



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

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**Inspection of Embassy Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**



*Embassy Bishkek*

During OIG's inspection of Embassy Bishkek, office space issues dominated all operational considerations. Construction of a new embassy compound would be the optimal solution. The proposed construction of an unclassified annex will only be a short-term palliative to a longer-term need for controlled access areas. Future space-planning must reflect a coordinated assessment of potential expansion in staff requirements.

The number of direct-hire Americans assigned to Embassy Bishkek had grown in a somewhat uncontrolled fashion. Expansion had been dictated largely by changes in mission such as activities related to 'Operation Enduring Freedom' and relocation of some regional work from Uzbekistan. The Ambassador had agreed to additional staff for a Millennium Challenge Corporation unit. Beyond those projected additions, further expansion should be put on hold until office space issues have been addressed.

Quality begets quality. Half of Department of State direct-hire Americans at Embassy Bishkek were promoted in 2007. The embassy's reputation for excellence attracts highly qualified bidders. More attention should be given to issues of concern to the locally employed (LE) staff, particularly compensation and benefits.

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OIG Report ISP-I-08-14A, Inspection of Embassy Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

The fieldwork for this report was conducted by the Office of Inspections in Bishkek between October 31 and November 16, 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:

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For American policy planners, Kyrgyzstan presents a set of contradictions. Alone among former republics of the Soviet Union, the ‘Glorious October Revolution’ is still observed. A large statue of Lenin stands across the square from the building of the recently dissolved

parliament. One out of every three working-age Kyrgyz now seeks employment in Russia, and remittances from that cadre (estimated at \$500-\$700 million per year) are larger than the host government’s annual budget.

Counterbalancing these strong affinities with Russia, the government of Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyz people warmly welcome Americans and are eager to increase interaction at all levels. These attitudes are, however, fragile. Political turbulence seems endemic. The constitution has been changed three times in the past 12 months. During that time, there have been three prime ministers, three cabinet changes. Although the most open democracy in the region, achieving the goal of open democracy – a primary U.S. government objective – may be a chimera.

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