



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

Inspection of Embassy Singapore



Exterior photograph of Embassy Singapore

Embassy Singapore is important to U.S. interests in Southeast Asia. The Ambassador and deputy chief of mission work together to ensure that all U.S. interests in this country are coordinated and carried out in accordance with U.S. government goals and objectives. Embassy Singapore's high quality of life, adequate office space, and sufficient International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) funds make it a good regional base for many other federal agencies. The volume and complexity of this regional work outweighs the important though small bilateral dimension of the embassy's workload.

Department of Defense commands and programs are active in Singapore, but are not under chief of mission authority. Nonetheless, they affect a number of issues related to force protection, privileges and immunities, and policy implementation.

The OIG inspection of this embassy found several praise-worthy situations. These include:

- The consular section is well run and efficient, and courteously provides a full range of services.
- The consular section's innovative predeparture, orientation seminar for U.S.-bound students has increased recruitment by U.S. universities, making the United States the second most popular destination for Singaporean students.
- The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) conducts robust, model public diplomacy programs and has made major inroads in reaching key Muslim audiences.

The OIG report singled out OPA's support to the National Library Board's partnership with Singapore's Ministry of Education, saying it allows OPA to cut through bureaucratic procedures to gain easy access to several junior colleges that have a large number of students interested in higher education in the United States. In addition to promoting U.S. educational information to Singaporean students and educators, OPA will use the partnership to promote other U.S. educational exchange programs.

The embassy's scores on OIG's workplace and quality of life questionnaires are among the highest OIG has ever recorded. OIG verified that the scores were warranted and that the management section deserved high praise for exceptional service.

Background



Map of Singapore

Singapore is an island city-state of about 4.1 million citizens, approximately 77 percent of them ethnic Chinese. Singapore has populous, predominantly Islamic, nationalistic neighbors, Indonesia and Malaysia, and is a member with those nations in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Furthermore, Singapore lacks natural resources and cannot field a large military force. Its leaders have accordingly sought to build stabilizing regional associations, to assign paramount importance to trading and economic relationships that increase the prosperity of all, and to seek outside partners that can provide strategic stability and a counterbalance to the region. Singapore's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew has consistently called for the United States to play such a role through sustained regional military, political, and economic involvement.

The United States has a large and growing stake in Singapore, despite the absence of formal treaty ties. The primary importance of Singapore to the United States rests in its strategic location astride some of the world's busiest and most crucial sea-lanes. A developed and thoroughly high-tech society, Singapore is an engine for regional economic development, a center for financial transactions, and a hub for international air and shipping routes. ASEAN political leaders and economic decisionmakers are heavily influenced by Singapore's views. Singapore's leaders have taken a key, if quiet, role in working out solutions on a wide array of regional issues. The Singapore government's specialized knowledge and informed counsel have made valuable contributions to U.S. policy, most recently in U.S. efforts to combat global terrorism.

Singapore is the eleventh largest export market for U.S. goods and the base for some 1,500 U.S. companies, most with regional orientation. It is also home for about 15,000 American citizens. The U.S. Foreign Commercial Service and the Foreign Agricultural Service are represented in Singapore; both anticipate that American exports to Singapore will remain strong, particularly with the greater market access provided by the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, which took effect on January 1, 2004.

Bilateral relations overall are perhaps the best ever. As a former colony, Singapore is still very protective of its sovereignty. This limits its willingness to make binding commitments it believes would be an infringement. In addition, American publications and journalists in Singapore still operate under certain reporting and circulation constraints imposed by the Singapore authorities. All of this requires constant attention to manage.

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.