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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Report Number ISP-I-08-14A, February 2008

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PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, as issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of State.

PURPOSE

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department of State, its posts abroad, and related activities. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; 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 being accurately and effectively represented; 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 instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

METHODOLOGY:

In conducting this inspection, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records in the Department and elsewhere; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on site interviews with personnel at the overseas missions, in the Department, and elsewhere; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with office, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.



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PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, the Arms Control and Disarmament Amendments Act of 1987, and the Department of State and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY 1996. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its oversight responsibility with respect to the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors to identify and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office, post, or function under review. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

The recommendations therein have been developed on the basis of the best knowledge available to the OIG, and have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that these recommendations will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations.

I express my appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Todd", written in a cursive style.

William E. Todd
Acting Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- Office space issues dominate all operational considerations at Embassy Bishkek. Construction of a new embassy compound (NEC) would be the optimal solution. The proposed construction of an unclassified annex would only be a short-term palliative to a longer-term need for controlled access areas (CAA). Space-planning is to be reviewed in December 2007. That process must reflect coordinated assessment of potential expansion in staff requirements.
- There are options to address the needs for CAAs. At a minimum, plans must include removal of temporary trailers used for relevant office space.
- The number of direct-hire Americans assigned to Embassy Bishkek has grown in a somewhat uncontrolled fashion. Expansion has been dictated largely by changes in mission (e.g., activities related to ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ and relocation of some regional work from Uzbekistan) .
- The Ambassador has agreed to additional staff for a Millennium Challenge Corporation unit. Beyond those projected additions, further expansion should be put on hold until office space issues (for both classified and unclassified use) have been addressed.
- The Ambassador and other embassy employees must spend a considerable amount of time working with Kyrgyz authorities on issues stemming from incidents involving the U.S. military presence at the Manas Air Base.
- Protestations to the contrary, American military officers at the Manas Air Base neither understand nor fully appreciate what the embassy does on their behalf.
- Quality begets quality. Half of Department of State (Department) direct-hire Americans at Embassy Bishkek were promoted in 2007. The embassy’s reputation for excellence attracts highly qualified bidders.
- More attention should be given to issues of concern to the locally employed (LE) staff, particularly compensation and benefits.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 4 and 21, 2007 and in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan between October 31, and November 16, 2007. Ambassador David Zweifel (Team Leader), Alan Berenson (Deputy Team Leader), Francis Cheever, Craig Cheney, Zandra Flemister, Barry Langevin, Timothy Wildy, and Roman Zawada conducted the inspection.

CONTEXT



For American policy planners, Kyrgyzstan presents a set of contradictions. Alone among former republics of the Soviet Union, the ‘Glorious October Revolution’ is still observed. A large statue of Lenin glowers across the square from the building of the recently dissolved parliament. Some Kyrgyz regarded independence upon the breakup of the Soviet Union to be a near-unpleasant bequest. One out of every three working-age Kyrgyz now seeks employment in Russia, and remittances from that

cadre (estimated at \$500-\$700 million per year) are larger than the host government’s annual budget. Indicative of local attitudes: the U.S. air base at Manas is referred to as ‘foreign’ whereas the much more secretive Russian military operations at the Kant airfield are not considered as such. A recent embassy cable noted that “In economic terms alone, Kyrgyzstan’s economy – and (President) Bakiyev’s government – is joined at the hip with Russia’s more than with any other Central Asian state.”

Counterbalancing these strong affinities with Russia and nostalgia for the services the Soviet Union provided – education, health care, full employment – the government of Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyz people warmly welcome Americans and are eager to increase interaction at all levels. These attitudes are, however, fragile. Political turbulence seems endemic. The constitution has been changed three times in the past 12 months. During that time, there have been three prime ministers, three cabinet changes. Once considered the ‘poster child’ for democratic progress in Central Asia, forward movement now is questionable. A propensity to miscast U.S. government activities (propelled actively by Russian ‘black’ propaganda) makes Embassy Bishkek an easy target for domestic suspicion and criticism. Although the most open democracy in the region, achieving the goal of open democracy – a primary U.S. government objective – may be a chimera.

Overwhelmingly, U.S. interests in Kyrgyzstan are driven by the conflict in Afghanistan. Host government support of American involvement in ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ is of paramount importance. Essentially all American forces transiting to and from Afghanistan stage through the facilities at the U.S. air base collocated with the Manas International Airport. Refueling of coalition aircraft is done via tankers operating from the base. Despite political problems stemming from base-related incidents over the past year (discussed elsewhere in this report), Embassy Bishkek, in 2006, successfully renegotiated use of the Manas facilities. At best, it would be much more expensive to support coalition operations from another venue. The conclusion: the annual infusion of circa \$150 million of U.S. funding for programs in Kyrgyzstan (equivalent to almost five percent of Kyrgyzstan’s gross national product) is money well spent.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The American Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan seems indefatigable, maintaining a schedule that challenges the rest of the staff. As much as they try to keep pace, she is always at least one step ahead. She is more a strong, inspiring leader than a manager. In regard to the latter, the deputy chief of mission (DCM) complements the Ambassador's talents. He keeps close tabs on the work across the embassy, partly through weekly meetings with each section head and chief of non-Department agency represented at post. However, he also mirrors the Ambassador's natural affinity for political, economic, and public diplomacy matters.

Weekly country team meetings are primarily occasions during which members exchange information on events that have transpired during the week, planning for visitors, and other operational details. Formulation of the Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) brings embassy elements together for a discussion of longer-term objectives. Events such as demonstrations, constitutional changes (of which there have been three over the past 12 months), and other similar events, also evoke some brainstorming. On days other than those when the country team meets, the Ambassador, DCM, chief of the political/economic (P/E) section and the public affairs officer (PAO) gather briefly to plan out the work for the day. A law-enforcement working group (LEWG) meets intermittently. The Emergency Action Committee meets on an ad hoc basis.

Through these mechanisms, coordination across Embassy Bishkek is very strong. The reverse of this fine record is a pattern in which too much of the work of the embassy goes to or through the DCM and Ambassador. For example, a review by the OIG team of 184 cables drafted by the P/E section (essentially the corpus of that section's record traffic generated between December 2006 and November 2007) revealed that all messages went to the front office for approval before transmission. The Ambassador 'authorized' 142 of these, the DCM (while chargé d'affaires) another 25; the rest were signed out by the DCM when in that role. Those sent forward to the Ambassador almost invariably first were cleared by the DCM. This pattern places high demands on the time and attention of the front office. A greater downward delegation of authority would increase efficiency of embassy operations, at the same time developing the talented staff that know – and are prepared to meet – the high standards set by the front office.

A considerable amount of the Ambassador's time and attention must be devoted to issues related to the U.S. Air Base at Manas. Over the past year, base-related incidents have included the temporary disappearance of an Air Force Major, a collision between a U.S. plane and the Kyrgyz president's long-haul aircraft, and the shooting death of a Kyrgyz truck driver by a U.S. Air Force (USAF) sergeant. As noted by the Central Command Commandant, visiting Bishkek during this inspection, the host government is not sufficiently sophisticated to differentiate its reactions to such events. All incidents thus are treated as important to the bilateral relationship. USAF officers at Manas are focused on accomplishing their important missions relative to 'Operation Enduring Freedom.' In conversation with inspectors, they downplayed the need to assuage Kyrgyz sensitivities and reactions. The Ambassador cannot follow suit. She has to respond to complaints and inquiries from the Kyrgyz government on an almost-daily basis. To her great credit, the embassy has managed to preserve U.S. access to Manas. This careful tending of the most critical U.S. government interest in Kyrgyzstan comes at a price. Continuing access is not a given, and U.S. leverage to counteract negative perceptions among Kyrgyz citizens is hampered by diminishing availability of U.S.-funded assistance programs.

Among the American staff at Embassy Bishkek, morale is very high. There are many reasons why this is so, among them is the fact that 50 percent of Department direct-hire Americans were promoted in 2007. That is an enviable record that attracts attention from highly-qualified bidders

RIGHTSIZING

When the present chancery at Embassy Bishkek was opened in 1998, plans called for an American direct-hire staff numbering 10-12. There are now over 50 direct hire American and eligible family member employees. Over the same period, the LE staff numbers have expanded from 87 to 239. The dramatic growth reflects post-September 11, 2001, Washington-mandated changes in the issues to be addressed by the embassy. Primary in this respect are security related aspects and work related to the all-important activities at the Manas air base. Work related to the base has evolved into the most time-consuming effort by the Ambassador and some other members of the staff.

An additional factor was the need to relocate some regional positions as the Uzbek government obstructed relevant operations. The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) addressed relocation needs on an ad hoc basis. The Ambassador in Bishkek agreed to accept two officers to be moved from Tashkent. She de-

clined requests for two other Department regional positions because of office space limitations and because their programs were only peripherally related to Kyrgyzstan. Although the Ambassador approved relevant National Security Decision Directive-38 (NSDD-38) requests, a proposal to base regional operations of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Bishkek were not approved. (A country-specific DEA presence is in the offing.)

The Ambassador formally has approved one NSDD-38 request for augmenting American staffing for agencies other than the Department. This is about to change with the anticipated arrival of three direct-hire Americans who will represent the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a program new to Kyrgyzstan.

Even though the Ambassador has been selective in ‘holding the line’ on growth, she is eager to respond to Washington-generated suggestions that Bishkek may be a conceivable venue for basing regional operations. The OIG team acknowledged that this may be so – living conditions in Bishkek are comfortable, and transportation links relatively good. Nonetheless, Almaty, Kazakhstan, is a more logical regional hub. For the present time, space constraints at the Bishkek chancery, the still-problematic concept of moving some operations off the NEC, and continuing political turbulence in Kyrgyzstan, counsel against further expansion at this embassy.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs and Overseas Buildings Operations, except for the agreed-to addition of the Millennium Challenge Account presence, should forestall any further augmentation of staff until office space constraints have been resolved. (Action: Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with SCA and OBO)

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MANAS AIR BASE AND THE EMBASSY

The Manas Air Base, opened in December 2001, supports coalition military operations in Afghanistan. The importance of the base further increased after a similar facility in Uzbekistan was forced to shut down. At present, all U.S. military forces moving in and out of Afghanistan transit through Manas, as does a significant amount of materiel. The presence of the base and the continuation of the conflict in Afghanistan are the essence of Kyrgyzstan's strategic importance to the United States.

Sustaining good bilateral relations with the Kyrgyz government is complicated by Manas-related issues. Russia and China are suspicious of USAF operations which they oppose politically. (Russian-language media dominate Kyrgyzstan and often feature reports hostile to the United States.) Certain incidents involving base personnel and operations have inflamed Kyrgyz public opinion. And, differences in the bureaucratic cultures of the Department and the Department of Defense have hindered, and still hinder, prompt responses to the Kyrgyz government when untoward incidents arise. The most critical of these incidents occurred on December 6, 2006, when a USAF airman killed a Kyrgyz truck driver on the base. An investigation is still underway.

While on base at Manas, U.S. military personnel do not fall under Chief of Mission authority. Rather, the base commander's chain of command jumps from Manas directly to the Air Force Commanding General at the U.S. Central Command. When off base, American personnel from Manas do observe the base regulations which are consistent with embassy regulations (e.g., concerning self-drive vehicles and weapons' policies.) However, in discussion with the OIG team it was readily apparent that some members of the USAF leadership at Manas neither fully understand nor appreciate the critically important role the Ambassador and embassy play in assuring continuing access to Manas.

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(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2) The current base commander is determined to prevent incidents such as those mentioned previously in this report. However, in doing so, he wants to look only forward and to dismiss or minimize the clouds of the past.

The base commander's approach is not an option for Embassy Bishkek. The Ambassador must deal with unrequited concerns, vocalized repeatedly by Kyrgyz government officials. The issues cannot be swept under the carpet, and Department of Defense officials have been tardy in bringing closure to issues such as offering compensation to the widow of the slain truck driver or reticent in releasing the corollary investigation into the incident.

Such unresolved matters roil U.S. Kyrgyz relations. The embassy and the U.S. government are convenient targets for domestic political criticism and maneuvering. Some Kyrgyz parliamentarians have been quick to exploit the base issues to gain political leverage or simply to up the ante in U.S. assistance given to Kyrgyzstan in return for use of the base. Through public outreach programs, Embassy Bishkek works to counter negative Kyrgyz perceptions.

Parallel work to improve the mutual understanding between the base command and the embassy is essential. A hopeful sign is that the PAO and the base public relations officer have a good working relationship. The problem is not a lack of good will but a need for a mechanism for closer coordination in dealing with incidents that may arise.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Bishkek should work with the Manas Air Base commander to establish a joint working group to meet regularly to discuss matters of common interest. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

U.S. government foreign assistance funding for Kyrgyzstan comes through a number of sources and is implemented by different offices of the Department and other agencies. The total budgeted for assistance to Kyrgyzstan for FY 2006 was \$43.54 million, of which \$29 million were Freedom Support Act funds. The FY 2007 assistance report will be available in January, 2008. In the MSP for FY 2009, the embassy is requesting \$30 million in foreign assistance, of which \$24.7 million would be Freedom Support Act funds.

Often one U.S. department or agency will fund several programs to be implemented by more than one unit in the embassy. By design, any inefficiencies or duplication of effort are to be resolved through an evolving 'F Process' conducted by that new bureau in the Department, charged with coordinating all Department and U.S. Agency for International Development funding. Embassy Bishkek is not alone in finding the new 'F Process' to be time consuming and sometimes confusing. Requests for embassy input to 'F Process' deliberations often require very short turn-around and much detail.

The FY 2009 MSP, submitted in April 2007, outlines Embassy Bishkek's foreign assistance goals. Four of these properly fit the definition of foreign assistance: counterterrorism and security; democracy and good governance; economic growth and social development; and public diplomacy. The fifth goal, improving office space at the embassy, is meant to enable achievement of the other priorities.

The embassy's foreign assistance efforts are scattered. In the FY 2009 request "Investing in People" garners \$4.2 million; \$7.4 million is requested for programs leading to "Peace and Security;" \$9.8 million for "Governing Justly and Democratically;" \$8.2 million for "Economic Growth;" and \$450,000 for "Humanitarian Assistance." Within these titles the embassy proposes 42 presumably separate programs and projects.

Obviously, much thought went into formulating the MSP, and each proposal has its supporters, both in the embassy and in Washington. Every goal enunciated has merit, but available funds are declining, a trend likely to continue.

The OIG team informally recommended that in the future the embassy focus allocation of diminishing foreign assistance funding on highest priority objectives (perhaps education and health) rather than the concept of devoting at least minimal resources to each area of concern.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SECTION

Four officers, one an entry-level officer, currently staff the P/E section. All speak passable Russian. The head of the section and his deputy have small offices approximately 40 yards apart at opposite ends of the CAA. The two junior offices are isolated in a windowless, temporary CAA trailer with cramped working space that barely accommodates computer terminals.

Desk officers in the Department rated Embassy Bishkek's P/E reporting as the best and most complete among that submitted from the five embassies in Central Asia. The OIG team agrees that relevant reporting is of good quality and breadth. As noted elsewhere, the Ambassador or DCM clear on every outgoing substantive cable written by the section. Nonetheless, cables are dispatched in a timely fashion. Both the Ambassador and DCM also draft a significant number of cables on P/E subjects.

There is no formal filing system for reporting, whether electronic or paper. However, the deputy was able to run off all of the section's substantive cables for the past year for the OIG team. The senior LE staff maintains extensive unclassified biographical files electronically.

The head of the P/E section conducts a considerable amount of work via telephone conversations and e-mail exchanges with officials at the Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry. He and other officers in the section have reasonable access to sub-ministerial Kyrgyz government officials and to influential members of civil society. Though not frequent, travel by P/E officers outside Bishkek adds perspective on political developments. However, access to the extreme southwest – the region of most concern to the Kyrgyz government – is restricted because of problematic security in that area. Two former members of the P/E section were expelled as *personae non gratae* in 2006, allegedly for maintaining contact with opposition figures.

Two LE staff currently work in the section. Their workspaces, in the form of carrels, are cramped and offer little privacy. Relations between P/E officers and their LE support staff are warm and mutually respectful. The embassy holds the senior LE staff in this section, a one-time FSN of the Year, in especially high regard. Previously scheduled, weekly meetings between P/E officers and the section's LE staff have been discontinued because of work pressures. However, P/E officers and their LE staff counterparts are in constant contact by telephone, e-mail, and frequent face-to-face encounters. After press briefings (nominally held four days each week), the Ambassador, DCM, PAO, and P/E section chief meet quickly and informally to decide the priorities of the day.

Reporting officers in P/E noted that administrative tasks and serving as control officers for visitors detract from the time they can devote to reporting. Often – but not invariably – scheduling visitors encompasses useful meetings with Kyrgyz government officials and others. However, in those instances either the Ambassador or DCM are participants in the meetings, and the P/E control officers thus have limited opportunity to engage in the conversations.

INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) at Embassy Bishkek is represented by the Senior law enforcement advisor (SLEA) and a resident legal advisor (RLA). Neither has INL experience per se, but both have the respective legal and law enforcement experience that their work requires. Both positions are funded by INL, but the incumbents are employees of the Department of Justice.

INL-funded programs in Kyrgyzstan are generally multi-year. Some are directly implemented by the SLEA or RLA, others by contractors. The SLEA has about \$2 million in unexpended funds currently under his control. Some INL funds are administered by other U.S. government agencies, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

One of INL's larger programs, implemented by the UN Office of Drug Control, will expire in March 2008. This \$6 million dollar program supports the Kyrgyz Drug Control Agency by, among other things, paying the salary supplements of its 200-odd agents. It is unclear how the supplements will be paid in 2008. A second significant program involves equipping and reforming Bishkek traffic police. Under this program, INL has refurbished police quarters and provided them with new patrol cars.

Administering INL programs in Kyrgyzstan is difficult. On the Kyrgyz side, a lack of resources and political support hinder implementation. Widespread corruption and a Soviet-era mindset among older officials are further impediments. Other contradictions persist. Top-level Kyrgyz government officials are willing to approve programs and put good laws on the books, but there is continued resistance to implementation by lower-level officials. Program effectiveness also depends on personal relationships. The SLEA enjoys a good relationship with the current minister of interior who formerly headed the Kyrgyz Drug Control Agency. INL efforts in Kyrgyzstan are supported by the regional legal attaché posted to Embassy Astana and a regional DEA officer posted in Dushanbe.

Embassy plans call for collocating the SLEA in offices of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Interior. A request for the requisite waiver is pending with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. If this relocation transpires, it will free up office space in the chancery.

The RLA works on revision of the Kyrgyz government criminal code in conjunction with prosecutors and local judges. He also collaborates with local law enforcement officials to prepare better cases for presentation to prosecutors.

Within the embassy, a LEWG meets each four to six weeks. The DCM chairs the LEWG, and the RLA prepares an agenda for the meetings. There is a growing sense among some LEWG members that it should meet more often and that it should be the venue for discussion strategic planning as well as an exchange of information. The SLEA occasionally convokes an international donors' meeting as well.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

In the words of a FY 2009 MSP goal paper, Embassy Bishkek's public diplomacy (PD) section has the unenviable task of demystifying U.S. foreign policy and security goals in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. The U.S. Air Base at Manas is both a curse and a blessing in this effort. With a push from some Kyrgyz politicians and negative coverage in the Russian-dominated media, the public's attention is generally focused negatively on the base because of perceived environmental damage, Kyrgyz government pressure for higher compensation, and failure to bring closure to incidents that resulted in material damage or Kyrgyz loss of life.

The PD section is comprised of three Americans and 10 LE staff to carry out these responsibilities and to coordinate cultural events, educational exchanges, visits to the United States, and to conduct other public outreach activities. The OIG team concludes this profile is generous for the tasks at hand.

Each of the Americans is a first-time PD officer, and all are economic cone specialists. The PAO had an earlier tour in the Kyrgyz Republic and has done PD work informally on previous assignments. The information officer is on her third tour. The cultural affairs officer has volunteered to serve in Iraq and will depart Bishkek shortly.

There is a weekly section meeting for all members of the PD section. On days other than those on which the country team meets, the Ambassador and DCM attend morning media briefings presented by two LE information assistants. Following these sessions the PAO huddles with the Ambassador, the DCM, and P/E section chief to set priorities for the day.

The section's statistics show 10-15 walk-in clients per day use the facilities of the Information Resource Center (IRC). The relatively remote location of the chancery and security clearance procedures are factors that discourage higher usage. Embassy plans are to move the IRC to a children's library in the center of town. This would free up much needed office space in the chancery and make the facility more acces-

sible to the public. A request for the necessary colocation waiver is pending. Cost estimates for the relocation are among factors yet to be defined, but these would be significant. A major cost – perhaps as much as \$500,000 – would be entailed in security upgrades at the library site.

The IRC supports five provincial American Corners throughout the country, as well as three American Centers at universities and a library in Bishkek. The corners provide Internet access and reference books to Kyrgyz citizens. A visiting information resource officer visited the post at the end of October and gave the IRC low marks in some areas. Position descriptions did not match job performance. Lines of authority within the IRC and delineation of tasks, such as responsibility for drafting weekly highlights, were not clear. Electronic outreach needed improvement. The OIG team agrees with these assessments. The PAO is working to correct these deficiencies.

Visitors to the American Corners range from 1,250 a month at a university in the western part of the country to 240 at a provincial high school. Perhaps only five percent of the Kyrgyz population has access to the Internet, but presumably those who do are more motivated students and educated adults interested in policy.

Funds available for PD outreach activities totaled \$430,000 in FY 2007. From this amount, the PD-supported Democracy Commission made 29 small grants to NGOs and independent media. Records for these grants were in order. There was also a one-time allotment of \$125,000 that the embassy used as scholarships enabling eight students to attend a four-year degree program at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek. The thirst for information and the desire to participate in U.S.-sponsored visits and educational exchanges is high. Participants in such programs are perceived to be the best agents for future change in Kyrgyzstan. One of the local employees maintains rosters of approximately 1,500 alumni of U.S.-sponsored visits and educational exchanges.

PD does a good job in reaching out to a small but potentially important audience, but its means for reaching a mass audience are limited. Most people in the Kyrgyz Republic receive their information from Russian TV stations, which are more varied and informative (though not always friendly to the United States) than the Kyrgyz state television. The Voice of America does not broadcast in Kyrgyz though a small FM station that occasionally broadcasts Voice of America Russian-language programs. The Voice of America is starting a TV arm, but is a long way from launching a news and information channel.

plicants qualify for student visas. However, applicants from the southern region of the country who apply to attend English language schools often submit fraudulent documentation and their applications are refused. The DCM reviews 70 percent of daily issuances and 30 percent of refusals.

Immigrant Visas

The section does not process immigrant visas (IV), but does accept American citizen petitions for immediate relative IVs. The Embassy Astana Branch Office in Almaty processes all Kyrgyz IV cases. Adoption cases generate a multitude of fraud issues for the Bishkek consular section. As agencies find it more difficult to arrange adoptions in other former Soviet countries; many have expanded their operations in Kyrgyzstan. The country's adoption laws are new and based on Russian laws. The section requested and, as discussed above, is getting a third visa-clerk/anti-fraud LE staff position. This employee will focus on Kyrgyz adoption practices in order to identify and prevent fraud in the IV adoption process. Embassy Bishkek is also seeking a panel physician who meets Department and Centers for Disease Control requirements. Employing a local panel physician would provide Kyrgyz IV applicants the option of having their physical examinations completed before traveling to Almaty for IV processing.

American Citizens Services

The section is formally open for ACS assistance on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Americans who need emergency assistance may appear at the section on any day. The section's ACS workload mainly involves the several hundred American citizen contractors who work at Manas Air Base located near Bishkek. The rest of the American citizen population includes employees of NGOs, missionaries, and a few visitors. There is also a Peace Corps program with 96 volunteers. In the past fiscal year the section has handled several arrest and death cases of private contractors working at the air base. Kyrgyzstan is in an earthquake area, and the consular section maintains a large Internet-based registration service warden system. In FY 2007, the section sent out 20 messages on safety issues to its 36 wardens spread throughout the country and via e-mail to all American citizens registered with the section. Due to the lack of modern medical services in Kyrgyzstan, the consular section assisted in the medical evacuations of three American citizens in FY 2007. The section handles very few welfare and whereabouts cases but maintains contact with Kyrgyz government officials on the handling of such cases when they occur. The section

does not have a secure storage area, per 7 FAM 290, in which to keep the estates of deceased American citizens. Currently an estate is being kept under a desk in the consular workspace. There is clearly a need for a secure storage area for estate items.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Bishkek should provide a secure storage area for American citizens' estates. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)

Most of the consular section's U.S. passport work involves the routine replacement of expired passports. Some American citizens who work for NGOs and multinational companies need to travel to other countries within the region. They often require second passports because visas are required by the other countries in the region and American citizen passports can be held in other embassies for a month or more waiting for visas.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2007 \$000
State – D&CP	20	2	14	36	752
State - ICASS	4	2	123	129	2,787
State – Public Diplomacy	3	0	10	13	526
State – Diplomatic Security	2	3	73	78	1,206
State – Marine Security	6	0	0	6	104
State – Representation	0	0	0	0	17
PD - Representation	0	0	0	0	3
State – OBO	1	0	0	1	833
USAID	1	3	10	14	Non post
Defense Attaché Office	4	0	2	6	168
Office of Defense Cooperation	1	0	3	4	83
EXBS	1	0	2	3	69
INL	1	0	1	2	35
DOJ/OPDAT	1	1	0	2	Non post
Peace Corps	3	0	2	5	Non post
DOC	0	0	1	1	Non post
TOTALS	48	11	241	300	\$6,583

Amounts shown are operating costs only. Assistance costs are not shown.
Peace Corps volunteers -- 96

REAL PROPERTY

Although too small, the overall condition of real property assets is good. The embassy compound includes a 1,512 gross square meter chancery and a 732 gross square meter warehouse. There are also separate buildings for the cafeteria and medical unit, a guard changing area, and a gym building, maintenance shops, several compound access control sites, and outbuildings. Other than the chancery, most of the other buildings are designed for temporary occupancy, and most do not meet Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) building codes. This includes the facilities manager's office and the health unit. A \$400 thousand multi-purpose and recreation facility has been approved but has not been funded.

Embassy Bishkek uses seven storage containers to supplement its need for additional space. Designed poorly, these storage containers are unsuitable for occupancy, do not meet fire codes, and are not in compliance with Department building standards. However, they are the best available interim solution. Per Bureau of Diplomatic Security regulations, colocation of all personnel on one compound is required. Approval to lease commercial office space is rarely approved, leaving the use of storage containers the only viable short-term solution that meets this requirement.



Facilities Manager's Office (background) – Container as a Mail Room

Inadequate Space

Embassy Bishkek's most significant problem is inadequate space for its American and local staff. For the size of the mission, the offices and workstations are too small. Conference rooms, bathrooms, storage areas, and office equipment areas are not only too small but are insufficient in number. Separate buildings for the health unit, cafeteria, guard house, drivers lounge, mail room, and gym are a collection of poorly designed buildings that are too small and are not suitable for their intended purpose. Built in 1998, the embassy was designed for a staff of 47 desk positions. As discussed in the rightsizing section of this report, in a span of five years, the number of employees tripled. At projected staffing levels of 111 desk positions, the mission has an office space shortage of 2,983 net square meters or 32,515 square feet. This shortage is equivalent to double the size of the current chancery.

The space shortage is based on OBO's average allocation of 35.25 net square meters per desk position, which includes office space allocations and common areas such as conference rooms, cafeteria, rest rooms, and other common space. The current space allocation per desk position is far less at an estimated 15.53 net square meters. CAA space is even lower than the 15.53 net square meters. For example, one U.S. direct hire sits in a four square meter space that was originally a kitchenette.



The four square meter space



Narrow width office space for four officers

Embassy Bishkek needs a long term solution that will provide enough space for its personnel and that will meet current Department building and security guidelines. Two possible building options could solve the embassy's real property problems.

The first option would be to build a medium-size chancery capable of housing all mission personnel. This would be the most desirable option, but it would also be the most expensive. The estimated cost of a medium-sized chancery ranges from \$55 to \$78 million with an estimated project completion time of 26 months. Other

than cost, another disadvantage of pursuing this option is that construction would not probably occur until after 2014 unless the Department establishes a new, more urgent priority for construction.

The most expedient and second option discussed in the 2004 OBO long range facilities plan is construction of a new unclassified building annex. At a cost of about \$21 million, this 2,200 gross square meter annex is projected to provide sufficient space for 79 desk positions, adequate if staff growth is modest. The corollary would be to expand CAA space in the existing chancery to more than double the current dedicated area at a cost of about \$6 million. This plan will be sufficient only if projected staff requiring CAA space does not increase. The Ambassador successfully has lobbied and moved the proposed construction date of the unclassified annex from 2014 to 2011. An OBO space planner was scheduled to come to post in December 2007 to determine the mission's space requirements based on staffing projections. Total building project cost would be an estimated \$27 million.

The OIG team believes, and OBO concurs, that the first option is the best long-term solution to satisfy the mission's need for unclassified and classified office space. Because the mission is going to be surrounded by the Chinese, Russian, and Iranian occupied high-rise buildings, a new chancery would provide enhanced technical security. Another benefit is that offices now housed in separate buildings could be consolidated under one roof. To exercise this option in the near future, the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs would have to reprioritize their current building priorities. As short term solutions to the mission's space issues are limited, a decision to halt all growth would need to be enforced until adequate facilities could be built.

Regardless of the option chosen, a comprehensive overview of the mission's facility requirements is needed to update the long range facilities plan. This plan should include the optimum utilization of existing assets, rehabilitation of existing facilities, and a plan for facility acquisitions and disposals. There should be careful consideration given to current and future staffing needs incorporated into this plan. With proper planning, the Department has the opportunity to prevent a recurring problem of embassies being too small to fully accommodate staff upon completion.

Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Bishkek, should update its 2004 long range facilities plan to reflect current and future projected staffing needs. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Bishkek)

MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

The management section, overall, functions well. This is a significant accomplishment given working conditions and space constraints (discussed earlier in this report.) The section's customer satisfaction scores, in every category, exceeded SCA's scores and in most instances the Department's worldwide scores. The incumbent management officer arrived at post in August 2007. There were, and are, serious efforts and attempts to alleviate the space problem, and the officer will be heavily involved although there cannot be much in the way of accomplishment until an unclassified annex, presently scheduled for 2011, is built and added to the NEC or waivers can be obtained to move certain functions to offices and ministries away from the NEC. In addition, there are human resource issues that directly impact the LE staff and serious management control shortfalls in the operations of the Bishkek American Recreation Association (BARA) that need to be addressed.

HUMAN RESOURCES/FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

One American is designated as the human resources/financial management officer. Financial management is functioning well. The LE staff of five is experienced, trained, and cross trained. Cashier operations are closely monitored, and monthly reconciliations made at varying times. The human resources unit has an LE staff of three. Both units need to be augmented by at least one employee each, but decisions to hire new staff should be held in abeyance until office space issues have been resolved.

There are human resource issues that need additional management attention. Several major areas need to be addressed. These include a new salary survey, implementation of a leave plan as well as provisions for night differential that would be in accordance with Kyrgyzstan law, and completion and issuance of a current LE staff handbook.

The Compensation Package

Salary surveys are conducted for the Department by the Birchis group. The Birchis Group is the vendor for Embassy Bishkek's compensation survey and only uses the following three organizations as comparators: the European Commission (staff of 13), the World Bank (staff of 13), and the UN Development Program (staff of 40). It is obvious that none match the organizational size and structure of

the embassy, with almost 300 locally-hired employees. Therefore, the usage of these comparators casts doubt on the accuracy of the comparison of prevailing practices. While the LE staff has not had a salary increase since 2005, the employees of the other comparator organizations have received increases. On September 27, 2007, Embassy Bishkek sent a request to the Bureau of Human Resources requesting an extraordinary salary survey. The request cited the decline of the dollar (employees are paid in dollars), penalties for using their salary debit cards when they withdraw funds or use the card in stores, the elimination of a transportation allowance (comparators are located nearer the city center where transportation is more readily available), and significant increases in the cost of living. For example, clothing costs have risen by 54 percent; bakery products 37 percent by the end of 2007, and fruit 27 percent.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Bishkek should request the Bureau of Human Resources to select another vendor for the salary surveys in order to analyze a larger number of comparator entities that are more similar in size to the embassy staff. (Action: Embassy Bishkek in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should conduct a new salary review upon the selection of a new vendor. (Action: Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with DGHR)

Noncompliance with Kyrgyz Republic Labor Law

The embassy's pregnancy and maternity leave benefits are not consistent with Department regulations (3 FAM 7312.3 and 3 FAH-2 H-212 A&D) or the local labor law. Article 307 of the Kyrgyz Republic Labor Code adopted May 25, 2004, provides for maternity leave of 70 calendar days before childbirth and 56 after. Article 309 provides for child nursing breaks. The law also has provisions for paternity leave. In 1995, the Department required all posts to adopt locally prevailing leave benefits. Several Foreign Affairs Manual sections indicate the Department's clear intention for U.S. embassies to implement prevailing practices, with very few exceptions. The Department's leave policy, delineated in 3 FAM 7432b, states that "...overseas establishments must adopt locally prevailing leave benefits in lieu of any benefits patterned after the provisions of the Annual and Sick Leave Act." Embassy Bishkek has not implemented the local leave plan. The LE staff is still under the U.S. leave system.

The embassy's compensation plan does not provide for night differential pay. This is contrary to Article 169 "Payment for work at night time" of the Kyrgyz Labor Code that provides for such a differential. The local guard force, drivers, and maintenance personnel in particular are those who are adversely impacted.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should implement a leave plan consistent with the Kyrgyz Republic's Labor Code to include maternity leave, child nursing breaks, and night differential pay. (Action: Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with DGHR)

The Locally Employed Staff Handbook

The locally employed staff handbook is woefully out of date and incomplete. The handbook in place was made effective in 2000. Since that time, the LE staff has increased. Policies and procedures for Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) as they pertain to LE staff, for example, are missing. A new handbook was in the planning at the time of the inspection.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Bishkek should complete, publish, and distribute a complete and current locally employed staff handbook. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND THE FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Embassy Bishkek has designated an EEO counselor but has not designated an EEO LE staff liaison. In 2007, the former EEO counselor conducted multiple EEO training sessions. Sessions were conducted in both English and Russian. An informal recommendation was made for the embassy to designate an EEO LE staff liaison.

The newly designated EEO counselor has not received training. 3 FAM 1514.1 (c) states that a counselor shall only conduct counseling activities following completion of the obligatory 32-hour training program and certification as an EEO counselor. The new EEO counselor received bilingual EEO pamphlets. The EEO counselor plans to update the bulletin board.

The Federal Women's Program coordinator has not received training, nor was she aware of her responsibilities. The OIG team provided written and oral instructions to the staff member designated with this responsibility.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Bishkek should follow the Department's guidance requiring that an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor receive 32 hours of training before certification as an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)

GENERAL SERVICES OPERATIONS

The general services unit provides a wide range of services in a difficult, third world environment, and is functioning well. The staff is effective in satisfying the administrative and support needs of both Department and other agency personnel assigned to Bishkek. The general services staff received high International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) scores in all administrative service categories. Even with these high scores, the general services officer and facilities maintenance manager strive to further improve conditions at the embassy. Appropriate attention is given to management controls. The OIG teams' review of procurement and contracting, transportation, housing, accountable property management, travel, and facilities maintenance disclosed no irregularities.

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

Overall, ICASS is functioning satisfactorily. The embassy provides quality administrative services to five agencies. The ICASS council has published performance standards and has begun to monitor compliance with its performance standards. The ICASS council meets regularly and on an ad hoc basis as needed. Relations among agencies are professional and productive. Duplication is being eliminated.

The ICASS council is not involved in NSDD-38 requests. Also, it is unaware of its role and responsibility in the NSDD-38 process. In addition, ICASS minutes are not always recorded. The OIG team made informal recommendations to correct these deficiencies.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SECURITY

The information management (IM) section has two authorized direct-hire American positions and three LE staff. A third direct-hire American slot has been approved for an entry-level information management specialist who started working in November 2007. The employee selected is an eligible family member.

Embassy Bishkek operates a comprehensive IM program including: computer networks, communications, mail, pouch, radio, telephone, and digital videoconferencing services. OIG questionnaires reported relatively good marks for IM services, and embassy customers appear satisfied. However, server room wiring needs considerable attention.

The unclassified server room located in the embassy is not organized to ensure proper and timely maintenance by IM staff. The room has excess wiring that needs to be identified and removed. In addition, required cabling is not adequately labeled to allow embassy technicians to identify, troubleshoot, and fix network connectivity problem. With the server room cabling in disarray, the amount of time spent by technicians troubleshooting a problem is significantly increased. The IM staff should identify, label all required cabling, and remove all unneeded wiring.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Bishkek should remove unnecessary cabling from the unclassified server room and label the cabling systems for clear identification. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)

QUALITY OF LIFE

HEALTH UNIT

The health unit was staffed by a Foreign Service health practitioner on extended temporary duty and two local physicians. The unit receives support from the regional medical officer in Almaty who visits Bishkek quarterly. The regional psychiatrist based in Moscow visits approximately twice a year. Broader regional support comes from the regional medical officer in Moscow who has visited Bishkek three times.

The health unit is located outside the chancery and shares a building with the cafeteria. The unit is small, the current space is cramped, and most of the medical supplies are stored in a warehouse on compound. During the inspection, the Foreign Service health practitioner, working with the general services office and facilities maintenance officer, was working to renovate the health unit waiting area and separate the emergency treatment room. The renovated areas will also enhance patient confidentiality. The embassy is also improving the unit's laboratory capabilities by ordering new medical equipment.

Individual medical records are kept in a locked file. There is a logbook inventory kept of all the controlled drugs in stock. The health unit has an adequate number of first aid kits for emergency use. The safe haven is also supplied with a first aid kit. These first aid kits are checked monthly. However, first aid kits placed in the chancery and other work areas contained medicines that had passed their expiration dates. The embassy has a formal agreement with nearby Manas Air Base for the ordering and supply of medicines. However, the health unit has not established procedures for the calculation of stock levels, including the time required for replenishment to preclude out-of-stock conditions. The delivery of medical supplies and medicines is often delayed, and medicines are either out of stock or retained beyond expiration dates. The unit does not dispose of expired medications in accordance with 16 FAM 741. Expired medications are kept until a new supply is received. Patients are notified when they are given expired medications and given the option of using it or, if available, buying the medication on the local market.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Bishkek should establish a stock control system for medications that will include calculations of replenishment quantities and disposition of expired medications in stock. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)

The local hospitals are not up to western medical standards. There have been 14 medical evacuations to London and/or the United States in the past year. During this period, one embassy officer was hospitalized at Manas Air Base. A water analysis report done by staff at the air base was provided to the health unit. Local water is not potable. Bottled or distilled water is used due to the low chlorine levels in the water. All embassy residences are equipped with water distillers. The health unit staff and health practitioner do monthly unannounced inspections of the embassy cafeteria. The Foreign Service health practitioner follows up to ensure suggested changes made during the inspection on food hygiene and food handling procedures are implemented.

The medical components of post's emergency action plan are adequate and have been reviewed in the latter half of FY 2007. Both the Foreign Service health practitioner and one of the local-hire physicians have received trauma and emergency medicine training through a comprehensive advanced life support course provided by the Department.

Avian Influenza

The health unit has received supplies of Tamiflu and Relenza should there be an outbreak of Avian influenza and has kept abreast of the latest Avian influenza information. There have been no reported cases of human Avian influenza in Kyrgyzstan. The embassy has also conducted town hall meetings with resident American citizens. The embassy's web site is updated with new Avian influenza information sheets as they are released by the Department, and warden messages are sent advising private American citizens that updated Avian influenza information is available.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

The community liaison office (CLO) is staffed by a fulltime coordinator and CLO assistant. They provide information to American staff and their family members about available employment and educational opportunities. The CLO finds sponsors for new mission staff and their families, provides a local information welcome kit and orientation briefing, and publishes a monthly newsletter that pro-

vides information about groups such as a monthly book club and tourism opportunities both in-country and abroad. The CLO promotes community cohesiveness and morale by organizing mission-wide parties at Halloween, Christmas, Easter, and other holidays. While there is a bilateral work agreement with Kyrgyzstan, opportunities for spousal employment on the economy are minimal. The CLO attends the country team, emergency action committee, post employment committee, and BARA meetings. There are several family members that work outside the mission, however the local pay is low. To keep informed of employment opportunities, the CLO is in contact with various expatriate organizations, such as The American Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The Chief of Mission Certification of management controls submitted on June 15, 2007, identified chancery overcrowding as a significant deficiency in material controls. As discussed earlier in this report, the certification pointed out that an August 2004 OBO space utilization study described the chancery as providing only 44 percent of the office space required. Since then another 10 positions were added. The OIG team found that overall, management controls were in place. The certification did not mention major weaknesses in the operations of the BARA. However, the required 2007 Principal Officer Compliance Certification forwarded on June 25, 2007 hinted at problems. It stated that “A system of internal controls to protect the assets of the association and the interest of the U.S. Government is in place and functioning, albeit not as well as it should be.” The conclusion understated the problem(s).

At the time of the inspection there were virtually no internal controls in place for BARA. An accounting system required by 6 FAM531c did not exist. Significant long term debts to another U.S. government entity were outstanding for more than a year and could not be liquidated on a current basis. The audit report for calendar year 2006, although prepared by an individual whose credentials could not be verified, pointed out that BARA did not maintain its accounting records during 2006 with respect to property plant and equipment, inventories, and sales. The auditor issued a disclaimer and could not express an opinion on the financial statements. The OIG team agrees with the auditor’s conclusion even though the actual work appears flawed. The income statement prepared shows a net gain for the year of \$11,190. If the income statement had been prepared correctly it would have shown a loss of \$12,967.

The association provides limited services to the community. The services mainly involve consolidating frozen food orders and acting as an intermediary for Internet and cable services. A new board was installed in October 2007. The officers are devoting considerable time and effort to correct past mismanagement. Their progress will require close oversight. Therefore, in accordance with 6 FAM 558.1a, that states “If an association is determined to have been mismanaged, upon the recommendation of the A/OPR/CR, the Central Fund Board Chairperson shall approve trusteeship status for an association,” BARA should be placed in trusteeship.

Recommendation 12: The Bureau of Administration should place the Bishkek American Recreation Association in trusteeship status. (Action: A/OPR)

FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation 1:** Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with the Bureaus of South and Central Asian Affairs and Overseas Buildings Operations, except for the agreed-to addition of the Millennium Challenge Account presence, should forestall any further augmentation of staff until office space constraints have been resolved. (Action: Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with SCA and OBO)
- Recommendation 2:** Embassy Bishkek should work with the Manas Air Base commander to establish a joint working group to meet regularly to discuss matters of common interest. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)
- Recommendation 3:** Embassy Bishkek should provide a secure storage area for American citizens' estates. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)
- Recommendation 4:** The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Bishkek, should update its 2004 long range facilities plan to reflect current and future projected staffing needs. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Bishkek)
- Recommendation 5:** Embassy Bishkek should request the Bureau of Human Resources to select another vendor for the salary surveys in order to analyze a larger number of comparator entities that are more similar in size to the embassy staff. (Action: Embassy Bishkek in coordination with DGHR)
- Recommendation 6:** Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should conduct a new salary review upon the selection of a new vendor. (Action: Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with DGHR)
- Recommendation 7:** Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should implement a leave plan consistent with the Kyrgyz Republic's Labor Code to include maternity leave, child nursing breaks, and night differential pay. (Action: Embassy Bishkek, in coordination with DGHR)
- Recommendation 8:** Embassy Bishkek should complete, publish, and distribute a complete and current locally employed staff handbook. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Bishkek should follow the Department's guidance requiring that an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor receive 32 hours of training before certification as an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Bishkek should remove unnecessary cabling from the unclassified server room and label the cabling systems for clear identification. (Action: Embassy Bishkek)

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Recommendation 12: The Bureau of Administration should place the Bishkek American Recreation Association in trusteeship status. (Action: A/OPR)

INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover matters not requiring action by organizations outside of the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau and are not be subject to the OIG compliance process. However, any subsequent OIG inspection or on-site compliance review will assess the mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

Foreign Assistance

Heretofore, Embassy Bishkek's allocation of Department foreign assistance has encompassed multiple, often small-scale, projects and programs. The prospect is for diminished funding in the future. Apart from some high-cost programs, notably in the INL category, a more focused approach should result in higher value-for-investment return.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Bishkek should allocate future foreign assistance funding to fewer projects and programs, perhaps in areas such as education and health.

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

The ICASS council does not understand its role and responsibility for advising the Chief of Mission on cost implications of NSDD-38 requests and making recommendations on ICASS staffing levels per Department's guidance, Action Request and Guidance for Chief of Mission NSDD-38 Requests.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Bishkek should distribute National Security Decision Directive-38 guidance and train International Cooperative Administrative Support Services Council members on developing cost impacts for National Security Decision Directive-38 requests.

The ICASS council does not always record minutes of its meetings.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Bishkek should document discussions that occur at International Cooperative Administrative Support Services board meetings.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The mission has not designated and publicized the designation of an EEO local staff liaison in accordance with 3 FAM 1514.2a.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Bishkek should designate and publicize the designation of an Equal Employment Opportunity local staff liaison.

The EEO bulletin board contains some outdated materials.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Bishkek should update the Equal Employment Opportunity bulletin board with current guidelines.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Officer	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Marie Yovanovitch	08/05
Deputy Chief of Mission	Earle Litzenberger	08/06
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Patrick Fenning	08/07
Consular	Valerie Chittendon	08/07
Political/Economic	Robert Burgess	08/06
Public Affairs	Mark Cameron	07/06
Regional Security	Shane Ronish	08/06
Other Agencies:		
Defense Attaché	Lt. Colonel Jeffrey Zoubek	08/07
Security Assistance Office	Lt. Colonel Patrick Crabb	06/07
U.S. Agency for International Development	Patricia Shapiro	07/07
U.S. Department of Justice	Irfan Saeed	08/06
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs	Robert Delcore	04/06
Peace Corps	Claudia Kuric	05/07

ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American citizens services
BARA	Bishkek American Recreation Association
CAA	Controlled access area
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IRC	Information Resource Center
IV	Immigrant visa
LE	Locally employed
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NEC	New embassy compound
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	Public affairs officer
PD	Public diplomacy
P/E	Political/Economic
RLA	Resident legal advisor
SCA	Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs
USAF	U.S. Air Force
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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