



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

Office of Inspections

**Inspection of
Embassy Conakry, Guinea**

Report Number ISP-I-11-44A, June 2011

Office of Inspector General

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PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, as issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

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

METHODOLOGY

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



United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

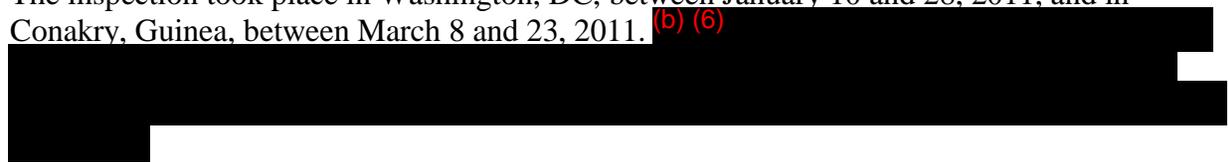
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Key Judgments

- Embassy Conakry played a central role in encouraging the democratic elections of 2010, the first in Guinea's recent history. The Ambassador, in particular, is credited with urging Guinea's interim, postmilitary junta government to move the democratic process forward, culminating in the peaceful inauguration in December 2010 of the country's first democratically elected President.
- Faced with staffing gaps caused in part by the ordered departure of embassy employees during a critical period in Guinean history, the executive leadership did a good job of empowering entry-level personnel to successfully assume leadership responsibilities in policy formulation and implementation. However, insufficient communication and executive oversight of some entry-level personnel also contributed to the uneven application of established rules and procedures that damaged overall mission cohesion and post operations.
- Embassy Conakry is an extreme hardship post that ranks among the most difficult assignments in the Foreign Service. A seasoned management officer has made significant improvements to operations despite a nearly nonexistent local infrastructure, inexperienced local employees, and an extended post evacuation that eroded American oversight of internal controls. Now that the election and security crisis have passed, it would be beneficial for executive leadership to devote more time to internal operations to improve service quality and minimize internal vulnerabilities.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between January 10 and 28, 2011, and in Conakry, Guinea, between March 8 and 23, 2011. (b) (6)



Context

In December 2010, after enduring more than 50 years of authoritarian rule, Guinea (officially the Republic of Guinea) inaugurated its first-ever democratically elected President. Although declared free and fair by international observers, the election was preceded by months of political and ethnic violence that led to a 6-month ordered evacuation of all nonessential American personnel from Embassy Conakry. A fragile political stability has returned to Guinea, but the new President, Alpha Conde, who won the election by a very narrow and contested margin, had spent the past 20 years living in France, has limited administrative experience, and faces the daunting challenge of rebuilding the government as the country prepares for mandated parliamentary elections in late 2011.

Guinea is located on the Atlantic coast of West Africa, is slightly smaller than Oregon, and has a population of approximately 10 million, 80 percent of which is Muslim. The country has enormous mineral wealth, including more than one-third of the world's bauxite reserves and large reserves of gold, diamonds, iron, and offshore oil and gas. Even though rich in natural resources, Guinea has been left in ruin and poverty after decades of government mismanagement, rampant corruption, and a poor legal system. The United Nations ranked Guinea 156 out of 169 nations in its 2010 quality-of-life index, and the World Bank ranked Guinea 179 out of 183 in its 2011 business environment survey.

Despite the high risk of doing business in Guinea, the country's natural resources have attracted significant foreign investment over the years, including from America. The greatest hope for increased investment and international involvement with this country in the future is continued stability to allow the pursuit of substantive reform by the new government. The United States has clear political and economic interests in Guinea, and priorities include the promotion and support of democracy and governance, security sector reform, sustainable economic growth, protection of human rights, security against transnational threats, and improved mission management. Undeterred by the 6-month evacuation, Embassy Conakry, with minimal staff, was a principal force in pushing the 2010 elections forward to a successful conclusion. Mission program efforts focus on training the new political leadership, security sector, and civil organizations, particularly youth groups, to ensure a peaceful transition as the country prepares for the legislative elections.

Embassy Conakry is a hard-to-fill, hardship-differential (30 percent), adult-dependents-only post, with two rest and recuperation trips during a 2-year assignment. The embassy has 27 direct-hire Americans when fully staffed (which has not been the case since October 2009) and 335 locally employed (LE) staff representing the Department of State (Department), the Department of Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Peace Corps. Annual U.S. Government assistance to Guinea is currently approximately \$17 million.

Executive Direction

Embassy Conakry: Recent History

The Ambassador arrived in Conakry at the beginning of November 2009, just more than a month after members of the augmented Guinean Presidential Guard, a military force directly controlled by (then) ruling military junta President Moussa Dadis Camara, entered the Conakry Football Stadium and opened fire on a large rally of political opponents. According to international organizations, at least 150 were reported killed and more than 1,000 were wounded. The Presidential Guard also publicly raped many of the female protesters during the September 28 incident.

In the weeks following the atrocity, U.S. Embassy Conakry was evacuated via mandatory ordered departure down to a skeleton staff, leaving the newly arrived Ambassador with no political, economic, or public diplomacy officer and no office manager. Embassy personnel began returning to post as early as mid-December, and by mid-March 2010, the Department rescinded the ordered departure, enabling embassy staff members and their adult dependents to return to post. Children, however, are still not authorized to accompany their parents to Guinea, which damages the embassy's ability to attract qualified bidders to this already difficult-to-staff, high-differential West African post.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with the Bureaus of African Affairs, Diplomatic Security, and Human Resources, should take appropriate steps to review the current adult-dependents-only status and determine whether it should be changed. (Action: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with AF, DS, and DGHR)

From the start, the drastic reduction of the embassy—executed without the Ambassador's concurrence—created friction in the relationship between the Ambassador and the Bureau of African Affairs (AF). A year and a half later, the OIG team found that the relationship between the Ambassador and some key officials in AF remains frosty, potentially damaging trust and credibility on both sides.

OIG team interviews revealed, and the Ambassador herself acknowledged, that she was further challenged at the beginning of her tenure by confidence and compatibility issues between herself and her (then) deputy chief of mission (DCM), who completed his tour in July 2010. The inspection interviews reveal a perception that she managed by marginalizing him, relying instead on her small cadre of entry-level officers (ELO) and specialists to help her through the critical period from the stadium massacres through the Presidential election. Thanks to this team effort, Embassy Conakry, and the Ambassador in particular, is widely credited for its leadership in encouraging Guinea's interim, postmilitary junta government throughout the democratic process, which culminated in the December 2010 inauguration of the country's first democratically elected President.

Throughout 2010, when the entire embassy had been consumed with election-related activities, the only at-grade members of the Ambassador's country team were her DCM, consular chief, and regional security officer (RSO). Until the arrival of the at-grade management officer in

August, both the acting management officer and the acting political/economic chief were first-tour ELOs. The extraordinary ELO political/economic chief also served for most of 2010 as the acting public affairs officer (PAO). Assigned to a rotational position, she officially transferred to the vice consul position in July 2010, but, according to OIG interviews, still retained her authority as de facto political/economic chief at the time of the inspection.

Mission Strategic and Resource Plan: The Process

In early 2010, the Ambassador assigned coordination of Embassy Conakry's FY 2012 Mission Strategic Resource Plan (MSRP) to her ELO political/economic chief and ELO general services officer. The OIG team learned that the Ambassador's direction was to make clear in the MSRP the need for the United States to work with Guinea's transitional government. The Ambassador advised her ELOs that the MSRP was the central document, the roadmap for all embassy operations, and that work on its preparation was an opportunity for them to see the embassy as a whole. What made the MSRP special, she said, was that it demonstrated the U.S. "all-of-government" approach to foreign policy goals. At the time of the OIG inspection, Embassy Conakry was starting preparations for its FY 2013 MSRP, with the two ELOs again coordinating the policy and process. The current DCM, who arrived in July 2010, told the inspectors that he would be more directly involved in the process than had his predecessor. The inspectors learned he has attended the initial meetings and urged him to assume a stronger leadership role over policy and procedure. They reiterated this point to the Ambassador. A seasoned officer's direct oversight should help the ELOs, who are still new to the process. In response to OIG questionnaires, the DCM reported that the MSRP is used in internal management at the mission, that the goals and objectives enjoy complete mission consensus, and that public diplomacy goals are included as part of each MSRP section.

Information Sharing: Country Team and Other Venues

Embassy Conakry maintains a traditional structure with respect to regularly scheduled meetings. The Ambassador chairs the twice weekly (Tuesdays and Fridays) country team meetings at which all U.S. direct-hire personnel are welcome. The OIG team observed active meeting participation from all embassy sections as well as the small interagency contingent consisting of the Defense attaché office, USAID, and the Peace Corps. Further to mission cohesion, OIG questionnaires revealed mission-wide confidence in post management attention to security and emergency preparedness, and no Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) concerns. Overall morale in the challenging Conakry environment, as evidenced in the collegial country team setting and elsewhere, appeared good. Aside from her country team and daily press briefings, the Ambassador does not keep a schedule of regular embassy meetings but does talk to individual officers on specific issues.

The DCM, in keeping with a traditional embassy structure, handles a much more extensive meeting schedule than does the Ambassador, including meetings with all embassy sections and all agencies each week or every 2 weeks. He has a session with the LE committee every 2 weeks, and the OIG team encouraged him to include the management officer in these meetings. He also chairs a weekly session that he established to discuss political-military affairs, which are critical in a country that only recently was led by a military junta.

Given the Ambassador's busy schedule of official commitments outside the embassy, it falls to the DCM to assume the classic role of internal mission management and problem solving. Although in principle this traditional division of labor is workable, from conversations with embassy personnel and through personal observation, it appeared to the inspectors that too-rigid adherence to this model may enable the Ambassador to avoid some of the more unpleasant aspects of internal management. For example, when the OIG team brought to her attention an unconventional four-way LE staff reassignment, which reportedly was precipitated by her dissatisfaction with some of the LE staff members, the Ambassador recounted her perception that all appropriate procedures had been followed. This situation is described in greater detail in the Human Resources (HR) section of the report. The OIG team discussed the matter with the Ambassador and the DCM, as well as the advisability of the Ambassador adopting a more engaged approach to mission management

Conversely, the DCM appears to have little visibility outside the embassy, particularly with respect to the Guinean Government. This condition, which the inspectors also discussed with the front office, may impede the DCM's operational effectiveness, particularly when he is obliged to assume the position of charge d'affaires a.i. In a mission as small as Embassy Conakry, and with a disproportionately large number of inexperienced officers, it makes sense to consider a front office structure in which the DCM is the true alter ego of the Ambassador.

Executive Direction: Entry-Level Officers and Specialists

The DCM meets frequently with Embassy Conakry's large group of entry-level personnel individually, in groups, and on an ad hoc basis. He maintains a genuine open-door policy, and the ELOs indicated that they have taken advantage of this accessibility. The DCM has also established a regularly scheduled ELO meeting. Such a meeting might appear incongruous, because most of the ELOs have already been delegated positions of considerable responsibility and authority within the embassy community. Nevertheless, ELOs often are not fully equipped to assume the levels of responsibility and authority expected of mid-level officers. The OIG team encouraged the Ambassador and the DCM to provide more direct oversight of both strategic policy direction and tactical management issues for those officers and specialists who may be too new to even know what questions they should be asking. In addition, the inspectors suggested that the front office call upon its mid-level front-line supervisors (the few that they currently have) to assist in providing this guidance.

Policy and Program Implementation

Political, Economic, and Commercial Affairs

From the October 2009 ordered departure until the time of the OIG inspection, the embassy's small political/economic section was composed exclusively of first-tour officers. The months of preelection political upheaval placed extraordinary demands on the embassy and especially on this section, which during some periods had no assigned officers and had to rely on short-term temporary duty help. As noted earlier in this report, during one 6-month period, a rotational ELO operated the section alone while also serving as the acting public affairs officer. The section now has two of its three direct-hire positions filled with first-tour officers, although the rotational ELO, now in the consular section, was still considered to be the de facto section chief at the time of the inspection. The section chief position has been vacant since October 2009. The new section chief had been scheduled to arrive in November 2010, but at the time of the inspection was being held for additional French language training.

The section is supported by two LE political assistants, one LE economic/commercial assistant, and one LE Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program fund coordinator. One of the political assistants joined the section under irregular circumstances, which are discussed in the Human Resources section of this report.

Throughout 2010, the section was consumed almost exclusively with supporting the front office's efforts to facilitate a successful first democratic election in Guinea. Its advocacy work and frequent reporting received high marks from Washington consumers. At the same time, it managed to fulfill the Department's many mandated reporting requirements. The section performed remarkably well under trying circumstances. Although the section has made the transition from paper files to electronic filing, the system is not well organized. The OIG team counseled section staff on this issue.

Following the 2010 election, the section has been able to broaden its scope. The return of political stability has significantly increased the demands on the economic officer to support growing U.S. commercial interests in Guinea, particularly from extractive industries. Neither the economic officer nor the economic/commercial assistant has had formal commercial training and both depend on support from the Foreign Commercial Service's regional office in Dakar, Senegal, which is scheduled to close later this year. Its closure will undercut the section's capacity to serve the growing American business community in Guinea. Commercial training for the economic officer and the economic/commercial LE staff would help minimize the negative impact of the Dakar office closure.

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should enroll the incoming economic officer in the Foreign Service Institute's commercial tradecraft course prior to his arrival in Conakry. (Action: AF, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs, should send its economic/commercial locally employed staff to a neighboring embassy for on-

the-job training in commercial procedures and policies. (Action: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with AF)

The section has small but growing responsibilities for overseeing the management of assistance programs. This issue, along with a recommendation, is discussed in greater detail in the Foreign Assistance section of this report.

Law Enforcement Issues

The RSO is the only law enforcement representative in Embassy Conakry. He arrived in September 2010 at the height of political tension and quickly became involved with embassy efforts to support security sector reform. Elements of that support are described in the Foreign Assistance section of this report. The RSO works closely with the Defense attaché office on security sector reform issues and maintains close, constructive relations with Guinean law enforcement agencies. With the removal of restrictions on assistance following the successful November 2010 election, the RSO anticipates working with these agencies to identify the most productive areas for further capacity building.

Foreign Assistance

Emerging from a period of restrictions on assistance following the 2008 coup, Guinea receives only limited U.S. Government funding. That funding is expected to increase somewhat if Guinea's nascent democratic government takes root. At the time of the inspection, no mission-wide committee or other mechanism coordinated assistance. The OIG team informally counseled that one be established if and when assistance expands.

USAID is rebuilding its presence in Guinea. In FY 2010, USAID managed programs valued at \$16 million that were focused on democracy, governance, and health. At the time of the inspection, USAID expected an additional \$6 million for agriculture and economic growth to be unfrozen, bringing the FY 2010 total to roughly \$22 million. USAID's health programs include a small PEPFAR component. Some USAID funding is administered through the Peace Corps' Small Project Assistance program.

Guinea also received a 3-year \$3.5 million grant from the Department of Labor to combat child labor and a separate 3-year \$445,500 grant from the Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to promote democracy. Outside implementing partners manage both grants, which conclude in 2011. In FY 2010, various elements of the Department provided approximately \$2 million in law enforcement and security sector reform assistance.

The political/economic section manages the Ambassadors' Special Self-Help Program fund and Democracy and Human Rights Fund. One LE staff assistant, supervised by the rotational ELO in the consular section, handles these two programs. In FY 2010, the embassy awarded seven grants from \$75,000 in Special Self-Help Program funds. There were no Democracy and Human Rights funds in FY 2010. The political/economic section is also responsible for soliciting and vetting grants provided by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. In FY 2010, one \$100,000 grant went to the International Organization for Migration. At the time of the inspection, no one in the section had received grants training or

had grants authority. Given the expected growth in assistance to Guinea, the OIG team believes that at least one officer in the section should have appropriate grants management training to provide informed guidance and oversight to the assistance programs.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Conakry should develop and implement a plan for Department of State personnel with responsibility for foreign assistance grants programs to receive appropriate Foreign Service Institute training on grants monitoring and management. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Public Affairs

The public affairs section (PAS) is located in the new embassy compound (NEC) and is managed by a PAO, an assistant public affairs officer (APAO), and nine LE staff members. At the time of the inspection, the PAO position had been vacant since the October 2009 ordered departure, more than 18 months ago. A new PAO was scheduled to arrive at post soon after the inspection but was delayed for additional French language training. The APAO position also became vacant with the ordered departure and was filled 14 months later, in January 2011. The current APAO is a management-cone officer on her first public diplomacy assignment. During the 14-month staffing gap, PAS supervisory responsibilities were provided by a combination of temporary duty public diplomacy officers and one embassy ELO political/economic officer. The APAO brings strong management and communication skills to the job and has established solid working relations with other mission elements. The APAO participates in all country team functions, meets weekly with the DCM, and has direct access to the Ambassador. Soon after her arrival, the APAO initiated a daily PAS staff meeting to share information and review the program calendar. This and other inclusive actions have lifted staff morale following a very difficult period.

The LE staff is highly motivated. During the tumultuous months leading up to the Presidential election, under frequently changing American supervision, the LE staff maintained an active outreach effort to target audiences, particularly youth activists. PAS programs track closely with current embassy MSRP priorities and have been especially focused toward Muslim communities, youth groups, and organizations involved in women's issues. The embassy participates in Fulbright graduate student and senior lecturer programs and the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship program. During FY 2010, the embassy international visitor committee, chaired by the DCM, selected 12 Guinean participants for programs in the United States. PAS supports an alumni association that includes participants of all U.S.-funded exchange programs. At the time of the inspection, the association was providing voter education for the upcoming legislative elections. One part-time LE advising specialist manages an active educational advising program. The LE assistant responsible for coordinating PAS administrative and financial support was assigned to this position under irregular circumstances in September 2010, with no previous experience or training. This assignment has had a negative impact on PAS operations and is further discussed in the Human Resources section of this report.

Information Resource Center and American Corner

Embassy Conakry's Information Resource Center (IRC) provides an important service in a country starved for reliable information. Moreover, it is a model for public diplomacy

operations that have relocated from facilities with ready public access to the more secure environment provided by NEC facilities. The move in 2006 from a location in the center of Conakry to the NEC some distance away has, in fact, resulted in a steady increase in target audience attendance instead of the decrease that many embassies experience. The very modest facility, with maximum seating for 50 people, currently attracts between 1,000 and 1,600 students and professionals a month and has 8,000 members registered with the embassy. There are two principal reasons for this increase: creative programming and a commitment by all elements of the embassy to make the IRC work. In addition to very popular book-of-the-month group discussions featuring specific titles, the IRC hosts frequent guest speakers, film showings, and video Web chats on specific MSRP themes. The facility provides a modest reference and circulating book collection, eight Internet workstations, and three terminals for English language study. The IRC is managed by two LE staff specialists and one university student intern who, in addition to coordinating the very busy program schedule, also provide electronic reference and information outreach services to embassy contacts and one American Corner.

The embassy has established one American Corner in eastern Guinea at the University of Kankan. Because the city of Kankan has only intermittent electricity, the embassy funded the installation of solar panels at the American Corner to provide reliable power and Internet service. This modest \$12,000 investment more than paid for itself when, during the critical months before the 2010 elections, American Corner Kankan served as a democracy program base and vital source of information to key audiences throughout the region. The embassy and university maintain an active program at the American Corner through a memorandum of understanding that is kept up to date. The embassy has submitted a request to establish a second American Corner in another region of Guinea, and the OIG team supports this initiative, subject to the availability of funds.

Consular Affairs

Embassy Conakry has a small, well-managed consular section that works efficiently as a team in the face of a challenging, high-fraud environment. The consular section chief is an experienced mid-level officer who fosters a collegial, professional atmosphere that promotes high morale. The section issues nonimmigrant visas (NIV), provides services to American citizens in Guinea, and processes some asylee visas for residents of Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Consular Management

Management controls are well understood and applied to prevent fraud, waste, and mismanagement. Staff size is sufficient for the work load. The OIG team noted some procedural irregularities that were corrected during the inspection. Reviews of the ELO's adjudications, which had been conducted by the DCM, are now being handled by the consular section chief in accordance with *Foreign Affairs Manual* guidance 9 FAM 41.121 c. Wait times had not been routinely updated in the consular consolidated database and showed a slightly longer waiting period than what actually existed. The OIG inspector discussed the need to update the wait times on a weekly basis, and the consular section implemented the practice.

Staffing

In addition to the consular section chief, staffing includes a rotational ELO who, as noted earlier in this report, was also still acting as de facto political/economic section chief at the time of the inspection; one eligible family member; and four LE staff assistants. The consular section chief will complete his assignment in less than 2 months. At the time of the inspection, no replacement had been identified, and an extended vacancy in this position is anticipated. The ELO position will be vacant for 2 months in late spring. The arrival date of the new officer is dependent on the successful completion of French language training and thus unknown. Two other officers in the embassy have some recent consular experience and may be available to provide short-term help. Embassy Conakry has requested temporary duty assistance for the summer, and the OIG team supports this request.

The LE staff is enthusiastic and capable but has limited experience and training. The longest-serving LE assistant has been in the section for 5 years and has completed online courses and one workshop at the Foreign Service Institute. The other three have 2 or 3 years of experience each and are taking online courses that are prerequisites for Foreign Service Institute training. The consular section chief and the ELO have devoted time to cross-training all of the staff.

American Citizens Services

There are fewer than 700 Americans registered with the embassy in Guinea. Of those, nearly a third are long-term missionaries and another third are children who were born in the United States and have returned to Guinea live with relatives. American citizens are rarely the target of crimes, and arrest cases are rare. The consular section has updated all emergency procedures and keeps an updated list of potential evacuees.

Nonimmigrant Visas

Embassy Conakry adjudicated 2,058 NIVs in FY 2010, more than 40 percent less than the previous year. This decrease was primarily because the visa section did not provide routine service during an extended ordered departure of embassy personnel. Because high levels of corruption make it easy to obtain diplomatic notes for positions that may or may not exist in the United States, all applicants, including those for diplomatic visas, must have an interview.

The consular section follows worldwide guidelines on visa referrals and requires all authorized personnel to attend a briefing and sign an acknowledgement of understanding. At the time of the inspection, the names of approved referrers had not been added to the database. Although no cases were identified in the visa system as having been formal referrals, some notes indicated that information had been provided by other embassy employees. The OIG inspector confirmed that referrals had been prepared and instructed the consular section chief on the procedure for updating the database and identifying referred cases in the NIV software.

Embassy Conakry has an agreement with a local bank for collection of all NIV application fees and scheduling all NIV cases. Visas 92 and 93 cases (left-behind family members of asylees and refugees who have been granted permission to apply for entry status)

must be scheduled directly by the consular section. More than one-fourth of all NIV cases are visas 92 and 93. At embassies with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officers, such cases are not processed by the consular section. These cases require much more time to process than other NIV applications because virtually every case requires more than one, usually lengthy, interview and coordination with the National Visa Center. Because these cases often require additional documentation, the consular section spends more time answering questions on the status of visas 92 and 93 applications than all other types of inquiry combined. Additionally, many of the beneficiaries do not speak English or French, and so the consular section must rely heavily on LE staff to translate into one of several local languages.

Visas Viper Program

Embassy Conakry holds Visas Viper meetings as required and has submitted all mandated reports on time. During the past year, the embassy submitted one name via the Visas Viper channel. The consular section checked the name in the consolidated consular database to verify that the person in question did not hold a U.S. visa and was not already included in the lookout database.

Consular Integrity and Antifraud

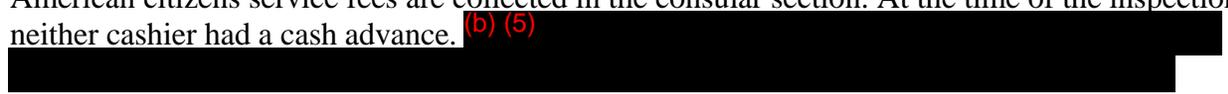
The fraud prevention unit consists of one full-time LE staff investigator with supervision by the consular section chief, who acts as the fraud prevention manager. Document fraud is widespread, and verification of documents, especially those presented in visas 92 and 93 cases, represents the largest percentage of the workload for the fraud investigator. She also verifies documents presented to the consular sections in Dakar and Sierra Leone for immigrant visa cases and coordinates closely with the fraud units in those embassies.

DNA testing is frequently required in visas 92 and 93 cases involving children. The consular section is following the guidelines in 9 FAM 42.44 Notes for the collection of DNA samples. Approximately 30 percent of DNA results are negative, indicating that no family relationship exists. Also common in visas 92 and 93 cases is the practice of including adopted children. Adoption cases must be verified to determine whether they are “simple” cases, which are informal arrangements that have not gone through the court system and are not legal for visa issuance purposes.

Any lengthy staffing gap in the consular section chief position and the eligible family member positions will decrease the effectiveness of the fraud unit. Many functions in the DNA testing process must be performed by a cleared American. Findings of ineligibilities based on fraud also require action by an American officer.

Consular Cashiering

Two LE staff assistants have been designated in writing as consular cashiers. Only American citizens service fees are collected in the consular section. At the time of the inspection, neither cashier had a cash advance. (b) (5)



(b) (5)

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Informal Recommendation 1:

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Resource Management

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding (in dollars) FY 2010
State – Diplomatic and Consular Programs	12	2	17	31	\$1,702,300
State – ICASS	4	7	180	191	\$6,419,500
State – Public Diplomacy	2	0	9	11	\$314,200
State – Diplomatic Security	2	0	22	24	\$850,740
State – Representation	0	0	0	0	\$26,200
State – OBO	1	0	0	1	\$1,004,392
Defense Attaché Office	3	0	1	4	\$205,960
USAID – OE	1	0	32	33	\$2,083,000
Peace Corps	2	0	38	40	\$1,407,716
Subtotal	27	9	299	335	\$14,014,008
Foreign Assistance					
USAID					\$16,000,000
AF/RSA					\$1,786,911
Department of Labor					\$1,160,000
G-TIP					\$100,000
DRL					\$148,500
Other					\$210,350
Subtotal					\$19,405,761
Total	27	9	299	335	\$33,419,769

Management Operations

The management section is providing good support across almost the entire range of administrative operations, despite the ordered departure and long staffing gaps within the section. This level of support is particularly noteworthy, given the dilapidated infrastructure and general hardship of living in Conakry, where all electricity must be provided by a generator and water must be delivered by truck.

In addition to providing quality support services to the staff, post management faces several other challenges in the immediate future, many of which involve the NEC, including maintaining the sophisticated infrastructure and controlling the operational costs of the facility. These initiatives cannot be accomplished without the technical and financial support of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO).

The section is under the direction of an experienced management officer who arrived at post in August 2010 but will soon depart. At the time of the inspection, a replacement had not been identified. The management team is capable, with a combination of experienced mid-level and competent entry-level personnel. Three of the officers are serving in one-grade stretch positions. There are seven eligible family member positions in the section, but only the community liaison office coordinator, general services office (GSO) assistant, and security escort positions are filled. Although only in the position a very short time, the community liaison office coordinator is considered by all to be very effective.

The 2011 International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) customer satisfaction survey scores for overall ICASS services at Embassy Conakry were above AF and worldwide averages. The responses to the workplace and quality-of-life questionnaires prepared for this inspection indicated a similar degree of satisfaction with overall management operations.

LE staff members are generally well regarded by their American colleagues and perform well in many important positions in the management section and elsewhere in the mission. However, many of the lower level white- and blue-collar LE staff members, especially those in general services, lack training.

Embassy Security Program

A full discussion of Embassy Conakry's security program is provided, with recommendations, in the classified annex to this report.

Financial Management

Embassy Conakry's financial management office is providing quality services to its ICASS customers. The financial management officer (FMO), a first-tour management officer in a one-grade stretch position, directly supervises seven LE members of staff. The office was responsible for FY 2010 allotments of approximately \$10.3 million. The FMO also has regional responsibility for Embassy Freetown.

After serving 2 years as the Class B cashier and 2 years as the alternate, the cashier is experienced, knowledgeable, and well trained. Cashier operations are in accordance with established financial management procedures and requirements. The cashier's accountability was decreased from (b) (5). Although there have been subcashiers in the past, at present there are none. The FMO plans to designate mailroom, facilities maintenance, and consular subcashiers (an informal recommendation is included in the Consular Affairs section of this report).

With the imminent departure of the management officer, the FMO will be the only certifying officer at the embassy and will serve as acting management officer. The LE financial specialist has completed the formal certifying officer coursework and has a designation card on file.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Conakry should request that its locally employed financial specialist be designated as a locally employed staff certifying officer.

In advance of the inspection, the Financial Support and Training Office in Paris sent an AF regional specialist to Conakry for approximately 3 weeks to review financial operations. Areas reviewed and discussed with the financial management staff included funds control, vouchering, cashier operations, and embassy policies.

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

The embassy's ICASS council includes representatives from the Department of State, Department of Defense, Peace Corps, and USAID. The council is chaired by the USAID mission director. Because of the ordered departure, the council met only twice in 2010 but plans to meet regularly in 2011, using the ICASS Service Center's meeting planning schedule as guidance. Following *Foreign Affairs Handbook* guidance 6 FAH-5 H-222.4, the embassy recently established an ICASS budget committee that is chaired by the DCM.

One of the responsibilities of an ICASS council is to provide input to embassy management for inclusion into the annual evaluations of service providers. Because implementation of this responsibility has been hit or miss, in September 2010, the Department's ICASS executive board decided to revise the annual assessment process of mission services. The OIG team counseled both the management officer and the FMO to meet with the mission ICASS council and adopt the revised process as outlined in 6 FAH-5 H-160.

Human Resources

Embassy Conakry respondents to the 2011 ICASS customer satisfaction survey ranked American personnel services on par with bureau and worldwide averages; LE staff services were ranked slightly higher. The results of OIG questionnaires were also positive, with the overall management of HR receiving an aggregate score far above the average of embassies previously inspected by the OIG.

The HR section consists of three LE staff members under the supervision of the management officer, who received HR officer training before arriving in Conakry. The two senior LE staff assistants are knowledgeable and well trained, but the third, the HR clerk, is less experienced. HR operations will be affected by the imminent departures of the management officer and the most senior LE specialist. The OIG team reached out to Embassy Bamako's regional HR officer, and she and her senior HR specialist will visit Conakry at the end of March to provide support.

Training is an embassy priority, with \$90,000 budgeted for ICASS employees and \$45,000 for program employees. The awards program functions appropriately, and \$32,400 has been set aside for ICASS and program American and LE staff.

Because of the poor information technology infrastructure in Guinea, the Department's Office of Performance Evaluation has granted Embassy Conakry an exception from the use of ePerformance in preparing American employee evaluation reviews for the 2010–2011 cycle.

In August 2010, embassy management decided to reassign two LE assistants, an action that ultimately affected a total of four LE assistants from different sections and at different pay

grades. The moves resulted in a promotion for one and an involuntary downgrade for another. The four positions were C95233, C95488, N12025, and C95307. Per the Department's Office of Overseas Employment (HR/OE), there are three instances when an employee can be reassigned without going through the recruitment process; however, first and foremost, there has to be a vacant position. The three instances are reduction in force, medical reasons, and exigent circumstances (e.g., harassment of an employee and/or relatives from outside sources due to the employee's assigned duties and responsibilities or position held at the embassy). The third must be authorized by HR/OE's international HR manager. There was no vacant position at the time of the reassignments.

To obtain authorization for these moves, embassy management did not consult HR/OE but relied instead on local labor law, under which the reassignments could be justified, provided all four LE employees concurred. The OIG team received conflicting accounts as to whether the four LE employees did, in fact, voluntarily concur. The front office advised that all four had agreed. At the same time, others told the inspectors that the employees were not given a choice; if all four did not agree, embassy management would direct them to move. If the affected staff did not agree with embassy management's decision, the employee(s) would have to resign. This reassignment of LE staff to positions for which they had no training and experience has had repercussions, including violations of procurement regulations.

In its review of the employees' files, the OIG team found no deleterious information that could be used to justify the employees' reassignments. In fact, all employees received ratings of good and/or exceptional on their employee performance reports.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Office of the Legal Adviser, should review the September 2010 transfers of local employees to determine whether they were accomplished in accordance with Department of State regulations and procedures. (Action: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with DGHR and L)

Locally Employed Staff Committee

On several occasions, the OIG team met with members of the LE staff association's executive committee, which includes representatives from Peace Corps and USAID. They reported that they have excellent access to the front office and meet with the DCM every 2 weeks. Unfortunately, the inspectors discovered a communications disconnect between the LE committee and the former DCM concerning the new LE staff health plan. The LE committee told the OIG inspectors that, in their meetings with the former DCM, the committee believed that he was negotiating on their behalf to secure a new health plan that would include no deductibles. In fact, this was not the case. In its discussions with HR/OE, the OIG team learned that the "no deductible" request was never an option. The departure of the former DCM left an information vacuum with respect to this issue. The OIG team urged the DCM to include the management officer in all such future meetings.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Conakry should include the management officer and/or human resource specialist in the regularly scheduled meetings between the deputy chief of mission and the locally employed staff committee.

Officer elections for the LE staff committee are not conducted in accordance with the charter, which states that, once elected by the LE staff association, the LE staff committee members themselves meet to elect the officers. The charter does not reflect LE staff committee practice. At present, aspiring committee members campaign directly for a specific officer position.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Conakry should amend the locally employed staff association charter to reflect the current practice of electing officers.

Article 2. e. of the LE staff association charter states, “Upon request, the association may make itself available...as one of the primary sources for the recruiting of Guinean employees.” According to standard Department policy, LE staff associations may not serve as a primary source in the recruitment of personnel.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Conakry should amend the locally employed staff association’s charter to delete article 2. e.

General Services

Embassy Conakry’s GSO provides logistical services in one of the most difficult operating environments in the world. Daily challenges include chronic electricity and water shortages, nonavailability of basic supplies and services, and the need to support the chancery’s sophisticated technological systems. Headed by a first-tour officer, GSO has done a satisfactory job in light of these many challenges. Housing services, crucial to morale in this environment, generally work well. The embassy has made some progress in improving fuel accountability and motor vehicle operations. Scores for most services on OIG’s inspection questionnaires are near Department averages in most GSO service areas.

However, significant challenges remain, especially in property management and procurement. As the embassy moves to normalize operations following the extended evacuation, training for local staff in all GSO operations requires sustained attention. GSO has been plagued by high turnover in key local supervisor positions. Most local supervisors have less than 2 years on the job and are not fully proficient. The problem of high turnover and training gaps among local employees, also noted in the last OIG inspection, complicates successful management of GSO operations. The embassy cannot regularly send employees to the United States or Europe for training because applicants often cannot obtain visas. AF has actively supported all post requests for support and training.

Shipping

Shipping services are generally satisfactory, but the local supervisor is new to his position and has not had formal training in shipping regulations and operations. The embassy is not using the Department’s electronic application for shipping and does not have a tracking system for monitoring shipments. Shipping files do not contain required information such as travel orders, payments to local shipping vendors, and written shipping instructions from departing American personnel. As a result, required information needed to clear freight efficiently and document compliance with internal controls is not retained.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs, should send its shipping supervisor to a neighboring embassy for on-the-job training in shipping procedures and policies. (Action: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with AF)

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Conakry should establish a tracking system to record the status of incoming and outbound shipments.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Conakry should institute a written standard operating procedure for the establishment of shipping files that includes retention of copies of travel orders, bills of lading, vendor invoices, shipping instructions, and communications with U.S. dispatch agencies.

Property Management

Property management and warehouse operations are weak. The implementation of effective supply chain management and internal controls practices has been hampered by high personnel turnover among local staff; a lack of clearly documented procedures for control of property; and the extended post evacuation, which eroded American oversight. Proper separation of duties is not in place for receiving and issuing government property, which raises the risk of malfeasance. A review of property disposal records of items sold at the last auction revealed that a number of high-value items, such as photocopy machines, computers, and generators, did not have nonexpendable property numbers and that employees in the property management unit purchased items at the last property auction. These issues are described in more detail in the Management Controls section of this report.

Operationally, the embassy warehouse is too small to accommodate all of the mission's storage needs, a problem that affects many other NECs. The embassy plans to reduce excessive stocks of residential furniture and appliances by limiting furniture purchases this year to necessary quantities, a step that will free up space in the warehouse. The embassy operates two off-compound property storage facilities that are vulnerable to theft or mismanagement of government property. These compounds are used to store and dispense high-value items such as air conditioner units, generators, generator parts, and replacement (excess) furniture. The acquisition value of items stored at these locations exceeds \$350,000. Internal controls procedures at both compounds are not satisfactory. Property must be stored and accounted for under closer direct supervision at the chancery because of the risks of theft and malfeasance in this environment.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Conakry should develop and implement a plan to consolidate all expendable and nonexpendable property operations in the new embassy compound warehouse. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

As noted earlier, space is at a premium in the warehouse, but options exist to maximize space to accommodate facilities maintenance and excess property storage needs. For example, the embassy recently installed shelving and purchased containers for storage. Implementation of the established best practice of using disposable welcome kits would allow the conversion of another storeroom for secure storage of high-value items such as generator and vehicle parts.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Conakry should procure disposable welcome kits and eliminate its inventory of regular welcome kits to maximize usable warehouse space.

Motor Vehicles

The embassy maintains an official vehicle fleet of 67 vehicles, with a total acquisition value of \$2.76 million. This fleet is excessive for a post of Conakry's size. An analysis of the motor pool use records for the past 3 months indicates that the motor pool fleet should contain approximately 20 vehicles, based on Department standards of 12,000 miles per year. Vehicle fleet records do not allow on-site analysis to determine proper inventory levels for service vehicles for the Marines, maintenance, GSO, and regional security office; however, an OIG team analysis of the vehicle fleets of neighboring posts found that none of them had an inventory of more than 49 vehicles.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Conakry should reduce its inventory of official vehicles to no more than 40 vehicles. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Fuel Operations

Embassy Conakry runs generators for the chancery and all residential properties 24 hours a day. The single largest line item in the embassy's budget is fuel, which is procured at an annual cost of \$2 million. The embassy has recently instituted a number of strong practices to reduce fuel theft. The decision to assign an American family member to personally accompany the generator fuel truck to residential fuel deliveries is saving at least \$100,000 annually in reduced fuel consumption. However, the embassy does not yet prepare a comprehensive monthly report on fuel use and estimated consumption based on mileage and generator fuel consumption estimates, but it has collected most of the information needed to prepare a report. The development of a comprehensive fuel report will allow deterrence and detection of fuel theft.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Conakry should develop a monthly report on estimated fuel requirements and actual amounts procured and dispensed and submit it to the deputy chief of mission for review. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Facilities Maintenance

Embassy Conakry's facilities maintenance unit is led by a strong facilities manager who has successfully addressed building maintenance issues during his tour. The facilities manager revived a nonfunctional preventive maintenance program for the chancery's building systems. Implementation of an active preventive maintenance program has significantly reduced the number of major buildings systems failures that had occurred in previous years. He has also reorganized the maintenance personnel structure to create a more responsive maintenance operation.

The facilities maintenance unit has experienced severe difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified local personnel with the skills required to maintain building systems. A mechanical engineer position has been vacant for 5 years, and a key electrical engineer position

was filled only recently. As noted in a recent Government Accountability Office audit, similar staffing problems also affect other NECs worldwide. Embassy Conakry's challenges in supporting the building's complex chillers, fire suppression systems, and building automation systems also are typical of those encountered at other posts. OBO has provided extensive contractor support to train local staff and address ongoing programs.

New Embassy Compound

Embassy Conakry moved into its NEC in 2006. Since that time, the embassy has addressed a series of costly failures of major buildings systems. These failures were related to construction defects, a lack of regular preventive maintenance on these systems, and the installation of standard building systems that are not suited to rugged African conditions. Major problems reported by post include the failures of two automatic voltage regulator systems, two chiller system components, the dry pipe fire suppression system, forced-entry/ballistic-resistant doors throughout the mission, and generators designed to serve as backup rather than primary generators. The OIG team estimates that replacements of buildings systems in this facility have cost approximately \$2 million since the chancery opened in 2006. Maintenance of the chiller, fire suppression, and building automation systems has required extensive and costly assistance from OBO and external contractors.

Information Management

The electric power infrastructure in Guinea is one of the least reliable in West Africa. The embassy can function only on continual generator power, and this has had a serious impact on critical equipment, which is frequently destroyed. Despite these hardships, the information management (IM) section continues to provide adequate support and services to all embassy elements. These services include computer networks and radio and telephone programs, as well as mail, pouch, and switchboard operations.

The Information Programs Center is managed by an experienced information management officer (IMO) and one first-tour IM specialist. The section includes three LE systems specialists, three LE mail room assistants, three LE receptionist/telephone operators, and one LE radio/telephone technician. Despite the difficult conditions, overall mission satisfaction with IM support is good.

Systems security is performed by both the IMO and the IM specialist, and both have taken the information systems security officer course. The information systems security officers check regularly for abnormalities and keep all mission employees aware of systems rules and responsibilities. The section also closely monitors embassy employee cyber security training requirements.

Circuit Latency

Although a recent doubling of bandwidth has helped Embassy Conakry to some extent, latency factors continue to be an impediment to effective operations. Latency (i.e., excessive delay on the circuit via satellite) interferes with the use of many Web-based programs. Because of this latency, the embassy has a waiver not to use the ePerformance Web-based evaluation

application. The IMO has worked with elements within the Department and the Diplomatic Telecommunications Service Program Office to resolve this issue. However, the latency issues in the embassy will not be resolved until Guinea is added to a terrestrial/fiber submarine cable, currently scheduled for 2012 or 2013.

Alternate Command Center

According to the current embassy emergency action plan, the Peace Corps office is now designated as the alternate command center (ACC). However, this location has no office space or equipment other than a high-frequency radio and associated antenna. The OIG inspection team learned that the embassy plans to move the ACC to an alternate location that has been identified. The inspectors visited the proposed location, on a U.S. Government-owned compound, and support the ACC move to this site. The embassy currently has all of the necessary equipment for the new ACC.

Radio Inventory

Radios are a necessary form of communication in Conakry, and the embassy maintains a network of approximately 200 units. Department regulation 5 FAM 542.2 states that the IMO is responsible for managing the embassy's radio program, including maintaining an up-to-date inventory. The OIG team found that the radio inventory is not complete and does not account for approximately 15 percent of the current stock.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Conakry should reconcile its radio inventory according to Department of State guidance. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Worldwide Property Accounting System Inventory

The embassy does not have a Worldwide Property Accounting System (WPAS) inventory of its communications equipment. Department guidance in 5 FAH-2 H-851 advises that each piece of equipment, either online or stored as a spare, that is defined as accountable through the WPAS system should be listed on the WPAS inventory. In addition, 14 FAM 418.1 requires that an inventory certification must be sent to the Office of Logistics Management by March 15 each year.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Conakry should complete its Worldwide Property Accounting System inventory and submit it to the Bureau of Administration, Office of Logistics Management. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Dedicated Internet Network Waiver

Embassy Conakry has not obtained a required waiver for the Dedicated Internet Network that serves PAS. Department guidance in 5 FAM 872.2 provides the required registration policy.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Conakry should apply for a waiver for the Dedicated Internet Network that serves the public affairs section. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Lack of Documentation

All required IM documentation is up to date with one exception. The embassy has no current standard operating procedures for the systems and IM sections. The current standard operating procedures were last revised in 2004. Equipment and procedures change frequently in the IM section, and 5 FAM 121.2 c. (7) (h) states that the IM section should maintain up-to-date standard operating procedures for all Information Programs Center operations.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Conakry should revise the standard operating procedures for all information management section operations. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Quality of Life

Health Unit

A second-tour Foreign Service health practitioner and two LE medical assistants manage the health unit. Hired from Cote d'Ivoire, the nurse is eligible for an exception-rate-range salary under the local compensation plan. A regional medical officer, regional medical officer/psychiatrist, and regional medical technician, all from Embassy Dakar, support the embassy.

The health unit is located in the NEC and provides primary medical care to embassy staff and dependents, as well as emergency care to local staff members who suffer illness or injury while on the job. London is the medical evacuation point. An alternate embassy health unit has been established at the Peace Corps facility. A former regional security office vehicle has been converted to for use as an ambulance should the need arise.

The OIG team's review confirmed that the health unit correctly administers confidential patient records and that controlled substances are properly safeguarded and distributed, expiration dates are tracked, and logs are properly kept.

The Foreign Service health practitioner has been working closely with the Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs to ensure reimbursement of medical and living expenses incurred on behalf of an LE staff employee who was permanently disabled after having an accident while driving a U.S. Government vehicle.

Community Liaison Officer

The community liaison officer had been on the job for 6 weeks at the time of the inspection. She could not participate in country team meetings because her security clearance was still in process. She had not received training at the time of the inspection but was scheduled for a course later in the spring. Conakry is a partially unaccompanied post, with only adults allowed at post at this time. Even though there is currently no demand for school information, the community liaison officer attends school board meetings. She also maintains a full schedule of activities for embassy personnel and temporary duty visitors in Conakry.

Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor

Embassy Conakry is in compliance with 3 FAM 1514.2. The Chief of Mission has designated an EEO counselor and has also named an LE staff liaison for EEO issues. The EEO counselor maintains a bulletin board that is accessible to all mission employees and has completed the required 32-hour training program and certification. In February, the EEO counselor provided training to all embassy staff. No EEO complaints have been filed.

Recreation Association

The American Embassy Employees Association operates from one room within the chancery and provides snack food, coffee, and video rental services to both American and LE staff. A small selection of frozen foods is available to American employees only. A Guinea-hired part-time employee handles sales. The association's treasurer, the DCM's office management specialist, provides day-to-day oversight and is credited for revitalizing the association after the lifting of the ordered departure.

As long as Conakry's status remains adult dependents only, sales will remain minimal. An audit performed in 2009 by two employees of the embassy's financial management office relied on reconstructed financial records, and a small net profit was realized. A point-of-sale system and QuickBooks accounting software are now in use, which will enhance the accuracy of the 2010 audit.

As a morale booster, the association remodeled the movie room at the Nongo housing compound. When community functions are held there, the association pays for the snacks and drinks.

International School

(b)(5)(b)(6) is a small independent institution that is recovering from a period of reduced enrollment caused by political unrest. At the time of the inspection, the school had no U.S. Government-dependent children because of the embassy's adult-dependents-only status. The new director arrived in July 2010 on a 2-year contract and is working to rebuild enrollment and further develop the school. (b)(5)(b)(6)

The school is accredited by the Middle Schools Association of Schools and Colleges through the 9th grade. Currently, all high school instruction is conducted through the University of Nebraska Online High School Program. In FY 2010, the school received a \$65,000 grant from HR/OE. In the past, it has also received funds for security upgrades

Management Controls

Embassy Conakry operates in a high-risk environment for waste, fraud, and mismanagement. The OIG team found that embassy internal controls systems are operating in most areas. The extended post evacuation reduced American staffing to essential personnel only, and thin staffing eroded some controls processes. Internal controls on property management and procurement need attention. The Ambassador signed the annual chief of mission certification in July 2010 and did not identify reportable conditions or material weaknesses.

Property Management Standard Operating Procedures

The embassy does not have in place procedures to ensure separation of duties and sound controls procedures for property management. For example, there are no written receiving procedures, and as many as five individuals sign to accept government property. Neither of the two receiving clerks personally witnesses the delivery of fuel to the embassy compound, but they sign receiving reports for these deliveries. The motor pool maintains inventories of sensitive items such as tires, oil, and vehicle parts and is also responsible for issuing these supplies to a local body shop contractor. The expendable supply office conducts its own annual inventory process without oversight from an external inventory team. The OIG team conducted a spot check of expendable inventory and found shortages of high-value items. Both of the latter practices are contrary to 14 FAM 411.2 d. with respect to separating duties for inventory, receiving, and conducting the inventory process. Posts also are required to implement written standard operating procedures for property management, as noted in 14 FAM 413.7 a. The post is at risk of loss or theft of property in the absence of stronger controls on property.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Conakry should establish and implement written standard operating procedures for property management, with an emphasis on separation of duties for dispensing, receiving, and inventory functions, and distribute them to all personnel with property management responsibilities. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Nonexpendable Property Transfer Process

The embassy does not have in place several important internal controls on personal property with an acquisition value of \$6.53 million. The embassy does not always consistently prepare nonexpendable property transfer forms prior to removal of government property from the chancery. For example, the facilities maintenance unit maintains custody over certain property, which is removed from the premises without the written approval of the American accountable property officer. In addition, the nonexpendable property forms that are prepared are not sent to the nonexpendable property clerk before property is issued. Because the nonexpendable property clerk does not receive the forms, he cannot enter locations of property into the inventory database. The embassy has initiated the process of conducting residential inventories upon the arrival of American staff but has not received signed residential inventories for many properties. Regulations at 14 FAH-1 H-421a. require supervisory-level authorization and approval by the American accountable property officer prior to the removal of property from government premises. When forms are not completed, inventory procedures cannot accurately record the location of property. In the absence of property controls, there is no assurance that property is

being removed from the chancery compound for bona fide purposes. In 2005, the embassy wrote off \$1.5 million in personal property that could not be accounted for, a situation that highlights the risks of not having in place strong property management procedures.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Conakry should implement a procedure that requires the use of nonexpendable property transfer forms for all property transfers, complete with signatures authorizing such transfers and acknowledging receipt of property. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Procurement and Contracting

Procurement and contracting services are not operating efficiently and in accordance with contracting regulations. Procurement services received marks well below Department averages on OIG's customer service questionnaires. Problems include delays in acquisitions, inefficient tracking of pending acquisitions, and noncompletion of essential procurement file documentation. The unit also does not always obtain fiscal data in advance of procurements, correctly record invoice amounts, or properly maintain logs of blanket purchase agreements. The newly hired local supervisor has set up a tracking system and prepares basic contracting documents. Other essential internal controls need improvement. Several unauthorized commitments occurred during the inspection. An unauthorized commitment occurs when a contractual agreement is made that is not binding on the U.S. Government solely because the government representative who made the commitment lacked the requisite authority to do so. Acquisition agreements generally may be made only by warranted contracting officers. Unauthorized commitments are a serious violation of administrative procedures that may subject the responsible officers to disciplinary action. Although the procurement unit benefited from a visit from a senior local employee from a neighboring post, a training visit from the Office of the Procurement Executive would be of significant value.

Recommendation 16: The Bureau of Administration should send personnel to conduct a staff assistance visit to Embassy Conakry to evaluate local procurement operations and train staff in procurement regulations and procedures. (Action: A)

Recommendation 17: Embassy Conakry should publish a management notice on unauthorized commitments and distribute this to the embassy community. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Internal Controls on Fuel

During the inspection, the OIG team received allegations of fuel theft from embassy properties, as well as thefts of residential generators, embassy vehicles, and generators on the embassy compound. The embassy has instituted strict controls on vehicle fuel issuance. Although the embassy has generally satisfactory internal controls for fuel, there are several areas in which controls should be further enhanced.

GSO approves invoices for payment without properly completed receiving reports. Receiving reports must be prepared for receipt of all goods delivered to the embassy and constitute an essential internal control. Department regulation 4 FAH-3 H-424.1 requires that contracting officer personnel certify that invoices are correct, proper, and just for payment and that receiving reports exist. The embassy's receiving clerk does not personally participate in

verifying fuel deliveries to the chancery. It is necessary for the receiving clerk to be present to confirm that payment is made only for approved invoices and that shortages or nondeliveries are detected. The lack of involvement by the receiving clerk in the fuel delivery processes raises the risk that shortage in fuel deliveries could go undetected.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Conakry should establish and implement a policy that requires its receiving clerk to personally witness fuel deliveries and record fuel receipts against funded purchase orders. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

The embassy employs the services of a contract company to deliver residential diesel. Because fuel is delivered directly to generators and is not received first at the embassy, receiving reports cannot be prepared for this fuel. Regulations at 14 FAH-1 H-815.2 d. require preparation of receiving reports for all fuel deliveries. Because embassy personnel cannot verify the accuracy of the fuel contractor's flow meters, there is a risk that the embassy could receive less fuel than it paid for in deliveries or that undelivered quantities could be diverted. The embassy has two government-owned fuel trucks with calibrated flow meters that it could use to deliver fuel directly, which would strengthen internal controls.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Conakry should cease the practice of having a contract vehicle deliver fuel to residential generators. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

The embassy does make some emergency fuel deliveries with one of the embassy fuel trucks. However, this vehicle does not have a functioning dipstick to determine fuel levels prior to and after fuel delivery trips. Consequently, it is not possible to accurately complete daily fuel issuance reports and adequately monitor the usage of fuel for this vehicle.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Conakry should procure a dipstick to measure fuel levels for its fuel truck fleet and prepare daily fuel issuance reports for the fuel truck.

Cell Phone Controls

Embassy Conakry's official cellular telephone program is not well organized. Although the embassy expends approximately \$104,000 annually on cell phones, it does not retain accurate records of cell phones issued to employees. Disposal records for older and damaged cell phones have been neglected. Regulations at 14 FAM 414.3 a. require completion of personal custody records for cell phones issued to employees. If no signature is on record, there is a question as to who is responsible for the safekeeping of the phone.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Conakry should reconcile its entire cellular telephone inventory and use the DS-584 property custody record for all cell phones issued to embassy employees.

American Forces Network Equipment

The embassy improperly expended approximately \$21,000 in FY 2010 on satellite television equipment for employees to receive American Forces Network programming in their residences. Department policy is that such expenses are an employee's personal expense and that

appropriated funds should not be used to pay for these items. Certain employees with official business requirements, such as the Ambassador, DCM, and PAO, are authorized such expenses. At other embassies, the function of buying and supporting satellite television equipment rests with American employees and is frequently handled by the employee recreation association or private vendors.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Conakry should cease the practice of using appropriated funds to procure or support personal satellite television services. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with the Bureaus of African Affairs, Diplomatic Security, and Human Resources, should take appropriate steps to review the current adult-dependents-only status and determine whether it should be changed. (Action: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with AF, DS, and DGHR)

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should enroll the incoming economic officer in the Foreign Service Institute's commercial tradecraft course prior to his arrival in Conakry. (Action: AF, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs, should send its economic/commercial locally employed staff to a neighboring embassy for on-the-job training in commercial procedures and policies. (Action: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with AF)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Conakry should develop and implement a plan for Department of State personnel with responsibility for foreign assistance grants programs to receive appropriate Foreign Service Institute training on grants monitoring and management. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Office of the Legal Adviser, should review the September 2010 transfers of local employees to determine whether they were accomplished in accordance with Department of State regulations and procedures. (Action: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with DGHR and L)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs, should send its shipping supervisor to a neighboring embassy for on-the-job training in shipping procedures and policies. (Action: Embassy Conakry, in coordination with AF)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Conakry should develop and implement a plan to consolidate all expendable and nonexpendable property operations in the new embassy compound warehouse. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Conakry should reduce its inventory of official vehicles to no more than 40 vehicles. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Conakry should develop a monthly report on estimated fuel requirements and actual amounts procured and dispensed and submit it to the deputy chief of mission for review. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Conakry should reconcile its radio inventory according to Department of State guidance. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 11: Embassy Conakry should complete its Worldwide Property Accounting System inventory and submit it to the Bureau of Administration, Office of Logistics Management. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Conakry should apply for a waiver for the Dedicated Internet Network that serves the public affairs section. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Conakry should revise the standard operating procedures for all information management section operations. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Conakry should establish and implement written standard operating procedures for property management, with an emphasis on separation of duties for dispensing, receiving, and inventory functions, and distribute them to all personnel with property management responsibilities. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Conakry should implement a procedure that requires the use of nonexpendable property transfer forms for all property transfers, complete with signatures authorizing such transfers and acknowledging receipt of property. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 16: The Bureau of Administration should send personnel to conduct a staff assistance visit to Embassy Conakry to evaluate local procurement operations and train staff in procurement regulations and procedures. (Action: A)

Recommendation 17: Embassy Conakry should publish a management notice on unauthorized commitments and distribute this to the embassy community. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Conakry should establish and implement a policy that requires its receiving clerk to personally witness fuel deliveries and record fuel receipts against funded purchase orders. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 19: Embassy Conakry should cease the practice of having a contract vehicle deliver fuel to residential generators. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

Recommendation 20: Embassy Conakry should cease the practice of using appropriated funds to procure or support personal satellite television services. (Action: Embassy Conakry)

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:

(b) (5)

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Conakry should request that its locally employed financial specialist be designated as a locally employed staff certifying officer.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Conakry should include the management officer and/or human resource specialist in the regularly scheduled meetings between the deputy chief of mission and the locally employed staff committee.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Conakry should amend the locally employed staff association charter to reflect the current practice of electing officers.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Conakry should amend the locally employed staff association's charter to delete article 2. e.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Conakry should establish a tracking system to record the status of incoming and outbound shipments.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Conakry should institute a written standard operating procedure for the establishment of shipping files that includes retention of copies of travel orders, bills of lading, vendor invoices, shipping instructions, and communications with U.S. dispatch agencies.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Conakry should procure disposable welcome kits and eliminate its inventory of regular welcome kits to maximize usable warehouse space.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Conakry should procure a dipstick to measure fuel levels for its fuel truck fleet and prepare daily fuel issuance reports for the fuel truck.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Conakry should reconcile its entire cellular telephone inventory and use the DS-584 property custody record for all cell phones issued to embassy employees.

Principal Officials

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Patricia N. Moller	11/09
Deputy Chief of Mission	Stephen G. Fakan	07/10
Chiefs of Sections:		
Administrative	Michael R. Pace	08/10
Consular	John P. Marietti	02/08
Political/Economic (acting)	Albert Ofrecio	09/10
Public Affairs (acting)	Vallera Gibson	01/11
Regional Security	Keith W. Harris	09/10
Other Agencies:		
Department of Defense	Tong Chemeng Vang	01/10
Peace Corps (acting)	Priscilla Sampil	09/08
U.S. Agency for International Development	Nancy Estes	02/11

Abbreviations

ACC	Alternate command center
AF	Bureau of African Affairs
APAO	Assistant public affairs officer
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ELO	Entry-level officers and specialists
FAH	<i>Foreign Affairs Handbook</i>
FAM	<i>Foreign Affairs Manual</i>
FMO	Financial management officer
GSO	General services office
HR	Human resources
HR/OE	Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Overseas Employment
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
IMO	Information management officer
IRC	Information Resource Center
LE	Locally employed (staff)
MSRP	Mission Strategic Resource Plan
NEC	New embassy compound
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
RSO	Regional security officer
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WPAS	Worldwide Property Accounting System

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