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

Report of Inspection

Review of Middle East Partnership Initiative Coordination and Implementation

Report Number ISP-I-06-18, March 2006

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- There have been persistent communications problems in the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) between the Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA/PI) and embassies having MEPI programs.

- NEA/PI is aware of areas in the MEPI program needing improvement and is diligently working to make those improvements.

- MEPI is an example of transformational diplomacy at work, and there is general agreement that, at the macro level, MEPI works and is a useful tool for diplomats. MEPI's programs support overarching, strategic U.S. policy objectives such as the Administration's freedom strategy of promoting reform and democracy in the Middle East and North Africa, and the objective of addressing Islamic extremism.

This summary report is based on a review of Office of Inspector General (OIG) inspections that were undertaken after the creation of MEPI and involved U.S. diplomatic missions abroad and Department of State (Department) bureaus in Washington, DC. The inspections occurred between 2003 through 2005. This review also involved follow-up consultations with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA). OIG's Coordinator for International Broadcasting and Public Diplomacy Evaluations Louis A. McCall prepared this report.

CONTEXT

This report summarizes the results of OIG inspections and observations on MEPI program coordination and implementation since inception of the program in 2002.

The September 11, 2001, attacks galvanized the United States and focused attention on the Middle East. MEPI was launched in December 2002 as a Presidential initiative to promote reform, foster democracy in the Middle East and North Africa, and serve as a tool to address Islamic extremism.[1] MEPI initially had three objectives, which it calls pillars. They were political, economic, and educational. A fourth pillar, women's empowerment, was added in 2003. MEPI operates in a region known for autocratic and monarchial regimes with few truly democratic institutions or means of expression. The region is also characterized by significant illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, discontent, despair, and limited opportunities for women to enjoy freedoms taken for granted in the West. In this context, MEPI programs promoting reform are a practical manifestation of what is called the Administration's freedom strategy. MEPI seeks to achieve this objective by encouraging reform-minded elements of the civil society through targeted large- and small-grant projects involving nongovernmental groups and local citizens in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Deputy Secretary of State is the coordinator for MEPI. In June 2003, NEA established NEA/PI, which manages MEPI programs. NEA/PI works under the supervision of a deputy assistant secretary in NEA. Regional offices in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and Tunis, Tunisia, were established in the summer of 2004. NEA/PI has a staff of 27 and has received $391.9 million in funding since its inception. (This includes $29 million in FY 2002 reprogrammed Department funds. Congress provided additional funding of $100 million in FY 2003, $89.5 million more in FY 2004, $74.4 million in FY 2005, and an additional $99 million in FY 2006.[2]) Since it began, MEPI has funded over 350 projects. There

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[1] *Information on U.S. Agencies' Efforts to Address Islamic Extremism*, Government Accountability Office, GAO-05-852, September 2005, p. 11.

[2] Congress appropriated $90 million in FY 2004, a sum reduced by rescission to $89.4 million, and appropriated $75 million in FY 2005, which was reduced by rescission to $74.4 million. MEPI received another $99 million in FY 2006. (Congress appropriated $110 million and the Secretary allocated $99 million after rescission.)

are 17 MEPI target countries, plus the West Bank and Gaza.[3] In addition, there are regionally based programs to provide opportunities for reformers across the region to develop linkages and synergies. In some cases, host governments must grant approval for MEPI programs to operate. As a result, MEPI projects are not started with equal ease in all MEPI target areas, and projects for MEPI's four objectives do not enjoy an equal welcome, even in countries that permit MEPI projects.

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[3] MEPI target countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

TRANSFORMATIONAL DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

MEPI is an example of transformational diplomacy at work, and there is general agreement that, at the macro level, MEPI works and is a useful tool for diplomats. MEPI's programs support overarching, strategic U.S. policy objectives. Embassies inspected by OIG have indicated that they are using MEPI programs to achieve specific Mission Performance Plan goals. MEPI also opens up opportunities for new contacts for embassy officers and causes doors to some host government officials to open more readily. Embassy Kuwait, for example, makes judicious use of MEPI programs to increase dialogue with the host government and members of Kuwait's parliament and to engage more broadly with the Kuwaiti public.

In MEPI's operation, there has been a transformation in the role of U.S. diplomats in the region. Besides providing reporting, MEPI has required many Foreign Service officers to become project oriented. This is a fundamental adjustment in the Department's way of doing business. Subsequent sections of this report address how well that adjustment is occurring and the steps needed to facilitate adjustment and reduce the tension and frustration some officers experience in balancing their traditional diplomatic functions while operating in a transformational diplomacy milieu.

COMMUNICATIONS NEED IMPROVEMENT

During inspections of MEPI posts, OIG consistently heard that communication, primarily between Washington and the field, needs improvement. A number of officers with MEPI responsibilities said they experienced nonresponsiveness or were taken unaware by Washington. However, at one post, OIG was taken aback by the volume of e-mail correspondence and taskings the post had received from Washington.

Washington and those in the field have differing perceptions on this situation. According to NEA/PI, most MEPI projects begin with project design being done by Washington, usually through open competitions. After grantees apply, NEA/PI shares responsive proposals with potentially affected embassies and the MEPI regional offices for input. During the review, OIG was assured that, on all levels, Washington relies on embassy input. In particular, although NEA/PI reviews the proposals in Washington, NEA/PI said that, before making an award, an embassy could see the final proposal in order to raise any concerns.

The concerns the MEPI posts were describing appear to result from start-up problems. For example, one post described program and administrative miscommunications. Another post experienced similar problems and attributed them to start-up discontinuity, but said this discontinuity diminished somewhat over time as grant procedures and guidelines became clearer.

A number of posts also say they struggle with incomplete information. NEA/PI acknowledged that it did not regularly provide copies of grant agreements to embassies. Also, NEA/PI provided some grant funds to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Two kinds of projects have been funded through USAID. In some cases, such as in Morocco and Yemen, the local USAID mission develops, awards, and administers the project locally. Although the MEPI staff has been involved in program design, questions about the day-to-day activities are properly directed to the local USAID mission. Alternatively, one of USAID's Washington offices may be the office that awards a MEPI grant. Again, although MEPI is engaged in program design and implementation, the actual award is administered by USAID, and it is the responsible grants office and the principal recipient of project information.

Some Foreign Service officers expressed discomfort working in such a mixed environment. At least three posts attempted to construct their own databases of MEPI grants, but failed because, according to one participant, Washington and the regional MEPI office did not supply requested information. Several Foreign Service officers also raised concerns about not having received copies of grant agreements, despite requesting them, and thus having limited information on the duration, purposes, and funding levels of MEPI grants. OIG determined that, in some cases, the officers were referring to MEPI projects funded by USAID or to USAID projects; in such cases, USAID holds the files. A January 2006 NEA/PI-issued contract underwrites the design and implementation of a consistent monitoring and evaluation system that will include procedures to better manage and make accessible program information. The contractor's proposal for this project should go a long way toward addressing posts' concerns in this area.

There is another communication concern: planning and coordination between NEA/PI, the regional office, and the post. This is said to be especially a concern for regional projects but also includes bilateral projects. NEA believes this situation has improved considerably as the regional offices became fully staffed and developed procedures for communicating with their posts.

One Foreign Service officer who monitors some large MEPI projects said there is "a lot of mystery" about grants and that it was possible to first become aware of a project through informal communication from a MEPI implementing partner, not from NEA/PI. In addition, some embassies said MEPI grant implementers would sometimes be working on a project or traveling to their countries without prior knowledge of or coordination with the embassies. For its part, NEA/PI said it has procedures to approve the travel of grant implementers.[4] The travel of Washington-based, direct-hire personnel has never been an issue, it added, because such personnel always request country clearance. However, some anomalies were acknowledged by those OIG interviewed.

In addition to the communications concerns, several posts also said MEPI grants are not always vetted in advance with the embassies. In one case, the post said NEA/PI contacts the host government without always collaborating with the embassy, forcing the embassy to play catch up. However, NEA/PI procedures state that it must share proposals arising from open competitions with potentially affected embassies and the regional offices for input. NEA/PI relies on that input in making award decisions and then informs posts of award decisions by cable. Despite the differences between the posts and Washington, some posts' representatives made positive statements about their contacts with the regional MEPI office or said coordination and communication with the regional office is improving. One post specifically described the regional MEPI office as being responsive to chief of mission requests for assistance.

> **Recommendation 1**: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs should instruct its Middle East Partnership Initiative office to review its practices with the intent of becoming more customer friendly and responsive regarding the needs and concerns of embassies and officers having a stake in implementing the initiative. (Action: NEA)

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[4] Direct MEPI grantees are required to get grant officer approval for all travel chargeable to their projects. However, some grantees travel on funds from other sources to service other projects that do not trigger MEPI grant officer approval. Moreover, USAID grantees are routinely authorized by USAID to execute travel for their approved projects without specific country clearance requests. For awards made by USAID Washington with MEPI funds, NEA/PI finds it difficult to track the travel of grantees since the award is administered by USAID.

COORDINATION TO AVOID DUPLICATION, RIVALRY, OR UNINTENDED DAMAGE TO OTHER PROGRAMS

When it inspected NEA in 2003, OIG did not believe it could conduct a full inspection of NEA/PI, given the newness of NEA/PI and the recent arrival of many of its staff. However, OIG did find that NEA/PI ran the risk of duplicating existing regional programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, USAID, the Department of Treasury, the U.S. Trade Representative, and other entities in areas such as scholarships and media training that fall within MEPI objectives. In addition, OIG found that NEA/PI was not coordinating well with the field on MEPI projects and programs. In the region, embassies are supposed to have MEPI committees that are chaired by the deputy chief of mission. The committees allow different stakeholders to come together to make MEPI work well in their country and to try to avoid rivalries or unintended damage to other valuable programs and initiatives.

There remains a danger that duplication and workload will crowd out other valuable work, and this must be guarded against. In particular, public affairs officers at some posts appear to be overwhelmed by the need to aggressively pursue both MEPI projects and their normal stable of projects in education and exchange. In principle, prioritizing workloads is a senior post management responsibility. Moreover, the Secretary underscored the primacy of democratic reform, and MEPI's efforts in that regard, as an overarching foreign policy objective during the NEA Chiefs' of Mission Conference in December 2005. Prioritization by post management would provide direction and relief for these cross-pressured officers and reduce the risks to the effectiveness of MEPI programs as well as traditional non-MEPI projects. Some public affairs officers said programs, such as MEPI-funded exchanges, might involve extensive follow-up activities. The implementation of MEPI has been done without additional Foreign Service officer staff being made available to the field. This has meant that, at times, officers have felt compelled to spend time on a MEPI project that they personally judged to be a lower priority than some other endeavor that was their main work. (To address staffing, OIG makes a recommendation later in this report.)

Although the MEPI committees at some posts worked well, this does not necessarily mean there is a problem-free environment for MEPI programs in those countries. Some of those problems may originate in Washington, and the different agendas of Department offices and Washington agencies may therefore bump into each other in the field. NEA/PI is addressing this important issue through a contract with a private firm. The contract, signed in January 2006, provides for

overall program development of an integrated interagency system of coordination and communication that includes embassy representation in what are termed Freedom Agenda Coordination Teams (FACT). NEA/PI will put the Washington-based FACT teams in place. The interagency coordination will be extensive, involving over 25 government agencies and several nongovernmental agencies. These NEA-chaired, senior interagency fora will identify, coordinate, and deconflict different agencies' programs in a given country. That welcome development will take time to implement. In the meantime, there are also positive signs of existing coordination as individual missions work out win-win outcomes through their MEPI committees. In Beirut, for instance, the program activities of the various mission elements have often coincided and offered important synergies. In Manama, the technical support funded by MEPI for the free trade agreement there was well coordinated across different agencies. In Amman, USAID said there was good cooperation on MEPI programs.

It would be natural to expect some rivalries between USAID and the Department regarding MEPI, and they do exist. Yet the work of MEPI gets done. The Department has even transferred some MEPI program funding to USAID and other agencies to administer MEPI programs. Through 2005, over 60 percent of MEPI funds are being spent in countries not served by USAID. One useful simplification is to think of MEPI as concentrating on reform in the Middle East while USAID concentrates on development. However, USAID has previously done reform work too and has long experience with grants management, work that is new to many Department officers.

ROLES NEED CLARIFICATION AND OFFICERS NEED PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Grants management and monitoring have posed problems for NEA/PI and need to be improved. NEA/PI believes embassy officers normally are not grants or project officers, but acknowledges that the officers with MEPI responsibilities need additional tools. Most MEPI grants are signed in Washington and have Washington-based grants and projects officers. MEPI small grants are signed at the regional offices in Abu Dhabi or Tunis. The advantage of this arrangement is that NEA/PI reduces the number of financial management officers it must work with, and those financial management officers build experience and ease in working with the MEPI grants. NEA/PI believes that, by structuring it this way, it is not necessary to build in-depth grant writing skills at each MEPI post. However, each post is responsible for project management of small grants.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) also has reported problems in MEPI project monitoring. The Department responded to the GAO findings by indicating NEA/PI was taking steps "to ensure continued comprehensive program monitoring and evaluation," including "providing ongoing training in grants and project management for staff both in NEA/PI and at MEPI regional offices."[5] This approach is laudable, but did not include training for officers in the MEPI posts. In a continuing effort to address the GAO's issues, NEA/PI issued a contract in January 2006 to a private firm to design and implement a consistent monitoring and evaluation system that would allow for rapid identification of the current status and impact of MEPI projects and their effectiveness in promoting reform.

Grant Officer Representatives

Officers having MEPI responsibilities at embassies, although not grants officers, may still operate as grant officer representatives (GOR) or project officers. They may also assist GORs or project officers. (GOR and project officer are different terms for the same job.) OIG found that most of these officers lacked GOR training or other grant-related training. Some officers with MEPI responsibilities were even unaware that they were GORs, although more public diplomacy officers were aware of their GOR role. Many public diplomacy officers have grants training and experience and have the warrants needed to sign grant agreements. Although this capability is unrelated to MEPI, these public diplomacy officers are a skill resource for MEPI. At Embassy Riyadh, for example, the public affairs officer and public diplomacy officer have taken the three-day Foreign Service Institute grant-training course and have grant warrants. In addition, a more recent regional grant-training course for public affairs officers working in MEPI countries included an extra day of training on MEPI grants. Because of their backgrounds and training in grants, public diplomacy officers are often asked by post management to take on heavy MEPI responsibilities. In a few cases, officers expressed concern that the MEPI workload would harm their ability to carry out their primary public diplomacy duties.

Political and economic officers, who tend to be given their posts' political and economic MEPI portfolios to support MEPI's political and economic objectives, lack this advantage. OIG found that political and economic officers supporting the small bilateral MEPI grants and larger regional initiatives did not have grants training and showed an uncertain grasp of their oversight responsibilities and of MEPI expectations. Political and economic officers at one post said there was a

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[5] *Middle East Partnership Initiative Offers Tools for Supporting Reform, but Project Monitoring Needs Improvement*, Government Accountability Office, GAO-05-711, August 2005, p. 34.

feeling at post that no one had a good grip on the MEPI portfolio, although coordination with the MEPI regional office was somewhat better than with Washington. These officers said they had only a vague understanding of some grant parameters and asserted that all of the grant parameters had never been spelled out for them. The political officer at one post said he had no grant authority or training and was vague on what he had to do. Another officer indicated that she arrived at post with no training and was surprised by the amount of project oversight required. The deputy chief of mission at one post said the post's MEPI coordinator simply had no idea what to do with the paperwork and other procedures necessary to keep MEPI activities on track at the embassy.

Officers in embassy public affairs sections still have problems with their MEPI work although they may have had applicable training. At one post, the public affairs officer and the assistant public affairs officer were grants officers because of their non-MEPI public diplomacy responsibilities. However, their MEPI grant-related responsibilities were not designated in writing on any document they could present. Also, while there were general references to grant monitoring in the work requirements statements of the political and economic/commercial officers, these officers did not have written designations. The GOR in one embassy was carrying out GOR responsibilities but was not aware he was the GOR. A grants officer in NEA/PI said that, early in the MEPI program, NEA/PI did not designate GORs in writing.

GOR Authorities and Responsibilities

The Office of the Procurement Executive has established requirements for administering public diplomacy grants and cooperative agreements that include guidance for grants officers and GORs.[6] The Department has a clear policy regarding all GORs. (See Appendix B: Grants Policy Directive Number 16.) Before assuming GOR duties, the appropriate grants officer must send a formal designation memorandum to be signed by the designated GOR. Each grant needs a GOR, and GOR designations must include a description of the authorities, responsibilities, and limitations that apply to the GOR. One key GOR authority is to evaluate project performance to ensure compliance with the grant's terms and conditions and must monitor and inspect the grantee's progress and performance and promptly notify the grants officer in writing of any noncompliance or deviation in performance or failure to make progress. This requires the GOR to maintain a working file.

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[6] A noncertificate course developed by the Office of the Procurement Executive is available online through the Department's Intranet, and its Chapter 4.3 covers the grants officer representative.

Based on Grants Policy Directive Number 16, which is recommended for overseas grant activities, a GOR should be designated in writing for each MEPI grant. In January 2006, NEA/PI took steps to designate in writing every GOR by issuing a notification that grants officers would henceforth designate project officers in writing.[7] MEPI grants officers began sending in the notifications shortly thereafter. In addition, every program now has a designated GOR. Since NEA recently moved to designate GORs in writing, there remain eight project officers at overseas posts, excluding the four in the MEPI regional offices, for grants awarded by NEA/PI. MEPI Washington has designated GORs for 53 of the current MEPI grants. Posts also designate their own GORs for the small grants they award. For big projects, the Washington-based GORs visit these projects. To assist the Washington-based grants and projects officers with grants monitoring, NEA/PI has since November 2005 asked all NEA/PI, regional office, and embassy officers who visit MEPI project sites to complete a site visit form. The form will eventually be replaced by a monitoring and evaluation "toolkit" now under preparation.

One NEA/PI manager said that, "as a bureau, we haven't looked at grants management as a critical skill." However, that orientation appears to be changing. In the meantime, based on Grants Policy Directive Number 16 and consultations with the Office of the Procurement Executive, OIG believes embassy officers with MEPI portfolios, whether or not they are designated as GORs, should be trained and briefed by NEA/PI prior to taking up their responsibilities. This will require collaboration with the Bureau of Administration's Office of the Procurement Executive and with the assignments division of the Bureau of Human Resources so that time is made available for newly assigned officers. Some officers, in fact, have been briefed, but there is no structured program for preparing these officers for their MEPI responsibilities. Also, many officers having MEPI responsibilities in 2003 and 2004 were already at post and did not have the opportunity for such briefings or training.

OIG found that undesignated GORs were commonplace early on in the MEPI program, when officers assigned responsibility for MEPI at embassies were unaware of their responsibilities and were uncertain about their reporting responsibilities. At the time, there was often a lot of feedback. This included embassy reports by cable, stand-alone reports, e-mail messages, or telephone conversations. However, there were no structured reports and the system of feedback to NEA/PI in Washington was ad hoc. There also was no MEPI handbook or manual of standard

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[7] Memorandum from MEPI Acting Director to All MEPI Pillars, Offices, and Staff on the subject *MEPI Project Officer and Project Officer/Point of Contact Roles and Responsibilities Designation Letter*, January 25, 2006.

operating procedures and requirements to serve as a reference for officers in the field with MEPI responsibilities. This promoted the ad hoc aspects of MEPI operations and the uncertainties officers said they have regarding paperwork. Changes are in order to permit MEPI to work better and to reduce the stress experienced by officers in the field. NEA/PI said it was preparing a toolkit for officers in the field, with the assistance of a contractor, which would address these issues. Because NEA/PI is working with its contractor to address this issue, no recommendation is being made on that matter.

> **Recommendation 2**: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration and the Bureau of Human Resources, should provide appropriate training for grants officer representatives. (Action: NEA, in coordination with A and DGHR)

> **Recommendation 3**: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should establish procedures to ensure that officers having Middle East Partnership Initiative responsibilities are briefed on these responsibilities before taking up their overseas assignments. (Action: NEA, in coordination with DGHR)

RECORDKEEPING NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

A number of MEPI posts said they were not aware of all of the MEPI grants in their countries and lacked copies of grant agreements, although they have requested these agreements from NEA/PI and from the regional MEPI offices. Thus, these posts have inadequate information on the purposes of a particular grant and its funding or term. One post said it received the grant application documents from partners but had received no copies of final grants. This left the MEPI officer often confused concerning which grants had been approved.

This situation leaves a mission unable to determine the total MEPI portfolio in its host country and makes it difficult if not impossible for an officer to carry out GOR responsibilities. Embassies in Sanaa, Beirut, and Manama have all attempted to develop their own databases of MEPI grants, relying on partial information they had available. At one embassy, grant files did not contain copies of final agreements or progress evaluation reports. Although there was two-way communication

between the post and NEA/PI, much of the interchange on MEPI projects took place through e-mail or telephone calls, not through a message of record such as a front channel cable.

NEA/PI is aware of this problem and said its contractor has been tasked with developing a database or series of databases, together with support. A grants/ project database is certainly needed, but since NEA/PI is working on this matter, OIG makes no recommendation.

NEED FOR LOCAL SUPPORT STAFF

MEPI programs are an example of transformational diplomacy and of the new "project diplomacy" that has supplemented and, in some cases, supplanted the traditional diplomatic activities that are more comfortable for some reporting officers. However, MEPI has stretched posts' staffing resources as posts struggle to keep up with the amount of money flowing in from MEPI grants. MEPI is NEA-directed and supervised and aims to set up many democracy-related projects in MEPI countries as quickly as possible. Experience shows that this is not possible without some embassy assistance, and increases in MEPI programs have not resulted in increased personnel or support. In the absence of assigned MEPI positions, the burden of overseeing MEPI grants falls primarily on political, economic, or public diplomacy officers who say they are already fully occupied and often have neither experience nor training in GOR responsibilities. The communication and information problem has added to the difficulties and, as a result, embassies are sometimes ignorant of MEPI projects in their country or region. The MEPI small grants portfolio in particular has been very labor intensive.

There is a trade-off between political or economic officers' reporting duties and their MEPI oversight. There is also a trade-off between the MEPI-related and non-MEPI exchanges of the public diplomacy officers. At post, officers spend from 20 to 60 percent of their time on MEPI, depending on whether they are section chiefs responsible for one MEPI objective or are designated as the mission's MEPI coordinator. Furthermore, the oversight of small grants cuts into reporting productivity. At one embassy, this prompted the withdrawal of the public affairs section from involvement with small grants during FY 2006. Officers repeatedly say there is too little time or resources to cover reporting and their desire to produce more in-depth and wide-ranging reporting is constrained by a heavy workload and competing

programming responsibilities. Those competing responsibilities especially involve MEPI programs and responsibilities related to project implementation but also include those related to supporting high-level visits.

Although some MEPI work is done in Washington by NEA/PI and by MEPI regional offices in Tunis and Abu Dhabi, much of the response to the workload falls on the embassies. For instance, one embassy addressed the workload issue by requesting in its FY 2007 Mission Performance Plan a new local staff position to assist with MEPI coordination. Responding, NEA/PI recognizes the need for some relief and is actively pursuing a second option, the creation of an eligible family member position to help with programming. Embassy Manama and other posts are being provided with local-hire positions to help with the increased workload. NEA/PI recently identified funds in its request to Congress that it hopes to use to hire eligible family members in five posts that have significant MEPI programs and have problems managing those programs. However, since non-MEPI efforts are most at risk, the NEA front office, including the bureau's executive director, must become involved.

> **Recommendation 4**: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs should review the staffing needs of posts having Middle East Partnership Initiative programs and develop a plan that prioritizes the provision of local staff assistance where needed to enable officers to better cover their other requirements. (Action: NEA)

FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs should instruct its Middle East Partnership Initiative office to review its practices with the intent of becoming more customer friendly and responsive regarding the needs and concerns of embassies and officers having a stake in implementing the initiative. (Action: NEA)

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration and the Bureau of Human Resources, should provide appropriate training for grants officer representatives. (Action: NEA, in coordination with A and DGHR)

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should establish procedures to ensure that officers having Middle East Partnership Initiative responsibilities are briefed on these responsibilities before taking up their overseas assignments. (Action: NEA, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs should review the staffing needs of posts having Middle East Partnership Initiative programs and develop a plan that prioritizes the provision of local staff assistance where needed to enable officers to better cover their other requirements. (Action: NEA)

ABBREVIATIONS

FACT	Freedom Agenda Coordination Team
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GOR	Grants officer's representative
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
NEA	Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
NEA/PI	Middle East Partnership Initiative office in NEA
OIG	Office of Inspector General
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

APPENDIX A: OIG REPORTS REVIEWED

Review of the Issuance of Visas to the September 11, 2001, Terrorists (ISP-CA-03-27, March 2003)

Inspection of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (ISP-I-03-48, September 2003)

Review of the Department of State Procedures Related to the Issuance of Visas to the September 11, 2001, Terrorists (ISP-CA-04-17, December 2003)

Inspection of the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (ISP-I-04-06, January 2004)

Inspection of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (ISP-I-04-11, February 2004)

Inspection of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ISP-I-04-07A, March 2004)

Inspection of Embassy Kuwait, Kuwait (ISP-I-04-24A, May 2004)

Inspection of Embassy Doha, Qatar (ISP-I-04-23A, June 2004)

Inspection of Embassy Abu Dhabi and Consulate General Dubai, United Arab Emirates (ISP-I-04-19A, July 2004)

Inspection of Embassy Muscat, Oman (ISP-I-04-26A, July 2004)

Inspection of the Bureau of International Information Programs (ISP-I-04-31, July 2004)

The National Endowment for Democracy (AUD/CG-04-39, August 2004)

Inspection of Embassy Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti (ISP-I-04-44A, September 2004)

Inspection of Embassy Khartoum, Sudan (ISP-I-04-46A, September 2004)

Inspection of Embassy Amman, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, (ISP-I-05-02A, February 2005)

Inspection of Embassy Cairo and the American Presence Post in Alexandria, Egypt (ISP-I-05-04A, March 2005)

Summary Report on Public Diplomacy at the Department of State (ISP-I-05-54, March 2005)

Review of the Staffing of Embassy Baghdad (ISP-IQO-05-57, March 2005)

Inspection of Consulate General Jerusalem (ISP-I-05-15A, July 2005)

Inspection of Embassy Beirut, Lebanon (ISP-I-05-16A, July 2005)

Inspection of Embassy Damascus, Syria (ISP-I-05-17A, July 2005)

Review of Selected Grants Awarded to Institute for the Study & Development of Legal Systems (AUD/CG-05-26, September 2005)

Inspection of the Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues (ISP-I-05-47, September 2005)

Inspection of Embassy Manama, Bahrain (ISP-I-06-21A, February 2006)

Inspection of Embassy Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and Consulates General Jeddah and Dhahran (ISP-I-06-14A, February 2006)

Inspection of Embassy Sanaa, Yemen (ISP-I-06-19A, February 2006)

APPENDIX B: GRANTS POLICY DIRECTIVE NUMBER 16

Grants Policy Directive Number 16, Designation of Grant Officer Representatives

1. **Scope.** In accordance with Department policy, grant officers may designate technically qualified personnel to assist in the administration of grants. This directive establishes Department policy for the written designation of Grant Officer Representatives, detailing their duties and responsibilities. This section is mandatory for domestic grant activities and recommended for overseas grant activities.

2. **Procedure**. All grant officer representatives must receive a formal designation memorandum from the appropriate grant officer prior to assuming duties as a grant officer representative (GOR). This memorandum must be signed by the designated GOR, who then must return the original to the grant officer, and retain a copy for his/her own files. A sample GOR designation letter is attached at the end of this directive. All GOR designations should follow the suggested format, and must include a description of the authorities, responsibilities, and limitations that apply to the GOR. This sample may be tailored to fit individual grants, as long as the basic principles of authority are not changed. If the GOR is replaced during the period of the grant, the grant officer shall prepare a new designation memorandum for the replacement GOR and ensure that the grantee receives a copy.

3. **Policy and Responsibility**. Domestic and overseas grant officers are responsible for ensuring that all Grant Officer Representatives are designated in writing as explained above.

Delegation of Authority letter

You are hereby designated as the Grant Officer Representative ("GOR") with respect to the above referenced grant(s). As GOR, you are hereby delegated the Authorities and Responsibilities specified herein, subject to the stated Limitations.

This delegation is limited to the referenced grant(s) and is not subject to re-delegation by you. The delegation may be terminated at any time by written notice from the Grant Officer. Please notify the Grant Officer if you are transferred from your present position or prevented from continuing as GOR for the referenced grant.

Authorities

1. Coordinate and consult with the Grantee on all programmatic, scientific, and/or technical matters which may arise in the administration of the grant.

2. Evaluate project performance to ensure compliance with the grant terms and conditions.

3. Assist the Grantee in problem identification and resolution.

4. With prior approval of the Grant Officer, visit the Grantee's place(s) of performance to evaluate progress or problems.

5. Receive and review required Grantee reports (progress, financial, or other) on behalf of the Government to ensure that they are timely and complete.

6. Approve draw-down and reimbursement requests for payment.

7. Assist the Grant Officer in project closeout, including review and programmatic evaluation of the final Grantee progress and financial reports, Grantee publications, and any other required documentation.

Responsibilities

1. With regard to monitoring and inspecting the Grantee's progress and performance, promptly notify the Grant Officer in writing of any noncompliance or deviation in performance or failure to make progress.

2. With regard to preparing receiving reports and/or approving drawdown and reimbursement requests for payment, execute these documents promptly and transmit them to the designated payments office within five calendar days.

3. Know and understand the terms and provisions of the grant.