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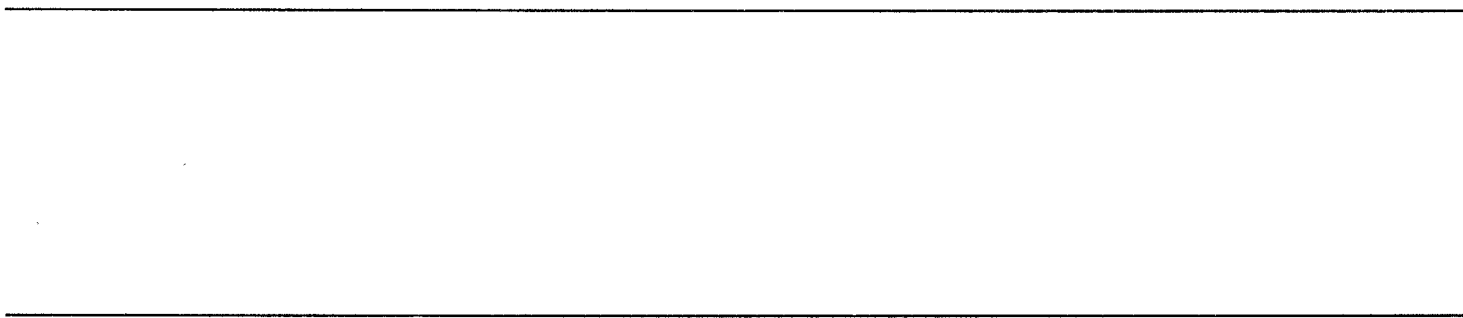
Report to the Chairman, Legislation and
National Security Subcommittee,
Committee on Government Operations,
House of Representatives

July 1993

STATE DEPARTMENT

Survey of
Administrative Issues
Affecting Embassies





**National Security and
International Affairs Division**

B-253694

July 12, 1993

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman, Legislation and National
Security Subcommittee
Committee on Government Operations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

You requested that we assess the Department of State's management of its overseas posts. As part of our work, we sent questionnaires to 104 U.S. embassies on problems and issues affecting operations in the following administrative and management areas: staffing, training, financial management, contracting and procurement, real and personal property management, regional support, and other management issues. This report presents the information provided by the 80 embassies that responded to our survey.

Results in Brief

According to the respondents to our questionnaire, (1) many embassies experience staffing gaps in key administrative positions; (2) the number of administrative staff at some embassies has not kept pace with increasing work loads; (3) some staff training needs are not met; (4) financial management systems do not meet embassy requirements; (5) some embassies have not taken required actions to improve overseas contracting and procurement; and (6) not all embassies inspect the condition of their facilities annually, and most do not prepare the required inspection reports.

Most of the respondents reported that they are satisfied with the administrative services received from State's regional offices, but some are dissatisfied with the offices' financial management services.

Background

The State Department operates 162 embassies and over 100 consulates and other posts overseas to conduct diplomatic and consular activities and provide administrative support services for State and other U.S. agency programs. We sent a questionnaire to 104 U.S. embassies with authorized State Department U.S. staff levels of 10 or more. According to State, overseas embassies employ over 7,000 U.S. direct hires and nearly 10,000 foreign national direct hires and have contracts with over 30,000 foreign

nationals for various support and administrative functions. In fiscal year 1992, State's budget for overseas operations totaled over \$1 billion.

The Administrative Counselor or Administrative Officer at each embassy is responsible for managing contracting and procurement actions, totaling worldwide about \$500 million annually; personal property, such as office equipment and supplies, valued in the aggregate at about \$600 million; and real property actions, such as maintenance and leasing, totaling about \$500 million annually. Other officials with management and administrative responsibilities at the embassies include the personnel officer, budget and fiscal officer, general services officer, information systems manager, communications program officer, and facilities maintenance officer.

Over the years, we have issued a number of other reports dealing with State's management of its overseas posts. The most recent reports discuss management control problems at the U.S. embassies in Panama, Barbados, Grenada, and Mexico and the need to recover overseas medical expenses.¹

Staffing

The embassies responding to our questionnaire indicated that there were frequent staffing gaps (delays in filling authorized positions and positions to which individuals have been posted but are not yet on site) in key U.S. administrative positions. For example, 84 percent of the embassies reported staffing gaps of 2 months or more in one or more administrative positions. About 80 percent of the embassies indicated that such staffing gaps adversely affected operations because important tasks were not done or were delayed. Also, 73 percent of the embassies reported relying significantly on personal services contractors to accommodate either an increased work load or staff shortages.

Another problem that affected operations at some embassies was the increased demands on the administrative staff. Seventy-seven percent of the embassies reported that they had experienced increased work loads to support non-State agencies since the beginning of fiscal year 1992, and 83 percent said their administrative staff levels to support that work had remained constant or declined. Also, 13 percent of the embassies reported

¹State Department: Management Weaknesses at the U.S. Embassies in Panama, Barbados, and Grenada (GAO/NSIAD-93-190, July 9, 1993); State Department: Management Weaknesses at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, Mexico (GAO/NSIAD-93-88, Feb. 8, 1993); and State Department: Need to Ensure Recovery of Overseas Medical Expenses (GAO/NSIAD-92-277, Aug. 7, 1992).

that the process outlined by National Security Decision Directive Number 38 (NSDD-38)² had been of little or no use in controlling mission size.

In its 1992 Financial Integrity Act report to the President and the Congress, State acknowledged that since 1988 it had suffered from an acute shortage of skilled foreign service administrative staff overseas. State indicated that inadequate administrative staffing overseas would not be corrected until 1996.

Training

Responses to our questionnaire indicate that inadequate attention has been given to the formal training needs of U.S. and foreign service national employees. Some respondents reported that senior foreign service officers had not received formal training in their primary areas of responsibility for more than 10 years. (We asked for detailed training histories of selected senior officers at each embassy, including the dates that certain specific courses were completed.) Also, 53 percent of the Information Systems Security Officers have not received formal training in managing an automated unclassified information security system. About 60 percent of the respondents reported that their embassy did not identify, on a regular basis, the training needs of foreign service officers. Our 1989 report,³ alerted the State Department to problems in its training programs and called for corrective action.

The majority of the respondent embassies reported that they addressed the training needs of their foreign service national employees but generally considered the amount of formal training received by foreign national personnel involved in administrative activities to be insufficient. The respondents believed that the foreign service national staff needed more formal training to effectively carry out their responsibilities in the areas of real property, including maintenance, contracting and procurement, personal property management, and budget and fiscal operations.

Financial Management

About one-third of the responding embassies reported dissatisfaction with the ability of financial management systems to provide timely information necessary for making operational and management decisions. Specific

²NSDD-38, signed by President Reagan in June 1982, assigned responsibility to the Chiefs of Mission for approving, in coordination with State, any changes in size, composition, or mandate of staff operating under their authority.

³State Department: Professional Development of Foreign Service Employees (GAO/NSIAD-89-149, July 26, 1989).

problems included the inability of the financial management systems to generate nonstandard reports and quick financial updates.

Embassies were highly dependent on unofficial "cuff records" (manual or automated records maintained outside of or supplemental to official financial management systems) to assist in managing financial operations. Cuff records were used by 92 percent of the respondent embassies, and over one-half of these respondents described the records as being essential in meeting their current financial management needs. Fifteen percent of the responding embassies that used cuff records reported that they did not reconcile them to official financial records or did so only on an irregular basis.

In 1983, State first reported its financial systems as a material weakness under the Financial Integrity Act process. Last year, we reported that (1) overall, the financial systems still did not meet applicable accounting requirements; (2) staff were often inexperienced and inadequately trained; and (3) overseas systems were obsolete.⁴ In December 1992, the State Department indicated that planned corrective actions would not be completed until 1999, or 16 years after the problem was first reported.

Contracting and Procurement

In 1987, as part of its Financial Integrity Act process, State identified four major deficiencies within the procurement process that continue to diminish its effectiveness in managing procurement activities worldwide. These deficiencies were the (1) lack of a certified procurement system; (2) lack of training leading to individual warranting of contract officers; (3) weaknesses in the procurement process, particularly with respect to acquisition planning; and (4) lack of a worldwide procurement data base. In December 1992, State reported that in 1993 it would complete the planned improvements to the contract administration process.

However, 39 percent of the embassies responding to our questionnaire reported that they did not have a competition advocacy program, 30 percent did not have State's worldwide procurement data base installed and in operation,⁵ and 39 percent had not developed an acquisition plan for fiscal year 1992.

⁴Financial Management: Serious Deficiencies in State's Financial Systems Require Sustained Attention (GAO/AFMD-93-9, Nov. 13, 1992).

⁵The data base was designed to meet mandatory legal reporting requirements for recording procurement information and reporting to the Federal Procurement Data System. State had expected the data base to be fully operational by early 1992.

Real Property Management

In 1988, as part of its Financial Integrity Act process, State identified inadequate rehabilitation and maintenance of real property overseas as a material weakness. It cited such problems as the lack of professional maintenance capabilities at embassies, a lack of systematic maintenance and rehabilitation programming, and the lack of adequate funding for maintenance and repair of overseas facilities. In December 1992, State reported that corrective actions would be completed by September 1993.

However, about 30 percent of the embassies responding to our questionnaire acknowledged that they had not conducted recommended annual condition surveys of all government-owned and long-term leased facilities. More than 10 percent indicated that they did not have a preventive maintenance program. Most embassies had not prepared annual inspection summary reports (a recommended tool for developing long-range maintenance objectives and budget requirements). Almost all of the responding embassies received services or review visits from State's Office of Foreign Buildings Operations, the Washington Maintenance Assistance Center, and/or the European Maintenance Assistance Center,⁶ and the majority of these respondents were generally or very satisfied with the services.

In 1989, we reported that about one in every three housing units in the seven countries we visited exceeded the State Department's standards.⁷ To address this problem, State established new housing standards in 1991. However, about 88 percent of the embassies responding to our questionnaire reported that some housing units at their embassy now exceeded State's 1991 residential housing space standards, and 61 percent reported that 10 percent or more of the housing units exceed standards. Sixty-two percent estimated it would take 2 years or more to be in full compliance with the 1991 residential housing space standards, established 2 years ago. Respondents cited attractive terms on unexpired leases, conditions in the local housing market, and security concerns as reasons for noncompliance with the standards.

Regional Support

Most of the respondent embassies that have received communications, contracting and procurement, budget and fiscal, and personnel services

⁶The Office of Foreign Buildings Operations created the Washington and European Maintenance Assistance Centers in 1989 to provide maintenance assistance to overseas embassies. Personnel from these centers perform maintenance for sensitive systems, train local maintenance personnel, and perform minor rehabilitation work.

⁷State Department: Management of Overseas Real Property Needs Improvement (GAO/NSIAD-89-116, Apr. 13, 1989).

from one or more of State's regional offices were satisfied with the timeliness and quality of services. However, in some cases, respondents were dissatisfied with the quality and/or timeliness of regional financial management services, particularly those provided by the Regional Administrative Management Center in Mexico City.⁸

Other Management Issues

As part of its Financial Integrity Act process, in 1983, State reported a lack of central oversight in personal property management operations as a material control weakness and indicated that corrective action was being taken. However, 10 years later, about 19 percent of the respondent embassies reported nonexpendable personal property shortages of 1 percent or more of the total value of inventory in fiscal year 1991, fiscal year 1992, or both. State established a 1-percent threshold to trigger a review by the embassy's property survey board. In fiscal year 1991, the value of inventory shortages (items stolen, misplaced, or otherwise unaccounted for) at 7 respondent embassies totaled \$566,136, and in fiscal year 1992, the value of inventory shortages at 10 respondent embassies totaled \$425,642. Also, 14 percent of the respondents reported that their embassy did not use an automated property system, developed by State in the 1980s to improve internal controls, for all nonexpendable property.

About one-third of the respondents viewed State's program planning system as of little or no use, or only somewhat useful, in identifying resource requirements, opportunities for improving embassy management, and opportunities for program efficiency and cost reduction.

Most of the respondents reported that their embassy had formally examined areas of management to determine if systems were adequate or corrective action was needed. Similarly, most respondents indicated that their embassy had formally examined opportunities for controlling or reducing costs, but the responses indicated a lack of uniformity in the opportunities examined. For example, 84 percent of the respondents reported that their embassy had examined opportunities for cost control in contracting and procurement, 59 percent in vehicle operations, and 25 percent in the replacement of U.S. direct hire positions with less costly dependents or foreign nationals.

⁸State has other Regional Administrative Management Centers in Paris and Bangkok.

Scope and Methodology

To conduct our survey, we sent a questionnaire to 104 U.S. embassies with authorized State Department U.S. staff levels of 10 or more. The 104 embassies represent about 64 percent of all U.S. embassies. The questionnaires were sent in December 1992 to the Deputy Chief of Mission at each embassy. We asked that the Administrative Counselor or Administrative Officer be responsible for the survey's completion. The results of the survey reflected in this report are based on responses from the 80 embassies that completed and returned the questionnaire by March 1993, representing a response rate of 77 percent. We did not attempt to independently verify the factual accuracy of the information collected by the questionnaire. However, fieldwork at selected embassies was designed to include some test checks of the survey responses.

To determine whether responding embassies differed systematically from those that did not respond, the embassies were compared in terms of staff size and composition, and no differences were found. All sizes, compositions, and geographical regions are represented in this report.

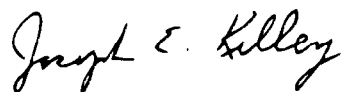
Our questionnaire was reviewed by experienced officers and subject matter experts within the State Department. Also, we conducted a series of pretests both in the field and with former overseas administrative and general services officers on assignment in Washington, D.C.

Appendix I contains responses to selected survey questions. Most of the figure titles in the appendix present the exact question that appeared in the questionnaire. (Some figure titles were edited to eliminate detailed instructions.) Questions that were to be answered by only specific embassies (e.g., those that had a certain characteristic) are noted. Questions in which respondents could choose more than one response are also noted; thus, percentages in these figures will not total to 100 percent. Percentages in other figures also may not total to 100 percent due to rounding. The item nonresponse rate—the rate of embassies not answering a question that should have been answered—ranged from 0 percent to 6 percent.

Unless you publicly announce this report's contents earlier, we plan no further distribution until 10 days from its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to other interested congressional committees, the Secretary of State, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. We will make copies available to others upon request.

Please contact me at (202) 512-4128 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix II.

Sincerely yours,



Joseph E. Kelley
Director-in-Charge
International Affairs Issues

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Abbreviations

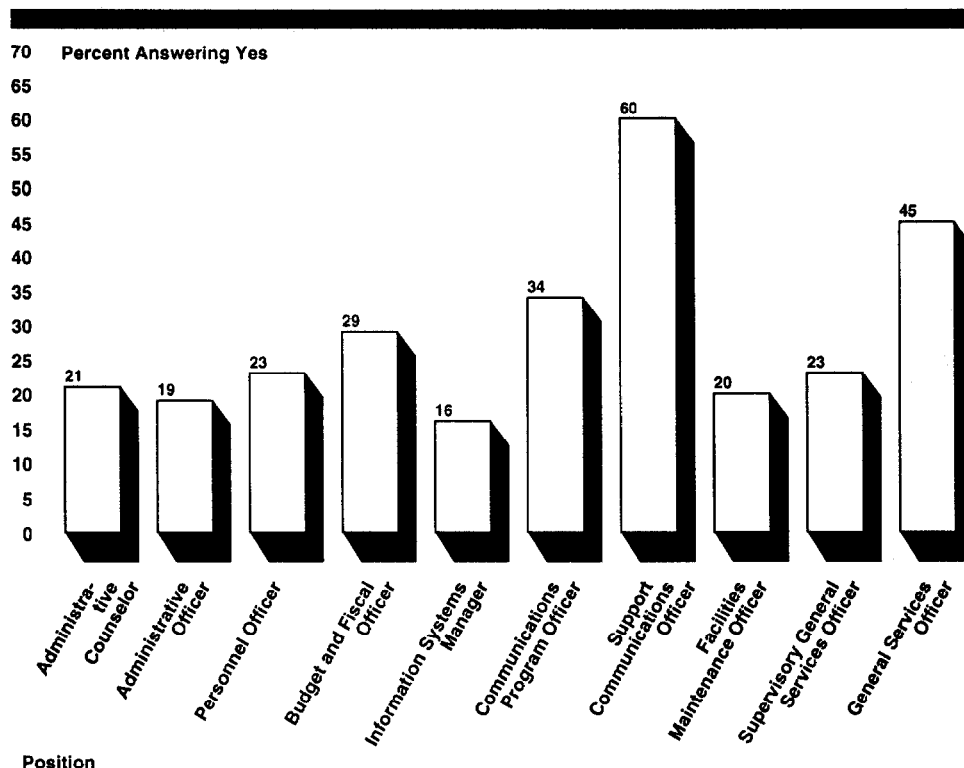
NSDD-38 National Security Decision Directive Number 38

Responses to Our Survey of U.S. Embassy Administrative Operations

Staffing

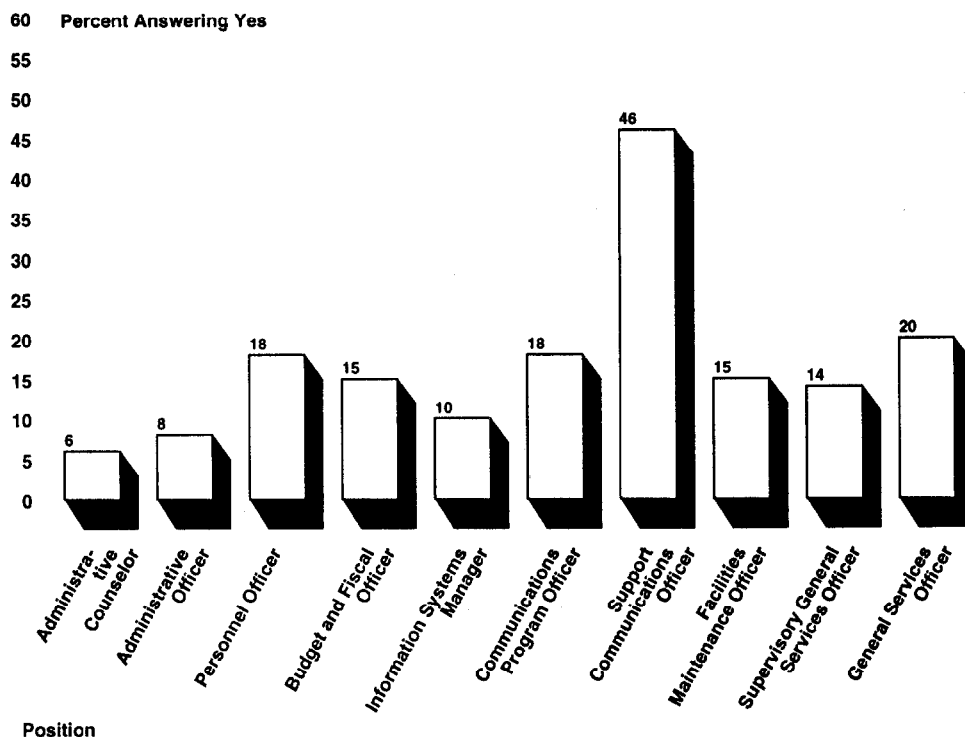
This section of the questionnaire was designed to obtain information on issues in personnel systems that affect the efficiency of overseas operations. About 95 percent of the respondents reported that their embassy had experienced staffing gaps in one or more key administrative positions over the past 2 fiscal years, and 54 percent reported gaps in at least three of these positions during this period. (Staffing gaps include delays in filling authorized positions and positions to which individuals have been posted but are not yet on site.) Many respondents reported that staff levels often failed to keep pace with additional administrative demands to support other agencies. A substantial number of respondents found that the NSDD-38 process had limited use in controlling the size of the mission or reducing the administrative burden on the embassy. Figures I.1 through I.11 present the responses to our questions on staffing.

Figure I.1: Have You Experienced Any Staffing Gaps in Each of the Following Positions at Any Time Since October 1991?



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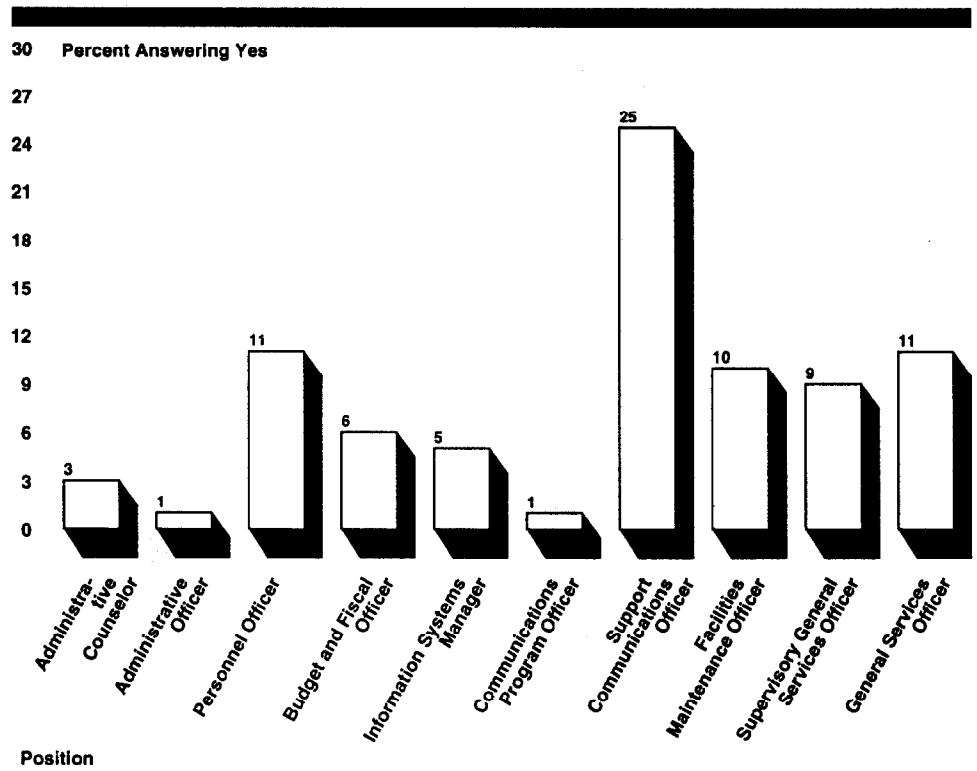
Figure I.2: Have You Experienced Any Staffing Gaps of 2 Months or More in Each of the Following Positions at Any Time Since October 1991?



Note: Eighty-four percent of all embassies experienced at least one staffing gap of 2 months or more in one or more of these positions.

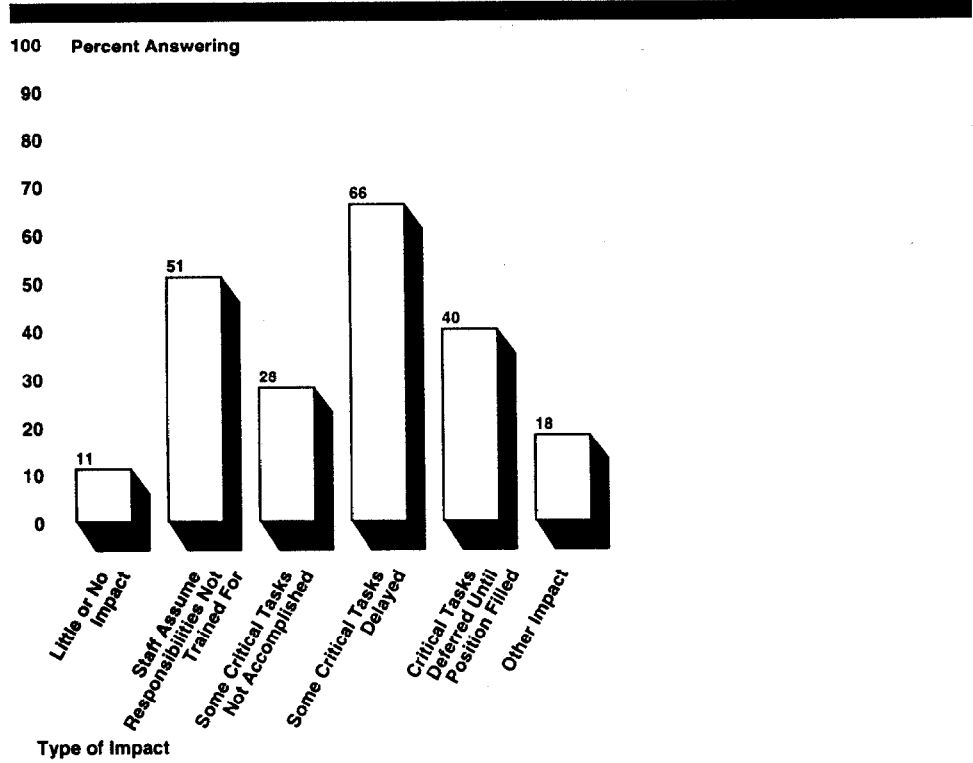
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Figure I.3: Have You Experienced Any Staffing Gaps of More Than 4 Months in Each of the Following Positions at Any Time Since October 1991?



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Figure I.4: In Your Opinion, What Has Been the Impact, if Any, of These Staffing Gaps on Embassy Operations?



Note 1: Embassies could choose more than one response, unless they chose little or no impact.

Note 2: About 80 percent of the embassies reported that critical tasks were delayed or not accomplished until the positions were filled.

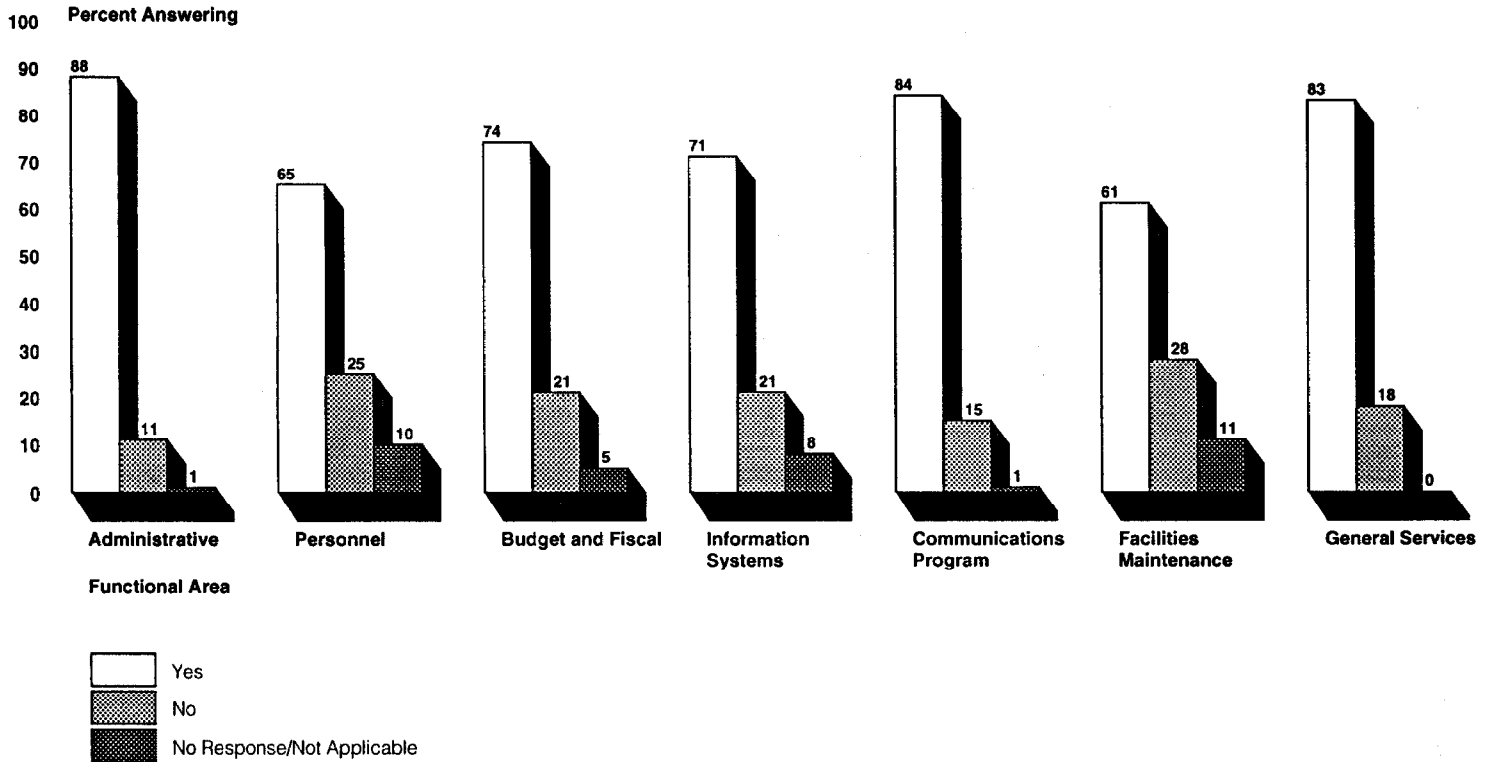
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Figure I.5: Does the Embassy Rely Significantly on Personal Services Contractors to Accommodate Either Increased Work Load or Staff Shortages?



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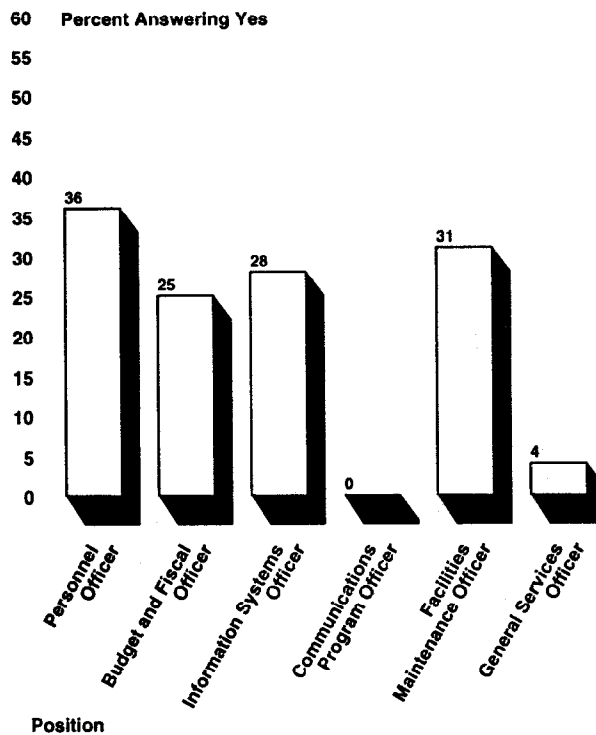
Figure I.6: Do You Consider the Number of Authorized Positions in Each of the Following Functional Areas to Be Adequate to Complete Their Respective Work Loads?



Note: Not applicable includes embassies that do not have authorized positions or receive services from a regional facility or another embassy.

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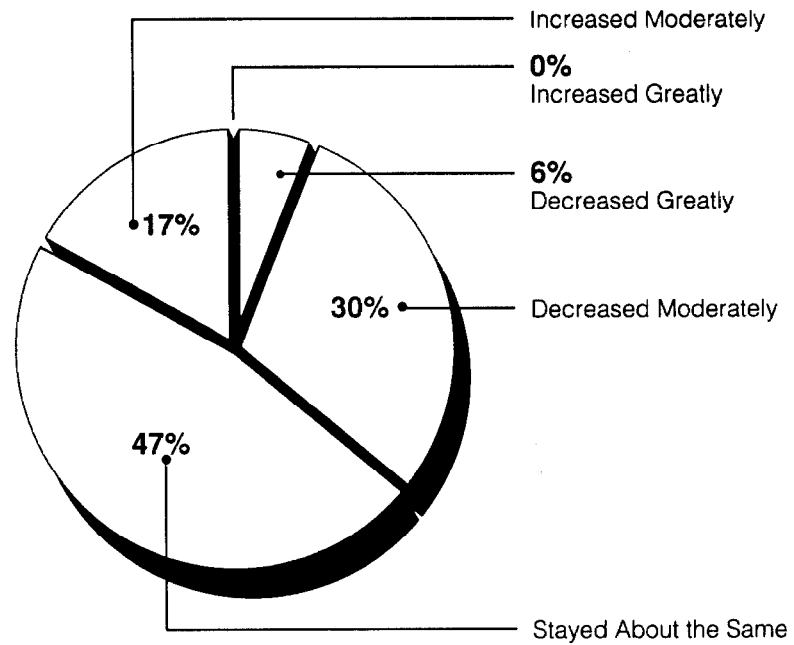
Figure I.7: Do Foreign Service National Personnel Currently Employed by the Embassy Perform the Duties of Any of the Following Positions?



Note: Embassies that have no foreign service national personnel were not included.

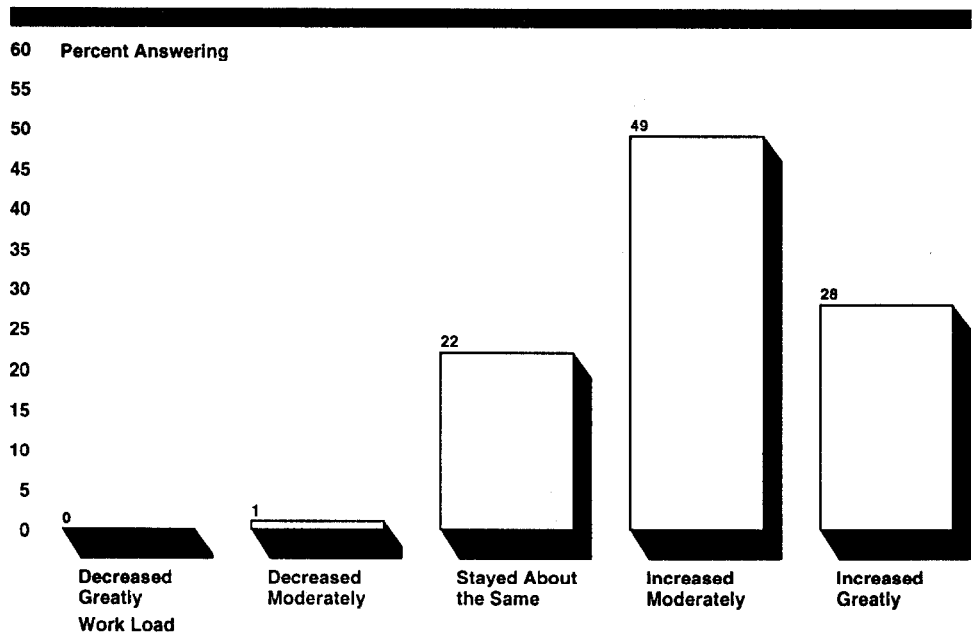
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Figure I.8: How Would You Describe the State Department's Staffing Levels at the Embassy Available to Support Other Agencies Since the Beginning of Fiscal Year 1992?



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Figure I.9: Has the Work Load of State Department Personnel in Support of Other Agencies Decreased, Increased, or Stayed About the Same Since the Beginning of Fiscal Year 1992?



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Figure I.10: In Your Opinion, How Useful, if at All, Has the NSDD-38 Process Been as a Tool to Control the Size of the Entire Mission?

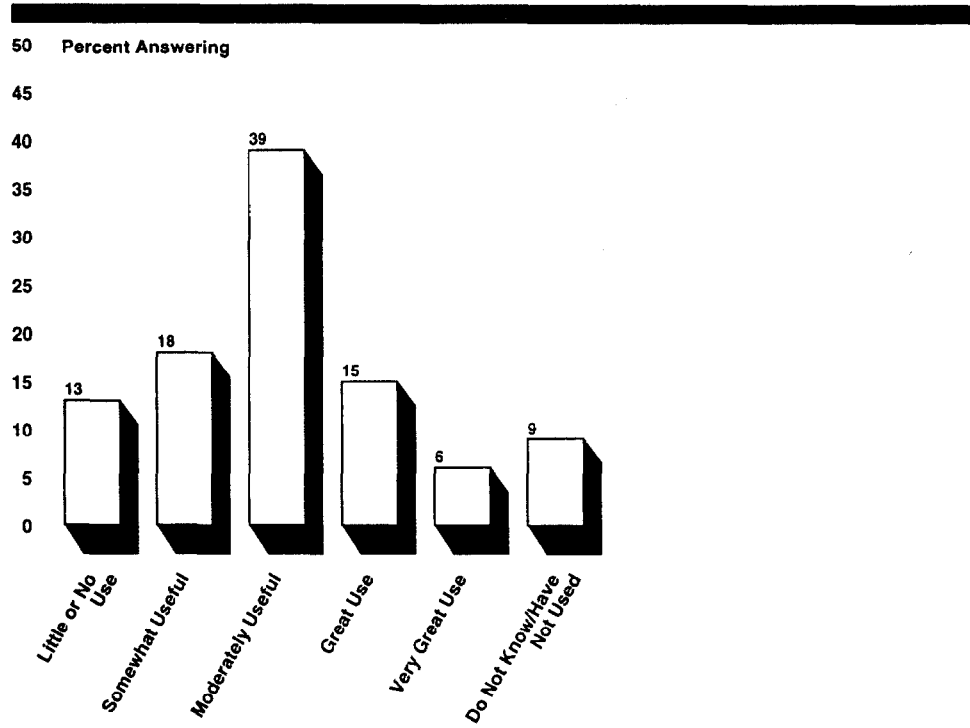
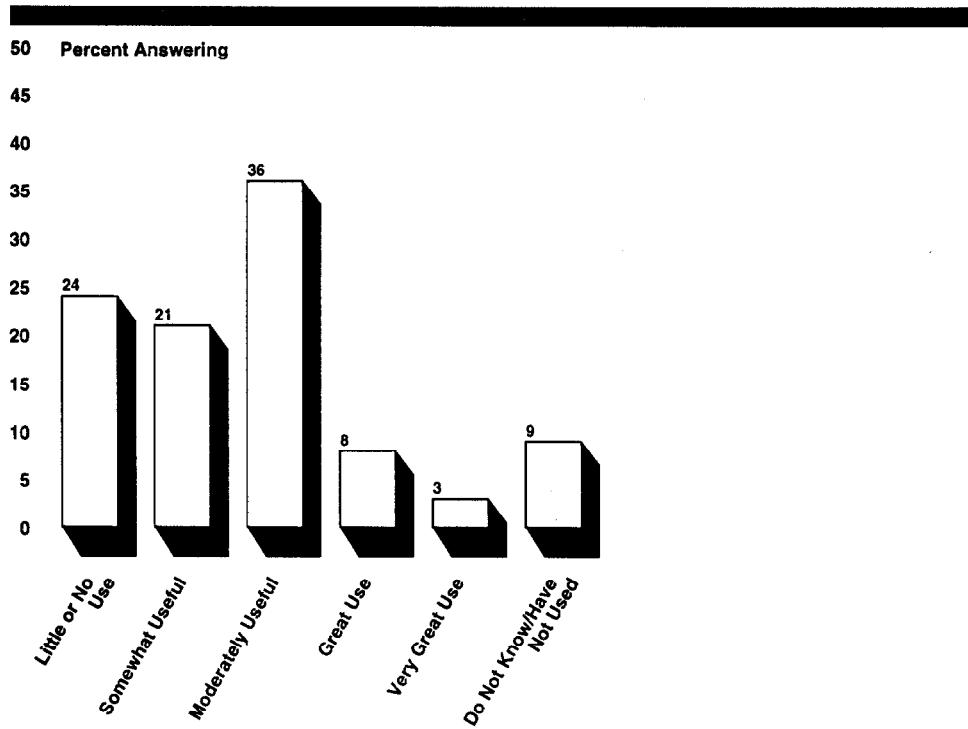


Figure I.11: In Your Opinion, How Useful, if at All, Has the NSDD-38 Process Been as a Tool to Reduce the Administrative Burden on the Embassy?

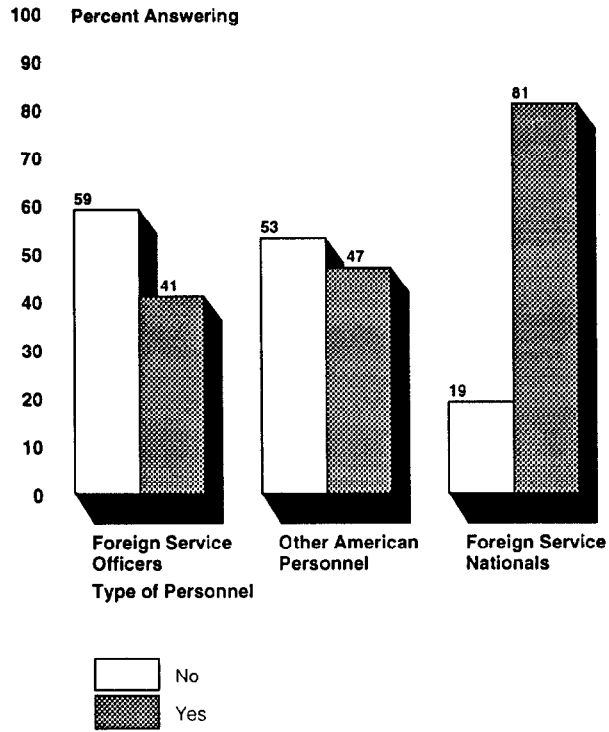


Training

This section of the questionnaire was to determine the type and frequency of formal training of key administrative staff and whether embassies identified and addressed the training needs of their staff. Embassies are highly dependent on foreign service nationals for administrative management functions and for ensuring continuity of operations when U.S. staff rotate. Most respondent embassies reported the desire for additional training for their foreign service nationals. Figures I.12 through I.16 show the responses to our questions on training.

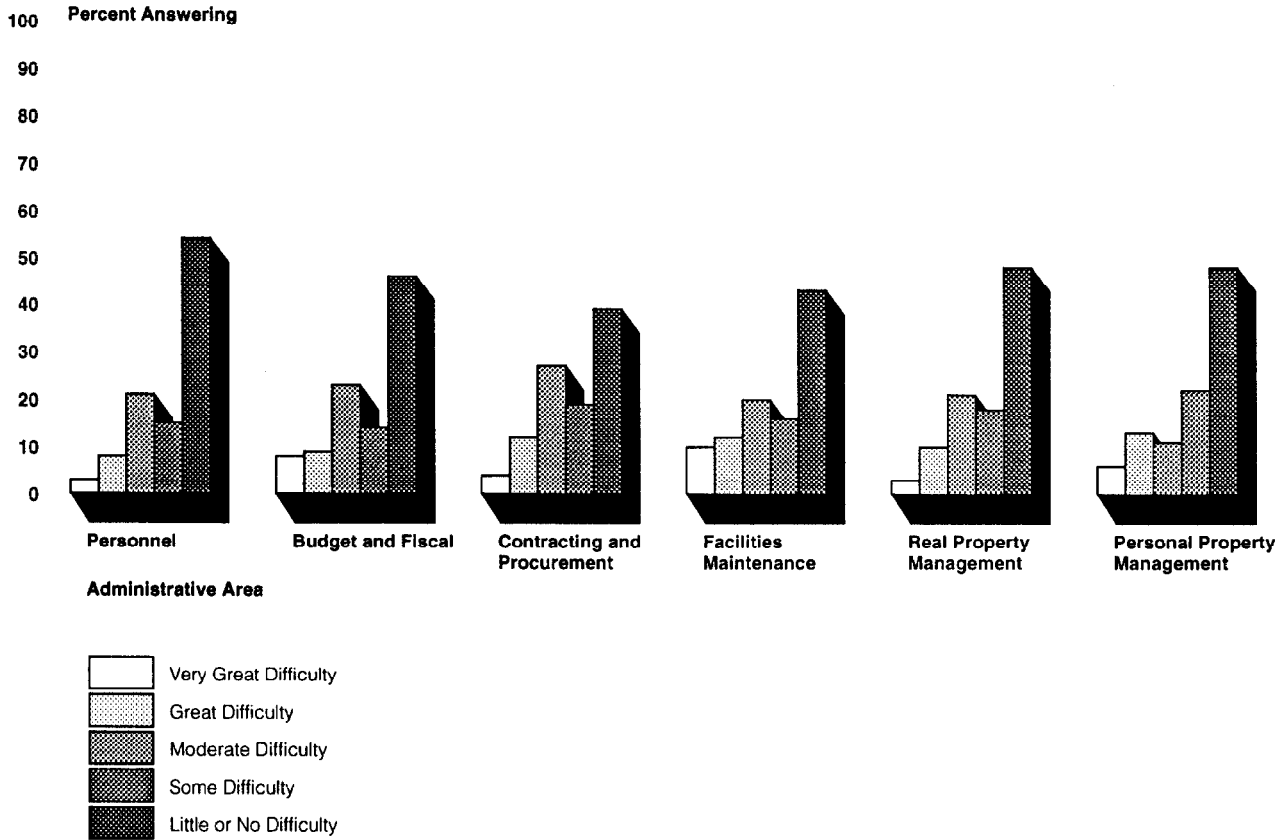
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Figure I.12: Is It the Embassy's Current Practice to Identify, on a Regular Basis, the Training Needs of the Following Personnel?



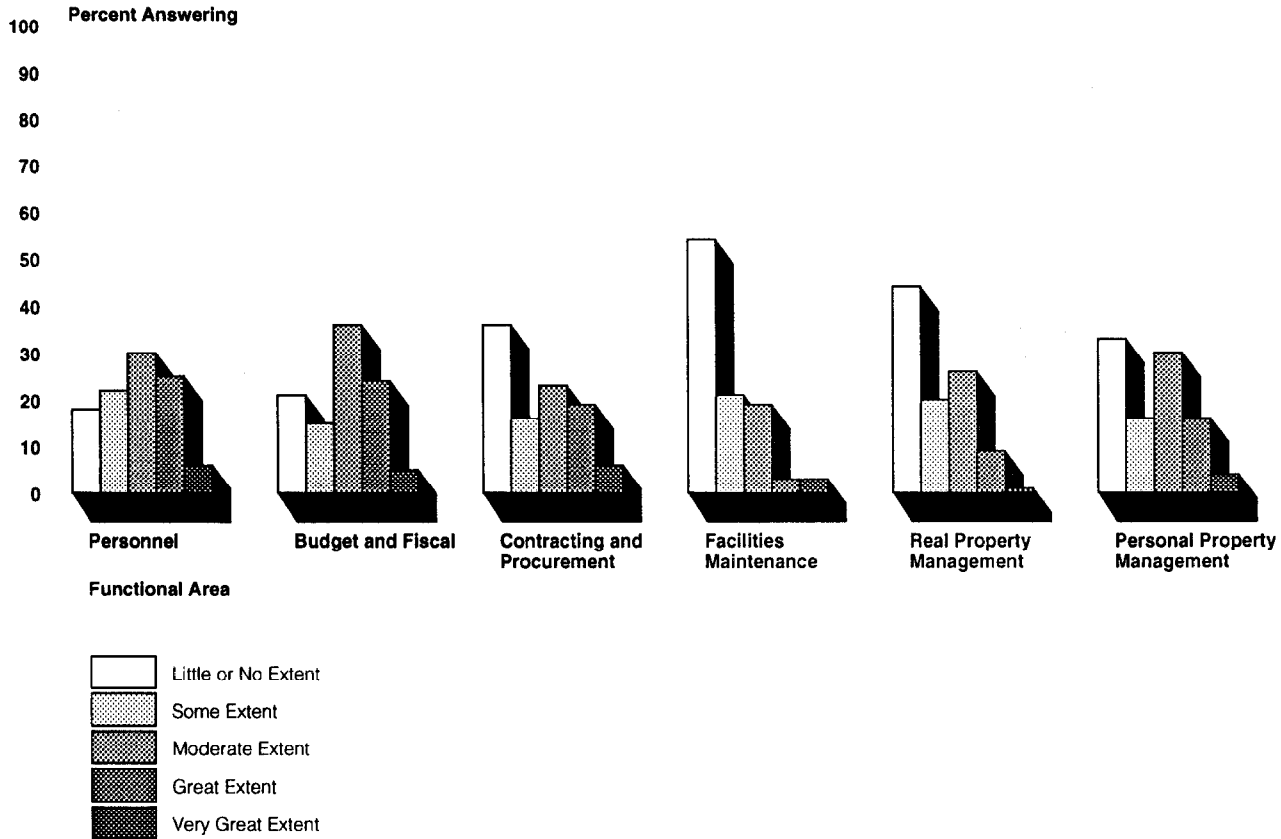
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Figure I.13: In the Recent Past, How Much Difficulty, if Any, Has the Embassy Experienced in Staffing Foreign Service National Positions With Personnel Proficient in the Administrative Skills Necessary to Do Their Jobs in the Following Areas?



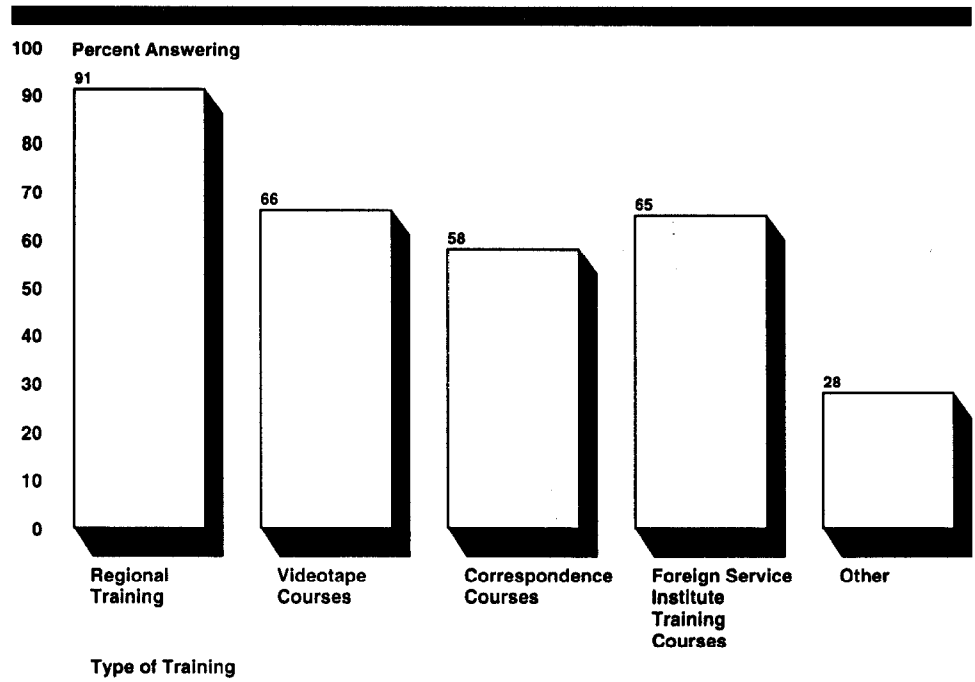
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Figure I.14: To What Extent, if at All, Do You Consider the Amount of Formal Training Received by Foreign Service National Personnel Involved in Administrative Activities at Your Embassy to Be Sufficient to Prepare Them to Perform Their Duties in Each Area?



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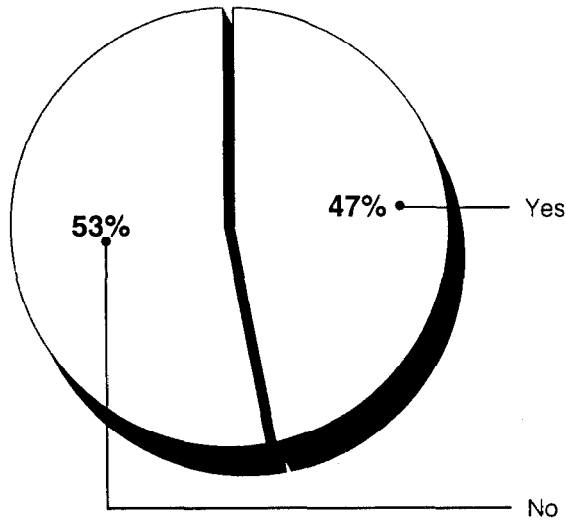
Figure I.15: What, if Any, Additional Forms of Training for Foreign Service National Personnel at Your Embassy Would You Prefer Become More Readily Available?



Note 1: Embassies could give more than one response.

Note 2: Regional training is provided by one of the State Department's regional support centers, such as the Regional Procurement Support Center in Bonn.

Figure I.16: Has the Information Systems Security Officer at Your Embassy Received Formal State Department Training on How to Perform His or Her Duties for Managing an Automated Information System Security Program?

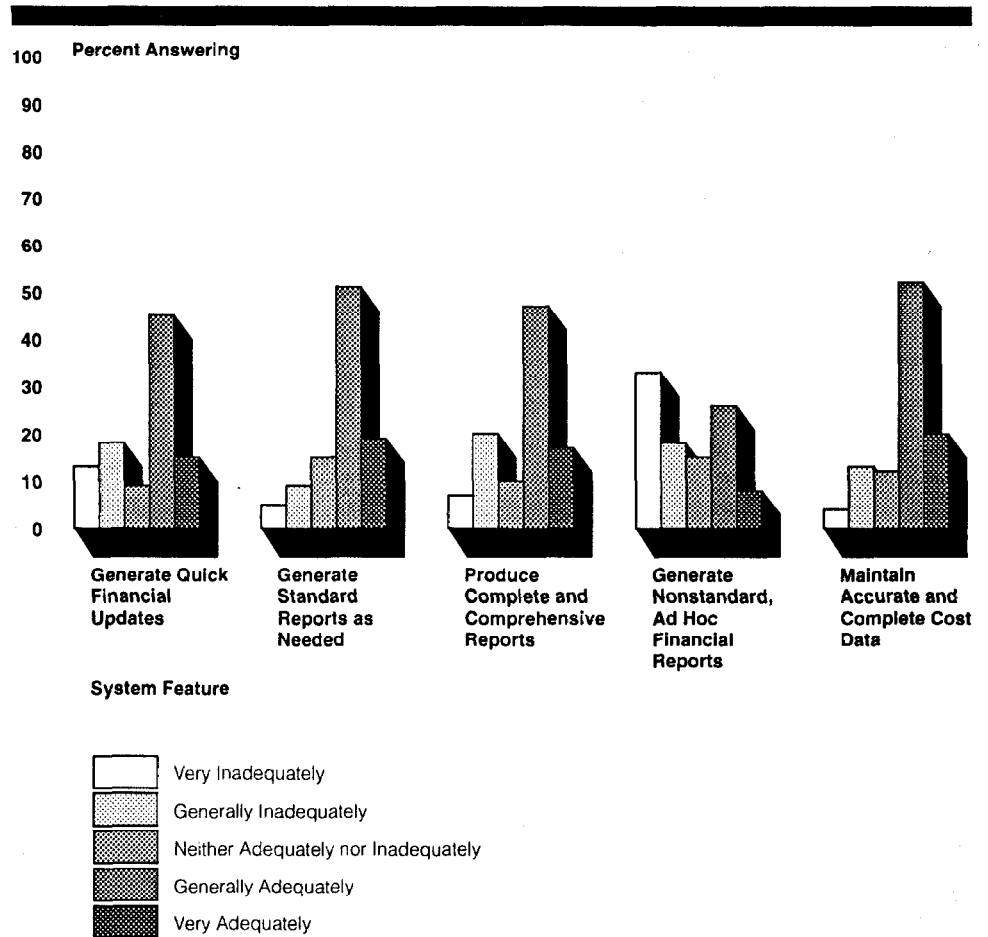


Financial Management

These questions were designed to determine if State's financial management systems met the embassies' needs for internal financial reporting and control. About one-third of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the ability of overseas financial management systems to provide timely information. In addition, about one-half of the respondents reported that the systems were generally or very inadequate for generating nonstandard, ad hoc financial reports. Figures I.17 through I.23 show the responses to the questions.

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Figure I.17: Overall, How Adequately or Inadequately Does the Financial Management System Supporting Embassy Operations Demonstrate Each of the Following Capabilities?



Note 1: Embassies were asked to consider only internal financial management and reporting needs.

Note 2: Embassies whose full financial management needs are serviced by an external office, such as a regional center or another embassy, were not included.

Figure I.18: How Satisfied or Dissatisfied Have You Been With the Ability of the Financial Management System Supporting Embassy Operations to Provide Accurate Information to Meet Operational and Management Decision Needs?

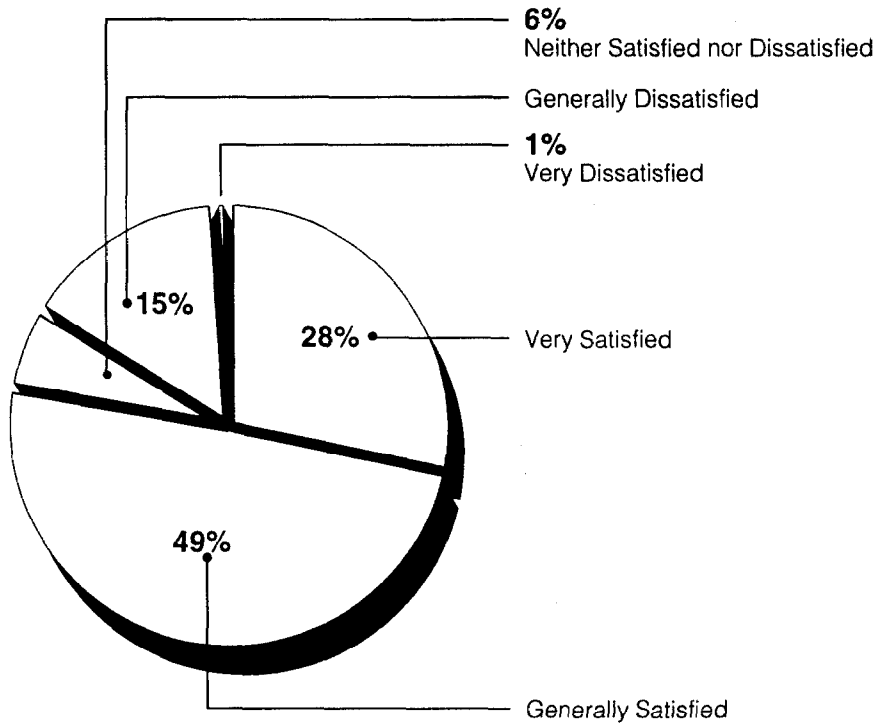
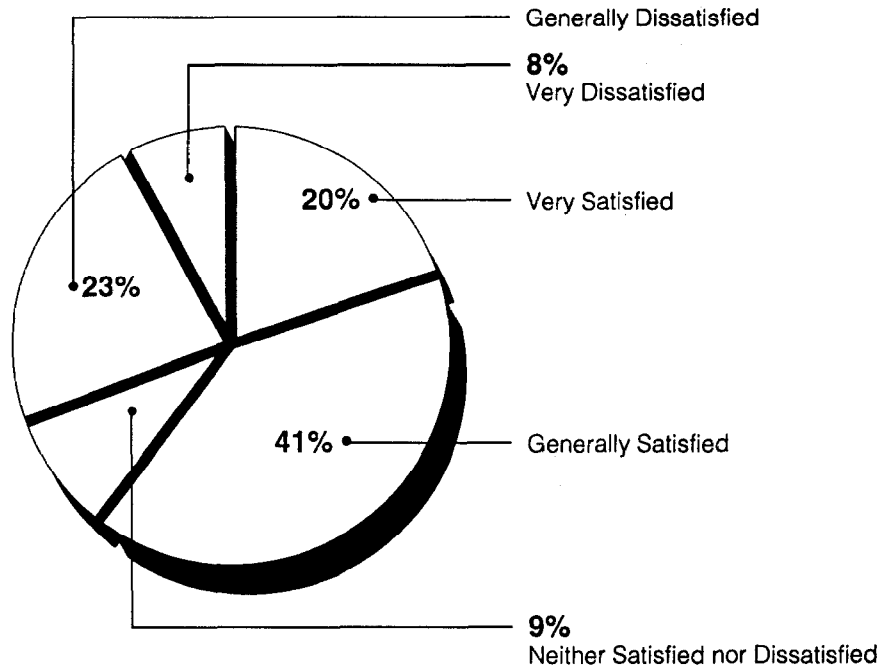
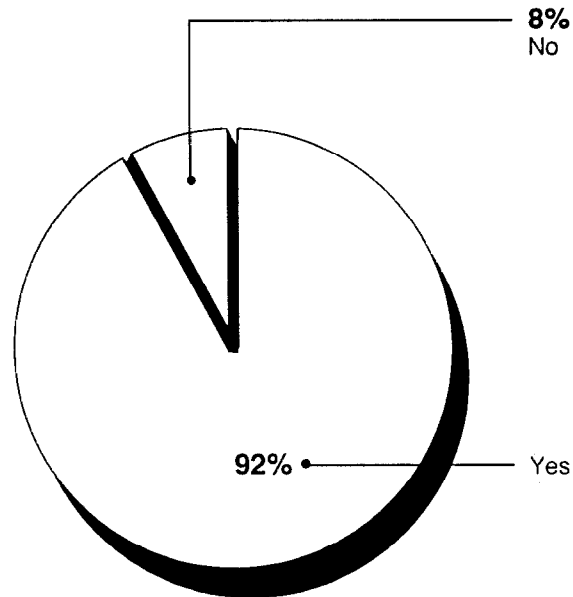


Figure I.19: How Satisfied or Dissatisfied Have You Been With the Ability of the Financial Management System Supporting Embassy Operations to Provide Timely Information to Meet Operational and Management Decision Needs?



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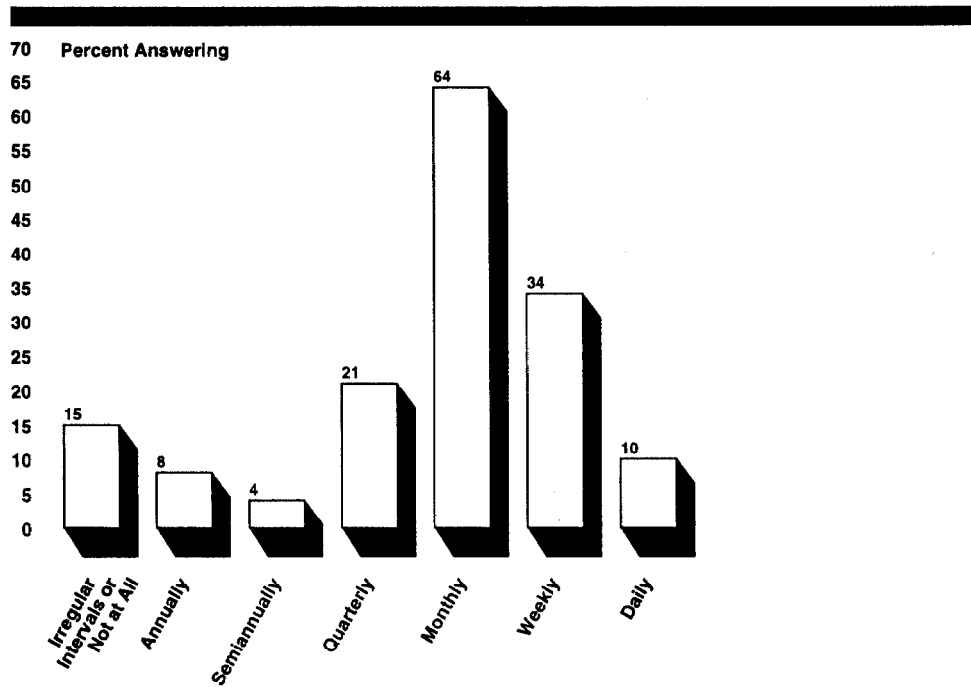
Figure I.20: Does the Embassy
Currently Use Cuff Records of Any
Type to Assist in Its Financial
Management?



Note: Cuff records are manual or automated records maintained outside of or supplemental to official financial management systems.

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Figure I.21: How Often, if at All, Does the Embassy Reconcile Its Cuff Records to Official Financial Management and Accounting Records?



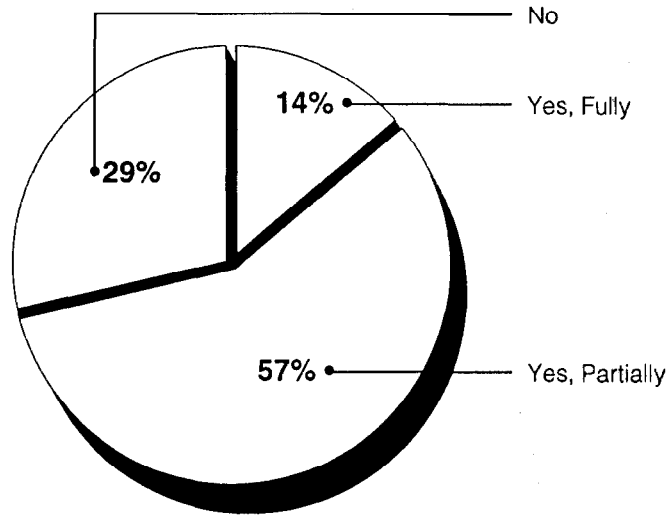
Note 1: Embassies that reconcile different types of cuff records may have chosen more than one interval. Embassies that do not reconcile their cuff records or do so irregularly appear only in the first bar.

Note 2: Biweekly responses appear in both the monthly and weekly bars.

Note 3: Data were based on embassies using cuff records.

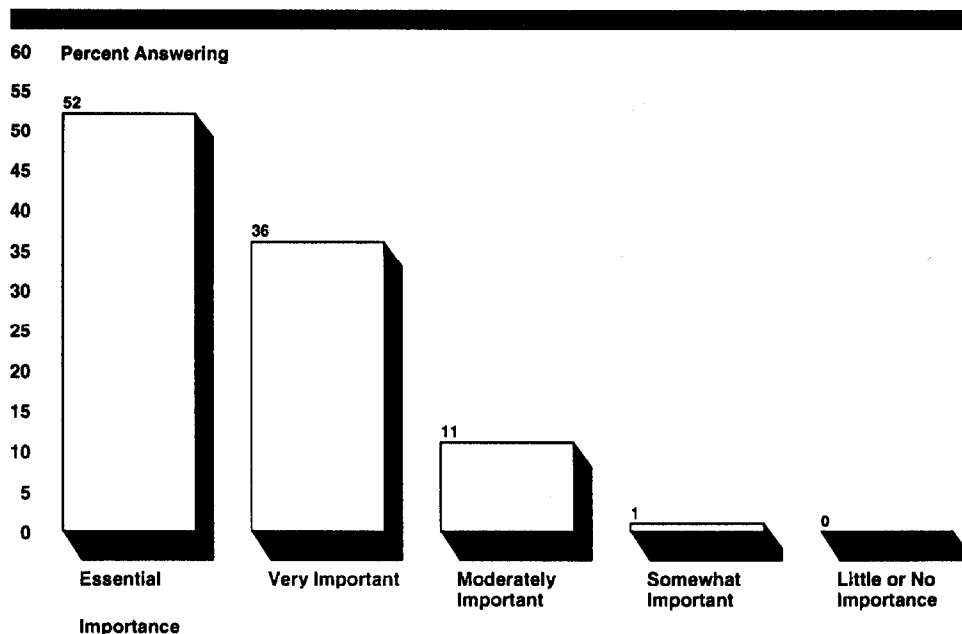
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Figure I.22: Are the Embassy's Cuff Records Automated?



Note: Data were based on embassies using cuff records.

Figure I.23: How Important, If at All, Are Cuff Records to Your Embassy in Meeting Its Current Financial Management Needs?



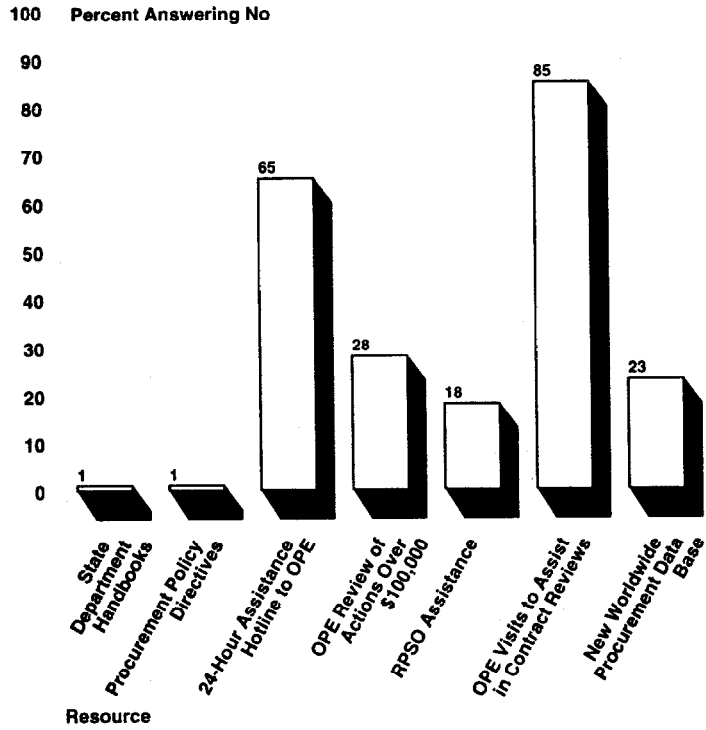
Note: Data were based on embassies using cuff records.

Contracting and Procurement

We structured these questions to find out whether embassies had implemented key components of a procurement system. Thirty-nine percent of the embassies reported that they had not developed acquisition plans, for fiscal year 1992, which would help ensure that the embassies obtain goods and services on time and at the lowest price. In addition, 39 percent of the respondents reported that their embassy did not have a competition advocacy program designed to encourage competition and lower costs for U.S. procurements and contracts. Most of the respondents did not find State's worldwide procurement data base helpful in carrying out contracting and procurement actions. Figures I.24 through I.28 show the responses to our questions.

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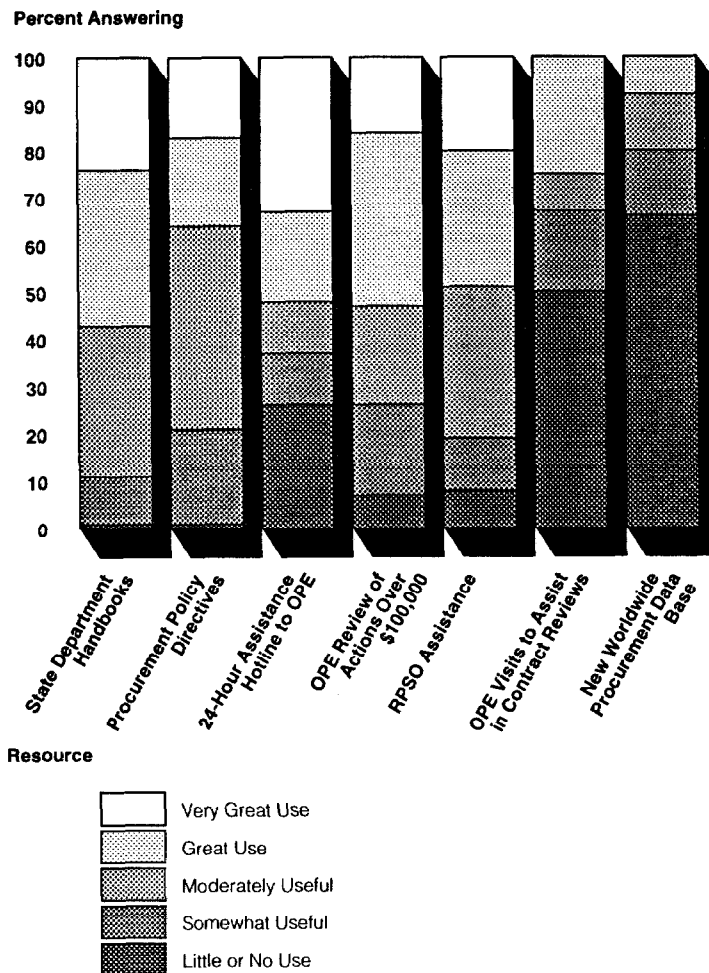
Figure I.24: Has Your Embassy Used Each of the Following State Department Resources in Carrying Out Contracting and Procurement Activities in the Recent Past?



Note: Office of the Procurement Executive (OPE) and Regional Procurement and Support Office (RPSO).

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Figure I.25: How Useful, if at All, Has Your Embassy Found Each of the Following State Department Resources in Carrying Out Contracting and Procurement Activities in the Recent Past?



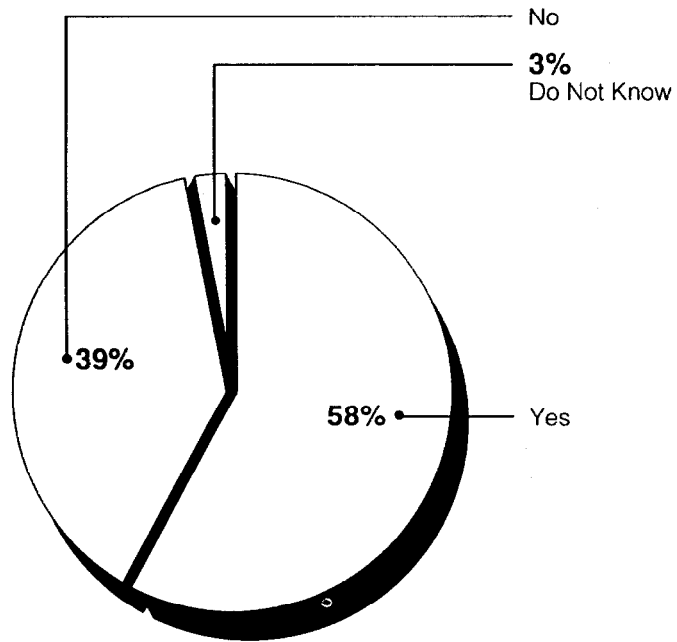
Note 1: OPE and RPSO.

Note 2: Embassies that had not used a given resource were excluded.

Note 3: Other resources mentioned included videos on procurement, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, and individual consultations.

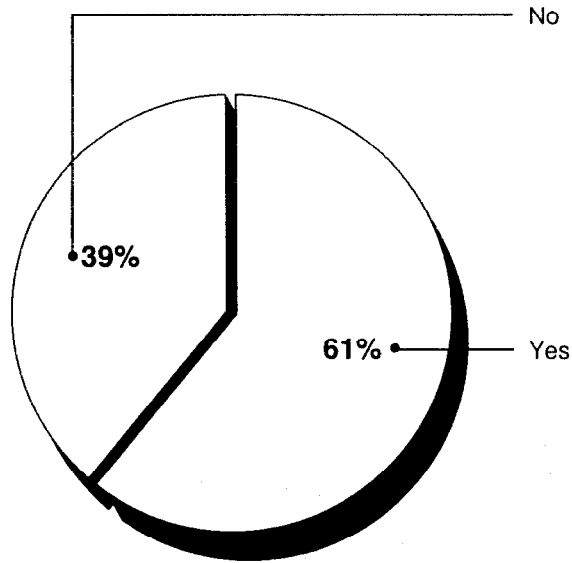
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**Figure I.26: Has Your Embassy
Established a Competition Advocacy
Program?**



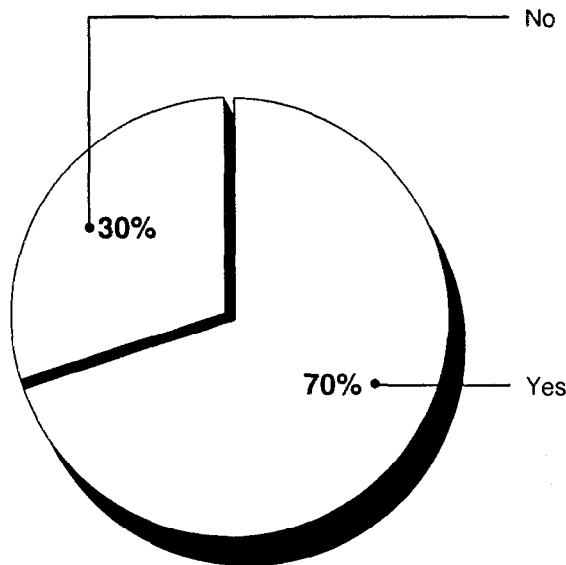
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**Figure I.27: Did Your Embassy Develop
an Acquisition Plan for Fiscal Year
1992?**



Note: Embassies are required by the State Department to develop advance acquisition plans for individual procurement actions. Although plans on a fiscal year basis are not required, such planning would help avoid year-end spending problems and better match procurement requirements to the budget.

Figure I.28: Has the Embassy Fully Implemented the State Department's Worldwide Procurement Data Base?



Note 1: The worldwide procurement data base was designed to meet mandatory legal reporting requirements for recording procurement information and reporting to the Federal Procurement Data System.

Note 2: Embassies were told to interpret "fully implemented" as meaning installed and operational.

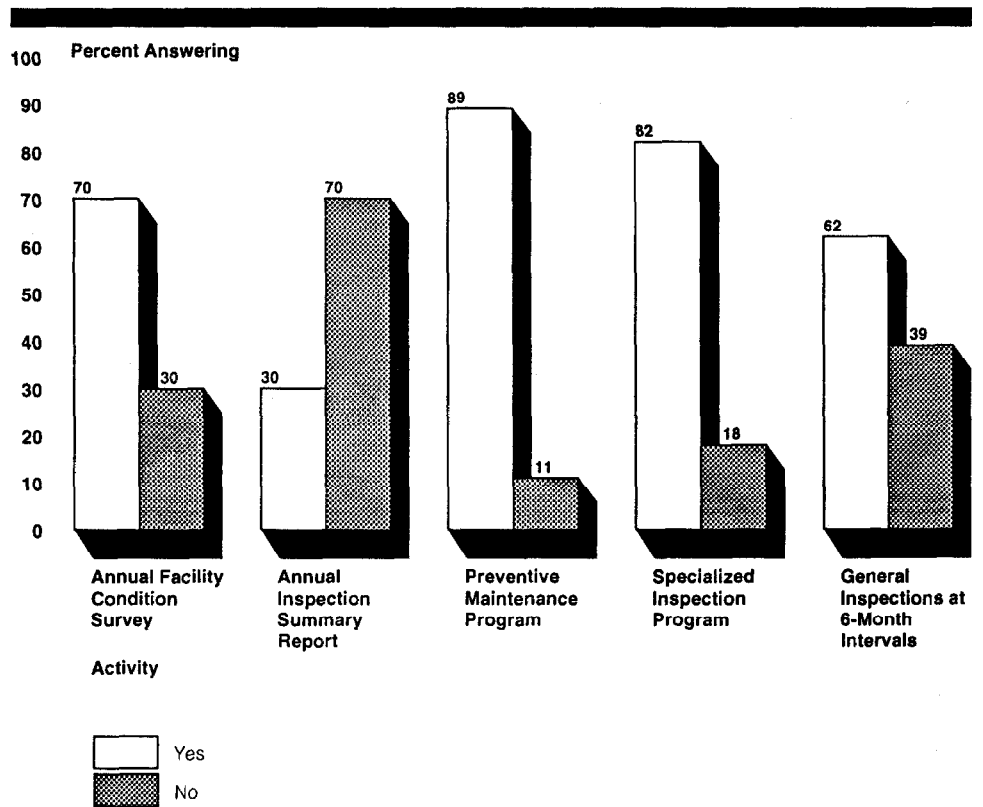
Real Property Management

This section of our questionnaire was to find out if the embassies had implemented guidance from the Office of Foreign Buildings Operations to promote efficient and effective maintenance of overseas properties and the progress embassies have made bringing their residential properties into compliance with State's space standards for overseas housing. Many of the embassies reported that the Office of Foreign Buildings Operations, the Washington Maintenance Assistance Center, and the European Maintenance Assistance Center had assisted them in conducting electrical systems, mechanical systems, and structural soundness assessments. In most cases, respondents reported that they were very or generally satisfied with the services. Almost all of the respondents reported that some of their embassy's housing units exceeded standards for space. About 18 percent of the respondents estimated that it would take more than 5 years before their embassy would be in full compliance with standards. Among the reasons given for noncompliance were security

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concerns, market conditions, and the attractive terms on unexpired leases. Figures I.29 through I.33 show the embassies' responses to our questions.

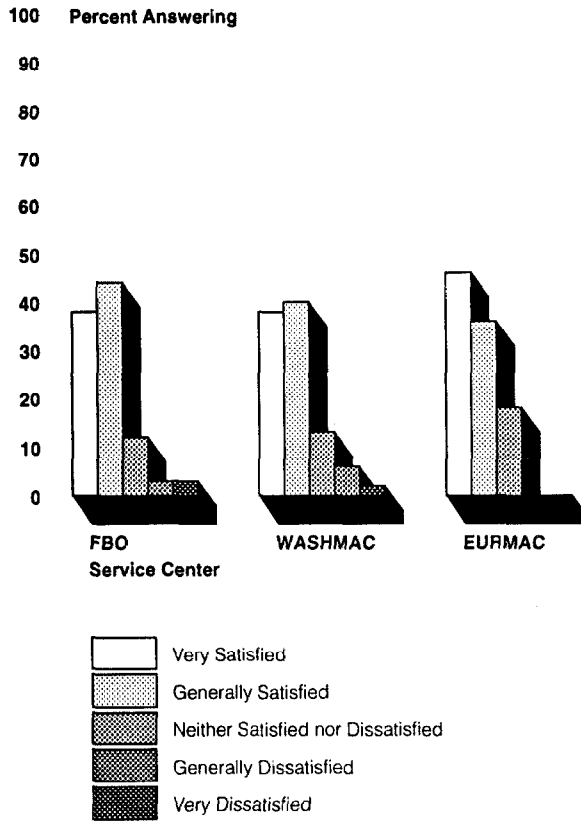
Figure I.29: Is It the Embassy's Current Practice to Perform the Following Kinds of Condition Assessments and Maintenance Activities?



Note: Three of the responses read as follows: conduct an annual facility condition survey of all government-owned and long-term leased facilities; operate a specialized inspection program for facility maintenance items, such as boilers, roofs, generators, etc.; and conduct general inspections of embassy facilities at 6-month intervals under the direction of the maintenance manager.

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Figure I.30: How Satisfied or Dissatisfied Are You With the Service Your Embassy Received From FBO, WASHMAC, and EURMAC?

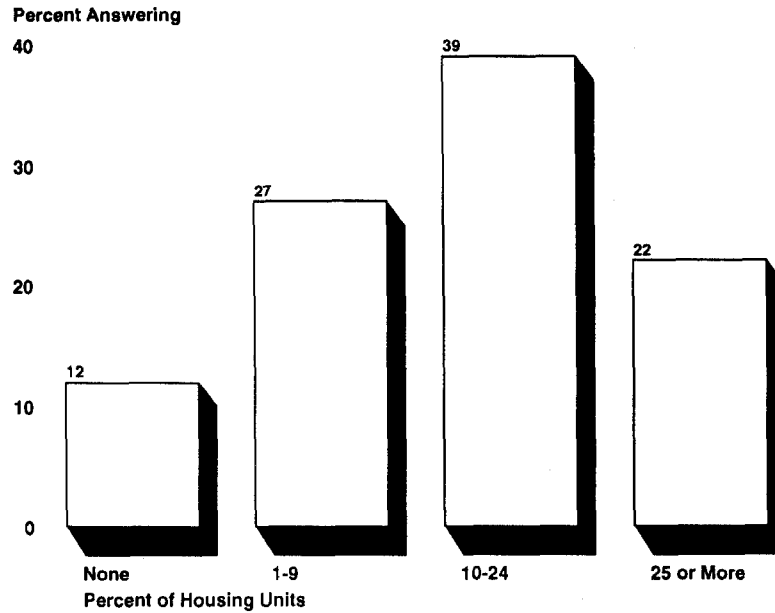


Note 1: Office of Foreign Buildings Operations (FBO), Washington Maintenance Assistance Center (WASHMAC), and European Maintenance Assistance Center (EURMAC).

Note 2: Data were based on embassies that had received services since December 1989: 68 from the Office of FBO, 47 from WASHMAC, and 11 from EURMAC.

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Figure I.31: About What Percentage, if Any, of Residential Units Managed by Your Embassy Currently Exceed A-171 Residential Housing Space Standards?



Note: State Airgram A-171, issued in June 1991, specifies residential housing space standards for overseas housing.

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**Figure I.32: In Your Estimation, About
How Long Will It Take for the Embassy
to Come Into Full Compliance With
A-171 Standards?**

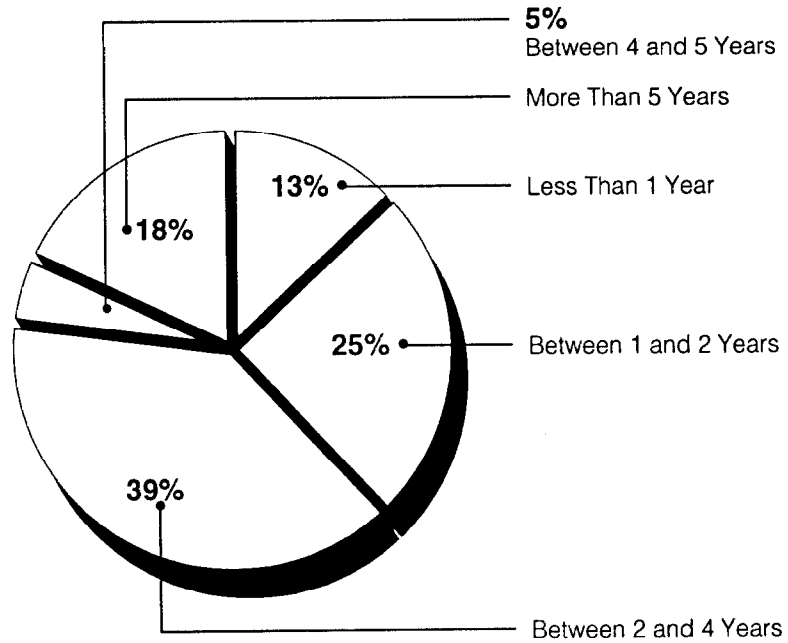
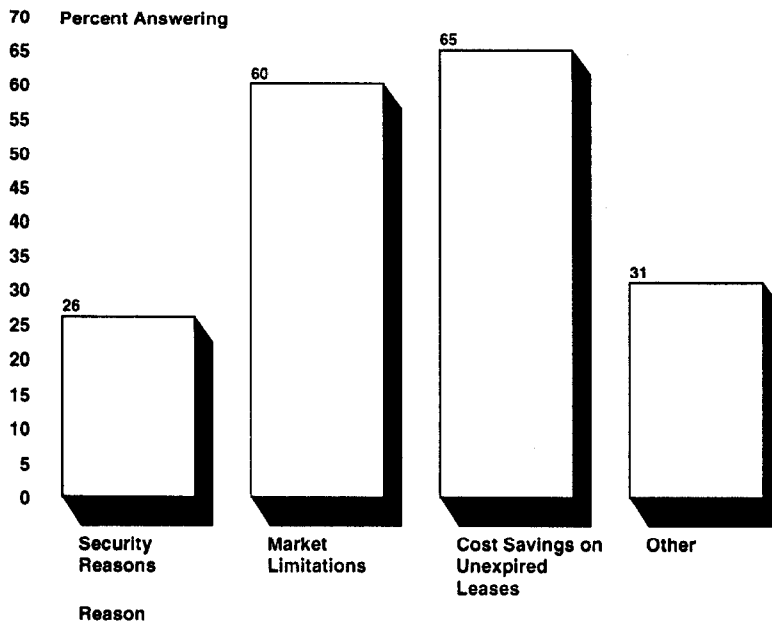


Figure I.33: For Properties Currently Exceeding Standards, Which of the Following Reasons Apply?



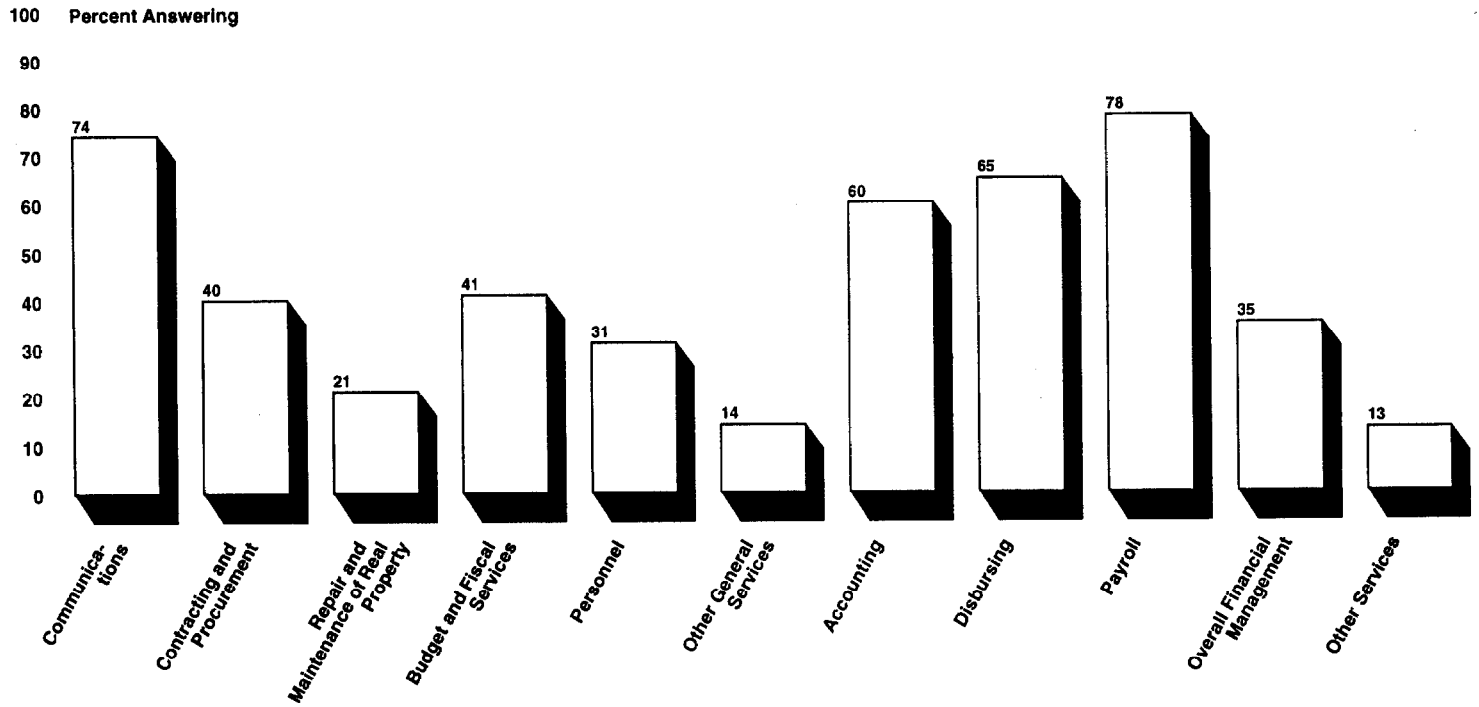
Note: Embassies could give more than one response.

Regional Support

We structured these questions to find out what services were provided to the embassies by regional facilities and Regional Administrative Management Centers based in Paris, Bangkok, and Mexico City. We also wanted to find out how satisfied or dissatisfied the embassies were with the service in terms of timeliness and quality. Most respondents were generally or very satisfied with the overall quality and timeliness of the services. However, there were 17 respondents who indicated they were generally or very dissatisfied with the timeliness and/or quality of accounting, payroll, and/or disbursement services. Of these, 12 were at embassies serviced by the Regional Administrative Management Center in Mexico City. Furthermore, of the five respondents that were very dissatisfied with quality and/or timeliness of regional financial services, four were customers of the center in Mexico City. Figures I.34 through I.36 show the embassies' responses to our questions.

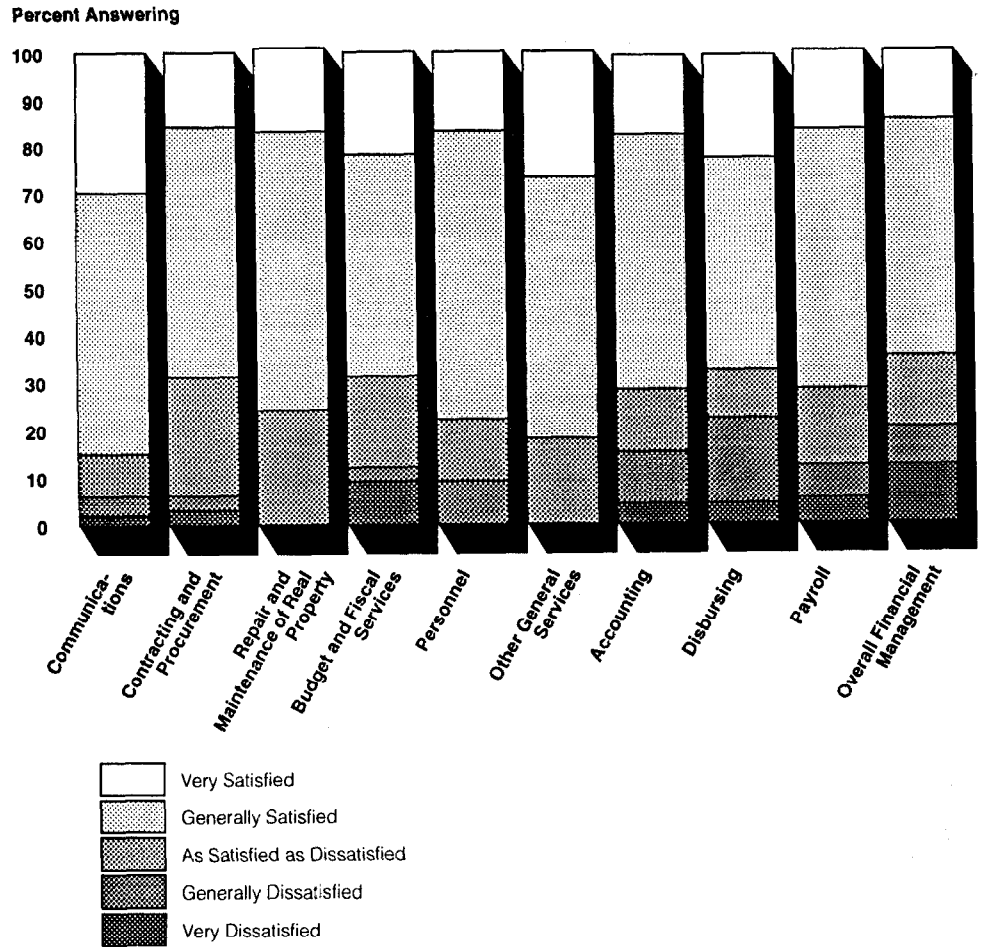
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Figure I.34: Which of the Following Services, if Any, Were Provided to Your Embassy by a Regional Facility?



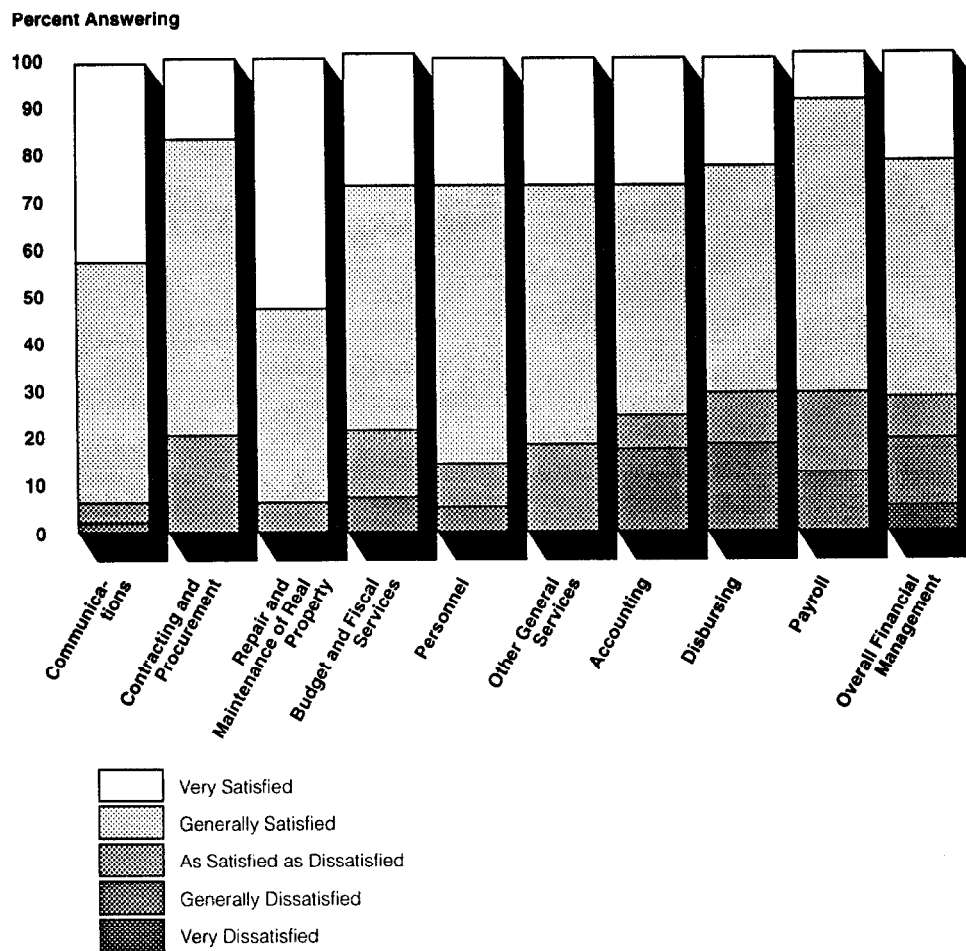
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Figure I.35: For Each Service Provided Regionally, How Satisfied or Dissatisfied Are You With the Timeliness of Service?



Note: Data were based on embassies receiving each type of service from a regional center.

Figure I.36: For Each Service Provided Regionally, How Satisfied or Dissatisfied Are You With the Quality of Service?



Note: Data were based on embassies receiving each type of service from a regional center.

Other Management Issues

The survey included questions on the extent embassies had implemented State's policy and guidance on managing personal property¹ and standards for security of unclassified automated information systems. Most, but not all, of the respondents reported that (1) their embassy was using State's automated system, designed to improve controls, to manage all nonexpendable property and (2) the embassy Information System Security Officer was performing required actions to ensure adequate safeguards for

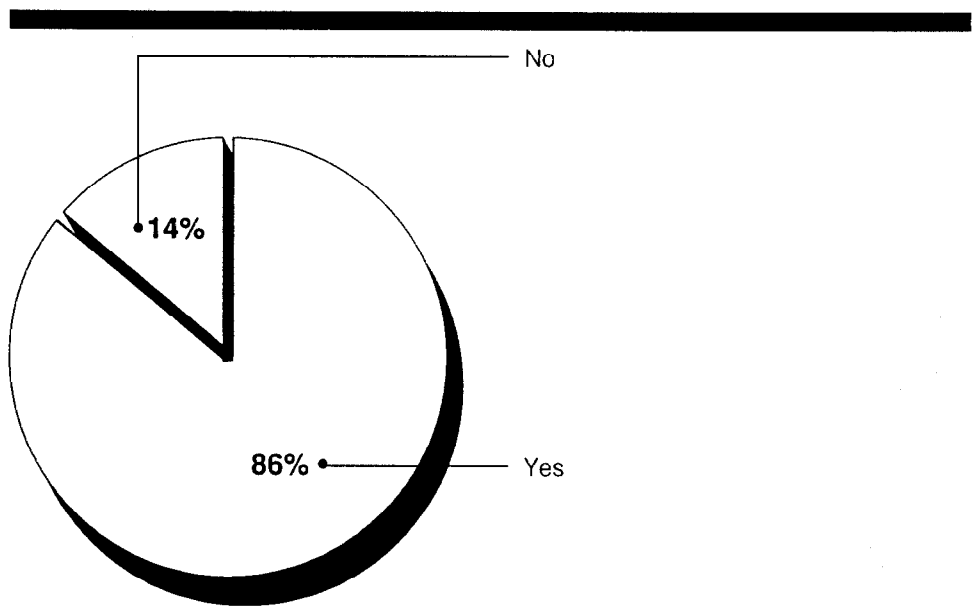
¹Personal property includes furniture, equipment, supplies, appliances, and machinery and refers to all property not otherwise classified as land, land improvement, buildings, and structures, which are referred to as real property.

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unclassified information. Figures I.37 through I.38 present this information.

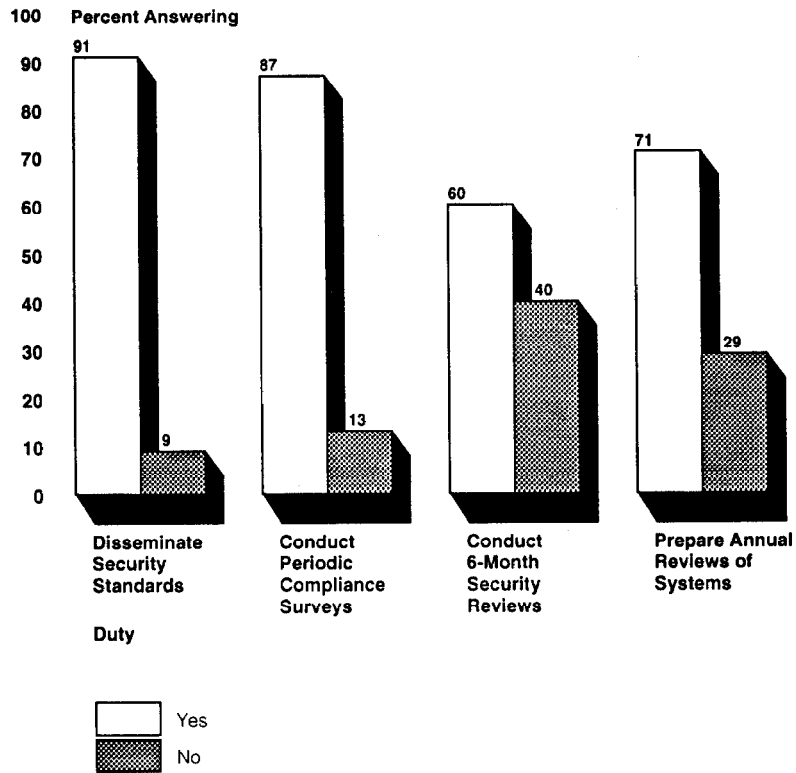
We also asked questions regarding the embassies' actions to review their administrative operations. Responses were mixed on how useful State's program planning system was to identify resource requirements and opportunities for improved embassy management, program efficiency, and cost reductions. Some respondents reported that their embassy had initiated other formal planning activities to examine management systems and determine whether they were adequate or if improvements were needed. However, the responses indicated a lack of uniformity in management areas examined. Figures I.39 through I.42 show the responses.

Figure I.37: Does the Embassy Currently Use the State Department's Automated Nonexpendable Property System to Manage All Nonexpendable Property?



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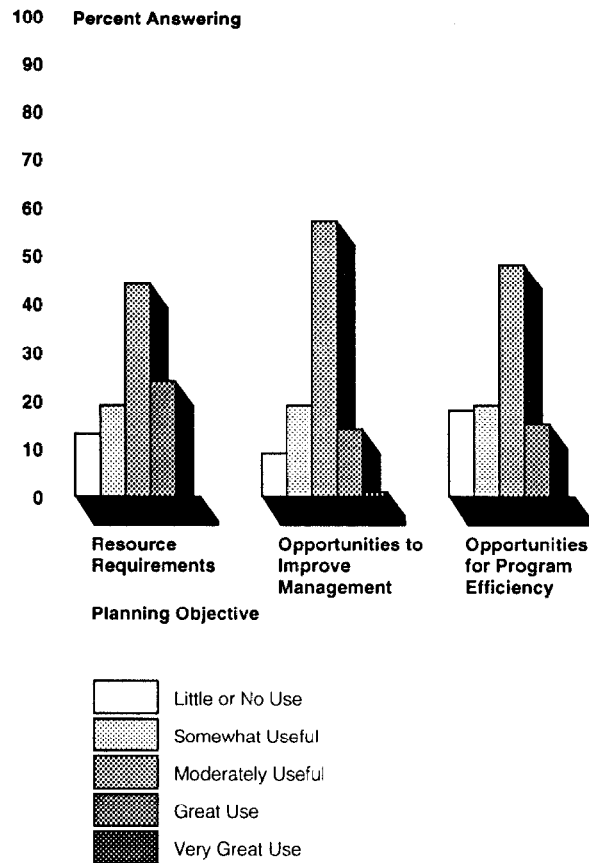
Figure I.38: Is It Current Practice for the Information System Security Officer to Perform the Following Duties for Security of Unclassified Automated Information Systems at the Embassy?



Note: The duty descriptions appeared as follows: disseminate security standards and guidance on the security of automated operations to all system users, conduct periodic surveys or reviews to assess compliance with automation security requirements, conduct evaluative security reviews of threats to and vulnerabilities of the automated information system at least every 6 months, and prepare annual reviews of automated information systems.

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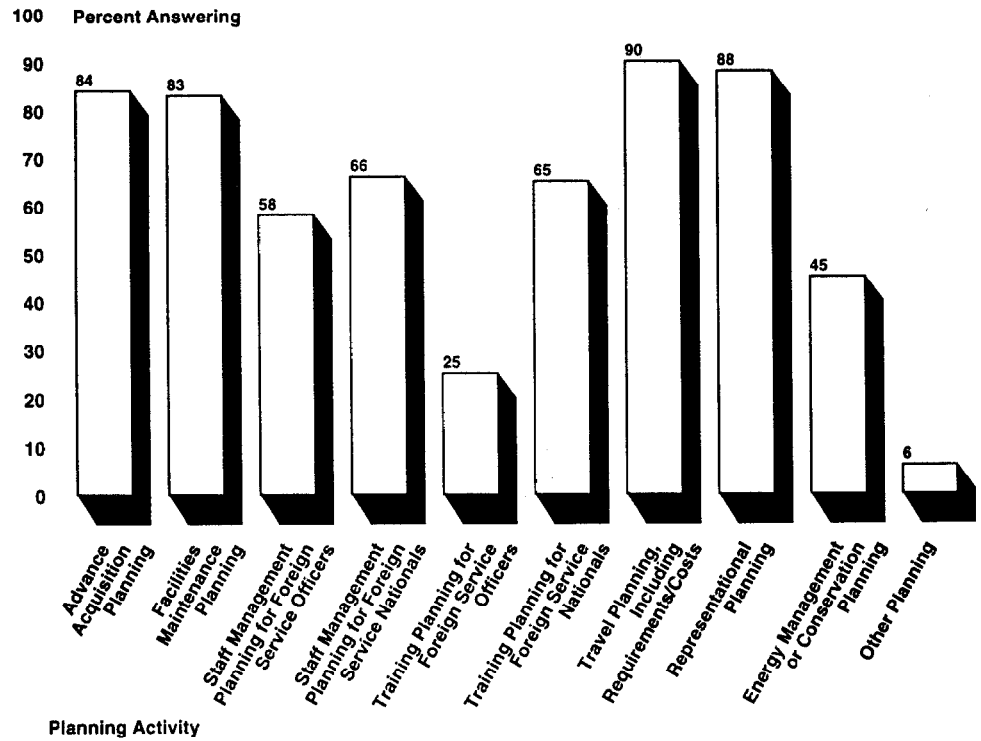
Figure I.39: How Useful, if at All, Would You Say the State Department's Program Planning System Is for the Following Planning Objectives?



Note: The planning objectives appeared as follows: identifying resource requirements (i.e., personnel, equipment, and budgets), identifying opportunities for improving embassy management, and identifying opportunities for program efficiency/cost reduction.

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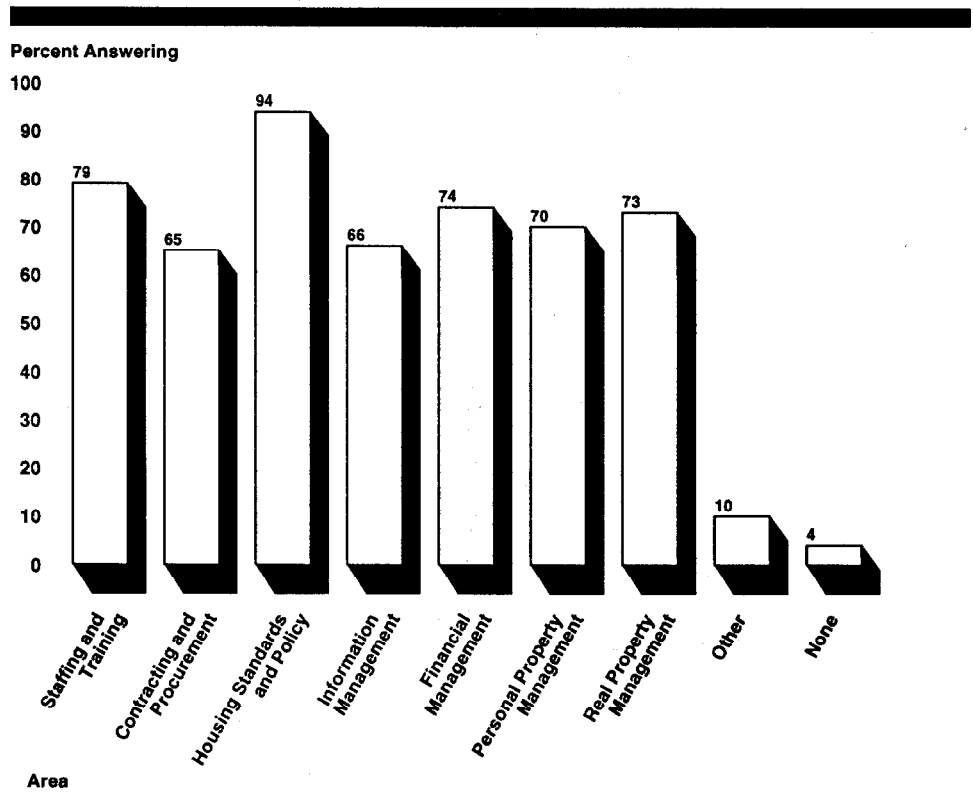
Figure I.40: Aside From the Embassy's Program Plan, What Other Formal Planning Activities for Fiscal Year 1993, if Any, Did Your Embassy Conduct?



Note: The full text of five planning activities appeared as follows: staff management planning that identifies staffing and work load requirements for foreign service officers, staff management planning that identifies staffing and work load requirements for foreign service nationals, training planning that identifies individual training requirements and scheduled training for foreign service officers, training planning that identifies individual training requirements and scheduled training for foreign service nationals, and representational planning that identifies requirements and costs.

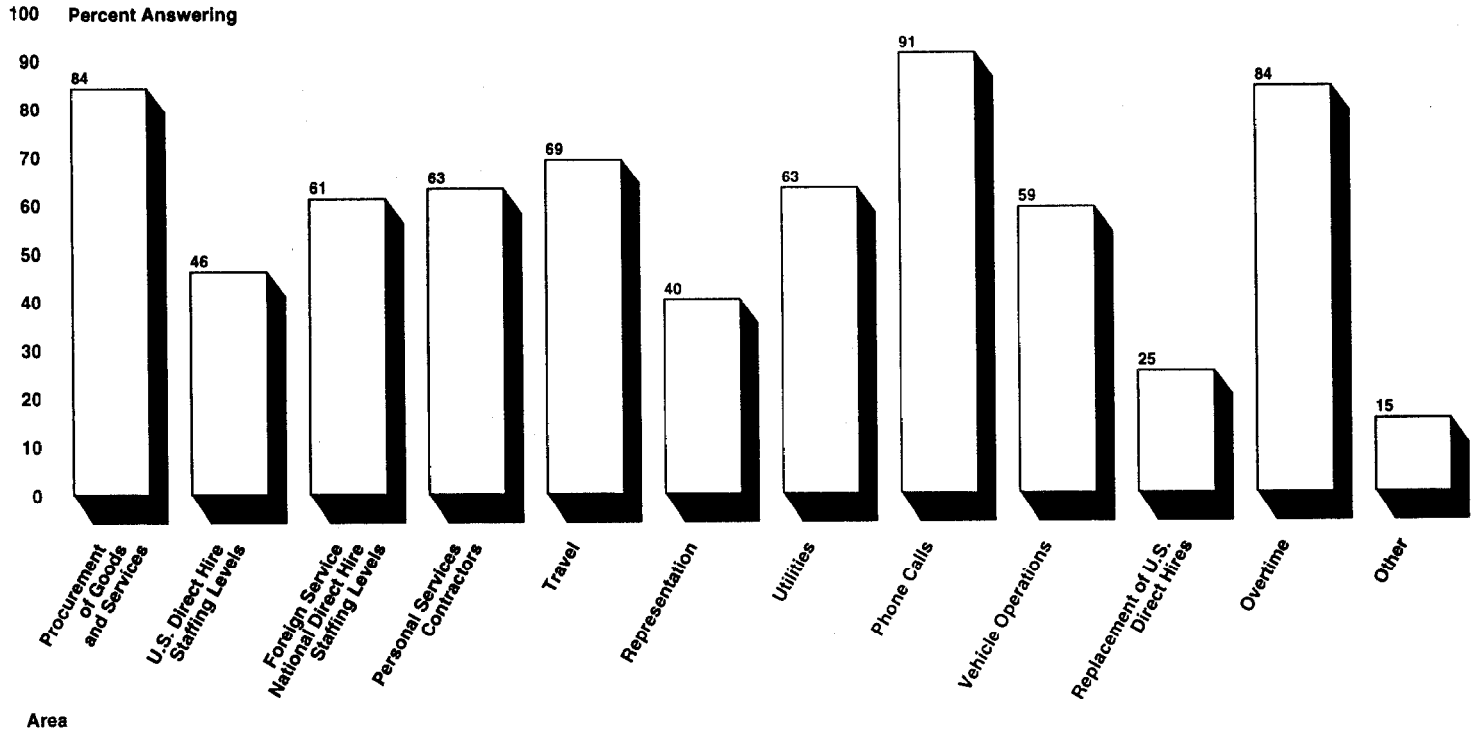
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Figure I.41: Since October 1991, Which, if Any, of the Following Areas Did Your Embassy Formally Examine to Determine if Systems Were Adequate or if Corrective Action Is Needed?



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Figure I.42: In Which of the Following Areas, if Any, Has Your Embassy Formally Examined Opportunities for Reducing or Controlling Costs?



Note: The full text of one area appeared as follows: replacement of U.S. direct hire positions with foreign service nationals, foreign service officer dependents, or other less costly options.

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