



Review of Off-Site Support to Embassy Baghdad

Results in Brief

The U.S. mission in Iraq is one of the largest and most complex U.S. missions in the world, with several thousand employees and contractors. The embassy's operating budget is approximately \$766 million for FY 2005. Reliance on military contractors to provide life support adds to the uniqueness of the mission.

The direct and immediate threat to Iraqi nationals associated with U.S. government operations in Iraq stymies efforts to recruit, train, and retain a cadre of experienced Foreign Service national employees. As a result, the mission is – and will remain – highly dependent on off-site administrative assistance and support.

The usual models for supporting overseas missions do not apply to Embassy Baghdad. The Department of State must be innovative and employ maximum flexibility in developing new ways to support the mission's operations. The Ambassador has decided that, over the next few months, all personnel under Chief of Mission authority will enter Iraq through Amman, Jordan. The implications of this decision, such as increased demand for air transportation and additional staff, need to be addressed.

The Department has established Iraq Support Units (ISU) in Amman, Jordan; Kuwait City, Kuwait; and Washington, DC, to support logistics and travel requirements. Interaction between Embassy Baghdad and these off-site support units should be better



Iraq Support Unit, Amman, Jordan



Partially destroyed Embassy Baghdad communications center

coordinated. OIG recommends standard operating procedures and memoranda of understanding.

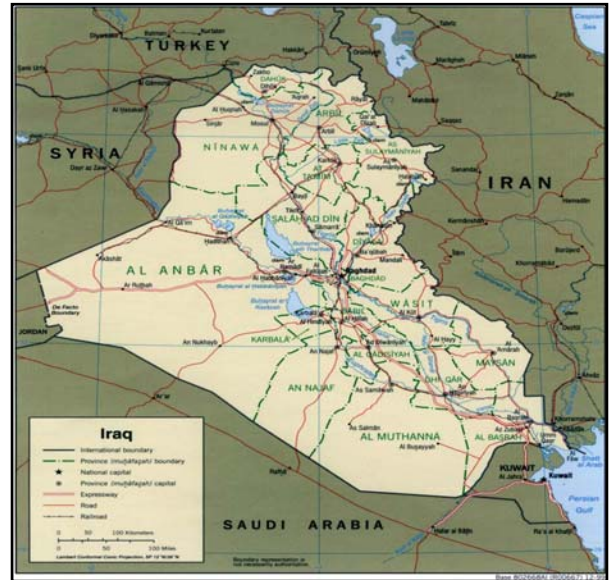
Newly hired employees at the Iraq Support Units need additional training. In addition, Embassy Baghdad should establish regular, systematic procedures for instructing and interacting with Iraq Support Unit staff in Amman.

Although there has been some discussion of moving parts of the Iraq Support Unit in Amman to such locations as Frankfurt, Germany, OIG recommends that ISU Amman offices remain intact and collocated within the Amman chancery compound. Any move to other locations would have to take into account Baghdad's need for exclusively dedicated services, 24-hour support, and Arabic-speaking employees.

The Department should develop uniform procedures for the issuance and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for travelers to Baghdad. Current practices for issuing PPE vary depending on point of last departure before entry into Iraq.

There are no accurate and up-to-date lists of personnel authorized to use ISU Amman travel services. The Department of State should provide this information to ISU Amman.

In sum, OIG found that decisions on where to provide off-site support were not well coordinated and that the Department has not yet developed a fully coherent regional support model appropriate for Embassy Baghdad.



The Office of Inspector General provides the Secretary of State and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department, its posts abroad, and related activities. OIG schedules an inspection of each post and bureau periodically in accordance with the Foreign Service Act of 1980 as amended.

Inspections cover three broad areas:

Policy Implementation: whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; whether post operations are in consonance with the foreign policy of the United States; whether U.S. interests are being accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.

Resource Management: whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.

Management Controls: whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; whether instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction and prevention have been taken.