



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

Inspection of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

The United States remains the world's leader in supporting international programs to assist refugees and other vulnerable populations, accounting for approximately one-quarter of contributions worldwide. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) manages the Department of State's (Department) second largest program budget, with approximately \$997 million expended in FY 2005.

The bureau's new Assistant Secretary, who took up her duties in January 2006, inherits a bureau with a well-deserved reputation for professionalism and competent and effective management. Her arrival comes at a time of dramatic change in the bureau's operational environment. A welcome decline in the number of refugees worldwide has been more than offset by increased numbers of those who are internally displaced and other persons of concern. Meanwhile, the conceptual frameworks for both the international humanitarian system and U.S. foreign assistance programs are being substantially redefined, even as resources to support humanitarian activities are declining.

These changes hold significant implications for the bureau's mission and ways of doing business. Addressing these challenges and opportunities successfully will require vision, proactive leadership, an enhanced capacity for strategic planning, and more active public diplomacy and public affairs efforts.

Changes in the global context and in U.S. policies have also created unpredictability in the U.S. refugee admissions program. With strong Congressional and executive branch support, the number of refugees admitted to the United States has rebounded significantly in the last three years, after reaching record lows in the two years following September 11, 2001.

PRM has a highly developed system for setting policy and funding priorities, allocating funds and approving program implementation proposals. But this system has grown increasingly cumbersome and excessively demanding on bureau staff, hampering the bureau's ability to give due attention to critical, core functions.

The bureau receives high marks for both the effectiveness of its programs and the efficiency with which it manages its contributions, grants, and cooperative agreements. Nevertheless, the bureau has correctly identified a need to further strengthen its grants management, performance measurement, and monitoring and evaluation functions.

To adjust to its changing roles and responsibilities, the bureau will need to make more efficient use of existing staff and consider some increases in administrative resources.

Over the past decade, PRM has had to carry out its responsibilities in a highly volatile international environment. The end of the Cold War ushered in a period of intrastate tensions and conflicts and a sharp increase in the number of refugees and other victims of conflict. Globally, the number of refugees increased from roughly eight million in 1980, when the Bureau of Refugee Programs was established, to nearly 18 million in 1992. In the last decade, there have been dramatic increases in the numbers of internally displaced persons and other victims of conflict. Current estimates place the number of internally displaced persons at between 25 and 30 million, double the number of refugees.

Bureau Background

PRM has primary responsibility within the U.S. government for formulating U.S. foreign policy on population, protection and assistance to refugees and conflict victims, and international migration, as well as for administering U.S. refugee assistance and admissions programs. In this capacity, it has the lead role within the Department in responding to complex humanitarian emergencies around the world, as well as working to resolve protracted refugee situations. It also serves as the focal point within the U.S. government for multilateral coordination of international migration programs. The bureau is headed by an Assistant Secretary of State, supported by three deputy assistant secretaries, and comes under the direction of the Under Secretary for Global Affairs.

Office of Inspector General

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May 23, 2006