



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

Inspection of Embassy Sanaa, Yemen



Exterior of Embassy Sanaa

The bombing of the USS Cole in the Yemeni city of Aden in 2000, a full year before the September 11, 2001, attacks, announced the presence of Islamic radicalism in Yemen. In the past five years, the government of Yemen has increased counterterrorism cooperation with the United States, but reports persist that Islamic extremists continue to find hospitality and a sympathetic ear in certain tribal areas of Yemen.

Against this backdrop, Embassy Sanaa does not permit school age children at post. At the same time, Embassy Sanaa has many assets. The embassy is collegial, well run, and uses a holistic approach to achieve its over-arching counterterrorism goal. All embassy sections including the U.S. Agency for International Development, the legal attaché, and the many military detachments, elements, and teams are fully involved. Coordination is structured and excellent, and policy advocacy has produced a number of successes.

Grants made under the Middle East Partnership Initiative have been particularly challenging for the mission. The embassy sees them as useful, and they receive good intra-embassy support. Still, poor communication limits embassy involvement in program planning and execution and therefore threatens MEPI's effectiveness and efficiency.

The embassy remains the *de facto* administrator of the Yemeni American Language Institute, which is a badly needed success story for the public diplomacy effort and an important embassy outreach tool that should be preserved. However, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) believes the embassy should privatize the institute. In the meantime, salary rates for its 100 teachers should conform to those for the post's locally employed staff.

The embassy is not rightsized in that regionalization of its human resources services is not working well. The embassy needs an additional American position to manage its over 500 locally employed staff, including the 277 guards at the chancery and residences and the language institute's teachers. Many of the embassy's poor human resources practices arise from the lack of a trained direct-hire American officer.

OIG also noted the following:

- The United States has no diplomatic or consular presence in Aden and should dispose of the U.S.-owned office building there, which it has not occupied since June 1969.
- The embassy's radio program suffers from neglect and poor management and needs an assigned Yemeni frequency.
- The customs-clearance process appears capricious and, at times, inexplicable, particularly for certain types of official equipment or supplies. There are high demurrage charges for shipments that do not clear customs quickly.

Background



Map of Yemen

The Republic of Yemen is at a crossroads that will determine whether it integrates into 21st century global economic and political structures. Half of Yemen's population is under age 15, and the population grows by 3.5 percent per year and could double by 2028. Less than half of adults are literate; the literacy rate stands at 30 percent among women. Unemployment ranges between 20 to 40 percent, and 45 percent of Yemenis live on less than two dollars a day.

Hydrocarbon, once Yemen's economic mainstay, is dwindling. The water table is depleting, with a serious hydrological crisis projected to occur within a decade. The central government has only tenuous control over some tribal areas, and health, education, and governance indicators that were trending upward have dipped during the past two years. Cultural and political challenges also exist, and a thriving small arms trade flourishes as weapons move from Yemen to other countries in the region.

The Yemeni press remains among the most vocal and untrammelled of news media within the Arab world, and the nation's parliament has increasingly asserted its prerogatives, including the right to question executive branch officials concerning the misuse of government revenues.

Office of Inspector General

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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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