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

Report of Inspection

The International Broadcasting Bureau's Philippines Transmitting Station

Report Number ISP-IB-07-37A, September 2007

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- The Philippines Transmitting Station effectively operates two sites located 115 miles apart that send medium wave and shortwave broadcasts.
- An authorized, but vacant, American direct-hire position for a transmitting plant supervisor is unneeded due to technological advances allowing the Poro site to be operated remotely from the Tinang site.
- The responsibilities of the Asia regional resource management specialist, now located at the chancery compound in Manila, could be successfully conducted in Washington. This position should be relocated to Washington.
- The information technology support staff recognizes how critical they are to the world-wide mission of the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) and are providing quality support not only to the Philippines but to the other stations of East Asia, the Pacific region, and Kuwait.

The purpose of this inspection was to assess the general operations of IBB's Philippines Transmitting Station, including its management, operational performance, human resources, security, information management, and management controls. The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between January 3 and 19, 2007; and at the Tinang site between February 28 and March 1, 2007, concurrently with the inspection of Embassy Manila by a team headed by Ambassador Eileen A. Malloy. It was conducted in accordance with quality standards for inspections prescribed by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency by Marjorie A. Lynch, Peter Stella, and Michelle L. Wood.

CONTEXT

OVERVIEW

The Philippines Transmitting Station effectively carries out its broadcasting mission for the U.S. government. Four American direct-hire employees, including three Foreign Service specialists and one Civil Service employee, supervise a large, complex operation and keep it running efficiently. One American direct-hire employee works out of the chancery in Manila. Coordination and cooperation with the embassy are excellent. The American staff members have developed long-standing, ongoing community action programs that have cemented positive relationships with villages surrounding the station. Security issues are addressed in a classified annex to this report.

SETTING

The U.S. government has broadcast from the Philippines since the late 1940s. The current Philippines Transmitting Station on the island of Luzon is composed of two separate transmitter sites. Broadcasting began at these sites in 1968 and became fully operational in 1969. The larger facility is located at Tinang, in Tarlac Province about 80 miles from Manila, and a much smaller facility is at Poro Point, in La Union Province, about 115 miles from Tinang or 195 miles from Manila. The plant at Tinang occupies nearly 2,300 acres of land that is surrounded by sugar cane fields and rice paddies. The Poro plant at San Fernando City, La Union is located on a peninsula known as Poro Point, overlooking San Fernando Bay and Lingayen Gulf.

The station is a dual medium wave/shortwave broadcast facility of IBB's (formerly the Voice of America) overseas network. Using 16 transmitters, the facility provides service to China, Vietnam, South and Southeast Asia, the Pacific Ocean, and the Russian Far East. Based on a provision in the 1963 Bilateral Agreement, IBB is required to provide Philippine government-owned Philippine Broadcasting Service time on the transmitters. During FY 2006, the station broadcast approximately 3,800 hours at a cost of about \$85,000.

MISSION

IBB transmits programs from the two sites in the following languages: English, Chinese/Mandarin, Chinese/Cantonese, Thai, Russian, Vietnamese, Lao, Khmer, Bangla, Korean, Indonesian, Burmese, and Tibetan. The target audiences of broadcasts transmitted from Tinang encompass the Russian Far East, China, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific Ocean. The Poro facility transmits to audiences in Vietnam, China, and Southeast Asia. Languages broadcast from the Poro site include Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, and English.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

FIBER OPTIC LINK

Effective September 2006, the station converted from satellite reception of transmissions to a trans-Pacific fiber optic link with the continental United States. The link provides faster, cheaper, and more reliable transmission that is immune to the atmospheric interference that is endemic with use of satellites. As a consequence of the fiber optic cable, the Philippines Transmitting Station has become the gateway for IBB in the Pacific region. Now broadcasts are received much more reliably at the Philippines station and promptly transmitted from it to other stations in the East Asian area.

TRANSMISSION RELIABILITY

The station has performed well and achieved its mission. One significant measure of broadcast effectiveness is the availability rate. It is a performance measure for evaluating station managers and staff and also shows how well the station's mission was met. The rate is an assessment of a station's ability to maximize its operational capabilities and to transmit the right program, on the right frequency, at the right time. During January 2007, this rate was 99.72 percent. The Tinang site operates 24 hours a day while the Poro site is operational for 16 hours. Poro's one million watt medium wave transmitter is remote controlled from the Tinang site.

The following table shows transmitting figures for January 2007.

TRANSMISSION STATISTICS, ALL TRANSMISSIONS

Transmitter No. and Power	Total Filament Hours	Total Carrier Hours	Total Scheduled Program Hours	Total Program Outage Hours	Total Off/ Ons
PHT-1, 200 KW	348.7	290.6	263.5	0.0	2
PHT-2, 200 KW	223.1	175.1	153.0	0.1	6
PHT-3, 200 KW	105.6	74.8	62.0	0.0	5
PHT-4, 200 KW	248.5	204.4	182.0	0.1	9
PHT-5, 200 KW	150.7	93.8	70.5	1.2	12
PHT-6, 200 KW	251.6	184.9	146.5	0.0	2
PHT-7, 200 KW	315.8	252.2	219.0	0.1	1
PHT-8, 250 KW	483.6	371.3	341.0	0.2	11
PHT-9, 250 KW	433.7	337.3	310.0	2.4	23
PHT-10, 250 KW	529.7	376.0	325.5	2.8	5
PHT-11, 250 KW	538.6	469.0	434.0	0.2	28
PHT-12, 250 KW	400.8	268.6	226.0	1.2	9
PHX-1, 50 KW	26.9	19.2	12.0	0.0	0
PHX-2, 50 KW	127.2	106.0	93.0	0.1	0
PHT-3, 50 KW	140.8	100.6	77.5	0.0	0
PHP-A, 1000 KW	N/A	181.2	178.0	0.1	0
Totals, All Transmissions:	4,325.3	3,505.0	3,093.5	8.5	113

Source: Philippines Transmitting Station Monthly Report (January 2007)

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS

The Tinang site is completely surrounded by five villages, with a total population of about 18,000 people. To enhance mutual understanding and foster a sense of cooperation between the station and the local communities, the station has long had

a civic action program. An Office of Inspector General (OIG) inspection of Embassy Manila conducted in 2000 featured these programs as a best practice. Those original projects have continued and others have begun. One project makes 1,400 acres of the site available for farming by the poorest residents of the neighboring villages. Another funds daycare grants for 257 five- and six-year-old indigent and undernourished children. The children are fed nutritious meals and prepared for formal schooling. These programs have proved their worth by the friendly relationship that has been established between the local people and the station. There is no local resistance to the presence of the station and no demonstrations or attempts to interfere with operations.

Other Matters

IBB's Bangkok Affiliates Marketing Office has a nonpersonal services contractor located in the Philippines. The individual is a marketing specialist with extensive local contacts especially in Mindanao, the southern region of the Philippines with a large Muslim population. The contractor is helpful in placing broadcasts targeted to the Muslim community.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

STAFFING COMPLEMENT	FOREIGN SERVICE SPECIALISTS	FSN	PSA
Authorized Positions ¹	6	73	20
Employees on Duty	5	73	11

STAFFING

FUNDING	DOLLARS
FY 2006 Annual Budget	\$4,759,903
Total FY 2006 Inventory	\$51,884,755
FY 2007 Estimated Budget	\$5,400,000

Generally high morale at the station is evidenced by the cooperative working rapport between the locally employed staff and the American managers. There is little turnover of local staff except for retirements and special immigrant visas. The transmitting station and Embassy Manila have productive working relationships that include participation in a package of International Cooperative Administrative Support Services. The station manager is satisfied with the services provided, including human resources, financial management, local guards, and some elements of general services.

An authorized, but presently vacant, American direct-hire position for a transmitting plant supervisor (45-088) is unneeded. Due to technological advances, the station has been able to consolidate operations at the Tinang site and operate the Poro facility remotely from Tinang. The equipment at Poro still must be maintained and that is done effectively by five local hires, local guards, and weekly supervisory visits by an American. As a consequence of the consolidation, the station conducted two reductions in force abolishing 19 local-hire positions, 13 during 2000, and six during

¹ These numbers do not agree with the official staffing pattern maintained by Embassy Manila. See explanation in the staffing section of the report.

2005. Also, an American direct-hire position was transferred from Poro to Tinang in June 2006. The station is functioning well under the consolidated operations, and there no longer is a justification for the vacant American direct-hire position that has been effectively replaced by advanced technology.

Recommendation 1: The International Broadcasting Bureau should abolish the vacant transmitting plant supervisor position (45-088) at the Philippines Transmitting. (Action: IBB)

The station formerly had a deputy director working at the Tinang site. In June 2006, the position was reclassified as an Asia regional resource management support specialist (43-048) and then was relocated to the chancery compound in Manila. IBB did not request National Security Decision Directive-38 approval for either the reclassification or the move. On paper the new responsibilities include providing resource management and analysis to the Broadcasting Board of Governors stations located in Asia, and the position's primary responsibility is to assist with cost reduction initiatives. Discussions with the incumbent specialist, however, revealed his main function is developing a budget database using Microsoft Access for stations in the Asia region that at present are using spreadsheets. Relocating the position to Washington would result in immediate savings to the U.S. government of at least \$100,000 a year with potential savings of about \$300,000 a year. There is no need for the Asia regional resource management specialist to have a physical presence in Manila as the specialist's activities could be performed effectively from Washington.

Recommendation 2: The International Broadcasting Bureau should transfer the Asia resource management specialist position (43-048) from Manila to Washington to achieve cost savings. (Action: IBB)

The Embassy Manila official staffing pattern shows the Philippines Transmitting Station has 104 authorized local-hire positions. However, station records show 93. The station has undergone two reductions in force and made other personnel adjustments since 2000 that do not appear to be reflected in the official staffing pattern. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the transmitting station coordinate with Embassy Manila to identify the number of authorized local-hire positions and adjust the official staffing pattern.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SECURITY

Overview

The Satellite Interconnect System/Local Area Network (SIS/LAN) section maintains and supports the unclassified network, which includes network hardware (routers and switches), as well as satellites and the telephone system. The SIS/LAN staff appears to be experienced, innovative, resourceful, and very security conscious. Their satellite connection distributes data to seven transmitting stations in Asia and the Middle East and is critical to the IBB mission abroad. However, the OIG inspection team identified several areas for improvement: training for SIS/LAN administrators, and updating the station's Intranet site and agency policies regarding personal hardware.

The Philippines Transmitting Station has two primary SIS/LAN administrators and five back-up personnel. IBB headquarters staff highly regard SIS/LAN administrators and relied upon them to provide guidance to their counterparts in the Asia Pacific region. Recently, one of the SIS/LAN staff accompanied the IBB manager of network applications to IBB's Voice of America Hong Kong News Center to resolve various server, router, and network issues. Additionally, the OIG inspection team commends the SIS/LAN administrators for recognizing the need for security and enforcing a higher standard of security than IBB requires. Despite the lack of a deadline and enforcement from IBB regarding the annual security awareness training, the SIS/LAN staff works with the station manager to obtain 100 percent completion, as well as maintain stricter configuration standards for their Windows XP workstations than the IBB configuration standards.

Information Management

The two primary SIS/LAN staff members do not have sufficient training. Not only the Philippines Transmitting Station, but the seven transmitting stations in Asia and the Middle East rely significantly on the Philippines satellite connection. Unfortunately, due to lack of funds the SIS/LAN administrators did not receive all the training necessary to support the satellites and the unclassified network. The SIS/LAN administrators realize how critical they are to the mission of IBB. They wanted to increase their effectiveness and efficiency despite the lack of funds for training, so they taught themselves several areas of information technology that include voice over Internet protocol and design and implementation of Windows networks. Even with the self-taught skills, the SIS/LAN administrators do not have the training and tools necessary to perform their duties effectively.

Recommendation 3: The Philippines Transmitting Station, in coordination with the International Broadcasting Bureau, should provide all necessary training for the two primary satellite interconnect system local area network administrators to effectively perform their duties. (Action: The Philippines Transmitting Station, in coordination with IBB)

The Philippines Transmitting Station's Intranet site was developed and is maintained by station SIS/LAN staff. Since this Intranet site was last updated in 2005, it now contains outdated and inconsistent information and links that no longer work. An outdated or incomplete system is not useful to the employees, and if information about the transmitting station is desired, employees typically must e-mail or telephone the station as there is little information on the Intranet. The OIG inspection team left an informal recommendation for the station to update the site.

Information Security

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Recommendation 4: (b) (2)

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MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The management of the Philippines Transmitting Station is aware of the requirements of the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123 and has established adequate controls over resources. The station has performed a vulnerability assessment and also established monthly operating reports that are used to improve management efficiencies. The station manager performs monthly unannounced cash counts of the subcashier located at the site. The subcashier's advance is 25,000 Philippine pesos, about \$500.

FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The International Broadcasting Bureau should abolish the vacant transmitting plant supervisor position (45-088) at the Philippines Transmitting Station. (Action: IBB)

Recommendation 2: The International Broadcasting Bureau should transfer the Asia resource management specialist position (43-048) from Manila to Washington to achieve cost savings. (Action: IBB)

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Recommendation 4: (b) (2)



INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover matters not requiring action by organizations outside of the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau and are not subject to the OIG compliance process. However, any subsequent OIG inspection or on-site compliance review will assess the mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

The Embassy Manila official staffing pattern shows that the Philippines Transmitting Station has 104 authorized local-hire positions. Yet, the transmitting station's records show only 93 locally employed positions, and station management verified the latter number. The transmitting station has undergone two reductions in force and has made other personnel adjustments since 2000 that do not appear to be reflected in the embassy's official staffing pattern. The transmitting station and the embassy's human resources section need to work together to correct the discrepancies.

Informal Recommendation 1: The Philippines Transmitting Station should coordinate with Embassy Manila to identify the number of authorized local-hire positions and should request Embassy Manila to adjust the official staffing pattern.

The Philippines Transmitting Station Intranet site was last updated in 2005. It has outdated information, links that no longer work, and inconsistent data or incomplete data.

Informal Recommendation 2: The Philippines Transmitting Station should update the station's Intranet site and remove all links that are no longer valid.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Kristie A. Kenney	03/06
Deputy Chief of Mission	Paul W. Jones	09/05
International Broadcasting Bureau:		
Transmitting Station Director	Terence J. Donovan	04/05
Asia Resource Mgt Supp Spec	Harold B. Boyd	08/03
Plant Supervisor	John L. Chick	03/02
Facilities Supervisor	Samuel V. Baxter	09/03
Construction manager	David K. Leonard	02/94

ABBREVIATIONS

IBB	International Broadcasting Bureau
OIG	Office of Inspector General
SIS/LAN	Satellite Interconnect System/Local Area Network

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