



Office of Inspector General

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

Office of Inspections

Inspection of Embassy Bogotá, Colombia

Report Number ISP-I-11-41A, June 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.



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PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

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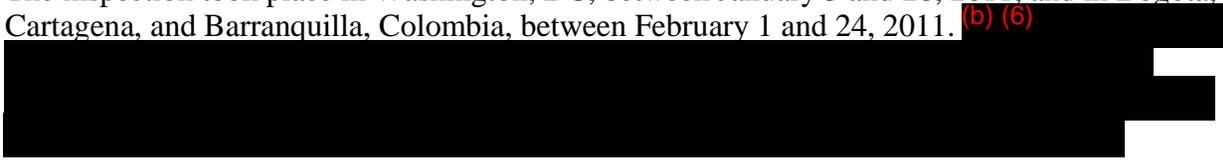
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Key Judgments

- Embassy Bogotá is one of the largest U.S. missions in the world, with over 3,500 personnel representing 42 agencies and their components. The Chief of Mission provides strong overall direction and policy guidance. U.S. programs, focusing principally on counternarcotics and counterterrorism, are successful and carried out with a high degree of interagency cooperation and coordination.
- The United States played a major role in the success Colombia has achieved in reducing the threat from narcotics and terrorism. As Colombia increasingly assumes responsibility for these programs, U.S. policy is shifting to more traditional bilateral diplomacy. Nevertheless, while some agencies are downsizing, the majority of law enforcement agencies do not envision a reduction in staff.
- The International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) platform is underresourced and struggling to provide adequate services to the mission population, as well as to a large number of official visitors and the 6,700 temporary duty personnel per year. The mission should take a bold and creative approach to the support platform and shift some of the burden from the Department of State (Department) as the sole ICASS provider to other entities such as the narcotics affairs section (NAS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).
- Despite the findings of two previous inspections and one compliance follow-up review in the past 11 years, Embassy Bogotá has not taken steps to strengthen the ICASS platform sufficiently to resolve management shortcomings. Many of these management concerns that recur in each inspection are related to the mission's inability to meet standards of efficiency. The Ambassador and deputy chief of mission (DCM) must take a more aggressive stance to address this continuing pattern of underperformance and have committed themselves to doing so.
- The political and economic sections will have new responsibilities as the diplomatic effort expands in areas such as energy, climate change, and science. Environment, science, technology, and health (ESTH) cooperation will play an important role in this new bilateral orientation. The mission's current ESTH resources will need reinforcing to meet these new requirements.
- Although the consular section provides excellent services to a large and growing Colombian clientele and to a U.S. citizen population living in a still somewhat dangerous environment, the critical consular fraud management portfolio suffers from weak leadership.

- The regional security office (RSO) provides effective security to American employees and families in a moderate danger environment. Physical security has improved on the embassy compound, but significant vulnerabilities remain. There is a large backlog of background investigations and a shortage of locally employed RSO staff to process the requests.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between January 3 and 28, 2011, and in Bogotá, Cartagena, and Barranquilla, Colombia, between February 1 and 24, 2011. (b) (6)



Context

Colombia, with its population of 44 million people and an area of 440,000 square miles, is one of South America's largest countries. The capital and largest city is Bogotá, with a population of approximately 8 million. Other important cities include Medellín, Cali, Barranquilla, and Cartagena. The United States is Colombia's chief trading partner. The two countries signed a U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement in 2006 that the Administration plans to send to Congress in 2011.

Colombia has become a democratic success story in recent years. Once plagued by guerrilla insurgencies and murderous paramilitaries, with wealthy drug lords controlling major cities, Colombia is now in the midst of a political and economic renaissance. Under former president Alvaro Uribe, the narcoterrorist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia was beaten back, the drug cartels of Cali and Medellín were significantly weakened, and a poor human rights record began to improve. In the summer of 2010, Colombia elected President Juan Manuel Santos. For the first time in recent election cycles, public safety and state security were not the leading issues for voters. Instead, Colombians were focused on economic issues: unemployment, inflation, and health care.

Since 2001, Colombia's estimated annual cocaine production potential has decreased by 61 percent, from 700 to 270 metric tons. The United States has made a major investment in helping Colombia address the narcotics problem. The United States provided more than \$7.4 billion (approximately \$5.9 billion from the Department of State (Department) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and \$1.5 billion from the Department of Defense for Plan Colombia and its follow-on programs from FYs 2000 through 2010. With training provided by the United States, the Colombians have made significant progress in taking over a number of counternarcotics programs. Other U.S. priorities in Colombia include counterterrorism; bilateral cooperation in environment, science, technology, and health (ESTH); promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; and promotion of trade and economic development.

Mission Colombia's management follows a "one mission, one team" approach in carrying out its programs to implement U.S. policy goals. Overall direction and interagency coordination have been exemplary for a number of years. Washington agencies have cited Colombia as a model for counternarcotics programs in the region. With Colombia gradually assuming ownership of counternarcotics programs, U.S. policy efforts can increasingly turn to a more traditional bilateral diplomatic focus.

Although the direct-hire presence has been reduced by 12 percent over the past 2 years, Embassy Bogotá remains the largest mission in Latin America and one of the largest in the world. There is an embassy branch office (EBO) in Cartagena that is staffed primarily by DEA employees, along with Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense offices, and a consular agency in Barranquilla. The mission's total budget in FY 2010 was \$596 million. This figure includes bilateral assistance to Colombia of approximately \$500 million, with major programs by DEA, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, NAS, the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, and USAID.

Executive Direction

Country Team and Interagency Relations

Relations among the 42 agencies and their components are excellent and have been for a number of years. At post for less than 6 months, the present Ambassador exercises strong leadership, with a focus on strategic direction. He is assisted by a DCM who is on his fourth tour in Bogotá, having previously served as director of NAS and overseen one of the largest programs in the mission. The Ambassador and DCM chair weekly country team meetings and regular meetings of working groups in specific cluster areas. All of the agencies and sections at post praised the cooperation and the good relations among the country team participants. Each agency's Washington headquarters described Mission Bogotá as a model of effectiveness in carrying out counternarcotics and counterterrorism programs.

Mission Strategic and Resource Plan

The Mission Strategic and Resource Plan (MSRP) process is overseen by the DCM, with guidance from the Ambassador. Subject-matter managers are designated to lead the interagency goal-paper teams. The front office offers all sections and agencies the opportunity to comment. The draft is reviewed and extensively edited in an iterative process, including by the DCM and the Ambassador. Mission leadership commented that they did not receive any feedback on their MSRP from Washington, nor have they received any guidance on MSRP preparation for the past 2 years.

Over the past 10 years, the United States has provided more than \$7.4 billion to Plan Colombia and its follow-on programs to assist the host government in its counternarcotics and counterterrorism efforts. As progress continues to be made, and as Colombia increasingly takes ownership of these programs, mission leadership is adjusting the focus of the U.S. effort to support the host government's development objectives through the mission's Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI). Future U.S. engagement will be characterized by a more traditional diplomatic relationship based on trade, economic, and multilateral issues.

With more emphasis on CSDI, the United States may reduce foreign assistance for some programs, perhaps significantly. At the same time, U.S. funding for other drug and law enforcement programs may increase. The Department is considering the expansion of foreign assistance to neighboring countries on a regional basis, possibly using Colombia as a platform. The implications of this complex set of possibilities go beyond the normal MSRP review.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Bogotá should conduct a review of its foreign assistance program, to include all sections and agencies, to develop a comprehensive plan for meeting the challenges of a changing policy environment in the years ahead. The strategy should include a description of the resources needed to implement the plan and should be submitted to the Department of State for approval. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Management Attention to Security and Emergency Preparedness

Although the Government of Colombia has made great strides in reducing terrorism, Embassy Bogotá is still a danger pay post, and mission leadership pays close attention to security and emergency preparedness. During the inspection, the OIG team observed an emergency action committee meeting, chaired by the chargé d'affaires, which reviewed measures to address the current threat environment. The front office values and relies upon the RSO to provide information on conditions in Bogotá and throughout Colombia. Working with the RSO, the consular section distributes information on security to private American citizens, whether resident or visiting. During the inspection, the OIG team reviewed with the mission the need to ensure that security advice on potential threats is the same for private Americans as it is for U.S. officials and that there is no double standard. (See the Consular Section of this report for more detail.)

Leadership

All of the sections and agencies gave high marks to both the Ambassador and the DCM for strong command of the issues and strategic direction of programs and policies. The Chief of Mission and DCM exercise oversight through a well-structured series of working groups as well as in individual meetings. Under the Chief of Mission's direction, the country team is successfully carrying out multimillion dollar counternarcotics and counterterrorism programs of high importance to the United States as well as to the host government. During the inspection, the OIG team encouraged mission leadership to interact more frequently with units with less visibility to the front office, such as the consular section and the community liaison office.

Morale Issues

OIG questionnaires did not indicate significant morale issues at Embassy Bogotá. Most personnel arrive knowing that Bogotá is a hardship/danger pay post and are pleasantly surprised to find conditions better than they had expected. In OIG interviews many employees did, however, express frustration with management support services. Consular officers, who are mostly first- and second-tour (FAST) officers, are faced with an enormous workload in one of the busiest visa-issuing posts in the world. Nevertheless, they remain motivated and cohesive. The community liaison office provides activities and counseling to help maintain morale.

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

Embassy Bogotá's management section is dedicated and hard working but understaffed. The ICASS provider-to-employee ratio is one of the lowest in the world. Employee dissatisfaction with management services is widespread, especially in the areas of vouchering and housing. A number of employees have had water and electricity cut off in their residences, and vendors sometimes decline to provide services to the embassy because of nonpayment of bills. At the EBO in Cartagena, the lack of permanently assigned on-site ICASS personnel means that services are frequently not available. Some of these problems are systemic, due to lack of personnel and resources, but increased executive direction to ensure greater transparency and communication between the management section and its customers would help. The OIG team

identified serious management control weaknesses and discussed with the Ambassador and DCM the need to devote more front office attention to these areas. Resource management issues are discussed in detail later in this report.

Entry-Level-Officer Program

Both the Ambassador and DCM attach importance to mentoring FAST officers. Both have periodic brown bag lunches with FAST officers: the Ambassador for a general discussion, and the DCM usually on a specific topic, sometimes at his residence. The FAST officers at Embassy Bogotá number between 40 and 50, with the large majority in the consular section. They are active both socially and professionally, have their own link on the embassy Web site, and have organized themselves into a FAST committee that meets periodically to discuss issues. The FAST committee developed its own proposed mentoring program that was approved by the DCM, and the Ambassador met with FAST officers as a group to inaugurate the mentoring program. The OIG team met with the FAST committee separately to discuss relevant issues.

Contact Database

Embassy Bogotá does not have a central contact database as a clearinghouse for all sections' contacts. For large events, the protocol office asks each relevant section for a guest list, and these lists are combined into an Excel spreadsheet to create a master guest list. This process is time consuming, as protocol staff must look through the master list for each event for duplications, misspelled names, and wrong addresses. When guest lists are assembled on short notice, multiple spellings for the same name occasionally slip through, resulting in one person receiving as many as three invitations (two with the invitee's name misspelled) to the same event. This is an embarrassment for both the recipient of the invitation and the embassy. The Fourth of July celebration, which has a guest list of over 1,000, is an especially serious problem. If the protocol office had an embassy-wide contact database, the assistants could update it regularly to ensure that names are spelled correctly and contact information is current. Key embassy staff, such as section heads and selected senior locally employed (LE) staff, could also have access to the database to keep contacts current.

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

Policy and Program Implementation

Political Section

Reporting

The political section has a relevant reporting plan that generates products that receive praise from Washington consumers. Political reporting may have suffered somewhat from the WikiLeaks scandal, especially in its immediate aftermath, when the post temporarily suspended its reporting. Formal reporting soon resumed, however, although at perhaps a slower pace than before. Since WikiLeaks, mission contacts have engaged with embassy officers in a more guarded fashion than in the past.

The embassy has no policy governing the use of cables, record emails, and working emails in post 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 to ensure that key post communications are tracked and recorded as the Department mandates.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Bogotá should establish a written post policy governing the use of cables, record emails, and working emails and develop a training regimen for mission personnel who create and administer such cables and emails via the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Organization of the Political Section

The head of the political section is an FS-01 officer. The section has two FS-02 deputies, a mid-level refugee coordinator (funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)), as well as other functional officers in areas such as human rights, political-military affairs, and labor. All officers maintain close and functional working relations with host country counterparts in ministries, nongovernmental organizations, and multilateral organizations. The officers provide oversight and mentoring of LE staff members, who are capable and enjoy a high level of morale.

One way for the Chief of Mission to shift the character of relations toward more traditional cooperation is through the Free Trade Agreement, to be sent to Congress in 2011. Another is the High-Level Partnership Dialogue (HLPD) that the Deputy Secretary inaugurated in November 2010. The HLPD established a bilateral commission with six committees on topics such as human rights, ESTH, and economic development. Also in 2010, the Secretary signed a new bilateral science and technology agreement through which a large number of U.S. agencies participate with Colombian counterparts.

This ongoing shift has significantly increased the political and economic sections' responsibilities and tasks in the mission, and the grades of the section chiefs should reflect their enhanced leadership roles in policy development and implementation. The political section chief

position is undergraded according to Department position classification standards, in comparison to other missions of this size, and in relation to the mission's other section and agency heads. The position requires seniority and experience to enhance the role of the Department in moving the Ambassador's transitional agenda forward. As head of one of the Department's flagship sections, the political section chief is one or two grades below what is normal and is below that of other country team and Department section chiefs. This arrangement conveys an optic that these positions are less important to the mission's agenda than other agency and Department sections, which is not the case in reality.

As now staffed, the political section has two deputy heads of section. At the deputy level, the section suffers some redundancy in and overlap of responsibilities with the subordinate officers. At the same time, as detailed in the Economic Section of this report, there is a critical need to create a new ESTH position in the economic section to assist with this burgeoning portfolio. By shifting one of the two political section deputy positions to the economic section to create a new mid-level ESTH position, the mission will gain in terms of its effectiveness and overall capabilities.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Human Resources, should revise the position description of the political counselor to reflect changed and more complex duties and submit it to the Bureau of Human Resources for reclassification review. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and DGHR)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Human Resources, should reprogram one of the FS-02 deputy political counselor positions (position number 10-268001) as a new FS-02 environment, science, technology, and health position in the economic section. (Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and DGHR)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Human Resources, should revise the position description of the deputy political counselor (position number 10-157001) to reflect changed and more complex duties and submit it to the Bureau of Human Resources for reclassification review. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and DGHR)

Human Rights and Labor

The Government of Colombia has made good progress in combating human rights abuses. To monitor this progress and maintain a dialogue with the host government, nongovernmental organizations, and other parties, the political section has a full-time human rights officer and a labor officer. The human rights officer also coordinates with a three-person vetting unit that was established in response to the Leahy Law, as amended. Before any agency can propose Colombian officials, military or civilian, for U.S.-financed training, the officials' names must be vetted to ensure that they are not human rights offenders. Bogotá's vetting unit reviews some 35,000 individuals and 600 military units annually. Once a request arrives, the section enters names into an online database, queries various mission offices for relevant

information, and either approves or denies the case. Names are also entered into an online Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor database. Based on available information, the OIG team determined that the process is highly accurate.

Displaced Persons

The political section has a full-time, mid-level officer that is funded by PRM. This officer serves as the regional refugee coordinator and is responsible for emergency assistance to the country's internally displaced persons and for those refugees who spill over from Colombia's neighboring countries. The Government of Colombia has registered more than 3.6 million internally displaced persons in Colombia since 1997; nongovernmental organizations place the figure at more than 5.3 million since 1985. The United Nations Refugee Agency estimates that an additional 335,000 Colombians have sought refuge in neighboring countries. PRM funds assistance principally through contributions to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross and secondarily through cooperative agreements with international nongovernmental organizations that provide complementary assistance. In FY 2010, PRM budgeted more than \$36 million for programs in and around Colombia. Under an arrangement made in 2001 with USAID, PRM provides emergency assistance for the first 90 to 120 days to displaced persons, after which USAID has programs for the longer-term displaced persons. PRM and embassy officers estimate that the amount of PRM funding for emergency displaced persons assistance currently ranges from \$12 million to \$20 million per year.

The program as now administered suffers from several problems. First, there is no tracking of displaced persons that might allow a handoff from PRM to USAID programs, and any handoff that does occur is more coincidental than planned. Second, the number of newly displaced persons in Colombia is rapidly falling, by 30 to 50 percent in 2008 according to various estimates, with an equal percentage drop in 2009. Meanwhile, Government of Colombia support for internally displaced persons has grown immensely from \$67 million in 2003 to \$750 million per year in 2010. This reduction in the number of internally displaced persons, accompanied by the availability of much greater host country support, raises the question of the need for continued U.S. displaced persons emergency assistance. Eliminating the assistance could provide a savings of \$12 million to \$20 million. Alternatively, some of the assistance identified for emergency programs could be rechanneled to refugee programs around Colombia's borders.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, should review the effectiveness of emergency internally displaced person programs in Colombia to save resources and/or retarget assistance. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with PRM)

Economic Section

The economic section is at the epicenter of the mission's efforts to build new structures for bilateral cooperation. For example, the section is the action office for the push to ratify and implement the Free Trade Agreement, for the new agreement for ESTH cooperation, and for four of the six committees under the HLPD.

The chief of the economic section is an FS-01 officer. The section also includes an FS-02 deputy, a trade officer, and other entry-level and rotational officers. Just as with the political section, the economic section's roles and responsibilities are increasing. Given the section's size and complexity, upgrading the chief of the section to a Senior Foreign Service grade is consistent with Department classification standards, would encourage bidding on the position from the service's most experienced officers, and would give the incumbent a stronger and more influential position in the intramission process. In the past, the economic section has not had sufficient status in the mission hierarchy. At the time of this inspection, the economic counselor did not have a place at the country team table but rather sat against the wall. However, with a country team of 27 members, space is at a premium.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Human Resources, should revise the position description of the economic counselor position to reflect changed and more complex duties and submit it to the Bureau of Human Resources for reclassification review. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and DGHR)

The economic section does not have adequate space. Five officers, the section's office management specialist, and the office equipment and cabinets are located in a room of only 656 square feet, a space very small in terms of the standard utilization rate in Department facilities. The recommendation in this report to place an ESTH officer in the section will add another person to the mix. The problem goes beyond insufficient space. The small office has no windows, and the air conditioning turns on every few minutes with a boom that shakes the entire section.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Bogotá should explore options for improving the space now allocated to the economic unit to enhance the office environment and expand the amount of space available to the unit.

Environment, Science, Technology, and Health

ESTH cooperation is a major part of the new bilateral orientation between the United States and Colombia. The agreement signed between Colombia and the United States in June 2010 formalized cooperation with a host of U.S. Government agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Army, the Department of the Navy, and more. On the Colombian side, the country's President has designated science and technology as one of the five pillars of his presidency, and the government is allocating 10 percent of its petroleum

income to science and technology projects. The ESTH program is also a prominent part of the HLPD. The ESTH agreement entails regular meetings, often attended by many U.S. agencies and headed at the Assistant Secretary level. Colombia has already become one of the United States' largest ESTH partners in Latin America.

The embassy's ESTH officer is a rotational officer who is located in the economic section and who also has other designated responsibilities. A rotational position is inadequate for the volume and substance of the rapidly expanding ESTH dialogue with Colombia. Too large a share of each rotational officer's time is necessarily spent on a learning curve, there is too little time to develop sufficient expertise required for substantive discussions with counterparts, and because of the short rotational period, one of the section's LE staff members must take responsibility for developing and maintaining contacts. With the section's rapidly growing responsibilities in fields such as trade, there will likely be less opportunity than in the past to provide backup for the ESTH officer in times of peak demand, such as for meetings associated with the HLPD and ESTH agreements.

Other sections in the mission, such as USAID and NAS, have programs aimed at promoting cooperation in ESTH areas. NAS, for example, recently supported a Ministry of Environment Youth for the Environment conference. With the growing complexity of mission ESTH programs, an interagency ESTH working group could provide an opportunity for useful collaboration and important coordination.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Bogotá should initiate an interagency environment, science, technology, and health working group to coordinate mission initiatives in these areas.

A regional ESTH officer in Lima covers Colombia, but this office has provided neither operational support nor, due to its location outside the country, much substantive support. In fact, when the current ESTH officer is stretched so severely, coordinating with the regional office may entail more cost than benefit.

To refocus mission resources toward meeting ESTH needs, this report has recommended that one of the mid-level positions in the political section be transferred to the economic section to create a full-time FS-02 level ESTH position (see Recommendation 5).

Trade Promotion

As the local business environment has stabilized and become more secure, the interest of American firms in trading with and investing in Colombia has grown rapidly and visibly. The economic section is working closely with both the Foreign Commercial Service and the Foreign Agricultural Service to support the increased flow of American business people seeking opportunities in Colombia. For example, the mission supported one trade mission in 2007, four in 2008, six in 2009, and five in 2010, and it already has nine planned for the first half of 2011. Passage of the Free Trade Agreement will result in a further explosion of work. The section's trade officer will be a point person for coordinating Free Trade Agreement implementation.

Foreign Assistance

One of the United States' largest foreign assistance efforts in the world is in Colombia. A multitude of agencies, from the Department of Justice to USAID, have programs aimed at reducing the production and exportation of narcotics, finding alternative forms of livelihood, and providing security so that these programs can proceed as smoothly as possible. The Chief of Mission, assisted by the DCM, coordinates this extensive interagency process through a series of committees that function well on both the executive and working levels.

The CSDI is the primary framework through which most U.S. foreign assistance is channeled. A driving concept behind the CSDI is that U.S. assistance must support and gradually make way for Colombia's own efforts to meet its development needs. For this reason, CSDI works hand in hand with the Colombian Government's National Consolidation Plan, which expands government presence into Colombia's most poverty-stricken and vulnerable areas, to deal with drug trafficking and cultivation, human rights violations, and displacements caused by the presence of illegal armed groups. CSDI coordinates the foreign assistance strengths of USAID, NAS, the U.S. Military Group, and the Department of Justice by focusing, combining, and sequencing aid in priority regions.

Public Diplomacy

The public affairs section (PAS) is in lockstep with the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs' *Strategic Framework for Public Diplomacy*. PAS is increasing its engagement with Colombian youth and historically marginalized communities through a combination of digital media outreach, English language programs, educational advising, and face-to-face interaction with embassy officials. An American studies program, an active Fulbright exchange program, and an International Visitor Leadership Program for rising members of Colombia's civil society, are helping develop relationships with future leaders that will be critical if U.S.-Colombian relations are to meet U.S. policy goals.

Reorganizing the Public Affairs Section to Meet Mission Objectives

PAS has been aggressive in restructuring itself to respond to the changes dictated by the MSRP and the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy. By reprogramming existing positions and creating new ones, with initial funding from the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA), the section has created LE staff positions that enable it to expand outreach to new audiences and employ social media more effectively. As PAS makes new contacts and reengages important contacts, such as alumni of U.S. Government exchange programs, the embassy will be assured of well-informed partners that are knowledgeable about current and potential U.S. and Colombian cooperation as the CSDI moves forward.

Educational Advising

PAS works with the Education USA coordinator for Colombia at the Fulbright Commission in Bogotá on a wide variety of educational advising activities in Colombia. With \$60,000 allocated by the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs in FY 2010, PAS has

provided funding to binational research centers for equipment and advising center materials, reference books, and the development of a national outreach plan to underserved regions.

PAS and the Education USA coordinator provide assistance to 11 advising centers, 9 of which are based at binational research centers spread around the country and are difficult for PAS to monitor. In March of each year, PAS organizes a country-wide conference for all educational advising centers to set out the agenda for the year and consult on problems faced by the individual centers. The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs' regional educational advising coordinator, located in Lima, attends this conference. In 2010, this was her only visit to Colombia to assist specifically with educational advising activities. More frequent visits by the regional coordinator would allow PAS to provide more thorough oversight of advising centers' activities.

Recommendation 9: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchange should revise the position description for the Lima-based regional educational advising coordinator to require two visits to Colombia per year, including visits to, and detailed reviews of, the education advising activities of binational centers outside Bogotá that receive U.S. Government assistance. (Action: ECA)

Grants Management

PAS provides grants to a wide variety of Colombian binational centers, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to carry out activities in support of MSRP goals. In FY 2010, PAS awarded a total of 107 grants worth \$915,877. PAS does not always receive final reports from grant recipients as required by the *Federal Assistance Policy Manual* (Section 5.2, Final Reports) and as indicated clearly in the award document signed by each grant recipient. PAS did not receive final reports for 42 of the 103 grants awarded and completed in FY 2010. As a result, PAS cannot always be aware of the final results of the activities undertaken under a grant. According to the public affairs officer (PAO) and administrative assistant in charge of grants administration, the majority of late or nonexistent reports were for grants undertaken in remote sections of the country. Although the PAO did attempt to collect final reports from these grantees, the efforts were insufficient. The PAO is now addressing this problem by developing a matrix that details the stage of each grant, including whether a final report is delinquent. Grantees whose reports are late are subject to a withholding of the final 20 percent payment under the grant and receive a formal letter from the PAO. The PAO is also training his secretary to assist the administrative assistant in collecting final reports.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement procedures so that all grant recipients submit a final report of their performance under the grant within 90 calendar days after the project period end date. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Reporting Burden

PAS is hampered by an increasingly heavy reporting burden. Assurances from the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs that requests from Washington would be reduced, and the statement in the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review that "we

will streamline reporting requirements so our diplomats have more time to engage their counterparts and the public,” have not slowed down the continuous flow of duplicative taskings. The mission activity tracking system, devised in 2004 to provide one-stop public diplomacy reporting, was to replace the hodgepodge of reporting requested by various entities in both the regional and functional public diplomacy bureaus. Instead of consulting the mission activity tracking system for reporting on recent post programs and outreach, however, officials in WHA who assemble daily activity reports, monthly newsletters, and other ad hoc reports often ask PAS to report separately on programs of note. The director of WHA’s Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs is aware of and concerned about the reporting burden.

Recommendation 11: The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, should streamline the reporting requirements placed on Embassy Bogotá’s public affairs section by not requesting information already contained in the embassy’s mission activity tracking system. (Action: WHA, in coordination with R)

Law Enforcement Coordination

Overview

Plan Colombia and its follow-on programs have been successful in reducing drug production and trafficking. Within Embassy Bogotá, 12 law enforcement agencies and offices, along with NAS, the RSO, Department of Defense, and USAID, coordinated to help achieve this goal. The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, through NAS Bogotá, has contributed close to \$3 billion since FY 2000 to assist in capacity building and sustainability of counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and anticrime organizations.

Now the task before the embassy is to maintain, in partnership with the Government of Colombia, the momentum of the current counternarcotics programs while branching out to other areas, as described elsewhere in this report. Although NAS and the Department of Defense are gradually downsizing, most law enforcement agencies do not plan to reduce their current staffing levels, and some are projecting increases. USAID will play a prominent role while staying within its current staffing cap. The embassy will use CSDI to coordinate the foreign assistance strengths of USAID, NAS, the Military Group, and the Department of Justice to assist Government of Colombia planning and capability.

The Department has expressed an interest in increasing cooperation and collaboration with the Government of Colombia as the latter takes the lead in regional capacity-building initiatives with neighboring countries. As noted in Recommendation 1 of this report, the embassy should conduct a long-range review to address continued U.S. counternarcotics foreign assistance support to Colombia and to neighboring countries, including the future roles and missions of the U.S. law enforcement agencies, Department of Defense, and USAID, and the resources needed to implement whatever strategies are developed.

The law enforcement working group meets on a regular schedule and is complemented by informal coordination among law enforcement agencies. Although the working group

concisely addresses law enforcement issues during these meetings, there is no published agenda or minutes of meeting proceedings.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Bogotá should keep minutes of the law enforcement working group meetings to maintain a record of issues discussed and decisions made during the proceedings.

Narcotics Affairs Section

Embassy Bogotá's NAS is one of the largest in the world, with 134 employees and 664 contractors. The FY 2010 NAS budget for all programs was approximately \$244 million, a significant decrease over a 3-year period from approximately \$326 million in FY 2007.

NAS is a self-sustaining unit within the mission. In some instances it has consolidated its logistical support activities with other mission management sections and has also assumed management responsibility to provide support to some mission-wide activities.

Colombia's estimated annual cocaine production potential has decreased since 2001 by 61 percent. The eradication programs, manual and aerial, have contributed to this reduction. The manual eradication program requires high levels of security and enormous logistical support, and it almost always results in social challenges when "outsiders" come in and destroy moneymaking crops. Instead of measuring the numbers of "hectares eradicated," the Government of Colombia has initiated the more effective coca-free consolidation zones. These are areas in which the Government of Colombia offers developmental assistance after coca eradication, along with providing permanent government presence to counter the return of narcotics trafficker organizations and gangs.

Aerial eradication is the favored method of halting cocaine production, but the challenges of eradication efforts have led to the adoption of different and more responsive approaches. The aerial eradication program exceeded its 2010 eradication goal. There were 47 hostile fire incidents, none of which resulted in loss of life or injury.

Adverse weather conditions in 2010 caused the worst flooding in 40 years in Colombia and produced a large number of landslides. Plan Colombia Helicopter Program (PCHP) aircraft are strategically deployed to make significant contributions to humanitarian relief efforts in addition to their primary mission, which is the eradication of cocaine. PCHP helicopters transported 619,000 pounds of relief supplies and dike-building materials and provided more than 48 hours of dedicated medical evacuations.

The highlights of NAS-supported interdiction efforts go beyond the destruction of cocaine laboratories and seizures of cocaine, marijuana, and heroin in Colombia. They include extensive regional training provided by the Government of Colombia to neighboring countries. In one training event in Colombia in 2010, 54 students from 11 Latin American countries completed international jungle commando training.

Innovative Practice: NAS Police Scholarship Program-Colombian Ethnic Minorities

Innovative Practice: NAS, in cooperation with the Colombian National Police (CNP), offers career opportunities to Afro-Colombians and other Colombian ethnic minorities in remote Colombian municipalities.

Issue: Economic, social, and security instability on the Colombian Pacific coast have created conditions favorable to narcotics traffickers and narco-based criminal gangs. These communities are inhabited principally by Colombian marginalized ethnic minorities who have few economic options and do not feel that the Government of Colombia is sympathetic to their plight.

Response: NAS and CNP jointly offered scholarships to selected CNP academies with the stipulation that successful graduates spend the first 2 years of their national police careers in their villages of origin. Initially, NAS and the CNP shared the costs of tuition, individual equipment, and monthly stipends. The CNP has agreed to nationalize the program with some continued NAS support. The Government of Colombia invested approximately \$50,000 in 2010 and has agreed to spend \$500,000 in 2011. NAS also provides materials that the police may use for building basic community medical, educational, and other facilities in conjunction with other USAID-supported Government of Colombia consolidation projects.

Result: This program provides marginalized youth an alternative to recruitment into narco-criminal activities. It establishes Government of Colombia presence in Colombian Pacific coastal communities and modifies the perception of the police in remote areas. The program has been so popular in its first year that the Government of Colombia has had to limit publicity for scholarship applications.

Nationalization

The sustainable nationalization of existing programs is a core goal of NAS Bogotá. The Government of Colombia has proved its ability to take over programs previously supported by the United States. The decrease in the NAS budget for foreign assistance programs in recent years reflects this success. Nationalization will result in the following annual program cost reductions. Some are already completed, and the ones enumerated here are proposed and/or accepted.

- Air Bridge Denial (USSOUTHCOM) \$1 million annually¹ (complete in 2012)
- ARAVI (CNP Air Service Support) \$12.74 million (complete in 2014)
- NAS Aviation Unit \$59.2 million (complete in 2012)

¹ Although most denial programs are operated by the Department of Defense, NAS contributes to contract oversight, which averages \$1 million annually. This amount reflects a significant decrease from previous budget years.

The following figures show completed cost reductions for the indicated periods:

- ARAVI (CNP Air Service Support) (Jan 2004 – July 2010) \$22.66 million
- NAS Aviation Unit (Dec 2007 – May 2010) \$37 million

The combined total NAS cost savings through nationalization programs is \$263.2 million (\$119.3 million for all completed and \$143.9 million for proposed and accepted).

Cartagena Law Enforcement Coordination

The principal U.S. law enforcement agencies in Cartagena are DEA, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. By far, the largest of these agencies is DEA. These agencies cooperate closely with the Colombian Port Authority, Navy, CNP, and NAS Bogotá. They also have excellent coordination in maritime interdiction operations.

Consular Section

The consular section does an excellent job in managing its growing workload. A strong cadre of managers and LE staff ensure that visa operations, which are returning to prerecession peaks, work smoothly. The visa referral program, however, is not in compliance with Department policies. High-profile American citizens services, which are growing with the pacification of the country and concomitant increase in tourism and investment, are outstanding, but routine transactions, such as consular birth documentation, need attention. The section's fraud prevention unit (FPU) is weak.

The consular section is integrated into the mission's activities and works closely with several agencies on matters of homeland security. (b) (5)

[REDACTED]

Informal Recommendation 4: (b) (5)

[REDACTED]

Consular Section Physical Plant

The physical plant of the consular section is cramped, with little room for expansion. Public areas are adequate. The embassy is constructing a new canopy for the consular waiting areas, which is critical in a rainy climate. Consular managers have overcome construction disruptions and have installed many new signs to direct visitors and alleviate potential confusion.

Although the waiting area is adequate, the area outside the fence where applicants form a line is half on sidewalk and half in dirt. During the frequent rains, some applicants stand in mud.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Bogotá should cover with stones or pavers the bare ground on which visa applicants stand while waiting in line.

Consular visa staff members accept applications and finger scan clients in a consular annex located in the outside visa waiting area. The building has a raised floor and a low ceiling. The facilities maintenance office informed the consular section that the building must be renovated and the floor lowered. Lowering the floor will require the consular staff to use tall chairs to perform their work at the interview windows. Because several of the consular LE staff members are short in stature, finding appropriate seating has been a challenge.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Bogotá should find reasonable seating accommodation for locally employed staff working in the consular annex before beginning renovations to the building.

Consular Management

A robust rotational program gives entry-level officers a myriad of opportunities to broaden their professional skills. Rotations vary from visa processing portfolios, to assignments in other consular section units, to details in the embassy front office. In a well-intentioned effort to provide professional development to as many officers as possible, the program features short duration rotations, usually for 3 or 4 months. These short rotations mean that the officers move out of the job just when they become proficient. Good management practices require that employees have adequate time to learn their job. In addition, officers are often rotated out of nonimmigrant visa (NIV) interviewing positions and into portfolios as little as 4 months after arrival. Another negative result of the policy is that employees who are supervised in the various portfolios have a rapid succession of supervisors and their performance reviews must be cobbled together after the fact.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Bogotá should revise its entry-level-officer rotation program in the consular section to give officers 6-month portfolios, except when circumstances dictate shorter assignments.

Outreach

More than 300,000 Colombians enter Embassy Bogotá's consular section every year for services. With such a huge number of consular customers, the mission is missing a golden opportunity to take advantage of this public diplomacy audience. The possibilities include optimization of applicant flow-through by using appointments; enhanced signage; presentations of information about U.S. programs, goals, and activities in Colombia; and a public-diplomacy-oriented visa refusal brochure for the 75,000 Colombian clients yearly who will not be traveling to the United States.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Bogotá should create a working group to find ways to take advantage of public diplomacy opportunities afforded by the 300,000 Colombians who visit the consular section annually.

No Double Standard

The dissemination of threat information at this danger pay post may violate the Department's "no double standard" policy. Some areas of Bogotá are off limits to U.S. Government employees because they are considered too dangerous. However, these areas are not identified as such in either the Colombia country-specific information sheet or the travel warning.

In addition, the embassy controls travel of its own employees throughout most of the country by delineating two safe areas (the north coast between Cartagena and Santa Marta) and the area around Bogotá (corresponding roughly to the Sabana de Bogotá plateau). The RSO approves visits to the rest of the country on a case-by-case basis after reviewing the security situation. Neither the Colombia country-specific information nor the travel warning mentions these two safe areas.

A third, lesser concern is the embassy's use of hotels that are approved in advance by the RSO. Although vetting hotels is commonplace for official travel, requiring embassy employees to use the hotels while on personal travel again raises questions about possible double standard issues.

Fourth, the RSO issues email alerts to embassy staff about demonstrations or other disruptions in traffic that might impede embassy employees and make them vulnerable to criminal acts. The RSO does not send these alerts to a public Web site for the American traveling public.

The Department's guidance on no double standard in *Foreign Affairs Manual* guideline 7 FAM 052.1 a. (1) applies to important security threat information, including criminal information. It states that "[s]uch information, if shared by the Department with the official U.S. community, generally should be made available to the non-official U.S. community if the underlying threat applies to both official and non-official Americans."

There is no evidence that the travel restrictions for embassy employees for personal travel are based on threats that would not also apply to private U.S. citizens in Colombia. Therefore, the OIG team believes that the present system may violate the Department's "no double standard" policy.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Bogotá should request from the Department of State by record communication a clarification of whether its dissemination of threat-related information is consistent with the Department of State's "no double standard" policy and alter any procedures that do not comply with this policy. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Staffing and Customer Service

Customer service in the American citizens services waiting room is not ideal. On one day at 10:15 a.m., five parents and their infants were waiting for consular report of birth abroad processing, while at the window an American woman was speaking to a consular officer about her Colombian boyfriend's NIV refusal. Because consular report of birth abroad applicants arrive between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., it is possible that some had been waiting for almost 2 hours.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Bogotá should revise its procedures for processing consular report of birth abroad cases to reduce the amount of time that applicants must wait for service in the American citizens services section.

Consular Agency Barranquilla

The consular agency in Barranquilla is located on the fifth floor of a modern office building. Access is adequately controlled, and the facility comfortably houses the two employees and the associated equipment. The agent has been working there for approximately 6 years, and the LE staff for less than a year. Both LE staff employees report that they receive good cooperation from the local authorities.

In a review of procedures, the OIG team uncovered several anomalies. The monthly cash accounting document, the daily accounting sheet, had not been completed correctly, and all funds received appeared as "discrepancies." In addition, a malfunction of the Automated Cash Register System cash register in October 2010 resulted in a virtual Colombian peso 140,000 (\$70.00) overage. (The amount of money received was correct, but the Automated Cash Register System did not account for it properly.) Although the error was explained by the cashier, there was no written record of the event in the file, contrary to guidance in 4 FAH-3 H-397.3 through 4 FAH-3 H-397.6. In addition, the Automated Cash Register System cannot accept credit or debit cards. (b) (5)

Consular agency staff reported that the embassy had promised them a shredder on several occasions but had never sent one. These problems create potential vulnerabilities and impede smooth agency operations.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Bogotá should increase supervision of the consular agency in Barranquilla by establishing a policy of visiting the agency at least three times a year for at least 2 days each visit to confirm that the agency is following cash accountability procedures and has the resources it needs to operate efficiently. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Nonimmigrant Visas

Embassy Bogotá's NIV workload remains the major element of its consular caseload, and consular management estimates the NIV unit will process 290,000 cases in FY 2011. NIV adjudications in Colombia take place in an environment replete with document fraud and verbal

misrepresentation. Adjudicators must also remain alert to applicants with serious grounds for ineligibility—including narcotics traffickers, money launderers, and terrorists—and their family members. Although the overall refusal rate of 30 percent has remained stable over several years, individual adjudicators' performances varied considerably—refusal rates varied from 20 to 40 percent and the number of daily interviews ranged from 75 to 150.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Bogotá should require its nonimmigrant visa managers to establish a regular schedule for discussions on adjudication criteria and interviewing techniques to standardize the process and make refusal rates among officers more uniform.

The OIG team determined that some NIV refusals were reopened by supervisors and approved based on additional information not available during initial interviews. Although the approving officers created appropriate notes and scanned relevant correspondence into the cases, the applicants did not submit new NIV applications or pay required fees, as stipulated in 9 FAM 41.121 N2.3-7 and N2.5, which describe internal reviews of refusals and reapplication procedures, respectively.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy requiring the submission of new applications and fees for all cases of reconsidered nonimmigrant visa refusals per Department of State guidance.

Embassy Bogotá staff would like to install four additional visa interview windows to ease bottlenecks, primarily in NIV processing. The OIG team believes that careful rescheduling of NIV appointments can allow the section to make additional use of its existing windows. An adjusted workflow will also reduce applicants' waiting times. During the inspection, the OIG team observed that priority applicants—foreign diplomats, business program travelers, and some referrals—had been waiting for more than 90 minutes to be interviewed.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Bogotá should revise its nonimmigrant visa priority processing procedures so that priority applicants are seen and interviewed in a timely manner.

Visas Viper

Embassy Bogotá's Visas Viper committee conducts its business with active consular participation. The DCM chairs monthly meetings, and all relevant offices at the embassy attend. The embassy submitted four of the monthly reports in the past year slightly past reporting deadlines but otherwise followed proper procedures in reporting significant new information.

Nonimmigrant Visa Referrals

The NIV referral system in Bogotá does not follow the 9 FAM Appendix K guidelines that require specific procedures for submitting and adjudicating these NIV applications. In the time period from February 2010 to February 2011, the consular section processed 2,102 NIV referrals. In the 6 months before the August 2010 arrival of the present consul general, the mix of

Class A and B referrals was typical of that of other posts. In the 6 months since August 2010, the number of Class A referrals has plummeted by 90 percent.

Embassy Bogotá Referrals 2010–2011

Period	Dates	Total Referrals	Class A Referrals	Class B Referrals
1 Year	2/16/2010 – 2/15/2011	2,102	401	1,701
6 Months	2/16/2010 – 8/15/2010	1,007	368	639
6 Months	8/16/2010 – 2/15/2011	1,095	33	1,062

In addition, from August 2010 to February 2011, the consul general personally adjudicated only four referral cases, two of them in the 2 weeks following the arrival of the OIG team. The FS-01 NIV chief had adjudicated only 10 Class A referrals and 12 Class B referrals in that same 6-month period.

According to the post referral policy, the consular section was processing cases of prominent and influential travelers as Class B referrals. In addition, the FS-02 deputy NIV chief was routinely adjudicating Class B referrals. In the absence of the deputy NIV chief, the responsibility for referral adjudication devolved downward to a recently tenured entry-level officer. Because of post’s policy of discouraging Class A referrals, the entry-level officer is in effect adjudicating what normally would be Class A referrals in a consular section that has an FE-MC (minister counselor), an FS-01, and an FS-02 officer. During the 6 months from August 2010 to February 2011, the entry-level officer backup referral adjudicator processed 120 cases, more than five times as many as the NIV chief.

Embassy Bogotá’s referral policy was originally based on 9 FAM Appendix K, Exhibit I. The consular section had made a small number of key changes, such as adding a notation after the header of the Class A criteria that require all potential referrers of Class A referrals to “[Please discuss with Consul General in advance]”; a notation after the header in the Class B criteria “[almost all Embassy Bogotá visa referrals]”; and a note in the paragraph discussing the DS-2019 requirements that “Class B-referrals are preferred” for U.S. Government-sponsored exchanged program participants. The effect of these changes is to alter the definitions of the Criteria A and B referrals as presented in the 9 FAM exhibit, which is in violation of 9 FAM Appendix K, 201 a. The end result is a 90 percent reduction in Class A referrals since August 2010.

The OIG team reviewed a small sample of referrals conducted in the 6 months from August 2010 to February 2011. About a quarter of the cases reviewed had no clear U.S. Government interest noted on the referral form. Of particular concern to the OIG team were referrals for informants (and their families) of the law enforcement elements of the mission.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement nonimmigrant visa referral procedures that comply with Department of State guidance regarding Class A and B visa referrals. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Bogotá should draft and disseminate a notice from the Ambassador to all potential referring officers in the mission that explains the changes to the visa referral program. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

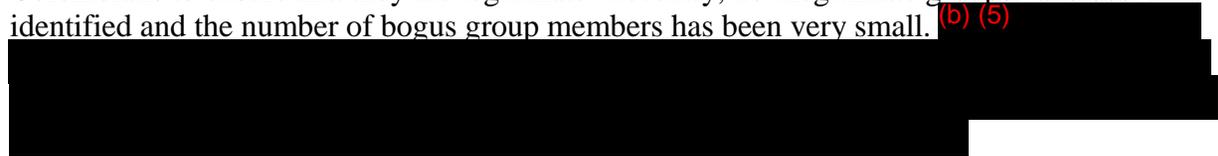
Immigrant Visas

The immigrant visa (IV) unit staffing levels, discussed in the 2006 OIG inspection report, are adequate for workload in the near future. The IV unit processed more than 12,000 applications in 2010, a 9 percent increase from 2009. Colocated with its much larger NIV counterpart, the IV unit competes for the same intake and interview windows during peak periods. As a result, some IV applicants must wait as long as 5 hours for their interviews. During the OIG inspection, the IV manager requested that the National Visa Center stagger appointment times beginning in April 2011 to reduce existing interview wait times. This and other adjustments to locally made appointments can also alleviate overall congestion at the intake and interview windows and help maximize their use.

Fraud Prevention Unit

Colombia has one of the most pervasive and sophisticated fraud environments in the world. The FPU is staffed by three officers, an eligible family member (EFM), and four LE staff members. In addition, an assistant regional security officer-investigator is colocated in the FPU.

For several reasons, the FPU is not as important an element of the consular operation as it could or should be. First, the unit chief has little overseas consular experience and has not elucidated a strategic vision for the unit. She has also not created a fraud prevention plan, as is required by the Consular Management Handbook (7 FAH-1 H-935.1 b.). Second, the rotating officers are not selected from the longest serving officers in the section. For example, the deputy fraud manager had only 4 months of visa experience in Bogotá before she rotated into the FPU. Third, the unit spends a disproportionate amount of time performing activities that yield few results. For example, the unit estimates that it spends 40 percent of its resources vetting groups of Colombians to ensure that they are legitimate. Recently, no illegitimate groups have been identified and the number of bogus group members has been very small. (b) (5)



One measure of the dysfunction of the unit is the percentage of cases referred from the visa interview line that are confirmed as fraudulent. In Bogotá's case, in approximately 90 percent of the cases that the FPU reviewed, it found no evidence of fraud. That means that the line officers do not have the knowledge to identify fraud and/or that they are reluctant to issue visas without a check by the FPU. In any case, it is a poor use of the line officers' and FPU's time to review cases that are overwhelmingly not fraudulent. In addition, several of the NIV officers commented that they did not get useful information from the FPU.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should convene a fraud prevention planning conference to create a fraud prevention plan that

meets the needs of the consular line officers and other constituents. The embassy should seek Department of State approval to invite a fraud management expert from the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Fraud Prevention Programs, to participate in the conference. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with CA)

One of the most important roles that the FPU can play is to provide line officers with feedback via validation studies. These studies are required for all referral cases. In Bogotá, the FPA staff had not completed any validation studies from May 2010 to February 2011.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Bogotá should increase the number and frequency of nonimmigrant visa validation studies.

Resource Management

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire	FMA & EFM	LE Staff	Total Staff	Funding FY 2010
Department of State – Program	99	11	22	132	\$7,351,016
Department – ICASS	14	11	216	241	\$14,374,400
Department – Diplomatic Security	2		5	7	\$2,642,266
Department – Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations					\$6,705,867
Department – Public Diplomacy	6	1	25	32	\$2,841,769
Department – Public Diplomacy Representation					\$75,980
Department – Consular Affairs	34	9	48	91	\$1,740,962
Department – Representation					\$62,600
Department – Marine Security Guard Support	13		3	16	\$203,502
Department – Narcotics	9	38	87	134	\$243,895,000
Department – Bureau of Refugees	1		1	2	\$155,000
Department –Antiterrorism					\$390,342
Broadcasting Board of Governors Affiliates					
Subtotal Department of State	178	70	407	655	\$280,438,704
Department of Agriculture – Foreign Agriculture Service	2		5	7	\$818,793
DOA – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	1		12	13	\$1,477,328
Department of Commerce – Foreign Commercial Service	2	1	10	13	\$802,996
DHS – U.S. Secret Service	5		3	8	\$648,150
DHS – Immigration and Customs Enforcement	6		4	10	\$1,872,208
DHS – Customs and Border Protection Container Security*	4		1	5	\$237,975
DHS – Customs and Border Protection Container Security Special Investigations*	1			1	
Defense Intelligence Agency	17	1	8	26	\$1,102,916
Department of Justice – Drug Enforcement Administration	119	7	27	153	\$20,360,000
Department of Justice – Criminal Division - Office of Prosecutorial Assistance and Training	3		13	16	\$12,036,996
Department of Justice – Plan Colombia - Justice System Reform	2		3	5	\$7,900,000
Department of Justice – Criminal Division – Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs	2	1	3	6	

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire	FMA & EFM	LE Staff	Total Staff	Funding FY 2010
Department of Justice – Federal Bureau of Investigation Legal Attaches	7			7	\$430,000
Department of Justice – International Investigative Training Assistance Program	2		5	7	\$10,963,004
Department of Justice – Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives	3		5	8	\$492,500
Department of Treasury	2		2	4	\$227,000
Department of Treasury – Office of Foreign Assets Control	2		3	5	\$517,058
Defense Agency Operations					\$2,245,790
Department of Army – Corp of Engineers	2		9	11	\$600,000
Department of the Army – Force Protection Detachment	6	1	1	8	\$62,000
Army – Strategic Leadership Division	3			3	
Defense Security Cooperation	7		3	10	\$1,100,000
U.S. Southern Command – Asuncion					
Army - SOUTHCOM - Operations and Maintenance	23	1	13	37	\$3,600,000
Army - SOUTHCOM - Counterdrug Teams Tacts	26		4	30	\$41,200,000
Army - SOUTHCOM - Traditional CINC Activities	1			1	\$25,000
Navy – Marines OLMSTEAD Scholar	3			3	
Navy – Personnel Exchange Program	1			1	
Peace Corps	3		2	5	\$962,700
U.S. Agency for International Development	22	3	20	45	\$3,800,000
USAID – Economic Support Funds	4	4	39	47	\$201,800,000
USAID – Office of Transition Initiatives		2	1	3	\$165,842
Subtotal Other Agencies	281	21	196	498	\$315,448,256
Total	459	91	603	1153	\$595,886,960

Source: Embassy Bogotá

*U.S. Customs and Border Protection offices have a combined budget.

Management Issues

This inspection of Embassy Bogotá revealed a number of management irregularities and deficiencies. The same or similar issues have appeared in OIG inspection reports since at least 2000. Although the embassy and OIG have followed routine compliance procedures, the problems still exist.

The OIG team believes that, over the years, the embassy and WHA have not paid sufficient attention to resolving the deficiencies that are described in this and past reports. Daily operations are not being conducted as effectively as they should be, and routine internal control procedures are not in place. The inability of the sections to perform basic functions has had a number of consequences, including numerous complaints from customers. Staff turnover in key sections and numerous vacancies are possibly a result of the high-pressure of working with insufficient staff and resources in this large and complex mission.

Embassy Bogotá must ensure that strategic planning and growth are effectively coordinated with staffing and funding levels. The mission has a culture of allowing program expansion, especially by other agencies, while underestimating the resource implications of the mission's growth. Since 2000, two OIG inspection reports and one compliance follow-up review have stated that the ICASS platform is insufficient to provide adequate services to the interagency community. Very little has been done to change that judgment. It is unlikely that the problem would be resolved simply by adding more financial resources, even if those resources were available.

The embassy does not have a plan that comprehensively outlines what is needed to make the management platform whole. It is time to confront these issues head on with innovative solutions. The embassy must review all options at its disposal, including the following:

- prioritizing facility and staff requirements;
- improving management coordination among the large number of U.S. Government agencies and consolidating duplicative management platforms to gain efficiencies;
- strengthening the management platform that underpins operations; and
- addressing human infrastructure through programs designed to create a corps of well-trained and experienced officers, specialists, and LE staff.

There is a serious need for a more comprehensive analysis of workload, management vulnerabilities, and critical infrastructure needs. Mission Bogotá has too many pressing issues to confront to be able to manage such a review itself.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, should prepare an analysis of anticipated changes in the U.S. Government presence in Colombia, and its management support needs, that prioritizes options for short-term fixes and long-term solutions and aligns human and financial resources. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and M/PRI)

Embassy Bogotá must institute better and more effective approaches to overseeing basic management operations. The front office has expressed support but needs to do more. Over the past 10 years, the various management counselors have not been able to turn the management section into an efficient customer-oriented support platform or to make it run efficiently. The OIG team believes that the DCM, with the support of the Ambassador, should be more closely involved and that he should be working directly with the management counselor to analyze what is not working and why and to determine appropriate methods of strengthening the operation.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Bogotá should establish a problem-solving working group that meets monthly and is chaired by the deputy chief of mission and attended by the management counselor and key members of the mission team to address systemic problems with management services.

Human Resources

The human resources unit is reasonably staffed and technically competent. In OIG questionnaires and interviews, embassy personnel complained about customer service, hiring decisions, and the lack of EFM employment work opportunities. Although there was merit to some of the complaints, the staff members do a reasonable job of accommodating a diverse number of agencies and LE staff members.

Savings Plan for Locally Employed Staff

LE staff members are not satisfied with the current supplemental savings plan. Their wish is to have a savings plan that allows them to place contributions in one of three funds: a credit union fund operated by “Cooperativa Alianza,” a voluntary pension fund run by “Proteccion,” and a trust fund administered by Helm Bank. At this time, the only option LE staff members have is to invest their contributions in the embassy-approved credit union fund. If an employee does not have an account at the credit union, he or she is not eligible to receive the embassy’s matching contribution. In addition, LE staff would like the option to invest in a plan that might yield higher returns.

The embassy has worked diligently to develop a viable savings plan that meets LE staff wishes, as well as American and Colombian regulatory requirements, and has formulated a three-tiered approach. After 5 years of effort, the option to allow LE staff to invest in a voluntary pension plan has been submitted and is pending Office of Overseas Employment approval. The post has successfully addressed a number of legal issues associated with this option. Under this approach, LE staff members will be able to elect to invest in the credit union fund or in the voluntary pension fund. They will also have a third investment option, a trust fund, once the embassy finalizes its agreement to allow Helm Bank to manage LE contributions. Helm Bank already manages mission contributions deposited into a trust fund.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should seek approval for the Helm Bank Trust to administer and manage locally employed staff contributions and finalize the written agreement to that effect. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 19: The Bureau of Resource Management, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should provide Embassy Bogotá with a timeline that includes the date when the proposed three-tiered savings plan will be included in the local compensation plan and the date when locally employed staff can begin to select their investment plan. (Action: RM, in coordination with DGHR and WHA)

Financial Management

The understaffed financial management unit has experienced an increasing workload. As a result, the unit's productivity has declined, and its ICASS scores have declined from good to below average. Over a 4-year period, the voucher workload increased by 53 percent or by 9,522 vouchers. The last time a position was added to the unit was 7 years ago.

Staffing gaps have plagued the unit. (b) (6)

Some staff stayed as late as 11:00 p.m. to keep up with demand. Altogether, the staff members worked many hours of overtime and, in some instances, were not compensated for this work. In FY 2010, LE staff worked 1,789 hours of overtime and 494 hours of compensatory time.

The financial management unit has not always paid vendors on time, a situation that has led to many complaints. As a result, some vendors do not want to do business with the embassy or the EBO in Cartagena. The unit has a significant backlog of travel advances, vouchers, and accounts receivable. Clearing these transactions will take additional hours of work. (Also see the Management Controls section of this report.)

To turn around performance, the financial management unit began to outsource its travel voucher function to the Department's Financial Services Centers' post support units. This change has greatly improved customer service. Travelers say that vouchers are processed and paid within 48 hours. Not having to review travel vouchers will allow the unit's 11 voucher examiners to concentrate on other types of vouchers. The post support unit charges \$12 per voucher and has agreed to process 1,667 travel vouchers at a cost of \$20,000.

The cost for post support units to process the unit's estimated 7,000 annual travel vouchers would be approximately \$84,000. The other option would be for the embassy to hire four voucher examiners at a cost of \$120,000. Clearly, outsourcing is the more cost-effective method for handling travel vouchers.

The financial management unit has one of the heaviest workloads worldwide. In FY 2010, the unit processed more than 27,000 vouchers, which equates to 2,566 vouchers annually per examiner. With the addition of four staff, the unit's ratio would fall to 1,882 vouchers per examiner. With outsourcing, the ratio would fall to 2,000 per voucher examiner. Thus the unit could elect either option, but the more cost effective appears to be outsourcing. Embassy Bogotá's voucher workload exceeds other large posts such as Beijing, Brasilia, London, Mexico City, and Rome.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Bogotá should continue to outsource its travel voucher payment function to the Department's Financial Services Centers' post support units until it has eliminated its backlog of unprocessed vouchers and has demonstrated that it can manage the workload without such assistance. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

The ICASS council is active and functions adequately, but several smaller agencies have complained about the budget impact of decisions made by the larger agencies at post. This difference of opinion has complicated the ICASS council's deliberations over the past year. Adding to the stress is the difficulty the Department has had in funding approved ICASS positions. Five LE staff positions have been approved but remain unfilled.

One of the leanest management operations worldwide, the ICASS platform at Embassy Bogotá has 14 U.S. direct-hire positions to support 1,155 employees. In 2010, the section supported 419 high-level visits, including the Secretaries of State and Defense. The management section provides minimal support to some of the 2,403 contractors. ICASS also provides basic support to 6,000–7,000 temporary duty personnel annually. The management section is understaffed in some areas to handle this number of personnel, and funding is not available to increase the number of ICASS positions.

Costs for Temporary Duty Personnel

In 2010, a heavy concentration of temporary duty personnel and frequent high-level visitors placed a strain on the management platform. Department policy prevents the mission from charging the actual cost of providing services to these users. This policy states that temporary duty personnel are not charged until they consume \$500 in services. Thus the mission was unable to recapture approximately \$2 million expended in the support of temporary duty personnel. Instead, in 2010, the mission charged and recaptured only \$156,975. The majority of temporary duty personnel who stayed less than 162 days paid nothing for services rendered. There is no way to capture this level of support in the base ICASS budget. For Embassy Bogotá, the Department's temporary duty ICASS policy does not allow the mission to keep up with demand, hire more staff, and provide quality administrative service.

Recommendation 21: The Bureau of Resource Management, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the Office of the Legal Adviser, and Embassy Bogotá, should revise the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services policy on temporary duty personnel to capture the actual cost of providing administrative support to temporary personnel. (Action: RM, in coordination with WHA, L, and Embassy Bogotá)

Some agencies at Embassy Bogotá use a series of temporary personnel to fill authorized positions. There is no mechanism in place to track this practice. During the inspection, the OIG inspectors learned that a Coast Guard position was filled for 11 months without the knowledge of the management section. ICASS support costs were not charged. The officer did not request country clearance through the normal channels. The embassy needs a more formalized check-in and check-out procedure to capture all temporary duty personnel.

Recommendation 22: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a written policy requiring agencies to declare in their International Cooperative Administrative Support Services agreements the number of authorized positions being filled with temporary duty personnel so that Embassy Bogotá can bill the appropriate charges. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 23: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a procedure that requires all temporary duty personnel to check in and out upon their arrival and departure, respectively. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Embassy Branch Office Cartagena

Embassy Bogotá is not providing adequate support to EBO Cartagena. The principal purpose of establishing an EBO in Cartagena was to provide diplomatic privileges and protection to the 53 personnel, primarily DEA agents, who have been stationed there since 2001. However, in 2008 when the operation in Cartagena was declared to be an EBO, the embassy and DEA did not establish a clear understanding of which services were to be provided by the embassy and which by DEA. The distance between Cartagena and Bogotá exacerbates the situation. In addition, DEA had been operating independently for 7 years. The embassy has provided some personnel to Cartagena to oversee ICASS support activities, but this support has not been steady and has not resolved the issues raised by EBO Cartagena. Lack of available personnel in Bogotá, backlogs in management service areas in Bogotá, and budget restrictions have severely limited this already minimal embassy support.

The four law enforcement groups in Cartagena have voiced multiple complaints about residential maintenance. Some agents said that landlords are not responsive to their maintenance requests. Upon review, many of the requests were for small repairs such as leaks, loose door handles, and mold due to climate conditions. More immediate requests were to fix broken air conditioning units and hot water heaters. Because some of the residential leases are paid in advance, the mission has no leverage to compel landlords to make timely repairs. Other complaints were about late vendor payments and inadequate medical care.

The embassy has been trying to resolve the EBO support issues. The mission approved the reallocation of three LE staff positions: a general services assistant, an electrician, and a driver/administrative assistant. The embassy also proposed creating two EFM positions: a general services officer and a community liaison officer. These positions have not been funded.

Because this is a unique situation, the OIG team discussed various options to improve administrative services. One approach would be to convert EBO housing from the short-term-lease system to the living-quarters-allowance method. DEA leadership was receptive to this idea, as it is practiced at other WHA posts such as Guatemala City, Panama City, and Quito. This option would be cost effective and would relieve the mission of providing support in the housing area.

Another option would be to make DEA the alternate service provider. Because DEA has its own management staff, this approach offers some possibilities. DEA has five positions authorized and three vacant positions.

Recommendation 24: Embassy Bogotá should conduct a pilot test for using the living-quarters-allowance system to lease residential units in Cartagena, compare it to the short-term-lease method, and select the more cost-effective and less problematic option. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 25: Embassy Bogotá should designate the Drug Enforcement Administration as the alternate administrative services provider for the Embassy Branch Office in Cartagena on a trial basis to determine whether it is the better option for providing these services. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

General Services Office

The general services office, with its four officers and a professional associate, is stretched extremely thin. Staffing gaps have exacerbated the unit's management challenges. Although the 2010 ICASS survey scores were above average, customer service ratings in more recent OIG surveys and interviews were lower.

Procurement and Contracting

The professional associate assigned as the contracting and procurement supervisor is on her first tour. She faces a number of significant challenges in managing an expansive portfolio of high-value contracts. In 2010, the unit processed 5,570 actions totaling \$22 million. During the last 2 months of FY 2010, the unit processed 36 percent of these procurements and awarded 10 contracts amounting to \$935,936.

In the 7 months prior to the OIG inspection, the unit lost four of its nine LE staff members, including the senior LE supervisor. One LE staff member retired, one left for an outside job, and two took positions in NAS. Training and experience are critical factors in the efficient operation of the unit. As a result of the rising demands, heavy workload, and budget constraints, LE staff is hard pressed to provide the level of service required.

Without the assistance from other agencies that have their own procurement sections, the unit's two contracting experts would be unable to handle the workload. The unit must rely on the superior technical knowledge for specialized contracts found in NAS, USAID, the Military Group, and throughout the Department. In 2010, this small unit processed 25 formal contracts and 1,100 contract modifications.

The unit is now down to one LE staff contracting officer and will be unable to meet the surge in the summer of 2011 without recruitment and training of additional personnel. Agencies routinely present incomplete documentation or last-minute requests for procurement or contracting, which leads to confusion, adds to the workload, and prohibits advance planning in areas such as year-end spending. (b) (5)

Recommendation 26: Embassy Bogotá should perform a job analysis for each of the vacant positions in the procurement and contracting section, advertise and fill the positions, and train the

incoming staff. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 27: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy that requires serviced agencies to prepare and submit acquisition plans that include year-end spending. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

There is currently no tracking tool that integrates the contract and procurement process with financial management for tracking payments and processing transactions, which constitutes a vulnerability.

Recommendation 28: Embassy Bogotá should identify and implement a database to track contracts from receipt of contract specifications through liquidation of payments. The database should include automatic notifications when contracts are due for renewal. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Both the ARIBA off-the-shelf procurement tracking software and the Integrated Logistics Management System used to procure goods and services unexpectedly deleted and dropped procurement actions. It takes additional time to research and re-input these actions every time there is a glitch, which has slowed the procurement process significantly. Some agencies were so frustrated that they refused to use these systems. As result, the procurement clerks had to enter the data manually, which increased their workload. The Federal Procurement Data System report showed 100 problems encountered with attempted procurements, which all appear to be due to technical glitches in the system.

Recommendation 29: The Bureau of Administration should review the performance of the ARIBA software and resolve software technical problems and glitches experienced by users. (Action: A)

Recommendation 30: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy that requires serviced agencies to use the ARIBA and Integrated Logistics Management System for all procurement requests. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Property Management

The personal property management section handles an inventory valued at approximately \$9.4 million. Shortages are very low – around 0.29 percent. Management controls are in place, and property management records are well maintained. The staff members try to keep excess property to a minimum and conduct regular auctions, but the warehouse is still crowded.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Bogotá should determine the feasibility of just-in-time shipments of furniture with the Department's Office of the Procurement Executive and the Regional Procurement Support Office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Embassy Bogotá agencies have duplicative property management staff and separate warehouse facilities. NAS and USAID consolidated property management operations, saving approximately \$77,000 annually. According to embassy personnel, the Department was not

included in this merger because NAS and USAID did not want to merge their warehouses under Department management. The NAS-USAID warehouse facilities are contiguous to the embassy-leased warehouse, thus the physical layout of the facilities lends itself to further consolidation. Not consolidating all inventories requires more warehouse space and increased labor costs than are necessary. In discussions with the OIG team, NAS and the management section were receptive to the idea of NAS becoming the alternate service provider for property management.

Recommendation 31: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should consolidate duplicative property management staff and warehouses. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and INL)

The establishment of mission-wide appliance and furniture pools would minimize the need for warehouse space, achieve greater efficiency in managing inventories of nonexpendable property, and offer several other advantages. Specifically, it would simplify inventory recordkeeping and procurement actions and ensure uniform quality and quantity of household furnishings. In addition, it would save time and money and prevent the unnecessary effort and potential damage involved in moving furniture and appliances whenever occupancy of a residence passes from one agency to another.

Recommendation 32: Embassy Bogotá should coordinate with its International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council to develop and implement mission-wide appliance and furniture pools. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Real Property in Cartagena

In Cartagena, the short-term-leased facility known as the Chambacú Building and occupied primarily by DEA is in poor condition. The facilities manager conducted an inspection of the building and found a number of electrical, air conditioning, and maintenance deficiencies. He believes that the building's support systems will fail. The building does not meet Department safety or building codes. There are 27 landlords that own the building as tenants in common, and reaching agreement upon repairs is difficult. Chambacú is a multitenant building, with U.S. agencies occupying the fifth floor.

The lease for the space in the Chambacú Building expires in August 2011. Representatives from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations told the OIG team that they plan to send staff to Cartagena to renegotiate the lease. DEA personnel told the OIG team that there were no other suitable facilities in Cartagena and that they had no funds to use for relocation. DEA expects the \$400,000 lease cost to increase during the renegotiation. The classified annex to this inspection report contains further information on the Chambacú Building.

Motor Pool

The motor pool received high marks on OIG questionnaires. However, the average age of vehicles in the fleet is 9 years, and many have exceeded the Department's vehicle replacement guidelines. Fuel consumption is also high. The fleet gets a combined average of 7 miles per

gallon. Because of the lack of effective monitoring, the OIG team could not determine the reason for the low mileage.

Recommendation 33: Embassy Bogotá should develop and implement a procedure to monitor vehicle fuel consumption on a routine basis and to investigate any irregularities immediately. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

LE staff and local vendors perform routine maintenance and repair. The embassy's garage is primitive, with minimal supplies and tools. Diagnostic equipment is insufficient for the fleet size. Garage life and safety measures must be improved. The ventilation system is also inadequate, and there are no emergency breathing apparatuses.

Fixing garage life and safety deficiencies, providing training, and equipping the garage facility to provide proper fleet maintenance would cost approximately \$750,000. Given the age of the vehicles and the long lead time to replace armored vehicles, the cost could be higher. Outsourcing the vehicle maintenance function might be more cost effective. Armored vehicles require regular maintenance to overcome the stress of the heavy armor on the vehicle's drive train, suspension, and braking systems. Certified mechanics may perform mechanical work or preventive maintenance on armored vehicles but only while being observed by an embassy employee (see 12 FAM 386).

Recommendation 34: Embassy Bogotá should perform a cost-benefit analysis of the merits of outsourcing vehicle maintenance and determine whether it is more feasible and economical than performing in-house maintenance. Any outsourcing of maintenance work for armored vehicles must include the availability of motor pool personnel to accompany and observe mechanical work performed by nonembassy employees. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Fire and Life Safety

Several safety, health, and environmental management issues require attention. The short-term-leased residences are not equipped with fire extinguishers that meet Department standards. A number of short-term residences have no secondary egress. Depending on the landscape, the Bogotá fire departments may not have the equipment necessary to reach apartments above the tenth floor.

Recommendation 35: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy that all leased residential units without a secondary egress be located on or below the tenth floor of buildings. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

According to Embassy Bogotá's Safety, Health, and Environmental Management report, the fire extinguishers in residential units do not meet Department standards. This issue is still unresolved.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Bogotá should work with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations to install fire extinguishers that meet Department of State standards in all residential units.

The paper shredder is located inside the warehouse on the second level, along with a large amount of shredded material. There is also a large quantity of recyclable cardboard material that is improperly stored under the wooden second floor of the warehouse.

Recommendation 36: Embassy Bogotá should move the shredding machine to a secure location outside the warehouse to reduce the potential accidental fire hazard. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 37: Embassy Bogotá should move the recycling materials from inside the warehouse to a more suitable location. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Housing

The general services office effectively administers a housing program that includes 331 apartments in Bogotá and 38 in Cartagena. The OIG team found a random sample of apartments to be of exceptional quality. The majority of employees are pleased with their housing, although there were some complaints about assignments. Some staff members with special needs were overlooked either because they did not inform the embassy of their requirements or because suitable apartments were not available.

Recommendation 38: Embassy Bogotá should revise its standard communication with newly assigned personnel so that the basis for housing assignments is clear. The standard communication should note that information on medical considerations should be provided by incoming personnel so that the embassy can take this information into account when making housing assignments. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

In FY 2010, the office handled 170 apartment turnovers with 5 LE maintenance staff members. Because of the small staff size, the embassy is forced to rely heavily on landlord willingness to carry out even minor maintenance requests. Although landlords do make some repairs, the large number of work order requests overwhelms the staff. In 2010, the facilities crew processed 2,650 official work orders and almost the same number of informal requests. In most cases, the landlord or an embassy-selected contractor makes the repairs within 60 to 90 days. However, there are occasions in which some repairs are still pending after 6 months. The OIG team counseled housing staff to take a more aggressive posture in dealings with recalcitrant landlords.

Recommendation 39: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy to enforce the lease provision that mandates the landlord to undertake needed repairs to leased residences within 72 hours. If the landlord does not respond, the embassy should automatically make the repairs and deduct the cost from the rental payments. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 40: Embassy Bogotá should review the short-term residential maintenance workload and request additional positions as warranted. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

The definition of what constitutes normal wear and tear versus damage to a residence is not clear. The OIG team heard complaints from employees regarding their having to pay hefty amounts for apartment damages. Factually, most employees were charged minimal amounts for

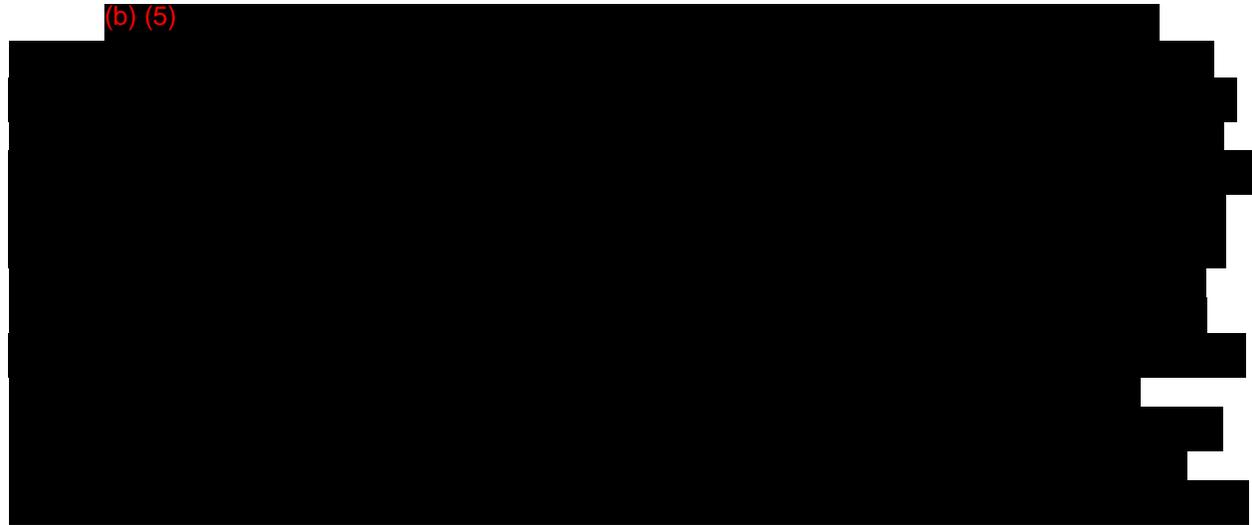
damages. There were some that were charged \$500 and a few several thousands of dollars. The combination of rumors and ill-defined policy negatively affect morale. The embassy's check-out procedure includes a walkthrough with housing and facilities maintenance staff to review the condition of the leased apartment. However, the procedures are ambiguous and require further definition to resolve questions about damages.

Recommendation 41: Embassy Bogotá should create a document that explains in detail the check-out procedure, the employee's responsibility for damages, and the definition of normal wear and tear, including examples of wear and tear and past damages assessed. The embassy should require that all newly arrived employees sign this document during the check-in process to confirm their understanding of the policy. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Regional Security Office Program Management

The RSO has been asked to conduct a significant number of background investigations over the past 2 years, and despite efforts to complete investigations on time, the section remains overwhelmed, particularly in cases involving contract employee, Colombian National Police, and LE staff investigations. The regional security officer directed his staff to focus on the timely completion of investigations; however, these efforts have not reduced the backlog owing to the constant influx of new cases. Furthermore, the investigators conducted 6,900 name checks in 2009; 5,100 in 2010; and, at the current rate, are likely to conduct more than 8,000 name checks in 2011. Additional responsibilities include police liaison and travel in support of congressional delegations and other high-profile visits.

(b) (5)



Information Management and Information Security

Embassy Bogotá operates one of the largest information management (IM) and information systems security programs in the world. Inadequacies in staffing have plagued the IM program for years, even predating the 2006 OIG inspection report. The IM program continues to incur major deficiencies in key areas of operational necessity. Surprisingly, Embassy Bogotá's IM program has been able to overcome these shortcomings and achieve high

scores in ICASS surveys and OIG questionnaires. Staff morale is high, and a teamwork structure is evident throughout the program.

The IM program provides off-site support to the EBO in Cartagena, the general services office/NAS warehouse, the Guaymaral facility, and a small network at the consular agency in Barranquilla. In addition to regular IM duties, the program supports frequent high-profile visits to the region. IM staff has consistently met these requirements. Furthermore, the Bogotá IM program also supports a regional BlackBerry program that provides services to missions in Barbados, Peru, Panama, and Venezuela.

The OIG team identified several areas that need immediate attention to ensure efficient IM operations. These include management of the mission's Dedicated Internet Networks (DIN), check-in and check-out procedures, radio program support, and training. The mission has addressed some of the concerns, and some remedial activities are in progress. Information security issues are covered in the classified annex to this report.

Information Management Staffing

Embassy Bogotá has long tried to acquire additional IM positions. The last two MSRPs have identified the need for more American systems personnel. There are several IM areas of responsibility that are not fully covered. It is imperative that the program be staffed according to operational responsibility. The classified annex to this report discusses this issue in more detail.

Check-in Check-out Procedures

The check-in and check-out procedures for temporary duty personnel at Embassy Bogotá are flawed. Although check-in and check-out lists are in use, the IM items are not being completed by employees. As a result, users arrive and depart without appropriate notification to the Information Programs Center and the Information Systems Center, and thus neither network is being administered according to Department regulations. This lack of network monitoring creates vulnerabilities associated with the improper management of user accounts.

Recommendation 42: Embassy Bogotá should establish procedures requiring all temporary duty and permanent personnel to complete all information management items on the embassy's check-in and check-out lists. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Dedicated Internet Network Management

Embassy Bogotá has multiple DINs located throughout the compound. However, the mission does not have records for each DIN. There are no standard operating procedures for maintaining the networks or a clear justification for having established so many. A DIN establishment has to show a clear need that cannot be met by the unclassified network. A justification and all 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 the management of the Department's OpenNet. Furthermore, lack of appropriate management and security of the networks can potentially expose government-owned

computers to vulnerabilities. During the course of the inspection, the OIG team found a wireless router operating in PAS. The information management officer was not notified of the establishment of the wireless network, which further indicates a need to standardize the operation and management of the DINs. Embassy Bogotá recognizes the deficiencies in its DIN management and has started to inventory and consolidate the networks and to implement controls to secure them as outlined in 5 FAM 872.

Recommendation 43: Embassy Bogotá should complete the inventory and consolidation of its Dedicated Internet Networks and register them with the Bureau of Information Resource Management. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 44: Embassy Bogotá should establish and document standard operating procedures for Dedicated Internet Network management. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Constituent Support

Embassy Bogotá's IM program does not include quarterly or semiannual support visits to the mission's off-site locations in Cartagena and Barranquilla. A site review of the EBO IM resources revealed the need for operational attention. Quarterly preventive maintenance visits to a mission's constituent posts are standard throughout the Department. IM management has stated that lack of funds has been a primary reason for not making more visits. Nevertheless, IM management is responsible for the servicing and operation of all Department-owned equipment. Without appropriate scheduling for the site visits, IM operations at the mission's off-site locations are susceptible to service interruptions and vulnerabilities.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Bogotá should establish a schedule for and fund quarterly operational visits by information management staff to off-site locations in Cartagena and Barranquilla.

Radio Program

The radio program at Embassy Bogotá includes over 1,000 transceivers and continues to grow. The program is managed by one radio technician who was initially hired to support a network less than half its current size. A number of the technician's current duties and responsibilities are not identified in the individual's position description and are therefore not being accounted for by ICASS. For example, the inherited responsibilities for supporting the multiple tenant-agency networks are beginning to rival the duties the technician was originally hired to perform. The combined radio networks of all tenant agencies at the mission have surpassed the network currently operated by the Department. Support and administration duties for these networks are substantial and warrant an additional position. The OIG team learned that an LE radio technician position was approved by the ICASS council but was never funded. Embassy management agrees with the need for an additional radio technician to ensure consistent maintenance of the radio inventory and equipment.

Recommendation 45: Embassy Bogotá should promptly fill the locally employed radio technician position. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Training of Systems Staff

The information systems staff has not been consistently granted approval for the technical training necessary to ensure quality information technology support. The deployed systems at this mission are too complex to be learned through trial and error; formal training is necessary. It would be prudent to provide platform administrators the appropriate training through formalized courses at the Foreign Service Institute. Without periodic technical training, IM staff members will be unable to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

Recommendation 46: Embassy Bogotá should establish a training regimen for information systems staff members that includes coursework at the Foreign Service Institute that is specific to their job function and designated duties. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Inadequacy in Position Grading

The OIG team found that a number of the positions in the information resource management section were graded at a level below that of other missions of comparable size. For example, the position description of the radio technician was last reviewed in 2003 and does not reflect the very significant increase in serviced equipment. Furthermore, a number of the systems staff position descriptions do not accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities currently performed by the employees.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Bogotá should update position descriptions for personnel in the information management section and reclassify the positions as appropriate.

Telephone Operators

Following the 2008 OIG compliance follow-up review, Embassy Bogotá initiated 24-hour telephone coverage in the chancery. During this inspection, the OIG team found that the night shift, which runs from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., receives an average of one call per shift. The lack of calls during this time period calls into question the need for a night shift.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Bogotá should review the mission's switchboard coverage and evaluate the need to maintain 24-hour coverage.

System Backup Media

During the inspection, the OIG team found multiple backup tapes containing sensitive information that had not been disposed of according to 12 FAM 629.6 guidance on media destruction.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Bogotá should properly dispose of all old backup tapes according to Department of State procedures.

Telephone Frame and Electrical Racks

The telephone frame and electrical racks in the controlled access areas are not properly maintained. These rooms have surplus wires and unlabeled cabling, conditions that can result in delays during repairs if the staff members are unable to locate the needed cables quickly. Embassy Bogotá staff members told the OIG team that they lacked the time and funding to address the issue. However, the time required for operational maintenance in the telephone frame and server rooms will only increase until proper action is taken.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Bogotá should properly organize and label all telephone frame and electrical racks in the controlled access areas.

Pouch Regulations

Embassy Bogotá currently does not have guidance specifying authorized use of the mission's unclassified pouch. Department guidance 14 FAM 724.1-1 and 14 FAM 724.1-2 stipulate who is authorized to use the unclassified pouch, and 14 FAM 728.3 requires that post management develop and implement post-specific procedures to control pouch use. Without proper post management oversight, pouch services are vulnerable to the possibility of inappropriate use as well as Department-incurred expenses.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Bogotá should establish and disseminate written policies regarding authorized use of the unclassified pouch as stipulated in Department of State guidance.

Memorandum of Understanding with the Narcotics Affairs Section

A memorandum of understanding between NAS and the IM office was established in March 2007. The memorandum of understanding outlines the relationship between NAS and the IM office with respect to the information technology networks and resources. Because of the consolidation that occurred in December 2010, NAS no longer operates the NAS network, and the duties for supporting the NAS have been inherited entirely by the Information Systems Center staff.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Bogotá should execute a new memorandum of understanding between the information management office and the narcotics affairs section to reflect the current business arrangement.

State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset

To its credit, Embassy Bogotá is one of the first missions in WHA to implement SMART, but it is not being fully utilized to create and archive record emails. The OIG team found that users are not familiar with the system. The OIG team discussed the issue with IM management, who reported that they had not been notified of this problem. IM management has stated its commitment to implementing training either through internal classroom training or via SMART Webinars.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Bogotá should develop and implement a training regimen for mission personnel who are required to create and administer record emails via the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset.

Quality of Life

Morale

Although it is difficult to build a sense of camaraderie in a huge mission, morale among American employees at Embassy Bogotá is generally above average. Individuals reported that they liked their coworkers and felt rewarded and respected for their endeavors. The smaller number of individuals who reported lower morale noted that they felt isolated or stressed or had specific issues with housing, schooling, or embassy services such as vouchering or delivery of household effects.

OIG questionnaires show that LE staff morale is very good. LE staff gave high marks to senior manager leadership and management's attention to morale. Communication is good. The management counselor meets with the LE staff association monthly. Unusually, LE staff formed a grievance committee modeled after the Foreign Service system. An LE staff member sits on the awards committee for U.S. direct-hire and LE staff.

Community Liaison Office

The community liaison office includes one full-time community liaison office coordinator and two part-time assistants. One of the chief concerns of the community liaison office is the training of household staff in maintaining the privacy and security of the mission's American employees and their families at home. Embassy residences frequently receive calls from unknown persons asking for information about the occupants. Another type of telephone call is the "Llamada Millionaria," during which an unknown caller tells the person who answers that another household member has been kidnapped and is being held for ransom. To date, these calls have all been false, but on occasion household members or staff members have collected money and valuables, paid the ransom, and then discovered that the call was false. The community liaison office and RSO have conducted training sessions in Bogotá and Cartagena to inform household staff of the nature of such calls and to help them learn how to handle them.

Although the community liaison office coordinator meets weekly with the management counselor, she has not been meeting regularly with the DCM. One of the duties of the community liaison office coordinator, as directed by the Family Liaison Office, is to attend regularly scheduled briefings with the DCM.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Bogotá should implement a schedule for regular meetings between the community liaison office coordinator and the deputy chief of mission.

Health Unit

Embassy Bogotá's health unit scored high marks on OIG questionnaires. Staffed by a regional medical officer, a regional medical psychiatrist, a Foreign Service health practitioner,

and various nurses, technicians, assistants, and clerical personnel, the unit provides quality service to the embassy community.

The number of patient visits to the health unit in 2010 was 40 percent more than in 2009. There is no obvious reason for this dramatic increase, although the supposition is that individuals may have been using outside medical providers and are now using the health unit. The increase in patient visits means that the budget for health unit supplies is lagging behind the demand. With the current concern over potential budget cuts, the health unit is hoarding supplies.

The space occupied by the health unit is cramped and crowded. Space adjoining the health unit originally intended for health unit expansion was instead given to the IM section, also located in quarters too small for its needs. There are no plans to expand the health unit, and additional space may not become available until a planned embassy construction project scheduled for 2023.

School Issues

(b)(5)(b)(6)

(b)(5)(b)(6)

The OIG team spoke with embassy parents whose children had encountered bullying at the school. Most of these parents eventually removed their children from the school. Although it is difficult to determine how widespread and frequent the bullying is, there is no doubt that it is occurring with some regularity. The parents interviewed by the OIG team described incidents that included kicking, punching, slamming heads into lockers, and name calling. The Department has a zero tolerance policy on bullying in schools attended by mission family members. Some parents also voiced concern that (b)(5)(b)(6) was deficient academically, describing how parents who had moved their children to other schools in Bogotá or the United States had needed to hire tutors to bring their children up to the appropriate academic grade. One child was placed back one grade upon transfer to another school.

Recommendation 47: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should implement a plan by which the Ambassador and deputy chief of mission work with embassy parents and the director and staff of the (b)(5)(b)(6) to institute an effective antibullying program. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with A)

(b)(5)(b)(6)

(b)(5)(b)(6) special needs programs, and a number of embassy families enroll special needs children in the schools. Embassy parents spoke highly of the two programs.

(b)(5)(b)(6)

Employee Association and Cafeteria

Post Employee Services provides a commissary for the embassy community, along with a small shop and a beauty salon. The operation is financially strong and is running smoothly. The 2010 net income was \$48,800, with an average daily gross intake of approximately \$2,500. All Post Employee Services documents are up-to-date, and the internal control procedures are adequate and effective.

At any point in time, Embassy Bogotá has a large number of temporary duty personnel. It is difficult for the commissary staff to determine which temporary duty staff members are eligible for which types of membership in Post Employee Services. Because the human resources office is not keeping up-to-date, accurate records of temporary duty personnel, Post Employee Services must seek information from the RSO, as that office issues badges to most temporary duty staff and, consequently, has somewhat more complete records. Other issues associated with temporary duty staff are described elsewhere in this report.

The embassy cafeteria is managed by an outside contractor. The OIG team received a number of complaints about the cafeteria, and the cafeteria committee at Embassy Bogotá is working with the cafeteria staff to provide items requested by embassy community members. The contract for the cafeteria is monitored, and reporting is up-to-date.

Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity

Both the Ambassador and DCM fully support the objectives of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program. Embassy Bogotá has two EEO coordinators. One received training in December 2010, and the other will receive training in March 2011. The Federal Women's Program coordinator accepted her duties in late 2010. At the time of the inspection in February 2011, she had not received any guidance from the Department. The OIG inspectors provided her with material on the program and suggested ways that she could publicize and bring attention to it.

At the time of the inspection, the embassy had placed some EEO announcements in public display cases in the chancery, but some of these announcements were out of date, and most were not in both Spanish and English. The public discussion and dissemination of notices is an integral part of this and other programs.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Bogotá should implement a procedure so that Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's Program information is provided in both English and Spanish, is disseminated mission-wide, and is reviewed for accuracy at least twice a year and updated as needed.

Management Controls

Despite the Chief of Mission's statement signed on July 2010 that adequate controls were in place, the OIG team identified serious management control weaknesses in contracting and procurement, financial management, and motor pool services. Some of these issues have been addressed earlier in this report. Others are detailed here.

Recommendation 48: Embassy Bogotá should include in the 2011 Chief of Mission statement regarding management controls all the weaknesses presented in this report, along with the steps the embassy has taken to resolve those vulnerabilities. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Vouchering

The financial unit has no established method to track vouchers. Upon receipt, vouchers are given to the voucher examiner assigned to the account. This lack of detail has made it difficult for the staff to know when vouchers were received, precertified, certified, and paid. The OIG team heard many complaints about late vendor payments and the backlog of vouchers. In a few instances, utility companies threatened to cut off services if the bills were not paid immediately. The unit's inability to pay bills within 30 days to meet the Prompt Payment Act or vendor due dates has harmed the embassy's reputation. The unit has a backlog of 241 vouchers and 790 travel vouchers.

A voucher tracking system is crucial to the financial unit's operations. During the inspection, NAS demonstrated the system they use to track vouchers, which enables them to measure the performance of each voucher examiner and to keep track of when vouchers are received, assigned, certified, and paid. Other tracking systems are also available.

The newly arrived supervisory financial management officer has commendably taken the initiative to improve performance and provide training for new staff. She inherited a significant backlog of unprocessed vouchers. The unit has outsourced some of its workload. In addition, she raised the issue of understaffing to the front office and ICASS council.

Recommendation 49: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a system to track vouchers. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 50: Embassy Bogotá should research, resolve, and process all vouchers outstanding more than 30 days. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Outstanding Travel Advances and Vouchers

Embassy Bogotá is not following Department guidance in 4 FAH-3 H-465 for processing travel vouchers and travel advances. Nor is it meeting the uniform ICASS standards that require travel vouchers to be processed within 11 days after the traveler has filed his or her voucher. The open advance report shows a backlog of 790 advances totaling \$801,000. The age of the open

travel advances ranges from 30 days back to the year 2002, with the majority between 6 months and 1 year old.

In addition, some travelers have been issued new travel advances before settling their prior outstanding ones. To clear open travel advances in a timely manner, travelers are required to submit their travel vouchers within 5 days of completing authorized travel. Regulations stipulate that prior travel advances to a traveler must be repaid before the traveler departs on transfer, separation, home leave, or further temporary duty travel. Because a travel advance is a loan, if it is not promptly vouchered or refunded, it represents a debt to the U.S. Government. Outstanding travel advances greater than 30 calendar days are subject to the Debt Collection Act, which provides for interest, administrative charges, and penalties.

Embassy Bogotá has outsourced its travel voucher process function to the Department's Financial Service Centers. However, a great deal of work will be needed to clear the large backlog of travel advances. In some instances, it will be time consuming and difficult to clear old transactions.

Recommendation 51: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement procedures that require travelers to submit their travel vouchers within the time frames established in the Financial Management Procedures Handbook. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 52: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a plan to research and resolve all outstanding travel advances that have been pending for more than 30 days. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Accounts Receivable

The financial unit's accounts receivable summary reports show that \$370,618 has not been collected. The reported receivables are more than 90 days old, and a significant number date back to the time period between 2003 and 2008. The majority, \$369,278 of the receivables, is for uncollected personal phone calls. Minimal amounts were for repairs and transportation. It is unclear why the receivables were uncollected. The unit is not following the guidance found in 4 FAM 232 that relates to management of accounts receivable.

Recommendation 53: Embassy Bogotá should research and resolve all outstanding accounts receivable that have been pending more than 30 days. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Cashiering

A commercial bank provides accommodation exchange services to the mission. The embassy also has automated teller machines.

In FY 2011, the cash monitor based at the Charleston Financial Service Center conducted a detailed review of cash operations. The report stated that the cashier and alternate cashier were doing a fine job. The cashiers have a firm understanding of Department regulations. The inspectors verified that deficiencies cited in the cash monitor's report had been addressed.

Unliquidated Obligations for the Narcotics Affairs Section

Coordination and communication between INL and NAS needs improvement. The OIG team found that INL had not closed all Bogotá-based contracts and that funds for expired contracts had not been deobligated. The appropriation for these obligations expires after 5 years, rendering them invalid. There are obligations dating back to 2001.

Recommendation 54: The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs should instruct Embassy Bogotá's narcotics affairs section to deobligate the funds for expired appropriations. (Action: INL)

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Embassy Bogotá should conduct a review of its foreign assistance program, to include all sections and agencies, to develop a comprehensive plan for meeting the challenges of a changing policy environment in the years ahead. The strategy should include a description of the resources needed to implement the plan and should be submitted to the Department of State for approval. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

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

Recommendation 3: Embassy Bogotá should establish a written post policy governing the use of cables, record emails, and working emails and develop a training regimen for mission personnel who create and administer such cables and emails via the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Human Resources, should revise the position description of the political counselor to reflect changed and more complex duties and submit it to the Bureau of Human Resources for reclassification review. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and DGHR)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Human Resources, should reprogram one of the FS-02 deputy political counselor positions (position number 10-268001) as a new FS-02 environment, science, technology, and health position in the economic section. (Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and DGHR)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Human Resources, should revise the position description of the deputy political counselor (position number 10-157001) to reflect changed and more complex duties and submit it to the Bureau of Human Resources for reclassification review. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and DGHR)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, should review the effectiveness of emergency internally displaced person programs in Colombia to save resources and/or retarget assistance. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with PRM)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Human Resources, should revise the position description of the economic counselor position to reflect changed and more complex duties and submit it to the Bureau of Human Resources for reclassification review. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and DGHR)

Recommendation 9: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchange should revise the position description for the Lima-based regional educational advising coordinator to require two visits to Colombia per year, including visits to, and detailed reviews of, the education advising activities of binational centers outside Bogotá that receive U.S. Government assistance. (Action: ECA)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement procedures so that all grant recipients submit a final report of their performance under the grant within 90 calendar days after the project period end date. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 11: The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, should streamline the reporting requirements placed on Embassy Bogotá's public affairs section by not requesting information already contained in the embassy's mission activity tracking system. (Action: WHA, in coordination with R)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Bogotá should request from the Department of State by record communication a clarification of whether its dissemination of threat-related information is consistent with the Department of State's "no double standard" policy and alter any procedures that do not comply with this policy. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Bogotá should increase supervision of the consular agency in Barranquilla by establishing a policy of visiting the agency at least three times a year for at least 2 days each visit to confirm that the agency is following cash accountability procedures and has the resources it needs to operate efficiently. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement nonimmigrant visa referral procedures that comply with Department of State guidance regarding Class A and B visa referrals. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Bogotá should draft and disseminate a notice from the Ambassador to all potential referring officers in the mission that explains the changes to the visa referral program. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 16: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should convene a fraud prevention planning conference to create a fraud prevention plan that meets the needs of the consular line officers and other constituents. The embassy should seek Department of State approval to invite a fraud management expert from the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Fraud Prevention Programs, to participate in the conference. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with CA)

Recommendation 17: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, should prepare an analysis of anticipated changes in the U.S. Government presence in Colombia, and its management support needs, that prioritizes options for short-term fixes and long-term solutions and aligns human and financial resources. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and M/PRI)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should seek approval for the Helm Bank Trust to administer and manage locally employed staff contributions and finalize the written agreement to that effect. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 19: The Bureau of Resource Management, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should provide Embassy Bogotá with a timeline that includes the date when the proposed three-tiered savings plan will be included in the local compensation plan and the date when locally employed staff can begin to select their investment plan. (Action: RM, in coordination with DGHR and WHA)

Recommendation 20: Embassy Bogotá should continue to outsource its travel voucher payment function to the Department's Financial Services Centers' post support units until it has eliminated its backlog of unprocessed vouchers and has demonstrated that it can manage the workload without such assistance. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 21: The Bureau of Resource Management, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the Office of the Legal Adviser, and Embassy Bogotá, should revise the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services policy on temporary duty personnel to capture the actual cost of providing administrative support to temporary personnel. (Action: RM, in coordination with WHA, L, and Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 22: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a written policy requiring agencies to declare in their International Cooperative Administrative Support Services agreements the number of authorized positions being filled with temporary duty personnel so that Embassy Bogotá can bill the appropriate charges. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 23: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a procedure that requires all temporary duty personnel to check in and out upon their arrival and departure, respectively. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 24: Embassy Bogotá should conduct a pilot test for using the living-quarters-allowance system to lease residential units in Cartagena, compare it to the short-term-lease method, and select the more cost-effective and less problematic option. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 25: Embassy Bogotá should designate the Drug Enforcement Administration as the alternate administrative services provider for the Embassy Branch Office in Cartagena on a trial basis to determine whether it is the better option for providing these services. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 26: Embassy Bogotá should perform a job analysis for each of the vacant positions in the procurement and contracting section, advertise and fill the positions, and train the incoming staff. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 27: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy that requires serviced agencies to prepare and submit acquisition plans that include year-end spending. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 28: Embassy Bogotá should identify and implement a database to track contracts from receipt of contract specifications through liquidation of payments. The database should include automatic notifications when contracts are due for renewal. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 29: The Bureau of Administration should review the performance of the ARIBA software and resolve software technical problems and glitches experienced by users. (Action: A)

Recommendation 30: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy that requires serviced agencies to use the ARIBA and Integrated Logistics Management System for all procurement requests. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 31: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should consolidate duplicative property management staff and warehouses. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with WHA and INL)

Recommendation 32: Embassy Bogotá should coordinate with its International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council to develop and implement mission-wide appliance and furniture pools. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 33: Embassy Bogotá should develop and implement a procedure to monitor vehicle fuel consumption on a routine basis and to investigate any irregularities immediately. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 34: Embassy Bogotá should perform a cost-benefit analysis of the merits of outsourcing vehicle maintenance and determine whether it is more feasible and economical than performing in-house maintenance. Any outsourcing of maintenance work for armored vehicles must include the availability of motor pool personnel to accompany and observe mechanical work performed by nonembassy employees. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 35: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy that all leased residential units without a secondary egress be located on or below the tenth floor of buildings. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 36: Embassy Bogotá should move the shredding machine to a secure location outside the warehouse to reduce the potential accidental fire hazard. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 37: Embassy Bogotá should move the recycling materials from inside the warehouse to a more suitable location. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 38: Embassy Bogotá should revise its standard communication with newly assigned personnel so that the basis for housing assignments is clear. The standard communication should note that information on medical considerations should be provided by incoming personnel so that the embassy can take this information into account when making housing assignments. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 39: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy to enforce the lease provision that mandates the landlord to undertake needed repairs to leased residences within 72 hours. If the landlord does not respond, the embassy should automatically make the repairs and deduct the cost from the rental payments. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 40: Embassy Bogotá should review the short-term residential maintenance workload and request additional positions as warranted. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 41: Embassy Bogotá should create a document that explains in detail the check-out procedure, the employee's responsibility for damages, and the definition of normal wear and tear, including examples of wear and tear and past damages assessed. The embassy should require that all newly arrived employees sign this document during the check-in process to confirm their understanding of the policy. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 42: Embassy Bogotá should establish procedures requiring all temporary duty and permanent personnel to complete all information management items on the embassy's check-in and check-out lists. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 43: Embassy Bogotá should complete the inventory and consolidation of its Dedicated Internet Networks and register them with the Bureau of Information Resource Management. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 44: Embassy Bogotá should establish and document standard operating procedures for Dedicated Internet Network management. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 45: Embassy Bogotá should promptly fill the locally employed radio technician position. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 46: Embassy Bogotá should establish a training regimen for information systems staff members that includes coursework at the Foreign Service Institute that is specific to their job function and designated duties. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 47: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should implement a plan by which the Ambassador and deputy chief of mission work with embassy parents and the director and staff of the (b)(5)(b)(6) to institute an effective antibullying program. (Action: Embassy Bogotá, in coordination with A)

Recommendation 48: Embassy Bogotá should include in the 2011 Chief of Mission statement regarding management controls all the weaknesses presented in this report, along with the steps the embassy has taken to resolve those vulnerabilities. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 49: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a system to track vouchers. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 50: Embassy Bogotá should research, resolve, and process all vouchers outstanding more than 30 days. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 51: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement procedures that require travelers to submit their travel vouchers within the time frames established in the Financial Management Procedures Handbook. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 52: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a plan to research and resolve all outstanding travel advances that have been pending for more than 30 days. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 53: Embassy Bogotá should research and resolve all outstanding accounts receivable that have been pending more than 30 days. (Action: Embassy Bogotá)

Recommendation 54: The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs should instruct Embassy Bogotá's narcotics affairs section to deobligate the funds for expired appropriations. (Action: INL)

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 Bogotá should explore options for improving the space now allocated to the economic unit to enhance the office environment and expand the amount of space available to the unit.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Bogotá should initiate an interagency environment, science, technology, and health working group to coordinate mission initiatives in these areas.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Bogotá should keep minutes of the law enforcement working group meetings to maintain a record of issues discussed and decisions made during the proceedings.

Informal Recommendation 4: (b) (5)

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Bogotá should cover with stones or pavers the bare ground on which visa applicants stand while waiting in line.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Bogotá should find reasonable seating accommodation for locally employed staff working in the consular annex before beginning renovations to the building.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Bogotá should revise its entry-level-officer rotation program in the consular section to give officers 6-month portfolios, except when circumstances dictate shorter assignments.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Bogotá should create a working group to find ways to take advantage of public diplomacy opportunities afforded by the 300,000 Colombians who visit the consular section annually.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Bogotá should revise its procedures for processing consular report of birth abroad cases to reduce the amount of time that applicants must wait for service in the American citizens services section.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Bogotá should require its nonimmigrant visa managers to establish a regular schedule for discussions on adjudication criteria and interviewing techniques to standardize the process and make refusal rates among officers more uniform.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Bogotá should establish and implement a policy requiring the submission of new applications and fees for all cases of reconsidered nonimmigrant visa refusals per Department of State guidance.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Bogotá should revise its nonimmigrant visa priority processing procedures so that priority applicants are seen and interviewed in a timely manner.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Bogotá should increase the number and frequency of nonimmigrant visa validation studies.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Bogotá should establish a problem-solving working group that meets monthly and is chaired by the deputy chief of mission and attended by the management counselor and key members of the mission team to address systemic problems with management services.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Bogotá should determine the feasibility of just-in-time shipments of furniture with the Department's Office of the Procurement Executive and the Regional Procurement Support Office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Bogotá should work with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations to install fire extinguishers that meet Department of State standards in all residential units.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Bogotá should establish a schedule for and fund quarterly operational visits by information management staff to off-site locations in Cartagena and Barranquilla.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Bogotá should update position descriptions for personnel in the information management section and reclassify the positions as appropriate.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Bogotá should review the mission's switchboard coverage and evaluate the need to maintain 24-hour coverage.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Bogotá should properly dispose of all old backup tapes according to Department of State procedures.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Bogotá should properly organize and label all telephone frame and electrical racks in the controlled access areas.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Bogotá should establish and disseminate written policies regarding authorized use of the unclassified pouch as stipulated in Department of State guidance.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Bogotá should execute a new memorandum of understanding between the information management office and the narcotics affairs section to reflect the current business arrangement.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Bogotá should develop and implement a training regimen for mission personnel who are required to create and administer record emails via the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Bogotá should implement a schedule for regular meetings between the community liaison office coordinator and the deputy chief of mission.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Bogotá should implement a procedure so that Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's Program information is provided in both English and Spanish, is disseminated mission-wide, and is reviewed for accuracy at least twice a year and updated as needed.

Principal Officials

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	P. Michael McKinley	09/10
Deputy Chief of Mission	Perry Holloway	08/10
Chiefs of Sections:		
Consular	Raymond Baca	07/10
Economic	Timothy Stater	07/09
Management	Terry Leech	07/09
Narcotics Affairs	Dan Foote	08/09
Political	Mark Wells	07/09
Public Affairs	Mark Wentworth	04/07
Regional Affairs	Juan O. Cruz	07/10
Regional Security	Robert Myers	07/10 ²
Other Agencies:		
Department of Defense	Col. Paul Murray	04/09
Foreign Agricultural Service	Joseph Lopez	08/10
Foreign Commercial Service	Margaret Hanson-Muse	07/07
Homeland Security	Luis Sierra	05/08 ³
Justice		
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives	Robert Clowers	05/09
DEA	Jay Bergman	11/06
International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program	Gary Sheridan	03/03
Judicial attaché	James Faulkner	07/09
Justice Sector Reform Program	Paul Vaky	08/04
Legal attaché	Alejandro Barbeito	09/10
Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training	Virna Santos	09/07
Peace Corps	George Baldino	07/10
Treasury	Manny Muriel	05/10
U.S. Agency for International Development	Susumu (Ken) Yamashita	09/09

² Mr. Myers occupied the deputy regional security officer position from 07/09 to 07/10.

³ Mr. Sierra occupied the assistant customs attaché position from 08/07 to 05/08.

Abbreviations

CGB	Colegio Gran Bretana
CNG	Colegio Nueva Granada
CNP	Colombian National Police
CSDI	Colombia Strategic Development Initiative
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
Department	Department of State
DIN	Dedicated Internet Network
EBO	Embassy branch office
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EFM	Eligible family member
ESTH	Environment, science, technology, and health
FAST	First- and second-tour
FPU	Fraud prevention unit
HLPD	High-Level Partnership Dialogue
HR	Bureau of Human Resources
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
IV	Immigrant visa
LE	Locally employed
MSRP	Mission Strategic and Resource Plan
NAS	Narcotics affairs section
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
PCHP	Plan Colombia Helicopter Program
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
RSO	Regional security office
SMART	State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WHA	Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

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OR MISMANAGEMENT**
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