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

**Inspection of
Embassy Santo Domingo,
Dominican Republic**

Report Number ISP-I-11-40A, May 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 AND SCOPE

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

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

METHODOLOGY

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



United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H.W. Geisel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

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Key Judgments

- Embassy Santo Domingo is headed by a recently arrived noncareer Ambassador who is in the process of familiarizing himself with the numerous programs and operations conducted at this mid-sized embassy. In the foreign policy program management areas, he has been ably assisted by the deputy chief of mission (DCM).
- Policy and program implementation is effective, overall coordination is good, and interagency relations are cooperative.
- Mission leadership has not provided sufficient oversight of internal management support services. This report documents a number of long-standing deficiencies. The front office has the strategic responsibility for establishing a framework within which the embassy can deal with weaknesses in management and internal controls, and it must provide leadership support to, and exercise oversight over, the many internal embassy functions (e.g., management, consular, and security operations), as well as the foreign policy program areas.

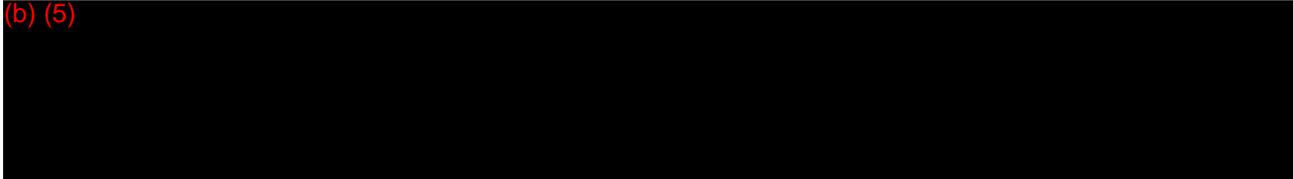
(b) (5)

- Although embassy officials acknowledge the high-fraud atmosphere of the Dominican Republic, the management section's internal controls have been weak for a number of years, as reflected in the past three OIG inspection reports. The arrival of a new management counselor in the summer of 2010 has reenergized the operation, with more attention to accountability. However, a number of deficiencies continue, particularly in motor pool, procurement, housing, facilities, and maintenance. Staffing gaps have had serious negative consequences, but they do not explain the decade-long weakness in the general services area.
- Although Embassy Santo Domingo is one of the busiest visa issuing missions in the world and is operating in a high-fraud environment, consular services are, for the most part, well run. However, the section must improve its customer service orientation. Moreover, the consular agency at Puerto Plata does not (b) (5) conduct financial operations in accordance with Department of State (Department) regulations.
- The law enforcement agencies in Santo Domingo conduct effective counternarcotics and counterterrorism programs. The narcotics affairs section (NAS) needs an additional U.S. direct-hire position to carry out its responsibilities effectively. The role of NAS contractors needs to be better defined and consistent with Department regulations.
- The public affairs section (PAS) conducts effective cultural programming and social media outreach, and the image of the United States in the Dominican Republic is high. However,

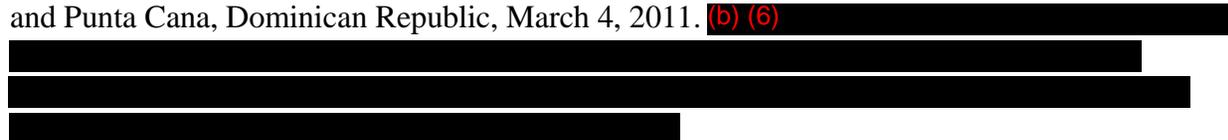
the embassy needs to address financial irregularities at the Binational Center (BNC) in Santiago before conducting any more programs with, or providing further support to, the BNC.

- The Leahy vetting process to screen nominees for American-funded training for human rights violations is not as effective as it needs to be, and the mission lacks a standard operating policy.

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The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between January 3 and 28, 2011; in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, between February 25 and March 15, 2011; and in Puerto Plata and Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, March 4, 2011. (b) (6)



Context

The Dominican Republic, located just 70 miles from the U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, is the second-largest Caribbean country after Cuba. It shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. In the wake of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the U.S. embassy in Santo Domingo provided invaluable assistance and support.

The United States has played an active role in the history of the Dominican Republic over the past century and has intervened twice. U.S. Marines landed in 1916 during a period of unrest and established a military government that lasted until 1924. In 1965 American troops landed again in Santo Domingo to protect U.S. citizens during another period of unrest. Following 30 years of the Trujillo dictatorship, democracy gradually took root and the electoral process since 1996 has been generally free and fair.

The Dominican Republic is an American ally in a region of strategic importance. U.S.-Dominican relations are close and collaborative, as evidenced when President Obama received Dominican president Leonel Fernandez at the White House in July 2010. The United States is the Dominican Republic's largest trade partner. The Dominican Republic and the United States participate in the Central American and Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement. Over 1 million people of Dominican origin live in the United States and return \$3 billion in remittances annually. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provides \$35 million in foreign assistance each year, and Dominican law enforcement agencies and its military cooperate closely with U.S. counterparts.

Among the embassy's priorities are to provide excellent consular services to the 100,000 Americans who live in the Dominican Republic, the 1.2 million Americans who visit, and the more than 180,000 Dominicans who apply for visas each year. Another priority is to assist the Dominican Republic in addressing the narcotics problem. Located astride key drug smuggling routes, the Dominican Republic is a critical link in the U.S. war on international crime and drugs and a key partner in interdiction, arrest, and extradition efforts. The Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, and other agencies cooperate with the Dominicans in carrying out major antinarcotics programs. Washington agencies have praised Mission Santo Domingo's effective coordination of its diverse antinarcotics, economic development, and other assistance programs, but the challenge is great in the face of a widespread culture of corruption, cronyism, and patronage.

Embassy Santo Domingo has 151 Department and other agency direct-hire employees and 353 locally employed (LE) staff. There are approximately 250 Peace Corps staff and volunteers in the Dominican Republic. The total mission budget for FY 2010 was approximately \$116.6 million. U.S. foreign assistance to the Dominican Republic totals approximately \$50 million annually. The embassy is housed in an overcrowded chancery constructed in 1939. Embassy offices are spread out over eight locations in the city, some separated by a 45-minute commute in heavy traffic. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) is constructing a new embassy compound, with completion expected in 2014.

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Executive Direction

Country Team and Interagency Relations

The country team at Embassy Santo Domingo includes representatives of 10 agencies in addition to the Department: Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Justice, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, Treasury, Peace Corps, Social Security, and USAID. The country team focuses on counternarcotics and counterterrorism, democracy, economic growth, health, education, and the provision of consular services. Interagency relations are cooperative and collegial.

Executive direction occurs through weekly country team meetings and senior staff meetings chaired by the Ambassador, as well as through a series of working group meetings on specific issues (law enforcement, counternarcotics, counterterrorism, etc.) organized by a section chief and chaired by the DCM or, on occasion, by the Ambassador. Individual sections also meet separately with the DCM on a regular basis.

Several agencies and sections suggested to the OIG team that there were too many meetings, some of which had overlapping agendas and participants.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Santo Domingo should review the existing pattern of staff meetings to determine the optimum structure.

Mission Strategic and Resource Plan

The 2011 Mission Strategic and Resource Plan was developed by a process that involved all sections and agencies at the mission. The plan identified 10 goals and established benchmarks and criteria to judge progress. During the past year, the DCM, while serving as chargé d'affaires, chaired meetings to review how the mission was meeting the various performance indicators. Embassy personnel told the OIG team that Department offices provided little feedback on the Mission Strategic and Resource Plan.

After arriving at the embassy, the Ambassador organized a 2-day off-site meeting at his residence to discuss the embassy's goals and objectives and to prepare for the next Mission Strategic and Resource Plan cycle. Department and other agency representatives expressed satisfaction at the Ambassador's initiative, both to learn his vision of where he would like to lead the embassy (education is his number one priority) and to have a chance to interact with him personally.

(b) (5) [Redacted]

[Redacted]

(b) (5)

Although responsibility for these security deficiencies devolves in the first instance to the regional security officer and his staff, the OIG team believes that the DCM should have become aware of the deficiencies during his 15-month tenure as chargé d'affaires and have taken aggressive leadership action to correct them. The DCM, with the support of the Ambassador who has overall responsibility for the security of the mission, must exercise close oversight to ensure that the recommendations to address the deficiencies in the mission's security programs are implemented.

Management activities are another area of concern. The OIG team identified a number of continuing deficiencies, particularly in motor pool, procurement, housing, facilities, maintenance, and information management. Many of these issues are long-standing and have been reported by previous OIG teams.¹ They will require attention from a wide range of embassy personnel, including the direct involvement of the DCM, if they are to be resolved.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement procedures so that the deputy chief of mission, with the support of the Ambassador, assists with and exercises close oversight of actions taken to correct the security and management deficiencies identified in this report and its classified annex. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Support of Equal Employment Opportunity Program Objectives

In the past 2 years, Embassy Santo Domingo has had five Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) cases, including allegations of sexual harassment, which is an unusually high number for a mission of its size. The embassy EEO counselors acted to resolve the cases or to forward them to the Office of Civil Rights in the Department.

As a result of the repeated allegations, in July 2010, two representatives from the Office of Civil Rights visited the mission and conducted 15 training sessions on EEO objectives and the prohibitions on sexual harassment. The training sessions were mandatory for all supervisors and employees. Since the training was held and the individual who was the subject of the charges left the mission, there have been no additional cases brought to the attention of the counselors.

During the time of the inspection, the DCM, chairing the country team and senior staff meetings in the absence of the Ambassador, stressed the mission's zero tolerance for sexual harassment. He distributed information sheets on EEO issues and asked the country team to be sure that all employees knew the names of the two EEO counselors at the mission.

¹ These inspections were conducted in 1999 and 2005.

Leadership

For most of the past 2 years, Embassy Santo Domingo has been under the leadership of a chargé d'affaires. The current DCM served in that position for more than 15 months prior to the arrival of the Ambassador. Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the chargé d'affaires provided outstanding leadership in organizing the mission's relief and humanitarian assistance to the victims and to American citizens evacuating from Haiti. He played a critical role in obtaining approval from the Department to advance construction of a new embassy compound by 9 years, which will alleviate the communication and coordination challenges of having the mission spread out over eight locations. He also provided effective direction to the country team agencies and sections that are conducting large and important programs in areas such as counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and development assistance. As discussed elsewhere in this report, however, he did not adequately address deficiencies in some areas of mission operations.

The DCM has played a valuable role in offering his knowledge and experience of embassy operations to the new Ambassador as he assumes leadership and direction of the embassy. The Ambassador intends to take a management-by-objectives approach, keeping the focus on the embassy's main goals and objectives.

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Public Diplomacy

Mission leadership is aware of the importance of public diplomacy and outreach in working toward U.S. goals in the Dominican Republic. Coming from the private sector, where he was the national spokesman for a civil rights organization, the Ambassador understands fully the need to get the U.S. message out to the Dominican public. The embassy public affairs section is working closely with him to develop the most effective procedures to do so. Other sections and agencies participate in the effort. For example, consular officers, in coordination with PAS and a local nongovernmental organization, host and moderate film screenings and discussions of current events. USAID, the Foreign Commercial Service, the Foreign Agriculture Service, and others commented favorably on the support PAS gives to their effort.

Entry-Level-Officer Program

Although the embassy has 22 entry-level officers (ELO), it has a meager development and mentoring program. The DCM receives ELOs for a courtesy call upon their arrival and meets them one on one for lunch once during their tour. A rotational program gives ELOs the opportunity to work in two or three different units during a 2-year tour. Invitations to events are shared among ELOs, and on infrequent occasions they assist in activities outside their work areas, such as congressional or other high-level visits. A number of ELOs take advantage of public speaking opportunities. When the OIG team met with the ELOs, they requested that more activities and events be held at the consular annex, where most of them work. In addition, the first-tour officers doing out-of-cone consular assignments said they would find it valuable to do some work in their home cones, such as management, economic and political, and public diplomacy.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Santo Domingo should develop a mentoring program for entry-level officers, headed by the deputy chief of mission, which involves more interaction with the front office and with officers in other sections and agencies.

Contact Database

Embassy Santo Domingo does not have a central contact database that serves as a clearinghouse for all sections' contacts. For each medium or large event, the protocol assistant passes around the guest list from the previous year's event to embassy officers and LE staff for additions and subtractions, then incorporates the changes into a Word document to create a master guest list. This is quite time consuming, as the embassy's one protocol assistant must look through the master list for each event for duplications, misspelled names, and incorrect addresses. In addition, when called upon intermittently to revise an existing guest list, officers may forget some of the changes in contact information that have accumulated over the year. With a database that allows the same officers to delete and add names continuously as their lists of contacts evolve, the protocol assistant would be assured of a more accurate and up-to-date list. When guest lists are assembled on short notice from a variety of sources, multiple spellings for the same person occasionally slip through, requiring the protocol assistant to spend an inordinate amount of time revising the list. With an embassy-wide contact database, the protocol assistant could update contact information regularly and ensure its accuracy.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Santo Domingo should create a central contact database and use it as the exclusive source of guest lists for medium and large events. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Policy and Program Implementation

Economic/Political Section

Organization of the Economic/Political Section

The head of the combined economic/political (ECOPOL) section is an FS-01 political officer. Two FS-02 officers head the section's political and economic units. The political unit has an officer who covers judicial affairs, such as extraditions and vetting, and both units have rotational ELOs. The section employs a Foreign Service national-9 specialist. All officers maintain functional working relations with host country counterparts in ministries, nongovernmental organizations, and multilateral organizations but could improve their outreach efforts through greater use of representational activities. There is very good oversight and mentoring of the section's two rotational ELOs, and all American staff members enjoy a high level of morale. Section meetings are unscheduled and focus principally on taskings, which does not enhance the section's creativity, hone a strategic outlook, or support staff professional development.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Santo Domingo should hold regular economic/political section meetings that are structured to facilitate information sharing and discussion.

Reporting

The ECOPOL section has a relevant reporting plan that generates a good, timely, and steady flow of reporting. Reporting does not seem to have suffered from the WikiLeaks scandal. The section can sharpen the focus of its reporting by taking better advantage of interagency working groups, such as the economic commercial working group, to launch a team strategic approach that optimizes reporting and program efforts in today's tight budget environment. Better and more regular feedback from the regional bureau desk will also benefit reporting officers' efforts to key in on issues relevant to American political and commercial interests. The OIG team discussed procedures to provide regular feedback and direction from the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA).

The embassy has no policy governing the use of cables, record emails, and working emails in mission reporting. At present few, if any, officers are using record emails, and few reporting officers feel adequately trained in the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset (SMART). There is no mechanism assuring that key mission communications will be tracked and recorded as the Department mandates. A policy would outline the procedures the mission expects officers to follow in conducting their communications.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement a written mission policy governing the use of cables, record emails, and working emails. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

One important reason for embassy officers not fully utilizing SMART is their insufficient familiarity with the system. Training at the time of SMART implementation was not adequate. This problem can be resolved if the mission implements a training program either through internal classroom training or via SMART Webinars.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Santo Domingo should develop a training regimen for mission personnel who create and administer record emails via the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset.

Human Rights, Leahy Vetting, and Extraditions

The Dominican Republic suffers from many serious human rights problems, including extrajudicial police and military killings, beatings of prisoners, and severe discrimination against Haitian migrants and their descendants. The Leahy vetting process aims to bar perpetrators of such abuse from U.S. Government-funded training and assistance programs. In 2010, Embassy Santo Domingo processed nearly 1,000 Leahy vetting requests, most if not all of which were sent to the Department for inclusion in its internal vetting and security tracking (INVEST) database system. A review of responses from the Department indicated that the INVEST process rejected only two submissions. The ECOPOL section reported that few Leahy vetting requests at the mission resulted in denials, and these denials were for crimes rather than human rights-related abuses. The ECOPOL section did not have the Foreign Assistance Vetting standard operating procedure. The embassy also does not have a database of Dominicans about whom derogatory human rights abuse information is known, nor does it seek or submit derogatory information to the INVEST system. Given the profile of human rights issues in the Dominican Republic and the large number of Dominican Republic police and security force candidates for U.S. Government programs, the Leahy vetting process needs to be tightened.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement a Foreign Assistance Vetting standard operating procedure that effectively screens candidates for U.S. Government-funded assistance. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

The ECOPOL section provides valuable support to mission law enforcement agencies by facilitating a relatively large number of extradition requests to return fugitives to the United States for prosecution. In 2010, the Dominican Republic extradited 22 wanted fugitives to the United States, mostly for narcotics-related offenses. Only three requests for extradition that went before the Dominican Republic Supreme Court were denied in 2010.

In 2010, the Department elevated the Dominican Republic to “*tier 3*” status for trafficking-in-persons (TIP) violations. The embassy reporting that contributed to this finding suffered from a lack of local statistical evidence and successfully prosecuted cases. The mission has put increased staff resources into investigating TIP abuses. At the same time, it has engaged diplomatically to encourage stronger Government of the Dominican Republic efforts to deal effectively with TIP crimes. A USAID-funded assessment completed in early 2011 provided much greater insight and detail on the nature of the problem, as well as areas in which progress has been made and in which institutional and enforcement weaknesses still exist. Subsequent

reporting promises to provide a fuller perspective on the nature of the TIP situation in the Dominican Republic.

Narcotics Affairs Section

Narcotics Interdiction

The Dominican Republic, through which flows an estimated 3 percent of the cocaine entering the United States, is the largest Caribbean transit location for cocaine and illicit drugs shipments to the United States. The Department is now considering a proposal under a bilateral program entitled “Sovereign Skies” to develop tactical airlift to the Government of the Dominican Republic for use in the interdiction of transiting illicit narcotics. All elements of the mission interagency team support this initiative.

Organization of the Narcotics Affairs Section

The NAS budget has grown over the past few years, from \$1.8 million in FY 2005 to more than \$15 million in FY 2010. However, the FY 2010 budget allocation of \$10 million to the Sovereign Skies program may not be realized if the program is not approved. Even if the sum is eventually rescinded, however, the NAS budget has still almost tripled over the past 5 years and is now supporting programs as well as projects.

The NAS director serves as the Ambassador’s principal advisor for narcotics affairs. The level of interagency cooperation between NAS and law enforcement agencies has increased since the director’s arrival in late 2010. NAS appears to share close and good collaboration with other embassy sections and agencies. It also meets periodically with its counterpart at Embassy Port-au-Prince to coordinate programs.

There have been numerous staffing gaps in the NAS director position. When this has occurred, NAS personal services contract personnel attended country team and other senior-level meetings and represented NAS in one-on-one meetings with the chiefs of the national police and the narcotics police. Now that a NAS director is in place, this practice is no longer appropriate or needed, and its continuation may be hampering mission operations. (b) (5)

[REDACTED]

Foreign Affairs Manual regulation 3 FAM 7261.2 and USAID Acquisition Regulations, Appendix D, provide detailed authority allowing a personal services contractor to represent the hiring agency in dealing with host government officials in certain circumstances. However, it is difficult or impossible for personal services contractors to meet with policy-level officials, such as the chief of the national police, without conveying an impression that they are representing the mission, and, as such, the U.S. Government. In addition, meetings on the policy level always raise questions of accountability regarding what is said, what is understood, what other issues arise, and what is reported back to the mission.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Santo Domingo should develop guidance for personal services contractors that specifies which mission meetings they should attend and prohibits their assuming supervisory or senior roles on the mission team or their replacing U.S. mission officers in personal meetings with senior policy-level officials in the Dominican Government.

Suffering from a lack of sufficient Department staff to carry out duties at a time when the program and budget have increased significantly, NAS has had to rely extensively on personal services contractors. In numerous instances, NAS has utilized personal services contractor staff for tasks that direct-hire employees should have assumed. This practice has complicated and sometimes hindered cooperation between NAS and law enforcement agencies at post (see also Informal Recommendation 5). In its 2005 inspection report, the OIG team concurred with the embassy's request for a second NAS officer. However, this request was never granted. Even in today's lean budget environment, NAS, with its greater budget and broader range of programs, requires an additional direct-hire position.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should review the mix of direct-hire and contract personnel in the narcotics affairs section program and, if justified, request an additional direct-hire position. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with WHA and INL)

With rare exceptions, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs handles and signs contracts and grants for projects and programs in the Dominican Republic. NAS provides local oversight. The NAS director conducts an informal and continual assessment of the success or failure of assistance programs and, during his short tenure, has already redesigned programs to make them more effective. However, the NAS director has not taken the Foreign Service Institute contracting officer's training, nor has he been designated as a contracting officer's representative by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. This training is necessary to ensure that mission oversight of these contracts is consistent with Department standards and regulations.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs should designate and train a contracting officer's representative for the narcotics affairs section at Embassy Santo Domingo. (Action: INL)

In January 2009, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs issued a report on a management assessment visit to the Dominican Republic. The report made 25 recommendations for improving NAS operations. At the time of the OIG visit, the NAS section was working to close the recommendations but still had seven recommendations open.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Santo Domingo should expeditiously complete all management assessment visit recommendations that the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs made in its January 2009 report.

Consular Affairs

Embassy Santo Domingo's consular employees, housed in an extremely cramped workspace, provide effective services in a high-volume, high-fraud environment. Although section management has reduced backlogs and wait times for appointments, it has done so at the expense of other customer services. The fraud prevention unit (FPU), working closely with the assistant regional security officer-investigations (ARSO-I), impedes non bona fide travel to the United States, but the culture of corruption and tradition of fraud in the Dominican Republic guarantees constant challenges.

Management and Outreach

A respected leader, who moved into the position after the departure of the previous consul general, manages the consular section. The deputy consul general position is now vacant, which places strains on both the consul general and the mid-level unit chiefs who share these responsibilities. The section is generously staffed with 6 mid-level officers and 23 ELOs. The Bureau of Consular Affairs has used ELOs from the Dominican Republic to help regional posts that were experiencing staffing shortages.

The consular section in Santo Domingo is housed in an overcrowded facility half a mile west of the chancery. All customer interaction takes place on the ground floor, through a Dickensian warren of windows. On the east side of the building, officers at 13 immigrant visa windows handle approximately 300 applicants a day. On the west side of the building, 500 nonimmigrant visa (NIV) applicants are processed each day at 12 windows. In the middle are the American citizens services (ACS) unit waiting area and four windows, two Social Security Administration windows, and two fraud interview booths. The ground floor work areas behind the multitude of interview windows are cramped and crowded.

The second floor of the building is dedicated to the immigrant visa processing staff and a small U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office. The third floor contains the consul general's suite, the FPU, the ARSO-I and his staff, the Federal benefits unit, and the ACS staff. Because of the distance between the windows and the supervisory staff on the second and third floors, supervisors must leave their desks to oversee the ground floor workers. A recommendation in the Immigrant Visas section of this report addresses this issue.

The consular section has a robust professional development program. Officers rotate through the four units, depending on their needs and desires; ELOs participate in regular film screenings and other public diplomacy events; and consular ELOs take notes at country team meetings. However, consular staff members have little contact with the rest of the embassy and feel physically and operationally isolated from the mission.

(b) (5)

Some officers stated matter-of-factly that their customers sometimes had to wait 9

hours for services. (b) (5)

The embassy has given some attention to this issue in the past, through occasional presentations on customer service, dealing with stress, and conflict resolution. A number of employees interviewed by the OIG team believed that additional stress management and customer service training would be helpful. It would also improve the section's ability to conduct more effective outreach and public diplomacy activities, as also noted in the Public Diplomacy section of this report.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Santo Domingo should conduct regular consular training sessions on customer service, stress management, and conflict resolution.

In addition to dealing with the effects of difficult work circumstances on employees, the consular section can improve the situation by viewing its clients differently. Embassy Santo Domingo has an opportunity to influence positively the 180,000 Dominican citizens who visit the consular section annually for services. For example, all three waiting rooms contain flat-screen monitors that display local television broadcasts, mainly cartoons. These monitors could be better utilized to provide guidance on the visa process, finger scanning procedures, citizenship documentation, antifraud messages, the embassy's activities in the Dominican Republic, or information about the United States. By considering the public diplomacy ramifications of all their actions, consular employees can improve the experience of their customers and help win the hearts and minds of the Dominican people.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a committee to explore better ways to reach out to consular clients so that their visits to the embassy are positive and professional experiences.

The consular section uses a variety of electronic and social media to communicate with the Dominican public. One of the key tools consists of appearances on a television show called —*Visa Semanal*” (Visa Weekly) and a radio program called —*Micro Visas*.” A prominent Dominican immigration attorney hosts both weekly broadcasts. It is inappropriate for the U.S. embassy to lend credence to this attorney by having consular staff members appear as regular guests on his show. The public could improperly believe that there is a connection between the immigration attorney and the consular section.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Santo Domingo should cease participating in the immigration attorney's radio and television shows and explore neutral broadcast venues for disseminating its consular information over the airwaves. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

American Citizens Services

The ACS unit provides services to a large resident and transient population of U.S. citizens in a critical crime, high-fraud environment. The experienced personnel efficiently handle a varied special consular services portfolio, providing prompt and effective assistance to Americans in need. An excellent after-hours duty officer system (supported with a super

electronic duty handbook) funnels information to the section for action, either immediate or upon opening of business. The ACS unit uses email to disseminate and track actions on breaking ACS cases.

Although the emergency ACS services are top notch, routine citizenship transactions, such as passports and consular reports of birth abroad, are a different story. Because of the extensive fraud and burgeoning workload, the ACS unit must ration appointments, which creates temporary backlogs. Customers who come to the unit for citizenship services are given staggered appointments only in the early morning and then must wait their turn to see a consular officer. Clients (including young children) had to wait several hours for their interviews. Keeping American citizens waiting for hours reflects poorly on the mission. (See a related recommendation regarding immigrant visa (IV) services in the Customer Service and Quality Control section of this report.)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Santo Domingo should change its appointment schedule for American citizens services to reduce the wait time for U.S. client interviews to no more than an hour. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Federal Benefits Unit

Employees of the Social Security Administration, who report to the regional manager in Costa Rica, staff the Federal benefits unit. They report good cooperation with the ACS unit.

Consular Agency Puerto Plata

Puerto Plata is located on the north coast of the Dominican Republic and has historically been a focus of international tourism and a destination for foreigners looking for inexpensive tropical living. In recent years, Punta Cana has overtaken Puerto Plata as a tourist destination, but the resident community in Puerto Plata keeps the consular agency busy. The embassy praised the consular agent for his welfare and whereabouts activities and emergency services.

The agency is on the second floor of a commercial building, across the hall from the Canadian honorary consul. (b) (5)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The FY 2011 Santo Domingo Mission Strategic and Resource Plan lists the relocation of the consular agency as an objective. The agent located a potential new office, but the embassy has not taken any action to move the agency. The classified annex to this report contains a recommendation regarding this situation.

The consular agent communicates with the embassy by telephone and Internet email. He has a “One FOB” encryption device to permit him access to the Department intranet for sensitive

communications, but it does not work. Evidently, the embassy had assigned the FOB to the previous agent, and it has not functioned in the 3 years that the current agent has had it.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Santo Domingo should assign a functioning “One FOB” encryption device to the consular agent in Puerto Plata.

The consular agency routinely processed and disposes of personally identifiable information. However, their only “shredder” is a home-office model that slices the paper into ¼-inch-wide strips. The OIG team advised the agency staff not to use the slicer but to send personally identifiable information to the embassy for proper disposal until they obtained a cross-cut shredder.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Santo Domingo should provide the consular agency in Puerto Plata with a Department-approved cross-cut shredder.

Consular Agency Puerto Plata Cash Accountability

The accountability files for the consular agency are not in order. There are no completed and approved “Daily Accounting Sheets,” showing that the monthly cash transactions have been reviewed and approved by the financial management officer (FMO) in Santo Domingo, as required by the *Foreign Affairs Handbook* (7 FAH-1 H-787.8). Although the daily accounting sheets in the files contain hand-written corrections and errors, a review of several months’ Automated Cash Register System reports and the associated OF-158 receipts did not yield any discrepancies. During the OIG team’s 1-day visit, the automated cash register system was not working and had not worked for over a week. As a result, the agency was using manual receipts (Form DS-4042).

In the past, the agency deposited its cash—totaling \$5,000 to \$6,000—only once a month. The agency staff members said that they now knew to deposit the money once a week or when it reached \$1,000. The consular agent said that he had performed a surprise cash count in January 2011, but there was no written record of the count in the files as required by 7 FAH-1 H-771.5. (b) (5)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Santo Domingo should cease all fee services at the consular agency in Puerto Plata until all monthly consular cash accounting (including daily accounting sheets approved by the financial management officer) from January 2010 until February 2011 are complete and the agency has established internal controls and standard operating procedures as outlined in Department of State regulations to facilitate future accountability. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Consular Agency Punta Cana

Forty percent of all American visitors to the Dominican Republic now arrive at the rapidly expanding beach resort area of Punta Cana. The consular agency was established to serve this clientele as well as other Americans residing in the eastern part of the country. The agent's office is located on the second floor of a shopping mall in the town of Bavaro. The agency will open for services to American citizens upon completion of the consular agent's security clearance. The facility comfortably houses the two staff members, associated equipment, and a public waiting room. Both employees have close links to local authorities and travel industry representatives.

Immigrant Visas

The IV unit was the largest element of Embassy Santo Domingo's consular section and processed the second largest number of U.S. IV cases in the world. An experienced mid-level officer and a seasoned deputy competently managed the unit. They supervised 10 ELOs, 39 LE staff (some of whom are American citizens), and 5 eligible family members (EFM). Working conditions were cramped, and there were physical impediments to effective line-of-sight supervision.

Unreliable civil documentation, fraudulent relationships, and grounds of ineligibility based on crimes of moral turpitude, narcotics trafficking, previous visa overstays, and public charge provisions of immigration law complicate IV processing. Family and economic inducements to migrate to the United States are strong, and there is a thriving local fraud industry. The IV unit has an excellent relationship with the FPU, the ARSO-I, and the local offices of the Department of Homeland Security.

The unit handled 69,000 cases in FY 2010, markedly above the average of 43,000 cases of the preceding 5 years. Historically, IV processing in Santo Domingo has suffered backlogs in appointment wait times of over 1 year. Since the 2005 OIG inspection, consular managers and staff reduced these backlogs, and by March 2011 the unit had eliminated them. In 2008, the consular section forwarded 20,000 IV case files to the National Visa Center for scanning and storage.

Supervision and Oversight

The OIG team noted that all 38 subordinate LE staff members report to a team leader, who reports to the senior LE supervisor, who in turn reports directly to the IV chief. Many communications between ELOs and IV LE staff must pass through this single supervisor. This arrangement limits the ability of clerical employees to air concerns and suggestions to American officers. It also limits opportunities for ELOs to manage subordinates. Assigning ELOs to oversee each of the five LE staff work teams will help improve overall communication within the unit and enhance ELO professional development.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Santo Domingo should assign entry-level officers to oversee each of the five immigrant visa unit's locally employed staff work teams.

Customer Service and Quality Control

The IV unit schedules its interview appointment times in two early morning blocks at 6:15 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. As many as several hundred applicants for both IVs and NIVs may already be lined up to enter the screening area and waiting room even before the first intake time. The massing of applicants early in the morning creates unnecessary congestion in the waiting room and results in long wait time for interviews. On more than one occasion, the OIG team observed children waiting for interviews in the afternoon, well past their appointment times.

The rush to complete intake all at once creates internal problems as well. LE staff members make data transcription and photo capture errors that slow processing. Bringing in the applicants at the same time also requires EFM's and LE staff to double up at windows, which adds to the noise and congestion and increases the risk of errors. In contrast, the unit's interview and intake windows are largely unused later in the day. A greater staggering of IV intake and interview times will result in more favorable customer service and less risk of data entry errors.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should review its immigrant visa unit workflow procedures, stagger its immigrant visa appointment times to reduce waiting room congestion and interview wait times for its clients, and ask the Bureau of Consular Affairs to instruct the National Visa Center to schedule cases accordingly. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with CA)

A supervision deficiency exists during the first hour of IV operations each day. LE staff members begin document intake at 6:30 a.m. on the ground floor, but the American IV officers work at their desks on the second floor until 8:00 a.m., when they begin interviewing. One American officer opens the building and the visa waiting room at 6:30 a.m. but is not required to remain in the work area. Although no controlled material is in the workplace during this period, the absence of American supervision increases the risk of inappropriate treatment of applicants and malfeasance.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Santo Domingo should require an American officer to be present in the immigrant visa work area whenever locally employed personnel are working there.

Nonimmigrant Visas

Embassy Santo Domingo has a high NIV workload. The pervasive documentary fraud, misrepresentation, and sophisticated visa touts who coach visa applicants on concealing their ineligibilities make the work challenging. An experienced mid-level chief supervises the unit, which comprises 7 ELOs, 15 LE staff members, and 5 EFM's. The unit handled 113,000 cases in

FY 2010, with a refusal rate of just under 30 percent. During the OIG visit, consular management was utilizing validation studies to determine whether the current refusal levels were appropriate. The NIV unit's staffing appeared adequate for its current workload. Officers were working minimal overtime, and the appointment waiting period was only 2 business days.

Although the unit transitioned successfully to the new Internet-based NIV application in mid-2010, the new process is troublesome for many Dominican applicants. LE staff estimated that approximately 5 percent of applicants resubmitted applications to correct data presented on their interview day. In late February 2010, consular management authorized LE staff to annotate those applications containing missing or incomplete supplementary data. This approach was deemed more efficient than requiring mass resubmissions of applications and setting new interview dates. NIV appointments, appropriately staggered throughout the workday, are made through the Mexico-based regional call center, which also provides telephone information and greeters to help direct clientele in the waiting room.

With one exception, supervisory officers were conducting NIV adjudication reviews according to Department guidance: The DCM was not reviewing the consul general's visa adjudications. This review is an important management control to ensure the integrity of the visa adjudication process.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement procedures so that the deputy chief of mission regularly reviews the visa issuances and refusals of the consul general. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Nonimmigrant Visa Referrals

In the 12 months before the OIG inspection, Embassy Santo Domingo processed almost 1,000 NIV referrals, of which only 1 percent constituted Class A cases. A small sample of 10 Class B referrals yielded an example of a Class A referral (the wife of the President of the Dominican Republic Senate) that was processed as a Class B referral. Another problem was that consular staffers were referring cases that were not consular contacts. For example, the first consular section referral case that the OIG team examined was that of a Mexican model for a well-known intimate-apparel company. The Dominican Foreign Ministry had forwarded the case to the consul general.

Consular staffers should refer only those cases in which the U.S. official consular interest is beyond question. Consular review of referral cases is an important internal control in the process. When consular officials refer extraneous cases, that layer of review and control is lost. In addition, the documentation of the cases reviewed showed that, in most instances, there was no clear exposition of the U.S. Government interest in the traveler as specified in 9 FAM Appendix K. The consular section was performing required yearly validation studies, which showed that there were no systemic problems with travelers overstaying in the United States.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Santo Domingo should require that consular staff carefully follow the definitions of nonimmigrant visa referrals as set out in Department of State regulations, that all referrals clearly state the U.S. Government interest in the traveler, and that the consular section refers only cases that are of clear, official consular interest. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

One of the reasons for so many referrals was that there are travelers (including famous entertainers) whose presence in the consular section could be disruptive. Rather than document them all as referrals, the section could establish an expedited appointment or processing avenue by which applicants could directly contact the consular section. The NIV chief could then (in a transparent and documented manner) offer a special appointment at a time when the waiting room is not full.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a special email address by which the visa section could directly accept requests from emergency and high-profile cases for expedited appointments and processing.

Visas Viper

The FPU chief coordinates Embassy Santo Domingo's Visas Viper committee. The DCM chairs its monthly meetings, and all relevant offices at the embassy attend. Five of the monthly reports for the past year were submitted past the monthly reporting deadline specified in 9 FAM 40.37 N5.2. The embassy did not submit any names in the past 12 months.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Santo Domingo should implement procedures for the Visas Viper committee to submit monthly reports no later than 10 days following the end of the previous month.

Fraud Prevention Unit

Santo Domingo's FPU is one of the most productive in the world. In January 2011, it confirmed more than five times more immigrant visa fraud cases (251) than the second place mission (Phnom Penh, with 47). Its collaboration with the colocated ARSO-I office is ideal. Staff meetings are jointly chaired, and their work is fully integrated.

Although the FPU was efficient, it was constantly bombarded by a varied and dynamic fraud environment. Dozens of visa fixers operate openly on the streets surrounding the consular annex, just beyond the reach of the numerous guards and national police. The FPU and ARSO-I were examining innovative ways to engage the visa fixers rather than just chase them away. These many challenges will keep the FPU in Santo Domingo fully occupied.

Public Diplomacy

The Embassy Santo Domingo PAS consists of 3 American officers and a staff of 14 Dominican employees working at the Centro Franklin, a decaying ex-United States Information Service facility 2 miles from the embassy. The PAS information section coordinates and clears press interactions for all sections and agencies within the embassy, manages the embassy Web site and other social media sites, and operates a small, rarely visited library. The cultural section promotes educational exchange primarily through its administration of the Fulbright Program, and mutual understanding through its use of social media platforms and an active embassy officer-centered speakers bureau program. Because PAS is scheduled to move to the new embassy compound in 2014, the embassy does not plan to renovate the Centro Franklin.

The embassy's Internet site, Facebook page, and virtual library are PAS's strongest suits. As a part of a Mission Strategic and Resource Plan mutual understanding strategy to draw in a younger audience and increase interest in U.S. culture and society, PAS promotes book clubs and essay contests on its Facebook site. PAS officers also engage in online discussions with the site's fans about U.S. foreign policy and U.S.-Dominican Republic relations. With 28,000 fans in a country of 9.3 million people, the site has one of the largest followings among posts in the Western Hemisphere. The Facebook site is so lively that PAS found it necessary to create an ad hoc committee to ensure, per 5 FAM 791 a., that fans are not using offensive or threatening language and that third-party entities are not attempting to advertise or promote non-embassy-related products and services. The committee, consisting of the public affairs officer (PAO), information officer, webmaster, and Information Resource Center (IRC) assistant, meets whenever IRC staff members notice any questionable postings. PAS removes advertising for commercial products and services, as well as obviously offensive language, on a daily basis.

The virtual library, administered by the IRC, is another equally successful social media outreach tool aimed at secondary and university level students with research and English language study-related questions. The increasingly popular virtual library provides links to free-of-charge educational sites on subjects ranging from science and technology to English teaching and a wide variety of information about the United States. As the virtual library grows and becomes more popular, the IRC director, now its main administrator, will have to share the site's maintenance responsibilities with the PAS webmaster. As noted in the subsequent paragraphs, this will require significant changes to position descriptions.

The IRC library houses nearly 3,000 volumes of books and films and has 5 Internet terminals for use by library patrons. In recent years, the number of visitors to the library has dropped dramatically, as Dominicans have more and more sources of information to turn to and security and parking restrictions make the space less welcoming. During the inspection period, the library was often empty, with only the occasional patron using an Internet terminal. PAS has ceased purchasing books for the library, and its collection is becoming increasingly outdated. The regional information officer has suggested that the book collection be donated to a local educational institution and that the IRC staff position descriptions be changed to increase the focus on social media and personal outreach activities.

Changing position descriptions would allow the IRC assistant to devote more time to developing social media tools. It would also reassign audio-visual responsibilities from the webmaster to the IRC technician (who now acts as library attendant), freeing the webmaster to assist with the development of the PAS virtual library. Fortunately, both the IRC assistant and technician possess considerable technical skills and would be able, under their new position descriptions and with equipment that PAS already possesses, to create professional quality video footage of embassy outreach activities and post them to the embassy's various social media sites.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Santo Domingo should donate its book and digital video disc collections to an appropriate educational institution under a grant that specifies the terms of use.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Santo Domingo should rewrite position descriptions for the public affairs section webmaster, Information Resource Center assistant, and Information Resource Center technician to provide a greater emphasis on social media and direct person-to-person outreach.

Grants Management

PAS administers approximately \$320,000 worth of public diplomacy grants per year, and the PAO, information officer, and cultural affairs officer all have warrants to administer grants. The PAO's administrative assistant, who manages the grants, has developed a detailed checklist that she uses in addition to the checklist included on each grant folder to determine the status of all documents, including progress and final reports, associated with each grant. In the vast majority of cases, she has been successful in obtaining all required reports from grant recipients.

PAS has not been able to obtain either progress or final reports for grants awarded during the past 3 years to the BNC in Santiago, a city approximately 100 miles north of Santo Domingo. These grants include two dating from 2009 for books and library furnishings, both of which have expired without progress reports or final reports being supplied to PAS. The third, a grant dating from 2008 for microscholarships for disadvantaged students to study English, has not yet expired, but PAS has not received periodic progress reports from the grantee as required by 10 FAM 236.7-1 a. (3).

Shortly after his arrival at the mission in September 2010, the PAO learned of the Santiago BNC's noncompliance with grant requirements. He immediately contacted the Department for guidance and sent two letters to the BNC director, requesting an accounting of funds spent under the grants and making it clear that no further grants were possible until such an accounting was provided. The BNC director has not responded, and the PAO is continuing to consult with the Department on the next steps. In the meantime, the PAO is working with the well-run and solvent Santo Domingo BNC on its proposed plan to take over the insolvent Santiago BNC.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Santo Domingo should refrain from providing financial assistance to the Santiago Binational Center until it gives a full accounting of all funds received

under grants provided by the embassy's public affairs section for the acquisition of library books and furnishings and the provision of English language training to disadvantaged youths. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

In the spring of 2010, the PAS, with funding from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, purchased equipment, including a computer and photocopier, and a collection of educational advising books for the Santiago BNC. Subsequent revelations by auditors of serious internal control weaknesses in the management of the BNC caused the then-PAO to withhold the donation. The equipment and books are still in storage in the Centro Franklin. The longer they are stored, the more likely they are to become obsolete.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Santo Domingo should donate the books and equipment originally intended for the Santiago Binational Center to an appropriate institution.

English Language Teaching

PAS support for English teaching in the Dominican Republic favors the train-the-trainer approach. This focus makes sense: In 2007, the Ministry of Education designated four secondary schools in Santo Domingo as centers of excellence. English language training will be a major part of these schools' curricula. In addition, the Ministry of Higher Education recently initiated a program to provide 10 months of free English language training to thousands of public university students. Both programs suffer from one serious flaw—a lack of qualified English teachers. According to PAS LE staff, the English teachers participating in these two programs have difficulty communicating with them in basic English. It is thus hard to envision them as effective teachers of English. English teaching also takes place in private schools and at the embassy-supported Santo Domingo BNC, which provides language training to 17,000 students per year. As these institutions can offer higher salaries, they are able to attract more qualified English teachers.

In the previous 2 years, PAS has hosted a variety of ECA-funded English language teaching assistants (English-speaking college graduates who do not necessarily have teaching degrees) and fellows (fully trained English-as-a-second-language teacher trainers). PAS has requested two English teaching assistants for academic year 2011–2012 but has not requested the more fully trained English language fellows due in part to problems encountered with the Ministry of Higher Education, which is responsible for placing fellows in meaningful teacher training positions. Although working with an overly bureaucratic Ministry of Higher Education presents challenges, continuing cooperation will benefit the Ministry's English teaching program and provide a boost to Embassy Santo Domingo's efforts to increase its English teaching profile in the country.

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Resource Management

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire	FMA & EFM's	LE Staff	Total Staff	Funding FY 2010
Department of State - Program	25	6	12	43	\$6,367,528
Department – Haiti Relief Efforts					\$1,000,000
Department – ICASS	7	7	124	138	\$7,242,800
Department – Diplomatic Security	3	3	9	15	\$1,435,184
Department – Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations	1			1	\$2,550,338
Department – OBO - New Embassy	7			7	\$7,633,660
Department – Public Diplomacy	3		16	19	\$1,075,986
Department – Public Diplomacy Rep					\$7,900
Department – Consular Affairs	31	11	74	116	\$1,132,527
Department – Representation					\$35,000
Department – Narcotics	1		2	3	\$15,928,367
Subtotal Department of State	78	27	237	342	\$44,409,290
Department of Agriculture– Foreign Agriculture Service	1		5	6	\$245,499
DOA – Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service	4		5	9	\$2,923,099
Department of Commerce – Foreign Commercial Service	2		8	10	\$770,357
Department of Health & Human Services – Center for Disease Control	2		5	7	\$540,204
Department Homeland Security (DHS) Citizenship & Immigration Services	1		1	2	\$125,893
DHS – Immigration and Customs Enforcement	3		2	5	\$640,958
DHS – Customs & Border Protection Container Security	2		2	4	\$181,589
DHS – Customs & Border Protection Container Security Special Investigations	1			1	\$176,495
Defense Intelligence Agency					\$572,574
Department of Justice – Drug Enforcement Admin.	14	2	1	17	\$1,300,000
Justice – Federal Bureau of Investigation Legal Attachés	3			3	\$293,353

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Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire	FMA & EFM	LE Staff	Total Staff	Funding FY 2010
Justice – U.S. Marshals	2	1		3	\$265,000
Department of Army – Tactical Analysis Teams	2			2	\$16,900
Army – Force Protection Detachment	2		1	3	\$32,286
Army – Operations and Maintenance					
Military Assistance Advisory Group	6		2	8	\$7,701,600
President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief	1		1	2	\$56,000
Peace Corps	3		6	9	\$3,250,000
Social Security Administration			5	5	\$213,419
Department. of Treasury – Office of Technical Assistance	1			1	\$233,274
U.S. Agency for International Development	21		72	93	\$3,493,423
USAID – Programs	2			2	\$49,200,000
Subtotal Other Agencies	73	3	116	192	\$72,231,923
Total	151	30	353	534	\$116,641,213

Source: Embassy Santo Domingo

Management Issues

Management Operations

A legacy of poor leadership and inadequate oversight has contributed to less than optimal performance in the management section. At least one past OIG inspection team found similar vulnerabilities in procurement and property management functions. Until the management counselor's arrival, the embassy had made no sustained effort to address these vulnerabilities. The 2010 management controls statement of assurance from the chief of mission did not list any weaknesses. Later in this report, the OIG team discusses the information that should be included in the 2011 management controls statement.

(b) (5)

[REDACTED]

Staffing gaps and budget constraints have undermined any sense of continuity in the management section. The absence of key American supervisors has contributed to the increased workload and loss of effective oversight. The demands placed on this mission as a result of the Haitian earthquake in 2010 added to the stress of an already overworked staff.

Eight spread-out, poorly configured, and cramped compounds make communication, coordination, and team building difficult. A new embassy compound is scheduled to be completed in 2014, bringing all mission offices onto one property. That move will help bring consistency and oversight to many operations. In addition, the consolidation plans now under way between the Department and USAID will provide an opportunity for improved communication, customer service, and management controls.

The years of neglect cannot be corrected immediately. The management counselor's top priority is to improve internal controls. To achieve this, she will need to establish performance standards and create and maintain proper oversight, monitoring, and accountability. In addition, she will need the full and active support of the front office. Staff involvement will be crucial, as will WHA participation, to ensure continuity of management operations during periods of staff turnover.

Human Resources

There is no resident human resources (HR) officer at Embassy Santo Domingo. A regional HR officer, based at the Florida Regional Center (FRC), visits the mission for 1 week

every 2 months. The management counselor told the OIG team that the length and frequency of visits by the regional HR officer are insufficient. The management counselor estimates that she spends 30 percent of her time on personnel-related issues. Embassy personnel do not have a clear understanding of the role of the regional HR officer. At the time of inspection, the embassy did not have a signed agreement outlining the roles and responsibilities of the management counselor, regional HR officer, and LE staff. Embassy personnel are also not certain which HR functions can be performed remotely.

Recommendation 14: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should revise its memorandum of agreement for human resources services and define the roles and responsibilities of the management counselor, the locally employed staff, and the regional human resources officer for such issues as hiring, retirements, terminations, local compensation plans, medical and life insurance contracts, pensions, consolidation of administrative services, supervision of staff, and the dissemination of technical information to mission staff. (Action: FRC, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo and WHA)

Recommendation 15: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo, should track and monitor the amount of time the management counselor spends each month on human resources activities and evaluate whether some of the management counselor's human resources duties should be delegated to the regional human resources officer, the locally employed staff, or the eligible family member human resources assistant, or could be performed remotely at the Florida Regional Center. (Action: FRC, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo)

To conduct human resources activities effectively, Embassy Santo Domingo needs either a resident HR officer or coverage from the FRC that would amount to 50 percent of the regional HR officer's time. The FRC is not structured to provide this amount of coverage to one post. The HR regional officer serving Embassy Santo Domingo covers four posts.

As a whole, the FRC uses 6 regional HR officers to cover 17 of its 28 embassies and 3 U.S. interest sections, and it plans to increase the number of regional HR officers to 7 in the summer of 2011. The provision of regional support is a substantial cost savings for WHA over the placement of an officer at a post.

The FRC has examined its coverage of regional posts and has proposed a reduction in the number of posts assigned to each regional HR officer to no more than two. In addition, WHA and FRC hope to pursue the possibility of remote signing of certain documents, such as personnel actions and personal services agreements.

Recommendation 16: The Florida Regional Center should evaluate whether its regional human resources concept is adequate to meet the needs of the embassies and U.S. interest sections serviced by regional human resources officers and determine whether additional officers, more frequent visits of longer duration, innovative technology, and other resources are needed to

improve the performance of the regional human resources concept. (Action: FRC)

Customer Service

The HR section received lower-than-average scores on International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) and OIG surveys. Complaints were primarily about customer service. In OIG interviews, American and LE staff complained about the negative attitude of some HR employees. LE staff committee members echoed the same complaint. Some LE staff said that they avoid asking questions of HR employees at all costs. Some HR employees were defensive when asked about customer service, saying that they are often bombarded with questions, some of which could easily be researched by customers. They believe that attention to so many personnel-related questions takes time away from their other duties.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Santo Domingo should determine what type of personnel questions and issues should be sent to the regional human resources officer for her action.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Santo Domingo should set designated hours for answering American and locally employed staff personnel-related questions.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Santo Domingo should include in its new employee orientation a session on the most frequently asked personnel questions.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Santo Domingo should post on its intranet site a list of the most frequently asked personnel questions, along with the answers.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Santo Domingo should include customer service as an element in human resources staff position descriptions and performance evaluations.

Recommendation 17: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and the Foreign Service Institute, should provide customer service training for the human resources staff. (Action: FRC, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo, WHA, and FSI)

Eligible Family Member Evaluations

In most instances, American and LE staff evaluation reports and work requirements statements are being completed within the appropriate time frame, but many of the 34 EFM evaluations were not. The EFMs believe that they are being overlooked, (b) (5) Supervisors claim that reminder notices are not sent to them. However, some supervisors were reminded but still did not prepare evaluations by the required due date. Some evaluations were still outstanding at the time of the inspection.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Florida Regional Center, should follow the same guidelines for preparing, tracking, and sending reminder notices for eligible family member evaluations as for locally employed staff. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with FRC)

Evaluation Reports for Untenured Officers

Embassy Santo Domingo does not have a process for ensuring that employee evaluation reports are completed regularly and on time for untenured officers per 3 FAM 2244.2-2 and telegram 05 State 090741. Normally, the rating period extends 1 year from the date in which the ELO assumes specific duties at an overseas mission. The rating period may end upon change of the immediate supervisor. At Embassy Santo Domingo, many of the untenured officers serve in the consular section on rotational assignments that are less than 1 year in length. When an ELO rotates from position to position and changes supervisors, an employee evaluation report should be prepared. An alternative, if the total elapsed period is less than 120 calendar days, is for the supervisor to prepare a one-page document of performance and submit it to the rating officer for use in preparing the annual evaluation. Memos of performance may also be submitted to the Office of Performance Evaluation in the Bureau of Human Resources for inclusion in an individual's official personnel folder.

The ELOs told the OIG team that some of their evaluation reports were from 6 to 9 months late. The OIG team found that the files in the HR office were incomplete. Even when evaluations and work requirements statements were completed, they were not necessarily being filed in the individual personnel folders. The OIG team sampled five folders and found deficiencies in four of them, including three evaluations that were several months late. The fourth folder had only a work requirements statement dated in 2009. Overall, the lists of ELOs were not up-to-date, and not all ELOs had folders and work requirements statements.

The record keeping is complicated by the frequent rotations among officers and the lack of information about the rotations in the HR office. An individual might have been given an evaluation for a 6-month period. The HR office might accept that evaluation, which is usually late, as the evaluation for the entire 12-month period and not request an update or a second evaluation for the last 6 months of the rating period.

Evaluations play an important role in determining ELO promotions, which are based upon satisfactory performance of assigned duties over the prescribed rating period. However, the major focus of the evaluation process for ELOs should be upon long-term potential, growth capacity, and adaptability to the discipline and rigors of a Foreign Service career. The absence of employee evaluation reports hinders this process.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Florida Regional Center, should establish and distribute procedures so that employee evaluation reports are prepared for entry-level officers as prescribed by Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with FRC)

Recommendation 20: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Florida Regional Center, should maintain current lists of entry-level officers, rating officers, and reviewing officers and should establish a regular schedule for reminding these individuals of their responsibilities, both with respect to specific individuals and in general. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with FRC)

Nepotism

There is a perception of nepotism within Embassy Santo Domingo that stems from the fact that 13 percent of LE staff employees are related to one another. In the consular section, 15 percent of LE staff members are related. In addition, there are three EFMs working in the same office, but in different units, as their spouses. (There are no supervisory relationships among these family members.) During the hiring process, prospective employees are required to list relatives who work for the mission. Prospective employees are also asked during the clearance process to list relatives who work for the mission or for the local government. The embassy has found no basis for claims of nepotism among American employees, but there is a continuing concern about the number of LE staff members who have relatives employed by the embassy. Embassy management knows that these relationships exist, but there are no formal nepotism reviews or waivers on file. The number of familial relationships is a potential vulnerability and a morale issue.

Recommendation 21: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should conduct a review to determine whether the percentage of family relationships in Embassy Santo Domingo sections poses a risk to internal controls and, if so, take corrective actions as needed. (Action: FRC, in coordination with DGHR)

Local Social Security System

LE staff members described their most pressing concern as that of retirement benefits. They are concerned about the adequacy of retirement payments and the viability of the local social security system (LSSS). They believe that the LSSS is poorly managed and subject to corruption, that the money is being poorly invested, and that they will lose their money. LE staff did not provide the OIG team with any documentation for these concerns.

In countries with high corruption indexes and unreliable pension systems, the Department allows LE staff to participate in Department-approved offshore retirement programs. To justify a departure from a host country's retirement system, an embassy must conduct an assessment to determine whether the social security retirement system for local staff is adequate and viable.

Under the LSSS, two criteria must be met to qualify for pensions. The individual must have 30 years of service and have made contributions equaling 1 million pesos. Annuitants receive a fixed pension equal to the minimum wage. Others not meeting these criteria receive a lump sum. At the time of the inspection, retirees did not have medical coverage. Employees told the OIG team that in the Dominican Republic, it is a common practice for retirees to rely on their children for medical coverage. Per prevailing practice, local companies allow their employees to

claim their parents as beneficiaries. However, retirees who are childless or do not have children employed in the Dominican Republic are without medical coverage. Clearly, LE staff retirement benefits are inadequate.

Recommendation 22: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo and the Bureau of Human Resources, should gather and review required documentation on the Dominican Republic social security system and make a determination regarding the eligibility of Embassy Santo Domingo's locally employed staff to participate in the Department of State's defined contribution plan or a supplemental retirement plan. (Action: FRC, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo and DGHR)

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Santo Domingo should conduct an annual retirement seminar for locally employed staff that includes information about the local social security system, medical insurance benefits, financial planning, and independent supplemental retirement plans.

CaribAlico Pension Plan and Local Social Security

In 2003, the Government of the Dominican Republic initiated the LSSS. In 2005, the private company in which LE staff pension funds were invested went bankrupt. In 2007, the embassy undertook the task of ensuring that LE staff members were properly enrolled in the LSSS and that employees had not lost any funds due to the bankruptcy of CaribAlico. The U.S. Government —made whole” all funds that LE staff had invested in the bankrupt CaribAlico pension plan, plus any interest that might have been earned in the interim time periods.

The OIG team reviewed the calculations of the settlements and determined that the U.S. Government had taken the necessary steps to ensure that employees were treated fairly. The mission gave employees cash settlements based on their accrued CaribAlico retirement benefits, less the value of employee and employer contributions (made retroactively) to the LSSS for U.S. Government service from June 2003 through December 2005. The value of the cash settlement was increased at an annual rate of interest of 12 percent for the time period from December 2005 through May 2007. For those employees with less than 5 years of service in 2007, the value of the accrued CaribAlico retirement benefits was often less than the value of employee and employer contributions that would have been made to LSSS. In those cases, the employee received the total amount that had been paid into CaribAlico, including interest, without subtracting the value of the LSSS payments. Employees were free to do as they wished with the settlements. Those employees who did not save or invest the money are among those who are most concerned now about the deficiencies in the LSSS.

There is still lingering discontent among LE staff members about the settlements, and they described to the OIG team what they characterized as —cars” in their relations with the mission. LE staff members indicated that they had received only the value of their employee contributions, not the value of the funds contributed by the U.S. Government. They also reported that they were forced to sign a statement releasing the U.S. Government from any liability or obligation related to the pension plan. The OIG team, as noted previously, reviewed the

calculations and found them to be generous and thorough. The OIG team does not believe that any employee lost funds through the transaction and that employees with less tenure had, in fact, profited from it. Because of the continuing misunderstanding and confusion regarding the matter, the OIG team suggested that the embassy reissue the memorandum from 2007 that explained the process, which the embassy did on March 23, 2011.

Financial Management

The financial management section is well run by an experienced FMO who has improved operations and instituted cross-training. These changes have strengthened management controls and have revealed some staff performance weaknesses.

The financial management unit is understaffed by one voucher examiner position. In FY 2010, to keep up with demand, LE staff worked overtime hours costing over \$16,000. Voucher examiners in Santo Domingo processed an average of 27,032 vouchers. The unit's workload per voucher examiner far exceeds other large missions such as Beijing, Brasilia, London, Mexico City, and Rome. These embassies are, presumably, better funded and staffed. Santo Domingo's voucher work load ratio is also higher than the worldwide average of 2,006.

The OIG team discussed with Embassy Santo Domingo the possibility of outsourcing the travel voucher processing. It is more cost effective for the Department's Financial Service Centers' post support units to perform this function. For a post support unit, processing an estimated 1,200 to 1,500 travel vouchers annually would cost between \$14,000 and \$18,000. The other option would be for the embassy to hire another voucher examiner at a cost of about \$21,000.

Recommendation 23: Embassy Santo Domingo should outsource its travel advance and voucher payment function to the Department of State's Financial Service Centers' post support units. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

The collection of money to pay for personal long distance telephone charges is not cost effective. One voucher examiner spends approximately 25 percent of his or her time on this task. In FY 2010, the unit spent approximately \$5,000 to collect personal long distance cellular telephone calls totaling \$5,900. This does not include the cashier's time used to collect reimbursements. There has also been some abuse. Some employees have amassed bills ranging from \$500 to \$2,000. In addition, personal long distance calls are prohibited by 5 FAM 523.1, except under the limited personal emergency provision of 5 FAM 523.1 c. Department regulations 5 FAM 511 and 5 FAM 522 allow for the limited use of government telecommunications for personal reasons. Personal calls are acceptable as long as they do not result in additional charges to the U.S. Government and do not interfere with an employee's work responsibilities.

Recommendation 24: Embassy Santo Domingo should prohibit the use of official cellular telephones and land lines for personal long distance calls and should issue a telephone usage

policy that outlines the permitted exceptions for usage of official cellular telephones and land lines. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Cashiering

Monthly unannounced cash counts are one of the main management controls used to detect errors and prevent theft. In Santo Domingo, the FMO has instituted another control that not only enhances the performance of staff but also adds another layer of protection. The alternate cashier is required to perform cashiering duties quarterly for a 1-month period, during which the alternate cashier is responsible for the imprest fund. This practice allows the alternate cashier to retain her cashiering skills. It also relieves the primary cashier of her duties and allows the alternate cashier to reconcile the imprest fund every 3 months. This type of cross-training exercise might help prevent cashier thefts.

Recommendation 25: The Bureau of Resource Management should review the practice of allowing the alternate cashier to take custody of the imprest fund for a set period one or more times a year and determine whether it should become part of standard cashiering operating procedures. (Action: RM)

General Services Office

The embassy has three U.S. direct-hire general services office (GSO) positions and one facilities maintenance officer. There are 82 LE staff members in the section. The GSO section has not had full American staffing for 18 of the past 24 months. In the absence of American supervision, senior LE staff members have provided continuity and day-to-day direction of the various units. However, the quality of services and the internal controls have degraded during that same period.

Procurement and Contracting

The procurement unit, which has four LE staff positions but is currently short one clerk, has not had consistent American supervision. In 2010 the unit processed 4,000 procurement requests worth approximately \$7 million and 20 contracts/modifications valued at \$5.6 million. With one vacancy, the procurement staff is forced to work weekends to keep up. The unit services all agencies at the mission except USAID and Peace Corps. USAID is consolidating services with the embassy this year.

Embassy Santo Domingo has a number of blanket purchase agreements (BPA) for motor vehicle, air conditioning, generator maintenance, and hardware supplies. There is no indication that American supervisors provide effective oversight of either the work performed or the supplies procured. LE staff members do not follow proper receiving procedures for goods and services procured with BPAs. These receiving functions should be the same as those for goods ordered through other arrangements.

The ARIBA off-the-shelf procurement tracking software, as currently configured, is undermining management oversight. Procurement actions are initiated by LE staff, but they should be approved at an early stage by an American officer who is familiar with the details of the purchase request and whose approval indicates his/her agreement with the need for the procurement action. At present, the certification and approval steps are performed at the end of the ARIBA process. The absence of American engagement in validating the need for the procurement action represents a major vulnerability.

Recommendation 26: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a review process aimed at validating work performed and supplies received for the maintenance of residences and motor vehicles. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

The ARIBA software adds to the workload of all elements of the mission. The software is not responsive to the needs of either the FMO or the GSO. The various agencies within the mission using the system have all expressed frustration over the added workload imposed. The FMO outlined a few of the difficulties encountered:

- Procurement certifications and approval are performed at the end of the procurement process rather than at the beginning.
- The system does not allow amendments to correct currency fluctuations. The embassy's work-around does not properly document these corrections and bypasses formal review by the FMO. The user should enter a new purchase request when currency fluctuations occur.
- The amount remaining under a bulk-funded BPA is displayed only for the procurement section and the contracting officer. The BPA drawdown report that presents the BPA's available balance requires user access and generation.
- If the amount of the new transaction under the existing BPA exceeds the available balance, ARIBA does not halt the purchase request and the shortfall is brought to the attention of the procurement section only at the final step of the process.
- The entry of a transaction under a BPA into ARIBA requires just as much work as the entry of a standard purchase request. This level of effort negates the effectiveness of using a BPA, which is intended to lessen the work required to make small, frequent purchases.
- There is no ability to enter multiple funding sources for a BPA. For example, purchases for supplies intended for general use should be billed to ICASS, program, and other budgets, but this cannot be done in ARIBA.

- Bulk funding requires numerous adjustments. The bulk-funded obligation is deobligated and charges are made to the appropriate sub-object, function, and/or project codes necessary to maintain proper expenditure tracking.

Recommendation 27: The Bureau of Administration should review the performance of the ARIBA software and address its shortcomings to improve internal controls and increase efficiency. (Action: A)

Property Management

With a staff of 17, the property management section oversees an inventory worth approximately \$9 million. Inventory shortages are low—approximately 0.36 percent. The embassy has instituted management controls and holds quarterly sales of excess property. The warehouse is overcrowded, but an upcoming sale will permit the staff to improve allocation and demarcation of space in the facility. The receiving area adjacent to the warehouse is overcrowded due to the backlog in the pickup of items received.

Recommendation 28: Embassy Santo Domingo should require all agencies to take delivery of goods from the receiving office within 3 days. If this does not occur, the receiving office should process the items and place them in the warehouse. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Santo Domingo should store the nonexpendable property of various agencies in clearly marked areas in the warehouse.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Santo Domingo should investigate the possibility of using a local bank to accept payments during warehouse sales.

Housing

The OIG team found management oversight of the housing function to be ineffective. Rental figures for U. S. Government leases provide ample basis for concern. In 2010, the embassy staff signed leases for 20 new housing units. The lease costs were remarkably uniform, and the OIG team could find no indication that the American supervisor had been engaged in the negotiations. OBO has recommended that Embassy Santo Domingo retire residences in high-rise apartment buildings and identify replacement residences that meet OBO seismic guidelines, preferably single-family residences and low-rise apartment buildings (10 STATE 106839).

In early 2011, the acting director of OBO approved the build-to-lease process for a 75-unit housing compound to be located near the new embassy compound. As part of this process, OBO announced in the spring of 2011 that it would solicit a proposal from the developers for the project and would initiate negotiations.

Newly assigned personnel complain about long delays, as much as 10 weeks or more, to complete upgrades to newly leased residences. In the meantime, the embassy has often placed newly arrived families in hotels, often costing their agencies more than \$18,000.

Recommendation 29: Embassy Santo Domingo should require the American employee who is responsible for the housing section of the general services office to take part in lease negotiations so that the U.S. Government receives a fair value. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Prior to arrival, employees are provided a six-page welcome notice that is overly detailed, with important information about housing options, availability, and the assignments process buried within its text. As a result, new employees are often surprised by or dissatisfied with their housing and respond by submitting waivers or requests for housing transfers. In addition, the information that the embassy provides to new employees does not clearly outline their responsibilities with regard to the upkeep of their residences, which leads to confrontation with employees during the check-out process at the end of their tours.

Recommendation 30: Embassy Santo Domingo should review its standard communications with newly assigned personnel so that the basis for housing assignments and the availability of housing are clearly outlined. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 31: Embassy Santo Domingo should create a document explaining in detail the check-out procedure, employee responsibilities for damages, and the definition for normal wear and tear and require employees to sign the document upon arrival, indicating that they understand the policy. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

The OIG team discovered that the USAID director's residence is not listed on OBO's inventory. The Department is the only agency authorized by Congress to own properties overseas.

Recommendation 32: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should include the director of the U.S. Agency for International Development's residence in its U.S. Government-owned inventory. (Action: OBO)

The 10-year lease for the Marine Security Guard residence is due for renewal and requires action. Security issues raised by the regional security officer in connection with this property are addressed in the classified annex of this report.

Recommendation 33: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should conclude negotiations to extend the current lease of the Marine Security Guard residence. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with OBO)

Facilities Maintenance

The facilities maintenance section performs minor maintenance and repairs requiring urgent attention through eServices work orders. The OIG team received a number of complaints from employees regarding poorly supervised maintenance workers, including both LE staff and contractors. The maintenance employees procure and receive goods and services through BPAs without oversight by an American officer. Furthermore, the OIG team could find no evidence that anyone but the occupant of a residence ever verifies that the work is performed. This lack of

property oversight and execution of proper procurement, receiving, and follow-up procedures not only compromises customer service, it also constitutes a financial vulnerability for the U.S. Government in the form of unnecessary or excessive expenditures.

Recommendation 34: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a facilities maintenance review process to facilitate the satisfactory completion of work orders. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 35: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a procedure so that all equipment and supplies procured under blanket purchase agreements are received and inventoried before being allocated to the maintenance staff. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

The embassy maintenance operation, directed by the facilities maintenance officer, shares responsibility with the various landlords for maintenance of the short-term leased properties. Maintenance staff members receive an average of 500 work orders per month and 3 to 5 emergency calls per week. Either the landlord does the major work or the facilities staff members perform the work and charge the cost to the lease contract. Although the housing office coordinates communication with the landlords, a senior locally employed supervisor does not check the quality of service and cost accounting for services provided under BPAs. As a result, residences are often not ready for incoming personnel, who must then be placed in hotels at considerable cost to the U.S. Government.

Recommendation 36: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a procedure that requires the facilities maintenance officer to authorize services provided under a blanket purchase agreement before they are entered into ARIBA. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 37: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a policy whereby a senior locally employed staff supervisor reviews make-ready work and checks that work is performed properly by either the landlord or embassy contractors and that the residential units are ready for incoming personnel. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

PAS is located in a dilapidated facility with major electrical problems. Recently, that facility suffered a significant power surge and equipment was damaged beyond repair. Continued use of the current facility in its present condition represents a threat to the safety of the personnel employed there, and the embassy needs to take immediate corrective action.

Recommendation 38: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should obtain funding and contract for the immediate rewiring and grounding of the public affairs facility. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with OBO)

Safety, Health, and Environmental Management

The embassy's fire and safety program lacks rigorous oversight. The OIG team found shortcomings in every aspect of the current program that not only jeopardize the safety of

employees but, in one instance, increase the potential for malfeasance in an already high-fraud environment. Residential fire extinguishers are not routinely checked and refilled. Emergency shutoff systems for the fuel pumps and the cafeteria butane tanks were not properly identified and labeled; there was no mechanism to monitor the access, use, and safety of the embassy's gasoline pump; and there was no sink or wash-down area adjacent to the diesel pump for cleanup after refueling. There were missing smoke alarms and insufficient fire extinguishers in the chief of mission residence, and the public diplomacy offices were improperly wired and grounded. Also of concern was the lack of a secondary egress from the warehouse ground floor and the need for additional smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in both the warehouse and the receiving area. The age and deterioration of embassy buildings further contributes to the vulnerability of the employees working in these facilities.

While exhibiting a desire to address these shortcomings, the facilities maintenance officer, who is the designated post occupational safety and health officer, also needs to establish a more disciplined approach to fire and life safety. The following recommendations should be addressed on an urgent basis.

Recommendation 39: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement a procedure to tag all residential fire extinguishers on an annual basis and to check that all smoke alarms are functioning properly. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 40: Embassy Santo Domingo should properly mark the emergency shutoff systems and post instructions for the butane tanks, the gasoline pump, and the diesel pump. Embassy Santo Domingo should also locate appropriate firefighting equipment nearby. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 41: Embassy Santo Domingo should install a camera and recording device to monitor access to and use of the embassy gasoline pump. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 42: Embassy Santo Domingo should install appropriate personnel cleanup facilities adjacent to the diesel pump. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 43: Embassy Santo Domingo should create a secondary emergency egress from the ground floor of the warehouse. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 44: Embassy Santo Domingo should install smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in areas not currently covered in both the warehouse and the receiving facility. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Motor Pool

The embassy motor pool outsources vehicle maintenance to three commercial garages. Motor pool supervisors do not mandate a review of what maintenance is performed or whether it is needed. There is no mechanism in place to prevent garages from making unnecessary repairs,

overcharging, installing used or faulty materials and parts, or not doing the work for which they charge.

Recommendation 45: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish written procedures that require motor pool staff to perform spot checks of garage repairs so that repairs are made correctly and that new parts are used. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Driving in Santo Domingo is hazardous. Traffic accidents are a routine occurrence. Embassy vehicles are involved in an average of two to three serious, costly accidents per month. Despite this average, the embassy has no formal review process for determining responsibility for accidents involving official vehicles. In addition, the embassy does not require the use of seat belt restraints.

Recommendation 46: Embassy Santo Domingo should institute a formal review process for determining responsibility for traffic accidents involving official vehicles. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 47: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a policy that requires all passengers riding in mission vehicles to fasten their seat belts and all motor pool drivers to enforce this policy. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

The motor pool is not properly completing vehicle utilization logs. In addition, the motor pool supervisor does not review gasoline consumption. The records show that vehicles with less than 60,000 miles are getting approximately 6 to 9 miles per gallon of gasoline in the city. This low mileage rate is not readily explainable, and with the cost of gasoline at \$6 per gallon, it is also expensive. The Department requires that mileage and fuel usage of official vehicles be monitored (14 FAM 436.1 and 436.2 b.).

Recommendation 48: Embassy Santo Domingo should create a monthly report that tracks mileage per gallon, maintenance history, and vehicle age and implement procedures for the general services officer to regularly review this report for discrepancies. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 49: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement procedures requiring drivers to complete mileage logs and obtain signatures from passengers. The procedures should include a requirement that the general services officer regularly spot check logs for accuracy. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Consolidation of Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development Services

USAID and the Department have had active discussions for several years about the consolidation of some services. Working with the USAID executive officer, the management counselor has initiated an aggressive strategy to restructure the ICASS service platform that, when completed, should improve services and reduce costs by approximately \$150,000 during

the first year. In 2007, in anticipation of consolidation, the embassy eliminated 18 GSO positions, primarily in the maintenance area. Unfortunately, the untimely departure of the former management counselor put plans for consolidation of services on hold until the arrival of the incumbent. The two agencies are now determined to consolidate all administrative services by no later than October 2011.

The agreed upon time line for consolidation envisions the merger of housing, maintenance, and warehousing by April 2011. This step will be accompanied by a restructuring of ICASS cost centers and concurrence by the ICASS council of the new structure and standards.

The second phase of the plan foresees consolidation of the two agencies' motor pools (June 2011). The final phase will involve procurement and LE staff and EFM recruitment (October 2011). USAID will continue to perform contracting in support of its program activities.

This consolidation plan involves the transfer to the Department of most USAID LE staff involved in these functions. USAID and the Department have developed a very deliberate set of goals involving training of USAID staff in Department systems, reallocation of financial support, and transfer of equipment and leases to the Department.

Information Management and Information Security

Embassy Santo Domingo's information management program has been hampered by inadequacies in management and oversight. Coordination of internal controls continues to plague the information management program, as previously identified in the 2005 OIG inspection report. The information management program continues to function despite constant staffing turnover in the Information Systems Center (ISC) operation. Problematic initiatives and poor leadership by the information systems officer (ISO) have led to vast amounts of waste and mismanagement. Repeated failures in oversight by the previous information management officer have voided accountability in key areas of operational necessity, (b) (5)

Information management program operations are managed from the main chancery building that houses both the Information Program Center and ISC systems staff. The section provides support to operations that are spread over several off-site locations throughout the city. These locations include the consular building, joint administrative office compound, GSO compound, USAID building, public diplomacy offices, and Foreign Commercial Service building, in addition to two consular agencies located in Punta Cana and Puerto Plata.

The OIG team identified several areas that require immediate attention. These include management of the mission's ISC, Dedicated Internet Network (DIN), laptop program, and mail operations. Information security issues are covered in the classified annex of this report.

Information Systems Center

ISC operations have been hampered by ineffective management and leadership, (b) (5)
During the course of the inspection, an additional key

member of the consular systems staff resigned due to lack of oversight and support from management. This vacancy will further hamper an already stretched staff for the considerable amount of time necessary to hire and train a systems administrator.

Projects and Planning

Embassy Santo Domingo has implemented a number of projects of questionable result and utility. Many of these projects were initiated by the ISO without the knowledge and coordination of ISC staff. In one instance, a system called “Patch” was approved by the local information technology change control board and was installed in the main chancery. A number of users have questioned the purpose of the IPatch system. Initially, it was presented and endorsed by the ISO as an enhancement of the mission’s cyber security program, in addition to various other benefits. The information systems security officer does not use the system for any operational duties. The contractor had presented the system as one that would reduce operational costs. However, the system has not only increased operational costs but also hindered ISC operations on multiple levels. The project was mismanaged, and despite the fact that the contractor was paid to install the system, ISC staff was forced to assist with portions of it.

The section recently implemented a cabling initiative, requiring the complete rewiring of the mission’s large infrastructure. During the course of the past 2 years, several annexes were rewired with high-speed category 6 cabling. The ISO procured the cabling against the advice of the staff, who thought the project was not needed and that it showed poor decision making on the part of the ISO. The ISO did not take into account the technical capabilities of the mission’s network nor the projected move to the new embassy compound. The OIG team learned that the mission is the only one in the world to have an infrastructure of category 6 cabling. The project was a major initiative of the ISO and was supported by the previous information management officer, despite repeated objections from systems staff. Implementation of this project was also less than successful, causing a number of operational disruptions in addition to other issues. The classified annex contains details regarding this matter.

Helpdesk Operations

ISC is struggling to meet the mission’s helpdesk needs. The challenge is due in part to the complexity of servicing a network spread out over eight annexes. Staffing turnovers have further hindered operations. ISC operations are based in a small office in the main chancery. ISC staff members have tried to coordinate trouble calls in accordance with priority but are hampered by a lack of personnel. The OIG team observed several instances in which the ISC office was empty and customer calls could not be answered. ISC should implement a mission-wide procedure detailing how to leave messages or contact staff in an emergency so that issues do not go unaddressed.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Santo Domingo should create and distribute mission-wide a procedure for answering customer requests or taking messages when staff members are not present in the Information Systems Center due to operational requirements.

Dedicated Internet Network Management

Embassy Santo Domingo has multiple DINs throughout the compound. However, the mission does not have records for each DIN. There are also no standard operating procedures for maintaining the networks or clear justifications for some of the networks. The establishment of a DIN must be based on a clear need that cannot be met by the unclassified network. The justification and network information must be submitted to the Department's Information Technology Change Control Board for approval. If not appropriately managed and justified, DINs divert resources from management of the Department's OpenNet. (b) (5)

The mission's information security systems officer was not aware of the on-site locations of the DINs. Information management staff members recognize the deficiency in DIN management and have started to inventory and consolidate the networks and to implement controls to secure them as outlined in 5 FAM 872.

Recommendation 50: Embassy Santo Domingo should inventory and consolidate all Dedicated Internet Networks and register them with the Bureau of Information Resource Management. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 51: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and document standard operating procedures for Dedicated Internet Network management. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Encrypted Laptops

The OIG team found vulnerabilities in the mission's laptop program. The OIG team identified two laptops that were not included on the mission's laptop inventory, one of which lacked the mandated security encryption (June 2010 State cable 57406). Furthermore, several laptops in the consular section had the encryption keys (with user names and passwords) taped directly on the equipment. Insecure passwords defeat the purpose of installing laptops with encrypted software in the first place. The OIG team found evidence that the same vulnerability was previously associated with a number of the laptops in the ISC inventory. Information management staff has acknowledged these deficiencies and has removed the user names and passwords from all of their laptops.

Recommendation 52: Embassy Santo Domingo should conduct an inventory of the mission's laptop computers. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 53: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement a procedure for appropriately encrypting Department of State laptops in order to safeguard the security and integrity of the data stored on them. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Telephone Operators

About 85 percent of the telephone calls received by Embassy Santo Domingo's telephone operators are consular related. The telephone operators direct callers to the consulate Web site and other online sources of consular information. Although the telephone operators are not trained in consular affairs, they have learned how to respond to some questions. The embassy should review the types of calls that the telephone operators receive and answer and determine whether this is the best way to handle these calls. The volume of consular-related calls may be significant enough to consider having consular personnel handle them.

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Santo Domingo should review the mission's telephone operator program and explore possible alternatives for handling the volume of consular-related calls.

Cellular Telephone Accountability

The cellular telephone program at Embassy Santo Domingo has limited internal controls. The financial management section has requested additional capabilities to provide accountability for personal calls that are being handled by staff. The financial management section stated that the mission used to have internal controls on billing for cellular telephones and office land lines. The OIG team conducted a review of the cellular telephone records and billing and identified multiple accounts unpaid by American staff. Furthermore, several of the accounts were approved by American supervisors without the required review by the employee. Several of the accounts had accumulated substantial fees for usages that had not been paid. This issue is further addressed in the Financial Management section of the report.

Informal Recommendation 28: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement controls on billing for the cellular telephone program.

System Backup Media

During the course of the inspection, the OIG team found multiple server backup tapes. The backup tapes contain old data that can be sensitive due to the type of information stored in them. The information systems security officer is aware of the need to dispose of the backup tapes properly according to 12 FAM 629.6.

Informal Recommendation 29: Embassy Santo Domingo should properly dispose of all old server backup tapes according to Department of State standards.

Diplomatic Pouch and Mailroom Operation

Embassy Santo Domingo manages an active mail and diplomatic pouch operation. During the course of the inspection, the information programs staff issued a mission-wide notification that mail and pouch services would be limited due to the lack of tarmac access. As a result, the mission was required to cancel an operational pouch shipment. The IPC staff has been

unable to renew the airport badges required for tarmac access. This lack of necessary credentials threatens all incoming mail and pouch deliveries. The OIG team learned that the same badge issue occurred at the mission last year as well.

Recommendation 54: Embassy Santo Domingo should create and implement a procedure for renewing all airport tarmac credentials necessary for receipt of mail and pouch deliveries. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

~~**SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**~~

~~**SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**~~

Quality of Life

Health Unit Operations

Embassy Santo Domingo has a well-staffed health unit that serves some 280 American employees and family members. The unit averages approximately 90 adult patient visits per month, with approximately 23 pediatric visits and 17 LE staff visits each month. American employees gave the health unit good scores on the OIG questionnaires (about 4 on a 5-point scale). The health unit space includes a pharmacy operated by an outside pharmaceutical contractor at no cost to the embassy.

The health unit is storing medical supplies and controlled substances according to Department guidelines. It is also performing annual inspections of the cafeteria operated by the employee association.

Although the health unit was maintaining current patient medical records in locked cabinets, it was not appropriately securing the medical records of those individuals who had left the mission. In unlocked cabinets in the pharmacy area of the health unit, the OIG team found unorganized assortments of medical records of persons who had left Santo Domingo. Retired medical records were also being stored in an unlocked closet in a regional security office working area (the area itself is secured by a cipher lock), but the room was too cluttered to find them. Department guidance is that employee medical files are to be maintained at the mission for 6 years, except in the case of minors. Medical records for minors should be maintained for 6 years beyond the age they attain majority (i.e., age 18). During the inspection, the health unit placed all retired records in the same cabinets and installed locks.

Community Liaison Office

The community liaison office (CLO) at Embassy Santo Domingo has one CLO coordinator and an LE staff assistant. The CLO coordinator regularly attends a number of embassy meetings and has monthly meetings with the DCM. She is scheduled to attend CLO training in late March 2011, following the OIG inspection. The CLO coordinator has a Secret clearance; her Top Secret clearance is still pending.

The family member employment program at Embassy Santo Domingo includes 29 family members who are now working, with approximately 6 individuals still looking for work. Two other family members are employed at a local school, one at a local business, and another as a tutor to school children.

American Embassy Recreation Association

The American Embassy Recreation Association (AERA) operates a small gift and alcohol shop on the embassy grounds, as well as a cafeteria (Rincon Verde) and a snack bar in the consulate. AERA also handles the charges for gasoline purchased by U.S. employees from the GSO gasoline tanks on the chancery compound. In addition, AERA receives income from a

photographer operating in the consulate and from the sale of U.S. postage stamps. The income generated by AERA is used to fund an embassy softball team, as well as various CLO and embassy activities.

Neither the licensing agreement between AERA and Embassy Santo Domingo nor the AERA charter was up-to-date when the OIG team arrived in Santo Domingo. However, AERA acted quickly to update the licensing agreement and contacted the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs regarding the charter, which requires signatures from Department officials. The board updated the charter and sent it to the Department for approval.

The OIG team found that a number of individuals were behind in making payments to AERA for gasoline and alcohol purchases. Of the \$18,000 in outstanding payments due to AERA, about 45 percent had been owed for more than 60 days. The board took immediate action to reduce the overdue amounts and within several weeks had successfully cleared all accounts over 60 days old.

Management Controls

The 1999 OIG inspection report for Embassy Santo Domingo noted that “executive office oversight of the administrative section has been less than required in this complex mission.” The report went on to say that “administrative support services are not up to Department standards, and should be improved.” The OIG team found that although support services were functioning adequately, internal controls procedures were exceedingly lax. In the chargé d’affaires’ statement regarding management controls dated July 2010, he did not indicate any areas needing improvement. The statement also indicated that measures taken by the embassy provided reasonable assurance that management control objectives were being achieved. The OIG team did not find that to be the case.

The embassy must address vulnerabilities in housing, maintenance, and contracting. Although some of these issues were identified in past inspection reports, neither Embassy Santo Domingo nor WHA has taken effective corrective action. There are numerous contributing factors—untimely staffing gaps, a disjointed embassy complex composed of eight separate facilities, and an emphasis on controls managed by software systems rather than human oversight. The result, for better or worse, is that management of key areas of administrative support has been controlled by LE staff.

American supervisors should be actively involved in determining significant maintenance actions, authorizing procurement, overseeing quality control, negotiating leases, and managing day-to-day activities rather than simply inputting information in automated systems and responding to emails.

Financial management is one area in which improvements have taken place, and they are due almost entirely to the leadership and direction of the newly arrived FMO.

The newly arrived management counselor is aware of many of these issues and has begun to address them systematically. A mission-wide evaluation of management controls, as detailed in 2 FAM 023.1, is needed to assist in this effort. The OIG team estimates that with enhanced oversight and leadership, Embassy Santo Domingo should be able to save in excess of \$135,000 per year in lease costs through better negotiation and \$23,000 in maintenance costs by eliminating duplicative and wasteful procurement.

Recommendation 55: Embassy Santo Domingo should address in its 2011 chief of mission statement all the significant weaknesses in management controls identified in this report, along with the steps the embassy has taken to resolve those vulnerabilities. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 56: Embassy Santo Domingo should conduct an embassy-wide management controls review as described in Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 57: Embassy Santo Domingo should enroll all personnel with management control responsibilities in the Foreign Service Institute PA-164 distance learning Management Controls course. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

A review of accountability in the consular section in Santo Domingo showed that required controls are in place. The only recent fiscal irregularity occurred during the February 2011 visit to Santiago, when the back-up consular cashier from Santo Domingo took the money in place of the cashier from the consular agency in Puerto Plata, who was on leave. The written record of the resolution of that irregularity was not complete. Considering the Dominican fraud and corruption environment, the consular section must be especially careful to investigate and fully document all fiscal irregularities immediately.

Informal Recommendation 30: Embassy Santo Domingo should require that the consular section immediately document and resolve all fiscal irregularities and keep all associated documentation in the accountable consular officers' files.

The consular section works a 40-hour week that ends at 11:30 a.m. on Fridays. The accounting for the cash on Fridays had been delayed until the following Monday, when an armored car picked up the money for both days, and the FMO issued the appropriate OF-158 receipts. The Consular Management Handbook, 7 FAH-1 H-771.2-5 (End-of-Day Procedures), states that fees must be delivered to the Class B cashier daily. This same regulation also prohibits retaining fees in the consular cashier's possession overnight. In the month of February, the amounts that were kept by the consular cashier over the weekend averaged \$7,500, which constitutes an unacceptable vulnerability.

Recommendation 58: Embassy Santo Domingo should deliver the consular fees and reports each Friday to the embassy Class B cashier before the end of the cashier's business day. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement procedures so that the deputy chief of mission, with the support of the Ambassador, assists with and exercises close oversight of actions taken to correct the security and management deficiencies identified in this report and its classified annex. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Santo Domingo should create a central contact database and use it as the exclusive source of guest lists for medium and large events. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement a written mission policy governing the use of cables, record emails, and working emails. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement a Foreign Assistance Vetting standard operating procedure that effectively screens candidates for U.S. Government-funded assistance. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should review the mix of direct-hire and contract personnel in the narcotics affairs section program and, if justified, request an additional direct-hire position. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with WHA and INL)

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs should designate and train a contracting officer's representative for the narcotics affairs section at Embassy Santo Domingo. (Action: INL)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Santo Domingo should cease participating in the immigration attorney's radio and television shows and explore neutral broadcast venues for disseminating its consular information over the airwaves. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Santo Domingo should change its appointment schedule for American citizens services to reduce the wait time for U.S. client interviews to no more than an hour. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Santo Domingo should cease all fee services at the consular agency in Puerto Plata until all monthly consular cash accounting (including daily accounting sheets approved by the financial management officer) from January 2010 until February 2011 are complete and the agency has established internal controls and standard operating procedures as outlined in Department of State regulations to facilitate future accountability. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should review its immigrant visa unit workflow procedures, stagger its immigrant visa

appointment times to reduce waiting room congestion and interview wait times for its clients, and ask the Bureau of Consular Affairs to instruct the National Visa Center to schedule cases accordingly. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with CA)

Recommendation 11: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement procedures so that the deputy chief of mission regularly reviews the visa issuances and refusals of the consul general. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Santo Domingo should require that consular staff carefully follow the definitions of nonimmigrant visa referrals as set out in Department of State regulations, that all referrals clearly state the U.S. Government interest in the traveler, and that the consular section refers only cases that are of clear, official consular interest. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Santo Domingo should refrain from providing financial assistance to the Santiago Binational Center until it gives a full accounting of all funds received under grants provided by the embassy's public affairs section for the acquisition of library books and furnishings and the provision of English language training to disadvantaged youths. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 14: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should revise its memorandum of agreement for human resources services and define the roles and responsibilities of the management counselor, the locally employed staff, and the regional human resources officer for such issues as hiring, retirements, terminations, local compensation plans, medical and life insurance contracts, pensions, consolidation of administrative services, supervision of staff, and the dissemination of technical information to mission staff. (Action: FRC, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo and WHA)

Recommendation 15: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo, should track and monitor the amount of time the management counselor spends each month on human resources activities and evaluate whether some of the management counselor's human resources duties should be delegated to the regional human resources officer, the locally employed staff, or the eligible family member human resources assistant, or could be performed remotely at the Florida Regional Center. (Action: FRC, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 16: The Florida Regional Center should evaluate whether its regional human resources concept is adequate to meet the needs of the embassies and U.S. interest sections serviced by regional human resources officers and determine whether additional officers, more frequent visits of longer duration, innovative technology, and other resources are needed to improve the performance of the regional human resources concept. (Action: FRC)

Recommendation 17: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and the Foreign Service Institute, should

provide customer service training for the human resources staff. (Action: FRC, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo, WHA, and FSI)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Florida Regional Center, should follow the same guidelines for preparing, tracking, and sending reminder notices for eligible family member evaluations as for locally employed staff. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with FRC)

Recommendation 19: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Florida Regional Center, should establish and distribute procedures so that employee evaluation reports are prepared for entry-level officers as prescribed by Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with FRC)

Recommendation 20: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Florida Regional Center, should maintain current lists of entry-level officers, rating officers, and reviewing officers and should establish a regular schedule for reminding these individuals of their responsibilities, both with respect to specific individuals and in general. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with FRC)

Recommendation 21: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should conduct a review to determine whether the percentage of family relationships in Embassy Santo Domingo sections poses a risk to internal controls and, if so, take corrective actions as needed. (Action: FRC, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 22: The Florida Regional Center, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo and the Bureau of Human Resources, should gather and review required documentation on the Dominican Republic social security system and make a determination regarding the eligibility of Embassy Santo Domingo's locally employed staff to participate in the Department of State's defined contribution plan or a supplemental retirement plan. (Action: FRC, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo and DGHR)

Recommendation 23: Embassy Santo Domingo should outsource its travel advance and voucher payment function to the Department of State's Financial Service Centers' post support units. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 24: Embassy Santo Domingo should prohibit the use of official cellular telephones and land lines for personal long distance calls and should issue a telephone usage policy that outlines the permitted exceptions for usage of official cellular telephones and land lines. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 25: The Bureau of Resource Management should review the practice of allowing the alternate cashier to take custody of the imprest fund for a set period one or more times a year and determine whether it should become part of standard cashiering operating procedures. (Action: RM)

Recommendation 26: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a review process aimed at validating work performed and supplies received for the maintenance of residences and motor vehicles. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 27: The Bureau of Administration should review the performance of the ARIBA software and address its shortcomings to improve internal controls and increase efficiency. (Action: A)

Recommendation 28: Embassy Santo Domingo should require all agencies to take delivery of goods from the receiving office within 3 days. If this does not occur, the receiving office should process the items and place them in the warehouse. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 29: Embassy Santo Domingo should require the American employee who is responsible for the housing section of the general services office to take part in lease negotiations so that the U.S. Government receives a fair value. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 30: Embassy Santo Domingo should review its standard communications with newly assigned personnel so that the basis for housing assignments and the availability of housing are clearly outlined. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 31: Embassy Santo Domingo should create a document explaining in detail the check-out procedure, employee responsibilities for damages, and the definition for normal wear and tear and require employees to sign the document upon arrival, indicating that they understand the policy. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 32: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should include the director of the U.S. Agency for International Development's residence in its U.S. Government-owned inventory. (Action: OBO)

Recommendation 33: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should conclude negotiations to extend the current lease of the Marine Security Guard residence. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with OBO)

Recommendation 34: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a facilities maintenance review process to facilitate the satisfactory completion of work orders. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 35: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a procedure so that all equipment and supplies procured under blanket purchase agreements are received and inventoried before being allocated to the maintenance staff. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 36: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a procedure that requires the facilities maintenance officer to authorize services provided under a blanket purchase agreement before they are entered into ARIBA. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 37: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a policy whereby a senior locally employed staff supervisor reviews make-ready work and checks that work is performed properly by either the landlord or embassy contractors and that the residential units are ready for incoming personnel. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 38: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should obtain funding and contract for the immediate rewiring and grounding of the public affairs facility. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with OBO)

Recommendation 39: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement a procedure to tag all residential fire extinguishers on an annual basis and to check that all smoke alarms are functioning properly. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 40: Embassy Santo Domingo should properly mark the emergency shutoff systems and post instructions for the butane tanks, the gasoline pump, and the diesel pump. Embassy Santo Domingo should also locate appropriate firefighting equipment nearby. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 41: Embassy Santo Domingo should install a camera and recording device to monitor access to and use of the embassy gasoline pump. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 42: Embassy Santo Domingo should install appropriate personnel cleanup facilities adjacent to the diesel pump. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 43: Embassy Santo Domingo should create a secondary emergency egress from the ground floor of the warehouse. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 44: Embassy Santo Domingo should install smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in areas not currently covered in both the warehouse and the receiving facility. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 45: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish written procedures that require motor pool staff to perform spot checks of garage repairs so that repairs are made correctly and that new parts are used. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 46: Embassy Santo Domingo should institute a formal review process for determining responsibility for traffic accidents involving official vehicles. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 47: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a policy that requires all passengers riding in mission vehicles to fasten their seat belts and all motor pool drivers to enforce this policy. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 48: Embassy Santo Domingo should create a monthly report that tracks mileage per gallon, maintenance history, and vehicle age and implement procedures for the

general services officer to regularly review this report for discrepancies. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 49: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement procedures requiring drivers to complete mileage logs and obtain signatures from passengers. The procedures should include a requirement that the general services officer regularly spot check logs for accuracy. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 50: Embassy Santo Domingo should inventory and consolidate all Dedicated Internet Networks and register them with the Bureau of Information Resource Management. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 51: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and document standard operating procedures for Dedicated Internet Network management. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 52: Embassy Santo Domingo should conduct an inventory of the mission's laptop computers. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 53: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement a procedure for appropriately encrypting Department of State laptops in order to safeguard the security and integrity of the data stored on them. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 54: Embassy Santo Domingo should create and implement a procedure for renewing all airport tarmac credentials necessary for receipt of mail and pouch deliveries. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 55: Embassy Santo Domingo should address in its 2011 chief of mission statement all the significant weaknesses in management controls identified in this report, along with the steps the embassy has taken to resolve those vulnerabilities. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 56: Embassy Santo Domingo should conduct an embassy-wide management controls review as described in Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 57: Embassy Santo Domingo should enroll all personnel with management control responsibilities in the Foreign Service Institute PA-164 distance learning Management Controls course. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

Recommendation 58: Embassy Santo Domingo should deliver the consular fees and reports each Friday to the embassy Class B cashier before the end of the cashier's business day. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

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 Santo Domingo should review the existing pattern of staff meetings to determine the optimum structure.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Santo Domingo should develop a mentoring program for entry-level officers, headed by the deputy chief of mission, which involves more interaction with the front office and with officers in other sections and agencies.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Santo Domingo should hold regular economic/political section meetings that are structured to facilitate information sharing and discussion.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Santo Domingo should develop a training regimen for mission personnel who create and administer record emails via the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Santo Domingo should develop guidance for personal services contractors that specifies which mission meetings they should attend and prohibits their assuming supervisory or senior roles on the mission team or their replacing U.S. mission officers in personal meetings with senior policy-level officials in the Dominican Government.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Santo Domingo should expeditiously complete all management assessment visit recommendations that the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs made in its January 2009 report.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Santo Domingo should conduct regular consular training sessions on customer service, stress management, and conflict resolution.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a committee to explore better ways to reach out to consular clients so that their visits to the embassy are positive and professional experiences.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Santo Domingo should assign a functioning "One FOB" encryption device to the consular agent in Puerto Plata.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Santo Domingo should provide the consular agency in Puerto Plata with a Department-approved cross-cut shredder.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Santo Domingo should assign entry-level officers to oversee each of the five immigrant visa unit's locally employed staff work teams.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Santo Domingo should require an American officer to be present in the immigrant visa work area whenever locally employed personnel are working there.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a special email address by which the visa section could directly accept requests from emergency and high-profile cases for expedited appointments and processing.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Santo Domingo should implement procedures for the Visas Viper committee to submit monthly reports no later than 10 days following the end of the previous month.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Santo Domingo should donate its book and digital video disc collections to an appropriate educational institution under a grant that specifies the terms of use.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Santo Domingo should rewrite position descriptions for the public affairs section webmaster, Information Resource Center assistant, and Information Resource Center technician to provide a greater emphasis on social media and direct person-to-person outreach.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Santo Domingo should donate the books and equipment originally intended for the Santiago Binational Center to an appropriate institution.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Santo Domingo should determine what type of personnel questions and issues should be sent to the regional human resources officer for her action.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Santo Domingo should set designated hours for answering American and locally employed staff personnel-related questions.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Santo Domingo should include in its new employee orientation a session on the most frequently asked personnel questions.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Santo Domingo should post on its intranet site a list of the most frequently asked personnel questions, along with the answers.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Santo Domingo should include customer service as an element in human resources staff position descriptions and performance evaluations.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Santo Domingo should conduct an annual retirement seminar for locally employed staff that includes information about the local social security system, medical insurance benefits, financial planning, and independent supplemental retirement plans.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Santo Domingo should store the nonexpendable property of various agencies in clearly marked areas in the warehouse.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Santo Domingo should investigate the possibility of using a local bank to accept payments during warehouse sales.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Santo Domingo should create and distribute mission-wide a procedure for answering customer requests or taking messages when staff members are not present in the Information Systems Center due to operational requirements.

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Santo Domingo should review the mission's telephone operator program and explore possible alternatives for handling the volume of consular-related calls.

Informal Recommendation 28: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish and implement controls on billing for the cellular telephone program.

Informal Recommendation 29: Embassy Santo Domingo should properly dispose of all old server backup tapes according to Department of State standards.

Informal Recommendation 30: Embassy Santo Domingo should require that the consular section immediately document and resolve all fiscal irregularities and keep all associated documentation in the accountable consular officers' files.

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Principal Officials

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Raul H. Yzaguirre	11/10
Deputy Chief of Mission	Christopher Lambert	08/09
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Jennifer Haskell	08/10
Consular	Mary Sue Conaway	08/09
Narcotics Affairs Section	Arnold Sierra	10/10
Political/Economic	Alexander Margulies	08/09
Public Affairs	Todd Haskell	08/10
Regional Security	Mark Bandik	08/08
Other Agencies:		
Customs and Border Protection	Lucia Foglia	06/06
Defense Attaché Office	David O'Connell	07/10
Drug Enforcement Administration	Peter Reilly	07/07
Foreign Agricultural Service	Margaret Bauer	08/08
Foreign Commercial Service	Robert Jones	01/08
Immigration and Customs Enforcement	Donald Bruckschen	07/08
Legal Attaché	George P. Quinlan	03/09
Military Assistance Advisory Group	Drew Bayliss	08/10
Peace Corps	Romeo Massey	08/05
Technical Assistance Team (TAT)	Christine Mulder-Meira	05/08
U.S. Agency for International Development	James Watson	12/08
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services	Anadina Hernandez	07/05
U.S. Marshals	John Hall	07/09

Abbreviations

ACS	American citizens services
AERA	American Embassy Recreation Association
ARSO-I	Assistant regional security officer for investigations
BNC	Binational Center
BPA	Blanket purchase agreement
CLO	Community liaison office
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DIN	Dedicated Internet Network
ECOPOL	Economic and political section
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EFM	Eligible family member
ELO	Entry-level officer
FAH,	<i>Foreign Affairs Handbook</i>
FAM	<i>Foreign Affairs Manual</i>
FMO	Financial management officer
FPU	Fraud prevention unit
FRC	Florida Regional Center
FS	Foreign Service
GSO	General services office
HR	Human resources
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
INVEST	Internal vetting and security tracking
IRC	Information Resource Center
ISC	Information Systems Center
ISO	Information systems officer
IV	Immigrant visa
LE	Locally employed
LSSS	Local social security system
NAS	Narcotics affairs section
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
SMART	State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset
TIP	Trafficking in persons
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WHA	Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

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