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AND THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Office of Inspections

March 2014

Inspection of Embassy San Salvador, El Salvador

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PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2012 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

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

METHODOLOGY

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



United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Peterson".

Robert B. Peterson
Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

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Key Judgments

- The Ambassador directs a cohesive mission that effectively promotes U.S. interests. Her extensive political contacts, Spanish language proficiency, and engaging public persona resonate positively with Salvadorans across the political and social spectrums.
- The embassy coordinates U.S. foreign assistance programs, with total funding of about \$1 billion over the last 5 years. It uses the Partnership for Growth framework to set priorities and measure results. The embassy could improve its coordination of Washington-based programs by creating a comprehensive inventory and reviewing all activities regularly to ensure proper oversight and policy coordination.
- Demand for immigrant visa services has doubled over the last 5 years, straining a consular section already operating at the limits of its space capacity. Consular management has streamlined operations, but the mission still needs new construction to increase the number of interview windows and provide additional workspace to meet a growing immigrant visa and American citizen workload.
- U.S. direct-hire staffing has grown by 39 positions since 2006. Continued growth may negatively affect the embassy's ability to support operations and protect its personnel.
- The management section delivers good service and follows sound internal controls practices. The mission can achieve additional efficiencies by outsourcing voucher processing and position classification to regional centers.

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

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 9 and 30, 2013; and in San Salvador, El Salvador, between October 19 and November 5, 2013. Ambassador Carol van Voorst (team leader), Arne B. Baker (deputy team leader), David P. Bocskor, Ronda M. Capeles, Leo J. Hession, Dolores J. Hylander, Daniel C. McCollum, Leslie A. Gerson, Robyn E. Hinson-Jones, Barry J. Langevin, Ken Moskowitz, Charles A. Rowcliffe, and Timothy A. Wildy conducted the inspection.

Context

El Salvador's 6 million residents live in the smallest, most densely populated country in Central America. In 1992, El Salvador ended a 12-year civil war that killed 75,000 residents and drove nearly a quarter of the population into exile. Although El Salvador has reestablished multiparty democracy and made significant progress improving social indicators such as infant mortality and literacy, the economy is hobbled by inequality, crime, and poverty. Roughly 40 percent of Salvadorans live below the poverty level. Despite a recent truce between the 40,000 members of two violent transnational gangs, MS-13 and Barrio 18, El Salvador reports the second highest homicide rate in the world. The almost 2 million U.S. residents who claim Salvadoran ancestry sent remittances to El Salvador that totaled \$4 billion in 2012, 16 percent of the country's gross domestic product. In a recent Pew Research Center survey, 79 percent of Salvadorans reported a favorable opinion of the United States, and nearly two-thirds said they would like to live in the United States.

The 2009 election of leftist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front candidate Mauricio Funes after 20 years of rightist rule marked the first time the party of the former rebels assumed power. All post-war elections have been free and fair. Funes has governed as a moderate and maintained close ties with the United States. The United States is committed to working with the winner of the presidential election scheduled for early 2014.

El Salvador is the only country in the Western Hemisphere that participates in the Partnership for Growth (PFG), a presidential initiative to improve economic and security conditions. Two Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compacts will provide a total of \$737.9 million over a 10-year period to the Government of El Salvador. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department's Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) together provide about \$42 million in annual assistance focused on crime reduction, judicial sector reform, community policing, and gang resistance training, among other programs. El Salvador is a reliable military partner. The international airport at Comalapa hosts a cooperative security location for U.S. military personnel, and El Salvador contributes troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led mission in Afghanistan.

Embassy San Salvador has 134 U.S. direct-hire employees and 314 locally employed staff from the Department of State (Department) and 18 Federal agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Justice, Homeland Security, Treasury, and Health and Human Services. The embassy occupies a secure 26-acre compound constructed in 1992 and had an operating budget in FY 2013 of \$18.6 million, with a foreign assistance request of \$41.8 million. Since 2000, U.S. direct-hire positions have increased by 38 percent. The mission also supports an International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) staffed by embassy employees and Government of El Salvador employees to train police officials from countries throughout Latin America.

Executive Direction

Leadership

The Ambassador anchors a well-integrated and productive mission committed to improving lives in this poor and crime-plagued country. Her enthusiastic leadership in efforts to make El Salvador a more secure and prosperous partner for the United States, combined with her emphasis on teamwork and consensus decisionmaking, have fostered a motivated embassy staff marked by a sense of common purpose.

A noncareer appointee, the Ambassador has directed the mission for 3 years in two separate tours interrupted by a hiatus when her initial recess appointment expired. Officials in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and other Washington agencies share the opinion of mission personnel at all levels that she is well suited for and highly effective in El Salvador. Her outgoing personality, fluent Spanish, and obvious concern for the welfare of the country resonate with the public and give her entree into government, business, and social circles. The Ambassador's ties to the Salvadoran community in the United States, broad range of contacts in U.S. Government agencies and institutions, and legal experience are assets to the embassy.

The close relations she has developed with Salvadoran officials and the wide range of contacts she has built in the private sector and civil society are vital to achieving U.S. objectives. She has cultivated a high public profile and uses it intelligently. The Ambassador is a familiar figure in obscure villages and Peace Corps outposts and takes pains to direct a public spotlight on even the most modest projects supported by the embassy. She engages often and easily with the local media. When advocating the painful steps necessary to achieve better government, security, economic growth, and human rights, the Ambassador is blunt about the country's challenges and shortfalls, but also practical and encouraging about El Salvador's future. Embassy employees describe her as charismatic, inspiring, and supportive, and point to her as a source of positive morale.

The deputy chief of mission's (DCM) personality and work style match the Ambassador's preference for vigorous and constant dialogue, easy access, and person-to-person interaction. They form a supportive and focused partnership. The DCM has streamlined decisionmaking and information-sharing to improve the speed and quality of paper flow. His accessibility, light touch, and fairness have impressed the embassy community. He has dealt quickly and decisively with a number of lingering management problems.

Strategic Objectives and Planning

The centerpiece of U.S. engagement with El Salvador is the 5-year PFG initiative announced by President Obama in March 2011, which provides a model for partnering with El Salvador to promote sustainable and broad-based economic growth. The PFG foreign assistance model focuses most program resources on two areas identified as the most significant obstacles to economic advancement: poor security conditions and lack of competitiveness. The PFG scorecard outlines specific goals and commitments by both partners. It is reviewed by the embassy every 6 months to evaluate progress. The latest scorecard covers 20 joint objectives in law enforcement, civil society, governance, and economic growth. The most recent review found

15 goals on track and five behind schedule. Neither the Ambassador nor her team has illusions about the difficult multi-year effort necessary to move ahead on society-changing goals, such as combatting corruption and weaning gang members away from violence. To promote continued high-level interest in the partnership, the Ambassador carefully tends to a network of stakeholders in Washington agencies.

All 19 agencies at the mission use PFG as a strategic blueprint for planning and action. The scorecard and regular reviews provide a common framework for allocating resources, coordinating responsibilities, and determining next steps. The PFG program and its scorecard goals help embassy staff at all levels understand how their day-to-day work fits into broader U.S. bilateral objectives.

Although the PFG program serves as a benchmark for organizing embassy programs and activities, the embassy needs to hold periodic missionwide examinations of overall U.S. aims in El Salvador. The 2014-2016 Integrated Country Strategy was largely drafted by individual sections, with limited reference to mission colleagues.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy San Salvador should bring together all mission elements at least annually to discuss overall mission objectives, allocations of resources, and tactics.

Interagency Coordination

The embassy's committee structure is an effective and well-regarded coordination tool. Meetings of the weekly country team and executive policy working group provide a platform for the Ambassador to express her views and concerns to the community. Members of the law enforcement group operate collegially, and their meetings serve to deconflict operations and responsibilities. The Ambassador and the DCM schedule regular meetings with Department section heads, agency heads, and management and section personnel. In addition, both preach and practice an open door policy that employees correctly interpret as an invitation to consult.

Mission Growth

Embassy San Salvador has grown 38 percent since 2000. The embassy's ample physical space makes it especially attractive to agencies seeking to grow in the region. Questions arose in both Washington and the mission as to how much more expansion the current management and security platforms can accommodate. Although scores for International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with support services, some sections, such as the regional security office, expressed concern they are reaching the limit of what they can provide absent additional resources. OIG inspectors discussed with the Ambassador and DCM the need for close scrutiny by all stakeholders of any additional staffing requests.

Morale and Workplace Issues

Morale is good throughout the embassy. Employees describe the Ambassador and the DCM as patient listeners who consult broadly, ask questions before reaching a decision, and aim for consensus. OIG inspectors advised the Ambassador that local employees and other staff had

expressed interest in more frequent, direct contact to hear her policy priorities and to discuss employment and personnel issues in informal settings.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy San Salvador should schedule more periodic town hall meetings to allow the Ambassador to engage directly with embassy employees.

Mentoring of First- and Second-Tour Employees

The Ambassador and DCM are attentive to the 30 first- and second-tour (FAST) Department and USAID employees at post. In his first weeks, the DCM worked with the group to develop a more useful mentoring and professional development training program. He meets every other week with two coordinators elected by the FAST employees and schedules monthly meetings with the group as a whole. The DCM recently arranged for an agency head to make the first of what the DCM plans will be a series of presentations on different mission portfolios. The DCM also hosted a lunch to stimulate group discussion on career and tradecraft issues. During the last 2 years, the Ambassador has hosted several FAST-only events at her residence to allow interaction with high-level visitors. FAST officers take notes in rotation at country team meetings and accompany the Ambassador to selected public events. OIG inspectors provided the DCM examples of best practices from other missions to use as models for the active program he plans.

Representational Funds

The embassy is not using representational funds as effectively as it could to develop contacts and maintain useful relationships with counterparts at all levels. It recently established a representation plan to distribute funds equitably among sections. Although the embassy expended its FY 2013 representational funds consistent with regulations, it provided only \$600 to the political and economic sections. Department of State Standardized Regulations 312 authorize representational funds for employees whose official positions entail responsibility for establishing and maintaining relationships of value to the United States in foreign countries. The OIG team supports the DCM's emphasis on representational outreach as a priority for the embassy sections.

Policy and Program Implementation

Political Section

The political section has positive synergy with the economic section. Officers in both sections play key roles formulating objectives in the Mission Resource Request and the Integrated Country Strategy.

On arrival in 2013, the deputy political officer found neither a logical shared electronic filing system nor an easy way to search files by topic. Similarly, biographic reporting had not been centralized, and reports were located in different places in different formats. During the two months prior to the inspection, the deputy political officer initiated projects to organize the electronic filing system and centralize biographic files using the Department's standard Diplopedia format. Similar steps are planned on the classified system.

Reporting and Analysis

The section has produced high-quality analytical reporting on Salvadoran political parties, the judicial system, and the legislature, with many cables citing a wide variety of sources to underpin the embassy's analysis. The section's reporting plan emphasizes the 2014 presidential elections and judicial and legislative institutions.

Locally employed (LE) staff members analyze daily events and play a major role in producing annual reports required by statute, including those on human rights, international religious freedom, and trafficking in persons. The section has the additional duty of producing a report every 18 months assessing country conditions for the Department of Homeland Security to use in deciding whether to extend temporary protected status for Salvadorans in the United States.¹

To understand better the nuances of Salvadoran society, the section head invites officers and LE staff from a variety of sections and agencies to regularly scheduled informal meetings where participants exchange information and views on election-related political, social, and cultural developments.

Economic Section

The front office often turns to the economic counselor to draft cables that include sensitive interactions with the Government of El Salvador. Washington agencies that work closely with the economic section commented positively on its cooperative approach to working with the interagency community and its access to Salvadoran sources. Most of the economic section's work focuses on PFG goals and the MCC's second compact with El Salvador. It also reports on economic trends and the country's investment climate.

¹ 8 U.S.C. § 1254a authorizes the Attorney General to designate eligible nationals from a foreign state for temporary protected status, a designation that allows such nationals to remain in the United States and obtain work authorization as long as the designation continues. About 212,000 Salvadorans reside in the United States under temporary protected status.

The embassy has created a multi-agency economic/commercial/development working group and a PFG working group. The working groups bring together participants from the economic section, public affairs, USAID, the U.S. Commercial Service, the Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Department of the Treasury to share information and assess progress on meeting mission goals and objectives. The working groups provide a forum to coordinate efforts on issues such as agriculture, advocacy for U.S. companies, intellectual property rights, and the investment climate.

Leahy Vetting

The Leahy amendment prohibits the use of foreign assistance funds to assist foreign security forces where there is credible evidence they have committed gross human rights violations. Leahy vetting determines whether there is such evidence prior to providing assistance, and is an important part of the embassy's work. In 2013, embassy agencies and sections submitted 2,500 names for vetting, about 10 percent of whom were deemed ineligible for training. The political and economic section's first-tour office management specialist handles all vetting. This responsibility takes up 65 percent of her time, leaving insufficient time for other duties and limiting her opportunities for professional development. An eligible family member with appropriate language skills could handle this job.

Recommendation 1: Embassy San Salvador should hire and train a Spanish-speaking eligible family member to manage Leahy vetting. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Records Management

The political and economic sections do not use record emails to archive email communication of significant policy interest. None of the officers had ever used record emails in the course of their work. As outlined in the *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM), 5 FAM 443, officers are expected to use record emails to retain communication of significant policy interest. The failure to use record emails means that embassy products, such as weekly round-up emails and analytical emails, are not accessible by interested U.S. Government consumers.

Recommendation 2: Embassy San Salvador should develop and implement procedures for the use of working emails, record emails, and cables for communicating and reporting. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy San Salvador should provide online training to officers on how and when to draft record emails.

Foreign Assistance Oversight

The embassy manages substantial bilateral foreign assistance programs from three main sources of funding. The embassy requested \$41.8 million in funds through State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies appropriations for FY 2015, similar to previous years. These funds are used by USAID, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and others to carry out their programs. MCC is the second funding source. El Salvador has received \$460.9 million in funds from MCC over the last 5 years and at the time of the inspection was preparing to sign a \$277 million follow-on compact. Third, El Salvador receives

foreign assistance from accounts other than traditional foreign assistance funds, such as Department of Defense and Department of Labor funds. The classified annex to this report contains additional information on these programs.

Most foreign assistance activities fall under one of the PFG's strategic goals. Given the size and complexity of programs, however, and the absence of a comprehensive inventory of assistance programs and regular front office reviews of them, there is a danger of duplication among agencies. In some cases, the front office does not fully know of certain assistance programs. For example, embassy personnel were unaware of the existence and purpose of a Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor grant for \$717,000. Similarly, in August 2013 a Washington-based Department of Labor employee reviewed a \$14 million Department of Labor grant to help eliminate child labor, but embassy personnel did not receive a report or feedback from the visit. The embassy has monitored another problematic \$1 million grant from the Department of Labor that may require more oversight by the parent agency. Embassy employees, including the Ambassador, DCM, and acting political counselor, were not aware of the status and purpose of a \$250,000 grant from the Bureau of Political and Military Affairs. As a result of the OIG inspection, embassy staff met with the implementer's representative and representatives of the Salvadoran military to discuss progress on the final steps of the grant. The programs noted above support mission goals, but closer coordination between Washington-based program managers and the mission is necessary to ensure that programs are monitored properly, align with policy goals, and do not duplicate other activities.

Recommendation 3: Embassy San Salvador should centralize information on all foreign assistance activities and designate who is responsible for monitoring each program and aligning program activities with embassy goals and objectives. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Grants Management

There are no trained grants officer representatives in the embassy to oversee foreign assistance programs. Grants Policy Directive 16 requires the appointment of trained grants officer representatives to oversee grants of \$100,000 and above. The public affairs section administers a number of such grants, including \$115,000 to the San Salvador Binational Center and \$100,000 from the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation. The International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) section oversees two grants in excess of \$2 million for gang resistance training. Because employees have not taken required grants management training, they may not be aware of their responsibilities to monitor grantee performance and finance.

Recommendation 4: Embassy San Salvador should identify Department grants in the mission with a value of \$100,000 or more and provide required grants management training to employees designated as grants officer representatives. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Section

The INL section, which opened in 2012, is progressing well. The INL director has focused on setting up the new office, hiring LE staff, and implementing standard operating procedures. The director has established good relationships with embassy law enforcement offices and coordinates appropriately within the embassy and with the Salvadoran Government. Since 2008, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs has allotted

\$47.1 million, primarily through CARSI, to support law enforcement programs. Fourteen of the 19 PFG goals for El Salvador pertain to crime and security. With the exception of a money laundering initiative, most programs are meeting performance goals.

The INL section reports significant funds that have not been subobligated for assistance purposes (“pipeline funds”). Subobligation refers to the commitment of U.S. Government foreign assistance funds, usually under the terms of a bilateral letter of agreement. As of September 30, 2013, the INL section reported \$20.26 million in funds that had not been subobligated. Embassies typically receive funding for INL programs in the last weeks of the fiscal year and sign a letter of agreement with host countries to obligate funding. Funds are then available in the next fiscal year for subobligation. Delays in committing funds can result from problems in procurement, grants, or project development processes. They can also reflect delays in negotiating specific project parameters with the host government. The INL financial management handbook requires embassies to subobligate funding within one fiscal year of the letter of agreement’s signature. The bureau has approved Embassy San Salvador’s request to extend subobligation dates for its pipeline funds. Embassy San Salvador has an internal plan that appears viable for committing CARSI and Regional Gang Initiative pipeline funds within an acceptable timeframe. Some delays can be attributed to the opening of the office and associated building of administrative capacity.

International Law Enforcement Academy

Embassy San Salvador hosts an ILEA that annually trains about 1,500 mid-career law enforcement officers from countries throughout Latin America. ILEA doubled the number of its trainees over the last 5 years and substantially increased its operating budget to \$5.1 million annually during the same period. Completion of the San Salvador campus in 2013, built at a cost of \$14 million, concluded the final phase of San Salvador ILEA construction. INL internal evaluations indicate generally successful performance by course instructors. The curriculum consists of core police training courses, supplemented by specialized offerings such as community policing, trafficking in persons investigations, and anti-gang courses, typically taught by U.S.-based instructors from Federal law enforcement agencies.

International Law Enforcement Academy Pipeline Funds

The current pipeline of funds that have not been subobligated for travel and training purposes is excessive. San Salvador ILEA reports \$9.2 million in pipeline funds from FY 2008 – 12, equivalent to about 2 years’ operating expenses at current levels. Additional funds will be released later in the fiscal year. San Salvador ILEA requested permission by cable (13 San Salvador 1252) to extend the expiration date for its pipeline funds by an additional year. Because the San Salvador ILEA training facility is operating near capacity and was forced to cancel courses during the Federal government shutdown, it is not clear that it will be able to spend down the pipeline without additional program activities, none of which have been identified. As noted, the INL financial management handbook requires that INL project funds be subobligated within a year of signing a letter of agreement with the host government. If ILEA San Salvador cannot make productive use of funds, they likely can be redirected to other priorities. Decisions about whether to reprogram funds require policy guidance from INL and, potentially, congressional notification.

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs should review the San Salvador International Law Enforcement Academy's balances, with particular attention to funds that have not been subobligated, and reprogram them as appropriate. (Action: INL, in coordination with Embassy San Salvador)

Public Affairs Section

The public affairs section's highest priority goals are in tandem with embassywide themes of increasing educational opportunities for at-risk youth, rule of law, good governance, improving the business climate, and entrepreneurship. The section also supports PFG goals with its traditional press contact work as well as through public outreach and exchange programs.

Cultural Affairs Office

The cultural affairs office manages professional and academic exchanges and works well with Washington support offices. The exchanges take place in the framework of the 100,000 Strong Latin American initiative launched by the White House in March 2011 to boost regional academic exchanges. The office plans to add 20 more exchange slots in FY 2014 and has nominated a slate of 11 international visitors for FY 2014 in fields such as youth leadership, higher education, small business development, and grassroots democracy. The office's Fulbright academic exchanges tilt toward Salvadoran participants, with 15 graduate students and scholars studying in the United States and only five Americans coming to El Salvador in FY 2013. The International Visitor Leadership Program above could also include a group of security experts, lawyers, or police officials in support of PFG goals.

The office received only six applications for two slots in the Teacher Excellence and Achievement program, and only 30 applications for 11 slots in the student and teacher exchange. The Department sponsors both programs to promote educational and cultural understanding. The OIG team counseled the public diplomacy officers on ways to boost the number of exchange applications with more aggressive recruitment efforts, now chiefly conducted via social media and ad hoc visits to institutions and schools.

The office includes a full-time LE employee who administers a program of speaking engagements by embassy officers. These talks have focused exclusively on cultural or mutual understanding themes such as American holidays and sports, and not on PFG themes such as citizen security and rule of law. The embassy staff includes many experts in personal and cyber security who could reach out to Salvadoran social media users.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy San Salvador should broaden exchanges and the speaker program to focus on Partnership for Growth crime and security themes.

Media Office

The media unit is in charge of press engagement and effectively represents embassy activities to the Salvadoran media. The unit prepares a daily media summary in Spanish each morning that includes print and television summaries. This product is distributed mid-morning, although the front office and reporting sections require a news summary at the opening of business. The political section consequently prepares its own product, which essentially

duplicates the public affairs section's effort. The media office's news summary could be abbreviated to meet an earlier deadline, allowing time for a more complete product later in the day. In addition, not all end users read Spanish, and the public affairs section should include an English summary for Washington consumers.

Recommendation 6: Embassy San Salvador should prepare a single daily news summary that meets the respective needs of embassy and Washington clients. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Information Resource Center

The Information Resource Center does a satisfactory job reaching audiences in journalism, politics, and academia, but could do more to publicize its research capabilities to customers within the embassy, particularly new employees who might be unaware of the center's resources. It has not conducted an open house or other informational session for internal customers in several years.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy San Salvador should hold periodic open houses to publicize the Information Resource Center's products and services.

Social Media

Since launching its social media platform in 2010, the public affairs section has made rapid progress. According to a recent local study, there are 2.2 million Facebook users in El Salvador—about two users for every computer in the country. The embassy hired a Salvadoran contractor to expand its Facebook base, which has jumped to 48,000 from 15,000. The Bureau of International Information Programs boosted this effort by selecting the section for the 20/100 campaign to double the size of the social media audience. The section also has developed a social media calendar, shared with USAID, to coordinate the timing of Facebook uploads. The media office also sponsors a Twitter feed to reach journalists. Some 73,000 users follow the section's tweets.

Staffing

Because of the Department's hiring slowdown, the section was unable to fill an LE staff position to manage budget, grants, and procurement. Instead, the embassy appointed an eligible family member to the position. The position typically requires several years of experience to become fully proficient in public diplomacy and grants. The team counseled the public affairs officer to seek opportunities to train the eligible family member in handling public diplomacy grants and financial management.

Consular Section

The consular section is a medium-sized operation. Nonimmigrant visa workload is relatively stable, but American citizen services is growing as Salvadoran-American retirees return home and swell demand for passports and Federal benefits. Immigrant visa demand has been growing rapidly for several years, straining space and personnel resources. The embassy is already one of the top five immigrant visa processing posts in the Western Hemisphere. Increases in visa demand and attendant fraud prevention work have been met to date with

makeshift and unsuitable local redesign projects to create more space. Only additional, purpose-built workspace will meet worldwide standards for secure and efficient processing and customer service.

Three of the section's five American managers arrived less than 2 months before the start of the inspection. New management was in the midst of reviewing processes and making adjustments to improve productivity and customer service. Their changes had already eliminated some artificially restrictive criteria for nonimmigrant visa adjudication, facilitated the flow of both immigrant and nonimmigrant visa applicants, reduced backlogs of immigrant visa cases awaiting final review, and refocused attention on resolving visa reciprocity discrepancies between the United States and El Salvador.

Over time, several management control tasks have devolved to the three unit chiefs, despite their already heavy adjudication and oversight responsibilities. The new visa chief/section deputy is taking over many of these responsibilities, including consular shared tables administration, accountable consular officer duties, and coordination of the visa referral program. This updated division of labor has potential to free up resources for client services, increase the time available for adjudication review, and reinforce senior attention to management controls.

The entire consular staff, from the most experienced officers to the newest local hires, is motivated, well trained and managed, and goal-oriented. The section has a model cross training program for LE staff: every nonsupervisory local employee rotates approximately every 2 years and can be assigned to work on tasks that require extra support.

Space

The OIG's 2006 inspection² recommended a construction project to address the section's space deficiencies. Those problems remain and have been exacerbated by a doubling of the immigrant visa workload in the interim. [Redacted] (b) (5)

[Redacted] The embassy identified a requirement for a consular construction project even before the 2006 inspection, but the Department has not funded it.

[Redacted] (b) (5)

[Redacted] Four nonimmigrant visa clerks work several hours each day in a container in the outdoor visa waiting area because there is insufficient window space inside the section. Wheelchair customers have to be hoisted to the fingerprint collection counter because there is no handicapped-accessible interview window. The fraud prevention and correspondence units are located outside the consular section. Because neither unit has a full-time American supervisor, their physical separation from the rest of the section affects oversight, coordination, and efficiency. Only two-thirds of the immigrant visa officers can adjudicate applications at the same time due to lack of window space, affecting the section's ability to schedule applicants in the required timeframe. The number of American citizens services interview windows and the small waiting room limit

² Report of Inspection, Embassy San Salvador, El Salvador, Report No. ISP-I-06-31A, May 2006.

the number of available appointments that unit can allocate. The unit has appropriated an unused receptionist window in the main embassy foyer, but this temporary solution affords customers no privacy and was not designed for full-time use.

The consular section had already outgrown its space when the new embassy compound was occupied in 1992. Even modest U.S. immigration reform in the next few years, added to the average immigrant visa growth of approximately 15 percent every 2 years, will overwhelm the section unless there is an increase in the number of windows and in employee work space. Section management has identified redesign and construction priorities to address workflow, security, and processing deficiencies to the Bureau of Consular Affairs. In the short term, the emphasis is on adding four interview window, including one that is wheelchair-accessible, and at least one privacy booth within the existing hardline area. In the medium term, construction of a small annex adjacent to the current section would address oversight and communication problems, provide additional interview windows, and free up visa processing space. The Bureau of Consular Affairs is receptive to the section's space needs. The OIG team concurs with Embassy San Salvador's approach to address the section's most urgent needs immediately. (The classified annex to this report provides additional details on the exterior screening and fraud interview space issues.)

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should implement Embassy San Salvador's short-term consular space plan before the end of FY 2014. (Action: OBO, in coordination with CA)

Recommendation 8: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should review the consular section's medium-term space needs, determine whether construction of an annex is feasible, and establish an appropriate timeline. (Action: OBO, in coordination with CA)

Efficiency

Although the section is well organized and provides all essential services, management is eager to increase efficiency. It plans to improve the Web site, upgrade standard operating procedures, and train new locally hired staff. The OIG team identified additional areas where efficiencies might free up resources to handle workload increases.

Many immigrant visa applicants appear for interviews without having seen a panel physician. In such cases, the interviewing officer has to refuse the visa pending medical results. Even if the eventual results do not indicate significant problems, filing, retrieving, and reviewing cases rather than processing them to conclusion at the initial visit is inefficient. If there is a medical problem that affects visa eligibility, applicants have to be re-interviewed and might have to obtain new financial documentation. There appear to be enough panel physicians to handle the workload, so it is unclear why so many applicants arrive without medical exams.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy San Salvador should determine why many immigrant visa applicants lack medical examination results at the time of their interviews and take steps to rectify the situation.

The American citizens services unit's emergency telephone number appears on the embassy Web site so that Americans can contact the unit at any time in case of death, arrest, or other life and safety situations. Because it is the only consular number listed on that site, the telephone rings throughout the work day with routine questions about citizen services and visa operations that are addressed on the Web site or through a visa call center. This situation detracts from the efficiency of the American citizens services unit and also can prevent emergency calls from being answered expeditiously.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy San Salvador should clarify on its Web site what constitutes an emergency and indicate how clients can obtain non-emergency information, update its American citizens services phone tree, and identify limited non-emergency citizens services telephone hours.

The section includes five part-time eligible family members who provide a range of services, including biometrics collection, visa printing, and fraud unit assistance. There has not been a concerted effort to maximize the potential of these eligible family members, to identify a range of responsibilities other than biometrics collection that require their clearance and skills level, or to develop a training and rotation program.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy San Salvador should include eligible family members in the consular section's training, development, and rotational plan as appropriate.

Resource Management

Agency	U.S. Direct- Hire Staff	U.S. Local- Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2013
Department of State					
Consular	13	5	22	40	\$1,416,730
Diplomatic Security	6	2	9	17	\$805,698
Diplomatic Program	14		6	20	\$1,762,718
ICASS	13	14	126	153	\$9,102,100
International Law Enforcement Academy	1			1	
Narcotics and Law Enforcement	3		17	20	\$46,857,519
Public Affairs Section	3		11	14	\$1,001,044
Marine Security	12		4	16	\$135,950
Representation					\$25,799
Overseas Buildings Operations					\$1,820,858
Department of Agriculture					
Foreign Agricultural Service	1		2	3	\$179,094
Department of Commerce					
U.S. Commercial Service	3		6	9	
Department of Defense					
Army Corps of Engineers	1		3	4	
Defense Attaché Office	5		3	8	\$293,590
Force Protection Detachment	3		1	4	
Military Group	6		8	14	
Office of Defense Cooperation				0	
Tactical Analysis Team	1			1	
MCC			3	3	\$245,439
Department of Health and Human Services					
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention			1	1	
Department of Justice	1		1	2	
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms	2		2	4	
Drug Enforcement Administration	3			3	
Federal Bureau of Investigation	5			5	
Department of Homeland Security					
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services	2		3	5	\$280,388
Enforcement and Removal Operations	1			1	
Homeland Security Investigations	2		3	5	

Peace Corps	2		4	6	
Department of Treasury				0	
Office of Technical Assistance	2		1	3	
USAID					\$45,233,306
Program Staff	21	1	73	95	
Regional Inspector General	8	22	5	35	
Totals	134	44	314	492	\$109,160,233

Management Section

The management team successfully provides services to a large embassy staff. For 2012 and 2013, ICASS scores exceeded 4.0 on a 5-point scale in 26 of 29 management categories. Three management categories—LE staff human resources, procurement, and leasing—were slightly lower than 4.0. The majority of scores were higher than worldwide averages. On OIG’s questionnaire, information management was the only service that scored below average. Communication among management units is effective and office morale is good, although a 3-year wage freeze and suspension of incentive awards has negatively affected LE staff morale. Nevertheless, staff attrition is low. Management controls are in place and working properly in management units.

The management section has 16 unfilled LE staff positions. Under current sequestration guidance,³ hiring is limited to one new hire for every two vacancies, which allows a maximum of eight LE staff positions to be filled. The management officer identified seven LE staff positions that are critical to operations. The embassy is awaiting approval from the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs to fill them. In the interim, the embassy prudently filled LE staffing gaps with eligible family members, who are not subject to the hiring limitation. The management section employs 15 eligible family members.

Rightsizing

Since the 2006 OIG inspection report, direct-hire staffing has grown by 39 positions: 4 from the Department and 35 from other agencies. Staffing growth has been in line with projections from the last analysis by the Office of Rightsizing, prepared in 2010. To date, U.S. direct-hire staffing increases have had limited impact on the management section’s ability to provide services, though resources are stretched thin, and additional growth is likely to outstrip the embassy’s ability to provide quality services.

The embassy has complied with State-USAID Joint Management Council guidance that mandates consolidation of motor pool, housing, and household furniture and appliance cost centers. USAID maintains its own human resources, financial management, and information technology staff, which are exempt from the consolidation mandate. The embassy implemented an interagency furniture and appliance pool in 2012. There are 18 subscribers. Nineteen agencies are exempt and did not join the pool. To increase efficiency, since January 2013 the embassy has

³ In March 2013, the Department instituted a hiring slowdown for local employees (13 State 30462), including a policy limiting the filling of vacant positions for certain employee categories.

required approved NSDD-38 positions to subscribe to the furniture and appliance pool if the agency is signed up for the housing pool.

Financial Management

The financial management office provides good customer service and financial support, including accounting, budgeting, cashiering, vouchering, and payroll services. The OIG team found no anomalies in cashier operations, funds management, premium travel, unliquidated obligations, suspense deposit accounts, accounts receivable, and outstanding advances. Current staffing is sufficient to meet customer needs and provide necessary oversight.

Post Support Unit Usage

The financial management office outsources travel vouchers to the Comptroller and Global Financial Services' Post Support Unit but does not outsource other types of vendor payments. The embassy's average cost to process a financial strip code is \$20.60; the Post Support Unit charges \$12 per strip code. Department guidance makes outsourcing voucher processing optional and leaves the decision to embassy management. The financial management staff is reluctant to expand Post Support Unit usage because of the time involved preparing documents for electronic transfer to the unit for processing. Increased use of the support unit is one of the Department's Top 8 Global Management Priorities to lower ICASS costs and increase efficiency.

Recommendation 9: Embassy San Salvador should prepare a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether outsourcing voucher processing to the Post Support Unit would result in cost savings, and share the results with the mission's Interagency Cooperative Administrative Support Services council. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Voucher Processing Efficiency

The voucher unit has an annual workload of approximately 10,600 transactions or strip codes. Financial strip codes are the workload metric ICASS uses to distribute the costs of providing voucher services to interagency customers. Each voucher examiner at Embassy San Salvador processes approximately 1,900 strip codes per year. This number is well below the worldwide average of 2,224 strip codes per examiner and below the level of other embassies in the region. The most efficient embassy in the region processed nearly twice as many vouchers as Embassy San Salvador, for example. The unit could achieve greater efficiency by comparing its voucher processing procedures with more efficient embassies in the region and adopting their best practices.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy San Salvador should solicit input from other embassies to determine the most efficient procedures for processing vouchers and revise its voucher processing procedures to reflect those findings.

Cellular Telephone Usage

Embassy policies on cellular telephones and BlackBerry devices do not comply with Department regulations. The embassy permits personal long-distance calls on embassy devices and then seeks reimbursement contrary to guidance in 5 FAM 523.1 that prohibits personal long-

distance calls on embassy devices. The regulation has been in place since 2011 but the embassy has not enforced it. The embassy also permits unlimited personal local calls and then seeks reimbursement. Guidance in 5 FAM 511 and 5 FAM 522 place limits on the usage of U.S. Government telecommunications equipment and services for personal calls. Occasional local calls are permitted if they do not result in additional charges to the U.S. Government and do not interfere with work.

One result of noncompliance is that the financial management office spends too much time and money collecting reimbursements. In 2012, it sent approximately 486 collection bills for personal and long-distance phone calls. One voucher examiner spends approximately 25 percent of his time sending bills. In FY 2012, the financial management office spent approximately \$13,500 to bill \$13,164 in personal and long distance cellular telephone calls, not including the cashier's time to collect reimbursements.

Recommendation 10: Embassy San Salvador should issue a management notice outlining Department policy concerning use of government telecommunications equipment for long-distance calls and personal use. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services Council

ICASS council meetings are professional, collaborative, and without significant disputes. The council is in the process of establishing a budget committee.

Human Resources Office

The human resources office serves American and LE staff well. For the past 2 years, the embassy has had a U.S. direct-hire human resources officer. The Department will not fill this position after the incumbent departs in 2014. The embassy asserts that it needs this position for continuity, in part because the senior LE position in the office has been vacant for 18 months. The Department has proposed transferring responsibility to a regional human resources officer based at the Florida Regional Center in Fort Lauderdale. The OIG team agrees with the embassy that the LE staff position should be filled. It also agrees with the Department that the officer position can be filled by an employee assigned to the Florida Regional Center.

Duty Officer Program

Embassies are required to appoint American employees to answer after-hours inquiries and respond to emergencies. More than 40 officers and staff from other agencies do not serve as embassy duty officers, placing an undue burden on Department and USAID personnel. On the most recent duty roster, 20 percent of the duty officers were entry-level officers from one embassy unit, and more than half were USAID employees. Several employees served as duty officers three times a year. The embassy has not done an analysis of why exempted offices should not share duty officer responsibilities as they do at many other embassies.

Recommendation 11: Embassy San Salvador should review the duty logs of offices and agencies exempted from participation in the embassy duty officer program and broaden the duty officer roster appropriately. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Many duty calls involve American citizen emergencies. In the worst cases, the duty officer calls the American citizens services chief or another designated consular officer. The number of cases referred to the consular officer would decrease if all duty officers completed the duty officer training program. Few do so, and not all duty officers request briefings from the American citizens services unit, as required, before they assume duty. Some do not enter any data, including their names and dates of duty, in the duty log.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy San Salvador should require duty officers to complete appropriate training.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy San Salvador should appoint one office to review duty log entries and report to the front office those officers who do not document their activities while serving as duty officer.

Locally Employed Staff Position Classification

The human resources office has a backlog of 12 positions awaiting classification. This backlog occurred because of staff vacancies in the human resources office. A human resources assistant now spends about 75 percent of her time on position classification. Since 2010, the human resources assistant has classified 109 positions.

The human resources office could outsource its position classification services to one of the Department's regional centers for faster processing. Outsourcing could also help prevent grade creep and minimize the conflict of interest inherent in classifying LE staff positions locally. Since 2009, four regional bureaus have outsourced local position classification to the Frankfurt Regional Center, which now performs position classification services for 56 embassies. In addition to cost savings, regional position classification results in more uniform and consistent outcomes, reduced staffing levels, and fewer burdens on embassy human resources staffs.

The Florida Regional Center based in Fort Lauderdale provides limited classification services to some Bureau of Western Hemisphere embassies. The center does not have the staff or capacity to take over Embassy San Salvador's position classification duties. The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs estimates that it would need six to nine U.S. direct-hire positions to provide regional position classification services for its 29 embassies, which may make Frankfurt a better option.

Recommendation 12: Embassy San Salvador, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether outsourcing local position classification to a regional center in Frankfurt or Fort Lauderdale would result in cost savings or increased efficiency, and implement the lower cost option. (Action: Embassy San Salvador, in coordination with WHA)

Locally Employed Staff Handbook

The LE staff handbook was last updated in 2009 and does not reflect current local labor laws. Human resources staff started a handbook update in 2012 but could not complete the task because of staffing shortfalls. The handbook update is now in the final stages and a local attorney

is reviewing the draft. LE staff handbooks should be kept current and explain conditions of employment, ethical standards, and disciplinary processes, including termination. Absent accurate policies and procedures, American and LE staff might disseminate and work with incorrect information.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy San Salvador should complete the update of its locally employed staff handbook to reflect current conditions of employment, ethical standards, and disciplinary processes.

Locally Employed Staff Committee

Mission management maintains a good dialogue with the LE staff committee. The DCM met with the committee his first week on the job. LE staff concerns include freezes on wages, allowances, and awards, as well as special immigrant visa policies, the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program, hiring, and the mandatory retirement age. Embassy management is taking appropriate action with the Department to address these concerns where possible.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Several EEO issues in the mission over the past year required use of EEO channels and led to the Ambassador's personal involvement in EEO outreach and education. The four trained EEO counselors, two LE staff liaisons, and the Federal Women's Program coordinator take their roles seriously. Notices describing the EEO program and listing designated EEO counselors are posted throughout the embassy.

General Services

The general services unit delivers good customer service, a notable achievement given that 20 percent of its positions are vacant because of Department limits on hiring new LE staff. Two American officers divide general services duties and supervise 55 LE staff members.

The property management unit manages an inventory valued at \$10.4 million. The unit has developed standard procedures and controls accountable property using correct procedures. In FY 2013, the unit did not submit the required certification of inventory reconciliation on time because of warehouse staff shortages, problems using the asset management system, and confusion about the location of accountable property in the information management office. Motor pool, shipping, and procurement operations work well.

Facilities Maintenance

The facilities maintenance unit effectively maintains five government-owned buildings on the 26-acre embassy compound. The properties, including the chancery, chief of mission residence, DCM residence, and Marine house, are in good condition. The unit receives excellent ICASS scores for building maintenance and average marks for residential maintenance. The unit is operating with two unfilled positions and expects the departure of two more LE staff members in coming months. In FY 2013, the section completed 5,389 work orders, tracking and processing them efficiently. [Redacted] (b) (5)

[Redacted] (b) (5) The facilities maintenance officer is exploring options to address office space issues.

Safety, Health, and Environmental Management

The occupational health and safety program complies with Department regulations. The Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management conducted its last site visit in December 2010. Its safety report identified 25 deficiencies; all but two recommendations have now been closed. Pending projects include the relocation of several warehouse panels and the installation of a \$30,000 system to reduce the risk accidental falls.

Information Management

Although the workload of the information management and information security program has grown, staffing has remained unchanged over the past several years. The information management team does not have the resources to expand and automate services. The information management officer requested two additional LE positions in the FY 2014 Mission Resource Request. At that time, a number of issues, such as the alternate command center and physical infrastructure, had been neglected by previous management.

The information management office participated in the pilot phase of the Information Technology Transformation Initiative to consolidate Department and USAID information networks. This initiative was projected to yield \$114,000 in bandwidth and server cost reductions but has been suspended pending Washington review. In the meantime, USAID is migrating to a virtualized desktop environment that may make the concept unnecessary. Other initiatives include installing computers at ILEA, establishing a Foreign Service Institute adjunct training facility, and modernizing physical infrastructure for classified information programs.

The inspectors identified help desk management, laptop security, SharePoint site content, and diplomatic note archiving as areas for improvement.

Project Management

Project planning is weak. For example, the office deploys operating system software upgrades inefficiently. The office gives each computer technician 48 hours to perform an upgrade on two workstations, rather than the standard 90 minutes per workstation. The information management office has not developed standard operating procedures for project planning, scheduling deployments, or monitoring resources, as required by 5 FAM 864 and 5 FAM 121.3. In part, project planning deficiencies stem from the lack of an American employee to oversee unclassified systems operations.

Recommendation 13: Embassy San Salvador should establish project plans, deployment schedules, and standard operating procedures in the information management office. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

[Redacted] (b) (5)

SharePoint Site

The embassy's internal SharePoint site is incomplete and does not contain pertinent information. For example, strategic planning information and emergency preparedness documents are not prominently displayed on the main page.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy San Salvador should update its SharePoint site.

Diplomatic Notes Registry

Diplomatic notes are official correspondence between an embassy and the host government. Embassy San Salvador does not maintain copies of incoming and outgoing diplomatic notes consistent with records management requirements in 5 FAH-1 H-611h. It has developed an electronic database that assigns note numbers but does not store copies of the notes. In the absence of complete records, important correspondence is not preserved, and embassy business may be hampered.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy San Salvador should issue a management notice designating offices authorized to issue diplomatic notes and requiring retention of all incoming and outgoing notes, consistent with records management regulations.

Quality of Life

Overall morale is good. U.S. employees receive a 10 percent post allowance, a 15 percent hardship differential, and two rest and recuperation trips in a 3-year tour. San Salvador has good housing, restaurants, medical care, schools, and shopping. The region has abundant travel and sightseeing opportunities, cultural activities, and sporting options. Negative factors include heavy traffic, pollution, night-time driving restrictions, and violent crime.

Community Liaison Office

The community liaison office operates a robust and popular program. The office organizes a large number of activities, events, and social outings that meet the needs of a diverse embassy community. The coordinator participates in the emergency action committee, country team, housing board, recreation association board, and the employment committee. The American employee association funds community liaison office-sponsored trips and activities.

Schools

U.S. direct-hire dependents are enrolled in four schools. Parents are generally satisfied with the quality of education. In April 2013, the Department's regional education officer visited each school, observed operations, and met with administrators, teachers, school board members, and students. The regional education officer made recommendations to improve parent and student integration into the mostly Salvadoran student social structure.

Health Unit

The health unit provides good service. It receives strong support from the front office and management section. The health unit has sufficient resources, with a regional medical officer, a part-time doctor, two part-time nurses, and a receptionist. A regional medical officer supports the medical programs of embassies in Central America and Jamaica. A regional psychiatrist based in Bogota provides mental health care.

American Employees Association

The association has a strong financial position and ample cash reserves. In 2012, the association had a profit of \$172,000. Except for food services, all cost centers are profitable. In January 2012, the Bureau of Administration, Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs, conducted a review and found no deficiencies. The board of directors, general management, and the management counselor meet monthly. The association has an in-house accountant and employs an outside financial consultant to review the books monthly and provide a statement and report. The association meets all Department reporting requirements.

Management Controls

The annual chief of mission management controls statement of assurance was signed on July 8, 2013. This evaluation of management controls provided reasonable assurance that there were no material weaknesses or reportable conditions. The statement of assurance identified and reported a list of safety, health, and environmental management issues discussed in this report.

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Embassy San Salvador should hire and train a Spanish-speaking eligible family member to manage Leahy vetting. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Recommendation 2: Embassy San Salvador should develop and implement procedures for the use of working emails, record emails, and cables for communicating and reporting. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Recommendation 3: Embassy San Salvador should centralize information on all foreign assistance activities and designate who is responsible for monitoring each program and aligning program activities with embassy goals and objectives. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Recommendation 4: Embassy San Salvador should identify Department grants in the mission with a value of \$100,000 or more and provide required grants management training to employees designated as grants officer representatives. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs should review the San Salvador International Law Enforcement Academy's balances, with particular attention to funds that have not been subobligated, and reprogram them as appropriate. (Action: INL, in coordination with Embassy San Salvador)

Recommendation 6: Embassy San Salvador should prepare a single daily news summary that meets the respective needs of embassy and Washington clients. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should implement Embassy San Salvador's short-term consular space plan before the end of FY 2014. (Action: OBO, in coordination with CA)

Recommendation 8: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should review the consular section's medium-term space needs, determine whether construction of an annex is feasible, and establish an appropriate timeline. (Action: OBO, in coordination with CA)

Recommendation 9: Embassy San Salvador should prepare a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether outsourcing voucher processing to the Post Support Unit would result in cost savings, and share the results with the mission's Interagency Cooperative Administrative Support Services council. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Recommendation 10: Embassy San Salvador should issue a management notice outlining Department policy concerning use of government telecommunications equipment for long-distance calls and personal use. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Recommendation 11: Embassy San Salvador should review the duty logs of offices and agencies exempted from participation in the embassy duty officer program and broaden the duty officer roster appropriately. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

Recommendation 12: Embassy San Salvador, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether outsourcing

local position classification to a regional center in Frankfurt or Fort Lauderdale would result in cost savings or increased efficiency, and implement the lower cost option. (Action: Embassy San Salvador, in coordination with WHA)

Recommendation 13: Embassy San Salvador should establish project plans, deployment schedules, and standard operating procedures in the information management office. (Action: Embassy San Salvador)

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 Recommendation 1: Embassy San Salvador should bring together all mission elements at least annually to discuss overall mission objectives, allocations of resources, and tactics.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy San Salvador should schedule more periodic town hall meetings to allow the Ambassador to engage directly with embassy employees.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy San Salvador should provide online training to officers on how and when to draft record emails.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy San Salvador should broaden exchanges and the speaker program to focus on Partnership for Growth crime and security themes.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy San Salvador should hold periodic open houses to publicize the Information Resource Center's products and services.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy San Salvador should determine why many immigrant visa applicants lack medical examination results at the time of their interviews and take steps to rectify the situation.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy San Salvador should clarify on its Web site what constitutes an emergency and indicate how clients can obtain non-emergency information, update its American citizens services phone tree, and identify limited non-emergency citizens services telephone hours.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy San Salvador should include eligible family members in the consular section's training, development, and rotational plan as appropriate.

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[Redacted] (b) (5)

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy San Salvador should update its SharePoint site.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy San Salvador should issue a management notice designating offices authorized to issue diplomatic notes and requiring retention of all incoming and outgoing notes, consistent with records management regulations.

Principal Officials

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Mari Carmen Aponte	7/12
Deputy Chief of Mission	Michael Barkin	9/13
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Clarke Allard	9/13
Consular	Mark Leoni	8/13
Political	Richard Merrin	8/13
Economic	John Barrett	9/12
Public Affairs	Mari Tolliver	7/12
Regional Security	Michael Wilkins	7/12
Other Agencies:		
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms	Harry Penate	06/12
Department of Defense	Colonel Robert Wagner	8/13
Department of Homeland Security – Citizenship and Immigration Services	Paul Mitchell	10/10
Department of Homeland Security – Immigration and Customs Enforcement	Thomas Almond	04/10
Drug Enforcement Administration		
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Joseph Deters	10/08
Foreign Agricultural Service	Henry Schmick	9/11
U.S. Agency for International Development	Kirk Dahlgren	12/12
U.S. Commercial Service	Ireas Cook	8/11

Abbreviations

CARSI	Central American Regional Security Initiative
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
Department	Department of State
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAST	First- and second-tour
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
ILEA	International Law Enforcement Academy
INL	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
LE	Locally employed
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
PFG	Partnership for Growth
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development



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