

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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

# Report of Inspection

## Limited-Scope Inspection of Embassy Bratislava, Slovakia

Report Number ISP-I-08-27, June 2008

### ~~IMPORTANT NOTICE~~

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

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

## 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 instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

### METHODOLOGY

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



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

*Office of Inspector General*

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

Harold W. Geisel  
Acting Inspector General

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY JUDGMENTS .....	1
CONTEXT .....	3
EXECUTIVE DIRECTION .....	5
Mission Strategic Plan .....	5
Locally Employed Staff and Morale .....	5
Mentoring .....	6
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION .....	7
Advocacy and Reporting .....	7
Public Diplomacy .....	8
Consular .....	14
Law Enforcement Coordination .....	16
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT .....	17
Management .....	18
International Cooperative Administrative Support Services .....	21
General Services Operations .....	21
Procurement .....	22
Facilities Management .....	23
Customs and Shipping .....	24
Housing .....	25
Transportation and Property Management .....	25
Travel .....	26
Financial Management .....	26
Human Resources .....	27
Information Resource Management .....	28
Security .....	30
MANAGEMENT CONTROLS .....	33

QUALITY OF LIFE . . . . . 35  
    Health Unit . . . . . 35  
    Overseas Schools . . . . . 36  
FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . . 37  
INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . . 39  
PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS . . . . . 41  
ABBREVIATIONS . . . . . 43



for a short time could adequately evaluate their performance in policy implementation and resource management. The inspection did not include a full review of security or information technology programs. This limited-scope report sets forth the team's observations, informed impressions, findings, and recommendations.

## CONTEXT

Following its peaceful divorce from the Czech Republic in 1993, Slovakia endured a bleak period of uninspired political leadership and economic decline. In 1998, a coalition emerged dedicated to economic reform, democratic practice, and an intensified effort to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Eu-



ropean Union (EU). Ten years later, the country is unrecognizable. Continuous large-scale economic growth (10.3 percent in 2007) and EU financial transfers have brought an air of prosperity to much of the country, and unemployment has dropped to

7.9 percent nationwide. The latter figure masks regional disparities; the area around Bratislava is close to full employment, whereas the figure for Eastern Slovakia, with a large Roma minority traditionally not engaged in the regular economy, is closer to 20 percent. Large foreign, including American, investment has played an important role in this transformation. Slovakia's population of 5.4 million has stabilized after years of decline. Although the country's inhabitants are overwhelmingly ethnic Slovaks, a Hungarian minority of approximately 10 percent lives in southern and eastern regions. A Roma population undercounted in census figures, but estimated at seven or eight percent of the total, is concentrated in the east.

A new coalition, with a strong nationalist bias and some hard-line statist attitudes, took power in early 2007 and has demonstrated interest in reining in both the political and economic reform process. At the same time, by endorsing its predecessor's objective of bringing Slovakia into the Euro Zone in 2009, it has effectively limited its scope for significant restrictive actions, either political or economic. One thing

that is clear is that this government sees good relations with Russia, which controls all of its energy supplies, and closer integration into the EU as of primary importance. Also clear is that the government enjoys a high level of popularity with a population focused on stability and digesting the dramatic change of recent years. Public debate remains free, and the government and Parliament have been open to compromise on initially restrictive draft laws governing such key elements as the press and nongovernmental organizations. Similarly, labor legislation that investors initially feared would make Slovakia a less attractive environment ultimately emerged in a less onerous form.

Slovakia maintains troops in Kosovo and recently increased its presence in Afghanistan (while fulfilling an election campaign promise to withdraw its last few troops from Iraq). The United States has easy access to, and a strong, on-going dialogue with this government. However, Slovakia is clearly mostly interested in its place in Europe and needs to be persuaded through active diplomacy, more than in the past, that U.S. requests for support are in tune with Slovakia's interest.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Ambassador, who is a native Slovak speaker, had been at post about three months at the time of the inspection. He had already traveled extensively in the country on official business and was beginning to put a clear stamp on how the Embassy addresses its business. His plan is to identify a half dozen or so issues of immediate importance and to assign individual officers mission-wide responsibility for dealing with them. The Ambassador is ably assisted by an active, thoughtful, and organized DCM, who has been at post for two and a half years. The principal coordinating tool is a weekly country team meeting. The Ambassador and DCM also chair a series of other issues-oriented meetings and each maintains an open door policy.

## MISSION STRATEGIC PLAN

Embassy Bratislava had completed its FY 2010 MSP immediately in advance of the inspection. Like the FY 2009 version, which received wide praise in the Department, it was drafted in a collaborative process by all at post, and was the subject of an embassy off-site discussion. Both MSPs are marked by a compelling chief of mission statement that provides readers with a sophisticated introduction to what is at stake for the United States in this country. The FY 2010 MSP also reduces and clarifies the overall goals while continuing to lay out specific performance indicators and targets. The MSP is used regularly by Embassy Bratislava as a management tool throughout the year and has been supplemented, beginning in late 2007, with a reporting plan. The Ambassador's issues-management initiative should mesh easily with this MSP.

## LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF AND MORALE

After an intense rightsizing exercise that began in late 2006, Embassy Bratislava instituted a major change in how it does business in mid-2007, contracting out a number of services and reducing local employees by approximately 20. As the inspection occurred, most LE staff seemed to accept the rationale for the move,

and morale was not particularly low as demonstrated in questionnaire responses and a meeting with the board of the LE association. Two board members are among those let go last year, and the board had not been meeting regularly with post management since then. The Ambassador and DCM accepted an Office of Inspector General (OIG) team suggestion that a new board election take place and those meetings be regularly scheduled monthly with the management officer, quarterly with the DCM, and from time to time with the Ambassador.

## MENTORING

The DCM used a thorough plan for mentoring entry-level officers in earlier years; the inspection happened to coincide with a period when there was only one entry-level specialist here.

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

### ADVOCACY AND REPORTING

The political/economic section is currently staffed by a chief, a deputy who is also an economic officer, a Fascell Fellow doing mostly political work, and a fourth American assigned as an economic officer. Four LE staff also work in the section. The last year has been a challenging one for the section because of the unanticipated elimination of the second political officer slot in summer 2007 (scheduled to be reestablished in summer 2008). In addition, the section needed to move heavily into an advocacy role to counter Slovak Government moves to restrict press and non-governmental organization freedoms and to roll back intellectual property rights on pharmaceuticals that had allowed the U.S. Trade Representative to remove Slovakia from the Section 301 watch list in 2006.

The section chief arrived in late summer 2007 and has been effective in reorganizing the section on an ad hoc basis. She has also instituted a reporting plan tied to MSP goals and coordinated with the Slovak desk in the Department, something Embassy Bratislava had been doing without.

The section coped with the loss of the political officer position by assigning major political responsibilities to the second economic officer. The Fascell Fellow assumed responsibility for two slowly diminishing activities: an Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance Program and a Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration Second Line of Defense Program. Both of these programs had been handled by an LE staff person, now absent on extended maternity leave. The section chief plans to use the arrival of a second political officer in the next few months as an opportunity to clarify and reassign some of these responsibilities. A consular officer also provided valuable assistance, researching and preparing a comprehensive report on trafficking in persons.

Several Washington readers expressed interest in more reporting and more analysis, particularly on energy and the new government's role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the EU. At the same time, they noted that the post had been thorough in its extensive dialogue with Slovakia during its two-year term on the UN Security Council that ended only in December 2007.

The OIG team found post reporting to be well-drafted, geared to U.S. policy interests, and generally with adequate analytical content. Embassy Bratislava has developed a biweekly e-mail with a broad interagency list of recipients to keep Washington readers informed on local developments, including those which are later incorporated into a more comprehensive report. The section has performed well in a trying period. It was a period that saw the temporary loss of the American position and the absence of the LE staff member, as well as the urgency of developing close partnerships with the American Chamber of Commerce, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and European embassies on proposed changes in Slovak law and the relative success of such advocacy.

## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The Embassy Bratislava PAS does an overall excellent job of supporting the MSP, led by two experienced officers, the public affairs officer (PAO) and the information officer, and supported by 10 LE staff, some of whom were the initial LE staff of the post. The LE staff in the PAS are dedicated and invested in the success of the PAS and the broader mission. Many have witnessed the transition from consulate to embassy and the merger of the United States Information Service into the Department's contingent. More recently, they have continued to adjust to the changes flowing from the Embassy's 2007 reengineering and concomitant downsizing and outsourcing of some services. The high points of PAS programming in the past year were the U.S.-Slovak higher education forum in June 2007 and the October 2007 visit of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. PAS made effective use of that three-day visit to touch many target audiences and showcase PAS and embassy priorities.

## Public Diplomacy Strategy and the MSP

The Embassy Bratislava 2008 public diplomacy strategy strategic goals are aligned with MSP goals. MSP goal paper three, *Promoting International Understanding*, is the specific public diplomacy goal. The PAO and information officer were heavily involved in the MSP and prudently marshaled PAS resources to ensure that PAS is a big contributor to the success of the MSP. The following objectives were accomplished:

*Support for a free press with high standards has been a priority.* PAS has worked with the Press Union and supported the professional development of journalists through speaker programs and international visitor leadership program grants. Although

concerned by some possibly chilling portions of the proposed media law, PAS and the Embassy have chosen wisely not to antagonize the new government publicly but rather to use contacts and influence to lobby the government to change the draft law.

*The Embassy's outreach program, run by PAS, has been a great success.* The most impressive thing about the outreach program is that the entire Embassy is involved in outreach. The previous ambassador and the current executive office have made the point that this Embassy is committed to higher education reform. Officers traveling for other purposes have volunteered to stop and speak in schools or at InfoUSA Centers, also known as American Corners. PAS has used the Ambassador's and DCM's travel, and the travel of other officers, for this outreach and also organized around themes like 9/11. The information officer developed the idea of sending American staff out on September 11, 2007. Approximately 12 officers and office management specialists offered to participate in the successful multiagency effort. A similar activity took place on Super Tuesday, February 5, 2008, as part of the Embassy's larger focus on outreach to Slovak youth. The outreach program has also been used, in coordination with the consular section, to get out the authorized message on the VWP.

*American Corners have been important partners.* Because "Red Corners" were a tool and a name used under the period of communist domination, the decision was made not to use the term American Corners in Slovakia. One of the LE staff suggested the alternative InfoUSA Centers, and that has worked well. There are three InfoUSA Centers, and working with them has taken a lot of the time of the information resource center (IRC) staff. The three centers are located in Bratislava, Kosice, and Banska Bystrica. In February 2005, First Lady Laura Bush, who is herself a former librarian, opened the Bratislava InfoUSA Center to heavy local media coverage. U.S. Steel invested in infrastructure (bricks and mortar) for the set up of the center in Kosice.

All three InfoUSA Centers are collocated in Ministry of Culture libraries in university towns. The memorandums of understanding with the Ministry of Culture have given the centers a good foundation and commit the Ministry to a wide array of support. The OIG team visited the Bratislava InfoUSA Center, which is a short walk from the Embassy. It is housed in a 15th century building that has been remodeled to provide prime space to the center. Because of the difficulties in holding events at the Embassy, the Bratislava InfoUSA Center has become a frequently used program space for the PAS. Further, the relationship with the hosting library's general director and the coordinator for the center is so strong that other prime areas in the library, which are not themselves part of the center, have been made available for PAS events. PAS is also in the process of putting digital videoconferencing (DVC) equipment in each corner to facilitate planning and joint programming.

## Information Resource Center Strengths and Public Access Weakness

The IRC is a key element in the outreach strategy of the PAS. Unfortunately, it is also hampered from accomplishing its mission because of security requirements related to its location in the Embassy. The IRC director and the PAO have wisely decided to work around this, reaching out via other venues rather than scaling back on initiatives to accommodate these restrictions.

The IRC facility is behind the hard line, so cumbersome procedures must be followed for public access and even for guests to get to a restroom. The result is that the facility is used sparingly because of the difficulty and the demands made on LE staff. Briefings, DVCs, presentations, and individual appointments are held in the IRC space twice a month. Moreover, there is the general difficulty of getting visitors into the Embassy. This problem affects other PAS program events and effectively means that only visitors who have appointments may gain entrance to view cultural affairs exhibits for example. The regional security officer (RSO) has worked closely with the PAO and with the contract guards to make access as painless as possible without compromising security. The PAO has decided that the PAS focus in the near future will be to find venues outside of the embassy compound with partner institutions.

The management officer has worked out a “bricks and mortar” fix to the complicated issue in the IRC, which when implemented will greatly reduce some of the hindrances now faced by the IRC. This will enable the IRC facility to be used more but will not change the decision to look outside. Even if the IRC access issue is resolved, the IRC space will still be limited. IRC staff go on the road with the one van the Embassy still has to deliver materials and make public presentations. Because the IRC does not operate a lending library, it links electronically with many clients and uses that same Internet link to place materials with PAS contacts

The IRC is responsible for the Embassy’s Web site. Visitors to the site are overwhelmingly interested in consular related materials. For this reason, consular content on the site is in English and Slovak. There is limited Slovak content on the site. Although Slovak is the official language of Slovakia, 9.7 percent of the 5.4 million citizens are ethnic Hungarians. There is no Hungarian content on the site. The PAS and IRC have reached out to the Roma community in many ways, but there is also no Roma content on the site. PAS has funded a new Web site, hosted by the Roma Press Agency, to promote greater awareness of Roma success, and that site links back to the Embassy’s Web site. The LE staff person responsible for maintaining the Embassy’s Web site is also responsible for the technical aspects of the PAS

contact management database. Although the Ambassador has called for more Slovak content on the Web site, the Web site manager's workload and the post's earlier conversion to the Department's content management system for the Web site have deprived the Embassy of enough time and resources to add the Slovak content and keep it updated.

## Cultural Programming

Slovakia has a great cultural heritage. The Opera House, the Slovak Philharmonic, and a building where Amadeus Mozart used to play the piano as a child are within a very short walking distance from the Embassy. Slovak organizations also actively bring in commercial U.S. performers. The PAS has great success with performing groups from the United States and uses them creatively to reach out to more than one type of audience in several cities. For example, one event with a group touring under PAS auspices was a joint musical event with Roma youth.

## Speakers

The PAS effectively programs speakers in support of MSP issues and also uses DVC as well linking up to four locations at a time (with three being in Slovakia) through the DVC technology. Speakers are carefully chosen with an eye to MSP goals.

## Public Diplomacy Grants

PAS has about \$110,000 per year in discretionary funds for programming purposes. The post was able to boost that up to \$170,000 last year with some "unfunded priority" money from the Department. The planned budget for public diplomacy grants in FY 2008 is \$116,000. The PAO plans to give more small grants to nongovernmental organizations, where the Embassy is only one of the donors, as a way of raising the profile of the Embassy. It is also a way to encourage Slovak Government participation as the grant is dependent upon the group also getting Slovak Government support. The Embassy believes that in giving to nongovernmental organizations, the Embassy and the United States are saying that what those organizations are doing is important. It also makes the point that Slovakia is already participating in transformational diplomacy efforts outside its borders – and the United States would like for Slovakia to do more of that in places like Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and former Soviet Republics. For example, one grant went to a Slovak nongovernmental organization doing humanitarian work in Afghanistan. The biggest individual grants have been for \$20,000.

## Fulbright Commission

The Slovak Fulbright Commission is an outgrowth of the Czechoslovak Fulbright Commission, which was established in 1991 and subsequently split, as did the country. Per agreement with the Slovak Government, the commission has rent-free space in the Ministry of Education and Slovak Government financing. They also get in-kind help such as office supplies from the Slovak Government. The budget includes \$450,000 from the U.S. Government plus \$150,000 from the Slovak Government. The commission is audited twice annually; once by an American auditing firm and once by the Ministry of Education. The commission stretches its funds by getting tuition waivers from some U.S. universities. The program has sent 250 Slovaks to the United States and brought 200 Americans to Slovakia since 1994.

The commission program menu has grown from six to 12 programs and includes a high school exchange and a summer institute in the United States for six weeks. The commission also administers a Humphrey Fellows program and hosts the Education USA advising center. All of these programs contribute to a stronger bilateral relationship.

There are four Americans and four Slovaks on the commission's board, which includes the PAO and the consul from the Embassy. The Ambassador is the honorary chairperson. The commission is nevertheless independent and makes use of a large selection committee and outside evaluators.

The falling foreign exchange value of the dollar reduces the value of grants for Americans to live in Europe, which makes it harder on those Americans. The future of the commission will depend in part on trying to get more money from Slovak sources. However, the past track record for getting private Slovak donations has not been good. Despite its own financial difficulties, including commission staff who have not had a pay raise in four years, the Fulbright Commission recently provided the funds to enable the PAS to bring in an American educator to speak at a European-wide event in Slovakia organized by PAS.

## Contact Management

Embassy Bratislava has been working on a conversion from three contact management databases to a single platform since 2000. Only PAS has undergone the conversion. It converted from a distribution records system that was a legacy of the U.S. Information Service to a commercial contact management database called Goldmine. No other section has completed the conversion. For example, the political/

economic section uses Outlook while the protocol assistant uses AESOP. A working group met a number of times and reached agreement on fields and other parameters to be included in a common contact management database. The non-PAS users were expected to scrub their contact lists and provide them to PAS, but the conversion is not moving forward. One reason is that PAS was left with the greatest amount of work, although at one point the Embassy had a contract employee dedicate part of her time to the conversion.

PAS workers responsible for the conversion simply have too much on their plates to get the job completed in a timely manner. A PAS LE staff member is responsible for technical issues, but there is no clear front office management person to champion the conversion and set benchmarks with timelines for their completion. Some users have received training in Vienna or Frankfurt, and a user manual has been prepared. Because PAS recently upgraded the version of Goldmine, the manual is being updated. Other users will be trained in-house. In the meantime, it is only with difficulty that the Embassy can combine contacts from various sections for major mission-wide events. LE staff continue to waste time working with input from multiple systems. It is time to complete the consolidation of its contact management databases so this badly needed conversion can enable the Embassy to enjoy the fruits of implementing a best practice.

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Bratislava should develop and implement a plan to complete conversion to a single contact management database before the end of fiscal year 2008. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

## Effects of Service Changes

Since the closure in 2007 of the Department's regional procurement services office and the 2007 reduction in embassy in-house procurement staff, PAS (especially the IRC) has experienced some difficulties adjusting for procurements. The impact on PAS came from the introduction of mandatory procurement software. Part of this was in steps in the procurement process and in adjusting to changes. The PAO and the management officer have worked cooperatively to alleviate some of the problems that were experienced early on in the transition. The PAO also held an off-site with PAS LE staff in February 2008 to address the issue of its staff taking a greater role in procurement and other functions previously provided by the general services office and the budget and fiscal unit. The PAO later brought some of the issues that surfaced to the general services office. In general, he tried to get

PAS staff used to a new way of doing things, including working in small groups. In interviews with PAS LE staff, some LE staff were clearly stressed over the situation. Some called it “chaos.” The PAO and the management officer are on the right track, but their work is not yet done in this area. To be sure, some parts of PAS have adapted well and take obtaining outside services, rather than having embassy service providers available, in stride. Others have special and time-sensitive needs that are not yet well served. Some PAS LE staff complained to the OIG team that this adjustment had the effect of forcing them to pick up administrative support work at the expense of doing program work, though OIG did not confirm irreparable or unacceptable impairment of the PAS programs.

## CONSULAR

The consular section comprises three officers and seven LE staff, is well-managed, and has good working space. The section does not issue immigrant visas. Nonimmigrant visa (NIV) cases totaled 18,097 in FY 2007. Approximately one-third of the NIV workload is from exchange visitors issued J visas under the summer work and travel program. The summer work and travel applicants are seasonal and would not be affected by Slovakia’s entrance into the VWP. The section applies consular best practices with machine-readable visa fee collection by banks off-site and the use of an appointment system. The section has experienced minor frustrations from embassy events and obligations in morning hours that conflict with its best plans for a smooth visa process and that have the effect of isolating consular officers. The OIG team counseled post management to bear in mind the consular section’s public requirements when planning and setting events that should also involve consular officers or their LE staff. The consular officers, all of whom have had previous consular assignments, are experienced and work as a cohesive team. Only the consul is a career consular officer. The consular officers participate in embassy outreach events in other cities, during which they multitask to provide consular outreach to American citizens and speak on the VWP with other audiences in conjunction with PAS.

The American citizens services workload is moderate and growing as more U.S. firms set up operations in Slovakia, and the tourist traffic continues to climb. Approximately 1,100 Americans are registered with the consular section. Many more unregistered American citizens are dual nationals. In FY 2007 there were 414 special consular services cases, 268 passport cases, and 38 reports of American citizen births abroad.

## Visa Waiver Program

The VWP is the biggest continuing focus of the consular section. It comes up regularly in the press, and Slovaks who are refused visas are increasingly less tolerant of the process and their own outcomes. The Foreign Minister, on several occasions, has admonished Slovaks to rigorously observe their visa status to help the country achieve VWP entry. The consular staff is cognizant of hopes and expectations on the part of the Government of Slovakia, the Slovak public, the Ambassador, and the Administration that there will be a favorable VWP outcome on Slovakia. This began with hopeful public remarks by President Bush on a February 2005 visit to Bratislava in which the President implicitly linked acknowledgment of Slovakia's risks for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq with "working with your government to make it easier for Slovaks to travel to the United States of America." On March 17, 2008, DHS Secretary Chertoff signed VWP memorandums of understanding in Washington with Slovakia, Hungary, and Lithuania. The official press release said "The security enhancements outlined in the agreement put all three countries on track for visa-free travel to the U.S., and potential destination as VWP members later this year."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the NIV adjudicators have professionally limited themselves to judging each NIV application on its own merits.

The booming Slovak economy and the other options for work as an EU member nation have resulted in the downward trend in NIV refusals. This trend, if maintained, would bring Slovakia within the parameters of the revised VWP based on actual statistics for the completed FY 2008. However, the post accepts the possibility that Slovakia, whose global adjusted NIV refusal rate in FY 2007 was 12 percent, might not come under the 10 percent cut off established by Congress when it expanded the VWP and added new security requirements.

Even so, solely in terms of the criteria Slovakia must meet, its prospects look good for eventual inclusion in the VWP under the provisions of the security waiver in the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007.<sup>2</sup> The roadmap for VWP inclusion still requires DHS to certify Slovakia to the Secretary for inclusion and also to put in place certain systems and procedures required in the revised legislation. For its part, Slovakia has tentatively made arrangements for data

---

<sup>1</sup>DHS Signs Visa Waiver Program Agreements with Slovakia, Hungary, and Lithuania, DHS Press Release March 17, 2008.

<sup>2</sup>P.L. 110-53 of August 3, 2007.

on Slovak lost and stolen passports to become available through the legal attaché in Prague, who in turn, would pass that information onto the visa lookout system database for entry into the consular lookout and support system known as CLASS. In the meantime, DHS is doing its due diligence by, among other things, having an assessment team visit Slovakia. That visit is tentatively scheduled in May 2008. For its part, the consular section has conducted two validation studies in concert with DHS. The results of those studies so far are that Embassy Bratislava is seeing fewer Slovaks violating the terms of their visas. They are even seeing long time overstayers return, and some legal permanent residents are giving up their green cards and returning to Slovakia.

Slovakia will still have to work out implementing agreements in addition to the steps that Congress has mandated for DHS. In January 2008, Slovakia implemented the electronic passport for tourist passports. At the time of the inspection the U.S. Senate had not yet ratified the new extradition treaty with Slovakia.

## Antiterrorist Coordination

The consular section chief coordinates the Visas Viper committee chaired by the DCM. The committee meets monthly and reports at that time.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT COORDINATION

The RSO is the only law enforcement official resident in Bratislava. He and the political/economic section chief coordinate necessary reporting. A Drug Enforcement Administration attaché resident in Vienna met with the OIG team during a visit to Bratislava. He reports that formerly reticent Slovak officials seem to be interested in increased cooperation. As a result, he expects to increase the frequency of his visits to approximately once a month. A newly arrived assistant legal attaché resident in Prague also met with the OIG team during a visit to Bratislava. He finds his Slovak counterparts professional and forward-leaning with important areas of mutual interest. He expects to meet with them several times per month.

The DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement office resident in Vienna, comes to Bratislava two or three times a year. The Secret Service agent, resident in Frankfurt, visits at least quarterly. The RSO reports that all seek appropriate country clearance for their visits and keep the Embassy informed of their activities in Slovakia.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Embassy Bratislava undertook a comprehensive and ambitious reengineering program in 2007 to implement Department management initiatives and reduce administrative service costs while maintaining service quality in accordance with its International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) standards. In a mere nine months, the Embassy transformed itself by taking full advantage of outsourcing, automation, rightsizing, regionalization, business process management, gain-sharing, and LE staff empowerment. The effort stretched the capabilities and energy of the management staff, but it completed the first phase of the transformation on schedule at the end of December 2007. Such massive change in a short span of time was bound to prompt some challenges, but the transformation on balance was extremely successful. The Embassy is now consolidating around its successes, identifying areas for improvement, and moving to correct deficiencies. At the same time, it is implementing additional changes that aim to cut costs further. Bratislava stands as a clear exemplar of a rightsized embassy that is leveraging sound business practices and automation to enable effective allocation of resources to achieve strategic goals.

Embassy Bratislava's reengineering efforts also served to highlight the Department's challenges in supporting and enabling some of its own, and its bureaus', management initiatives. In some cases, the Department does not have management mechanisms and processes that incentivize posts to implement cost-saving measures, empower LE staff to assume responsibilities now held by American officers, eliminate redundant workload to facilitate regionalization, or take full advantage of technology and market conditions to optimize performance and results.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>US Direct-Hire Staff</b>	<b>US Local-Hire Staff</b>	<b>Foreign National Staff</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Total Funding FY 2007</b>	<b>Total Funding (Target) FY 2008</b>
<b>State – Diplomatic and Consular Programs (D&amp;CP)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>\$1,576,100</b>	<b>*\$1,159,700</b>
<b>State – ICASS</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>\$3,397,300</b>	<b>*\$2,661,900</b>
<b>State – Public Diplomacy</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$884,800</b>	<b>**\$833,000</b>
<b>State – Diplomatic Security</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>\$850,939</b>	<b>\$930,440</b>
<b>State – Marine Security</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$211,023</b>	<b>\$210,600</b>

~~**SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**~~

State – Representation				0	\$37,049	\$34,000
State – Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO)				0	\$835,679	\$864,850
State – OBO Maintenance and Repair (7901)				0	\$25,900	**\$14,000
State – OBO Maintenance and Repair (7902)				0	\$5,695	\$0
State – OBO Physical Security Upgrade				0	\$163,485	***\$3,500
State – Machine Readable Visa	0	0	2	2	\$76,809	\$94,359
Foreign Commercial Service	1	0	3	4	\$260,495	**303,710
Defense Attaché Office	4	0	1	5	\$292,020	\$306,940
Office of Defense Cooperation	1	0	2	3	\$205,000	\$210,000
Bilateral Affairs Office	1	0	2	3	\$80,000	\$116,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>\$8,902,294</b>	<b>\$7,742,999</b>

\* Mid-year revised target. \*\* Requested but not yet approved. \*\*\* Amount represents exchange rate losses requested in order to pay final invoice for security upgrade.

## MANAGEMENT

In 2007, Embassy Bratislava implemented changes related to every major Department management initiative with the strong support of its front office and under the leadership of a remarkably knowledgeable and dynamic management officer. It aggressively rightsized itself by outsourcing its motor pool, janitorial, expendable supply, delivery, casual labor, residential maintenance, and accommodation exchange functions to commercial firms. Warehousing and most property management functions were regionalized to Embassy Vienna. These measures allowed a 40 percent reduction of the LE management staff and resulted in cost savings for FY 2008 of approximately \$275,000. By July 2008, post expects to outsource a major part of its classified communications system to Vienna. The combined outsourcing of services enables post to eliminate two American positions – one assistant general services officer and one information resource management position – thereby reducing the U.S. direct-hire footprint of the Embassy and saving the significant cost of posting American employees overseas. Embassy Bratislava documented its reengineering efforts in great detail in two cables, one in June 2007 (Bratislava 00358) and one in January 2008 (Bratislava 00008).

Post has pursued additional opportunities in post-to-post cooperation, which is a subset of regionalization and facilitates rightsizing. In a reversal of its arrangement with Embassy Vienna on warehousing and communications, Embassy Bratislava is working with a local travel management center on a contract that could provide service at lower cost to both embassies. Embassy Bratislava also has subscribed to Blackberry services from Embassy Budapest and thereby eliminated the need to purchase an expensive server and pay maintenance and update costs. At the same time, Bratislava's regionalization initiatives have highlighted the limited ability a post has to charge other posts for services, particularly under current ICASS processes and mechanisms. The Department does not have appropriate financial systems that facilitate and encourage such collaboration between posts.

**Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of Resource Management should develop and implement financial guidance, processes, and mechanisms that govern and facilitate the provision and charging of services by one post to another. (Action: RM)

Embassy Bratislava seeks to maximize the involvement and use of LE staff through empowerment. The senior financial management employee has certifying authority, which alleviates some of the management officer's workload. Post requested a contracting warrant for its senior procurement employee without success due to expiration of the pilot program that would allow it. The management officer involves the LE supervisors in decision making, giving them considerable control over section budgets and generally challenged them to realize their potential as leaders and managers. The Embassy has not neglected professional development, which is a key enabler to empowerment. Post maintains a robust training program that is closely linked to mission goals and section business plans. The management officer conducts his own mentoring/training/reading group program that focuses on current leadership and business management subjects.

Post is on the forward edge of other new management initiatives that should be key enablers of regionalization, rightsizing, and sound resource allocation. Embassy Bratislava is pioneering the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs' gain-sharing program, which allows posts to retain 70 percent of savings gained through implementation of management initiatives. Gain-sharing is a rare inducement for posts to voluntarily reduce operating costs and can be a powerful tool to offset the effects of diminishing budgets. Embassy Bratislava has used gain-sharing funds thus far to improve its health unit, fund the formation of a furniture pool with Embassy Vienna, and expand the community liaison office program. Notably, it also permitted post to

transfer \$100,000 from its ICASS to diplomatic and consular programs (D&CP) allotment to allow operations to continue normally despite post's 18.5 percent D&CP reduction levied at mid-year. This amount represented approximately six percent of post's D&CP allotment. However, gain-sharing should be governed by transparent mechanisms, processes, and formulae to maintain trust that savings are not allotted to post by one hand and taken away with budget cuts by the other hand. This is particularly important because budget cuts are levied unevenly, sometimes varying by more than 20 percent from one post to another.

**Recommendation 3:** The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs should develop and implement a transparent plan, processes, and formulae to govern its gain-sharing program, including any linkage with budget rescissions, to build confidence and incentive for the program. (Action: EUR)

The gain-sharing program now includes retention of net savings of post-held funds, but not of centrally controlled funds, e.g., salaries and leasehold accounts. Gain-sharing would be more effective and motivational if the program netted to posts some portion of centrally controlled funds, as well. The Bureau of Resource Management indicated informally to post that it would undertake to develop a gain-sharing formula for these funds.

**Recommendation 4:** The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs should coordinate with the Bureau of Resource Management to develop and implement a plan to include net savings to centrally controlled funds in the gain-sharing program. (Action: EUR, in coordination with RM)

Embassy Bratislava is also breaking new ground by implementing activity-based management as a means to allow managers in each section to connect cost and performance with strategic planning, identify and reduce waste in activities and in costs, and generally manage in better synchronization with goals and objectives. The system is integrated into post's Sharepoint services to convert data into easy-to-read Gantt charts depicting performance and progress. This innovative approach enables more effective allocation of human and financial resources to meet mission needs. The management officer is scheduled to deliver a presentation on activity-based management to the May 2008 Bureau of Resource Management conference.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The ICASS council is chaired by a Department economics officer and includes more representation than is mandatory because the Department of Defense has both a Defense attaché and an Office of Defense Cooperation member. The council met more often than normal during the past year due to the reengineering effort that affected many ICASS services. The process also underscored the different equities that agencies have in the system and the different levels of motivation for cost savings. The most recent ICASS customer survey showed a dip in satisfaction levels, but there is no clear correlation with performance standards. Post is reviewing comments derived from the customer satisfaction survey in order to improve its services.

## GENERAL SERVICES OPERATIONS

The general services operations and morale were greatly affected by post's reengineering efforts, which included outsourcing the motor pool and warehousing and janitorial functions. Outsourcing made employees redundant, and the resulting reduction in force, while handled as well as possible under the circumstances, had a negative effect on morale. The section is now assessing its operations and improving where necessary and appropriate. Section morale has improved, and fair implementation of gain-sharing should bolster morale further by showing that the expected benefits of reengineering will materialize.

Post developed two eligible family member positions that are paying great dividends across a wide spectrum of services by taking advantage of their security clearances. The employees escort uncleared personnel in controlled access areas, process classified pouch shipments, inventory classified equipment, perform limited maintenance functions in controlled access areas, and assist in classified procurement. Not only does this provide excellent employment opportunities for eligible family members, it also alleviates the workload of U.S. direct-hire personnel who then can work on higher value tasks.

## PROCUREMENT

A highly experienced and capable LE staff member leads the procurement section. She is well-trained not only in the technical aspects of her position, but also in leadership and management. In recognition of her proficiency, post nominated her for membership in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs' EUR Executive Corps, which comprises the best LE staff members in each of the management disciplines. To her credit, she was accepted. She has the knowledge and judgment to carry out the duties of a contracting officer, but post's request for a warrant has not been acted upon by the Department's procurement executive due to expiration of the pilot program. The warrant would exemplify the Department's empowerment initiative, as well as lessen the workload of the sole remaining general services officer as a result of reengineering and rightsizing.

The procurement section played a key role in the reengineering efforts of the past year, most notably in developing and implementing contracts for outsourced services. The time pressures were great, and the workload was very heavy, but the section responded very well to produce contracts for janitorial, transportation, expendable supplies, and accommodation exchange services. The section is now in an assessment and improvement mode with regard to the changes that have been implemented. It also is pursuing further refinement of its use of the enterprise solution, WebPASS Procurement, to improve internal controls and operations. Specifically, the section is expanding its use of the receiving module to better link components of post's supply chain management system, and it is taking advantage of the application's ability to create logs that document purchases against blanket purchase agreements. The procurement section has also facilitated the use of a purchase card by public affairs to improve the responsiveness of the procurement system to that section's needs.

As post expands its use of WebPASS Procurement, it has identified possible enhancement features that would improve internal controls. First, a report that shows all cancelled purchase orders would allow trend analysis and close the loop with financial management to ensure deobligation of funds. Second, allowing the receiving officer/clerk to attach a scanned signature to the DS-2076 form and to update the file showing full/partial receipt would further automate the system, improve process visibility, and avoid generation of paper copies. The Bureau of Information Resource Management indicated to the OIG team that the PASS post management officer would assist the post in implementing these features.





The upcoming summer turnover season will provide more opportunity to assess its effectiveness as the primary means of shipping household effects, unaccompanied baggage, and personally owned vehicles.

## HOUSING

The inflationary cost of residential leases in Bratislava has stabilized over the past two years after many years of rapid growth. However, the value of the local currency has risen greatly against the U.S. dollar in the meantime, resulting in increasing costs. For example, the terms of a five-year recently expired lease called for annual payment of \$24,000. During renewal negotiations of the same lease, the landlord asked for \$45,000 per year. Post is trying its best to keep lease costs low, but that is becoming more difficult under current economic conditions.

## TRANSPORTATION AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The transportation section was transformed through reengineering and now consists of a supervisor, a receiving clerk, and a nonexpendable property application clerk. The motor pool was substituted with contract services provided by two taxi companies for local transportation and an auto/limousine contractor for other transportation needs, such as airport arrivals and departures. The supervisor is working to improve services by working with at least one of the taxi services to implement a Web site in English to facilitate use by the American employees of the Embassy. The section still retains responsibility for maintenance of vehicles, which is outsourced commercially.

The transportation section also coordinates with Embassy Vienna on property inventory and transport now that property and warehousing is outsourced to Vienna. The two embassies concluded a memorandum of understanding that clearly delineated roles, responsibilities, and processes for all aspects of the relationship. The memorandum is contained in the cable, Bratislava 00008, cited above.

## TRAVEL

The recent problems between the General Services Administration and its travel management center presented Embassies Bratislava and Vienna with an opportunity for post-to-post cooperation and regionalization. In a meeting attended by the OIG inspector, representatives from the two embassies negotiated in accordance with Department guidance with the local travel management center affiliate for a bridge contract. Taking full advantage of lower costs in Slovakia, volume discounts, and rebates, and the general leverage of one rather than two embassies, the two embassies negotiated terms that were very advantageous and far less expensive than perhaps either could have achieved individually. This underscores the benefits of collaboration and post-to-post partnerships.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The financial management section is led by another LE staff member who is technically proficient and an able custodian of the post's financial system and resources. His appointment by the Department as a certifying officer speaks to his capabilities and trustworthiness. He is assisted by five colleagues who provide the full range of budgeting, accounting, voucher examining, cashiering, and travel services.

The financial management section took the lead on the outsourcing of accommodation exchange to a local bank and is working to identify any areas for improvement now that post has sufficient experience with the new system. The section solicited and received comments and recommendations from ICASS subscribers and was scheduled at the time of the OIG inspection to meet with bank representatives to discuss possible remedies and improvements. In an effort to empower its clients and share knowledge, the section has given managers desktop access to its financial data via the automated COAST system, which grants direct access to daily updates on all financial transactions and the ability to analyze data using various queries and reports.

Post has experienced some problems related to errors in electronic payments to vendors by Global Financial Services in Charleston. In some cases, invoice data input by post is not properly conveyed when payment is made through the local U.S. Disbursing Officer bank account to the vendor. The vendor therefore cannot match the payment against an invoice and cannot register the payment properly. The Embassy is not aware of this until the vendor sends an overdue payment notice. In order to bridge this communication gap, post is now using an application developed

by Embassy Berlin, but it is no substitute for an enterprise-wide system that notifies a vendor via e-mail of an imminent payment and what steps to take if payment is not received. Post understands that Momentum has this capability, which could preclude late payments and provide better service to posts and vendors.

**Recommendation 7:** Global Financial Services should develop and implement a system that notifies vendors of in-transit payments to facilitate communication and preclude late payments, as is possible by activating the e-mail function of Momentum. (Action: GFS)

## HUMAN RESOURCES

LE staff have not received a salary increase in four years, which is difficult for them to understand, notwithstanding the results of the most recent salary survey data analysis. Instead, they view their compensation through the lens of local economic conditions in 2007 (10.4 percent economic growth, five percent wage growth and two to three percent unemployment in Bratislava) and 11 percent turnover rate in the Embassy due to salary reasons. The turnover rate warranted a one percent increase, which post has the resources to implement. However, post also is exploring more innovative solutions to retaining valued LE staff, recognizing in particular that certain specialty and grade employees are more critical to retain than others. Post is therefore working with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs to implement other solutions, such as establishing bands of grades that are treated separately with regard to retention criteria and creating two additional grade steps in the local compensation plan that would effectively add a .5 percent increase as employees earn within grade increases.

The burgeoning local economy has begun to affect recruitment as well as retention. The human resources supervisor observed that two years ago post would receive up to 100 applications per announced vacancy. Now, the Embassy receives far fewer applications and, in fact, had to readvertise recently for two openings. Further, a vacancy announcement for a Foreign Commercial Service position attracted only three qualified applicants, all of whom turned down the job due to salary. The human resources section is tracking these statistics to accurately gauge recruitment challenges and develop solutions.

An important component of post's reengineering efforts is empowerment of LE staff, so that they assume greater responsibility and accountability while increasing their roles in leadership, management, and decision making. At the same time, it is important to capture and define these job components in employee position descriptions, reclassify positions when appropriate, and thereby compensate employees fairly. Post recognizes this need and is in the process of reevaluating certain positions using the computer aided job evaluation tool. Of the 22 positions that remained in the management section, 13 required reevaluating. So far, eight positions have been reevaluated, resulting in five upgrades. This is one aspect of retaining LE staff members who become even more important in a lean, rightsized organization. Another aspect is an award system that is aligned with organizational values and business philosophy, which post is working to design.

## INFORMATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Embassy Bratislava's information resource management section is focused not only on keeping systems secure, but it is integrated into operations and leverages technology to provide comprehensive business solutions. The effects of the synergistic partnership are seen throughout the mission, perhaps most notably in the deployment of a Microsoft Office Sharepoint Services system that cuts across all sections to provide a means to organize and share information, collaborate on-line, and maintain continuity of knowledge as Foreign Service personnel cycle in and out. Every section is making use of Sharepoint, which is available on the Intranet or on the Internet using a fob (every U.S. direct-hire employee and many LE staff are issued fobs). Moreover, post has added third-party software to Sharepoint that endows it with business process management and automated workflow capabilities that amplify its capabilities and value as a business tool. Post's use of Sharepoint has become a model for other posts. Thus far, Bratislava's information systems officer has helped install Sharepoint in Prague, consulted on-site with Chisinau on the system, and fielded many e-mail inquiries from posts who are considering Sharepoint implementation.

On the classified side, Embassy Bratislava is working to regionalize much of its communications to Embassy Vienna by mid-2008. This project is significant in paving the potential way for broader regionalization of communications, which could reduce the number of U.S. direct-hire employees at posts, just as Bratislava will give up one position in FY 2008. The eventual deployment of the entire suite of State Messaging and Retrieval Toolset applications in Vienna, which is Bratislava's partner in communications regionalization, will provide full proof of concept. Unfortu-

nately, the Bureau of Information Resource Management maintains that it is unable to accelerate the toolset deployment due to the complexity of Embassy Vienna's tri-mission operation.

Yet another example of regionalization is Embassy Bratislava's outsourcing of Blackberry services to Embassy Budapest, which already has the infrastructure in place and therefore obviates the need for Bratislava to purchase a server and other expensive peripherals. However, Embassy Bratislava's quest for Blackberry services underscored the problems individual posts encounter in making the business decision to outsource or provide its own services. Post also experienced problems in locally procuring instruments that are approved for use by the Department. It appears that it would be more cost effective and efficient if Blackberry services were centralized and provided from Washington, which would prevent the needless proliferation of servers that cost approximately \$15,000 a copy and require updates and maintenance by posts. An enterprise-wide solution could also eliminate instrument compatibility issues and time lost by individual posts researching local options.

**Recommendation 8:** The Bureau of Information Resource Management should develop and implement a plan to centrally administer and provide global Blackberry services with an eye towards eliminating redundant server procurement/deployment and redundant staff maintenance thereof, as well as facilitating the procurement of instruments that are compatible with Department specifications. (Action: IRM)

The information systems office has found an effective solution to control media that require Universal Serial Bus port access. Post's local change control board approved the use of the application, Volume Shield, which allows limited or broad access based on device serial number and provides an audit trail of device use. This precludes configuring individual workstations to accept devices and also provides the user with more flexibility to use the device on other workstations on the network. If the Department had an enterprise-wide solution to deal with the issue of Universal Serial Bus port access, it would save individual posts time and effort in developing local solutions to a common issue.

**Recommendation 9:** The Bureau of Information Resource Management should develop and implement an enterprise-wide solution to workstation Universal Serial Bus port access that facilitates authorized access and use, while also providing adequate security and audit controls, such as the solution developed and deployed by Embassy Bratislava using Volume Shield. (Action: IRM)



A real issue at this post is the physical and verbal harassment Americans of African, Hispanic, and Asian ancestry receive in Bratislava outside of the confines of the mission. The RSO and post management have worked with one employee and relocated her to a different residence. It is an issue of tolerance on the part of Slovaks and of enforcement on the part of local authorities. The RSO has done some work with local law enforcement, and PAS has used multiple programming opportunities to promote tolerance. The OIG team made suggestions to the post regarding actions that would ensure that those seeking an assignment to Embassy Bratislava were fully informed on the environment prior to bidding. Additionally, the RSO would be more aware of incidents and their locations, including those not involving American citizens.

## Equal Employment Opportunity

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program at Embassy Bratislava is functional. The post EEO and Federal Women's Program counselors are designated in writing and posted on an EEO bulletin board near the human resources unit. The EEO counselor is experienced, having been the EEO counselor at a previous post. During the inspection, he returned to Washington to receive refresher EEO training so that upon his return he could conduct EEO and sexual harassment awareness training for all. The post has required this training for all staff.



## MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

One of the primary goals of reengineering Embassy Bratislava management services was to improve management controls. Post has accomplished this by outsourcing services either to other embassies or to commercial firms, which effectively outsources the associated management controls as well. Activity-based management and automation also strengthen management controls by fixing responsibilities for every step in a process, increasing visibility throughout processes, and involving all managers more closely in resource tracking and allocation. Full implementation of enterprise-wide solutions, such as WebPASS applications, further strengthen controls by enforcing discipline on processes and enhancing transparency.



## QUALITY OF LIFE

### HEALTH UNIT

The health unit was in transition at the time of the inspection from one non-resident, part-time, non-Slovak speaking nurse to a unit headed by a full-time, local, bilingual medical doctor alone in the role of the health unit director. The incumbent contract nurse, who was now redundant, was to have her contract terminated within days of the departure of the OIG inspection team. The new health unit director, who arrived in January 2008, has been in frequent contact with the regional medical officer at Embassy Vienna. This has included two training sessions in Vienna, primarily to learn the administrative requirements of running a health unit in compliance with Office of Medical Services guidance.

Before the arrival of the new director, the post had 12 medical evacuations in its previous year – one to the United States and the remainder to Vienna. Although the regional medical officer has recommended giving Embassy Bratislava American staff and their eligible family members the choice of seeking treatment in either Vienna or Bratislava, more treatment in Bratislava, rather than a medical evacuation, is expected in the future based on the groundwork the new health unit director has done in making contacts with local medical facilities, laboratories, and doctors. The health unit is also being prepared to perform medical clearances in Bratislava. In sum, the upgrade of the health unit means better first response care and the convenience, for those who choose, of in-patient care in vetted facilities near the support network of their immediate family and friends at post. Another major undertaking for the health unit will be working with the management officer to add adjacent office space to the unit for use as the director's office. This will have the added advantage of increasing patient privacy in the current examination room office configuration. Although the focus and priorities of the new health unit director and of the management officer has been correct, the OIG team informally recommended that the director complete an inventory of health unit holdings in FY 2008. The health unit keeps no controlled substances.

## OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)

..... both of which have received grants from the office of overseas schools. Both also received grants for soft target security upgrades, such as perimeter fences, public address systems, and radios. There is concern about the growing number of students for whom English is not the mother tongue, which may slow the pace of teaching. Post is also concerned that ..... identify a permanent location for the school and plan for an orderly transition to it. A representative from the office of overseas schools visited post during the OIG inspection and will file a separate report upon his return to Washington.



**Recommendation 8:** The Bureau of Information Resource Management should develop and implement a plan to centrally administer and provide global BlackBerry services with an eye towards eliminating redundant server procurement/deployment and redundant staff maintenance thereof, as well as facilitating the procurement of instruments that are compatible with Department specifications. (Action: IRM)

**Recommendation 9:** The Bureau of Information Resource Management should develop and implement an enterprise-wide solution to workstation Universal Serial Bus port access that facilitates authorized access and use, while also providing adequate security and audit controls, such as the solution developed and deployed by Embassy Bratislava using Volume Shield. (Action: IRM)

## INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover matters not requiring action by organizations outside of the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau and are not 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.

LE staff at Embassy Bratislava was reduced by nearly 20 to a total of 82 in June 2007, with many services that used to be provided in-house now contracted out. While LE morale is not bad, the LE association has hesitated to call new elections, needed in part to replace two board members who were let go, and does not meet regularly with post management. Knowledgeable LE staff remain skeptical that Embassy Bratislava will share in the gains realized by this major rightsizing effort.

An active LE association is a good means to ensure job satisfaction and good morale at an embassy. Such an association should meet more or less monthly with the management officer and quarterly with the DCM. The Ambassador can be involved to the extent his time allows. Post management agreed this should be done.

**Informal Recommendation 1:** Embassy Bratislava American management should make sure that the locally employed association holds elections and should meet regularly with its board.

Embassy-wide events or meetings are often scheduled when the consular section is serving the public, thereby precluding consular officers from attending.

**Informal Recommendation 2:** Embassy Bratislava post management should bear in mind the consular section's public requirements when planning and setting events that should also involve consular officers or their locally employed staff.

The health unit does not have an up-to-date inventory. It does not keep controlled substances.

**Informal Recommendation 3:** Embassy Bratislava should have the new health unit director complete an inventory during fiscal year 2008.

The RSO is leading the process of electronically updating the emergency action plan, which should be completed by the end of 2008. The RSO is concerned that it may not be completed on time, yet there are no milestones that define intermediate objectives and gauge progress.

**Informal Recommendation 4:** Embassy Bratislava should ensure that the regional security officer establishes a timeline, milestones, and track progress with an objective of completing the update of the emergency action plan by the end-of-year deadline.

## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Arrival Date</b>
Ambassador	Vincent Obsitnik	12/07
Deputy Chief of Mission	Lawrence R. Silverman	08/05
<b>Chiefs of Sections:</b>		
Consular	Robin Haase	08/05
Political/Economic	Susan Ball	08/07
Public Diplomacy	Edward Kemp	08/06
Regional Affairs	Jeff Thiel	08/05
Management	Charles Eaton	
General Services	Andrew Hogenboom	09/06
Information Management	Paul Echaniz	08/05
Regional Security (RSO)	Alex Reinshagen	09/06
<b>Other Agencies:</b>		
Department of Defense		
Defense Attaché	Lt. Col. David Galles	07/07
U.S. Marine Security Guard	GySgt Matthew Blais	06/07
Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC)	Lt. Col. Bradley Hocevar	07/05
Department of Commerce	David Ponsar	07/06



## ABBREVIATIONS

DCM	deputy chief of mission
D&CP	diplomatic and consular programs
Department	Department of State
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DVC	digital videoconference
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EU	European Union
LE	locally employed
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IRC	information resources center
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NIV	nonimmigrant visa
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	public affairs officer
PAS	public affairs section
RSC	regional support center
RSO	regional security officer
VWP	Visa Waiver Program
WebPASS	Web Post Administrative Software Suite

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

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

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

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