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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Doha, Qatar

Report Number ISP-I-11-04A, November 2010

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and the Broadcasting Board of Governors**

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

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.

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY JUDGMENTS	1
CONTEXT	3
EXECUTIVE DIRECTION	5
POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.....	9
Political/Economic Section.....	9
Public Affairs Section	13
Consular Affairs Section	17
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.....	23
Management Operations.....	23
Human Resources	24
Financial Management.....	27
General Services	28
Procurement.....	28
Warehouse and Property Management.....	29
Facilities Management.....	29
Information Management and Information Security	30
QUALITY OF LIFE	33
Health Unit	33
Community Liaison Office	33
Schools.....	33
Embassy Doha Employee Association.....	34
MANAGEMENT CONTROLS	35
Payment for Home-to-Office Transportation	35
LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS	37
INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS	39
PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS	43
ABBREVIATIONS	45

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between April 12 and 29, 2010, and in Doha, Qatar, between May 15 and June 1, 2010.

CONTEXT

Sitting atop the world's third-largest natural gas reserves, Qatar is a small peninsular country in the Persian Gulf with a population of approximately 1.7 million, of whom only about 225,000 are Qatari citizens. Since 1995, exploitation of the country's vast natural gas resources has proceeded at a rapid pace, fueling an ambitious program of infrastructure investment and economic diversification as the country seeks to expand its transportation, banking, and education sectors. Qatar now enjoys a per capita income of approximately \$60,000 a year, the second highest in the world. The country's projected infrastructure investments total \$225 billion over the next 5 years, creating significant opportunities for U.S. businesses. The planned opening this year of one of the world's largest airports underscores Qatar's commitment to becoming a regional hub of commerce and trade.

Relations between the United States and Qatar are cordial but not without occasional challenges. Qatar pursues a highly activist foreign policy in the region, engaging directly with Iran, Sudan, and Syria, and on Israeli-Palestinian issues. The Al Jazeera broadcast network, owned by the government of Qatar and based in Doha, reaches an audience of 60 million viewers throughout the Arab world and often stakes out controversial editorial positions. Engagement with Al Jazeera's senior leadership and network of journalists therefore is a priority focus for the embassy. Other policy issues of concern to the United States include Qatar's limited cooperation on counterterrorism and its mixed record on trafficking in persons.

Qatar is home to the U.S. Central Command's regional headquarters and two military bases, which support combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Military issues related to this presence are a major focus of U.S.-Qatari relations.



Map of Doha

Source: U.S. Department of State

Embassy Doha is a mid-size embassy, with a staff of 82 U.S. direct-hire personnel, 113 foreign national staff, and 11 locally hired American personnel. No Qatari citizens are employed by the mission. Operations under chief of mission authority include representatives from the Department of Defense, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Foreign Commercial Service. Operating budgets for U.S. Government agencies under chief of mission authority total approximately \$13.7 million.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Ambassador arrived to Embassy Doha in July 2008 and the deputy chief of mission (DCM) in July 2009. The Ambassador focuses on the overall direction of the embassy and relations with the host country government and institutions. He also engages with key constituencies, such as U.S. businesses, high-level visitors, and the media. The DCM oversees day-to-day embassy operations. They form a strong team and communicate frequently and freely. As this report indicates, Embassy Doha is a well-functioning embassy with talented staff, good teamwork, and strong leadership.

The Ambassador and DCM place a high priority on teamwork among the agencies and sections of the mission. Their emphasis is not just on coordination, but on working together to achieve clearly laid out goals. The primary vehicle for this priority is the Ambassador's synchronization process, which is an innovative approach to strategic planning and execution that draws on his recent experience working with the U.S. military. The process begins with an examination of agency-specific strategic planning documents relevant to Qatar. Additional guidance is obtained from Presidential policy statements, such as the June 2009 Cairo speech and the U.S. National Security Strategy. The Ambassador holds a semiannual interagency offsite meeting to analyze trends in Qatar and their implications for U.S. policy objectives. This meeting provides the basis for the creation of interagency synchronization groups with clearly defined goals and timelines for achieving them. The groups cover issues such as security and counterterrorism, the National Export Initiative, critical infrastructure protection, and Muslim community outreach. The groups adjust their objectives or conclude operations when their goals are achieved. All groups are chaired by the DCM and meet every two weeks or, in some cases, less frequently.

This process sounds complicated at first, but it provides clarity and focus to interagency goals and is heavily results-oriented. It promotes teamwork and helps agencies and sections see how their own agendas can be reinforced through cooperation with their counterparts in the embassy. It also helps the embassy enlist the growing number of high-level visitors to advance the embassy's objectives in meetings with Qatari officials.

Two beneficiaries of this process are the Foreign Commercial Service and the public affairs section (PAS), whose interests and programs are included in all syn-

chronization groups. Needless to say, they are strong supporters of the process. Others, while somewhat less engaged given their agency-specific missions, appreciate the strategic direction and cooperation the process provides, although some would prefer less frequent meetings or more time for operational coordination. Agencies participate on a voluntary basis, but given the Ambassador's strong commitment, they want to do all they can to support the process. The process is compatible with the Mission Strategic and Resource Plan process and is an idea worth considering by other chiefs of mission for possible adaptation to their own circumstances.

The front office also employs the more traditional methods of promoting cooperation among agencies and sections. The Ambassador chairs a weekly country team meeting. He meets biweekly with agency heads and section chiefs. These meetings offer the opportunity for an open exchange of information and opinions. The DCM meets weekly with the section chiefs, biweekly with agency heads, and on a regular basis with LE staff and family members. The DCM gets around the embassy regularly. The Ambassador, because of his outside role, is a more distant figure to some of the staff, but he presides over embassy-wide gatherings such as hail and farewell parties and awards ceremonies. He also conducts a monthly policy briefing that is open to all employees. The Ambassador and DCM played a leading and forceful role in getting the Department to address long-standing local compensation plan issues of interest to the LE staff. They rightly consider this to be one of the highest priorities of this mission and the most important morale issue for LE staff.

The current leadership has given a significant boost to the mission's public diplomacy efforts. Because the Ambassador can conduct print and broadcast media interviews in Arabic, the embassy's profile in the local media has grown dramatically. The DCM, a former spokesperson for Embassy Baghdad and a public affairs officer (PAO) in Qatar, is fluent in Arabic and knows the local political scene. The Ambassador and DCM work well with an energetic PAO who orchestrates the mission's public diplomacy programs under the guidance of the front office.

The Ambassador plays an especially active role in commercial advocacy in this very wealthy and ambitious country. The Foreign Commercial Service officer is greatly pleased by the support and leadership provided by the Ambassador, whose role is critical given the concentration of decisionmaking at high levels of the government of Qatar.

Defense and security affairs rank at the top of U.S. objectives in Qatar. Because of the significant military presence in Qatar, including the forward headquarters of the U.S. Central Command, one might expect to find coordination problems or questions about whether employees fall under the authority of the chief of mission or the combatant commander. That the OIG team did not find any such issues is a

tribute to good embassy-military cooperation. The Ambassador's experience, both in the region and as political advisor to the Special Operations Command, contributes to the embassy's close and productive coordination with the military.

The U.S. military presence has also led to the fortuitous stationing of a Department of Defense civilian center dedicated to document translation in Doha. Two other civilian agencies, the Open Source Center, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Virtual Translation Center also operate in Doha under chief of mission authority. The three agencies comprise a joint center, the Integrated Linguistics Activity – Doha. The Ambassador was able to gain some of their time and resources to develop summaries of regional media coverage of a few key foreign policy issues. These products have been well received in Washington.

The Ambassador and DCM are very interested in how the United States can build a productive and appropriate relationship with Al Jazeera, the rapidly growing global media network funded by the government of Qatar. While recognizing that the responsibility for organizing and directing this relationship rests with the Department, the embassy already plays a role in developing a constructive interaction with the key interlocutors, including the board of directors and management of Al Jazeera, and the government of Qatar. The Department, in its effort to develop an overall approach to Al Jazeera, needs to determine how the embassy's role can be expanded, for example, whether a spokesperson should be assigned to Doha and whether its translation services could be more effectively used in the analysis of Al Jazeera reporting. (This issue is addressed in the public diplomacy section of the report.)

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC SECTION

The combined political/economic section is fortunate to have officers with backgrounds in science, technology, business, and law—all key embassy priorities in the bilateral relationship. The section chief is a strong leader who is well respected by the front office and his embassy colleagues. He speaks Arabic and understands Qatar's customs and practices. His excellent access to prominent Qataris makes him a valuable resource for the Ambassador, the DCM, and a host of high-level visitors to Qatar, who have included numerous cabinet secretaries, the Speaker of the House, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, special envoys, and dozens of U.S. official representatives to international conferences and seminars held in Doha each year.

Reporting and Advocacy

Decisionmaking in Qatar is limited to a closed circle of prominent families. Major decisions usually are made only at the highest levels of government. The lack of a single Qatari employee in the embassy, particularly in the political/economic section, places the embassy at a disadvantage and puts additional pressure on the American and LE staff to understand the dynamics of Qatari political relationships. Despite this major handicap, political/economic section reporting and analysis generally has been excellent. Officers work hard to gain access to Qataris and understand what motivates the leadership and society. Whether reporting on Iran, Hamas, oil and gas, food security, or Al Jazeera, the section's officers demonstrate a broad range of knowledge about how to manage the bilateral dialogue with this small, complex, and immensely wealthy country.

Visitor Support

In the first 6 months of 2010, political/economic section officers served as control officers for 36 individual visitors and delegations. The embassy is alert to opportunities to enlist official visitors as advocates during their meetings with Qatari

interlocutors. Official visitors are asked to promote the U.S. Government's agenda by speaking to local audiences on Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, international mediation, and other areas of interest to the bilateral dialogue.

The logistics of hosting large numbers of visitors is a significant burden on the section's time and resources. Officers are called upon to unravel time-consuming problems when visitors run afoul of immigration requirements or experience problems with the base access procedures at the Al Udeid Air Base. These problems will increase as Qatar enhances its international profile by hosting more international conferences, which in turn will attract more official American visitors. The opening of a new airport this year will further increase Doha's role as a regional travel hub for official visitors traveling to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) established a position under the Expanded Professional Associates Program to support visits, but to date the position has not been filled.

Locally Employed Staff

The political section's LE staff is highly qualified and capable. Perhaps because they too are expatriates, they have more in common with American officers than one finds in other embassies. The Ambassador and DCM are sensitive to the need to include LE staff in policy briefings on the embassy's goals and objectives in Qatar. The Ambassador holds monthly unclassified sessions to talk about embassy policy initiatives.

The OIG team concluded that more could be done to include LE staff in meetings and representational events with contacts. The Ambassador's briefing sessions could be used as more formal means to solicit LE staff ideas. The front office and political/economic officers could also hold an offsite discussion with LE staff in the political/economic and public diplomacy sections. In addition to information sharing, an offsite would build rapport and enhance cooperation among LE staff working on overlapping issues. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address this issue.

Trafficking in Persons

Embassy Doha has worked with the government of Qatar to address the country's serious trafficking-in-persons problems. Although the government has taken steps to address human trafficking abuses, it has not yet passed comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation. Nevertheless, there has been clear progress. Qatar recently signed the UN protocol to suppress and prevent trafficking in persons, and employ-

ers are no longer permitted to forcibly withhold employees' passports. Another success is the role the embassy played in persuading the government to ban trafficking of children as young as 5 years old to perform as jockeys in camel races.

More must be done. Qatar's failure to pass comprehensive legislation against labor exploitation leaves the country for the second year in a row on the Tier 2 watch list maintained by the Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs' Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. The embassy believes that the key to moving forward on trafficking issues is to understand local sensitivities and to avoid demands on the government that appear to be externally imposed. Any anti-trafficking-in-persons initiative must take into account Qatar's overriding perception that, from a national security perspective, it must maintain control over a foreign population that vastly outnumbers its citizens. The embassy believes that the most effective approach is to help the government recognize that it can maintain control of its foreign nationals while ensuring that they are treated humanely. Qatar's aspiration to become a world center for conferences and commerce offers potential leverage to encourage respect for the human rights of its expatriate workers.

Middle East Partnership Initiative

Embassy Doha is a recipient of MEPI program funding. The political/economic section and PAS share responsibility for implementing MEPI projects. Officers keep track of all MEPI grantees in Qatar and monitor their progress through frequent telephone calls, emails, and visits to the projects. The embassy's MEPI coordinator reports that MEPI Washington and the regional office in Abu Dhabi provide excellent support. Representatives from the MEPI offices in Washington and Abu Dhabi have visited Doha, and the LE staff member responsible for MEPI received training in Abu Dhabi. This year, PAS and the political/economic section identified six Qatari women who will travel to the United States as part of MEPI's student leaders program. The embassy also ran a MEPI-funded documentary films workshop for young filmmakers. All MEPI grants are signed by grants officers in Abu Dhabi or Washington.

Embassy Doha's MEPI program is relatively small because, in general, Qatar can fund its own projects and there are a limited number of grass-roots nongovernmental organizations in Qatar. Much of MEPI's success in Qatar comes from groups, especially women's groups, which seek U.S. expertise in entrepreneurship. Two programs on women's community development and women's small- and medium-sized enterprises will begin soon. Together they will receive \$165,000 in funding. A \$71,000 local project on labor reform is ongoing. About a dozen regional MEPI

projects operate in country. These projects include programs directed at legal profession reform sponsored by the American Bar Association; programs on trade union capacity supported by the American Federation and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) Solidarity Center; and a National Democratic Institute project on expanding support for political reform.

Foreign Commercial Service

Embassy Doha hosts a very active Foreign Commercial Service office that promotes U.S. exports through a range of services to American firms, from counseling on the business climate to preparing comprehensive reports on potential business partners. The economic officer and commercial counselor work well together, sharing economic data and sometimes jointly approaching the Qatar Government on démarches related to the oil and gas industry.

The United States is the top exporter to Qatar and has achieved particular successes in the energy, aviation, and education sectors. U.S.-Qatari commercial ties have been expanding at a rapid pace, with bilateral trade growing by more than 387 percent, from \$841 million in 2004 to \$3.2 billion in 2009. Over the same period, U.S. exports have surged by 600 percent. This trade acceleration has been fueled by strong economic growth in Qatar. Qatar's hydrocarbon revenues have filled state coffers, with much of the proceeds being invested in infrastructure.

Still, Qatar has the potential to become an even bigger U.S. export destination and trade partner because of its ambitious economic development program. New, multibillion dollar export opportunities abound. Over the next 5 years, the embassy estimates that about \$120 billion will be invested in Qatar's energy and infrastructure sectors. At present, there are 60 major infrastructure projects underway, at a total value of \$50 billion. Over 120 U.S. firms have established Qatar-based offices or representatives to take advantage of the export opportunities, with more firms arriving every day.

Department of Defense

The senior Defense official in the embassy serves as chief of both the Office of Military Cooperation and the Office of the Defense Attaché. The Office of Military Cooperation's principal responsibility is to promote foreign military sales to the Qatari armed forces. As a secondary objective, the chief of the Office of Military Cooperation facilitates military training, which includes accompanying Qatari officers to the United States as part of relationship building.

A key element of the U.S. Qatari strategic partnership is the use of Qatar's Al Udeid Air Base, one of the most important military bases in the Middle East. Although there are occasional working-level problems centered on immigration and customs issues, the embassy and the Department of Defense have a good record of working to address such issues satisfactorily. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates a regional construction oversight program.

Integrated Linguistic Activity-Doha

As noted earlier, Embassy Doha hosts the Integrated Linguistic Activity - Doha, a language translation center that consists of representatives from the Open Source Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Virtual Translation Center, and the Defense Intelligence Agency's Combined Media Processing Center. Operating under a joint director, the center prepares products to support regional diplomatic initiatives, in addition to the primary missions of the sponsoring agencies. As noted earlier in this report, the Ambassador has used the center's resources to support regional diplomacy through the production of innovative media translation projects.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

PAS is closely involved in mission planning and enjoys excellent relationships with the Ambassador, DCM, and other section heads and their staffs. The PAO is a dynamic officer who has launched several innovative outreach programs. As mentioned, the Ambassador, with his fluent Arabic and knowledge of Arab culture, is comfortable giving interviews to the media and speaking at public events, which adds an important dimension to the embassy's public outreach capability. The section consists of a U.S. direct-hire PAO, a cultural affairs officer, and six LE staff members. A newly established information officer position will be filled during the summer rotation.

Turnover and inexperience among LE staff are significant management challenges. Only three of the present LE staff members have been employed in their current positions for more than a year. The present and incoming PAOs met in March 2010 in Doha and discussed staffing and training needs for the section. Because of vacancies in several positions, employees must cover duties outside their assigned areas of responsibilities. For example, the cultural affairs specialist, in addition to managing up to six cultural programs at a time, must also cover the portfolio of the vacant

director position in the Information Resource Center. The PAO and cultural affairs officer are taking appropriate steps to fill vacant positions and distribute tasks equitably in light of the office's heavy workload.

The OIG team noted that the media specialist has had no formal training for his position. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the new PAO arrange for this training as soon as possible and review training opportunities for other new staff as appropriate.

Engagement with Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera is one of the most influential media outlets in the Arab world, reaching an audience of about 60 million in Arabic and English. It is rapidly becoming a global media empire and receives budget subsidies totaling approximately \$750 million annually from the government of Qatar. Al Jazeera on occasion stakes out controversial and inflammatory positions on issues of interest to the United States. On the other hand, its reporting does support other U.S. objectives in human rights, democratization, and environmental protection, among other issues.

The Department is conducting a policy review to determine how to improve engagement with Al Jazeera. The role of the embassy in the broader engagement strategy remains to be fully defined. Engagement with Al Jazeera is a complex issue, involving U.S. policymakers in Washington; the Department's media hubs in London, Dubai, and Brussels; regional embassies; and the Department of Defense, among others. The OIG team determined that there is an essential role to be played by embassy employees in Doha. At a minimum, this could include developing relationships with the Al Jazeera's management and board, as well as the government of Qatar – but there could be additional opportunities to expand this engagement, should the Department wish to pursue them.

The Ambassador and the PAO are in regular contact with key officials at Al Jazeera and have assisted in arranging interviews with U.S. officials. The embassy regularly briefs and meets with Al Jazeera's senior management, editorial staff, and board of directors. For example, during the inspection the Ambassador briefed Al Jazeera's senior management on the new U.S. National Security Strategy. The embassy also prepares some reporting on Al Jazeera.

At the same time, there are several opportunities to expand outreach and engagement opportunities with Al Jazeera in Qatar. These include:

- a) designating a media spokesperson in Doha to focus on Al Jazeera, in coordination with the regional media hub representative in Dubai;
- b) tasking the Open Source Center with monitoring and analyzing Al Jazeera news media coverage (Al Jazeera reporting currently is translated and monitored by the Open Source Center in Amman, Jordan, which does not have the capacity to perform analysis.);
- c) formally delineating responsibilities for the incoming PAO and information officer with respect to Al Jazeera; and
- d) increasing local staffing to facilitate engagement with Al Jazeera's journalists and management.

Although some or all of these functions ultimately may best be performed elsewhere, the OIG team believes that Embassy Doha's potential contributions to the broader policy goal of increasing outreach to Al Jazeera merit consideration.

Recommendation 1: The Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs should, as part of its overall strategy for Al Jazeera, clarify the role of Embassy Doha, including whether to assign a spokesperson, add support staff, and create an analytic capability to assess Al Jazeera's reporting. (Action: R, in coordination with NEA)

Information Resource Center

Because of the long-term absence of an Information Resource Center (IRC) director, the embassy's electronic outreach is limited to basic Web site maintenance that is performed by an offsite U.S. Government contractor. Attempts to develop social media networking and other electronic outreach have suffered as a result of this vacancy. The IRC's annual plan has not been updated, and outreach plans for targeted audiences, including Qatar University and journalists, have been tabled. The embassy is attempting to hire a new IRC director to perform this vital function.

Educational Advising

The part-time educational advisor also supports English language programs. She arranges delivery of books and educational materials by the embassy's mobile library. Books are transported in a van and left in schools for a fixed period, and then gathered and transported to the next school. This has been a popular program and has generated positive media coverage.

Best Practice: Mobile Library Visits to Schools

Issue: Young Qataris have limited exposure to American culture and are reluctant to participate in embassy-sponsored events.

Response: PAS developed a mobile library program that delivers two book collections to high schools throughout Doha. The schools appreciate this service and there is a waiting list for these visits, which are made at little cost to the U.S. Government. Mobile library visits are frequently coordinated to coincide with embassy donations of book collections containing classics of American literature. An embassy representative often participates in these visits and speaks on American themes to audiences that would otherwise have little or no contact with American culture.

Result: Hundreds of Qataris now have access to American literature and an opportunity to interact with Americans.

Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs

Qataris are reluctant to attend embassy events and generally will not attend events with a political focus. They are more willing to come to events with a commercial or economic theme. By wisely selecting subjects of mutual interest, such as documentary filmmaking and children's sports, PAS has managed to attract more Qataris to embassy events and has encouraged them to participate in exchange programs.

PAS staff has developed extensive and valuable contacts throughout Qatari society. The cultural affairs officer has been especially active in creating and executing—within the bounds of Qatari receptivity—a balanced and effective cultural affairs program, especially among the youth and women of Qatar. These programs include musical events with U.S. military bands and sports competitions at local schools.

In the past, the section has had difficulty identifying and recruiting female participants for exchange programs. It invited three participants from the Supreme Education Council, which directs Qatar's education policy, to attend an International Visitor Leadership program on science teaching, but none of them accepted despite a resolute recruitment effort. However, through persistence and good contact work, things have begun to change. Within the past year, working with its counterparts in Washington, PAS created a single-country exchange program that will send four women to the United States to study sports management and leadership. The section also designed a training exchange program for teachers of English as a foreign language, which sent six Qatari women to the United States. These programs garnered positive local media coverage when participants returned from their exchanges.

Fulbright Program

PAS has placed U.S. Fulbright scholars at Qatar University and will continue to fund exchanges for this program. There is no Fulbright commission in Qatar. Qatari nominees are selected by the deans of various colleges from Qatar University. PAS is involved with the selection process and in administering the applications. Qatar University provides U.S. Fulbright scholars with housing, office space, supplies, and Internet access. Three Qatari Fulbright scholars will be placed in the United States in the coming months.

Despite the absence of a bilateral Fulbright commission, PAS has cultivated a promising partnership with a local nongovernmental organization to facilitate educational exchanges, a laudable objective. Working with the Qatar Foundation International, a well-funded nonprofit organization with offices in Qatar and the United States, the section established a "sister schools" program between students at four Qatari middle and high schools and students at high schools in Boston and Washington, DC. Using computer laptops equipped with video, the students regularly communicate with each other in English and Arabic and maintain a blog in English that is monitored by the Meridian House in Washington, which provides content oversight. This program led to a visit to Qatar by 50 American students in 2009.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS SECTION

The consular section operates efficiently and is well managed by a mid-level officer and a deputy who is an entry-level officer. They share the supervision of eight LE staff. A second entry-level officer position is being created through a Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) global repositioning exercise.

In contrast to the chronic staffing shortages noted during the 2004 OIG inspection, current resources allow the section to perform its statutory functions well, except as noted below in regard to American citizens services (ACS). The OIG team observed high morale and excellent customer relations skills among the consular staff. The consular section engages effectively with the front office and other embassy sections to protect American citizens and borders, promote international travel, and enhance the image of the United States. The embassy receives excellent support from the Cairo-based regional consular officer.

American Citizens Services

ACS and passport workloads have more than doubled in the past five years because of the significant increase in the number of Americans working in Qatar as contractors, teachers, and energy service workers. Rising levels of trade and investment in the tourism, finance, and real estate sectors also attract more American visitors now than in the past. The estimated population of 15,000 to 20,000 locally resident American citizens is augmented by some 20,000 U.S. military personnel, who receive limited passport services via a military courier system. Child custody and contractual disputes, deaths, and arrests form a regular part of the workload and are often complex given Qatar's differing cultural and legal approaches to these issues. In addition, the section handles other sensitive cases that require comment from several offices in Washington. These issues are discussed in the classified annex to this report.

The section's local staff develops routine ACS and passport cases, and either the eligible family member (EFM) consular associate or one of the two consular officers provide follow-on assistance, as necessary. The consular associate has primary responsibility for registering American residents and maintaining the electronic warden notification system. This EFM position has been filled for only three of the past six years; for two of those three years, the position was not filled during the peak service months of May-June and November-December. The embassy's human resources unit reported that there are no EFMs currently interested in the now-vacant position, and no indication of interest from EFMs who are due to arrive during the 2010 assignments transfer cycle. In addition, the average tenure for each of the previous incumbents was only six months, which prevented them from becoming skilled with the automated systems, getting to know the wardens, and becoming well versed in outreach activities.

Steadily increasing workloads of over 10 percent per year have prevented the consular managers and other LE staff from covering ACS duties. As a result, core functions dedicated to the protection of American citizens in Qatar have not been

Visas

The consular section has coped admirably with the quadrupling, since 2004, of its nonimmigrant visa (NIV) workload. Despite 10 percent annual increases in applications since 2006 and a similar increase predicted for 2010, appointment waiting times are minimal, even during peak periods. The section made a smooth transition to online NIV application processing in early 2010, and developed standard operating procedures, which have served as a model for several other consular sections in the region. A consular employee staffs a window at the chancery's public entrance to verify appointments, pre-screen documents, and return travel documents. The embassy currently is negotiating with a local vendor to provide courier services for approved visas.

The staffing level of six LE staff in the visa unit remains appropriate for current workloads and a projected tapering off of demand beginning next year. Thirty percent of the 13,500 NIV cases handled in 2009 were for Qatari citizens, whose issuance rate is over 95 percent. Third country nationals from over 60 countries comprise the remaining 70 percent of NIV applications; their refusal rates are markedly higher.

Many visa applications require lengthy interviews and security advisory opinions from Washington, which are handled according to required procedures. The immigrant visa workload varies according to the availability of numerically controlled employment visas and has averaged 320 per year since 2005. In most years, immigrant visa applicants are exclusively third country nationals.

Workplace and Visitor Access Issues

The consular staff work area is adequate for the embassy's projected workload and provides adequate line of sight for consular supervisors. The public waiting room is seldom crowded because of an effective online appointment system for both American citizens and visa applicants. Consular management and the regional security officer consult frequently on consular traffic flow and other visitor access concerns, but bottlenecks are inevitable due to the chancery's physical layout and security screening requirements. Screening issues are discussed further in the classified annex to this report.

Fraud Prevention

Consular management devotes correct attention to antifraud issues. An experienced LE fraud prevention assistant, supervised by the consular deputy, handles the

majority of consular fraud investigations. The Department of Homeland Security's regional office in Abu Dhabi provides additional resources and visits every 6 months. There are no consular-funded regional security officer positions at Embassy Doha.

Visa Referrals and Other In-House Services

Visa referrals are infrequent and are handled correctly. However, during its public hours, and particularly during peak periods, the consular section experiences disruptions in handling these requests and in providing other routine in-house services, such as notarials and passport renewals. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the embassy establish specific hours for accepting visa referrals and providing other in-house consular services that are separate from the scheduled interview hours.

Visas Viper

Embassy Doha has an active Visas Viper committee that is coordinated by the consular section deputy chief. The DCM chairs its monthly meetings, and all relevant offices represented at the embassy attend regularly. (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2010
State – ICASS	6	5	53	64	\$7,256,000
State – Program	30	3	24	36	\$2,003,728
State – Diplomatic Security	-	1	11	12	\$908,346
State – Public Diplomacy	3	-	7	10	\$634,857
State – Marine Security	6	-	3	9	\$182,734
State – OBO	1	-	-	1	\$1,821,250
State – CA/MRV	-	1	4	5	-
State – Representation	-	-	-	-	\$14,400
US Commercial Service	1	-	3	4	\$355,362
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	17	-	6	23	-
Defense Attaché Office	5	1	1	7	\$542,626
Office of Military Cooperation	8	-	1	9	-
Federal Bureau of Investigation	4	-	-	4	-
Totals	81	11	113	184	\$13,719,303

MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Embassy Doha's management section is performing well. An experienced management officer has a good grasp of the issues facing the mission and provided detailed reports on the status of chancery lease renewal negotiations, LE staff salary adjustments, spousal employment, and quality-of-life issues. His vision of what is working well and areas that require more attention squares with the inspectors' findings. The management officer's top priorities include resolving a longstanding impasse over LE staff compensation issues and concluding negotiations on the renewal of the chancery lease.

Embassy Doha has fully implemented eServices, the Department's administrative services electronic application. This has provided valuable performance metrics for measuring and improving management section services. Despite initial misgivings among management section employees about the usefulness of eServices, the system has allowed management to identify where attention and resources might produce better results.

Rightsizing

Embassy Doha completed its required report on rightsizing and submitted this report to the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation in 2010. As a result of the exercise, Doha requested the establishment of one entry-level U.S. direct-hire position in the general services unit; it currently has one U.S. direct-hire general services officer (GSO) position and one facilities management officer. The heavy visitor and conference support schedule and annual paid trips home for senior LE staff place serious strain on the GSO.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The human resources unit is led by an energetic first-tour HRO who inherited a large amount of issues. Previously, the position was responsible for both the human resources and financial management officer portfolios. Assigning a new officer whose sole responsibility is human resources has provided stability to both units. The HRO has made significant progress in establishing and updating human resources policies. The community of LE staff includes citizens of 24 countries, none of whom are Qatari citizens. As a consequence, and consistent with local prevailing practice, the embassy supports an unusually wide range of employee services. For example, two section employees work full-time with local authorities to obtain various permits, work visas, car purchase permissions, and travel documents for LE staff members. Qatar's slow response makes this process time-consuming.

The LE staff handbook was last updated in 2004. A plan is in the works to revise it, but the HRO is waiting until the embassy receives results of the pending salary and benefits survey to issue the update, which may change the package of benefits for employees. The inspectors made an informal recommendation reminding the embassy to complete the update.

Position Descriptions

Many LE staff position descriptions are outdated and may be inaccurate. LE staff from virtually every section of the mission expressed dissatisfaction with the accuracy of their position descriptions, some of which have changed significantly as Embassy Doha has expanded. Position descriptions are an integral part of proper personnel administration, and 3 FAH-2 H-441.3 states that position descriptions should be revised whenever there is a material change in an employee's duties. The lack of accurate position descriptions may disadvantage employees whose duties have changed significantly in the past several years.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Doha should conduct a systematic review and update of position descriptions for all locally employed staff in the mission. (Action: Embassy Doha)

New Employee Orientation

The HRO has been made the de facto community liaison office (CLO) coordinator, because the coordinator is absent. The welcoming and orientation programs for new employees received low marks from the community. The HRO is making an effort to improve these services beginning with this year's arrivals. Although the welcoming and orientation program customarily applies only to U.S. direct-hire employees, prevailing practice in Doha of recruiting third country nationals means that most new employees must travel to Doha from their countries of origin before beginning employment. LE staff members also need a welcoming and orientation program to orient them to Qatar and the embassy since they are often recruited from neighboring countries and must locate housing and support services when they assume their duties.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Doha should complete the ongoing project of improving the welcoming and orientation process for American employees and develop a similar program for new locally employed staff members. (Action: Embassy Doha)

Eligible Family Member Employment

(SBU) Although some mission spouses work on the economy, there is neither a de facto nor an actual bilateral work agreement between the United States and Qatar.

The embassy has mounted an effort with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to pursue a bilateral work agreement. EFMs who work on the local economy without authorization from the local government face the risk of losing their jobs.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program works well and enjoys strong front office support. No formal EEO or sexual harassment incidents have been reported. The EEO liaison conducts several informal counseling sessions per year, among LE staff, on cross-cultural communications and religious tolerance issues. These counseling sessions are an important consideration in Embassy Doha's workplace, where 24 different nationalities and several major religions are reflected in the local workforce.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A second-tour officer leads the financial management office. The inspectors received complaints that vouchers were not being processed in a timely manner. This situation reflects the long-term absence of the voucher examiner and consequent delays in preparing voucher packages for transmittal to the Global Financial Services in Bangkok. A cashier reconciliation conducted during the inspection revealed no discrepancies or internal control weaknesses, but cashier working conditions are undesirable. Air circulation is poor, and the cashier window is not optimally configured to allow the cashier to conduct business efficiently. The inspectors made an informal recommendation to improve this situation.

The embassy's representational funds are minimal. Although the Ambassador has used a substantial portion of available representational funds, other sections have not made use of their allocations. The OIG inspection team made an informal recommendation that the embassy redistribute the allocation as necessary.

The International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) process works well, because the chairperson, the management officer, and the senior financial specialist are well versed in ICASS matters. The OIG team made several informal recommendations regarding ICASS, including that the embassy establish a working-level ICASS budget committee consistent with best practices at other posts.

GENERAL SERVICES

The general services unit is headed by an experienced officer on his fourth tour. General services functions well overall. The procurement unit received low scores on OIG's pre-inspection survey questionnaires. The GSO is aware that procurement is an area that needs improvement and is giving increased attention to mentoring staff and providing performance feedback.

Real Property

The chancery, Marine security guard residence, warehouse, facilities maintenance office, and commissary are located on a 12.8-acre, short-term leased compound. The chancery building was built out by a contractor in 2001 from a masonry shell.

The current lease is entering its final, 6-year renewal period. After lengthy discussions with embassy management about options, the OIG team concluded that retention of the current compound makes sense from a long-term perspective. The upcoming renewal period is the last period guaranteed by the original lease agreement, and the embassy will be in a more difficult bargaining position when the next renewal negotiations commence.

Inspectors urged post management to initiate discussion with the landlord regarding alternate courses to the current short-term lease arrangement; specifically, to discuss conversion to a long-term lease or a lease-purchase agreement. The embassy is currently contracting for an independent assessment of fair rental market value of the property. An up-to-date valuation, when available, will be a solid basis for formulating a proposal.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Doha, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should formulate a plan to replace the present, short-term chancery lease with a long-term lease, a lease-purchase agreement, or an acquisition agreement. (Action: Embassy Doha, in coordination with OBO)

PROCUREMENT

As noted above, the GSO is giving increased attention to the procurement unit. Preinspection survey respondents cited speed of response as the main area of com-

plaint. The procurement unit supervisor has less than 1 year of experience. Productivity is expected to improve with additional mentoring from the GSO. The OIG team reviewed files and record keeping for blanket purchase agreements, contracts, purchase orders, and purchase cards. Separation of duties standards are in place and reflected in the documentation on file. Trafficking-in-persons protection is included in embassy contracts, as specified in Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 52.222-50.

WAREHOUSE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Embassy Doha maintains a small warehouse for expendable and nonexpendable property on the embassy compound. The warehouse staff maintains appropriate stock levels for expendables, such as toner cartridges and printer/copier paper, based on actual consumption rates.

Embassy Doha does not employ a property clerk, as is normally the case at mid-sized embassies. The most recent chief of mission statement of assurance dated August 2009 noted the lack of a property clerk as a potential internal controls vulnerability. Personal property management guidance in 14 FAM 411.2 d. requires separation of duties between property record keeping and receiving whenever possible, in order to reduce vulnerability to fraud. The U.S. direct-hire GSO provides additional oversight in the absence of full-time property clerk, and the ICASS council recently approved creation of a new position to address this vulnerability.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

The facilities manager is responsible for the maintenance of the chancery compound and the Safety, Health and Environmental Management (SHEM) program. The facilities officer runs a vigorous SHEM program, including a monthly briefing for post management and fire safety training sessions for contract guards and household staff. The facilities and general services units have a close and cooperative relationship. All housing in Doha is leased, and landlords generally provide most residential maintenance. The chancery has had problems with its fire suppression system since it was installed, and inspectors learned that the copper piping of the system was joined with the wrong type of solder. Facilities management expects a fire inspection from OBO later this year to assess the severity of the issue and identify engineering solutions to address this vulnerability.

Courier Escort Duties

Agencies at the embassy that use the courier pouch do not share in the responsibility of providing courier escorts, as is required by 12 FAM 151.1 a. That duty currently falls only to information technology staff, because the host government imposes airport access restrictions, which limit the number of airport badges that can be issued to embassy personnel. To comply with the intent of the FAM, and to lessen the burden on the information technology staff, especially during periods of staffing shortages, the OIG team made an informal recommendation to include other agency personnel on the courier escort roster.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Morale at Embassy Doha is mixed. Housing and schools receive high marks from American staff. Consequently, morale among families is higher than that of singles or couples without children. One management priority is to build a stronger sense of community, using the CLO, human resources unit, and the revived recreation association as keys to the effort. Traffic congestion, lack of recreational opportunities, and absence of an effective orientation program were all noted as being detrimental to morale. The absence of a CLO coordinator has hindered progress in these areas, although the HRO has made an effort to improve the welcoming and orientation program.

HEALTH UNIT

Embassy customers are satisfied with the quality of medical services the health unit provides, as well as the support from the regional medical officer in Kuwait. The embassy recently approved a position staffing request to station a regional medical manager in Doha.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

The CLO coordinator is on long-term leave. As a result, the HRO has assumed responsibility for most CLO duties, although the coordinator continues to assemble a newsletter once a month from the United States. Efforts to replace the CLO coordinator have been unsuccessful. In the meantime, the HRO has taken it upon herself to improve the sponsorship and orientation programs.

SCHOOLS

Embassy children attend (b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6) Employees are satisfied with the school, and the embassy's relationship with the school is outstanding. The Ambassador serves as the chairman of the board of trustees, and the DCM is a voting member on the board of directors. The school has received numerous grants

from the Office of Overseas Schools over the years, including \$2 million in funding under OBO's soft target program to provide additional physical security to the facility. For the current year, the Department is providing a grant of approximately \$37,000 to supplement teacher salaries, purchase educational materials, provide in-service training, and promote staff development.

EMBASSY DOHA EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION

The Embassy Doha Employee Association is financially viable but has gone through a difficult period. Financial statements maintained by the association did not conform to the format prescribed by the Office of Commissary Affairs. The association also did not coordinate with a qualified audit firm to prepare an audit of physical stock and financial records, as required by 6 FAM 557 b. The embassy has taken action to correct most deficiencies that were reported in the association's last compliance certification. The association hired an experienced general manager and elected to the association board an embassy employee who is a certified public accountant. These steps have stabilized the association, and the procurement of point-of-sale software has improved record keeping. The long overdue audit has begun, but it had not yet been completed at the time of the inspection. The association recently opened a newly renovated commissary. It has been well received by the community and has addressed an internal controls weakness by segregating the alcohol store room from the products that are available to the local staff.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation 1:** The Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs should, as part of its overall strategy for Al Jazeera, clarify the role of Embassy Doha, including whether to assign a spokesperson, add support staff, and create an analytic capability to assess Al Jazeera's reporting. (Action: R, in coordination with NEA)
- Recommendation 2:** Embassy Doha should advertise and fill the warden coordinator/consular clerk position (# 97-029-033). (Action: Embassy Doha, in coordination with NEA)
- Recommendation 3:** The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, should complete its analysis of local compensation salary data and authorize any necessary pay and benefits changes. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with NEA)
- Recommendation 4:** Embassy Doha should conduct a systematic review and update of position descriptions for all locally employed staff in the mission. (Action: Embassy Doha)
- Recommendation 5:** Embassy Doha should complete the ongoing project of improving the welcoming and orientation process for American employees and develop a similar program for new locally employed staff members. (Action: Embassy Doha)
- Recommendation 6:** Embassy Doha, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should formulate a plan to replace the present, short-term chancery lease with a long-term lease, a lease-purchase agreement, or an acquisition agreement. (Action: Embassy Doha, in coordination with OBO)
- Recommendation 7:** Embassy Doha should collect the required payment from personnel who drive government-owned vehicles from home to office for the purpose of rapid recall to duty. (Action: Embassy Doha)

INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Political/Economic Section

LE specialists in the political/economic section are not fully briefed on relevant mission goals and objectives relating to their section's responsibilities and to the bigger picture of the embassy's strategic plan.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Doha should conduct an offsite discussion with locally employed staff in the political, economic, and public diplomacy sections to share information, build rapport, and enhance close cooperation on overlapping issues.

Public Affairs Section

Because the public diplomacy section's media specialist has had no formal U.S. Government training for his position, he is not fully aware of the support, products, and personnel resources available to him.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Doha should arrange formal training for the media specialist.

Consular Affairs Section

The required annual F-77 report on potential evacuees, prepared by the consular section as part of Embassy Doha's emergency action plan, has not been updated for 18 months.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Doha should update its F-77 report as soon as possible.

Disruptions occur when other embassy staff members seek routine services such as visa referrals, notarials, and passport renewals because there are no clearly defined hours for these consular services.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Doha should establish specific hours for providing in-house consular services.

Human Resources

The LE staff handbook was last updated in 2004, and is now out-of-date.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Doha should update and reissue its locally employed staff handbook, once the results of the pending salary and benefit survey are released.

Financial Management

The cashier's office is inadequate. Lack of air circulation, constricted workspace, and an inadequate window facility are all hindrances to conducting effective cashier business.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Doha should reconfigure and, if possible, relocate the cashier's office.

The embassy's representation allotment is minimal. At the same time, funds were allocated to four sections that had used little or none of their allocations 8 months into the fiscal year.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Doha should better monitor the use of representation funds by the embassy sections, reallocating funds as necessary.

Embassy Doha has an effective ICASS council, but it lacks a budget committee to discuss issues at the operational level.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Doha should form an International Cooperative Administrative Support Services budget committee.

Embassy Doha maintains an excellent Web site that contains informative results of ICASS meetings and decisions. However, this information is presented only on the Foreign Commercial Service Web site.

Agencies at Embassy Doha do not share in the responsibility of providing courier escorts for classified diplomatic pouch deliveries, contrary to the guidance contained in 12 FAM 151.1 a. The embassy's information technology staff suffers a heavy burden in providing this service.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Doha should assign pouch escort responsibilities to Department of State and other agency personnel to provide service as pouch escorts.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Joseph E. LeBaron	7/2008
Deputy chief of mission	Mirembe L. Nantongo	7/2009

Chiefs of Sections:

Management	Mikael C. McCowan	9/2009
Consular	Alexander N. Ave-Lallemant	7/2009
Political/Economic	Steven C. Rice	8/2007
Public Affairs	Joey R. Hood	11/2007
Regional Security	Mark S. Conord	7/2009
Regional Affairs	John H. Hyp	6/2009

Other Agencies:

Federal Bureau of Investigation	Scott P. MacCracken	6/2009
Office of Military Cooperation	John McQueen	9/2009
Defense Attaché Office	Ken Rasmussen	8/2008
U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service	Dao Le	8/2008
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Gharib Ibrahim	2/2008
Open Source Center	Shireen Kriegel	6/2009
National Virtual Translation Center	Timothy Kriegel	6/2009

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Alternate command center
ACS	American citizens services
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CLO	Community liaison office
Department	U.S. Department of State
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EFM	Eligible family member
GSO	General services officer
HRO	Human resources officer
HR/OE	Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Overseas Employment
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
IRC	Information Resource Center
LE	Locally employed
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
NEA	Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
SHEM	Safety, Health and Environmental Management

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