



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

**Inspection of the Regional Information Management Center
Fort Lauderdale, Florida**



Florida Regional Center

Embassies and consulates worldwide are increasingly turning to Regional Information Management Centers (RIMC) for telecommunications, network, systems engineering, installation, and maintenance support. The RIMC located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida provides information technology (IT) support to Foreign Service posts within the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, as well as military installations in Florida through memoranda of agreement. In addition to regional IT support, RIMC Ft. Lauderdale supports the Department of State's

(Department) antiterrorism initiatives by providing emergency telecommunications support to areas of escalating political instability. This report focuses on the results of the Office of Inspector General's review of RIMC Ft. Lauderdale's maintenance and support services.

RIMC Ft. Lauderdale, one of four regional centers, provides support to 49 posts within its geographic region. Management has been effective in raising the level of service to meet or exceed customer expectations. However, there are areas for improvement that should be addressed to ensure that RIMC Ft. Lauderdale can maintain its current level of customer service. First, the organizational structure with respect to the digital discipline should be examined and restructured to prevent overlaps in functional responsibilities with the operations officer and Regional Information Technology Support Office sections. RIMC Ft. Lauderdale should negotiate an agreement with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to formalize their relationship regarding funding of the training center. Also, the Department should grant technicians appropriate access to the Department's OpenNet infrastructure to allow them better diagnostic capabilities when dealing with customers. RIMC Ft. Lauderdale technicians should increase their use of the Department's Infocenter and universal trouble ticket tracking system, to allow for better recording and analysis of systemic issues.

Additionally, the Department should establish a satellite branch office with one or more resident technicians in Bogotá, Colombia to better meet the needs of that large and expanding mission. Finally, the Department should purchase maintenance or customer support contracts for Nortel switches, to ensure that technicians have access to the information they need to assist customers in the field.

RIMC Ft. Lauderdale is based out of the Florida Regional Center, a facility housing multiple regional support entities. This location allows for convenient travel to almost all of the serviced posts within the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. RIMC Ft. Lauderdale also maintains a satellite branch office in Embassy Mexico City that consists of one resident digital technician.

RIMC Ft. Lauderdale supports posts in Central, South, and North America. This support impacts all post operations by providing guidance for IRM program standardization, digital services, telephone services, information system services, radio system services, and telecommunications maintenance and logistical support. RIMC Ft. Lauderdale also operates a training facility with FSI-certified instructors, which offers courses in advanced information systems to systems administrators throughout the region. The facility also is a certified testing center, which allows students to test for certification on-site.

Office of Inspector General (OIG)

OIG's mission is to assess Department of State and Broadcasting Board of Governors operations and recommend ways to strengthen their integrity, effectiveness, and accountability. OIG's Office of Information Technology provides systematic and independent evaluations of the information management and information security operations of the Department of State and its posts abroad.

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