



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

Inspection of Embassy Buenos Aires, Argentina



Exterior of Embassy Buenos Aires

Embassy Buenos Aires has a front office team that has fostered excellent interagency cooperation and has orchestrated impressive law enforcement and security cooperation with Argentine authorities.

The public affairs and public diplomacy programs support all of its Mission Performance Plan goals, but to improve the Argentine public's predominately negative opinion about the United States, the embassy's public affairs section needs more tools to allow it to concentrate on

programming with the most impact. The mission's substantive reporting has been timely,

comprehensive, and well received by Washington end users.

The consular section is still working hard to rebuild its capacity in the wake of Argentina's 2002 loss of the visa waiver program and the country's unexpectedly robust economic resurgence. The section's focus on the nonimmigrant visa workload has limited the attention it devoted to other important areas. A planned increase in Foreign Service officer staffing should redress this situation.

The growing crime and illicit drug trafficking in Argentina, combined with the regional political shifts that signal reduced cooperation by neighboring governments with U.S. counternarcotics programs, have increased the need for bilateral cooperation with Argentine law enforcement officials. The State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs should adjust its program accordingly.

The embassy organized the President's participation in the November 2005 Summit of the Americas, which was held at a resort town at a distance from the capital city. This remote location and the lack of suitable hotel and transport options created severe challenges for the embassy's management section. The post's overall performance in support of this summit was good, but some financial issues remained unresolved at the time of this inspection.

The Ambassador and DCM provide strong support to the post's security program. In the face of rising levels of crime against mission employees, the Ambassador requires all mission staff members to pay attention to post security practices and procedures.

OIG Report ISP-I-06-49, Inspection of Embassy Buenos Aires, Argentina

The fieldwork for this report was conducted by the Office of Inspections in Buenos Aires from May 2 to May 22, 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.

Background: Argentina

Argentina's economy has recovered at a rapid rate since the economic crisis of 2001-2002 and is on track to perform well in 2006, provided that Argentina is able to attract more investment and control inflation. The production of grains, cattle, and other agricultural goods continues to be the backbone of the Argentine economy. Energy products, high technology goods, and services are emerging as significant exports. U.S. trade with Argentina grew an estimated 20 percent in 2005, with two-way trade totaling almost \$8.5 billion.

The government of Argentina is a close and productive partner of the United States in counterproliferation, counternarcotics, and counterterrorism activities. Argentina is the only South American country that has endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative and implemented the Container Security Initiative. The nation is also in the final stages of negotiating a memorandum of understanding on the Megaports Initiative – the first such agreement in South America. Argentina cooperates as a major regional security ally and contributes troops to the United Nations' peacekeeping mission in Haiti. The United States and Argentina have exceptionally active science and technology cooperation with a strong focus on nuclear nonproliferation. In January 2005, Argentina assumed a two-year seat on the U.N. Security Council.

Office of Inspector General

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September 12, 2006