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

# Report of Inspection

Bureau of Consular Affairs  
Office of Overseas  
Citizens Services  
Office of Children's Issues

Report Number ISP-CA-05-68, August 2005

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## KEY JUDGMENTS

- The Bureau of Consular Affairs' Directorate of Overseas Citizens Service, Office of Children's Issues (OCS/CI), provides exceptional service to children abducted from the United States, to their left-behind parents, and to American citizens who seek to adopt children abroad.
- OCS/CI benefits from excellent leadership. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) observed the director and deputy director demonstrating clear policy direction and a command of issues such as implementation of the Hague Adoption Convention. OCS/CI's managers are held in high regard by their staff, consular officers abroad, officials throughout the Department of State (Department) and other federal entities, and non governmental organizations such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).
- The Abduction and Prevention units operate efficiently and effectively carrying out their mandates. Despite heavy workload and staffing short falls, the caseworkers display a mixture of tact, empathy, ingenuity, and professionalism, even when dealing with the most intractable cases. Staffing is inadequate to meet all the demands on these units and should be increased.
- The Adoption unit plays a key role in the complex, on-going, multifaceted process that will, in the near future, permit the United States to adhere formally to the Hague Adoption Convention. The director and deputy director spend the majority of their time on this process.
- The two responsibilities of OCS/CI, abduction casework and adoption policy, are very different. As both expand in volume and complexity, it may become necessary to divide the unit into separate offices.

The quality of the contract support staff is uneven, and there is confusion about the rules for exercising supervision. Contract oversight is not exercised directly in the Directorate of Overseas Citizens Services (CA/OCS) or OCS/CI.

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## SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The inspection took place in the Washington, DC, between March and May 2005. Larry Colbert (team leader), Norbert Krieg, and Robert Mustain conducted the inspection as part of OIG's ongoing series of inspections to review the operations of the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

OIG conducted personal interviews and collected data at the Department, in other U.S. agencies, individual state agencies, private and semiprivate organizations involved in abduction and overseas adoption issues as follows:

Department of State

- Bureau of Consular Affairs
  - Executive Office
  - Directorate of Overseas Citizens Services
  - Directorate of Visa Services (CA/VO)
- Bureau of European Affairs
- Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
- Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs

Department of Homeland Security

- General Accountability Office
- Staff of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- Staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee
- Office of the Attorney General of California
- Hague Conference on Private International Law
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- Team Hope - a parent support network for families of missing children
- Retired California Superior Court Judge - a leading U.S. expert on Hague Convention administrative matters

In addition, OIG sent a confidential electronic questionnaire requesting information on the quality of assistance provided by OCS/CI to the consular officer at each overseas post responsible for child abduction and overseas adoption issues.

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OIG received responses from approximately 68 percent of the posts abroad (136 of 211). Additionally, OIG teams conducting routine post management inspections during winter 2005 sought information on the above issues.

## BACKGROUND

OCS/CI was created in 1994 by transferring responsibility for overseas American citizen child welfare issues from the Office of American Citizens Services (ACS). ACS is responsible for supervising assistance to all Americans abroad across a broad range of emergency services, e.g. deaths, arrests, and disappearances. This action was taken to ensure that issues involving the welfare of American children abroad and American citizens seeking to adopt abroad would receive constant priority and attention in the Department and at consular sections in the field regardless of other emergent issues. The change also served to underline for the Congress and the American public the Bureau's commitment to addressing issues concerning children.

OCS/CI has the lead role for the Department on two important issues: international parental child abduction and intercountry adoption policy. Under the leadership of the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, the office formulates and coordinates policy, provides assistance to parents, and provides direction to posts abroad on international parental child abduction cases. OCS/CI serves as the U.S. Central Authority (USCA) for the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (the Hague Abduction Convention).

OCS/CI also coordinates Department policy on international adoptions. It works with parents seeking to adopt children from overseas by providing information on U.S. and foreign adoption requirements. When crises at consular posts or in the actual country occur, OCS/CI coordinates with the prospective parents, the Visa Office, the Department of Homeland Security, the adoption community, and congressional staffers to develop and implement strategies to keep all parties informed and to return the adoption process to normal. OCS/CI is slated to become the U.S. Central Authority (USCA) for the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of International Adoption (the Hague Adoption Convention). The office is currently playing a lead role in an interagency and intra-Departmental effort to draw up final implementing regulations that would permit the United States to move toward meeting the requirements that would permit notifying the parties at The Hague of formal adherence to the Convention.

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OCS/CI is led by an FS-01 director, supported by a GS-14 deputy. The director reports to the OCS managing director and receives policy direction from the deputy assistant secretary for OCS. The office is divided into three distinct elements each with a unit chief designated at the FS-02 level: an Abduction unit and a Prevention unit that each address the issue of parental overseas abduction and an Adoption unit responsible for overseas adoption matters. The two units devoted to abductions operate completely independently from the Adoptions unit with little or no overlap of personnel or responsibilities. OCS/CI is authorized 33 full time positions, 3 contract support staff positions and one Presidential Management Fellow. Twenty-eight full time positions and the four additional positions are currently filled.

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs gives high priority to children's issues and strongly supports the programs and initiatives of the office. OCS/CI is under the direction of the OCS deputy assistant secretary and her deputy, the managing director of OCS. A senior official of the Department of Homeland Security remarked that the current deputy assistant secretary has affected a sharper focus on adoption policy issues and, by drawing on her previous senior assignment in CA/VO, ensured that OCS/CI staff better understand visa law and procedures in adoption cases, particularly concerning the Hague Adoption Convention. The new convention represents significant new challenges, and preparations for implementation have consumed management for at least the last year. The adoption convention creates new responsibilities for not only OCS/CI, but also the Visa Office and other government departments including Homeland Security and Justice thus leading to inevitable tensions. One source in OCS/CI described the deputy assistant secretary as a "godsend" who quickly mastered complex issues and gives prompt clear policy guidance. The managing director was described as "hands on" and effective in her role of assuring that the disparate elements of OCS are in sync.

OIG heard similar praise for OCS/CI's leadership from sources outside the Department. An international official at The Hague said she had the highest respect for the OCS/CI office director and added that the deputy was "widely known and respected in The Hague countries for her knowledge and ability." This official further stated that OCS/CI was the most effective of all the individual country Central Authorities and a model for other countries' units to copy. A California state official involved in child abduction issues since 1981 told OIG that OCS/CI is much improved under the current leadership.

OCS/CI is charged with two very different responsibilities. The Abduction unit is case oriented; the work is high profile and emotionally wearing. The Adoptions unit is, especially now, heavily policy oriented. The two sets of issues have very different constituencies and requirements. OCS/CI management provided cogent explanations of the issues and the status of key projects. This, combined with OIG's observation of an overall well-directed operation with dedicated staff, resulted in a positive appraisal of the unit's leadership. OIG did observe that the demands of policy formulation, particularly with respect to the Hague Adoption

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Convention, detracted from the more mundane issues of day-to-day management, such as assuring effective supervision of contract support staff. OIG commends OCS/CI leadership for the recently completed, excellent training manual that was prepared for the Abduction and Prevention units as well as efforts to improve internal office communication by ensuring that both the daily activities report to the Assistant Secretary and a weekly overview are also received by the entire OCS/CI staff.

## ABDUCTION UNIT

The Abduction unit is responsible for assisting parents in cases of children wrongfully removed from the United States to a foreign country or retained in a foreign country following a visit. These are designated outgoing cases and include those children taken to countries that are signatory to the Hague Abduction Convention and those taken to countries that are not members of the convention. OCS/CI also serves as the USCA for the convention.

The unit is organized into two teams of six case officers and one contract administrative assistant, each with a designated team leader. An FS-O2 chief supervises the unit. Case officers are about evenly divided between Foreign Service and Civil Service employees. Workload is difficult to quantify. Cases are opened when they come to the attention of the unit and remain open as long as there is activity or until the minor reaches maturity. Inactive cases can be re-opened. Workload has remained fairly constant at between 1000 and 1100 active cases. The case officers divide the world geographically with an effort made to distribute the caseload evenly. Congress has mandated a caseload of no more than 75 cases per officer. OIG found that this mandate is interpreted as referring to active cases and that the individual officers all have close to the maximum number of cases and a few exceed the maximum. Staffing gaps, extended sick leave, and other job requirements result in all the case officers covering their own caseload and all or part of one or more colleague's caseload for extended periods. Currently, for example, the unit has 25 percent of its case officer positions vacant.

Case officers participate in various outreach programs for the public, training sessions for judicial officials and central authority personnel from other countries, and consular conferences. Civil Service case officers are encouraged to visit consular sections abroad as well. Training, outreach, and travel opportunities are severely limited by the need to cover the caseload.

For reasons discussed elsewhere, much of OCS/CI senior management's attention has been drawn away from the Abductions unit and focused on adoption policy. The unit manager has responded well and has kept the unit focused and productive. OIG learned that OCS/CI intends to reprogram a Civil Service correspondence position to become a caseworker and endorses that decision. However, OIG believes an additional position is warranted in order to maintain satisfactory performance.

**Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should reprogram the existing correspondence specialist position and create one new caseworker position in the Abduction unit. (Action: CA, in coordination with DGHR)

Foreign Service case officers are consular officers who have received full consular training and served abroad. Civil Service case officers receive consular training, initially only the ACS portion, when training openings are available and their caseload permits. Every Civil Service case officer agreed that consular training significantly improved their work and that visits to posts, particularly to fill gaps in consular officer staffing at overseas posts or attend consular conferences, provided valuable insight. Comments from ACS officers in the field responding to the OIG questionnaire pointed to a lack of this experience as one of the few weaknesses in otherwise exceptionally qualified and dedicated caseworkers. The visa portion of consular training is useful because case officers must often answer visa questions related to the repatriation of abducted children, the travel of guardians, and other issues.

**Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should make the successful completion of the full basic consular course mandatory for all new Civil Service case officers in the Office of Children's Issues. (Action: CA)

Casework is extraordinarily wearing. Caseworkers spend much of their time in direct contact with parents often during emotional times. Striking a balance between providing emotional support and careful adherence to the limitations on the services and assistance that can be provided is difficult and requires great tact, empathy, and professionalism. OIG was impressed by the abilities and commitment observed in the work of all the case officers. In a typical response to our questionnaire, a consular section chief wrote, "Our questions are always answered promptly...I have had to call on breaking abduction cases on weekends, in the middle of the night, and have gotten enthusiastic support."

As noted, the unit is divided into two teams, each led by a team leader. The role of the team leader was unclear to the inspection team, and interviews with caseworkers and the team leaders themselves disclosed similar confusion. Team leaders do not rate caseworkers nor can they approve leave or training requests.

Their role is generally limited to training and serving as a resource based on their greater experience. Each has spent a number of years as a caseworker dealing with parental abduction issues and, absent clear supervisory roles, both seem to function more as experienced counselors than team leaders.

Each team has one contract administrative assistant assigned to help with filing, mailing and, presumably, data entry. Caseworkers were generally critical of the performance of these employees and cited the lack of effective administrative assistance as a major drain on their time, making them less efficient.

**Recommendation 3:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should write, promulgate, and discuss with all team members clearly defined position descriptions for the team leaders, including supervision of the administrative assistants. (Action: CA)

Caseworkers interact on a regular basis with the abducted children's families in the United States, congressional staff members, geographic desk officers in the Department, consular officers in the field, and a range of other participants in these often-complex cases. OIG interviewed or surveyed many of these contacts and received nearly universal praise for the caseworkers' performance. A typical response from a consular section said "my impression is that OCS/CI staff are knowledgeable about their subject area and are interested in being as helpful and informative as possible to consular officers overseas, as well as to the individual families." Even those few respondents who had criticisms tempered them with the recognition of how difficult the job really is. The most common criticism was that caseworkers developed "clientitis" on behalf of the family in the United States and failed to see the other side of the case. The only other criticisms were a lack of country or area knowledge and a lack of appreciation of the limitations placed on the actions of the consular officer in the field.

The working relationship between NCMEC and the Abductions unit is particularly close. NCMEC receives federal funding and handles "incoming" cases of children abducted to the United States from other countries, as well as a number of services to families of children abducted or retained overseas and to families who believe abduction is possible.

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## PREVENTION UNIT

OCS management created the Prevention unit in 2003 by dedicating personnel to assist American citizens who believe their children are at risk of international parental abduction. Separating this proactive function from the existing Abduction unit gave the latter's hard-pressed staff more time to assist parents who are victims of child abductions, while creating a separate, distinct unit to counsel and assist those citizens who are or may be at risk of becoming victims of parental abduction. The unit chief position is designated at FS-02 level but is currently occupied by a more junior officer. The unit has two full-time Civil Service case officers and two half-time employees who are college students concurrently pursuing their studies. The unit chief devotes more than half of her time to doing casework. In addition, she spends one day a week as OCS/CI's liaison officer at NCMEC.

The Prevention unit receives phone calls from concerned parents who are counseled, told of warning signs of a potential parental abduction, informed of other public or private resources available both nationally or in their area, and entered into a database for tracking purposes. Subsequently, they receive a packet of information by mail. From January 2004 through May 2005 the unit opened 317 new cases. A key service provided by OCS/CI is the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program. At the request of a parent, prevention officers may also enter a child's name into the Department's computer-based passport lookout system. OCS/CI assumed responsibility for this function in October 2000 and through May 2005 has entered 12,444 lookouts into the system. Once a child's name is in the system, passport-issuing offices are precluded from issuing a passport to that individual without the specific approval of OCS/CI. From replies to the OIG questionnaire sent to consular sections, it was not apparent that all consular sections were aware of the existence of this relatively new unit as a resource to which they could refer worried parents calling from the United States.

OIG met with senior officials of NCMEC who said that there has been substantial overlap in "outgoing cases" between OCS/CI and NCMEC for some time. For example, both organizations mail packets of information to parents and both provide advice to parents. OIG observed, however, that each organization has tools the other lacks, such as OCS/CI can authorize passport holds and NCMEC has funds to defray the costs of travel by parents to retrieve children. While calling for a greater effort to reduce the redundancy, NCMEC told OIG that having the

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Prevention unit chief in their offices once a week has significantly improved relations and cooperation. NCMEC lamented the fact that the Foreign Service Institute no longer sends locally employed staff who are in Washington for consular training to visit NCMEC. NCMEC would also like more systematic contact with new consular officers during their formal basic consular training at the Foreign Service Institute. This increased awareness on the part of consular officers and staff in the field would make NCMEC's services even more available to families dealing with abductions.

**Recommendation 4:** The Foreign Service Institute should redesign its training for consular officers and locally employed consular staff assigned to American citizens services units overseas to include contact with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. (Action: FSI)

OCS/CI management has requested one additional case officer and one contract administrative support person for the Prevention unit. The additional positions appear justified. The administrative support person would relieve the case-workers of routine clerical tasks such as mailing informational packets to those who have phoned the unit.

**Recommendation 5:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should fill the additional positions for the prevention unit. (Action: OCS/CI, in coordination with DGHR)

Additional staff and the pending installation of the Passport Lookout and Tracking System computer hardware will exacerbate a space issue that finds workspace at such a premium that certain staff are relegated to very small cubicles described by one observer from another work unit as "packing cases standing on end." These workspaces do not permit the case officers to hold confidential conversations with often distraught American citizens. Further, the cramped workspace compounds the perception that the unit's staff is "second team and less important" than the staff in the Abduction unit.



## ADOPTION UNIT

The Adoption unit, which was created in 1999, assists Americans seeking to adopt children from other countries by providing information on U.S. and foreign adoption requirements. Further, when crises occur because of a country's change in policy or because of a problem at a consular post that adversely affects adoption processing, the unit staff coordinates with the prospective parents, CA/VO, the Department of Homeland Security, the adoption community, and congressional offices and implements strategies to return casework to normal levels, keeping all parties informed of pertinent activities and developments.

In conjunction with the Office of Policy Review and Interagency Liaison (OCS/PRI), the unit works with CA/VO, and other departments to bring the Hague Convention on Adoptions into force for the United States. At such time, OCS/CI, and in particular its Adoptions unit, would serve as the USCA under the convention for all adoptions from abroad from any other country that had similarly ratified the agreement.

The seven-person Adoption unit is headed by an FS-02 chief, and has five Civil Service officer positions, one of which is vacant, and one contract administrative support person. Staffing is slated to increase substantially. OCS/CI management has requested that a position be reprogrammed from elsewhere in OCS to create a Foreign Service officer position to head the new Bilateral Adoption unit. A new GS-13 accrediting entity<sup>1</sup> (AE) liaison officer position was recently filled, and the new officer starts in June. The Bureau of Consular Affairs also plans to create three new positions: a Civil Service position for an assistant AE liaison officer; a Civil Service officer for training, technical assistance, and liaison with state and local officials; and another Foreign Service officer position for a Hague country officer to monitor issues in specific countries. That would account for a total of five new positions. Additionally, Bureau of Consular Affairs leadership has determined that contractors could handle certain Hague-related functions. Work is underway to arrange to hire as many as eight such employees, some of whom may

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<sup>1</sup> An accrediting entity is a nonprofit entity that accredits and approves those adoption service providers that provide services for families seeking adoptions from Hague Convention countries.

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work off-site. Supervision of the unit is bifurcated with the OCS/CI office director supervising those officers, including the unit chief, involved in Hague Convention implementation issues, while his deputy oversees the staff doing bilateral, non-Hague adoption work.

The unit has contributed significantly to the smooth operation of adoption services provided at consular sections abroad. It is well respected by those in the Department, in other departments, congressional staffers, and in adoption interest groups for its timely dissemination of adoption information and its willingness to intervene when events at an overseas post disrupt the adoption process. OIG noted evidence of a constant dialogue with stakeholders in the adoption process via the Internet, e-mail, briefings, and presentations at national conferences. In response to OIG's questionnaire, one consular section chief praised OCS/CI for helping the post identify "pipeline cases" when adoption from that country was curtailed and for keeping in close contact with the affected prospective parents in the United States. A senior Department of Homeland Security officer told OIG that OCS/CI did very well in the areas for which it was responsible, adding that if there was any difficulty, it was the tension resulting from the fact that OCS/CI approaches adoptions from the perspective of keeping adoptions flowing, while for CA/VO, the relevant issues are visa process and fraud. He concluded that the new OCS deputy assistant secretary, coming as she did from CA/VO, worked to ensure that this was a positive, creative tension. One observer cited OCS/CI's continuing efforts to create conditions that would again permit adoptions from Vietnam and Cambodia as another example of excellent, proactive work.

The U.S. Senate ratified the Hague Adoption Convention, and Congress passed the necessary implementing legislation, entitled the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (IAA), in 2000 (P.L. 106-279). With these actions, OCS/CI accumulated significant new responsibilities. OCS/CI, along with OCS/PRI and CA/VO and in conjunction with several other Federal Departments, was charged with arranging the implementation of the Convention. By any measure a massive undertaking, this became a very high priority. First, the legislation required "community input" and solicitation of expert opinion, followed by the publication of proposed regulations in the Federal Register for a 90-day period of public comment. OCS/PRI, with input from OCS/CI and CA/VO, is writing the final version of the regulations. OCS/CI informed OIG that these regulations are now scheduled to be completed by the end of 2005.

Slated to serve as the USCA after formal ratification of the Convention, OCS/CI must also select and enter into agreements with accrediting entities. OIG learned that although discussions with potential entities have begun, the

Department is prohibited from entering into agreements with entities until the final regulations on standards and accreditation are in force. Other key tasks include establishing communication with other countries' Central Authorities, liaison with the accrediting entities, and arranging training on Hague adoptions for consular officers, as well as a myriad of other requirements set out in the Convention and in the IAA. Training of consular officers, for example, is important because IAA implementing legislation changed the Immigration and Nationality Act. With respect to Hague cases, changes permit irrevocable relinquishment for adoption by two living parents, family adoptions, and add a requirement that the determination of a child's ability to immigrate to the United States be communicated to the country of origin prior to the approval of the I-600 orphan petition - all are provisions that run counter to the current law and visa process in non-Hague cases.

Additionally, the Central Authorities exchange information related to intercountry adoption. IAA expanded that requirement to include information about all Hague and non-Hague adoptions incoming and outgoing. This requirement poses another major challenge to OCS/CI since there is currently no collection of data by local or state authorities on outgoing adoptions. OIG did learn, however, that the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Executive Office is working with contractors to develop the Adoption Tracking Service, which will serve as the central database, which the Executive Office believes will be operational by the time the United States ratifies the Convention.

OIG concluded that OCS/CI is playing a constructive and key role in this complex process and making steady progress. Were the United States to adhere to the Hague Convention at this moment, only some 10 percent of the approximately 22,000 annual foreign adoptions would come from countries that have already adhered to the Convention. Until the major "sending" countries, such as Russia and China, ratify, which is not expected to occur soon, the remaining 90 percent of the cases will still be non-Hague. OIG learned that while the Convention does provide for greater protection for the adopted child, there was no indication that ratification of the Convention will increase the number of children eligible for adoption. Hague adoptions will, moreover, almost certainly be more time consuming and likely more expensive for the adopting parents. Finally, should both the sending and receiving countries have ratified the Convention, only adoption via the Hague process will be possible. While OCS/CI has attempted to ensure that stakeholders in the adoption community understand the foregoing, OIG was not convinced that message has gotten out sufficiently to prevent serious disappointment after the Hague Convention comes into force. With that caveat, OIG believes the work is in progress and is being carried out well, with good cooperation

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and clear timelines. Although there are external pressures to rush ahead, OIG believes that taking the time to get this challenging task right outweighs any benefits gained by rushing it to completion for completion's sake.

OIG considers the increasing size and growing complexity of the work in the adoption unit to be a strong argument for establishing a separate office for adoption issues within OCS in the future. The issues already are quite distinct and the stakeholders outside OCS/CI quite different. Separation would also provide additional options for managers addressing the current dearth of workspace, even as more staff in all three units is expected. Finally, as noted earlier, OCS/CI management is devoting far more time to Hague issues than to the other two units. That reality is understandable, yet not desirable, particularly for the future. Given the many clear challenges listed above, OIG doubts that after implementation of the Convention there will be more time available for the other two units.

## MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Although OCS/CI is a very busy office dealing with very stressful issues, morale is remarkably good. This can be attributed to the director and deputy's strong management skill and to staff dedication. Problems do exist and, if not addressed, will detract from the strong performance of the office.

A recurring theme in personal questionnaires and interviews was the uneven quality of support provided by contract administrative staff. OIG subsequently determined that officers did not know to whom to address such concerns, or even what the rules are with respect to how to exercise supervision. OCS/CI does not have a copy of the pertinent contract, nor a contracting officer's representative, and none of the office's supervisors received training regarding their responsibilities under the contract. The Executive Office presumably executed the administrative support contract in order to simplify new contract employee hiring/firing procedures for OCS/CI. Prior to OIG's arrival, one team leader in the Abduction unit had taken on the active supervision of a contract employee with positive results, and, near the end of the inspection, OIG learned that both OIG counseling and subsequent actions by the other team leader had engendered improvements in a second contract employee's performance.

**Recommendation 6:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should take appropriate measures to ensure that proper supervision of contract employees is exercised, including appointing and training an on site contracting officer's representative. (Action: OCS/CI)

In its ten years of existence, OCS/CI has grown from two officers to 33 positions and faces substantial further growth. In what is otherwise a remarkably attractive work environment, several employees have less than adequate space. While office management is working to rearrange workspace for the existing staff to improve the situation in the short term, the additional staff foreseen for the three units of OCS/CI will outpace the available space. Lack of space remains problematic even if the eight contract employees projected to implement Hague Adoption Convention regulations work off-site, as is currently planned. OIG understands that the bureau is undertaking a broader evaluation of space requirements that will address the OCS/CI problems. OIG commends OCS and OCS/CI for addressing the spaces issues.

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## FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should reprogram the existing correspondence specialist position and create one new caseworker position in the Abduction unit. (Action: CA, in coordination with DGHR)
- Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should make the successful completion of the full basic consular course mandatory for all new Civil Service case officers in the Office of Children's Issues. (Action: CA)
- Recommendation 3:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should write, promulgate, and discuss with all team members clearly defined position descriptions for the team leaders, including supervision of the administrative assistants. (Action: CA)
- Recommendation 4:** The Foreign Service Institute should redesign its training for consular officers and locally employed consular staff assigned to American citizens services units overseas to include contact with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. (Action: FSI)
- Recommendation 5:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should fill the additional positions for the prevention unit. (Action: OCS/CI, in coordination with DGHR)
- Recommendation 6:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should take appropriate measures to ensure that proper supervision of contract employees is exercised, including appointing and training an on site contracting officer's representative. (Action: OCS/CI)

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## INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

OCS/CI processes large numbers of documents, some quite long, both coming from and going to members of the public as well as interested governmental and nongovernmental organizations. OCS/CI also deals with over 200 posts abroad. It currently has only two old, breakdown-prone copying machines, one scanner, and three CD ROM burners, which are inadequate for the volume of documentation it handles.

**Informal Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should provide the Office of Children's Issues with three new copying machines; two document scanning machines, and two CD ROM burners.

OCS/CI's list of key contacts outside the Department is out of date and hence hinders the work of the caseworkers.

**Informal Recommendation 2:** The Office of Children's Issues should update the list of key outside contacts provided to caseworkers.

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## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Overseas Citizens Services

Catherine Barry

Managing Director

Alice Moore

Office Director

John Ballif

Deputy Office Director

Michelle Bernier-Toth

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Accrediting entity
CA/ACS	Bureau of Consular Affairs, American Citizens Services
CA/OCS	Bureau of Consular Affairs, Directorate of Overseas Citizens Services
CA/VO	Bureau of Consular Affairs, Directorate of Visa Services
Department	Department of State
IAA	Interagency Adoption Act of 2000
NCMEC	National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
OCS/CI	Office of Children's Issues
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OSC/PRI	Office of Policy Review and Interagency Liaison
USCA	U.S. Central Authority