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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Beirut, Lebanon

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- Lebanon is of growing importance to U.S. policy and has the attention of policymakers, who see developments in that nation as potentially helpful in achieving and spreading democracy in the Middle East.
- The Ambassador provides strong leadership and aggressively pursues well-defined goals.
- The embassy's tours of duty have advantages and disadvantages. One-year tours attract bidders and are short enough to prevent the employee from chafing under the security restrictions. However, one-year tours negatively affect continuity and planning. Two-year tours help improve performance and management, but could adversely affect morale. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) recommends gradually reducing the number of rest and recuperation breaks and negotiating tours of less than two years for some positions.
- There are discrepancies in the Department of State's (Department) management of Embassy Beirut's security restrictions, tour-of-duty policy, and total funding for security and growth. The Department has not brought its plans for Embassy Beirut into line with the level of resources it is willing to provide. OIG recommends more coordination within the Department on the requirements and the necessary funding for them.
- Plans for the new embassy compound for Embassy Beirut are complicated by the fact that there is no consensus on the size of the facility to be built.
- Embassy Beirut's information systems security program has deficiencies in oversight and the completion of documentation.
- The consular section has resumed full visa services and is functioning well but should use public diplomacy resources more fully. The deputy chief of mission (DCM) should also review the consular section chief's visa decisions.

- Embassy Beirut carries out well-directed operations in support of the high-priority U.S. policy goals of Middle East peace and a sovereign and economically healthy Lebanon.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between January 3 and 28, 2005, and in Beirut, Lebanon, between February 2 and 17, 2005. Ambassador Willard A. DePree (team leader), Anita G. Schroeder (deputy team leader), Thomas Carmichael, Joseph S. Catalano, Ronald Harms, Vickie J. Huss, Gwendolyn G. Llewellyn, and Matthew S. Worner conducted the inspection.

CONTEXT

Embassy Beirut is on an 18-acre, high-security compound in Awkar, a suburb that is 20 minutes from downtown Beirut. The mission includes the Departments of State and Defense, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Currently, the mission is authorized 48 American employees, and ap-

proximately ten to 20 temporary duty personnel routinely supplement this number. The embassy employs 403 locally employed staff (LES), most for security functions. The Department is planning a new embassy compound (NEC) that will be completed in 2007, have high-security features, and be staffed by about 70 direct-hire Americans who would all live on the NEC.



Embassy Beirut is moving toward normalized operations as Lebanon's civil war of 1975-1990 passes into history. Lebanon's unusual history and cultural make-up, however, still present special challenges. The embassy's bilateral agenda focuses on Lebanon's role in the Arab-Israeli peace process, the aftermath of the Iraq War, and raising Lebanese economic practices to international standards. Syria also still plays an important role in Lebanese politics and has several thousand intelligence agents in the country.

U.S. policy toward Lebanon took a dramatic new step with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1559 in September 2004. This resolution, spearheaded by the United States and France, called for Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, and the restoration of full Lebanese sovereignty throughout the country including the disarmament of militias such as Hizballah. UNSCR 1559 implementation is now the linchpin of U.S. policy in Lebanon, and debate over the resolution

is the leading issue in Lebanon's foreign relations and its domestic political dialogue. The Lebanese people are sharply divided over the question of Syrian withdrawal. Following the inspection, Syria agreed to gradually withdraw its troops.

Lebanon's economy holds real opportunities for U.S. business, and Lebanon is already a gateway in rebuilding Iraq. Since the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990, much of Beirut has been restored. Per capita income, \$4,400 per year, is high for the region. Economic growth, led by tourism, banking, and real estate, reached four percent in 2004. But the Lebanese government's economic reform commitments remain unfulfilled, due in part to internal political paralysis. A best-case scenario would have the government pressing forward with privatization, a responsible budget policy, increased economic transparency, and World Trade Organization-compatible trade practices. Remittances from Lebanese living throughout the world are strong, but despite record deposits, Lebanon is losing banking and commercial business to Gulf states. Many young and talented Lebanese are stymied in their quest for jobs, as the private sector faces the challenges of global competition and high local costs. The USAID mission in Embassy Beirut manages \$35 million per year in economic support funds and up to \$15 million to \$20 million in commodities exchange programs that focus on social development.

The security outlook in Lebanon contains many unknowns. Although some areas are safe for the prudent tourist or business visitor, a strict travel advisory is in effect. The social and political divisions that underlay Lebanon's civil war remain largely unresolved. The absence of a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement also has left intact the tensions arising from such issues such as Palestinian refugees and Syrian influence. Some Lebanese believe the departure of Syrian forces would lead to a resurgence of religious and ethnic strife. Terrorist groups in Lebanon, especially the Iranian-backed Hizballah, are a potential danger. In this respect, the evolution of Iran's nuclear threat could have serious implications for security in Lebanon.

Embassy Beirut's priorities follow from its Mission Performance Plan (MPP), which addresses five goals: Iraq, Arab-Israeli engagement, counterterrorism, democracy and human rights, and economic prosperity. The embassy incorporates UNSCR 1559 implementation into each of these goals. Similarly, the embassy's public affairs and USAID programs find ready opportunity to integrate UNSCR 1559 into the five bureau-directed strategic goals.

In February 2005, during the OIG inspection, a massive bomb in central Beirut killed Rafiq Hariri, Lebanon's leading Sunni political figure, a four-time prime minister, and the country's wealthiest businessman. This attack, which killed dozens and injured over 100, was the most violent and politically momentous event since the end of Lebanon's civil war. As of this writing, it appears that the Hariri assassination will cast great uncertainty over Lebanon's political system and its shaky economy, with broad effects in the near to medium term. Embassy operations, including the UNSCR 1559 policy agenda and the post's security practices, will have to adapt.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

At the time of the inspection, both the Ambassador and the DCM had been in their jobs less than six months. Both, however, had had previous tours in the Middle East (the Ambassador in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the DCM in Syria), and both were conversant with U.S. policy goals regarding Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian peace prospects, and other related Middle East issues. Almost coincident with their arrival in the fall of 2004, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1559, which calls upon Syria to withdraw its military and intelligence forces and to cease its interference in Lebanese politics. U.S. success in achieving this resolution and in persuading the Security Council to press for the resolution's implementation has brought Lebanon to the forefront of U.S. policymaking on the Middle East. The Ambassador and others see Lebanon's upcoming parliamentary election in May 2005 as an opportunity to maintain the momentum for constructive change that was generated by the large electoral turnouts in the January 2005 elections in Iraq and Palestine.

The Ambassador is a take-charge leader. He did not wait for instructions from Washington to redirect the mission resources in response to UNSCR 1559. He made submission of a revised MPP a priority and urged his staff to think hard about what each unit of the mission might do differently to advance U.S. policy goals in Lebanon. He also personally followed the submission of the FY 2007 MPP with a think-piece cable in which he suggested a number of actions for the U.S. government to take to convert the positive but tenuous momentum within Lebanon in support of freedom, democracy, and sovereignty into something more meaningful and sustainable. The Ambassador was justifiably commended for this initiative, and his performance thus far has U.S. policymakers eager to hear his recommendations.

Although the Ambassador is the driving force behind the mission's policy initiatives, Embassy Beirut is not a one-man show. Starting with the DCM, the embassy has some very strong officers and extremely able and professional Foreign Service national (FSN) employees. The Ambassador uses the staff as sounding boards for his ideas and depends on them to carry out and oversee the day-to-day work of the mission. The Ambassador and DCM meet early in the week with the country team and section heads and again at the end of the week with an expanded country team. These meetings are used to keep the staff apprised of front office

actions and to hear the agendas of other agency heads and section chiefs. The meetings are crisp and to the point; issues that warrant further discussion are promptly pursued in smaller meetings chaired by the Ambassador or DCM. The Ambassador and DCM also meet weekly or biweekly with the heads of other agencies and the section chiefs, for such purposes as ensuring that embassy program funds serve U.S. policy goals. The program funds involved include those of USAID, public diplomacy, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), and international military education and training. Embassy employees speak highly of the man whom one called "dynamic and smart" and say the front office is very supportive. The Ambassador imbues his staff with confidence and direction, and employees derive a great deal of professional satisfaction from their work because they know they are making a positive contribution.

The MPP process at Embassy Beirut is interactive and wide reaching. The country team functions well, and interagency relations are good. There are differences of opinion among agencies about the appropriate level of security procedures at the embassy, and the Ambassador is open to discussion on this issue.

Embassy Beirut maintains a high security compound. Security restrictions require that Americans live on the compound and that, when they leave the compound, they travel only in armored vehicles with bodyguards. Visitors are screened and escorted. Although all Americans at post are intensely aware of the security restrictions, OIG did not find that these procedures were well understood or regularly reviewed. Security issues are discussed in the associated classified security report on this post (ISP-S-05-16A).

Although attentive to entry-level officers at post, the embassy front office does not have a strong program of support for them, such as regular meetings with the DCM, or other organized activities. Embassy officials agreed to incorporate such programs.

Post management strongly supports public diplomacy. The front office has put its seasoned public affairs officer's expertise to work by asking her to submit a revised mutual understanding goal paper for the MPP. The front office also has consistently been open to public affairs section guidance on public diplomacy strategies and program implementation. Both the Ambassador and DCM participate in public diplomacy programs, encourage other substantive officers to join, and provide clear policy guidance that has helped the section organize its efforts toward the desired results.

The chief of mission and the DCM provide strong support to the consular section and raise consular issues to high levels of the government and solicit consular contributions to the MPP. The two executives closely monitor the visa referral system, and the Ambassador personally reviews Class A referrals. However, if they made more frequent visits to the consular section, the front office would increase its understanding of consular operations.

The Ambassador and DCM provide strong support of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) objectives, and OIG did not encounter any EEO issues. However, some believe that the embassy discriminates in hiring. Although OIG found no evidence of this, the front office agreed to provide more oversight to combat such perceptions and to ensure that embassy hiring reflects the rich, local diversity of Lebanon.

Morale at Embassy Beirut is surprisingly good, considering the confined compound living and restrictions on off-compound movements. In part, this is because the front office pays special attention to staff morale, hosting events for employees, encouraging American employees to make moves off the compound, and advocating that American employees not come to work on weekends and holidays. There are no serious health concerns. The employee association and the community affairs assistant organize many activities.

Near the close of the on-site inspection, Lebanon's leading Sunni political figure was killed in a bomb attack in downtown Beirut. OIG observed first hand how the embassy, under the direction of the Ambassador, responded quickly and professionally. The Ambassador addressed the country team and a broader town hall meeting of all employees, conveying the official condolences of U.S. officials and expressing the concern of the embassy's American employees for the well being of local employees, their families, and their country. He said the event was a loss for U.S. policy goals, but that he did not anticipate a change in Embassy Beirut's profile.

Following the bombing, OIG did not alter its draft report but did review the recommendations for relevancy in the light of possible changes in the security situation. Days after the event, the embassy began a staged return to its pre-bombing procedures.

ADDRESSING EMBASSY BEIRUT ISSUES

STAFFING AND SUPPORT UNDER CURRENT SECURITY CONDITIONS

Embassy Beirut, with its history of violence, high security restrictions, and burgeoning importance in U.S. foreign affairs, presents a unique organizational and operational conundrum to the Department. Although other U.S. embassies around the world function under difficult conditions - some more difficult than Embassy Beirut's - the situation in Beirut is complicated by the seeming ordinariness of local life and the lack of uniform policies from the Department. The absence of a coordinated approach from various Department bureaus shows up most clearly in several areas. There are discrepancies among tour-of-duty policies, the security restrictions on the embassy, and the fact that the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) program and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) provide too little funding to support security requirements and anticipated growth.

Embassy Beirut formerly had a one-year tour of duty and was designated as an unaccompanied post. Then, from August 2001 to January 2005, the embassy operated under a pilot program that admitted a few adult family members. In October 2004, the Ambassador requested that tours be for two years, with the employee able to be accompanied by family members, or one-year tours that are unaccompanied. In January 2005, the Department began two-year, accompanied tours, beginning with the assignment of persons bidding in the fall of 2005.

Although Embassy Beirut has traditionally not been a hard-to-staff post, OIG believes that eliminating the possibility of a one-year tour will reduce the pool of potential bidders, eliminating those who find a one-year tour more attractive than a two-year one. The one-year tours allow Foreign Service officers to complete an overseas assignment and restart the clock for the six-year limit imposed on domestic service. Officers whose spouses and family members wish to stay in the United States also find the one-year tours appealing.

On the other hand, one-year tours have negatively affected the embassy's ability to plan and coordinate activities, as noted in the next section.

Embassy Beirut is in a growth phase. The embassy has requested 22 additional American positions - 12 from the Department, three from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), two in USAID, three in the Office of Defense Cooperation, and two for the Department of Defense. The embassy compound includes offices and residential quarters for employees and family members. The employee association manages the Tango Inn, which provides housing for temporary duty personnel. Although the post and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) plan to place six more modular housing units on the current compound, no housing has been identified for the new employees the post is requesting.

Embassy Beirut continues to operate under tight security restrictions that require fully armored vehicles (FAVs) and bodyguards to accompany Americans wishing to leave the compound. However, DS local guard funding has undergone a ten-percent decrease in recent years. The post and the Department have not identified funding to hire bodyguards to replace those who quit or to replace the aging inventory of FAVs. The increases predicted in the number of American employees and family members will place additional demands on the shrinking number of bodyguards and FAVs.

Most of the 12 FAVs, which are under the regional security officer's (RSO) purview, are six to seven years old and some have over 70,000 miles. The post is performing preventive maintenance and the vehicles are still in working condition. The RSO has submitted a replacement program plan to DS.

Employees' ability to leave the compound for shopping or other purposes is strongly linked to their morale. Should the lack of funding limit the frequency with which Americans can leave the compound, the morale of those living on the compound will suffer.

All Embassy Beirut budgets are very tight. As long as the current security restrictions apply, the embassy's funding is insufficient to cover the costs arising from the increases in American staff and their family members. For example, under ICASS funding, the motor pool now fills an average of about 22 personal requests per day from Americans who are not allowed to leave the compound without a

security escort. These requests include trips by drivers in motor pool vehicles (not FAVs) for food, dry cleaning, coffee, shopping, medical and veterinarian errands, etc.¹ The six additional personnel who will inhabit the six new modular houses, for example, require even more resources. The embassy's administrative staff said it would not be able to handle requests from six additional persons without the addition of two motor-pool drivers. However, the post has no money to hire additional drivers.

ICASS also provides for the embassy's two airport expeditors, who now handle some 1,350 passenger events annually. (An event is an arrival or departure of an official American at the airport or Syrian border.) Each event requires about four hours of expeditor time because the RSO requires that Americans be escorted while they are in the airport or while traveling to or from the Syrian border.² The annual number of passenger events has been steady for about the last three years. Should the number of events increase, the two expeditors would not be able to handle the work load, assuming current security requirements continue to apply.

The new policy of two-year tours will also impact ICASS, as new assignees will be eligible for the regular, fullweight allowance for shipments, exclusive of personal vehicles. Thus, persons assigned to Embassy Beirut are allowed the usual amount of unaccompanied air baggage (UAB), plus up to 7,200 pounds of household effects. Embassy Beirut housing is fully furnished, but residential quarters are about half the size of Department standards and have little room for a full shipment. In addition, the RSO requires that, when an employee packs out of Embassy Beirut, the UAB be held on-compound until the day it is sent to the airport for shipment. Should this same policy apply to household effects held for ocean shipment, there is no warehouse on the compound that can store effects temporarily or long-term. Again, the policy is not consistent with the resources available. OIG informally recommended that the embassy review the issues surrounding potentially larger shipments, prepare procedures to handle full household effects shipments, and inform the Department of whether this increased weight allowance will require additional funding.

¹ RSO vehicles with bodyguards take American personnel to medical appointments, but motor pool vehicles are used to pick up laboratory results and medications. Motor pool vehicles take pets to the veterinarian, as animals are not allowed in RSO vehicles. The RSO vehicles carry the American staff if they wish to visit the vet with their pets.

² Airport expeditors perform pre-check-in for outbound travelers, so that passengers are conducted immediately to the departure gate. For incoming passengers, expeditors meet the passengers at the gate, escort the individuals through customs, and take them immediately to the waiting RSO vehicle with bodyguards.

Embassy Beirut personnel say the post has not always been able to employ family members who wish to work. The employment of family members is another factor in maintaining their morale and well-being. The lack of office space on the current compound limits the number of family member jobs that can be established, as does the lack of funding.

The Department must bring its plans for Embassy Beirut into line with the level of resources it is willing to provide. The longer, accompanied tour of duty involving full shipments must provide for additional warehouse space or other arrangements. Proposed increases above the current staffing levels of any agency at this post must also involve additional expeditor and driver positions.³ Unless security restrictions are reduced or eliminated, the Department must provide the ICASS and program resources that are needed to comply with security policies.

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with the Office of Management Policy and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should establish and implement procedures to coordinate security requirements for Embassy Beirut with bureau resources and Department policies. (Action: NEA, in coordination with M/P and DS)

EFFECT OF ONE-YEAR TOURS OF DUTY ON PLANNING AND COORDINATION

OIG found that Embassy Beirut's management structure and planning are weak. The embassy does not have documented procedures for many of its daily activities, and OIG informally recommended that the embassy should devote more time to preparing standard operating procedures. Furthermore, when policies are established, they are not always enforced. For example, the embassy has a policy requiring that phone cards be used for personal calls from embassy telephones, but these policies have not been enforced. In addition, although the embassy has established performance standards for ICASS services, the post is not measuring

³In its proposal to the Department, the post noted that the longer, accompanied tours of duty will place a large number of spouses on-compound and could force the post to turn down more off-campus move requests than it currently does. In an October 2004 cable, the Ambassador stated that, while this was a serious post management issue, he was convinced that it could be managed without cutting into professional responsibilities or compromising safety. However, that assurance does not cover such general services office (GSO) areas as the non-RSO motor pool or the expeditors.

whether sections are meeting the standards. Procurement and contracting personnel are not well equipped to handle the ever more challenging solicitations and contracts and could use greater American oversight. Overall, the embassy does not provide solid coordination of its various activities and does not always follow through after a project or policy is initiated.

The lack of management planning was noted in the 1998 Beirut inspection report. OIG was concerned at that time with the lack of continuity in key positions and said that the annual upheaval associated with personnel turnovers and the one-year tours precluded focused mid- and long-term planning. OIG's report also discussed how to coordinate the embassy's staffing and resource requirements, pointing out the need for future staffing profiles to preposition the post to meet future resource requirements and capital improvements. During the compliance process, OIG closed a recommendation made in this regard when the embassy reported that it was "doing all within its power to move prudently toward normalization of post operations."

Six years later, the embassy is still suffering from the impact of short-duration assignments. For example, OIG found that, in the public affairs section (PAS), an officer who nominates someone for the international visitor program may not serve long enough to see that person travel to the U.S. and return. Thus, the PAS is denied the benefits from cementing that relationship through the visitor program. The one-year tenure of the public affairs officer (PAO) is insufficient to redirect the Fulbright program toward specific MPP goals - this must involve a multi-year effort. The frequent turnover of personnel means that the embassy has difficulty keeping up with delegations of authority and thus does not always have someone assigned to important management control duties, such as the role of alternate information systems security officer (ISSO). In the consular area, the use of untrained, entry-level officers as visa interviewers is a weakness that is also seen at other posts. However, at most posts this weakness is overcome as the officers gain experience. Embassy Beirut's one-year tour policy perpetuates this weakness. In the American citizen services unit, the tour-of-duty policy hampers the critical building of relationships with host-government officials and the American families involved in long-standing disputes over children.

OIG believes that much of the reason for these weaknesses lies in the rapid turnover of post personnel. The change from one- to two-year tours will help remedy this matter, but many of the two-year tours will not begin until the summer of 2006. As noted earlier, there are drawbacks to the two-year tours, given the limitations and restrictions of working in Beirut. When spouses accompany employees for two-year periods, the spouses must be able to find satisfying

employment within the embassy. Embassy employees say they do not mind being largely confined to the compound for a one-year tour, but would not want to live on the compound for a second year. In other embassies around the world, the lack of amenities and entertainment in the local community and the presence of harsh local conditions are usually offset by larger living quarters for employees and family members. Embassy Beirut's housing is quite small.

The two-year tours have traditionally included a provision for four rest and recuperation (R&R) breaks, a benefit that OIG views as a management drawback. Although this benefit is attractive to bidders, it imposes hardships on the embassy, which must do without its officers for a significant amount of the time that they are assigned to post. Embassy Beirut officials noted that changing from four R&Rs to three or fewer would negatively affect newly assigned personnel, who would have to coexist with those who have more R&Rs. Post personnel say the R&R policy should not be changed until security restrictions are lessened. OIG believes the two year/four R&R policy is too expensive and causes too much loss of time to the embassy. The Department should establish an R&R policy for Embassy Beirut that gradually reduces the number of R&Rs allowed.

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources should design and implement a plan for rest and recuperation travel for Embassy Beirut that gradually reduces the number allowed. (Action: NEA, in coordination with DGHR)

As discussed earlier, neither one- nor two-year tours will exactly meet Embassy Beirut's needs. Therefore, OIG believes the Department should allow tours of varying lengths for this post. The Office of the Director General of the Foreign Service has noted that the Office of Career Development and Assignments would look favorably on individual requests to extend tours of duty beyond two years. Thus, the only aspect not covered is that of allowing shorter tours for some. OIG supports the idea of negotiating for tours that are shorter than two years, provided the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) believes the responsibilities of those employees can be adequately carried out in less than two years.⁴

⁴Other U.S. embassies, notably Embassy Islamabad (see 05 Islamabad 355), find that flexible arrangements for unaccompanied posts benefit the post and the Department. At Embassy Beirut, which now has accompanied tours for adult family members, flexible tours may be needed only until the requirements of Recommendation 1 of this report are met, the security situation has stabilized, and the Department has completed a new facility and housing for the mission.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs should ask the Bureau of Human Resources to design and implement procedures to allow flexibility in the length of Embassy Beirut's tours of duty in instances where the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs determines that the responsibilities of the positions involved can be adequately carried out in less than two years. (Action: NEA, in coordination with DGHR)

OIG made an informal recommendation that the post devote more time to forecasting staffing and resource needs and communicating this information to the Department. In addition, OIG left an informal recommendation that the post prepare standard operating procedures so that each new incoming officer will have readily available information and so that the pattern of decisionmaking and its underlying rationale is not lost when officers depart post.

PLANS FOR THE NEW EMBASSY COMPOUND

The Department plans to build an NEC in Beirut that will provide office and residential space for 58 employees within a budget of \$111 million. As noted, Embassy Beirut has 48 authorized American positions and proposes adding 22 U.S. positions, not all of which can be accommodated in the NEC as planned. The Department and the embassy may wish to reassess the adequacy of office space and housing on the NEC in light of these high-priority staffing increases.

The Beirut NEC was designated as an FY 2005 project, necessitating that site acquisition be accomplished by June 30, 2005. As of this report writing, OBO and the post were completing the steps in the acquisition. However, the timing was too close for OBO or OIG to predict if the deadline would be met.

Should the Department be able to continue with plans for the NEC, then NEA must plan to fund the potentially increased utility and other new building support costs, as well as the ICASS and program costs for increased support staff. If the deadline is not met, the Department and the post must deal appropriately with a number of considerations, including the continuing increase in the operational costs of the current compound and the need to enforce the limits on permanent and temporary-duty staff. Whether or not an NEC is funded, additional ICASS funding will be required.

IMPACT OF SECURITY POLICY

The embassy has several security procedures that require substantial funding from DS, ICASS, and other sources. The procedures dramatically affect the quality of life for official Americans and influence embassy operations. Therefore, OIG believes these policies deserve special attention. The policies and other security issues are detailed in the classified security report, ISP-S-05-16A.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SECTIONS

The Ambassador and DCM effectively direct the political and economic section, providing the office with clear policy direction on the priority MPP goals for its advocacy and reporting activities. The Ambassador, in his statement in the revised MPP, lucidly presents the logical underpinnings of how an integrated strategy drives the work of all mission elements. His subsequent requests for reporting and other taskings consistently reinforce these goals - and emphasize the implementation of UNSCR 1559. This clarity has raised morale among economic and political officers and FSNs and has instilled confidence and sure direction in their work.

The economic and political sections have the appropriate contacts to carry out their taskings. The sections also have easy and direct access to Lebanese officials at all levels, including those at the very highest levels of the government. They also have wide access to media figures, private and public education officials, religious officials, and leaders in human rights, labor, and other fields. However, their lack of access to the Palestinian refugee camps hampers their reporting on these important areas, where operations damaging to U.S. interests could arise. The reason is that U.S. policy forbidding direct contact with Hizballah prevents the one-on-one discussions that could complement second-hand sourcing and produce additional valuable insights, analysis, and reporting on this group.

Embassy Beirut's Lebanese locally employed staff (LES) is proactive, analytically sophisticated, and well connected. The one-year posting of American officers to Beirut, and the American staffing gaps, have encouraged an aggressiveness and independence among the LES, who can mix with great confidence at representational events and meetings with officials from the highest levels of the Lebanese government. Their superb English-language skills support clear, bilingual communications and nuanced drafting. The LES also provide excellent support for the American officers in their contact and other work and contribute to reporting and advocacy.

Most of the political and economic officers did not receive the Arabic-language training needed to work professionally in Arabic in Lebanon. The widespread use of English among the Lebanese permits embassy officers to function well in discussions, but the officers have limited, independent understanding of Arabic-language media. This lack of Arabic-language competency also creates difficulties for American officers seeking to expand their contacts beyond Beirut to the less sophisticated urban areas and into the countryside. Most are dependent upon translations by LES, a significant overhead cost that adequate language training could reduce.

Security procedures for off-compound travel to meetings and events also create significant administrative overhead. The restrictions hamper mission responses to short-fuse action requests that require face-to-face discussion and preclude many chance, ad hoc meetings with contacts. These procedures also retard the American officers' development of the relationships and insights into economic and political trends that they might gain through casual, unofficial travel.

Security procedures for visitors hinder representational activities on the mission compound, which is the least-expensive venue. Additionally, the modest size of mission housing discourages hosting Lebanese contacts at compound apartments, although the Ambassador and DCM often offer their residences to officers for events. Lebanese hospitality is generous, a fact that makes reciprocation costly and potentially awkward. The mission's receipt of representational allotments often falls behind its need to reimburse officers and may leave officers with unreimbursed expenses for considerable periods, discouraging representational spending. Nevertheless, political and economic officers seek the appropriate venues and overcome budget and security restraints to engage in purposeful representation.

Despite these hurdles, OIG concurs with the view expressed during its preinspection survey by sources within the Department and other Washington agencies: The mission's political and economic reporting is top notch. The thematic spread and amount of reporting indicates a mission that is well-directed and connected to host-country political, economic, social, cultural, and media conditions. The post's political and economic reporting is timely and based on varied sources. The officers drafting these reports consistently offer thoughtful, insightful comments and provide readable work that, at times, has humor. The political and economic section, the public affairs section, Defense attaché office, and USAID coordinate clearances of cables and share information, aiding in accurate reporting.

An economic officer supervises two Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) LES, in addition to her economic reporting and other requirements. She is clear in her supervision and communication with the front office on behalf of advocacy requests and other programs. She also represents FCS on the ICASS council.

The front office and the political and economic officers and their LES staff are scattered throughout the compound, hampering communication. The one-year tours and the lack of voice mail and of communal gathering areas have increased day-to-day communication difficulties.

The front office has sought to overcome impediments to communication by being open and accessible to embassy staff and by creatively reformatting and developing new meetings to close communication gaps. For instance, the economic officer in charge of FCS now attends country team meetings as a section head. The Ambassador also chairs a weekly meeting for American and LES political and economic employees to review reporting priorities and taskings.

The political section, under the DCM's guidance, is tightening its stewardship of the MEPI program. The mission is also enhancing its coordination with Washington and the MEPI regional coordinator in Tunisia. The political officer, who is the MEPI coordinator, is developing a MEPI tracking database but needs additional training in program development and oversight. OIG informally recommended that he and his successor receive such training.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The PAS carries out U.S. policy priorities with creativity and enthusiasm. The PAO is a seasoned FS-02 public diplomacy officer with strong area and public diplomacy expertise. She is energetically re-establishing the standard operating procedures that were weakened by the successive one-year postings of previous PAOs and an extended staffing gap that arose when her predecessor left her assignment early to serve in Embassy Baghdad. The first-tour assistant PAO brings area expertise and extensive private sector management experience to bear on the rebuilding effort. This team is giving public diplomacy a higher profile in Mission Beirut.

The vigorous public diplomacy effort focuses on goals and results in the MPP. The PAO drafted the recently revised 2007 MPP goal paper on mutual understanding. That paper clearly reflects mission priorities and emphasizes PAS support for implementation of UNSCR 1559. PAS also provides media support to bolster the tactics in MPP goal papers written by other mission elements - most of them directed toward UNSCR 1559 implementation. PAS officers understand the role of public diplomacy in the mission and communicate MPP priorities clearly to their LES. The MPP performance indicators for the PAS are results oriented.

One of PAS' most important assets is the Ambassador's support and involvement in public diplomacy. His emphasis on clear, strategically important policy goals and cooperative spirit has built morale in PAS. The Ambassador is enthusiastic in his support, responds well to advice, and has the language and people skills to make a positive public impact. He willingly adds prestige to PAS events and has hosted in his residence representational events for PAS program participants, including Fulbright and Youth Exchange and Study program students. The Ambassador also reaches out to the media in his representational events. The DCM willingly makes himself available to speak at PAS events and has hosted a PAS speaker in his residence.

The PAS cooperates productively with practically all mission elements, to ensure consistency among U.S. policy presentations in the media, and clears all press releases. The PAO writes the Ambassador's speeches, with input from other mission elements. The PAS also distributes by e-mail the "White House Global Messenger," disseminating the highest priority policy messages to all employees. The PAS works with the political and economic sections on press background briefings, to promote an accurate media understanding of MPP goals, and ensures that the mission's International Visitor program is highly integrated with MPP goals and receives participation from other embassy sections.

The PAS also is revamping its web site under the standard Department format into an Arabic language only web site. This action, plus the increased electronic outreach by a new LES web site coordinator and outreach manager, allows PAS to improve its contact with Lebanon's increasingly Internet-savvy audiences.

The PAS steers its long-range programs with care and has created great synergies among its student exchange, English-teaching, and student-advising programs. PAS implements its MPP priorities in these areas effectively through Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) grants to the America-Mideast Educational Testing Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST), a regional, nongovernmental, educational, developmental, and information organization. AMIDEAST has good contacts

among many nongovernmental organizations and government agencies addressing MPP priorities, has credibility with the public, and is well managed. AMIDEAST's student recruitment for the Fulbright; Linking Information, Knowledge, and Culture; Youth Exchange and Study; and ACCESS programs meets the Department's goal of reaching less-served Muslim youth living outside the capital cities of the Middle East.

The PAS, meanwhile, conducts outreach to newer Muslim audiences by placing ECA's English-language fellows in English-teaching associations. The Fulbright program's suspension in Lebanon, due to the civil war and security concerns, ended five years ago. Although there have not been enough returning Fulbrighters to form a Fulbright alumni association, the returnees join other exchange program participants at frequent events, some of them hosted by the Ambassador.

ECA generously funds AMIDEAST's English micro-scholarship programs and also is raising the level of Lebanon's English-teaching expertise with visits by ECA's NEA regional English language officer. The PAS and AMIDEAST use these program tools to reach new audiences.

The number of student visas applied for and issued to Lebanese citizens to attend U.S. universities dropped dramatically after the September 11 terrorist attacks. ECA's regional educational advising coordinator energetically supports AMIDEAST's student advising and recruitment programs and the PAS also increasingly focuses on this issue. For instance, the PAS and consular section are combating the misperceptions that the United States does not welcome Arabs and Muslims and that embassy visa procedures prohibit Lebanese students from attending U.S. universities. OIG recommends that this be carried out in a structured media outreach effort. (See Recommendation 5.) The Ambassador eagerly addresses student-exchange activities, including university fairs, to highlight the welcome Lebanese students receive in the United States. Consular officers also staff information booths at these events to explain and demystify visa procedures.

Economic hardships also hinder Lebanese enrollment in U.S.-based universities. Fortunately, long-established U.S. support for the American University of Beirut and other institutions ensures that the Lebanese students who are financially unable to attend a U.S. campus have an alternative that offers American educational values and pedagogy. The PAS is building American Studies programs at this university and at Notre Dame University in Beirut to expand their offerings on the United States.

The PAS does an excellent job of following mission priorities in its distribution of educational materials. For instance, most materials are sent to public schools outside Beirut serving Muslim student audiences. The post also wisely selected these more-isolated audiences to receive the Department's Arabic-language "Hi" magazine - a product that is less attractive to English-speaking Beirut audiences. The PAS book distribution program is carefully coordinated with USAID and the Ambassador's travel schedule to maximize effectiveness.

PAS has energetic outreach and representational programs, but the embassy security procedures significantly increase its administrative overhead. PAS has sought to hire an LES program assistant to handle these and other administrative procedures and has requested a position in the FY 2007 MPP. The mission should review coordination between the budget and fiscal offices and the PAS regarding grants and establish tighter standard operating procedures. OIG left an informal recommendation with the post regarding grant procedures.

CONSULAR OPERATIONS

With the resumption of immigrant visa (IV) services in November 2004, the consular section now provides the full range of visa services for the first time in over 20 years. The offering of all nonimmigrant (NIV) services only resumed in May 2003, so the section has gone through significant changes in a short time. Considering this, the section's operations are impressive. The introduction of IV services has gone smoothly, in part because the staff received solid training at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and neighboring posts. The spacious new consular building housing the section chief's office and the NIV and IV units has aided the section's success, as has the knowledgeable section chief. The totals for American and LES staff are on the mark, but the one-year tour of most officers is a weakness. The American citizens services (ACS) unit has an adequate facility next door to the new building. In addition to routine services, the ACS officer and LES spend time each day handling sensitive child abduction and custody cases. They have established an impressive warden system and are well prepared for any potential evacuation.

While the visa referral program has strong front office support, there is a noticeable communication problem between the consular section and other mission offices that could be overcome with more frequent mission-wide discussions of general visa policies and procedures. The DCM also needs to review the section chief's visa decisions. The section needs to use the resources of the PAS more

effectively to return student visa numbers to their pre-September 11, 2001, levels and to overcome some public image deficiencies.

Consular Space and Staff

In July 2003, the visa units and the section chief moved from cramped trailers to a new facility and now have ample space. The waiting room is never crowded because NIV applicants enter in the morning in groups of 14 every half hour. The IV applicants come in smaller groups in the afternoon.

The ACS unit is still in a trailer that was recently renovated. The public service area is small, but adequate, except on the busiest summer days. The officer and LES have sufficient workspace, but there is no line-of-sight view from the officer's desk to the LES work areas and customer windows. OIG informally recommended that the embassy install mirrors so that the officer can view all parts of the unit from her desk.

The entry-level officers conducting NIV interviews speak Arabic well enough to require LES translation infrequently. Additional language training would increase the officers' ability to conduct more in-depth interviews when necessary. In 2000, FSI extended Chinese language studies for some entry-level officers from six to nine months. OIG recommends nine months of language training for entry-level officers assigned to Arabic language consular positions. (See Recommendation 9.) The section chief and IV officer speak French, for which there is far less need.

The one-year tour of most consular officers is a weakness, leaving them little time to develop in-depth knowledge about the host country that is crucial to good visa decisionmaking. The consular LES are competent, but the rapid turnover of officers results in a heavy reliance on the LES.

Consular Management

The consular section chief has been in Beirut for over one and one-half years and is an experienced officer who has overseen the rapid expansion of services. She ensures that the LES are cross-trained, provides the consular officers with broad exposure to consular work, and pays attention to internal management controls. The section handles from 80 to 100 telephone inquiries each day from its limited user-pays telephone information service. OIG informally recommended that the consular section chief consult with the Bureau of Consular Affairs to determine options for improving the telephone information system.

Visas Services

The NIV unit interviews about 100 applicants each morning, with seasonal variations. Most interviewing is done by two Arabic-speaking, entry-level officers, with the section chief helping as needed. This allows for fast-paced, but not frantic, interviewing. The officers have time to give more extensive interviews when warranted. The embassy uses an appointment system for NIV interviews that is managed by a local bank that also collects the application fee.

There are no backlogs in the visa units. Approved IV and NIV applicants receive their visas the same day as the interview unless they need to undergo special name-check procedures, which can take from five days to one month.

The NIV officers are very aware of their roles in protecting U.S. border security. They solicit and receive information from other sections and agencies of the mission that helps them identify applicants who warrant special scrutiny. They understand the use of visa laws and regulations to deny applicants who may intend to harm the United States or U.S. interests.

One concern is that the DCM does not review the section chief's visa decisions, a requirement under 9 FAM 41.121 PN 1.2-8. This review is a significant management tool for maintaining high professional standards and ensuring correct application of laws, especially those promoting domestic U.S. security. The Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs has periodically reminded DCMs of this responsibility, most recently in 04 State 34271.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Beirut should establish procedures to ensure that the deputy chief of mission conducts the required reviews of the consular section chief's visa decisions and indicate this action in the Nonimmigrant Visa Adjudication Review report in the Consular Consolidated Database. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

An FS-03 consular officer manages the IV unit. The LES staff has all the necessary training, although only the senior FSN attended FSI. The others spent time in the IV units of neighboring U.S. embassies. The IV unit expects to handle about 2,000 cases in the first 12 months and to reach an annual average of 3,000. Its office space is adequate now, but the section will outgrow it in three or four years. The space planned for it in the NEC should handle this increase, however.

The embassy referral system meets the requirements of 9 FAM Appendix K, and the front office provides more than adequate oversight. The Ambassador personally reviews all Class A referrals before they go to the consular section chief for adjudication. (Class A referrals directly support U.S. interests.) Only a couple of Class A referrals occur each month, but several hundred Class B referrals are made annually. (Class B referrals are those that further the mission's interests within the host nation.) Although the consular section refuses only around six percent of the Class B referrals, some officers from other sections are critical of any Class B refusals. Some officers also have been told by outside contacts that the consular section could be more courteous to applicants. Despite the consular section's noticeable efforts to provide quick and efficient service, more can be done to improve its customer service image. OIG suggested that the employees be open to comments passed on by other sections, make more of an effort to explain the visa process to mission colleagues, and be receptive to the perspectives of Lebanese society. Therefore, OIG informally recommended that the consular section hold semiannual meetings to discuss visa policies and procedures with mission officers and to solicit useful information from them.

The number of students from Lebanon receiving visas to attend U.S. educational institutions has dropped precipitously since 2001. In 2001, the section issued 1,352 student visas to Lebanese citizens; in 2004, only 370. Among reasons for this are increased competition from other countries, the poor economy in Lebanon, and the increasing excellence of Lebanese universities. However, many believe students from the Middle East are not welcome in the United States and that U.S. student visa procedures take too long. The Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs has asked consular sections worldwide to use public diplomacy to encourage students to study in the United States (04 State 261900).

Embassy Beirut does not have a structured plan that outlines how it will use public diplomacy to help overcome these beliefs. Such a plan would include other useful public diplomacy targets, warn applicants about visa fraud (also requested by the Bureau of Consular Affairs Assistant Secretary in 04 State 253961), and highlight the section's attention to public service. PAS officers said that in Lebanon it is easy to get articles printed or to arrange radio/TV interviews.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Beirut should draft and implement a plan of frequent public diplomacy activities to overcome public perceptions that the student visa process is onerous and that students from Lebanon are not welcome in the United States. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

American Citizens Services

A second-tour, entry-level officer manages the ACS unit, and the unit has two experienced LES, who get some help from the consular cashier who is collocated with them. The unit provides routine citizen services efficiently and has established a system of 125 wardens that is subdivided into "key" wardens who are ready to take action in an emergency. Warden meetings are held throughout the year. OIG informally recommended that the embassy circulate reports of these meetings, since the wardens may be useful contacts for other embassy officers. About 9,000 American citizens are registered with the embassy, and the unit is well prepared to evacuate American citizens from Lebanon. The consular section's contribution to the emergency action plan is well organized. However, OIG found that, although the section has good contacts with local airline, immigration, and medical officials, the section is less organized in its preparations for disasters or accidents that do not warrant evacuation. OIG informally recommended that the section follow the guidelines in the Disaster Assistance Handbook and take a more methodical approach to planning how to handle a crisis, such as an airplane crash.

Some of the best work done by the section chief and the ACS unit is in the area of children's issues. The section has 23 active child abduction or custody cases and has had noticeable success in a tough environment. For example, the embassy signed a memorandum of understanding with the government of Lebanon acknowledging the importance of resolving children's issues and soon will have a draft from the government of Lebanon on implementing the agreement. In addition, Embassy Beirut will be joining other western embassies in a joint demarche asking the government of Lebanon to sign the Hague Convention.

Antifraud Unit

Since visa services are relatively new to the consular section, the antifraud unit is new as well. One entry-level NIV officer oversees one anti-fraud LES. The mission's MPP contains a request for another anti-fraud FSN for FY 2006. Visa fraud in Beirut appears to be unsophisticated. The unit conducts validation checks on all referral cases and has completed several validation studies of other NIV applicants. Employees are analyzing the results of the studies and other information, such as adjustments of status, to prepare material to help interviewing officers identify applicants of concern. The antifraud unit focuses on the border-security aspect of visa work. The standard operating procedures acknowledge this, and the unit works to build relationships with other mission sections that have information useful on border security.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RESOURCE SUMMARY

Agency	Direct-hire (filled)	Direct-hire (authorized)	FSN (filled)	FSN (authorized)
Department of State	38	44	389	420
Department of Commerce	0	0	2	2
Department of Defense	2	2	1	1
Office of Defense Cooperation	1	1	3	3
U. S. Agency for International Development	1	1	8	8
Totals	42	48	403	434

Embassy Beirut has 42 American employees and 403 LES, the majority performing security functions. The mission includes employees from the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, the Office of Defense Cooperation, and USAID. The post recently provided conditional approval for the FBI to open a one-person office, but until housing is available, the FBI will continue to cover Beirut from Amman. American direct-hire employees receive a 25-percent post differential, 20-percent danger pay, and a 5-percent cost of living allowance. The FY 2004 post budget includes these line items: diplomatic and consular programs, \$2,048,891; bureau ICASS, \$3,504,000; representation, \$24,000; nonresidential ICASS, \$4,473,200; DS-bodyguard, \$2,610,000; DS-consular guards, \$90,000; and DS-surveillance, \$859,700.

OVERVIEW

Embassy employees gave management activities generally high marks on the OIG questionnaires. Embassy Beirut also received top honors among all NEA posts on the global ICASS customer-satisfaction survey administered by the ICASS executive board in 2004.

The management section includes a management officer, who also directs the human resources and financial management offices; a general services officer who is assisted by an eligible family member GSO assistant, and a facilities maintenance specialist. Embassy Damascus provides regional support to Embassy Beirut's human resources and financial management sections.

The management section is planning for the occupation of the NEC and has proposed the gradual augmentation of American and LES personnel. Several positions requested in the post's MPP deserve priority, including those for a generator technician and for two additional char-force personnel.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The eight LES in the financial management section provide excellent service. The section performs all its operation at a high standard. Representation, official residence expense, and travel vouchers are processed promptly. Monthly, unannounced, cash verifications are conducted for the Class-B cashier's funds. A cursory review of the Status of Funds and Status of Obligation Reports failed to identify any unjustified, unliquidated obligations.

The financial management section spends a large amount of time administering telephone bills for personal calls made from landline phones and the approximately 150 cellular phones issued to American and LES employees, including bodyguards and surveillance detection personnel. Responding to the cost of identifying and billing personal calls, the embassy installed six pay telephones throughout the compound for making personal calls. The embassy also required that phone cards be used for personal calls from embassy telephones, but these policies have not been enforced.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Beirut should enforce its telephone policy and, if necessary, take back cellular phones from those who are abusing the policy or institute other corrective action. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Beirut should explore cell phone options, such as prepaid calling cards, that would reduce the cost of operating and billing for cell phone calls, both personal and official. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

INTERAGENCY COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The embassy manages an ICASS budget of approximately \$8 million. Relations between ICASS council members and the management section are productive and cordial, and the council is receptive to management section proposals regarding budgets and ICASS staffing. ICASS performance standards have been established for each of the management sections, although the success of the sections in meeting their service standards has not been measured. Although the various service providers believe that they routinely exceed the standards, OIG informally recommended that the post institute measurements for meeting service standards.

Post management has emphasized its need for increased ICASS funding. Last year, the Office of Overseas Employment recommended salary increases for the post of up to 17 percent for some grades, but the bureau only funded a four-percent, across-the-board increase. Furthermore, the aging ICASS vehicles cannot be replaced without additional funding. Earlier in this report, OIG noted that the lack of sufficient ICASS funding affects the ability of the embassy to implement security. The bureau has asked the post to prepare for a 4-percent cut in ICASS, a possibility the post will oppose.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The human resources (HR) office serves Embassy Beirut well, despite the mediocre scores received on the OIG workplace and quality of life questionnaires and the few critical comments made by mission personnel. The office is led by an experienced, well-trained LES HR supervisor and has three additional full-time and one part-time LES positions. A first-tour regional HR officer provides good support from Damascus.

The computer-assisted job evaluation (CAJE) project was completed in the fall of 2004. The HR section prepared the LES community by hosting CAJE seminars to answer questions regarding the process. Overall, some 115 jobs were reclassified, resulting in position increases for 30 percent of the LES. As a quality control measure, the regional HR officer re-evaluated some positions to verify that the positions were meeting standards.

The FSN committee, newly elected in 2004, is an effective group that has promoted positive change. Communication on LES issues is strong, and the committee has met with the DCM and management officer. LES staff established its own pension plan and is satisfied with the local compensation plan.

The HR assistants would benefit from additional HR training. Cross-training is practiced in the section, but HR classes would enhance employees' knowledge of Department personnel regulations and guidelines. OIG informally recommended that eligible family member training be provided, when available. Embassy Beirut has no training plan for direct-hire Americans. Such a plan for Foreign Service officers would identify section skill sets. OIG informally recommended a training plan for American staff.

The embassy provides reasonable attention to its entry-level officers. The Ambassador hosted a dinner for the officers to discuss Palestinian issues, and the consular officers, many of whom are entry-level, held a "night out" with a visiting Department official. The DCM hosts quarterly luncheons for the entry-level officers and has held 15 to 20 counseling sessions with them on career issues and substantive matters. However, the DCM, who is their reviewing officer, does not have a structured program of performance counseling for the entry-level officers. OIG discussed this with the DCM, who agreed to establish a more defined program that includes regular counseling of the entry-level personnel for whom he is the reviewing officer. OIG left an informal recommendation regarding this issue.

Embassy Beirut's entry-level officers are dissatisfied with the post's mentoring program. The lack of a structured mentoring program weakens career development. The Department emphasizes the importance of mentoring and professional development for entry-level personnel, and has provided templates for post programs in such messages as State 026345, dated February 6, 2004.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Beirut should develop and implement a structured mentoring program for entry-level personnel. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

POST LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Embassy Beirut has an active post language program managed by an entry-level consular officer. Although the program runs smoothly, the officer indicated that her responsibilities prevent her from devoting the time needed to strengthen the program. Because Embassy Beirut is growing, it should consider creating a position for an eligible family member as post language officer; an informal recommendation addresses this. FSI supplied the post with \$12,400 for the language program in FY 2004. In October 2004, the embassy requested \$35,700 from FSI for FY 2005, and later received \$22,600 for that fiscal year, which it will use to create a language laboratory and library at post. This will provide staff the option of practicing language skills after work.

Presently, American staff can schedule one-hour sessions in French or Arabic with the language instructor, who has over 40 years experience in post language training. Employees can choose structured lessons or conversational sessions, and about 60 percent of the American staff participates. Some employees say a more structured approach to teaching might be helpful for them, and OIG informally recommended that a documented syllabus be used to assist staff in defining a more beneficial course of study.

Language training for officers prior to their arrival could be enhanced. Some entry-level officers received only six months of Arabic language training, not the nine-month language training that FSI normally offers. NIV interviewing officers conduct most of their interviews in Arabic without the aid of an FSN interpreter. However, with limited Arabic training, their ability to conduct the in-depth interview that may be necessary for homeland security issues is limited. Some officers stated that the language training they received in classical Arabic did not prepare them for the modern Arabic spoken in Lebanon.

The political, economic, and public affairs officers also arrived unprepared and cannot carry out professional conversations or understand the local Arabic-language press or broadcast news. This hampers these officers in understanding local political, economic, or social conditions, as presented by Arabic-language media, or in expanding their contacts among audiences that do not speak English. Economic, political, and public affairs officers need two years of training, including a year of study at the Arabic language school in Tunisia. FSI, in partnership with NEA and the post, is exploring ways to institute short-term internships and workshops to provide officers with more advanced Arabic skills.

Recommendation 9: The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with Embassy Beirut, should implement procedures to ensure that, prior to arrival at post, officers receive language training appropriate for their work. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with Embassy Beirut)

POST LANGUAGE INSTRUCTOR

For several years, the embassy has contracted with the same individual for language instruction services. The embassy did not seek competition when it re-awarded the contract each time and has created a clear employee-employer relationship with the contractor. The instructor works on embassy grounds, uses materials furnished by the U.S. government, and takes direction from the language officer. This individual, who works from 100 to 120 hours per month, has been paid an hourly rate since starting work. Following discussions with the Office of the Legal Adviser, OIG determined that Embassy Beirut should make other arrangements for language instruction.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Beirut should terminate the contract with the language instructor when the contract expires in November 2005. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Embassy Beirut employees are familiar with Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies and procedures. An EEO counselor and secondary counselor were appointed in 2004, and both have received required EEO training. To promote better understanding, Embassy Beirut held a mandatory EEO seminar in May 2004 to discuss such issues as sexual harassment and explain how the EEO process works. This seminar was translated into Arabic.

GENERAL SERVICES OPERATIONS

A take-charge employee heads the general services office (GSO). He is the force behind many of the creative solutions to the mission's real-property shortfalls and was instrumental in selling the idea of purchasing locally designed and manufactured modular homes. Projects he has overseen include the construction of the new consular office building, the move of the Office of Defense Cooperation out of a basement apartment into an office trailer, the relocation of the gym from the Tango Inn to the Baaklini building, the conversion of a chancery basement storage room into office space for the FBI agent and an economics officer, and the expansion of the public affairs section.

Although the embassy size has almost doubled in the last few years, the number of GSO staff has increased only slightly. The MPP includes a number of position requests for the GSO, including the three LES it is seeking for FY 2005. The FY 2006 request includes one American and one LES in GSO, and the FY 2007 request includes another American and 14 more LES.

The embassy does not have a Marine security guard detachment, and the assistant GSO officer must escort the cleaning crew through the classified access areas of the chancery. This takes time from this employee that could be devoted to badly needed work elsewhere on the compound. OIG informally recommended that the post consider hiring a cleared family member for this work or ask other Americans at the mission to share this duty.

Procurement and Contracting

The talent base of the procurement and contracting section may be stretched, particularly because contracts require solicitations and price and technical evaluations. On occasion, the post uses the services of the Regional Procurement and Support Office in Frankfurt, a good practice that should continue whenever needed.

Travel and Shipping

The travel, customs, and shipping office, has five FSNs and performs well under numerous security restrictions. The embassy is working on a new contract for travel services and expects to finalize it by the end of March 2005. The section uses government travel requests to pay for official travel and is looking into using travel cards. Government travel requests are appropriately tracked and secured.

As described earlier, providing expeditor services to the 1,300 annual arriving and departing travelers is a large part of the section's job. The embassy could use additional expeditors, but the lack of airport passes and shortage of funding preclude this expansion.

Real Property

The embassy is on an 18-acre, high-security compound made up of 51 leases for 55 properties involving 39 landlords at an annual cost of over \$2 million. The chancery is a converted residential villa. The NIV section operates from a 5,000 square foot building built by OBO on leased property and opened in July 2003. The Baaklini building, which is government-owned and which was bombed in 1984, is used to house the GSO warehouse and facilities maintenance shops. The Geahchan building is a design/build apartment building on leased property. The embassy uses trailers to house the administrative section and other offices. When the NEC is completed, the current compound will have to be decommissioned and most of the leased property restored to its original state, which will cost millions of dollars.

Facilities Maintenance

The facilities maintenance section keeps the compound operational under unusually stringent and restrictive circumstances. Although the 51 residential and office leases correctly place responsibility for routine maintenance with landlords, in practice the facilities maintenance office performs the lion's share of these duties, generally because security restrictions do not permit landlords to conduct work on the compound.

The facilities maintenance office has a staff of 37, mostly carpenters, painters, laborers, gardeners, and housekeepers. The staff includes only one engineer, three electricians, two plumbers, and one welder.

City power in Beirut is intermittent and unreliable, and there are frequent, short outages and power surges. Given the damage this is causing to embassy electrical equipment and appliances, having an additional generator technician on staff would be helpful, and OIG supports hiring such a technician.

The facilities maintenance section handles work orders as they come in and does not have a work-order backlog. Due to operational demands, the section does not have a preventive maintenance program. The facilities maintenance officer is the post's occupational safety and health officer. The post has no open fire or life-safety recommendations.

Housing

All American staff must reside on the embassy compound. Interim housing, two prefabricated modular homes, augments the short-term-leased properties, and the post plans to acquire six more modular homes. The embassy, with the assistance of OBO, has divided one leased property into two residential units. With some exceptions, housing is not in good condition and has little storage space.

Official visitors to Embassy Beirut stay in the Tango Inn, operated by the embassy employee association. This property, for which OBO pays lease costs, was formerly the Marine security guard quarters and also is the location of the travel and shipping office, the protocol assistant, and the telephone switchboard.

Motor Pool

The motor pool at Embassy Beirut is well run. Of the 91 vehicles registered by the embassy, 75 receive maintenance and repair services in the GSO garage and 22 are dispatched by the motor pool. The remaining vehicles are operated by the RSO in its sizable vehicle pool or by other agencies. Although this appears to be a high number of vehicles for a post of this size, the vehicles are an important part of the post security program. The average age of the motor pool vehicles is seven years, and the aging fleet does not provide the most efficient service. The post has recently added two pickup trucks and has ordered several new vehicles.

No personal vehicles were shipped to Beirut, and the motor pool performs a number of tasks for American officers and family members who cannot leave the compound without a security escort. Thus, the motor pool fills an average of 22 off-compound personal requests per day.

The motor pool operates a fuel pump for the mission, keeping careful records of the amounts pumped and billing user agencies appropriately. The motor pool vehicles and drivers have not been involved in any traffic accidents in the last two years, and the drivers have uniforms.

The motor pool tracks vehicle usage, preparing daily trip reports. OIG made several minor suggestions regarding motor pool operations, but found most aspects of the section to be adequately supervised and managed.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SECURITY

Embassy Beirut has an adequate information management program to support its approximately 160 authorized users. Information technology, telecommunications, and Internet services were rated average in the OIG management operations questionnaire. However, several areas require management attention, such as the incomplete information systems documentation and inappropriate material on the unclassified network. Web site modifications are also necessary. OIG informally recommended improved record keeping on employees who have completed the computer-security awareness training.

However, embassy information security has several shortcomings, including critical deficiencies in the ISSO program. OIG also reviewed the information programs center (IPC), and the results are in the classified inspection report (ISP-S-05-16A).

Information Management

Embassy Beirut's information systems staff consists of an information management officer (IMO) who oversees unclassified and classified operations and a diplomatic mail and pouch room. Two LES are system administrators for the Department's Sensitive But Unclassified OpenNet Plus network. The IPC has two direct-hire American information management specialists who, with the IMO, administer the classified network, the Overseas Wireless Program, unclassified and classified diplomatic pouch services, and the telephone operators. Eight LES employees support the IPC activities: two employees in the unclassified mail and pouch room, two radio technicians, two telephone operators, and two telephone technicians.

Embassy Beirut's information management staff is well trained; many members hold industry certifications and all staff attended the extensive Department information management training.

Embassy Beirut regularly implements new Department programs. The post has implemented the local change control board, participated in the global information technology upgrade for its classified information systems, and installed network intrusion-detection systems to protect information resource assets. The embassy also has documented standard operating procedures for the mission's unclassified and classified information operations.

OIG found that Embassy Beirut had not completed the information systems documentation required by 5 FAM 867. Documentation of all aspects of computer operations and support is necessary for efficient and effective system operations and is necessary for the site to receive certification and accreditation. Two key documents that are not complete and implemented are the contingency plans for both the unclassified (12 FAM 622.3) and classified systems (12 FAM 632.3) and the information systems security program plan for its unclassified (12 FAM 622.4) and classified information systems (12 FAM 632.4).

Contingency planning is designed to ensure continuity of operations under adverse conditions and addresses the ability to recover from a disruption and provide service sufficient to meet the minimal needs of users. The lack of a documented contingency plan could leave the mission's information systems vulnerable to a variety of disruptions, ranging from mild problems such as short-term power outages to severe problems such as fire. System security plans delineate the responsibilities and expected behavior of all those accessing the system. Templates for these plans are available on the Department's information assurance web site.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Beirut should complete and implement the required information system documentation, including contingency plans and security plans. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

OIG found material that is not allowed by 5 FAM 723 on the Embassy Beirut unclassified information systems. Although the ISSO promptly removed the material, Embassy Beirut does not have established procedures that involve supervisors, the RSO, and the HR officer in this personnel issue. Nor does the ISSO

The status of the embassy's software security patch management is not being reported accurately by the Department's automated system. Current Department reports show problems with the embassy's patch management, but the post appears to be installing the required patches. The post, however, does not have a documented patch-management procedure, as required by 5 FAM 866. During the inspection, the IMO requested assistance from the Department by reporting the problem to the Department's Info Center. When inadequate or incorrect data is provided regarding the implementation of patches, the result can be an erroneous view of network vulnerabilities.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Beirut, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should develop and implement procedures to correctly describe the implementation of software patches in Department reports and establish and implement a written patch-management procedure. (Action: Embassy Beirut, in coordination with IRM)

OIG found that the ISSO is not documenting monthly reviews of randomly selected user libraries (12 FAM 622.1-8, 12 FAM 632.1-8), monthly reviews of audit logs (12 FAM 629.2-7, 12 FAM 637.1-9), and annual reviews of user and system operational practices (12 FAM 622.1-13, 12 FAM 632.1-11). The ISSO has not regularly run the Department's Baseline Toolkit (BTK) software, which identifies compliance with the Department's Windows Security Guidelines. In October and November 2004, DS asked the embassy to run the BTK and update the information maintained on Embassy Beirut. The ISSO reviews the systems every 90 days or so, but has no documentation to demonstrate that the checks take place. The lack of documented reviews and regular BTK scans demonstrates that appropriate information security management controls are not in place, possibly leaving mission information systems vulnerable.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Beirut should perform the required information systems security functions; document the reviews of randomly selected user libraries, audit logs, and user and operational practices; and regularly run the Department's Baseline Toolkit to ensure compliance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

The inadequate separation of duties discussed above complicates effective and efficient information systems security oversight, largely because an alternate ISSO, who could assist with oversight, has not been appointed in accordance with 12 FAM 622.1-1a. The previous alternate ISSO departed in July 2004 and authority had not been delegated to someone else at the time of the inspection. Two direct-hire information management specialists, however, have been to the Department's ISSO training and have performed the duties at much larger missions.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Beirut should implement the appropriate separation of duties necessary for information systems security oversight or ensure the requisite separation of duties through additional management oversight. It should also appoint an alternate information systems security officer. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

COMMUNITY LIAISON ACTIVITIES

Because there are only four family members at post, Embassy Beirut does not have a community liaison office (CLO) coordinator. However, the embassy employs a long-time FSN in the role of community affairs assistant. This employee, who has 31 years of experience with the embassy, actively promotes activities for American and local employees. She manages the annual diplomatic bazaar for all missions in Beirut and stays in touch with a number of local commercial concerns to keep embassy employees informed of events. She maintains a busy schedule of events for compound-bound American staff, setting up excursions to points of interest. The management officer files reports to the Family Liaison Office on her behalf.

During the inspection, OIG was told that the embassy did not have sufficient job opportunities for the four family members at post. As the mission expands to include more employees and additional family members, it should consider hiring a family member as a part- or full-time CLO coordinator. Having an American CLO coordinator would create a family member employment opportunity and address family member issues. An American CLO coordinator would also help with rumor control, which is especially important on security matters. OIG informally recommended such a position to supplement, not replace, the current community affairs assistant and to perform duties that the FSN community affairs assistant cannot do.

HEALTH UNIT

The embassy health unit operates under the direction of a locally hired nurse whose medical activities are supervised by the regional medical officer in Amman. Because all Americans at post have Class One medical clearances, most personnel are healthy and there are few medical issues. The Post Capability Database is up to date.

When an American employee must be hospitalized, security personnel and bodyguards must escort the individual for the entire time he or she is off-compound. While this procedure should be applied unstintingly for emergencies and needed treatment, doing so in the case of elective surgery imposes a heavy cost on the embassy. OIG informally recommended that the embassy deny requests for elective surgery to be performed in Beirut, unless the regional medical officer specifically recommends otherwise, and that individuals desiring elective surgery be required to have it in another country at their convenience.

The embassy maintains an inventory of medical supplies and medications. The nurse keeps the inventory of controlled drugs.

The embassy health unit supplies include sufficient Doxycyclene and Cipro for all persons on the compound, should such medications be required. The nurse has distributed chemical and biological antidotes to all personnel.

The nurse only occasionally performs health inspections of the embassy snack bar and does not document them. OIG informally recommended that the nurse perform more frequent, random inspections of the snack bar, including laboratory analyses, and that she document them and distribute copies of her reports to the management section.

Employee Association

The Beirut Recreation Association (BRASS) contributes greatly to improving the quality of life at the mission. The association manages the Tango Inn, the temporary-duty quarters and bar in the former Marine House. It also operates a print and video library and organizes numerous events for mission employees and guests.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The annual chief of mission certification, which was prepared, signed, and forwarded to the Department on July 6, 2004, identified two reportable conditions. Telephone costs were determined to be high. As a remedy, the post introduced the telephone policy discussed earlier. In addition, the audit of the employee association revealed an unexplained excess of funds on the association's books, which the association is investigating.

The management officer is the mission's designated management controls officer. However, the consular officer and RSO control most of the mission's resources and report directly to the DCM. OIG, therefore, informally recommended that the DCM be designated the management controls officer.

BEIRUT RECREATION ASSOCIATION

The Beirut Recreation Association (BRASS) is chartered to sell duty-free and non-duty-free goods and open alcoholic beverages and to provide food and dining services, recreational activities/classes, personal services, a weight room/gym or fitness center, and to rent rooms or property. Although the association's services are valued, association operations do not comply with Department requirements.

The primary activity of BRASS is operating the Tango Inn, which provides its only source of revenue (room rentals). BRASS members do not pay membership fees or to use BRASS facilities. Contrary to guidance from the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs, none of BRASS' other services is self-sustaining. The sales of goods and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages cover their costs, but not in the associated overhead. All BRASS staff salaries are expensed against the Tango Inn. The BRASS Board of Directors may want to review and update its insurance coverage as well; it is paying for some items that do not appear to be needed.

The Tango Inn is a government-leased facility for which the U.S. government is not assessing rent. Under its license agreement, BRASS must pay its utility costs, including those from the gym, but it is not clear that this is happening. To some extent, the Tango Inn is furnished with embassy furniture and other furnishings loaned to BRASS. The association has paid for routine maintenance and repairs but needs to set aside funds for non-routine maintenance and structural repairs and upkeep.

Department guidelines allow BRASS to take up to a 15 percent management fee for operating the Tango Inn, in addition to expenses for utilities, maid and janitorial services, laundry services, expendable supplies, replacement and maintenance of furniture, furnishings and equipment, and routine maintenance. These expenses and the 15-percent management fee are supposed to comprise the daily lodging rate, although the management fee may also underwrite "community events." However, this money, the only revenue, may be needed to pay BRASS' assessment to the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs, due each November.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Beirut, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, Office of Operations, should take corrective action to ensure that the Beirut Recreation Association operations comply with 6 FAM 500 requirements. (Action: Embassy Beirut, in coordination with A/OPR)

GENERAL SERVICES/PERSONAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Embassy Beirut has completed its annual inventory and reconciliation of expendable and nonexpendable property for FY 2004. However, the employees of the GSO property section have not been involved in the receipt of gasoline shipments or the monitoring of fuel in the gasoline tanks on the embassy grounds. OIG informally recommended that the embassy separate the duties of activities related to the purchasing and monitoring of gasoline supplies and distribute these duties among motor pool, procurement, and property staff.

Property section employees are not using Form DS-582, Expendable Supply Issue/Turn-In Request, which requires the signatures of an authorizing officer, the GSO officer, and a designated person in the receiving office. Proper use of this form is essential for controlling personal property. OIG informally recommended that Embassy Beirut begin use of the form.

FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with the Office of Management Policy and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should establish and implement procedures to coordinate security requirements for Embassy Beirut with bureau resources and Department policies. (Action: NEA, in coordination with M/P and DS)

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources should design and implement a plan for rest and recuperation travel for Embassy Beirut that gradually reduces the number allowed. (Action: NEA, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs should ask the Bureau of Human Resources to design and implement procedures to allow flexibility in the length of Embassy Beirut's tours of duty in instances where the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs determines that the responsibilities of the positions involved can be adequately carried out in less than two years. (Action: NEA, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Beirut should establish procedures to ensure that the deputy chief of mission conducts the required reviews of the consular section chief's visa decisions and indicate this action in the Nonimmigrant Visa Adjudication Review report in the Consular Consolidated Database. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Beirut should draft and implement a plan of frequent public diplomacy activities to overcome public perceptions that the student visa process is onerous and that students from Lebanon are not welcome in the United States. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Beirut should enforce its telephone policy and, if necessary, take back cellular phones from those who are abusing the policy or institute other corrective action. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Beirut should explore cell phone options, such as prepaid calling cards, that would reduce the cost of operating and billing for cell phone calls, both personal and official. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Beirut should develop and implement a structured mentoring program for entry-level personnel. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 9: The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with Embassy Beirut, should implement procedures to ensure that, prior to arrival at post, officers receive language training appropriate for their work. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Beirut should terminate the contract with the language instructor when the contract expires in November 2005. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 11: Embassy Beirut should complete and implement the required information system documentation, including contingency plans and security plans. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Beirut should develop and implement procedures on the appropriate use of government equipment, including the consequences of inappropriate use, and establish a monitoring schedule that ensures all network resources, servers, and workstations are reviewed periodically for inappropriate material. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Beirut, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should develop and implement procedures to correctly describe the implementation of software patches in Department reports and establish and implement a written patch-management procedure. (Action: Embassy Beirut, in coordination with IRM)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Beirut should perform the required information systems security functions; document the reviews of randomly selected user libraries, audit logs, and user and operational practices; and regularly run the Department's Baseline Toolkit to ensure compliance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Beirut should implement the appropriate separation of duties necessary for information systems security oversight or ensure the requisite separation of duties through additional management oversight. It should also appoint an alternate information systems security officer. (Action: Embassy Beirut)

Recommendation 16: Embassy Beirut, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, Office of Operations, should take corrective action to ensure that the Beirut Recreation Association operations comply with 6 FAM 500 requirements. (Action: Embassy Beirut, in coordination with A/OPR)

INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover operational matters not requiring action by organizations outside the inspected unit and/or the parent regional 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 mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

Community Liaison

Embassy Beirut does not have an American CLO to participate in emergency action committee meetings, assist with rumor control, and address family member issues.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Beirut should consider hiring a family member as a part-time or full-time community liaison office coordinator.

Household Effects Shipments

The Department's policy of allowing full household effects shipments of 7,200 pounds for persons assigned to Embassy Beirut will severely tax the post in several respects.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Beirut should review the issues surrounding the potentially larger shipments of household effects, prepare procedures to handle full household effects shipments, and inform the Department of whether this increased weight allowance will require additional funding.

Coordination of Staffing and Resource Requirements

Staffing and resource requirements are not well coordinated for Embassy Beirut.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Beirut should better forecast staffing and resource needs and communicate this information to the Department.

Standard Operating Procedures

Embassy Beirut does not have documented procedures for many of its daily activities.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Beirut should prepare standard operating procedures so that each new incoming officer has readily available information and so that the pattern of decisionmaking and its underlying rationale is not lost when officers depart.

Consular Issues

The location of the American citizens services officer's desk does not provide an adequate line-of-sight view of the service windows and FSN work areas, including the cashier's area.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Beirut should place sufficient mirrors to provide line-of-sight views from the American citizens services officer's desk to the service windows and Foreign Service national work areas.

The consular section handles from 80 to 100 telephone inquiries per day. This "user pays" telephone system provides some general information, but is not one of the more advanced systems used elsewhere to cover all but American citizens' calls.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Beirut should consult with the Bureau of Consular Affairs to discuss possible improvements to its "user pays" telephone system to decrease the number of calls handled by consular staff.

Some embassy officers believe the consular section scrutinizes Class B NIV referrals more strictly than it does regular applications. Although the referral policy is clearly spelled out, there does not appear to be a good understanding of how best to use Class B referrals or what kind of information is most useful to the consular section. Some officers also hear from Lebanese contacts that the section does not treat applicants with requisite courtesy.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Beirut should hold at least semiannual meetings at which the consular officers can explain visa operations, including the referral system, and obtain feedback from other mission officers concerning the Lebanese public's perception of consular services.

The consular section has a warden system of about 125 American citizen wardens who meet throughout the year. The consular section has invited other mission

officers to attend these meetings, but they seldom do. Many wardens are dual-nationals and prominent members of Lebanese society. Others are Americans who have lived in Lebanon for decades.

Informal Recommendation 8: After each warden meeting, Embassy Beirut should distribute a list to all mission officers containing the names of the wardens, some background information, and notes on topics discussed at the meetings.

The embassy has extensive plans for the evacuation of American citizens from Lebanon. Plans for handling disasters and major accidents involving American citizens are less well planned.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Beirut should prepare more detailed plans for disasters and major accidents, using the Disaster Assistance Handbook outline as a guide.

The consular section's American citizens services unit has a number of paper signs providing directions to the public. The signs are unsightly and make the contrast between the new visa services building and the American citizens services building stark.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Beirut should replace all paper signs in the American citizens services facility with permanent signs.

The student visa section of the embassy web site goes directly into instructions on how to apply for a visa. There is no welcoming paragraph and no statement addressing the recent improvements in the speed of processing student visas.

Informal Recommendation 11: To help overcome perceptions that students from the Near East are not welcome in the United States and that the procedures are time consuming, Embassy Beirut should begin the student visa section of the embassy web site with an opening paragraph welcoming students to study in the United States and explaining recent improvements to the student visa process.

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Information Management

The Embassy Beirut web site does not inform users when a hyperlink on the site will lead to a web site that is outside the Department's network.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Beirut should add a warning notice to its web site, alerting users to hyperlink sites that are outside the Department's private network.

Embassy Beirut does not have a mechanism to track which employees have completed the annual computer-security awareness training.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Beirut should create a list of users who have taken the annual computer-security training.

Political/Economic Section

The political officer is the Middle East Partnership Initiative coordinator but does not have ample training or a sufficiently strong background in program development and implementation.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Beirut should ensure that the Middle East Partnership Initiative coordinator takes advantage of training opportunities in program development and implementation. The embassy should ensure that this official's successor is trained in program development and implementation and grants management before arrival at post.

Public Diplomacy

The PAS has a greatly expanded slate of new and varied programs and activities. The personal involvement of an American embassy officer, and that officer's attention to program execution, is needed if there is to be successful implementation of these costly, high-priority efforts. The PAS is also developing new electronic outreach capacity, which will become a major information program effort.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Beirut should ensure that, when the additional public diplomacy officer requested in the FY 2007 Mission Performance Plan arrives at post, the officer is assigned responsibilities that free the public affairs officer from media responsibilities, giving the public affairs officer more time for management and development activities. The new officer should direct the public affairs section's enhanced electronic outreach capacity toward mission goals and coordinate its output with the media.

Administrative procedures associated with the strict security regime and aggressive PAS outreach add significant overhead to PAS operations. The PAS grant files show inconsistencies in grant accounting, reporting, and filing.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Beirut should establish tighter standard operating procedures for coordination on grants between the public affairs section and the financial management office.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Beirut should ensure that, when the program assistant requested in the FY 2007 MPP is hired, the assistant's training requirements include a Department course on implementing proper documentation procedures for public affairs section grants.

General Services Office

Because the post has no Marine security guard detachment, the assistant GSO escorts the cleaning crew through the classified access areas of the chancery, a time-consuming task.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Beirut should hire a cleared eligible family member for cleaning-crew escort duties or use other mission American employees to share this duty.

The GSO does not require the use of Form DS-582, Expendable Supply Issue/ Turn-In Request, although this form is an important document for controlling personal property.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Beirut should ensure that the mission uses Form DS-582.

The property and supply unit does not monitor gasoline purchased for the motor pool and dispensed on the compound. However, the unit must account for bulk fuel and must annually certify that it has properly accounted for this item.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Beirut should distribute duties for monitoring gasoline among motor pool, procurement, and property staff so that the property and supply unit is able to make annual certifications regarding the handling of bulk fuel.

Management Controls

The management officer is the designated management controls officer. As the

DCM has more offices reporting directly to him, he would be better positioned for this job.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Beirut should designate the deputy chief of mission as the management controls officer.

Medical Unit

Should official Americans require local hospitalization, bodyguards must escort them for the time they are off-compound. Providing this security protection for an employee undergoing elective surgery is a heavy cost to the embassy.

Informal Recommendation 22: Unless the regional medical officer specifically recommends otherwise, individuals desiring elective surgery should be required to undertake such surgery in another country at their convenience.

Human Resources

Entry-level officers indicated that the embassy did not have a mentoring program in place. The DCM, who is their reviewing officer, has not scheduled periodic individual, performance-counseling sessions with entry-level officers, has not discussed ways to broaden those officers' exposure to embassy operations, and has not spent sufficient time observing the officers at work.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Beirut should develop a structured performance-counseling program for entry-level officers.

Although a training plan exists for LES, there is no training plan for American direct-hire employees.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Beirut should develop a training plan for American direct-hire employees.

The HR staff has not had training in eligible family member employment policies and procedures.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Beirut should determine ways in which the human resources staff can become more knowledgeable about eligible family member employment procedures and should ensure that some training is provided to the human resources staff.

The post language program lacks a structured syllabus for use as a guide for language instruction. It also lacks experiential learning activities.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Beirut should develop a syllabus for language instruction.

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Beirut should enhance its language program through excursions and other activities.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Jeffrey D. Feltman	August 2004
Deputy Chief of Mission	Christopher W. Murray	Sept 2004

Chiefs of Sections:

Administrative	Barbara L. McCarthy	Sept 2004
Consular	Amber M. Baskette	August 2003
Political	George M. Frederick	July 2004
Public Affairs	Juliet Wurr	August 2004
Regional Security	John W. Schilling	August 2004

Other Agencies:

Defense Attaché and Army Attaché	Robert K. Carnahan (LTC)	Dec 2003
Office of Defense Cooperation	Benjamin D. Crockett (LTC)	June 2004
U.S. Agency for International Development	Raouf N. Youssef	June 2002

ABBREVIATIONS

AMIDEAST	America-Mideast Educational Testing Services, Inc.
ACS	American citizens services
BRASS	Beirut Recreation Association
CAJE	Computer-assisted job evaluation
CLO	Community liaison office
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DS	Bureau of Diplomatic Security
ECA	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAV	Fully armored vehicle
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCS	Foreign Commercial Service
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
FSN	Foreign Service national
GSO	General services office(r)
HR	Human resources
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

IMO	Information mangement office(r)
IPC	Information processing center
IRM	Bureau of Infomration Resoucre Management
ISSO	Information systems security officer
IV	Immigrant visa
LES	Locally employed staff
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
MPP	Mission Performance Plan
NEA	Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
NEC	New embassy compound
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	Public affairs office(r)
PAS	Public affairs section
R&R	Rest and recuperation
RSO	Regional security office(r)
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development