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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Dublin,
Ireland

Report Number ISP-I-09-07A, November 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 for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the BBG, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and the BBG. 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 economy 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; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on-site interviews; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.



**United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors**

Office of Inspector General

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 "H. W. Geisel".

Harold W. Geisel
Acting Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- Embassy Dublin's noncareer Ambassador and seasoned deputy chief of mission (DCM) have led embassy staff through a period of management changes designed to bring the local compensation scheme into compliance with the Irish social security system. Their efforts to foster clarity and communication with the Foreign Service national (FSN) work force throughout this process avoided widely predicted morale problems.
- Interagency relations, while professional and productive, would benefit from greater transparency and inclusiveness on the part of post management.
- Embassy Dublin has not utilized fully the National Security Decision Directive (NSDD)-38 process to require other federal agencies to contribute to the cost of security and administrative support for new positions and the need to comply with Chief of Mission (COM) mission-wide policies.
- The success of American, British, and Irish diplomacy in bringing peace to Northern Ireland has enabled Embassy Dublin to shift resources to other key objectives such as seeking Irish Government support for U.S. approaches to the European Union (EU).
- Most public diplomacy (PD) programs are well managed, but communication needs to be improved among the Embassy, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), and the U.S.-Ireland Fulbright Commission.
- The Embassy provides efficient, customer-focused consular services to a steadily increasing number of U.S. residents and a changing visa demographic. It needs to bolster internal controls and streamline behind-the-scene operations.
- Embassy Dublin should require a resolution of the status of locally hired Americans employed at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) facilities in Shannon and Dublin airports before allowing the expansion of preinspection operations.

- The Embassy's internal management controls in both the consular and management sections were not being applied in accordance with Department procedures and require greater attention from post management.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between April 1 and May 1, 2008, and in Dublin, Ireland, between May 22 and June 18, 2008. Ambassador Eileen Malloy (team leader), Keith McCormick (deputy team leader), Peter Antico, William Belcher, Boyd Doty, Leslie Gerson, Jacqueline James, Michael Kirby, and Charles Rowcliffe conducted the inspection.

CONTEXT

Embassy Dublin's work takes place in a very different national and international environment than during the last Office of Inspector General (OIG) inspection in 1999. Historically one of the poorest countries in Western Europe, Ireland experi-



enced an economic boom after joining the EU Euro zone in 1999. This “Celtic Tiger” boom transformed large parts of Ireland’s society as well as its economy, reversing a long tradition of unemployment and emigration, and bringing the country into closer harmony with broader European social norms. The role of the Embassy changed even more significantly with the success of the Anglo-Irish peace initiative in ending Northern Ireland’s Catholic-Protestant conflict. Embassy Dublin’s objectives shifted to supporting the consolidation of that process through investment and cross-border confidence-building measures. The Embassy

also plays a more important role since 1999 in urging Ireland to consider U.S. interests as it formulates positions in EU affairs. Less well known is the important work the embassy carries out to support Department of Defense-chartered flights that transit Shannon airport en route to and from Iraq and its efforts to spur the government of Ireland to stiffen its counterterrorism efforts.

Embassy Dublin is currently staffed by 34 Department of State (Department) American direct-hire employees and 21 direct-hire staff from other agencies. There were also 131 locally employed (LE) staff members employed by the Department and four other agencies. In addition to the Department, the Departments of Defense, Commerce, Agriculture, and Homeland Security maintain personnel in Ireland. FY 2008 budget targets for Dublin were \$4.7 million for program, \$6.3 million for International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS), and \$45,900 for representation. In addition to the chancery, there are U.S. Foreign and Commercial Service (FCS) staff at a separate location in Dublin, DHS personnel staffing preinspection operations at Dublin and Shannon airports, and Department of Defense personnel at Shannon airport.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Embassy Dublin's Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) for FY 2010 outlines seven primary goals, including:

- promote Ireland's further cooperation with the United States on the full range of global policy issues and objectives, including continued support of U.S. military operations at Shannon airport, support of U.S. foreign policy at the European Union, and support of U.S./UN peacekeeping operations around the world;
- assist Northern Ireland with continued economic development and community integration;
- maintain and strengthen the mostly positive view of the United States held by the Irish Government and public by emphasizing our common interests and using our cultural links to engage and win over traditional and nontraditional opinion leaders;
- support/protect U.S. business interests in Ireland and increase U.S. exports to Ireland;
- protect the U.S. border and U.S. citizens in Ireland while facilitating the free flow of legitimate travelers;
- identify a site for a new chancery and get Dublin on the Top-80 list;
- foster embassy excellence and effectiveness at service delivery and achieving goals.

The Ambassador and DCM have made significant and laudable progress on a number of these goals. For example, Dublin has been added to the Department's list of the top 80 sites needing a new chancery building. Also, the Ambassador has made progress in shifting the public diplomacy debate from what the Irish do not like about the U.S. Government's policies to a broader discussion of our shared values and common history. The embassy has improved the customer service orientation of its consular work and kept waiting periods for nonimmigrant visas (NIV) to a

manageable number of days. Perhaps most importantly of all, the Ambassador, the DCM, and embassy staff have worked behind the scenes to gain and keep the Irish Government's support for U.S. global policy goals.

While the MSP goal papers place the embassy's focus on the right issues, the document tends to focus mainly on the resources the Department sections of the mission can bring to the table. In some cases, it needs to take a broader, interagency approach. The MSP makes a case for the augmentation of Embassy Dublin's resource base, requesting additional representation, facility maintenance, and travel funds as well as two new American officer positions. The OIG team found that the current use of representation and maintenance funds for U.S. Government-owned or long-term leased properties could be tightened up. See the management controls section for a discussion of these issues. The inspectors suggested that Embassy Dublin reexamine some of its funding practices to see if they were sustainable in today's budget conditions.

Embassy Dublin is a small mission with a broad set of responsibilities. Limited by its tight American direct-hire staffing and the high cost of salaries in Ireland, and continually challenged by a large visitor workload, the Ambassador and DCM have worked to improve morale and retention rates among key FSN staff.

The Ambassador and DCM maintain an open door policy, encouraging staff to provide comments or suggestions. In October 2007 the Ambassador took the initiative to chair an off-site meeting with the embassy staff to encourage teamwork and identify ways to improve communication. The meeting generated a set of specific tasks, many of which have already been accomplished, to include the reopening of the embassy's cafeteria, improved lighting in the chancery, initiation of a recycling program, and regular meetings between the front office and the FSN committee and FSN work force at large. This enhanced dialogue was particularly important as the embassy began an unpopular compliance with the Irish Government's social security plan, and all FSN salaries were paid via electronic funds transfer.

Morale among the American direct-hire staff remains less than optimal. The reasons are complex and include such endemic factors as Ireland's high cost of living, difficulty in enrolling dependent children in schools, difficulty in accessing appropriate medical care, and the gloomy and rainy Irish weather. Within the embassy, however, the inspectors found a lack of esprit de corps among American officers, many of whom felt they were working in a stove-piped organization that did not operate with a sufficient level of transparency and inclusion. This was particularly true among country team members from other agencies. The OIG team suggested to the Ambassador and DCM various ways in which communication and transparency could be enhanced among country team members.

The Ambassador, a noncareer appointee with prior experience in U.S. Government service, comes to the Department from the business world. Operating with a consensual leadership style, his efforts to improve communication within the Embassy, and, in particular, his willingness to lobby for the funding needed to increase FSN salaries at a time of budgetary pressure in the Department, were commendable. The DCM sees his role as that of supporting the Ambassador's goals and objectives. Some staff members, however, felt that the operating styles of the Ambassador and DCM did not exhibit sufficient awareness of the constraints under which the U.S. Government operates – both in terms of resources and in regulation. The inspectors discussed with the Ambassador and DCM the results of staff interviews and offered suggestions on ways to improve clarity and team building. On questions of resource usage, the inspectors suggested that the Ambassador share with his staff the fact that much of the resources invested in the maintenance/upgrade of the COM residence came from his personal funds in order to dispel any misunderstanding that these were all U.S. Government funds. With regard to the use of resources at the DCM's official residence, the inspectors informally suggested that the DCM conduct a review to ascertain whether all life/safety and mandatory maintenance work on U.S. Government-owned or long-term leased properties had been accomplished before any further upgrades to the DCM residence were funded.

The Ambassador provides the security program with an appropriate level of support, and makes himself available to the regional security officer (RSO) whenever necessary. The DCM, who has direct responsibility for the supervision of the RSO and the regional security program, is meeting all of his responsibilities in this area with one exception. The embassy has not yet established a viable alternate command center. This subject is discussed in the classified annex to this report.

Both the Ambassador and the DCM provide the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program all appropriate support. There were no pending EEO cases at the time of the inspection.

Even though the Ambassador has served in an overseas mission before (Iraq), he does not bring to his job (nor would he be expected to) a complete understanding of the Department's management controls systems. The DCM, as Embassy Dublin's formally designated management controls officer, is the Ambassador's principal advisor on management controls. While a management cone officer himself, the DCM has not served recently in management positions and was hampered by the fact that there has not been a dedicated management officer at Embassy Dublin since the retirement of the incumbent shortly after the arrival at post of the new DCM. The inspectors identified vulnerabilities in both consular and management section internal controls. In addition, the inspectors counseled the DCM on the need to play a

more active role in his oversight of management controls by testing consular and management internal controls to satisfy himself that section chiefs under his supervision were performing the required controls. Formal recommendations for corrective actions are outlined in the management controls section of this report.

Both the Ambassador and DCM are active and productive in the promotion of Embassy Dublin's PD goals and objectives. The Ambassador organized a highly successful conference on private philanthropy, designed to share with Ireland's newly rich entrepreneurs best practices developed in America and also to bring home to the Irish public the American tradition of private philanthropy. His next conference will be on ocean energy, designed to share with Irish opinion leaders state-of-the-art U.S. technology on renewable energy. He has cast his net wide in outreach to the Irish public, hosting a series of representational events designed to bring in Irish artists, writers, and opinion shapers on topics of keen interest to the U.S. Government. The DCM has been generous with the time he has devoted to PD activities and his presentations have been well received. He has ensured that the entry-level officers (ELO) at Embassy Dublin are given opportunities to conduct PD activities as part of their career development.

The DCM admirably supports the ELO program. He meets monthly with the ELOs as a group and makes himself available to them one on one for mentoring/discussions whenever needed. Most of the officers participating in the ELO program had already been tenured by the time of the inspection, but they found the program to be beneficial and appreciated the DCM's efforts. The OIG team informally suggested that the ELOs each be encouraged to choose a mentor from among the willing, mid-grade officers serving in the embassy.

The footprint of DHS in Ireland is growing. Preinspection operations at Shannon and Dublin airports, originally established in the 1980's by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, are now run by the DHS Customs and Border Protection Agency (CBP). DHS/CBP applied for, and the Ambassador approved, an expansion in both the number of CBP direct-hire staff working in Ireland and the functions they were to perform. At present, CBP performs only immigration inspection activities in Ireland, and passengers must still undergo U.S. Customs and U.S. Department of Agriculture screening upon arrival in the United States. The Ambassador approved an NSDD-38 proposal to begin full, preclearance operations in Ireland in 2009. CBP plans to send an additional 38 direct-hire employees to work in Ireland as part of this expansion.¹

¹National Security Decision Directive 38, *Staffing at Diplomatic Missions and Their Constituent Posts*, issued on June 2, 1982, assigns ambassadors the authority and responsibility to determine the appropriate size, composition, and mandate of all staffing operating under their authority.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The Embassy carries out political and economic work through a small, combined political/economic section. The section coordinates closely with an FCS office and provides supervision to one LE staff member of the Department of Agriculture. Officers in the section work in parallel rather than in combination – one officer is responsible for political affairs, a second for economic work, and the third devotes nearly full time to required reports on issues such as trafficking and human rights. Since the last inspection, much of the focus of their work has shifted from Northern Ireland to EU issues. The Embassy manages policy advocacy well but needs to strengthen some reporting and analysis as described below.

Operations and Advocacy

Advocacy on behalf of U.S. business is rarely needed in Ireland, but the Embassy places a high priority on lobbying the Irish Government to advance American policy interests. Bilateral issues are outnumbered by multilateral work involving Ireland's actions in the EU, the United Nations, or third countries such as Iraq. A growing number are political/military. Ireland is a neutral country and is not a U.S. ally, but it contributes troops to EU and UN peacekeeping operations, such as those in Chad, that help protect U.S. humanitarian programs. Ireland also makes Shannon airport available for U.S. military flights despite the opposition of important segments of the Irish public. Increasingly, the Embassy must work bilateral issues through the EU. U.S.-Irish disagreements over civil aviation, for example, will be reduced if the U.S.-EU Open Skies Agreement of 2008 replaces individual country agreements with an EU-wide one. The embassy and FCS work hard to open Ireland's markets to genetically modified U.S. foods, but the issue ultimately will be decided in Brussels.

The Embassy manages these demarches well. It chooses its approaches carefully, using contacts it has built up in the Foreign Office and other ministries to maximize its influence. Briefing papers for the Ambassador's meetings with officials lay out thoughtful strategies for reaching U.S. goals, though the OIG team left an informal recommendation that they include more information on his interlocutors' political

and economic interests, ties, and background. The effectiveness of some demarches has been undermined, however, by problems in coordination with the U.S. Mission to the European Union (USEU) or by late instructions. If Ireland has already cast its vote in Brussels on an EU issue, it will not respond to a bilateral demarche.

Coordination with USEU is improving. Embassy Dublin is too thinly staffed to keep up with complex EU issues by reading USEU's daily cable traffic to Washington. Instead, it relies on new tools USEU has developed since its last inspection by OIG in 2004, including sending summaries of key policy issues laterally by e-mail to bilateral posts. These summaries are more advanced in economic areas such as intellectual property or biotech than in political areas, but Embassy Dublin has made good use of them, and they have made its work more effective in advancing U.S. goals.

Late instructions play a more important role in undermining the effectiveness of advocacy. Some cables have been held up so long for clearance by other agencies that the Department began posting the uncleared drafts on Intellipedia so that posts could at least begin to prepare demarches. Embassy Dublin does not approach the Irish Government until instructed to do so, but by then it is sometimes too late.

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs should put in place procedures and deadlines to ensure that instructions to demarche European Union member governments reach embassies in a timely manner, before host governments have already made commitments on the issue to the European Union Council. (Action: EUR)

Unlike some countries, Ireland provides specific and authoritative responses to U.S. demarches. The Embassy maintains a careful log of these responses, but crosschecks of the embassy's files with other actions (such as UN voting) where the information could be useful showed that it does not always report them to Washington. The OIG team left an informal recommendation that the Embassy report more fully on reactions to demarches.

The Embassy could save time in preparing its demarches if it maintained better files. General background on some issues can be found on the Internet, but the embassy needs to keep good records of the diplomatic state of play or risk being outmaneuvered by negotiating partners. The Embassy is well aware that, while its paper files are well organized, its electronic files are not. The OIG team left an informal recommendation that it complete its plan to bring them up to date.

Embassy Dublin receives a large number of official visitors and supports them well. It would be less of a drain on embassy resources if it received more and earlier information from the Department on the policy interests of these official visitors as well as their travel and schedule plans. This information is often available to the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, which maintains an office in the Rayburn House Office Building to help track it, but it is the responsibility of the regional bureau to disseminate it to posts. The OIG team left an informal recommendation that the Embassy establish contact with the Congressional adviser in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs to obtain more and earlier information on the policy interests of congressional visitors.

Reporting and Analysis

The Embassy produces a steady stream of well-informed reporting on the policy priorities identified in its MSP. It does its most important reporting by cable, using e-mail largely for operational purposes such as coordinating visitor support. Whenever possible, the Embassy prefers to send a smaller number of more analytical cables rather than a larger number of spot reports.

In line with a broader trend at posts in Western Europe, the Embassy has reduced reporting and analysis in order to concentrate on policy advocacy and support for visitors. It no longer reports in depth, for example, on the Anglo-Irish peace process in Northern Ireland. Embassy Dublin contributed to the success of the British and Irish Governments, with sustained American support, in ending Northern Ireland's bloody conflict between the province's Catholic minority and Protestant majority. With the decision of the Irish Republican Army to end its terrorist campaign in 1999, the embassy's focus shifted from political reporting to supporting "peace dividend" investment in the province. It still coordinates closely with Embassy London and Consulate General Belfast through the so-called BelGroup, using cables, e-mail, and a regular video conference, but its basic reporting mission has changed, and it plans to make less frequent use of mechanisms such as regular video conferences.

In most areas, this reduction in reporting has been carefully managed to maintain the post's ability to carry out key MSP priorities. The Embassy does not report on macroeconomic issues, for example, because so much of this information can be obtained from media sources; instead, it reports on Irish economic policy directions. The Embassy does produce valuable biographic and leadership reporting, though it does not have a system for debriefing departing officers for this information, and OIG made an informal recommendation that it develop one. It reports on terrorist financing, and is expanding its reporting on environmental and energy issues, includ-

ing Ireland's growing unease at its dependence on energy from Russia and its interest in renewable energy. Many first drafts of reporting cables are produced by the section's well-connected LE staff. The section chief makes his work more effective by ensuring that he sees redacted copies of reports which must eventually be sent as classified cables because American officers have added confidential comments or material.

The weakest link in reporting is a weekly digest of political and economic news. In recent years, it has begun to lift more articles directly from the Irish press. Some are already being reported by the PD section, and the accompanying comments are too bland to add significant value. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the Embassy use this digest to submit its own assessments of the issues it selects for coverage rather than including items from the press.

Required reporting on issues such as human rights and religious freedom suffers from too many uncoordinated taskings. Following the instructions for preparing such reports, the embassy tries to focus on government policies and important trends, including changes made in Irish law as Ireland adapts to EU standards on such issues as religious minorities and divorce. The ELO assigned to prepare the reports was distracted from this by a steady stream of Washington requests to, instead, investigate rumors of anti-Semitic comments or actions by individuals. This rarely turned up information relevant to the report but made its preparation less efficient and prevented the officer from doing regular, assigned reporting. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the embassy instruct its ELOs to consult their supervisors when confronted with uncleared or contradictory e-mail instructions from Department officers.

Staffing and Management

While the Embassy has requested one additional economic position, the OIG team concluded that its present staffing is sufficient to achieve its MSP objectives. During the inspection, it adopted a number of small changes that could make its work more efficient, such as creating a shared calendar for the political/economic section to improve coordination. To help new officers adapt more quickly to their work, the OIG team made an informal recommendation that the embassy require transition memos to successors as a routine part of the checkout process.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Public diplomacy is an important component of all goals in the mission's MSP except for those focused on internal management and the need for a new chancery. A single PD officer and a small, but experienced, LE staff in the PD section manage an active and multifaceted PD program. The Embassy works hard to gain exposure for its views in the relatively small and inward-looking Irish media universe. The section arranges interviews with all three major dailies and with Ireland's many influential radio stations, for example, but is still seeking to expand its work with television broadcast stations.

The PD section is also responsible for the embassy's informative web page, in coordination with the consular section, which updates the site's links to consular and visa information. The section selects or creates all other content for the page, including a monthly newsletter on American studies and a second newsletter on topical issues such as the U.S. election campaign. Other PD outreach is channeled through a variety of Information Resource Center (IRC) activities such as educational counseling and a reference service for key contacts on MSP issues. The section manages a small International Visitor Leadership Program (five visitors in FY 2008) and a bare-bones speakers program that has had a greater impact on targeted themes such as Muslim outreach and minority integration in schools than might have been expected. The section also coordinates an active program that brings embassy officers together with students at schools throughout Ireland to talk about the United States and its policies. This year, not surprisingly, the most requested topic is the U.S. presidential election.

Educational Exchanges and the Northern Ireland Peace Process

The most important PD tool the embassy has used to further its objectives is exchanges, including both academic programs and exchanges of professional groups. The imaginative use of these programs represents a notable accomplishment for so small a post.

Many of the exchanges support the Anglo-Irish peace process in Northern Ireland. The largest, operated by Boston College in cooperation with the Irish Institute, currently sponsors travel each year by about 100 Irish professionals in various fields, with participants divided equally between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. In the United States, these community leaders participate in workshops, seminars, and site visits on a range of practical community-building themes such as health

care, integration in education, community policing, even traffic management. The program also provides funding for small numbers of the American experts involved in the U.S. workshops to travel to Ireland for follow-up meetings with the grantees' organizations. The program has received multiple grants from ECA since the mid-1990s. In FY 2008 the program received a grant of \$991,000 from ECA base funds.

Another successful North-South exchange is the Washington Ireland Program, which sponsors internships by young people from both the Republic and Northern Ireland with Congress, the Washington offices of nongovernmental organizations, major American corporations, and others. The Embassy also supports the important Mitchell Scholars and "Civic Links" North-South programs, both of which receive some funding from ECA's Office of Citizen Exchanges.

Fulbright Program

By far the most important of these exchanges is the Fulbright Program, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2007. The program's overarching aim, in Ireland as elsewhere, is to promote mutual understanding through study of the political, economic, social, and cultural heritages of the host country and the United States. In this, all evidence suggests the Ireland program is successful. However, this record of success has been tested several times in recent years by a series of miscommunications and misunderstandings among Embassy Dublin, the Fulbright Commission, and ECA. For example, the embassy failed to notify ECA when the previous commission director unexpectedly resigned; the position was advertised, and a new director recruited before any word of the development was passed to Washington. Also, the new director, again without any consultation with ECA, was given a contract including an improper provision regarding bonus pay that had to be amended following ECA's objections.

In another incident, ECA advised the commission that the terms under which the Irish Government wished to participate for a second year in the Foreign Language Teachers Assistantship program were no longer acceptable if the program were to be run under the Fulbright name. The Government could continue to sponsor the initiative, which the Irish fully fund except for administrative costs, if it chose to do so, but only as a "non-Fulbright" program. Upon getting this information from the commission, the responsible Irish Government minister threatened to pull Ireland out of the 50-year-old program. Although compromises have been negotiated so that the Foreign Language Teachers Assistantship program will go forward again this year under the Fulbright name, the relationship may have suffered some lasting damage. In the inspectors' judgment, communications among ECA, the embassy, and the commission fell short of what they should have been.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Dublin should establish a system to keep the Embassy and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs informed of all significant communications either of them has with the Ireland Fulbright Commission and to exchange brief e-mail records of important telephone messages. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Looking beyond these communications issues, and while the commission director is still relatively new to her job, the three offices should conduct a complete review of the operations of the Fulbright program in Ireland to ascertain whether they are in all respects compliant with ECA policies and those of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, which is appointed by the President.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Dublin, in coordination with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, should conduct a complete review of the operations of the Fulbright program in Ireland to ascertain whether they are in all respects compliant with Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs policies and those of the Foreign Scholarship Board. (Action: Embassy Dublin, in coordination with ECA)

Public Diplomacy Support to the Ambassador

As noted, the Embassy carries out an active and effective media outreach program. The Ambassador sets high goals for media outreach, rightly wishing to ensure that U.S. views on key issues are as clearly and frequently articulated in the Irish media as possible. The public affairs officer was under instructions to push for media opportunities, including, when appropriate, interviews with the Ambassador, to convey American policies and positions. She acknowledged that she had not always been able to satisfy the Ambassador's high expectations in Ireland's limited media environment. The officer now meets with the DCM frequently on an ad hoc basis to review PD planning and progress on achieving the embassy's media goals. The OIG team counseled the public affairs officer to be mindful of her obligation to give the Ambassador, directly when occasion demands, and always in a timely manner, the benefit of her best advice and her informed judgment on media issues. However, periodic meetings between the public affairs officer and DCM to assess both immediate press issues and longer range PD planning are a good idea.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Dublin should institute regular, biweekly meetings between the public affairs officer and the deputy chief of mission to discuss current media issues and review longer range public diplomacy planning. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Audience and Contact Databases

There are differences within Embassy Dublin over which of several audience contact databases best serves its needs. The protocol office uses the “Contacts” application of the Aesop database to prepare invitation lists for functions hosted by the Ambassador, and all other embassy sections have been instructed to input their recommended names for these events directly into Aesop. Like every other section, PD is doing this. PD, however, maintains its own separate audience contact records in the Microsoft Outlook application – also, confusingly, called “Contacts.” The section believes that Outlook Contacts is a better system for its purposes, offering greater flexibility to enter a variety of identifying information for each contact name, which can then be retrieved in a targeted search. PD thinks other databases, such as Goldmine, which the Embassy does not currently support, offer even greater search capabilities.

There are distinct disadvantages to having PD working on two systems (Outlook and Aesop) as it is now doing. For example, for every new invitation list required for an ambassadorial event, PD must first review its primary records in Outlook and then transfer new names and other changes since the last previous invitation list was prepared (job changes, new addresses, deaths, etc.) into Aesop. This not only involves a good deal of unproductive, duplicative work, but greatly increases the risk of error. While noting this drawback, the OIG team understands PD’s wish to have an audience records system it can use, readily, to select appropriate contacts for the many and varied activities it sponsors. Other sections of the Embassy, for example the political/economic section, also need a more flexible system than Aesop to maintain their contact records.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Dublin should conduct a review of the several contact records databases the Department has approved, select the one that best satisfies the requirements of the entire embassy, and instruct all sections to use the same database for their audience contact records. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Embassy Dublin's consular section is productive and customer service oriented. Its four U.S. direct-hire and 21 LE staff² are efficient and conscientious. Although a recent upgrade has improved customer waiting space and the number of interview windows, the consular space is ill designed and cramped. Despite a positive public image and a high profile in the country team, consular operations suffer from a lack of overall section coordination and communication, and a lack of attention to internal controls. The OIG team recommends a number of changes in the management controls section of this report.

Consular Management

Consular and visa issues have traditionally been important in U.S.-Irish relations, and the Embassy assigns a high priority to outreach in this area. Under the Ambassador's direction, the consular section chief has emphasized a customer service attitude, worked with the Irish media to explain U.S. requirements and procedures, and pressed to keep waiting times for consular services short.

Despite its success in these external areas, the consular section has had problems with internal management and management controls. Some of these stem from the division of work between the consular section chief and the visa chief. Although the section chief's work requirements statement indicates that he is responsible for internal controls, in effect it is the visa chief who serves as the principal accountable consular officer (ACO), the Visas Viper coordinator, the fraud prevention manager, the liaison with the call center contractor, the arbiter of all security advisory opinions and waiver requests, the "B" referral officer, and a full-time interviewing officer. In addition, although he had arrived at post only four months earlier, post management made him the coordinator of the most recent MSP process. The visa chief also supervises one officer and 11-12 LE staff, which requires constant attention to counseling sessions and evaluations.

²Five of the LE staff are Social Security Administration-reimbursed employees who work under an Embassy London-based U.S. supervisor and are only tangentially integrated into the Dublin consular section structure. They have multicountry responsibilities.

While the section chief has focused more on outreach and liaison with host country officials, a small consular section, in which two of the four officer positions are at the entry level, cannot afford to have its most senior officer focused primarily outward for a four-year tour of duty. The internal controls problems discussed later in this report stem, in large part, from this management structure. The OIG inspectors determined that Dublin's consular section needed considerable focus on its consular management controls and on the morale of its consular workforce. In order to do this, the consular section chief should assume responsibility for either the fraud prevention manager or the ACO portfolios and any other smaller portfolios that balance the day-to-day responsibilities of the two consular mid-level managers.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Dublin should redraft the work requirements statements for the visa chief (deputy) and the incoming consular section chief to create a more equal division of labor. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Consular section efficiency could benefit from adopting best practices on fee collection, public information, and record keeping. Just prior to the arrival of the OIG team, the ACO uncovered irregularities in the consular fee collections. Although these irregularities might have occurred even if the post had a process for offsite machine-readable visa (MRV) fee collection, the fact that Dublin's consular cashier had such a complicated mix of bank drafts and cash receipts in two currencies, with no credit card option available, made reconciliation that much more difficult.

Embassy Dublin reportedly had offsite fee collection at one time, but reverted to requiring Euro or dollar bank drafts for all MRV fees and some other fees. These are payable to the consular cashier at the time of service, resulting in considerable demand on the cashier and longer waits for the customer. The post has been unable to implement credit card fee payments for technical reasons, and had essentially given up on finding a solution to the problem. The cashier function would be less complicated, quicker, and less vulnerable if MRV fees were paid offsite and if credit cards were accepted for non-MRV services, reducing the amount of cash collected and accounted for. (See the management controls section for additional discussion of fee collection vulnerabilities.) OIG inspectors assisted the section in rectifying its longstanding problems with the credit card system, and by the conclusion of the inspection the credit card process was working. The ACO welcomed Bureau of Consular Affairs' concurrence with setting up an offsite fee collection process until a worldwide integrated application/appointment/fee payment regime is implemented.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Dublin should institute offsite fee collection for all machine-readable visa fees in accordance with Bureau of Consular Affairs guidelines until an integrated application and fee payment system is instituted worldwide. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

The consular section could also benefit from a review of LE staff position descriptions and the overall division of LE staff labor. The OIG team noted that position descriptions vary widely even among staff who perform exactly the same functions. This is particularly noticeable among the three passport and citizenship clerks, but both the NIV and special consular services position descriptions need harmonization of required and realistic educational levels and ongoing responsibilities in order to assure fairness and workplace flexibility.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Dublin should review and standardize position descriptions in the consular section to balance the division of labor and ensure that employees doing the same work have identical position descriptions that reflect the maximum responsibilities of each position, submitting any new position descriptions for computer aided job evaluations. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Dublin's consular section has a three-person information unit. The LE staff also have early morning NIV responsibilities and backup cashiering responsibilities. For several hours each day, however, these three employees staff the telephones and a fax machine in order to forward calls to the appropriate units or answer questions directly. Dublin's sole Embassy operator would be unable to field information calls. Employees estimate receiving 400 faxes per week, of which the majority relate to NIV questions. They field 200 phone calls daily, of which 85 percent are on general passport and citizenship issues. The OIG team observed the process briefly and noted that many of the calls are simply transferred to other consular employees, even though the information unit employees have access to that same information, so that callers in fact are transferred three times before receiving substantive attention. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the information unit respond to as many of the case-specific calls as practical.

OIG's 1999 inspection report recommended that Dublin set up a pay-for-use call center, which it did. All NIV appointments are made through that call center, but many callers approach the information unit first before resorting to the call center. There are several reasons why this situation persists: customers balk at the high per

minute call center fee; the call center's operating hours parallel the Irish work day and many offices block calls to pay-for-use numbers; the embassy's phone tree is not operational 24/7, and does not give any detailed information about the visa or passport process; much of the phone tree information is inappropriate for the majority of callers; the consular portion of the embassy web site encourages telephone inquiries for a variety of services; and Internet access is not available countrywide. Consular management needs to whittle away at these various problems in order to reduce public reliance on the information unit without degrading customer service. The OIG team made several informal recommendations to resolve this situation. Management had already taken steps to encourage the use of e-mail for case specific inquiries, rather than fax and telephone queries.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Dublin should make its telephone tree available 24/7 and revise the consular information so that it is up to date, targets the majority of the callers, and redirects them to the preferred hours or methods for seeking additional information. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Although the consular section's individual employees are remarkably productive and energetic, there are several relatively simple improvements that would enhance efficiency. In the American citizens services (ACS) unit, for example, staff cannot see if there are clients in the waiting room so they take turns jumping up from their desks to scan the waiting room. This is a waste of time and energy when the installation of a camera and monitor would allow them to see the waiting room from their workstations.

The Dublin consular section has struggled with its speaker system since a new one was installed as part of a recent upgrade. Although the system is now functional most of the time, the complexities of using separate buttons on the same unit for the public address system and as a sound amplifier for interviews is not ideal, not to mention the fact that the units themselves have a fairly significant footprint at cramped interview stations. The consular section could use a Q-matic to mitigate its speaker deficiencies and identify the arrival order of ACS customers. The management section intends to include funding for a Q-matic in its end of year priorities, and the OIG team concurs that this workflow management tool would be useful. The OIG team made a number of informal recommendations about equipment purchases that would improve efficiency and assist the section in procuring an additional scanner for the ACS unit. A number of redundant processes including the maintenance of hand-entry ledgers and the indefinite retention of treaty investor supporting documents were stopped while the inspection was still in process.

Finally, there is a too little communication among the different elements of the consular section. Although the officers meet together periodically, they do not hold regular meetings of the individual units. There have been few meetings of the entire section during the past two years. Because the ACS unit is physically separated from the visa unit, and the federal benefits unit is on another floor, it is imperative that consular management hold periodic meetings to bring all staff up to date on departmental guidance and process changes, brainstorm on workflow and personnel issues, and defuse concerns about unequal workloads or process changes. The Embassy holds a Consular Leadership Day, but needs to focus on communication throughout the year. The OIG team made a number of informal recommendations in this respect, including the establishment of a consular section e-mail collective.

Visa Services

Dublin's small NIV and immigrant visa (IV) units are appropriately staffed and well organized. There are no IV backlogs, and for most of the year NIV backlogs are less than two weeks. Over one-third of all NIV applications are from students participating in the J1 summer work and travel program who are interviewed between February 1 and May 30. In other periods, the unit is able to keep its wait times to a few days.

Ireland's pool of visa applicants is changing, however, and the change is apparent in both the NIV and IV workloads. Irish citizens are currently able to travel to the United States for tourism or business under the visa waiver program, but the booming Irish economy and the enlargement of the EU have resulted in an influx of immigrants from Central Europe, particularly Poland, as well as from the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent. This demographic change will cause steady growth in NIV demand and an increase in requests for security advisory opinions. On the IV side, the consular section is starting to send more of its cases for DNA testing where birth documents are nonexistent or suspicious. It is inevitable that the IV unit will increase its outreach, either directly or through the part-time fraud prevention unit, to the fraud prevention units of other consular sections in order to complete these new cases with the appropriate attention to fraud indicators.

Dublin has never taken steps to review and forward its large Category One file holdings to the Kentucky Consular Center as required by 04 State 110476. The contents of the current holdings occupy three four-drawer security containers. In order to comply with the requirement to review, triage, scan, or forward for scanning all Category One files, consular management will need to develop a multimonh plan, including the judicious use of overtime for teams of officers and LE staff. The post

currently has some resources to support overtime, and the OIG team made an informal recommendation that Dublin initiate this project during FY 2008 in order to take advantage of available funds.

One very capable LE staff member handles both the section's significant E visa workload and its modest fraud prevention workload. Because the incumbent retires in six years and E visas in Ireland require considerable attention to balance sheets and legal incorporation requirements, it is not too soon to cross train more than one alternate now. The same person does not need to cross train on both E and fraud prevention issues. Fraud prevention is not inherently a visa function, and a passport staff member could just as easily cross train on the fraud prevention side. The OIG team made an informal recommendation in order to address this situation.

American Citizens Services

Ireland receives over one million U.S. visitors per year and has about 93,000 Americans permanently resident in its district. The passport and citizenship workload has risen significantly over the past three years, with a 21 percent increase in passport applications during the first four months of FY 2008 alone. Most of this increase results from the return of thousands of Irish immigrants from the United States to take advantage of the Celtic tiger economy. Although the increase in passport volume is the most obvious, there is a parallel increase in requests for notarial and federal benefits services (see below).

Earlier sections of this report discussed some equipment purchases that will position the ACS unit better for its workload growth. In the near future, however, if the demand for passports and consular reports of birth continues, consular management will have to look towards its information unit, the full-time LE section chief secretary, and the cashier position that will become part time after offsite fee collection is implemented for additional ACS resources.

Federal Benefits

As discussed earlier, Dublin's federal benefits unit operates under the oversight of the Social Security Administration officer in London. The LE staff includes a Dutch speaker because Dublin handles the Netherlands' case load as well as backing up other European operations when their sole LE federal benefits employees are on leave or training. Almost every aspect of their workload is automated, and the supervisor reports no backlogs despite a 31 percent increase in the Irish social security workload over the past 10 years and a 57 percent increase in the Dutch workload during the same period.

Fraud Prevention

As mentioned earlier, the visa chief oversees the fraud prevention unit, which is staffed by a part-time LE staff member. The likelihood that the workload will increase with Ireland's changing demographic was discussed earlier. The unit also has primary responsibility for organizing and conducting validation studies. The section is planning a validation study of the 2007 J1 summer work and travel program. No one seemed aware of the requirement to validate referrals, however. Because most referrals are for government-sponsored travel, this should not be a difficult task. The visa chief/fraud prevention manager has just secured access to the DHS entry exit system, and that will enable the section to conduct reliable validation studies without massive telephone efforts. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to validate all referrals as required.

The inspectors also noted the lack of quarterly fraud reporting telegrams for the past two years until the incumbent visa chief submitted one at the end of April 2008. The OIG team provided suggestions on the content of future reports.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2008
State – D&CP	21	3	25	49	\$4,297,400
State – ICASS	4	2	51	57	\$6,324,700
State – Public Diplomacy	1		4	5	\$443,100
State – Diplomatic Security	2	1	23	26	\$1,279,618
State – Marine Security	6			6	\$71,198
State – Representation					\$45,900
State – OBO					\$1,431,827
Foreign Commercial Service	1		4	5	\$859,269
Defense Attaché Office	7		2	9	\$394,380
Foreign Agricultural Service			1	1	\$197,446
Department of Homeland Security	13	15		28	Not available
Totals	55	21	110	186	\$15,344,838

Embassy Dublin's most pressing resource issues are providing support during extended gaps in the management officer position; implementation of new procedures; and support for an expanding DHS presence at Shannon and Dublin airports. The Embassy also needs to address weaknesses in management controls in the management and consular areas.

MANAGEMENT SECTION

Embassy Dublin's management section has undergone unusually high turnover in American officer positions over the past several years, most recently when the management officer departed post in October 2007. A new management officer has

been assigned to the post but will not arrive until October 2008. In the meantime, the Department has arranged for temporary coverage by an experienced, retired officer. Because of statutory limits on how long retired officers can serve in when-actually-employed status, however, even this temporary measure cannot provide uninterrupted coverage of the management officer position. Embassy Dublin has had seven management officers in the last six years.

The Embassy has not had such high turnover among its LE staff, with the exception of security guards and surveillance detection employees. Of 17 vacancies in the last year, 12 were among security staff. Much of this turnover is due to the competitiveness of security-related jobs in Dublin. Because of budget constraints, the embassy held off on filling a number of vacancies, including a chauffeur position, procurement clerk, warehouse supervisor, and information technology supervisor. When it received additional funds that helped to compensate for exchange rate losses, it immediately advertised to fill the most critical positions. These included the procurement clerk and a temporary eligible family member/member of household position to replace the Ambassador's office management specialist, who will rotate in July and will not be replaced until a new ambassador arrives in 2009. The community liaison office (CLO) coordinator position was also filled.

The Embassy's management section earned mixed reviews from employees. Almost all management functions scored above average on OIG's workforce and quality of life questionnaire. The functions rating the lowest are management of the medical unit and overall management of the general services office (GSO). The management officer directly supervises the human resource (HR) and financial management sections, as the Embassy does not have American officers heading these sections, and the workload does not warrant full-time American staff in these positions. The embassy receives regional HR and financial management support from the Regional Support Center Frankfurt.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The Department is the single ICASS service provider at the embassy. The assistant Defense attaché is the outgoing ICASS council chairperson, and the economic officer has been named the new chairperson. The council is active, with the outgoing chairperson providing strong leadership, and is actively involved in issues affecting ICASS services and budget. The OIG team found no major issues with the council. Appropriate standards are in place, service agreements are current

and signed, and the council provides guidance and feedback to reduce costs. The customer survey is also conducted as required. The ICASS council has been kept informed about discussions regarding the planned expansion of CBP at Shannon and Dublin Airports, discussed below.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION PREINSPECTION EMPLOYEES

DHS/CBP carries out preinspection operations at Shannon airport and Dublin airport. Currently, it has approximately 16 officers at Shannon, and approximately 12 in Dublin performing immigration preinspection of most flights to the United States. Passengers still need to clear U.S. customs and agricultural screening in the United States upon arrival. Eight of the positions at Shannon and seven at Dublin were filled by Americans normally resident in Ireland who had been hired over the course of the last 10-15 years by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. These employees collect salary plus some additional benefits such as cost of living increases but do not collect either LQA or educational allowances. While DHS operations in Ireland fall under COM authority, neither the embassy nor DHS was able to provide documentation to clarify under what authority these employees had been hired.

During Washington survey meetings with CBP, the OIG inspectors were informed that, based on negotiations between the Department and DHS, agreement had been reached to change the status of these normally resident American staff members. Two options were to have been presented to the employees in early May 2008 for their decision: either they could convert to CBP direct-hire status or they could convert to LE status. Upon arrival in Ireland in late May, however, the OIG team learned that there had been a delay in the resolution of this issue, and DHS had not yet presented these two options to the affected staff members.

With a potential doubling of U.S. direct-hire staffing, DHS had already applied for and received permission under NSDD-38 to expand its operation at both Dublin and Shannon airports to full preclearance of flights (immigration, customs, and agricultural screening checks). The information provided to the inspectors indicated that DHS had based its staffing projections on the assumption that the normally resident LE American staff would continue to work for DHS. Because of uncertainty as to whether these staff members will agree to the requisite changes in their employment status, there is a lack of clarity as to the actual number of new U.S. direct-hire DHS officers that the embassy will need to support.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Dublin should require a resolution of the status of the existing locally hired Americans currently employed at the Department of Homeland Security facilities at Shannon and Dublin airports before allowing implementation of the expansion of preclearance operations. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

HUMAN RESOURCES

Day-to-day operations of the HR office are managed adequately by an LE HR specialist supported by a staff of two. The management officer is the designated HR officer. The HR section is viewed favorably by embassy management and regional HR staff. Many local employees have concerns about the services provided by the section, but most American staff at the Embassy appear to be satisfied with them, as evidenced by the above average scores the section received on OIG's workforce and quality of life questionnaire and verified during the inspection.

The Embassy has addressed a number of longstanding, challenging HR issues over the past year, including updating the local pay and benefits system. In January of 2008, the Embassy began paying LE staff salaries by electronic funds transfer, and both the embassy and local employees began contributing to the Irish social security system. As part of this effort, the embassy negotiated with Irish authorities a lump-sum payment to settle the embassy's nonpayment of such contributions in prior years.

Embassy management collected a list of employee recommendations at an off-site meeting in November 2007. Almost all of the 17 recommendations resulting from that meeting have been completed. The Ambassador also took a number of steps that raised morale, including reestablishing a cafeteria, hosting a weekly coffee hour for all employees in the cafeteria, and expanding the employee awards program. OIG inspectors met with representatives of the embassy's LE staff committee, who expressed appreciation for the efforts current embassy management has made to address concerns and improve morale. Embassy management has met regularly with the committee to discuss issues of concern.

While the HR section performs adequately in terms of operating procedures and requirements, closer oversight from the management officer is needed in other areas. As noted, many LE staff are dissatisfied with the HR office, based on the inspector's questionnaires and complaints heard during the inspection. A similar situation was

The Embassy supports an employment program for individuals with disabilities. When the program was discontinued by its Irish sponsor, the Embassy devised a way to hire these employees. It sought, and was granted from the Department, a downward exception rate so that they could work fewer hours without losing their Irish social benefits. There are three employees at the embassy hired through this program.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

For the past year and a half, Embassy Dublin has called upon the EEO counselor at Embassy London to serve as Dublin's counselor. This has generally worked well. She advised a number of employees during this time, but no formal complaints were lodged. No significant problems at the embassy came to the attention of the OIG inspection team. Both American direct-hire and LE staff are aware of their rights, and understand that they are covered under Department policies. The Embassy maintains an EEO and Federal Women's Program bulletin board on which contact information for the counselors and current information on related issues is displayed.

With the pending arrival of a new officer at the Embassy who previously served as an EEO counselor, Embassy Dublin plans to appoint her as EEO counselor. Because there is no EEO Foreign Service national liaison currently at the embassy, the OIG team informally recommended that the mission designate and train an LE staff EEO liaison.

Financial Management

Financial management operations at the Embassy are generally adequate. The financial management office – an LE financial specialist supported by a staff of four – provides good support to its customers. Management of accounts, financial reporting, and budgeting is adequate. The management officer is the designated certifying officer. Financial operations were given above average scores on the OIG workforce and quality of life questionnaire. The most pressing issue for the section is ensuring that the Embassy lives within its allocated budget for the remainder of the fiscal year. Although, as noted above, the Embassy received new funds to compensate for exchange rate losses, its program budget remains tight, and there is no room for discretionary spending.

As noted in the section on consular operations, the Embassy needs to improve its management controls over consular fee collections by the class B cashier. This issue is discussed in more detail in the management controls section of the report.

General Services and Facilities Maintenance

Embassy Dublin is well served by a conscientious and experienced general services officer and a highly experienced facilities manager.

Many parts of the GSO received good evaluations and comments in the OIG employee questionnaires and during interviews with employees. The most recent ICASS survey also showed favorable ratings. Areas where customer service problems appeared to exist included procurement, shipping and customs, and maintenance and repair on housing. The OIG team informally recommended that the Embassy arrange for training of GSO employees in sensitivity to customer service and transparency in their operations.

Vehicle Fleet Replacement Program

Embassy Dublin devised an innovative vehicle replacement program in 1999 under which it trades in vehicles every two years and obtains replacements at no additional cost. Ireland taxes new cars at a rate of 40 percent. The Embassy conceived of the idea to sell back every two years to the dealer (by trade-in) vehicles in the motor pool to receive a credit toward the cost of new vehicles. Two years is the minimum ownership period in Ireland for diplomatic missions before they can sell a vehicle without having to pay duty or tax on the transaction. Thus, the dealer could buy the car back and sell it to a new buyer for \$1,000 to \$2,000 more than it credits toward the new vehicle purchase by the foreign diplomatic mission. At some point, the cost of a new (duty-free/tax-free) vehicle will exceed the credit the dealer will grant, but this has not happened to date. Embassy Dublin has successfully used this system for ICASS and other agency-owned vehicles more than 30 times with no additional cash being paid for the new vehicles. Currently, all agencies at the Embassy participate in the program, though the mission has no program vehicles.

The program was originally initiated to improve the age profile of the fleet, which was dated compared to other diplomatic missions in Dublin; to reduce the maintenance and repair costs of maintaining an aging fleet; and to ensure that the embassy was getting the best value in using, purchasing, and divesting its vehicle resources. Maintenance and repair costs have been largely eliminated, as all cars in the program are always under warranty. Breakdowns are almost nonexistent, and the

safety profile has been raised considerably. The estimated annual cost savings to the U.S. Government currently runs to tens of thousands of dollars. The program has resulted in a de facto change to the vehicle replacement cycle at the Embassy from the normal six-year cycle to a two-year cycle, which is more in keeping with the practice of other, local diplomatic missions.

This appears to be a creative and innovative practice. The OIG team could find no regulations forbidding it: while the Buy America Act normally requires embassies to purchase U.S.-manufactured vehicles, for example, the legislation provides for waivers for a number of reasons, including safety issues in right-hand-drive countries. Procurement authority resides at the Embassy in the warrant of the contracting officer, and likewise property disposal authority resides at the embassy in accordance with the Foreign Affairs Manual (Volume 14). The regulations do not explicitly require that the embassy acquire Department permission each time in order to acquire non-U.S. manufactured vehicles for the ICASS fleet on an accelerated replacement cycle. At the same time, the embassy has no record of Department approval for the program.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Dublin should seek permission from the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, the Bureau of Administration, and the Department's International Cooperative Administrative Support Services center to continue its vehicle fleet replacement program for non-U.S. manufactured International Cooperative Administrative Support Services vehicles at an accelerated replacement cycle. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Communications Contract and Cell Phone Antenna

Embassy Dublin has a unique and advantageous arrangement for provision of cell phone service. To support a presidential visit in 1995, it requested a repeater cell phone antenna for the Ambassador's residence, where the President was staying. An Irish company installed a diesel generator driven mobile antenna to boost coverage in the area. The temporary antenna worked so well that the mission kept it and used it to support similar visits in 1998 and 2000.

The Embassy decided to formalize the relationship and negotiated aggressively. In exchange for allowing the company to use the repeater antenna, the Embassy was able to eliminate, for all cell phones it used the instrument rental fee, the monthly "line rental" fee, and the value added tax payment, in lieu of a rental payment and negotiated a significant reduction to across the board call costs. The agreement also

meant that the embassy could support visiting delegations by loaning them handsets for which the only charges would be call usage, which was billed to the delegation fiscal data. The Embassy and the local company signed a 10-year agreement in January 2000.

Over time, two other providers of cell phone service have arisen in the Dublin market, whereas when the original contract was signed, no other company could provide like services. Despite the fact that the contract extends to 2010, the GSO, wonders if it should be competed again under current conditions. This could present a risk that the excellent deal, that avoids the annual expenditure of \$55,000 in monthly cell phone connection charges, would go away, but indications are that the antenna is of such a value to the company that they would try to continue the relationship.

Given that the existing contract would extend until 2010, the OIG team informally recommended that the embassy contact the Bureau of Administration's Office of Logistics Management and Office of Operating Expenses to explain the existing relationship and seek advice as to the need to compete the contract now versus waiting until its 2010 expiration.

Warehouse Lease

Embassy Dublin's warehouse is packed literally to the rafters with new furniture, including some that it had ordered and some that the European Logistical Support Office had offered up for free. The Embassy plans to replace 10 houses of existing furniture with this new furniture during this summer's turnover cycle. The old furniture will be auctioned off. When this is completed, the Embassy will have more warehouse space than it needs. The OIG team informally recommended that the Embassy give back or sublease the portion of the warehouse that is underutilized. The OIG team also informally recommended that Embassy Dublin enlist the expertise of the Foreign Service national executive corps to bring in a warehousing expert to conduct training for the new acting warehouse manager, to revamp the inventory and receiving records process, and to help optimally configure the warehouse.

Procurement

Despite issuing management instructions explaining how to avoid unauthorized commitments, Embassy Dublin has experienced numerous instances in the past two years. This issue is discussed further in the management controls section of the report.

The GSO procurement specialist is moving to take a voucher examiner position. His position has been posted, and needs to be filled as quickly as possible. The embassy has already planned a visit by the Foreign Service national executive corps expert on procurement to review procurement procedures and help train the new specialist. The OIG team's preliminary review of procurement records and folders found that they were incomplete and needed more support information so that someone unfamiliar with the particular transaction could ascertain the status of the procurement just from a review of the folder. The OIG team informally recommended that the procurement specialist spend his last several months in the position working to fill in the gaps in back-up documents in the procurement records, and make them more robust (e.g., putting copies of the e-mail correspondence that backs up the transaction into the folder).

Housing Support

Given the importance of accuracy and completeness in lease waiver requests to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) and in lease language itself, the OIG team stressed that the GSO must use the latest forms and formulations of these documents and must stay current with policy changes as they occur. This will also give the interagency housing board more timely and complete information to assist their decisions in acquiring leases and assigning housing.

Facilities Maintenance; Safety, Health and Environmental Health Program; and Fire Protection Program

There are 10 major 7902 maintenance projects pending for Embassy Dublin, of which three are being completed, or are in the contracting phase. The others are in need of funding from OBO and are in the development/proposal phase. These include repair/replacement of the COM residence roof, replacing the chancery elevator, and replacing the heating at one of the owned residences. The Embassy had a fire safety inspection in July 2007. It generated 29 recommendations, of which 16 have been resolved, leaving 13 to be addressed. A number of the recommendations require resources from OBO that are not as yet available. In part because of a backlog of work orders, Embassy Dublin is not keeping current with all parts of its regular, preventive maintenance for the chancery.

The OIG team left informal recommendations that the tasks in these three categories be given priority by the facilities maintenance section due to the significant safety implications involved. This may mean that the large number of small, non-critical work orders for U.S. Government-owned residences will have to be addressed

less urgently until progress has been made on the safety-related issues. In addition, these nonsafety-related work orders should be addressed in priority order.

The OIG team visited the Ambassador's residence, which is a two-story masonry and timber structure located on 70 acres of prime park land in central Dublin. Construction of the COM residence was completed in 1776 and has had numerous additions and upgrades throughout its history. The OIG team also visited the DCM's residence, a two-story house near the Embassy which was constructed in 1850 and purchased by the U.S. Government in 1940. The Embassy and OBO have devoted considerable attention to both properties. They are used frequently for official functions and appear to be in good condition.

The Embassy recently instituted a recycling program which will facilitate the recycling of more than 70 percent of what has heretofore been thrown away in the trash dumpster. In addition, the embassy has been able to negotiate new trash and recycling removal service that may actually save \$4,000 over the next year.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY

Embassy Dublin operates a technically adequate information management and information systems security officer program. The current information management officer effectively manages all of the embassy's information management and security requirements, with the exception of communication with upper management and other sections of the Embassy. The OIG team examined all information management spaces, verified all security components of the information systems security officer program, assessed all standard operating procedures and systems documentation, and performed random checks of the embassy's files. The information technology posture of the Embassy is compliant with all relevant regulations.

The information technology staff provides unclassified and classified systems operations support for approximately 119 workstations, 13 servers, and 230 user accounts in the chancery and GSO warehouse, including encrypted wireless and circuit connections between buildings. Six LE staff assist with unclassified operations, telephone functions, and mailroom and receptionist duties.

In some areas, the OIG team made recommendations that are contained in the classified annex to this report.

Information Management Officer

There are communication problems between the information management officer and the other sections of the Embassy. This problem is particularly evident in the information management section's relations with other agencies. Complaints were made both about the quality of services provided to ICASS subscribers, and about what was characterized as the information management officer's overly rigid interpretation of Department policies limiting what services can be provided.

This problem has been exacerbated by miscommunication with the Ambassador and DCM, who operate on the principle that ICASS services should be provided in an efficient and customer service oriented manner unless prohibited by Department policy or regulation. Communication from the information management officer to post management has not been clear, concise, and timely regarding the resource and regulatory limitations of the information management section. Post management, equally, may not have been sufficiently clear as to its expectations about customer service. Without clear lines of communication, Department policy cannot be implemented properly in a timely manner.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Dublin should implement a schedule of weekly reports from the information management section regarding projects and policy implementation, and weekly meetings between the deputy chief of mission and the information management officer to review progress and resolve any disputes over service. These reports and meetings should continue until a new management officer arrives at Embassy Dublin. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Intranet Connection to Other Agencies

The DHS/CBP preinspection operation at Shannon airport in the west of Ireland is staffed by a contingent of DHS personnel under COM authority. (b) (2)
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QUALITY OF LIFE

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

Embassy Dublin has a well regarded CLO coordinator who has served since October 2004, but now is leaving post. Her replacement has been named. The OIG team informally recommended that the embassy send the new CLO to the CLO training conference at the earliest opportunity.

The CLO has worked hard to ensure that incoming American employees receive critical information about the challenges and requirements of living and working in Ireland and especially that they get it sufficiently early to act upon it. This includes updating the information submitted to the Overseas Briefing Center at the Foreign Service Institute, so that personnel considering a bid on Dublin can get comprehensive information. The remaining contribution owed to the Overseas Briefing Center is the Dublin video, which is currently being made.

In particular, the CLO is trying to emphasize the importance of early action to get children into preferred local schools (some schools require registration for the fall semester as early as January of that year), the exorbitant cost and difficulty of access to day care, and the realities of housing in Ireland (with smaller rooms, doors that may be too small for American sized furniture, and little closet/storage space).

MEDICAL SERVICES

Embassy Dublin's medical unit is staffed by an American nurse who has served the embassy for 21 years. She is available for an average of 16 hours per week, though she makes sure that everyone has her phone contact information at home and has frequently "been called out late at night."

The nurse receives good support from the regional medical officer and regional nurse practitioner (out of London) whose schedule of twice yearly visits is arranged to afford quarterly contact. The regional psychiatrist (also out of London) usually visits twice a year or as requested.

The embassy nurse publishes a comprehensive post medical booklet for Dublin, with a good introduction to the rules of Irish healthcare (such as payment for care in advance, regardless of insurance) and lists of physicians and medical resources, as well as medical policy explanations.

RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Embassy Dublin's commissary is a small operation that does not generate a lot of money, but contributes to the morale and quality of life of the Embassy community, including DHS employees at Shannon and Dublin airports who may be serving at their first and only overseas posts. The four or five annual commissary runs to England are important to employees for purchase of items not available locally. The commissary also provides other services that generate a small amount of income, such as Homeward Bound mailing service and a salon service once a month. The board chairperson performs required oversight such as cash counts, the annual audit, and other reporting. The board is active, meeting at least once per month. The charter and bylaws are current. A required annual audit and COM certification were performed during the inspection.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The most recent annual COM management controls certification was signed by the Ambassador on July 30, 2007. This certification did not identify any significant management controls deficiencies. A review of work requirements statements for key officers demonstrated that management control elements are included. However, the inspection disclosed serious management control weaknesses over consular and management operations, as discussed below.

CONSULAR MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

Consular internal controls, particularly those relating to fee collection and accountability, have been neglected for several years. To his credit, the incumbent ACO, who had never served as ACO at a previous post, enrolled in the online ACO training and has been bringing the function under control systematically. The situation prior to his arrival in October 2007, however, probably accounted in large part for the cashiering irregularities that have affected both the consular and financial management sections recently.

The OIG team found the following vulnerabilities in the consular cash collection and accounting process:

- Neither the ACO nor the consular cashier and back-up cashiers had the proper designation of authority documents on file as required by 7 FAH-1 H-732.1, with models available on the consular fees page of the Bureau of Consular Affairs web site;
- The ACO function was assigned to a mid-level officer with no previous ACO experience without proper oversight and training, and without a full briefing on the known vulnerabilities;
- The signed attestation of the monthly reconciliation of receipts and deposits had not been completed for about three years prior to the arrival of the incumbent ACO, and therefore no copy was given to the financial management office as required;

Recommendation 16: Embassy Dublin should conduct unannounced consular cash counts at least quarterly and document them as required. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

The OIG team also made an informal recommendation that consular management clear the cashier's booth of its multiple drawer units and review and organize the required cashier recordkeeping in accordance with retention requirements.

The OIG team reviewed all of these requirements with the ACO. As noted above, when the inspection began he was already taking steps to implement them. However, the consular section chief, as the officer responsible for the overall integrity of the consular fee collection process, should verify in detail that all requirements of 7 FAH are in place before the arrival of a new section chief and in preparation for the next annual certification of management controls.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Dublin should conduct a rigorous review of all its accountable controls in coordination with the deputy chief of mission before attesting to the required, yearly certification of consular management controls. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Consular management controls also require the DCM to review the consular section chief's issued and refused visa adjudications. Because the consular section chief plays an active role in interviewing the J1 summer work and travel applicants during their peak season, there are actually a significant number of cases requiring DCM oversight. An OIG review of the consolidated consular data base indicates that the DCM had not conducted the required reviews although he indicated a readiness to do so to the OIG team.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Dublin should implement a schedule for the deputy chief of mission to review the consular section chief's nonimmigrant visa adjudications. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Services. The embassy has requested and will receive assistance from the Regional Support Center Frankfurt to train the Class B cashier and address the weaknesses that led to these irregularities. The OIG team is satisfied with the embassy's planned efforts to correct deficiencies concerning the Class B cashier.

PROCUREMENT

A review of a sample of vouchers found several unauthorized commitments. Despite issuing management instructions explaining how to avoid unauthorized commitments, Embassy Dublin has experienced numerous instances in the past two years. These include purchases related to visitor support, which frequently require short notice arrangement of vehicles, hotels, and other support. The Federal Acquisition Regulations state that "the only individual with the authority to bind the government is a warranted contracting officer." Unauthorized commitments violate Department and federal regulations. During the inspection, the Embassy sent out an administrative notice reminding mission employees about unauthorized commitments. An informal recommendation addresses this issue.

INVENTORY CONTROL

The GSO is meticulously attentive to inventory controls and proper use of the nonexpendable property application system. The system clerk has been accepted as a volunteer to serve a one-year temporary duty assignment in Iraq starting in November 2008. It will be important for the GSO to get a replacement on board and trained in the system well in advance.

The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the GSO obtain copies of the vouchers for the past two years for both official residences in order to ensure that the items such as books, appliances, dishes, etc. purchased with official residence expense funds are properly recorded and inventoried. The Embassy should also ensure that the GSO receives copies of monthly official residence expense vouchers in the future for the same purpose.

Usage of U.S. Government Resources

The OIG team found that the Embassy's administrative instruction on the use of official vehicles was incomplete and did not emphasize that all official vehicles at post fall under the authority of the COM. The embassy agreed to reissue its administrative notice on the use of U.S. Government motor pool vehicles making it clearer and more specific as to what constitutes proper use and proper authorization. The Embassy also submitted a bill to the DCM for past usage of the motor pool, which he paid immediately. Finally, the OIG team made informal recommendations to the Ambassador that he revise the letter of authorization used by the DCM to permit other authorized use of U.S. Government motor vehicles so that it was consistent with Foreign Affairs Manual and Department guidance.

LIVING QUARTERS ALLOWANCES

The four CBP American direct-hire employees stationed at Shannon airport receive LQA, while the eight at Dublin airport reside in embassy short term-leased housing but provide their own furnishings. Although the Shannon preinspection operation is under COM authority, for years the employees have had very little affiliation with the mission and have never participated in the mission's housing program. Currently, CBP manages the LQA program for its Shannon preinspection staff internally, with no involvement or oversight from the embassy. CBP approves the leases and processes invoices for reimbursement through its Indianapolis finance office. No documentation is provided to the embassy, and the leases are neither reviewed for language nor entered into the Department's real property application database.

Under section 156 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FYs 1990 and 1991 (P. L. 101-246), responsibility for managing the overseas housing program was centralized in the Department in order to ensure coherent, cost-effective management of such programs worldwide. The single real property manager at a post (in this case the management officer at Embassy Dublin), is responsible for ensuring compliance with the policies and regulations governing LQA (15 FAM 212.1). Security responsibilities for overseas housing are addressed in the classified annex to this report.

Because Shannon's CBP preinspection employees have never participated in the mission's housing program, Embassy Dublin does not currently have the resources to provide appropriate management and oversight of CBP's LQA program. This does not relieve the embassy of the responsibility, however.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Dublin, in coordination with the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, should perform all internal controls required for the living quarters allowance program for the Customs and Border Protection preinspection personnel assigned to Ireland, charging Customs and Border Protection for any costs that can be identified as directly attributable to the preinspection operation. (Action: Embassy Dublin, in coordination with EUR)

FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs should put in place procedures and deadlines to ensure that instructions to demarche European Union member governments reach embassies in a timely manner, before host governments have already made commitments on the issue to the European Union Council. (Action: EUR)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Dublin should establish a system to keep the Embassy and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs informed of all significant communications either of them has with the Ireland Fulbright Commission and to exchange brief e-mail records of important telephone messages. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Dublin, in coordination with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, should conduct a complete review of the operations of the Fulbright program in Ireland to ascertain whether they are in all respects compliant with Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs policies and those of the Foreign Scholarship Board. (Action: Embassy Dublin, in coordination with ECA)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Dublin should institute regular, biweekly meetings between the public affairs officer and the deputy chief of mission to discuss current media issues and review longer range public diplomacy planning. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Dublin should conduct a review of the several contact records databases the Department has approved, select the one that best satisfies the requirements of the entire embassy, and instruct all sections to use the same database for their audience contact records. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Dublin should redraft the work requirements statements for the visa chief (deputy) and the incoming consular section chief to create a more equal division of labor. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Dublin should institute offsite fee collection for all machine-readable visa fees in accordance with Bureau of Consular Affairs guidelines until an integrated application and fee payment system is instituted worldwide. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Dublin should review and standardize position descriptions in the consular section to balance the division of labor and ensure that employees doing the same work have identical position descriptions that reflect the maximum responsibilities of each position, submitting any new position descriptions for computer assisted job evaluations. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Dublin should make its telephone tree available 24/7 and revise the consular information so that it is up to date, targets the majority of the callers, and redirects them to the preferred hours or methods for seeking additional information. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Dublin should require a resolution of the status of the existing locally hired Americans currently employed at the Department of Homeland Security facilities at Shannon and Dublin airports before allowing implementation of the expansion of preclearance operations. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 11: Embassy Dublin should seek permission from the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, the Bureau of Administration, and the Department's International Cooperative Administrative Support Services center to continue its vehicle fleet replacement program for non-U.S. manufactured International Cooperative Administrative Support Services vehicles at an accelerated replacement cycle. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Dublin should implement a schedule of weekly reports from the information management section regarding projects and policy implementation, and weekly meetings between the deputy chief of mission and the information management officer to review progress and resolve any disputes over service. These reports and meetings should continue until a new management officer arrives at Embassy Dublin. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Dublin should prepare standard designations of authority for the accountable consular officer, cashier, and the backups for each role and maintain a file with the designations to be retained for five years. (Action: Embassy Dublin)

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 onsite compliance review will assess the mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

Political and Economic Affairs

Briefing memos for the Ambassador's meetings with officials do not include sufficient information on political connections, economic ties, negotiating style, and other personal background.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Dublin should include biographic information in memos prepared for meetings with key officials.

The embassy conveys demarches effectively, but does not report reactions frequently enough to Washington.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Dublin should interpret and report official Irish government reactions to all significant demarches, keeping records that would help it inform and strengthen future approaches on the subject.

The political/economic section's paper files are well organized, but its electronic files are poorly organized and difficult to use. Some files have not been culled and retired on time because they were not filed by date.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Dublin should complete its plan to reorganize the electronic files in its political/economic section, ensuring that information is filed by date so that it can be retired on time.

Support for Congressional delegations could be stronger if the embassy received more information from the Department on the delegations' policy interests as well as schedules. While the Bureau Legislative Affairs may have such information, providing it to the field is the responsibility of regional bureaus.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Dublin should contact the Congressional adviser in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs to obtain more information on the policy interests of codels.

The embassy does not have a system for obtaining required end-of-tour biographic reports.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Dublin should include a requirement for biographic reports in its check-out procedures for departing officers.

The embassy's weekly report on economic and political developments includes too many items drawn directly from the press.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Dublin should draft the items in its weekly political/economic newsletter itself rather than compiling items from the press.

The ELO responsible for preparing required reports on human rights and religious freedom was unable to prioritize her work sufficiently because of ad hoc e-mail tasks from individual officers in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, which were not sufficiently coordinated in Washington or screened in Dublin by her supervisors.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Dublin should instruct its entry-level officers to consult their supervisors when confronted with uncleared or contradictory e-mail instructions from offices in Washington.

At least one officer left an extremely useful memo for her successor, but many officers begin their tours without a transition memo and are less efficient because of it. The embassy does not have a standard procedure to ensure that critical information is passed on during rotations.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Dublin should include in its check-out procedures a requirement that officers leave a transition memo for their successors before departing post.

Consular Affairs

The consular section has a three-person information unit. In many cases, information unit staff simply forward calls to the operational units even though they have the capacity to answer the client's request for information. They forward all calls requesting the status of advisory opinions, for example, to the visa unit despite having access to that information themselves.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Dublin should authorize the consular information unit to provide case specific information to callers wherever possible.

The fees to access the contract call center are very high, and the call centers hours of operation are limited to the work day. Many callers contact the information unit before they follow instructions to book appointments and seek visa information from the call center.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Dublin should review its call center contract, compare per minute charges with other European posts, and negotiate more liberal operating hours and fees commensurate with neighboring posts if required.

The consular portion of the embassy's web site does not always prominently address customers' frequently asked questions. Some pages refer readers to the information unit telephone number when additional detailed information at the site might answer their questions.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Dublin should review the consular portion of the embassy web site to be sure that information about getting visa appointments or applying for a U.S. passport is on the main page rather than in a sidebar and is presented in a conversational or interactive format.

The information unit receives about 400 faxes per week, most requesting NIV information, and 200 phone calls per day, most requesting routine information. When the three LE staff are called on to help in the NIV unit or to serve as backup cashier, the phones go unanswered, causing customer frustration.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Dublin should create public e-mail addresses for each of the consular units, including nonimmigrant and immigrant visas, and feature those addresses as hyperlinks on the web site and in recorded information.

ACS unit staff cannot see if they have customers in the waiting area without getting up from their desks and walking to the bank of interview windows.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Dublin should procure and install a camera and monitor in the American citizens services unit to scan the waiting room and alert staff that customers are awaiting service.

ACS customers use a sign-in sheet that staff cannot read unless a customer holds it up to an interview window. NIV staff call applicants to the interview windows with a booming speaker system that impedes normal communication at the other service windows.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Dublin should give priority to the purchase and installation of a Q-matic system that would issue separate tickets for both nonimmigrant and American citizens services customers.

Consular management does not hold regular meetings either section wide or for the individual work units. Many staff expressed concern over lack of information sharing. Opportunities for collective problem solving and ongoing training are lost as a result.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Dublin should hold regular unit meetings and periodic all hands meetings with well thought out agendas.

There is no consular e-mail collective for disseminating section wide announcements.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Dublin should set up a consular e-mail collective.

The consular section has not reviewed and retired any of its large Category One file holdings as required. This large project cannot be completed during normal working hours and will require several months.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Dublin should develop a plan, including the judicious use of overtime for both officers and a limited number of LE staff, to review all Category One holdings, check them against the consular data base, eliminate duplication, and prepare the cases for forwarding to the Kentucky Consular Center for backscanning.

There is no consistently trained backup for the LE staff member who handles the combined E treaty investor and fraud prevention portfolio. To avoid preselecting an eventual replacement, there should be more than one person cross trained in one or both of these functions.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Dublin should recruit one or more consular locally employed staff interested and able to cross train in either or both the E visa and fraud prevention functions and set up a realistic training plan.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Dublin should enforce post policy on unauthorized commitments and provide training to the heads of sections and other agencies on Department procurement regulations and procedures.

Equal Employment Opportunity

There is no EEO FSN liaison currently at the embassy.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Dublin should act to designate and train a locally employed staff Equal Employment Opportunity liaison.

General Services and Facilities Maintenance

There is evidence of customer service problems in some areas of the GSO.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Dublin should arrange for training of general services office employees in sensitivity to customer service and the need for transparency in their operations.

The embassy's cell phone service contract does not meet some technical requirements but has important advantages to the mission.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Dublin should consult the Bureau of Administration to explain the existing cell phone provider relationship and seek advice as to the need to compete the contract now or wait until its expiration in 2010.

The Dublin warehouse will be underutilized after this summer, and the staff is in need of training.

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Dublin should investigate the possibility of giving back or subleasing the upstairs portion of the warehouse, which is currently underutilized.

Informal Recommendation 28: Embassy Dublin should further enlist the expertise of the Foreign Service national executive corps to bring in a warehousing expert to conduct training for the new acting warehouse manager, to revamp the inventory and receiving records process, and to help optimally configure the warehouse.

Review of procurement records and folders found that they were incomplete and needed more support information so that someone unfamiliar with the particular transaction could ascertain the status of the procurement just from a review of the folder.

Informal Recommendation 29: Embassy Dublin should instruct the procurement specialist to spend his last several months in the position working to fill in the gaps in back-up documents in the procurement records and make them more robust (e.g., putting copies of the e-mail correspondence that backs up the transaction into the folder).

It is important to have accuracy and completeness in lease waiver requests sent to OBO and in lease language itself.

Informal Recommendation 30: Embassy Dublin should ensure that it uses the latest forms and formulations of documents for leases and lease waiver requests, and stays current with policy changes as they occur.

Because it has so many noncritical work orders pending, the embassy is not able to carry out a satisfactory program of preventive maintenance for the chancery.

Informal Recommendation 31: Embassy Dublin should prioritize tasks assigned to the facilities maintenance section in order to properly focus on the safety-related issues.

Community Liaison Office

Embassy Dublin will soon have a new CLO coordinator.

Informal Recommendation 32: Embassy Dublin should send its new community liaison office coordinator to training at the earliest practical opportunity.

Information Management

DHS/CBP preinspection operation at Shannon and Dublin airports and the FCS staff in Dublin do not have access to the Department's Intranet and cannot receive information from the regional security or community liaison offices or be kept fully informed of policies and information notices.

Informal Recommendation 33: Embassy Dublin should ask the Customs and Border Protection Agency and the Foreign Commercial Service to provide their staff in Ireland with access to the Department's Intranet.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Thomas C. Foley	10/06
Deputy Chief of Mission	Robert J. Faucher	8/07
Chiefs of Sections:		
Administrative	Sandra J. Cecchini (WAE)	10/07
Consular	Danny Toma	8/04
Political/Economic	Theodore S. Pierce	8/06
Public Affairs	Sheila R. Paskman	8/06
Regional Security	Terry L. Cobble	6/05
Other Agencies:		
Department of Defense	Col. Paul J. Flynn	5/05
Foreign Commercial Service	Vacant	
Department of Homeland Security	Juan M. Soltero	8/05

ABBREVIATIONS

ACO	Accountable consular officer
ACS	American citizens services
CBP	Customs and Border Protection Agency
CLO	Community liaison office
COM	Chief of Mission
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
Department	Department of State
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
ECA	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ELO	Entry-level officers
EU	European Union
GSO	General services office
HR	Human resources
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support
IV	Immigrant visa
FCS	U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service
FSN	Foreign Service national
LE	Locally employed
LQA	Living quarters allowance
MRV	Machine-readable visa
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa

NSDD	National Security Decision Directive
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
PD	Public diplomacy
RSO	Regional security officer
USEU	U.S. Mission to the EU

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