



**United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
Office of Inspector General**

Inspection of Embassy Manila, Philippines



Embassy Manila, Philippines

The career Ambassador and career deputy chief of mission provide strong leadership of Embassy Manila's highly complex and dynamic policy implementation activities. Coordination between U.S. federal departments and agencies working in the Philippines under chief of mission authority and those operating under the authority of the U.S. regional military command is exceptionally close and productive.

Manila's consular section is remarkably productive and service oriented, although the unrelenting visa workload affects staff morale and limits entry-level officer exposure to a range of embassy activities. Consular standard operating procedures need updating. The embassy's political and economic reporting both receive very high marks from policymakers and community analysts in Washington.

With strong support from the public affairs section, the Ambassador's frequent outreach efforts get high-profile coverage in print and electronic media. This media coverage has proved a successful method of conveying the mission's core messages to millions of Filipinos. Moreover, section officers have met the challenges of a vigorous local press with innovative solutions.

The mission has grown by more than a third since 1999. The National Security Decision Directive-38 review process has not been used effectively and could be more rigorous.

The management section is well run, provides good services to its customers, and has developed a number of innovative approaches deemed "Best Practices." However, its strong infrastructure and abundant resources have allowed it to be less than economical when making some financial decisions.

OIG Report ISP-I-07-36A, Inspection of Embassy Manila, Philippines

The fieldwork for this report was conducted by the Office of Inspections in Manila between February 21 and March 20, 2007. This is an unclassified summary of a full report, which receives limited official distribution. Both the report summary and the full report reflect the conditions reviewed during the fieldwork.

Background: Philippines



The Philippines is an archipelago nation situated east of Vietnam and north of Indonesia. It consists of over 7,100 islands that are humid, tropical, and mostly mountainous. The Philippines lies on the western Pacific's typhoon belt and is astride major seismic and volcanic lines, so natural disasters are frequent. The busy port of Manila, on the island of Luzon, is the nation's capital; and metropolitan Manila is the 11th most populous urban area in the world.

The United States remains the Philippines' largest trading partner, with two-way merchandise trade standing at \$17.7 billion in 2006. The United States is also the largest historic foreign investor, with \$6.6 billion in fixed assets. Real economic growth has annually averaged over four percent, a very respectable figure for East Asia, over the past decade. Nonetheless, substantially higher growth rates are needed to alleviate poverty significantly, given the country's consistently high population growth rate and unequal income distribution. The United States works closely with the armed forces and police of the Philippines to combat terrorism.

Office of Inspector General

The Office of Inspector General conducts independent audits, inspections, and investigations to promote effective management, accountability, and positive change in the Department of State, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, and the foreign affairs community.

OIG's Office of Inspections provides systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department of State, its posts abroad, and related activities. Inspections cover policy implementation, resource management, and management controls. As part of the inspection, particular attention is given to consular, security, and information technology operations.

August 2, 2007