



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

**Inspection of Embassy Cairo, Egypt, and the American Presence
Post in Alexandria, Egypt**



Embassy Cairo

Embassy Cairo is one of the largest U.S. missions. With nearly 2,000 employees, the embassy administers a \$22 million budget and one of the United States' largest bilateral assistance programs. In addition to the Department of State, eight government agencies are represented at the embassy. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that the embassy, led by an Ambassador and deputy chief of mission, excels at policy advocacy, reporting, and support for a steady stream of high-level visitors.

A key priority is reaching out to the Egyptian public, given that a recent study found only six percent of Egyptians view the United States favorably. To address this, embassy officers other than the Ambassador need to engage in public diplomacy activities, and Radio Sawa must reach more of the Egyptian public.

The inspection team also found other ways in which the embassy could improve. These include:

- Making greater efforts to provide mission staff with opportunities to travel and develop contacts, which would benefit reporting and diplomatic outreach.
- Addressing the backlog in Embassy Cairo's nonimmigrant visa section. The backlog is caused by increased security requirements and the temporary assignment of several consular officers to Iraq and may decrease once the section is fully staffed. If not, the section must develop new strategies to expedite visa processing.
- Implementing structural renovations in the consular section, information program center, and the information resource center.
- Responding to the weaknesses found in management controls and in the human resources section. (Management functions, however, were rated good by embassy personnel.)

The recent redesignation of the former American Cultural Center in Alexandria as an American presence post (APP) will allow the mission to increase its reporting on developments in the Nile Delta. To ensure a smooth transition, the embassy will need to reprogram several positions and to spell out clearly the embassy's and APP's responsibilities.



Map of Egypt

Embassy Cairo’s strategic goals include achieving regional peace in partnership with this key ally, supporting political and economic reform, and enhancing public understanding of the United States. Since Egypt and Israel signed the U.S.-brokered Camp David accords in 1978, the search for peace in the Middle East has been the cornerstone of the U.S.-Egypt partnership. Recent setbacks have made the peace process less central to the day-to-day relationship, but Egypt would remain a key U.S. partner in implementing an eventual peace settlement. Meanwhile, ties have deepened in other areas. Egypt supports U.S. efforts in Iraq, is a strong partner in the war against terrorism, and is a leading U.S. ally in efforts to bring peace to Sudan. Egypt, regarded by many as the preeminent nation in the Arab world, is an important diplomatic player on the world stage. The importance of shipping through the Suez Canal further

ensures long-term U.S. strategic and commercial interests.

The U.S. also favors political and economic reform in Egypt to advance stability and peace in the region. President Hosni Mubarak, who has led the country since the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat, has a strong hold on power, and the government has a strong security apparatus.

Engagement with the Muslim world is a cornerstone of current U.S. public diplomacy. Egypt, as the cultural capital of the Middle East, is central to this effort. Despite strong bilateral ties, Egyptians – like most people in the Middle East – are highly critical of key areas of current U.S. policy. According to a U.S. government study, only six percent of Egyptians surveyed in 2002 had a favorable view of America. Changing these perceptions will be a Herculean task, and quick results are not likely. Nevertheless, a high-profile American presence can enhance Egyptians’ understanding of – if not support for – U.S. policies.

Office of Inspector General

The Office of Inspector General’s (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 Inspections provides systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department of State, its posts abroad, and related activities. Inspections cover policy implementation, resource management, and management controls. As part of the inspection, particular attention is given to consular, security, and information technology operations.

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