



OIG

Office of Inspector General

U.S. Department of State • Broadcasting Board of Governors

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ISP-I-17-06A

Office of Inspections

January 2017

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# Inspection of Embassy Bratislava, Slovakia

## BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

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# OIG HIGHLIGHTS

ISP-I-17-06A

January 2017  
OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS  
Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs  
Inspection of Embassy Bratislava, Slovakia

## What OIG Found

### What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected U.S. Embassy Bratislava from May 25 to June 13, 2016.

### What OIG Recommended

OIG made 11 recommendations to tighten Embassy Bratislava's internal controls and improve embassy operations. These address deficiencies in fire alarm testing and maintenance; grants management; electronic file organization; use of record emails; employee use of the contracted taxi service for personal trips; cabling infrastructure; housing inspections; and monitoring of consular cashier activities.

- Embassy Bratislava's Chargé d'Affaires and acting Deputy Chief of Mission encouraged teamwork and collaboration in the mission, consistent with Department of State leadership principles.
- The Department of State has been trying since 2007 to identify a new embassy compound site. Embassy Bratislava identified this as its highest priority management goal and was working with the Department and the Government of Slovakia to identify and acquire a site.
- Embassy Bratislava did not inspect, test, or maintain the embassy fire alarm systems.
- The Public Affairs Section did not fully comply with Department guidance on grants management.
- Electronic records were not organized or readily retrievable and employees made limited use of record emails.
- The embassy did not effectively monitor employees' use of its contracted taxi service for personal trips.
- The embassy systems cabling infrastructure did not meet Department specifications.

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## CONTENTS

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CONTEXT.....	1
EXECUTIVE DIRECTION.....	2
Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct.....	2
Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives.....	3
Adherence to Internal Controls.....	3
Security of the Mission.....	4
POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.....	4
Advocacy and Analysis.....	4
Public Diplomacy.....	5
Grants Management.....	6
Consular Affairs.....	7
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.....	8
Management Operations.....	8
Financial Management.....	9
General Services and Facility Management.....	10
Information Resource Management.....	11
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13
PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS.....	14
APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY.....	15
APPENDIX B: FY 2015 STAFFING AND FUNDING BY AGENCY.....	16
ABBREVIATIONS.....	17
OIG INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS.....	18

## CONTEXT

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Slovakia is one of two states created from the non-violent breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1993. It borders Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Ukraine. Slovakia is about twice the size of New Hampshire with a population of 5.5 million. The capital, Bratislava, is home to approximately 400,000 people. The ethnic makeup of the population is about 81 percent Slovak followed by Hungarian, Romani, and unspecified ethnicities. Sixty-two percent of the population identifies themselves as Roman Catholic.

Since its independence, Slovakia has implemented significant economic reforms. It joined the European Union in 2004 and adopted the Euro as its official currency in 2009. Slovakia's location in Central Europe, coupled with its highly skilled work force and reasonable tax rates, has attracted significant levels of foreign direct investment, including \$4.5 billion from the United States. However, corruption, slow resolution of disputes within the legal system, and tax increases slowed investment flows over the past 3 years.

The United States does not give Slovakia bilateral economic assistance, but it does provide approximately \$1 million in security assistance focused on improving the country's military forces capacity within NATO. Slovakia has been a member of NATO since 2004 and contributed troops to the war in Afghanistan.

The embassy's 2016-2018 Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) had four policy and two management goals. The policy goals were: work to advance Slovakia's Euro-Atlantic integration, peace and stability; strengthen Slovakia's institutions to sustain democracy and promote shared values; strengthen and grow the foundation of Slovakia's economy and encourage integration into regional and trans-Atlantic structures; and engage the Slovak public to share American experiences and build support for U.S. global and regional priorities. The highest priority management goal was to identify a site for, and secure Slovak Government approval of, relocation to a new embassy compound. The second management goal was to improve crisis management planning.

At the time of the inspection, the mission included 35 U.S. direct hire employees, 82 locally employed (LE) staff and 8 eligible family member staff. The Department of Defense and Foreign Commercial Service are also at post. American employees receive a 15 percent cost of living allowance.

OIG evaluated the embassy's policy implementation, resource management, and management controls consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act.<sup>1</sup> OIG also assessed security, which is covered in a classified annex to this inspection report. The annex discusses the embassy's security program and issues affecting the safety of mission personnel and facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

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OIG based the following assessment of the embassy's leadership on 143 interviews conducted in Washington and Bratislava, 122 meetings in Bratislava, 80 questionnaires completed by American and LE staff in Bratislava and OIG's review of 814 documents.

The leadership of Embassy Bratislava changed in July 2015, when the previous Ambassador departed post. A Chargé d'Affaires led the mission with the Political/Economic Section chief serving as acting Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). A new Chargé d'Affaires arrived in September 2015. At the time of the inspection, the embassy was preparing for the arrival of the new Ambassador, expected in August 2016.

### **Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct**

Embassy employees, both American and LE staff members, told OIG in questionnaires and interviews that they had good morale. Among the 27 American employees who completed questionnaires, the average rating for morale was 4.1 on a scale of 1 to 5. Personal interviews with embassy employees corroborated these conclusions. Many employees attributed their good morale, at least in part, to the Chargé's and the acting DCM's leadership. The acting DCM focused on embassy management; employees cited him as being supportive of their activities. Employees said that both leaders were approachable and willing to listen to alternative points of view, attributes of leadership in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214.

### ***Collaboration Among Sections***

Embassy leaders encouraged teamwork, and OIG found several examples of collaboration between embassy sections. These included work by the Consular and Public Affairs Sections (PAS) to secure appropriate Slovak visas for American Fulbright scholars and the sections' combined efforts to promote the Summer Work and Travel exchange program (detailed in the Public Diplomacy section of this report). The Regional Security Officer also worked with the two sections to address false claims of a recruiting company that offered to arrange work in the United States for Slovak citizens without appropriate visas. That collaborative effort resulted in the Slovak National Police initiating a high-priority investigation and issuing a warning that clarified for Slovak citizens the limitations on visa-free travel to the United States.

The Chargé and the acting DCM supported the Defense Attaché and the Office of Defense Cooperation in fostering a closer defense relationship with Slovakia, which has continued to support U.S. policies, such as serving with the U.S. military in Afghanistan and helping to resettle detainees from Guantanamo.

## Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

### *Public Outreach Across Slovakia*

The Chargé focused his efforts on developing contacts and representing the United States and its policies to the Slovak government, media, and public. The Chargé made a particular effort to engage in public outreach in communities across the country. He told OIG that economic conditions and political trends were different outside Bratislava and that PAS was working to achieve a goal of covering all areas of the country on a regular basis. OIG reviewed documents showing that the embassy engaged in 47 outreach events, most outside Bratislava, between September 2015 and June 2016. The majority were with students or the general public on topics such as U.S.-Slovak relations, the environment, diversity, and human rights for minorities.

The Chargé and the acting DCM were both fluent in Slovak, and most embassy officers could conduct business in Slovak with host country officials, the media, and the public. According to officials in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, the embassy successfully advanced U.S. policy interests despite being without an ambassador since July 2015.

### *Need to Review Progress on ICS Goals*

When the Chargé arrived in September 2015, the embassy was beginning its triennial revision of its ICS. According to embassy employees, the process of developing the ICS was collaborative, involving all sections and agencies at post. The ICS reinforced that human rights and anti-corruption issues are central to U.S. goals of cementing the progress Slovakia had made in the last two decades in governmental and societal reforms. However, the embassy did not have a process to monitor progress on ICS goals. During the inspection, OIG encouraged the Chargé and the acting DCM to institute such a formal ICS review process. They agreed to do so.

## Adherence to Internal Controls

Under the leadership of the Chargé and the acting DCM, the embassy maintained appropriate internal controls of most functions. However, OIG identified some deficiencies and made 10 recommendations to correct them. These are discussed in more detail in the Resource Management section of this report. When OIG brought these internal control issues to the attention of embassy leaders, they began taking steps to address them.

### **Spotlight on Success: Professional Development Program for All American Employees**

The acting DCM took the professional development program that is standard for First- and Second-Tour employees and expanded it to include all American staff members. The DCM interacted with the embassy's two First- and Second-Tour manner, leadership attributes set forth in 3 FAM 1214.(8). The Chargé and the acting DCM expanded the program to include all mid-level staff and the Marine Security Guards to allow them to benefit from monthly sessions on leadership, management and career development. Embassy employees expressed to OIG their appreciation for this program.

## Security of the Mission

The Chargé and the acting DCM supported the Regional Security Office in meeting its goals. The leaders were attentive to the safety and security of embassy personnel. They encouraged collaboration among staff regarding the development and implementation of the emergency action plan. They also encouraged the Regional Security Officer in his efforts to pursue contacts with Slovak officials and to increase engagement with law enforcement officials. They regularly participated in security drills.

### *Search for a New Embassy Site Stalled Since 2007*

The Department of State (Department) has been trying since at least 2007 to select a site on which to construct a new embassy compound in Bratislava. When OIG inspected Embassy Bratislava in 2007, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) was in the process of selecting a site from nine possible locations, none of which were deemed to be suitable. When OIG returned to Bratislava in 2016, a new site selection process was in progress.

At the time of this inspection, the embassy's lease on the security perimeter in front of the chancery was to expire in August 2016. Bratislava's city government wanted the embassy to vacate its current location because many citizens believed the fence surrounding the embassy harmed the visual integrity of the historic square. The lease for the land on which the perimeter fence was built is separate from the property on which the embassy stands. The lease itself states that future lease renewals depended on the embassy demonstrating good faith efforts to find and purchase an appropriate site for a new chancery.

The site selection process was stalled at the time of this inspection, despite efforts by the Chargé and other embassy officers. The preferred site had multiple owners, and a current tenant, which complicated negotiations. Post was working with OBO's locally engaged legal counsel and had conducted several meetings with Slovak officials and the city council to determine whether the purchase of this parcel is possible. The arrival of the new Ambassador in August 2016 will present an opportunity to work with the Department and local and national Slovak officials to move the site selection process forward. This issue needs to continue to be one of the highest priorities of this embassy.

## POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

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### Advocacy and Analysis

#### *Political/Economic Reporting Satisfactory*

Washington end-users, including bureau officials, expressed satisfaction with the Political/Economic Section's reporting, stating that it provided the information needed to understand the U.S.-Slovak relationship. Readers regularly cited the section's daily "Bratislava-in-Brief" as a timely and useful summary of the most important daily developments.

The Political/Economic Section prepared an annual reporting plan, which it updated quarterly, based on the key ICS elements. OIG reviewed 105 cables prepared over the 7 months prior to the inspection and determined that the messages were well-sourced and incorporated input from a wide variety of embassy offices, including other agencies.

### ***Embassy Not Preserving Record Email Correspondence***

Embassy Bratislava made limited use of the record email function in the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset, preserving only two daily wrap-ups, one from PAS and the other from the Political/Economic Section. Drafters did not use the record email function for other email exchanges, including those containing information that facilitated decision-making and documented policy formulation and execution. Failure to use the record email function in the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset system as required by 5 FAM 443.1-3 and 5 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-231 hinders the Department's ability to make and preserve records as the Federal Records Act requires.<sup>2</sup> OIG found that embassy staff at all levels had not received training on the use of record emails, nor did post have in place a policy requiring the use of record emails. The Management Section issued a staff notice during the inspection that provided such guidance, with links to Department training.

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Bratislava should require mission staff to transmit official record correspondence using State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset archive record emails in compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

### ***Embassy Complying with Leahy Vetting Requirements***

OIG found that Embassy Bratislava followed requirements<sup>3</sup> for Leahy human rights vetting. In 2015, the embassy processed 135 cases requiring Leahy vetting.

## **Public Diplomacy**

### ***Public Affairs Section Programs Support ICS Goals***

PAS managed a variety of information and outreach programs throughout Slovakia that addressed ICS goals to improve integration into the democratic Euro-Atlantic community and to promote a more just civil society. To reach these goals, the section used its network of American Corners,<sup>4</sup> its speakers programs, its ties to the Fulbright Commission and other exchange

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<sup>2</sup> Federal Records Act of 1950, as amended, 44 U.S.C. Chapters 31 and 33.

<sup>3</sup> The Leahy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 prohibits the Department of State from furnishing assistance to foreign security forces if the Department receives credible information that such forces have committed gross violations of human rights. See 22 USC 2378d.

<sup>4</sup> American Corners are open-access facilities used to engage foreign audiences overseas. The embassy has three American Corners located in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, and Košice.

program alumni groups, an Educational Counseling program, English-language programs, and an extensive program of grants used to support local non-governmental organizations.

OIG reviewed grants management, information and outreach programming, and initiatives to counter negative public opinion about the United States. OIG found no significant deficiencies in the PAS except for those described below.

### ***Public Affairs Section Workload Concerns***

PAS staff members described a heavy and sometimes unbalanced workload. They cited the high volume of grants, particularly small grants, issued during busy program seasons or the “end-of-year rush,” as the causes for omissions in grants management. OIG reviewed position descriptions, interviewed LE staff and supervisors, and attended section meetings and program events. OIG determined that the high level of activity among staff and the fact that they have both program and grants management responsibilities contributed to mistakes in grants managements. Since his arrival in August 2015, the Public Affairs Officer had worked to realign responsibilities and reduce the number of small grants. He and his deputy also began to monitor grants management more closely. In the Mission Resource Request for FY 2018, the embassy requested an additional LE staff grants manager position. Having observed the demands on the section, OIG concurs in this request.

### **Spotlight on Success: Sections Collaborate on Photo Contest for Slovak Students**

The PAS and Consular Sections collaborated to promote a positive image of the United States by taking advantage of the largest exchange program the United States has in Slovakia—the Summer Work Travel Program. In 2016, more than 2,700 Slovak students participated in this program. The embassy promoted a photo contest that solicited original photos taken by Slovak students during past visits to the United States on this program. The embassy invited the public to vote on the photos on social media. It then hosted an event to award the winning photos and invited Slovak TV news crews.

## **Grants Management**

### ***Political/Economic Section’s Grants Files in Order***

The Political/Economic Section was responsible for four grants. Two of these grants were funded with Public Diplomacy monies, one was funded from a special program established during the refugee migration crisis in 2015, and the fourth was funded from the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. The section’s grants totaled \$57,800. OIG reviewed the files of all four grants and, aside from minor issues corrected during the inspection, found no significant deficiencies. Both the Grants Officer and the Grants Officer Representative had received the appropriate training.

### ***Public Affairs Section Grants Management Out of Compliance***

PAS did not manage its grants in full compliance with Department standards. OIG conducted a detailed review of 22 grants files funding organizations and individuals and 7 property grants to American Corners. OIG selected these grants from the 116 grants awarded in FY2015 and FY2016 prior to June 1, 2016, and included large and small grants, open and completed grants, and grants files held by different staff members. OIG found that previous supervisors had not stressed detailed adherence to grants management records policy nor enforced consistency among grants managers. In addition, out-of-office program responsibilities distracted or delayed program managers' responsiveness to proper grants management.

When grants are not reported or recorded in accordance with Department standards, the embassy and the Department cannot be fully informed of grants monitoring or funds expended. During the inspection, the Public Affairs Officer began to address these long-standing concerns by realigning staff responsibilities and providing training for backup personnel.

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Bratislava should issue a management directive defining the policies and procedures for processing and closing out foreign assistance awards in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

### **Consular Affairs**

OIG reviewed the full range of consular operations in Bratislava, including immigrant visas, American Citizens Services, consular anti-fraud programs, and nonimmigrant visas, and found no significant deficiencies. OIG concluded that the Consular Section was implementing consular management controls in most areas in accordance with regulations and Department standards, but noted a few areas where the consular officer needed to give additional attention in order to strengthen internal controls.

### ***Consular Staffing Challenges***

Embassy Bratislava has been challenged to maintain sufficient officer coverage in the Consular Section since Slovakia was admitted to the Visa Waiver Program in 2008. At that time, the Department reduced the number of consular officer positions from three to one to match the reduced workload. When that sole consular officer was absent from post, the acting DCM, working with embassy section chiefs, ensured that one of four backup officers provided coverage. The Department approved an embassy request for an eligible family member position to assist with some officer duties. The embassy was seeking to fill that position at the time of the inspection.

### ***Line-of-Sight Problems in the Consular Section***

The accountable consular officer was unable to maintain line-of-sight supervision of the consular subcashier booth, as required by Department standards in 7 FAH-1 H-742 (a), due to the section's configuration. Only when the officer stood directly behind the booth and looked in the window was it possible to exercise line-of-sight supervision of the subcashier's activity. The

inability to maintain line-of-sight over the cashier increased the risk of unauthorized activity or misuse of U.S. Government funds. A closed-circuit television or other monitoring system would enable line-of-sight of the cashier's booth from the accountable consular officer's workstation.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Bratislava should install a monitoring system to give the accountable consular officer line-of-sight supervision of the consular cashier's booth.  
(Action: Embassy Bratislava)

OIG also observed that overhead storage cabinets installed above the Consular Section cubicles exceeded the maximum 42 inches specified in 7 FAH-1 H-282 (15). This obstructed the accountable consular officer from line-of-sight supervision of those areas. OIG discussed with the Consular Section chief the need to remove the overhead cabinets to reduce their height and provide an unobstructed view into those work areas. She agreed to implement this change as soon as possible.

### ***Embassy Not Fully Compliant with Consular Internal Controls***

OIG concluded that the Consular Section chief and the four back-up consular officers were complying with most consular management control requirements; however, they needed to strengthen controls in some areas. OIG discussed with the Consular Section chief the need to track and enforce mandatory training for consular personnel, including backup consular officers, and the importance of conducting regular end-of-day fee reconciliations. The Consular Section chief began addressing these issues during the inspection.

## **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

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### **Management Operations**

OIG concluded that, overall, the Management Section implemented required processes and procedures in accordance with applicable regulations and Department guidance. Embassy Bratislava received the highest International Cooperative Administrative Support Service (ICASS) customer satisfaction scores in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, and scored well above worldwide averages in the most recent global ICASS survey. OIG reviewed internal controls in the following areas: the purchase card and motor vehicle fuel programs; human resources activities; facility management operations, including preventative maintenance contracts and the annual compliance review; and financial management operations. OIG found no significant deficiencies except for those described below.

### ***Embassy Vienna Providing Adequate Basic Support Services***

During the inspection, the embassy decided to renegotiate its agreement with Embassy Vienna to better address Embassy Bratislava's needs. Since 2007, when the Department downsized Embassy Bratislava as a cost-saving measure, the embassy has relied on Embassy Vienna—a larger embassy within a 45-minute drive of Bratislava—to provide some support functions,

including the furniture and appliance programs, facilities management, and financial management back-up. OIG reviewed the effectiveness of this arrangement and concluded that Embassy Vienna's furniture and appliance support addressed Embassy Bratislava's requirements and negated the need for a conventional warehouse in Bratislava. OIG also concluded that Embassy Vienna's facility management support was adequate. However, Embassy Bratislava leaders told OIG that a renegotiated agreement that better defined their needs could improve certain support services provided by Embassy Vienna and ensure that Embassy Bratislava received the services for which it is paying Embassy Vienna.

## Financial Management

### *Employees Not Reimbursing Embassy for Personal Taxi Trips*

Embassy Bratislava initiated a taxi service for local transportation needs as a cost-saving measure after eliminating its motor pool in 2007. Prior to March 2016, embassy policy permitted employees to use the contracted taxi company for personal trips and to reimburse the embassy after doing so. The embassy issued a management notice in March 2016 that revised the transportation and vehicle policy to prohibit embassy employees from charging their personal trips to the embassy account. OIG found, however, that embassy employees continued to do so even after this policy was issued. In reviewing embassy records, OIG found 7 taxi bills from 2014 and 20 bills from 2015 that employees had certified as personal but for which they had not reimbursed the embassy. These 27 bills totaled more than \$1,000.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Bratislava should collect all outstanding monies owed by embassy staff for personal taxi expenses paid by the Embassy. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

### *Employees Not Properly Certifying Taxi Expenses*

The embassy's transportation and vehicle policy required all users to certify their taxi trips monthly. OIG found that employees and their supervisors failed to certify as either personal or official expenses 116 bills, totaling over \$9,000, dating back to January 2014. Without certification, managers did not know whether any of these trips were personal. Failure to enforce this policy resulted in employees inappropriately charging the U.S. Government for personal expenses.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Bratislava should review all monthly taxi bills since January 2014 that lack the proper employee and supervisor certification to identify and collect reimbursement for those bills identified as personal expenses. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

### *Lack of Standard Operating Procedures Led to Improper Payments*

The embassy had not established a standard operating procedure (SOP) to monitor and enforce its taxi policy. As a result, the embassy paid for employees' personal expenses, sometimes for more than 2 years. Some of these employees finished their tours in Bratislava without making the required reimbursement, as the embassy did not include payment of personal taxi bills as part of its checkout procedure. During the inspection, embassy leaders agreed on the need to

institute an SOP to monitor and enforce the taxi policy. The embassy also began to seek reimbursement from employees for previous personal trips charged to the embassy.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Bratislava should implement standard operating procedures to monitor and enforce effectively its policy on use and reimbursement of the contracted taxi service for personal trips. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

### ***Embassy Directly Paid Official Residence Expense Staff***

OIG found that the embassy was paying the Official Residence Expense staff directly. This practice violated 3 FAM 3257, which requires the principal representative or the household manager to pay the official residence staff. OIG issued a Management Assistance Report<sup>5</sup> that addressed this improper practice and recommended that the Department issue a directive that prohibits an embassy's direct payment to the official residence expense staff. Department management was reviewing this issue at the time of the inspection. OIG is not making a recommendation in this report.

## **General Services and Facility Management**

### ***Embassy Not Inspecting, Testing, or Maintaining Fire Alarm Systems***

Embassy Bratislava had not inspected, tested, or maintained the embassy fire alarm systems on an annual basis, as required by 15 FAM 845. An OBO fire safety inspector made the same observation during a 2014 embassy visit. Embassy officials told OIG it was unable to contract for these functions because it could not identify a local company with the expertise on its specific equipment. The lack of annual inspection, maintenance, and testing of the fire alarm systems creates vulnerabilities for life and safety. At the time of the inspection, the embassy was working with OBO to identify a suitable contractor to perform these operations.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Bratislava, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should implement a schedule for inspecting, testing, and maintaining the embassy fire alarm systems on an annual basis. (Action: Embassy Bratislava, in coordination with OBO)

### ***Health and Safety Inspection, Residential Security Survey Documentation Incomplete***

The embassy did not maintain complete documentation of either the required safety/health inspections or residential security surveys. Supporting documentation—including the embassy's requests for mandated upgrades as well as records of work performed and of final approvals to meet standards—were either missing or had not been consolidated into one file. As a result, OIG could not confirm whether all required certifications and approvals were completed before employees occupied their assigned residences. OIG advised the General Services Officer to

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<sup>5</sup> OIG, *Management Assistance Report-Direct Payment of Official Residence Expenses Staff Salaries* (ISP-I-14-08, April 3, 2014).

consolidate all required documentation into a centralized property lease file. The embassy began taking this action during the inspection.

### ***Embassy Not Using Required Checklist to Evaluate Safety of Prospective Residences***

The embassy did not use the latest Residential Safety, Health, and Fire Prevention Awareness Checklist, mandated by 15 FAM 252.5, when evaluating prospective residences. Failure to use all required checklists increases the risk that certain residential safety issues will be overlooked. Embassy staff told OIG they were unaware of the existence of the Fire Prevention Awareness checklist. Once informed, the embassy told OIG that it would begin the process to address this deficiency.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Bratislava should use the Department of State Residential Safety, Health, and Fire Prevention Awareness Checklist when evaluating prospective residences for inclusion in the housing pool. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

### ***Embassy Lacked Standard Procedures for Evaluating and Selecting Residences***

The embassy had not established SOPs for evaluating and selecting prospective residences for embassy employees and their families. Guidance in 2 FAM 021 states that the Department must maintain effective systems of management controls, and identifies policies and procedures as a key part of an effective control environment. OIG observed that in the absence of SOPs, LE staff members were unsure what documentation should be kept in files. In reviewing files, OIG found it difficult to determine what factors embassy managers considered when selecting residences for the housing pool. The absence of SOPs increased the risk that housing selections could occur without consideration of key factors involving potential risks to life, safety, and health.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Bratislava should develop and implement standard operating procedure for selecting properties for inclusion in the interagency housing pool. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

## **Information Resource Management**

OIG concluded that Embassy Bratislava's information resource management services effectively met customer needs and complied with guidance in 5 FAM 120. OIG reviewed technical security protection of classified and sensitive computer networks; radio and telephone systems; diplomatic post office mail and pouch services; and mobile computing, communications security, records management, assets accountability and emergency readiness.

Based on scores in the 2016 ICASS customer satisfaction survey, OIG's own survey questionnaire, and interviews, OIG confirmed a high level of customer satisfaction with information resource management support. OIG determined that there were no significant deficiencies except as described below. OIG also noted minor deficiencies in mail screening and emergency action procedures for the destruction of sensitive materials. These were resolved during the inspection.

### ***Cyber Security Needs Continuous Monitoring***

A June 2014 Bureau of Diplomatic Security regional cyber security officer assessment identified information systems vulnerabilities that required corrective measures. OIG confirmed the embassy had corrected all deficiencies and that its technology systems adhered to standard operating environment controls.

OIG found that the IT staff successfully managed day-to-day computer and communications services. However, OIG found that the Information Systems Security Officer had not performed analyses of audit logs, user libraries, emails, workstations, or servers for indications of inappropriate or unusual activity, as 12 FAM 600 requires. The embassy corrected this during the inspection by implementing the Department's official Information Systems Security Officer checklist and by scheduling checks.

### ***Electronic Records Not Organized or Readily Retrievable***

OIG found that Embassy Bratislava's electronic records system did not comply with the requirements in 5 FAM 400 and 5 FAH-4. The embassy had not developed or enforced a policy on how to organize records according to Department standards. OIG also found that employees had not completed training on how to appropriately organize records. In accordance with Department standards, the embassy should organize electronic records by relationship and subject. A lack of proper records management creates vulnerabilities that inhibit efficient information retrieval and increase the risk that critical documentation could be lost.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Bratislava should implement and enforce a policy for electronic file organization in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

### ***Embassy Cable Infrastructure Not Compliant***

The embassy unclassified and classified systems local area networks cable infrastructure did not meet 5 FAH-9 standard specifications for network cabling installation and uniform labeling. During systems upgrades or changes, the installation teams had not prioritized the work necessary to correct the cabling infrastructure or to update design drawings. These vulnerabilities risk compromising the integrity of U.S. Government sensitive data or networks.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Bratislava, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should correct all cable infrastructure issues in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bratislava, in coordination with IRM)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Bratislava should require mission staff to transmit official record correspondence using State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset archive record emails in compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Bratislava should issue a management directive defining the policies and procedures for processing and closing out foreign assistance awards in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Bratislava should install a monitoring system to give the accountable consular officer line-of-sight supervision of the consular cashier's booth. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Bratislava should collect all outstanding monies owed by embassy staff for personal taxi expenses paid by the Embassy. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Bratislava should review all monthly taxi bills since January 2014 that lack the proper employee and supervisor certification to identify and collect reimbursement for those bills identified as personal expenses. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Bratislava should implement standard operating procedures to monitor and enforce effectively its policy on use and reimbursement of the contracted taxi service for personal trips. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Bratislava, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should implement a schedule for inspecting, testing, and maintaining the embassy fire alarm systems on an annual basis. (Action: Embassy Bratislava, in coordination with OBO)

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Bratislava should use the Department of State Residential Safety, Health, and Fire Prevention Awareness Checklist when evaluating prospective residences for inclusion in the housing pool. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Bratislava should develop and implement standard operating procedure for selecting properties for inclusion in the interagency housing pool. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Bratislava should implement and enforce a policy for electronic file organization in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bratislava)

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Bratislava, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should correct all cable infrastructure issues in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bratislava, in coordination with IRM)

## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

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Title	Name	Arrival Date
<b>Chiefs of Mission:</b>		
Chargé d’Affaires	J. Liam Wasley	9/2015
Deputy Chief of Mission (Acting)	Richard “Trey” Lyons	8/2014
<b>Chiefs of Sections:</b>		
Management	Elizabeth Sewall	7/2015
Consular	Selena Nelson-Salcedo	9/2014
Political/Economic (Acting)	Liam Sullivan	8/2014
Public Affairs	Jason Khile	8/2015
Regional Security	Anthony Dylan Ragan	7/2015
<b>Other Agencies:</b>		
Defense Attaché	LTC Matthew Atkins	8/2013
Office of Defense Cooperation	LTC Walter Richter	7/2014

**Source:** Embassy Bratislava

## APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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This inspection was conducted 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 Inspector's Handbook, as issued by OIG for the Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

### Objectives and Scope

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

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

### Methodology

In conducting inspections, OIG uses a risk-based approach to prepare for each inspection; reviews pertinent records; reviews, circulates, and compiles the results of survey instruments, as appropriate; conducts interviews; and reviews the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by the review.

OIG conducted 143 individual interviews in Washington and in Bratislava. It reviewed 814 records during this time. OIG also reviewed 80 survey responses from both American and LE staff and attended 122 meetings while in Bratislava.

## APPENDIX B: FY 2015 STAFFING AND FUNDING BY AGENCY

Agency	U.S. Direct-hire Staff	U.S. Locally Employed Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff <sup>6</sup>	Funding (\$)
<b>Department of State</b>					
Diplomatic & Consular Programs	14	1	8	23	1,191,300
Consular	1	0	4	5	369,176
ICASS	2	6	40	48	2,645,200
Public Diplomacy	2	0	10	12	1,203,125
Diplomatic Security	2	1	11	14	578,779
Marine Security	8	0	2	10	174,500
Representation	0	0	0	0	32,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>6,194,080</b>
<b>Department of Defense</b>					
Defense Attaché Office	4	0	1	5	279,619
Office of Defense Cooperation	1	0	2	3	246,800
Bilateral Affairs Office	1	0	1	2	63,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>589,419</b>
<b>Foreign Commercial Service</b>					
Foreign Commercial Service	0	0	3	3	260,402
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>260,402</b>
<b>Foreign Assistance</b>					
International Military Education & Training (IMET)	0	0	0	0	900,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>900,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>7,943,901</b>

**Source:** Generated by OIG from data provided by the Department.

<sup>6</sup> Authorized staff.

## ABBREVIATIONS

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DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
Department	Department of State
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Service
ICS	Integrated Country Strategy
LE	Locally Employed
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
PAS	Public Affairs Section
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure

## OIG INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS

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Thomas Furey, Team Leader

Paul Cantrell, Deputy Team Leader

Jay Dehmlow

Mark Jeleniewicz

James Norton

Lavon Sajona

Frank Ward



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