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

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

Inspection of Embassy Oslo, Norway

Report Number ISP-I-11-27A, February 2011

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PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, as issued by the 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, and organizations by this review.



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and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
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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 OIG and, as appropriate, have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that these recommendations will result in more effective, efficient and/or economical operations.

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

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

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- Embassy Oslo's political appointee Ambassador and experienced Foreign Service deputy chief of mission work closely to advance the goals identified in the embassy's Mission Strategic and Resource Plan.
- The front office needs to do more to foster effective communication among embassy elements, allowing sections, some of them on the outside of the policy discussion, to work effectively beyond their own portfolios.
- The embassy's workload, combined with the numerous high-level visitors and congressional delegations that visit during the busy summer months, can push the embassy to the limit of its capacity. Better strategic planning could help to address this issue.
- The consular section has been proactive and effective in using a variety of outreach tools, including town halls, travel and speaking engagements outside the capital, appearances on local and national media, and an innovative newsletter, to provide consular services and communicate and inform the American community in Norway.
- Norway has low unemployment and a highly competitive labor market, and Embassy Oslo experiences unusually high local staff turnover. The embassy should determine whether any changes are needed in the work environment to promote retention of local staff.

All findings and recommendations in this report are based on conditions observed during the on-site review and the standards and policies then in effect. The report does not comment at length on areas where the Office of Inspector General (OIG) team did not identify problems that need to be corrected.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 1 and 29, 2010, and in Oslo, Norway, between November 1 and 15, 2010 (b) (6)



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CONTEXT

Norway is Scandinavia's northernmost country, bordering Sweden, Finland, and Russia to the east, the Barents Sea to the north, and the Atlantic Ocean and North Sea to the west. Thanks to the large petroleum reserves on the Norwegian Continental Shelf and careful management of oil and gas revenues, it is one of the world's wealthiest countries on a per capita basis and enjoys the highest standard of living, as measured by the Human Development Index. Roughly half of Norway's population lives within 75 miles of downtown Oslo, whose population is among the fastest growing in Europe, due in almost equal degree to high birth rates and immigration.

A “red-green” coalition government, consisting of the Labor Party, the eco-friendly Socialist Left Party, and the agrarian-friendly Center Party, has held a parliamentary majority since the 2005 elections. A “High North” strategy has remained one of the constant themes of this government and encompasses many of its highest priorities, including environmental protection, responsible development of energy resources, maintaining a security presence in the Arctic, and developing Norway's relations with Russia. With referenda in 1972 and 1994 having failed to approve pursuit of membership, Norway remains outside the European Union. It does, however, enjoy free trade under the European Economic Area agreement with the European Union in persons, services, capital, and goods. (The agreement does not address agriculture or fisheries.)



Map of Norway

Source: U.S. Department of State

The cornerstones of Norwegian foreign policy are active membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and support for the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Norway also pursues a policy of economic, social, and cultural cooperation with other Nordic countries—Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland—both bilaterally and through the Nordic Council. It provides a generous 1.02 percent of its gross domestic product as foreign assistance—the highest level of any donor that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee tracks.

Norway's emergence as a major oil and gas producer in the mid-1970s transformed its economy. Heavy capital inflows have led to currency appreciation and disadvantageous price and wage differentials with the rest of Western Europe. This situation also has sustained economic activity during the recent financial turmoil, enabling the Norwegian economy to maintain an unemployment rate below 3.5 percent. Despite Norway's lagging competitiveness, economists forecast continued recovery and moderate growth in 2010. Its principal trading partners are in the European Union; the United States ranks sixth.

During the inspection, domestic political attention focused on the United States as a result of sensationalist press coverage alleging that the embassy's surveillance detection unit had been conducting espionage on Norwegian citizens over the past 10 years. The unit became the object of a police investigation and a Ministry of Justice report to parliament to determine if its employees "spied for a foreign power" or violated Norway's privacy laws. This case, with its potential to cast a shadow on the United States-Norway bilateral relationship, occupied much of the embassy's attention during the OIG inspection.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Ambassador is an effective political appointee, who actively seeks to be a positive face of the United States. The deputy chief of mission (DCM) is an experienced, senior Foreign Service officer who takes his role as mentor seriously. Together, they have worked to advance the goals identified in the embassy's Mission Strategic and Resource Plan (MSRP), including securing Norwegian cooperation on global and regional political-military issues; countering terrorism; winning support for U.S. policies; combating climate change; and promoting common economic and business objectives. Embassy staff perceives the Ambassador as open, friendly, and outgoing, and he is often seen around the chancery engaging with them. Morale in the embassy is good.

The front office holds a daily senior staff meeting with section and agency heads to review the press and set taskings for the workday. Collaboration among Department of State (Department) and non-Department entities at the embassy is high. Agency heads reported to the OIG team that they have an active role in developing and implementing the mission's plans, and they share their agency's reporting and analysis plans with embassy management.

The DCM has responsibility for coordinating policy details, internal embassy management, and priority setting. This arrangement has freed the Ambassador to assume a more public, externally oriented role. The DCM and section and agency heads keep the Ambassador informed of developments. However, some elements within the mission characterized embassy communication, including within the front office itself, as incomplete. Indeed, the team observed a classic "stovepiping" of activity, with a high degree of delegation that leaves insufficient room for the coordinating function the front office should provide. Policy discussions tend to be among a small inner circle, and some section leaders do not attend meetings in which their section's action items are discussed and to which they could contribute valuable input. Local staff perceives the lack of information flow keenly—notably during the OIG inspection, when press reports raised worrisome questions about their employment and working conditions.

The Ambassador has maintained an excellent working relationship with all levels of the Government of Norway. At the top of the policy agenda with Norway are issues such as NATO, Afghanistan, Russia, the Arctic, climate change, the Middle East, energy, international peacekeeping, educational exchange, minority outreach, economic development, and the embassy's surveillance detection unit. These issues generate a steady stream of visitors, démarches, policy dialogues, and other exchanges. The Ambassador noted that his training in Washington did not address many of these challenges.

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The Ambassador actively supports U.S. businesses engaged in exporting to Norway. He works with them to reduce trade barriers and to increase protection of intellectual property rights and other areas of importance to American businesses engaged in exporting.

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POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Embassy Oslo has a combined political/economic section, with an experienced FS-01 as its chief. Staffing is evenly divided between entry-level officers (ELO) and mid-level officers, with an additional ELO expected in early 2011. As was the case in 2009, the section will have a virtual turnover in staff in 2012—again, at the same time the DCM departs, with a single officer providing the section’s continuity. The section has the support of two locally employed (LE) staff members who, in line with the pattern of staffing at the embassy, have been in place roughly two years. One LE staff member has received training, and the embassy has requested training for the other at every opportunity.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Oslo should maintain its request for its locally employed political specialist to attend the Political Training for Foreign Service Nationals course at the Foreign Service Institute.

Political issues spring from Norway’s status as a charter member of NATO, a non-member of the European Union, and the host to a burgeoning immigrant population. Key issues on which the embassy provides analytic and advocacy support include Norway’s 500-strong contingent in Afghanistan, relations with Russia, counterterrorism, outreach to the Muslim community, and sanctions against Iran. Environment, science, technology, and health (ESTH) and economic issues reflect Norway’s large role in the energy sector (both as petroleum supplier and architect of clean energy), the Arctic, fisheries and whaling, and pharmaceutical intellectual property. The section is proactive in identifying issues of interest to Washington, and is resourceful in identifying opportunities to deepen engagement in new areas. Reporting on all aspects is of high quality and responsive to Washington’s interests, earning high marks from end-users.

Much of the section’s effort is dedicated to political and political-military affairs, although there is an active agenda on climate, energy, investment, intellectual property rights, and ESTH issues. The “High North” (Arctic issues) is a top Norwegian priority and cuts across nearly all portfolios. An ELO is responsible for the major required reports. The section’s deputy coordinated the MSRP, a function that subsequently will rotate to the public affairs section.

Visitor support is a major operation of the political/economic section, in part due to a Norwegian embassy in Washington that is keen to build engagement and visibility among U.S. officialdom by encouraging and facilitating visits. Norway's active participation in a wide array of international organizations also attracts a large cohort of official visits. As a result, since the arrival of the current staff, the section has experienced a steady stream of high-level visitors, including congressional and staff delegations, senior Department and other agency officials, and a Presidential visit. The year 2009 saw an average of nearly one high-level visit per week (inevitably clustering in the summer months); 2010 is at only a slightly slower pace.

The section also provides support to the Ambassador in the form of briefing memoranda, talking points, scenarios, and speeches (as required), following events up with written reports. The DCM frequently tasks the section with taking the lead on breaking issues.

Under these conditions, the section is running at the limits of its capacity. The pace of work is rapid and, despite weekly staff meetings, internal communication is frequently ad hoc and too often by email. Many on the staff express a desire for more intensive interaction within the section, a wider discussion and dissemination of issues, and a more in-depth sense of the section's mission. Broader participation in decisionmaking would give the staff a greater stake in the work of the section and facilitate ideas for better ways to go about its work. To date, however, the section's frenetic pace has precluded such an exchange. The OIG team believes that the section needs to take a step back from the day-to-day routine and discuss its priorities, strategy, and workload. The section would benefit from an extended meeting away from the embassy to do this, preferably with the assistance of a professional facilitator.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Embassy Oslo, in coordination with the Foreign Service Institute, should hold a political/economic section office offsite meeting, to build teamwork, establish priorities, and set goals for the coming year. (Action: Embassy Oslo, in coordination with FSI)

Travel by section personnel has been mainly in conjunction with travel by visitors or the Ambassador, which has given them access to high-level officials and notable people. However, it has come at the expense of cultivating close and durable working-level contacts outside of Oslo. One result is that few, if any, of the section's international visitor nominations are from outside the Oslo area.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Oslo should require that the political-economic section integrate travel outside of Norway into its work plan.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

At the time of the inspection, the public affairs section (PAS) was down to just one American officer, the new public affairs officer (PAO), due to a 4-month staffing gap of the assistant PAO position. The section also recently had lost its most senior local employee, the director of the Information Resource Center (IRC); most of the remaining local staff had just 3 years of experience and one was a temporary replacement for a staffer who was on maternity leave. Nevertheless, PAS continued to carry out its strong public diplomacy program thanks to a flat and flexible staffing structure that fosters a high degree of teamwork and enables staff members to back each other up.

The core feature of the section's unusual structure is that the IRC is not a separate entity, but is integrated into the rest of the section and called the information resource unit. Like many IRCs, especially in Western Europe, the Oslo information resource unit is not open to the public. It serves the usual IRC functions of research assistance via telephone and email, information dissemination, and Web site and social media outreach. In addition, members of the Oslo information resource unit conduct an active youth outreach program, manage the speaker program, and compile the media report.

The unusual structure led Washington to question whether Oslo has a true IRC; whether the unit should receive the services of a regional information resource officer, whether it should have the required annual plan; and whether it should be numbered among the Department's IRCs. The OIG team believes that, since Oslo staff is still carrying out many IRC functions, they should still be considered part of the IRC community. They benefit from visits by the regional information resource officer, who brings new ideas and best practices from other posts, although such visits may not need to be as lengthy or frequent as they have been in the past. Moreover, cutting Oslo off from access to information resource officer services or appropriate IRC training opportunities could potentially quash experimentation with new staffing structures at other posts, at a time when changes in the global information environment demand a creative response.

The information resource unit sends out the general compilation of articles found on America.gov, but it does not currently target information outreach to contacts based on the recipients' interests. The PAO plans to beef up that area by filling the IRC director vacancy with a specialist in audience analysis and contact management. To succeed in this effort, PAS will need to make better use of the embassy's Contact 8 database, discussed below.

About 5 years ago, PAS opened American Corners throughout Norway, in Tromsø, Stavanger, Kirkenes, and (briefly) Bergen. However, the concept of American Corners led to controversy in Norway and engendered opposition from Norwegians,

who saw the Corners as intrusions into their libraries. Only in Kirkenes was the PAS book donation kept in a separate space, as is required for American Corners. Elsewhere, libraries integrated the donated books with their regular collections. PAS signed memoranda of understanding that outlined loose partnership structures with all participating libraries. None has had a designated director who is not also the library director, and none of them submits reports on attendance, programs, or materials usage. The PAS occasionally has sent speakers to the libraries and conducted joint programs with them, but embassy officers do not visit regularly, and the Corners do not carry out U.S.-themed programs on their own. Their listings in the American Corners Cooperative database contain little information. Except for some subscriptions for the library in Kirkenes, PAS has not regularly provided additional books in recent years. The relationships with these libraries, while valuable and worth continuing, are more in the nature of loose partnerships than true American Corners. The current partnership activities could easily continue without formal Department designation as “American Corners.”

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Bureau of International Information Programs should remove entries for the American Corners in Norway from its lists of American Corners. (Action: IIP)

PAS has a strong presence on social media Web sites, with a Facebook page that has 1,500 fans and receives a good amount of interaction. It also has Twitter and YouTube sites. PAS updates the social media sites and responds to comments frequently, but updates the embassy Web site much less often—largely because only one staff person knows how to use the content management system, a problem that will be alleviated when the embassy hires the audience analysis staffer who will serve as the Web site and social media back-up. In June 2010, the Department issued a new subsection of the *Foreign Affairs Manual* (5 FAM 790) dealing with social media. PAS Oslo already has complied with several of its key provisions and has followed listserv discussions on the new regulations, but the unit still needs to take other actions, such as posting a privacy statement (5 FAM 795.1 a.— i.) and making sure the sites all are Section 508 compliant (5 FAM 794 a. [7]).

RECOMMENDATION 3: Embassy Oslo should bring its social media sites fully into compliance with the new *Foreign Affairs Manual* subsection on social media. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

Press Issues

PAS has a single LE press assistant, who works with assistance from the information resource unit. At the time of the inspection, the new PAO had been managing the section alone and had not had a chance to visit all news media organizations or get to know key journalists. With the arrival of the assistant PAO in early November, the constraints should ease, enabling PAS officers to spend more time cultivating journalist contacts, as well as arranging more opportunities for the Ambassador to interact informally with journalists, either on background or off the record.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Oslo should arrange more opportunities for the public affairs section and the Ambassador to interact informally with members of the news media.

The section has the lead in press matters; other embassy sections and agencies keep PAS informed about press matters and refer press questions to it. Nonetheless, it is standard practice to have an embassy media policy that establishes ground rules and encourages appropriate interaction with the press, and Embassy Oslo has not issued such a policy in several years.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Oslo should establish a formal media policy and circulate it periodically to embassy staff.

Exchanges and Education

Embassy Oslo normally has eight slots for the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). It has increased that allowance to 12 by taking advantage of various incentives, including those for nominating minority candidates; sending participants to the United States during the winter; and submitting applicants for the Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists.

Despite having this many slots available, embassy officers nominated only 12 candidates for the FY 2011 program. Such a low number of nominations has been the embassy's pattern over the past several years. It submitted 17 nominations each year in FY 2010 and FY 2009, which was better than 12, but still generated very little competition for the IVLP slots.

There is no strict standard for the number of candidates an embassy should nominate for the IVLP program, but a wider choice of candidates would improve the IVLP selection committee's ability to shape the program to fit mission goals. The embassy has done an excellent job in putting forth minority and female IVLP nominees, but geographic diversity is lacking. Among the 46 nominations made in the last three fiscal years, only four were from outside Oslo. As noted previously, political and economic officers have limited travel opportunities, which may have reduced their

ability to meet eligible candidates. Nonetheless, greater publicity about the IVLP within the embassy earlier in the program year, along with strong encouragement from the front office, would encourage officers to think about nominations as they meet new contacts.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Embassy Oslo should develop and implement a plan to increase the number and geographic diversity of nominations for the International Visitor Leadership Program. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

For possibly related reasons, the embassy does not make extensive use of the voluntary visitor program. Other embassies have discovered that this program is a good tool in countries where people can afford to travel to the United States on their own.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Oslo should publicize the Voluntary Visitor program within the embassy and encourage officers to nominate candidates for it.

The Fulbright program, well run by a binational Fulbright Commission, receives strong support from the Norwegian Government, which contributes more than twice the funding to the program as the U.S. Government. One of its most distinctive aspects is the Roving Scholar program, in which three American Fulbright teachers travel throughout the country conducting classes in American history and culture in high schools. One aspect of the Fulbright program not being fully utilized is the Fulbright specialist program. Norway had two Fulbright specialists last year and generally does not use its full quota.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Oslo should work with the Fulbright Commission to encourage more widespread use of the Fulbright specialist program.

As part of its active youth outreach efforts, the embassy has a Meet America program that brought 30 school groups into the embassy last year for programs on American topics their teachers requested; the program also sent officers to speak at schools 10 times, where they addressed an average of 150 students in multiple sessions at each school. About a half-dozen embassy officers conduct all the sessions; the program would benefit from a wider pool of volunteers.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Oslo, with strong front office support, should seek more volunteers for its Meet America youth outreach program.

Administrative Issues

PAS has made significant efforts to encourage alumni activity, most notably through its Young Ambassadors program, a high school enrichment program of seminars and

mentoring, designed by a group of young alumni of the Benjamin Franklin Summer Institute and the Fulbright Summer Institutes for Outstanding European Students. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs originally funded the program, but PAS has picked up the funding to sustain it. Fulbright also has an active alumni organization, which will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2011.

However, due to the poor state of PAS office files, there is no complete and reliable list of IVLP alumni going back more than 3 or 4 years, and PAS must rely on the State Alumni Archive for the oldest records. The section also does not have a full list of Fulbright alumni, although the Fulbright Commission could supply such a list. Any lasting solution to the record-keeping problem will depend on the section systematically using the embassy's contacts database, Contact 8, to its full capacity. For instance, PAS does not currently record whether key contacts in the database are alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs; nor does the section use Contact 8 to record contacts' interests—which would enable PAS to achieve its goal of improving targeted information outreach.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Embassy Oslo should create a field or fields in its Contact 8 database to record U.S. Government exchange program alumni status, and should enter relevant data into the system regarding contacts' interests and other public diplomacy information. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

The PAS grants records are in good order, with solid documentation of program results and proper close-out procedures. However, PAS is writing some grants in Norwegian kroner rather than dollars, and there were some minor documentation issues. The OIG team counseled the staff on these issues. The section has only one LE staff member who has had grants training and knows how to write grants.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Oslo should provide grants training and occasional grant writing experience to a second local staff member of the public affairs section to serve as a back-up to the primary grants staff person.

CONSULAR OPERATIONS

The consular section at Embassy Oslo functions well with its experienced and trained officers and staff. It provides the full range of consular services to the public and engages in active outreach efforts to Oslo and areas outside the capital city. Norway is a visa waiver program country, and most visa services focus on applications for students, exchange visitors, workers, and applicants requiring special actions. The

consular section also houses a federal benefits hub that provides regional support to all Nordic posts. This arrangement is satisfactory and will continue for the foreseeable future. The new embassy chancery will provide larger office areas and more appropriately designed space for consular functions.

Staff

A consul, a tenured officer, and a second-tour ELO provide the public with efficient adjudication of visa applications and American citizens services. They are supported by eight LE staff members and a part-time, cleared eligible family member. The federal benefits unit has five local employees, who provide service to 14,500 beneficiaries in the Nordic countries. The consul spends about 10 percent of his time on administrative oversight of the unit, which reports to the Social Security Administration representative in London for technical matters.

During the busy summer season, a seasonal hire and one or two interns supplement the local staff. They help with the increased workload and fill the gaps caused by the Norwegian legal requirement to grant at least 2 weeks of vacation time during the summer. The section anticipates a gap in one of the ELO positions during the winter, a situation they should easily be able to manage, given the anticipated workload. The consular chief does not have a specific portfolio, but manages the section, takes on complex cases, engages in a number of outreach activities, and fills in during the absence of one of the vice consuls. The tenured officer has the anti-fraud and American citizens services portfolios. The other vice consul focuses on immigrant and nonimmigrant visas and has become the section's expert on treaty trader and investor (E) visas.

Outreach

The consular section has been exceptionally active with outreach activities. All three officers speak Norwegian and use their language skills to interview visa applicants and engage in outreach activities. The consul has appeared on local television and given press interviews in Norwegian on various aspects of consular work, including an explanation of the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), which all visa waiver travelers are required to use. The vice consuls have participated in travel conferences and school presentations, as well as outreach activities such as town hall meetings in the major cities.

Two of the local staff members soon will receive training in how to maintain the consular Web site, which provides a wealth of information for the public. In the last year, the section has also published two editions of the quarterly newsletter, which the embassy sends to all registered Americans in Norway. To date, the newsletter has included information on ESTA, passports, consular fees, U.S. taxes, voting,

registration, and embassy related news—such as the progress on construction of a new embassy building and upcoming events at the embassy. Feedback about the newsletter has been very positive.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Oslo should include information about Federal benefits in its quarterly newsletter.

Physical Space

The consular section has made the best use of the existing space, but there are a number of shortcomings in its layout in the current chancery. There is good oversight for visa operations, but not for passport printing. The federal benefits unit is in cramped space and shares three windows with the American citizens services unit. With careful scheduling, including an appointment system for American citizens services, they manage well. The two vice consuls do not have offices, but spend much of their time at the two visa interviewing windows. A cashier booth is adjacent to the interview windows. Visa applicants and American citizens share the waiting room. There is no privacy booth, which is a source of discomfort to visitors with sensitive issues, such as federal benefits clients who need to discuss their disabilities or Americans seeking to revoke their citizenship.

The embassy expects to sign a contract in 2011 to construct a new embassy compound. The floor plan for the consular section appears to provide more room and a much better layout, including spaces for all officers and good oversight for consular operations. The office space appears to be a significant improvement over the current setup, but the section is concerned that they will have to manage with fewer windows than they would like.

Visa Operations

The section processes about 9,900 nonimmigrant visa applications and 120 immigrant visa applications each year. Most Norwegians traveling for tourism or business use the visa waiver program and therefore do not normally come to the attention of the embassy. There are about 200,000 Norwegian admissions to the United States each year, 89 percent of whom travel on the visa waiver program. The cases the section sees are usually complex and time-consuming, requiring special categories of visas or waivers of ineligibility. The foreign-born population in Norway has doubled in the last 15 years. Many of these are third country nationals from Iraq, Somalia, and other countries where it is difficult for applicants to obtain relevant documents to prove identity or familial relationships. The workload for processing security advisory opinions for these nationals has increased significantly.

Processing E visas is challenging and time-consuming because the staff needs to evaluate numerous documents and conduct multiple interviews for marginal

applicants. Waiver requests also demand a great deal of staff time, especially since Norwegians are particularly careful to report any criminal convictions that may be in their past.

The consular chief has briefed embassy staff on the procedure for referrals. However, Embassy Oslo has very few visa referrals; it had none in the 6 months preceding the inspection.

Antiterrorism

The consular chief is the coordinator for the Visas Viper committee, which held its regular meeting on the first day of the inspection. He ensures that nominations are processed appropriately and exceeds Department requirements by including checks on visa waiver program travel and other individuals of interest. In addition, he and other embassy employees peruse the daily press and other open sources for possible candidates for consideration.

As with all visa waiver countries, the Departments of State, Homeland Security, and Justice are exchanging information on known or suspected terrorists (Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6) and serious criminals (Preventing and Combating Serious Crime). Norway must have these agreements finalized and in place, in order to be compliant with Public Law 110—53 (the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007). A Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6 agreement is in final draft, and a Department of Homeland Security delegation will arrive soon to discuss crime data sharing and other issues. With tens of thousands of felony convictions in the Norwegian database, this discussion will be a sensitive negotiation.

Fraud

Overall, fraud in Norway is relatively low. The greatest challenges are posed by third country nationals and their questionable identification documents. Some 17,200 people sought asylum in Norway in 2009, about 62 percent more than in 2008; others arrive by bus from other Schengen Agreement countries and remain in Norway illegally. Norway's open borders within the Schengen area and its policy of opening its labor market to EU citizens further swell the ranks of third country nationals.

Visa fraud among Norwegian applicants is minimal. It usually is confined to attempts to circumvent the requirements or wait times for certain visa classifications, requiring careful scrutiny of E and H visa applications, in particular.

The embassy conducted a validation study for all third country national applicants for B1/B2 visas over a 6-month period in 2009. Applicants came from 110 countries. The post ascertained that the overstay rate was very low.

American Citizens Services

Passport and citizenship services are generally routine. Some applicants come to Oslo from western Sweden because of its relative proximity. However, the post handles a high number of citizenship renunciation requests, due to Norwegian citizenship laws prohibiting dual nationality.

During trips to cities outside Oslo, officers set up appointments to take passport applications and consular reports of birth. Since Norway is a relatively large country with long and expensive travel to the capital, these outreach activities spare parents the significant travel time and expense of bringing children to Oslo for processing.

Norway has a very high standard of living and correspondingly high standards in areas such as medical care and correctional services. Accordingly, the embassy receives few requests for assistance with hospitalization cases or serious complaints about prison standards. Four Americans were imprisoned at the time of the inspection. Travelers of marginal means who make it to Norway tend to run out of money quickly, due to the high prices. Some become destitute or seek repatriation.

Several high profile cases continue to take the attention and time of the consul and staff. These include a criminal case that involves several countries, including Norway, and the Department.

Norway is a party to the Hague Adoption Convention. However, in practice, there are no adoptions by foreigners in Norway. There are a few cases involving child custody, but the embassy provides support to left-behind parents and has established a cooperative working relationship with the Norwegian Central Authority. The section has followed one difficult child custody case for years, providing continuing support to the American father and keeping the Department and congressional interests informed.

Warden System

Embassy Oslo uses its email list of about 12,000 and its Web site to distribute warden notices to 22,000 registered Americans. This system appears to work well for the few notices the embassy sends out each year. The section has established important contacts with key members of American communities outside the capital in areas such as Stavanger, where there is a large community of oil workers and a large international school. These Americans, in turn, informally provide feedback to the section on issues of concern to American citizens in their locations. A more formal network of wardens could enhance and back up information distribution and provide the embassy with feedback on American concerns in Norway.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Oslo should establish a warden system for Norway.

Fee Collection

The section does not have an offsite collection agreement for consular fees, nor does the embassy accept U.S. dollar cashier checks for American services from certain banks in Norway (including the largest bank), because of processing difficulties. Norwegians ceased using checks in general in the 1990s, and most people use online banking, credit, debit, or bank cards rather than checks. An individual must have an account at the servicing bank in order to obtain a check. The difficulty in obtaining a U.S. dollar check (or using a credit card when not physically present at the embassy) leads to many emails and phone calls from the public. Sometimes when a person cannot obtain a cashier's check from a bank, he or she will ask friends or family to obtain one for them. This situation becomes particularly acute after consular visits to areas outside Oslo. These visits are designed to lessen the burden on those applicants for passports and consular reports of birth abroad who would otherwise need to travel to the embassy in Oslo for the service. However, the embassy's payment requirement remains a major inconvenience. In addition, fees for obtaining a U.S. dollar check can run up to several hundred Norwegian kroner.

The consular cashier processes all consular fees for Embassy Oslo. He accepts credit cards presented at the cashier window (b) (2)

The embassy has explored the possibility of an offsite collection arrangement with a Norwegian bank. However, Norwegian banks charge excessive fees, making an offsite arrangement impractical. Money orders do not work well either, because the exchange rate changes so frequently that often the money order is for the incorrect amount. There is another possibility, however, based on the model that Embassy Stockholm has arranged. The consular client makes an electronic payment through his or her bank to a U.S. designated account, and obtains a receipt from the bank for a small fee. The consular client then presents the receipt to the consular officer at the time the service is rendered. In order to provide better service to the public and remove what has become a significant irritant, the embassy needs to arrange alternative fee collection methods.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Embassy Oslo, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should establish and implement an alternative arrangement for collecting consular fees. (Action: Embassy Oslo, in coordination with CA)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2010
Department – D&CP	26	5	13	44	\$3,345,306
Department – ICASS	3	9	47	59	\$6,290,600
Department – Public Diplomacy	2	1	6	9	\$872,100
Department – Diplomatic Security	2	0	23	25	\$1,949,374
Department – Marine Security	6	0	3	9	\$521,201
Department – Representation	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$51,250
Department – OBO	1	0	0	1	\$2,980,920
Department – MRV	0	0	2	2	\$188,000
Foreign Commercial Service	0	0	4	4	\$486,404
Defense Attaché Office	10	0	2	12	\$792,440
Office of Defense Cooperation	3	0	2	5	
Totals	53	15	102	170	\$17,477,595

MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Embassy Oslo’s management officer arrived 2 months before the inspection and has had an immediate, positive impact on the section. Overall, the management section is performing well. Scores for most management services on OIG’s questionnaires were at or above Department averages. The management officer has improved communication with the front office and with other embassy sections. As noted in the Executive Direction section of this report, however, the management officer was not asked to attend senior staff meetings, nor was the front office bringing management into the picture soon enough on key issues.

Nearly every employee interviewed noted communication as an issue within the embassy. They indicated that there is a lack of information sharing, and inefficiencies are created when employees are out of the loop. The management officer’s partici-

pation in strategic planning and policy discussion will allow her to play a role in facilitating better embassy communication and information sharing.

Including the management officer in key staff meetings will help, but this is only part of the solution. There are opportunities for the entire management staff to participate in strategic goal setting within the management section. Better and broader participation in decisionmaking would provide buy-in for new initiatives and allow employees to participate in workplace changes. A discussion around these themes would improve morale and give the section a sense of common purpose that is currently lacking. Management could lead the way for these same kinds of interactions in the broader embassy context.

There are some communication issues, particularly related to change management, between the general services officer (GSO) and his staff. Coordination issues result when the maintenance staff needs to perform work but is unaware of events or meetings that would affect their schedule for doing so. The local staff also noted less than optimal communication among various sections; too much of the embassy's work is stovepiped. Several employees also noted they do not have a sense of who does what in management and other sections. A management section offsite may identify communications issues and generate suggestions for better communication and information sharing.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Oslo should hold a management offsite to discuss communication issues and to identify ways the section can improve communication and information-sharing.

The employee orientation program for newly arrived American and local staff tends to be ad hoc and less than fully effective. Information on housing and arrival times is available, but it is not widely shared. There is no centralized arrival and departure database to which all relevant sections have access, nor are there regular coordination meetings to discuss sponsorship, housing, etc. Each unit manages a piece of the check-in and orientation operation for new employees, but there is insufficient coordination and back-up built into the process. As a result, new local employees feel overwhelmed and underprepared for working in the embassy environment, and new American employees have settling-in issues that are not well addressed.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Embassy Oslo should develop an orientation program for new local and American employees. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The embassy's financial management unit delivers strong service to the embassy community in all areas. The OIG team reviewed accounting, vouchering, and cashing operations and found them to be running well. As recommended in the consular section of this report, offsite fee collection is desirable to reduce the volume of cash transactions. The team also noted several minor issues with cashier operations, such as making emergency cash payments over \$500 without approval.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Oslo should require the signature of the emergency cash payment officer for cash payments over \$500, as required by Department regulations.

The embassy has in place a well functioning process for requesting refunds of the value-added tax that is charged for most embassy purchases of work-related goods and services. The embassy collected approximately \$400,000 in such reimbursements in FY 2010, and all but one invoice reviewed by the OIG inspection team was properly submitted for a value-added tax refund. In this case, the embassy did not claim value-added tax in the amount of approximately \$17,000 paid to a hotel vendor that appears to be eligible for a refund.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Embassy Oslo should request a refund of the value-added tax paid on a hotel bill in fiscal year 2009. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

HUMAN RESOURCES

One part-time and two full-time local employees staff the human resources unit, under the management officer's supervision. The Frankfurt Regional Center provides regional human resources support. The OIG team observed the unit under pressure as they dealt with very sensitive human resources issues, and the team was impressed with the unit's professionalism. The local employee handbook was updated in January 2010. The unit maintains an excellent set of resources on the embassy's Web site. Norwegian labor law is quite different than U.S. law, and has created some tensions in the embassy between American supervisors and local staff. For example, Norwegian law mandates that an employer must allow each employee a minimum of three weeks of annual leave during the summer, creating staffing shortages during the busiest personnel transfer season. The human resources unit works with

American supervisors to help them understand how to work within the Norwegian system more effectively.

Embassy Oslo has an unusually high employee turnover rate. The numbers reached a high of approximately 40 percent in 2007, and the 2010 turnover through November 1 is around 25 percent. The embassy has done standard exit interviews to determine why people are leaving, but there has been no systematic analysis of the information it has obtained. The high turnover creates inefficiencies, including a constant need for expensive and time-consuming training. Norway has very little unemployment, and the embassy has competition from many local and international employers; this situation would predict a higher turnover rate than at other embassies, but there are likely other factors contributing to the retention issue. Employees note that the embassy's salary and benefits are competitive, and anecdotal evidence indicates that few depart because they are dissatisfied with their salary.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Oslo should do a study that identifies the reasons for employee turnover and determine whether any changes are needed in the work environment to promote retention of local staff.

The embassy has had some serious problems with completing LE staff evaluation reports on time. Nearly 50 percent of evaluations from April to November 2010 were at least a few days late, with some more than a year behind schedule. Some of the delays have resulted in delayed within-grade increases. Department regulations (3 FAH-2 H-135.5 A. [2]) caution that a late report can delay the processing of within-grade increases; hence, LE staff evaluations need to be processed on time. The human resources unit needs a more aggressive method of collecting timely reports. The human resources staff sends reminder notices to the supervisors and to the management officer, but does not copy the DCM.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Embassy Oslo should require supervisors to complete local staff evaluations on time, and report delinquent supervisors to the deputy chief of mission for further action. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

GENERAL SERVICES

The general services office is performing its responsibilities effectively and efficiently. It received above average scores for most services, with shipping and procurement services receiving especially high marks from customers. Local staff members are well trained and proficient in their duties. The embassy has adopted most of the

new electronic logistics applications in procurement, shipping, and travel services. The office has made necessary adjustments to motor pool chauffeur schedules to reduce overtime, among other positive changes. Local staff morale is fair to good. In common with employees in other sections, general services office employees expressed a desire for greater consultation and collaboration in workplace decisions.

Housing

The embassy's real property holdings consist of four government-owned properties and a total of 46 short-term leased residences. Housing services received good scores from customers, and most leases are within applicable maximum space standards.

A review of real property lease files disclosed several procedural problems with lease execution. One short-term lease was for a total of 27 years and included 6-year terms. Department regulations (15 FAM 312.7 d. [13]) require that the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) approve leases with a term of 10 or more years. Another lease included deviations from OBO's model lease, to include items such as cable television and utilities. Cable television is not an allowable government expense, and utility costs should be charged directly to agencies or post funds rather than to OBO's leasehold account. The general services office is aware of these problems and is working to correct them, but further action is needed to confirm that leases comply with applicable regulations and are negotiated to the advantage of the U.S. Government.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Embassy Oslo should develop and implement a corrective action plan to remedy deficiencies in real property leasing procedures. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

Although the embassy is a participant in OBO's Rental Benchmark Initiative to control costs and reduce time-consuming lease waiver procedures, 14 of the 21 leases in FY 2010 required lease waivers from OBO. Leasehold account expenses increased \$392,000 in 2 years, or by about 21 percent. The OIG team noted that the embassy has some leases with undesirable features, such as escalation clauses and payment of lease expenses a year in advance. Such practices can be justified if they result in advantages to the U.S. Government, but they should be supported by a market survey.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Oslo should conduct its annual real property lease survey and report the findings to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations.

Procurement

The embassy's procurement unit consists of two employees, one of whom also provides travel services as a collateral responsibility. The LE procurement agent is a participant in the Department's program to issue contracting warrants of \$25,000 to LE staff in several countries. As a practical matter, the GSO signs virtually all contracts as contracting officer. The LE staff member signs contracts only on those occasions when the GSO or another American contracting officer is not available. There have been no reports of internal controls problems under this program, and the LE staff member has performed well. Procurement services received high marks from customers, and files are well documented.

The embassy procures about \$150,000 annually in packing and crating services through purchase orders. Under the international government through bill of lading program launched several years ago, most embassy packing and crating services are procured through government-wide contracts, which the General Services Administration administers. A significant number of shipments, about 15 per year, are still procured by the direct packing method. As stated in 14 FAM 614.5-2 b., consideration should be given to the establishment of an indefinite delivery contract in circumstances where the estimated volume of services exceed \$25,000 every year. Use of a contract could reduce costs and simplify administrative procedures for moving personnel who are departing post.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Embassy Oslo should prepare a contract solicitation and establish a contract for packing and crating services. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

Expendable Supplies

Embassy Oslo maintains an inventory of expendable supplies totaling approximately \$70,000. It regularly orders supplies from the General Services Administration and maintains supply inventories in the warehouse. At many European posts, just-in-time inventory procedures allow the embassy to eliminate expendable supply inventories, through weekly deliveries from local vendors. Implementation of this established best practice would allow the embassy to eliminate its inventory of expendable supplies.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Embassy Oslo should establish just-in-time inventory procedures for expendable supplies. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

Motor Pool

The embassy's motor pool fleet consists of 16 official government vehicles and a mix of 16 full-time and part-time chauffeurs. At the time of the inspection, motor pool staff was midway through the process of inputting updated trip information into WebPASS. As a result, information on monthly mileage driven and fuel consumption was not available for review. A spot check of driver logs indicated light usage of most vehicles, with many being driven fewer than 500 miles per month, well below the recommended target of 12,000 miles per year. In addition, the Marine security guard detachment has a mix of 10 full-time and part-time chauffeurs assigned to that office. Embassy management noted that it has conducted a cost-benefit analysis in the recent past, and determined that outsourcing motor vehicle services is not cost-effective. The embassy has made a concerted effort to change driver schedules to reduce excessive overtime and to reduce the number of shifts worked in excess of 10 hours. Nonetheless, on average, about five drivers per month work overtime. Both the number of vehicles and the number of chauffeurs may be more than the workload warrants.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Embassy Oslo should undertake a fleet utilization survey to determine the proper number of staff and official government vehicles needed to support motor pool and Marine security guard operations. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

The facilities management staff functions well as a team, led by a U.S. direct-hire facilities manager. The unit has an effective safety program, and employees were satisfied with safety procedures and equipment. Oslo is slated for a new embassy construction project in FY 2011; completion is expected in 2014. With that in mind, the facilities management unit is working only to keep chancery systems operating and is undertaking no major improvements or renovations, with the exception of the chief of mission residence—an historic, U.S. Government-owned property that requires significant maintenance. The residence celebrates its 100-year anniversary next year. During the OIG team's visit, projects were under way to improve the sewer system and repair a retaining wall on the property.

Embassy Oslo's facilities manager has regional responsibility for Embassy Reykjavik. The OIG team discussed with him the need to establish a memorandum of understanding with Reykjavik that outlines his regional responsibilities, including the

requirement for quarterly visits. This memorandum of understanding will be the subject of a forthcoming recommendation from the inspection of Embassy Reykjavik.

Preventive facilities maintenance is done on an ad hoc basis, and the OIG team discussed the need to establish a better system. There is, however, a commendable focus on maintaining safety equipment. When the current facility manager arrived, he found outdated fire extinguishers and immediately implemented a plan to rectify the situation.

The facilities staff will be adequate, once the section hires a new heating and air conditioning technician. Recruitment for these skilled positions is difficult; the embassy competes with the oil and shipping industries for the best employees. The current vacancy has existed for more than a year. There is a new applicant who the facilities manager hopes will qualify for the position, but the recruitment process has been long and frustrating.

The facilities management section has only ad hoc meetings that include the entire unit. A more regular meeting schedule would facilitate communication and provide an opportunity to discuss issues that affect the employees in the unit.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Oslo should schedule regular facilities management unit meetings.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The OIG team assessed technical and management operating procedures, as well as the physical security of the information technology spaces of Embassy Oslo. It performed a penetration test, a network analysis, and a series of systems cyber security reviews and determined that Embassy Oslo's information management (IM) program adequately meets the information technology needs of all users and provides the minimal level of information system security. With the arrival of the new IM officer, the embassy will more directly address the issue of information system security."

The OIG team counseled Embassy Oslo on issues such as labeling, wiring, modems, individual development plans, patches, and offsite backup tape storage. The embassy addressed all concerns to the satisfaction of the OIG team; some mitigation activities remain in progress.

The IM program is also responsible for switchboard operations, telephone and radio management, and classified and unclassified pouch operations. The OIG inspectors

reviewed these operations and found that the embassy follows the Department's policies and guidelines.

Embassy Oslo's IM officer oversees the information systems and information processing centers for the embassy. The section includes, in addition to the IM officer, an information program officer and an IM specialist in charge of the classified systems.

Three American officers, one cleared American, and six full-time local employees are supporting Embassy Oslo's unclassified systems, diplomatic post office, pouch operations, and telephone switchboard. Overall, the IM office supports 150 users on the unclassified side.

Embassy Oslo's information systems center has had a complete turnover in personnel in the last 2 years, resulting in some loss of knowledge of Department information systems. The personnel currently employed in the information systems center have had only on-the-job training. As a result, it takes them extra time to resolve problems on the OpenNet.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Oslo should create an individual development plan for the locally employed information management staff that implements the required training.

Embassy Oslo's PAS has a dedicated Internet network (DIN), but there is no service level agreement between PAS and the IM section. Guidance in 2008 STATE 110378, states: that "A service level agreement should be established between the IMO and section(s) that have a business need to operate a DIN." The lack of an agreement that defines the roles and responsibilities of the organizations will likely result in improper management of the DIN.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Oslo should create a service level agreement between the information management and public affairs sections that defines duties regarding the dedicated Internet network.

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QUALITY OF LIFE

Norway, with its wonderful summer environment and outdoor/health focus, enjoys a very high quality of life. However, it is not always an easy place for a non-Norwegian to live. Challenges include one of the world's highest costs of living, and a persistent winter gloom that begins in November and ends in March. The cold weather and lack of sunshine require embassy staff to create opportunities for exercise and social activity during the long winters.

HEALTH UNIT

One local nurse staffs Embassy Oslo's health unit, and she spends much of her time assisting embassy staff in gaining access to the Norwegian medical system. The regional medical officer in Frankfurt and the regional psychiatrist in London provide regional support, and each practitioner visits once or twice a year. The current nurse was the first nurse hired by the embassy, and she set up the medical unit. The space is less than ideal, but a well designed health unit is planned for the new embassy. The embassy's nurse will retire in approximately 2 years. With the frequent training and leave for the current nurse and the need to have a trained nurse available when she retires, the embassy realizes the need for continuity at this position. It has begun planning for adequate health unit staffing.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

The community liaison office (CLO) coordinator in Oslo runs an active program for embassy employees and their families. The CLO particularly focuses on activities that provide social outlets during the winter months. The coordinator works closely with the embassy employees association (EEA) on most events, often handling the planning side, with the EEA taking care of the funding and handling the money issues.

The CLO coordinator manages the sponsorship program for new American employees, which is well supported by embassy staff. As the management overview notes above, the CLO coordinator would benefit from having a database on new officers, including arrival and housing information, into which she could add data, such as contact information for the post sponsor who is assigned to each new employee.

SCHOOLS

(b)(2)(b)(6) The school received high marks from American parents in OIG's customer service surveys. As a nonprofit established under Norwegian law, the school reserves one seat on its governing board for an embassy employee. The school receives an annual grant from the Office of Overseas Schools in the amount of \$20,000, and in past years has received soft target security funding for physical security upgrades to the school's facilities.

EMBASSY EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION

The EEA plays an active role in the embassy community. The association's current board has tightened up some of the EEA's procedures; for instance, board members are performing monthly inventory spot checks and cash counts. The EEA manages the commissary, a coffee service, and a dry cleaning operation. It also plans and supplies cash bar happy hours, to raise funds for other embassy social activities. In addition, the EEA manages the contract for a small embassy cafeteria operation.

The EEA board has several ex officio members, including two local employees who work with the board to plan embassy events that include LE staff. A locally employed manager handles the day-to-day operations of the EEA and works closely with the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs in Washington. She recently attended an association manager training course and is focused on establishing correct procedures for managing the operation. The commissary lost money last year, and the manager understands that she will need to make some changes in its operations—by raising prices or reducing opening hours—to produce a profit this year.

The EEA has small but adequate bank balances, and a realistic inventory for this small operation. The manager is currently working to find a new auditor, both for internal control purposes and to find audit services at a lower cost.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Equal Employment Opportunity counselor takes his job seriously and has taken all of the necessary training and refresher classes. He has posted Equal Employment Opportunity information on one of the bulletin boards near the cafeteria. Since

taking on the counselor role in Embassy Oslo in the summer of 2008, he has received no Equal Employment Opportunity complaints. He is working with the management office to set up training for all employees, hoping to hold the class before the 2010 December holidays.

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MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

Embassy Oslo has in place acceptable procedures to protect government resources against waste, fraud, and mismanagement. The inspection team's review of internal controls found no major deficiencies. On July 10, 2010, the Chief of Mission transmitted the annual statement certifying that adequate management controls are in place.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: Embassy Oslo, in coordination with the Foreign Service Institute, should hold a political/economic section office offsite meeting, to build teamwork, establish priorities, and set goals for the coming year. (Action: Embassy Oslo, in coordination with FSI)

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Bureau of International Information Programs should remove entries for the American Corners in Norway from its lists of American Corners. (Action: IIP)

RECOMMENDATION 3: Embassy Oslo should bring its social media sites fully into compliance with the new *Foreign Affairs Manual* subsection on social media. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

RECOMMENDATION 4: Embassy Oslo should develop and implement a plan to increase the number and geographic diversity of nominations for the International Visitor Leadership Program. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

RECOMMENDATION 5: Embassy Oslo should create a field or fields in its Contact 8 database to record U.S. Government exchange program alumni status, and should enter relevant data into the system regarding contacts' interests and other public diplomacy information. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

RECOMMENDATION 6: Embassy Oslo, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should establish and implement an alternative arrangement for collecting consular fees. (Action: Embassy Oslo, in coordination with CA)

RECOMMENDATION 7: Embassy Oslo should develop an orientation program for new local and American employees. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

RECOMMENDATION 8: Embassy Oslo should request a refund of the value-added tax paid on a hotel bill in fiscal year 2009. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

RECOMMENDATION 9: Embassy Oslo should require supervisors to complete local staff evaluations on time, and report delinquent supervisors to the deputy chief of mission for further action. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

RECOMMENDATION 10: Embassy Oslo should develop and implement a corrective action plan to remedy deficiencies in real property leasing procedures. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

RECOMMENDATION 11: Embassy Oslo should prepare a contract solicitation and establish a contract for packing and crating services. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

RECOMMENDATION 12: Embassy Oslo should establish just-in-time inventory procedures for expendable supplies. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

RECOMMENDATION 13: Embassy Oslo should undertake a fleet utilization survey to determine the proper number of staff and official government vehicles needed to support motor pool and Marine security guard operations. (Action: Embassy Oslo)

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.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Oslo should maintain its request for its locally employed political specialist to attend the Political Training for Foreign Service Nationals course at the Foreign Service Institute.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Oslo should require that the political-economic section integrate travel outside of Norway into its work plan.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Oslo should arrange more opportunities for the public affairs section and the Ambassador to interact informally with members of the news media.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Oslo should establish a formal media policy and circulate it periodically to embassy staff.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Oslo should publicize the Voluntary Visitor program within the embassy and encourage officers to nominate candidates for it.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Oslo should work with the Fulbright Commission to encourage more widespread use of the Fulbright specialist program.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Oslo, with strong front office support, should seek more volunteers for its Meet America youth outreach program.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Oslo should provide grants training and occasional grant writing experience to a second local staff member of the public affairs section to serve as a back-up to the primary grants staff person.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Oslo should include information about Federal benefits in its quarterly newsletter.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Oslo should establish a warden system for Norway.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Oslo should hold a management offsite to discuss communication issues and to identify ways the section can improve communication and information-sharing.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Oslo should require the signature of the emergency cash payment officer for cash payments over \$500, as required by Department regulations.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Oslo should do a study that identifies the reasons for employee turnover and determine whether any changes are needed in the work environment to promote retention of local staff.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Oslo should conduct its annual real property lease survey and report the findings to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Oslo should schedule regular facilities management unit meetings.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Oslo should create an individual development plan for the locally employed information management staff that implements the required training.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Oslo should create a service level agreement between the information management and public affairs sections that defines duties regarding the dedicated Internet network.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Barry B. White	10/09
Deputy Chief of Mission	James T. Heg	07/09
<i>Chiefs of Sections:</i>		
Consular Affairs	Rodger Deuerlein	08/08
Political/Economic	Cherrie S. Daniels	07/09
Management	Jennifer L. Christenson	08/10
Public Affairs	Timothy W. Moore	06/10
Regional Security	Eric K. Carlson	07/08
<i>Other Agencies:</i>		
Department of Defense		
Defense Attaché Office	Capt. Jeffrey S. Coran	07/10
Office of Defense Cooperation	Col. Robert K. Simm, Jr.	05/07

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ABBREVIATIONS

CLO	Community liaison office
Department	Department of State
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
EEA	Embassy employees association
ELO	Entry-level officer
ESTA	Electronic System for Travel Authorization
ESTH	Environment, science, technology, and health
GSO	General services officer
IM	Information management
IRC	Information resource center
IVLP	International Visitor Leadership Program
LE	Locally employed
MSRP	Mission Strategic and Resource Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section

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