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

# Report of Inspection

The Bureau of  
Administration's Office of  
Emergency Management

**Report Number ISP-I-10-43, July 2010**

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*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

## **PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION**

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

### **PURPOSE**

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

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

### **METHODOLOGY**

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

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## OVERVIEW

A/OEM was established in 2003 to consolidate the Department's domestic emergency preparedness functions into a single entity and to serve as the conduit between the Department of State (the Department) and U.S. domestic national security entities. Previously, these functions were scattered among different bureaus and offices, which proved inadequate for the rapidly changing post-9/11 environment. Organizationally, OEM initially was made a component of A's Directorate of Operations. It combined the Department's existing contingency and continuity operation with a newly created planning and preparedness function. In 2006, the office was elevated in the A's hierarchy to report directly to the Assistant Secretary.

A/OEM is responsible for developing the Department's domestic emergency plans, policies, procedures, and capabilities to respond to and recover from any domestic security threat or other emergency (e.g., natural disasters, terrorism, pandemics). These emergencies may range from small, localized events to a nationwide catastrophe.

A/OEM's strategies for ensuring safety of domestic employees and continuity of the Department's essential functions include developing and implementing an overall Department Emergency Action Plan, national Continuity of Operations (COOP) and Continuity of Government Plans (COG), Enduring Constitutional Government (ECG), and an Incident Management Program.<sup>1</sup> A/OEM also manages and coordinates the program requiring that all Department bureaus and each Department facility develop and regularly update emergency action plans. Other strategies to ensure preparedness include employee outreach and a training and exercise program to coordinate and manage training plans, drills, and response exercises (including national and principal level exercises).

<sup>1</sup>Continuity of Operations: An effort within individual agencies and their subcomponents to ensure primary mission essential functions continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological or attack-related emergencies.

Continuity of Government: A coordinated effort within the Federal Government's executive branch to ensure that national essential functions continue to be performed during a catastrophic emergency.

Enduring Constitutional Government: A cooperative effort among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the U.S. Government, coordinated by the President, to preserve the constitutional framework under which the nation is governed and the capability of all three branches of government to execute constitutional responsibilities and provide for orderly succession, appropriate transition of leadership, and interoperability and support of national essential functions during a catastrophic emergency.

The office supports the Assistant Secretary for Administration in his roles as executive secretary of the Department's Emergency Action Committee (DEAC) and Department Continuity Coordinator. The DEAC, which is chaired by the Under Secretary for Management, is the senior decision-making body responsible for ensuring the Department is prepared for all domestic security threats, emergencies, or other events that may affect the safety or welfare of Department assets (people, information, equipment, facilities, activities, and operations).

A/OEM's mission and functions are driven by myriad federal mandates and initiatives, including regulations, national security presidential directives, homeland security presidential directives, executive orders, federal continuity directives, presidential decision directives, national security presidential directives, Homeland Security presidential directives, the National Response Framework, the National Incident Management Plan, and the National Infrastructure and Management Plan. The majority of these mandates and requirements, which proliferated exponentially following 9/11, originate in the White House, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

A/OEM functions revolve around its various coordination roles. The office's employees received praise for their expertise and ability to work collaboratively within and outside the Department. Many employees are well known throughout the federal emergency management community. Within the Department, A/OEM coordinates most closely with components of the Office of Domestic Operations within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Executive Secretariat's Operations Center, A's Office of Facilities Management Services, the Office of Medical Services, and the office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. Externally, A/OEM maintains extensive relations with DHS, the National Security Council, and the national emergency management community.

OIG distributed a customer satisfaction questionnaire to the Department's executive directors requesting their assessment and rating of A/OEM services. While the response rate was low, the responses that were received did not contain any significant complaints.

Several A/OEM employees said a continuing challenge is the tendency of Department management and staff to become complacent about emergency preparedness because of competing priorities and not feeling as vulnerable as employees overseas. Officials and employees are busy, distracted by pressing issues, and ambivalent about investing Department time and resources to prepare for eventualities that may never occur. Further, the Department's primary focus is overseas and not on the domestic scene. A/OEM tries to raise awareness through its ePrepare Web site, COOPTalk newsletter, and emergency preparedness pamphlets. Also, in coor-

dination with the Foreign Service Institute, A/OEM developed an online domestic emergency management course to inform employees about potential hazards in their homes and communities and how they can plan and prepare for them. The Assistant Secretary for Administration recommended to the DEAC that this course be mandatory for all employees. However, after discussion with the Bureau of Human Resources and Foreign Service Institute, it was determined that no legal basis existed to enforce such a requirement unless it was incorporated into employees' annual work requirements.

## FUNDING

A/OEM operations are funded by Worldwide Security Protection program funds. Until recently, the domestic emergency preparedness budget had remained unchanged for several years, despite A/OEM's expanding functions. In FY 2009, the budget was about \$10 million. In FY 2010, the budget is estimated at \$ 17 million. The budget outlook improved in recent years with the approval of a 5-year strategic plan for domestic emergency preparedness in the Department budget request. In FY 2009, A/OEM was able to fund some outstanding initiatives and equipment replacements with end-of-year funding.

## OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE AND TRAINING CENTER

A/OEM maintains and operates an offsite conference and training center. The facility is leased from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The lease cost (approximately \$4 million annually), which includes information technology and maintenance costs, has more than tripled between 2002 and 2010 and increased by 33 percent over the past year. The annual increase had to be absorbed each year by A/OEM, as it was not until 2008 that the Bureau of Resource Management provided funding to A/OEM to cover the increased Federal Emergency Management Agency costs. The A/OEM director and Assistant Secretary for Administration believe the lease costs have reached an unreasonably high amount. During the inspection, A/OEM began reviewing the possibility of relocating the facility. Although this would require significant up-front funding for construction or reconfiguration, A/OEM believes the Department could save at least \$1 million in rent annually. A will continue to research options.

## STAFFING

At the time of the inspection, A/OEM had an authorized staff of 18 U.S. direct-hire (USDH) positions; of these, five positions were vacant. Additionally, there are 11 contractor employees, 3 of which are part-time. Like many Department offices, A/OEM is reliant on contractors to carry out its functions. Staffing has been a pressing issue; in 2008, the office lost four full-time equivalent positions as a result of a reallocation of positions within A. However, A/OEM is slated to receive five full-time equivalent positions for FY 2010. Nevertheless, the A/OEM director emphasizes that, in light of an expanding workload, this will fall short of the positions needed. Four additional positions have been requested in the FY 2011 budget pass back, to create a Test Training and Exercise Program Division to expand the Department's ability to meet DHS national level, principal level, and internal drill and exercise mandates. The prospect of filling new positions provides A/OEM managers an opportunity to reassess the organization's skills mix and needs.

The Planning and Preparedness Division (A/OEM/PPD) is staffed by a director, five emergency management specialist USDH positions, and five contractors. The division has been undergoing a period of high turnover, in part due to retirements and staff seeking and gaining promotion opportunities at other federal agencies.

The Diplomatic Continuity Programs Division (A/OEM/DCP) is staffed by a director, nine USDH positions, and six contractors. Three are part-time positions. Many of the staff are communications and computer specialists. They form a cadre that has the unique skills and experience needed to participate in the nation's highest-level continuity programs. Several USDH employees as well as contractors have worked together in A/OEM and its predecessor offices for more than 25 years. Many are eligible to retire. Indications are that because of the skills level required for the very complex functions performed, A/OEM would have a difficult time replacing departing personnel. Records indicate that the process to fill the last vacated position took over two years. The A/OEM director and Assistant Secretary are aware of the need to ensure a smooth succession should staff turnover accelerate in the future.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The director's overall performance is excellent. He does an excellent job managing two distinct, physically separated divisions with disparate functions. Scores on OIG personal questionnaires completed by the A/OEM staff in categories such as vision/goal setting, communication, engagement, fairness, and ethics were high. He is approachable, knows his staff, and manages by walking around. In addition, he is seen as effective in dealing with outside entities.

### DIPLOMATIC CONTINUITY PROGRAMS DIVISION

A/OEM/DCP is successfully meeting all mission requirements, as prescribed by DHS and presidential directives and other mandates.<sup>2</sup> The division is responsible for planning, coordinating, implementing, and managing the Department's classified and unclassified COOP, COG, ECG, and other emergency continuity programs, including continuity-related information technology requirements. The programs are designed to ensure the continuity of the Department's primary mission essential functions under a wide range of emergencies, including terrorist or nuclear attack. In coordination with the White House and the Secretary of State's protective security detail, A/OEM/DCP participates in all presidential successor programs. It also identifies, trains, and participates with Department principals and designated personnel in national-level COOP, COG, and ECG exercises pertaining to continuity roles, responsibilities, and operations. The OIG team reviewed A/OEM/DCP's classified functions and determined the division is performing well in implementing those programs and requirements.

### Emergency Relocation Site

To address the need for national-level continuity of operations in the event of a national security threat that renders the Department unable to perform mission-essential functions from its headquarters in Washington, A/OEM/DCP, with the assistance of bureau executive directors, coordinates the Department's mission critical team, a cadre of continuity personnel that would deploy to an offsite location. This site is managed and operated by A/OEM/DCP (24/7, 365 days per year).

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<sup>2</sup> Among the most comprehensive mandates are National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 51 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 20, "National Continuity Policy," May 9, 2007, which prescribe continuity requirements for all executive departments and agencies.

From this location, A/OEM/DCP maintains classified and unclassified communications systems, including an emergency computer network, telephones, radios, and other equipment. Among these systems is a *secure emergency communications system with posts overseas*. The systems provide vital communications functions that must be performed during a national security emergency; they are the Department's final backup communications system. A/OEM/DCP computer and communications specialists use most of these systems daily and formally test them monthly. The OIG team determined that the systems successfully provide full contingency back up for the Department's operations.

## Mission Critical Team

The Department's mission critical team is composed of Department principals, senior management, and other employees who are designated to support the continuity programs in the event the programs are activated by the President or Secretary. There are 250 mission critical team members and 250 alternates. Participation by team members in A/OEM/DCP's continuity programs orientation program is vital. Because of the ever-changing roster of members due to employee rotation or reassignment, the division conducts an unlimited series of orientations. A review of records for 2009 showed that of the 500 personnel designated as primary and alternate members, only 184 participated in the orientation training. There are many reasons for this low participation rate, ranging from recent assignment to the program, previous orientation attendance, lack of interest, lack of time, change of family situation, or concern about the relevance of the program.

## PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS DIVISION

The A/OEM/PPD staff of emergency management specialists and other employees performs its duties well, despite workload stress due to increasing mandates, shifting priorities, staffing gaps, and high staff turnover over the past few years. The division's primary responsibilities are to facilitate planning, preparedness, and response to all domestic emergencies that impact any Department domestic facility and to coordinate with internal and external partners to fulfill mandated multiagency responsibilities. A/OEM/PPD manages the DOS emergency management center, emergency action plans process, employee outreach efforts, a radio program, employee notification system, and the A/OEM ePrepare Web site. A/OEM conducts

mandatory bureau and office preparedness drills and exercises to ensure the Department is prepared to operate in domestic emergency situations. Drill and exercise results, including participation levels, are reported to the DEAC. Among other mandates, A/OEM/PPD implements the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive HSPD-5, "Management of Domestic Incidents," February 28, 2003, and HSPD 8, "National Preparedness," December 17, 2003. A/OEM/PPD also is the interagency liaison for fulfilling mandated responsibilities under the National Response Framework.

## Office of Inspector General Audit

In 2007, OIG conducted an audit of emergency preparedness at the Department's Washington, DC, metropolitan facilities.<sup>3</sup> The audit found the emergency preparedness program was not fully implemented. In large part, this was because the Department: (1) had not clearly defined bureau and office roles and responsibilities; (2) had not developed formal policies and procedures to manage the program; and (3) had not implemented all federal requirements and directives. The report made 11 recommendations to correct these deficiencies. Subsequently, A/OEM/PPD and the Department engaged in a lengthy process to implement the OIG recommendations and, as of March 2010, all of the recommendations had been resolved. Six recommendations are awaiting final action.

## EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

A/OEM/PPD provides technical guidance, templates, and assistance to bureaus and offices in developing, maintaining, and exercising their emergency action plans. The plans must be exercised and recertified annually. The division also provides training to floor wardens and assembly point coordinators. Emergency action plans include:

1. *Bureau Emergency Action Plan*, which defines each bureau's critical functions and identifies the personnel and other resources needed to continue essential functions and ensure the safety of employees during an emergency. There are 32 Bureau Emergency Action Plans that cover all Department bureaus and offices.

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<sup>3</sup> OIG, Office of Audits, Audit of Emergency Preparedness at the Washington Metropolitan Facilities of the Department of State, AUD/SI-07-27, March 2007.

2. *Facility Emergency Action Plan*, which are building-specific plans that describe how to respond to a range of domestic emergencies, such as building evacuation, sheltering in place, and protective actions for persons with special needs. Plans are required for any facility where the Department occupies space—whether the facility is Department-owned, GSA-owned, or commercially leased.
3. *Department Emergency Action Plan*, which is currently under development by A/OEM, in coordination with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS), the Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM), and other bureaus and offices. When completed, it will serve as the Department's comprehensive domestic emergency preparedness and continuity framework for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from domestic incidents.

Now that the domestic emergency management section of the FAM has been published, A/OEM/PPD will be able to issue the corresponding chapters for the Foreign Affairs Handbook that outline the processes and procedures related to Bureau Emergency Action Plans and Facility Emergency Action Plans and contain links to A/OEM sites.

A/OEM/PPD is in the process of updating the Bureau Emergency Action Plan template and creating a Facility Emergency Action Plan template. The revised/new templates will ensure a consistent format and base of information. A major initiative is the implementation of a new, automated system that is intended to streamline and standardize the emergency planning process and make it more user-friendly. To accomplish this, A/OEM/PPD is working closely with A's executive office, Division of Information Resource Planning (A/EX/IRM) to adapt the DS overseas emergency planning system for domestic use. This is a Web-based system to be known as D-CEPA (Domestic Crisis and Emergency Planning Application). Implementation is scheduled to begin in summer 2010. A/OEM/PPD expects the new system will make it easier for bureaus to update their plans in a timelier manner than has often been the case in the past.

## Emergency Management Center

In 2007, A/OEM/PPD opened an emergency management center (EMC) in the Harry S Truman building to serve as a focal point for domestic emergency response. It is maintained by one USDH employee and one contractor. In an emergency, the EMC staff works with representatives of A/OPR, DS, and other Department entities to facilitate the Department's response. The EMC communicates with the Operations Center and the DS Command and Security Control Centers and uses the

Alert Management System and Text Messaging System to keep employees informed. A/OEM/PPD anticipates the Centralized Emergency Notification System will be online by summer 2010. To date, the EMC has been activated four times, mostly in response to hurricanes and white powder incidents affecting the Department's regional facilities. The EMC also supports training classes, conferences, and exercises. An alternate EMC site at a Department annex is expected to be operational by summer 2010.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

A/OEM/PPD maintains a comprehensive information management program that includes the daily operations at the EMC, unclassified and classified networks, staff telecommunications, alert and voice messaging mechanisms, the A/OEM Web page, and publications. A/OEM/PPD has a Service Level Agreement with A/EX/IRM for operational support of the Alert Management System, Text Messaging System, D-CEPA, Centralized Emergency Notification System, and the A/OEM Web site. The coordination between A/OEM and A/EX/IRM is excellent.

There are several initiatives in various stages of development to improve and expedite communication and information. A/OEM would like to make Open Net Everywhere (ONE) FOB key devices available to members of the mission critical team and emergency action team who telework. A/OEM/PPD has been working with the Bureau of Information Resource Management on a ONE test targeting 1,000 simultaneous users.

The OIG team concluded that overall project management, support, security configurations, and information technology change control are within guidelines and regulations set forth by the Department. In customer surveys, most end users are comfortable with the applications.

## MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

A/OEM is in general compliance with Department regulations and procedures and adheres to internal controls principles. For its most recent audit (November 2009), the Bureau of Information Resources Management gave A/OEM/DCP a satisfactory rating for controls over the classified information technology equipment at the alternate location.



PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

|                                | Name          | Arrival Date  |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Director                       | Robert Becker | June 2007     |
| Division Directors             |               |               |
| Diplomatic Continuity Programs | Art Mock      | June 2005     |
| Planning and Preparedness      | Lynda Kasonde | November 2009 |



## ABBREVIATIONS

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| A         | Bureau of Administration  |
| A/EX/IRM  | Division of Information Resource Planning                             |
| A/OEM     | Office of Emergency Management  |
| A/OEM/DCP | Office of Emergency Management, Diplomatic<br>Continuity Division     |
| A/OEM/PPD | Office of Emergency Management, Planning and<br>Preparedness Division |
| COG       | Continuity of Government  |
| COOP      | Continuity of Operations  |
| DEAC      | Department Emergency Action Committee                                 |
| DHS       | Department of Homeland Security                                       |
| DS        | Bureau of Diplomatic Security   |
| ECG       | Enduring Constitutional Government                                    |
| EMC       | Emergency management center   |
| OIG       | Office of Inspector General   |

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