



Office of Inspector General

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

**Office of Inspections**

**Compliance Followup Review of  
Embassy Bangkok and Consulate General  
Chiang Mai, Thailand**

**Report Number ISP-C-12-33A, June 2012**

**~~Important Notice~~**

~~This report is intended solely for the official use of the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, or any agency or organization receiving a copy directly from the Office of Inspector General. No secondary distribution may be made, in whole or in part, outside the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, by them or by other agencies or organizations, without prior authorization by the Inspector General. Public availability of the document will be determined by the Inspector General under the U.S. Code, 5 U.S.C. 552. Improper disclosure of this report may result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.~~

## **PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY OF THE COMPLIANCE FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2011 by the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) 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. Compliance followup reviews (CFR) 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.

The Office of Inspections may perform on-site CFRs to verify whether agreed-upon corrective actions for recommendations issued in previous reports were fully and properly implemented and to provide OIG with a quality assurance assessment of its work.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In conducting this compliance follow-up review, the inspectors have: 1) reviewed the previous inspection report and the reported corrective actions; 2) distributed survey instruments to inspected entity(s) and compiled and analyzed the results to measure and report changes in the period between the previous inspection and this CFR; 3) conducted on-site interviews and reviewed and collected documentation to substantiate reported corrective actions; 4) addressed new, significant deficiencies or vulnerabilities identified in the CFR survey results and during the course of the on-site CFR and, where appropriate, issued new recommendations; and, 5) discussed the substance of the draft CFR report substance of the draft CFR report at the final meeting with the head of the inspected bureau/office or post.



United States Department of State  
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

*Office of Inspector General*

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

Harold W. Geisel  
Deputy Inspector General

## Table of Contents

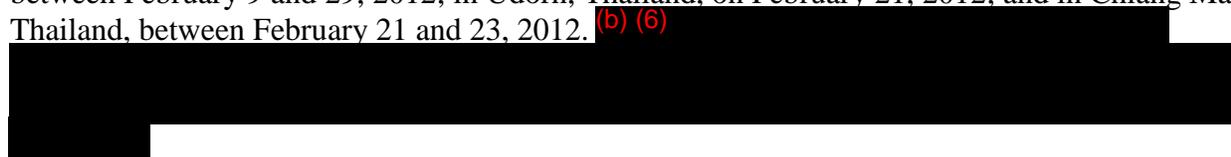
|   |    |
|---|----|
| Key Judgments   | 1  |
| Background  | 2  |
| Evaluation of Compliance  | 3  |
| Leadership Issues   | 4  |
| Policy Advocacy and Reporting Issues                            | 7  |
| Reporting   | 7  |
| Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Issues             | 9  |
| Increasing Efficiency   | 9  |
| Language-Designated Positions                                   | 10 |
| Public Diplomacy Issues   | 12 |
| Consular Issues   | 13 |
| American Citizens Services                                      | 13 |
| Immigrant Visas   | 14 |
| Consular Personnel Issues                                       | 15 |
| Consular Files  | 16 |
| Consular Space Issues   | 16 |
| Consulate General Chiang Mai                                    | 18 |
| Management Issues   | 19 |
| Management Section  | 19 |
| Human Resources   | 20 |
| Financial Management  | 21 |
| International Cooperative Administrative Support Services       | 22 |
| Facilities Management   | 22 |
| General Services Office   | 22 |
| Information Management  | 23 |
| Quality of Life   | 23 |
| Management Controls   | 24 |
| List of Compliance Followup Review Recommendations              | 25 |
| List of Informal Recommendations                                | 28 |
| Principal Officials   | 29 |
| Abbreviations   | 31 |
| Appendix I: Status of 2010 Inspection Formal Recommendations    | 32 |
| Appendix II: Status of 2010 Inspection Informal Recommendations | 52 |

## Key Judgments

- A new Ambassador and a new deputy chief of mission (DCM) since the 2010 inspection lead a cohesive and well-functioning interagency team. Morale is high.
- The Ambassador's emphasis on public diplomacy, especially a trailblazing use of social media, effectively promotes the U.S. foreign policy agenda in Thailand.
- The consular section has excellent leadership, in contrast with the situation the OIG team found in 2010. Although the section works efficiently, it should change some processes to enhance customer service and conform with regulations.
- The greatest staffing need is for a mid-level management officer position, which could be solved by converting an entry-level officer (ELO) position. The management section staffing has not grown commensurate with the overall growth of the mission. Despite that, the management section is highly successful in supporting the mission.
- The Compliance Followup Review (CFR) determined that the embassy had implemented or otherwise closed 89 of the 98 recommendations (formal and informal) from the 2010 inspection. The CFR revised and reissued nine recommendations.

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

The CFR took place in Washington, DC, between January 3 and 27, 2012; in Bangkok, Thailand, between February 9 and 29, 2012; in Udorn, Thailand, on February 21, 2012; and in Chiang Mai, Thailand, between February 21 and 23, 2012. (b) (6)



## Background

The OIG inspection of Embassy Bangkok in May 2010 determined that the mission was meeting its goals and objectives and satisfying Washington end users. However, inspectors also found that the Ambassador's abilities to lead and manage one of the Department of State's (Department) largest and most complex regional support platforms fell short of mission requirements. Six months after the inspection, a new Ambassador with senior-level leadership and management experience assumed charge in Bangkok. In the fall of 2011, the new Ambassador ably led the embassy community through disastrous floods, some of the worst in a century in Thailand, which put large areas of the country and the capital under water.

Hampered by political violence and social unrest that shut down the embassy and paralyzed the capital, inspectors in 2010 were unable to make a thorough examination of the general services office, financial management office, and some human resources functions. In addition to evaluating compliance with the specific recommendations of the 2010 inspection, this report fills in those gaps.

## Evaluation of Compliance

The CFR team found that Embassy Bangkok had complied with most of the formal and informal recommendations from the 2010 inspection. A CFR automatically closes all formal and informal recommendations from the inspection, but these may be reopened, revised, and/or reissued by the CFR, as appropriate. A complete list of the compliance status of all formal recommendations from the 2010 inspection is in Appendix I of this report. A complete list of the status of all informal recommendations from that inspection is in Appendix II of this report.

Of the 66 formal recommendations in the 2010 report, 60 were closed before the CFR, 5 were resolved/open before the CFR, and 1 was unresolved before the CFR.

The CFR team determined that 55 of the 60 formal recommendations that had been closed before the CFR remained closed as a result of the CFR. The team reopened the remaining five recommendations that had been closed before the CFR. Recommendation 2 on posting biographic files on Web-based services was revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 4. Recommendation 6 on reinforcing emails and informal messages with cables was revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 3. Recommendation 8 on maintaining and retiring files was revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 5. Recommendation 12 on grants training for the bilateral environment, science, technology, and health officer was revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 7. Recommendation 23 on the staffing of Consulate General Chiang Mai was revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 21.

Five formal recommendations had been resolved/open before the CFR. The CFR team closed four of those recommendations (Recommendations 26, 45, 63, and 64). The remaining resolved/open recommendation was Recommendation 22. The team revised and reissued that recommendation on updating the position descriptions of locally employed (LE) staff in the visa units of the consular section as Recommendation CFR 15.

The one recommendation that had been unresolved before the CFR was Recommendation 16 about grants training for officers and LE staff of the public affairs section who were grants officer's representatives. The CFR team closed that recommendation as implemented.

Of the 32 informal recommendations, the CFR team closed 28. The team revised and reissued four informal recommendations as formal recommendations. Informal Recommendation 11 on returning immigrant visas by mail was revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 14. Informal Recommendation 12 on applicants returning immigrant visa documents by mail was revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 13. Informal Recommendation 13 on appointments for American citizens services was revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 11. Informal Recommendation 14 on a telephone tree for the American citizens services unit of the consular section was revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 12.

## Leadership Issues

The embassy has been headed since January 2011 by a career Ambassador on her third assignment as Chief of Mission. Her tours as Ambassador and her experience in senior staff positions in the Department of State and the National Security Council prepared her well to lead one of the largest U.S. embassies in the world and to direct a country team that includes representatives of more than 30 U.S. Government departments and agencies. The embassy community recognizes the Ambassador's skills in policy strategy, tactics, and advocacy of U.S. interests. Her management and coordination of the embassy's human and material resources is admired and emulated. The Ambassador's exemplary public outreach and her use of social media technologies have given her face recognition and a high level of public attention. She uses this platform to push ahead vigorously on U.S. bilateral and regional objectives in Thailand.

Thailand is a dependable partner in the fight against terrorism and an influential regional economic and political leader. It collaborates with the United States on security, law enforcement, health, refugee, and environmental programs. The country is also an attractive location for regional support operations, and more than half of the embassy's 2,000 employees work on tasks related to regional objectives. The Ambassador has set becoming the U.S. Government hub for Asia as the embassy's number one goal and pays considerable attention to the activities of the regional elements of the mission. The U.S. Government's "pivot" to Asia and our growing engagement with Southeast Asia, augmented by possible requirements in Burma, suggest Embassy Bangkok will continue to grow. The Ambassador is aware she must manage this growth in an environment of limited resources.

To advance the mission's second goal of bilateral prosperity and environmental sustainability, the Ambassador actively supports the President's National Export Initiative, the Secretary of State's Lower Mekong Initiative, and the Thai-U.S. Creative Partnership, which highlights U.S. innovation. Elections in July 2011 produced a new government with a solid mandate. The Ambassador champions activities to strengthen democratic institutions and civil society, another core mission objective. She has worked with the new government to reinvigorate Thailand's regional leadership and explored new bilateral cooperation, including a strategic dialogue to be launched in Washington in June. The Ambassador has opened training sessions that help Thailand build an effective criminal justice system; visited camps to draw attention to refugee protection efforts; participated in events to showcase joint programs to mitigate health threats; and expanded outreach during the floods and recent terrorist threats to inform and advise the tens of thousands of U.S. citizens in Thailand.

The Ambassador's use of social media makes her stand out in Thailand. Almost 30,000 Thai receive her personal tweets; retransmission by the embassy's Twitter feed extends her immediate reach by another 40,000. She also has a Facebook page and a blog. To accommodate the Thai preference for broadcast rather than print news and opinion, the Ambassador posts video commentary on YouTube for the local television channels to pick up. Although the terseness required by Twitter has on occasion generated some public misunderstanding, the Ambassador's skillful management of her public persona is a huge asset to the mission.

A strong DCM, who brings front office experience, prior service in Thailand, and language skills to the job, ably supports the Ambassador. The DCM's meticulous attention to

detail and ability to operationalize the Ambassador's vision complements the Ambassador's broad and enterprising outlook. The excellent marks the Ambassador and DCM individually received for leadership and management capabilities in the CFR team's preinspection survey of American direct-hire employees were reiterated in laudatory comments in interviews conducted at post. The partnership in the front office is regarded by employees as close, transparent, and a plus for the mission. A number of the most senior and well-traveled section chiefs in the Department and other agencies told the CFR team that this front office team is either the best or among the best leadership teams in their experience.

The Ambassador and DCM share a concern for the welfare of the embassy community and a common emphasis on high ethical and professional standards. Both articulate their goals and expectations clearly to the mission and require (and receive) a high-quality product. The front office's informal style, openness to dissent, and encouragement of initiative invite creativity and allow feedback and contrary opinion to flow in both directions. The dialogue between the front office and the rest of the mission is dense and constant. Employees told inspectors it was exciting and invigorating. There is wide agreement throughout the embassy that the front office is accessible, responsive, and supportive.

The Ambassador is a decisive and self-aware leader with a high energy level. Employees understand what she wants from them. Coordination among sections and agencies at post is tight, fast, and collegial. The Ambassador and the DCM expect members of the country team to collaborate and to function on whole-of-government principles, and they do. A solid structure of joint meetings in various configurations promotes team cohesion and provides ample face time with the Ambassador and DCM. The Ambassador uses the weekly country team meeting, attended by almost 50 section and agency representatives, to outline her views on current developments and to highlight opportunities for useful collaboration. A smaller group of senior advisors meets weekly with the front office for brainstorming and decisionmaking. Under the DCM's direction, monthly cluster meetings in a variety of substantive and functional fields bring key players together. Both the Ambassador and the DCM also meet regularly with section chiefs and most agency representatives. Members consider the meeting structure efficient and valuable.

Front office attentiveness to the welfare of the employees has created strong bonds of loyalty, trust, and shared purpose. During the recent floods, the front office made taking care of the staff the primary mission goal. Although some LE staff had unrealistic expectations about what restitution or assistance the United States would provide, the front office's responsiveness and empathy left many grateful. The Ambassador has taken other actions to knit the mission together. During the CFR, the Ambassador hosted a ceremony at her residence to honor the contract employees of the embassy, such as the char force, who are often invisible. She recently implemented a highly popular employee of the month program to spotlight special contributions. The Ambassador and the DCM make frequent informal visits to offices in the embassy's central compound and make an effort to visit the mission's many off-compound sites periodically. The community appreciates front office attendance at all embassy social events and the alacrity of the Ambassador and the DCM to offer their residences for mission social activities. The elected LE staff association meets quarterly with the Ambassador and/or the DCM to air concerns and engage in give and take. A recent front office initiative to meet periodically with LE staff in the individual sections has been received warmly.

An active and demanding Ambassador requires an active and productive support structure. The Ambassador's extremely full agenda places considerable drafting and organizational responsibilities on the mission, particularly on the political, economic, transnational crime, and public diplomacy sections. The CFR team found that officers in a number of sections routinely put in long hours, mostly out of genuine enthusiasm to support the Ambassador's objectives and a desire to meet high-quality standards. The long workdays put in by the Ambassador and the DCM, further extended by mobile communication, also tend to encourage overtime. The front office is aware of these tendencies and is considering steps to encourage a healthy life/work balance, such as reducing the memoranda for second-tier events and limiting the use of nonurgent emails outside office hours.

The dynamism of the front office requires a staff assistant to manage the paper flow and facilitate other activities. The staff aide position was abolished many years ago. The Ambassador has coped with the lack of a formal staff assistant position by rotating ELOs from other sections through the front office in 3-month intervals. Although it does provide useful professional training to several ELOs a year, this practice does not allow for continuity in the front office and comes at the expense of the offices providing an ELO. The CFR team believes the embassy needs a formal staff assistant position at the ELO level.

**Recommendation CFR 1:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should implement a solution to provide the embassy a formal entry-level staff aide position. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with EAP and DGHR)

Although there is no formal program for them, the embassy's 25 ELOs and entry-level specialists benefit from personal attention from the front office, which appoints them to serve on mission projects and as visit control officers. Particularly noteworthy is the practice of cross-training first- and second-tour officers by providing them opportunities to serve out of their assigned positions or even with other agencies for short periods. The Ambassador and the DCM have hosted brownbag events for the entry-level employees.

## Policy Advocacy and Reporting Issues

The strength of Embassy Bangkok's leadership, personnel, and interagency coordination greatly enhance the success of its policy advocacy and public diplomacy outreach, with one policymaker calling it a "model post." An impressive array of interagency programs advances a broad range of U.S. global, regional, and bilateral interests, which are well captured in the Mission Strategic Resource Plan. Since the 2010 inspection, the Department program sections have increased cooperation with other agencies at post to further these goals. They also devote considerable effort to supporting the Ambassador's outreach and visiting officials. Reporting is well coordinated and reflects the Ambassador's priorities.

The four units of the political section function largely autonomously but collegially and well. The new political counselor was unanimously praised for his empowering management style and for expanding support to the two units with regional responsibilities. The economic section, with an embedded environment, science, technology, and health unit, is doing a remarkable job handling an increasingly dynamic operational tempo with a growing commercial portfolio. The economic counselor skillfully and strategically directs her staff. The transnational crime affairs section, headed by its only U.S. direct-hire employee, has made important strides in increasing interagency law enforcement cooperation, capitalizing on programming synergies to increase the impact of each program dollar.

### Reporting

Washington endusers complimented the mission's responsiveness and political and economic reporting, but some would like to see more frequent analytical reporting on a number of internal political issues, including perspectives from Consulate General Chiang Mai. During the CFR, the political section finalized its travel plan, drafted a reporting plan, began work on a representation budget, and started using a shared Outlook calendar. The political section also proposed ways to increase the effectiveness of its coordination with political staff in Consulate General Chiang Mai. Both the political and economic sections would appreciate more regular feedback from the Department on their reporting.

The political section is using its ELOs and eligible family members (EFM) well, but it could take better advantage of its experienced LE staff members, who are effectively researching issues but producing little independent reporting. Some have overlapping portfolios not clearly aligned to those of the American staff. The section's senior specialist is preoccupied by supervisory responsibilities. One of the political assistants spends most of her time preparing a daily press summary that may no longer be essential. The administrative assistant, who could be reporting, is performing a number of duties that would be handled more efficiently by the political specialists. Few meetings are held in which LE staff members have the opportunity to present their analyses of events.

**Recommendation CFR 2:** Embassy Bangkok should differentiate clearly the portfolios of political section locally employed staff members and update position descriptions accordingly, specifying reporting and backup responsibilities. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

The embassy has partially complied with Recommendation 6 in the 2010 report in that it is no longer sending emails reporting developments, analyzing trends, and offering scenarios and suggestions for U.S. policymakers that are not captured in front channel reporting. However, the embassy still transmits valuable reporting in its daily official-informal message to the regional bureau when that information or commentary does not fit the criteria for front channel reporting. Many Washington endusers do not receive and cannot retrieve these official-informal messages. According to the *Foreign Affairs Handbook* (FAH), in 5 FAH-1 H-216.3, such messages are record traffic and must not be used to submit economic or political reporting. To make such reporting accessible to other agencies, the embassy could use the Intelink Web pages and portals for Thailand.

**Recommendation CFR 3:** Embassy Bangkok should submit by record emails reporting relevant to policy interests that is not transmitted in front channel cables. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

The embassy has taken a number of steps to improve its biographic files since the 2010 inspection. Prior to and during the CFR, several sections adopted a common biographic template and a naming convention. The embassy designated a new biographic information coordinator and alternate coordinator in March 2012. However, the embassy still lacks a functioning central biographic file for information on foreign nationals, official or private, who directly or indirectly influence domestic and foreign policy in their countries, as specified in the *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM), 2 FAM 113.3 b. (1). The political and economic sections have more than 500 Unclassified and Sensitive But Unclassified biographic files stored in folders on shared computer drives that are accessible only to section employees.

In compliance with Recommendation 2 in the 2010 inspection report, the political and economic sections uploaded a number of Unclassified and Sensitive But Unclassified files to Intellipedia on ClassNet. There has been no demand for classified biographies over the last several years, however. Given the time required to transfer biographic files to Intellipedia and then maintain them on two systems, it would be more efficient for the embassy to move its Unclassified and Sensitive but Unclassified biographic files to Diplopedia or SharePoint.

**Recommendation CFR 4:** Embassy Bangkok should create a functioning central biographic file accessible to Department of State personnel. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

In compliance with Recommendation 8 of the 2010 inspection report, the political section assembled files and retired official records, including emails. It is now maintaining its files. The economic section has assembled files but has not yet started to create record emails or retire official records. This recommendation has been revised and reissued.

**Recommendation CFR 5:** Embassy Bangkok should implement procedures to ensure that the economic section creates record emails and retires official records, in accordance with Department of State standards. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

## Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Issues

The FS-02 regional environmental officer covers 15 East and Southeast Asia countries from Bangkok, travelling 30 percent of the time. Unlike most regional environmental officers, he is rated by the economic counselor rather than the DCM. This arrangement is working well, complemented by a review from an office director in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. The economic counselor and front office are aware of the need to minimize the amount of purely bilateral work the officer performs.

The section has a new bilateral environment, science, technology, and health officer position, which is designated at the FS-02 level. The position was ceded to be filled by ELOs for two assignment cycles. The incumbent is an ELO who reports to the regional environmental officer. This arrangement is effective, but when an FS-02 officer fills the bilateral officer position, that officer will report to the economic counselor. Frequent communications between the bilateral and regional officer untangle their overlapping portfolios. Potential for problems exists if the boundaries between the two jobs are not clearly defined.

**Recommendation CFR 6:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, should delineate in writing the portfolio of the regional environmental officer and that of the bilateral environment, science, technology, and health officer. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with OES)

The embassy funds an EFM to support the regional environmental officer. The EFM's portfolio is not as well defined as the portfolios of other economic section staff members, who are struggling to manage a growing workload.

**Informal CFR Recommendation 1:** Embassy Bangkok should assess the needs of the environment, science, technology, and health section and revise the eligible family member's portfolio accordingly.

The bilateral environment, science, technology, and health officer should have grants training so that he can fulfill properly his responsibilities as grants officer's representative. This training was the subject of Recommendation 12 of the 2010 inspection report. He was scheduled to complete grants training in Bangkok in February 2012, but the training course was cancelled. This recommendation is revised and reissued.

**Recommendation CFR 7:** Embassy Bangkok should require the bilateral environment, science, technology, and health officer to complete grants training. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

## Increasing Efficiency

Many officers in the three sections have heavy workloads. Although they are excited to contribute to a dynamic mission, the majority would like to establish a better work-life balance, particularly during noncrisis periods. Using collaboration tools such as SharePoint more effectively would enhance efficiency within the mission and improve coordination with Washington. The political section does not have a SharePoint site; the economic section and transnational crime affairs section have rudimentary and obsolete sites.

**Informal CFR Recommendation 2:** Embassy Bangkok should develop fully functioning SharePoint sites for the political, economic, and transnational crime affairs sections.

The embassy has more than 20,000 records in its contact management database, which it has used for 14 years. Under current procedures, sections submit proposed invitees and their contact information for each event. The protocol section then must verify and update all the records. This is a wasteful and time-consuming duplication of efforts in sections already under time pressure. It is particularly challenging for the embassy to prepare for the July 4 reception to which 1,200 people are invited. The embassy has a trainer and a programmer who can train section staff to use the database.

**Recommendation CFR 8:** Embassy Bangkok should develop a standard operating procedure for entering and updating records in its mission contact management database and implement a plan to train staff from each section to use the database effectively. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

### **Language-Designated Positions**

Strong Thai language skills are necessary for those serving at Consulate General Chiang Mai, those working in the consular section in Bangkok, and those who work frequently or directly with Thais outside Bangkok. Thai is not generally needed by officers who meet with contacts in Bangkok. The Department dropped the language designation for the DCM position during the last assignments cycle. During the CFR, embassy staff identified additional positions that only require the 6-week familiarization course. These include the head of the political-external unit; the trade and investment officer; the bilateral environment, science, technology, and health officer; the transnational crime affairs director; and the ELO energy and transportation officer. The CFR team concurred with these assessments.

**Recommendation CFR 9:** Embassy Bangkok should submit a new certification to the Bureau of Human Resources specifying which language-designated positions are essential to advance foreign policy objectives. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

Thai is challenging to learn to speak and even more difficult to learn to read. As a result, officers reported that the Foreign Service Institute focuses the last quarter of instruction on reading. A number of officers reported that, even with a general professional proficiency score in reading, they still could not read articles quickly enough to make the learning effort worthwhile. They argued it would be more useful to spend instruction time on improving their speaking abilities. If the Department determines that it is not necessary to have symmetric speaking and reading levels for some language-designated positions in Thailand, training time would be reduced and cost savings would be realized.

To foster the development and use of foreign language skills deemed critical to its mission, the Department provides monetary incentives for proficiency in designated hard languages, including Thai. To qualify for this language incentive pay, specialists must achieve limited working proficiency in speaking and reading; generalists must achieve general proficiency in both. If the Department decides to establish asymmetric speaking and reading levels in Thai for some positions in Thailand, it will have to evaluate whether to extend

asymmetric language incentive pay (which it currently has for seven languages) to Thai. Otherwise, the Department may find it difficult to provide incentive for students to study Thai for those positions.

**Recommendation CFR 10:** The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Embassy Bangkok, should evaluate the levels of speaking and reading proficiency in Thai needed in each language-designated position in Thailand to determine whether some should have asymmetric speaking and reading levels. If so, the language designations of those positions should be revised accordingly and the Bureau of Human Resources should evaluate whether to include Thai in the asymmetric language incentive pay pilot program. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with EAP and Embassy Bangkok)

## Public Diplomacy Issues

The 2010 inspection report described a large, well-functioning public affairs section that did an outstanding job supporting Embassy Bangkok's strategic priorities. That description is still accurate; in fact, public diplomacy operations are even more effective because of changes in the front office and the Ambassador's strong support for public affairs. The 2010 report also noted several weaknesses; the section has successfully addressed all of them. The CFR team closed all the formal and informal recommendations for public diplomacy.

In the past 3 months, the public affairs section experienced multiple staffing changes. The former public affairs officer left in January 2012 to become the principal officer in Chiang Mai. His temporary successor, the cultural affairs officer, retains his responsibilities for the cultural unit, whose small and relatively inexperienced American staff was also in flux. During the CFR, an EFM overseeing speaker and other programs resigned, and an ELO on a consular/public diplomacy rotation was seconded to the front office as a staff assistant. This left a recently arrived professional associate to handle much of the work. The cultural unit also took a hard look at its American Corners network, closing one less effective corner and opening another at a nearby university.

Before leaving Bangkok, the former public affairs officer restructured the section's Information Resource Center, moving two of its staff to the information unit and putting the remaining three under the direct supervision of the regional information resource officer. Though the change initially provoked dismay among affected staff, the situation has since settled; the CFR team believes the change was needed and ultimately will benefit public affairs operations as a whole.

The information unit has won the confidence and support of the activist, public-diplomacy-oriented Ambassador and of the country team. The Ambassador instituted a weekly public affairs meeting attended by the DCM, all section heads, and many agency chiefs. Discussions focus on upcoming public events and initiatives as well as the public message on bilateral issues.

The information unit's efforts in social media, supported by a full-time specialist hired in 2010, dramatically expanded the audience for mission messages. The embassy's Facebook page now has more than 34,000 friends; 40,000-plus Thais follow the embassy's Twitter feeds; and more than 28,000 Thais receive the Ambassador's personal tweets, giving her the third-largest following of any U.S. ambassador worldwide. Traditional media pick up embassy postings on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter and use the material in print and broadcasts, garnering a much wider audience than conventional embassy press releases or opinion pieces in the newspapers.

In accord with a recommendation in the 2010 inspection report, all relevant public affairs staff members successfully completed one or more of the online grants training courses offered by the Foreign Service Institute. Grants files are in order, and the section maintains a color-coded spreadsheet, available to all staff, that summarizes the status of all grants and ensures better tracking.

## Consular Issues

The 2010 inspection report described a consular section with serious leadership and morale problems. A strong cadre of ELOs and LE staff members were putting in an impressive performance under great stress, but the consul general and the visa chief were providing inadequate leadership and supervision. The two most senior officers in the section were not helping the other officers during peak visa workload periods, they were not mentoring and counseling the ELOs on a regular basis, and they were not communicating well with the staff.

The CFR team observed a transformed consular section. The new consul general and visa chief arrived in the summer of 2011. They and the other consular managers are practicing the consular leadership tenets of the Bureau of Consular Affairs. Although the workload for the section continues to rise and the pressures on the staff are heavy, consular employees are working hard and their morale is high.

The CFR team identified several issues that had been the subject of informal recommendations in the 2010 report and that had not been resolved in the interim. Those informal recommendations have been revised and reissued as formal recommendations in this report. In addition, the team addressed other issues that will bring the consular section into conformity with regulations and help the section operate more efficiently.

### American Citizens Services

American citizens services workload growth is the largest factor putting pressure on the consular staff. Thailand continues to attract increasing numbers of American tourists, Americans who work in industries such as finance, and retired Americans and those looking for an inexpensive place to live. The growth in American citizens services workload led to Recommendation 21 in the 2010 report that one of the eight ELO positions be transferred from the nonimmigrant visa unit to the American citizens services unit. The embassy did transfer the position, and that has helped the unit cope with its growing workload.

In September 2011, the embassy instituted an appointment system for nonemergency American citizens services such as notariats and passports. The OIG team had recommended this in 2010 in Informal Recommendation 13. The embassy had not implemented that recommendation until the Department (in State cable 60939 on June 17, 2011) mandated such an appointment system in all posts effective September 2011. Advantages of appointments include reducing wait times for Americans seeking services; balancing workload with staffing; and helping applicants avoid second visits by informing them in advance of the documents they need to bring.

Embassy Bangkok found initially that the new appointment system did indeed lead to these improvements, but in the intervening months the consular section's failure to enforce the system effectively has reduced its benefits. Consular employees have been serving American citizens who were requesting nonemergency services despite their lack of appointments. The customers have been told to wait until those with appointments have been served first. Although the intent of not turning away Americans is admirable, the result has been that more Americans are walking in without appointments and expecting to be served.

The contrast with the experience of the consular section in Chiang Mai is telling. Chiang Mai instituted an American citizens services appointment system well before Bangkok. In Chiang Mai, the consular officers ask Americans without appointments to make an appointment. Officers use their discretion in cases of extenuating circumstances. This system is more effective than the current one in Bangkok. Informal Recommendation 13 is revised and reissued as a formal recommendation.

**Recommendation CFR 11:** Embassy Bangkok should fully implement and enforce the appointment system for nonemergency services in the American citizens services unit by requiring those consular customers who walk in for such services to make appointments. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

The American citizens services unit does not have a phone tree. LE staff members are interrupted regularly throughout the day by phone calls, many of which are routine procedural questions. This impedes the efficiency of the unit and does not conform with standard management practices in other large consular sections. This issue was the subject of Informal Recommendation 14 in the 2010 report. Consular managers told the CFR team that they had been planning to install a phone tree in 2011 but their attention was diverted by the floods. Following that crisis, the embassy instituted a new telephone system. The managers said they are pursuing this issue. This informal recommendation is revised and reissued as a formal recommendation.

**Recommendation CFR 12:** Embassy Bangkok should implement a phone tree to channel routine calls on American citizens services to recorded messages, minimizing interruptions for routine inquiries. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

## **Immigrant Visas**

The immigrant visa unit, which processes approximately 2,500 applications per year, engages in some inefficient practices that should be corrected. These issues were the subjects of informal recommendations in the 2010 report but had not been resolved in the interim.

When immigrant visa applicants are refused because they are missing one or more key documents (for example, the original of a marriage certificate), they usually return to the consular section to submit the missing documents. In other posts, applicants normally submit missing documents through the mail or a courier service. The applicants have already been interviewed and have signed the applications before a consular officer, so a second personal appearance by applicants serves no purpose. Asking applicants to return to submit missing documents creates more work for security and consular employees. Department regulation 7 FAH-1 H-263.2 states in part: "Limiting the need for multiple visits to the (consular) section, and the resulting additional work placed on consular and security staff, should be a priority in organizing operations."

The 2010 OIG team recommended in Informal Recommendation 12 that the embassy require additional personal appearances by immigrant visa applicants only when a personal interview was essential to determine visa eligibility. When asked why they had not implemented that informal recommendation, consular employees told the CFR team that they were worried

that a document might get lost in the Thai postal system, which serves as the equivalent of a courier service for the consular section in Bangkok. The employees admitted that they have been using the same postal system for years to send American passports and tens of thousands of passports with nonimmigrant visas, and they have not had reports in years of the postal system losing documents. This informal recommendation is revised and reissued as a formal recommendation.

**Recommendation CFR 13:** Embassy Bangkok should implement a change in immigrant visa processing so that applicants who must submit missing documents are encouraged to send them through the Thai postal system rather than delivering the documents in person to the consular section. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

In a similar vein, the 2010 team recommended in Informal Recommendation 11 that the embassy send issued immigrant visas to applicants by mail. The embassy did not implement that recommendation. As noted above, the embassy already sends U.S. passports and passports with nonimmigrant visas to the applicants by mail. Consular managers told the CFR team that they had not made this change because it was relatively easy to replace passports and nonimmigrant visas but it was more difficult to replace all the documents contained in an immigrant visa package. The CFR team believes the managers need to practice risk management, not risk avoidance; the benefits of this change are great and the risks are small. This informal recommendation is revised and reissued as a formal recommendation.

**Recommendation CFR 14:** Embassy Bangkok should change immigrant visa processing so that the issued immigrant visas are sent to the applicants through the Thai postal system rather than requiring the applicants to appear in person to pick up their visas. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

### **Consular Personnel Issues**

Recommendation 22 of the 2010 report recommended the embassy update the position descriptions for the LE staff in the visa unit. The recommendation was in resolved/open status when the CFR was announced in the fall of 2011. The CFR team reviewed the issue in Bangkok and closed this recommendation as implemented. Now the embassy needs to take the next step of reviewing the grade levels of those positions.

**Recommendation CFR 15:** Embassy Bangkok should evaluate the updated position descriptions for the employees in the visa unit of the consular section to determine the appropriate grade levels for those positions. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

ELOs in the consular section are working considerable amounts of overtime, but they are not claiming compensation. The CFR team heard anecdotal evidence that the officers were working on average several hours of overtime per week. The team reviewed the overtime claimed by consular section ELOs for the previous 3 months. Only 3 hours of the overtime claimed appeared to be for consular work. The rest was related to high-level visits, surveys of the areas affected by the recent floods, and work in support of the front office.

**Recommendation CFR 16:** Embassy Bangkok should implement a plan so that entry-level officers in the consular section seek approval and claim compensation for the hours of overtime they work. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

### **Consular Files**

The consular section has seven file cabinets of Category 1 refusals, the visa files of applicants refused for reasons that make them permanently ineligible. New Category 1 refusal records are scanned and retained electronically, and the paper records are shipped to the Kentucky Consular Center in accordance with the requirements in 9 FAM Appendix F. The consular section has not dealt with the old Category 1 refusal files, however. According to 9 FAM Appendix F, 101.1, "Posts must electronically scan all unclassified Category 1 refusal files into the Consular Consolidated Database and immediately ship the Category 1 paper refusal files to Kentucky Consular Center for storage."

In addition, 9 FAM Appendix F, 103.5 notes that "the Kentucky Consular Center is prepared to perform back-scanning of every post's unclassified Category 1 refusal files." The same reference also states that posts must cull the files for extraneous documentation, as employees of the Kentucky Consular Center are not authorized to perform that task. The CFR team did a spot check of the files. The sampling showed the files to be in excellent shape, but it will still be necessary to review all the files before shipment. The CFR team also confirmed with the Kentucky Consular Center that it was prepared to scan Bangkok's files.

**Recommendation CFR 17:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should implement a plan to cull the embassy's Category 1 visa refusal files of extraneous documentation and ship the remaining paper files to the Kentucky Consular Center for scanning. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with CA)

The consular section also has several file cabinets of visa cases in which the consular section has entered lookouts of derogatory information that may or may not lead to visa ineligibility. Such lookouts are retained in the consular lookout system only for 10 years. The CFR team reviewed a sampling of the files. The files were culled recently to clear them of cases that were created more than 10 years ago, but the section does not have a plan for future culling of the files.

**Recommendation CFR 18:** Embassy Bangkok should implement a plan to identify all local lookout visa files by date of creation to facilitate future reviews of the files for removal of inactive cases. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

### **Consular Space Issues**

The security upgrades to the consular section that were the subject of a recommendation in the 2010 report were completed in the summer of 2011. The upgrades solved the space issues that had been identified by the OIG team in 2010. The CFR team identified three new space issues.

The upgrades included the addition of more interview windows for the American citizens services unit and the reconfiguration of the waiting room for the unit. The noise level in the waiting room is high when the waiting room is full, which is often. Sound buffering would mitigate the noise problem.

**Recommendation CFR 19:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should implement a plan to mitigate the noise problem in the waiting room of the American citizens services unit in the consular section. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with CA and OBO)

As stated in 7 FAH-1 H-282, work spaces in consular sections should have partitions no higher than 42 inches. The partitions in the LE staff work areas in the immigrant visa units and the American citizens services units of the consular section are 72 inches high. (b) (5)

**Recommendation CFR 20:** Embassy Bangkok should change the partitions in the locally employed staff work areas of the immigrant visa unit and the American citizens services unit of the consular section so that the partitions are no higher than 42 inches. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

## Consulate General Chiang Mai

The consulate general is a small, well-run post. A recent unexpected change in consuls general due to a family medical emergency was well managed by both the departing and incoming officers. The new consul general, an officer with significant experience in Thailand, is quickly and effectively taking over his new responsibilities. The consulate general receives excellent support from Embassy Bangkok, including some management services, public diplomacy programming, and consular staffing assistance.

Although the consulate general's facility is beautiful, it is located in an historic compound with significant maintenance challenges and no room to expand. This is especially a problem in the consular section. If the consular workload continues to grow, the consular section will have no space to add more staff. As it is, there is no room for a separate consular cashier booth. (b) (5)



Consulate General Chiang Mai has two ELO positions that were the subject of Recommendation 23 in the 2010 report. In Appendix I, the CFR findings explain further the recent history of these two positions. One position is a political and economic officer position, and the other is a consular and political officer position. As consular workload has increased, the officer in the consular/political position has had less time for the political part of the portfolio. The CFR team assessed that the position requires approximately 75 percent of time dedicated to consular work. With such a heavy concentration of time in one function, it is difficult for the officer in that position to carry out the political officer duties effectively .

Because both positions are at the FS-04 level, it would be more rational to convert the two positions to rotational. This would provide a wider experience for the officers and would allow them to back up each another as necessary. The change should be made effective for future assignments. Officers already assigned should not be affected.

**Recommendation CFR 21:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should convert the two entry-level officer positions in Chiang Mai to a consular and political/economic rotation. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with EAP and DGHR)

## Management Issues

### Management Section

Embassy Bangkok's management section has been, and continues to be, highly successful in providing management services to the large number of Department staff, as well as the staff of 31 other agencies and 9 regional support offices. For 2011, the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services scores all exceeded 4.0; these were higher than the 2010 scores, higher than other embassies in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP), and higher than worldwide averages.

The management counselor provides strong leadership to a section that includes 23 U.S. direct-hire employees. The section is understaffed in that it does not include a mid-level generalist management officer, a needed resource in this huge enterprise of over 600 direct-hire Americans; more than 1,110 LE staff members; 55 EFMs; and hundreds of contractors, including local guards and others. An FS-01 deputy management officer position was abolished in 1997. The section's office management specialist position was converted to an EFM position. An ELO supports the management counselor as the only other generalist officer in the management section.

In the 15 years since the deputy management officer position was abolished, the embassy has grown enormously in fiscal and human capital resources, including the addition of many other agencies and regional entities. The present structure is not adequate to meet the embassy's need for a fully staffed management section. Although assigning one of the ELOs to fill the management officer role has been a reasonable accommodation, it is not a permanent solution.

The 2010 OIG report noted that the embassy hoped that the Department would provide the position under the Diplomacy 3.0 program. Although the embassy planned to ask for one of the assistant general services officer positions to be reprogrammed if the position was not provided, it did not request the position. The CFR team believes that an entry-level general services officer position (position number 52469013) should be reprogrammed to the FS-02 level. This change would not increase the number of officers in the management section but provides needed management support and oversight.

**Recommendation CFR 22:** The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Bangkok and the Bureau of Human Resources, should reprogram an entry-level general services officer position (position number 52469013) to an FS-02 position and designate it as the management officer. (Action: EAP, in coordination with Embassy Bangkok and DGHR)

### *Employee Engagement Initiative*

The management section has undertaken an Employee Engagement Initiative aimed at creating a more cohesive organizational structure and becoming a model 21<sup>st</sup> century diplomatic mission and regional platform. The vision emphasizes shared values, common goals, and teamwork with a focus on integrity, unity, creativity, and responsibility. Embassy support and the management section's leadership, interest, and focus on engagement goals continue to make this embassy a high performing organization.

### ***Regional Support***

The Department and eight other agencies have regional offices in Bangkok. The embassy's management section provides administrative support for them as they subscribe to the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services. At the same time, the embassy provides human resources and budget support to Embassy Dili; human resources support to Embassy Vientiane and Embassy Rangoon; and facilities and financial management support to all these embassies. Although an earlier goal to expand services and become the support platform of choice has been discontinued, the support continues to play a big role in embassy responsibilities.

### ***Regional Employment Development Center***

EAP provides funding to share training space with the U.S. Agency for International Development at the Asia Regional Employment Development Center. Together EAP, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs divide the cost of the Department's share of 25 percent of the training center space, totaling approximately \$170,000 annually. The development center's training is different from the focused and specific financial management training the Bureau of Resource Management's Global Financial Management Center provides in a nearby location. When there are capacity problems, the U.S. Agency for International Development shares one of its classrooms, the classes may be held in a hotel, or the Global Financial Management Center may provide space and, occasionally, a trainer.

EAP and the Foreign Service Institute placed a member of the Foreign Service Institute training staff in Bangkok. As the Department's director at the center, the trainer is a member of the management team and provides administrative services at the training facility. Since her arrival, the Foreign Service Institute has begun to give credit for courses taken at the development center and at the financial management center. The Asia Regional Employment Development Center's director is well satisfied with the center's success and the number of students who have found the courses worthwhile.

### **Human Resources**

The human resources office provides excellent service to the large population resident in Bangkok. The office also provides regional support to Embassies Dili, Rangoon, and Vientiane, where there are only LE staff assistants, and gives computer-aided job classification services to an additional eight posts in the region. Staffing includes 3 direct-hire human resources officers and 26 LE staff members, sufficient to accomplish their work.

Embassy employees have submitted direct-hire American, EFM, and LE staff evaluations within deadlines. The section revised its LE staff compensation plan to include a clear description of its policy and the Government of Thailand's requirement that limits employment to 1 year beyond the mandatory separation age of 60. The embassy agreed to include the information in its next revision of the LE staff employment handbook.

External employment for family members continues to be an issue. There is no bilateral work agreement, although the embassy has attempted to negotiate an agreement for the last 10 years. At this point, the embassy has abandoned the goal to establish a bilateral work agreement. The embassy currently employs 55 EFMs, with 9 more in the process of being hired. Agencies with a large regional presence lag behind on creating opportunities for EFMs.

### ***Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights***

Embassy Bangkok's Equal Opportunity Employment and Civil Rights program is robust. The three counselors are trained and take their roles seriously. As OIG recommended previously, the embassy added an Equal Opportunity Employment segment to newcomer orientations and provides handouts with relevant information on how to address workplace concerns.

### ***Duty Officer Roster***

In 2010, Embassy Bangkok introduced a lottery system to assign duty officers and ensure duty officer assignments are equitable and transparent. The management section developed a system that clearly defines eligible personnel, as well as staff exempt from serving as duty officers, and assigns an agency a number of weeks for duty based on the total number of that agency's personnel in the mission.

The roster covers the full year, and each week is assigned to an agency based on lottery results. Each agency assigns an individual to serve during the assigned week and provides the name to the human resources office.

### **Financial Management**

The financial management section provides excellent customer service and financial support, including budgeting and accounting to its large client base. The section also provides regional support to Embassy Dili and Embassy Vientiane, which rely on their LE staff for financial management needs. The local staffs lack financial expertise and consult with Embassy Bangkok regularly.

The section's present staffing, 2 direct-hire American financial management officers and 28 LE staff members, is sufficient to meet customer needs and provide oversight. This section is very efficient. Despite its heavy work load, the staff processes large numbers of transactions with fewer LE staff members than at similarly large embassies. For example, in FY 2011, the financial management section's voucher examiners processed a total of 40,525 vouchers or an average of 2,984 vouchers per examiner, exceeding the worldwide average of 2,033 vouchers per examiner.

The financial management office revised and reissued the embassy's temporary duty policy, discontinued check cashing privileges for retired local employees, issued policies and procedures for bulk funding blanket purchase agreements and purchase cards, and completed all outstanding recommendations in the 2010 OIG report.

## **International Cooperative Administrative Support Services**

The International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council operates effectively. Each agency subscribing to the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services sends one representative to the council meetings, which are held approximately four times each year, in compliance with 6 FAH-5 requirements. A consensus vote determines outcomes. Subcommittees are formed when needed to discuss outstanding issues such as furniture pool contributions. Most subscribers are satisfied that the meetings are productive.

## **Facilities Management**

Two facilities managers are responsible for 26 U.S. Government-owned properties. These include the Ambassador's residence, now on a long-term lease at \$1,500 annually; five executive-level residences at the Rajdamri compound; the chancery (new office building); the existing office building, which houses the consular section, the Global Financial Center, the Marine House, and the commissary; and an apartment building with 18 standard and mid-sized apartments on two lots. The section provides carpentry and other furniture refinishing services.

## **General Services Office**

The senior general services officer is very experienced and an expert in the section's operations and requirements. This section is excellent, and there are no concerns about performance. As noted above, one of the five general services officers assigned to Embassy Bangkok serves as the deputy management officer. Consequently, the four officers have large and complicated portfolios. For example, the housing officer is responsible for all phases of housing from leasing 421 short-term leased residences, to make-ready, to housing assignments. The section also assists as needed with 93 local quarters' allowance residences. Many landlords supply furniture; however, the embassy fills in with extra bookcases, desks, and other furnishings.

Twenty-five percent of the procurement section's purchases are for specialized brand name medications and other supplies for the Armed Forces Research Institute Medical Services. Major contracts over \$250,000 that require a waiver from the Department include the local staff health care contract, janitorial and gardening services, packing and crating services, copier maintenance, travel, life insurance, and a difficult new cell phone contract. The section has just begun its transition to the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System.

Finally, a general services officer, located at the Rajdamri compound, is responsible for motor pool, receiving, inventory controls, and overseeing a sprawling warehouse. He is also the gifts officer, responsible for receiving, recording, inventorying, and disposing of gifts as referenced in the embassy's gifts policy, found in management instruction number A2010-025, dated March 8, 2011.

## ***Mission Visitors Office***

The mission visitors office makes hotel arrangements for about 50,000 hotel nights per year for Embassy Bangkok's many visitors and also arranges expediting and motor vehicle

services. In addition, it coordinates with the warehouse to supply expendable and nonexpendable items used in control rooms during visits. The implementation of the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System will help to ensure inventories are accurate.

### **Information Management**

The information management office is an efficient, well-managed operation that meets customer needs. The team has successfully taken on new projects, including the creation of a computer donation program to local schools and implementation of a technology camp in which the section nongovernmental organizations partner to train students. The operation, with 60 employees in 7 locations, is led by a capable, goal-oriented information management officer. The office provides rover support to 33 embassies and consulates in East Asia.

All formal and informal recommendations for which the information management office was responsible have been closed. The CFR reviewed telephones, radios, mail, print services, and the help desk operation and concluded that internal operations are solid and meet standard operating practices.

The office has had many significant achievements since the 2010 inspection. For example, the embassy completed the installation of a new telephone system and the replacement of all wiring in seven locations in 2011. A full-time information systems security officer position was established and will monitor nearby small posts. During the floods, the switchboard was a lifeline for Mission Thailand. The major challenge that the office faces is that the expansion of the customer base is not supported by increases in staffing. The embassy is looking at ways to address this issue in consultation with EAP.

### **Quality of Life**

Embassy morale is high. The commissary is well stocked with familiar products and offers mailing, dry cleaning, and other services. Housing is spacious and accommodating and, for those close to the school, worth the commute. Bangkok suffers from a hot, muggy climate and notorious traffic jams, yet employment at the embassy is highly sought after and the staff is capable and competent. The health unit is innovative in its attempts to offer modern techniques, and local hospitals and health care providers are modern and capable.

### ***Community Liaison Office***

The community liaison offices in Bangkok and Chiang Mai received high praise for their creativity and dedication. The coordinators participate actively in the emergency action committees and are treated as integral members of the country team. The community liaison office in Bangkok, whose coordinators are well versed and enthusiastic, pays special attention to assisting EFMs seeking employment in the embassy.

### ***Health Unit***

The health unit occupies a spacious location, with professional medical staffing, a laboratory, and examination rooms dedicated to eye and ear examinations, pediatric patients, and

trauma requirements. The unit provides food sanitation training. Storage has proper locks for controlled substances and over-the-counter medications.

The regional medical officer is using new technologies to enhance diagnosis and treatment. For example, he is using a “telemedicine” capability to enable distant examinations for cardiac and lung function, ear and nose problems, and skin conditions. Further, he is using an electronic system that provides better medical records information and privacy for patients.

### *American Community Support Association*

Embassy Bangkok staff had positive views about the recreation association, its commissary, and the snack bars it operates. The commissary stocks American brands and carries a large selection of alcoholic beverages. It contracts for coffee shops located at the chancery and other facilities, often makes financial contributions to community liaison events, and is contributing to a new fitness center. Temporary duty personnel have cost-free access.

The recreation association has annual audits, as required. Although the cafeterias lose money, fuel oil sales provide revenue that offsets those losses, keeping the association essentially solvent. In October 2011, the Bureau of Administration’s Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs conducted a comprehensive review of Embassy Bangkok’s American Community Support Association. Its report identified 23 operational and management control deficiencies. The association manager and active board of directors are working to correct them. To date, six deficiencies have been corrected. The Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs tracks recommendations and ensures that recreation associations take corrective action with regard to the recommendations.

### **Management Controls**

The Ambassador’s Chief of Mission Annual Management Control Statement of Assurance, dated July 5, 2011, stated that the embassy had conducted an evaluation of the systems of management controls for Embassy Bangkok and constituent posts, in accordance with 2 FAM 020 requirements, and found no problems. The memorandum was accompanied by internal management control review lists for Embassy Bangkok and Consulate General Chiang Mai. The CFR team did not find control deficiencies during the CFR.

## List of Compliance Followup Review Recommendations

**Recommendation CFR 1:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should implement a solution to provide the embassy a formal entry-level staff aide position. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with EAP and DGHR)

**Recommendation CFR 2:** Embassy Bangkok should differentiate clearly the portfolios of political section locally employed staff members and update position descriptions accordingly, specifying reporting and backup responsibilities. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 3:** Embassy Bangkok should submit by record emails reporting relevant to policy interests that is not transmitted in front channel cables. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 4:** Embassy Bangkok should create a functioning central biographic file accessible to Department of State personnel. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 5:** Embassy Bangkok should implement procedures to ensure that the economic section creates record emails and retires official records, in accordance with Department of State standards. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 6:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, should delineate in writing the portfolio of the regional environmental officer and that of the bilateral environment, science, technology, and health officer. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with OES)

**Recommendation CFR 7:** Embassy Bangkok should require the bilateral environment, science, technology, and health officer to complete grants training. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 8:** Embassy Bangkok should develop a standard operating procedure for entering and updating records in its mission contact management database and implement a plan to train staff from each section to use the database effectively. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 9:** Embassy Bangkok should submit a new certification to the Bureau of Human Resources specifying which language-designated positions are essential to advance foreign policy objectives. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 10:** The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Embassy Bangkok, should evaluate the levels of speaking and reading proficiency in Thai needed in each language-designated position in Thailand to determine whether some should have asymmetric speaking and reading levels. If so, the language designations of those positions should be revised accordingly and the Bureau of Human Resources should evaluate whether to include Thai in the asymmetric language incentive pay pilot program. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with EAP and Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 11:** Embassy Bangkok should fully implement and enforce the appointment system for nonemergency services in the American citizens services unit by

requiring those consular customers who walk in for such services to make appointments.  
(Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 12:** Embassy Bangkok should implement a phone tree to channel routine calls on American citizens services to recorded messages, minimizing interruptions for routine inquiries. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 13:** Embassy Bangkok should implement a change in immigrant visa processing so that applicants who must submit missing documents are encouraged to send them through the Thai postal system rather than delivering the documents in person to the consular section. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 14:** Embassy Bangkok should change immigrant visa processing so that the issued immigrant visas are sent to the applicants through the Thai postal system rather than requiring the applicants to appear in person to pick up their visas. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 15:** Embassy Bangkok should evaluate the updated position descriptions for the employees in the visa unit of the consular section to determine the appropriate grade levels for those positions. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 16:** Embassy Bangkok should implement a plan so that entry-level officers in the consular section seek approval and claim compensation for the hours of overtime they work. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 17:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should implement a plan to cull the embassy's Category 1 visa refusal files of extraneous documentation and ship the remaining paper files to the Kentucky Consular Center for scanning. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with CA)

**Recommendation CFR 18:** Embassy Bangkok should implement a plan to identify all local lookout visa files by date of creation to facilitate future reviews of the files for removal of inactive cases. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 19:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should implement a plan to mitigate the noise problem in the waiting room of the American citizens services unit in the consular section. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with CA and OBO)

**Recommendation CFR 20:** Embassy Bangkok should change the partitions in the locally employed staff work areas of the immigrant visa unit and the American citizens services unit of the consular section so that the partitions are no higher than 42 inches. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Recommendation CFR 21:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should convert the two entry-level officer positions in Chiang Mai to a consular and political/economic rotation. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with EAP and DGHR)

**Recommendation CFR 22:** The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Bangkok and the Bureau of Human Resources, should reprogram an entry-level general services officer position (position number 52469013) to an FS-02 position and designate it as the management officer. (Action: EAP, in coordination with Embassy Bangkok and DGHR)

## List of 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 CFR Recommendation 1:*** Embassy Bangkok should assess the needs of the environment, science, technology, and health section and revise the eligible family member's portfolio accordingly.

***Informal CFR Recommendation 2:*** Embassy Bangkok should develop fully functioning SharePoint sites for the political, economic, and transnational crime affairs sections.

## Principal Officials

|   | Name                     | Arrival Date |
|---|--------------------------|--------------|
| Ambassador  | Kristie A. Kenney        | 01/2011      |
| Deputy Chief of Mission   | Judith B. Cefkin         | 7/2010       |
| <b>Chiefs of Sections:</b>  |                          |              |
| Management  | Gregory S. Stanford      | 7/2009       |
| Consular  | Elizabeth S. Pratt       | 8/2011       |
| Political   | Raymond D. Richhart      | 6/2011       |
| Economic  | Julie J. Chung           | 9/2010       |
| Public Affairs (Acting)   | Michael J. Honnold       | 10/2011      |
| Regional Security   | Melissa C. Foynes        | 8/2011       |
| Transnational Crime Affairs   | Ali Jalili               | 8/2011       |
| Refugee and Migration Affairs                                       | Andrea L. Doyle          | 8/2010       |
| Bangkok Regional Diplomatic Courier Division                        | James B. Angell          | 8/2011       |
| Global Financial Services Bangkok                                   | Barry L. Haney           | 7/2011       |
| Bangkok Regional Director Security Engineering                      | Stephen J. Klein         | 8/2009       |
| Regional Information Management Center<br>Bangkok                   | Patrick J. Meagher       | 8/2011       |
| Consulate General Chiang Mai<br>Principal Officer (Acting)          | Kenneth L. Foster        | 6/2009       |
| <b>Other Agencies:</b>  |                          |              |
| Broadcasting Board of Governors                                     | Richard G. Baltus        | 9/2003       |
| Centers for Disease Control   | Michael D. Malison       | 10/2006      |
| Department of Agriculture<br>Foreign Agricultural Service           | John Wade                | 7/2010       |
| Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services                         | Robert T. Tanaka         | 12/2008      |
| Regional Marine Office  | Lt. Col. Thomas Stephens | 6/2011       |
| Department of Defense<br>Joint States Military Advisory Group       | Col. Edward A. Swanda    | 6/2008       |
| Defense Attaché   | Col. Patrick J. Kane     | 5/2010       |
| Defense Attaché Technical Liaison                                   | Richard D. Gibson        | 10/2008      |
| Defense Attaché System Support                                      | Robert W. Majors         | 6/2010       |
| Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical<br>Science               | Col. Robert A. Bowden    | 6/2010       |
| Force Protection Detachment   | Gregory S. Miller        | 8/2009       |
| Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command                                    | Lt. Col. Marc E. Galler  | 1/2009       |
| Resident Office in Charge of Construction                           | Lt. Cdr. Aaron W. Park   | 3/2011       |
| Department of Homeland Security<br>Citizen and Immigration Services | Pius D. Bannis           | 11/2011      |
| U.S. Customs and Border Protection                                  | Ana Cambiaso             | 8/2011       |

|   |                    |         |
|---|--------------------|---------|
| U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  | Barry Tang         | 4/2009  |
| Transportation Security Administration    | Anjum K. Agarwala  | 11/2008 |
| U.S. Secret Service                       | Sung H. Yi         | 10/2010 |
| Department of Justice                     |                    |         |
| Office of International Affairs           | Philip A. Guentert | 8/2010  |
| Drug Enforcement Agency                   | Joseph P. Reagan   | 10/2011 |
| Legal Attaché                             | Daniel P. Kelly    | 1/2006  |
| Open Source Center                        | Jesse Reeder       | 6/2010  |
| Foreign Commercial Service                | Michael McGee      | 8/2011  |
| U.S. Agency for International Development | Michael J. Yates   | 5/2011  |
| Peace Corps                               | David Claussenius  | 7/2011  |
| U.S. Trade and Development Agency         | Mark Dunn          | 1/2009  |

## Abbreviations

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| CFR        | Compliance followup review              |
| DCM        | Deputy chief of mission                 |
| Department | U.S. Department of State                |
| EAP        | East Asian and Pacific Affairs          |
| EFM        | Eligible family member                  |
| ELO        | Entry-level officer                     |
| FAH        | <i>Foreign Affairs Handbook</i>         |
| FAM        | <i>Foreign Affairs Manual</i>           |
| LE         | Locally employed                        |
| OBO        | Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations |
| OIG        | Office of Inspector General             |

## Appendix I: Status of 2010 Inspection Formal Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs should require a career Foreign Service officer assigned to a large embassy (Overseas Staffing Model category 4 and above) as a Chief of Mission for the first time but who has never served as a deputy chief of mission to take the deputy chief of mission training at the Foreign Service Institute. (Action: EAP)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** EAP argued that there is sufficient overlap between DCM and Chief of Mission training at the Foreign Service Institute to make the recommendation unnecessary. For Chiefs of Mission without DCM background, the two bureaus would work together to identify and address areas where specific training was needed. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable alternative implementation.

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Bangkok should establish a schedule to post, on the Intellipedia system and in cables, regular biographic submissions on official and unofficial Thai individuals in the political and economic fields. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok reported in a compliance message that it had reviewed its biographic files and had begun in January 2011 to post updates regularly on a twice-per-month schedule to Intellipedia. It commented that biographic reporting would be augmented by a new reporting officer to be assigned to the political section in May 2011 and a new EFM position in the political section.

The CFR team found that the embassy has taken a number of steps to improve its biographic files, but that its files are still not fully functional. Political and economic section staff members were unaware that they were to have been updating biographic files twice a month on Intellipedia and have not been doing so. The biographic information coordinator designated in the most recent delegation of authority reported that, by the time he departed post in July 2011, he had updated only two biographies on Intellipedia. The two sections store unclassified and Sensitive But Unclassified biographic files on separate shared drives on the unclassified system.

The sections have not generated or needed any classified biographic files in the past 2 years. In January 2012, EFMs in the political and economic sections with responsibilities for biographic reporting began to enter unclassified and Sensitive But Unclassified biographic files of members of the new government into Intellipedia, which is on the classified system. Because the embassy has little need for classified biographic files and the Department's current best practice is to use Diplopedia to create a central biographic file, this recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 4.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Bangkok should submit periodic leadership analyses on notable individuals throughout Thailand, elaborating on their motivations, alliances, and scope of influence in the changing domestic environment. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok reported in a compliance message that the embassy had begun submitting tailored leadership analyses on a twice-per-month basis. As described in the CFR findings for Recommendation 2, political and economic section officers were unaware that they were to have been doing this. End users of Embassy Bangkok's political and economic reporting, however, are satisfied with the amount of leadership analysis included in reporting. Because Recommendation 2 was revised and reissued, this recommendation is closed.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Bangkok should direct employees not to transmit sensitive information on public email accounts. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok issued a management instruction in February 2011 entitled "Use of E-Mail on OpenNet and ClassNet Systems." During the CFR, both the political counselor and the economic counselor indicated that their staffs are abiding by this policy. The information systems security officer agreed to start performing random checks to ensure this is the case. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Bangkok should designate appropriately the classification of highly sensitive information that is transmitted on the OpenNet or the classified networks. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok issued a management instruction in January 2011 entitled "Proper Use of Classification Levels and Markings." During the CFR, both the political counselor and the economic counselor indicated that their staffs are abiding by the policy. The information systems security officer agreed to start performing random checks to ensure this is the case. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Bangkok should reinforce emails and informal messages with cables that report developments, analyze trends, and offer scenarios and suggestions for U.S. policymakers. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok reported in a compliance message that most reporting was already being submitted through the State Messaging and Retrieval Toolset system, not email. During the CFR, political and economic staffs said that reporting is sent either in front channel cables or in the embassy's daily official informal message. The official informal is not retrievable on the State Messaging and Retrieval Toolset system, depriving some policymakers

and analysts who have a need to know of the full extent of post's reporting. This recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 3.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Bangkok should issue an administrative notice explaining that all Department employees are required to establish, maintain, and annually retire official records, including email messages that meet the definition of records as specified in Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok issued a management instruction in August 2010 entitled "Records Management Responsibilities." In January 2011, the embassy issued a management instruction entitled "Preserving Electronic Message (E-Mail) Records." In November 2011, the embassy issued a staff notice entitled "Annual Review and Retirement of Records." The three notices address the various issues raised by this recommendation. On January 23, 2012, the political section office management specialist issued a record email to section staff with instructions for retiring files and converting emails into record emails. During the CFR, the political section office management specialist advised economic section staff how to do this. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Bangkok should assemble 2008, 2009, and 2010 files, including relevant emails, and require staff to maintain files and retire them annually in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok reported in a compliance message that it had issued management instructions responsive to the recommendation and that the process of files retirement was underway in December 2010. The CFR found that the political section began the process of establishing electronic files in January 2011 but did not have functional files until the fall of 2011. In January 2012, the political section office management specialist worked with section staff to review the contents of each safe and to retire official records. On February 1, 2012, the political section submitted to the Department for retirement four boxes of files from 2003 to 2010. The political counselor reported that section staff members are now maintaining files properly, including converting record emails. The economic section has functioning electronic files but is not yet preserving record emails or retiring records. During the CFR, the political section office management specialist advised economic section staff how to retire files and convert emails into record emails. This recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 5.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Bangkok should retain Leahy vetting files at post for 3 years for Department-funded training, and 10 years for Defense Department-funded training. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok reported in a compliance message that the embassy and Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group-Thai had adjusted file retention standards to bring the post into compliance. During the CFR, the Leahy vetting point of contact displayed post's procedures, tracking database, and paper files, which it plans to retain for 10 years regardless of the source of funding. Since 2010, the embassy's Leahy vetting files have been archived as part of the international vetting and tracking system. During the CFR, the Leahy vetting point of contact worked with a Leahy vetting specialist in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and agreed to start checking proposed candidates with the regional security office; enter data in accordance with a February 2011 bulletin; and save post checks electronically. The embassy's Leahy vetting point of contact correctly noted that it would be much easier to conduct Leahy vetting appropriately if the Department updated the 2007 Leahy vetting guidance and ensured that changes relayed in the various international vetting and tracking system bulletins are included in a timely fashion in the user manual. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Bangkok should issue an administrative announcement setting forth the requirements of section 620J of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and of section 8061 of the 2010 Department of Defense Appropriations Act, as they relate to vetting trainees for programs funded by those statutes. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok issued an instruction in July 2010 entitled "Embassy Bangkok's Foreign Assistance Vetting Standard Operating Procedure." On February 21, 2012, the embassy issued an updated instruction with the same title. The instructions meet the requirements of the recommendation. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Bangkok should have the political officers responsible for Leahy vetting brief the law enforcement working group on vetting requirements and procedures to ensure that there is no confusion regarding sponsoring agencies' responsibilities to vet training candidates. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok reported in a compliance message that the recommended briefing was conducted. The CFR found that agencies understand and are complying with the embassy's Leahy vetting procedures. The embassy's Leahy vetting point of contact is currently entering all records into the international vetting and tracking system that agencies submit to her on a spreadsheet. To save duplication of effort and the Leahy vetting point of contact's time, the CFR team suggested that the embassy bring its standard operating procedure in line with the practice at other posts, which allows agencies with access to the international vetting to enter candidates into the system. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 12:** Embassy Bangkok should assign the incoming bilateral environment, science and technology, and health officer to complete grants training. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok reported in a compliance message that it was committed to completing the recommended training online or through Foreign Service Institute classes in Bangkok by June 2011. The CFR found that the bilateral environment, science, technology, and health officer had not yet received the training. He was scheduled to complete grants training in Bangkok through the Foreign Service Institute in February 2012, but the training course was cancelled. This recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 7.

**Recommendation 13:** Embassy Bangkok should acquire a grants warrant for either the regional environment, science and technology, and health hub officer or the bilateral environment, science and technology, and health officer. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok reported in a compliance message that the new regional environment, science and technology, and health regional officer had obtained a grants warrant and had assumed duties at post. During the CFR, the officer showed the team his certificate of appointment as grants officer for up to \$100,000, dated August 7, 2011, valid until December 31, 2014. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 14:** Embassy Bangkok should assign an experienced embassy economic officer to serve as a functional mentor to the Consulate General Chiang Mai entry-level officer, to include providing consultation with the embassy economic section when the entry-level officer travels to Bangkok for consular consultations. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok reported in a compliance message that the officer was assigned as recommended. During the CFR, the team learned that the previous trade and investment officer was initially assigned as the ELO's mentor. The deputy economic section head became the ELO's mentor in November 2011 and has discussed bidding, shared projects, and cable drafting with him. Effective February 2012, the economic counselor became the ELO's reviewing officer. The CFR team determined that she is taking her supervisory responsibility seriously and that the arrangement is working well for the ELO in Chiang Mai. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 15:** The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should provide additional administrative support to the regional English language officer based at Embassy Bangkok by adding to the locally employed staff. (Action: ECA, in coordination with EAP)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** In June 2011, the Office of English Language Programs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs increased the budget base of the Bangkok-based regional English-language officer by \$27,000 to pay for an additional person for the office. As of the time of the CFR, the regional English-language officer had submitted the position description for determination of the appropriate grade level of the position. The human resources office is

working on that evaluation and then the position will be advertised. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 16:** Embassy Bangkok should require its officers and locally employed staff serving as grant officer representatives to complete online or classroom grants training offered by, or in coordination with, the Foreign Service Institute in addition to any supplemental grants officer representative training provided by the embassy. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with FSI)

**Pre-CFR Status:** The embassy stated that all current officers and affected LE staff members had been instructed to take courses offered by, or in coordination with the Foreign Service Institute, and any supplemental training provided by the embassy. The OIG team noted that fulfillment of this commitment could be checked in a CFR.

**CFR Findings:** The OIG team was provided with a list of public affairs section staff who had completed one or more online grants training courses and the dates the courses were taken. The staff also has access to a supplementary training manual (Bangkok public affairs grants process) on the section's SharePoint site. The public affairs section has also provided copies of the local manual to staff from other sections who write grants. The local manual is, at least on the surface, superior to the material provided in the Foreign Service Institute course; some parts of the local manual could make an excellent supplement to Foreign Service Institute online material. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 17:** Embassy Bangkok should develop and implement procedures to keep the public affairs officer and the information officer promptly apprised of emergent, potential public affairs problems. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Both the public affairs officer and the information officer attend the weekly country team meetings, and the Ambassador has an additional weekly special public affairs coordinating meeting; the heads of relevant sections and agencies routinely attend the coordinating meeting. During the CFR, the information officer was an active participant in an emergency action committee meeting called in response to bombings by suspected Iranian terrorists in Bangkok. The public affairs section also has a seat at the embassy's weekly senior staff meeting. The Ambassador made it clear in a staff notice issued in January 2011 (soon after her arrival at post) that the public affairs section is to be made aware of developments that affect the mission. The public affairs section is now routinely included in meetings concerning sensitive issues. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 18:** Embassy Bangkok should review its activities related to capturing, translating, and archiving media accounts of the activities of embassy staff and family members, and should cease using U.S. Government resources to find, translate, and archive media coverage of personal, social activities. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** This recommendation related to activities demanded by the previous Ambassador and his spouse. With their departure from Bangkok in 2011, the activities ceased. Although the current Ambassador is active in both traditional and social media, her activities in these media are appropriate and support mission goals. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 19:** Embassy Bangkok should create an additional International Cooperative Administrative Support Services cost center to capture the expenses associated with the public affairs section providing mission-wide audiovisual support services. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed with acceptable nonimplementation.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy disagreed with the recommendation, asserting that the vast majority of the work of the audiovisual unit of the public affairs section did not involve services to non-Department employees. The CFR team reviewed programs the audiovisual unit supported during the past 9 months. Less than 20 percent of the staff's time was spent on supporting non-Department activities. The public affairs staff claimed that, since the section moved across the street from the main chancery in 2011, the number of requests for assistance from non-Department entities had dropped. Public affairs section managers believe the audiovisual staff should remain section employees and not be moved to support staff funded by the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

**Recommendation 20:** The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should give high priority to funding and implementing the security upgrades to the Embassy Bangkok consular section in FY 2010. (Action: OBO)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) awarded a post-managed hardline project in September 2010 that was completed in the summer of 2011. Additional visa and American citizens services interview windows were added, including a privacy booth for visas; the makeshift booths for LE staff in the visa waiting area were improved and enclosed within the hardline; the waiting room for American citizens services was reconfigured; and the privacy booth in the American citizens services unit was enlarged. As part of the project, the embassy funded the upgrades of the public restrooms and the addition of two restrooms in the exterior waiting area. The main facilities problem in the American citizens services unit now is that, with more windows and more business being conducted at the same time, the noise level in the waiting room makes it difficult for customers at the windows to hear the employees. This issue, which is separate from this recommendation, is addressed in the main section of this report. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 21:** Embassy Bangkok should transfer one of the five nonimmigrant visa line officer positions to the American citizens services unit and provide for one additional nonimmigrant visa position to serve half time in the American citizens services unit. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy transferred one nonimmigrant visa officer to the American citizens services unit as recommended, and an additional officer position provides part-time support to American citizens services and nonimmigrant visas. During the CFR inspection, the officer in the latter position was serving for 3 months as staff aide to the Ambassador, an issue that is addressed in the main part of this report. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 22:** Embassy Bangkok should update the position descriptions for the locally employed staff in both visa units and review staffing levels, reprogramming excess positions to the American citizens services unit. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Resolved/open.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy reported on January 10, 2012, that implementation was complete. No excess positions were identified for reprogramming. The OIG compliance processing was suspended with the announcement of the CFR on October 31, 2011. The recommendation remained open. The CFR team agreed that no excess positions should be reprogrammed. Although the position descriptions had been rewritten, the embassy had not yet determined whether the grade levels of the positions should be changed. Thus, the process of updating the position descriptions was not yet complete. This recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 15.

**Recommendation 23:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should realign Consulate General Chiang Mai position numbers 30482026 and 10474018 so that there is a full-time, mid-level political-economic/public diplomacy section chief and an entry-level officer who works half time in the consular section and half time in the political-economic/public diplomacy section. (Action: CA, in coordination with EAP and DGHR)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Since the 2010 inspection, EAP and HR agreed to reclassify position number 30482026 to FS-04 but to keep it part-time consular and part-time political/economic. That officer is rated by the consular section chief in Chiang Mai and is reviewed by the consul general in Chiang Mai. Position number 10474018 is also FS-04. That officer is rated by the consul general in Chiang Mai and is reviewed by the economic counselor in Bangkok. (See the CFR findings for Recommendation 14 for a further discussion of the supervisory relationship involving this position.) The CFR team determined that the officer in position number 30482026 has to spend at least 75 percent of his time on consular work. It is no longer viable to consider this position a half-time consular position. The duties would be distributed more effectively if both of the positions discussed above were converted into two parts of a rotational position. This recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 21.

**Recommendation 24:** Embassy Bangkok should request that the Bureau of Consular Affairs replace the existing consular assistant position at Consulate General Chiang Mai with a consular associate position as soon as possible. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The request was made and approved by the Department. The consulate general was unable to fill the consular associate position, however, as there were no qualified EFMs in the labor pool in Chiang Mai. Given the small size of the official community there, the consulate general made a determination that the lack of qualified candidates for that position would be a chronic problem. The consulate general decided to convert the position to a LE staff position. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

**Recommendation 25:** Embassy Bangkok should carry out all normal supervisory responsibilities in the visa units, monitor performance, and document steps taken to implement and monitor supervisory effectiveness in the appropriate performance evaluations. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy reported that all employee evaluation reports for the rating cycle that ended in April 2011 were completed on time. Post management has continued to monitor progress on evaluations. All visa adjudication review and accounting responsibilities were fully up to date. The visa chief was meeting with interviewing officers as a group to discuss standards and was counseling officers individually. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 26:** Embassy Bangkok should undertake the necessary analyses for consular agencies in Phuket and Pattaya and follow the instructions on the Bureau of Consular Affairs Web site for requesting establishment for one or both consular agencies. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Resolved/open.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy initially resisted the intent of this recommendation, arguing that the recommended agencies were unnecessary and not cost effective. The embassy submitted an analysis to the Department by cable in December 2011. In the cable, the embassy weighed the costs and benefits of establishing and maintaining consular agencies in both locations versus sending consular employees for routine and emergency visits to those areas. The analysis concluded that sending employees on temporary duty “would have to increase several fold to make consular agencies economically rational.” In addition to costs, another factor is ease of travel to both cities. Pattaya is a 2-hour drive from Bangkok; flights from Bangkok to Phuket are 1½ hours and are scheduled almost hourly throughout the day. Thus, consular employees can go to either location quickly in an emergency. The cable noted that an active warden system in both Phuket and Pattaya has helped the consular section reach out to Americans in crisis situations.

In its response to the embassy analysis, the Department concluded that it did not support establishing consular agencies in either Phuket or Pattaya.

The embassy fulfilled the recommendation that it analyze the costs and benefits of establishing these two consular agencies and make recommendations to the Department. The CFR team agrees with the Department’s conclusion. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 27:** Embassy Bangkok should apply the planning guidelines contained in 5 FAH-5 H-210 to its plans for expanding regional management support. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The recommendation was based on Embassy Bangkok's FY 2010 Mission Strategic Plan goal number 7: strengthening regional management support outreach and maintaining pace with client growth. However, expanding regional management support, such as providing human resources support to more posts in EAP, is no longer a goal in the embassy's FY 2013 strategic plan. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

**Recommendation 28:** Embassy Bangkok should prioritize its plans for expanding regional management support and develop a schedule to roll out these expanded services. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Currently the embassy does not intend to expand regional management support and does not have a regional management support goal in its FY 2013 strategic plan. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

**Recommendation 29:** Embassy Bangkok should coordinate with Global Financial Services Bangkok on their training programs, to determine where there are economies of scale. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with GFS Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy, Global Financial Services Bangkok, and the Charleston Financial Service Center discussed how to use best the facilities and the training programs of Global Financial Services Bangkok and the Asia Regional Training Center. Financial management training, focused primarily on LE staff from the region, is conducted at the Global Financial Services Bangkok training facility. The Asia Regional Training Center focuses on training LE staff from the region in customer support skills in embassy support services across the board. The two centers coordinate training. Staff members of Global Financial Services Bangkok conduct financial management training sessions as part of the customer support classes at the Asia Regional Training Center. The two entities have different training goals that often complement each other and the coordination works well. The training centers do not duplicate services, such as negotiating hotel rates, for their students. All mission temporary duty personnel benefit from hotel rates that the embassy negotiates centrally through the mission visitors office. The recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 30:** Global Financial Services Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of Resource Management, should work with the Foreign Service Institute to develop a plan to credit courses offered by Global Financial Services Bangkok in the Foreign Service Institute's student

training management system database. (Action: GFS Bangkok, in coordination with RM and FSI)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** In response to this recommendation, the Bureau of Resource Management now provides course credits to students completing Global Financial Services Bangkok courses. The Foreign Service Institute issues course codes for Global Financial Services Bangkok courses and allows Global Financial Services Bangkok to enter course completions into the student training management system database. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 31:** Global Financial Services Bangkok should update its continuity of operations and contingency plans, taking into account the lessons learned during the May 2010 political crisis and in coordination with Embassy Bangkok's emergency action plan. (Action: GFS Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Global Financial Services Bangkok updates its continuity of operations and contingency plans annually. It took into account its experiences in the May 2010 political crisis and in the flooding in late 2011. Global Financial Services Bangkok contributed to the embassy's documents detailing lessons learned from both crises. The Charleston Financial Management Center is transferring Global Financial Services Bangkok primary computers to Charleston to ensure continuity of computer-based operations in any future crises in Thailand. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 32:** Global Financial Services Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of Resource Management, should develop a business case for expanding services offered by its post support unit beyond voucher processing, to determine whether there are cost benefits to offering additional services. (Action: GFS Bangkok, in coordination with RM)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The Bureau of Resource Management responded to this recommendation by noting that the post support unit in Bangkok is one of several centers that operate under the direction of the Charleston Financial Management Center. Hence, it is not Global Financial Services Bangkok's role to develop a business case for expanding its services; that is the bureau's decision. The bureau stated that it is centralizing services where appropriate. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

**Recommendation 33:** The Bureau of Resource Management should perform a risk assessment to determine the costs versus benefits of developing a Department-wide invoice tracking system. (Action: RM)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The Bureau of Resource Management did not agree that a formal risk assessment was needed. The bureau is continuing to explore the feasibility of automated tracking and routing capabilities for the domestic and overseas payments process and noted its efforts to leverage existing investments in corporate systems and applications. The risk of double payments for vouchers that may not be properly tracked has not been a serious problem, even with the existence of post support unit voucher processing. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

**Recommendation 34:** The Bureau of Resource Management should update the position description of the training and customer services support division chief to clarify the roles and expectations of this position, as well as its reporting relationship to the Director of Global Financial Services Bangkok and to the Bureau of Resource Management. (Action: RM)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The Bureau of Resource Management updated the position description of the training and customer services support division chief and clarified expectations and reporting relationships. The chief reports to the Director of Global Financial Services Bangkok and to Charleston's Training and Customer Service Director. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 35:** The Bureau of Diplomatic Security, in coordination with Embassy Bangkok, should adjust its approval of premium travel to give the Bangkok diplomatic courier division sufficient flexibility to make last-minute changes to mission-critical premium courier travel. (Action: DS, in coordination with Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The intent of the recommendation was to allow the courier hub director to approve business class travel for couriers who often undertake urgent travel. At the time of the 2010 inspection, couriers encountered delays because all business class travel was signed by a deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. In its response, the bureau detailed steps to streamline and simplify communication and redelegate business class authorization authority to the hub director. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable alternative implementation.

**Recommendation 36:** Embassy Bangkok should clarify the role of the community liaison office in the emergency action plan and include a representative of the community liaison office in all crisis management team activities, including the core emergency action committee. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy has clarified and defined the community liaison officer's role in its emergency action plan. The community liaison officer now participates in all crisis management team activities, including core emergency action committee meetings. The CFR team attended an

emergency action committee meeting during the inspection and observed that the community liaison officer was present. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 37:** Embassy Bangkok should implement procedures for notifying the executive office whenever a rating officer fails to submit an employee evaluation report on time. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The human resources officer confirmed that the executive office is notified when an employee evaluation report for a direct-hire American officer is 30 days late. The human resources office developed a tracking spreadsheet for all employee evaluation reports; a human resources officer has been designated to monitor the system and to notify the executive office whenever a report is late. The CFR team notes that ePerformance also reports when evaluations are late and the officer responsible for the delay may be penalized accordingly. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 38:** Embassy Bangkok should update its policy on separation-for-age of locally employed staff to reflect the Office of Overseas Employment's policy of extending employment only once for a one-year period after retirement. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** In March 2011, the embassy updated the local compensation plan to reflect its separation-for-age policy. The CFR team suggested and the embassy agreed to include the policy in its local employee handbook. There are no LE staff members on extensions beyond 1 year. Four LE staff members are currently on 1-year extensions. The embassy is tracking their status to ensure that their extensions will not exceed 1 year. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 39:** Embassy Bangkok should update the employment agreements for all official residence expense staff to reflect Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The contracts for the official residence expenses staff working for the Ambassador and DCM during the time of the CFR correctly included the language reflecting Department guidelines. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 40:** Embassy Bangkok should list its direct charge costs for temporary duty visitors and publish the policy on the Department's eCountry clearance Web site. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy has updated its policy on temporary duty visitors to include direct charge costs for supporting such visitors. This policy was added to the embassy Web site during the CFR. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 41:** Embassy Bangkok should discontinue the practice of using the Class B cashier as a bank to cash locally employed staff retiree U.S. dollar annuity checks and instruct Global Financial Services Bangkok to make electronic payments to these retirees. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Since May 1, 2011, retired LE staff who are members of the former Civil Service retirement plan no longer have permission for accommodation exchange through the embassy cashier. In some cases, the embassy has established direct electronic deposit of retirement payments for those with local bank accounts. Retirees can also cash retirement checks at local banks. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 42:** Embassy Bangkok should write and implement procedures for bulk-funding blanket purchase agreement and purchase card purchases. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy has completed implementation of the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System. Blanket purchase agreements are now bulk-funded using the integrated logistics management system capabilities. Purchase card are bulk-funded, as needed using manual procedures. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 43:** Embassy Bangkok should seek reimbursement for the representational claims that do not meet the Department of State Standardized Regulations for allowable expenses. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** OIG files from the 2010 inspection contained copies of 15 vouchers filed in Bangkok that did not meet requirements for allowable representational claims. The former Ambassador provided reimbursement for three events that did not meet criteria. Twelve other vouchers were missing information such as guest lists. The claimants corrected the vouchers. The CFR team reviewed a sample of representational vouchers and found no errors. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 44:** Embassy Bangkok should ratify the two unauthorized commitments made in connection with representation events in 2008. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed

**CFR Findings:** The embassy ratified one commitment that was under \$1000. The Bureau of Administration's Office of the Procurement Executive held that the other commitment was not unauthorized and did not need ratification. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 45:** The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Resource Management and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should determine whether the embassy improperly funded repairs and improvements to the chief of mission residence. (Action: EAP, in coordination with RM and OBO)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Resolved/open.

**CFR Findings:** EAP and OBO agreed that the embassy should not have funded repairs and improvements to the chief of mission residence from the embassy's program allotment. Embassy Bangkok said that the embassy and OBO were unclear about how to fund repairs and improvements to the residence as it had been a short-term leased property for 60 years. According to embassy staff, emails over the years between the embassy and OBO indicated that repairs had been paid for with program funds. Given that the U.S. Government pays \$1,500 annually in rent to the Thai Government, the embassy did not believe it prudent to approach the Thai Government to pay for repairs and improvements that cost \$74,000. In 2011, OBO changed the status of the lease to long term. This will allow future repairs and improvements to be paid with OBO funds. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 46:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should make necessary adjustments to correct the funding of any repairs and improvements to the chief of mission residence that were improperly charged. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with EAP and OBO)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** As noted in the CFR findings for Recommendation 45, OBO has converted the lease for the chief of mission residence from short term to long term. OBO will thus be responsible for funding repairs and improvements to the residence. To rectify the situation identified by the 2010 team, OBO shifted funds into the embassy's program account to cover the costs of the repairs and improvements in FYs 2007-08. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 47:** Embassy Bangkok should cease using program funds for work done on the chief of mission residence and should instruct the single real property manager to review the requirements and coordinate the funding of routine and special maintenance and repair projects with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with OBO)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The CFR findings for Recommendations 45 and 46 demonstrate that this recommendation was closed when the property was converted to a long-term lease, making OBO

responsible for maintenance and repair funds. This recommendation is closed on the basis of alternative implementation.

**Recommendation 48:** Embassy Bangkok should revise the mission-wide motor vehicle policy to clarify the chief of mission's authority and responsibilities for all U.S. Government-owned vehicles in Thailand. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy issued a mission transportation policy on July 8, 2011, that clarifies the Chief of Mission's authority and responsibilities for all U.S. Government-owned vehicles in Thailand. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 49:** Embassy Bangkok should establish and implement a corrective action plan for all U.S. Government-controlled residential pools, using Department of State guidelines for pool safety. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy installed depth markers, locking gates, and "no diving" signs at all pools, including those at the Ambassador's residence, the DCM's residence, and U.S. government-owned apartment buildings. The embassy followed OBO's Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management guidance to ensure the pools meet Department guidelines. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 50:** Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of maintaining all 18 leases on the Tarn Dong Village compound in Chiang Mai. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with OBO)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok and OBO conducted the analysis and determined that leasing these properties should be discontinued. The leases were terminated and new residences were leased in Chiang Mai. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 51:** Embassy Bangkok should provide refresher training to the information management staff on safeguarding personally identifiable information. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The head of the information systems center signed a memo August 17, 2010, listing the 14 information systems center staff members who attended a briefing she gave on personally identifiable information on June 2, 2010. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 52:** Embassy Bangkok should formulate and institute the information technology development project lifecycle in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy issued a detailed Configuration Management Plan in July 2010, and the OIG team verified that the embassy is complying with the plan. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 53:** Embassy Bangkok should establish procedures for the local information technology change control board to review and locally approve software application development implementation. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The Bangkok Local Information Technology Change Control Board has been established and its charter, along with standard operating procedures, is located in the embassy SharePoint site. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 54:** Embassy Bangkok should establish and enforce written procedures for reviewing and approving access control to the OpenNet network. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy amended its application form for OpenNet network access to require embassy badge information before the form is approved. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 55:** Embassy Bangkok should create and document a standardized process to manage information technology service requests and support resources. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy reported that it uses eServices to process and manage information technology services and evaluates service using the Collaborative Management Initiative Performance Metrics Dashboard. An embassy notice was issued in March 2011 reminding users of requirements. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable alternative implementation.

**Recommendation 56:** Embassy Bangkok should complete and test information technology contingency plans for the OpenNet and the classified networks and develop a process for periodically updating the plans as systems environments and resources change. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy developed information technology contingency plans for OpenNet and ClassNet, and an exercise was held successfully in January 2012 to test the plans. The plans were posted on the respective intranet sites. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 57:** Embassy Bangkok should align the information technology contingency plan with Embassy Bangkok's emergency action plan, and update the information technology section of the emergency action plan. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy certified the recommended actions as of March 11, 2011. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 58:** Embassy Bangkok should establish viable offsite backup storage for the OpenNet and unclassified backup media. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** (b) (5)

This compound is located 10 miles from the main chancery. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 59:** Embassy Bangkok should require that only U.S. citizens handle OpenNet and unclassified backup media when transporting it between sites. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed, with acceptable alternative implementation.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy argued that the transportation could be handled with appropriate precautions by LE staff. It cited 12 FAM 622.1 -7 b. (1), which provides for review and approval by the regional security officer of procedures for transporting Sensitive But Unclassified material. The regional security officer did the review and issued a memorandum on March 11, 2011, approving transport of the media by LE staff. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable alternative implementation.

**Recommendation 60:** Embassy Bangkok should annually review, update, and reissue its local employee handbook. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The local employee handbook was updated and reissued in January 2011. The CFR team notes that there is no requirement to update the entire handbook annually. The compensation plan, however, must be updated annually and included in the handbook. The compensation plan was updated in January 2012. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 61:** Embassy Bangkok should develop and publish guidelines for official residence expense vouchers so that all costs are included in the monthly voucher, allowing the embassy to determine the true cost of maintaining official residences. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy has published the guidelines and developed a form that captures the monthly cost of maintaining official residences. The financial management staff enters the data, based on vouchers and bills. The form, introduced in July 2011, is located on the Financial Management Center Web page. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 62:** Embassy Bangkok should create and implement a standard operating plan to maintain accurate records on acceptance of all gifts by embassy employees including procedures to determine whether a gift is from a prohibited source, ascertain the fair market value of a gift, and record the proper disposition of a gift. (Action Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy issued a management instruction on gifts policies in November 2010. Updated instructions were issued in March 2011 and February 2012. The gifts officer in the general services office answers calls about what gifts may be received and what events staff may attend. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 63:** Embassy Bangkok should seek a formal opinion from the Office of the Legal Adviser as to the applicability of the Code of Federal Regulations provisions pertaining to the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch to the two training opportunities afforded to the Ambassador's family member. (Action: Embassy Bangkok, in coordination with L)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Resolved/open.

**CFR Findings:** In September 2011, the Office of the Legal Adviser issued an opinion in an email to the former Ambassador. The legal opinion stated that the questioned conduct regarding the Ambassador's spouse attending training was permissible under applicable rules and regulations. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 64:** Embassy Bangkok should update and publish its mission travel policy, to include the latest guidelines on temporary duty travel – especially as it prohibits the use of business class accommodation for rest and relaxation and emergency visitation travel – including a section on any unique requirements for rest and relaxation travel to and from Chiang Mai. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Resolved/open.

**CFR Findings:** Before the CFR was underway, the embassy provided the requested copy of its travel policy. The CFR notification was issued before the OIG review could close the

recommendation. The mission travel policy, issued February 1, 2012, was appropriate and addressed the issues identified by the OIG team in 2010. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 65:** Embassy Bangkok should develop and enforce procedures to get advance approval of official travel from the appropriate entity and to fully document it in the travel voucher files. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy's mission travel policy, issued February 1, 2012, includes a section with the procedures for advance approval of official travel. The CFR team reviewed a sample of recent travel vouchers and found no authorizations without advance approval from the regional bureau. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Recommendation 66:** Embassy Bangkok should carry out daily adjudication reviews of nonimmigrant visa issuances and refusals, and should document any deficiencies in this procedure in the annual certification of consular management controls cable and in the appropriate officers' performance evaluations. (Action: Embassy Bangkok)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy reported implementation of the recommendation in December 2010. A sample by the CFR team of recent adjudication reviews confirms that the embassy is in compliance. This includes the DCM, who reviews cases adjudicated by the consul general. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

## Appendix II: Status of 2010 Inspection Informal Recommendations

**Informal Recommendation 1:** Embassy Bangkok should convene the economic cluster meeting every 2 weeks, rather than monthly, to improve coordination of economic activities.

**CFR Findings:** The economic cluster, including economic section LE staff, meets monthly for in-depth discussions of joint strategies and tactics. The economic officer from Consulate General Chiang Mai participates via digital video teleconference. Participants receive an agenda in advance of the meeting and minutes after the meeting. The DCM also meets every 2 weeks with core economic staff, including the economic counselor and the heads of the Foreign Agricultural Service, the Foreign Commercial Service, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. This informal recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable alternative compliance.

**Informal Recommendation 2:** Embassy Bangkok, in reports to U.S. trade offices, should distinguish more carefully Thai Government intentions from its actions on intellectual property rights protection when suggesting U.S. trade policy responses.

**CFR Findings:** Thai Government performance remains uneven in strengthening intellectual property rights protection. Although Thai Government officials continue to express their intention to advance legislation, it has not been passed. Policymakers and analysts indicated to the team that embassy reporting now clearly delineates government intentions from government actions. This informal recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 3:** Embassy Bangkok should have the public affairs section work with the American Corners to encourage continued programming during those periods when the host universities are on recess and should not limit the audiences to the students and staff of the host institutions.

**CFR Findings:** The public affairs section has worked actively with American Corners directors and staff to increase both the number of digital video conferences and the volume of programming held during academics breaks on the campuses on which the Corners are located. A 4-day American Corner conference in Chiang Mai held during the course of the CFR devoted several sessions to these issues, the result of which should be even more activity in both areas. This informal recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 4:** Embassy Bangkok should have the public affairs section work with the American Corners to pursue opportunities for digital videoconferences on approved themes with speakers who are available in the region in a similar time zone.

**CFR Findings:** The response to Informal Recommendation 3 also covers this informal recommendation. This informal recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 5:** Embassy Bangkok, in addition to using traditional methods to publicize job opportunities for eligible family members, should conduct outreach to the officers in Thai language classes on consular associate employment opportunities.

**CFR Findings:** The consular section is working with the human resources office and the community liaison office on identifying employees who are coming to work in the embassy, and is working with the community liaison office on contacting EFMs of those employees. They explain to those EFMs the employment opportunities in the consular sections and the need for consular training while the EFM is in Washington. This informal recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 6:** Embassy Bangkok should reprogram the consul general's eligible family member office management specialist position to be half-time biometrics clerk and half-time secretary-receptionist, and fill the position.

**CFR Findings:** Consular managers explained to the CFR team that having the EFM capture fingerprints would add a bottleneck to the intake process. It would require processing of visa applicants at another window, leading to another line, and the EFMs in the consular section usually do not speak Thai. Thus, the fingerprinting process would take longer and slow down the flow of visa processing. ELOs told the team that they can talk to the applicants and establish a rapport with them while capturing one fingerprint to verify identity. Such verification is necessary when an LE staff member has captured the 10 fingerprints. The officers and the LE staff agreed that using LE staff for fingerprinting was more efficient than using EFMs for that function. This informal recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

**Informal Recommendation 7:** Embassy Bangkok should include critical locally employed staff responsibilities in the Chiang Mai consular eligible family member position description and ensure that the eligible family member carries out those responsibilities regularly.

**CFR Findings:** The position in question could not be filled by an EFM as there were no qualified applicants in Chiang Mai. The position has been converted to an LE staff member position, as explained further in the CFR findings to Recommendation 24 in Appendix I. This informal recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

**Informal Recommendation 8:** Embassy Bangkok should monitor consular staffing levels and workload growth in Chiang Mai and use the Consular Package to request an additional locally employed staff position when the demand for nonimmigrant visas shows a sustained increase.

**CFR Findings:** Consulate General Chiang Mai said in its most recent consular package, prepared in December 2011, that it did not need an additional LE staff member position in the consular section at this time, but that the most critical staffing need has been to fill a position that was meant for EFMs and has now been converted to a LE staff member position. The consulate general is in the process of hiring for that position. The background on that position is described in the CFR findings for Recommendation 24 in Appendix I. This informal recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 9:** Embassy Bangkok should assign the design and maintenance of the consular rotational program to the consul general.

**CFR Findings:** The consul general, who arrived in Bangkok in August 2011, has been reviewing the rotational schedule of officers in consultation with the chiefs of the visa unit and the American citizens services unit to ensure appropriate balancing of staffing with workloads. This informal recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 10:** Embassy Bangkok should coordinate with Consulate General Chiang Mai to establish policies and procedures for handling applicants who have not completed all the fields on the new, electronic nonimmigrant visa application, to ensure consistency and good public relations.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy and consulate general consular section managers are coordinating closely on these policies and procedures, which are now essentially the same in both posts. In December 2011, the visa chief in Bangkok visited Chiang Mai to review visa operations in the consulate general and to deepen the coordination. This informal recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 11:** Embassy Bangkok should return issued immigrant visas by courier or mail, so that applicants do not have to visit the consular section a second time.

**CFR Findings:** Consular managers have been reluctant to implement this recommendation. They told the CFR team that, if immigrant visa documents were lost in the mail, it would be difficult for the applicants and for the embassy to replace those documents. The Thai postal system has been delivering U.S. passports and passports with nonimmigrant visas for years and has not had problems with lost documents. Consular managers should practice risk management rather than risk avoidance, as the workload savings by mailing the immigrant visas outweigh the minimal risks of losing documents in the mail. This informal recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 14.

**Informal Recommendation 12:** Embassy Bangkok should require immigrant visa applicants to present updated or supplementary documentation in person only when an additional interview is essential in order to determine visa eligibility.

**CFR Findings:** According to consular managers, immigrant visa applicants have the option of mailing their updated or supplementary documents to the consular section or bringing them personally to the section. Giving the applicants options does not provide a workload savings for the consular section, as too many applicants prefer the personal appearance option. As noted in the CFR findings on Informal Recommendation 11, the Thai postal service has a good record of not losing documents. The consular section needs to be directive with immigrant visa applicants about using the mail system to return documents. This informal recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 13.

**Informal Recommendation 13:** Embassy Bangkok should amend its Web site and other outreach to require appointments for routine passport and notarial services.

**CFR Findings:** Subsequent to the 2010 inspection, the Bureau of Consular Affairs mandated all consular sections to establish appointment systems for American citizens services by a deadline of September 1, 2011. The consular section in Bangkok established an appointment system for

American citizens services in September 2011. Consular managers saw benefits from the system, including reduced wait times and better balancing of work and staffing throughout workdays. The section has not benefited as much as it could from the appointment system, however, as consular employees have been allowing Americans without appointments to wait until others have been served. Without a continuing robust outreach program to explain the appointment system, more Americans have been showing up without appointments. This informal recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 11.

***Informal Recommendation 14:*** Embassy Bangkok should adapt its existing consular telephone system or procure an alternate system, to redirect routine American citizens services queries to automated response scripts and to refer visa phone calls to the call center or to a case-specific public inquiry number.

**CFR Findings:** The consular section had been reviewing a phone tree plan in 2011, but the floods diverted the attention of the staff. After that a new telephone system was installed in the mission. The consular managers intend to pursue this issue. This informal recommendation is revised and reissued as Recommendation CFR 12.

***Informal Recommendation 15:*** Embassy Bangkok should set up a regular meeting schedule for the fraud prevention manager and the assistant regional security officer for investigations, over and above the weekly general staff meeting, and they should take advantage of Bureau of Diplomatic Security funding to travel in tandem as frequently as feasible.

**CFR Findings:** The fraud prevention manager and the assistant regional security officer-investigations have been meeting weekly to discuss fraud trends. They conducted a joint training program in Vientiane, Laos, in September 2011. The fraud prevention manager has sufficient funds for travel and is prohibited from using funds from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security for travel. This recommendation is closed on the basis of partial implementation.

***Informal Recommendation 16:*** Embassy Bangkok should request that Global Financial Services Bangkok modify the “365 Reports Submitted for Calendar Year” to reflect the class B cashier codes that have been closed.

**CFR Findings:** This informal recommendation is no longer valid. In January 2012, Embassy Bangkok stopped using the former automated cashiering system that generated the old cash reconciliation reports and started using the Bureau of Resource Management’s new cashiering system, the Consolidated Overseas Accountability Support Tool. This informal recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

***Informal Recommendation 17:*** Global Financial Services Bangkok management should establish a policy regarding the issuance of BlackBerrys and other portable electronic devices.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok issued a management instruction in October 2010 entitled “State OpenNet Blackberry Program.” The instruction included the business need criteria for a user to be issued a BlackBerry and the procedures for requesting one. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 18:** Embassy Bangkok should prepare emergency travel authorizations for all American employees upon arrival at post.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok currently uses the Department's Crisis Management Evacuation Management System. The system coordinates and plans for overseas personnel draw-downs and evacuations. The evacuation system allows authorized users to access emergency contact information. It tracks arrival and departure status during a crisis, creates and prints travel authorizations, and records where personnel are located at a mission or away from post. The information can be viewed simultaneously by the embassy and the Department. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable alternative implementation.

**Informal Recommendation 19:** Embassy Bangkok should provide the CLO coordinator and assistant coordinators with the means to conduct official communication with the embassy from their homes.

**CFR Findings:** Post has issued BlackBerry devices to employees of the community liaison office, which will allow them to conduct official communications from their homes in crises. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 20:** Embassy Bangkok should hold a crisis management workshop as soon as possible.

**CFR Findings:** The Foreign Service Institute conducted a crisis management exercise at Embassy Bangkok with members of the emergency action committee in March 2010. The Foreign Service Institute is scheduled to hold another such exercise at the embassy in March 2012. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 21:** Embassy Bangkok should conduct a workshop for eligible family members who are interested in working, to make them aware of the application process and the availability of jobs both within the mission and on the local economy, once the de facto bilateral work agreement is in place.

**CFR Findings:** Shortly before the CFR, Embassy Bangkok held a coffee for EFMs specifically to discuss internal employment opportunities. The human resources office and community liaison office sponsor at least two workshops annually that focus on family member employment. Embassy Bangkok has 55 of 87 EFM positions filled. Nine candidates are undergoing a security clearance process. Regarding external employment, there is still no bilateral work agreement. After many years of pursuing this objective, Embassy Bangkok has abandoned the goal of having a bilateral work agreement with Thailand. The Royal Thai Government does not authorize diplomats from any countries, including family members, to work locally. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable partial implementation.

**Informal Recommendation 22:** Embassy Bangkok should do a cost/benefit analysis for charging temporary duty visitors for the indirect cost of delivering International Cooperative Administrative Support Services.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy did not conduct a formal cost/benefit analysis. The financial management officer told the CFR team that the costs for temporary duty staff are captured in base budgets. Embassy Bangkok captures support costs for temporary duty personnel with sponsoring agencies, counting them toward the cumulative workload counts for each agency. For nonsponsoring agencies, costs are captured using the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services temporary duty module. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable nonimplementation.

**Informal Recommendation 23:** Embassy Bangkok should formulate and disseminate a policy setting a minimum threshold for claims for reimbursement for vouchers except at the end of the fiscal year.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok issued a management instruction in February 2012 entitled “Representational Allowances - Policy and Procedures” that included the following statement: “Smaller claims of \$10 or less per voucher should be combined on one form for reimbursement claim at the end of the month.” This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 24:** Embassy Bangkok should develop procedures to send copies of utility bills to tenant agencies based in Chiang Mai in a timely manner and on a regular basis after receipt of the bills. In addition, Embassy Bangkok should issue a policy or management notice explaining the process of paying utility bills, and how often agencies can expect to receive copies.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok is now sending copies of the certified vouchers to the agencies by email or interoffice mail so they will have a record of the payment. The embassy has posted on its intranet site the process for paying utility bills for agencies located outside Bangkok. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 25:** Embassy Bangkok should dispose of excess information management equipment in the OpenNet and the classified server rooms.

**CFR Findings:** The CFR team confirmed that the excess equipment has been disposed of in accordance with regulations. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 26:** Embassy Bangkok should update systems documentation and keep the documents centralized and current.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy has updated and centralized the storage of all systems documentation in the embassy’s SharePoint site. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

**Informal Recommendation 27:** Embassy Bangkok should add an Equal Employment Opportunity segment to its newcomer orientations.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok added Equal Employment Opportunity segments to its weekly newcomer orientations. The mission also provides Equal Employment Opportunity training for American and local staff on a regular basis. The CFR team notes that newcomer

orientations are weekly and are not limited to three times annually as stated in the 2010 report. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

***Informal Recommendation 28:*** Embassy Bangkok should include Equal Employment Opportunity materials in its weekly orientation sessions for new employees.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok's Equal Employment Opportunity counselors have provided the human resources office with handouts on Equal Employment Opportunity law. Additionally, the counselors are in the process of creating a brochure that provides Equal Employment Opportunity information to all staff in the mission. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

***Informal Recommendation 29:*** Embassy Bangkok should provide Equal Employment Opportunity and harassment training to its locally employed staff.

**CFR Findings:** On February 2, 2012, Embassy Bangkok's Equal Employment Opportunity counselors provided four sessions that provided in-depth information to American and LE staff. A total of 115 embassy staff members participated. The counselors coordinated these briefings with the Office of Civil Rights. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

***Informal Recommendation 30:*** Embassy Bangkok should issue an administrative notice explaining the limitations on contributions to fund or replenish informal office benevolence or celebratory arrangements, and clarifying that all donations are voluntary.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy issued an email to all mission personnel on this subject during the CFR. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

***Informal Recommendation 31:*** Embassy Bangkok should issue an administrative notice explaining timekeeping procedures and policies.

**CFR Findings:** Embassy Bangkok's Policy and Procedures for Timekeeping states that timekeepers shall not post their own time and attendance data. It also states that the payroll liaison or his/her designee at the Financial Management Center will report the timekeeper's time and attendance on the time and attendance system. Embassy Bangkok issued an administrative notice explaining its timekeeping procedures and policies during the CFR visit. This recommendation is closed as implemented.

***Informal Recommendation 32:*** Embassy Bangkok should develop a system for managing the expendable property issued to and then returned by the mission visitors office.

**CFR Findings:** The embassy has implemented the Integrated Logistics Management System. The system ensures that items removed from inventory for visits, training, and other requirements will be re-entered into the expendable supplies inventory when there are returned. This recommendation is closed on the basis of acceptable alternative implementation.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

**FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE,  
OR MISMANAGEMENT**  
of Federal programs hurts everyone.

Contact the  
Office of Inspector General  
**HOTLINE**  
to report illegal or wasteful activities:

202-647-3320  
800-409-9926

[oighotline@state.gov](mailto:oighotline@state.gov)

oig.state.gov

Office of Inspector General  
U.S. Department of State  
P.O. Box 9778  
Arlington, VA 22219

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~