

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
AUD-FM-15-07

To the Secretary and the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of State

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying consolidated financial statements of the U.S. Department of State (Department), which comprise the consolidated balance sheets as of September 30, 2014 and 2013, the related consolidated statements of net cost and changes in net position, the combined statements of budgetary resources for the years then ended, and the related notes to the consolidated financial statements (hereinafter referred to as the "consolidated financial statements").

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of consolidated financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 14-02, *Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements*. Those standards and OMB Bulletin No. 14-02 require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate under the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.



We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion on the Consolidated Financial Statements

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Department as of September 30, 2014 and 2013, and its net cost of operations, changes in net position, and budgetary resources for the years then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matters

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the Management's Discussion and Analysis, condition assessments of Heritage Assets, Combining Schedule of Budgetary Resources, and Deferred Maintenance (hereinafter referred to as "required supplementary information") be presented to supplement the consolidated financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the consolidated financial statements, is required by OMB Circular A-136, *Financial Reporting Requirements*, and the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board, which consider it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the consolidated financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing it for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the consolidated financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audits of the consolidated financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Other Information

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements as a whole. The information in the Message from the Secretary, the Message from the Comptroller, and the Other Information Section, as listed in the Table of Contents of the Department's *Agency Financial Report*, is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. Such information has not been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the consolidated financial statements, and accordingly, we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on it.

Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards*

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and OMB Bulletin No. 14-02, we have also issued reports, dated November 15, 2014, on our consideration of the Department's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of the Department's compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements for the year ended September 30, 2014. The purpose of those reports is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing and not to provide an opinion on internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. Those reports are an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, *Government Auditing Standards*, and OMB Bulletin No. 14-02 in considering the Department's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kearney & Company". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alexandria, Virginia
November 15, 2014

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER
FINANCIAL REPORTING**

To the Secretary and the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of State

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of the U.S. Department of State (Department) as of and for the year ended September 30, 2014, and have issued our report thereon dated November 15, 2014. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 14-02, *Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements*.

Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the consolidated financial statements, we considered the Department's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate under the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the consolidated financial statements but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Department's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Department's internal control. We limited our internal control testing to those controls necessary to achieve the objectives described in OMB Bulletin No. 14-02. We did not test all internal controls relevant to operating objectives as broadly defined by the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982, such as those controls relevant to ensuring efficient operations.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented or detected and corrected on a timely basis.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraphs and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified.

Our audit was also not designed to identify deficiencies in internal control that might be significant. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance. We consider the following deficiencies in the Department's internal control to be significant deficiencies.

Significant Deficiencies

I. Financial Reporting

Weaknesses in controls over financial reporting have been reported as either a material weakness or a significant deficiency since the audit of the Department's FY 2009 financial statements. The Department has addressed certain control deficiencies reported in prior financial statement audit reports related to financial reporting and improved underlying data. However, financial reporting continues to be a significant deficiency because of issues with the preparation of the Statement of Budgetary Resources (SBR).

The SBR is derived predominantly from an entity's budgetary general ledger in accordance with budgetary accounting rules. Information on the SBR should reconcile to budget execution information reported to the Department of the Treasury on Standard Form (SF) 133, Report on Budget Execution and Budgetary Resources, and with information reported in the Budget of the United States Government to ensure the integrity of the numbers presented. We found that the Department had made numerous adjustments related to budgetary resources outside the financial system, most of which originated from automated edit checks as well as manual free-form journal entries. Many of the adjustments are required to correct budgetary problems and limitations in the accounting system. Based on audit procedures performed, we identified a number of significant discrepancies in the adjustments made during the manual preparation of the Department's SF 133 reports.

The Department did not use the full functionality of its accounting systems to capture all budgetary accounting events and to automate SBR reporting procedures. In addition, the Department did not have sufficient controls in place to ensure all manual budgetary adjustments were supported or that the adjustments were consistently recorded when preparing the SBR. Manual adjustments require an increased measure of internal control and review, reduce the Department's ability to produce statements timely, and increase the likelihood of errors in the statements.

II. Property and Equipment

The Department reported over \$18 billion in net property and equipment on its FY 2014 balance sheet. Real and leased property consisted primarily of facilities used for U.S. diplomatic missions abroad and capital improvements to these facilities. Personal property consisted of several asset categories, including aircraft, vehicles, security equipment, communication equipment, and software. Weaknesses in property were initially reported in the audit of the Department's FY 2005 financial statements and subsequent audits. In FY 2014, the Department's internal control structure continued to exhibit several deficiencies that negatively affected the Department's ability to account for real and personal property in a complete, accurate, and timely manner. We concluded that the combination of property-related control deficiencies was a significant deficiency. The individual deficiencies we identified are summarized as follows:

- Personal Property Acquisitions and Disposals – The Department uses several non-integrated systems to track, manage, and record personal property transactions, which are periodically merged or reconciled with the financial management system in order to centrally account for the acquisition and disposal of personal property. We noted a significant number of prior year personal property transactions that were not recorded until the current year. In addition, we noted that the acquisition value for a number of selected items could not be supported and that the gain or loss on personal property disposals was not recorded properly for numerous items. The Department’s control structure did not ensure that personal property acquisitions and disposals were recorded timely and accurately. In addition, the Department’s monitoring activities were not always effective to ensure proper financial reporting for personal property. The errors resulted in misstatements to the Department’s financial statements. The lack of effective control may result in the loss of accountability for asset custodianship, which could lead to undetected theft or waste.
- Recording Constructed Assets – The Department currently manages nearly \$3 billion in overseas construction projects. All construction projects should be tracked in the Construction-in-Progress account until the project reaches completion. Once a construction project is complete, the Department transfers the asset from the Construction-in-Progress account to the real property asset account and the asset is depreciated over its estimated useful life. In FY 2014, we found that the Department had reclassified costs related to a large construction project that was completed in FY 2013. All costs relating to this project were incorrectly recorded as expenses during prior years. The Department used project codes to ensure construction activities were properly recorded; however, the unrecorded asset did not have a project code. The misclassification led to an understatement in property and an overstatement of expenses in the Department’s financial statements.
- Contractor-Held Property Inventory – The Department uses contractors to provide support in overseas locations, which may include purchasing and operating personal property, such as armored vehicles, on behalf of the Department. This type of property is generally referred to as contractor-held property (CHP). The Department has title to the CHP and reports all CHP with an acquisition cost of over \$25,000 as an asset in its financial statements. We identified some CHP armored vehicles that were incorrectly recorded as expenses rather than as assets. The Department performed additional analyses and identified more unrecorded CHP. During the procurement process, Department officials did not always include clauses requiring contractors to submit information related to CHP in contracts. In addition, although the Department had a process in place to identify potential unrecorded personal property, the process did not assess all transactions that could potentially involve CHP. Incomplete CHP inventories result in understated property and overstated expenses in the Department’s financial statements.
- Operating Leases – The Department manages over 15,700 real property leases throughout the world. The majority of the Department’s leases are short-term operating leases. The Department must disclose the future minimum lease payments (FMLP) related to the

Department's operating lease obligations in the footnotes to the financial statements. We found numerous recorded lease terms that did not agree with supporting documentation and two leases that should have been capitalized but that were inaccurately listed as operating leases. We also tested leases that were scheduled to expire and found multiple leases that had been renewed; however, the renewed lease terms were not included in the Department's FMLP calculations. The Department's process to monitor lease information provided by posts was not always effective. The discrepancies identified in the Department's FMLP calculation methodology led to multiple errors in the Department's footnote disclosure. In addition, the misclassification of two leases resulted in an understatement of assets and liabilities on the Department's balance sheet.

III. Budgetary Accounting

The Department lacked sufficient reliable funds control over its accounting and business processes to ensure budgetary transactions were properly recorded, monitored, and reported. Beginning in our report on the Department's FY 2010 financial statements, we identified budgetary accounting as a significant deficiency. During FY 2014, the audit continued to identify control limitations, and we concluded that the combination of control deficiencies remained a significant deficiency. The individual deficiencies we identified are summarized as follows:

- Support of Obligations – Obligations are definite commitments that create a legal liability of the Government for payment. The Department should record only legitimate obligations, which would include a reasonable estimate of potential future outlays. We identified a large number of low-value obligations for which the Department could not provide evidence of a binding agreement. The Department's financial system was designed to reject payments for invoices without established obligations. Because allotment holders were not always recording valid and accurate obligations prior to the receipt of goods and services, the Department established low-value obligations, which allowed invoices to be paid in compliance with the Prompt Payment Act but effectively bypassed system controls. The continued use of this practice could lead to a violation of the Antideficiency Act, and it increases the risk of fraud, misuse, and waste.
- Timeliness of Obligations – The Department should record an obligation in its financial management system when it enters into an agreement, such as a contract or a purchase order, to purchase goods and services. During our testing, we identified obligations that were not recorded within 15 days of execution of the obligating document and obligations that were posted subsequent to the receipt of goods and services. We also identified obligations that were recorded in the financial management systems prior to the formal execution of a contract. The Department did not have processes to ensure the accurate and timely creation and recording of obligations. Without an effective obligation process, controls to monitor funds and make timely payments may be compromised, which may lead to violations of the Antideficiency Act and the Prompt Payment Act.
- Capital Lease Obligations – The Department must obligate funds to cover the net present value of the Government's total estimated legal obligation over the life of a capital lease

contract. However, the Department annually obligates funds equal to 1 year of the capital lease cost rather than the entire amount of the lease agreement. The Department obligated leases on an annual basis rather than the entire lease agreement period because that is the manner in which funds are budgeted and appropriated. Because of the unrecorded obligation, the Department's financial statements were misstated.

- Effectiveness of Allotment Controls – Federal agencies use allotments to allocate funds in accordance with statutory authority. Allotments provide authority to agency officials to incur obligations as long as those obligations are within the scope and terms of the allotment authority. We identified systemic issues in the Department's use of allotment overrides, which allowed officials to exceed allotments. Department systems did not have an automated control to prevent users from recording obligations that exceeded allotment amounts. Department management stated that an automated control is not reasonable because there are instances in which an allotment may need to be exceeded; however, the Department has not formally documented the circumstances under which an allotment override is acceptable. The Department has a process to identify instances in which an obligation exceeded a domestic allotment; however, this process does not include overseas allotments. Additionally, the process does not adequately validate whether the override was acceptable and summarize the information for management use. Overriding allotment controls could lead to a violation of the Antideficiency Act and increases the risk of fraud, misuse, and waste.

IV. Validity and Accuracy of Unliquidated Obligations

Unliquidated obligations (ULO) represent the cumulative amount of orders, contracts, and other binding agreements for which the goods and services that were ordered have not been received or the goods and services have been received but payment has not yet been made. The Department's policies and procedures provide guidance related to the periodic review, analysis, and validation of the ULO balances posted to the general ledger. We identified a significant amount of invalid ULOs that had not been identified by the Department's review process. The internal control structure was not operating effectively to comply with existing policy or facilitate the accurate reporting of ULO balances in the financial statements. The Department's internal controls were not effective to ensure that ULOs were consistently and systematically evaluated for validity and deobligation. As a result of the invalid ULOs, the Department's financial statements were misstated. In addition, funds that could have been used for other purposes may have remained in unneeded obligations. Weaknesses in controls over ULOs were initially reported in the audit of the Department's 1997 financial statements and subsequent audits.

V. Information Technology

The Department's information technology (IT) internal control structure, both for the general support system and critical financial reporting applications, exhibited limitations in several areas, including risk management strategies and user account management. The National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Government Accountability Office's *Federal Information*

System Controls Audit Manual provide control objectives and evaluation techniques that we used during our audit. Weaknesses in IT controls have been reported as a financial statement significant deficiency since the audit of the FY 2009 financial statements.

In accordance with the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA), the Office of Inspector General (OIG) performed a review of the Department's information security program for FY 2014, including controls related to the Department's general support system.¹ The Department's general support system is the gateway for all of the Department's systems, including its financial management systems. Generally, control deficiencies noted in the support system are inherited by the other systems that reside on it. We did not perform additional work on the controls related to the general support system but instead relied on the work performed by OIG.

Overall, OIG found that the Department had implemented an information security program and had made progress during FY 2014 to address IT deficiencies identified in prior FISMA reports, but OIG continued to identify weaknesses in the risk management framework, plans of action and milestones, and the continuous monitoring program, which were collectively reported as a FISMA significant deficiency. A significant deficiency is the highest level of severity under FISMA. The weaknesses identified by OIG impact the Department's general support system, which is used to access the Department's financial management systems. Specifically, ineffective IT security controls increase the risk that sensitive financial information could be accessed by unauthorized individuals or that financial transactions could be altered either accidentally or intentionally. IT weaknesses increase the risk that the Department will be unable to report financial data accurately.

The focus of our IT-related audit work was primarily on financial system-specific deficiencies that could lead to significant misstatements of or corruption to the Department's financial data. Based on IT deficiencies identified by OIG with the general support system, we developed additional risk-based audit procedures to substantively test financial management system inputs and outputs. In addition, we tested and confirmed certain compensating controls that would mitigate some of the risks that were attributable to the general support system deficiencies. Our IT audit procedures identified a financial system control deficiency with the Global Employment Management System (GEMS), which is the Department's human resource system. We identified instances where users had access to security administration and human resources business activities—a combination generally considered incompatible. We also found that the Department did not effectively monitor user access or changes to user accounts within GEMS. Although the Department had developed a corrective action plan, the plan was not implemented during FY 2014 and was not complete. Inadequate segregation of duties and inadequate application monitoring contribute to an overall weakening of the internal control environment for GEMS and increase the risk that errors and irregularities could occur and remain undetected.

¹ *Audit of the Department of State Information Security Program* (AUD-IT-15-17, Nov. 2014).

Although the Department had addressed several deficiencies in its financial management systems during FY 2014, the weaknesses identified by OIG during the FISMA audit and by us during the financial statement audit are considered to be a significant deficiency within the scope of our financial statement audit.

During the audit, we noted certain additional matters involving internal control over financial reporting that we will report to Department management in a separate letter.

Status of Prior Year Findings

In the Independent Auditor’s Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting included in the audit report on the Department’s FY 2013 financial statements,² we noted several issues that were related to internal control over financial reporting. The status of the FY 2013 internal control findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Status of Prior Year Findings

Control Deficiency	FY 2013 Status	FY 2014 Status
Financial Reporting	Significant Deficiency	Significant Deficiency
Property and Equipment	Significant Deficiency	Significant Deficiency
Budgetary Accounting	Significant Deficiency	Significant Deficiency
Validity and Accuracy of Unliquidated Obligations	Significant Deficiency	Significant Deficiency
Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund Data Inaccuracies and Timeliness	Significant Deficiency	Closed
Information Technology	Significant Deficiency	Significant Deficiency

Department’s Response to Findings

Department management has provided its response to our findings in a separate memorandum attached to this report. We did not audit management’s response, and accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

² *Independent Auditor’s Report on the U.S. Department of State 2013 and 2012 Financial Statements* (AUD-FM-14-10, Dec. 2013).

Purpose of This Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and the results of that testing and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Department's internal control. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, *Government Auditing Standards*, and OMB Bulletin No. 14-02 in considering the entity's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

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Alexandria, Virginia
November 15, 2014

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF LAWS, REGULATIONS, CONTRACTS, AND GRANT AGREEMENTS

To the Secretary and the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of State

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of the U.S. Department of State (Department) as of and for the year ended September 30, 2014, and have issued our report thereon dated November 15, 2014. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 14-02, *Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements*.

Compliance

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Department's consolidated financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material impact on the determination of financial statement amounts, and certain provisions of other laws and regulations specified in OMB Bulletin No. 14-02, including the provisions referred to in Section 803(a) of the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996 (FFMIA) that we determined were applicable. We limited our tests of compliance to these provisions and did not test compliance with all laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements applicable to the Department. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

The results of our tests, exclusive of those related to FFMIA, disclosed instances of noncompliance that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards* and OMB Bulletin No. 14-02 and which are summarized as follows:

- *Antideficiency Act*. This act prohibits the Department from (1) making or authorizing an expenditure from, or creating or authorizing an obligation under, any appropriation or fund in excess of the amount available in the appropriation or fund unless authorized by law; (2) involving the Government in any obligation to pay money before funds have been appropriated for that purpose, unless otherwise allowed by law; and (3) making obligations or expenditures in excess of an apportionment or reappropriation, or in excess of the amount permitted by agency regulations. Our audit procedures identified Department of the Treasury fund symbols with negative balances that were potentially in violation of the Antideficiency Act. We also identified systemic issues in the Department's use of allotment overrides to exceed available allotment authority. Establishing obligations that exceed available allotment authority increases the risk of noncompliance with the Antideficiency Act.

- *Prompt Payment Act.* This act requires Federal agencies to make payments in a timely manner, pay interest penalties when payments are late, and take discounts only when payments are made within the discount period. The Department did not always make payments within 30 days, as required. Additionally, we found that the Department did not consistently pay interest penalties for domestic and overseas payments in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act.

Under FFMIA, we are required to report whether the Department's financial management systems substantially comply with Federal financial management systems requirements, applicable Federal accounting standards, and the U.S. Standard General Ledger (USSGL) at the transaction level. Although we did not identify any instances of substantial noncompliance with Federal accounting standards, we did identify instances, when combined, in which the Department's financial management systems and related controls did not substantially comply with certain Federal financial management systems requirements and the USSGL at the transaction level.

Federal Financial Management Systems Requirements

- The Department has long-standing weaknesses in its financial management systems regarding its capacity to account for and record financial information. For instance, the Department has significant deficiencies relating to financial reporting, property and equipment, budgetary accounting, and unliquidated obligations.
- During its annual evaluation of the Department's information security program, as required by the Federal Information Security Management Act, the Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) identified weaknesses with computer security that it reported collectively as representing a significant deficiency.³
- The Department did not maintain effective administrative control of funds. Specifically, obligations were not created in a timely manner or were recorded in advance of an executed obligating document. In addition, there were systemic issues identified in the Department's use of allotment overrides.
- The Department did not always minimize waste, loss, unauthorized use, or misappropriation of Federal funds. For example, OIG reported more than \$45 million in questioned costs and funds put to better use during FY 2014.
- Interest was not always paid on overdue domestic and overseas payments.

Standard General Ledger at the Transaction Level

- The Department's financial management systems did not consistently post transactions to USSGL compliant accounts or track proprietary and budgetary account attributes consistent with the USSGL.
- General ledger account balances could not always be traced to discrete transactions. Further, discrete transactions could not always be traced to source documents.

³ *Audit of the Department of State Information Security Program* (AUD-IT-15-17, Nov. 2014).

The Department had not implemented and enforced systematic financial management controls to ensure substantial compliance with FFMIA. The Department had not developed and executed remediation plans to address instances of noncompliance or validate compliance against criteria. The Department's ability to meet Federal financial management system requirements and fully process transaction-level data in accordance with the USSGL was hindered by limitations in systems and processes.

During the audit, we noted certain additional matters involving compliance that we will report to Department management in a separate letter.

Department's Response to Findings

Department management has provided its response to our findings in a separate memorandum attached to this report. We did not audit management's response, and accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

Purpose of This Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of compliance and the results of that testing and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, *Government Auditing Standards*, and OMB Bulletin No. 14-02 in considering the entity's compliance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

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Alexandria, Virginia
November 15, 2014



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

UNCLASSIFIED

November 16, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: OIG – Steve A. Linick

FROM: *Chris H. Flaggs*
CGFS – Christopher H. Flaggs

SUBJECT: Draft Report on the Department of State’s Fiscal Year 2014 Financial Statements

This memo is in response to your request for comments on the Draft Report of the Independent Auditor’s Report (AUD-FM-15-07), Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting, and Report on Compliance With Applicable Provisions of Laws, Regulations, Contracts, and Grant Agreements.

As the OIG is aware, the Department operates in over 270 locations and 180 countries in some of the most challenging environments. The scale and complexity of Department activities and corresponding financial management operations and requirements are immense. We understand and take this dynamic into account as we pursue an efficient, accountable, and transparent financial management platform that supports the Department’s and broader U.S. Government’s foreign affairs mission. Part of our accountability is the essential discipline of the annual external audit process and the issuance of the Department’s annual audited financial statements. Few outside the financial community likely realize the time and effort that go into producing the audit and the Agency Financial Report, as we all work to demonstrate our commitment to strong financial management and to producing meaningful financial statements. It is a rigorous and exhaustive process.

This year was no exception. It has been a concerted and dedicated effort by all stakeholders involved. While we may not agree on every aspect of the process and findings, we certainly appreciate and extend our sincere thanks for the professionalism and commitment by all parties, including the Office of the Inspector General and Kearney & Company, to work together throughout the audit process. We know there will always be new challenges and concerns given our global operating environment and scope of compliance requirements. Nonetheless, we believe the Independent Auditor’s Report reflects the continuous improvement we strive to achieve in the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services and across the Department’s financial management community. As expressed in the Independent Auditor’s Report, we are pleased that the Department has received an unmodified (“clean”) audit opinion on its FY 2014 and FY 2013 principal financial statements, and with no material weaknesses reported by the Independent Auditor.

We remain committed to strong corporate governance and internal controls as demonstrated by our robust system of internal controls overseen by our Senior Assessment Team (SAT), Management Control Steering Committee (MCSC), and validated by senior leadership. We appreciate the OIG participation in both the SAT and MSCS forums. For FY 2014, no material management control issues or material weaknesses in internal controls over financial reporting were identified by senior leadership. As a result, the Secretary was able to provide an unqualified Statement of Assurance for the Department's internal controls in accordance with the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act. In addition, prior significant deficiencies regarding the lack of an adequate federal financial assistance information system and Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund data inaccuracies and timeliness were closed.

We fully recognize that there is more to be done and that the items identified in the Draft Report will require our continued attention, action, and improvement. We look forward to working with you, Kearney & Company, and other stakeholders on addressing these issues in the coming year.