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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Kabul,
Afghanistan

Report Number ISP-I-10-32A, February 2010

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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 Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) 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 instances 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 onsite 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
Deputy Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- The Ambassador and his leadership team in their first six months in Kabul have made impressive progress implementing the Administration's plans for a massive civilian plus up to support the large increases in assistance programs. This progress took place at the same time that the Embassy experienced virtually 100 percent turnover of American staff, supported international facilitation of the Afghan presidential elections, and participated in the Administration's Afghanistan policy review.
- Even with the able leadership of Kabul's senior officers, the best of intentions, and the most dedicated efforts, Embassy Kabul faces serious challenges in meeting the Administration's deadline for "success" in Afghanistan. The unprecedented pace and scope of the civilian buildup, the need for these new officers to arrive in Kabul before support infrastructure expansions have been completed, and the complexity of establishing arrangements to equip the new subject matter experts for success in the field will constrain the ability of these new officers in the short-term to promote stability, good governance, and rule of law (ROL) in Afghanistan.
- The number of U.S. executive branch staff assigned to the U.S. Mission to Afghanistan will have grown from 320 to approximately 900 by early 2010. The Embassy, at the direction of the Administration, used a process outside of the Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) to justify these new positions and to plan for the increased life support and security costs involved in hosting so many new officers. These costs have not yet been captured in the Department's International Cooperative Administrative Support System (ICASS) planning procedures.
- Embassy Kabul has a detailed, multiphase plan to expand its administrative support infrastructure to accommodate these new employees. The management section is remarkably adaptable and responsive in an atmosphere of massive personnel surges, constant reinvention, and multiple construction and infrastructure projects.

CONTEXT

The President's Strategic Review for Afghanistan and Pakistan identified this region as our nation's highest national strategic and security priority. Afghanistan is bigger in geography and population and more complex in tribal dynamics than Iraq.



The country is exhausted by over three decades of war that destroyed Afghan capacity in the public and private sectors. In the wake of August 2009 elections fraught with allegations of wide-scale fraud and the withdrawal of the incumbent's closest challenger just prior to a November runoff, the U.S. Government now hopes to resume efforts on strategic goals that depend on the commitment to reform by a popularly supported Afghan Government. Despite the election outcome, there remains some doubt that the new Afghan Government will enjoy the wide support that U.S. policymakers were counting on.

The complexity of the Embassy's structure and operations parallels the complexity of the security and political situation in the country as a whole. There is tension among the U.S. Government's lofty goals, the Embassy's ability to advance them, and the capacity and commitment of elements of the Afghan Government to implement them. Corruption threatens the Afghan Government's effectiveness. Its human rights record remains poor, including its record on violence and discrimination against women, lack of due process, weak rule of law, and restrictions against free speech. The security situation is dire in many regions, and has deteriorated in some previously relatively calm areas in the north and west. U.S. forces have faced sharply increased violence over the past two years, and attacks in early September 2009 were at their highest levels since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Amidst this volatility, the U.S. administration, through the embassy, is encouraging major economic reforms to support private sector development. This includes

a focus on: job creation, increased agricultural productivity, education and vocational training, capacity building, governance, and rule of law, along with greater emphasis on projects at the subnational level. The former U.S. policy on eradication of poppy crops in the field has been replaced with a focus on shutting down high-level processing and trafficking targets and the systems that support them, and greater emphasis on alternative livelihoods.

In order to support these priorities, the Embassy is trebling its U.S. staff from 320 to approximately 900 countrywide and across agency lines by early 2010; this new number represents a quadrupling of U.S. staff at the provincial reconstruction teams (PRT) and forward operating bases. In addition to the assignment of Foreign Service officers to the embassy and to the PRTs, the Department also uses a mechanism authorized by Title 5, Section 3161 of the U.S. Code to hire subject matter experts (commonly called 3161s) to support its ambitious reconstruction and stability agenda. Most of these 3161s come from outside the U.S. Government and are assigned to PRTs where they are expected to work semi-autonomously. The Embassy is also experiencing growing difficulties in recruiting local staff in certain specialties to support this rapid U.S. direct-hire plus up.

The need to expand the already over-burdened life support systems (housing, food, security, transport) in Kabul and in the field to support the new staff has itself become a major short-term challenge. Some PRT staff is housed in makeshift lodgings with no heat or running water, while TDY staff in Kabul may occupy 65-bed dormitory-style containers with common bath facilities for months at a time. There are multiple permanent and temporary construction projects underway or in the pipeline, and efforts to relocate work and living spaces while those projects disrupt normal operations occupies much of the Embassy's energy and resources. The Embassy will also soon stand up consulates in Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. Meanwhile, the Embassy has already presented a follow-on proposal for an additional 307 U.S. direct-hires and 362 locally employed (LE) staff positions in the next two years. Because the majority of assignments to Kabul are for only one year with multiple R&R breaks, most U.S. staff spend approximately two months of their one-year tours on leave. The one-year assignment scenario limits the development of expertise, contributes to a lack of continuity, requires a higher number of officers to achieve the Administration's strategic goals, and results in what one former ambassador calls "an institutional lobotomy."¹

¹ *The Other War: Winning and Losing in Afghanistan* by Ron Neumann

In addition to the Embassy's focus on its own rapid growth, the staff manages a prodigious visitor workload that takes a toll on management resources in particular, and draws on all Embassy personnel to perform support functions. Some describe the incredible volume of visitors from all branches of the federal and even state governments as "war tourism". As of October 1, 2009, the Embassy had supported approximately 100 groups of visitors, totaling over 700 individuals, and accounting for over 30,000 bed nights. Approximately a dozen more Congressional delegations were expected before the end of 2009 (see housing section of this report for a description of availability and suitability of living conditions.) Although Congressional and other VIP travel builds crucial support for U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, it also taxes the same military and civilian assets that would otherwise be deployed in the vital counterinsurgency and reconstruction efforts that the visitors seek to evaluate. Official travelers often visit dangerous or remote areas. Travel to conflictive zones obviously increases the exposure of those visitors, as well as the Embassy and military personnel who support them, to insurgent attacks. It is not unusual for the Embassy to host multiple groups of Congressional visitors in one week, replete with individual tours of the war zone, separate representational events, and sequential meetings with the same Afghan Government representatives. The production of briefing materials and the performance of control officer duties cuts into the limited time that officers have to work with their Afghan counterparts outside the embassy walls.

Even when there are no visiting delegations, much of the embassy staff already works extraordinarily long hours in support of core initiatives. Continual 80-hour work weeks, even with periodic R&Rs, may, in fact, reduce productivity as staff reaches the half-way point in their tours of duty. The time difference between Kabul and Washington regularly extends Kabul's workday with a flurry of late night requests to clear briefers, or provide information for Washington's consumption first thing in the morning, Washington time. In addition, Washington's often preferred time for video conferences or telephone calls is at the end of their day, which equates with 2:00 a.m. or 3:00 a.m. Kabul time. Last-minute requests that Kabul be prepared to participate in information sharing meetings or policy discussions in the middle of the night sap the energy of the senior staff, disrupt the next day's meeting or travel schedule, and add to already long work days.

Much of the Embassy's policy implementation work actually occurs at the PRTs rather than at the Embassy itself. PRTs are integrated civil-military (civ-mil) organizations that expand the reach of U.S. Government and international community assistance efforts to the provincial level and to the local community. Approximately half of the PRTs are led by U.S. military forces; others are led by coalition military forces. PRTs seek to improve the governing capacity of the host nation through interaction with the governor's office as well as with provincial ministry representatives. They

assess international efforts and urge coordination with the host nation's development plan and, in doing so, try to mitigate constraints to development.

In order to ensure that the military units in charge of the PRTs are ready to receive the assigned civilian personnel, the Embassy established a small office to coordinate the logistical requirements for PRT employees. In the summer of 2009, this office expanded to coordinate the substantive work of the PRTs and was renamed the office of interagency provincial affairs (IPA) to reflect its broader responsibility for PRT coordination and oversight.

Finally, the deteriorating security situation in many areas of the country limits the embassy staff's exposure to Afghans other than regular government interlocutors and constrains the reporting and advocacy work that U.S. direct-hires from all agencies were brought to Afghanistan to undertake.

As of September 28, 2009, Embassy Kabul had 558 U.S. direct hires, including 3161s, 548 LE staff, and approximately 100 other U.S. staff hired through various other personnel mechanisms. U.S. development assistance in FY 2009 totaled approximately \$2.9 billion.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The inspection of Embassy Kabul coincided with a number of profound changes in the structure and size of the embassy, and the U.S. Government's policy on Afghanistan as a whole. The inspectors were not surprised, under those conditions, to find a certain amount of confusion and angst over the many changes in policy and procedure. For example, on counternarcotics the U.S. Government had only very recently decided to shift from a focus on eradication to interdiction of high-value production and shipment of illicit narcotics. Human resources and assets formerly directed against the cultivation of opium poppies were in the process of being redirected to the new policy focus. In another example, responsibility for the large police training programs was being shifted during the course of the inspection from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) to the Department of Defense. Once again staff members hired by INL were in transition, with some departing Afghanistan and others being redirected to work with the Department of Defense program.

Perhaps the most profound change was to the coordination of U.S. foreign assistance in Afghanistan – traditionally a responsibility of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). With the Administration's new focus on Afghanistan, and the huge increase in funding made available to development and security programs in that region, President Obama appointed a Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (S/SRAP) to direct changes in the operation of Embassy Kabul that have had a significant impact on the allocation of foreign assistance funds in Afghanistan. The Embassy established a new senior Foreign Service position of Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs (CDDEA) and recruited a senior Foreign Service officer who has served both as Ambassador and as Assistant Secretary to fill that position. This CDDEA, under the Ambassador's direction, has supervisory responsibility to ensure that all interagency economic and development assistance programs are fully integrated and working in sync with the U.S. and Afghan Governments' goals for Afghanistan.

In addition to the new CDDEA, Embassy Kabul has also appointed senior civilian representatives (SCR) who will have responsibility for coordination of all civilian development and security assistance activities in their corresponding North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) International Security Force for Afghanistan (ISAF) regions. As will be further developed in the assistance section of this report, the

Embassy is still in the process of clarifying the authorities of the CDDEA function, and the new senior civilian representatives vis-a-vis the mandatory internal controls and oversight responsibilities of the agency funding the actual assistance projects.

Even with the issues raised above, relations between the country team members and Embassy Kabul's executive team are harmonious and quite productive. The Ambassador chairs one country team meeting each week and allows very wide participation. A number of agency heads interviewed by the inspectors reported that time spent in this meeting is highly valued as it is the one occasion for many of them to hear directly the Ambassador's thoughts on key policy issues. It is also the only forum in which many of the smaller agencies are able to brief the Ambassador on important activities and high-level visits. The Ambassador, the deputy chief of mission (DCM), the assistant chief of mission, and the CDDEA all participate in a wide range of regularly-scheduled interagency meetings to include a series of 14 working groups, each focused on a specific theme of great importance to the U.S. Government's goals and objectives for Afghanistan, the law enforcement working group, the counterintelligence working group, visas viper, and emergency action committee meetings.

One of the great challenges of leading Embassy Kabul is the disparity in resources available to the U.S. mission as compared to those available to the U.S. military forces in country. Between May and July 2009, at the direction of S/SRAP and the U.S. Central Command, embassy and International Security Force for Afghanistan (IASF) staff crafted the Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan. In accordance with the plan, the Embassy established the 14 issue-focus working groups to enhance coordination between the civilian and military components on planning and implementation of governance and assistance activities. The Ambassador and his team are working to ensure that local fast track assistance projects implemented by U.S. forces to promote the counterinsurgency (COIN) program are both properly coordinated with U.S. development programs and fully sustainable. As will be developed further on in this report, the inspectors suggested that the embassy review this process with an eye to streamlining these 14 working groups to free up more subject matter expert time for work with Afghan counterparts.

Embassy Kabul no longer reports to the Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs but rather reports directly to S/SRAP, although it still receives administrative support from the regional bureau's executive office. S/SRAP is composed of a brain trust of subject matter experts who have played a key role in the design and development of the integrated civ-mil plan for Afghanistan. There is constant interaction between Embassy Kabul and the staff of S/SRAP, but a significant

number of these transactions involve S/SRAP staff tasking the Embassy to draft or review products, often on a very short fuse and literally in the middle of the night Kabul time. A number of Kabul officers interviewed noted that they have not been able to get assistance from S/SRAP staff nor do S/SRAP staff members routinely keep their embassy counterparts well briefed on Washington policy developments relevant to Embassy Kabul's responsibilities.

Embassy Kabul has a de facto six-day workweek. (See the management section of this report for a discussion of premium pay and overtime issues.) The Embassy participates in frequent conference calls and digital video conferences each week, many stretching into the early evening. During the course of the inspection it was clear that the weekly S/SRAP video conferences are scheduled during Embassy Kabul's one day off from work, forcing those officers who must support the Embassy's participation in these interactions to work on their only day off. In addition, while the OIG team was in Kabul, the Ambassador and the DCM, on top of a very long workday, were called to participate in a series of videoconferences scheduled by S/SRAP and the National Security Council between the hours of midnight and 4:00 a.m. Kabul time. While recognizing that emergent issues will need to be dealt with immediately, and sometimes in the middle of the night Kabul time, the inspectors believe that the Department and other Washington entities must pay greater attention to the time difference in Kabul.

Embassy Kabul has an approved FY 2011 MSP that was submitted by the Embassy on February 26, 2009. The relevance of that MSP, however, was dramatically curtailed by the Administration's review of its policy on Afghanistan and by the subsequent decision to shift its overarching strategy from one of attempting to secure the entire territory of Afghanistan to an ambitious integrated civ-mil COIN program. The Embassy has worked closely with ISAF on a Joint Campaign plan that incorporates both civilian and military goals and objectives. The inspectors urged post management to initiate work on the FY 2012 MSP so that the new positions and resources it will need to carry out the COIN strategy are captured in the Department's normal planning process and not simply to rely on the Joint Campaign plan. See the rightsizing section of this report for a formal recommendation.

The Ambassador and DCM exhibited support for the mission's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program not only in the recruitment of female and minority officers, but also in the public diplomacy work of the Embassy. For example, the Ambassador makes a point of including his spouse on his internal travel to the provinces of Afghanistan. This allows his spouse to take advantage of the media spotlight on the Ambassador's visits to call attention to the need for Afghan men to allow their wives a more equal role in society.

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Morale at Embassy Kabul has been challenged by the stresses of an almost 100 percent personnel turnover, a massive civilian buildup at a frenetic pace, the redesign of development assistance programs, the continuing high volume of official visitors, and the need to support an extended Presidential strategy review. In addition, the involuntary curtailments of several recently arrived officers led some staff to perceive that any misstep would result in their own removal. The short-term impact of the expansion of the executive office from the traditional ambassador and DCM to four ambassadorial-level positions to include the Ambassador, the DCM, the assistant COM, and the CDDEA – each of whom plays a role in policy development, tasking of work, and clearance of all products -- has also had a negative impact on morale. The embassy leadership was aware of these problems and was engaged in a process to revamp and streamline the executive secretariat support system. The inspectors suggested a number of improvements to the executive secretariat function, discussed later in this report, which should help ameliorate some of the adjustment difficulties.

Embassy Kabul is on a path to increase its footprint by more than 100 percent. Its approved positions in January 2009 were 531 (320 of which were U.S. direct hires), but by the end of this calendar year it is projected that total staffing will be over 1,300 employees (approximately 900 of which will be U.S. direct-hires.) Most of these positions will need to be housed, at and will work on, the embassy compound, but more than 380 are projected to work out of PRTs and other field locations at over 100 locations around Afghanistan. Provisions for life support and security at these locations have not yet been finalized. The reality of work in Afghanistan is that some officers under chief of mission control who work at field locations are living under primitive conditions without basic housing and sanitation. Embassy leadership is fully aware of these shortcomings and actively engaged in negotiations with coalition partners and Department of Defense commanders to rectify them. However, it is not likely that accommodations available for this civilian upsurge will be adequate in the short term absent support by interagency officials for Embassy efforts.

Conditions on the embassy compound are already strained beyond capacity, and, despite the embassy's efforts, there will be serious challenges in residential and office space. Security vulnerabilities are detailed in the classified annex to this report. The management controls section of this report will discuss recommendations for improvements to the internal systems used by the Embassy to avoid waste, fraud, and mismanagement as it implements the ambitious building projects and life support systems augmentations that will be required to care for this increased number of staff members.

RIGHTSIZING

It is not possible to evaluate rightsizing at Embassy Kabul the same way that one would at any other U.S. embassy. The Department has responded to the Administration's renewed emphasis on Afghanistan with plans for a vibrant civ-mil partnership. In order to match the military's capacity to implement reconstruction and stabilization goals, the Embassy requested hundreds of new positions both in Kabul and in the field, primarily at PRTs. Because the Department committed to complete the first phase of this plus up before the end of 2009 with a second phase to begin in early 2010, new staff is arriving in Afghanistan before the Embassy can prepare position descriptions, ready housing, and office space, or adequate onsite supervision for the subject matter experts (3161s), many of whom have never worked in the government.

Embassy Kabul is expanding its life support infrastructure to accommodate these newly arrived employees as rapidly as it can at considerable effort that, in some cases, has resulted in insufficient attention to good management practice. This will be developed further in the resource section of this report. Prior to FY 2010, most of the funding for this expansion, as well as funding for the greatly enhanced bilateral assistance programs, has been derived from supplemental funding. Supplemental funding levels were incorporated into both the FY 2010 budget and the FY 2011 budget request to sustain the expansion of the U.S. mission and its programs. The U.S. Mission to Afghanistan will be dependent on regularly appropriated program funding in the future and will be required to evaluate the affordability of its activities carefully. The MSP continues to be the appropriate vehicle to insert Embassy Kabul's resource needs into the Department's long-term planning process.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Kabul should capture all the new positions and resources that it needs to carry out its counterinsurgency strategy in the FY 2012 Mission Strategic Plan. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION DIRECTIVE-38 PROCESS

As part of the Administration's decision to surge civilian employees in Afghanistan, the Embassy was directed to process hundreds of new position justifications. The OIG team did not have the time or the resources to evaluate each of these hundreds of new positions or their justifications; the inspectors are concerned that there has been a lack of planning on how to link new, generously funded programs with an appropriate number of implementing officers and with sufficient officers to provide the requisite oversight. A quick review of several NSDD-38 requests indicated that many were hastily prepared and essentially used the same justification for multiple positions. In one case, the inspectors spoke with representatives from an agency that had filed an NSDD-38 request to create up to ten full-time positions in Afghanistan but had not yet decided what those positions would do when the employees actually arrived in country.

The inspectors also noted that the NSDD-38 approvals issued by the Embassy failed to require other agencies to commit to specific ICASS costs, did not clarify the question of where the new officers would work or live in advance, and failed to reach agreement on extra costs attributable to the new positions such as the cost of providing security escort services. The fact that most of these costs are paid by the Department using supplemental funds has removed a budgetary limitation that normally serves as a force for discipline in evaluations of new NSDD-38 requests.

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

The Ambassador and DCM realized upon their arrival that executive office support was insufficient for their needs. Embassy Kabul has a large executive secretariat operation very different from other staff assistant or visitor assistance operations found at most large U.S. embassies. The structure and processes have been evolving over the past few months, leaving many in the embassy uncertain about expectations and devoid of feedback. Many U.S. direct-hire staff reported inadequate two-way communication with embassy leadership and the staff assistant operation in addition to problems with lost paperwork, tight deadlines, and last minute, late night taskings. With the arrival of a new executive secretary halfway into the inspection to build on initiatives begun by an interim executive secretary, a more rational executive secretariat is beginning to take shape. Some refinements on work flow, team assignments, and visitor support still remain before the operation can run seamlessly and with minimal stress or overtime.

Accelerated Success and the Ambassador

Both the Ambassador and the DCM have exceptionally ambitious schedules. The Ambassador works in overdrive all the time, and his own long hours, his one or two trips within Afghanistan per week, a robust meeting schedule, and a representational plan built around a steady stream of high-level visitors and Congressional delegations drive a corresponding flurry of activity from the executive secretariat.

Until a few weeks before the inspection, the staff assistants were either inexperienced or pulled from other parts of the Embassy with no formal standard operating procedures (SOP) to guide them, a situation that they inherited upon assignment. There was also, until recently, no experienced executive secretary to organize the staff assistant operation and ensure efficiency. There are now three full-time, mid-level staff assistant positions, and an agreed upon tracking system for papers moving through the executive office. In theory, the staff assistants work shifts, but in reality they are all on duty at least 12 hours each day, often more. Until recently, they planned all travel for the Ambassador and DCM, and one of them also accompanies the Ambassador to all his meetings and on all travel, performing much like a military staff aide rather than in the traditional staff assistant role. The staff assistants still lead planning for the Ambassador's travel, although the logistics and control officer function have recently moved from the executive secretariat to the IPA section. (See Embassy Visitor Bureau section below for other travel planning.) This change has reduced the frenetic activity in the executive office and permitted the staff assistants to perform their more traditional roles.

Because of space limitations, the executive secretary and the staff assistants are not colocated. The executive secretary sits in another office down the corridor from the executive suite, and is not in close enough proximity either to train the staff assistants, ensure equitable assignments, or to run interference on more complicated issues. Because of his location, he cannot play a useful chief of staff role in problem solving matters that could be redirected to other offices or handled without the involvement of the Ambassador or DCM. As the inspection was concluding, the executive secretary was adapting one of the staff assistant work areas in the executive suite for his use and relocating one or two of the staff assistants to nearby office space. The OIG team concurs with this relocation as a way of enhancing oversight of the staff assistant operation and rationalizing their work assignments.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Kabul should reorganize the staff assistant operation so that the executive secretary manages a rotating schedule of responsibilities for the three staff assistants to include facilitating paper flow, note taking, country team follow-up, travel, and other support activities as required. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

In a top heavy hierarchy, the clearance process can be onerous. The interim executive secretary codified a series of formats on a SharePoint site so that officers now have drafting models. This cuts down on paper rejected for formatting problems but does not mitigate the fact that a paper coming from the economic section, for example, may have to move from the CDDEA to the staff assistant operation, which will decide whether the assistant COM has to clear it as well, then to the executive secretary, and finally to the DCM who will decide whether it needs further edits before going to the Ambassador, or if it is a telegram whether it can be transmitted. Although section chiefs do have the authority to transmit some memoranda and reporting telegrams on their own, a considerable amount of paper wends its way to the executive office via multiple clearance levels, with the potential for edits at each juncture. Staff assistants may also return products for punctuation or word changes as part of an effort to encourage attention to detail and more professional products.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Kabul should streamline its clearance process, using staff assistants to make nonsubstantive changes to end products, initiating in-house tradecraft training, if necessary, to encourage better products from initial drafters, and reducing the number of clearing officers wherever possible. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The Embassy Visitors Bureau

The executive secretary also oversees a three-person embassy visitor bureau (EVB).² One of the EVB staff is a Foreign Service officer who focuses predominantly on Congressional visits; one eligible family member (EFM) handles other high-level visitors; and the second EFM organizes travel for the DCM, the assistant

² There was a fourth unfilled position for an EFM in the EVB at the time of the inspection.

COM, and the CDDEA, and also supports Congressional visits. In October 2009, the Embassy supported 11 multiple-day and multiple-visitor high-level delegations, and in November 2009, it supported an additional 15 similar visits. Obviously, other embassy officers participate in visitor support and control officer duties, but the increased capacity in the EVB will help to reduce the burden for visitor support on the rest of the embassy staff.

The EVB, the staff assistants, the regional security officer (RSO), and other elements of the embassy and the military that coordinate transportation for official visits spend an inordinate amount of time arranging last minute requests to visit sites throughout the country. While the OIG team was on site, one Congressional delegation, upon arrival, unexpectedly requested travel outside of Kabul for the next day, redirecting the efforts of several embassy staff at the last minute to try to coordinate an unanticipated trip. Travel outside Kabul requires considerable preparation, security arrangements, and the redirection of air transport that would otherwise be engaged in operational activities. The Embassy does not have a good mechanism for advising official visitors of the limitations on travel in the conflictive areas, for imposing reasonable deadlines to decide on their travel programs, and for holding the delegations to those programs so that the Embassy has time to arrange secure travel and minimize disruptions while the visitors are on the ground. Bearing in mind that much of this travel is tied to the Administration's strategic objectives, the Embassy also requires strong support from S/SRAP and the Bureau of Legislative Affairs to rationalize congressional and executive branch travel to Afghanistan.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Kabul should develop, implement, and enforce a protocol for official visitors that requires travelers to submit their preferred programs, including in-country travel, at least 72 hours before the group's arrival in Afghanistan to allow for adequate logistical preparation. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Protocol and Interpretation

Three LE protocol assistants support the Ambassadors' meetings and representation agenda—much of which is built around the high-level visitor schedule. They work closely with the residence manager on event planning, and serve as escorts during representational events. The sole LE interpreter augments their number, serving as an invitee escort, but also standing by for nearly every representational event involving Afghan attendees in case interpretation is required. All of the protocol assistants and the interpreter work considerable overtime, often cutting deeply into family and rest time. The Embassy is trying to recruit two additional trilingual

interpreters, and the OIG team endorses that effort. At present, although they often work side by side on representational events, protocol assistants are supervised and rated by the Ambassador's office manager while interpreters fall under the executive secretary's supervision. Because of recent changes in the structure of the executive secretariat, the interpreter, in particular, is not adequately mentored or considered for awards with the same attention that has been given to the protocol assistants. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the Embassy review the arrangements for the supervision of protocol assistants and interpreters so that they all receive the same level of mentoring and supervision.

The Washington Factor

There is not a single quiet day for the Kabul executive office. The Ambassador has to be alert and focused for full days of meetings, for action-packed travel days into the hinterlands, and for speeches. Most of the U.S. direct-hire staff also work seven days a week and late into the night. It is important to have excellent communications with Washington on policy developments, and in fact a good portion of the paper generated in Kabul is a result of requests for information in Washington. Washington, however, is sometimes not sensitive to the schedule that it imposes on an already-stressed Embassy as a result of the time and work week differences.

The Department tends to push out its paperwork for clearance or action towards the end of their work day, or close to midnight Kabul time. Often the Embassy receives long policy papers for comment with a demand for overnight turnaround time. Since those responsible for comment often have their next day completely scheduled, they have no choice but to try to provide input that same evening and sacrifice meals or sleep.

From October 1 through November 12, 2009, Embassy Kabul participated in ten late night video conferences, some called at the last minute, between 9:00 p.m. and 4:30 a.m., in addition to other video conferences scheduled during working hours. Three nights in a row during the month of November, the Ambassador participated in video conferences between midnight and 2:00 a.m. The OIG team witnessed one day when the Ambassador had to cancel his next day's activities in order to get enough rest after being up virtually the entire night preparing for and participating in a video conference with Washington. On occasion he has to leave for previously scheduled travel a matter of hours after a 3:00 a.m. video conference terminates. The Ambassador is not the only person who is involved in late night conversations with Washington; he is usually supported by the DCM, a staff assistant, and other subject matter experts—all of whom then have to either reorganize their next day schedules or work sleep deprived.

Recommendation 5: The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan should coordinate all routine high-level communications between the Department, the National Security Council, and Embassy Kabul and restrict such communications with the Embassy to between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Kabul time. (Action: S/SRAP)

Embassy Kabul participates via video teleconference in a weekly Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell Federation Forum meeting that is chaired by the Joint Staff. This regular meeting, which can involve up to a dozen embassy participants, is scheduled for Friday evenings during the Kabul dinner hour. Fridays are an official day off, and the only day of the week when most embassy staff can take a few hours away from the office. All Embassy Kabul staff rely on a cafeteria for meal service during limited hours at the same time as the regular Friday meeting.

Recommendation 6: The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan should ask the Joint Staff to reschedule its routine weekly Friday teleconferences with Embassy Kabul during official Kabul working hours. (Action: S/SRAP)

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

A small political section carries out Embassy Kabul's reporting and advocacy on political issues with the Afghan central Government. The section focuses primarily on bilateral relations rather than Afghanistan's relations with its neighbors. It covers human rights, Afghanistan's fledgling parliament, and other issues well, but lacks depth in its analysis of Afghan leaders who could be effective U.S. interlocutors. It is not responsible for reporting on developments outside the capital city (see IPA section). The section is well led but not well organized to absorb a large, projected increase in its staffing. The skillful use of temporary surge capacity enabled it to cover important elections without being overwhelmed. The biggest challenge it faces is the lack of experienced officers familiar with the complex political and cultural dynamics of Afghanistan. To overcome the effects of one-year tours of duty and constant turnover, it could benefit from additional internal management tools including reporting and travel plans, contact and handover systems, and more in-depth predeployment training.

Reporting and Analysis

Working in cramped quarters but supported by experienced LE staff, the political section turns out a steady stream of reporting cables, briefing memos, and emails on developments at the national level in Afghanistan. Most reporting is well written, timely, and objective. The focus is on spot reporting, with a minimum of analysis, although there is a measurable trend toward greater analytical depth each spring as officers near the end of their one-year tours of duty and reap the benefit of greater familiarity with the country and its issues.

Reporting on external issues is more limited. No one in the political section follows Afghan foreign relations on a full-time basis. In addition to its focus on bilateral relations, the Embassy could expand reporting and analysis about Afghanistan's relations with neighboring countries, particularly Iran. With the opening of a consulate general in Herat, the Embassy will have enhanced options for external political reporting.

immediate circle. In the absence of such formerly required actions as the country director's annual evaluation of reporting, the Embassy has no mechanism for obtaining formal feedback from a wider range of readers in the Department and other agencies. Combined with the overuse of email and restricted caption traffic, this has meant that some bureaus and agencies in Washington do not receive the reporting that they need.

Recommendation 9: The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan should collect and convey the reporting needs of Washington consumers to Embassy Kabul by providing the mission with a periodic summary of key areas of reporting interest that reflect the needs of all consumers while consolidating and prioritizing needs, wherever possible, to reduce ad hoc requests. (Action: S/SRAP)

The skillful use of temporary reinforcements enabled the Embassy to cover crucial national elections without overwhelming its small political section. A TDY elections team, led by a retired Ambassador with experience in several similar situations, acted as a semi-autonomous reporting group but cooperated closely with the political section, strengthening reporting and analysis without creating tensions over turf and rivalries. The OIG team informally recommended that the embassy make more use of such surge capacity in the future, though not necessarily only for elections.

The Embassy also made good use of a professional associate family member to increase its coverage of human rights. With only one ELO available to cover the human rights portfolio, the section was in danger of missing deadlines for congressionally required reports on human rights, religious freedom, and trafficking in persons – particularly because some annual deadlines fall immediately after the summer officer turnover. These reports are a vital part of the Embassy's reporting goals but are enormously time-consuming. Hiring an EFM to draft them enabled the human rights officer to continue the investigations, advocacy, and reporting on which they ultimately depend.

While the reports that the Embassy produced this way were widely praised in Washington, it makes no sense to assign the drafting of such complex and important assessments to a newly arrived officer. The Embassy cannot change the deadlines by which final drafts must be in Washington, but it could alter its internal deadlines for preparing them. The OIG team informally recommended that the Embassy make the first draft of some annual reports the last thing the human rights officer does before departing in the summer rotation rather than the first thing his or her replacement does upon arrival in the fall.

Stretching Embassy Kabul's reporting resources to cover demands is made more difficult by the absence of a reporting plan. While it has used one in the past, the Embassy did not produce one for the current fiscal year. A traditional reporting plan that promises lengthy analytical research pieces at rigid intervals would not be useful in the busy Afghan context, but a reporting strategy that lays out key anticipated issues on a time line and identifies constraints to covering them could help the section make the most efficient use of scarce resources.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Kabul should produce a strategic reporting plan for political issues and link it to resource planning through the Mission Strategic Plan. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Reporting from Afghanistan could also be strengthened by adding periodic, stand-back summaries to the flow of daily spot reporting. Turnover among Washington consumers is not as rapid as it is at the embassy. Nevertheless, it is difficult for many readers and policymakers to keep sight of important trends and developments in the relentless flow of daily emails.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Kabul should prepare a quarterly cable summarizing key political developments and trends in addition to its daily reporting. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The inspectors' survey found that consumers in the Department and other agencies as well as other parts of the mission need more leadership analysis reporting to identify effective Afghan interlocutors. Information is currently scattered in different places, and the political section makes too little use of it to strengthen its reporting. Many officers are unaware of how to report such information and few telegrams contain the necessary TAGS for automatic retrieval. Although the Embassy has an experienced leadership analyst available on temporary duty in the political military section, it has not assigned a mission-wide biographics coordinator as required in 2 FAM 113.3. One of the political section's innovative LE staff has constructed an impressive file of information on key members of parliament but is uncertain how to integrate it with other biographic records. The political section does not take the additional step of assembling and maintaining a database of information to assist all parts of the mission in identifying reliable leaders at the provincial and subcabinet level and in the private sector.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Kabul should appoint an experienced biographics coordinator, and that coordinator should construct appropriate databases of information on key Afghan leaders and potential leaders to assist in identifying effective interlocutors. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The weakest aspect of political reporting is the link between developments at the national and local levels. Some of the Embassy's most valuable reporting comes from the PRTs, which were not originally envisioned or equipped to do reporting but do develop important economic and political information through their first-hand access to provincial leaders. To be useful to consumers in Washington, reporting on developments at the national and local levels must be closely integrated, because the only way to understand the actions of the central government is often to relate them to maneuvering in the provinces while information on developments in each local area is of limited value until collated and placed in context. Instead of holding a single section accountable for both perspectives, Embassy Kabul divides the responsibility. The political section is responsible only for developments at the national level; IPA reports developments at subnational levels.

This bifurcated approach has not produced reporting that sufficiently combines the two perspectives. Political officers do not travel outside Kabul often, and some of their reporting could be strengthened by more information on the view from outside the capital. Some PRT reporting is too parochial to be useful because the drafting officers do not have access to reporting and information from the Embassy that enables them to place it in a broader context. Most political reporting from the PRTs is cleared by political officers before it is sent to the Department. In some cases, IPA and the political section have each begun a project only to discover that the other is working on the same issue. On a few occasions, they have been unable to include supporting information necessary to a well-supported analysis because of disagreements over which one "owns" the information.

As discussed in more detail in the section on PRTs below, the OIG team found that IPA needs to retain control over any requests for action from the political or other sections to protect the PRTs from too many ad hoc "taskings" that would divert them from their primary missions. At the same time, PRT reporting could benefit greatly from more frequent guidance from the political and economic sections that would help them know how best to fit their pieces of the puzzle into the embassy's broader needs. The political section and IPA could also cooperate on a plan for political officers to travel more extensively outside the capital to strengthen their reporting and for officers from PRTs to contribute their experience and insights

to the reporting sections during visits to the Embassy. The OIG team informally recommended that the political section provide all PRTs with periodic guidance on what issues would be most useful to investigate and report, carefully distinguishing this guidance from immediate taskings or requirements. The OIG team also informally recommended that the section develop a funded plan for reporting-oriented travel outside the capital city.

Advocacy and Operations

The Embassy makes a limited number of demarches due to the pace of events. In addition, the Afghan Government is so dependent on its Western allies that such formal diplomatic requests are rare. Instead, the Embassy competes with other foreign embassies for access to a thin layer of decisionmakers in each ministry and urges U.S. views on them in meetings. It also takes its case directly to the fledgling Afghan parliament, discussing U.S. points of interest with members. In 2009, the Embassy assigned a second political officer to this important business.

This work is made more difficult by the lack of political parties in Afghanistan. Instead of organizations with officials at all levels with whom diplomats can interact, most factions represent a single, powerful individual. The Embassy is still experimenting with the most effective method for covering Parliament. At present, one Foreign Service officer and one LE staff spend hours watching plenary sessions from the visitors' gallery as well as making calls on individual members. This is not an efficient use of time. The OIG team informally recommended that the Embassy make use of the daily summary of developments in Dari and English that Parliament now produces through a grant by USAID.

Political officers are not responsible for managing any grants or contracts. Beginning in FY 2010, however, a section officer will serve as grants officer representative for two grants from the Office for Monitoring and Combating Trafficking in Persons. Both grants closely match the policy needs identified in embassy reporting and have formal embassy support. Embassy Kabul and the trafficking office worked closely and harmoniously to design these programs and the section is well placed to oversee and monitor them.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor has worked with the section to identify programs it could fund that are related to women's access to the political system, a neuralgic issue in Afghanistan but one of the mission's key policy objectives. Political officers have identified several possible programs that would support this goal. S/SRAP has proposed expanding grants in this area to \$20 million or more in FY 2010. The Embassy feels confident that the political section, drawing

upon grants expertise in PAS, could provide adequate oversight for a limited grants program; however, the inspectors found that the political section lacks the staffing or the specialized training required to oversee a grants program of the magnitude that S/SRAP is proposing. Nor is PAS, as detailed in this report, able to assist with a new program supporting women's access to the political system on top of its present and proposed expanded duties.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Kabul should assign responsibility for oversight of large-scale grants for the advancement of women's rights to an agency with development experience. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Management and Staffing

The political section is well led and managed but is not well organized to absorb a large, projected increase in its staffing. At present, the entire section is a single, flat structure. Having everyone report to the deputy counselor instead of to a unit chief creates too great a span of control for effective management, particularly since the deputy also has a substantive portfolio. It also deprives the section's mid-level officers of supervisory experience and means that no one takes the place of the counselor or deputy when they are away from post on frequent R&R breaks. Carrying out the Embassy's plan to nearly double the number of officers in its political section will require a different management structure.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Kabul should reorganize its political section into at least two units, headed by officers who can replace the deputy counselor when necessary. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The biggest challenge facing the section is the combination of one-year tours, inexperienced officers, and simultaneous rotation of all personnel. As the inspection began, no officer had been in the job for longer than two months. Almost all except the counselor and deputy were on their first political reporting tour. Many had not received a handover memo from their predecessor, and most did not receive an orientation to the section's work although they did receive the mission's overall administrative orientation. The section does not use an integrated source management system, travel plan, or representation plan. Because the formats and requirements for producing memos and other products for the Ambassador have changed multiple times, the section has been unable to develop SOPs or "how-to" books. The OIG team left informal recommendations on how to develop and make greater use of these traditional management tools.

Refugee Affairs

The small refugee coordinator's office monitors and evaluates Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration Affairs (PRM) grants in Afghanistan, which are focused primarily on returning refugees, displaced persons, gender issues, and hygiene. PRM enters into all cooperative or grant agreements with the nongovernmental organizations that oversee their projects; all of the grants are for one year in duration. The grants officer representatives for the cooperative agreements are in the Department. The sole refugee coordinator and two LE staff track, monitor, and provide interim evaluations of the PRM-funded projects in conjunction with the grants officer representatives who, until recently, traveled periodically to Afghanistan. The monitoring system is in place, but the deteriorating security situation limits the refugee coordinator's ability to conduct onsite inspections.

PRM makes every effort to fund projects only when the bureau and the refugee coordinator think they will be able to get to the project site without risking life and limb. There are no PRM-funded projects in the volatile south and fewer in the north than previously. PRM realizes that they will have to carefully consider how to monitor future grants given the uncertain security situation. In some cases, even PRM's nongovernmental implementing partners are unable to get to the region where local counterparts are carrying out the projects. The refugee coordinator relies on second-hand reports on how the projects are advancing. With refugee returns from Pakistan at their lowest levels since 2002 and PRM funding decreasing accordingly, the refugee coordinator realizes that synergy with other assistance programs is the best way to maximize PRM resources. There is, however, no systematic coordination of programming between the refugee coordinator's office and USAID offices working in some of the same regions. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the refugee coordinator maintain regular contact with USAID counterparts as they both develop strategies for assistance.

The OIG team also made an informal recommendation that the Ambassador include the refugee coordinator or the senior LE assistant when he travels to areas where there are PRM-funded projects. The Ambassador can often travel to areas with his protective detail that the RSO would consider unsuitable for travel by less well-protected officer staff.

POLITICAL-MILITARY AFFAIRS

Unlike most embassies, Kabul has a large, independent political-military (pol-mil) section. This approach reflects the need for constant interaction with U.S. and NATO military forces and facilitates the Ambassador's desire for greater unity of military and civilian efforts in Afghanistan. Strong leadership and a well-thought-out reorganization have transformed this section into one capable of carrying out a large, projected increase in its workload. This includes extensive new responsibilities for strategic planning. In 2009, the Embassy reorganized its pol-mil section into three new units that handle demining and disarming, security assistance, and strategic planning. It also disbanded the Integrated Civil-Military Action Group set up by planners from the Office for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) and transferred its responsibilities to the pol-mil section. In addition to traditional pol-mil programs such as demining and the training and equipping of Afghan military and police, the expanded pol-mil section is now responsible for planning and assessment metrics and support for an elaborate system of 14 civ-mil working groups that needs to be streamlined and consolidated as recommended below. The pol-mil section serves as a liaison with military attachés from other embassies because Embassy Kabul does not have a Defense attaché.

Demining and Disarming

The first unit now oversees traditional pol-mil programs such as weapons removal and abatement, the recovery of surface-to-air missiles, and humanitarian demining. These assistance programs totaled \$29 million in FY 2009 and are expected to grow to over \$100 million in FY 2010. The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) manages the assistance programs and implements them primarily through contract personnel in Afghanistan. Embassy Kabul's role is to provide political oversight and guidance to ensure that they support the mission's policy objectives and are well coordinated with each other and with ISAF. An OIG inspection of the demining program in early 2009 found that the program was well managed and effective.³ In order to maintain effective oversight if funding for these programs triples, however, the section will need to find ways to reduce competing demands on officers' time by reassigning clerical and other duties as recommended below.

³ ISP-I-10-11, October 2009.

This unit is also responsible for liaison with NATO. Persuading allies to share the burden in Afghanistan is a key objective of U.S. policy, and the United States regarded it as a victory when NATO agreed in 2007, at U.S. urging, to take over responsibility for security throughout the country. Because each NATO member contributes troops to ISAF with a different set of caveats, however, U.S. actions in Afghanistan must be coordinated extensively with all 27 allies. In some cases this coordination has been easier for the U.S. military, whose commander in Afghanistan is also commander of NATO forces, than for the Embassy. There was initially resistance in some quarters to including British, Dutch and other Allied officers in all strategic planning meetings until the Embassy concluded that no effective planning could be done without their full participation.

As noted in the 2009 OIG inspection of the U.S. Mission to NATO, the Department launched a new program in September 2009 under which one officer at Embassy Kabul and one at the U.S. Mission to NATO exchange positions every six months. Each ends up spending half of a two-year tour in each of the two linked posts. The OIG team found that this new program is already paying dividends to both missions by improving the flow of information and coordination. It is also likely to strengthen both missions in their dealings with allies by providing them with officers who bring immediate, firsthand experience with the view from the other end of the telescope.

Security Assistance

The second pol-mil unit works with U.S. military forces on security assistance issues, including detainees and the training of Afghan military and police. It also supports the work of a combined new fusion cell set up in October 2009 to try to replicate in Afghanistan the success that Western forces had in Iraq in persuading enemy fighters to switch sides. The Embassy moved promptly to assign two Foreign Service officers to this cell, which will be led by a British general. It has not yet sorted out exactly how to clear its reporting and coordinate its advocacy with the new cell, which has been assigned the lead role in reintegration policy by NATO. The OIG team informally recommended that the mission review its systems for communication links, reporting responsibilities, and information sharing to ensure that this important work is fully coordinated with U.S. policy and UN mandates for the disarmament and reintegration of disillusioned former Taliban.

Like the other units, this group no longer depends on individual portfolios but works as an integrated team, in which three or more officers share overlapping responsibilities for an issue area. The OIG team found that this approach was more successful than traditional systems of portfolios and backups in ensuring coverage

of an issue during frequent absences for R&R. Using the team approach, the deputy section chief, who concentrates on management while the counselor focuses on policy, is able to let people go on leave with the assurance that each team will still have at least two other members who are equally familiar with all aspects of the work.

Strategic Planning

The third new unit handles strategic planning. In 2009, the Embassy abolished the Integrated Civilian-Military Action Group after concluding that its complex planning models and assertive style were not producing adequate results. Because of the need to keep the Embassy's planning linked with that of ISAF, the Ambassador instructed the pol-mil section to take over strategic planning. Using TDY assignments from S/CRS and other temporary staffing sources including military augmentees, the section hastily assembled a new planning unit known as the civ-mil plans and assessments subsection. Despite cramped working quarters and a shortage of computer terminals, it set to work to turn out planning documents including metrics, benchmarks, and the Joint Campaign plan that were cosigned by the Ambassador and the ISAF commander as a summary of their agreed strategic concepts.

During the inspection, this small staff was overwhelmed with requests from the Department for new metrics to determine whether the United States was making progress in Afghanistan. Under these conditions, it was impossible for the OIG team to assess the long-term viability of this new approach. The unit is also still in the experimental stages, using a series of short-term TDYs instead of creating permanent positions. However, it is clear that much of this planning work does not depend on interaction with the Afghan Government, and does not necessarily need to be done in Kabul, where the costs and security risks of maintaining U.S. employees are so high. The OIG team informally recommended that Embassy Kabul review the unit to determine whether some of its work could be done more cost effectively in the Department or at another embassy in the region.

Interagency Working Groups

In addition to its planning and assessment function, the pol-mil section is also responsible for staff support to Embassy Kabul's system of civ-mil working groups, which are directed by the CDDEA. Fourteen working groups, each chaired by a relevant agency or section and a corresponding military officer, report to an executive working group chaired by the DCM and the deputy ISAF commander. Its decisions are in turn submitted to weekly "summit" meetings between the Ambassador and the ISAF commander.

The inspection found shortcomings with this system that is still evolving. There are too many working groups to be efficient and they meet too frequently. Many working groups are being used primarily as coordinating bodies rather than decision mechanisms. In part because too many agencies or individuals are not kept aware of what their colleagues are doing, many working groups use all their time for the exchange of information, and do not reach a policy decision or consensus. The DCM is often too busy to chair meetings of the executive working group. The Embassy does not always keep minutes of key meetings or a formal, interagency record of decisions. After reviewing the amount of time expended on preparing for key meetings and comparing it to the number of decisions reached, the OIG team concluded that the system is cumbersome.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Kabul should streamline and consolidate its planning system by reducing the number of working groups, focusing agendas on decisions to be made, and keeping formal records of all meetings that reflect agreement by all agencies on what decisions were reached. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 16: Embassy Kabul should keep minutes of all regularly scheduled meetings between the Ambassador and the commander of U.S. military forces in Afghanistan, ensuring that the minutes reflect agreement by both sides on what decisions were reached. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 17: Embassy Kabul should add an administrative assistant to its political-military section, using an eligible family member or other appropriate hiring mechanism, to take over the clerical aspects of civilian-military planning meetings and required Leahy Amendment vetting. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Political Advisers

Embassy Kabul has eliminated most of its political adviser positions. This program, administered by the PM bureau, places Foreign Service officers in U.S. military commands where they can offer advice on the political considerations of military strategies and decisions. The political advisers were replaced by four new SCRs (see

executive direction) whose primary role is to coordinate and supervise all civilian personnel assigned to the four military regions in Afghanistan.

The Embassy believes this new approach, in which the SCR will be the co-equal of the military commander of that region rather than a member of his staff, will improve unity of government, enhance civilian stature in the implementation of reconstruction efforts, and better integrate civilian efforts with ongoing military plans. Because the experiment is so recent, the OIG team concluded that despite some encouraging indications, it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness.

ASSISTANCE: DEVELOPMENT, GOOD GOVERNANCE, COUNTERNARCOTICS, LAW ENFORCEMENT

Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs

The CDDEA is tasked with coordinating and overseeing the work of 14 sections and agencies at the U.S. mission. These include economic and development agencies such as USAID, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Treasury attaché, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Department of Transportation, and the economic section itself. The CDDEA also oversees a subgroup of entities consisting of the development and assistance portions of the rule of law section and law enforcement agencies including the Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Department of Homeland Security, and the INL office. Additional offices reporting to the CDDEA are the Afghanistan-Pakistan border coordinator and the large and growing IPA office.

The intent of the CDDEA's office is to link civilian efforts with military efforts to achieve the Administration's goals in Afghanistan. Within the civilian effort its aim is to end the stovepiping of information and program development within agencies and offices and instead coordinate a "whole of government" approach that reduces duplication and ensures that the goals and efforts of various agencies and offices are not in conflict with each other. CDDEA has succeeded in increasing coordination, reducing stove piping, and better assuring that development supports U.S. foreign policy. However, it has also created two new layers between the Embassy's executive office and the implementing agencies and offices.

The CDDEA is a former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary; he is assisted by three experienced Foreign Service deputy coordinating directors with line responsibility for a variety of functions and agencies or sections. A vast volume of paper passes through the three CDDEA deputies. In the first months of the new structure, the deputies not only coordinated and properly cleared documents, but also checked them for content, coherence, and relevance, as well as for style, form, and grammar. Their purpose was to ensure a level of quality to all paper provided to the CDDEA and eventually forwarded to the DCM and the Ambassador. Their efforts were directed by the executive office, in particular by the Ambassador and DCM who wanted to increase the volume and quality of reporting by officers who had front line interactions with Afghan interlocutors in the field. Because many of these officers lacked reporting expertise, this effort was labor intensive. Officers in many of the agencies and sections expressed considerable frustration at having their work returned not only for substantive additions but often for grammatical or semantic corrections. While CDDEA noted that the quality of draft documents has improved substantially, officers continued to report delays for editing. The inspectors made an informal recommendation that CDDEA staff focus their efforts on products for consumption outside of the Embassy such as reporting cables and give internal products a lighter scrub for policy consistency.

Development Assistance

The President's March 2009 announcement of a new direction for our engagement in Afghanistan altered the focus and pattern of development assistance. Many programs will now focus on developing Afghan leadership and assisting the Afghan Government to assume a larger role in their own development. At the national level, more U.S. assistance is channeled through the Afghan Government; at the subnational level, U.S. assistance is creating smaller, more flexible mechanisms to meet local needs and to decentralize decisionmaking.

In FY 2009, nearly \$2.8 billion was appropriated for development assistance for Afghanistan, with \$2.1 billion for USAID, \$485 million for INL and the remaining \$203 million mainly for PRM, PM, and the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation. The Administration has made a base request of \$2.8 billion for FY 2010, and the Ambassador has submitted a substantially larger request to meet the revised requirements of the President's strategy. In FY 2009 \$1.17 billion was allocated for reconstruction, which includes infrastructure as well as agriculture, health, and education. Democracy and governance programs were allocated \$959 million, which includes \$297 million (14 percent of USAID's appropriation) in direct assistance to the Afghan Government, principally through the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which is managed by the World Bank. Counternarcotics efforts were

funded at \$462 million, of which the majority was through USAID to fund programs for alternative crops to poppy. Humanitarian assistance, which includes demining and refugee reintegration, was budgeted at \$201 million. The programs of most of the U.S. law enforcement agencies present in Afghanistan and the ROL programs are funded from INL-administered, USAID, or Department of Defense money, and not through appropriations to their parent departments.

USAID is the primary designer and implementer of development assistance. By the end of 2009, USAID will have approximately 300 Americans and 180 LE staff in Afghanistan to manage the largest USAID development program in the world, funded at nearly \$2.1 billion for FY 2009. According to USAID, 20,000 staff members are employed by USAID-funded implementing partners – 19,000 of whom are Afghan nationals. Cumulatively, USAID-funded cash-for-work programs have provided employment for 304,000 Afghan citizens since 2002. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, by the end of 2009, will have 64 employees in Afghanistan devoted to agriculture development efforts.

As part of the Obama administration's new focus on Afghanistan, the newly created S/SRAP reviews and approves all USAID programs and projects, including new projects, additional funding for ongoing projects, and project extensions, to ensure that they support U.S. policy priorities. In some cases, S/SRAP has delegated this responsibility to the Ambassador. All new approved projects are initially awarded for one year with options for extensions. Although it is appropriate to ensure that all development programs support U.S. foreign policy objectives, the OIG team made an informal recommendation that CDDEA review the established process to make sure that only essential information is requested and, in the cases of contract extensions, that continued program relevance and contract performance are the key issues addressed.

To ensure civ-mil coordination and cooperation outside Kabul, the Embassy created four senior civilian representative positions, matching the four regional ISAF commands. Below them, in turn, are civilian representatives at the task force, provincial, and district levels. Each level is subordinate to the next level up, with the senior civilian representative reporting to IPA. Each level also has a counterpart military structure with which they coordinate activities and on whom they are dependent for security, logistical, and support services. The Government of Afghanistan, however, does not have regional or task force-level representation. Therefore it is essentially only at the national, provincial, and district levels that the U.S. Government civilians can mentor Afghan officials.

The Ambassador issued a letter of instruction to each of the senior civilian representatives charging them with coordinating and directing the work of all U.S. Government civilians under chief of mission authority within their region. Implementation of this instruction may come into conflict with specific U.S. Department of Agriculture, USAID, and INL development program requirements. Authority to direct USAID's programs is vested in the USAID mission director as delegated under USAID policy (Automated Directives System—ADS 103) from the USAID Administrator. The authority to change contracts or grants or to direct contractors or grantees is vested in warranted contracting officers and their certified representatives in accordance with federal acquisition regulations and specific agency regulations.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should implement policy decisions in accordance with acquisition and grant law and regulations, including the requirements that contract and grant changes be authorized by warranted contract and grant officers. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with A)

Personnel assigned outside of Kabul and under the responsibility of the regional senior civilian representative may come from several different agencies and may have been hired under several different personnel systems. There are differing rules regarding direction and performance evaluations for contractors. In the case of USAID contractors, there is a contractual obligation requiring that they be directed and their performance evaluated by USAID direct-hires. The Ambassador's letter of instruction charges the senior civilian representatives to rate or review the performance of their immediate subordinates regardless of parent agency. The USAID rules conflict with this letter of instruction.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Kabul should amend and reissue the letter of instruction from the Ambassador to the senior civilian representatives in the regional commands to bring the text into harmony with contractual obligations regarding direction and performance evaluations of other agency contractors and indicating that responsibility for direction and performance evaluations must remain with the employing agency. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

In the same vein and relating to the same instruction regarding rating subordinates, employing agencies have different systems for employee performance evaluation. USAID rates its Foreign Service officers with a 360 degree rating, and does not use a reviewing officer. USAID regulations state that personal services contractors (PSC) may not supervise U.S. direct-hire USAID employees or employees of other U.S. Government agencies.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Kabul should conduct a review of the rules, regulations, and practices of all agencies with employees under chief of mission authority in Afghanistan and amend guidance as necessary so that performance evaluations are done in accordance with the appropriate rating system. (Action: Embassy Kabul.)

INL and USAID officers and their PSCs at regional commands, PRTs, and district support teams are activity managers and as such are tasked by INL or USAID to evaluate and report to contracting officer technical representatives in Kabul on the performance of implementing partners (contractors or grantees) in their region. These technical reports go through IPA for clearance and approval before being forwarded to INL or USAID Kabul.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Kabul should authorize activity managers and contracting officer technical representatives in the field to send technical performance reports on implementing partners and development projects directly to the corresponding agency's contracting office at the embassy at the same time that they send such reports to the interagency provincial affairs office. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Rule of Law Program

The ROL section under CDDEA is responsible for developing the Embassy's ROL and anticorruption strategies as well as coordinating the development assistance activities of six law enforcement agencies. In light of the increasing emphasis that the Obama administration is giving to anticorruption in its overall Afghan strategy, this is a daunting and high-profile task. The three officers in the section (two Foreign Service officers and one U.S. Army Judge Advocate General colonel) are charged with bringing competing agencies to one table to develop a coordinated strategy to improve Afghanistan's legal regime.

There are several agencies at Embassy Kabul that have a wide spectrum of technical capacity in the administration of justice and in law enforcement, and most have ROL coordinators of their own. Partners include the full complement of law enforcement agencies, the largest INL program in the world, and USAID. The ROL section leads both the rule of law and anticorruption working groups and develops and coordinates a cooperative action plan to focus judicial capacity building assistance on achieving functioning courts capable of hearing corruption and low-level insurgent cases. It coordinates a resource action plan to make the Kabul-based Major Crime Task Force/Anticorruption Unit functional and works with the Department of Justice, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Department of Defense's Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A), and INL to implement the Afghan Judicial Security Force. Non-embassy entities, like ISAF and the Government of the United Kingdom, also have programs that dovetail with U.S. efforts in this area. In addition to encouraging a unified approach to ROL issues at the Embassy itself, the ROL section provides guidance to nearly a dozen ROL coordinators at PRTs. One of the ROL section's top goals for the next six months is to work with IPA to improve the flow of policy guidance on ROL and anticorruption issues to the field and at the same time enhance ROL-related reporting from officers at the PRTs.

Funding from the supplemental and from INL underwrite most of the Embassy's ROL programs, no matter which agency is actually providing the technical expertise. At present, the availability of technical resources determines the Embassy's priorities, and the ROL section is trying to coordinate and leverage well-funded entities that are implementing the programs that they have developed with the personnel assets they have in country. The Embassy prepared a draft ROL strategy, and S/SRAP has approved much of it in principle, but as yet there is no approved overarching strategy that the ROL section can use to set priorities, timelines, the needed numbers of personnel, and their skill sets. Once the ROL strategy is formally approved, the Embassy can adjust the size of its ROL coordination office, as appropriate.

Recommendation 22: The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, in coordination with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, should approve and disseminate a sustainable, comprehensive rule of law strategy, to include program priorities, interagency staffing and skill needs, and a timeline. (Action: S/SRAP, in coordination with INL)

Recommendation 24: Embassy Kabul should review the positions it requested for FY 2010 in light of the approved anticorruption strategy and assign an anticorruption officer to oversee its implementation. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Programs

INL's narcotics control program operates in direct support of ROL and anticorruption programs in Afghanistan. Its major objectives are threefold:

- 1) attack and weaken the nexus among narcotics, crime, corruption, and the insurgency;
- 2) build a professional and competent Afghan national police force; and
- 3) support nationwide development of rule of law institutions and capabilities.

The INL/NAS budget for Afghanistan averaged over \$217 million in each of the past five years. The Department also funds from Washington, sizeable contracts to support discrete programs such as police training (see below) and counternarcotics. The INL/NAS section at Embassy Kabul oversees and evaluates the performance of these contracts even though it does not control the funding stream. INL-administered funding enables DEA and other law enforcement agencies to accomplish their goals.

Grants and Contracts

In addition to its sizable budget, INL/NAS provides oversight for upwards of \$1.8 billion in contract services to support its programs related to counternarcotics, construction, and police training throughout the country. The Foreign Service program officers who assess contract performance, however, are not also the in-country contracting officer representatives (I-COR). INL/NAS has seven authorized I-COR positions to oversee the contractors' technical performance in coordination with Foreign Service program officers who oversee the contractor's program execution. These contract activities take place at seven regional training center locations in Afghanistan. At the time of the inspection, only five of these I-COR positions were filled. All five of those I-CORs were PSCs, four on long-term contracts and one in Kabul on temporary duty status. These five I-CORs were based in Kabul as were the Foreign Service program officers. Security conditions in Afghanistan limit site visits to the regional training centers to day trips. The I-CORs reported that their ability to make frequent site visits to the regional centers was hampered by the lack of a

permissive security environment. INL has not been able to fill all seven of the authorized I-COR positions for Afghanistan. These five I-CORs cannot provide effective oversight of the contractual service programs as required by the Federal Acquisition Regulations.

Recommendation 25: The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs should immediately fill all seven of the in-country contracting officer representative positions. (Action: INL)

During the inspection, the I-COR positions at the embassy were filled by PSC employees. This subject has been discussed in several OIG reports, most recently in MERO-A-10-02, *Status of INL Counternarcotics Programs in Afghanistan*. As of the time of the MERO inspection there were four I-CORs in country, two of whom were PSCs on long-term contract, and two were PSC staff on temporary duty assignment. As that report contains an outstanding formal recommendation on this subject, the inspectors simply noted that the fact that all of the ICORs were PSC employees had not changed as of the time of this report. INL/NAS also oversees a number of grants in Afghanistan. The INL/NAS management officer is the warranted grants officer. Foreign Service officers assigned as program officers also serve as grants officer representatives.

Counternarcotics

The U.S. law enforcement agencies in Afghanistan rely heavily on INL financial support for training, capacity building, and mentoring programs. The U.S. administration's shift to a greater focus on interdiction and enforcement efforts against high-level targets combined with expanded alternative agricultural development programs required a shuffle of resources and personnel. In response to this shift in focus, INL has partnered effectively with DEA by shifting the helicopters it formerly dedicated to poppy eradication to DEA's highly effective interdiction programs.

Justice Sector Development

Without INL's financial resources, the Embassy's ROL and justice programs would be seriously weakened. INL funds the Embassy's efforts to build a sustainable nationwide criminal justice system and a Justice Sector Support Program that runs a capacity building and mentoring program with a staff of over 100 U.S. and Afghan legal and support personnel. This staff provides guidance and technical assistance

to the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General's office. The INL Corrections System Support Program trains, mentors, and advises the Ministry of Justice's Central Prison Directorate in developing a safe and humane prison system that will not radicalize prisoners.

Police Training

The U.S. Government spends a significant amount of money on police training, and there has been considerable progress in providing basic police training to members of the Afghan National Police although the number of trained police is not sufficient to respond to Afghanistan's deteriorating security conditions. As a result, this program is changing from a Department of Defense-funded and INL-managed program to a program funded and managed by the Department of Defense. Because the Department of Defense is likely to provide paramilitary training rather than basic civilian police training, this may mean a change from the INL emphasis on community policing skills.

The Air Wing and Embassy Air

The INL-funded and managed air wing is based at the Kabul International Airport and at the Kandahar Air Field. UH-1H helicopters provide gunship and medical evacuation support for DEA and Afghan Ministry of Interior interdiction operations. The fixed-wing aircraft and the medium helicopters provide passenger transportation and logistical support for all counternarcotics activities and programs. In addition to the INL aircraft, the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) purchased six aircraft (two fixed wing and four rotary wing). Congress funded this additional air capacity through the FY 2008 and FY 2009 supplementals. The additional aircraft are intended to support the plus-up in civilian personnel described elsewhere in this report. These aircraft, operating under chief of mission authority, will be part of a consolidated aircraft pool known as Embassy Air. This aircraft pool will include USAID wet-leased aircraft. SCA arranged with INL to use the same contractor supporting the INL program air fleet to operate SCA's aviation assets. The entire consolidated air wing will eventually be housed at the same camp housing as the INL air fleet when physical colocation of the USAID fleet is possible. In the meantime, a jointly managed Embassy Air office undertakes centralized passenger manifesting and dispatch. Aircraft will be used to support the routine transport of high-level U.S. Government officials. There may be foreign registry aircraft with non-U.S. citizen crews in the aircraft pool. In observance of international safety standards, all aircraft and crew should, at a minimum, adhere to the International Civil Aviation Organization standards detailed in 41 C.F.R. Part 102-33 (Management

Travel outside of Kabul is less frequent. There is little economic reporting from the provinces or of provincial views. The economic section does not have a travel plan linked to reporting. While officers in the provinces are sending in some economic information, it is screened by a cumbersome reporting chain, forwarded to the IPA office, and then generally subsumed in a daily summary. (See section on IPA.) Economic information is not passed directly to the economic section for amalgamation and use in coordinated reporting and analysis. The OIG team encouraged the economic section to send out to the PRTs lists of topics and issues on which it would welcome input or field reports.

Environment, Science, Technology, and Health

One officer in the section has responsibility for environment, science, technology, and health issues in addition to other full-time responsibilities. There are a number of environmental issues that could be addressed more fully if the section had the resources to do so. The Embassy has requested two additional economic reporting positions. The OIG team supports this increase in personnel and suggested that the position approved for the next assignment cycle include the environment, science, technology, and health portfolio.

Trade Promotion

The Embassy would like to do more to promote and encourage U.S. exports to Afghanistan. One economic section officer devotes the majority of her time to commercial matters because there is no U.S. Commercial Service presence at the Embassy. Much of the work involves assisting U.S. companies doing business in Afghanistan, promoting the establishment of an American Chamber of Commerce, working with potential U.S. investors, and encouraging government improvements to the business climate. During the inspection, the economic section hired an LE commercial assistant.

Presently, Afghanistan is covered by the U.S. Commercial Service officer based at Embassy Islamabad, who visits Kabul infrequently. The Embassy and the Department have been negotiating with the Department of Commerce to have a full-time U.S. Commercial Service position created and staffed at Embassy Kabul. This officer would support mission efforts to promote Afghan economic development via Afghan export promotion, match making, and the promotion and facilitation of small and medium enterprises, as well as perform the traditional role of promoting U.S. exports and investment.

Treasury Attaché

The Treasury attaché works closely with Ministry of Finance and Central Bank officials on macroeconomic stability and economic growth objectives. He also monitors the work of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank in improving the Afghan economy and training Afghan officials. An increasingly important focus is increasing the Government of Afghanistan's revenues through a number of mechanisms including taxation, customs collection, and improved management.

The Treasury attaché reports through the CDDEA but has frequent contact with the Ambassador. A deputy attaché arrived during the inspection. The Treasury Department's Office of Technical Assistance maintains mentors in the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank. Several additional technical advisors are expected to arrive soon to provide training in effective budgeting and auditing. The Treasury Department also provides staff to the Afghan Threat Finance Cell. Initially focused on gathering information on terrorist financing, the threat finance cell is now an important component of information gathering for anticorruption efforts. Currently located at Bagram Airfield, the center is expected to move to Kabul when office space becomes available at the ISAF compound adjacent to the Embassy.

Border Coordination

The Afghan-Pakistan border coordinator, a Foreign Service officer, is responsible for coordinating all U.S. Government efforts to improve the Government of Afghanistan's capacity to provide security, fundamental services, and economic opportunity to its citizens in the border areas. He chairs the interagency border issues working group and also coordinates closely with his counterpart border coordinator at Embassy Islamabad and with international donors. He encourages Afghan Government officials to plan for border development to include infrastructure as well as economic development.

The border coordinator works closely with the border management task force (BMTF) in the Embassy. The BMTF is composed mainly of Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection officers and contractors who mentor the Afghan customs and border police. Much of the mentoring is done through instruction at the Afghan customs academy, and emphasizes counternarcotics training as well as increasing customs revenues from the 14 recognized border crossing points. The BMTF also coordinates its training and mentoring efforts with customs officials from several other coalition countries.

Currently, over 50 percent of the Afghan Government's revenues come from customs receipts. Better trained customs officers and better infrastructure at traditional border crossing points are likely to substantially increase customs revenue to the central government.

The border coordinator's formal mandate is to assist the Afghan Government's program to strengthen controls on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Afghanistan, however, has international borders with five other countries as well. Licit as well as illicit trade with these other neighbors is increasing. The Government of Afghanistan has not taken advantage of opportunities to develop economic corridors in all its border areas or developed the necessary infrastructure to increase trade and trade revenues.

Recommendation 27: Embassy Kabul should expand the border coordinator's role to include the coordination of border activities at all borders. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Public Affairs Section

Leadership upheaval severely affected PAS from August through October 2009, a period which saw the sudden departure of both the new public affairs officer (PAO) and the cultural affairs officer. Internal reassignment of another officer left a vacancy in the information officer position, and most of the rest of the American PAS staff had only limited previous public diplomacy (PD) experience. This unusual staffing flux exacerbated the problems caused by the complete annual turnover of the American staff due to one-year assignments.

The timing of this upheaval came at a bad time, as it occurred when plans were underway to increase the \$1.5 million PD budget by an additional \$22.1 million in the FY 2009 Afghanistan supplemental budget. A strategic communications plan developed jointly by S/SRAP, SCA/PPD, and Embassy Kabul envisions a program of \$150 million for PD activities. Thus PAS was forced to make initial strategic planning decisions during a period when the section did not have a leader.

PAS officers, like their colleagues in the rest of the Embassy, also found themselves spending large amounts of time to complete multiple and sometimes contradictory taskings from the Department and from embassy management. Only the willingness of the staff to work long hours kept the section afloat. Basic PD programs and activities continued under the direction of an acting PAO from another section of the Embassy. The press office capably managed a constant stream of journalists, media events for high-level visitors, and the Ambassador's many public appearances. The Lincoln Centers (American Corners)—the crown jewels of PD outreach in Afghanistan—continued to host programs and serve visitors; a new center opened its doors in Gardez. More than 1,200 underprivileged Afghan students studied English through a microscholarship program. An English language fellow began work with Afghanistan's most important teacher training college. Fulbright scholars left for programs in the United States. Embassy-funded cultural restoration projects continued apace.

The creation of the position of deputy PAO for programs and operations was a positive step that facilitated decisions on handling the upcoming tidal wave in PD resources. The Embassy executive office was aware that PAS was undermanned and facing extraordinary challenges and supported the addition of staff. Realizing that the section itself lacked the time and expertise to develop a concrete plan specifying the personnel and programs that would be required, the Embassy requested a team from S/CRS to develop such an operational plan. This team was scheduled to travel to Kabul after the OIG team's departure. In addition, the arrival of a new PAO in mid-October improved morale and created forward momentum in the section.

Structural Issues

Throughout the mission, an array of offices and agencies in addition to PAS carry out PD and communications activities. USAID sponsors extensive journalist training and educational development projects, and its six-person public affairs office publicizes USAID development programs through media activities and a Web site. Foreign Service officers and staff at PRTs and military regional commands engage in PD activities; some PRTs and regional commands have their own PD specialists with more on the way as part of the civilian uplift plan. The INL office has its own public affairs person who arranges press events and public information campaigns. A nine-member military information support team (MIST) embedded in PAS undertakes student outreach and publications projects.

In addition, Embassy PD officers are working in an environment where much larger entities, especially the U.S. military and ISAF, are heavily engaged in public affairs and strategic communications projects similar to and sometimes overlapping

with traditional PD work. Message coordination with the military is good in this fast-paced environment of incessant media inquiries and breaking events. The PAS press staff is in frequent contact with their military public affairs counterparts, and they keep each other informed about what they are saying to the media. A civ-mil information initiatives working group meets weekly and includes about two dozen representatives from PAS, USAID, IPA, MIST, and the public affairs offices of key U.S. military units and ISAF.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the various PD plans and proposals floating about, many staff emphasized the need for a concise PD strategy that would focus resources on the highest priorities, design programs to push the strategy forward, and serve as a benchmark against which they could judge the many program proposals they receive from various Department offices and outside sources. Without such a plan, they feared that they would be engaging in a lot of uncoordinated programs and activities that would not move toward concrete goals.

To improve coordination of the growing PD and strategic communications activities, the Embassy created the director of communication and public diplomacy position, popularly known as the “über PAO” because this position would not only be the PAO’s superior but would also be in charge of the overall public affairs strategy. While logical in theory, other sections and agencies were concerned about how this structure would work in practice. They also had qualms about how much authority the director of communication and public diplomacy would have over non-PAS staff and whether the director could give instructions about PD priorities and strategy directly to the PD officers at the PRTs, whose lines of command do not include the PAO. Complicating the structural questions was the assignment in mid-October of the same individual to be both the PAO and the acting director of communication and public diplomacy. The director of communication and public diplomacy arrived a few days before the inspection began, and it was still unclear how his authority to direct PD strategy mission-wide would eventually work in practice. However, there is no point in having the director (in addition to and above the PAO) unless his or her authority to provide policy direction on communication strategy extends beyond PAS. Otherwise, inconsistency, duplication of effort, and missed opportunities for programs across sections and agencies could result.

Recommendation 28: Embassy Kabul should establish a concise public diplomacy and communications strategy to set priorities, drive program initiatives, and provide a framework to judge proposals and should disseminate this plan to all officers, sections, agencies and entities that conduct public diplomacy activities in Afghanistan. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 29: Embassy Kabul should clarify the role of the director of communication and public diplomacy in providing policy direction to all personnel under chief of mission authority in Kabul and in the field who are working on public diplomacy and communications issues. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The PAS structure itself has been modified to accommodate the addition of particular individuals, chosen for their special expertise, but then shoehorned into the PAS organizational chart in newly created positions. The new deputy PAO for press (also performing the duties of spokesperson), for example, overlapped the authority of the information officer to such an extent that the information officer was moved into a new position as deputy PAO for operations and programs. Worldwide, only the largest public affairs sections have a deputy PAO; Kabul ended up with two, and is due to get a third as a result of another special assignment: a deputy PAO for strategic communications. That deputy PAO's authority and duties are yet to be defined. Vacancies in key slots, particularly the cultural affairs officer position, caused those responsibilities to be divvied up among other officers and muddled the lines of authority. As a result of the flux, although all PAS officers have work requirements in some form and know their portfolios and responsibilities, specific work requirements have not been defined fully.

Recommendation 30: Embassy Kabul should rationalize and clarify the public diplomacy staffing structure to eliminate duplication of functions and unclear lines of authority and should establish a clear organizational chart with work requirements for each position. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

An anomaly in the PD staffing structure is the position of the Foreign Service officer who serves as senior adviser to the Government Media Information Center (GMIC) and that of the two other U.S. Government employees working there. The GMIC is an Afghan institution that aims to build the capacity of the Afghan Government to communicate with the Afghan people. It was established two years ago and has grown into an Afghan-led institution on a compound that comprises a large, well-equipped facility for press events; a two-story training center; a sophisticated digital video imagery distribution system capable of doing two-way interactives from anywhere in Afghanistan; and offices for its 35-member Afghan staff. The \$2 million in funding to set it up was cobbled together from NATO, British, Canadian, Dutch, and American sources. The animating idea is that Afghan officials, spokespersons,

and informal communicators are more credible than foreigners in delivering messages to Afghan audiences, but they lack the training and support to be effective. GMIC aims to fill that knowledge gap and also to provide a venue for Afghans and their foreign partners to speak to Afghan media. This approach is in accord with the Ambassador's guiding principle to "put Afghans in the lead." Its value was demonstrated during the inspection when GMIC hosted press events by a provincial governor and Islamic scholars effectively debunking false allegations that ISAF forces had burned a Koran, thus depriving the Taliban of a propaganda weapon.

However, the position of the senior adviser to GMIC, the extent of the position's authority, and the adviser's relationship to PAS are not well defined. This has led to a situation in which the adviser is regarded as something of an outsider. The embassy does not initiate events at the GMIC as much as it could to reinforce the concept of U.S.-Afghan partnership by putting U.S. officials and visitors side-by-side with their Afghan counterparts on the stage of the Afghan GMIC before Afghan journalists.

Recommendation 31: Embassy Kabul should increase its use and support of the Government Media Information Center and should clearly define the position and clarify the authority of the Foreign Service officer advising the center, as well as other U.S. Government staff working there. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Resource Issues

PAS's FY 2009 budget was \$1.5 million (including additions for special projects but not including funds kept separately such as Fulbright and speaker funds). The FY 2009 Afghan supplemental put an additional \$22.1 million in the pipeline for PD activities, with \$23 million more for FY 2010. A draft strategic communications plan envisions \$150 million more for PD. The existing PAS staff is already working at maximum capacity. Except for the top leadership of the section, most of the officers in PAS have limited PD experience; some are on their first PD tours. They expressed a common concern about how PAS could manage the looming funding increases effectively and responsibly. The OIG team shared their concern and concluded that any plan that counts on existing staff to take on significant additional program responsibilities is unrealistic.

The Embassy has requested additional PD staff, but these requests were not tied to specific PAS program plans. The initial proposal developed by SCA/PPD in June for spending the \$22.1 million from the FY 2009 Afghan supplemental does take into account staffing requirements. It requests 27 new Foreign Service officer and LE staff positions in Afghanistan, though some programs, such as journalist tours, are listed without new staff to carry them out. But the strategic communications plan calls for huge increases in labor-intensive exchanges, media programs, grants, English teaching, cultural preservation, and other programs without specifying the staffing needs for each.

Recognizing that it did not have anyone in-house with the time to focus on the kind of detailed planning needed to spend large sums of new money, PAS took an important first step in requesting a team from S/CRS to develop a detailed spending and implementation plan, including budgets, contracts, and grants proposals. The success of this short-term infusion of planning staff will depend on whether their recommendations—especially those regarding additional staff—are sufficiently specific and actually followed.

Recommendation 32: The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, in coordination with the Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and Embassy Kabul, should develop and implement a staffing plan to cover all of the additional public diplomacy programs to be carried out by the Embassy and should link these new programs to the provision of additional staff in Kabul. (Action: SCA, in coordination with S/SRAP and Embassy Kabul)

Any large-scale increase in resources would require PAS to issue significantly more grants to carry out the projects. For example, the spending plan for the FY 2009 supplemental proposed \$340,000 for 680 opportunity grants, which is ten times more than the total number of grants PAS issued in FY 2009. The plan also provides for \$50,000 in PD grant money for each of the PRTs; these grants would presumably have to be issued by PAS because none of the PRT staff have grant warrants. Most of the other projects listed would also require additional grants yet grants management has been a weak point for PAS for some time. The OIG team examined a sampling of more than 20 of 68 grants files for FY 2009 and found serious shortcomings in all of them, including missing program reports, incomplete financial documents, and lack of proof of the requisite bureau approval for grants over \$10,000. Some grants had expired, but there was no indication that the projects had been completed or that the grant had been extended. In one case, a PD-funded grant was

issued for what appeared to be a non-PD project on waterway control. In another case, a grant was made to a speaker with no mention of the topic. PAS had stopped entering its grants into the grants database management system at the beginning of 2008 and was not asking for the required identification numbers from institutional grantees. OIG's December 2005 Kabul inspection report also cited grants management as a problem, mentioning many of these same issues.

At the time of the inspection, PAS had begun to put its grants folders in order and was attempting to determine the status of each grant. PAS staff were again entering grants into the database. This turnaround was largely due to the addition of a new LE staff member who had taught himself to do grants. The OIG team counseled him on grants procedures, such as the requirement to check the excluded parties list and obtain identification numbers from grantees, and showed him the Office of the Procurement Executive's grants Web site, including the grants toolkit, list of sample documents, and grants directives.

Many grant periods extend past the grant officer's tour of duty, and the funded projects are not completed until after the officer has left post. This heightens the importance of well-trained LE staff and makes the establishment of a system of oversight and an orderly way to convey grant responsibility from one officer to another even more vital. With a dramatic increase in PD funding on the way, PAS is not staffed to handle a large increase in grants; PAS has recognized this and identified an LE program manager assistant for grants to be funded by the FY 2009 supplemental.

Recommendation 33: Embassy Kabul should establish a stronger oversight system for issuing and monitoring grants to ensure that projects are completed according to the proposal, funds have been expended properly, and grants files include all the required documents. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 34: Embassy Kabul should request grants training for the locally employed staff handling grants. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Program Issues

At the time of the OIG inspection, the PRTs and the military regional commands had three U.S. direct-hire employees devoted to PD, and new positions were scheduled to be added as part of the civilian uplift. In addition, other PRT officers were also engaging in a variety of PD activities, including responding to journalists, conducting programs at Lincoln Centers, and nominating participants for exchange programs. PAS has one officer whose primary duty is to serve as the PD coordinator for the PRTs and the PAS chief point of contact for officers in the field. This person regularly briefed officers on their way out to the PRTs, provided them with packets of information about various PD programs, answered questions, and provided advice. However, the amount of contact the PAS coordinator has with PD staff in the field varies widely. Some PRT officers expressed frustration that the IPA office in Kabul discouraged PRT officers from directly communicating with the PAS coordinator.

PRT officers said they wished they had more PD training and guidance because they were having difficulty conceiving, initiating, and carrying out projects. One who had been sent to a PRT to do PD work received press training but no training on educational or exchange programs; another had received no PD training at all. Unlike officers in embassy public affairs sections who can consult daily with fellow PD officers and experienced LE staff, these PRT officers are on their own. The problem will be especially acute for 3161 employees, most of whom will have had no experience at an embassy, let alone in PAS. The need for training will become even more pressing when each PRT becomes eligible for \$50,000 to administer PD activities. While FSI has the training capabilities to address this need, the current limits set by S/SRAP on U.S.-based-training time preclude additional training.

Recommendation 35: The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, the Bureau of Human Resources, and the Foreign Service Institute, should authorize all U.S. direct-hire personnel who are designated to do public diplomacy at the provincial reconstruction teams to have targeted diplomacy training, including grants training, and provide other provincial reconstruction teams officers with some basic public diplomacy (especially media) training. (Action: S/SRAP, in coordination with SCA, DGHR, and FSI)

The OIG team informally recommended that the Embassy continue PAS briefings for all PRT officers heading out to their assignments and expand those for staff who will be focusing on public diplomacy.

As the worsening security in Afghanistan and increasing work demands within the Embassy have made it more difficult for PD officers to get out and travel, the Lincoln Centers have assumed an increasingly important role in reaching out to ordinary Afghans. Through the end of November 2009, the centers had welcomed 148,000 visitors, up from 71,000 in all of 2008. The network of Lincoln Centers has grown to eight, and negotiations are under way for a ninth. The centers host community meetings, offer English and computer classes, show films, present speakers, welcome school groups, and sponsor a variety of information programs on issues such as democracy, human rights, diversity, the role of a free press, and Islam in America. In some places, the Lincoln Center is the only public library or free source of Internet access. They also provide a good location for PRT officers to engage with local Afghans. In one city, a PRT officer teaches an English class at the local Lincoln Center.

The special circumstances in Afghanistan make the Lincoln Centers more expensive, both in money and staff time, than American Corners in other countries. They do not follow the standard model of shared costs between the embassy and a local host institution. Although local officials are involved in the decision about where to place the centers, the U.S. Government pays all costs to set up and equip the centers. Through a grant to a nongovernmental organization, the U.S. Government also pays for the annual operating costs--about \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year. The logistics for getting books and equipment out to the centers are daunting. The three-person staff of the Embassy's information resource center orders the books and equipment. When the shipment arrives, they transfer it to vehicles, accompany it to the airport, and load it on a USAID plane. At the other end, PRT officers handle the arrival and monitor the delivery. The information resource center staff estimate that they spend about 80 percent of their time on the Lincoln Center program. This complete dependence on U.S. funding raises questions about future sustainability, but for now, the consensus in the Department and at Embassy Kabul is that the centers are worth the cost, and the OIG team concurs.

The spending plan for the \$22.1 million PD funds from the FY 2009 supplemental includes nine more Lincoln Centers. The information resource center would need additional staff to handle this increase. The growing network would also benefit from supervision and guidance by an information resource officer with library or information resource experience – an addition that would free up an assistant cultural affairs officer to work on other programs.

PAS held a training and networking conference for all of the Lincoln Center directors in November, which gave them an opportunity to meet each other and exchange ideas. Unfortunately, they have been blocked from participating in an international visitor program for American Corner directors because their salaries are paid by the U.S. Government, albeit through a grant to a nongovernmental organization.

Due primarily to lack of time and the drumbeat of requests and taskings from the Department and Embassy leadership, PAS officers were not doing basic contact work, meeting key Afghans in important local educational and cultural institutions and media organizations, and developing relationships that lead to better understanding and more effective programming. Inability to speak the language was also a factor, especially for the press office. None of the American press officers were fluent in a local language, and this hampered interaction with Afghan journalists. Despite an informal recommendation in the 2005 OIG inspection report, PAS still lacked a contact database in 2009. Fortunately, an LE staff member has kept program alumni records on a Microsoft Outlook database, and these records appeared up-to-date and reasonably well-catalogued. In other areas, however, continuity was hampered by a poor filing system. The OIG team made a formal recommendation in the information management (IM) section of this report to address the lack of a contact database system and also made informal recommendations on the filing issues.

PAS has done a good job involving PRT officers in nominating participants from the provinces for exchange programs, particularly the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). However, this geographic diversity was not matched by functional diversity. PAS did not involve the entire mission in its 2009 call for nominations; the memo requesting nominations was addressed only to Department sections. Among these, just three sections sent in nominations. The IVLP selection committee, which is supposed to be mission-wide, had representatives from only these three sections, plus the PAS program staff. The early departure of the officer handling the IVLP program led to a rough transition to the new staff because the nomination files did not include contact information for the selectees or program descriptions for the Embassy Kabul-originated single-country projects for which the individuals were being nominated.

Beyond these logistical problems lies the question of whether the IVLP could be a more effective tool for Embassy Kabul. The mission has only 40 IVLP slots, far fewer than Iraq or Pakistan. In addition, an OIG examination of documents for the past three years showed a large number of English speakers among the nominees for the IVLP, one of the few U.S. Government exchange programs capable of handling non-English speakers.

Recommendation 36: Embassy Kabul should reach out to the entire mission for nominations, project proposals, and selection committee participation for the International Visitor Leadership Program and should place more emphasis on seeking out non-English speakers. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Although the number of Internet users in Afghanistan is small, they represent a young and influential section of the population. The Embassy has a Web site in English and Dari and at the time of the inspection was working on establishing a site in Pashto, the language of the areas of southern and eastern Afghanistan where the insurgency is strongest. However, PAS has only a single translator, and he specializes in Dari. This lack of translation capacity has slowed the development of the Pashto Web site and limited PAS's ability to produce publications in local languages. A Pashto translator is listed as a vacancy on PAS's projected staffing list but has not yet been hired.

Recommendation 37: Embassy Kabul should hire a Pashto translator for the public affairs section, and backup the translator's work by investigating the availability of private translation companies and consulting with Embassy Islamabad on cooperation in producing Pashto language materials. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The Embassy Web site would also benefit from more frequent updates and the inclusion of more "good news" stories of successful assistance projects and economic progress. USAID's public affairs staff produces a lot of material for their own Web site that could be given broader play by highlighting it on the embassy Web site. The OIG team made an informal recommendation on this issue. PAS also maintains Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr sites, but they mirror the embassy Web site and PAS staff said that they currently lacked the time to focus more attention on the social media sites.

Administrative Issues

PAS has one LE staff member who does all of the mission's audio-visual work and unclassified digital video conferences, including for events that have no PD element. Embassy Kabul often has digital video conferences or other events requiring audio-visual assistance simultaneously on different parts of the compound. The audio-visual technician sets the different events up and then shuttles back and forth

to oversee any problems, but he is not necessarily onsite when there is a problem. Since PD funds its programs and its salaries separately, and many of these events have no PD element, the Embassy cannot simply request an increase in PAS audio-visual staff to provide sufficient technical capacity for non-PD activities like regular digital video conferences with the Department on policy planning. In effect, the PAS audio-visual technician is providing services for several embassy elements that would normally contribute to ICASS for shared audio-visual services. Transferring responsibility for non-PD audio-visual services to the management or IM sections could have ICASS implications, but PAS cannot continue to underwrite the Embassy's entire audio-visual needs.

Recommendation 38: Embassy Kabul should develop the capacity in the general services office to handle non-public diplomacy audio-visual work, as well as an arrangement in the information management office for handling non-public diplomacy digital video conferences. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

PAS employs an EFM who was hired originally as an administrative assistant but now serves as the embassy photographer. As such, the EFM works primarily at the direction of the Ambassador and photographs the Ambassador's public activities and trips around the country as well as VIP visits, important meetings, and embassy events. This involves extensive overtime work. The photographer personally owns all the camera equipment used for embassy work, the computer and software for editing the photos, and the hard drives on which the 120,000 photographs taken for the Embassy are stored. This equipment will depart post with the EFM.

Recommendation 39: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Office of the Legal Adviser, should clarify the role of the embassy photographer, including issues of supervision, payment and approval of overtime, and ownership of the photo archive. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with L)

INTERAGENCY PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND THE PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS

The Obama administration's revised policy on Afghanistan includes a new focus on governance and stability at the provincial and district levels. The IPA office was created in 2009 to provide strategy and policy guidance on subnational governance, stabilization issues, Afghan capacity-building programs, and civ-mil integration. For these issues, IPA facilitates exchanges on subnational issues among offices in the

Embassy, senior U.S. military commanders, Afghan officials, and nongovernmental organizations. This new responsibility is in addition to its previous and ongoing responsibility for logistical and management support of embassy civilian staff deployed at PRTs across Afghanistan.

To accomplish these goals, IPA created a structure outside of Kabul parallel to the military. The Embassy recently designated four SCRs, co-equal to their military command counterparts. While the creation of the SCR structure formed a quick alliance with the military commands, the SCRs have begun to eclipse the policy and operational leadership of the subject matter experts in the Embassy on some issues.

PRTs are an invaluable source of information that feed into traditional embassy reporting. Department readers have noted that some of the best reporting comes from officers serving at PRTs. For example, PRT reporting on the voter registration process and the recent Afghan national elections was particularly noteworthy.

Although IPA has an important coordination role, there are several sections and agencies that need to communicate directly with PRT representatives doing work in areas such as political reporting, economic analysis, and public diplomacy. IPA has established a system to coordinate communications to and from the field to screen out unnecessary and excessive taskings. IPA instructions to the field dated September 27, 2009 require that officers at PRTs "... submit cables to IPA through [the] 'chain of command,' e.g. through the Senior Civilian Representative to IPA... In order to avoid excessive or uncoordinated taskings, you should accept requests for information or action only from or through the Embassy front office, IPA, or [the] chain of command (e.g. supervisor, SCR)." Although the intent of IPA's policy is to avoid unnecessary and excessive taskings, in practice it has included many other kinds of communication with the PRTs, causing delays in reporting and information sharing and impeding the flow of timely guidance and insights to the field from policy and program-sponsoring sections. (See development assistance and public affairs sections of this report for examples of communication requiring direct access to the PRTs.) All of these entities need access to the PRT officers. Some of these programs require direct monitoring from the respective embassy counterpart office.

Recommendation 40: Embassy Kabul should review, clarify, and where necessary streamline the policy on when and how the interagency provincial affairs office and other sections and agencies transmit and coordinate policy and program guidance between the Embassy and the field to enable more direct communication while maintaining limitations on mandatory taskings. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

the executive office to serve as staff aides for weeks at a time. At the same time, the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) was sending TDY help from other consular sections in the region to process nonimmigrant visas in Kabul. With the addition of the second mid-level officer in 2010 and generous executive office staffing, CA-funded TDY assistance should no longer be required. Consular officers will serve as control officers and event support staff as part of a roster of embassy personnel, but they will be able to devote the majority of their tours to the professionalization of the consular function.

Consular space is adequate for current and future needs including the addition of the new ACS officer and an ARSO-I, but the section needs some reconfiguration to afford privacy for the ARSO-I operation. The introduction of IV processing (see below) will take up any extra space that the section now enjoys. There is considerable confusion over the eventual location of the consular section. CA and the architect for the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) believe that the consular section will move into one of two annexes being planned for construction in the next few years. Embassy Kabul's OBO representative and the assistant COM responsible for management issues believe that the consular section will remain in its current location. Because Embassy Kabul is likely to add IVs and additional personnel in the next year, it is vital that any potential move and the relevant space designs be coordinated with consular management early in the process. Space in any new building cannot be premised on existing workload and numbers but rather must include space for the additional services coming on line in the next 12 months.

Recommendation 41: Embassy Kabul should request immediate clarification from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Bureau of Consular Affairs of plans to relocate the consular section and review any new space configuration to be sure that new premises can accommodate the additional staff expected in FY 2010 and the return of the immigrant visa function. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The one-year tours of duty have played havoc with the development of SOPs and training plans on which successful consular sections rely. Two of the LE staff never had work requirements statements. Consular management is rectifying that situation, is developing SOPs and a new-officer training protocol, has initiated cross training days, and is seeking training opportunities in the region and at the Foreign Service Institute for the relatively junior LE staff. The efforts of the consular section chief and the two ELOs to systematize operations in Kabul have already been successful.

Visas

An intersection of two events—the special immigrant visa (SIV) program for Afghanistan and the creation of an ARSO-I position at Embassy Kabul—will change the face of the Kabul consular section within the next few months. Through the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, the U.S. Congress authorized 1,500 SIVs annually from FYs 2009-13 for Afghan employees and contractors who have been employed by or on behalf of the U.S. Government in Afghanistan on or after October 7, 2001, for a period of not less than one year, and who have experienced or are experiencing an ongoing serious threat as a consequence of that employment.

Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the National Visa Center, is developing an application process now, and it is expected that applicants will begin applying for SIV status by January 2010. Embassy Kabul does not currently process IVs; most Afghan residents travel to Islamabad to process their IVs. The security situation in Islamabad is poor, however, and the trip to Pakistan can be dangerous. Given the consular section's increased capacity, the anticipated volume of SIVs, and the recent establishment of internationally sponsored hospital facilities in Kabul, it makes sense to process SIVs in Afghanistan and, once the consular staff is comfortable with that process, to reintroduce all IV processing to Embassy Kabul.

Recommendation 42: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should identify one or more panel physicians and a laboratory facility in Kabul that is capable of providing reliable physical examinations and x-rays, referring to Centers for Disease Control guidelines for selecting a panel position. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with CA)

Recommendation 43: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Embassy Islamabad, and Embassy New Delhi, should send one of its consular officers and one locally employed staff to observe immigrant visa processing at a consular section in the region prior to initiating visa processing in Kabul and designate a locally employed supervisor from the region to oversee initial processing in Kabul. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with CA, Embassy Islamabad, and Embassy New Delhi)

With the arrival of the ARSO-I, the consular section will have increased fraud prevention and detection resources. Given concerns at other consular sections in the region about the difficulties of investigating relationship and adoption fraud in Afghan IV cases, the ARSO-I will play a key role in tracking patterns among U.S. petitioners and investigating suspect adoption facilitators. Embassy Kabul does not process petition-based temporary work visas. Afghan citizens applying in those visa categories do so at neighboring embassies, notably Islamabad. The volume of applications in those categories appears to be manageable. The ARSO-I will have the tools to investigate U.S. employers for petition-based IVs and NIVs, and the Kabul consular staff has the expertise and capacity to confirm local educational and work credentials better than their colleagues elsewhere in the region. Embassy Kabul has access to more information on local conditions to assist the Department of Homeland Security in developing a more informed petition approval process.

Recommendation 44: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should transfer all immigrant visa processing for persons resident in Afghanistan to Embassy Kabul as soon as the initial surge of special immigrant visa applications has moved through the pipeline. (Action: CA)

Recommendation 45: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should advise the Department of Homeland Security to transfer approved petitions for temporary work visas for Afghan residents to Embassy Kabul. (Action: CA)

During its preparation for the Embassy Kabul inspection, the OIG team learned that there had been very few visa referrals during the previous year. Upon arrival, it quickly became obvious that USAID, the military commands, and PAS sent large volumes of passports to the consular section under covering letters that essentially served as a parallel referral system, outside the mandated CA process. The consular section chief has already taken steps to implement CA referral guidelines across the board, but the informal referrals for military training from the various commands pose a thorny problem. There is no Defense attaché office in Kabul, and the military commands do not fall under chief of mission authority therefore they cannot be referring officers.

assist with an American citizen arrested for murder during the critical first hours of his detention. Once the consulates are open, although it is not anticipated that they would provide routine consular services, the staff will be available to assist the Kabul consular section in consular emergencies and serve as acceptance agents for passport applications from contractors, nongovernmental organization staff, and other Americans in those areas. Kabul's ACS officer would provide guidance, training, and oversight of any consular services provided at the consulates.

Recommendation 47: Embassy Kabul should require Foreign Service officers assigned to the two new consulates to take the portions of consular training that deal with American citizen services regulations and processes before assignment. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 48: Embassy Kabul should rewrite the consular section's travel plans to include quarterly oversight and training trips to the consulates in Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Fraud Prevention

Although it is widely acknowledged that Afghan documents are unreliable and that corruption is rampant in both government and social sectors, this has not affected NIV processing to date because so many of the applicants are found to be intending immigrants and therefore ineligible for NIVs regardless of the veracity of their supporting documentation. The high number of travelers absconding from government-sponsored training programs, youth exchanges, and official travel, with many of those absconders requesting asylum in Canada, suggests that there may be organized smuggling rings operating both in Afghanistan and the United States. As mentioned earlier, an ARSO-I may be able to identify and deter this type of fraud.

An experienced ACS LE staff member currently doubles as the antifraud investigator; most of the requests for investigation come in from embassies in the region in connection with IVs or temporary work visas for Afghan citizens. There is little systematization or tracking of the fraud caseload, however, and the OIG team made an informal recommendation to codify the investigation process before the arrival of the ARSO-I and the onset of IV processing.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Funding and Personnel at Embassy Kabul⁴

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	3161	PSC	LT-TDY ⁵	Total Staff	FY 2009 Actual Expenditure
State – D&CP ⁶	162	9	28	30	0	0	229	\$28,074,530
State – ICASS	22	10	302	0	0	0	334	\$27,718,472
State – DS	27	1	39	0	0	0	67	\$4,781,375
State – MSG	10	0	0	0	0	0	10	\$32,250
State – INL	26	3	13	0	33	0	75	\$119,500,000 ⁷
State – MERO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$118,710 ⁸
State -- PAS	10	3	19	0	0	0	32	\$1,486,400
State – SIGAR	10 ⁹	0	0	0	0	0	10	\$398,127
USAID	102	5	147	0	42	0	296	\$99,766,000 ¹⁰
USDA	13 ¹¹	0	0	0	0	0	13	\$39,431
DOD	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	\$25,377 ¹²
Commerce	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA ¹³
DHS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA
DOJ –Civil ¹⁴	16	0	3	0	0	0	19	\$1,000,000
DOJ –DEA	61	0	11	0	0	4	76	NA

(table continued on next page)

⁴ Numbers indicate personnel in-country as of 09/29/2009, not positions.

⁵ LT-TDY means long-term TDY, over 6 months.

⁶ State-D&CP actual expenditures include supplemental funds.

⁷ State-INL – Program and operational (PD&S \$3.3M) funds.

⁸ State-MERO – Start up costs in preparation for arrival of personnel.

⁹ State-SIGAR – Personnel numbers vary from week to week.

¹⁰ USAID – Program (\$53.8M) and operation (\$45.6M) funds; PSC figure includes 36 PSCs and 6 PSAs.

¹¹ USDA – Personnel to arrive end of FY 2009, but expenses to be incurred beginning of FY 2010.

¹² DOD – For one DOD FSN only.

¹³ NA – Not all funding is known or has been received yet.

¹⁴ DOJ-Civil – Funded from FY 2005-09 – FSN and operational expenses only, USDH costs funded domestically.

Funding and Personnel table continued from previous page

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	3161	PSC	LT-TDY ⁵	Total Staff	FY 2009 Actual Expenditure
DOJ –LEGATT	71	0	2	0	0	0	73	NA
ATF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA
U.S. Marshals Service	4	0	2	0	0	0	6	\$30,000
D/Treasury	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	NA
D/Transportation (FAA)	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	NA
HHS/CDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA
AFGHANISTAN TOTAL	538	31	567	30	75	4	1245	\$282,970,672

Notes: Personnel numbers from S/SRAP Civilian Staffing Afghanistan Matrix
The Departments of Commerce and Homeland Security did not have personnel at the embassy in FY 2009.

MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The management section is remarkably adaptable and responsive in an atmosphere of massive personnel surges, constant reinvention, and multiple construction and infrastructure projects. To the outside observer, it is nearly miraculous that the management section can shoehorn so many permanent and TDY staff into an inadequate facility and support an unparalleled number of high-level visitors. The OIG team noted several areas, however, where the section has not paid enough attention to the regulations and management controls.

Embassy Kabul's management section is led by a management counselor who is assisted by two deputies. Most of the subunits are headed by experienced officers. Some veteran LE management staff began working for the embassy prior to its 1989 closure and now anchor the management operation in the newly emerging mega embassy.

Accommodating the rapid plus up of U.S. direct-hire and TDY personnel is the greatest challenge facing the management section. Management staff told the OIG team in 2009 the Embassy had occasionally filled all but five to ten of its 584 total beds. Kabul regularly hosts large delegations of legislative and executive branch personnel, often on very short notice. Permanent office buildings are already filled to capacity. Basic systems are at or near capacity. Management, with the strong support of the Department, including SCA and OBO, copes on a day-to-day basis. There is some concern that the additional civilian personnel now arriving in Kabul will outstrip the ability of the Embassy's infrastructure to meet the demands placed upon it in the short term. While the management section has a carefully orchestrated plan for construction of both permanent and temporary office and housing units for the civilian uplift, a slight delay in any one phase could result in a serious shortfall in life support.

All of the OIG management inspectors individually observed a pervasive lack of documentation to support actions taken or decisions made in the management area. Inspectors noted the difficulty this created when trying to reconstruct the actions that led to certain conditions and drew management personnel's attention to this issue.

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

The International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) council at Embassy Kabul holds regular meetings; one was held during the OIG team visit. The OIG team reviewed ICASS operations and they appeared to be working well. ICASS invoices are distributed and paid in Washington. Costs are captured and allocated according to standard ICASS procedures, although there are some exceptions. The practice of loaning ICASS vehicles to other agencies, for example, adds to subscribers' invoice costs. (The section on motor vehicles provides more information.) Also, ICASS TDY costs are not captured and reimbursed by the agencies providing the TDY staff (see the financial management section.) Given the large number of TDY visitors in Afghanistan, the failure to recover these TDY costs through ICASS could have repercussions for the Embassy, particularly if supplemental funds are reduced or eliminated in the future, which would put a greater burden on the Embassy's ICASS budget.

Contract and Grants Management

Embassy Kabul has many weaknesses in the oversight of its contract and grants management program. PAS, INL, and management sections of the report discuss specific cases. Oversight of contracts and grants that relate to activities being carried out in Kabul appears to be better than in remote locations simply because the security situation does not permit regular monitoring and evaluation trips to many areas of the country. Other OIG entities are currently or have recently reviewed the performance and oversight of specific contracts and grants, therefore the OIG team did not include a detailed review of this issue.

Management Consolidation

Embassy Kabul has made some progress in establishing a joint management structure. Kabul is a Tier One post for management consolidation purposes but is consolidating on a Tier Two schedule. Motor pool operations are consolidated. USAID vehicles are housed in the embassy motor pool area and appear on the common inventory. Department of State-USAID property management consolidation was ongoing at the time of the inspection. The USAID property inventory was underway; general services office (GSO) personnel were participating in the inventory and affixing common property tags. Kabul planned to move USAID property into the embassy compound warehouse upon creation of an internal mezzanine structure to increase usable floor space.

Human resources (HR) consolidation had not progressed as far as general services. The Embassy and USAID maintain separate HR sections. USAID representatives told the OIG team that the operations would not be consolidated but rather colocated, although Embassy management plans to consolidate certain HR functions including training, recruitment of LE staff, performance evaluation management, and computer assisted job evaluation. Although post management is making arrangements to move the USAID HR staff into the Embassy's HR office, there is no documentation showing when or how the move is going to take place. HR personnel in both agencies were uninformed as to how the changes will affect their duties.

IPA has its own management section to handle logistics and support operations at the PRTs. Given the Embassy's efforts to consolidate as many administrative functions as possible across agency lines, it is surprising that IPA retains its own management section. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the embassy examine the efficiencies that could be gained by consolidating IPA management support into the management section.

General Services

An assignment in Kabul's general services unit is certainly one of the most difficult management challenges anywhere in the Foreign Service. In addition to supporting the rapidly growing permanent staff, the unit carries out a wide array of other tasks in support of Kabul's large number of TDY employees and high-level visitors. The GSO in Kabul is headed by an experienced management officer, who is assisted by a deputy. In addition, there are four assistant general services officers and two EFM assistants in the GSO. Six officers would be an unusually high number, even for a post of Kabul's size and complexity, but one or more officers is absent from the unit on R&R travel at any given time.

The GSO handles housing assignments via input to the interagency housing board (IAHB), travel, shipping and customs, procurement, motor vehicles, expendable and nonexpendable supplies, and property management. Facilities management is a separate unit within the management section.

Motor Vehicles

Because of the security situation, Embassy Kabul uses armored vehicles to transport its personnel. Armored vehicles require significantly more maintenance due to their added weight and the resultant strain on suspension and drive train components. Poor road conditions in Afghanistan compound maintenance challenges.

The GSO uses a contractor to manage its vehicle maintenance program and has a fully equipped maintenance facility on the embassy compound. The contractor's technicians do a good job on the maintenance of the motor pool vehicles, using an automated program that flags vehicles requiring service including oil, filter, and fluid changes and regular inspections for other maintenance issues such as brake pads, shocks, and body damage.

The OIG team learned that some motor pool vehicles are loaned to individual agencies that have self-drive authorization. The motor pool staff sees the loaned vehicles only when they are brought in to the maintenance facility, normally because of a serious problem. The borrowing office then is usually in urgent need of that repair, but is often unable to leave the vehicle long enough to have other periodic maintenance completed. Because the loaned vehicles are outside the daily control and oversight of motor pool personnel, the OIG team could not confirm whether operator-performed maintenance tasks (Tier One maintenance) are being done by the borrowing agency, as required. There is additional discussion of the ICASS implications of this loaned vehicle program later in this section.

The GSO conducted a motor vehicle inventory during the inspection. The number of vehicles counted during the inventory and checked against GSO Kabul's spreadsheet, totaled 144 vehicles of all types. The Department's Inventory of On Hand Vehicles Report shows the total number of vehicles on hand at 239, with a value of over \$24 million. The average acquisition cost per motor vehicle in Kabul is roughly \$100,000, giving an approximate value of \$9.5 million for the discrepancy of 95 vehicles between the two inventories.

No one in the GSO was able to advise the OIG team if any vehicles were actually missing or if the problem was an accounting discrepancy in one of the two inventories. The OIG team inquired about the measures that were underway to reconcile the two reports. The motor vehicle supervisor reported difficulty in making changes to the Inventory of On Hand Vehicles Report. The OIG team counseled the supervisor and the responsible supervisory officer on the importance of reconciling the two inventories and seeking assistance from the Bureau of Administration where necessary to prevent the loss or misuse of government property.

Recommendation 49: Embassy Kabul should identify the reason it has been unsuccessful in making the needed corrections to the Inventory of On Hand Vehicles Report and request assistance from the Bureau of Administration to accurately adjust its inventory. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 50: Embassy Kabul should reconcile the Inventory of On Hand Vehicles Report to document the reasons for the 95-vehicle discrepancy. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

In many cases, the GSO does not have documentation for the motor pool vehicles that it has loaned to various agencies. The loaned vehicles are shown on embassy records as ICASS vehicles that are part of the common motor vehicle pool. In practice, Embassy Kabul is providing ICASS vehicles for the exclusive use of some agencies without any prospect of the vehicles being returned to the motor pool while still in operable condition. As mentioned earlier, there is no guarantee that vehicles are properly maintained when they are removed from GSO control. When vehicle maintenance is performed on loaned ICASS vehicles, costs are charged to ICASS, improperly raising all ICASS agencies' invoices when the other ICASS members do not have access to those vehicles. In effect, ICASS is subsidizing the operations of agencies that should be funding the costs of vehicle acquisition and maintenance.

Recommendation 51: Embassy Kabul should recover loaned International Cooperative Administrative Support Services vehicles and return them to the embassy motor pool. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 52: Embassy Kabul should inform agencies that have been operating loaned International Cooperative Administrative Support Services vehicles that maintenance and fuel costs for the period that those agencies have had exclusive use of the vehicles will be charged directly to the agency. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

In one case, the Embassy loaned an armored ICASS vehicle with an acquisition cost over \$100,000 to a host government entity. The vehicle was in an accident while being driven by a host government employee. The vehicle was returned to the embassy motor pool in an inoperable condition and is considered a total loss. The OIG team asked for a copy of the embassy accident report, but none was available. The loan agreement with the host government office required that the vehicle be returned in the condition received, with a provision that any damages would be paid by the borrower. At the time of inspection, there was no action underway to collect from the host government entity.

Recommendation 53: Embassy Kabul should cease loaning International Cooperative Administrative Support Services vehicles to Afghan Government agencies. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Embassy Kabul authorizes a number of U.S. direct-hire staff to operate self-drive vehicles, but the Embassy does not have any kind of document to inform self-drive employees or occasional operators of embassy vehicles of liability issues connected with the operation of official vehicles for other authorized use. When the OIG team informed the Embassy that 14 FAM 430 provides guidance regarding liability issues and the information to be made available to drivers, the Embassy immediately took steps to prepare a mission announcement. The OIG team made an informal recommendation on this issue.

Housing

The GSO and facilities management collaborate in the assignment and management of Kabul's housing units. At the time of the inspection, all personnel in Kabul were assigned to some form of housing on the embassy compound. Work was underway on several leased properties outside the compound that will house additional staff when maintenance and security upgrades are complete.

Compound housing units vary widely in quality. There are three OBO-constructed apartment buildings with a total of 144 single and double occupancy units. Occupants of the well-appointed apartments universally reported satisfaction with their units, and stated that living in one of the apartments made a significant difference in their morale and quality of life. An assignment to an apartment is highly prized, and is offered as an incentive to employees who volunteer for a two-year tour in Kabul.

Personnel not accommodated in apartments live in containerized housing units (CHU), which are modified cargo containers. The GSO provides microwave ovens and small refrigerators, but preparing a full meal in the CHUs is difficult, if not impossible, although there is a dining facility available for three meals a day for all employees. The CHUs share laundry facilities in containers adapted for that purpose. Housing can affect an employee's entire attitude to a Kabul tour of duty, and the embassy's attention to fairness and equity in making assignments is under constant scrutiny.

The OIG team looked closely at the housing program and assignment system. The IAHB met several times between May and September 2009 to address assignment issues for the summer turnover, but there was no IAHB meeting between September and the conclusion of the inspection in mid-November. Minutes and decisions from the IAHB meetings are published on a SharePoint Web site. At the time of the inspection, the GSO's housing office was ensuring that all newcomers moved into permanent housing quickly. A priority list for apartment assignments guided GSO actions. The IAHB makes assignments to apartments, but the GSO makes the housing assignments of all other employees who go to CHUs without IAHB discussion.

There were mixed opinions about whether the housing priorities were clear. Employees who believed they qualified for a priority category based on a two-year assignment reported volunteering for a second year after arrival and being told that only employees volunteering for two years prior to arrival would be considered for apartments. Others reported a perception that embassy management exerted undue influence on the housing assignment process by requesting apartments for some staff under the "special circumstances" priority category. The OIG team concluded that, while the current system functions adequately in getting employees into shelter, it does not address legitimate concerns about fairness and transparency.

Recommendation 54: Embassy Kabul should schedule regular meetings of the interagency housing board throughout the year to consider assignments to apartments as well as housing appeals from employees. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Embassy Kabul is not in compliance with 15 FAM 232 and 15 FAM 261, which cover the allocation of government-owned housing at overseas posts. The regulations clearly and unequivocally state that priority for government-owned housing is to be given to direct-hire employees of foreign affairs agencies (State, USAID, the Foreign Agricultural Service, the U.S. Commercial Service, and the Defense Intelligence Agency). Non-foreign affairs agency personnel are currently occupying a number of apartments while some foreign affairs agency personnel are housed in CHUs. A reasonable way to correct this violation of regulations would be to identify apartments occupied by non-foreign affairs personnel and earmark them for reassignment to direct-hire foreign affairs agency personnel upon the departure of the current occupants.

Recommendation 55: Embassy Kabul should identify apartments occupied by non-foreign affairs agency personnel and propose to the interagency housing board the assignment of direct-hire foreign affairs agency personnel upon the departure of the incumbents, according to the published priority list for housing. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Property Management

The OIG team visited the warehouse and observed receiving, expendable supply, and nonexpendable operations. The LE staff is professional and well trained. Non-Expendable Property Application bar code property labels are affixed to items at the time of receipt. Random checks of expendable and nonexpendable property showed stock records to be current and accurate. Staff members reported that the bar code system functions satisfactorily, but that the bar code scanner had not worked for several months. The U.S. supervisor was informed and took action; the scanner was restored to service prior to OIG departure from Kabul.

Inspectors were advised that the 2008 annual property inventory had significant discrepancies. As the inspection concluded, the GSO was working on identifying property that might have been overlooked when the inventory was taken. The GSO also provided an ambitious schedule for the coming year's inventory.

Recommendation 56: Embassy Kabul should update and reconcile its property inventory in accordance with its projected schedule and document the reasons for the discrepancies in the 2008 inventory. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Procurement

The deputy general services officer holds a \$250,000 contracting warrant. Because most embassy contracts are above that warrant level, Embassy Kabul relies on outside support from the Regional Procurement Support Office in Frankfurt and the Bureau of Administration, Office of Logistics Management.

Embassy Kabul has a policy of "Afghan First" for procurements. According to the policy, whenever possible, the embassy is to make procurements from Afghan sources in order to encourage growth in the Afghan economy. At the same time, the

policy is nuanced enough to allow for acquisitions from mandatory sources, from GSA, or from vendors outside Afghanistan if necessary to acquire goods of sufficient quality. Procurement staff was unclear about the details of the procurement options, however.

Recommendation 57: Embassy Kabul should provide guidance that details the Afghan First policy while clearly stating the necessary exceptions. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

In early 2009, an officer, who has since departed Afghanistan, initiated contracting actions that violated acquisition regulations. The officer prepared a sole-source justification and issued purchase orders to a government contractor to cope with an unexpected increase in staff that required the immediate purchase of new housing units. The OIG team compared the sole-source justification in the purchase order files with the guidance in the Federal Acquisition Regulations Part 6.302 and did not find the justification credible.

Beginning in February 2009, the contracting officer issued purchase orders to a contractor to acquire and install the needed CHUs. None of the purchase orders totaled more than \$100,000, although the total project was over \$1,257,000. The OIG team concluded that the acquisition was split into smaller parts to circumvent the contracting officer's \$250,000 limit.

Recommendation 58: Embassy Kabul should establish internal review procedures for large procurements and request contracting assistance when a procurement exceeds the embassy's warrant limits. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

In addition to the irregular mechanism used to purchase these CHUs, many of the CHUs were unusable due to contamination problems. Although the Embassy was able to return most of the unusable CHUs for a refund, the time spent on the CHU problem and the loss of needed housing while the problem was being identified and resolved probably outweighed the amount of time that the Embassy would have spent had the CHUs been procured according to regulation.

Facilities Management

The facilities management unit handles an extraordinary workload. The embassy compound consists of the former chancery building; a new chancery building; three apartment houses; Marine security guard quarters; one building housing the medical unit, community liaison office (CLO), dining facility, and a small gym; an electrical

power generating plant; a water treatment facility; a wastewater treatment facility; and a warehouse. Overflow population is accommodated in CHUs. OBO is clearing a nearby property to construct additional temporary dwellings so that current land can be used for permanent apartment buildings.

Embassy Kabul's facilities infrastructure is supported by an operation and maintenance contract with an American firm at an annual cost of approximately \$7 million. The contractor has local, U.S., and third country national employees. The senior facilities manager is the contracting officer's representative (COR) for the contract. A provision in that contract calls for the contractor to train LE staff to take over operation of the Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system and the water treatment and waste water treatment plants. To date, none of the LE staff have been trained, allegedly because of lack of capacity among the LE staff and a management decision not to exercise the training program option. No documentation is available detailing any efforts to identify, recruit, or train qualified employees or to explain why management declined to make such an effort. In the absence of relevant documentation, the OIG team believes that the contractor did not comply with an important part of the contract.

Recommendation 59: The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs should deduct an appropriate amount from the operations and maintenance contractor's payment due to the failure to train local personnel to take over the contractor's duties. (Action: SCA)

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

As operations at Embassy Kabul expanded over the past year, the workload in the financial management office increased dramatically. Kabul adjusted by hiring additional staff and requesting more positions to keep pace with anticipated growth. Some of the processes need strengthening. Most of Embassy Kabul's generous budget comes from supplemental funding, but once supplemental funding ends it is unclear if the normal budgeting process will be able to sustain the rapidly increasing level of embassy operations.

Temporary Duty Support Costs

As mentioned in the context, Embassy Kabul supports a high number of TDY staff in addition to numerous Congressional delegations and other high-level visits. Lengths of stay vary from a few days to several weeks or even up to 12 months. The Embassy does not have a system to ensure that the financial management office receives information on TDY visitors such as date of arrival, administrative support requirements, or length of stay. Visitor support costs are significant given the large numbers of TDY visitors in Afghanistan, but the Embassy's country clearance process does not require agencies to submit information on TDY visitors to the financial management office. The previous financial management officer drafted a policy covering ICASS TDY support costs, with specific charges for certain services, but the Embassy never implemented the policy, and no charges for TDY support costs are currently tracked or invoiced under ICASS. Furthermore, the Embassy does not use the Department's ICASS TDY module to capture administrative costs for all TDY visitors per 6 FAH-5 H-363.1-3. Because of the volume involved, directly charging TDY visitors would be appropriate. It is the responsibility of the financial management office to explore all the options and implement an appropriate policy.

Recommendation 60: Embassy Kabul should establish and implement an official temporary duty policy that delineates the terms, calculations, and conditions under which International Cooperative Administrative Support Services costs of official visitors are recorded and charged to the sponsoring agency. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Suspense Deposit Abroad Accounts

Six suspense deposit abroad (SDA) accounts¹⁵ totaling \$12,600.00 and dating from 2003 to 2009 remain open. The financial management office is in the process of researching these accounts to close them. According to 4 FAH-3 H-322 c 2, SDA accounts are only used temporarily to hold funds, and should be cleared within 30 business days. Furthermore, balances in SDA accounts are to be reviewed quarterly to determine if there are unclaimed balances that should be refunded to the depositor or if the deposit should be turned over to the U.S. Treasury as miscellaneous receipts.

¹⁵ SDA transactions are official collection amounts for payments on behalf of and as directed by the depositors. The U.S. Government is responsible to each depositor for ensuring that amounts received are appropriately disbursed or returned.

Recommendation 61: Embassy Kabul should review and close all open suspense deposit abroad accounts. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Travel

As part of the Afghanistan Service Recognition Package, most employees are eligible for three R&Rs or two R&Rs and three regional rest breaks (RRB) to provide temporary relief from the stresses of living in Afghanistan. Two of the R&R trips may be to the United States, and three are for regional rest breaks. In FY 2009, Embassy Kabul employees made 420 R&R trips at a cost of just over \$2 million. Prior to August 2009, the Embassy issued restricted business class tickets (no authorization required) for R&R travel, using the justification that it was cheaper than unrestricted economy class. Per 14 FAM 567.2-4 b. (7)(c), business class accommodations are not authorized for R&R travel. The travel vouchers reviewed showed that, although there is a space for supervisor approval on the travel request form, Embassy Kabul supervisors do not normally sign the travel request forms absent justification. When the travel office receives an email with the supervisor's approval, it is not attached to the file or the voucher. Some of the reviewed vouchers included travel by senior embassy officers.

Embassy Kabul issued an administrative notice in August 2009 to advise embassy staff that it would adhere strictly to Department guidelines for R&R travel. However, a final comprehensive travel policy has not been issued. The draft policy clarifies the use, length, timing, and allowable locations for R&R travel. Publishing the updated policy will assist all employees in their planning and use of authorized travel and establishing clear guidelines to avoid any misunderstandings.

Recommendation 62: Embassy Kabul should revise, issue, and implement an updated travel policy that includes the requirement for supervisory authorization, justification, and documentation. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The OIG team reviewed a sample of the Embassy's travel vouchers and noted several other issues in addition to the inappropriate use of business class travel for R&R's prior to August 2009. Travel authorizations typically cite an "authorized and actual itinerary" rather than the designated R&R relief point as required by 3 FAM 3725.3. This creates confusion between the cost of the allowable travel and the cost of the actual travel. Cost-constructive travel was not well documented, and there was

little or no documentation of the authorized fare versus the cost-constructive fare. Since the R&R points are known in advance, it would be in the Embassy's interest to have the regional bureau approve routes in advance. Addressing these issues can prevent abuse and fraud in the R&R travel.

Recommendation 63: Embassy Kabul should develop and implement procedures requiring all travel authorizations to show the authorized itinerary and authorized cost. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 64: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, should identify and approve cost-constructive routes for rest and recuperation travel and document all cost-constructive travel with the associated costs. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with SCA)

Because the Embassy documentation does not show travel costs to the authorized R&R point, it is difficult to determine if an actual itinerary was above or below the authorized cost. In some cases, R&R travel to the United States included points abroad but used the U.S. city for cost-constructive travel instead of the R&R relief point abroad as required in 3 FAM 3725.3-1d. The OIG team reviewed travel vouchers that contained a variety of problems, some of which may require that travelers reimburse the U.S. Government for unauthorized or inappropriate travel costs. With the increased use of e-tickets, travelers are no longer including ticket stubs with their vouchers for reimbursement nor are boarding passes required as substitutes. Some travelers are submitting itineraries as substitutes, but these do not establish what actual flights were taken. An assistant general services officer supervises the travel unit, but the travel agency and the traveler set up travel without the general services officer reviewing the travel plan. In some instances, R&R tickets appear to have been issued in business class even after the change in the policy occurred in August 2009. During interviews with the travelers as well as with officers handling travel, it was clear that the embassy was not exercising proper oversight and management control of premium travel.

Recommendation 65: The Bureau of Resource Management, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should conduct an audit of all rest and recuperation travel performed by Embassy Kabul employees in FY 2009 to verify that travel was based on the most cost efficient routes, that the proper cost constructive basis was used, and that all premium class travel was properly approved and justified. (Action: RM, in coordination with A)

Internal Travel

The OIG team found that significant numbers of Embassy employees, visitors, and nonofficial guests traveled within Afghanistan on U.S. Government civilian aircraft during 2009. The OIG team requested records showing which travelers were on official business, which were traveling on a space available basis for recreation, and which were official visitors. The inspectors learned that some trips could be reconstructed from memoranda or manifests, but the Embassy does not have a formal system for issuing travel authorizations for domestic travel, distinguishing travelers on official business from recreational travelers or accompanying spouses, or recovering costs from visitors traveling on orders. The Embassy does not require travelers who are not U.S. Government employees, such as U.S. or foreign journalists accompanying an official traveler, to hold the government blameless in the event of accident or injury.

Existing regulations do not take into account the unique conditions of travel on U.S. Government civilian aircraft in a danger pay country such as Afghanistan, nor do they speak specifically to those issues. Post management does not have a system to control travel and account for costs by collectively applying the principles in 14 FAM 500 to conditions in Afghanistan.

Recommendation 66: Embassy Kabul should review its current system for controlling travel within Afghanistan and establish procedures that require all official travel to be approved in advance by the chief of mission or his designee; distinguish official from unofficial travel; protect the U.S. Government from liability for nonofficial travelers; and allocate costs, including collecting the cost of trips from temporary duty employees and visitors on official travel when appropriate. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The voucher process, overtime, and the employee association are discussed in the management controls section.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Considering that until August 2009 there was only one human resources officer (HRO) in Kabul, the HR section has done remarkable work. In addition, the section recently lost most of its LE staff members for various reasons, leaving a staff of HR technicians with less than six months' experience each. Two generalists on their first tours as HROs arrived in August and September 2009 respectively. Although these new officers are capable, they lack the HR background and experience needed to address complex issues. In the future, the Department and Embassy Kabul would benefit by seeking bidders who have more Department HR experience.

Survey information received by the OIG inspection team alleged that the LE staff have been influencing LE staff hiring in favor of a certain ethnic group. An OIG team review of the recruitment and hiring process did not reveal any cases where qualified applicants had been excluded from consideration. All applications that meet the qualifications are forwarded to the prospective U.S. supervisor. In fact, the HR LE staff keep all applications, including those that do not meet the hiring qualifications, longer than required in case the selecting officer chooses to review additional applications.

Although the inspection did not reveal any improprieties, the OIG team noted that job vacancies are advertised primarily on two commercial Internet Web sites and the Embassy's Web site. Since personal Internet access is not widespread in Afghanistan, this process could be limiting the pool of potential applicants to current employees and their relatives and friends. In the interest of providing equal opportunity, vacancy announcements normally are designed to target a wider audience through advertisements and outreach to professional organizations. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that recruitment and selection of LE staff put greater emphasis on diversity and that outreach efforts are documented.

The section has established very good procedures for the awards program, the employee evaluation program, and orientation for new arrivals. However, the OIG team found that other SOPs are either missing or outdated. This was true not only in the HR section, but throughout other management sections. The OIG team addressed the need for SOPs in the HR section through an informal recommendation. Other informal recommendations address minor operational weaknesses.

Eligible Family Member Program

One of the success stories at Embassy Kabul is a program to allow spouses to reside at this otherwise unaccompanied post if they have EFM employment. Embassy Kabul used to have a dozen EFM positions; now it has now 35 positions. The Embassy plans to identify even more EFM positions, and request hiring authorization from the Department. Given the multiple priorities that the HRO faces, the Embassy has not been able to provide sufficient oversight to the EFM program. The inspectors identified problems with recruitment, advertizing, and hiring of EFMs.

The rapid growth of the EFM program has created some problems and EFM hiring is occasionally a contentious issue. The OIG inspectors assessed the program and found that it has weaknesses and inconsistencies. Although the Department does not guarantee that a spouse will be accepted for a particular position, and an employee cannot bid or be assigned to a Kabul position on the condition that an accompanying spouse be guaranteed a job, the reality has been that every spouse who wanted to work in Kabul has been given an EFM position to date, as long as he or she meets the basic qualifications for that job. However, many of the EFM files that the OIG team reviewed did not include a résumé showing the EFM's qualifications. It is important to note that the majority of the EFM positions do not require specialized qualifications; therefore, a letter describing work experience would suffice. However, in some cases, even that information was not found in the files. The inspectors were told that some of the required documents were stored in individual email accounts or in the shared drive rather than in the personnel files, but after a review of the HR shared drive, the inspectors were unable to find the required documentation in the electronic files.

The OIG team advised post management that information pertaining to EFM employment needs to be either in hard copy or in shared electronic files. Although there is no evidence of unqualified EFMs working in the Embassy, HR's record keeping and documentation are lacking.

There is also an absence of advertisements for available EFM positions in the Embassy. As a result of the previous OIG inspection report of Embassy Kabul (ISP- I-04-35), SCA advised OIG that, starting with 2007 assignments, "the bureau will advertise available EFM positions so that bidders on embassy jobs will know which might be available for an EFM at post." The lack of advertisements for EFM jobs remains a problem. Some positions go unfilled without being advertised. Other positions are created to match the qualification of specific EFMs. In some cases, only after the EFMs arrive in Kabul do they learn about other vacant jobs that may have been a better fit for them. The Embassy, rightly so, has selected some positions

which are critical and need to be filled first. However, that should not prevent post from providing information on all options in a transparent manner.

The OIG team found several other anomalies: an occasional lack of EFM personnel files, missing EFM work requirements statements, inappropriate procedures to document the superior qualification rate process, and, in one instance, a position description that had not been updated when the employee was assigned to another EFM position. Finally, the selection process could be improved. The files revealed that the post employment committee was not being used in selecting the candidates for EFM jobs and that the CLO coordinators were not on the committee. Shortly after the arrival of the inspectors, the HR section rectified this situation and implemented standard operating procedures for the post employment committee.

Recommendation 67: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asia Affairs, should establish a streamlined system for administering the eligible family member program and for addressing weaknesses including transparency, recruitment and selection of candidates, and documentation. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with SCA)

Nepotism Review

As part of the EFM process, the Embassy conducts a nepotism review for every EFM position to comply with 3 FAM 8300, which prohibits an employee from exercising supervisory responsibilities over another member of the his or her family. If necessary, an alternate reporting chain is established to ensure compliance. Although the Embassy has been requesting the requisite nepotism reviews from the Bureau of Human Resources, the inspectors found that the information the Embassy provided to the Bureau of Human Resources has not been comprehensive or detailed enough for some positions, including those involving EFMs of senior-level officers. The Embassy does not have a standard formal process for developing the information that is needed to conduct the nepotism reviews. A standard checklist that applies to all nepotism reviews, especially those for spouses of senior-level officers and section heads, is a useful tool. The nepotism reviews that the inspector examined did not provide details on what steps embassy management would take in different situations to avoid conflicts of interest (i.e. supervision arrangements, attendance at meetings, approval of time and attendance.)

Although the OIG team found instances where the Department asked for additional information from post, this practice was not consistent in all of the nepotism reviews. In a few instances, the information included in the nepotism reviews was different from the actual situation on the ground. The inspectors found that embassy management was not aware of how detailed and comprehensive the nepotism reviews needed to be. Given that spouses of senior-level officers are working in the Embassy, and more will be employed in the future, it is important that Embassy Kabul include in the nepotism reviews, all possible conflict of interest scenarios and proposed solutions. Doing so in advance will reduce the probability of conflicts arising later.

Recommendation 68: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Office of the Legal Adviser, should develop, document, and implement a formal and comprehensive nepotism review process and then seek approval of the revised process from the Department. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with HR and L)

Recusal Letters of Senior-Level Officers

Because a number of the spouses of senior officers work in the Embassy, each of these officers is required by 18 U.S.C. section 208(a) to recuse himself or herself from personal and substantial participation in any particular matter with a direct and predictable effect on his or her financial interests or those of any person whose interests are imputed to him or her. To document such a recusal, the officer drafts and signs a recusal memorandum that is then provided to those embassy employees who may find themselves in situations possibly involving a conflict of interest between the officer and his or her spouse. The recusal memorandum is a message that identifies the specific issues that the employee's spouse will be handling, and informs the staff that the senior-level officer will recuse himself or herself from any discussion, action, or decision related to the spouse's portfolio.

The OIG team applauds the Embassy for initiating letters of recusal as soon as the inspectors notified post management; however, this is an opportunity for the Embassy to establish SOPs on how to draft recusal letters. The reason these letters were not done in the first place is because HROs were not aware of this requirement. Before the letters are distributed to all appropriate mission personnel, it is imperative that Embassy Kabul seek approval and clearance from the Bureau of Human Resources and Office of Legal Adviser. The recusal letters will help mission personnel

to get a better understanding of the roles of the senior-level officer and his or her spouse. In addition, the recusal letters show a commitment from embassy management to a process that is transparent and free of conflicts of interest.

Recommendation 69: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Office of the Legal Adviser, should finalize the recusal memoranda for senior employees whose spouses work at the Embassy and issue a formal notification to appropriate mission staff. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with HR and L)

Locally Employed Staff Training and Development

Although Embassy Kabul tracks LE staff training, the Embassy does not have a comprehensive training plan for all LE staff. (See the information management section of this report for some specific training needs.) The LE staff committee members raised the issue of a general lack of training opportunities with the inspectors. Unfortunately, the embassy has not required LE staff to prepare individual development plans, a basic management tool to determine need, availability of training, and data for financial planning.

In reviewing training documentation, the Embassy had a robust training plan including individual development plans until 2007. Part of the development of a good workforce is properly training employees. After four LE employees were sent to FSI for training in early 2009 and did not return, the embassy temporarily stopped most U.S.-based training but resumed it on a case-by-case basis in July. Regional training continued. Post management has now requested authorization to bring experienced LE staff from neighboring embassies to provide on-the-job training. LE staff expressed their desire to take online training offered by FSI, but some admitted that their English skills are insufficient to benefit from those courses. Others expressed dissatisfaction that, due to the workload, their supervisors would not allow time to take the courses. The information management section indicates that latency problems also make online training problematic.

Given that most U.S. officers are on one-year tours, it would be beneficial to have one single document where American supervisors can find information on what training courses the LE staff have taken and which ones are needed. Training planning requires full participation by all sections of the Embassy.

Recommendation 70: Embassy Kabul should establish and implement a mission-wide comprehensive training plan including the preparation of individual development plans for the locally employed staff and should make that plan available to American supervisors. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Checkout Procedures

Embassy Kabul has a comprehensive checkout sheet. However, in reviewing the checkout process, the inspectors found that the majority of departing employees did not turn in the checkout sheets to the HR section. The checkout process is more problematic among employees from the PRTs who stop in Kabul for only a few days before departing the country. The PRT employees do not feel that the checkout sheet applies to them because the sheet is designed for employees who live on the embassy compound.

Despite efforts by embassy management to require completion of the checkout sheet, the OIG team found that no one enforces the checkout procedures. The lack of a formal checkout procedure produces a ripple effect. For example, the health unit records are not given to the employee before departure; email accounts remain open for a long time because there is no evidence that the employee has left permanently; reconciliation of inventory items is not verified until after the employee leaves; some supervisors do not complete employee evaluation reports for their subordinates; and outstanding financial debts are not settled in time.

Recommendation 71: Embassy Kabul should review and modify its current departure checkout sheet to disseminate clear guidance and procedures and require all departing employees to complete the checkout process before their airline tickets are issued. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Tracking Embassy Personnel

Embassy Kabul tracks its personnel manually by checking with offices periodically to have them count and recount employees. The Department's current automated system is not useful because some types of direct-hire Kabul positions as well as long-term TDY positions actually appear only in the Department's staffing patterns. The embassy has to contact Department HR personnel for help in verifying employee and position information for these alternative hiring mechanisms. This is a time consuming and ineffective way to track the number of positions on the ground. In

addition, this practice circumvents normal procedures and standards for creating and funding positions. The 2009 OIG inspection report for Embassy Baghdad (ISP-I-09-30A) addressed the same issue. Embassy Kabul has expressed its concerns to the Bureau of Human Resources without much success. Tracking mission staffing yields a formal staffing pattern to ensure proper accountability for all embassy personnel in Afghanistan.

Recommendation 72: The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asia, should establish a mechanism to manage all categories of personnel assets in Afghanistan using the Department's standard automated application for post personnel. (Action: HR, in coordination with SCA)

American Staffing

The Department has exerted considerable effort to attract individuals to work in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan service recognition package includes two R&Rs, three RRBs, special differential and premium pay provisions, and a rollover of some pay benefits to the following year. Even if the Department were to staff Embassy Kabul without significant staffing gaps, one-year tours of duty with two R&Rs and three RRBs means that the average employee only spends approximately 10 months on the job. Moreover, the number of key positions filled by employees in stretch assignments is significant. ELOs on their first tour fill 11 embassy positions. Other untenured officers are on the first tours in their area of expertise. These officers are doing impressive work, but they require more supervision from senior officers and often miss key points of the job, most significantly, a lack of attention to detail in processes and internal controls.

The OIG team found that some officers have volunteered for a second year in Kabul. Many of them said that the work and the incentives were the primary reasons for staying a second year. Others expressed the opinion that Embassy Kabul should move to two-year tours with adult dependents authorized to accompany the employee. Many feel that the Embassy would attract more qualified bidders if spouses were able to accompany the employee routinely, and indeed there is a correlation between those agreeing to an extension and those whose spouses are working at the Embassy. Given the civilian plus up that Embassy Kabul is experiencing, it is hard to determine now if the Department would benefit from changing from one to two-year tours. Employees are finding the work in Kabul to be challenging and rewarding and are volunteering on their own to stay for a second year. However, the Embassy

would benefit by exploring other options and presenting them to the Department. One idea is for Embassy Kabul to have a hybrid tour in which employees serve at the Embassy for a period of time (i.e., one year), and then do a short tour in the Department with the SCA bureau (i.e. desk officer or another position) and then return to Kabul to finish off a two-year stint. The OIG team encouraged post management to engage actively with the Department on this issue.

Locally Employed Staff

The OIG team heard in addition to compensation issues common to almost all LE staff worldwide, high on the Kabul LE employees' list of concerns was the debilitating effect of the yearly turnover of their U.S. supervisors. Not only did they cite such issues as lack of continuity and ineffectual leadership, but they complained about the lack of camaraderie, cultural indifference, and lack of sense of "family." The human side of working together was lost as Americans come and go in frequent rotations. Many Americans arrive lacking social and cultural training in the very different mores of Afghanistan; LE staff noted that the short tours, combined with workload factors, made it impossible to develop anything but superficial relationships.

The other LE staff issue was an economic one that the Embassy addressed during the inspection. The Department approved Embassy Kabul's enrollment in the Defined Contribution Fund, an off-shore LE staff retirement fund. LE staff is also interested in plans to implement the congressionally-approved SIV program. The consular section of this report addresses this issue. LE staff also expressed concern about personal security for themselves and their families. Several employees mentioned that working for the U.S. Government is dangerous. Most hide their place of employment from all but immediate family, and their children may be subject to harassment if their parents' employment becomes known.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Embassy Kabul's information management (IM) program generally meets customer needs in a challenging environment and was given high marks by most of its clients. The IM section's priorities, however, are focused on achieving externally imposed goals such as consolidation of Department and USAID information management programs and on piloting new technologies, and as a result, the section is struggling to maintain some aspects of its daily operations, including updating systems documentation, developing SOPs, providing information systems security oversight, and monitoring staff development.

The IM section's mantra is "if we can do it in Afghanistan, they can do it anywhere." With that in mind, section management has been eager to take on several pilot projects including consolidation of USAID's information technology (IT) operations and SharePoint collaboration (intranet) while simultaneously undergoing a major infrastructure upgrade that includes a satellite dish installation. The infrastructure upgrade is intended to increase bandwidth while leveraging existing tools in order to improve the Embassy's communication capability. In addition, the IM section is planning to revamp the Internet, telephone, and television infrastructure in the temporary housing that is being constructed, while at the same time planning a major deployment of the OpenNet unclassified network to the PRTs in the field. The OIG team commends this proactive approach to the Embassy's many challenges but notes the difficulty of piloting projects in a conflict zone and the distractions that these projects cause to IM's daily operations. Some projects, such as OpenNet installation in USAID offices, could have been piloted elsewhere so that the Kabul IM staff could focus on information security, SOP development, and other required duties. Other areas that require attention include strategic planning, switchboard operations, and contact management.

The IM team handles system administration of unclassified and classified networks, radio, telephone, and classified and unclassified pouch service in 18 buildings. Currently, there are 13 U.S. direct-hires and 19 LE staff who support over 1,000 customers. With the mission projected to grow to over 1,300 by the summer of 2010, the IM section will face greater challenges in keeping up with an ever growing customer base.

Strategic Planning

Requests for Internet service in the housing units, video conferencing, and other technical services are growing. With 16 government agencies each bringing a variety of technical requirements, the IM section cannot accommodate everyone on an ad hoc basis. With the inclusion of IM in senior management planning sessions, the IM section would be able to establish priorities better, request resources more rationally, and provide consistent customer service. The end result would be that mission employees could do their jobs more effectively, funds would be expended more judiciously, and embassy morale would improve.

Recommendation 73: Embassy Kabul should involve the information management section in the Mission Strategic Plan exercise and identify specific benchmarks for the future development of information technology, as appropriate. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The December 2005 OIG inspection report recommended that the Embassy “develop an operating plan that identifies and prioritizes IM operations,” but to date, no such operating plan is in place. In addition to establishing priorities through the MSP process, it is also important to have SOPs to guide program implementation. For example, in one case, a U.S. Government agency ordered radios for their operations, but they did not coordinate the technical requirements with the IM section. When the radios arrived, they discovered that they could not be operated in Kabul. If the IM section had SOPs requiring coordination on the procurement of all technical equipment embassy-wide, this waste could have been avoided.

Recommendation 74: Embassy Kabul should develop standard operating procedures on the procurement and installation of all information technology equipment embassy-wide. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

IM places inadequate emphasis on management efficiencies. Because there is very little time to systematize operations, the IM section finds itself reinventing and repeating processes that take a toll on resources, both human and monetary. For example, to support the large number of congressional delegations and other high-level visits, the IM section builds temporary VIP support centers, complete with computers, telephones, printers and furniture, only to dismantle them after the visits. It takes approximately two days for several IM employees to establish a support center. There is no established procedure to decide what should remain in place and reused for the next visit. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to identify temporary office space for high-level visits and maintain core IT equipment for reuse by subsequent visiting delegations.

United States Agency for International Development Information Technology Consolidation

Under chief of mission direction, Embassy Kabul has embarked on a program to create a single IT platform to move all mission employees to the OpenNet system. This effort is progressing slowly. The goal is to avoid stove piping and to reorganize the Embassy along functional rather than agency lines. The Embassy manages the largest USAID program globally, and the purpose of consolidating IT functions is to share financial, procurement, and performance data among agencies that support the Afghan program; to provide access to staff in remote locations; and to facilitate collaboration with local partners.

USAID’s Afghanistan Office of Regional Legal Advisor, with three employees, and USAID’s Office of Program and Project Development, with 14 employees, have

already been moved to the OpenNet system. The project, however, continues to run behind schedule. Initial plans called for all users to be consolidated by October 15, 2009. A subsequent cable requested a delay of that deadline to November 15. That deadline has not been met either.

In addition to progress delays, many end-user and technical issues have not been resolved. For example, Office of Program and Project Development employees were provided OpenNet accounts and needed to have their data transferred. But they also needed to retain access to AIDNet from their workstations. The Embassy is still dealing with related configuration issues, regular trouble shooting meetings have not occurred, and there is no proper project management methodology in place. As a result, consolidation will most likely experience continued delays.

Recommendation 75: Embassy Kabul should work with the United States Agency for International Development to convert the Afghanistan information technology pilot plan into a formal OpenNet consolidation project plan and include new target dates. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

USAID is a member of the Embassy's recently created local change control board. According to 5 FAM 115.6-2 a., the local change control board is required to review the different applications that other agencies need to have on the OpenNet desktop. As a result of the recent consolidation, USAID has several applications to be reviewed prior to placement on the OpenNet network. If these applications are installed on OpenNet without thorough testing, they may introduce security vulnerabilities to the network.

Recommendation 76: Embassy Kabul should submit all United States Agency for International Development applications to the local change control board for review. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

The USAID mission director identified an alternative method to connect the USAID and OpenNet networks directly. The OIG team noted that since Kabul is pilot testing numerous projects, it might also be valuable to test the "local connection" option proposed by USAID to see if it would be simpler and more cost effective. The local connection option is already in use in 38 locations and supports the sharing of the Department's WebPASS application, SharePoint, and other applications. The OIG team made an informal recommendation on this subject.

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Switchboard Operations

Currently, the telephone switchboard operation is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. The OIG team reviewed the telephone logs, and noted that there were very few calls after 8:00 p.m., and those calls usually involved misdialed numbers. Staffing the switchboard during times when there are few incoming calls results in wasted funds. The telephone operation can be automated by establishing a recorded greeting that directs emergency calls to a duty officer. Official communication with Washington is handled through other systems and would not be effected by this measure.

Recommendation 78: Embassy Kabul should establish an automated recording for after-hours use that directs emergency callers to a duty officer and should cease telephone operator service after normal business hours. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Contact Management

Embassy Kabul lacks a single database that allows all Embassy sections and agencies to maintain a record of their local contacts. Sections have been maintaining their own contact lists in a variety of ways, but it is not easy for one section to tap into another section's guest lists or representation records. A single integrated application would provide a standardized system that generates guest lists for official functions and serves the entire embassy.

Recommendation 79: Embassy Kabul should form a committee to review Department-approved contact management options and those databases currently in use by protocol and other embassy sections, decide which option best meets the needs of all embassy sections, and require all embassy elements to use the same contact management system. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Employee Development

The Embassy has hired many talented IM employees locally, and they have provided superb technical support at the information systems center helpdesk and in the mailroom. The majority of the LE staff are university students majoring in business and computer science who also work full time for the Embassy. Due to latency that causes slow response times on the OpenNet network, it is difficult for them to take online courses offered by FSI. Instead, they have taken the initiative to study manuals and some have traveled at their own cost to nearby countries to take certification examinations. The hiring of Afghan students for the information service center has been a real success; they provide desperately needed continuity when U.S. staff departs after their one-year assignments.

Despite this success, there are still some problems in LE staff development. Three individuals have not yet completed the Information Assurance for Administrators course as recommended in an earlier regional computer security office report. There is one radio technician who, despite providing valuable knowledge and service for several years, has not had the opportunity to attend radio training. Two new LE staff from USAID will transition to the information services center as a result of USAID consolidation, and they have not been trained on the OpenNet system.

Recommendation 80: Embassy Kabul should develop and implement individual development plans for locally employed information technology staff to include information assurance and radio systems. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

QUALITY OF LIFE

The quality of life at Embassy Kabul is difficult and will remain so for the indefinite future as the arrival of even more personnel increases the stresses on the infrastructure. The workload is heavy virtually across the board and the hours are long, as addressed elsewhere in this report. Employees live and work on two adjoining compounds, and security considerations severely limit any travel off the compounds for official or unofficial business. There are some recreational facilities (i.e. gymnasiums, tennis court, volleyball court, and swimming pool), which employees use on a limited basis due to long work days. There are even fewer common areas where staff living in CHUs can relax or socialize, although post management is seeking creative ways to redress this problem including large heated tents for common use, a year-round enclosure for the pool, and common reading areas.

Morale at the mission is mixed. As indicated in OIG's personal questionnaire survey, some individuals have very high morale while others are less satisfied. A variety of factors affect morale, including time in country, job satisfaction, separation from family members, and limited social activities. The extraordinary pressures generated by the Presidential review process, the uncertainties surrounding the Afghan elections, and the need to plan for the dramatic staff surge contributed to a particularly stressful atmosphere as the inspection got underway. The Department and the Embassy work hard to improve those areas over which they have some control, such as providing a benefits package to attract bidders to Kabul, regular R&R travel, and employment opportunities for EFMs. These measures alleviate, but do not eliminate, the austere living and working conditions that many employees experience.

HEALTH UNIT

Embassy Kabul's health unit performs well, and Embassy personnel are generally satisfied with the level of care. The health unit facility is spacious and has the necessary equipment. In addition to the regional medical officer, two Foreign Service health practitioners, a local doctor, and a social worker due to arrive by December 2009, the Embassy receives frequent visits from the regional psychiatrist (RMO-P) located in New Delhi. The workload, is by all accounts, heavy, and expected to increase even more with the personnel plus up.

At the time of the inspection, there were no strong indications of mental health issues among employees. In reviewing the health unit's post-traumatic stress disorder process, the OIG team found that the questionnaire used by the health unit, per the Office of Medical Services' instructions, has not produced any significant statistical evidence of employees showing mental health problems. The Embassy asked the Department to assign an RMO-P to Kabul, but the Office of Medical Services opted to have a new RMO-P in Doha cover Kabul. Given that the social worker has not yet arrived, and there are no indications of mental health issues, the OIG team is not taking any position on the assignment of an RMO-P. However, it would be appropriate for the Embassy to reevaluate the need for an RMO-P periodically.

The health unit provides weekly health tips and general medical information to the embassy community on the Embassy's internal television channel. The OIG team found some minor operational weaknesses in the health unit. Although medications are stored and controlled correctly, the inventory records are not well organized. The first aid kits in official embassy cars are missing, and there is no assurance that all the first aid kits have been checked by health unit staff. The OIG team made informal recommendations on these issues.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

Two CLO coordinators serve the embassy community and fill a real need. In addition to emails to the embassy collective, they have started to focus their attention on providing more information to the embassy community through its monthly newsletter, *The Kabul Khourier*. At the time of the inspection, the two CLO coordinators participate in the emergency action committee meetings, country team meetings, USAID executive meetings, and IAHB meetings. While the inspectors were at post, the CLO coordinators were asked to join the post employment committee as well. The CLO coordinators are working with post management to reach out to personnel in the PRTs by sending DVDs and books when personnel from Kabul visit those locations. During the course of the inspection, the CLO coordinators converted an unused open area above the cafeteria into a reading area with sofas and an Internet wireless zone. In addition, the CLO coordinators, with the support of embassy management, plan to convert part of the cafeteria into an Internet café. The OIG team applauds these efforts to improve morale.

The OIG team received feedback from embassy personnel that they were not always aware of CLO-sponsored events. The OIG team found that a CLO bulletin board had not been updated for some time. The CLO SharePoint site is not updated frequently. There is no social sponsorship for new arrivals. The OIG made informal recommendations addressing these issues.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Embassy Kabul has three designated EEO counselors and a Federal Women's Program coordinator. They report no active EEO cases. Embassy Kabul issued the Department policy on sexual harassment and EEO policy prior to the inspection team's arrival. One of the EEO counselors is working with the Office of Civil Rights to issue the Ambassador's personal commitment on EEO policies. The OIG inspection team observed that the EEO policies and information about how to reach the EEO counselors are posted only on one bulletin board outside the HR office. Given the multiple buildings on two compounds, it would be beneficial to post the information in Dari and Pashto in other high traffic areas. The inspectors made informal recommendations on these issues.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The OIG inspectors found that internal controls in the management section are weak in a number of key areas, as detailed elsewhere in this report. The 2009 chief of mission annual management controls certification did not acknowledge any of the deficiencies identified by the OIG team but rather described routine actions that the embassy has taken to ensure management controls in personal property assets, safety environment, and inventory of official motor vehicles. The Embassy does not have SOPs in place across all embassy sections. This leads to different procedures being implemented every year with the arrival of new officers. There is weak verification and control of overtime, leaving this area vulnerable to fraud and abuse. In the area of general services, the Embassy has insufficient management controls over a number of components including inventory of official motor vehicles and procurement. As discussed elsewhere in this report, the Embassy has no accurate inventory of its vehicles and ICASS vehicles are on loan to other U.S. agencies for their exclusive use, yet service and repairs of these loaned vehicles are being paid by ICASS. The OIG team reviewed travel procedures and vouchers and found deficiencies in the oversight of travel program funds. The employee association has virtually no internal controls in place.

The risk assessment questionnaire completed by the Embassy shortly before the arrival of the inspection team and scored by the Bureau of Resource Management showed acceptable scores in all sections, with some scoring 100 percent. The only function that scored 72 percent was overall post management. Embassy Kabul has a program of management controls that on the surface appears to be adequate with high scores in its annual risk assessments. The inspectors found, however, that these controls do not work as intended in this embassy where long hours and understaffing are endemic. The overworked staff, one-year tours, inexperienced American officers, and untrained LE staff members all contribute to lapses that collectively could create significant problems. The Embassy has tried to maintain good controls, but more needs to be done to mitigate vulnerabilities.

There was no evidence that the delegation of responsibilities has been reviewed carefully. There are many inconsistencies in some of the delegations of duties. For example, the OIG team noted that the members for the IAHB and the post-employment committee are listed incorrectly. The management controls program, outlined in 2 FAM 021.3, is “the plan of organization, methods and procedures adopted by

management to provide reasonable assurance that throughout all organizational elements and activities of the Department, the objectives of management control are achieved and the integrity of the programs are safeguarded.” Embassy Kabul has not designated anyone as the management controls coordinator. Department policy (2 FAM 022.8 d.) requires the Ambassador to appoint the Embassy’s management controls coordinator, usually a management officer with direct access to the DCM. Given the leadership structure at Embassy Kabul, whoever is appointed in this position will be responsible for ensuring that all offices within the Embassy report management control deficiencies accurately and establish corrective action plans.

Recommendation 81: Embassy Kabul should appoint a management controls coordinator and disseminate this information in a revised designations of authorities administrative notice. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Overtime

Most U.S. direct-hire employees in Kabul are paid a 20 percent premium to compensate for the long hours that they regularly work to support U.S. goals and objectives in Afghanistan. Non-tenured Foreign Service officers, specialists, EFMs, and LE staff, however, are compensated for the actual number of overtime hours worked and do not receive the 20 percent premium. These staff accumulate a significant amount of overtime. This situation is not new; the 2005 OIG report recommended that the embassy establish procedures to prevent abuse of overtime. In response to that inspection report, the Embassy implemented procedures requiring supervisors’ approval in advance of any overtime, and requiring employees to detail the exact hours they worked overtime. In addition, supervisors were expected to review average weekly overtime hours worked by each employee and highlight overtime hours that might be excessive. However, a review of the current overtime situation shows that the procedures have not gone far enough to prevent overtime abuse.

In FY2009, the Department incurred over \$1.5 million in overtime costs (Diplomatic & Consular Programs and ICASS combined).¹⁶ With the increase in workload across the board, more employees are now claiming overtime. Examination of a sample of six pay periods for FY 2009 revealed that 80 percent of eligible U.S. staff and 68 percent of LE staff overtime justifications were weak, incomplete, or nonexistent. There was no evidence that supervisors received reports on overtime usage or that they monitored overtime. The OIG team acknowledges that overtime is neces-

¹⁶ This figure does not include overtime costs incurred by other agencies but does include overtime by 3161s at the PRTs.

sary to meet the heavy demands placed on the Embassy for visitor support and other priorities, but strong justification and supervisory approval or verification of premium time worked are necessary to prevent abuse of overtime.

Recommendation 82: Embassy Kabul should establish, implement, and disseminate an updated policy on overtime that requires complete documentation and valid justifications for the additional hours and sets up a process for a monthly management review. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Representational Funding

Embassy Kabul's representational funding was not adequate to cover all of the Embassy's representational events in FY 2009. To cope with this shortfall, management redirected representational funds initially budgeted for use by other embassy sections to cover the Ambassador's representational events. Officers from other embassy sections who had planned representational events expressed dissatisfaction about the loss of representational funds, and some continued to follow their outreach program but simply did not submit any representational vouchers, assuming they would not be paid anyway. Although the Department provided Embassy Kabul additional representational funds at the end of the fiscal year, some officers were apparently unaware that they could have been reimbursed. The representational budget and vouchering process could have been more transparent.

The FY 2010 budget request for representational funding included an increase of funds for representation across the board. In reviewing the representational funding, the OIG team found that the Embassy does not have a representational policy that discusses use of funds and distribution, nor does it set dollar limits for various types of activities as outlined in 3 FAM 3246.3 a. A representational plan ensures that resources are used efficiently to advance the Embassy's goals and objectives.

Recommendation 83: Embassy Kabul should establish, implement, and disseminate a policy on use of representational funds, redistribution of funds during the fiscal year, and dollar limits for various types of activities. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Representational Vouchers

The OIG team reviewed a sample of representational vouchers from FY 2009. Vouchers often did not include the purpose of the event as required in 3 FAM 3247.2 nor did the guest lists always indicate if invitees attended the event or not. As a result, it was not always possible to determine if executive branch attendees were less than 50 percent of the total attendees as required 3 FAM 3246.3 b. Also, no justification was made for events with more than 50 percent executive branch attendees. There is no established process for reviewing representational vouchers. The OIG team noted some discrepancies in the numbers of guests versus the number of meals provided. In general, better and more complete documentation is necessary to meet the requirements of 4 FAH-3 H423.5. It was not clear that requirements for representational vouchers are enforced or that vouchers are sent back to the appropriate office for additional information.

Recommendation 84: Embassy Kabul should establish and implement procedures for representational vouchers that require clear documentation of attendees, costs, and justification for the event. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Kabul Embassy Employee Association

The Kabul Embassy Employee Association (KEEA) provides several important services that contribute to the morale and welfare of the embassy community. These include a logo store, which sells alcohol, meal tickets, and souvenir merchandise; a small club facility; and lease agreements with local vendors for sales of groceries and sundries. The store and the club use a point of sale system to capture sales information.

The 2008 KEEA audit, completed in October 2009, was incomplete and issued as a qualified report due, in part, to corrupted computer files. KEEA subsequently acquired a proper accounting package, and the profit and loss statement for FY 2009 to date shows a profit of \$160,000. Assets include over \$140,000 cash in the bank account.

The KEEA board is relatively new, but is made up of enthusiastic officers who have some good ideas on how to improve the overall operation. KEEA suffers, however, from the lack of experienced management staff and the frequent rotation of board members, who may not have sufficient time to spend on association matters in addition to their regular workload. In reviewing the association's financial and operational documents, the OIG team concluded that oversight and controls over

KEEA have been virtually nonexistent. There is no evidence that the oversight that the board members are providing to the association's operations is adequate. A persuasive case can be made that the board members are not familiar with Department regulations on how to operate an employee association.

Recommendation 85: Embassy Kabul should request, and the Bureau of Administration should perform, a site visit to provide specific guidance to board members, review internal controls, and establish strengthened procedures for employee association operations. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with A)

Meal Ticket Accountability and Process

The current food service contractor does not accept cash. As a result, the Embassy has arranged for TDY employees to purchase meal tickets from KEEA. Embassy Kabul and KEEA have a memorandum of agreement to have the association print and sell meal tickets. The Embassy devised this process almost overnight when the new food service contractor came on board, but has not followed up or evaluated the meal ticket process to determine if it is working as envisioned. According to the agreement, KEEA is to reimburse the Embassy for each meal ticket sold and presented at the dining facilities as recorded by the food services contractor's daily head count document.

Under the current reimbursement process, KEEA reports the number of tickets sold each month to the financial management office, which in turn bills the association for that amount, and the association pays that bill to the financial management office. The financial management office then pays the food services contractor. Used tickets collected by the food services contractor are sent back to the employee association without being cancelled. Meal ticket sales are not being reported according to the memorandum of agreement. The process is cumbersome and difficult to audit. It is possible that the employee association is reimbursing too much to the embassy, since tickets sold but not used are included in the calculations. In addition, meal ticket profits may be excessive when compared to the cost of providing this service (resulting in higher per diem for TDY visitors and excessive profits for the association.)

Recommendation 86: Embassy Kabul should reassess the current reimbursement process and develop a system that provides for the reimbursement of the actual number of meal tickets accepted by the food services contractor. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

In addition, if the profits from the meal ticket sales are subsidizing other KEEA operations, this could suddenly reduce the association's profits should the current food service contractor be replaced with one who accepts cash payments. The Embassy has not established cost centers or reviewed the operation for sustainability as required by 6 FAM 531.5. KEEA did not contribute any significant portion of its excess funds to the embassy community, such as grants to the CLO for community events. The lack of cost centers prevents KEEA's management or the board from identifying unprofitable services. The heavy reliance on meal tickets as a source of revenue is not a good management practice.

Recommendation 87: Embassy Kabul should conduct an audit of the meal ticket program that justifies administrative costs and a reasonable profit margin and establishes cost centers to ensure that each cost center is self-sustaining. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Alcohol Sales and Limits

KEEA does not have a workable system to limit sales of alcohol or a system to monitor sales to individual purchasers. Alcohol sales account for a considerable portion of total association sales. A variety of people have access to the embassy compound, but not all are eligible to purchase alcohol. KEEA established limits for personal alcohol purchases; current limits are one bottle of liquor, three bottles of wine, and two cases of beer per day. Despite these limits, the OIG team found no evidence that alcohol sales were being monitored and reported periodically to Embassy. There were no indicators that duty-free alcohol bottles are being resold on the open market; however, given the current limits and lack of controls, it may be possible. However, it is a good management practice to prevent employees from abusing their diplomatic privileges.

Recommendation 88: Embassy Kabul should review the current limits on alcohol sales, establish and implement limits, and monitor sales of duty-free alcohol by the Kabul Embassy Employee Association (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Employee Association Trailers

In May 2009, the Embassy purchased five modified shipping containers fitted out as retail sales space for a total of \$59,900 from KEEA. The procurement was a negotiated sale. Documentation from the purchase order file shows the price to be the full price the association paid when it had originally acquired the containers. The

Embassy did not receive a good or service as the result of the acquisition, and the association continued to occupy the containers as before.

Inspectors attended a KEEA board of directors meeting at which one member stated that the purpose of the procurement was to give the association some liquidity. The financial condition of the association, documented elsewhere in this report, is now quite strong. The OIG team believes the acquisition was a purely paper transaction to transfer embassy funds to the KEEA treasury, with no benefit to either the embassy or the government.

Recommendation 89: Embassy Kabul should request, and the Kabul Embassy Employees' Association should return, funds paid to the association for five used shipping containers fitted as retail sales space. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation 1:** Embassy Kabul should capture all the new positions and resources that it needs to carry out its counterinsurgency strategy in the FY 2012 Mission Strategic Plan. (Action: Embassy Kabul)
- Recommendation 2:** Embassy Kabul should reorganize the staff assistant operation so that the executive secretary manages a rotating schedule of responsibilities for the three staff assistants to include facilitating paper flow, note taking, country team follow-up, travel, and other support activities as required. (Action: Embassy Kabul)
- Recommendation 3:** Embassy Kabul should streamline its clearance process, using staff assistants to make nonsubstantive changes to end products, initiating in-house tradecraft training, if necessary, to encourage better products from initial drafters, and reducing the number of clearing officers wherever possible. (Action: Embassy Kabul)
- Recommendation 4:** Embassy Kabul should develop, implement, and enforce a protocol for official visitors that requires travelers to submit their preferred programs, including in-country travel, at least 72 hours before the group's arrival in Afghanistan to allow for adequate logistical preparation. (Action: Embassy Kabul)
- Recommendation 5:** The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan should coordinate all routine high-level communications between the Department, the National Security Council, and Embassy Kabul and restrict such communications with the Embassy to between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Kabul time. (Action: S/SRAP)
- Recommendation 6:** The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan should ask the Joint Staff to reschedule its routine weekly Friday teleconferences with Embassy Kabul during official Kabul working hours. (Action: S/SRAP)
- Recommendation 7:** Embassy Kabul should assign a team or unit in its political section to follow Afghanistan's relations with Iran and other neighboring countries on a full-time basis. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 8: The Foreign Service Institute should develop online modules in the history, politics, and culture of Afghanistan, and in reporting trade craft that can be added to the predeployment training of officers who will have political reporting and analysis responsibilities on provincial reconstruction teams.

(Action: FSI)

Recommendation 9: The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan should collect and convey the reporting needs of Washington consumers to Embassy Kabul by providing the mission with a periodic summary of key areas of reporting interest that reflect the needs of all consumers while consolidating and prioritizing needs, wherever possible, to reduce ad hoc requests.

(Action: S/SRAP)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Kabul should produce a strategic reporting plan for political issues and link it to resource planning through the Mission Strategic Plan. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 11: Embassy Kabul should prepare a quarterly cable summarizing key political developments and trends in addition to its daily reporting. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Kabul should appoint an experienced biographics coordinator, and that coordinator should construct appropriate databases of information on key Afghan leaders and potential leaders to assist in identifying effective interlocutors. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Kabul should assign responsibility for oversight of large-scale grants for the advancement of women's rights to an agency with development experience. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Kabul should reorganize its political section into at least two units, headed by officers who can replace the deputy counselor when necessary. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Kabul should streamline and consolidate its planning system by reducing the number of working groups, focusing agendas on decisions to be made, and keeping formal records of all meetings that reflect agreement by all agencies on what decisions were reached. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 16: Embassy Kabul should keep minutes of all regularly scheduled meetings between the Ambassador and the commander of U.S. military forces in Afghanistan, ensuring that the minutes reflect agreement by both sides on what decisions were reached. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 17: Embassy Kabul should add an administrative assistant to its political-military section, using an eligible family member or other appropriate hiring mechanism, to take over the clerical aspects of civilian-military planning meetings and required Leahy Amendment vetting. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should implement policy decisions in accordance with acquisition and grant law and regulations, including the requirements that contract and grant changes be authorized by warranted contract and grant officers. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with A)

Recommendation 19: Embassy Kabul should amend and reissue the letter of instruction from the Ambassador to the senior civilian representatives in the regional commands to bring the text into harmony with contractual obligations regarding direction and performance evaluations of other agency contractors and indicating that responsibility for direction and performance evaluations must remain with the employing agency. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 20: Embassy Kabul should conduct a review of the rules, regulations, and practices of all agencies with employees under chief of mission authority in Afghanistan and amend guidance as necessary so that performance evaluations are done in accordance with the appropriate rating system. (Action: Embassy Kabul.)

Recommendation 21: Embassy Kabul should authorize activity managers and contracting officer technical representatives in the field to send technical performance reports on implementing partners and development projects directly to the corresponding agency's contracting office at the embassy at the same time that they send such reports to the interagency provincial affairs office. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 22: The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, in coordination with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, should approve and disseminate a sustainable, comprehensive rule of law strategy, to include program priorities, interagency staffing and skill needs, and a timeline. (Action: S/SRAP, in coordination with INL)

Recommendation 23: The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should approve an anticorruption strategy and authorize the allocation of assistance funding to support that strategy. (Action: S/SRAP, in coordination with SCA and INL)

Recommendation 24: Embassy Kabul should review the positions it requested for FY 2010 in light of the approved anticorruption strategy and assign an anticorruption officer to oversee its implementation. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 25: The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs should immediately fill all seven of the in-country contracting officer representative positions. (Action: INL)

Recommendation 26: Embassy Kabul should require that all aircraft and crew in the Embassy Air pool adhere to the International Civil Aviation Organization crew proficiency, aircraft maintenance, and aircraft safety standards and that all personnel have appropriate security clearances. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 27: Embassy Kabul should expand the border coordinator's role to include the coordination of border activities at all borders. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 28: Embassy Kabul should establish a concise public diplomacy and communications strategy to set priorities, drive program initiatives, and provide a framework to judge proposals and should disseminate this plan to all officers, sections, agencies and entities that conduct public diplomacy activities in Afghanistan. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 29: Embassy Kabul should clarify the role of the director of communication and public diplomacy in providing policy direction to all personnel under chief of mission authority in Kabul and in the field who are working on public diplomacy and communications issues. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 30: Embassy Kabul should rationalize and clarify the public diplomacy staffing structure to eliminate duplication of functions and unclear lines of authority and should establish a clear organizational chart with work requirements for each position. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 31: Embassy Kabul should increase its use and support of the Government Media Information Center and should clearly define the position and clarify the authority of the Foreign Service officer advising the center, as well as other U.S. Government staff working there. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 32: The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, in coordination with the Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and Embassy Kabul, should develop and implement a staffing plan to cover all of the additional public diplomacy programs to be carried out by the Embassy and should link these new programs to the provision of additional staff in Kabul. (Action: SCA, in coordination with S/SRAP and Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 33: Embassy Kabul should establish a stronger oversight system for issuing and monitoring grants to ensure that projects are completed according to the proposal, funds have been expended properly, and grants files include all the required documents. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 34: Embassy Kabul should request grants training for the locally employed staff handling grants. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 35: The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, the Bureau of Human Resources, and the Foreign Service Institute, should authorize all U.S. direct-hire personnel who are designated to do public diplomacy at the provincial reconstruction teams to have targeted diplomacy training, including grants training, and provide other provincial reconstruction teams officers with some basic public diplomacy (especially media) training. (Action: S/SRAP, in coordination with SCA, DGHR, and FSI)

Recommendation 36: Embassy Kabul should reach out to the entire mission for nominations, project proposals, and selection committee participation for the International Visitor Leadership Program and should place more emphasis on seeking out non-English speakers. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 37: Embassy Kabul should hire a Pashto translator for the public affairs section, and backup the translator's work by investigating the availability of private translation companies and consulting with Embassy Islamabad on cooperation in producing Pashto language materials. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 38: Embassy Kabul should develop the capacity in the general services office to handle non-public diplomacy audio-visual work, as well as an arrangement in the information management office for handling non-public diplomacy digital video conferences. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 39: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Office of the Legal Adviser, should clarify the role of the embassy photographer, including issues of supervision, payment and approval of overtime, and ownership of the photo archive. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with L)

Recommendation 40: Embassy Kabul should review, clarify, and where necessary streamline the policy on when and how the interagency provincial affairs office and other sections and agencies transmit and coordinate policy and program guidance between the Embassy and the field to enable more direct communication while maintaining limitations on mandatory taskings. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 41: Embassy Kabul should request immediate clarification from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Bureau of Consular Affairs of plans to relocate the consular section and review any new space configuration to be sure that new premises can accommodate the additional staff expected in FY 2010 and the return of the immigrant visa function. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 42: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should identify one or more panel physicians and a laboratory facility in Kabul that is capable of providing reliable physical examinations and x-rays, referring to Centers for Disease Control guidelines for selecting a panel position. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with CA)

Recommendation 43: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Embassy Islamabad, and Embassy New Delhi, should send one of its consular officers and one locally employed staff to observe immigrant visa processing at a consular section in the region prior to initiating visa processing in Kabul and designate a locally employed supervisor from the region to oversee initial processing in Kabul. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with CA, Embassy Islamabad, and Embassy New Delhi)

Recommendation 44: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should transfer all immigrant visa processing for persons resident in Afghanistan to Embassy Kabul as soon as the initial surge of special immigrant visa applications has moved through the pipeline. (Action: CA)

Recommendation 45: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should advise the Department of Homeland Security to transfer approved petitions for temporary work visas for Afghan residents to Embassy Kabul. (Action: CA)

Recommendation 46: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should develop a referral program to address the large number of Afghan trainees that the U.S. military commands propose for U.S. programs who fall outside the standard referral guidelines. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with CA)

Recommendation 47: Embassy Kabul should require Foreign Service officers assigned to the two new consulates to take the portions of consular training that deal with American citizen services regulations and processes before assignment. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 48: Embassy Kabul should rewrite the consular section's travel plans to include quarterly oversight and training trips to the consulates in Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 49: Embassy Kabul should identify the reason it has been unsuccessful in making the needed corrections to the Inventory of On Hand Vehicles Report and request assistance from the Bureau of Administration to accurately adjust its inventory. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 50: Embassy Kabul should reconcile the Inventory of On Hand Vehicles Report to document the reasons for the 95-vehicle discrepancy. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 51: Embassy Kabul should recover loaned International Cooperative Administrative Support Services vehicles and return them to the embassy motor pool. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 52: Embassy Kabul should inform agencies that have been operating loaned International Cooperative Administrative Support Services vehicles that maintenance and fuel costs for the period that those agencies have had exclusive use of the vehicles will be charged directly to the agency. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 53: Embassy Kabul should cease loaning International Cooperative Administrative Support Services vehicles to Afghan Government agencies. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 54: Embassy Kabul should schedule regular meetings of the interagency housing board throughout the year to consider assignments to apartments as well as housing appeals from employees. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 55: Embassy Kabul should identify apartments occupied by non-foreign affairs agency personnel and propose to the interagency housing board the assignment of direct-hire foreign affairs agency personnel upon the departure of the incumbents, according to the published priority list for housing. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 56: Embassy Kabul should update and reconcile its property inventory in accordance with its projected schedule and document the reasons for the discrepancies in the 2008 inventory. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 57: Embassy Kabul should provide guidance that details the Afghan First policy while clearly stating the necessary exceptions. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 58: Embassy Kabul should establish internal review procedures for large procurements and request contracting assistance when a procurement exceeds the embassy's warrant limits. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 59: The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs should deduct an appropriate amount from the operations and maintenance contractor's payment due to the failure to train local personnel to take over the contractor's duties. (Action: SCA)

Recommendation 60: Embassy Kabul should establish and implement an official temporary duty policy that delineates the terms, calculations, and conditions under which International Cooperative Administrative Support Services costs of official visitors are recorded and charged to the sponsoring agency. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 61: Embassy Kabul should review and close all open suspense deposit abroad accounts. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 62: Embassy Kabul should revise, issue, and implement an updated travel policy that includes the requirement for supervisory authorization, justification, and documentation. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 63: Embassy Kabul should develop and implement procedures requiring all travel authorizations to show the authorized itinerary and authorized cost. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 64: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, should identify and approve cost-constructive routes for rest and recuperation travel and document all cost-constructive travel with the associated costs. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with SCA)

Recommendation 65: The Bureau of Resource Management, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should conduct an audit of all rest and recuperation travel performed by Embassy Kabul employees in FY 2009 to verify that travel was based on the most cost efficient routes, that the proper cost constructive basis was used, and that all premium class travel was properly approved and justified. (Action: RM, in coordination with A)

Recommendation 66: Embassy Kabul should review its current system for controlling travel within Afghanistan and establish procedures that require all official travel to be approved in advance by the chief of mission or his designee; distinguish official from unofficial travel; protect the U.S. Government from liability for nonofficial travelers; and allocate costs, including collecting the cost of trips from temporary duty employees and visitors on official travel when appropriate. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 67: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asia Affairs, should establish a streamlined system for administering the eligible family member program and for addressing weaknesses including transparency, recruitment and selection of candidates, and documentation. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with SCA)

Recommendation 68: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Office of the Legal Adviser, should develop, document, and implement a formal and comprehensive nepotism review process and then seek approval of the revised process from the Department. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with HR and L)

Recommendation 69: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Office of the Legal Adviser, should finalize the recusal memoranda for senior employees whose spouses work at the Embassy and issue a formal notification to appropriate mission staff. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with HR and L)

Recommendation 70: Embassy Kabul should establish and implement a mission-wide comprehensive training plan including the preparation of individual development plans for the locally employed staff and should make that plan available to American supervisors. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 71: Embassy Kabul should review and modify its current departure checkout sheet to disseminate clear guidance and procedures and require all departing employees to complete the checkout process before their airline tickets are issued. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 72: The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asia, should establish a mechanism to manage all categories of personnel assets in Afghanistan using the Department's standard automated application for post personnel. (Action: HR, in coordination with SCA)

Recommendation 73: Embassy Kabul should involve the information management section in the Mission Strategic Plan exercise and identify specific benchmarks for the future development of information technology, as appropriate. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 74: Embassy Kabul should develop standard operating procedures on the procurement and installation of all information technology equipment embassy-wide. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 75: Embassy Kabul should work with the United States Agency for International Development to convert the Afghanistan information technology pilot plan into a formal OpenNet consolidation project plan and include new target dates. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 76: Embassy Kabul should submit all United States Agency for International Development applications to the local change control board for review. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

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Recommendation 78: Embassy Kabul should establish an automated recording for after-hours use that directs emergency callers to a duty officer and should cease telephone operator service after normal business hours. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 79: Embassy Kabul should form a committee to review Department-approved contact management options and those databases currently in use by protocol and other embassy sections, decide which option best meets the needs of all embassy sections, and require all embassy elements to use the same contact management system. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 80: Embassy Kabul should develop and implement individual development plans for locally employed information technology staff to include information assurance and radio systems. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 81: Embassy Kabul should appoint a management controls coordinator and disseminate this information in a revised designations of authorities administrative notice. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 82: Embassy Kabul should establish, implement, and disseminate an updated policy on overtime that requires complete documentation and valid justifications for the additional hours and sets up a process for a monthly management review. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 83: Embassy Kabul should establish, implement, and disseminate a policy on use of representational funds, redistribution of funds during the fiscal year, and dollar limits for various types of activities. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 84: Embassy Kabul should establish and implement procedures for representational vouchers that require clear documentation of attendees, costs, and justification for the event. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 85: Embassy Kabul should request, and the Bureau of Administration should perform, a site visit to provide specific guidance to board members, review internal controls, and establish strengthened procedures for employee association operations. (Action: Embassy Kabul, in coordination with A)

Recommendation 86: Embassy Kabul should reassess the current reimbursement process and develop a system that provides for the reimbursement of the actual number of meal tickets accepted by the food services contractor. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 87: Embassy Kabul should conduct an audit of the meal ticket program that justifies administrative costs and a reasonable profit margin and establishes cost centers to ensure that each cost center is self-sustaining. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 88: Embassy Kabul should review the current limits on alcohol sales, establish and implement limits, and monitor sales of duty-free alcohol by the Kabul Embassy Employee Association (Action: Embassy Kabul)

Recommendation 89: Embassy Kabul should request, and the Kabul Embassy Employees' Association should return, funds paid to the association for five used shipping containers fitted as retail sales space. (Action: Embassy Kabul)

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

Executive Secretariat

Because of the constant change in the structure of the executive secretariat, protocol assistants and interpreters have different supervisors although they often work on the same events and the interpreters backstop the protocol assistants. The interpreters, in particular, are not adequately mentored.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Kabul should review the arrangements for the supervision of the protocol assistants and interpreters to ensure that all receive the same level of mentoring and supervision.

Political Affairs

Temporary reinforcements enable the Embassy to cover the national elections without overwhelming its small political section.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Kabul should make more use of temporary duty surge capacity in the future to cover crucial national events.

A number of required reports, such as those on human rights, religious freedom, and trafficking in persons, are due at the end of the summer, which coincides with the annual officer rotation. It is unreasonable to assign the drafting of such complex and important assessments to officers who have just arrived in country, but the embassy cannot change the deadlines for the reports.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Kabul should make the first draft of annual reports the last thing that reporting officers do before transferring out of Kabul rather than the first thing a replacement officer does upon arrival in the fall.

IPA coordinates PRT reporting with minimal guidance from the political and economic sections. Sometimes this results in PRT failure to put their reporting in a broader context and results in a loss of synergy between the embassy reporting offices and the PRTs.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Kabul should require the embassy reporting sections to provide the provincial reconstruction teams with periodic guidance on which priority issues to investigate and report.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Kabul should develop and fund a travel plan for the political and economic sections to bolster reporting from the field.

One Foreign Service officer and one LE staff spend hours watching plenary sessions of the Afghan Parliament from the visitors' gallery to gather information. This is not an efficient use of time.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Kabul should make use of a daily summary of developments that the Parliament produces in Dari and English.

The political section is not currently using some management tools that could make its work easier and address the lack of experience and continuity that results from the one-year tours.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Kabul should develop and use an electronic system to help new political officers identify key sources, organizing it by issue rather than by individual or portfolio, and including annotations to reflect reliability.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Kabul should require political officers to leave a handover memo for successors before departing the Embassy.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Kabul should invite all officers at provincial reconstruction teams who have political reporting responsibilities to consult with the political section on arrival and debrief it prior to departure.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Kabul should develop a written orientation to the political section's work and use it to help new arrivals become familiar with their work more quickly.

Political-Military Affairs

A new fusion cell has been created to work with U.S. military and coalition forces on efforts to persuade enemy fighters to switch sides and join the coalition payroll. The embassy has not yet sorted out exactly how to clear its reporting and coordinate its advocacy with the new cell, which has been assigned the lead role in reintegration policy by NATO.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Kabul should review its systems for communication links, reporting responsibilities, and information sharing to ensure that the work of the fusion cell is fully coordinated with U.S. policy and United Nations mandates for the disarmament and reintegration of former Taliban members.

The small strategic planning unit of the pol-mil section is partially staffed with TDY personnel and much of its work is destined for Department offices. Most of the planning work does not depend on interaction with the Afghan Government and does not necessarily need to be done in Kabul, where the costs and security risks of maintaining U.S. employees are high.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Kabul should review the strategic planning unit to determine whether it would be more cost effective to do the strategic planning and metrics monitoring in the Department or at another embassy in the region.

Refugee Affairs

It is often difficult for the refugee coordinator or PRM's nongovernmental implementing partners to visit projects because of the security situation in the area. The refugee coordinator relies on secondhand reports on how the projects are advancing. Synergies with other assistance programs may be the best way to maximize PRM resources.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Kabul should establish a mechanism to coordinate Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Affairs and U.S. Agency for International Development projects in the same regions of Afghanistan to provide maximum synergy in those communities.

The refugee coordinator and her staff have difficulty monitoring projects in conflict areas. The Ambassador can often travel to areas with his protective detail that the RSO would consider unsuitable for travel by less well-protected refugee affairs staff.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Kabul should include the refugee coordinator or the senior locally employed assistant when the Ambassador travels to areas where there are Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Affairs-funded projects.

Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs

The CDDEA office has several management layers that review drafting from the officers in the sections and agencies under the coordinator's responsibility. Officers in many of those agencies and sections are frustrated at having their work returned not only for substantive additions but for grammatical and semantic changes as well. This multiple clearance and redrafting process can delay products.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Kabul should focus their drafting clearance efforts on products for consumption outside of the embassy such as reporting cables and give internal products a lighter scrub for policy consistency.

Development Assistance

The Ambassador reviews all USAID programs and projects, including new projects, additional funding for ongoing projects, and project extensions to ensure that they support U.S. policy priorities. The decision memorandum can be extremely detailed and cumbersome.

Informal recommendation 16: Embassy Kabul should streamline the process for approving U.S. Agency for International Development programs and projects so that only essential information is included, and in the case of contract extensions, that contract performance is the key issue addressed.

Public Affairs Section

All or virtually all officers heading out to PRTs will eventually do some media or public diplomacy work. Some will have PD as their primary focus.

Informal recommendation 17: Embassy Kabul should continue public affairs briefings for outgoing provincial reconstruction team officers and expand those briefings to staff who will be focusing on public diplomacy.

PAS officers lack the time to do basic contact work and develop relationships with the key Afghans in educational, cultural institutions, and media organizations.

Informal recommendation 18: Embassy Kabul should take advantage of the arrival of additional public diplomacy staff to set up a regular schedule of meetings with key contacts and should use these meetings to develop contact information for the contact management database.

The filing system in PAS is not well organized, and officers said they had difficulty finding previous records. They also said they spent a lot of time doing essentially clerical tasks.

Informal recommendation 19: Embassy Kabul should hire an American office management specialist for the public affairs section to upgrade the filing system and establish better administrative procedures.

The FY 2009 supplemental spending plan for public diplomacy includes \$1 million for ten or more cultural preservation projects. Since these projects would likely involve sensitive cultural, historic, or religious sites, it is essential that they be done well.

Informal recommendation 20: Embassy Kabul should get a cultural preservation specialist to handle the work if the proposed multiple large-scale cultural preservation projects go forward. In cooperation with the staff of the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, the embassy should use these projects to build Afghan cultural preservation capacity.

PAS produces an attractive report on public diplomacy activities called the "PD Weekly" that is distributed internally within the embassy and to offices in Washington. Although it is quite popular and well-received, the PD Weekly is very time-consuming for the PAS staff, especially for a document that is not distributed outside the U.S. government.

Informal recommendation 21: Embassy Kabul should investigate ways to reduce the amount of time spent on the public diplomacy weekly report or get more benefit from it by using portions of it in public fora, such as the embassy Web site.

The Embassy Web site is not used routinely to highlight the benefits to the Afghan people of U.S. involvement and assistance.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Kabul should highlight more positive stories about successful programs and the U.S. Agency for International Development on the Embassy Web site.

Consular Affairs

Consular officers have an emergency telephone that they pass among the three of them on a consular duty officer rotation. No other embassy personnel handle the consular duty. When new consular officers arrive they have no resources for the consular duty.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Kabul should develop a consular duty manual that can be used by consular officers but also by nonconsular duty officers in the future.

The ACS LE assistant doubles as the part-time fraud investigator. Most of his work involves responding to requests for investigation from other embassies that are processing Afghan NIV or IV cases. He has no systematic way of tracking and recording his anti-fraud work.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Kabul should develop a system for tracking its fraud prevention and detection work in preparation for the arrival of an assistant regional security officer for investigations and the onset of immigrant visa processing.

Consolidation

IPA has its own management section to handle inprocessing of new employees, logistics, and support operations for over 180 (soon to be 380) U.S. civilians at the PRTs.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Kabul should examine the possible efficiencies that could be gained by consolidating Office of Interagency Provincial Affairs management support into the management section.

Motor Vehicles

Embassy Kabul allows some employees who are not embassy chauffeurs to operate armored vehicles, but does not have a current policy statement informing employees of their personal liability and the extent of embassy liability insurance coverage.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Kabul should revise its motor vehicle self-drive policy following guidance in the Department of State Motor Vehicle Safety Program for Overseas Posts (issued by OBO/OPS/SHEM, dated November 2009) to establish the applicability of the policy to all agencies under chief of mission authority and provide for an active Certified Safe Driver Instructor Program for all employees operating motor pool vehicles.

Procurement

Embassy Kabul provides bottled water to embassy personnel even though the water in the embassy compound is potable. There is no justification in the files for purchasing and distributing bottled waters to embassy personnel

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Kabul should include in the procurement files, justification for providing bottled water to embassy personnel.

Financial Management

There is no travel authorization or blanket travel authorization for some in-country travel since there is no travel cost. While cost may not be an issue, there could be liability issues if travelers performing official travel are not covered by a travel authorization.

Informal Recommendation 28: Embassy Kabul should prepare either travel authorizations or blanket travel authorizations for in-country travel in advance of travel for all travelers.

Human Resources

Embassy Kabul's vacancy announcements are only advertised on one Internet Web site.

Informal Recommendation 29: Embassy Kabul should advertise on more than one Internet Web site and establish practices that foster diversity in local recruitment.

The FSN Handbook was last updated in 2008. New compensation information has not been included in the handbook.

Informal Recommendation 30: Embassy Kabul should revise the local employee handbook and distribute it to the local staff.

The HR section does not use its SharePoint site to advertise internal vacancy announcements

Informal Recommendation 31: Embassy Kabul should advertise internal vacancy announcements on its SharePoint site.

Embassy Kabul does not have a regular orientation program for their newly hired local staff employees.

Informal Recommendation 32: Embassy Kabul should establish and implement a mission-wide orientation program for all their newly hired locally employed staff.

American supervisors do not take advantage of other types of recognition, such as local staff employee of the quarter awards, certificates of appreciation, and non-monetary awards of minimal value.

Informal Recommendation 33: Embassy Kabul should establish other types of recognition for local staff employees.

Embassy Kabul does not have a human resources checklist with timelines to guide the hiring process for EFMs.

Informal Recommendation 34: Embassy Kabul should prepare a checklist with timelines to guide the hiring process for eligible family members.

An explanation from the post employment committee on the selection of an eligible family member is not always included in the files.

Informal Recommendation 35: Embassy Kabul should request from the post employment committee and keep in the files an explanation of the selection of an eligible family member.

Information Management

The OIG team noted that since Kabul is pilot testing numerous projects, it would also be valuable to test the “local connection” option suggested in a USAID Mission Director memo to the Chief of Mission. The “local connection” is in use in 38 locations and supports the sharing of the State WebPASS application, SharePoint, and other applications. There may be cost savings for all agencies.

Informal Recommendation 36: Embassy Kabul should test the U.S. Agency for International Development's "local connection" option to determine if it is a viable alternative to the information technology consolidation pilot project underway.

There is no established procedure to decide what IT hardware should remain in place and be reused for the next VIP visit.

Informal Recommendation 37: Embassy Kabul should identify temporary office space for high-level visitors and maintain core information technology equipment in that space for future visitors.

Telephone, radio, and computer inventories are not up to date.

Informal Recommendation 38: Embassy Kabul should update its telephone, radio and computer inventory systems.

The IM officer was responsible for monitoring contracts in excess of \$14,000,000, and had not received the Government Technical Monitor training.

Informal Recommendation 39: Embassy Kabul should require that the information management officer completes Government Technical Monitor training.

The IM staff did not have updated individual development and security awareness training.

Informal Recommendation 40: Embassy Kabul should require that the information management staff have updated individual development plans and complete security awareness training.

Health Unit

Although medications are correctly stored and controlled, the inventory records are not well organized.

Informal Recommendation 41: Embassy Kabul should prepare and maintain inventory records of medications.

The first aid kits in some embassy official cars are missing and there is no assurance that all the first aid kits have been checked by health unit staff.

Informal Recommendation 42: Embassy Kabul should maintain first aid kits in all embassy official vehicles and have health unit personnel check the kits regularly.

Community Liaison Office

The CLO SharePoint site is not updated frequently.

Informal Recommendation 43: Embassy Kabul should update the community liaison office SharePoint site regularly.

The second CLO bulletin board does not have current information.

Informal Recommendation 44: Embassy Kabul should update its second community liaison office bulletin board regularly.

Embassy Kabul does not have a social sponsor program.

Informal Recommendation 45: Embassy Kabul should establish a social sponsor program for new arrivals.

The CLO coordinators do not have a systematic way of gathering information from embassy personnel about activities of interest.

Informal Recommendation 46: Embassy Kabul should prepare a survey to elicit information from embassy personnel on activities that they would like to have sponsored by the community liaison office.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Karl W. Eikenberry	05/09
Deputy Chief of Mission	Francis J. Ricciardone	04/09
Assistant Chief of Mission	Joseph A. Mussomeli	05/09
Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs	E. Anthony Wayne	06/09

Chiefs of Sections:

Management	Kevin Milas	07/09
Consular	Randall Merideth	08/09
Economic	Michael Spangler	08/09
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement	Andrew Quinn	08/09
Political	Annie Pforzheimer	07/09
Political-Military	Philip Kosnett	08/09
Public Affairs	Stephen Cristina	09/09
Regional Security	Douglas Allison	07/09

Other Agencies:

Department of Defense – USFOR-A Liaison to the Embassy	Lt. Gen. Carlton Everhart	03/09
Department of Homeland Security – Border Management Task Force	Raoul Ortiz	07/09
Drug Enforcement Administration	Michael Marsac	10/08
Department of Justice Federal	Howard Parker	02/08

Aviation Administration	David Boulter	03/08
Legal Attaché	Robert Jones	09/09
Treasury Attaché	Stuart Jones	04/08
U.S. Agency for International Development	William Frej	05/09
U.S. Department of Agriculture	Rodrick McSherry	11/09
U.S. Marshals Service	Joseph Kimpel	10/09

ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American citizen services
ARSO-I	Assistant regional security officer – investigations
BMTF	Border management task force
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CDDEA	Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs
CHU	Containerized housing units
Civ-mil	Civil-military
CLO	Community liaison office
COIN	Counterinsurgency strategy
COM	Chief of mission
COR	Contracting officer’s representative
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EFM	Eligible family member
ELO	Entry-level officer
EVB	Embassy visitor bureau
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
GMIC	Government media information center
GSO	General services office
HR	Human resources

~~**SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**~~

HRO	Human resources officer
HVAC	Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning
IAHB	Interagency housing board
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
I-COR	In-country contracting officer representative
IM	Information management
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
IPA	Office of Interagency Provincial Affairs
ISAF	International Security Force for Afghanistan
ISSO	Information systems security officer
IV	Immigrant visas
IVLP	International Visitor Leadership Program
KEEA	Kabul Embassy Employee Association
LE	Locally employed
MIST	Military information support team
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NAS	Narcotics affairs section
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
NSDD-38	National Security Decision Directive 38
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
PD	Public diplomacy
PM	Bureau of Political-Military Affairs

Pol-mil	Political-military
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
PRT	Provincial reconstruction team
PSC	Personal services contract
R&R	Rest and recuperation
RMO-P	Regional medical officer – psychiatrist
ROL	Rule of law
RRB	Regional rest break
RSO	Regional security officer
SCA	Bureau of South and Central Asia
SCA/PPD	Bureau of South and Central Asia, press and public diplomacy office
SCR	Senior civilian representative
S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
SDA	Suspense deposit abroad
SIV	Special immigrant visa
SOP	Standard operating procedures
S/SRAP	Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
TDY	Temporary duty
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIP	Very important person
3161	Subject matter experts hired under Title 5, Section 3161 of the U.S. Code

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