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**Management Assistance Report:
Department Can Take Further Steps to
Improve Executive Direction
of Overseas Missions**

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE REPORT

Summary of Review

For this management assistance report (MAR), OIG reviewed 52 overseas inspection reports issued from February 2017 to April 2020. OIG found that in 67 percent of the inspected missions (35 of 52), chiefs of mission (COM) set a positive, inclusive, and professional tone for their missions consistent with the Department of State's (Department) leadership and management principles, outlined in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214. OIG also determined that in 83 percent of the inspected missions (43 of 52), COMs fulfilled presidential and Department instructions in representing the interests of the United States; expanding markets for U.S. exports; reporting significant political, economic, and societal developments; and establishing relations with potential leaders from all levels of society.

However, OIG also found that in 33 percent of inspected missions (17 of 52), the COM was deficient in one or more of the leadership and management principles described in the Department's 3 FAM 1214 guidance. Furthermore, OIG determined that 51 of the 52 inspection reports contained findings that involved vulnerabilities in internal controls, which placed programs, personnel, resources, or sensitive information at risk, and COMs did not identify and address these vulnerabilities as part of the process of preparing the annual Management Control Statement of Assurance (SOA), as required by 2 FAM 024d. Additionally, 12 of the 52 missions inspected by OIG did not have a consular emergency preparedness program that met Department standards. Lastly, OIG found that only 9 of 52 missions had implemented professional development programs for mid-level employees as directed by the Department,¹ and just one mission had a structured mentoring program. OIG made four recommendations to the Department to improve the executive direction of overseas missions. In its comments on the draft report, the Department concurred with two recommendations and disagreed with two recommendations. OIG considers two recommendations resolved and the other two recommendations unresolved. The Department's response to each recommendation and OIG's reply can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The Department's formal written responses are reprinted in their entirety in Appendix B.

BACKGROUND

The COM represents the President of the United States to foreign governments or international organizations and conducts the relationship to support U.S. foreign policy objectives. The COM's authority and responsibility, as specified in 2 FAM 113.1 and the President's Letter of Instruction,² generally encompasses all U.S. Government executive branch activities, operations, and employees at a mission or organization. In large missions, this can result in an embassy with multiple constituent posts, more than 30 U.S. Government agencies, and more

¹ Cable 15 STATE 96434, "Promoting Professional and Leadership Development for Mid-Level Foreign Service Employees," August 14, 2015.

² The President's Letter of Instruction is a foundational document that explicitly addresses the authority and responsibility of the COM and outlines the roles and responsibilities of executive branch agencies conducting official U.S. Government activities in the COM's country of responsibility.

than 700 U.S. direct-hire employees, and nearly 2,000 locally employed (LE) staff. COMs are assisted by deputy chiefs of mission (DCM) who are generally responsible for the day-to-day operations of the mission.

Given the important role the COM and DCM play in advancing U.S. foreign policy and ensuring the effective functioning of an embassy, OIG devotes the first section of its overseas inspection reports to evaluating executive direction in five areas:

1. Tone at the top and standards of conduct, including equal employment opportunity (EEO).
2. Execution of foreign policy goals and objectives.
3. Adherence to internal controls.
4. Security of the mission and emergency preparedness.
5. Developing and mentoring Foreign Service professionals.

OIG evaluates COM and DCM performance in these areas against criteria from the FAM—principally 2 FAM, “General;” 3 FAM, “Personnel;” and 18 FAM, “Programs, Practices, and Planning,” which addresses strategic direction and management policies, principles, and practices. OIG also refers to 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH), “Diplomatic Security;” the President’s Letter of Instruction, which is sent to each COM upon assumption of office; and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*.³ OIG also evaluates COM and DCM performance using supplemental criteria included in cables sent by the Department to all diplomatic and consular posts.⁴

In 2017, to determine common areas of strength or weakness in the performance of COMs and DCMs and identify common factors that underlie those areas, OIG analyzed the Executive Direction sections of 34 overseas inspection reports issued from December 2014 to January 2017. In its July 2017 MAR,⁵ OIG found that COMs generally set clear goals, modeled adherence to high ethical standards, and established constructive relationships with host governments. However, 38 percent of OIG inspections found deficiencies in the COMs’ oversight of embassy internal controls and in their annual SOA processes. Although nearly 70 percent of First- and Second-Tour (FAST) employees reported being satisfied with their posts’ development programs, FAST employees at 32 percent of the inspected posts were dissatisfied with the opportunities to improve their professional skills. Overall, OIG found deficiencies in at least one

³ The *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* provide criteria for setting the tone at the top and standards of conduct. See GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* 22-24 (GAO-14-704G, September 2014).

⁴ Cables 16 STATE 21482, “Top Ten Crisis Preparedness Best Practices,” March 1, 2016; 15 STATE 137452, “Your Role in Assuring Strong Management Controls and Oversight Over Mission Operations,” December 7, 2015; 14 STATE 19636, “Mentoring the Next Generation – Take Charge!” February 22, 2014; 15 STATE 23542, “Mentoring for a Stronger Department of State,” March 5, 2015; and 15 STATE 96434.

⁵ OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Department Can Take Steps Toward More Effective Executive Direction of Overseas Missions* (ISP-17-38, July 2017).

area of COM performance in 62 percent of the inspected missions. In 2017, OIG made recommendations to the Department to provide more regular feedback to COMs on their performance, improve internal controls, and enhance FAST programs. As of April 2020, OIG had closed two of these three recommendations. One recommendation was still open, pending Department publication of a revision to the FAM regarding FAST programs.

OIG conducted this MAR to build on the work done in 2017 and reviewed the Executive Direction sections in 52 overseas inspection reports issued from February 2017 to April 2020. OIG's specific objectives were to identify areas in which COMs and DCMs met or did not meet Department and U.S. Government standards, identify recurring problems, and, if necessary, make recommendations to correct those problems.

FINDINGS

Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

Two-Thirds of Chiefs of Mission Set a Positive, Inclusive, and Professional Tone

OIG found that in 67 percent of inspected missions (35 of 52), COMs set a positive, inclusive, and professional tone consistent with the leadership and management principles described in the Department's 3 FAM 1214 guidance. Among the positive practices OIG found, these COMs communicated consistently with all members of their missions, including LE staff; made themselves available and were approachable; welcomed constructive input and feedback; cared for the well-being and professional development of their colleagues; and worked collaboratively with all elements of their missions, both in daily operations and in long-term strategic planning.

OIG found that COMs who met the Department's standards stressed the importance of ethics and proper conduct in town hall meetings with mission staff, in management notices, in Country Team meetings, and in email messages. For example, at Embassy Lisbon, the COM and the DCM demonstrated their commitment to ethical principles by rejecting a long-standing complimentary local gym membership that was inconsistent with 11 FAM 613.1-4b, which prohibits discounts that discriminate among government employees on the basis of their official responsibilities or that favor those of higher rank or rate of pay.⁶ Embassy Bishkek made it clear that the leadership team was subject to the same rules as everyone else when the COM self-reported a security infraction.⁷ When an article in a local paper seemed to suggest, incorrectly, that the DCM at Embassy Koror showed favoritism to a visa applicant, the COM used it as a teachable moment for the staff, explaining how even unintentional actions can create the appearance of impropriety.⁸ The COM and Deputy Principal Officer at Consulate

⁶ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Lisbon and Consulate Ponta Delgada, Portugal* 3 (ISP-I-18-22, May 2018).

⁷ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan* 3 (ISP-I-17-13, March 2017).

⁸ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Koror, Republic of Palau* 3 (ISP-I-19-06, February 2019).

General Jerusalem⁹ promoted mutual respect and teamwork by promoting a code of conduct, which noted the political sensitivities of the region and set the expectation that all employees would treat each other professionally. The leaders discussed it with all newly arrived U.S. direct-hire staff to ensure they understood the complexities of the Jerusalem working environment.¹⁰

Executive Direction Spotlight: Embassy Nairobi Fostered a Culture of Respect and Tolerance

The COM told OIG that following a 2016 discussion with Kenya-based African American members of “Black Lives Matter,” he recognized that an open dialogue about race was needed at the embassy. Initially, the Front Office focused on facilitating community-wide dialogue on race relations and then, at the request of LE staff, added ethnic relations to address tribal-based tensions in Kenyan society. Building on the initiative of embassy staff, the Front Office started a cultural dialogues forum, in which U.S. direct-hire and LE staff addressed common cultural miscommunications and misperceptions. Embassy staff told OIG that the Front Office’s leadership and initiative in creating a race and ethnic relations group and the cultural dialogues forum, as well as the Front Office’s initiative to add a cultural component to the newcomers briefing, had eased tensions between U.S. direct-hire and LE staff and among the multi-ethnic LE staff. The initiatives also provided opportunities for candid discussions of race and ethnic relations and fostered an environment of mutual respect and tolerance in the workplace.¹¹

Some Chiefs of Mission Failed to Adhere to One or More of the Department’s Leadership and Management Principles

Despite many COMs setting a positive, inclusive, and professional tone for their missions, in 33 percent of inspected missions (17 of 52), OIG found that the COM was not modeling one or more of the leadership and management principles described in the Department’s 3 FAM 1214 guidance. Specifically, OIG found that COMs in 14 of the 17 missions failed to provide a clear focus, be decisive, offer and solicit constructive feedback, be proactive in soliciting varying points of view, establish constructive working relationships with all mission elements, manage conflict, or model ethical behavior. For instance, at Embassy Podgorica, the COM’s rapid-fire taskings, shifting priorities, and ambitious agenda hindered the staff’s ability to perform their core responsibilities.¹² Additionally, staff at the U.S. Mission to Somalia said they needed the COM to provide clear and concise guidance and make decisions in a timely manner.¹³ Regarding soliciting varying points of view, the COM at Embassy Riyadh, limited his

⁹ At the time of OIG’s inspection, Consulate General Jerusalem was an independent diplomatic mission, and the Consul General in Jerusalem was designated as a COM. On May 14, 2018, the embassy relocated to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, and, on March 4, 2019, Consulate General Jerusalem merged into U.S. Embassy Jerusalem to form a single diplomatic mission.

¹⁰ OIG, *Inspection of Consulate General Jerusalem* 2-3 (ISP-I-17-18, June 2017).

¹¹ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Nairobi, Kenya* 4 (ISP-I-19-08, October 2018).

¹² OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Podgorica, Montenegro* 2 (ISP-I-17-41, September 2017).

¹³ OIG, *Inspection of U.S. Mission to Somalia* 4 (ISP-I-19-09, October 2018).

communication to a small circle of employees and did not always include relevant offices in the meetings he chaired.¹⁴ At Embassy Libreville, conflict between the COM and a key member of the embassy's security team led to an almost total breakdown in communication regarding embassy security.¹⁵ Furthermore, at Embassy Banjul,¹⁶ contrary to guidance in 3 FAM 1214b(1), staff felt pressured to reconsider visa applications they had previously refused.¹⁷

Lack of Clarity in Some Chief of Mission and Deputy Chief of Mission Relationships Impeded Embassy Operations

In 8 of the 17 missions with deficiencies in executive direction, the COM and the DCM (or acting DCM) did not form an effective leadership team. As described in 2 FAM 113.2, the DCM generally serves as the alter ego to the COM. In practice, OIG found that DCMs generally were responsible for the day-to-day operations of the mission. However, at Embassy Banjul, the COM and DCM gave differing guidance to staff regarding embassy management, resulting in confusion and morale problems.¹⁸ At Embassy Libreville, the COM did not establish clear expectations for the DCM regarding his responsibilities to manage the mission.¹⁹ OIG found that the DCM there was generally unengaged in embassy operations, unfamiliar with the work of the embassy's sections, and uninvolved in performance management. Staff at Embassy Bishkek told OIG they were unclear about the DCM's authority and role in decision-making, which resulted in delays in decision-making.²⁰ Additionally, at Embassies Pretoria²¹ and Canberra,²² the long-term acting DCMs did not fully assume the DCM's mission-management responsibilities. At Embassy Pretoria, this resulted in neglect of management challenges ranging from weak internal controls to security and safety issues. At Embassies Helsinki²³ and Banjul,²⁴ conflict between the COMs and DCMs complicated the chain-of-command and decision-making.

¹⁴ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Riyadh and Constituent Posts, Saudi Arabia* 6 (ISP-I-18-17, May 2018).

¹⁵ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Libreville, Gabon* 2-3 (ISP-I-19-16, June 2019).

¹⁶ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Banjul, The Gambia* 4 (ISP-I-19-04, November 2018).

¹⁷ As stated in the report, this is contrary to extensive Department guidance that cautions against conduct that could be seen as imposing such pressure. Guidance in 7 FAH-1 H-643d states that consular supervisors must never order, or inappropriately pressure, a subordinate to reach a particular outcome when adjudicating a visa or citizenship application. This is confirmed in 9 FAM 601.8-1(A)a, which states the Immigration and Nationality Act confers upon a consular officer exclusive authority to issue nonimmigrant visas. In addition, guidance in 9 FAM 601.8-1(A)b states that advocacy for visa issuance is prohibited outside the formal referral process. Interference by supervisors in visa cases threatens the integrity of the visa process and creates the appearance of a violation of law or ethical standards.

¹⁸ ISP-I-19-04, November 2018, at 3-4.

¹⁹ ISP-I-19-16, June 2019, at 3.

²⁰ ISP-I-17-13, March 2017, at 4.

²¹ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Pretoria and Constituent Posts, South Africa* 3-4 (ISP-I-20-09, January 2020).

²² OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Canberra and Constituent Posts, Australia* 3 (ISP-I-20-07, February 2020).

²³ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Helsinki, Finland* 2-3 (ISP-I-20-08, December 2019).

²⁴ ISP-I-19-04, November 2018, at 3.

Chiefs of Mission Continued to Lack a Mechanism to Receive Feedback on Their Performance

OIG recommended in 2010, 2012, and again in 2017, that the Department conduct annual surveys to provide all COMS with feedback on their performance.²⁵ However, OIG determined that the Department had conducted only one such survey, in 2014.

In its 2017 MAR, OIG recommended that the Department institute annual surveys of American and LE staff to provide COMs with feedback on their performance.²⁶ In response, the Department reported to OIG that the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) offered a tool to COMs that they could use to proactively identify and leverage organizational strengths as well as mitigate organizational challenges.²⁷ The program, which was voluntary, offered missions tailored organizational development programs based on staff surveys that assessed the mission's work culture. The program received positive feedback from the posts where it was piloted in 2017 and 2018.²⁸ Based on these actions, OIG closed the recommendation for acceptable implementation. During this review, however, OIG found that due to resource constraints and shifting priorities, FSI did not deploy this program widely after the pilot phase. As a result, at the time of this review, COMs still lacked a mechanism to receive systematic feedback on their performance.

The leadership and management principles for Department employees enumerated in 3 FAM 1214b(4) and (5) state that all employees, including COMs, should offer and solicit constructive feedback, acknowledge shortcomings, and work continuously to improve skills and substantive knowledge. Without the annual surveys OIG recommended on the three occasions listed above, COMs lack the regular feedback necessary to help improve their performance as directed by the Department's leadership and management principles. Because deficiencies in executive direction of overseas missions cannot be identified and addressed absent regular feedback for COMs, OIG is again making a recommendation for the Department to institute annual surveys to provide COMs with this critical performance feedback.

Recommendation 1: The Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent should institute annual surveys of U.S. direct-hire employees and locally employed staff to provide feedback on chief of mission performance. (Action: GTM)

²⁵ OIG, *Implementation of a Process to Assess and Improve Leadership and Management of Department of State Posts and Bureaus* (ISP-I-10-68, June 29, 2010); *Memorandum Report, Improving Leadership at Posts and Bureaus* (ISP-I-12-48, September 19, 2012); and ISP-17-38, July 2017, at 2.

²⁶ ISP-17-38, July 2017, at 2.

²⁷ Cable 17 STATE 64650, "Effective Leadership and Organizational Development: New Tools for Chiefs of Mission," June 21, 2017.

²⁸ Cables 17 GABORONE 1280, "Leading from Within: FSI Spurs Gaborone Team Building," November 21, 2017, and 18 MDA 5628, "Tashkent Organizational Health Review: The Checkup Is Worth It," March 13, 2018.

Not all Equal Employment Opportunity Programs Complied With Department Standards

More than 80 percent (42 of the 52) of Equal Employment Opportunity programs at the 52 inspected missions complied with applicable Department guidance.²⁹ However, OIG reported a range of deficiencies in EEO programs at 10 of the 52 inspected missions. Guidance in 3 FAM 1514c(3)(a) and (b) requires COMs and DCMs³⁰ to nominate EEO counselors to ensure one counselor at medium-sized posts and at least two EEO counselors at large posts. OIG found that 6 of the 10 missions with deficient EEO programs had not appointed any EEO counselors. Other deficiencies included an insufficient number of counselors, the lack of LE staff EEO liaisons, failure to publicize the names and contact information of EEO counselors, and a lack of training for EEO counselors or mission staff. Despite these issues, OIG found EEO programs generally complied with Department standards.

Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

Chiefs of Mission Generally Fulfilled Instructions Regarding Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

OIG found that in 83 percent of the inspected missions (43 of 52), COMs fulfilled the requirements of the President's Letter of Instruction and 2 FAM 113.1. Those that did not fulfill the requirements failed to use the strategic planning process or effectively oversee foreign assistance programs as discussed in the section below. The requirements in the President's Letter of Instruction explicitly charge COMs with representing the interests of the United States to foreign governments and international organizations; expanding markets for U.S. exports; reporting significant political, economic, and societal developments; and establishing relations with potential leaders from all levels of society. OIG found that these COMs had high-level contacts within the host governments, kept Washington stakeholders regularly and appropriately informed, used media and events to reach out to host country publics and decision-makers, engaged in trade and investment promotion activities, coordinated U.S. foreign assistance activities effectively, and exercised their COM authority over all executive branch activities.

OIG reports noted examples of COMs accomplishing a range of U.S. foreign policy goals. Embassy Accra's intervention persuaded the Ghanaian government to permit the Millennium Challenge Corporation's \$498 million compact to enter into force.³¹ Embassy Georgetown founded and chaired the Petroleum Donor Coordination Group, which encompassed all relevant multilateral and bilateral missions in Guyana and sought to avoid duplication of effort

²⁹ 3 FAM 1514, "Responsibilities."

³⁰ According to 3 FAM 1514c(3)(a), the "nominating official must be an Ambassador, Principal Officer, Deputy Chief of Mission, Deputy Principal Officer, Consul General, Director, Deputy Director or someone of equivalent leadership rank or higher at the nominating post/office."

³¹ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Accra, Ghana* 3-4 (ISP-I-17-17, June 2017).

and promote coordination among the missions.³² Embassy Skopje played a critical role in brokering a 2016 agreement to help stabilize the domestic political environment.³³

Chiefs of Mission Generally Used the Department's Strategic Planning Processes Effectively

COMs generally used the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) effectively as their primary strategic leadership tool and internal control mechanism to focus their mission's efforts and resources on agreed-upon and achievable U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives.³⁴

OIG found several commonalities among the COMs who used the ICS effectively. Specifically, the COMs developed the ICS through a mission-wide process, often beginning with an off-site session or sessions that brought together all agencies in the embassy. See the Executive Direction Spotlight, below, for an example of how one mission took an inclusive approach to the ICS. The COMs regularly reviewed the ICS to measure the embassy's progress against the goals and to adjust strategy and resource allocations, as necessary. Regular reviews of the ICS familiarized mission personnel with the goals and their own roles in fulfilling them.

However, OIG found that COMs at 13 percent of the inspected missions (7 of 52) did not use the Department's strategic planning tools to achieve the most effective U.S. foreign policy outcomes as directed in 18 FAM 301.2-1a. OIG found that in these missions, the COMs did not regularly review progress in achieving ICS goals; align embassy resources such as travel, representational, and reporting plans with ICS goals; communicate ICS goals across the mission; or maintain focus on the mission's strategic goals as described in the ICS. Despite these issues, OIG found that COMs generally used the strategic planning process effectively.

Executive Direction Spotlight: Embassy Nairobi Developed an Inclusive Approach to the Integrated Country Strategy

At Embassy Nairobi, a mission composed of 31 agencies, the COM restructured 4 embassy working groups, chaired by the DCM, to align with the four ICS goals: democracy and governance, economic prosperity, security, and health. The embassy used the working groups, plus over a dozen sub-working groups chaired by mid-level officers, to coordinate foreign assistance and develop strategies for achieving embassy-wide policy objectives. To reinforce the policy development and advocacy role of these groups, the embassy conducted separate Country Team meetings for every working group, with agency members contributing information relevant to each working group's own ICS goal.³⁵

³² OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Georgetown, Guyana 3* (ISP-I-18-19, May 2018).

³³ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Skopje, Macedonia 3* (ISP-I-17-40, August 2017).

³⁴ The ICS is a four-year strategic plan that articulates whole-of-government priorities in a given country and incorporates higher level planning priorities.

³⁵ ISP-I-19-08, October 2018, at 5.

Chief of Mission Coordination and Direction of Foreign Assistance Programs Presented Challenges but Generally Met Department Standards

COM coordination and direction of foreign assistance programs generally met Department standards, but OIG found some instances where the COM did not fulfill the requirements of the President's Letter of Instruction. This letter directs the COM to have full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all executive branch personnel, activities, and operations.³⁶ OIG found that in two embassies, the COM did not coordinate assistance programs delivered by Washington-based agencies. At another embassy, OIG found conflict among the interagency team—the Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Department of Defense—that was responsible for implementing the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This difficult interagency environment inhibited the program's ability to achieve its goals in that country.

Notwithstanding these issues, OIG found examples of COMs who established special mechanisms for coordinating and directing complex, multi-agency U.S. foreign assistance. A working group at Embassy Monrovia effectively coordinated the programs of seven U.S. Government agencies addressing Ebola and other health threats in Liberia.³⁷ Embassy Nouakchott established two coordinating bodies, one to ensure activities funded through multiple foreign assistance streams were known to, and coordinated throughout, the mission; the other to serve as the point of contact for other U.S. Government agencies such as the Departments of Agriculture and Labor, which were not present in Mauritania but funded assistance activity across the country.³⁸ OIG found that Embassies Kigali (see below), Maseru, and Mbabane established effective coordination mechanisms for PEPFAR.³⁹

Executive Direction Spotlight: Embassy Kigali's PEPFAR Coordination Office Successfully Promoted Cooperation Among Interagency Stakeholders

At the time of OIG's inspection of Embassy Kigali in FY 2019, the United States had invested nearly \$1.3 billion in Rwanda through PEPFAR over the previous 15 years. To effectively manage these funds, the embassy's PEPFAR Coordination Office organized the efforts of the Department, USAID, CDC, and the Department of Defense to ensure that clearly defined lanes of responsibility reinforced efficiencies. USAID focused on commodities procurement as well as orphans and vulnerable children; CDC handled clinical services and prevention; and the Department of Defense targeted military-linked communities and voluntary male

³⁶ Additionally, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act authorize a range of programs for foreign assistance and Foreign Military Sales. The COM has a significant role in directing and supervising the implementation of all programs authorized by these acts in the COM's country of responsibility, consistent with the President's Letter of Instruction. See 1 FAM 013.2k(6), "Responsibilities of Chiefs of U.S. Missions."

³⁷ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Monrovia, Liberia* 3 (ISP-I-17-12, May 2017).

³⁸ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Nouakchott, Mauritania* 6 (ISP-I-20-04, November 2019).

³⁹ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Kigali, Rwanda* 3-4 (ISP-I-19-15, March 2019); *Inspection of Embassy Maseru, Lesotho* 4 (ISP-I-20-01, October 2019); and *Inspection of Embassy Mbabane, Eswatini* 3-4 (ISP-I-20-03, October 2019).

circumcision. The office also led the development of country operational plans that outlined program activities and led interagency meetings that promoted assessments of milestone achievements, such as progress toward United Nations established goals to identify HIV prevalence, provide treatment, and measure success rates of viral suppression. Washington offices and the interagency community touted the PEPFAR Coordination Office's role in promoting cooperative approaches in Rwanda and managing relations with the Government of Rwanda and the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator in Washington.⁴⁰

Adherence to Internal Controls

Mission Internal Control Reviews Need Improvement

OIG found that 51 of the 52 inspection reports contained findings that involved vulnerabilities in internal controls,⁴¹ which placed programs, personnel, resources, or sensitive information at risk. The Department's Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS) directs all missions to conduct a systematic, comprehensive review of their internal controls every fiscal year and certify that they have done so in a Statement of Assurance (SOA).⁴² OIG found that COMs did not identify and address these deficiencies either in the process of preparing the annual SOA or during the ongoing evaluations required by the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act and the *GAO Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*.

CGFS provides missions with a detailed checklist to assist mission staff in conducting the annual SOA internal control reviews.⁴³ However, many of the deficiencies identified by OIG during its inspections could have been discovered and mitigated earlier through the conscientious and consistent use of this checklist. For example, OIG noted that more than 100 of the findings in the 51 reports related to the missions' safety, health, and environmental management programs and more than 200 deficiencies were found in information management and cybersecurity programs⁴⁴ although the CGFS checklist directs mission's attention specifically to

⁴⁰ ISP-I-19-15, March 2019, at 3-4.

⁴¹ An internal control system is a continuous built-in component of operations, effected by people, that provides reasonable assurance, not absolute assurance, that an entity's objectives will be achieved. See GAO-14-704G, September 2014, at 5. OIG issues formal recommendations addressing deficiencies when they cannot be corrected during the onsite phase of an inspection.

⁴² Cable 20 STATE 123846, "Your Role in Assuring Strong Management Controls and Oversight Over Post Operations," December 23, 2020, and Department May 21, 2020 memorandum "Guidance for Fiscal Year 2020 Reporting Requirements for the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act." As described in 2 FAM 024d, COMs are directed annually to provide a SOA to the Secretary of State concerning the effectiveness of internal controls in their respective operations.

⁴³ The 59-page FY 2019 CGFS Management Control Checklist dated April 2019, for example, included specific questions about a mission's internal control regime by function, including ones concerning the COM's role and responsibilities, health and safety programs, IT management and security, EEO, human resources, financial management, and others.

⁴⁴ OIG directed the Department's attention to serious deficiencies in cybersecurity programs at overseas missions in *Management Assistance Report: Non-Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Duties by Overseas Personnel* (ISP-17-24, May 2017) and in *Management Assistance Report: Deficiencies Reported in Cyber Security*

these areas. OIG also noted that although some COMs conducted reviews of internal controls, they did not include all embassy sections, including public affairs, political, and economic sections, in their reviews, nor did they retain documentation of such reviews as required by GAO standards.⁴⁵

In OIG's 2017 MAR on executive direction⁴⁶ and 2015 review of the SOA process,⁴⁷ OIG similarly found that COMs did not identify and address internal control deficiencies and needed more training to do so. To address this issue, OIG has recommended repeatedly that FSI develop and include training on management control responsibilities in its classes for COM candidates and DCMs. In its response to OIG's 2017 recommendation, FSI noted that CGFS had created a knowledge management portal as a centralized distribution method for CGFS documentation (such as its checklist) and guidance on management controls. Based on that action, OIG closed the recommendation for acceptable implementation. However, during this MAR, OIG reviewed both the CGFS portal and the material currently used by FSI to instruct COMs and DCMs on internal control in the Federal Government. OIG determined that neither included practical guidance on how to effectively direct internal control reviews and assure the reliability of those reviews.

Because OIG continues to identify and report on deficiencies in COMs' oversight of internal control reviews and the development of the SOA during its overseas inspections, more focused, comprehensive training for COMs and DCMs on the SOA process is still needed, particularly in those areas routinely identified in OIG inspection reports, such as missions' safety, health, and environmental management programs, consular emergency preparedness, and information management and cybersecurity. Until a comprehensive, practical training program is in place, embassies will continue to be at increased risk of waste, fraud, or abuse of U.S. Government resources.

Recommendation 2: The Foreign Service Institute, in coordination with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, should develop and execute more comprehensive training on management control responsibilities and procedures for conducting management control reviews in its classes for chief of mission candidates and deputy chiefs of mission. (Action: FSI, in coordination with CGFS)

Assessment Reports Remain Uncorrected (ISP-17-39, July 2017). This management assistance report found that these deficiencies were uncorrected.

⁴⁵ GAO-14-704G, September 2014, at 19-20.

⁴⁶ ISP-17-38, July 2017, at 3-4.

⁴⁷ OIG, *Review of the Statements of Assurance Process 13-14* (ISP-I-15-37, September 2015).

Security of the Mission and Emergency Preparedness

Chiefs of Mission Generally Took Responsibility for Their Mission's Security

In 85 percent of the inspected missions (44 of 52), OIG found that COM performance was consistent with instructions in the President's Letter of Instruction to take direct and full responsibility for the security of the mission and its personnel. COMs generally engaged on security issues and supported the regional security officer and other mission elements that contributed to an effective security posture. At Embassy Nicosia, for example, the COM nurtured a strong relationship between the embassy and the Cyprus National Police, who played a key role in protecting the COM and the embassy.⁴⁸ At Embassy Lisbon, the COM urged local American Chamber of Commerce members to participate in the Overseas Security Advisory Council, which was facilitated by the embassy's regional security officer.⁴⁹ OIG also found that DCMs chaired emergency action committee meetings and conducted them in an inclusive style to foster good communication and ensure a thorough understanding of the risks facing the embassy community.

OIG found that in 15 percent of inspected missions (8 of 52), COMs did not completely fulfill their security responsibilities, as detailed in the President's Letter of Instruction. Deficiencies included their lack of awareness of the post's security vulnerabilities; not leading by example by participating in emergency drills and radio checks; and a failure to ensure that emergency action plans were current and complete. In one mission, OIG found that key personnel did not participate in emergency action committee meetings. Additionally, OIG found several COMs who had not completed the annual review of the memorandum of understanding on security of Department of Defense elements and personnel with the relevant combatant commanders as directed by 2 FAH-2 H-116.4b. Notwithstanding these issues, OIG found that COMs generally took responsibility for their mission's security.

More than Two-Thirds of Missions Were Generally Prepared to Manage Emergency Situations

OIG found that COMs generally ensured that their missions were prepared for emergencies by having up-to-date emergency action plans; ensuring that Country Team members and other embassy staff understood their roles in emergency situations; conducting annual crisis management exercises, including biannual exercises facilitated by FSI; and maintaining active contact with the U.S. citizens residing in-country and with schools in which mission dependents were enrolled.

At Embassy Nicosia, the DCM chaired a 30-minute crisis planning exercise once a month, following Country Team meetings. During the exercise, section heads reported how their staff would respond to the crisis scenario. The regular exercises developed the embassy's "muscle memory" for dealing with a crisis and promoted a whole-of-mission approach to emergency

⁴⁸ ISP-I-18-03, October 2017, at 5.

⁴⁹ ISP-I-18-22, May 2018, at 4.

preparedness. Staff told OIG they found the exercises useful for sharing information on interagency responsibilities and capabilities and that the exercises contributed to the embassy's coordinated response to the hijacking of an Egypt Air flight to Cyprus in March 2016.⁵⁰ See the Executive Direction Spotlight, below, for an example of how one mission improved its earthquake preparedness.

Executive Direction Spotlight: Embassy Bishkek Improved Earthquake Preparedness

At Embassy Bishkek, located in an area rated at the highest risk for a seismic event, the COM established an interagency earthquake preparedness working group and created an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator position to direct preparations for a seismic event. The working group developed a three-pronged approach: pre-earthquake preparations, survival training for the earthquake and its immediate aftermath, and post-earthquake triage and response. The embassy also hosted 35 participants from Washington and the Central Asia region for a regional crisis management exercise focused on seismic preparedness. The event was the first time FSI had conducted a regional, multi-country crisis management exercise.⁵¹

Some Consular Sections Were Not Fully Prepared for Emergencies

Consular sections are responsible for a portion of a mission's overall emergency preparedness program—namely, planning for and being ready to respond to emergencies, such as natural disasters or terrorist incidents, that might impact the U.S. citizen community. However, OIG found that 23 percent of the inspected missions (12 of 52) had consular sections that were not fully prepared to manage potential emergency situations. Specifically, these missions' consular emergency preparedness programs did not meet Department standards as described in 7 FAM 1800. Of particular concern, 2 of the 12 missions were in areas rated high or very high for seismic risk. Deficiencies included the following:

- Uncertainty about roles in an emergency.
- Failure to complete required consular crisis preparedness training.
- Unfamiliarity with the contents and location of disaster kits containing the supplies, equipment, and information a consular officer might need to function off site in an emergency.
- Unfamiliarity with the location and use of emergency communications equipment, such as satellite phones.
- Incomplete or dated contact information.
- Failure to liaise with host government and other diplomatic missions.
- Inactive or non-existent American Liaison Networks.⁵²

⁵⁰ ISP-I-18-03, October 2017, at 6.

⁵¹ ISP-I-17-13, March 2017, at 6-7.

⁵² A network of U.S. citizen liaison volunteers, formerly known as wardens, who are post's primary points-of-contact within the private U.S. citizen community, provide a direct window to the concerns, interests, and needs of the U.S. citizens in a post's consular district.

These deficiencies were not consistent with the 12 FAH-1 H-721 requirement for COMs to oversee the mission's crisis preparedness program and in whole or in part could make it impossible for the COM to fulfill the 2 FAM 113.1c(13) requirement for COMs to advise, protect, and assist U.S. citizens.

The Bureau of Consular Affairs provides input to the management control checklist distributed each year by CGFS as part of the SOA process to assist COMs in evaluating internal controls within their missions. However, that input does not include material to assist COMs with evaluating consular crisis preparedness programs in their missions.

In its 2015 review of the SOA process, OIG noted that according to 2 FAM 021.1d, the Department's management control program applies to all Department activities and recommended that CGFS issue guidance for performing comprehensive reviews on the full range of activities in the mission.⁵³ Failure to include the consular crisis preparation program in the SOA review deprives COMs of a tool they can use to oversee their mission's crisis preparedness program and increases the risk to mission employees and U.S. citizens the event of an emergency.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should add consular crisis preparedness to the management controls checklist distributed annually to assist missions in their internal reviews of management controls. (Action: CGFS, in coordination with CA)

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

Department Guidance Regarding Structured Professional Development Programs for First- and Second-Tour Employees Remained Pending

The Department's guidance in 3 FAM 2242.4 assigns DCMs the responsibility for ensuring entry-level employees are well trained, counseled, and evaluated, but does not include guidance on how to structure an effective FAST professional development program. Department cable 14 STATE 19636 urged DCMs to create FAST committees at their posts to provide formal and informal activities to network, learn more about the Department, and create opportunities for greater professional development. Department cable 15 STATE 23542 and the Bureau of Global Talent Management Mentoring Handbook provided additional FAST program guidance and examples of best practices.

Despite the lack of Department guidance on structured professional development programs, OIG found that DCMs at all but 3 of the 48 posts with FAST employees sought to satisfy the 3 FAM 2242.4 requirement in a variety of ways. The DCMs met regularly with FAST employees and arranged for them to perform activities outside their normally assigned duties. FAST activities included taking notes at Country Team meetings, serving as control and site officers,

⁵³ ISP-I-15-37, September 2015, at 11.

drafting cables, attending and hosting receptions, serving on post committees, meeting with high-level visitors and diplomats from other missions, and participating in public outreach activities. At Embassy Bishkek, FAST employees organized the embassy's offsite ICS review, and prepared a video to help recruit U.S. direct-hire employees for positions at the embassy.⁵⁴ In Colombo, the COM made representational funds available to the FAST employees to host two events with counterparts in the diplomatic community.⁵⁵

OIG's 2017 MAR recommended that the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources⁵⁶ issue additional FAM and FAH guidance requiring all COMs and DCMs to implement structured FAST employee programs in collaboration with FAST employees at their posts.⁵⁷ OIG noted in the 2017 MAR that the lack of such guidance increased the risk that FAST employees would not receive professional development opportunities to develop the competencies necessary for a successful career. Because the Department told OIG during this MAR that it was in the process of issuing such guidance, OIG did not make another recommendation to address this issue.

Mid-Level Employee Development Programs Were Not Widespread

OIG observed mid-level professional development programs at only 9 of the 52 missions inspected. Examples of mid-level programs included an interagency mid-level program with over 70 mid-level employees at Embassy Islamabad.⁵⁸ At Consulate General Jerusalem, the Deputy Principal Officer organized a program for 30 mid-level employees,⁵⁹ and at Embassy Dublin, the Chargé matched FAST employees with mid-level mentors and drew on specific activities that included many of the best practices identified in cable 15 STATE 23542.⁶⁰

In cable 15 STATE 96434, the Director General of the Foreign Service directed all diplomatic and consular posts to establish structured programs focused on building strong leadership and supervisory skills for mid-level employees. The Director General added that ongoing professional development, mentoring, and coaching are not optional, "as time permits" activities, but a means to ensure that Department staff have the expertise and skills to tackle global challenges.

Although the Director General's instructions were sent 5 years ago, the Department has not provided COMs and DCMs with guidance in the FAM and the FAH that would require a

⁵⁴ ISP-I-17-13, March 2017, at 5.

⁵⁵ ISP-I-17-14, April 2017, at 4.

⁵⁶ In 2020, the Department rebranded the Bureau of Human Resources as the Bureau of Global Talent Management. Accordingly, the Director General's title was changed to Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent.

⁵⁷ ISP-17-38, July 2017, at 6.

⁵⁸ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Islamabad, Pakistan* 4 (ISP-I-17-11A, February 2017).

⁵⁹ ISP-I-17-18, June 2017, at 6.

⁶⁰ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Dublin, Ireland* 5 (ISP-I-18-24, June 2018).

structured professional development program for mid-level Department employees. Without this guidance, mid-level employees may not receive professional development opportunities to develop the competencies necessary to meet the Department's needs.

Recommendation 4: The Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent should issue Foreign Affairs Manual and Foreign Affairs Handbook guidance requiring all missions to implement structured mid-level development programs. (Action: GTM)

Structured Mentoring Programs Were Not Established

Among 52 inspections, OIG observed only one embassy (Embassy Nairobi) where there was a structured, mission-wide mentoring program, as described in the Executive Direction Spotlight below.

Department guidance contained in 3 FAM 1214 makes embracing mentoring and other means to develop talent a core precept of the Department's leadership and management principles. Additionally, in 2015, the Director General of the Foreign Service sent a worldwide cable that reminded all Department employees of the importance of mentoring and included resources and best practices to assist overseas missions and domestic bureaus in starting or expanding a structured mentoring program.⁶¹ In the cable, the Director General stated that structured mentoring programs are essential to the Department's efforts to make sure that all employees are provided with the development opportunities they need to grow and succeed.⁶² The Bureau of Global Talent Management subsequently established a mentoring portal with resources and tools for both Foreign Service and Civil Service mentoring programs. Additionally, in October 2020, the Department launched a pilot mentoring program for Foreign Service officers at the FS-01 level to help fuel the professional development and leadership capacity of these officers, as well as prepare them to compete for a position in the Senior Foreign Service ranks.

Despite the cable and availability of the mentoring resources through the portal, many missions still do not have structured mentoring programs, as evidenced by OIG's inspection results. However, the Bureau of Global Talent Management's more recent publicizing of the mentoring portal, as well as the launch of the pilot mentoring program, are positive steps toward increasing the use of mentoring to develop Department employees. As a result, OIG is not making a recommendation to address the lack of structured mentoring programs at overseas missions. However, OIG will continue to include an assessment of such programs when reviewing executive direction at overseas posts to determine whether the recent steps taken by the Department have had a positive impact on the implementation of structured mentoring programs.

⁶¹ 15 STATE 23542.

⁶² *Ibid.* at 1.

Executive Direction Spotlight: Embassy Nairobi Mentor Program Shines

OIG found that the DCM of Embassy Nairobi encouraged the creation of a program that was open to both U.S. direct-hire and LE staff. According to the USAID officer who spearheaded the initiative, over 100 embassy staff members registered and were matched with mentors and mentees. The DCM, for example, was matched with three Kenyan LE staff; they mentored her on Kenyan culture and behavior in the workplace, and she mentored them on time management and work-life balance.⁶³

⁶³ ISP-I-19-08, October 2018, at 7.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OIG provided a draft of this report to Department stakeholders for their review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued the following recommendations to the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent, the Foreign Service Institute, and the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services. The Department's complete response can be found in Appendix B.¹

Recommendation 1: The Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent should institute annual surveys of U.S. direct-hire employees and locally employed staff to provide feedback on chief of mission performance. (Action: GTM)

Management Response: In its June 1, 2021, response, the Bureau of Global Talent Management disagreed with this recommendation. The bureau noted the Department already has mechanisms in place to obtain feedback on the performance of those in leadership and supervisory positions, as well as tools to address challenges and concerns that may arise. The bureau cited the use of the Office of Personnel Management's annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) to Foreign and Civil Service employees, the bureau's 2020 FEVS-like survey of locally employed staff, the Department's performance evaluation process, as well as the Foreign Service Institute's organizational development services, as among the services and tools available to provide feedback on chief of mission performance. The bureau also noted that OIG issued this recommendation in 2017, and subsequently closed it in 2019 upon receipt of information about the Foreign Service Institute's organizational development services and the *Mission Possible* assessment tool. The bureau requested the opportunity to review the usage of these services and to provide further outreach to posts and regional bureaus about the available resources.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation unresolved. OIG acknowledges the Department has tools and services which could assist chiefs of mission in correcting and improving their performance. However, these tools serve a corrective, rather than a diagnostic, purpose and have not yet been deployed widely and regularly. OIG recognizes the FEVS includes general prompts on employee perceptions of those in leadership and supervisory positions. Nonetheless, these questions do not ask specifically about chief of mission performance. OIG also notes that both the FEVS and the performance evaluation process do not routinely and systematically include feedback from a chief of mission's subordinates, including locally employed staff. Furthermore, OIG acknowledges that it closed the same recommendation from its 2017 management assistance report for acceptable implementation. However, as indicated in the report, during this review, OIG found that the Foreign Service Institute did not deploy the *Mission Possible* tool widely after the pilot phase, and, as a result, chiefs of mission continued

¹ OIG faced delays in completing this work because of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting operational challenges. These challenges included the inability to conduct most in-person meetings, limitations on our presence at the workplace, difficulty accessing certain information, prohibitions on travel, and related difficulties within the agencies we oversee, which also affected their ability to respond to our requests.

to lack a mechanism to receive systematic feedback on their performance. Department standards in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual 1214b(4) and (5) state that all employees, including chiefs of mission, should offer and solicit constructive feedback, acknowledge shortcomings, and work continuously to improve skills and substantive knowledge. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent have instituted annual surveys of U.S. direct-hire employees and locally employed staff to provide feedback on chief of mission performance.

Recommendation 2: The Foreign Service Institute, in coordination with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, should develop and execute more comprehensive training on management control responsibilities and procedures for conducting management control reviews in its classes for chief of mission candidates and deputy chiefs of mission. (Action: FSI, in coordination with CGFS)

Management Response: In its May 18, 2021, response, the Foreign Service Institute concurred with this recommendation. The Foreign Service Institute noted an expected completion date of August 31, 2021.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Foreign Service Institute has developed and executed more comprehensive training on management control responsibilities and procedures for conducting management control reviews in its classes for chief of mission candidates and deputy chiefs of mission.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should add consular crisis preparedness to the management controls checklist distributed annually to assist missions in their internal reviews of management controls. (Action: CGFS, in coordination with CA)

Management Response: In its May 21, 2021, response, the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services has added consular crisis preparedness to the management controls checklist distributed annually to assist missions in their internal reviews of management controls.

Recommendation 4: The Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent should issue Foreign Affairs Manual and Foreign Affairs Handbook guidance requiring all missions to implement structured mid-level development programs. (Action: GTM)

Management Response: In its June 1, 2021, response, the Bureau of Global Talent Management disagreed with this recommendation. The bureau noted Department guidance in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual 2423 established the Career Development Program and the bureau

has designed a Professional Development Plan to develop the experience and skills of all employees over the course of their careers. New Foreign Affairs Manual and Foreign Affairs Handbook guidance would be duplicative of this ongoing effort. The bureau stated it will continue to implement the Professional Development Plan as an alternative, release information on the plan through a series of Department-wide cables and notices, as well as continue to advertise existing Department-wide mentoring programs that address these needs.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation unresolved. Department guidance in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual 2423a states that the Career Development Program was established “in order to help ensure, in part, that members of the Senior Foreign Service possess the necessary skills and qualifications to carry out their responsibilities to the Department.” The existing guidance does not address professional development for mid-level employees. OIG acknowledges that in previous guidance in cable 15 STATE 96434, the Director General of the Foreign Service directed all diplomatic and consular posts to establish structured programs focused on building strong leadership and supervisory skills for mid-level employees. However, as indicated in the report, following this cable guidance, OIG observed mid-level professional development programs in only 9 of the 52 inspection reports issued from February 2017 to April 2020. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent issued Foreign Affairs Manual and Foreign Affairs Handbook guidance requiring all missions to implement structured mid-level development programs.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This review was conducted from April 3 to October 13, 2020, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2012 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspections Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive Officer of USAGM, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and USAGM. Consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, this management assistance report (MAR) focused on executive direction of overseas missions. OIG's specific objectives for the MAR were to note areas in which chiefs of mission and deputy chiefs of mission met or did not meet Department and U.S. Government standards, identify any recurring problems, and, if necessary, make recommendations to correct those problems.

To meet its objectives, OIG reviewed the Executive Direction sections in 52 inspection reports on overseas missions issued from February 2017 to April 2020. Material in the published reports was compiled and converted into percentages of mission leadership meeting and not meeting Department standards in the five elements of executive direction: (1) tone at the top and standards of conduct, including equal employment opportunity; (2) execution of foreign policy goals and objectives; (3) adherence to internal controls; (4) security of the mission and emergency preparedness; and (5) developing and mentoring Foreign Service professionals. OIG used professional judgment, along with documentary, testimonial, and analytical evidence collected or generated, to develop its findings and actionable recommendations to improve executive direction of overseas missions.

Peter A. Prahar, U.S. Ambassador (Ret.), and Stephen Caldwell conducted this MAR.

Other report contributors included Dolores Adams, Cindy Cobham, Jennifer Mauldin, Kathryn McMahon, Iris Rosenfeld, and Rebecca Sawyer.

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSES



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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June 1, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: OIG – Sandra Lewis, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: DGTm – Kenneth Merten, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary *km*

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Management Assistance Report – Department Can Take Further Steps to Improve Executive Direction of Overseas Missions (ISP-21-14)

The Bureau of Global Talent Management has reviewed the draft OIG report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations outlined in the report for GTM action.

Recommendation 1: The Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent should institute annual surveys of U.S. direct-hire employees and locally employed staff to provide feedback on chief of mission performance. (Action: GTM)

Management Response: GTM disagrees with this recommendation to institute new annual surveys to provide feedback on chief of mission (COM) performance. The Department already has mechanisms in place to obtain feedback on the performance of those in leadership and supervisory positions, as well as tools to address challenges and concerns that may arise.

The annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), administered by the Office of Personnel Management, was last launched in the Fall of 2020 and was sent to over 22,000 Foreign and Civil Service employees. The FEVS provides an opportunity for employees to share their perceptions of supervisors and agency leadership, and in other critical areas including performance management, communication, and work life balance. For the first time, GTM launched a FEVS-like survey of Locally Employed Staff in 2020 to solicit feedback from more employees.

The Department's performance evaluation process provides chiefs of mission with timely feedback throughout the rating period, and an opportunity for successes to be recognized and areas of concern to be addressed. GTM launched the Performance Management Reform (PMR) initiative in late 2020 to systematically review performance management within the Foreign Service. The PMR team is currently assessing the inclusion of a multi-source review as part of the Employee Evaluation Report (EER) process.

The Leadership and Management School at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) aims to grow a culture of leadership and provides Organizational Development (OD) services that are available to posts to strengthen leadership, morale, and communication. These services include the *Mission Possible* assessment tool to proactively identify and leverage organizational strengths and mitigate organizational challenges.

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OIG previously issued this recommendation in 2017 and subsequently closed it in September 2019 upon receipt of information about FSI's OD services and *Mission Possible* assessment tool. These services remain available for posts to utilize. GTM would like the opportunity to review the usage of these services and to provide further outreach to posts and regional bureaus about the resources available to them.

Recommendation 4: The Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent should issue Foreign Affairs Manual and Foreign Affairs Handbook guidance requiring all missions to implement structured mid-level development programs. (Action: GTM)

Management Response: GTM disagrees with the recommendation to issue FAM and FAH guidance requiring all missions to implement structured mid-level development programs. 3 FAM 2423 established the Career Development Program and GTM/CDA has designed a Professional Development Plan (PDP) to develop the experience and skills of all employees over the course of their careers. New FAM and FAH guidance would be unnecessarily duplicative of this ongoing effort. It would also potentially create confusion and an additional, undue burden on already busy posts. GTM will continue to implement the PDP as an alternative, releasing PDP information for Generalists and Specialists through a series of Department-wide cables and notices. GTM will also continue to advertise existing Department-wide mentoring programs that address these needs.

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United States Department of State

Foreign Service Institute

*National Foreign Affairs Training Center
Washington, D.C. 20522-4201*

May 18, 2021

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MEMORANDUM

TO: OIG – Sandra Lewis, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: FSI – Julieta Valls Noyes, Acting Director

SUBJECT: FSI Response to the OIG Management Assistance Report: Department Can Take Further Steps to Improve Executive Direction of Overseas Missions

FSI/LMS has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by OIG:

OIG Recommendation 2:

The Foreign Service Institute, in coordination with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, should develop and execute more comprehensive training on management control responsibilities and procedures for conducting management control reviews in its classes for chief of mission candidates and deputy chiefs of mission. (Action: FSI, in coordination with CGFS)

FSI/LMS Management Response:

FSI accepts the recommendation and will coordinate with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services to develop and execute more comprehensive training on management control responsibilities and procedures for conducting management control reviews for inclusion in or addition to the Ambassadorial and DCM/PO Seminars by August 31, 2021.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Linda Eduful.



United States Department of State
Comptroller
Washington, DC 20520

MAY 21 2021

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MEMORANDUM

TO: OIG – Sandra Lewis, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: CGFS – Jeffrey C. Mounts 

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Management Assistance Report – Department Can Take Further Steps to Improve Executive Direction of Overseas Missions

The Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS) has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to recommendation #3 provided by OIG:

OIG Recommendation 3: The Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should add consular crisis preparedness to the management controls checklist distributed annually to assist missions in their internal reviews of management controls. (Action: CGFS, in coordination with CA)

CGFS Management Response: CGFS concurs with this recommendation. CGFS will coordinate with CA to add consular crisis preparedness questions in the Statement of Assurance management control checklist for FY 2022 implementation. (Note: The FY 2021 checklist was issued in April 2021.)

The point of contact for this memorandum is Carole Clay.

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