



OIG HIGHLIGHTS

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What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected the U.S. Embassy in Muscat from March 15 to April 1, 2015.

What OIG Recommended

OIG made 26 recommendations to U.S. Embassy Muscat and U.S. State Department bureaus. Twenty-two were to U.S. Embassy Muscat and addressed training, recruitment, and hiring of embassy staff; improving residential maintenance; and correcting deficiencies in contract, procurement, personnel, property, and information management.

OIG also made recommendations to the Bureau of Human Resources regarding the compensation packet for local staff and an annual homeward passage benefit for expatriate staff; one recommendation to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations regarding completion of a comprehensive space planning survey for the chancery; and one recommendation to the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs regarding completion of the Post Partnership Program Plan.

Authorities and Methodology

This report was completed in accordance with OIG's oversight responsibilities, as described in Section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. The 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 OIG for the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

June 2015
OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs

Inspection of Embassy Muscat, Oman

What OIG Found

- Inadequate contract administration has increased the risk of trafficking-in-persons violations.
- Despite restrictions on embassy contact with Omani citizens, military and security relations between embassy personnel and Omani defense and security counterparts are productive.
- Many mid-level officers in section chief positions are first-time section supervisors. The combination of first-time supervisors managing first- and second-tour officers has made completing some everyday operational requirements a challenge.
- Staffing gaps and delays in filling locally employed staff positions have negatively affected delivery of International Cooperative Administrative Support Services.
- The information management section needs to strengthen its customer service approach through collaboration and communication.
- The embassy has lowered costs for the Export Control and Related Border Security assistance program, but the embassy has not yet formalized these program adjustments with the Omani Government.

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OIG

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ISP-I-15-30A

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BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

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KEY FINDINGS

- Inadequate contract administration has increased the risk of trafficking-in-persons violations.
- Despite restrictions on embassy contact with Omani citizens, military and security relations between embassy personnel and Omani defense and security counterparts are productive.
- Many mid-level officers in section chief positions are first-time section supervisors. The combination of first-time supervisors managing first- and second-tour officers has made completing some everyday operational requirements a challenge.
- Staffing gaps and delays in filling locally employed staff positions have negatively affected delivery of International Cooperative Administrative Support Services.
- The information management section needs to strengthen its customer service approach through collaboration and communication.
- The embassy has lowered costs for the Export Control and Related Border Security assistance program, but the embassy has not yet formalized these program adjustments with the Omani Government.

CONTEXT

The Sultanate of Oman is located on the Arabian Peninsula at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, across the Gulf of Oman from Iran; it also shares a border with Yemen. Oman's leader, Sultan Qaboos, has sought to maintain good relations with Oman's neighbors well as with the United States. Oman has been a reliable and effective partner in supporting U.S. Government broader regional security and economic objectives. In turn, the U.S. Government has supported Oman's stability, security, and sustained economic and political development; the United States has a Free Trade Agreement with Oman and provides Oman's security forces with counterterrorism security assistance.

Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said has ruled the country since 1970 as an absolute monarch, serving as the prime minister as well as minister for foreign affairs, defense, and finance. He has opened up the country, embarked on economic reforms, and followed a policy of modernization. He is the longest serving ruler in the Middle East.

Oman experienced small-scale political unrest during the 2011 Arab Awakening, and Sultan Qaboos pledged to create and organize elections for "provincial councils," which were conducted in December 2012. Omani law does not permit political parties and does not provide citizens the right to change their government.

The embassy has 86 direct-hire employees and 132 locally employed (LE) staff members working for 3 U.S. Government agencies. Fifty-five percent of the direct-hire employees are U.S. Department of Defense personnel. Embassy Muscat has no hardship differential in Muscat but has a 15-percent cost-of-living allowance. The rest-and-recuperation allowance was reinstated in December 2014 and will be reevaluated on a biannual basis. The embassy states that its LE staff compensation package is inadequate to recruit and retain personnel.

Embassy Muscat has eight first- and second-tour (FAST) officers, serving in all sections; some are unit chiefs in the management, political/economic, and public affairs sections. Many mid-level officers in section chief positions are first-time section supervisors. The combination of first-time supervisors managing FAST officers has made completing some everyday operational requirements a challenge. For example, section heads, who are themselves FAST officers, must train FAST personnel on basic duties.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security maintains an office in Salalah, about 600 miles from Muscat. The office consists of two U.S. Customs and Border Protection positions (one vacant) that manage clearance of port shipments to the United States under the container security initiative.

LEADERSHIP

As reflected in the FY 2016 Integrated Country Strategy, the Chief of Mission's priorities are to promote regional security and stability by partnering with Oman to combat terrorism and the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to increase defense cooperation and Oman's counterterrorism capacity; to promote bilateral trade and investment; and to build Omani public trust and confidence in the United States as a partner for shared goals of prosperity and stability for Oman and the broader region.

The Ambassador has established cooperative relationships with key Omani interlocutors, including the Sultan and his immediate advisors. She used those relationships to facilitate the preparations for and the conduct of the January 2015 joint U.S.-Oman security exercise, "Invincible Sentry," which was declared a success by both governments. The Ambassador receives high marks from the leadership of the U.S. Central Command for her collaboration and for her facilitation with the Omani Government on behalf of their mission and operations. At the Ambassador's initiative, a delegation of senior Omani officials visited Washington in February 2015 for discussions with a wide range of U.S. Government interlocutors on ways to promote greater bilateral understanding and cooperation. Nonetheless, some U.S. Government-funded foreign assistance and public diplomacy programs remain in suspense (since 2013) pending the outcome of a policy review by the Omani Government. (See the Leadership section of the classified annex for more discussion.)

The front office and economic-commercial unit are engaged with Omani Government officials to resolve disputes under the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement, disputes that are impeding the sales of U.S. goods and services to Oman. The front office and economic-commercial unit collaborate closely with the local Omani-American Business Council to satisfy Omani labor laws that require foreign invested firms to hire and train a specified quota of Omani employees (also called "Omanization"). During the inspection, the Ambassador and the Business Council cohosted a networking event to help the Business Council's member firms identify potential employees from among Omani alumni of American universities.

The Ambassador and the deputy chief of mission (DCM) devote significant time to LE and direct-hire staff morale and development and are committed to ensuring a healthy work-life balance and Equal Employment Opportunity principles. The embassy's FAST program is active and well received by FAST officers. However, all FAST specialists noted that the dearth of experienced in-cone mentors for them at the embassy has been a developmental handicap. The DCM, who serves as the Ambassador's representative on [Redacted] (b) (5), [Redacted] (b) (6) school board, is credited with facilitating dialogue and resolving issues of mutual concern between embassy parents and the school.

Trafficking-in-Persons Monitoring Not Compliant with Regulations

The embassy does not comply with all anti-trafficking-in-persons requirements for purchases. Embassy purchase orders and contracts contain the required Federal Acquisitions Regulations clause 52.222-50, Combating Trafficking in Persons. However, documentation required by the Office of the Procurement Executive Procurement Information Bulletin No. 2015-05, such as housing plans, monitoring programs, and contractor briefing materials, is not included in the files. Extensive use of foreign labor and employer-provided housing in Oman increases risks of abuse. Without a structured anti-trafficking-in-persons program, embassy contractors and

subcontractors may be engaging in trafficking activities, contrary to the Department of State's (Department) zero-tolerance policy for recipients of Federal funds. Reports of visits to labor camps used by the contractors providing embassy janitorial and gardening services identified possible deficiencies, including no Ministry of Manpower certification, withheld passports, and less-than-required space per worker. Lack of training and heavy workloads prevented procurement managers from complying with all requirements.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should comply with anti-trafficking-in-persons requirements for all procurements greater than \$3,000. (Action: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with A)

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Advocacy and Analysis

The political/economic section at Embassy Muscat provides reporting that satisfies Washington policymakers and analysts. An Office of Inspector General (OIG) team review of 6 months of reporting by the section showed messages were policy relevant for Washington consumers and aligned with the embassy's strategic priorities. The reporting included timely periodic analyses of both internal and external Omani issues. The OIG team advised the section chief on the disciplined use of the system of traffic analysis by geography and subject, which the Department employs for organizing and managing information.

The political section and the Defense attaché office regularly coordinate reporting. The section chief has served as acting DCM, and the front office expressed confidence in the section chief's judgment. However, either the DCM or the Ambassador approves nearly all reporting. The OIG team advised the DCM and political/economic chief about the value of delegating authority to the chief to approve routine reporting messages.

During the inspection, the economic unit recognized the need for improved communication and began scheduling unit staff meetings, which should assist the newly hired commercial assistant, in particular, to work effectively.

The section engages with the Ministry of Environment pursuant to an environmental cooperation agreement signed in 2013. At the time of the inspection, the section was working with the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs and the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs to negotiate a bilateral agreement with Oman on science and technology.

Leahy Vetting¹

The section's political-military officer is the Leahy vetting point of contact. The section's office management specialist is the backup. Both have received training, and the embassy has developed its own standard operating procedures for vetting, which work effectively.

Lack of Partnership Program Plan with Performance Goals

The embassy is a partner post with the Commercial Service office in Consulate General Dubai. During the inspection, Consulate Dubai provided introductory training to the commercial assistant. In its FY 2016 Integrated Country Strategy, the embassy established a goal of increasing U.S. exports to Oman by 5 percent annually. The embassy is satisfied with the Post Partnership Program. The OIG team advised the economic-commercial officer on how to link her work requirements statement to Post Partnership Program plan performance indicators, a requirement of the 2011 State/Commerce Memorandum of Understanding.

The section did not receive an annual Post Partnership Program plan with performance targets. According to their 2011 Memorandum of Understanding, the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs and the Commercial Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce are supposed to develop an annual Post Partnership Program plan that includes performance targets for each Department Partner Post. Embassy Muscat was not informed of its performance targets for FY 2015. The absence of the annual Post Partnership Program plan performance targets inhibits the embassy, particularly the political/economic section, from planning its activities and measuring its performance.

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs should develop an annual global Post Partnership Program plan, including performance goals, for Embassy Muscat.
(Action: EB)

Section Is Not Retiring Records

The section has not retired files in accordance with 5 *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM) 433. Some electronic files are 10 years old. Language in 5 *Foreign Affairs Handbook* (FAH)-4 H-311 c. contains schedules for retiring records. The failure to archive section records stems from a lack

¹ Consistent with U.S. law and policy, the Department vets its assistance to foreign security forces, as well as certain Department of Defense training programs, to ensure that recipients have not committed gross human rights abuses. When the vetting process uncovers credible evidence that an individual or unit has committed a gross violation of human rights, U.S. assistance is withheld. The obligation to vet Department assistance and Department of Defense-funded training programs for foreign security forces units is in section 620M (a.k.a. the Leahy amendment) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and a comparable provision in the annual Department of Defense Appropriations Act. Security forces units subject to Leahy vetting generally include foreign militaries, reserves, police, homeland security forces such as border guards or customs police, prison guards, and other units or individual members of units authorized to use force.

of familiarity with the procedures for archiving electronic files. If files are not archived, they are not accessible.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Muscat should require the political/economic section to retire its files in accordance with Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

The section's office management specialist is not familiar with the procedures for archiving electronic records. The section's training schedule for 2015 does not include archival training. Language in 13 FAM 022.5 specifies responsibility for ensuring that employees have current and up-to-date training. Without appropriate training, the office management specialist cannot efficiently and effectively fulfill her responsibilities for archiving the section's records and record documents have an attendant risk of not being preserved.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Muscat should provide training to the office management assistant in the political/economic section on the archiving of electronic records. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Global Coalition to Counter Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

Oman is a member of the global coalition but does not participate in its working groups. It provided some assistance to Syrian refugees but has not contributed directly to combatting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Oman instead has focused on the political and security situation in Yemen, with which it shares a border, and on the threat of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The U.S. Presidential Special Envoy for the Global Coalition visited Muscat in 2014 for discussions with senior Omani officials. (See Embassy Support to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL section in the classified annex for more discussion.)

Foreign Assistance

U.S. foreign assistance to Oman includes foreign military financing and international military education and training, external border security (EXBS), antiterrorism assistance, and the regional security initiative. In FY 2015, the United States will provide Oman with \$8 million in foreign military financing and \$2 million in funding for international military education and training. Oman provides matching funding of \$500,000 per year that goes toward the professional military education of Omani military officers. All three Omani service chiefs are graduates of a U.S. professional military education institution. As a higher income country, Oman commercially purchases most of its defense equipment and has \$3.3 billion in open foreign military sales cases.

The embassy's security assistance working group meets on a quarterly basis. It is chaired by the DCM and helps the Ambassador oversee and coordinate assistance programs. If the DCM is absent, the political/economic section chief chairs the working group, which coordinates assistance and training provided to Oman by embassy elements. In addition to representatives of the embassy's office of military cooperation, the working group includes law enforcement representatives, such as the regional security officer, the legal attaché, and a Customs and Border Protection agent of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, who assists the Omani

port of Salalah to screen maritime shipments bound for the United States under the security container initiative.

Locking In External Border Security Cost Savings

The EXBS advisor administers the Department's EXBS program. The advisor has reduced costs of the EXBS program by securing the cooperation of the Royal Omani Police, the recipient of a majority of training projects, in providing a cost-free venue. This arrangement is an informal one, however, and could be at risk if the leadership of the Royal Omani Police changes. The EXBS advisor—who has responsibility also for Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—has explored with the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation Affairs the idea of a cost-sharing memorandum of understanding with the United Arab Emirates. It is a generally accepted management principle that managers should ensure that policies, programs, and activities under their supervision are managed efficiently. A formal memorandum of understanding with the Royal Omani Police, if concluded, would secure cost savings arrangements.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation Affairs, should propose a memorandum of understanding on cost sharing of external border and security training provided to the Royal Omani Police. (Action: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with ISN)

Training Needs

The EXBS program assistant was hired several weeks prior to the inspection but had received little formal training. She is required to manage EXBS financial accounts through the Consolidated Overseas Accountability Support Toolbox and to enter procurement requests in the ARIBA system, as well as maintain EXBS program records, but has difficulties fulfilling these responsibilities. Both the program assistant and the EXBS advisor identified a need for the program assistant to receive training on using the Consolidated Overseas Accountability Support Toolbox and records management. During the inspection, the program assistant received permission to take an online course on international trade and another 1-hour course on ARIBA, but this does not meet existing training needs. Department regulation 13 FAM 022.5 specifies responsibility for ensuring that employees have current and up-to-date training. Without appropriate training, the program administrator cannot efficiently and effectively fulfill her responsibilities and the risk of mismanagement of funds increases.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Muscat should provide needed training to the program administrator for the external border and security unit in the political/economic section. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Antiterrorism Assistance and Regional Strategic Initiative

The embassy's regional security office manages an FY 2015 Antiterrorism Assistance program with \$500,000 in funding. The statement of work for the antiterrorism assistance training courses provides for cost sharing. The Bureau of Counterterrorism also supports specialized training of

the Royal Omani Police that is managed by the embassy's legal attaché and uses FY 2015 regional strategic initiative funds, a key tool in promoting cooperation between our partners in combatting terrorism.

Public Affairs Section

The public affairs section was missing four of its nine permanent staff at the time of the inspection due to resignations, retirements, and extended leave. In addition, the assistant public diplomacy officer is in the Expanded Professional Associates Program, so this slot may also be vacant after summer 2015. These staff shortages resulted in fewer public affairs programs during the inspection than would be expected from a full staff complement.

In 2013, the Omani Government suspended, pending a "programming review," such outreach activities and public affairs programs as the Access English courses for under-privileged youth, grants to many government institutions, Youth Exchange and Study, and the Fulbright Foreign Language Teacher Assistant and English Teaching Assistant programs. As of the inspection, these programs remained suspended.

Information Resource Center

In early 2014, the embassy closed the Information Resource Center (IRC) in the embassy and converted the space to a conference room. Embassy officers told the inspection team that the decision was based on the need for conference space, anecdotal information indicating that virtually no Omanis visited the IRC, and a determination by the regional security office that all chancery employees had to be moved behind the hardline. The regional security office advised that moving the hardline to encompass the IRC and adjacent offices would be a significant new Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations project, requiring a comprehensive study, scope of work, and funding. The decision did not, however, take into consideration the possibility of another option: constructing a hardline at the entrance to the IRC and converting the IRC space to dual use (conference/meeting space and IRC). This option would have retained the IRC as a public programming space while allowing the space to be used for embassy meetings and conferences.

Reopening the IRC could provide the embassy with both a research facility as well as reliable public programming space and help compensate for the closure of the public programming space that was available at the six American Corners. To justify the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations project expenditure, the embassy front office and section chiefs agreed to an OIG team suggestion that the embassy conduct a survey of its Omani contacts, including alumni of American exchanges, to ascertain their views on whether they would visit a reopened IRC, either to conduct research or to attend programs.

Grants Management, Competition, and Monitoring

The inspection team reviewed all 24 files in the section's FY 2014 files, a total of \$105,041. Of this, \$63,012 was spent on musical performances. The inspectors advised the public affairs officer on the goal of achieving more balance or diversity in grants allocations by programming

in areas such as entrepreneurship, the environment, career advising, and science and technology education.

At the beginning of the inspection, the cultural specialist was managing the sections grants but did not have a grants officer representative certificate. She was also improperly identified as the grants officer representative on two of the largest grants—for \$30,814 and for \$18,877—in violation of Grants Policy Directive 16. After discussion with the OIG inspector, she applied for and obtained her grants officer representative certificate.

The embassy does not compete its grants, as required by Grants Policy Directive 5, revision 04. Several of them properly address issues of the grantees' special expertise, the prohibitive burden of administering competition while the section is short-staffed, or the proximity of the grantee to the programming venue. Four other grants files contain justification forms; however, the language does not address genuine disadvantages of competition. The team advised the section officers to publicize and compete grants or to write legitimate justifications for noncompetition, which they agreed to do.

The documentation of monitoring and evaluation in grants files is inconsistent. The larger grants have either full financial and program reports or mission activity tracker reports, which capture the results or achievements of the program. One of the two grants with no monitoring or evaluation documentation went to an educational advisor to attend the Salalah Tourism Festival for 4 days. No record exists of new contacts made, programs or sessions conducted, or goals accomplished. Adherence to Grants Policy Directive 42, which requires monitoring and evaluation, would provide an indicator of the value of this annual program.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Muscat should monitor and evaluate all its grants and maintain the documentation in its files. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Consular Affairs Management

The OIG team found no significant deficiencies in consular management or operations. The Office of Visa Services, the Office of Fraud Prevention Programs, and the Executive Office in the Bureau of Consular Affairs all commented positively on consular management. The Regional Consular Officer, based in Frankfurt, visited the embassy in November 2014 and again in February 2015 to help prepare the consular section for the OIG inspection. The OIG team observed timely and efficient provision of American citizens and Visa Services.

The position description of the senior visa specialist—an FS-10—was last reviewed in 2008. The position description of the FS-07 visa assistant—last reviewed in 2010—contains nearly the same job elements, with the exception of supervisory responsibility. The visa assistant is responsible for the same broad range of duties and responsibilities but was classified three grades below the supervisor. Given this disparity, the OIG team advised the consular section chief to submit LE staff position descriptions to Consulate General Frankfurt for M-classification review.

The consular section does not have an orientation and training program for new officers or LE staff members. Per 7 FAH-1 H-645.2, each embassy should have a written orientation and training program for new arrivals. Without adequate training, officers and LE staff members will not be able to carry out their responsibilities correctly.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Muscat should establish a structured orientation and training program for new consular section employees. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Visa Services

Embassy Muscat adjudicated 11,671 nonimmigrant visas in FY 2014, a 17-percent increase over FY 2013 and a 33-percent increase over FY 2012. Despite this sharp rise in nonimmigrant visa adjudications over a 2-year period, staffing is adequate to meet the workload. Omani nationals comprise only 60 percent of the nonimmigrant visa applicant pool, with the remaining 40 percent consisting of third country nationals from Oman's large expatriate community. The major challenge is adjudicating the intent of applicants resident in Oman, who may seek a U.S. visa to flee political strife or civil war—such as applicants from Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Pakistan, and Egypt—or who may seek better economic opportunities in the United States—such as applicants from India and the Philippines. Given the strong cultural, social, family, and economic ties of Omanis to their home country and no history of emigration, their adjusted nonimmigrant visa refusal rate is less than 1 percent, whereas the refusal rate for some third country nationals is as high as 60 percent. Visa adjudication is further complicated by Omani Government policies mandating hiring quotas for Omani citizens, putting pressure on third country nationals to migrate elsewhere in search of employment.

Monthly reporting cables for the Visas Viper interagency terrorist reporting program are timely, and coordination among agencies is appropriate. Visa validation studies are current. The embassy adjudicated 115 immigrant visas in FY 2014, nearly the same as the previous year. The immigrant pool is almost exclusively third country nationals. Global Support Strategy² provides information, appointment, and offsite fee collection services under the consular affairs worldwide contract.

The DCM was not reviewing visa refusals until the inspection; however, he is now fully compliant. According to 9 FAM 41.121 N2.3-7, consular supervisors are required to review as many nonimmigrant visa refusals as is practical, but not less than 20 percent of refusals. This review is a significant management and instructional tool and is useful in maintaining the highest professional standards of adjudication. Lack of reviews could affect the uniform and correct application of the law and regulations. The consular section chief—and both the current and the previous regional consular officer—had argued that the DCM must review at least 20 percent of the refusals. During the inspection, the Visa Office reaffirmed this interpretation.

² Global Support Strategy is a worldwide, 10-year contract with a maximum value of \$2.8 billion designed to change the way third parties provide information, appointments, fee collection, document delivery, and greeters for visa services.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Muscat should perform the full range of nonimmigrant visa adjudication reviews in accordance with Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

American Citizens Services

The 1,282 American citizens registered with the embassy are assigned to 18 warden zones. The Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs also reported approximately 52,000 American citizen visitors in 2013, primarily from cruise ships. In FY 2014, American citizens submitted 393 passport applications and 34 applications for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, a slight increase over the previous year. Emergency consular services are in little demand, but a small number of complex cases require ongoing attention. The last warden town hall meeting was held in February 2015, and all zones but one have a warden.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Table 1: FY 2015 Staffing and Funding, by Agency

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff (authorized)	U.S. Locally Employed Staff (authorized)	Foreign National Staff (authorized)	Total Staff (authorized)	Total Funding FY 2015
U.S. Department of State					
Diplomatic and Consular Programs	24	1	4	29	\$2,317,498
International Cooperative Administrative Support Services	11	6	69	86	\$6,271,300
Public Diplomacy	2	1	6	9	\$326,905
Consular Affairs	2	1	3	6	\$234,363
Diplomatic Security	11	3	83	97	\$1,559,224
Marine Security	6	0	3	9	\$125,650
Representation	0	0	0	0	\$27,208
Overseas Buildings Operations	2	0		2	\$2,184,971
Other	0	0	0	0	
U.S. Department of Defense	0	0	0	0	
Defense Attaché Office	14	0	1	15	\$366,333
Office of Defense Cooperation	12	0	4	16	
Other	9	0	7	16	
Federal Bureau of Investigation	3	0		3	
Legal Attaché Office	0	0	0	0	
Other				0	
U.S. Department of Homeland Security	3	0	2	5	
Immigration and Customs Enforcement	2	0	0	1	
Total	101	12	182	293	\$13,420,580

Source: Generated by OIG from data provided by Embassy Muscat.

Overall International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) customer satisfaction scores are good but have lagged slightly behind worldwide and regional averages for the past 3 years. In the 2015 ICASS customer satisfaction survey, the community liaison office, supply and property management, and furniture and appliance pool scored high, above 4 on a 5-point scale. Scores fell slightly from 2014 to 2015 in the areas of human resources, cashiering, vehicle maintenance, motor pool, shipping, procurement, information management (IM), and residential maintenance.

Staffing gaps and delays in filling LE staff positions affect delivery of services. In addition, Oman's inconsistent enforcement of labor regulations makes recruitment difficult and a cumbersome bureaucracy slows routine work, such as leasing residences and registering vehicles. The embassy's FY 2016 Integrated Country Strategy identified three priority tasks: upgrade chancery facilities, provide training and development for employees, and modernize communications technology.

Human Resources

The human resources section is staffed with an American human resources officer, a senior specialist, two human resources assistants, and two expeditors. Although it is unusual for expeditor positions to be attached to the human resources section, those employees perform extensive duties for the section, such as obtaining visas and liaising with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to obtain various permits and authorizations for both Americans and third country nationals. The human resources officer would like to retain this function in her office.

The section has been understaffed. A new human resources assistant position was approved by the ICASS council in April 2013 but only filled in January 2015. That employee has taken over the recruiting function previously performed by the other assistant. She will need training to be able to perform her work. The senior specialist has been with the embassy since November 2013 but has not received the 5-week human resources specialist training course.

Understaffing and the lack of training have created a general unhappiness within the embassy with the section's performance. ICASS service satisfaction scores for the section dipped to 3.35 for American human resources services and 3.41 for LE staff services in the latest ICASS survey.

Ineffective Translation Service Staff Management

Embassy Muscat is not adequately managing its translation service staff. A translation unit within the IM section provides English to Arabic and Arabic to English translation services to all mission ICASS subscribers. The IM officer manages the two LE staff members in the unit. Before moving to the IM section in August 2013, the unit was supervised by the management officer. According to interviews with embassy management, the IM section volunteered to supervise the unit.

Although IM management has created policies and procedures for operating the unit, members of the translation staff expressed that they lack training and coaching for their tradecraft. The staff requested training in areas of diplomacy and protocol and English language, but the requests were denied. Staff members also indicated that their translation roles are not clearly defined. For example, their position descriptions show duties, such as the preparation of a daily press summary of local and regional news, as well as translation of press releases; however, they are not performing these duties. Additionally, IM management does not have the expertise to develop the staff in the translation tradecraft. According to 1 FAM 014.1 a., organizational structure should strive to achieve a proper balance for effective use of government resources.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Muscat should define the roles and responsibilities of the translation unit and place the unit within the appropriate section. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Duty Roster for Translators Is Unnecessary

The human resources office prepares a duty roster that includes an American and an LE staff translator/interpreter. The LE staff members on this list have had no translator or interpreter training and may not be technically capable of performing the work. Moreover, the embassy already employs two translators attached to the IM section. The duty translator is supposed to provide after-hours support during unforeseen or emergency situations. Work includes translation of correspondence after hours or on weekends and holidays and may include being present at Royal Omani Police stations or other government offices in case of accidents or other emergencies. It is unclear why the LE staff members are included on the duty roster, especially since they do not have the skills to conduct these types of services. According to 1 FAM 014.1, the policy of ensuring the most effective use of government resources includes ensuring that employees are effectively used. Inappropriately trained LE staff could be used for translation services and could provide incorrect translation.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Muscat should eliminate the translator/interpreter duty roster. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Document Management and Adherence to Policy Needs Improvement

A review of various files and documents indicates a need for better paperwork management and enforcement of existing policies, as noted in 1 FAM 014. 1 b. A shortage of staff and inattention to detail, which resulted in poor ICASS scores, may have caused this to occur. For Americans, check-in sheets were frequently not included in personnel file folders. Of 26 files reviewed, check-in sheets were absent from 11. A review of the last awards committee files revealed some poor justifications, some missing fiscal data on approved cash awards, and lack of detail on either the amount the nominator requested or the amount the committee approved. Finally, a review of LE personnel folders revealed several evaluation performance reviews where the supervisor indicated the position description was not accurate, but no followup by the section was mentioned.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Muscat should develop a plan to enforce Department of State human resources-related policies and to correct the inadequate documentation in existing files. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Slowness in Hiring ICASS Staff

In April 2013, the ICASS council approved hiring for six ICASS positions, but none was filled. In July 2014, the ICASS council again approved hiring for these six positions—as well as six additional ICASS positions. At the time of the inspection, only 3 of these 12 positions were filled. Nine others were in some stage of the hiring process. The lack of prompt hiring to fill vacancies leaves offices short-staffed and possibly contributes to the low ICASS scores that the human resource offices received.

Recruiting and Retention Issues and the Possibility of Recruiting from Outside Oman

At the time of the inspection, the mission employed 98 Omanis and 52 expatriates hired in Oman. The embassy does not recruit expatriates from outside Oman. Embassy Muscat has experienced an attrition rate of more than 20 percent since the beginning of 2013. Recruiting within Oman is becoming more difficult for the mission. Omanis are turning down offers because of low wages and the lack of access to the local social security system. Expatriates hired locally must now obtain a "no objection certificate" from their previous employers to work at the embassy.

At the time of the inspection, 27 LE staff positions were vacant. Eight of the 27 were in the final stages of hiring. Thirty-four vacancies were announced in 2014; 15 so far in 2015.

The embassy receives job applications from individuals outside Oman but does not attempt to include them in the screening process. According to 3 FAM 7271.4, the appointment of expatriates is effected only when qualified persons are not available in the host country.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should examine and report on the possibility of recruiting expatriates from outside Oman. (Action: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with NEA and DGHR)

Locally Employed Staff Committee

The OIG team met with the LE staff committee, one that did not exist at the time of the last OIG inspection in 2010. The committee indicated they have a good working relationship with the front office (quarterly meetings) and with the management office (monthly meetings). They described their relationship with the embassy as "open" and management's reaction to their concerns as "responsive."

However, the committee brought several issues to the OIG team's attention, the most significant being salary and benefits, in particular Omani employees' inability to participate in the local social security system. They noted that most of their benefits (housing and transportation) were rolled up into salary in 2006. Since the wage freeze in 2011, they have been able to receive only the 3-percent Omani Government-mandated increases in 2014 and 2015. At the same time, housing costs have increased significantly.

Despite the fact that Oman has a social security system, Omani employees at the American embassy are unable to participate because the Omani Government is unable to provide a written copy of the plan or the rules, regulations, and procedures that would inform embassy and Washington deliberations on Omani employees' participation in the plan. All employees receive a severance payment from the embassy upon departure, a benefit the Omani employees would lose if they joined the local social security system. LE staff committee leadership noted that most—if not all—Omani employees would opt for joining the social security system; the severance pay was not considered to be a comparable benefit. As a result, the committee points

to the fact that qualified employees are leaving for better pay and benefits and qualified applicants are either not applying or are rejecting job offers from the mission.

Currently, the Department and Embassy Muscat are at an impasse regarding participation in the local social security system by Omani employees of the mission. The Bureau of Human Resources requires a translated copy of the Omani law. The embassy is unable to provide one because it does not exist. Local social security system participation is Department policy worldwide.

Recommendation 14: The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with Embassy Muscat, should approve enrollment of Omani locally employed staff in a retirement system. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with Embassy Muscat)

Locally Employed Staff Wages and Benefits Addressed in a Regionally Coordinated Cable to the Department

Embassy Doha transmitted a cable (15 Doha 171) that addressed the LE staffing challenges in restrictive Gulf Cooperation Council members' labor markets. It gathered joint input from four embassies, including Oman, and summarized the conditions under which local staff members are employed in the region. According to the cable, "embassy wages and the Department's compensation methodology fail to account for the labor market issues that artificially depress attrition rates and contribute to the rapidly rising costs of living." It concludes that "the Department should reexamine its methodology for compensation of LE staff serving at embassies in the Gulf Cooperation Council." Appropriate compensation for LE staff employees is discussed in 3 FAH-2 H-214 and H-215.

In June 2010, the Bureau of Human Resources conducted a broad study of Gulf Cooperation Council members' salaries and benefits to address this same problem. The team visited six posts, including Muscat. They examined the fact that these countries differ significantly in their makeup between host country and third country nationals in each mission. It is unknown what actions resulted from the study or what improvements were made to the salary and benefits structure. Until the study is completed and implemented, the embassy will find it difficult to find qualified personnel characterized by excellence and professionalism and embassy employees will not receive adequate compensation but will continue to suffer from artificial wage and labor markets.

Recommendation 15: The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, should update its 2010 study of Gulf Cooperation Council posts and recommend ways to improve the compensation package for locally employed staff members in these countries. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with NEA)

The LE committee noted that expatriates receive one homeward passage trip every 2 years, whereas similar employees in private companies in Oman (except maids and laborers) receive this benefit annually. The embassy has not requested annual passage for expatriate embassy staff members. Documentation provided by the human resources officer indicates that a 2014 report on Oman benefits and allowances, performed by Aon Hewett, stated, "home leave

benefit/flight home is commonly offered across all employee groups and is given once a year." According to 3 FAM 7274.4-1 a., third country national benefits must be based on prevailing practice. If substantiated, embassy employee expatriate benefits will continue to be unequal to other expatriates employed at private companies in Oman.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should submit justification to determine whether Muscat's expatriate staff warrants an annual homeward passage benefit. (Action: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with DGHR)

Financial Management

The financial management office is staffed with an American direct-hire financial management officer, a financial specialist, a cashier, two voucher clerks, an accountant, and a financial clerk. A cashier reconciliation was conducted with no issues arising. Unliquidated obligations are reviewed periodically. ICASS council/budget meetings are held semiannually.

No ICASS-Funded Information Management Position

The embassy has five U.S. direct-hire ICASS positions, but none is in the IM section. Post did not focus on this issue. The IM section has three American direct-hire positions—all paid for by the Department. The section performs a substantial amount of services for all agencies at post. Although specific criteria regarding the staffing of the section do not exist, 6 FAH-5H-011.2 notes that ICASS services include mail and messenger services, information systems management, and reception and telephone services, all of which fall under IM services. In addition, 6 FAH-5 H-013.2 notes that agencies abroad should pay their share of post administrative costs on the basis of usage. The ICASS services center in Washington has indicated that the "rule of thumb" is that the first IM specialist position at post should be program and the second ICASS.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Muscat should convene an International Cooperative Administrative Support Systems council meeting and convert one of the three information management specialist positions to an International Cooperative Administrative Support Systems-funded position. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Contracting Officer's Representatives Not Certified

Embassy contracting officer's representatives are not certified through the Department's Federal Acquisition Certification Program online system before appointment, as required by the Office of the Procurement Executive Procurement Information Bulletin 2012–15. The certification process checks that the designated contracting officer's representative meets the necessary level of training and experience to administer a specific contract. Without certified contracting officer's representatives, oversight of contracts could be inadequate, creating a management control vulnerability. The embassy staff was unaware of the requirement.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should register all contracting officer's representatives in the Federal Acquisition Certification Program online system. (Action: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with A)

Incidental Drivers Not Medically Certified

Eighty-five American and LE staff members have received driver training at post and been approved to self-drive official vehicles. American and LE staff members who operate official vehicles incidental to their primary jobs have not completed medical exams and certifications at least every 4 years, as required by 14 FAM 432.4 c. (4)(b) and the Department's Overseas Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program. Without periodic medical exams, incidental drivers may not be medically fit to drive safely, increasing the risk of motor vehicle accidents and injuries. The embassy's motor pool drivers have current medical certifications, but staff members said they did not know the requirement also applied to incidental drivers.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Muscat should require all incidental drivers to complete medical exams and certifications before driving official vehicles. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Property

Maintenance Property Tracked in Unapproved System

The facilities unit keeps its own property records for repair and maintenance parts and supplies on an unapproved electronic system. According to 14 FAM 414.2-1 a. (1)–(2), the Integrated Logistics Management System and the Post Administrative Software Suite are the only approved property accountability systems for all Department assets. The general services office uses these approved systems for all other embassy property, but the facilities staff has not had time to transfer property records to these systems. As a result, the embassy's annual inventory certification submitted to the Department does not include more than \$365,000 worth of facilities supplies, negatively affecting the integrity of the Department's financial reports.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Muscat should transfer all expendable and nonexpendable property records to a Department of State-approved system. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Housing

Complaints About Residential Maintenance

In survey questionnaires and interviews, embassy personnel complained about poor housing maintenance, including chronic problems with leaking air conditioners and overflowing sewage tanks. Residential maintenance is a shared service between the general services office, which is responsible for post's leased property, and the facilities maintenance unit, which is responsible for government-owned property. The housing pool includes 61 leased residences and 8 government-owned houses. The embassy's standard lease states landlords are responsible for maintenance; however, according to local prevailing practice, owners do not provide routine maintenance services after leasing their residences. Landlords are slow to respond to requests,

and the quality of repairs is often poor. Standards in 6 FAH-5 H-341.12-3(A)(1) require service providers to ensure residential repairs are made properly and on time. Poor residential maintenance negatively affects morale and may expose occupants to safety hazards.

To improve customer service, in July 2014 the ICASS council approved five new LE staff positions in the facilities office to provide more support for the maintenance of leased residences. At the time of the inspection, 8 months after approval of the new positions, none of them has been filled because of difficulties in recruitment and delays in the hiring process.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Muscat should convene an International Cooperative Administration Support Services working group to analyze issues with residential maintenance services, propose solutions to the International Cooperative Administration Support Services council, and monitor implementation of a plan to improve services. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Facilities Management and Safety, Health, and Environmental Management

The government-owned chancery building, completed in 1989, occupies a 4-acre site on the Gulf of Oman beachfront. The Marine security guard detachment quarters are also located on the chancery compound. In addition to the chancery compound, the Department owns eight staff residences plus one property operated by the Muscat Employee Association as a recreation center. The chancery compound is scheduled for a major security upgrade, including a new compound access control entrance and perimeter lighting in FY 2018.

After more than 26 years, the original fan coil air conditioning system in the chancery is unreliable and often requires repairs. Because of extreme heat in Muscat most of the year, working in the chancery without air conditioning is not feasible. The embassy could be forced to suspend operations if the air conditioning system fails. In addition, the aging system is not energy efficient. Replacement of the obsolete system was noted as a high priority in the embassy's FY 2016 Integrated Country Strategy and has been an urgent requirement awaiting funding from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations since 2009.

Facilities management operations have suffered from staffing shortages. At the time of the inspection, almost half the facilities LE staff positions (9 of 20 authorized) were vacant. As a result, the embassy had a backlog of 218 open preventive maintenance work orders from the past 4 months, with an estimated 5,388 work hours required to complete them. With limited staff, facilities focused on handling unscheduled work orders from customers at the expense of preventive maintenance. In addition, the embassy has not been entering material costs on work orders before closing them.

The safety, health and environmental management committee met twice during the past year, as required. All safety hazards identified during the 2012 visit from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations were corrected.

Comprehensive Space Planning Lacking

Chancery space planning to accommodate American and LE staffing growth has not been done in a comprehensive way. The embassy's FY 2016 Integrated Country Strategy notes that 14 U.S. direct-hire employees occupied the chancery in 1989 and 101 authorized direct-hire positions are currently authorized. The embassy has a space committee to review changes; however, reconfigurations often have been done to satisfy an immediate need without considering long-term requirements.

During the inspection, the OIG team identified space issues that could be improved through a more comprehensive approach. For example, space in the former IRC is underused. The health unit is converting a storeroom into an office for the new regional medical officer, but the entire health unit would benefit from a more efficient space use plan. In addition, the unclassified computer server room is cramped and partitioned to create office space for three LE staff members. The server room also doubles as a storage room, posing a fire hazard. Likewise, boxes of supplies are stacked in the basement hallway outside the property supply room.

Furthermore, the space allotted to the human resource specialist and her two assistants is inadequate for them to conduct business. The office space is too small; customers need to lean over partitions to talk with the employees; the files containing local staff information are contained in a closet and access to the files requires closing the adjoining door to the entire human resource office; and the senior specialist does not have a private office in which to conduct business.

According to 1 FAM 284.2(6), the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, Office of Design and Engineering is responsible for space planning to ensure functional facilities for the Department's conduct of diplomacy. Without professional space planning, changes in facilities compromise building safety and security standards.

Recommendation 22: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Muscat, should conduct a comprehensive space planning survey for the chancery. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Muscat)

Information Management

Embassy Muscat's IM section scored below the 4.05 average in the OIG work place and quality of life survey for its services. The section provides classified and unclassified computer, telephone, radio, mail, pouch, and translation services. On the basis of the survey and interviews with embassy personnel, the classified and unclassified computer support services are the least effective. The OIG team review identified that inadequate collaboration and communication between IM management and other embassy sections hamper the quality of the services. Other factors affecting the services are LE staffing gaps due to retirement and extended leave and lack of documented classified systems operating procedures.

During the inspection, the OIG team identified deficiencies in key areas, including inadequate customer service, inactive information technology (IT) configuration control board, and untested

IT contingency plan. Additionally, the team recommended moving the translation service out of the IM section. The OIG team also advised the IM staff to correct deficiencies, such as media labeling and storage, systems and telephone maintenance log keeping, standard operation documentation, laptop encryption, and cellphone inventory. The section corrected some of the deficiencies on the spot during the inspection, and others are in progress.

Inadequate Information Management Customer Service

IM management needs to improve its customer service. Service requests take a long time to complete, and at times solutions are not always discussed in joint forums for timely and effective solutions. The service delays frustrate customers and have reduced confidence in IM leadership. The information management officer who heads the IM section is not communicating effectively with his colleagues and embassy management. The officer is assigned to a position above his Foreign Service grade level. Department employees are required to complete mandatory leadership training, as outlined in 13 FAM 310, to develop their leadership skills. The IM officer has not received the required leadership training for his assigned position level. Additionally, 13 FAH-1 H132.3 cites that prior to each assignment, Foreign Service officers and specialist career candidates will receive preparatory training appropriate to the position to be occupied. According to 3 FAM 1214, collaboration creates constructive working relationships with all mission elements to further goals. The OIG team advised IM and embassy management to foster a collaborative work environment between the IM section and the rest of the mission.

Recommendation 23: Embassy Muscat should provide Foreign Service Institute leadership training to the information management officer for his assigned position grade level. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Inactive Local Information Technology Configuration Control Board

Embassy Muscat local IT configuration control board is not performing its duties. The board standard operating procedure has not been updated since 2011. According to 5 FAM 862.1 and 5 FAM 864 a. (1), the board is responsible for ensuring that local software and hardware changes do not adversely affect the Department's network and information security. During the inspection, the OIG team identified two locally developed applications that were not accounted for in the embassy software list provided to the team. An active local IT change control board provides the framework for the identification, control, and accounting of all IT assets used by the mission to ensure only authorized software is installed on the Department's networks. IM management did not recognize the need for a proactive IT configuration control board.

Recommendation 24: Embassy Muscat should implement a standard operating procedure for its information technology configuration control board and disseminate it to embassy personnel. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Unclassified Information Technology Contingency Plan Not Tested Annually

Embassy Muscat has not tested its IT contingency plan for the unclassified network annually as required in 12 FAM 622.3-2. Having a tested IT contingency plan provides post the necessary

operational plans to overcome potential IT outages. The IM staff has not tested the plan because of competing priorities.

Recommendation 25: Embassy Muscat should implement procedures for testing the unclassified information technology contingency plan in accordance with Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

MISSION SUPPORT SERVICES

American employees rated their personal morale “good” in the OIG workplace and quality of life questionnaire with a score of 3.6, exceeding the average score of 3.49 for all posts inspected over the past 5 years. In OIG survey responses and interviews, U.S. direct-hire embassy staff members cited extreme heat and poor housing maintenance as negative morale factors. The results of a February 2015 standardized morale survey administered by the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs regional medical officer/psychiatrist responsible for Embassy Muscat showed morale as “very high.” With a response rate of 35 percent, 95 percent of the respondents indicated they would recommend Embassy Muscat to prospective bidders.

Community Liaison Office

In the 2015 ICASS customer satisfaction survey, the score for community liaison office services rose to 4.12, equaling the worldwide average. Marks for the Muscat sponsor and orientation programs exceeded the worldwide average in the OIG workplace and quality of life questionnaires. Two eligible family member community liaison office co-coordinators manage the community liaison programs.

[Redacted] (b) (5), [Redacted] (b) (6)

In the OIG workplace and quality of life questionnaire, [Redacted] (b) (5), [Redacted] (b) (6) the Department-sponsored school, scored 4.52, above the world average of 3.86 for education for dependent children at posts abroad. Embassy parents, the community liaison office coordinators, and the Department’s Office of Overseas Schools regional education officer all praised the school’s educational quality and cooperation with the embassy. Since 1998, the Department has supported the school with grants totaling more than \$6.5 million for security upgrades as well as instructional activities. The DCM represents the Ambassador and embassy parents on the school board. The regional education officer last visited in November 2014.

Medical Unit

The medical unit employs two LE staff nurses working part-time schedules (24 hours per week) and an administrative assistant. The embassy has requested and received permission to establish an American medical provider in Muscat. At the time of the inspection, a regional medical officer was scheduled to arrive in late summer.

Drugs are regularly checked for expiration dates and destroyed when necessary. Controlled substances are inventoried, as required. Customer satisfaction with the health unit is good, although the ICASS scores fall below regional and worldwide scores. Many OIG questionnaires attributed this to the lack of an American medical provider as opposed to the quality of the current nursing staff.

The space in the unit is inefficient and needs restructuring. It currently consists of a waiting room and two very large rooms, one used for office space and the other as an examination room. A separate office is being carved out in anticipation of the arrival of the new medical officer. A second examination room, among other changes, is needed. A reorganization of the office space should be conducted in concert with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations space plan recommended in the Facilities Management section of this report.

Employee Association

The Muscat Employee Association operates a concession (but not a commissary), a gift shop, cafeteria, and temporary duty quarters. It also operates a separate government-owned facility containing a restaurant, swimming pool, and playground. Five mission members currently occupy board positions, and elections are held every 6 months to fill 1-year terms, although recently it has been difficult to recruit members for the committee.

The general manager is departing this summer and her position has been advertised. The financial position of the association is stable.

The Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs conducted an internal audit of the association in 2012. Although progress has been made to address the recommendations in the audit report, the embassy has not provided Washington with an official response. The OIG team advised the management officer to provide a status report and the association board to post meeting minutes on the association's SharePoint site to provide additional transparency to the community.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Embassy Muscat has two Equal Employment Opportunity counselors and four LE staff liaisons. A Federal Women's Program coordinator has also been designated. The Office of Civil Rights sent a team to Muscat in spring 2013 to conduct training. No cases were pending at the time of the inspection.

The four LE staff liaisons have not had training, and the inspectors suggested that the counselors approach other nearby missions to learn how they have conducted training for their LE staff counselors. The two counselors have had the 32-hour training course, but neither has attended the 8-hour refresher course required to be taken annually per 3 FAM 1514.1 c. Counselors lose their certification without the refresher training. The counselors attempted a digital video conference with a London training session, but the connection failed.

Recommendation 26: Embassy Muscat should provide the 8-hour Equal Employment Opportunity refresher course to the embassy's counselors. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The chief of mission management controls statement of assurance for 2014 identified four areas with management control vulnerabilities: timekeepers self-reporting time and attendance; overtime not consistently approved in advance; outdated chief of mission approvals for other authorized use of official vehicles; and drivers working more than 10 hours in 1 day. The embassy corrected all four deficiencies. Additional areas for improvement in management controls were identified during the inspection and are discussed in relevant sections of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should comply with anti-trafficking-in-persons requirements for all procurements greater than \$3,000. (Action: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with A)

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs should develop an annual global Post Partnership Program plan, including performance goals, for Embassy Muscat. (Action: EB)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Muscat should require the political/economic section to retire its files in accordance with Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Muscat should provide training to the office management assistant in the political/economic section on the archiving of electronic records. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation Affairs, should propose a memorandum of understanding on cost sharing of external border and security training provided to the Royal Omani Police. (Action: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with ISN)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Muscat should provide needed training to the program administrator for the external border and security unit in the political/economic section. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Muscat should monitor and evaluate all its grants and maintain the documentation in its files. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Muscat should establish a structured orientation and training program for new consular section employees. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Muscat should perform the full range of nonimmigrant visa adjudication reviews in accordance with Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Muscat should define the roles and responsibilities of the translation unit and place the unit within the appropriate section. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 11: Embassy Muscat should eliminate the translator/interpreter duty roster. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Muscat should develop a plan to enforce Department of State human resources-related policies and to correct the inadequate documentation in existing files. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should examine and report on the possibility of recruiting expatriates from outside Oman. (Action: Embassy Muscat, in coordination with NEA and DGHR)

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Recommendation 24: Embassy Muscat should implement a standard operating procedure for its information technology configuration control board and disseminate it to embassy personnel. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 25: Embassy Muscat should implement procedures for testing the unclassified information technology contingency plan in accordance with Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

Recommendation 26: Embassy Muscat should provide the 8-hour Equal Employment Opportunity refresher course to the embassy's counselors. (Action: Embassy Muscat)

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Title	Name	Arrival Date
Chiefs of Mission:		
Ambassador	Greta C. Holtz	9/2012
Deputy Chief of Mission	Paul Malik	5/2013
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Mark A Turner	8/2012
Consular	Vito DiPaola	9/2013
Political/Economic	Laura Malenas	7/2012
Public Affairs	Christy Watkins	8/2014
Regional Security	Nick Porter	8/2012
U.S. Department of Defense/Senior Defense Officer	Paul Ross, Col.	8/2012
Office of Defense Attaché Affairs	Jorn Pung, Lt. Col.	7/2013
Office of Military Cooperation	Ray Kahn, Lt. Col.	7/2012
Department of Homeland Security/CIS (Resident in Salalah)	Johnny Grays	7/2013
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Larry Crutcher (TDY)	2/2015

APPENDIX A: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This report was completed in accordance with OIG's oversight responsibilities, as described in Section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. The 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 OIG for the Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

Purpose and Scope

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors. 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 instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

Methodology

The inspection team's primary assessment criteria are regulations contained in the Foreign Affairs Manual and Handbooks, Department instructions, applicable law and generally accepted management principles.

The Office of Inspections solicits reviews of the content of inspection reports from interested offices, individuals, organizations, and activities.

For this inspection, inspectors conducted 100 formal interviews in Washington, DC, and 121 in Muscat, Oman. They reviewed 144 questionnaires from Embassy Muscat American and LE staff.

ABBREVIATIONS

DCM	Deputy chief of mission
Department	U.S. Department of State
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
EXBS	Education and training, external border security
FAH	<i>Foreign Affairs Handbook</i>
FAM	<i>Foreign Affairs Manual</i>
FAST	First- and second-tour
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
IRC	Information Resource Center
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
IT	Information technology
LE	Locally employed
OIG	Office of Inspector General

INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS

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Ken Moskowitz
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Derwood Staeben
Roman Zawada



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