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AND THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Inspection of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Visa Services Directorate

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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.

Robert B. Peterson
Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

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Key Findings

- The Bureau of Consular Affairs' Visa Services Directorate is accomplishing its complex, challenging, and critical mission. It has demonstrated that it can successfully realize the President's goal of facilitating travel to the United States while maintaining border security. However, the directorate needs to tackle important management challenges to sustain its performance and improve efficiency.

- Mounting visa demand and changes to immigration law have driven major changes in staffing, technology, and mission, but the directorate has adapted its organizational structure only incrementally. Lagging structural change contributes to inefficiency, resources not matched to operational needs, and low morale among staff.

- Delays responding to public inquiries about immigrant and nonimmigrant visas reflect poorly on the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Department of State.

- The directorate generally manages its contracts worth $350 million capably and complies with *Foreign Affairs Manual* and Federal acquisitions regulations. Nonetheless, the team identified several areas for improvement.

- Systems outages, a backlog of thousands of requests to make changes to the visa systems, and inability to monitor systems performance put at risk fundamental operations in the directorate.

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 inspection took place in Washington, DC, between March 24 and June 2, 2014; in Williamsburg, KY, between May 5 and 9, 2014; in New York, NY, on May 9, 2014; and in Portsmouth, NH, between May 12 and 16, 2014. Ambassador John Dinger (team leader), Betsy Anderson (deputy team leader), Alison Barkley, Sylvia Bazala, Leslie Gerson, Daniel McCollum, Patricia Murphy, Robert Mustain, Keith Powell II, and Moosa Valli conducted the inspection.

Context

The work of the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) is the most visible face of the Department to the public. CA's Visa Services Directorate (CA/VO) supports the processing of all U.S. visa applications, advises posts on visa matters, and liaises with the Department of Homeland Security and other government and nongovernment entities interested in visas and immigration.

Congressional attention to visa matters is intense. In FY 2013, CA/VO responded to more than 60,000 inquiries from congressional offices on behalf of constituents, not including inquiries made directly to overseas posts. U.S. visas are of extreme interest to the U.S. travel and education sectors. International tourism supports more than $180 billion of economic activity and more than 8 million U.S. jobs. A total of 819,644 international students in the United States contribute as much as $24 billion to the U.S. economy. Immigration reform could affect CA/VO's workload dramatically if Congress makes changes to the categories, quotas, or qualifications for U.S. visas.

Some 200 CA/VO staff members in Washington, DC; 500 at the National Visa Center in Portsmouth, NH; and 300 at the Kentucky Consular Center in Williamsburg, KY, support visa operations at more than 220 Foreign Service posts. Those posts in FY 2013 processed more than 11.5 million nonimmigrant visas, generating more than $1.5 billion in fees.

The Department of State (Department) has authority to retain certain visa and other consular fees to fund the Department's Border Security Program; in FY 2013 this amounted to $2.8 billion. The Department uses these funds to screen and facilitate the entry of foreign travelers, provide citizenship services, assist Americans overseas, and pay for the contracts that support those functions. The Border Security Program also funds the visa-related work of several Department bureaus involved in enhancing data sharing and screening; maintaining reliable worldwide connectivity; providing modern hardware and software; ensuring the integrity of processes and products; expanding facilities; and hiring, training, and paying staff members.

The President in early 2012 established a goal of doubling the number of annual visitors to the United States to 100 million by 2021, and the number of international visitors is increasing rapidly. Citizens of 37 countries and Taiwan do not need visas for temporary tourist or business visits to the United States. Nonetheless, facilitating travel and meeting burgeoning demand by foreign nationals who require visas—while helping secure the United States from international threats—present major challenges.

CA/VO pursues many avenues to meet increasing demand for visas while remaining vigilant. In recent years, it expanded and established new facilities, created new staffing mechanisms, improved interagency electronic vetting of applicants, and eliminated interviews for low-risk applicants. However, it is difficult to foresee any conventional means for CA/VO to meet the potential future demand for visas. For example, the U.S. mission in China processed more than 1 million visa applications in 2011. The mission believes that within 10 years, annual demand for visas in China could jump to 10 million.

After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, Congress established the Department of Homeland Security and tasked the new agency with setting visa policy, leaving responsibility for adjudicating visa applications with the Department. CA/VO strengthened visa adjudication processes but did not significantly change its organizational structure.

Introduction

In performing this inspection of CA/VO, the OIG team confidentially surveyed more than 1,000 directorate staff members—including members of the contract staff—focusing on the quality of leadership and supervision; overall strengths and weaknesses of the directorate; morale; and possible waste, fraud, and abuse. The inspection team invited deputy chiefs of mission at nearly 180 embassies, as well as ministers-counselor for consular affairs, consular section chiefs, and visa unit chiefs at more than 220 Foreign Service posts to respond to surveys on CA/VO's support. The inspection team interviewed more than 400 staff members, mostly direct-hire Department employees, but also about 20 percent of the contract staff. The team observed internal senior level, working level, and interagency meetings. It examined documents relating to visa policies and programs and assessed instructions and guidance to posts. Members of the inspection team visited CA/VO's two domestic processing facilities and observed visa processing staff members at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations (USUN). The team did not review overseas visa operations.

Before beginning the inspection, the team interviewed staff members whose work relates to CA/VO in Department bureaus, in 18 other U.S. Government agencies, and in congressional offices. The team also interviewed leaders of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors. Inspectors reviewed contracts, including contracting officer's representative (COR) files, invoices, and contractor reports, to draw conclusions about quality assurance, management, and oversight of contracts that govern the performance of more than 800 staff members. The findings in this report are based on those interviews, documents, surveys, and observations and reflect the conclusions of an inspection team with almost 350 years of combined executive, consular, and management experience in the Department, including more than 50 years inspecting the Department overseas and in Washington.

OIG last inspected CA/VO in 2003. Since then, OIG has conducted two audits and eight inspections covering consular operations and programs related to CA/VO. The inspection team reviewed those audit and inspection reports, along with related U.S. Government Accountability Office reports, CA's Functional Bureau Strategy, and other CA planning documents when establishing the scope and work plan for the inspection.

Leadership and Management

The OIG team's extensive surveys and interviews of CA/VO staff and stakeholders in and outside the Department show that the deputy assistant secretary and the managing director lead a directorate that accomplishes its complex, challenging, and critical mission.

Within the Department, nearly 160 overseas consular officials and 95 deputy chiefs of mission rated as very good their overall experience with the policy and procedural guidance and support CA/VO provided over the past year. Outside the Department, officials in other agencies—even those in agencies and offices that may prioritize differently protecting security and facilitating travel—told the OIG team they highly respect CA/VO. Nongovernment stakeholders and congressional staff members who handle constituent services described their interaction with CA/VO as very collaborative, responsive, and productive. The American Immigration Lawyers Association attributed to the directorate's executive leaders a relationship with CA/VO that is better than in the past.

CA/VO leaders play an active role in preparing CA's Functional Bureau Strategy. Employees at all levels indicated that they are aware that their jobs are important in maintaining U.S. border security and facilitating travel to the United States.

Addressing Cross-Cutting Issues

CA/VO faces chronic challenges such as mounting visa demand, continuing threats to U.S. security, and maintaining high levels of customer service. It also faces acute challenges, some of which it does not or cannot stay ahead of before pressure from outside stakeholders mushrooms. In response to wait times that stretched to more than 6 months for visa interviews at some posts, the President issued an executive order in January 2012 that required dramatically reducing wait times for nonimmigrant visa appointments. CA rapidly implemented a strategy that included increasing visa capacity in China and Brazil by 40 percent and ensured that at least 80 percent of visitor visa applicants worldwide receive an interview within 3 weeks of requesting one. During the inspection, CA/VO was involved in a proposal to extend the validity of tourist and business visas to Chinese nationals to ease further workload pressure.

In June 2013, the processing of special immigrant visas to Iraqi and Afghan nationals under serious threat because of their service to the U.S. Government was proceeding at a crawl. Many reports in the media harshly criticized the Department. Although it alone was not responsible for the program's delays, CA/VO assigned a Foreign Service officer to coordinate efforts that within months dramatically improved processing, reduced pending applications, and increased visa issuances. As of May 30, 2014, more Afghan special immigrant visas have been issued in FY 2014 than in all previous years of the program combined. Over 5,500 Afghans, mainly interpreters and their family members, have received special immigrant visas since October 1, 2013.

These examples epitomize CA/VO's work at its best. CA/VO employed ingenuity and innovation to meet booming Chinese demand for visas within the constraints of current law, which requires an interview for most applicants. However, CA's outgoing Assistant Secretary

acknowledged to the OIG team that it will be impossible to add enough staff or build enough facilities to "interview our way out" of the forecast growth in Chinese demand for visas. Nonetheless, CA/VO has not established an interdisciplinary team or approach to confront systematically a challenge that officials described as inevitable.

Although interviews with directorate leaders provided evidence that they think broadly and deeply about the future of immigration trends and policy, they are generally focused on near-term policy and daily crises. As a result, when a particular situation becomes a crisis, the CA/VO front office often establishes a senior advisor to capitalize on and integrate the experience and capabilities of all directorate, CA, and Department staff. The CA/VO front office currently has four senior advisors, one senior coordinator, and one special projects coordinator who work on such issues as special immigrant visas, coordination with other agencies involved with security-related visa screening, and multilateral visa issues. By residing in the front office, those senior advisors are not integrated effectively into the work of the line offices where their portfolios would normally reside.

Leadership and management principles in 3 *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM) 1214 call on managers to develop attainable long-term goals with stakeholders and promote a culture of creativity and exploration that constantly fosters fresh perspectives and new ideas. CA in its 2014 leadership tenets calls for collaboratively planning for the future in an innovative team approach that envisions future tasks, anticipates change, establishes clear goals, adapts to new challenges, and adopts new technologies and procedures.

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should implement in the Visa Services Directorate a policy planning process to identify and develop alternative policy and program approaches to emerging issues. (Action: CA)

Morale

CA/VO staff responses to OIG surveys reflect a wide range in how individuals judge personal and office morale. CA/VO staff members rate the deputy assistant secretary and managing director considerably more favorably than employees elsewhere in the Department view their front office leaders. However, scores for the directorate as a whole show morale to be substantially lower than average for domestic bureaus.

Interviews and responses to OIG surveys showed that, in general, CA/VO employees are satisfied with the substance of their work. They find it interesting and meaningful. Nonetheless, employees report that ineffective leadership; unclear chains of command; fears about impending change; and disparities in pay, privileges, and performance management among Foreign Service, Civil Service, and contract employees result in lower-than-average morale in the directorate overall. The OIG team counseled the director of one office, whom staff in survey responses and interviews conspicuously rated lower than average. The director began taking steps during the inspection to address weaknesses the OIG team identified.

Adapting Structure

CA/VO has not looked closely at its structure in more than a decade to take into account changes in staffing, technology, and missions. CA/VO leaders have adopted incremental changes, including recently reorganizing the Office of Public and Diplomatic Liaison and laying the groundwork to establish an Office of Domestic Operations to oversee the National Visa Center and the Kentucky Consular Center. Lagging structural change contributes to inefficiency, a mismatch of resources to operational needs, and low morale among staff. The OIG team found structural weaknesses in the offices described below.

Coordination Division

Structure and staffing in the Coordination Division has not kept pace with growth in its workload and staff, the expanded roles of other agencies in security advisory opinions and revoking visas, and the application of legal standards to intelligence input.

The Coordination Division chief is a mid-level Foreign Service officer, who resolves interagency differences, represents CA/VO to congressional offices, and oversees 45 staff members. The position description dates from when the division had 12 staff members. Although the chief brings an important overseas perspective to the division's work, the change in leadership every 2 years detracts from continuity and consistency, particularly in managing processes and performance. In its 2003 report on CA/VO,[1] OIG informally recommended converting the position to Civil Service. Many division staff told the OIG team that a Civil Service chief and a Foreign Service deputy would better suit the division.

Employees refer to a GS-14 senior visa specialist as the division deputy, although 1 FAM 014.7 does not authorize deputy positions in divisions. The position does not have authority to evaluate or discipline staff nor to officially act on behalf of the chief. CA/VO created an attorney advisor position in 2012 to assume most of the senior visa specialist's responsibilities for ensuring the quality of the division's written analysis of visa eligibility. In 2013, division management selected three team leaders to advise groups of analysts and gave them responsibility for editing products before the attorney advisor reviews them. The layers often result in weeks-long backlogs in security advisory opinion review.

Over the years, as the division's work increased or changed focus, managers adjusted staffing and composition in an ad hoc manner. The division added contractors, many of whom have stronger technical and analytical skills than staff members who were hired when the division's work was more clerical. The number of contractors now equals the number of noncontract staff members. Contractors manage several sensitive interagency liaison portfolios that may include inherently governmental work. A recent surge in visa revocations[2] and sanctions- and human rights-based ineligibilities calls for a formal team approach. Some responsibilities added to the Coordination Division since 2001, such as analysis of Interpol data

[1] *The Directorate of Visa Services, Bureau of Consular Affairs*, ISP Report No. ISP-CA-03-46, August 2003.
[2] In FY 2009, the Coordination Division processed 893 revocations. It is on track to process more than 15,000 revocation requests in FY 2014.

and implementing sanctions, belong in other divisions if the Coordination Division's focus is to remain on ineligibilities under section 212(a)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Advisory Opinions Division

The Advisory Opinions Division lacks the supervisory structure needed to manage its growing workload preparing litigation reports and providing advisory opinions to Foreign Service posts on visa classification and non-security-related ineligibilities. Litigation on visa matters increased 187 percent from 2010 to 2013. A GS-15 supervisory visa specialist attorney manages a staff of 11 attorneys and visa specialists. A GS-14 lead visa specialist, also an attorney, manages day-to-day work but does not supervise the other staff.

LegalNet

LegalNet is an electronic mailbox in CA/VO that is not integrated fully into the Advisory Opinions Division. CA/VO originally established LegalNet to provide opinions on legal matters relating to visas to private attorneys and recently decided to expand it to address legal questions from applicants. A CA/VO attorney responds to inquiries after a visa specialist screens them to make sure they actually require a legal opinion. At the time of the inspection, CA/VO was in the process of bringing together two visa specialists from the Public Inquiries Division and an attorney assigned to LegalNet. Consolidating the staff in the Advisory Opinions Division will improve effectiveness and mitigate the risk of inconsistent legal opinions.

Waiver Review Division

The Waiver Review Division has 11 employees who review requests to waive section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. That section of the law requires certain exchange visitors to return to their home country for at least 2 years at the end of their program. This review is an inherently governmental function. Eight of 11 staff members in the division are Civil Service and can recommend to the Department of Homeland Security whether to grant a waiver. The three others are contract employees who review cases but must pass their recommendation to a Civil Service officer to confirm. The additional step duplicates effort and wastes resources.

Post Operations Division

The Post Operations Division does not adequately train and oversee the division's 20 staff members. A branch chief supervises all 20 and reports to a division chief, who in turn reports to the office director. The branch chief, division chief, and office director frequently travel overseas to review consular management and develop consular leadership. As a result, post liaison officers lack consistent guidance and feedback on the quality of their support to consular sections. Liaison officers are confused because of their supervisors' unclear roles and responsibilities. The officers report they often inefficiently copy and clear their work with all three to be sure that they have not overlooked someone. CA/VO acknowledges these shortcomings and is in the process of dividing the office into two branches—each under its own branch chief—and clarifying supervisors' responsibilities.

Foreign Service, Civil Service, and contract employees all perform identical liaison functions in the Post Operations Division. CA/VO added contractors when budget and staffing ceilings did not permit adding Civil Service or Foreign Service staff, but some duties are inherently governmental. The liaison officers provide operational and procedural guidance to overseas consular sections, offer subject-matter and overseas operational expertise to Washington policymakers, and liaise with other U.S. Government agencies. The division's Foreign Service officers generally have several years of overseas experience, and Civil Service officers gain overseas experience on temporary tours. CA does not send contractors on temporary duty assignments because they cannot perform the inherently governmental function of visa adjudication that those assignments normally require. The contract employees are also aware that their compensation is significantly lower than that of their colleagues who perform identical duties, negatively affecting their morale and productivity.

Diplomatic Liaison Division

The Diplomatic Liaison Division issues and revalidates visas for diplomatic missions and international organizations, including applications submitted to USUN for staff at the United Nations (UN) and foreign missions to the UN. The division is comparable to a medium-sized overseas consular office, with a consular supervisor, four visa adjudicators, and two contractors. As a processing operation, it fits better with the National Visa Center and Kentucky Consular Center operations. The CA/VO deputy assistant secretary approved moving it to the newly established Office of Domestic Operations. The OIG team supports CA/VO's proposal to hire a Civil Service division chief at a rank that will ensure sufficient experience, consular knowledge, and supervisory skills to oversee, guide, and lead both the Washington-based Diplomatic Liaison Division and the visa operation at USUN.

Reorganization

The above examples illustrate that over many years CA/VO has modified its structure in only a makeshift way despite many changes in its work, including a large increase in its staff and an almost complete change in the scale, content, and complexity of its interaction with other agencies. Fundamentally reviewing the directorate's structure will allow it to align resources with operational needs, maximize efficiency, and improve staff morale.

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should reorganize the Visa Services Directorate to align responsibilities with mission requirements, create an appropriate mix of staff and skills, and assign supervisors a manageable number of employees. (Action: CA, in coordination with DGHR)

Position Descriptions

The OIG team examined 90 of CA/VO's position descriptions, most of which do not accurately reflect the duties employees perform. Guidance in 3 FAM 2638.2 requires regular updates to position descriptions in order to match job requirements to the skills of the incumbent and delineate specific responsibilities, including leadership, supervision, and unusual or difficult work conditions. Many position descriptions in CA/VO are out of date. For example, one was

drafted in 1980, lists an incorrect office location, and fails to describe the job the incumbent performs.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should update all the position descriptions in the Visa Services Directorate to reflect current responsibilities. (Action: CA)

Internal Communication

In interviews and survey responses, many CA/VO staff members said they lacked the opportunity to learn about CA/VO and wider CA priorities and activities. Some employees regretted not having access to CA daily activity reports, records of decisions, and senior officials' schedules. CA holds a weekly staff meeting open to all employees, and CA/VO's weekly meeting follows it. The OIG team suggested managers encourage wider participation in those meetings and use them to communicate CA front office decisions and activities. Most divisions hold weekly meetings, and the OIG team counseled managers to hold periodic office-level meetings to help reinforce two-way communication.

Directors of the National Visa Center and Kentucky Consular Center attend CA/VO meetings by telephone; however, direct communication between the directors is irregular. In transitioning to a new contract for both centers, the OIG team suggested CA/VO establish regular communication between CORs at the centers. Periodic meetings of all contract managers (CORs, assistant CORs, and government technical monitors) of both major contracts would also facilitate CA/VO contract oversight.

The role of the two centers in the visa process is critical and analogous to that of large constituent posts in missions abroad. The directors of the two visa centers are required to serve as principal advisors to the Assistant Secretary, deputy assistant secretary, and managing director and to consult regularly with offices in the Department. The managing director and the director of a new Office of Domestic Operations, who supervises both centers, occasionally visit. Both center directors also travel to Washington quarterly. Nevertheless, both directors describe a degree of isolation from headquarters. The OIG team encouraged CA/VO managers to monitor the frequency of visits and to be alert to signs of inadequate communication.

Telework

Some employees told the inspectors they would like to telework regularly and others claimed that managers arbitrarily denied telework requests. An OIG team analysis of CA/VO telework decision documents showed that managers made decisions about telework requests in a manner consistent with Office of Personnel Management, Department, and CA policy.

Border Security

Coordinating with Other Agencies and Offices

CA/VO effectively shares information and coordinates visa security decisionmaking with intelligence and law enforcement agencies, as well as with several Department entities. CA/VO established a senior coordinator for interagency security issues in 2009, and the Department assigns liaison officers to the National Counterterrorism Center, the National Targeting Center, the Terrorist Screening Center, and Interpol. The deputy assistant secretary, managing director, and attorney advisors become involved when issues require senior attention. Interviews with liaison officers and other-agency representatives confirmed uniformly positive working relationships.

Managing an interagency relationship, especially one in which agencies have different missions, requires significant attention. CA/VO's mandate to facilitate travel and maintain border security is broader than that of some Department of Homeland Security entities such as the National Targeting Center, whose focus is security. The amount of time the Coordination Division spends interacting with other agencies on proposals to revoke visas, watch list, and deny boarding has increased because of their enhanced role in reviewing visa applications.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) does not provide timely or thorough information on human rights allegations against prospective travelers, many of whom are high-profile political figures. Several Department bureaus, including DRL, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, act as subject matter experts related to visa eligibility. The Coordination Division relies on their input to review security advisory opinions on travelers whom Presidential Proclamations, corruption, technology transfer, sanctions, or human rights issues may make ineligible. DRL office-level management knows it is obliged to support the security advisory opinion process but has not assigned sufficient resources to do so.

The Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation has an excellent partnership with the team that processes cases related to potentially transferring technology. In contrast, DRL has a backlog of more than 80 human rights cases dating back to early 2012. The subject matter expert who gathers and analyzes information has several competing portfolios and provided information on only two visa cases in the first 4 months of 2014; that information was insufficient to determine visa eligibility. CA/VO's senior managers have not advocated in a sustained way with DRL and the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights to clear the backlog and ensure timely input in the future, nor have they escalated the matter to the Under Secretary for Management, who has authority over CA.

Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, should develop and adhere to service standards for providing and analyzing information on human rights ineligibility cases, train subject matter experts, and report any impediments to fulfilling its obligations to the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights and the Under Secretary for Management. (Action: CA, in coordination with DRL)

Interpreting Laws and Regulations

The Advisory Opinions Division does not have a systematic way to record responses to posts' requests for advice about visa classification and eligibility in non-security-related cases. It receives some requests for advice through the Consular Consolidated Database (CCD), but its attorneys receive most requests by individual email from posts in the region assigned to them. Each attorney maintains an individual mailbox. The division does not have a system to index its responses to private attorneys and other parties to requests for opinions on legal matters. Consistently interpreting laws and regulations, providing greater accountability for the quality of advisory opinions, and training new attorneys requires reliable and searchable files.

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should establish a system to create, maintain, and consult records of the opinions it renders in its Visa Services Directorate, Advisory Opinions Division. (Action: CA)

The FAM volume devoted to visa regulations, 9 FAM, is difficult for consular officers to use and search. Access to comprehensive FAM guidance is essential for consular officers to adjudicate visas correctly and consistently. CA/VO is completely reorganizing 9 FAM, the first project of its kind and scope since the Department converted the FAM to electronic format in the mid-1990s. A critical feature is harmonizing the existing 9 FAM and the new version, essential for working with older documents that reference the current volume.

The new version uses different software with a powerful search engine unique to 9 FAM. The Bureau of Information Resources Management, CA/VO, and the Office of Directives in the Bureau of Administration are cooperating to test and deploy the new FAM in late 2014. If successful, the search engine could be a model for other FAM volumes. At the time of the inspection, CA/VO and the Office of Directives were formalizing an agreement to maintain and fund the search engine platform.

Travel Facilitation

Responding to Public Inquiries

CA/VO does not respond adequately to public inquiries about the status of visa cases. In early 2014, CA/VO transferred responsibility for answering almost all public inquiries about immigrant visas from its Public Inquiries Division to the National Visa Center. It plans to transfer nonimmigrant visa inquiries to the center by the end of FY 2014. The Public Inquiries Division will continue to respond to congressional and White House inquiries, as well as those requiring analysis of classified information. The division will train and provide expert advice to the National Visa Center and help write scripts for replying to questions. CA/VO expects to reduce Washington-based staff for public inquiries and save approximately $1 million a year.

CA/VO claims that, once connected, a caller waits an average of 20 or more minutes to talk to an immigrant visa customer service representative and less than 7 minutes to talk to a nonimmigrant visa representative. The OIG team tested both lines and could not get past a busy signal on the immigrant visa line. The nonimmigrant visa line was difficult to navigate and circuitous; once past it, the OIG team waited between 9 and 25 minutes before abandoning the effort, far longer than the reported 7-minute average. The OIG team got no replies to messages it sent to the National Visa Center visa inquiry email address. At the time of the inspection, the center had more than 50,000 emails in a queue and estimated a 20-day wait for a response. The contract for providing information to callers was in transition during the inspection. The current contract specifies that customer service representatives will respond to public inquiries within 7 business days with 95-percent accuracy; the expired contract set slightly higher performance standards.

The changeover to a new contractor, a slow hiring process, inadequate technology, and an uneven workload flow have contributed to the difficulty keeping up with the workload at the National Visa Center. A surge from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services of nearly 250,000 approved immigrant visa petitions prompted many calls and emails. During the inspection, CA/VO took interim steps to mitigate the poor service, including adding more phone lines and hiring more contract staff.

Failing to respond promptly to public inquiries regarding visas reflects poorly on CA and the Department. Immigrant visa processing, for example, affects millions of applicants, U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and businesses. National Visa Center employees have little knowledge of nonimmigrant visas. Until an expanded and improved telephone system and additional staff are in place, the National Visa Center will not be ready to respond to nonimmigrant visa inquiries at the end of FY 2014. A subject matter expert on site would help smoothly transition public inquires about nonimmigrant visas from CA/VO to the National Visa Center.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should revise its plan to transfer nonimmigrant visa public inquiries from the Visa Services Directorate in Washington to the National Visa Center and assign a resident subject matter expert to the National Visa Center as a resource for the telephone and written inquiries units. (Action: CA)

The Web and Customer Service Unit, also located in the Public Inquiries Division, maintains visa-related content on both CA's public Internet and intranet sites. The unit recently successfully redesigned its public Web site. CA plans to incorporate lessons from that process to change the content management software it uses for its intranet site.

Visa Operations at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations

CA/VO and USUN do not have a formal agreement governing visa processing at USUN. As the host country mission, USUN is the Department's liaison with 30,000 members of the UN diplomatic community who require visa services. From 1996 to 2007, USUN adjudicated and issued visas in New York. By 2007, CA concluded that visa processing in New York required more oversight, and electronic communications and consular systems allowed CA/VO to adjudicate visas remotely from Washington. USUN continues to receive applications and place approved visas in passports.

Issues of oversight and independence aggravate the relationship between CA and USUN. Negotiations between CA and the Bureau of International Organization Affairs to regularize the relationship foundered over funding and operational control. The OIG team's direct observations and interviews with staff at USUN and CA/VO show that visa adjudication works well. The OIG team found no operational reason for USUN to adjudicate visas.

CA/VO and USUN officials told the OIG team they would like to conclude a memorandum of understanding that sets aside operational control and funding issues but ensures that CA/VO visits USUN, trains staff, provides guidance, helps during busy seasons, supports consular systems, and advises regarding management controls. USUN would make staff available for training, send them periodically to consult with CA/VO, and adhere to operational guidelines governing visas.

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, should complete a memorandum of understanding governing visa operations at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. (Action: CA, in coordination with USUN)

USUN does not have a published, current visa referral policy. Although USUN does not adjudicate visas, its visa processing office receives calls from mission staff asking for information about or assistance in visa cases. Members of missions accredited to the UN and UN staff often express interest about visa cases and policy to USUN. The Department requires all visa advocacy to be handled through a formal referral system in accordance with 9 FAM Appendix K.

Recommendation 8: The U.S. Mission to the United Nations, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should adopt and publish a visa referral policy. (Action: USUN, in coordination with CA)

Clearing Policies and Procedures for Waiver Reviews

CA/VO did not consult all Department stakeholders when it created standard operating procedures and revised policies in its Waiver Review Division governing waivers under section

212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. CA/VO's Waiver Review Division reviews applications for foreign policy considerations and the potential impact on the exchange visitor's program if the applicant does not return, and provides a recommendation to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which has authority to issue a waiver. CA/VO consulted with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs before establishing its policies and procedures but not with the Department's geographic bureaus and DRL, which are also stakeholders.

Recommendation 9: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should clear with all bureau stakeholders new standard operating procedures for evaluating exchange visitor foreign residence requirement waivers. (Action: CA)

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has the authority to determine hardship in 212(e) waiver cases, but it often lacks information about conditions in foreign countries that may be available to offices in the Department and at posts. The OIG team encouraged CA/VO to urge U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to consult with the Department about conditions in foreign countries that can inform their determinations.

The Waiver Review Division's system is paper based, but the division does not have enough network printers to work efficiently. In its 2003 inspection of CA/VO, OIG informally recommended shifting to a Web-based application process to eliminate most paperwork. CA/VO requested the process change, but the Office of Consular Systems and Technology did not accomplish it. When CA moved to a new location in 2013, it followed a U.S. Government-wide mandate to reduce printing and printers but did not provide for the unique requirements of the Waiver Review Division. At the OIG team's urging, CA took steps during the inspection to procure more printers for the division.

Contract Oversight

According to OIG interviews and analysis of records and invoices, CA/VO generally manages its contracts in accordance with FAM and Federal acquisitions regulations. Nonetheless, the team identified several areas for improvement.

Contractors make up 80 percent of CA/VO's workforce. CA/VO has two manpower contracts, one with Quality Support, Inc. and another with FCi Federal. The Quality Support, Inc. contract provides staff for CA/VO's Washington operations, and the FCi Federal contract provides staff for the National Visa Center and the Kentucky Consular Center. At the time of the inspection, the FCi Federal contract was transitioning with the outgoing contractor, SERCO, which was still on site.

Quality Support, Inc. Contract – Staff for Headquarters

The OIG team supports CA/VO plans to establish a Civil Service position that oversees the Quality Support, Inc. contract. CA entered into the contract in 2006. Now at its fiscal ceiling, it is a firm-fixed-price contract valued at $50 million. At the time of the inspection, it was in its final 6-month extension and will require a bridge contract until a new contract is awarded.

A Foreign Service officer with other responsibilities in CA/VO serves as COR, has developed a quality assurance regime, and maintains organized and comprehensive contract files. In accordance with 14 FAM 222 c. (2), government technical monitors assist the COR to monitor and evaluate the day-to-day work and performance of contractors embedded in CA/VO offices; however, many government technical monitors do not fully understand their responsibilities. Not holding government technical monitors accountable for their role in contract oversight risks inefficiency and wasting U.S. Government funds.

Recommendation 10: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should include contract monitoring responsibilities in the work requirements of government technical monitors, as well as in all new employee orientation materials, and publish the orientation materials on its intranet site. (Action: CA)

FCi Federal Contract – Staff for Kentucky Consular Center and National Visa Center

CA entered into a contract with FCi Federal in mid-2014 to provide labor and materials for its visa processing centers. The 5-year, $250 million contract combines firm-fixed-price and time and material provisions.

At the Kentucky Consular Center, the Civil Service deputy director serves as COR. The OIG team reviewed contractor files for the past 6 months and found them organized, detailed, and complete. The COR's designation letters from the Office of the Procurement Executive are on file for the outgoing and new contractors. Certified at Level II, she took required training and was recertified every 2 years. A Civil Service employee with other duties serves as assistant COR and is correctly designated.

The National Visa Center's director serves as COR, but CA/VO plans to transition COR duties to the deputy director in late 2014. A Civil Service employee serves as assistant COR, an appropriate and necessary role, because with more than 500 contract staff members, the National Visa Center is nearly twice the size of the Kentucky Consular Center. The OIG team endorses CA/VO plans to add another Civil Service assistant COR to increase contract oversight. Two Civil Service employees serve as government technical monitors at the National Visa Center. Contract files meet regulatory requirements, including documentation of COR certification. The COR monitors production reports for anomalies and trends. The assistant COR reconciles invoices to the contract and performs a random daily quality review. No one checks production reports against the invoice or spot checks such items as time sheets against employee hours. The OIG team counseled the COR and assistant COR to include such checks in the quality assurance plan for the new contract, in effect since June 2014.

The National Visa Center is located in two buildings separated by a parking lot. The director, deputy director, and contract operations managers have offices in the main building. Several OIG questionnaire respondents from the second building commented that they would prefer more U.S. Government presence. The OIG team suggested that CA/VO locate the deputy director in the second building to enhance COR contract oversight and employee morale.

Visa Systems Policy and Management

CA/VO and all visa issuing posts rely on sound and reliable consular systems to support U.S. visa application, clearance, adjudication, and production processes. The Office of Consular Systems and Technology develops, manages, and maintains systems for all CA directorates. In CA/VO, the Office of Information Management and Liaison coordinates all visa systems requirements for the directorate and participates in formulating CA-wide systems policies.

Systems Policy

The unique systems requirements of the Kentucky Consular Center and the National Visa Center are not integrated into processes established by the Office of Consular Systems and Technology. In 2013, the Office of Consular Systems and Technology instituted formal processes, including a collaborative tool to prioritize system changes and improvements, as well as business user liaison meetings and industry-standard stage gate review meetings,[3] to decide systems issues. The centers are not represented because CA/VO's Office of Information Management and Liaison, which represents CA/VO in these meetings, does not incorporate the centers' needs into its work. The documents establishing the formal processes assume that the CA/VO representatives represent all of CA/VO's systems needs. Additionally, CA has begun to design a consolidated information system for all consular applications, which will eventually replace current systems. By not incorporating the two centers into the formal processes, the design of the comprehensive system risks leaving out the business needs of the centers, which are critical to the performance of many visa functions.

Recommendation 11: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should designate one or more employees to represent the needs of the Kentucky Consular Center and National Visa Center to all bureauwide systems liaison, systems review, and new systems planning meetings. (Action: CA)

Consular Consolidated Database Outages

CA/VO staff members reported to the OIG team that unplanned outages of the CCD hamper their work. The CCD is the database containing all U.S. visa issuance and denial information, is central to all consular operations, and is an important element of U.S. national security. When consular posts cannot access the database, they must stop processing immigrant and nonimmigrant visas, and CA/VO cannot respond to advisory opinion requests and public and congressional inquiries. Production of U.S. passports also depends on the CCD. Other U.S. Government agencies and some foreign governments rely on parts of the database under formal agreements; when the database is unavailable, their operations are also affected.

CA does not have a comprehensive monitoring system that automatically alerts managers to systems anomalies that may cause unscheduled outages. A May 2011 OIG report of the Office

[3] OIG recommended establishing industry-standard collaboration tools in its 2011 report, *The Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Consular Systems and Technology*, ISP Report No. ISP-I-11-51, May 2011.

of Consular Systems and Technology[4] recommended ways to address the performance and reliability of the CCD. CA adopted a performance improvement plan and expects to meet its short-term goal of upgrading its platform to resolve most performance and reliability problems and to implement a performance monitoring system by November 2014. CA has not set a target date to meet its medium-term goal to create a redundant database and modernize CCD's replication capabilities. The medium-term performance improvements are critical to improving reliable access to the CCD.

CA does not have an outage schedule to accommodate required changes or additions to the CCD that cannot be accomplished during regular maintenance. For example, during the inspection, loading the electronic application for the Diversity Visa Program by a date publicly announced required an outage. Consular users work in all time zones, and very few hours in the week are available to shut down the system without affecting production. CA delayed the outage because of previously scheduled overtime work at domestic passport agencies and then undertook it with no time to spare in case a problem developed. The Office of Consular Systems and Technology plans to make a series of improvements and changes to existing consular systems, some of which will require a CCD outage. It is imperative that such outages be coordinated and announced well in advance so that essential work is not scheduled during these periods.

Recommendation 12: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should establish scheduled systems outage periods for maintenance of consular systems and post the schedule on the Office of Consular Systems and Technology Web site. (Action: CA)

Servers

Some of the Kentucky Consular Center's key servers do not work well. The local file server, print server, independent name check system servers, and an associated parser were installed between 2006 and 2008 and have not been replaced within CA's 4-year life cycle for consular servers. The information management team at the Kentucky Consular Center struggles to maintain these older servers, and server problems negatively affect the Center's work. The Office of Consular Systems and Technology has a plan to upgrade servers to accommodate a new operating platform for the CCD.

Recommendation 13: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should replace the local file servers, print server, independent name check system servers, and associated parser at the Kentucky Consular Center. (Action: CA)

Visa Systems Change Requests

As of January 2014, CA had a backlog of approximately 4,000 requests to make changes to consular systems, 800 of which relate to visas. The 2011 OIG report of CA's Office of

[4] *The Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Consular Systems and Technology*, ISP Report No. ISP-I-11-51, May 2011.

Consular Systems and Technology noted that 5,500 requests for changes were pending and recommended that CA improve the way it manages configuration changes. Since then, CA has developed a voting and collaboration tool to prioritize requests to change consular systems configurations. Staff members in the Office of Information Management and Liaison cast CA/VO's vote after consulting with CA/VO offices. That system improves transparency of the process, better prioritizes requests, and keeps a detailed record of deliberations. Nonetheless, the backlog of change requests means users still must overcome difficulties and inefficiencies to do their work.

The Coordination Division provides an example of the effects of the backlog of configuration change requests. In the past 5 years, more than 95 Coordination Division requests to CA's Office of Systems and Technology for time-saving systems improvements have gone unanswered. Analysts waste dozens of hours each week manually entering responses from other agencies into the Visa Opinion Information System. The Coordination Division has one approved change on the Office of Consular Systems and Technology's May 2014 74-project priority list for CA/VO. The change was requested 5 years ago and will address a problem affecting three agencies. Another example is the Waiver Review Division, which must maintain bulky paper files because of deficiencies in the automated system. CA/VO requests to improve that system are stuck in the backlog.

CA/VO's groundbreaking work on an interagency data sharing platform called Kingfisher Expansion streamlined the visa process for many applicants. However, the amount of information from multiple sources that Coordination Division analysts have to review before they can advise consular officers on visa eligibility has grown dramatically. Failure to maintain and update the Visa Opinion Information System delays travelers, increases litigation risk, and affects the integrity of the information-sharing process that was designed to keep terrorists from getting visas.

Since it was last inspected in 2011, CA's Office of Consular Systems and Technology has undergone a major reorganization and established many new procedures. In addition to the voting and collaboration tool, the establishment of business user liaison meetings and the stage gate process ensure that interested CA offices are involved in changing applications and developing new ones. The Office of Consular Systems and Technology may not be adequately staffed and funded to make modifications to existing consular systems, while simultaneously developing successor systems. The OIG team brought to the attention of CA leaders that CA/VO cannot effectively manage its current workload without those modifications.

Storing Classified Information

CA/VO has insufficient classified storage for security ineligibility electronic files. The Records Disposition Schedule requires that those files be kept until a visa applicant reaches 100 years of age. The Coordination Division prepares most security advisory opinion correspondence on a classified SharePoint site. SharePoint is useful to move memoranda and supporting documents among clearing officers and to track changes to drafts. However, the Coordination Division's SharePoint site was never intended to store files permanently and is rapidly reaching capacity.

At the same time, the Office of Information Management and Liaison is scanning and storing the Coordination Division's approximately 35,000 classified paper files, which predate the SharePoint site. That project also requires classified storage. Failing to provide adequate secure electronic file storage in the near term will affect both the efficiency and accuracy of the security advisory opinion process.

Recommendation 14: The Bureau of Information Resource Management, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should provide classified storage space or hardware to store the Coordination Division's classified electronic visa files. (Action: IRM, in coordination with CA)

Configuration Management

CA/VO did not submit some locally developed system applications to CA's configuration control board. The outgoing contractor at the National Visa Center developed these minor applications to facilitate immigrant visa file processing. The Kentucky Consular Center also uses some of these applications. CA/VO has no documentation that any Information Technology Configuration Control Board approved 46 such applications.

The National Visa Center estimates that 80 percent of these applications support the Immigration Visa Information System. The Office of Consular Systems and Technology is developing a replacement for that system—one that will incorporate functions in the locally developed applications. CA/VO also added a clause to the statement of work in the FCi Federal contract that requires that the Department approve through the Information Technology Configuration Control Board process all software the contractor develops. The Office of Consular Systems and Technology established a systems development life cycle process to approve all software. However, CA/VO has not established an oversight process to ensure the contractor complies with this provision in accordance with 5 FAM 861 and 862.

Recommendation 15: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should establish and implement a process to approve all software through its systems development life cycle process and the Department's Information Technology Configuration Control Board process. (Action: CA)

Operational and Management Efficiencies

During the inspection, the OIG team alerted CA/VO to additional areas in which it could improve efficiency, accountability, and management. It discussed ways to address them, including employing "1CA," a common approach to management the bureau tailored for consular officers, which includes concepts, tools, and practical guides to help analyze challenges, improve processes, and plan new projects. In many cases managers began to address the issues while the inspection was underway.

- CA/VO managers have not routinely engaged the staff across the board to identify and solve workload imbalances, communication shortfalls, and underperformance. The 1CA process mapping and brainstorming tools could quickly and effectively enlist the staff in problem solving.

- Consular managers overseas are required to review the quality and quantity of visa adjudications regularly, balance workload, and monitor service provided to the public. Divisions in the Office of Legal Affairs do not adhere to similar service or adjudication review standards. As a result, unacceptable backlogs developed in certain processes and portfolios. Although a lack of reports and monitoring software constrains supervisors' ability to oversee the division's work, they are not using existing tools to identify, analyze, and rectify backlogs.

    - As of May 19, 2014, the Coordination Division had 171 pending denial memoranda related to visa applicants suspected of terrorist activities under 212(a)(3)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Many remained unresolved for 6 to 12 months. These memoranda were awaiting editorial review, additional information, or corrections and represented approximately 20 percent of the division's annual workload. Division managers were unaware that they could use the same SharePoint system where they prepare and clear denial memoranda to identify bottlenecks, redirect resources, and enforce timeliness standards.

    - The Advisory Opinions Division does not have methods to measure workload or the timeliness or accuracy of advisory opinions it provides to posts. As a result, the division does not have any means of accurately gauging workload or judging whether the division is appropriately staffed.

    - The security advisory opinion workload for the sole analyst handling Iranian cases in the Coordination Division is crippling. The analyst has trouble keeping up with clearly approvable cases and has a backlog of more than 1,300 more complicated cases, dating back as far as 2 years. At the same time, managers have not trained or coached other analysts whose portfolios rarely include complex cases to help with the Iran portfolio. Increases in visa workload in China and Pakistan are likely to generate similar security advisory opinion backlogs if managers do not standardize performance, streamline work, and reallocate resources for surges.

- Managers in the Field Operations Division do not set uniform performance standards or provide guidance for interacting with overseas consular sections. Some consular officers are familiar with their liaison officers, although others do not know who their liaison officers are. Managers should determine standards for how often liaison officers should contact overseas counterparts.

- Post Operations Division liaison officers, regional consular officers, and consular officers interact in inconsistent and varying ways. The result is some duplication of effort and confusion about when consular officers should turn to their regional consular officers for assistance and guidance and when to turn to their liaison officer. Division managers should clarify with CA's Regional Consular Officer Coordinator the roles of regional consular officers and CA/VO's post liaison officers.

- At the time of the inspection, Post Operations Division policy required all Civil Service employees to take full consular training at the Foreign Service Institute and encouraged them to volunteer for temporary duty or excursion tours overseas. Overseas consular experience is critical to fully and successfully support visa operations. When hiring new liaison officers for the division, CA should require availability for overseas temporary duty and excursion tours.

- CA/VO's Office of Information Management and Liaison coordinates the access of other U.S. Government agencies to the CCD without any means of determining whether that access stresses the database. As of April 2014, the database had twice as many interagency users (21,791) as Department users (10,890). The performance monitoring system expected later this year could help CA/VO's Office of Information Management and Liaison determine whether other agency use stresses the database and prioritize other agency users' access, if necessary.

- CA/VO is not making optimal use of the Kentucky Consular Center's capabilities. For example, the Office of Information Management and Liaison plans to digitize archived nonimmigrant visa applications. The Kentucky Consular Center has extensive experience digitizing files, including thousands of nonimmigrant visa applications, but CA/VO had not considered assigning this work there until the OIG team suggested it.

- Many consular officers do not understand the work of the Kentucky Consular Center. The CA intranet site highlights the work of the National Visa Center with a link on the CA/VO home page but not that of the Kentucky Consular Center.

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should implement in the Visa Services Directorate a policy planning process to identify and develop alternative policy and program approaches to emerging issues. (Action: CA)

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should reorganize the Visa Services Directorate to align responsibilities with mission requirements, create an appropriate mix of staff and skills, and assign supervisors a manageable number of employees. (Action: CA, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should update all the position descriptions in the Visa Services Directorate to reflect current responsibilities. (Action: CA)

Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, should develop and adhere to service standards for providing and analyzing information on human rights ineligibility cases, train subject matter experts, and report any impediments to fulfilling its obligations to the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights and the Under Secretary for Management. (Action: CA, in coordination with DRL)

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should establish a system to create, maintain, and consult records of the opinions it renders in its Visa Services Directorate, Advisory Opinions Division. (Action: CA)

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should revise its plan to transfer nonimmigrant visa public inquiries from the Visa Services Directorate in Washington to the National Visa Center and assign a resident subject matter expert to the National Visa Center as a resource for the telephone and written inquiries units. (Action: CA)

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, should complete a memorandum of understanding governing visa operations at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. (Action: CA, in coordination with USUN)

Recommendation 8: The U.S. Mission to the United Nations, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should adopt and publish a visa referral policy. (Action: USUN, in coordination with CA)

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Principal Officials

	Name	Arrival Date
Deputy Assistant Secretary	*Edward J. Ramotowski*	*07/2012*
Managing Director	*Donald L. Heflin*	*07/2012*
Director, Office of Legal Affairs	*David S. Newman*	*12/2011*
Director, Office of Public and Diplomatic Liaison	*Karin M. King*	*08/2012*
Director, Office of Field Operations	*Sean Cooper*	*08/2013*
Director, Office of Information Management and Liaison	*Margaret Cooperman*	*09/2011*
Director-designate, Domestic Operations	*Daria Darnell*	*07/2013*
Director, National Visa Center	*Kimberly C. Kelly*	*08/2011*
Director, Kentucky Consular Center	*Sarah E. Welborne*	*06/2012*

Abbreviations

CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CA/VO	Visa Services Directorate
CCD	Consular Consolidated Database
COR	Contracting officer's representative
Department	U.S. Department of State
DRL	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
FAM	*Foreign Affairs Manual*
UN	United Nations
USUN	U.S. Mission to the United Nations

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