrator creates the account, the expiration date of the cyber security awareness certificate is entered as the expiration date of the account.

Result: When a staff member's cyber security awareness certificate expires, the account is deactivated. To overcome this, the employee presents his or her updated cyber security awareness certificate, which he or she can do ahead of time to keep the account active. The information systems security officer no longer has to remind personnel repeatedly to take the course, because the database automatically reminds them that they must do so before their cyber security awareness certificate expires, or their account will no longer function. The system also automatically deactivates the accounts of any personnel who do not check out.

Recommendation 41:

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

The community liaison offices (CLOs) carry out an active program of new employee orientation and sponsorship, as well as cultural and social activities for the embassy community. Events are heavily attended, and attendees are complimentary about them. The CLO coordinators in Riyadh and Dhahran are enthusiastic and energetic. Riyadh's recently arrived coordinator received Family Liaison Office-sponsored training in September and has quickly organized interesting embassy activities and produced several excellent weekly newsletters. Dhahran's coordinator, with six months on the job, is also well organized and full of ideas. Upon assignment, officers receive details about housing and the work environment in Dhahran, and upon arrival they are met by sponsors who provide them with more information regarding their new consulate community.

Riyadh's CLO is in the process of improving the embassy's new arrival sponsorship program. The OIG team informally recommended that Consulate General Dhahran send its CLO coordinator to Riyadh, for Family Liaison Office training and to exchange experiences and ideas. Consulate General Jeddah's management officer effectively serves as the CLO coordinator, in the absence of an interested family member.

HEALTH UNIT

Embassy Riyadh's medical unit is comprised of one regional medical officer, one fulltime LE registered nurse, and two part-time LE registered nurses. Consulate General Jeddah has two part-time LE registered nurses, and Consulate General Dhahran has one fulltime LE registered nurse. In addition to serving the embassy, the regional medical officer has direct medical responsibility for the two consulates general, as well as Embassy Doha in Qatar, Embassy Kuwait City in Kuwait, and Embassy Manama in Bahrain.

All of the mission's health units receive regional support from a regional medical officer psychiatrist, who is based in Embassy Cairo and is backed up by the regional medical officer psychiatrist in Embassy Amman. The units provide primary care to American staff and (upon their return to Saudi Arabia) the families of American staff, as well as LE staff suffering from work-related injuries. The embassy and both consulates general have local medical advisors and local medical care providers who offer adequate secondary care. For more serious conditions, patients are sent to London, England or the United States.

All three health units consist of exam rooms, regional medical officer office, nurses' offices, pharmacies, laboratories, waiting rooms and storage. The health units in Jeddah and Dhahran are located in houses on each of the respective consulate compounds. Jeddah's health unit facility is more than adequate, but Dhahran's is less than adequate; in particular, it lacks storage, since the health unit must share space in the house with the military post office.

All medications are properly tagged and reviewed for expiration dates, and controlled substances are properly stored. Mindful of pandemic influenza concerns, the health units are stocked with a supply of gowns, goggles, masks, and gloves for care providers, and an adequate supply of Tamiflu. Hand sanitizer dispensers are placed strategically throughout the embassy and both consulates general. The mission held town hall meetings on the H1N1 influenza virus in Jeddah and Dhahran in August 2009 and in Riyadh during the course of the OIG inspection.

A recent incident in Dhahran's consular section reminded the mission of the seriousness of pandemic influenza. A student visa applicant diagnosed with H1N1 was removed from the section by the Saudi Ministry of Health and hospitalized, and all consular employees had their throats swabbed and received Tamiflu. Before reopening, the consular section was disinfected.

Automatic external defibrillators are placed throughout the embassy and consulates general. At the time of the OIG inspection, the regional medical officer provided first aid training to the Ambassador and consuls general security details, in each of the three mission locations.

Access to the health unit by TDY personnel serving longer than 60 days has become an issue. Per M/MED guidance, TDY personnel who serve longer than 60 days must have a medical clearance for continued health unit access. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the mission ensure that TDY personnel who remain more than 60 days have a medical clearance.

The OIG team learned that American supervisors sometimes have approached the health unit seeking a subordinate's health information. The Privacy Rule, a federal law, prohibits the use or sharing of an employee's health information with an employer without the employee's written permission. The OIG team informally recommended that the mission comply with the law regarding privacy of medical information.

RECREATION ASSOCIATIONS

The U.S. Embassy recreation association in Riyadh provides its members with a wide range of services, including management of TDY apartments; beverage and gift shop sales; themed parties; cafeteria, snack bar, and pub; video club; and spa and fitness center. The association meets its financial reporting obligations to the Department and has maintained its profitability, increasing its net profit from 6 percent in 2007 (on gross sales/services of \$1.21 million), to 14 percent in 2008 (on gross sales/services of \$1.50 million). Its latest financial audit, conducted by an independent firm, indicated several minor weaknesses to which the association's management has responded.

In addition to offering full membership for all American employees of the U.S. Government, the association offers associate, affiliate, temporary, and guest memberships. Affiliate membership is extended to LE staff members and allows use of all facilities and the purchase of duty-free products consumed on embassy property. The association employs two resident Americans and 12 third-country nationals, and its general manager was the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs' winner of the 2009 Manager of the Year Award.

The American employees' facilities and services association in Jeddah employs one resident American, two fulltime third country nationals, and one part-time third-country national. The Jeddah association provides its members with access to beverage and gift sales, recreational activities, a snack bar, and rental of Armed Forces Network decoders. It has not met its financial reporting obligations to the Department, submitting its FY 2007 and FY 2008 audit reports 17 and five months late, respectively. Association-prepared semiannual financial statements are delinquent for the periods January through June 2007, 2008, and 2009. Although the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs agreed to a combined submission of the association's FY 2007 and FY 2008 audit reports, both audit reports omitted the cost

of goods sold for beverages, and thus profits are grossly over-stated. The association's part-time accountant, who also prepared both audit reports, admitted to the OIG team that the audits were not prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

The association's board has not submitted the statement of auditor independence. In signing this statement, the board should be cognizant of the third certification: "The auditor is unbiased in the conduct of the audit as he/she is not auditing his/her own work or that of a colleague." The new manager, hired in May 2009, is a U.S. citizen, but the association has not complied with U.S. tax laws with respect to her salary.

Although controls over access to the beverage locker are effective (the manager must be accompanied by a board member at all times), beverages used for happy hours, etc., are being stored in a snack bar storeroom and are unaccounted for on the beverage inventory.

It would appear from the problems cited above that the association in Jeddah has fallen apart, but that is not the case. The new manager, the third since August 2008, is enthusiastic and hardworking and keeps meticulous records, both handwritten and in Excel format. She has some familiarity with QuickBooks, which is used by the recreation associations in both Riyadh and Dhahran. A new association board has been elected, and both it and Jeddah's post management are making the association a priority. The manager of Riyadh's association has visited Jeddah's association on several occasions. In a meeting with the OIG team, he promised to send his accountant to Jeddah (once QuickBooks is installed there), to provide on-the-job training for the association manager.

Recommendation 42: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should develop a plan and a corresponding timetable for bringing the employee recreation association at Consulate General Jeddah into full compliance with regulations. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with A)

The Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs has tentatively scheduled Embassy Riyadh, but not Consulates General Jeddah and Dhahran, for an internal review in 2010. The February 2006 OIG inspection of Embassy Riyadh and Consulates General Jeddah and Dhahran highlighted problems with both consulates general's recreation associations. Consulate General Jeddah's problems persist to this day.

Recommendation 43: The Bureau of Administration should include Consulate General Jeddah in its 2010 internal review. (Action: A)

The U.S. Embassy recreation association in Dhahran provides its members with beverage sales, themed parties, an honor bar, snacks, and recreational facilities. It meets its financial reporting obligations to the Department and has maintained its profitability. Its latest financial audit by an independent firm indicated no material weaknesses.

The association employs a GSO LE employee on contract for an hour each day, whose duties include operation of the beverage locker and bookkeeping. Monthly, an employee of ARAMCO prepares the financial statements. A new association board was elected in September 2009 and the president, treasurer, and secretary play a very active role in running the association. However, the board is delinquent on submitting the 2008 statement of auditor independence. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation to correct this oversight.

All three recreation associations earn a substantial portion of their revenue from themed parties and social events. As the embassy and consulates general's management tighten access to and frequency of themed parties and social events, each of the three recreation associations may experience a drop in revenues.

Each year principal officers are required to certify the operations of employee associations (6 FAM 544). On May 30, 2009, the chargé d'affaires submitted a consolidated compliance certification, covering the employee associations in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran. The Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs rejected the certification as inaccurate, since the associations had not submitted all required documentation. The OIG team informally recommended that the mission prepare separate compliance certifications for each employee association. The team also informally recommended use of the employee association principal officer certification checklist (which is available on the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs' intranet website) in preparing future compliance certifications.

WELCOME TO POST

Riyadh's contracted airport expediting service has failed to deliver on at least two recent occasions, leaving two new employees to navigate through airport confusion on their first arrival to the Kingdom. (This process took more than two hours for one of the employees.) Fortunately, in both cases the employees were male and neither was a first-tour officer. Women traveling alone face an uncomfortable scenario at the airport, including a screening process that separates them from any view of their hand-carry luggage. In addition, the determination to seat a single female away from a single Saudi male can cause significant delays at check-in. As an informal recommendation, the OIG team suggested that the embassy consider adding an additional airport expeditor position to the LE staff, rather than relying on a contracted expediting service.

On occasion, new embassy employees have arrived without a sponsor to help orient them to their new environment. Most employees have received information about living and working in Saudi Arabia from their predecessors, or from the CLO, but this has not been done in a systematic fashion. The current CLO coordinator is working on an information packet he will send to all new employees. The OIG team recommended informally that the HR office work with the CLO to invigorate the process of sending information to new employees in advance of their arrival, welcoming them to the mission once they arrive, and providing them with adequate sponsorship after their arrival.

OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

The Department's regional overseas schools officer recently confirmed that there are adequate international schools at all three locations in Saudi Arabia. At the time of the inspection, there were no U.S. mission family members at these schools, so the OIG team did not seek their views on the schools.

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MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

MANAGEMENT

Mission Saudi Arabia operates with effective internal controls that prevent waste, fraud, and abuse. The 2009 Chief of Mission's management controls statement of assurance identified no material weaknesses. As part of the process for issuing the Chief of Mission's statement, the mission filled out risk assessment questionnaires, which it has kept on file. Small problems were noted and resolved. Uniform service standards are in place, and the mission has adopted collaborative management initiative procedures. Webpass and eServices programs are in use. According to reports, FMC has a "super travel arranger" for E2, and there are trained E2 travel arrangers in each section. When the section-specific arrangers have questions, they rely on the FMC staff for answers. The consulates general also have E2 arrangers. There are complaints about the user-unfriendly E2 process throughout the mission.

Three management operations that bear watching are procurement, motor pool, and travel. Past oversight of procurement operations was somewhat lax, but both consulates general now have an American GSO and are positioned to better monitor consulate procurement activities. Riyadh has an experienced LE staff, and the American GSO should continue to ensure that the proper checks and balances are in place. Formal recommendation 28, to improve procurement operations, is included in the GSO section. American officers in all three locations were following incorrect procedures in processing payments under the travel contract. This indicates the need for better oversight, to ensure that the mission actually is receiving the travel services for which it is paying. Formal recommendations 32, 33, and 34 should improve procedures. The motor pools in all three locations are complex operations, with many drivers, shuttle services, and visit support requirements. In Jeddah, overtime controls and documentation are lacking and will need a closer look from the recently-arrived GSO.

Riyadh and Jeddah management also should pay close attention to employee association operations. In Jeddah, there has been high turnover among American facilities and services association managers, resulting in some control issues. There has been a longstanding problem in the association's inability to maintain proper accounting records and provide required audit reports. The 2006 OIG report noted

this problem, but it has yet to be fully corrected. Jeddah is working to rectify the problem now, but its management should see that it is resolved as soon as possible; formal recommendation 44 addresses this. In Riyadh, the employee association is a well-run, but complex, operation; Riyadh management, along with the association Board, should ensure that effective controls are maintained.

CONSULAR

In Riyadh, LE staff members occasionally have presented cases to line officers for expedited interviews while applicants were in the window or the waiting room, leaving the American consular officer little choice but to provide expedited service. In order to protect the LE staff members from undue influence, they should never make subjective decisions regarding who merits expedited processing, once an applicant is in the section.

Recommendation 44: Embassy Riyadh should develop clear guidelines to cover all of its consular sections on accepting visa cases for expedited processing, which only an American officer can authorize. The guidelines should establish a verifiable audit trail to document the decision. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

On April 26, 2009 Consulate General Jeddah had a very small shortage in the local fees collected, which the use of fractional currency units caused. Though small, such errors are in violation of the Consular Management Handbook requirements, and there was no documented attempt to resolve or explain the shortage. The OIG team observed that such accounting discrepancies would be avoided if the consular cash registers were set to round all transactions to the nearest integer.

Recommendation 45: Embassy Riyadh should establish procedures to ensure that Consulate General Jeddah consular fees are accounted for in strict compliance with the Consular Management Handbook. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 46: Embassy Riyadh should set the consular automated cash register systems in Saudi Arabia to round all local currency transactions to the nearest integer. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Consulate General Jeddah uses a local form to document the monthly certification of records of fees. This form is redundant, since the consular automated cash register system produces a daily accounting sheet at the end of the month documenting daily consular receipts. Because of the redundancy, some of the daily accounting sheets are not signed, as is required by the consular management handbook.

Recommendation 47: Embassy Riyadh should establish procedures to ensure that Consulate General Jeddah uses only the daily accounting sheet to reconcile and record monthly consular receipts and that the accountable consular officer and the financial management officer verify and sign the daily accounting sheet promptly. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

A review of Consulate General Jeddah visa accountability shows that no one is reviewing the consul's NIV adjudications.

Recommendation 48: Embassy Riyadh should establish a protocol for reviewing all nonimmigrant visa adjudications in Consulate General Jeddah. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

In Jeddah, a visa applicant from Riyadh was told to apply in Riyadh, and his visa machine-readable visa application fee was returned. Consulate General Dhahran accepted a recent local visa case, despite the fact that the applicant had never paid his machine-readable visa fee.

Recommendation 49: Embassy Riyadh should review the requirements of 9 FAM 41.107 N5 and establish procedures to ensure that all line officers understand the conditions under which they may refund or waive application fees. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

The consular subcashier in Dhahran is located in one of the four consular interview windows, which is open and accessible to anyone in the section, in violation of the consular management handbook.

Recommendation 50: Embassy Riyadh should ensure that access to the Consulate General Dhahran cashier work area is limited only to employees having official reasons for it. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Embassy Riyadh should establish shared filing systems for both electronic and paper material for the embassy and the consulates general. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 2:

Recommendation 3: Embassy Riyadh should submit biographic reporting and leadership information to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research on a regular basis. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Riyadh should amend work requirements of both the political section office management specialist and economic section office management specialist to include providing part-time and back-up support to the political-military section. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Riyadh should establish a law enforcement working group led by the deputy chief of mission, involving all relevant mission elements; the working group should include narcotics, counterterrorism, and nonproliferation as issues of concern. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Riyadh, should designate and amend work requirements for an action officer within the bureau to monitor Office of Program Management/Minister of Interior activities and provide support to senior level steering group members. (Action: NEA, in coordination with Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should develop quantitative evidence documenting the need for an English language officer, and should use that documentation to request an English language officer position in the 2012 Mission Strategic Plan. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with NEA and HR)

Recommendation 17:

Recommendation 18: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should develop a plan to increase visa production in Jeddah. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with CA and DGHR)

Recommendation 19: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureaus of Consular Affairs and Human Resources, should fill expeditiously Embassy Dhahran's newly justified entry-level officer position. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with CA and DGHR)

Recommendation 20: Embassy Riyadh should include on a regular basis the Consulates General Dhahran and Jeddah management sections in management staff meetings, via digital videoconference, and include the consulates general management staff in all meetings at which major management policy changes are discussed. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 21: Embassy Riyadh should institute a formal schedule whereby the embassy's key management section personnel (including American and locally employed staff) regularly visit their compatriots at Consulates General Dhahran and Jeddah, and the key management personnel at each of the consulates general regularly visit the embassy. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 22: Embassy Riyadh should chair a mission-wide review of staffing with the consuls general and the management officers; this review should result in a workforce implementation plan. The Embassy should use the rightsizing report as the starting point for the discussion and update the report as necessary. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 23: Embassy Riyadh should include locally employed staff members from Riyadh, Dhahran, and Jeddah in its discussions regarding changes to the locally employed staff benefits before making any final decisions and before transmitting information related to benefits to the Bureau of Human Resources in Washington; the embassy also should discuss any changes in benefits with locally employed staff as far in advance as possible. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 24: Embassy Riyadh should change the exit visa request form to eliminate the requirement for an American supervisor's signature before an employee can request an exit visa for his/her family to travel out of Saudi Arabia. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 25:

Recommendation 26: Embassy Riyadh should send the locally employed procurement and contracting supervisor to review operations, establish procedures, and train the staff at the consulates general. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 27: Embassy Riyadh should include in the abovementioned training the general service officers at the consulates general so they can learn how to supervise locally employed procurement staff properly, make recommendations for process improvements, and implement better procedures. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 28: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of the Procurement Executive, and Office of the Legal Adviser, should develop and implement standard operating procedures for monitoring contracts' and contractors' compliance with anti-trafficking requirements. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with A/OPE, NEA and L)

Recommendation 29: Embassy Riyadh should perform an analysis of its gardening and janitorial needs to determine whether services are best provided by the private sector or by government employees. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 30: Embassy Riyadh should review the process for receipt, verification, approval, and certification of invoices. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 31: Embassy Riyadh should conduct unannounced reviews of vouchers certified by locally employed staff, as prescribed in 4 FAH-3 H-065.2-2 (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 32: Embassy Riyadh should send the motor pool supervisor and assistant general services officer to Consulate General Jeddah to review operations, investigate allegations of discrimination and favoritism, and establish operating procedures. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

Recommendation 41:

Recommendation 42: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should develop a plan and a corresponding timetable for bringing the employee recreation association at Consulate General Jeddah into full compliance with regulations. (Action: Embassy Riyadh, in coordination with A)

Recommendation 43: The Bureau of Administration should include Consulate General Jeddah in its 2010 internal review. (Action: A)

Recommendation 44: Embassy Riyadh should develop clear guidelines to cover all of its consular sections on accepting visa cases for expedited processing, which only an American officer can authorize. The guidelines should establish a verifiable audit trail to document the decision. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

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Recommendation 50: Embassy Riyadh should ensure that access to the Consulate General Dhahran cashier work area is limited only to employees having official reasons for it. (Action: Embassy Riyadh)

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.

Executive Direction

Many ELOs – as well as mid-level officers – are working outside their cone of choice. There is scope to provide them better perspective on how their efforts fit into overall mission operations by keeping them abreast of mission reporting.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Riyadh should include all entry-level and mid-level officers on the unclassified e-mail distribution list of reporting to integrate them better into overall operations and to increase their understanding of the broader policy context.

With so many ELOs in consular officer positions, there is considerable potential for officer rotations for career-broadening purposes and to strengthen the links among the embassy and consulates general.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Riyadh should consider occasional rotation of entry-level officers among the embassy and the two consulates general.

Policy and Program Implementation

Embassy Riyadh and Consulate General Jeddah use the Goldmine database software to share and update local contact information, but Consulate General Dhahran has not received requested training.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Riyadh should provide training as soon as possible to staff in Consulate General Dhahran on the Goldmine contact database software.

Embassy Riyadh relies on emails to provide quick reporting to the NEA Bureau, but emails are not followed up by formal reporting with wider distribution to Washington consumers.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Riyadh should convert emails into cables for wider distribution to interested parties in Washington.

The mission has set an ambitious reporting agenda, even while it is contending with staff vacancies and inexperienced officers. This agenda will call for greater mutual efforts among political-military, political, and economic sections.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Riyadh should enhance communication among the political, political-military, and economic section chiefs and their deputies by conducting joint meets and regularly monitoring progress on the reporting agenda.

Embassy Riyadh assigns a heavy load of mission-wide translations to the locally employed economic and political specialists. There is inefficient duplication of efforts, with each embassy in the region translating *démarche* texts into Arabic.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Riyadh should explore various ways to alleviate the volume of translations assigned to the Riyadh economic and political specialists including revising the position description for the second protocol assistant position to include translation qualifications in order to assume the bulk of executive office translating duties.

Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

The program and representation budgets for the public affairs sections in Jeddah and Dhahran are allocated by PAS Riyadh in a manner that does not give the consulates general a clear idea of the resources available to them.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Riyadh should clarify the program and representation budgets for the public affairs sections in Jeddah and Dhahran by having the public affairs officers submit an annual written estimate of their budget allocation.

Minor outlays of funds for goods or services in support of public affairs programs in Jeddah and Dhahran must be referred to the PAO in Riyadh for settlement, resulting in delays in reimbursement.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Riyadh should have the public affairs officer in Riyadh and the public affairs officers in Jeddah and Dhahran work with the financial management center to establish procedures for more rapid reimbursement of expenses.

The public affairs section in Riyadh will lose two offices in a reconfiguration. The overall reduction of space will reduce the area available for periodic storage of items such as printed material used in support of the Riyadh International Book Fair.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Riyadh should provide sufficient space for the public affairs section's program materials by having the public affairs officer work with the general services office to identify warehouse space for short- and long-term public affairs section storage.

The public diplomacy officer in PAS Riyadh is responsible for coordinating all Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) grants affairs in Saudi Arabia. She is a warranted grants officer, and has a grant project officer memorandum for grants on record in the MEPI office in Abu Dhabi, but has no copies of the grant project officer memoranda.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Riyadh should ensure that the public diplomacy officer in Riyadh can demonstrate assigned grant project responsibility for relevant Middle East Partnership Initiative grants in Saudi Arabia by obtaining a copy of each grant project officer memorandum.

The mission does not have a written institutional analysis of the public affairs section's work. Rapid turnover of American staff has reduced the section's knowledge of and familiarity with the major players at key Saudi organizations.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Riyadh should finalize a mission-wide written institutional analysis of the public affairs section's work during.

The public affairs officer at Consulate General Jeddah told the OIG team that he had a "handshake" agreement with the embassy's PAO regarding program funding for PAS Jeddah. The OIG team has recommended informally that he negotiate a written agreement.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Riyadh should negotiate a written agreement between the embassy's public affairs officer and Consulate General Jeddah's public affairs officer regarding program funding for Consulate General Jeddah's public affairs section.

PAS Jeddah is scheduled to occupy space in the new consulate building, perhaps as early as fall 2010. The planning of the new facility was done in a different security and programming environment. There may be a greater need for public access space for education advising, among other activities than was anticipated during the facility planning.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Riyadh should determine that sufficient space is allotted to public affairs activities in the new consulate building in Jeddah by having the public affairs officer in Jeddah work with the consulate general's management officer to reexamine and confirm designated public affairs section program and office space in the new structure, including a firm designation for public access program space.

The LE staff member in charge of education advising in PAS Jeddah has the same or similar responsibilities as counterparts in Riyadh and Dhahran. Her job title differs from theirs even though her job description seems to be the same.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Riyadh should determine if the job description and title of the head of the education advising office in Jeddah match those of her counterparts in Riyadh and Dhahran by having the public affairs officer in Jeddah work with the appropriate management officer and human resource officer determine the proper designation and grade for her current position.

PAS Jeddah has rack-mounted television receive only (TVRO) equipment in its office that has not been used for at least five years, and perhaps longer. It is not attached to a satellite dish antenna and does not appear on any inventory shown to OIG.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Riyadh should handle this program property issue by working with the public affairs section in Jeddah and the management office in a coordinated effort to identify and determine the proper disposition of this and any similar equipment.

The public affairs assistant at PAS Dhahran is the sole LE staff member; he works on all cultural and information programs. He has worked for the section for six years and at times served as acting PAO, but he has never had U.S. based public affairs training.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Riyadh should help the public affairs officer in Dhahran determine appropriate U.S. based training for the Dhahran public affairs assistant, nominate him for it, and support his application.

The PAS education advisor's meeting and reference space in Dhahran is located in the same room as the commercial section's conference space and library. There are no clear rules on the use of this space, and it is not adequately equipped or furnished for the education advisor to perform some basic job functions.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Riyadh should assist the education advisor in Dhahran's public affairs section by encouraging the public affairs officer Dhahran to establish procedures such as use of a joint calendar (such as Outlook) to regulate the use of the shared space with the commercial section, and Embassy Riyadh should identify funds in the public affairs section budget for necessary equipment and furnishings for the education advisor's use.

Consular Affairs

The consular team has made a good start in building a sense shared goals and values. It is important to both enhance that sense of teamwork and to build support mechanisms for the consuls working in their isolated outposts.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Riyadh should communicate at least monthly via digital video conference or telephonic conference calls to follow up on the results of the offsite meeting and to increase communication among consular sections.

At both Jeddah and Dhahran, all of the locally employed consular staff report directly to the consul. Therefore, the consuls have to personally supervise and rate all the LE staff in the section.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Riyadh should establish a supervisory consular locally employee staff position at Consulate General Jeddah and at Consulate General Dhahran in order to relieve the consul from direct supervision of all locally employed staff.

Since the consular sections are the face of the U.S. Government to some 60,000 people a year, the sections should ensure that their signage and other information are accurate and up to date. In Jeddah, the consular section is identified as the "Consulate Section," and in Dhahran visa applicants routinely wander the front lawn since there is no sign for "visas."

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Riyadh should ensure that consular signage at all three consular sections is clear, accurate, and welcoming.

Because staffing constraints limit the ability of consular sections to respond in person to queries, the quality of online information is critical. Consular web pages are out of date, contain expired and incorrect links, and are not presented in Arabic. The appointment provider uses inaccurate data for visa appointment wait times.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Riyadh should review the embassy and consulates general consular Web pages for completeness, functionality, and accuracy, including visa information in both English and Arabic.

Because the present NIV appointment backlog affects so many part of the U.S. mission, the consular section needs to work together with interested sections and agencies to ensure better understanding of the consular function.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Riyadh should meet with all interested parties to discuss better coordination and communication on the provision of visa services.

In the rare instances where the Department of Homeland Security disagrees with the vice consul's non-immigrant visa adjudication decision, the visa security units "do not recommend issuance." This puts the consular officer in the difficult position of issuing the visa against informal advice of the DHS – absent a legal basis for the refusal – or refusing the visa when the facts of the case support issuance.

Informal Recommendation 23: Riyadh should establish standard operating procedures with the Department of Homeland Security pursuant to 08 State 093945, specifically to address the matter of nonimmigrant visa cases that are not recommended for issuance.

The consular section currently has no written local operating procedures. In a section that has few experienced officers, it is important to institutionalize knowledge.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Riyadh should develop files of visa adjudication tips and advice at all three consular sections in order for the accumulated knowledge of experienced line officers to be retained and used.

The consul in Jeddah is effectively working alone, and would benefit from additional contact from other experienced officers. The consul general in Riyadh should visit both of his constituent posts, with Jeddah a priority.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Riyadh should visit Jeddah at least twice quarterly to provide consular oversight and guidance as long as there is only one full-time officer at the Consulate General Jeddah.

One of the five locally employed staff members in Dhahran is a half-time job, but the incumbent has been often working full time. In order that the position more accurately reflect the needs of the consulate general, and to clarify the employee's status, Dhahran has justified a request to Riyadh to make the position full time. Filling this position will help reduce the backlog to the Bureau of Consular Affairs' 20-day standard, and it will help mitigate the negative perceptions of the United States caused by years of poor visa appointment availability.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Riyadh should expeditiously act on the request to make Dhahran position number 100005 full-time.

Financial Management

The consuls general in both Jeddah and Dhahran complained about not receiving discretionary funding from Embassy Riyadh.

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Riyadh should provide an operating allowance to each of the consulates general and continue to provide oversight.

Until Jeddah's class B cashier operations are as required, oversight must be provided.

Informal Recommendation 28: Embassy Riyadh should task Consulate General Dhahran's class B cashier with providing the necessary oversight of Jeddah's cashier.

The alternate class B cashier at Consulate General Jeddah has not received any formal cashier training.

Informal Recommendation 29: Embassy Riyadh should provide funding to enable Consulate General Jeddah's alternate class B cashier to attend Financial Services Center Charleston's Basic Cashiering course in March 2010.

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International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

The membership of the ICASS council at Embassy Riyadh does not conform to the revised guidance that the ICASS executive board issued in 2006.

Informal Recommendation 31: Embassy Riyadh should reconstitute its International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council to mirror the representation on the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services executive board.

The ICASS council has not provided input to the management counselor's annual performance evaluation required by 6 FAH-5 H-161(a).

Informal Recommendation 32: Embassy Riyadh should require the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council chair to provide input to the management counselor's annual performance evaluation report.

There is a commonly held view that several agencies' TDY personnel are getting a "free ride" when it comes to ICASS support.

Informal Recommendation 33: Embassy Riyadh should arrange for the financial management officer to make a presentation at the next International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council meeting detailing the capturing of costs for temporary duty personnel.

Due to turnover of mission staff, many are unaware that a mission TDY policy exists.

Informal Recommendation 34: Embassy Riyadh should reissue its temporary duty policy countrywide.

Human Resources

The mission recently switched its health insurance for LE staff from the Alico to the Malath company. This relatively new company has had some start-up issues that need attention.

Informal Recommendation 35: Embassy Riyadh should require the human resources officer, as the contracting officer's representative for the health insurance contract, to closely monitor the new contractor's performance and solicit feedback on a regular basis from locally employed staff in the embassy and at the consulates general, to take remedial action, as necessary, to ensure adequate contractor performance.

Riyadh's certifying officers have been certifying ACE Travel invoices for payment without supporting documents.

Informal Recommendation 36: Embassy Riyadh should transmit invoices to the Bureau of Resources Management for their review and guidance whenever ACE Travel submits invoices for payment without supplying supporting documentation.

General Services

Many items reported missing during the last annual inventory were located in controlled access areas. The monetary value of missing property did not require special action by the embassy, but the losses are of concern nonetheless, since many of the items were located in controlled access areas.

Informal Recommendation 37: Embassy Riyadh should require the information program center and property management staffs to work closely to improve accountability of equipment.

Older property takes up limited storage space in the full warehouse. Property is also stored in a separate building on the annex compound. Change in tour of duty and a pending increase in weight allowance to full shipment of effects may further strain storage capacity.

Informal Recommendation 38: Embassy Riyadh should require the assistant general services officer in charge of property schedule more time at the general services office annex, in order to manage property and determine whether items should be disposed of or reconditioned.

Facilities Management

Consulate General Dhahran has both cramped and under-utilized space spread throughout the compound. The recreation center, in particular, is under-utilized.

Informal Recommendation 39: Embassy Riyadh should work with Consulate General Dhahran to create additional consular workspace.

Informal Recommendation 40: Embassy Riyadh should work with Consulate General Dhahran to establish schedules for regular use of the American recreation facility and open it to both American and locally employed staff.

The senior facility manager in Riyadh has technical expertise and experience that Consulate General Jeddah can tap into, in order to assist in hiring the new facilities management staff for the new consulate compound.

Informal Recommendation 41: Embassy Riyadh should participate with the Jeddah team in all interviews and hiring decisions for the new Jeddah maintenance staff.

Information Management

Information management staff members in Riyadh do not have individual development plans.

Informal Recommendation 42: Embassy Riyadh should create individual development plans for the information management staff.

Embassy Riyadh does not have host nation approval for the frequencies used by radio.

Informal Recommendation 43: Embassy Riyadh should obtain host nation approval for the radio frequencies.

Embassy Riyadh the consulates general have not fully completed all their standard operating procedures.

Informal Recommendation 44: Embassy Riyadh should develop standard operating procedures for all information management functions under embassy jurisdiction.

Community Liaison Office

Consulate General Dhahran's CLO coordinator has an efficient system for welcoming officers upon assignment and arrival. Riyadh's CLO coordinator is also full of ideas and able to share some of the finer points gleaned at the recently attended Family Liaison Office training.

Informal Recommendation 45: Embassy Riyadh should coordinate a time for Consulate General Dhahran's community liaison office coordinator to visit Riyadh to exchange experiences and ideas.

Health Unit

TDY employees serving longer than 60 days are seeking health unit access without a medical clearance.

Informal Recommendation 46: Embassy Riyadh should follow Office of Medical Services' guidance and require that temporary duty employees serving longer than 60 days have a medical clearance.

Informal Recommendation 47:

USERA Dhahran is delinquent in submitting the 2008 Statement of Auditor Independence.

Informal Recommendation 48: Embassy Riyadh should require Consulate General Dhahran to complete the 2008 Statement of Auditor Independence and forward it to the Office of Commissary and Recreations Affairs.

The chargé d'affaires submitted a consolidated compliance certification covering the employee associations in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dhahran. The Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs rejected the certification as inaccurate, since the associations had not submitted all required documentation.

Informal Recommendation 49: Embassy Riyadh should prepare separate compliance certifications for each of the three employee associations: Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran.

The consolidated compliance certification issued by Embassy Riyadh was inaccurate.

Informal Recommendation 50: Embassy Riyadh should establish procedures to ensure that the embassy and consulates general use the Employee Association principal officer certification checklist (which is available on the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs' intranet website) when preparing future compliance certifications.

Riyadh's contracted airport expediting service has failed to deliver on at least two recent occasions; women traveling alone face an uncomfortable scenario at the airport; and the determination to seat a single female away from a single Saudi male can cause significant delays at check-in.

Informal Recommendation 51: Embassy Riyadh should either hire an additional airport expediter or have a back-up system available in the event that the contract expediter does not show up.

On occasion, new embassy employees have arrived without a sponsor to help orient them to their new environment.

Informal Recommendation 52: Embassy Riyadh should establish procedures for the human resources and community liaison offices to work together to invigorate the process of sending information to new employees in advance of their arrival, welcoming them to the mission once they arrive, and providing them with adequate sponsorship after their arrival.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	James B. Smith	08/09
Deputy Chief of Mission	Susan L. Ziadeh	09/09
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Sandra M. Muench	09/08
Consular	Daniel E. Goodspeed	08/09
Political	Lisa M. Carle	09/08
Political/Military	Scott M. McGehee	09/08
Economic	Laird D. Treiber	08/09
Public Affairs	John G. Moran	07/09
Bilateral Programs	Keith L. Stepp	05/09
Regional Security	Thomas G. McDonough	10/09
Consulates:		
Consul General Dhahran	Joseph A. Kenny	09/08
Consul General Jeddah	Martin R. Quinn	09/08
Other Agencies:		
Agricultural Service	Tawid Al-Saffy	05/09
Commercial Service	Amer Kayani	08/09
Department of Defense	Col. Tarek Mekhail	08/09
Department of Homeland Security	Ronald R. Kriske	03/09
Department of Justice	Jeffrey C. Bedford	12/08
Department of Treasury	Matthew H. Epstein (resident in Dubai)	10/08

ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American citizen services
AEFSA	American employee facilities and services association
ARAMCO	Arabian American Oil Company
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CLO	Community liaison office
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DS	Bureau of Diplomatic Security
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ELO	Entry-level officer
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAR	Foreign affairs registration
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service
FCS	Foreign Commercial Service
FMC	Financial management center
FMO	Financial management officer
GSO	General services office
HR	Human resources
HR/OE	Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Overseas Employment
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IDP	Individual development plan
IMET	International Military Education and Training

IMO	Information management officer
IMS	Information management specialist
IPR	Intellectual property rights
ISSO	Information systems security officer
IV	Immigrant visa
LE	Locally employed
LS	Office of Language Services
M/PRI	Office of Management, Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NCC	New consulate compound
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
NEA	Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
NSDD 38	National Security Decision Directive 38
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMS	Office management specialist
OPM-MOI	Office of Program Management – Minister of Interior
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
RMO	Regional medical officer
RMO/P	Regional medical officer/psychiatrist
RSO	Regional security officer
SOP	Standard operating procedures
TDY	Temporary duty
USERA	United States Employee Recreation Association
WAE	When actually employed

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

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