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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Report Number ISP-I-09-24A, March 2009

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PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

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

PURPOSE

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

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; whether U.S. interests are being accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; whether instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this inspection, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on-site interviews; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.



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

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its responsibility to promote effective management, accountability and positive change in the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. W. Geisel".

Harold W. Geisel
Acting Inspector General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY JUDGMENTS	1
CONTEXT	3
POLICY OVERVIEW	5
EXECUTIVE DIRECTION	7
POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	13
Reporting and Analysis	13
Trade Promotion and Development	14
Law Enforcement Coordination	16
Public Diplomacy	17
Consular Affairs	18
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	21
Rightsizing Review	21
Management Section	22
Real Property	22
International Cooperative Administrative Support Services	23
Human Resources	24
General Services Operations	26
Financial Management Operations	32
Information Management and Information Security	32
QUALITY OF LIFE	35
Medical Unit Operations	35
American Recreation Center	35
International School	36
MANAGEMENT CONTROLS	39
FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS	41
INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS	43
PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS	47
ABBREVIATIONS	49

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 15 and October 3, 2008, and in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, between November 3 and 18, 2008. Ambassador Michael Senko (team leader), Brian Mohler (deputy team leader), Kathryn Berck, William Booth, Eric Chavera, and Dennis Matthews conducted the inspection.

CONTEXT



The size of Colorado, Burkina Faso is a landlocked country with few natural resources. It is among the poorest nations in the world with a per capita gross domestic product of \$440 and ranked second to last out of 177 countries in the 2007 UN Development Program's Human Development Index. Literacy rates and life expectancy are low, and many school-age children, especially girls, do not attend school. Infant mortality is high, the incidence of HIV/AIDS is significant and growing, and rates of malaria are high. However, the

HIV/AIDS rate is among the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa. Ninety percent of the country's more than 14 million people depend on subsistence agriculture, livestock breeding, and cotton production. Scant rainfall, poor soil quality, insect infestations, and the lack of modern farming equipment and methods result in low agricultural productivity, which leads to food insecurity and low incomes. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Burkinabe (the local term for Burkina Faso residents) migrate to neighboring countries to work.

Burkina Faso is heavily dependent on aid from donor countries, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, foreign remittances from Burkinabe workers, and earnings from cotton exports. The government remains committed to fulfilling its commitments under a World Bank/International Monetary Fund debt-relief and poverty reduction program for highly indebted poor countries. There is potential wealth from gold, zinc, uranium, manganese, and diamond deposits that are beginning to be exploited. The Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) 5-year, \$481 million compact with Burkina Faso — signed in mid 2008 — should provide the country with significant resources to fight poverty. The compact will fund important investments in road infrastructure, land reform, education, and agriculture. Although Burkina Faso became eligible for U.S. trade preferences under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2004, bilateral trade remains small — \$18 million in U.S. exports and \$1 million in Burkina Faso exports in 2006. Investment possibilities exist, especially in mining and telecommunications. While the government is improving the business climate in some areas, widespread corruption remains a significant drag on development.

Since attaining its independence from France in 1960, Burkina Faso has had mostly military governments. The current government is led by President Blaise Compaore, who came to power in 1987 in a military coup. He was reelected in 2005 with 80 percent of the vote. For the first time in 15 years, a significant number of opposition candidates competed in that election. Despite irregularities, most observers judged it as free and mostly fair.

While 60 percent of the population is Moslem, religion is rarely a source of conflict. A moderate form of Islam is practiced, and formal interfaith dialogue exists. Burkina Faso's human rights record has been mixed, although there is improvement. There have been arbitrary detentions by the government, use of excessive force against criminals, poor prisoner treatment, female genital mutilation, and child trafficking. Democratic institutions remain weak. There will be a presidential election in 2010, followed by municipal and legislative elections.

POLICY OVERVIEW

U.S.-Burkina Faso relations have improved markedly since the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) 2002 inspection. U.S. engagement has centered on democracy, good governance, economic growth and development, and regional stability. In recent years, Burkina Faso has worked to enhance its relationship with the United States and improve its international image. The country began a 2-year rotation as a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council in January 2008 and has been helpful to the United States on regional security issues, most notably Zimbabwe and Kosovo.

Once accused of supporting instability in neighboring countries, President Compaore is now seen as a regional leader and mediator. The international community has praised Compaore, currently Chair of the Economic Community of West Africa States and the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union, for his mediation efforts, including brokering agreements in Togo and between government forces and rebels in Cote d'Ivoire and Togo.

Burkina Faso is a partner in the U.S. Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance program, which has trained three 750-men battalions for peace support operations. One of these U.S.-trained and equipped battalions will deploy to Darfur in early 2009. The forces will also be available to undertake other peace support operations under the United Nations, the African Union, or the Economic Community of West Africa States. The former Burkina Foreign Minister is now the UN and African Union mediator for Darfur. In July 2008, President Bush received Compaore in the Oval Office where he praised the Burkina President for his efforts in democratization, poverty reduction, and African regional security. A U.S. military medical evacuation and logistics detachment has been stationed in Ouagadougou, and other military cooperation and counterterrorist activities are in the offing. A status of forces agreement was signed recently. Using a limited International Military Education and Training budget, the Embassy has established an English language laboratory at a military base and increased attendance by Burkinabe officers in military training in the United States.

The signing of the MCC Compact highlighted the significant increase in development assistance in recent years. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has seconded staff to the World Health Organization office in Ouagadougou. Although there is no U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) mission

in Burkina Faso, the USAID regional office in Accra is expanding its Burkina Faso programming of \$18 million in agriculture, food security and health, which is distributed through nongovernmental and regional organizations. Over 100 Peace Corps volunteers work effectively at the village level on health, education and small enterprise projects.

Embassy Ouagadougou is staffed by 33 direct-hire Americans (28 from the Department, two from MCC, and three from Peace Corps), and 359 LE staff. The Embassy's budget is \$13.5 million a year. The economic-commercial section manages nine projects under the Ambassador's Self Help Program with a total value of \$20,000. The USAID budget for Burkina Faso for FY 2009 is \$18 million. There is also a modest International Military Education and Training program.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Embassy Ouagadougou has done an exceptionally effective job on policy implementation, management of resources, and management controls. In many ways, it is a model embassy. Policy initiatives have paid dividends in regional stability and military cooperation. U.S. assistance is achieving the transformational diplomacy goals of strengthening security, consolidating democracy, and improving the lives of people. Mission employees, including those from all other agencies, carry out their work in a professional and supportive environment. Morale at the mission is high.

The Ambassador arrived at post in March 2006 and is scheduled to depart in March 2009 to become management counselor at Embassy Baghdad. A new deputy chief of mission (DCM) arrived in September 2008. Responses to OIG questionnaires and interviews showed that the DCM is off to a strong start and has already won the confidence of the mission.

The Embassy clearly and realistically laid out its goals in its FY 2010 Mission Strategic Plan (MSP). Under the direction of the Ambassador and DCM, each embassy section developed goals for which it was responsible. The DCM chaired regular meetings of both American staff and LE staff on cross-cutting issues. The Ambassador and DCM approved and finalized the plan, and each section then briefed its approved goals in a series of country team meetings. The Embassy reviewed the MSP with the Bureau of African Affairs (AF) and adjusted it to bureau plans and resources. Embassy officers regularly refer to the plan, especially when funding a program or planning travel or representation. Work requirements statements also reflect MSP goals.

The MSP also reflects the activities of other agencies at post, including the Department of Defense, MCC, USAID, and CDC. The Ambassador, DCM, and other Department elements work closely with agencies and their regional offices on developing goals and operational plans. Agency heads roundly lauded the Ambassador's support, manifest in policy coordination, and regular participation in the agencies' activities and events.

The Ambassador's energy and diplomatic tradecraft have earned her ready access to the highest Burkinabe officials and to the public. She has used this to achieve an enviable list of policy successes noted above in the policy overview, and she has improved U.S. relations with Burkina Faso to its current point, a pinnacle capped by President Compaore's Oval Office visit with President Bush in July 2008.

Among the Ambassador's achievements is new cooperation between Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) and the Burkinabe Government and military, which has resulted in the establishment in Ouagadougou of a U.S. special operations medical evacuation air detachment in support of regional counterterrorism operations. The activity, staffed by three continually rotating temporary duty military staff and 15-20 contracted crew, is covered by the recently signed status of forces agreement. The Ambassador's knowledge of military affairs — she is a retired U.S. Army Reserve officer — played a key role in facilitating these achievements.

The Ambassador also turned her attention to the Department and correctly persuaded it to include Burkina Faso in its Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, which will open up new opportunities for training, equipping, and cooperating with the Burkinabe military.

The SOCEUR contingent in Ouagadougou is transferring to the U.S. African Command, and its presence in Burkina Faso is slated to grow soon. Military personnel will replace contracted crew, growing the detachment to about 40 people. There will also be one or two additional aircraft. The Embassy has well-crafted plans to address the National Security Decision Directive-38 staffing issues and to integrate the military into International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) and into the NEC. For example, the military detachment will be able to choose from a two-tiered system of ICASS services.

Military issues have occupied much of the Embassy's time and efforts. A recent political/military meeting between embassy personnel and Burkinabe officials covered almost 40 issues. These included bilateral cooperation agreements, Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance, other peace keeping training and supply activities, International Military Education and Training issues, the Department of Defense HIV/AIDS Preventive Program, airfield modifications, and intelligence exchanges. Burkina Faso is covered by a regional Defense attaché based in Abidjan who visits monthly and participates in conference calls. (b) (2)(b) (2)

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U.S. assistance programs have closely tracked transformational diplomacy goals laid out in the MSP, which in turn are aligned with Burkina Faso's most pressing problems. Burkina Faso recently completed an MCC compact for \$481 million to be spent over 5 years. This money will help improve the lives of people and fight poverty through, for example, the establishment of schools for tens of thousands of children, primarily female. MCC funding will also foster economic growth through rural land governance, road building, and agricultural development, and the creation of an investment-friendly business environment. USAID PL480, Title II programs focus on school lunch, water, subsistence agriculture, and women's small enterprise. Other USAID programs promote cotton cultivation, trade, and a variety of health programs. Two CDC doctors seconded to the World Health Organization help fight meningitis and measles. Over 100 Peace Corps volunteers work at the village level in a variety of programs. Unfortunately the Ambassador's Self-Help Program in Burkina Faso, once reportedly the most highly regarded in Africa, has been reduced from over \$100,000 to \$20,000 annually, but it still helps achieve embassy goals through a variety of small, but well-directed grants.

The Embassy perhaps gets its most long-term positive impact from its exceptionally active, well-managed public diplomacy program. The Ambassador and embassy events are regularly and enthusiastically covered in the press, television, and radio. Almost all embassy officers and many other employees participate frequently—seemingly constantly—in outreach events, almost always in French, which all seem to handle well. These participants include three first-tour entry-level officers. The Ambassador and her office management specialist even do outreach via music to widespread appreciation.

Embassy leadership has been comprehensively focused on its responsibility for the security of the mission. The Ambassador has given each direct-hire employee a copy of the President's letter to chiefs of mission that charges the chiefs of mission with "direct and full responsibility" for the security of the mission. She then has regularly emphasized her interest in security at country team and town hall meetings and in individual meetings with agency heads. When the Peace Corps decided to pull out of the embassy guard program due to its cost, the Ambassador argued to the Department and Peace Corps that a pullout would compromise her ability to carry out the President's directive. Peace Corps has remained in the program. The Embassy is now engaged with the U.S. military in working out a new memorandum of agreement for security responsibility between the chief of mission and the new African Command commander.

The Ambassador and DCM also focus a great deal of attention on the embassy guard force, often attending and speaking at guard formations. The embassy guards

Best Practice: Coffee with Locally Employed Staff

Issue: LE staff are widely recognized as an important part of U.S. missions worldwide, and they deserve our attention and appreciation. Close interaction with LE staff shows concern for their interests and helps enlist them in achieving mission goals.

Response: Over the last two-and-one-half years, the Ambassador has invited every LE staff member, from political specialist to electrician to guard, 10 at a time, to her residence for a “get to know each other” coffee. The Ambassador discusses MSP goals, changes, and growth in the embassy, other agency work, and LE staff personnel issues. LE staff talk about their families, culture, and work. LE staff and guards are also included at every opportunity in formal and informal embassy events.

Result: Higher mission morale, an improved work environment, a more comprehensive understanding of mission goals and objectives, and a better understanding of the host nation.

Inspectors found no Equal Employment Opportunity problems at post. Employees are aware that U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity standards apply in the workplace. Embassy leadership sets a tone by personal example.

The Embassy is on schedule to move into its NEC in early 2010. Embassy management follows the project, and enjoys excellent communication with the contractor and staff, who are on-schedule. The Embassy has hired a well-organized move coordinator, and planning and even procurement are underway. The Embassy has also obtained a facilities management specialist position to replace the current assistant general services officer (GSO) position.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

REPORTING AND ANALYSIS

Washington offices, including in AF and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, told the OIG team that Embassy Ouagadougou is doing a “great job” on reporting despite having only two dedicated reporting officers, one for political-military issues and the other for economic-commercial affairs. The post has kept current with scheduled political, economic and commercial reporting.

Political/Military and Labor

Burkina Faso’s recent emergence as a regional leader has translated into a greater need for political reporting on regional issues. Recently the post drafted excellent messages on the government’s views on Zimbabwe developments, the results of a visit by the President of Cote d’Ivoire that focused on President Campaore’s efforts to broker domestic peace in that country, and an Ouagadougou visit by the UN Secretary General. The Embassy also reported extensively on labor unrest that surfaced unexpectedly early in 2008. While the Embassy’s primary method of reporting is by cable, it often uses e-mails for informal reporting and discussions of breaking events. The Embassy e-mails a biweekly report to AF, summarizing post activities as well as a daily press summary. However, because there is no Defense attaché at the Embassy, the political officer has had to spend a significant amount of time on military cooperation matters. As a result, traditional political reporting and analysis have sometimes taken a back seat.

Economic

Burkina Faso has earned high marks for its commitment to economic reform but struggles to address the underlying causes of poverty, such as illiteracy, poor infrastructure and public services, disease, and the lack of natural resources. The economic-commercial section has done solid reporting to describe how the government is shepherding the economy toward its recent good growth rates (5.6 percent in 2007). Embassy reports have also analyzed significant developments in cotton,

mining, and aviation security. One insightful message alerted Washington policy makers to the growing food security problem in Burkina Faso due to poor crops and a drought. A major future reporting goal is Burkina Faso's implementation of the recent MCC Compact. There is also Washington interest in the activities of the WEAMU, an economic grouping of eight Francophone West African countries.

TRADE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The largest cotton producer in sub-Saharan Africa, Burkina Faso has been in the vanguard in experimental trials of biotech cotton, which has been genetically modified to increase yields while requiring less fertilizer. As cotton is a major contributor to the Burkina Faso economy (it generates 75 percent of the country's foreign exchange), the Embassy has worked to assist this crucial sector through USAID's West Africa Cotton Improvement Program. The Embassy has also been active in encouraging U.S. business to take a more prominent role in the local economy. The Ambassador works hard to sell U.S.-made equipment and services to the Burkina Government and local companies and to attract American investment. A recent change in local mining laws has created a boom in the country's mineral sector and increased commercial interest. With the post's help, U.S. investors have entered into partnerships with the Burkina Faso gold industry, and U.S. construction equipment and technology are highly prized imports. The Embassy has used the Department's Business Facilitation Incentive Fund and the Department of Commerce's Foreign Commercial Service Gold Key Service as important tools to improve commercial access.

In 2004 Burkina Faso became eligible to participate in the AGOA trade preference program. U.S. companies have expressed interest in importing high-quality cotton, shea butter (used in cosmetics and soaps), nuts, and handicrafts. The Embassy has been aggressive in its efforts to increase Burkina Faso's ability to take advantage of AGOA in order to increase its low level of exports to the United States. Making maximum use of limited resources, the economic-commercial officer traveled 2,000 miles early in 2008 on a 12-city tour throughout the country to promote AGOA as well as sensitize communities about the MCC. To do this outreach effectively, the Embassy has been collaborating with the USAID West Africa Trade Hub in Accra as well as working with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, the Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Foreign Commercial Service.

The Embassy has used imagination to improve the business climate and trade potential. Its English Language Center is full of enthusiastic businesspersons who

hope that improving their language skills will help them become successful traders. Many officials from the Burkina Faso Ministry of Commerce are enrolled. The Embassy also announced a visa reciprocity schedule that allows for a visa validity of up to five years for Burkinabe and American businesspersons. This change will facilitate long-term business relationships.

The economic-commercial officer coordinates the post's response to local disasters or conservation efforts that involve cross-border activities. In 2007, the officer coordinated flood disaster relief with the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in Dakar and coordinated efforts with Embassies Lome and Accra.

Improved business prospects in Burkina Faso for U.S. companies have increased the workload on the energetic economic-commercial officer and the capable, well-connected but small staff. Senior government officials have been combating the corruption problem and improving government transparency. The government is also working to privatize major parastatals in fuel and water. As a result, there has been an upswing in U.S. commercial and official visitors whose schedules require much labor-intensive work on the part of the section to arrange; business inquiries have been increasing as well. The Embassy in its MSP has proposed adding another economic-commercial assistant to maintain its current high quality of service and responsiveness to the business community. The OIG team agrees and made an informal recommendation that the Embassy get an assistant.

While there has not been a USAID mission in Ouagadougou since 1995, there is a USAID education specialist housed in the economic-commercial section. The LE staff member reports to the USAID West Africa office in Accra; he also assists the economic-commercial officer as required.

The specialist carried out a 2-year MCC Threshold girls' primary education project to address the low level of girls' primary school completion rates. The first phase of this project, a comprehensive plan for 132 schools, was finished earlier in 2008, but the project has now been extended and enlarged under the MCC Compact. The section coordinates closely with USAID Food for Peace because it administers the PL480 funds for this program.

Until recently, the section supported the significant work involved in developing an MCC Compact proposal. After the Compact was signed earlier this year, a resident MCC director arrived at post. USAID recently proposed establishing one Food for Peace and one additional USAID position and a U.S. personal services contract position at the Embassy. The Embassy intends to approve these proposals. Overall,

USAID plans to double its Africa staff in coming years, so aid program expansion will be a continuing issue in Ouagadougou. Indeed, an USAID mission could eventually be reestablished at the Embassy.

LAW ENFORCEMENT COORDINATION

As its top priority, the Embassy has worked to increase the capacity of Burkina Faso's security forces through in-country and U.S. training, participation in local and regional exercises, and providing equipment. Among the factors contributing to local crime, narcotics and terrorism are porous borders, instability in neighboring countries, and the lack of capacity on the part of local security forces. There is a will in the Burkina Faso government to make improvements, and President Compaore, in his role as President of the Economic Community of West Africa States, has been taking a leading role in the region, requesting assistance to combat the growing narcotics trafficking for his country and the region. Although Burkina Faso was not until recently an official member of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership or Operation Enduring Freedom Trans-Sahara, the government eagerly accepted the establishment of the SOCEUR regional medical evacuation and logistics support for Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership/Operation Enduring Freedom Trans-Sahara in Ouagadougou. SOCEUR has provided training and offered participation in regional counterterrorism exercises for the Burkina Faso military. There has also been Burkina Faso participation in a training seminar on cyber crime sponsored by the Department of Justice and a training seminar on drug trafficking in West Africa sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Burkina Faso is serious about the war on terrorism, because it sees itself as a potential safe haven for terrorist groups. It borders several countries in which such groups operate and because its borders are porous, especially in the sparsely populated north. The country has ratified 12 of the 13 UN antiterrorism resolutions and it participates in the UN-coordinated antiterrorism activities within a Francophone Africa framework.

The post has few reporting requirements on law enforcement, but any necessary coordination is overseen by the DCM with assistance from the regional security officer, the regional affairs officer, the political-military officer, and the consular officer.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The public affairs section, with one American officer and an eight-member LE staff, manages an extremely popular, well-received, and widely varied portfolio, reaching more than 12,340 people through over 117 individual activities from January through early November 2008. These include student advising and support of International Visitors program and other scholars; workshops on subjects ranging from teaching English to female circumcision to sports; conferences on the recent U.S. elections and an election night extravaganza involving the Embassy's entire American staff; mock debates; suitable films; and a variety of other activities that directly and positively promote mutual respect and understanding between the United States and Burkina Faso. Well-placed press releases with direct bearing on current political, social, educational, and ecological issues reach thousands more. A program of micro-grants allows Peace Corps volunteers to lend American support to small but invaluable individual projects throughout the country in areas otherwise beyond the practical reach of the Embassy.

The section operates the American Cultural Center and the Martin Luther King Jr. Library, which are open to all. These establishments are located within walking distance of the University of Ouagadougou and contain some 4,000 books, 10 Internet stations, and a wide array of current periodicals. The center and library attracts about 150 users daily, the majority from a key target audience — young adult Moslim males.

Another major branch of the section is the American Language Center, which employs another 23 individuals and handles about 400 students at any given time, mostly senior and mid-level officers from ministries, nongovernmental organizations, businesses, and international organizations. The former prime minister attended private classes at the center in preparation for his posting as Burkina Faso's Ambassador to the United States: his instructors used materials promoting good governance, mutual understanding and cultural awareness to help him polish his English language skills. The current Prime Minister told the Ambassador that he plans to hold one meeting per week with his staff in English, and he had instructed those on his staff who could not carry out a meeting in English to schedule classes at the language center.

These programs clearly have an important and measurable long-term impact on the Embassy's achievement of its goals. However, the upcoming move to the NEC would relocate all embassy operations to the new compound about 25 minutes from the center of town. This would put these valuable programs beyond effective reach of the people they are meant to serve.

The Peace Corps requested and was granted a blanket colocation waiver due to the fact that it cannot function effectively, or at all, without easy access to and by the public. Public diplomacy has the same need.

Recommendation 2: The Department should respond to Embassy Ouagadougou's request for a colocation waiver by May 2009 in order to allow the mission to adequately plan its move to the new embassy compound. (Action: S/ES/EX, in coordination with R, AF, and DS)

The Embassy's 2006 rightsizing exercise and resulting memo recommended that an assistant public affairs officer position be created, funded, and filled. This recommendation has not been addressed due to funding and staffing limitations. But with the size of and successes of the public affairs program, it is clear that such a position and employee are needed.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of African Affairs should create, fund, and fill the proposed assistant public affairs officer position as soon as possible. (Action: AF)

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Embassy Ouagadougou's full-service consular section could serve as a model operation for a post of its size. The operation is managed well internally and is well-supported by the embassy. The OIG team found no deficiency or problem requiring corrective recommendations.

With two highly professional LE staff and a skilled first-tour officer, the section has no backlog in any service and is fully capable of handling walk-in nonimmigrant visa traffic on the two days per week that it accepts applications. Early every summer it opens a third day for student visa applications only. The consular officer monitors applicant flow, alert to the possible need for an interview appointment system and for off-site fee collection. The recent extension of visa reciprocity to 5 years eased the growing demand. Ouagadougou lacks a bank suitable for collection of fees.

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Following earlier inspection and regional consular officer recommendations, the section has produced written standard operating procedures for all major consular activities. It recently updated its information flyer on adoptions. Laws in Burkina Faso appear to regulate foreign adoptions sufficiently, and Burkina Faso, like the United States, is a signatory to the Hague Convention on International Adoption.

The Embassy's two back-up officers are experienced in consular work. The LE staff are completely cross trained and rotate duties regularly. At the time of this inspection, one was attending fraud prevention training at the Foreign Service Institute. Because each staff member is entitled to a month's vacation per year, the consular section operates with only one officer and one LE employee for 2 months each year, aside from any accident or illness. With such a small staff, a consular emergency such as an airplane crash or terrorist incident could render the section unable to respond adequately. Even outside these grim possibilities, a third LE staff member will be necessary as the work load grows. The 2006 rightsizing exercise recommended that a third consular LE staff position be created. The OIG team agrees and made an informal recommendation that the consular section request and fill a third LE staff position.

There are no specific consular goals or performance indicators in the MSP, but the consular section supports the Embassy's MSP goals by continuously improving and strengthening its consular capabilities and the protection of U.S. citizens. The section cultivated a broad range of productive contacts including police, judiciary, immigration, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials. The officer's work requirements reflect the Bureau of Consular Affairs' strategic plan, which leads to achievement of the Embassy's MSP goals. The officer is appropriately included in representation, travel, and outreach plans, which are linked to the MSP.

Visa referrals are submitted and handled appropriately but have not been correctly recorded in the consular database. Taught how this is done, the consular officer began to use the proper procedure immediately. The DCM takes an active interest in consular work, meeting and consulting regularly with the consular officer.

The consular officer is aware that the Harris Orkand Company will assist with the move of the consular computer equipment to the NEC when it is completed and is ready to contact them as soon as a firm move-in date is proposed.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Embassy Ouagadougou Resources - FY 2008

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2008 (000)
State – D&CP	11		8	19	\$1,369
State – WSP					\$160
State – ICASS	9		83	92	\$4,551
State – Public Diplomacy	1	2	29	32	\$534
State – Diplomatic Security	3		160	163	\$1,005
State – Representation					\$21
State – OBO	4	1	40	45	\$2,791
Millennium Challenge Corporation	2		3	5	\$407
Peace Corps	3		32	35	\$2,603
USAID			1	1	\$93
Totals	33	3	356	392	\$13,534

- Staff counts include number of authorized positions and eligible family members.
- Source: Embassy Ouagadougou

RIGHTSIZING REVIEW

The OIG team believes the current staffing structure at Embassy Ouagadougou is not adequate to support U.S. interests. The move to the NEC will require additional LE staff to maintain the advanced building systems: a senior-level technician; a heating, ventilating, and air conditioning technician; and at least two staff. The growing embassy also needs an assistant public affairs officer and a nurse practitioner.

MANAGEMENT SECTION

The management officer is a dedicated, experienced officer. He works closely with the DCM, and together they will play a key role in carrying out the move to the NEC. With a solid and experienced cadre of officers and LE staff supervisors in all the sections he supervises, the management officer has the opportunity to standardize procedures for such things as the sale of personal property and to review resource requirements for the future growth of the mission.

Planning for the move to the NEC in early 2010 is underway. The new facility will greatly improve the mission's security posture. The Embassy is hiring and training the staff it will need for maintenance.

REAL PROPERTY

The current embassy compound consists of the long-term leased chancery, consular and general services offices, and the Ambassador's residence, plus five short-term leased properties, including the health unit, security annex, MCC office, and a street next to the compound that has been cut off to traffic. The rents for the existing office buildings total \$155,900 per year. While conveniently located downtown, the Embassy has outgrown its space, lacks adequate setback, and the buildings are aging.

Construction on the NEC began in January 2008 and is due to be completed in early 2010. The NEC is located in a new neighborhood called Ouaga 2000, about 7 miles and a 30-minute drive from the current embassy. Operation of the NEC will be expensive, with the cost of electricity expected to triple. Water, vehicle fuel, and building maintenance costs will also increase significantly. Also, because of the modern building systems in the NEC, there will be a heavy investment in training employees on how to maintain and repair the systems. Spare parts will also be required.

A top priority for Embassy Ouagadougou is to ensure that trained staff is prepared to maintain and repair the systems. The Embassy has embarked on English language training for all maintenance staff and is developing training plans and schedules in various skill trades to prepare employees to undertake specific training on the new systems. The Embassy recently hired a move coordinator to develop the training plan and coordinate the hiring of five new facilities maintenance employees. A facilities maintenance manager position for Ouagadougou was on the open assignment cycle for the summer of 2009, and a candidate has been identified.

The Embassy has requested a colocation and setback waiver for the American Cultural Center and the Martin Luther King Jr. Library's Information Resource Center to remain at their locations in downtown Ouagadougou adjacent to the current embassy. The Embassy's English language program, now located in a different part of the city, would be relocated to the American Cultural Center facility. Six LE desk staff and 19 nondesk LE staff would be assigned to the combined American Cultural Center/Information Resource Center. All other American Foreign Service and LE public affairs staff would relocate to the NEC. The colocation waiver request is discussed in the Public Diplomacy section of this report.

The Embassy also leases the American Employees Recreation Association (AERA) facilities consisting of a lounge, restaurant, tennis court, swimming pool and fitness center. The annual rent for the short-term lease recreation center totals about \$14,000. At present the AERA pays a nominal monthly rent and a portion of the utility costs. The future of this facility after the move to the NEC is addressed in the recreation association section of this report.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The Department is the single ICASS provider. There are five agencies represented on the ICASS council, including the MCC, Peace Corps, CDC, and the SOCEUR Joint Special Operations Air Division. The Department's share of ICASS costs is 89 percent, much higher than the average. The ICASS council has been quite active under the present chair. Regular meetings are held at least every other month to review and discuss the ICASS budget, carryover of funds, and LE staff hiring and compensation issues. The ICASS council is in the process of reviewing and updating services standards to meet the criteria for uniform standards. The Embassy uses ICASS Lite, and, while agencies basically agree with the workload counts, the budget process is not entirely transparent. The OIG team informally recommended that post management review the criteria for determining the appropriate cost distribution system in 6 FAH-5 H-321 and change to ICASS standard, if appropriate.

The ICASS customer satisfaction questionnaire survey showed a decrease in overall scores from 4.03 in FY 2007 to 3.92 in FY 2008. The information management (IM) unit, accounting, cashier, and motor pool received the highest scores. Procurement and shipping and customs received much lower scores.

The new ICASS chair and the management officer attended training for ICASS council chairs in May 2008 in South Africa and benefited greatly from the course. The main issue facing the council is how to handle the projected growth and maintain quality support services.

The council is working very closely with the transition coordinator to ensure that adequate staffing resources are available to meet the increased growth and that LE staff are trained to meet the maintenance requirements for the sophisticated building systems at the NEC. The ICASS meeting notes from June 2008 reported that \$250,000 in ICASS carryover funds were being used for anticipated ICASS purchases for the NEC.

Department of Defense temporary duty personnel with the SOCEUR Joint Special Operations Air Division were previously accommodated by the Embassy by direct charging or without reimbursement depending on the length of the temporary duty. Now, with the change in the threshold that determines when a temporary duty visitor will be charged from 30 days to 7 days, the embassy has drafted a revised policy using the temporary duty module in ICASS. SOCEUR has concluded an ICASS memorandum of understanding that is continually reviewed.

The ICASS council has approved a number of additional new positions including mailroom clerk, technical systems assistant, human resources (HR) assistant, voucher examiner, and reinstatement of an assistant GSO position.

The Embassy received ICASS training in November 2006, which involved the ICASS council members and all employees providing administrative services. The ICASS council chair believes that most employees give effective customer service.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The local HR staff includes a senior HR assistant, HR assistant, four HR clerks, and an eligible family member HR assistant. Embassy personnel files are complete, and the majority of position classifications are current. The senior HR person is an AF HR executive corps member who recently completed a temporary assignment to Embassy N'Djamena. She has been certified in the computer aided job evaluation process. Since the 2002 inspection, Embassy Ouagadougou's staff has increased by 187 employees (18 American and 169 LE staff). 45 positions are in connection with the NEC. The local guard force increased from 114 to 160 over the 6-year period.

Locally Employed Staff Compensation

LE staff received a 2.2 percent across the board increase in salary in June 2002. The Birches group conducted the survey of the comparator organizations UN Development Program and SONABHY, the Burkina National Hydrocarbons Company.

The LE staff committee informed the OIG team that the Government of Burkina Faso had decreed a 4 to 8 percent wage and salary increase effective October 1, 2008, dependent on job level, with those earning the least getting the 8 percent, and higher wage earners getting less. The HR office sent an inquiry to the labor ministry asking for a copy of the decree. Upon its receipt, HR will analyze the decree's impact on the embassy pay scale, have it translated into English, and forward the documentation to the Bureau of Human Resources for consideration for an LE staff salary increase to the extent authorized.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Ouagadougou, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should review the Government of Burkina Faso decree on locally employed staff salaries and, as authorized, revise the local employee salary scale accordingly. (Action: Embassy Ouagadougou, in coordination with DGHR)

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Recruitment and Hiring Practices

Several LE staff expressed concerns about the hiring process at the Embassy and promotion opportunities. They would like more transparency in understanding how employees are selected for positions. The mission recruitment and hiring process policy was last issued in June 2006.

In the past, the post had not adequately documented post hiring decisions by supervisors. While there was no standing employment committee, management established ad hoc committees consisting of two Americans and an LE staff supervisor to interview and select candidates. The committees documented the interviews and hiring decisions. The OIG team informally recommended that the hiring policy be revised, translated into French, and reissued.

Locally Employed Staff Salary Payments

The embassy HR office was successful in converting employees' salaries from check to electronic funds transfer (EFT) effective the pay period beginning August 30, 2008. However, there were several employees who changed their bank accounts during the transition to EFT. This resulted in the EFTs being rejected. The employees were subsequently paid with funds advanced by the cashier. It took three pay periods to resolve the EFT deposits of payroll to the affected employee accounts. The Embassy has been assured by Global Financial Services Charleston that the problem with the EFT deposits will be resolved by late November 2008.

GENERAL SERVICES OPERATIONS

General services operations at Embassy Ouagadougou face many challenges but on the whole were well-managed and provided an acceptable level of service. The general services portfolio is equally divided between the supervisory GSO who supervises procurement, motor pool, travel, and housing, and the assistant GSO who manages residential and nonresidential maintenance, and personal property. The experienced supervisory GSO recently arrived after a 5-month gap. The GSO's workload increased in 2008 due to increases in U.S. staff levels of other agencies and with the construction of the NEC. There are 59 LE staff members with varying degrees

of experience. Some LE staff members are still relatively new employees, particularly in procurement and maintenance, who have not yet developed to their potential and could benefit from more technical training and professional development.

Notwithstanding the challenges with the NEC, the GSO has made progress in automating business processes, such as fuel consumption and accountability, facilities management, and expendable supplies accountability. The GSO has fully implemented the Department's WebPass Administrative Software Suite. The supervisory GSO has implemented the e-services work order system with limited access and has drafted a management notice and conducted training for staff. This automated system should improve customer service, monitor workload, and ensure follow through, particularly for residential property maintenance.

Procurement

Both the supervisory GSO and the assistant GSO have valid contracting warrants. Embassy Ouagadougou has implemented WebPass Administrative Software Suite applications including the procurement program. The OIG team review of a sample of purchase order files confirmed adequate competition for large purchases and complete documentation. The LE procurement staff is relatively new and will need specialized training. As noted below, the post also has not taken full advantage of programs such as blanket purchase agreements and expanded use of purchase cards to streamline and simplify acquisitions and payments.

The procurement office does not use blanket purchase agreements for specific recurring type purchases such as packing and freight forwarding services. The Embassy negotiates purchase orders for each pack out. The OIG team informally recommended that Embassy Ouagadougou implement use of blanket purchase agreements or indefinite delivery and indefinite quantity contracts in negotiating for the most cost effective quality services available.

The GSO does not use the government-issued Citibank purchase card for small purchases. The purchase card is an invaluable tool for facilitating the procurement of items under \$3,000. The Department strongly encourages posts to use the purchase card to the maximum extent practicable. The administrative savings achieved when using the purchase card for purchase of commercial items is significant when compared to the cost of using traditional methods. The purchase card streamlines the procurement process by allowing direct procurement through vendors with payment automatically upon receipt of the monthly billing statement from Citibank. During the inspection, the OIG team learned from the Bureau of Administration, Office of the Procurement Executive, that Embassy Ouagadougou had its previous

purchase card suspended 13 times because of numerous delinquencies. According to the financial management office all prior remaining balances have been paid.

With the new supervisory GSO and procurement staff on board, there should be no excuse to not use the purchase card. Before the Office of the Procurement Executive can issue the new purchase card it must first be approved by AF's executive office. Also, before the Office of the Procurement Executive will consider the request, the embassy must demonstrate that internal controls are in place to ensure that delays in payment will not recur.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Ouagadougou, with approval from the Bureau of African Affairs, should institute use of the purchase card in the general services section for small purchases at its earliest convenience. (Action: Embassy Ouagadougou, in coordination with AF)

Housing

There are currently five government-owned residences, the long-term leased chief of mission residence (CMR), and 20 short-term leased residential properties located near the downtown area of Ouagadougou. Over the past year, the number of leases increased the housing pool by eight single-family homes. The housing handbook was updated in November 2007, and the housing board has been very active. Housing is generally suitable and reasonably well-maintained. Locating new housing near the NEC will be a significant challenge, however.

The CMR is located next to the current embassy under a long-term lease that is due to expire in April 2012. There are no plans to have the CMR relocated to the NEC. The Ambassador is interested in identifying a potential CMR site and a small number of staff residences near the NEC. The houses near the NEC, in the Ouaga 2000 area, are very expensive, exceed space standards, and lack adequate yard space. Post management requested the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' (OBO) approval to engage in a build-to-lease program for a CMR and several staff residences, but the proposal was not approved because of the size of the post. As an alternative, the Ambassador is proceeding with a letter of interest to a local reputable builder to entertain construction and lease back of a CMR and staff residences. Many existing short-term leased residences near the downtown area will remain in the housing pool (b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6)

Travel

Embassy Ouagadougou has a memorandum of agreement between the Embassy and Satguru Travel for booking travel and issuing air tickets for official travel. Most travel is done via Air France, which has a code share agreement with Delta Airlines for U.S. travel. The memorandum of agreement does not include a provision for low-cost fares or requirements to follow the Fly America Act. A travel agent, according to 14 FAM 584.1, is financially responsible for an erroneous violation of the Fly America Act or unauthorized use of business class travel. The Embassy is still using government travel requests and does not have the Citibank Travel Card. Department Smart Pay II guidance requires all embassies to use a centrally billed account card rather than government travel requests where feasible. The OIG team understands that neighboring embassies such as Bamako and N'Djamena use the centrally billed account card under arrangements with Air France.

The OIG team found that the post has a comprehensive, current travel policy. However, post management believes that the air fares charged by the agent are expensive and that U.S. Government contract fares are not available for Ouagadougou. Consequently, the Embassy's travel agent does not take advantage of contract fares, when available, which results in higher costs to the government.

The GSO has reviewed ticketing options and decided how to proceed with the Department's new travel system. The travel section will be required to participate in one of the Department's new travel system's (E-Travel Service) options as delineated in STATE 107906 of October 8, 2008, from the Bureau of Administration. This will require that the section revise its travel practices.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Ouagadougou should select an E-Travel Service option and disseminate a comprehensive travel policy consistent with Department standards and explain its booking and ticketing processes. (Action: Embassy Ouagadougou)

Nonexpendable and Expendable Property

The GSO completed a physical inventory and reconciliation with the nonexpendable property application and expendable supplies inventory in September 2008. Displaced items were identified and missing items deducted from the inventory. The Embassy also conducted an auction to dispose of furniture and equipment that reached the end of its useful life.

Spot checks of expendable supplies by the OIG team confirmed an accurate inventory for all items in the sample. Although not severe, there appeared to be some excess items. Procedures and processes for receiving, custody, and record keeping appear reasonable.

The current warehouse has been under a short-term lease since 2000 consisting of 17,000-square feet at an annual cost of \$47,525. The warehouse is reasonably close to the Embassy and functions adequately but has problems with the separation between wall and roof, which causes serious problems with dust. Furniture and equipment are protected from the elements, however. Good quality metal shelving provides ample room for nonexpendable property and could hold the additional furniture and equipment. There are no plans for a warehouse at the NEC, so post management plans to maintain the existing warehouse for the foreseeable future.

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Property Maintenance

There were several OBO special maintenance and repair projects in progress at the time of the inspection. Patio and pool deck resurfacing projects were completed at the DCM and management officer residences. The electrical upgrade project at the alternate command center was due to be completed in November. Three roof replacement projects were due to be started in November as well.

A review of the status of obligations with the financial management section disclosed that the Embassy had used funds remaining from an OBO special maintenance and repair project for unauthorized renovations on a short-term lease facility. Originally, \$35,000 was allotted for an electrical upgrade project at the regional security officer's government-owned residence (XJ-WD-0090). However, only \$17,500 was spent. Post used the remaining \$17,500 to fund three purchase orders for vari-

ous renovation projects at a tennis court, a short-term lease facility managed by the AERA. The management officer had been misinformed that the tennis courts were a government-owned property, and when he realized that 7902 funds could not be used for such facilities he immediately cancelled the purchase orders. Special maintenance and repair funds are allotted for specific projects and may not be used for any other purpose unless funds are returned to OBO and alternative use of the funds are approved by OBO. The remaining \$17,500 has been deobligated and returned to OBO.

If post management is interested in upgrading the tennis court for morale reasons at U.S. Government expense, the embassy should request approval from OBO for funding to make the improvements to the short-term lease property. Because, as previously stated, the post will no longer lease the recreation facilities following the move to the NEC, it is doubtful that OBO would entertain such a request particularly because the original upgrades were made by the AERA.

Motor Pool

Motor pool services scored among the highest on the OIG workplace and quality of life questionnaires. Operations are well-run. The motor pool supervisor manages the vehicle fleet consisting of 25 vehicles. LE staff drivers properly record daily vehicle usage. However, the supervisor maintains mileage records manually and does not enter mileage in WebPASS. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to use the automated system. The motor pool operates three shifts. The fuel pump is at the general services compound, and the dispatcher confirmed compliance with procedures ensured accountability. However, the supervisor maintains a manual record of fuel consumption and not WebPASS. Fuel coupons are issued to drivers with an approved request for long-distance trips. The general services office secretary maintains the coupon inventory. Personnel are allowed home-to-office transportation while awaiting the arrival of their personally owned vehicles. The current mission policy on official and nonofficial use embassy vehicles was dated February 11, 2008.

Safety, Health, and Environmental Management

OBO's Safety, Health, and Environmental Management last report was issued in January 2007. Several corrective actions have been made, and the assistant GSO is addressing the remaining six actions.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

The financial management office staff includes eight positions: budget and finance supervisor, financial assistant, principal cashier, three voucher examiners, and an account technician. There is a former senior LE financial specialist who has been retained on the roles for 1 year as a financial advisor to work on special projects including ICASS funding for the NEC project. Training is needed for the two recently hired voucher examiners.

Global Financial Services Charleston records show an eligible family member as an alternate certifying officer, but this individual has departed post. The management officer has requested designation of the senior LE budget and finance supervisor as alternate certifying officer. The regional financial management officer supports the designation. The Embassy has received approval from Charleston, and the post has requested approval from AF's executive office. The LE staff member meets the qualifications after having completed the financial management officer course at the Foreign Service Institute in July 2008. The OIG team stressed the importance of promptly designating an alternate certifying officer.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SECURITY

Embassy Ouagadougou operates a comprehensive IM and information systems security program. The information management officer (IMO) effectively manages all of the Embassy's IM and security requirements. ICASS customer survey results reported the Embassy's highest overall marks for areas in IM services. Furthermore, the Embassy has achieved perfect site health scores on I-post, in addition to praise by the Department's IM affiliates. IM operations have been very well maintained, despite the fact that resources have been intermittently stretched due to temporary staffing gaps and the increase in workload due to the growth of the Embassy.

The IM staff is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and security of the Department's unclassified network (OpenNet), classified local area network, dedicated Internet networks, unclassified and classified pouch, telephone/radio operations, as well as mailroom operations. The OpenNet consists of 112 workstations and 10 servers; the classified local area network consists of nine workstations and five servers. The IM section largely adheres to Department IM guidelines and the industry's common practices. The IM staff consists of one IMO, one IM specialist, and the following LE staff: two systems-support employees, three mail/pouch employees, one telephone technician, and one switchboard operator.

Staffing Constraints

The Embassy's IM operations had experienced intermittent staffing shortages resulting from staffing gaps and the recent passing of the telephone technician. From early July until the end of September, the IMO was the only American managing IM operations. To its credit, the Embassy was able to maintain positive systems support without support from regional offices in Pretoria or Cairo. Furthermore, the Embassy was able to provide critical support to Embassy Niamey. Presently, with the recent arrival of the IM specialist, the section is fully staffed. IM staffing is a constant issue throughout AF and is often unavoidable due to IM staffing shortages in AF as well as throughout the Department.

Unclassified Operations

The unclassified network has operated effectively. The Embassy has two highly skilled LE administrators who have managed to maintain its site health at optimum levels despite increased staffing levels. At a recent risk scoring workshop the post was congratulated by the Department for having perfect scores in their system management server reporting and standard operating environment compliance. Ouagadougou has also managed to record an A+ score on the Department's new risk scoring tool. The tool, which is currently in the pilot phase, is a new initiative from the Department designed to assess overall network health in addition to identifying risks present at post.

Millennium Challenge Corporation Network

The MCC operates a separate unclassified network, which supports its foreign assistance operations in country. The MCC network is currently being supported by the embassy's IM staff. The IMO stated that the chief information officer of the MCC network had contacted the Embassy regarding a memorandum of understanding and was planning to send a proposal to the Embassy. Currently the MCC network is not identified in any memorandum of agreement or memorandum of understanding specifying its relationship with the IM staff managed by the IMO. Nevertheless, the IM staff continues to provide support to the MCC network. A basic memorandum of understanding should be created to address the MCC network support provided by embassy IM staff. It should stipulate the relationship between the network and the mission's IM operations, eliminating any possibility of confusion. The OIG team made an informal recommendation.

Individual Development Plans

The IM staff does not have individual development training plans. Although the staff has been able to receive training when funding is available, the establishment of a formalized training plan is required to streamline their development. According to 5 FAM 121, the IMO is responsible for developing individual development training plans for staff to ensure that they have the skills necessary to support mission programs, and to encourage their own professional growth. Without individual development training plans, information technology management is unaware of areas where training may be required to maintain the level of technical skills necessary in a time of constantly emerging new technology. The OIG team made an informal recommendation.

Classified Pouch Operations

Classified pouch operations at Embassy Ouagadougou are operated entirely by the IM staff. The IMO, who is designated as the pouch control officer, stated that post has an eligible family member pouch escort position that is currently vacant. The position has remained unfilled due to lack of interest among cleared EFMs at post. 12 FAM 151.1 states that all agencies at post that use the classified pouch are responsible for sharing escort duties. The IMO has acknowledged this and stated that he would prefer to continue with the current operation as opposed to training a new duty officer every month with the pouch procedures. The OIG team agrees with continuing the current operation pending the move to the NEC. The OIG team stated that with respect to pouch operations growth at the Embassy, pouch escort duties will need to be shared at the NEC if the escort position remains vacant.

QUALITY OF LIFE

MEDICAL UNIT OPERATIONS

The medical unit scored very well on OIG's workplace and quality of life questionnaires. A contract physician, an LE nurse, a technician, and a secretary manage the unit. Medical records and prescription medications are appropriately safeguarded; usage and inventory records are properly maintained.

The regional medical officer from Bamako visits Ouagadougou regularly and is in touch with the unit often by e-mail and telephone. Support from the Department's Office of Medical Services appears excellent. The local private medical infrastructure is generally adequate. In July 2007, four U.S. military members were medically evacuated from Bamako to Ouagadougou. The health unit nurse arranged for ambulance service and treatment at the national hospital. One patient required emergency surgery; all were stabilized and transported to Germany.

Embassy Ouagadougou's nurse, a 27-year veteran of U.S. Government service, was a finalist for Foreign Service National of the Year in 2001, and rated a full paragraph in the one-page September 2008 State magazine article on finalists for the Department's Marjorie Yamamoto Harwood Award for excellence by an LE nurse. She is a well-known, highly respected figure in the local medical community and has often been able to use her connections in the community to the advantage of the embassy.

Both the Embassy and the regional medical officer have indicated that a nurse practitioner should be added to the medical unit's staff. With the expected future growth in American personnel this addition makes sense, and the OIG team supports the increase.

AMERICAN RECREATION CENTER

Well-liked by the embassy community, the American Recreation Center has been dependent on the Embassy for financial support, but its survival after the move to the NEC is unlikely.

The AERA runs the American Recreation Center, which operates a cafe, tennis court, swimming pool, video club, fitness center, air conditioned lounge, bar, party room, and an informal paperback lending library. Although embassy employees and family members use the facility heavily, the majority of association members are resident U.S. citizens and third-country diplomats.

The property was leased, with the center paying \$20 per month toward the actual monthly rent of \$1,158, and paying \$525 per month toward utility costs; the balances were paid by the Embassy. The 2002 inspection gave the association low marks for financial accountability. On the other hand, the most recent independent audit report for 2007 was positive, while noting three prior recommendations by the same firm that had not been followed: establishing standard operating procedures and a budget, and regularizing a fixed wage structure. The audit also noted that the value of the center's fixtures had been established by the center itself.

The center has been very popular with the embassy community which, despite the presence of a swimming pool in every residence, valued the various facilities, the American menu, the English-language media and English-speaking staff for family members who have no French, the location a short walk from the current embassy, and the existence of a place to socialize — especially for families with small children — without play dates.

Despite the recreation center's popularity, the fact that most of its membership is nonembassy requires that the Embassy stop supporting it when the move to the NEC is completed. A letter to this effect was sent from the Embassy to the association.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Ouagadougou should reach an agreement with the American Employees Recreation Association regarding whether the American Recreation Center will close or become self-supporting and for the return of the embassy-owned property, such as gym equipment, when the Embassy withdraws its support. (Action: Embassy Ouagadougou)

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

(b)(2)(b)(6)(b)(2)(b)(6) an independent day school established more than 30 years ago, offers an English-language, U.S.-accredited education to children preschool through grade 12 and is an essential part of the quality of life at Embassy Ouagadougou.

Burkina Faso allows its citizen children to attend the international school and recognizes the diploma.

The teaching medium is English. The school has had graduating seniors for the past 5 years, 100 percent of whom have gone on to colleges and universities, mostly in the United States.

The school is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, with its most recent accreditation dating to 2008. The latest independent audit report was clean. Embassy officers sit on the school board, and the embassy management officer appropriately has monitored U.S. Government funding and the school's activities. Both the school and its administration receive outstanding evaluations from the embassy community. A further expansion within the existing campus is in the planning stage.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

In the annual chief of mission management controls assurance statement, there were two areas that disclosed management control deficiencies. The first was the lack of a financial management/HR officer. Oversight of financial management and HR is currently provided by the management officer, who also supervises all the management subfunctions, GSO, and IMO. However, the regional HR officer position will be transferred from Niamey to Ouagadougou in 2011, addressing this problem. The second control deficiency concerns the lack of a NEC facilities maintenance manager: The post requested this position from OBO, and it has been granted. The OIG team understands that there is a candidate pending assignment in the summer of 2009.

Embassy management conducted risk assessments for most sections to review internal controls. The financial management office, in coordination with the general services office, made a concerted effort to recover prior year unliquidated balances and confirmed that only valid obligations remained on the accounting records. The general services office conducted an off-year official expendable and nonexpendable property inventory reconciliation. The general services office also implemented process improvement measures to account more fully for fuel consumption.

There were two areas, however, that need attention. The Embassy has been allowing LE staff to make personal calls from cellular telephones. Over 100 cell phones have been issued to LE staff, and each has a calling card issued by the GSO. Management monitors the issuance of phone cards to control abuse, but there is no itemized statement detailing the calls made from the cell phones. Consequently, there is no way to know what calls are official or personal. The post is implementing a system to better account for personal telephone use.

FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

Recommendation 2: The Department should respond to Embassy Ouagadougou’s request for a colocation waiver by May 2009 in order to allow the mission to adequately plan its move to the new embassy compound. (Action: S/ES/EX, in coordination with R, AF, and DS)

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of African Affairs should create, fund, and fill the proposed assistant public affairs officer position as soon as possible. (Action: AF)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Ouagadougou, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should review the Government of Burkina Faso decree on locally employed staff salaries and, as authorized, revise the local employee salary scale accordingly. (Action: Embassy Ouagadougou, in coordination with DGHR)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Ouagadougou, with approval from the Bureau of African Affairs should, institute use of the purchase card in the general services section for small purchases at its earliest convenience. (Action: Embassy Ouagadougou, in coordination with AF)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Ouagadougou should select an E-Travel Service option and disseminate a comprehensive travel policy consistent with Department standards and explain its booking and ticketing processes. (Action: Embassy Ouagadougou)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Ouagadougou should reach an agreement with the American Employees Recreation Association regarding whether the American Recreation Center will close or become self-supporting and for the return of the embassy-owned property, such as gym equipment, when the Embassy withdraws its support. (Action: Embassy Ouagadougou)

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.

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

The ICASS budget process is not entirely transparent and does not reflect criteria for appropriate cost distribution between ICASS agencies as stated in 6 FAH-5 H-321.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Ouagadougou should review the criteria for determining the appropriate cost distribution system and change to the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services standard, if appropriate.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The rapidly growing workload of the economic commercial section needs an additional LE staff member to maintain the Embassy's current high quality of service and responsiveness to the business community.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Ouagadougou should add another economic-commercial assistant.

The 2006 rightsizing exercise determined that the consular section needs a third LE staff position.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Ouagadougou should request and fill a third consular locally employed staff position.

Management

There is no updated embassy policy spelling out the responsibilities of employees for the sale of their personal property prior to their transfer from Embassy Ouagadougou.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Ouagadougou should issue an administrative procedure notice on the sale of personal property consistent with regulations.

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Recruitment and Hiring Practices

There are seven overdue performance evaluations for embassy LE staff members.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Ouagadougou should require overdue performance evaluations to be completed as soon as possible and follow up with the delinquent supervisor reflecting the delinquency on the responsible person's performance evaluation.

The LE staff handbook is dated 2005.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Ouagadougou should update the locally employed staff handbook.

The post's hiring policy was last issued in June 2006. It is currently only in English and is not available in the local language.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Ouagadougou should update the post recruitment and hiring policy, include a French translation, and reissue it to employees.

Procurement

The procurement office does not use blanket purchase agreements, which are useful in recurring purchases such as packing and freight forwarding services.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Ouagadougou should implement the use of blanket purchase agreements or indefinite delivery and indefinite quantity contracts in negotiating for the most cost effective quality services available.

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Motor Pool

Vehicle usage is not being documented accurately and systematically in the WebPASS system.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Ouagadougou should record government-owned vehicle mileage in the WebPASS system motor pool module.

Financial Management Services

There were 12 outstanding travel advances from FY 2008, of which eight were pending voucher submissions.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Ouagadougou should clear the prior year outstanding travel advances on the open advance report.

Very few payments are made via EFT to local vendors.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Ouagadougou should obtain bank account information from vendors to facilitate more electronic payments.

The voucher for payment of telephone charges does not include a certification that long-distance calls are necessary and in the interests of the U.S. Government as required by 4 FAM 447.7 and 4 FAH-3 H-447.6-2.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Ouagadougou should certify official long-distance telephone calls...

The Embassy does not designate in writing “occasional money holders” to receive cash advances from the cashier for small purchases.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Ouagadougou should designate those individuals approved to receive cash advances to be designated in writing as occasional money holders.

Information Management

The Embassy is supporting another agency’s communications network without any agreement.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Ouagadougou should establish a memorandum of understanding with the Millennium Challenge Corporation stipulating the support provided from the information management staff.

Individual development plans will help IM staff maintain and increase the skills they need to serve the Embassy.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Ouagadougou should develop an individual development training plan for American and locally employed information technology employees based on assigned job responsibilities, mission needs, and professional development.

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PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Jeanine Jackson	03/06
Deputy Chief of Mission	Samuel C. Laeuchli	09/08
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	M. Eugene Aaron	09/07
Consular	Wossenyelesh Mazengia	07/07
Political/Military	Breanna Green	03/07
Economic/Commercial	Pamela Hamblett	08/07
Public Affairs	Joann Lockard	08/06
Regional Security	Christopher L. Berry	01/08
Other Agencies:		
Millennium Challenge Corporation	Kateri A. Clement	07/08
Peace Corps	Douglass Teschner	03/08

ABBREVIATIONS

AERA	American Employees Recreation Association
AF	Bureau of African Affairs
AGOA	Africa Growth and Opportunity Act
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CMR	chief of mission residence
DCM	deputy chief of mission
Department	Department of State
EFT	electronic funds transfer
GSO	general services officer
HR	Human resources
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	information management
IMO	information management officer
LE	locally employed
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NEC	new embassy compound
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
RSO	regional security officer
SOCEUR	Special Operations Command Europe
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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