



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
AND THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
*OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL*

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Office of Inspections

January 2015

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# Inspection of Embassy Bamako, Mali

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## **PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION**

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

### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

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

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

### **METHODOLOGY**

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



United States Department of State  
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

*Office of Inspector General*

## **PREFACE**

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

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

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

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

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

Robert B. Peterson  
Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

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## **Key Findings**

- The Ambassador heads a well-coordinated interagency team and is focused on strengthening democracy and governance and promoting economic and social development.
- The Department of State has not been recovering capital security cost-sharing support costs of an estimated \$700,000 annually for Department of Defense temporary duty personnel.
- The embassy was built in 2006 and has experienced a series of buildings systems failures caused by a combination of building defects dating to the original construction of the chancery, limited maintenance staff expertise, and a lack of preventive maintenance when the embassy was in ordered departure status in 2012 and 2013. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations plans to carry out a major remediation of the embassy compound beginning in late 2014.

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 OIG inspection took place in Washington, DC, between April 10 and 25, 2014, and in Bamako, Mali, between June 4 and 18, 2014. Ambassador Lawrence Butler (team leader), Timothy Wildy (deputy team leader), Georgienne Bednar, Calvin Carlsen, Pasquale Capriglione, Paul Cantrell, Darren Felsburg, Mark Jacobs, James Norton, and Joyce Wong conducted the inspection.

The OIG team interviewed 78 Washington-based officials from 4 agencies. At Embassy Bamako, the OIG team interviewed 64 U.S. direct hires and 46 locally employed staff members. The OIG team reviewed 32 OIG personal questionnaires, 34 OIG locally employed staff member questionnaires, and 30 OIG work life quality of life questionnaires, along with documents submitted by the embassy, as well as the Department and other agencies in the survey phase. A classified annex to this report covers security.

## **Context**

Mali is a French-speaking, West African country nearly twice the size of Texas, with a population of 16.5 million, of which 67 percent is under age 25. Nearly 95 percent of Malians are Muslim. The country had a per-capita gross domestic product of \$1,100 in 2013. Most of the country is in either the southern Sahara or the Sahel. In March 2012, a military coup overthrew the civilian government. The resulting chaos enabled terrorist groups—including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and armed rebel entities—to seize control over the northern two-thirds of the country. French military forces, with U.S. military logistical support, subsequently led an international offensive to recapture the north, and a United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has been engaged in peacekeeping operations since July 2013. Many Malians who fled during the conflict remain in neighboring countries. International refugee organizations continue to support returnees and other Malians who have been internally displaced.

In September 2013, Mali returned to democratic rule after Ibrahim Boubacar Keita won the presidential election. National assembly elections took place shortly afterward, and a new legislature was installed in January 2014. The U.S. Government has lifted restrictions on most of its foreign assistance programs for Mali and will resume military training and equipping, pending additional progress in Government of Mali efforts to improve civilian control over the military. U.S. policy goals for the Government of Mali include strengthening democratic governance, supporting the national reconciliation process, countering violent extremism, building the Government of Mali's capacity to deter terrorism and illegal trafficking, and increasing economic growth. The staff grew by 3 U.S. direct hires and 40 locally employed (LE) staff members since the 2006 OIG inspection of Embassy Bamako.

Embassy Bamako has 64 U.S. direct hires, 249 LE staff members, 9 local-hire Americans, and 17 long-term temporary personnel. A high-threat program post, Embassy Bamako experienced two evacuations in recent years: from April to August 2012, it was on ordered departure status for all eligible family members; and it was on ordered departure status between January and July 2013 for all school-aged eligible family members and authorized departure status for all other family members.

## **Leadership**

The Ambassador leads an embassy buffeted by a series of internal Malian political and security crises that started in January 2012, with a recurrence in January 2013, and the latest phase beginning on May 17, 2014. The earlier crises led to authorized and ordered departures resulting in staff curtailments and difficulties attracting bidders to U.S. direct-hire staff positions.

The Ambassador engages in outreach with development and security assistance activities in support of the embassy's Integrated Country Strategy goals, which reflect the Department of State's (Department) lead role in coordinating a whole-of-government approach to foreign policy. In June 2014, the Department recognized the Ambassador's achievements by announcing her as the recipient of the 2013 Diplomacy for Human Rights award for her work in Mali.

## **Interagency Coordination**

Agency representatives gave the Ambassador and deputy chief of mission (DCM) high marks for interagency coordination. The OIG team observed internal embassy meetings at which the Ambassador coordinated the activities of the agencies across the spectrum of foreign assistance and embassy activities. The Ambassador and DCM partner with the Department of Defense elements in country, both those at the embassy and those assigned to the United Nations peacekeeping force.

## **Morale**

OIG questionnaires of embassy personnel indicate that morale is good. The Ambassador's and DCM's openness and engagement with the staff, as well as a clear sense of mission, contribute to morale. American staff members pointed to lengthy stays in hotels after arrival and delays in moving into permanent housing as a source of discontent that could affect the mission's reputation and recruiting ability. Causes for this are the growth in the U.S. staff since 2013 and a shortage of quality housing. The OIG team counseled the embassy to use caution in approving new National Security Decision Directive 38<sup>1</sup> requests to add American personnel and to alert newly assigned staff members to possible lengthy delays in permanent housing.

## **Integrated Country Strategy Process**

The DCM described a well-organized process for producing the latest Integrated Country Strategy, in which he established a working group and delegated day-to-day coordination to the political/economic chief. The process included all major stakeholders in the embassy.

## **First- and Second-Tour Staff**

The embassy has 15 first- and second-tour (FAST) officers and specialists, about a quarter of all the U.S. staff in Bamako. Several are unit heads or first-time supervisors. The

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<sup>1</sup> The White House issued National Security Decision Directive 38 on June 2, 1982, to establish the process for staffing at overseas diplomatic establishments.

DCM has developed with the FAST group a professional development program to ensure that FAST officers gain exposure to a broad range of embassy functions, duties, and responsibilities. The group selected one of its own to lead the implementation of this program. The DCM hosts a monthly luncheon, open to all FAST employees. Group members seek to have a second monthly event on their own. The FAST group present at a meeting with the OIG team expressed satisfaction with their experience in Bamako.

### **National Security Directive Decision 38 – Department of Defense**

Embassy Bamako provides desk space for four U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) military positions not under chief of mission authority filled via enduring temporary duty assignments. This arrangement bypasses the chief of mission's responsibility, per 2 *Foreign Affairs Handbook* (FAH)-2 H 114.1, to require a sending agency to submit a formal proposal to establish a permanent position within the mission. It does not follow the President's instructions to chiefs of mission to exercise responsibility for balancing security, policy, and cost considerations in staffing.

After the OIG team identified this omission, the embassy added these positions to the Department's Post Administrative Software Suite database, which will enable the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) to bill the Department of Defense for about \$700,000 in annual Capital Construction Cost Sharing program charges for use of classified office space.

The OIG team counseled the embassy on an approach that would require AFRICOM to convert the enduring temporary duty positions into permanent positions through the National Security Decision Directive 38 process but allow AFRICOM to continue to staff them with long-term temporary duty personnel.

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Bamako, in coordination with the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, should require United States Africa Command to identify and submit National Security Decision Directive 38 requests to convert all Department of Defense temporary duty positions to permanent ones and deny country clearances to replacement temporary duty personnel pending receipt of requests. (Action: Embassy Bamako, in coordination with M/PRI)

### **Foreign Assistance Coordination**

The Ambassador leads a biweekly peace and security coordination meeting that brings together all mission elements with foreign assistance responsibilities. Two Washington offices described embassy coordination as good. According to the embassy's functional questionnaire input, the political/economic section and the front office met regularly with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to develop a Mission Operational Plan that reflects the equities and expertise of these country team members. Oversight of foreign assistance programs in Mali's north is problematic because of security-imposed travel restrictions.

Because of residual issues from the 2012 coup, most assistance is nonsecurity focused. Although antiterrorism assistance is only \$600,000, Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership funds go to USAID's Office of Transitional Initiatives. Other Department-funded assistance programs include the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, which provides assistance

via international organizations, as well as a collection of smaller grants administered by the public affairs and political/economic sections.

***Foreign Assistance Operations Plans Do Not Include Full Range of Activities***

Neither Embassy Bamako nor Department offices were able to provide the total amount of foreign assistance funding in Mali, partly because regional offices and multiple agencies provide some assistance. USAID manages 24 programs, some supported from offices in Senegal, Ghana, and Washington, DC. The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership also is funded regionally. Funding comes from the Department of Defense, outside chief of mission authority. In 2013, the Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor made a grant of \$300,000 to an American implementer without notifying the embassy. The embassy engaged with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to rectify the situation.

The Department requires embassies with significant foreign assistance activities to prepare annual operational plans coordinated with the Department's Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources. Although Mali prepares an operational plan, the bilateral assistance in that plan does not encompass all the regional funding streams. Embassies use these plans to provide transparent information on funded program activities for each country. Without comprehensive funding information on the scope, purpose, and composition of programs funded from regional offices, the embassy could duplicate efforts in addition to being unable to assess the impact of U.S. assistance programs.

Washington offices and embassy employees were cautious in taking on new grants because of a lack of capacity in Mali's military and civilian government. Given embassy staffing limitations, host-country capacity issues, Mali's continuing fragile political and security environment, and stringent travel restrictions for much of the country, foreign assistance activities involve significant risks. The absence of comprehensive information at the mission level could lead to waste, fraud, and mismanagement.

**Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with the U.S. Office of Foreign Assistance and Embassy Bamako, should identify the total amount of foreign assistance programs and funding managed by Embassy Bamako. (Action: AF, in coordination with F and Embassy Bamako)

## **Policy and Program Implementation**

### **Political/Economic Section**

The political/economic section chief supervises one economic and two political FAST officers, all of whom helped manage the section's operations during the 1-year gap between section chiefs. All officers are language qualified in French; two are near-native speakers who have often filled in as interpreters or translators for the front office. Officers participate regularly in public diplomacy outreach activities.

### ***Political Focus Crowding Out Economic Reporting***

The political/economic section produced 120 reporting cables from September 2013 to May 2014. Washington end users praised the reporting for timeliness and comprehensive coverage of key issues, such as the status of peace negotiations between the Malian Government and northern rebel armed groups, judicial progress in prosecuting perpetrators of human rights abuses following the 2012 coup d'état and northern armed conflict, and prospects for the successful 2013 legislative elections.

The OIG team's review of a broad selection of cables confirmed that the section has drafted a steady flow of informative cables on these issues, which fall within the embassy's Integrated Country Strategy's goal of "Promote Democratic Institutions, Responsive Governance, and Respect for Human Rights." However, the section's emphasis on these issues has led to an imbalance in the range of reporting topics covered; only about 10 of the 120 cables dealt with exclusively economic-related matters. Given the link between poor economic conditions and social unrest, the OIG team counseled section management on the need to devote sufficient staff resources to reporting on efforts of the Malian Government in implementing its fiscal, regulatory, and trade policy reforms. Such reporting will inform Department and interagency efforts to develop more effective action plans for achieving the Integrated Country Strategy Goal to "Increase Economic Growth and Sustainable Livelihoods."

Most of the reviewed cables included useful context and analysis. However, the sourcing of information in some cables was unclear. The OIG team counseled section management to identify more regularly whether a cable contains firsthand perspectives from embassy contacts or indirect information from media or other sources.

Washington end users welcomed the section's recent biographic reporting on new cabinet ministers. The OIG team advised section management to upload biographies onto the Department's Diplopedia SharePoint site.

### ***Active Support for Export Promotion***

Along with the Ambassador, the section staff has carried out commercial advocacy on behalf of U.S. firms. Embassy Bamako is a Department of State Partner Post with the Foreign Commercial Service office in Johannesburg, South Africa. The economic-commercial officer has provided U.S. companies with commercial service products such as International Company

Profiles. U.S. exports to Mali in 2013 were \$50 million, divided between machinery and pharmaceuticals.

***Leahy Vetting Procedures in Place***

Two political officers serve as the primary and backup Leahy vetting coordinators. One has already received training on how to use the International Vetting and Security Tracking system; the other is scheduled to complete training before transferring into the section in summer 2014. The embassy has set up a guidebook on vetting operating procedures for mission personnel.

***Potential Limit to Section's Grant Oversight Capacity***

The political/economic section staff has responsibility for monitoring various grants, especially those funded under the Department's Bureau of African Affairs' Special Self-Help Program and USAID's Africa Regional Program's Democracy and Human Rights Fund. The embassy received special self-help program allotments of \$40,000 for 2011 and 2012, enabling it to award grants for 6 and 10 projects, respectively.

Given the importance of due diligence in monitoring Federal grants, political/economic staffing constraints, and continuing in-country travel restrictions, the OIG team counseled the section chief to exercise caution before committing to oversight obligations. Over the past 2½ years, an eligible family member special self-help coordinator/grants manager has served as the section's interlocutor with these programs' grant recipients, carrying out field monitoring visits when security conditions permitted. The two political officers will serve as grants officer representatives for newly awarded, first-time grants from the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Other Department bureaus have approached the embassy with information on available funding for other programs.

**Public Diplomacy**

The Department lifted restrictions on public diplomacy program-funded activities in September 2013. These limits had coincided with restrictions on foreign assistance. The small public affairs section conducts traditional exchange and information programs with emphasis on two thematic areas, one of which—supporting peace and reconciliation—takes up approximately 50 percent of the section's time and resources. The section puts an additional 25 percent of its efforts into activities designed to counter violent extremism.

Following a period of reduced bilateral relations, U.S. Government interest in Mali has increased, along with the section's workload. Since January 2014, the section has received more than \$500,000 in new program funds. Given the small staff size, the public affairs officer must ensure that the section's resources are directed to the highest priority tasks. The OIG team discussed with the public affairs officer ways to maximize efficiency, including use of a SharePoint calendar.

The OIG team interviewed all public affairs section employees, reviewed files, observed regularly scheduled meetings and informal interactions, and visited the Information Resource Center. The OIG team found that public diplomacy activities were consonant with mission

priorities and that the staff understood these priorities. The OIG team found no problems in the conduct of the exchange, cultural, and media programs that would warrant a recommendation.

### ***Information Resource Center Decisions Pending***

As many as 100 Malian students use the Information Resource Center daily. In a 2013 trip report, the information resource officer, a regional specialist in center management, made a number of recommendations, including developing electronic outreach and weeding the book collection. Final decisions on those recommendations had not been made at the time of the inspection. The OIG team discussed with the public affairs officer the need to resolve these issues.

### ***Where to Put an American Corner?***

An American Corner<sup>2</sup> located in the city of Gao was destroyed in the political violence of 2012. Continuing instability in the region made Gao a problematic location for a replacement Corner. The information resource officer and the public affairs section staff had discussed other potential sites and visited some of them, but the public affairs officer had not reached a decision. The OIG team discussed with him the advisability of choosing a location for an American Corner in Mali, which can play a significant role in support of the mission's goals.

### ***Reporting as a Strategic Tool***

The section completed the public diplomacy implementation plan and the public diplomacy country context, which are planning documents that the Department mandates. The information in these documents, while useful, is general in nature. The OIG team discussed with the public affairs officer the strategic utility of more detailed analyses of the educational, cultural, and media sectors with which the section engages.

### ***Large Grants and Small Staff***

In FY 2014, the section managed \$1.3 million in public diplomacy grants. Several grants were in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Given the small staff size and staff members' diverse duties, monitoring and oversight responsibilities represent a potential vulnerability. The public affairs officer and the assistant public affairs officer had taken steps to improve oversight, including increasing the number of grants officer representatives, working with grant recipients to obtain required reporting documents, and developing a local grants checklist. One recipient was unable to account for approximately \$20,000 in grant funds. The section initiated action that resulted in the individual being debarred and was in consultations with the Department's Office of the Legal Adviser/Diplomatic Law and Litigation about whether and how to pursue a court case for restitution. The Department's decision was pending.

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<sup>2</sup> American Corners are venues for programs about the United States and American life located in hosting institutions such as libraries and universities.

### *Standardizing Contact Management Software*

The public affairs section does not use the contact management database system, the Department's de facto standard software for managing professional contacts, but other sections in the embassy do. The public affairs section has employed a variety of software programs through the years. Use of the contact management system creates efficiencies, and training is available for users.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Bamako should use the contact management database system in the public affairs section, providing training to the staff as needed. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

### **Emergency and Crisis Preparedness**

The OIG team visited Mali in the wake of a failed Malian Government military operation in the country's north and false reports of a coup. Although embassy personnel who responded to OIG's questionnaires rated the mission's emergency preparedness above worldwide averages, the OIG team identified weaknesses in crisis preparedness.

### *Inadequate Consular Crisis Preparedness – Missionary and Nongovernmental Organizations*

Although the consular staff communicates frequently with missionary and nongovernmental organizations, it is not familiar with these groups' respective crisis plans. Both missionary and nongovernmental organizations often have their own in-house crisis management plans that take advantage of the groups' long-term experience in the areas where their personnel live and work. In accordance with guidance in 12 FAH-1 H-323, consular personnel should be familiar with these organizations' crisis plans to learn from them and to identify how consular sections' crisis plans can complement them. The embassy estimates that many of the approximately 900 U.S. citizens residing in Mali are attached to these groups, making them a valuable source of information. The OIG team counseled the consular section chief to become familiar with these groups' crisis plans and explore ways to collaborate.

### *Inadequate Consular Crisis Preparedness – U.S Embassies in Neighboring Countries*

The consular staff is also unfamiliar with the range of support it could expect to receive from other U.S. embassies in the region during a crisis. Guidance in 12 FAH-1 H-332(5) recommends that consular managers be familiar with the type of support that consular staffs in U.S. embassies in neighboring countries could provide in a crisis. During a crisis, the consular staff may need to coordinate the evacuation of private U.S. citizens to safety in neighboring countries. The consular staff in the receiving countries could play a central role.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Bamako should establish a policy of periodically contacting consular managers in U.S. embassies in other countries in the region to identify the types of consular support that Embassy Bamako could receive from those embassies in the event of a crisis in Mali. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Inadequate Consular Crisis Preparedness – Operation of Emergency Communications***

The consular staff is unprepared to operate emergency communications equipment, including portable satellite telephone and Internet systems, which would be vital during a crisis. The consular staff needs to be ready to use portable satellite telephones in the field to communicate with the embassy, the Department, local government authorities, and private U.S. citizens. The consular section is also not conducting periodic drills to familiarize consular personnel with the operation of portable satellite telephones. Per 7 *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM) 1812.3-3, consular sections should regularly test off-site equipment and ensure that consular staff members are familiar with its operation. Per 7 FAM 71 a., the consular section chief is responsible for management of the post's warden system, including periodic testing, and 12 FAH-1 H-711 notes that effective emergency planning requires training, drills, and exercises.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Bamako should perform periodic drills that test the consular staff's ability to operate emergency communications equipment and access networks during a crisis. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Embassy Not Training Staff Members to Use Contingency Communication Equipment and Not Performing Monthly Contingency Communications Tests***

The embassy does not perform monthly tests of portable satellite equipment, per 5 FAH-2 H-653.2, and has not trained personnel on how to operate and maintain this equipment. Portable contingency communications equipment is essential during telephone and data circuit outages. The embassy can also use these devices to support remote emergency field operations.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Bamako should train staff to operate the portable satellite terminals and associated equipment and perform monthly tests of all portable satellite terminals and associated contingency equipment. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Inadequate Monitoring of Panel Physician Performance***

The consular staff has not made unannounced visits to the panel physician's office to inspect the premises and review the panel physician's performance. Panel physicians are responsible for performing complete physical examinations of individuals who apply for immigration to the United States as family members of individuals granted refugee or asylum status in the United States. Consular managers are responsible for monitoring panel physician performance and ensuring exams are conducted in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's technical instruction set forth in 9 FAM 40.11 N7. The 9 FAM 42.66 N4.3 instruction recommends that consular officers make unannounced visits to panel physician sites to evaluate physician performance.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Bamako should conduct periodic unannounced visits to evaluate whether the panel physician is performing medical examinations in accordance with Department of State guidance. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

## Resource Management

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2013
<b>Department of State</b>					
Diplomatic and Consular Programs	10	3	8	21	\$2,009,300
International Cooperative Administrative Support Services	12	6	151	169	\$8,906,100
Public Diplomacy	2		8	10	\$735,400
Diplomatic Security	4		8	12	\$1,504,815
Marine Security	13		3	16	\$136,714
Representation				0	\$16,700
Bureau of Overseas Building Operations				0	\$1,843,026
<b>Department of Defense</b>					
Defense Attaché Office	6		1	7	\$272,860
Office of Defense Cooperation	1		2	3	n/a
<b>U.S Agency for International Development</b>	13		57	70	\$164,900,000
<b>Other Foreign Assistance</b>					
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	1		7	8	\$432,251
National Institutes of Health	2		2	4	n/a
Peace Corps			2	2	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>\$180,757,166</b>

Source: Embassy Bamako

### Management Overview

The embassy's management section is rebuilding infrastructure, revamping customer service, and improving compliance with management controls after two 6-month ordered departures in 2012 and 2013. In 2012, five U.S. direct hires and three eligible family members curtailed to depart with their families. In 2013, two more direct-hire management staff members curtailed.

During 2012–2013, the management section experienced lengthy staffing gaps of up to 6 months in key positions. The Department covered most gaps with a series of temporary duty

personnel. The second ordered departure also overlapped with the Department's 2:1 hiring freeze, in effect from March 2013 to March 2014, which prevented the embassy from filling the 22 LE staff vacancies in the management section.

### *Customer Satisfaction*

Despite these vacancies, the embassy received good customer satisfaction scores. In 2014, International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) scores exceeded 4 on a 5-point scale in 22 of 30 services. Administrative supply; nonexpendable property management; and household furniture, furnishings, and appliance pools were slightly below 4. Procurement, residential buildings operations and maintenance, residential local guard program, leasing, and American human resources services were below the regional and worldwide averages and lower than the 2013 ICASS scores.

### *Below-Average International Cooperative Administrative Services Scores – Housing*

Housing is one of the primary determinants of embassy morale, but customers gave housing low scores on OIG and ICASS surveys. Irrespective of whether the housing is leased or government owned, some mission staff members viewed their housing negatively. U.S. direct-hire staff members uniformly complained about lengthy hotel stays before assignment to a house—a make-ready process that can take more than 1 month—the amount of time it takes the housing unit to find suitable housing for new staff members, the unresponsiveness of landlords to maintenance requests, and the work order process.

The housing unit faces a number of challenges with leased housing. The housing market is tight and is experiencing a shortage of quality leased housing in areas considered desirable and safe. Unlike other potential renters who have fewer administrative and financial limitations, the embassy must ensure that potential rentals meet security and safety standards and then must obtain an OBO waiver for cost if the new leases exceed OBO-approved rental cost limits. The time required to complete these reviews means that the housing unit can lose the most suitable properties to other foreign entities or international organizations and end up with properties that require more resources to maintain and bring into compliance with Department standards. The embassy staff believes that the recently approved rental cost limits are too low and are the main obstacles preventing the embassy from being competitive with other foreign entities in finding suitable housing within reasonable timelines. OBO and embassy rental market surveys are not in sync and contribute to the housing problem. Landlords request and receive lease prices, ranging from \$21,555 to \$37,322 a year, some requiring an advance annual payment. In FY 2014, the annual cost for 60 leases was about \$1.5 million.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Bamako, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should resubmit the rental market survey and analysis of local rental market information from independent sources to reflect current local market rental rates and reconcile differences between real estate market surveys. (Action: Embassy Bamako, in coordination with OBO)

Another obstacle is that agencies have provided the housing unit with insufficient notice of pending personnel assignments. For example, in an extreme case, the housing unit received only 3 weeks' notice of a pending new assignment but has regularly received notice 5 to 6 weeks

in advance. With the return of U.S. direct-hire staff members to the mission and increased program staffing requirements, insufficient notice is a recurring problem. The housing unit needs 6 months to prepare a residence for occupancy for a new position and 3 months for a replacement. The mission will need to strike a balance between program offices' need for personnel to fill vacant or new positions and housing unit lead times. In the past 12 months, the unit added five houses to the housing portfolio. In summer 2014, the unit will add another six units.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Bamako should issue an administrative notice reminding staff members and agencies of the time and staff requirements involved in securing a new lease, as well as the steps involved in preparing a residence for occupancy, and include this information in its National Security Decision Directive 38 cable. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Below-Average International Cooperative Administrative Services Scores – Residential Maintenance***

Low residential maintenance and leasing scores are interrelated. The quality of most construction in Bamako is well below U.S. standards, and even the most modern residential units experience chronic problems with basic systems such as plumbing and electricity. Despite contractual language in the leases requiring landlords to maintain the buildings, only a few demonstrate the ability and willingness to provide quality and timely repairs. Many leased properties belong to absentee landlords who reside abroad. The facilities staff has to inspect, correct, or perform maintenance for which landlords are responsible. The mission must pay most lease costs a year in advance to be competitive. If landlords do not meet their maintenance obligations, the embassy does not have the leverage to withhold lease payments or to deduct from the rent the cost of repairs maintenance staff might perform.

***Below-Average International Cooperative Administrative Services Scores – Procurement***

The procurement unit received mixed reviews. Some staff members complimented the procurement services they received, although others voiced complaints. One reason for the mixed comments and low ICASS scores is the complicated nature of the procurement process. Requestors do not understand the administrative processes and regulatory barriers involved in unclassified and secure procurements or that the embassy cannot order certain goods and services during a continuing resolution.

Another reason is that delivery times to the requestor can be unpredictable. Delivery times for the receipt of goods are estimates and can vary, depending on the type of item procured; whether it is a secure procurement, locally procured, or a U.S. purchase; and whether funding is available. Some customers believe that the unit does not always provide adequate explanations, which leads to frustration over delivery delays. The resulting uncertainty is a source of dissatisfaction for the mission staff, particularly to FAST and agency staff members unfamiliar with Department guidance. It is a source of frustration for the procurement staff members because once an order is placed with a vendor, they do not have control over how long the vendor takes to deliver the goods or services.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Bamako should issue a management notice reminding the staff about the length of time and staff requirements involved in unclassified and secure procurements

and that certain types of goods and services cannot be ordered under a continuing resolution.  
(Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Lack of Followup on Procurement Actions***

Because the procurement process is complicated and delivery times are estimates, procurement staff followup is important. The lack of followup on procurement requests was the biggest customer complaint and needs improvement. Management stated that procurement is understaffed and the staff is insufficient to perform followup. The OIG team suggested that the procurement unit track and publish its compliance with ICASS standards.

***Inadequate Training for Procurement Staff***

In addition, the procurement unit's staff has not fully grasped the Integrated Logistics Management System. Some of the procurement staff is inexperienced and requires training; these are barriers to improving customer service and providing followup. The OIG team advised the embassy to provide the unit with customer service training and training on the use of the Integrated Logistics Management System.

**Facilities Maintenance**

The facilities maintenance unit maintains the embassy compound and the government-owned chief of mission residence, DCM residence, and four staff residences. OBO renovated the recreation center. The unit follows prescribed preventive maintenance practices for the embassy compound and is attentive to occupational health and safety guidelines. OBO's Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management conducted its site visit in October 2011. Its report identified 76 deficiencies, of which the unit has corrected all but 24. OBO plans to correct the remaining deficiencies through a series of renovation projects.

***Embassy Remediation***

The embassy was built in 2006 and has experienced a series of buildings systems failures caused by a combination of building defects dating to the original construction of the chancery, limited maintenance staff expertise, and a lack of preventive maintenance during periods in which the embassy was in evacuation status. OBO plans to remediate the embassy compound later in 2014. The remediation comprises multiple projects that will update or replace problematic electrical, mechanical, and automation building systems. For example, the chiller system has never been fully functional. One chiller works at 30 percent capacity, and the other chiller does not work at all. The power conduits are underwater during the rainy season and could lead to power failure.

***Solar Power***

Embassy Bamako makes no use of solar technology and uses solar panels only to heat and maintain water temperature. Given the climate and cost of electricity, the OIG team believes that Embassy Bamako could realize cost savings by increasing its use of solar panels. For example, in FY 2013, the embassy spent \$1.23 million on electricity. In comparison, Embassy Bujumbura, which makes full usage of solar power, estimates it saves \$422,000 annually. OBO

has planned a solar project for the embassy. OBO has not determined the scope or cost of the solar project.

### **General Services**

The travel unit is compliant with the Fly America Act. In 2013 and 2014, the travel unit did not issue premium-class tickets. The unit issued rest and recuperation travel in accordance with 14 FAM 531.5. From May 12 to 24, 2014, a member of the LE staff Executive Corps from Embassy Port Louis, Mauritius conducted a pre-inspection of the procurement unit. His assessment included recommendations for additional staff training and procedural changes to ensure better procurement file record keeping.

### ***No Designated Contracting Officer's Representative***

A number of contract files do not contain a contracting officer's representative request, appointment memo, or evidence of training. Per 14 FAH-2 H-143.2(1), the program office is responsible for providing a written nomination for a technically qualified, responsible, and certified contracting officer's representative to the contracting officer. Per 14 FAH-2 H-141 b. (4) and 14 FAH-2 H-143, the contracting officer must designate in writing a contracting officer's representative. Per 14 FAH-2 H-143.1, all contracting officer's representatives must be certified and maintain their certification in accordance with contracting officer's representative training requirements. The embassy's failure to follow Department guidance could lead to billing and contractual errors.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Bamako should request, appoint, and train contracting officer's representatives in accordance with Department of State guidance and include documentation in the contract files. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

### ***Contract Files Do Not Contain Mandatory Combating Trafficking in Persons Clause***

Several older contracts do not contain the mandatory Federal Acquisition Regulation clause 52.222-50 (Combating Trafficking in Persons), per 14 FAH-2 H-524 d. The procurement agents stated that the clause was not included in earlier overseas contract models. The Federal Acquisition Regulation states that the clause must be included in all U.S. Government contracts. Some of these contracts will be recompeted in 2015, at which time the procurement unit will include the appropriate trafficking in persons clause.

**Recommendation 12:** Embassy Bamako should include in all new contracts the Federal Acquisition Regulation clause 52.222-50 pertaining to trafficking in persons. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

### ***Motor Pool***

The motor pool consists of 60 vehicles—at a cost of \$3.47 million—and 14 drivers. The general services unit and regional security office stated that the mission has an excessive number of armored vehicles. Vehicle inventory records list 22 armored vehicles, which represents 37 percent of the total vehicle inventory. Given that each armored vehicle costs more than \$100,000, the OIG team concurs with this assessment. The vehicle fleet supports a total staff of

64 U.S. direct hires, including 13 Marine security guards and other agency staff members who have their own vehicles. According to 14 FAM 432.2 a.(1)-(4), the size and composition of the embassy fleet is based on four criteria: (1) Department staffing, with a 4-to-1 ratio of direct-hire positions per vehicle as a guideline; (2) USAID staffing, also with a 4-to-1 ratio of professional positions per vehicle; (3) use of vehicles in support of the administration transportation requirement; and (4) annual mileage of 12,000 miles per vehicle. The motor pool fleet includes vehicles used by security, facilities, general services operations, and program staff members.

**Recommendation 13:** Embassy Bamako should conduct a review of its motor vehicle fleet size and composition and modify the size of its motor pool. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

### ***Personal Property Management***

The property management unit manages inventories of \$8.4 million in expendable and \$465,000 in nonexpendable property. The FY 2014 certificate of inventory reconciliation reported shortages of \$16,764 in expendable and \$59 in nonexpendable inventories, which are below the Department's 1-percent threshold for report loses.

The FY 2014 reported shortages were a significant improvement over last year's results. In FY 2013, the unit reported shortages of \$2.46 million in nonexpendable inventory, which the embassy wrote off. The unit believes that this loss originated in 2011 and 2012. The loss is the result of poor record keeping; fraudulent inventory reconciliations; and the improper disposal of inventory items, theft, and mismatched or duplicate records that occurred during the migration from the Nonexpendable Property Application to the Integrated Logistics Management System.

### **Human Resources Operations**

#### ***Late Locally Employed Staff Performance Evaluations***

Supervisors have not completed 24 LE staff member performance reviews in accordance with 3 FAH-2 H-135.5A (2), which requires supervisors to complete annual evaluations. Three LE staff evaluations are a year overdue; others are 2–8 months delinquent. The unit's notifications and reminders have failed to motivate the supervisors.

**Recommendation 14:** Embassy Bamako should complete outstanding employee evaluation reports. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

### **Financial Management**

#### ***Controls to Strengthen Internal Controls in Vendor Payments***

The financial management unit is not the designated billing office for purchase orders, as required by 13 State 57938 and 4 FAM 422 d. Invoices arrive routinely in the general services unit and in ordering units. Segregation of duties dictates that the unit ordering the goods or services should not be receiving the invoice directly from the vendor. On one occasion, the general services unit held the vendor invoice for 11 months and on another for 3 months before sending these invoices to the financial management unit. The embassy paid late fees in both instances in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act.

**Recommendation 15:** Embassy Bamako should designate the financial management unit as the official billing office on all purchase orders, contracts, and procurement actions. (Embassy Bamako)

***Subcashier Controls Not Followed***

Two subcashier supervisors have not performed periodic reconciliations as required by 4 FAH-3 H-397.2-3 a. The financial management officer is responsible for assisting with any difficulties in obtaining the verifications. Without this management control, errors and misuse of funds may go undetected.

**Recommendation 16:** Embassy Bamako should implement standard operating procedures to require all subcashiers' supervisors to conduct monthly unannounced cash verifications and to monitor compliance with this requirement. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Duplicative Accommodation Exchange Services***

The embassy provides duplicative accommodation exchange services. The embassy's cashier provides accommodation services for all agencies except USAID, which receives its accommodation services from a local on-site bank holding the U.S. Disbursing Officer's account. Per 4 FAH-3 H-361.2 c. and 04 State 241359, the Department strongly supports reliance on commercial facilities for accommodation exchange to reduce the cashier's accountability and workload accounts.

**Recommendation 17:** Embassy Bamako should renegotiate its current agreement with authorities at the local bank that holds the U.S. Disbursing Officer's account to include accommodation exchange for the entire mission. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Delinquent Accounts Receivable***

The total debt outstanding for personal use of official vehicles is \$867.28. Most staff members pay their bills on time, but several have charges dating back to late 2013. The process for collecting the debt and—if post is unsuccessful in its effort—referring the collection to the Financial Service Center in Charleston is outlined in 4 FAM 493.1-2 and 1-3.

**Recommendation 18:** Embassy Bamako should notify employees of outstanding debts they accrue for personal use of office vehicles and refer any unpaid debts to the Department of State for collection. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

**Information Management**

The OIG team counseled the unit on updating standard operating procedures and ensuring contingency communications readiness.

***Improving the Maintenance and Retiring of Official Files***

The embassy is not maintaining and retiring official records in accordance with 5 FAM 414.5. Employees store official records on shared electronic drives; they do not organize records by year, according to traffic analysis, by geography and subject, or by other specified terms. Good records management reduces vulnerabilities and enables the Department to perform its functions and recover from a disaster.

**Recommendation 19:** Embassy Bamako should implement procedures to maintain and retire official records in accordance with Department of State standards. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Installation of Mobile Radios in Official Vehicles***

Emergency and evacuation radios are essential to enhance security and protect mission staff. Although most of the equipment is in stock, the embassy is not installing or effectively using mobile radios in official vehicles, as mandated in 5 FAH-2 H-713.1 and 5 FAH-2 H-731.

**Recommendation 20:** Embassy Bamako should install mobile radios in all official vehicles. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Information Systems Center Computer Room***

The computer room in the information systems center does not meet Department physical and environmental protection standards as outlined in 12 FAM 629.4. As stated therein, the data center manager and the system manager, in conjunction with the general services officer, and—if abroad—the senior information management officer must locate automated information system processing facilities above ground. The facilities should not be beneath areas containing water pipes or subject to water penetration from upper floors, when possible. The current computer room location is vulnerable to flooding.

**Recommendation 21:** Embassy Bamako, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should relocate the information systems center computer room. (Action: Embassy Bamako, in coordination with OBO)

***Out-of-Date Emergency Action Plan – Communications Appendix***

The embassy does not have an accurate communications appendix in the emergency action plan, as required in 12 FAH-1 Appendix 7.1 and 12 FAH-1 H-024.8 b. A properly documented and tested emergency action plan affects the embassy's capacity to operate effectively in the event of a disaster or unforeseen incident. Contingency planning and testing mitigate the risks such events pose to embassy operations.

**Recommendation 22:** Embassy Bamako should update and test the communications appendix in the emergency action plan in accordance with Department of State guidance. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

## **Quality of Life**

Hardship factors include intense heat, traffic, and residential crime. U.S. direct-hire employees receive a 25-percent post allowance, a 25-percent hardship differential, a 10-percent danger pay allowance, a 2,500-pound consumables allowance, and two rest and recuperation trips for a 2-year assignment.

### **Community Liaison Office**

Two part-time employees share responsibility for running the community liaison office. They meet regularly with embassy management, including the DCM. They host monthly meetings with mission spouses to receive feedback on the program and solicit feedback informally as well. They were preparing to post a calendar of events on SharePoint that would be available to the embassy community. The office's ICASS score was higher than both the regional Africa and worldwide averages, 4.43 on a 5-point scale.

### **School**

At the time of the inspection, [REDACTED] the American International School of Bamako. [REDACTED]. Interviews and questionnaires suggested general satisfaction with the quality of education, along with some concern at the length of time children must commute, ranging from 45 to 90 minutes. The Ambassador's representative sits on the school board but does not vote; the embassy has a second member with voting rights. A representative from the Office of Overseas Schools visited in 2014.

### **Health Unit**

A regional medical officer manages the health unit. The unit has an effective management controls system for the procurement, storage, and disbursement of expendable supplies and nonexpendable equipment. The unit maintains medical records in accordance with Department guidelines and provides embassy personnel with information on preventive health measures. The unit's portions of the embassy's mass casualty plan and emergency action plan are up to date. The unit's ICASS score—4.68 out of 5—is above the regional and worldwide average of 4.21.

### ***American Community Services Association of Mali***

The board of directors is reactivating the association. Association activities halted after the 2012 and 2013 ordered departures of family members, who constituted a significant portion of the association's customer base and on whom the association relied to stay solvent. The OIG team counseled the board on submitting timely financial statements.

## **Management Controls**

The chief of mission annual management control statement of assurance, signed on July 23, 2013, stated that the embassy completed all required internal management control reviews. The evaluation of the systems of management controls provided reasonable assurance that the embassy achieved the referenced management control objectives. The evaluation disclosed a \$2.46-million loss of personal property. The evaluation disclosed no other potential material weaknesses and/or significant deficiencies.

### ***No Visibility over the Value Added Tax Reimbursement Process***

The embassy has not received reimbursements from the Malian Government for value added taxes on fuel purchases made in 2011 and 2013. The Malian Government does not make known the percentage it reimburses annually, which makes calculating the amount reimbursable to the embassy difficult. In recent years, the percentage reimbursable varied from 6 percent to 31 percent. To date, LE staff members—rather than American officers—have dealt with the Malian Ministry of Finance staff on this matter. The embassy has failed to recoup funds it could use for its operations.

**Recommendation 23:** Embassy Bamako should engage the Government of Mali at an appropriate level to clarify the value added tax percentage and obtain reimbursement for value added tax on fuel. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

### ***Outdated Telephone Policy***

The cellular telephone policy, dated March 6, 2008, is out of date and does not reflect the Department-limited telecommunications usage policy. Guidance in 5 FAM 511 and 5 FAM 522 places limits on the usage of U.S. Government telecommunications equipment and services for personal use. Occasional local calls are permitted, as long as they do not result in additional charges to the U.S. Government and do not interfere with work. Additional language in 5 FAM 523.1 prohibits personal long-distance calls, for which employees must use personal calling cards. The embassy's current policy is to provide employees with an allowance of \$41 per month before charges are assessed.

**Recommendation 24:** Embassy Bamako should issue a management notice outlining Department of State policy concerning use of government telecommunications equipment for long-distance calls and personal use and update its cellular telephone policy accordingly. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

### ***Charges for Personal Calls***

The financial management unit has not billed employees for their personal calls since 2012. The guidelines found in 4 FAM 493.1-2 require post to manage and collect the debts owed to the Department.

**Recommendation 25:** Embassy Bamako should charge employees for personal phone calls in accordance with Department of State guidance and Embassy Bamako's cellular telephone policy. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

***Overdue Travel Vouchers***

Approximately 17 employees have not followed 4 FAM 465.1 and 4 FAH-3 H-465.1-1 guidelines, which require travelers to submit their vouchers within 5 business days after completing their travel. Several employees are more than 100 days delinquent in their submission of required documents.

**Recommendation 26:** Embassy Bamako should review the list of outstanding travel authorizations and require travelers to submit their delinquent travel vouchers to the financial management office for processing. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

## List of Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Bamako, in coordination with the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, should require United States Africa Command to identify and submit National Security Decision Directive 38 requests to convert all Department of Defense temporary duty positions to permanent ones and deny country clearances to replacement temporary duty personnel pending receipt of requests. (Action: Embassy Bamako, in coordination with M/PRI)

**Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with the U.S. Office of Foreign Assistance and Embassy Bamako, should identify the total amount of foreign assistance programs and funding managed by Embassy Bamako. (Action: AF, in coordination with F and Embassy Bamako)

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Bamako should use the contact management database system in the public affairs section, providing training to the staff as needed. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Bamako should establish a policy of periodically contacting consular managers in U.S. embassies in other countries in the region to identify the types of consular support that Embassy Bamako could receive from those embassies in the event of a crisis in Mali. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Bamako should perform periodic drills that test the consular staff's ability to operate emergency communications equipment and access networks during a crisis. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Bamako should train staff to operate the portable satellite terminals and associated equipment and perform monthly tests of all portable satellite terminals and associated contingency equipment. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Bamako should conduct periodic unannounced visits to evaluate whether the panel physician is performing medical examinations in accordance with Department of State guidance. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Bamako, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should resubmit the rental market survey and analysis of local rental market information from independent sources to reflect current local market rental rates and reconcile differences between real estate market surveys. (Action: Embassy Bamako, in coordination with OBO)

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Bamako should issue an administrative notice reminding staff members and agencies of the time and staff requirements involved in securing a new lease, as well as the steps involved in preparing a residence for occupancy, and include this information in its National Security Decision Directive 38 cable. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Bamako should issue a management notice reminding the staff about the length of time and staff requirements involved in unclassified and secure procurements and that certain types of goods and services cannot be ordered under a continuing resolution. (Action: Embassy Bamako)

**~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~**

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(Action: Embassy Bamako)

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## Principal Officials

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Arrival Date</b>
Ambassador	Mary Beth Leonard	11/2011
Deputy Chief of Mission	Andrew Young	7/2013
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Robert Siletzky	9/2012
Consular	Kathryn Abate	2/2013
Political	Joshua Morris	6/2013
Public Affairs	William Bellis	4/2013
Regional Security	Corynn Stratton	10/2012
Other Agencies:		
Department of Defense	Michael Rue	7/2012
National Institute of Health	Dr. Richard Sakai	9/1999
U.S. Agency for International Development	Gary Juste	4/2013

## **Abbreviations**

AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
Department	U.S. Department of State
FAH	<i>Foreign Affairs Handbook</i>
FAM	<i>Foreign Affairs Manual</i>
FAST	First- and second-tour
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
LE	Locally employed
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development



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OR MISMANAGEMENT  
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