



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

Inspection of Embassy Riga, Latvia



Exterior of Embassy Riga

The Ambassador pursues U.S. policy objectives in Latvia effectively, using public diplomacy as an essential instrument. From the Ambassador on down, the embassy is vigorously committed to strengthening U.S. commercial ties with Latvia and played a key role in the recent U.S.-Baltic Trade and Investment Conference, which attracted 60 American firms. The Ambassador's centralized management style has led to blurred lines of communication and coordination, which affects morale. The Ambassador recognizes the need for a more disciplined approach to tasking and that internal coordination mechanisms need greater structure.

Overall, the embassy's component elements have performed exceptionally well. The political/economic section has been the driving element in managing the bilateral relationship under the Ambassador's direction. The consular section is well run and provides good customer service. The management section receives high marks for its support. However, the public affairs section is troubled and is being restructured to better reflect the embassy's public diplomacy priorities.

The embassy continues to face major challenges, including Latvia's October 2006 national elections and the need to support the November summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which will be held in Riga. In anticipation of the NATO summit, the embassy needs temporary duty assistance for its regional security office and public affairs and political/economic sections. The embassy must also soon identify a site for a new embassy compound and find a new residence for the Ambassador.

Overall, the embassy's security program has been revitalized and is in excellent shape, thanks to the efforts of the talented and energetic regional security officer. Although racial extremists in Latvia have targeted mission staff and dependents in the past, the embassy's handling of this challenge has been exemplary.

Background: Embassy Riga

U.S.-Latvian relations are excellent. Latvia, home to 2.3 million people, is a reliable and significant partner in promoting freedom, democracy, and market-based economics. It has deployed troops to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Balkans and works closely with the United States and the European Union to support and promote democracy in the former Soviet states of Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Georgia. Latvia has also moved steadily to increase interoperability with NATO forces and supports foreign investment and market opening. Despite these promising developments, Latvia remains the poorest country in the European Union. Its other problems include corruption, social integration of the sizable Russian minority, and promoting tolerance in an increasingly diverse society.

The highest U.S. policy priorities are encouraging Latvia's contribution to regional stability and freedom and democracy and ensuring the continuation of public and political support for Latvia's regional engagements, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. Public diplomacy is essential to pursuing U.S. objectives such as improving racial and religious tolerance. Other U.S. priorities include supporting an open, agile, and expanding market-oriented economy and strengthening Latvia's law enforcement and judicial institutions.

Office of Inspector General

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