



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

Inspection of Embassy Moscow, Russia and Constituent Posts



Exterior of Embassy Moscow

Under the Ambassador's leadership, Embassy Moscow has been influential in improving the tone of bilateral relations and the degree of access to Russian government policymakers, despite the continuing policy disputes between Russia and the United States. The Ambassador has astutely focused Washington policymakers' attention on areas where the U.S. and Russian governments can find common ground.

The Russian government is increasingly critical of U.S. policies and is restricting press freedom and the development of nongovernmental civil society. To counter this trend, the Ambassador has made public diplomacy a missionwide priority. The public affairs section is implementing every tool of public diplomacy to support the effort, including innovative use of its 32 American Corners.

The Ambassador is determined to streamline a mission that has grown too large. So far, most reductions have affected only Department of State (Department) offices. To continue this rightsizing initiative, the other agencies will need to reduce staffing levels as well. The Ambassador and deputy chief of mission put a high premium on close interagency cooperation.

Stringent but necessary security-driven restrictions on the use of Russian national employees force the Department to use cleared American staff to perform many jobs normally performed by Foreign Service national employees. This creates extra layers of administrative processing and drives up operating costs for the embassy. Nonetheless, management operations are very well run, providing good support.

The embassy turns out an impressive volume of quality economic and political work that is highly valued by Washington end users, but a growing number of positions in these areas are filled by entry-level officers who arrive without sufficient language or tradecraft training. This has forced the mission to divert resources from production to internal training, including immersion language training outside Moscow. The embassy runs an excellent immersion language training program that has improved the language ability of entry-level and mid-grade officers and eligible family members.

OIG Report ISP-I-07-15A, Inspection of Embassy Moscow, Russia

The fieldwork for this report was conducted by the Office of Inspections in Moscow, Russia, between October 2 and November 21, 2006. 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.

All four of the embassy's consular operations provide good customer service, and officers exhibit high morale despite inadequate or antiquated facilities. The Moscow and St. Petersburg consular sections, however, are overstaffed and have not focused on programmatic efficiencies and standardization.

The offices of the consular section, U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, and the U.S. Agency for International Development are housed at off-compound locations that do not meet security and safety standards. The planned new office annex building on the embassy compound is the best solution to this security problem. Decommissioning the former chancery building would also save \$1 million per year in lease funds.

Background: Russian Federation



The Russian Federation is the largest country in the world in terms of area, but its approximately 145 million people are concentrated in the Western (European) region, leaving the Far East and Siberia sparsely populated. Spanning 11 time zones, Russia extends from Central Europe through the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Siberia to the Pacific and borders on 14 different countries. Over 130 ethnic and religious groups, including some 16 million Muslims, populate it.

Since 2000, Russia has been an economic success story with gross domestic product growth of six to seven percent in each of the last eight years. This infusion of wealth has allowed the Russian Federation government to pay its current social benefits obligations, begin to pay down its large arrearages, invest in its aging energy infrastructure, and clear its Paris Club debts in advance of their due dates. President Vladimir Putin hosted the G-8 Summit in St. Petersburg in June 2006, and he is determined to gain entry for Russia into the World Trade Organization before he steps down at the end of his term of office in 2008.

Office of Inspector General

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