



OIG

Office of Inspector General

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

ISP-I-18-05

Office of Inspections

October 2017

Inspection of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Office of Mobile Security Deployments

DOMESTIC OPERATIONS AND SPECIAL REPORTS



OIG HIGHLIGHTS

ISP-I-18-05

What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected the Office of Mobile Security Deployments from April 19 to May 12, 2017.

What OIG Recommended

OIG made one recommendation to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to make the Office of Mobile Security Deployments' temporary administrative chief a permanent position in order to strengthen personal property management and internal controls.

In its comments on the draft report, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security concurred with the recommendation. OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The bureau's response to the recommendation and OIG's reply can be found in the Recommendations Section of this report. The bureau's formal written response is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

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October 2017

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

Bureau of Diplomatic Security

Inspection of the Office of Mobile Security Deployments

What OIG Found

- The Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Office of Mobile Security Deployments successfully accomplished its mission by addressing embassy and consulate support needs, providing effective assistance to protective details, and providing high-quality training to personnel overseas.
- Office leadership faced challenges in recruitment, mentoring, and establishing policies for personnel unable or unwilling to deploy on Office of Mobile Security Deployment's overseas missions.
- Some internal controls for the Office of Mobile Security Deployments' resource management needed to be reinforced.
- The office lacked permanent high-level oversight for its administrative functions.

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CONTEXT

The Office of Mobile Security Deployments (MSD) is the Department of State's (Department) emergency security support, crisis response, and special mission component, as outlined in 12 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 444. The Department originally established the office in 1985 under the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's (DS) Directorate for Training¹ to provide training and security support to overseas posts. As a result of the 9/11 attacks, the Department in 2002 expanded MSD's mission to include:

- Security Support Teams, which deploy to embassies or consulates during periods of immediate threat of terrorist or criminal activity, crisis, natural disaster, or other unusual event.
- Tactical Support Teams, which provide protection for the Secretary of State and other high-risk VIPs, both domestically and as required when the Secretary is traveling abroad.
- Integrated Mobile Training Teams, which provide specialized security training at overseas posts for U.S. Government employees and to foreign partners.

In order to ensure the office is able to accomplish the missions listed above, the MSD Director stated that his key priorities include: maintaining readiness of sufficiently staffed and trained operational teams; recruitment of qualified personnel; and preparing for future support requirements.

MSD is authorized 104 Foreign Service, 24 Civil Service, and 26 contractor² positions. At the time of the inspection, 25 percent of the Foreign Service positions were unfilled.

The office is divided into two divisions—Operations, and Training and Logistics—each led by a division chief, as shown in Figure 1. The Operations Division includes three senior DS agents, each of whom oversees teams that carry out the three security responsibilities—security support, tactical support, and training—outlined in 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH) -1 H-024.1-2. Each team typically has six DS agents,³ including a team leader and deputy. The Training and Logistics Division provides support to the teams conducting operations.

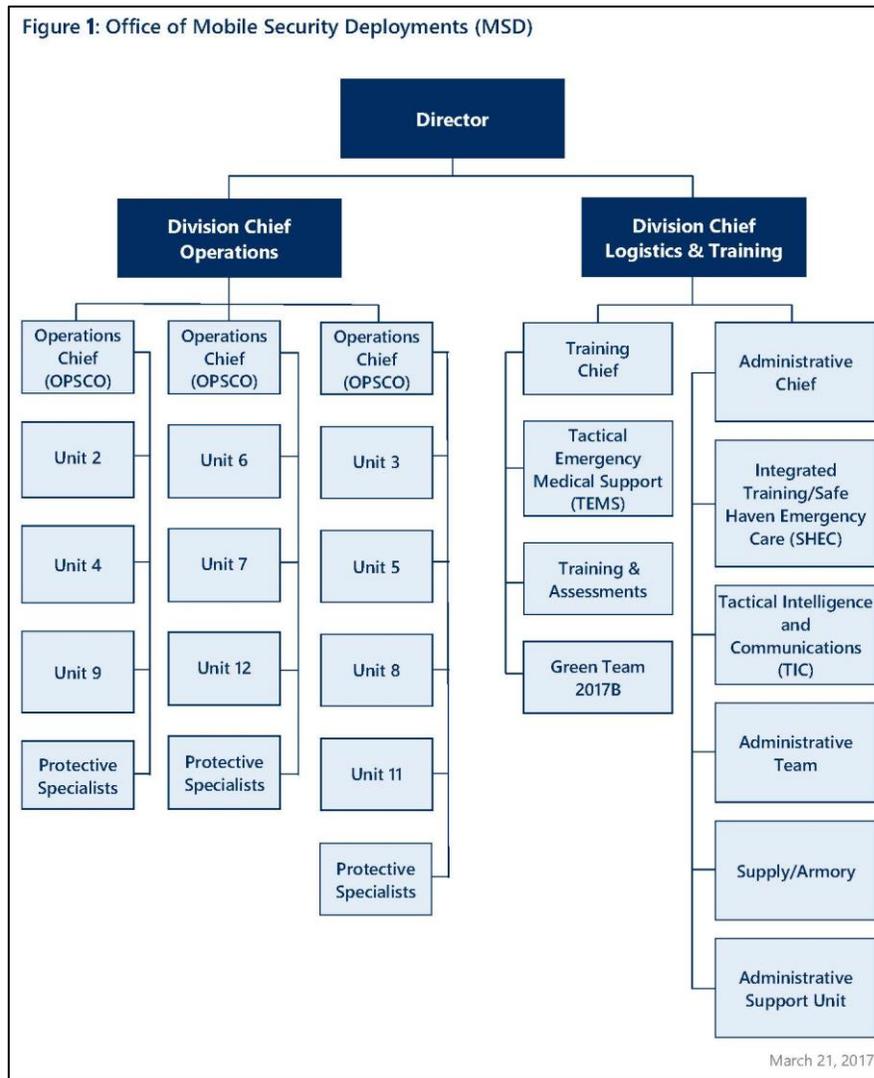
OIG evaluated the office's resource management and management controls consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act.⁴

¹ The DS Directorate for Training also includes two other offices: the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance, and the Office of Training and Performance Standards.

² MSD contractors included 25 personal services contractors and one third-party contractor.

³ MSD team members must serve at least one tour within DS prior to their assignment. The tour of duty with MSD is 3 years.

⁴ See Appendix A.



Source: Office of Mobile Security Deployments

OPERATIONS DIVISION

The OIG review of MSD’s operations concluded that the office successfully met its mission to support overseas posts in emergency situations, to assist DS protective details with augmented tactical support, and to deliver training to U.S. personnel and dependents at overseas posts. OIG also concluded that MSD leadership effectively met the goals and objectives in 12-FAH-1H-024.1-2, as well as the expectations of their colleagues in the Department, the bureau, and at embassies and consulates.

Security Support Teams Properly Addressed Embassy, Consulate Security Support Needs

MSD met the standards in 1 FAM 262.5-3(1), which require the office to provide Security Support Teams for emergency support to overseas posts during periods of high threats, crises, or natural disasters. The office also met Department standards in 12 FAH-1 H-024.1-2b, which state that Security Support Teams should provide time-sensitive protective security for ambassadors, post personnel, or facility protection, to generally counter a direct or imminent threat of attack. MSD deployed 25 Security Support Teams in FY 2015, 18 in FY 2016, and 10 through the first 7 months of FY 2017. Among the missions conducted from September 2016 through April 2017, MSD provided protective support during the ordered departure of Embassy Kinshasa personnel due to political protests. During the same period, MSD also provided a protective detail for the Ambassador and a tactical operations center at Embassy Juba in the face of civil unrest. Other Security Support Team missions included support to U.S. embassies in the Gambia, Mauritania, the Republic of the Congo, and Somalia. While at a post, Security Support Teams also provided training to regional security officers, Marine Security Guards, the local guard force and American family members in an effort to strengthen their capability to meet future crises.

OIG reviewed after-action reports and embassy reporting cables regarding Security Support Team missions from September 2016 through April 2017 and concluded that MSD met the standards in 12 FAM 444.2 to provide support to posts for emergency situations by deploying within 24 hours. OIG also spoke with deputy chiefs of mission, regional security officers, and DS program officers for the posts involved. In all cases, respondents reported satisfaction with MSD's support.

Tactical Support Teams Delivered Effective Assistance to Protective Details

MSD supported DS protective details with augmented tactical support, both domestically and abroad, as required by 1 FAM 262.5-3(2). DS also used Tactical Support Teams for foreign diplomats requiring a high level of protection during visits to the United States. The Secretary of State's protective detail also used MSD tactical support based on factors such as threats, host nation ability to provide support, and MSD's ability to operate within the specific country.

MSD conducted 21 Tactical Support Teams in FY 2015, 21 in FY 2016, and 2 through the first 7 months of FY 2017. For example, MSD provided seven units in support of the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 2015. Other Tactical Support Teams included overseas deployments to Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, France, Belgium, Serbia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Morocco, and Turkey, as well as domestic operations in New York. OIG spoke to senior supervisory agents on the Secretary's protective detail, and they reported that MSD provided effective assistance both domestically, such as to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, and overseas, as in Paris shortly after the November 2015 attacks.

Integrated Mobile Training Teams Delivered High-Quality Training to Personnel Overseas

As required by 1 FAM 262.5-3(3), the office's Integrated Mobile Training Teams provided specialized training at embassies and consulates on security topics such as room entry tactics or protective security operations. Integrated Mobile Training Teams delivered training based on the priority training list prepared by the DS Directorates of International Programs and High Threat Programs. OIG reviewed MSD's standard operating procedure on scheduling Integrated Mobile Training Team missions and found that it complied with 1 FAM 262.5-3(3). Integrated Mobile Training Teams delivered training to 45 posts during FY 2015, 30 in FY 2016, and 26 from October 2016 through May 11, 2017, with 4 training missions planned for the remainder of the fiscal year. Integrated Mobile Training Teams trained personnel attached to regional security offices, including Marine Security Guard detachments, the local guard force, and personal protective guards. Integrated Mobile Training Teams also provided training sessions for U.S. staff and their family members, and locally employed staff.

OIG queried a judgmental sample of 10 RSOs from the 47 posts that received Integrated Mobile Training Team visits from January 2016 through May 2017 and reviewed communication from 2 additional posts—Embassies London and Stockholm—on Integrated Mobile Training Team training courses. Officials at the 12 embassies praised the quality and relevance of the training. For example, Embassy Lima reported that the training was extremely valuable, and Embassy Amman said Integrated Mobile Training Team agents were skilled trainers and that employees "raved" about the training they received. OIG also observed a number of training segments in an Integrated Mobile Training Team mission in Saudi Arabia, including an advanced firearms range operation course. OIG found that Integrated Mobile Training Team instructors placed a strong emphasis on safety and provided coaching and feedback to students.

Internal Training Formed the Foundation of the Office's Mission Performance

The varied nature of their duties required MSD agents to undergo an intensive training program throughout their assignment to the office. New MSD agents attended initial 6-month "Green Team" training prior to their assignment to an operational team. This training covered marksmanship, communications, land navigation, room entry, protective security, driving instruction, and firearms instruction, among other topics. In addition, agents received regular Operational Team Sustainment Training. During this refresher training, agents were recertified in a wide range of skills, including weapons qualification and physical fitness. Agents also developed more advanced team-based tactics in the sustainment training. MSD's training cadre retained the flexibility to add additional modules to accommodate demands for additional skills. Agents also received advanced training to fill supplementary team roles, such as medics, communicators, and marksmen.

OIG found that DS had policies and standards for its internal training programs and that MSD's training prepared agents to complete their missions.⁵ MSD followed training standards for weapons qualification and physical fitness, as required by 12 FAH-9 H-112.1 and 12 FAM 043. MSD also codified Operational Team Sustainment Training in a standard operating procedure. For other areas of instruction, MSD instructors assessed trainees based on checklists of performance objectives specific to each module. Instructors provided feedback on performance, and trainees acknowledged receipt of that guidance.

OIG interviews and file reviews found that the training MSD agents received prepared them to perform their responsibilities. During the inspection, 47 of the 55 agents, protective specialists, and deployable communicators agreed their training constituted adequate preparation. DS desk officers and personnel from posts that hosted MSD missions from September 2016 through April 2017 unanimously agreed that MSD agents were prepared for their missions.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

More Needed to be Done to Attract Diplomatic Security Agents

DS leadership acknowledged that MSD is critical to the security and safety of the Secretary and the Department's embassies and consulates. Nonetheless, the office faced, on average, a 13.7 percent shortfall in staffing in the three years prior to 2017. This staffing shortfall resulted in 14 agent positions, or two and a half teams, being unstaffed. The staffing shortfall increased in 2017 to 38 percent; a shortfall of 38 agent positions or staffing for six and a half teams. In addition to reducing the number of teams it deployed, the staffing shortfall also required MSD to prioritize Security Support Team and Tactical Support Team missions over Integrated Mobile Training Team missions. As a result, MSD frequently had to reschedule training missions to address more urgent priorities.

In FY 2016, MSD teams deployed 70 times, often on short notice for periods up to 2 months or more, to locales where U.S. embassies and consulates faced serious security threats. Additionally, from July 2014 through April 2017, MSD dedicated 6 of its 10 teams to continuous missions in South Sudan and Somalia, leaving only 4 teams to address other crises or provide needed training. In December 2016, when every available team was deployed on priority missions, MSD trained senior agents, not normally deployed, to create an additional team in case another crisis arose. DS senior leadership acknowledged the need for additional MSD agents but also recognized DS' bureau-wide shortage of agents.

During the inspection, OIG noted that MSD leadership began to proactively address its staffing issue with a public relations campaign, brochures highlighting MSD's role, a new briefing on its

⁵ OIG interviewed instructors, training managers, and trainees; observed classroom instruction; and traveled to sites in Virginia and West Virginia to observe non-classroom instruction and off-site field exercises. OIG also examined training files and records to determine if trainees received feedback from instructors and if their performance was systematically recorded.

website designed to attract more DS agents, and increased outreach through personal contacts by MSD agents and office leadership.

Mentoring Efforts Were Not Formalized

MSD's 26 First- and Second-Tour agents had limited ability to use the DS mentoring program because of MSD's location,⁶ which is isolated from DS headquarters, and the fact that agents spend, on average, 70 percent of their MSD assignment either on missions overseas or in training at offsite locations. Without an effective mentoring program, employees do not receive career development opportunities they need to develop professionally and succeed within the Department. OIG advised MSD leadership of the need for a formal MSD-specific mentoring program, as required by 3 FAM 2242.4 and cable 2015 State 23542.⁷ As a result, MSD leadership developed a mentoring program and designated the MSD Deputy Director and the operations chiefs as key mentors for the agents. OIG reviewed the program and considered it sufficient to meet Department standards.

Policies to Address Agents Unable to Deploy Overseas Lacking

Over the past 3 years, 8 agents have been unable or unwilling to deploy on MSD's overseas missions. Because the office lacked a uniform policy governing the management of these cases, each was handled on a case-by-case basis. In two cases, MSD reassigned the individuals within the office, while in two others, the agents resolved their issues during a deployment cycle and rejoined their teams. In the other cases, the agents either curtailed their assignment or were awaiting a final decision on their curtailment requests.

Because MSD is chronically understaffed, the inability or unwillingness of agents to join their teams in the field affected the office's ability to accomplish its mission. Following discussions with OIG, MSD instituted two new policies: one established the process for requesting curtailments, and the other outlined the expectations for agents to deploy and the disciplinary process if agents refused. These policies meet the requirements of 3 FAM 2444 and cable 2015 State 125440.⁸ OIG concluded that these policies appropriately address the needs of the office.

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

OIG reviewed MSD's Equal Employment Opportunity, travel, procurement, property management, and timekeeping operations and determined the office was performing in accordance with Department standards and policies, with the exception of the areas noted further in the report.

⁶ MSD is located at State Annex 11 in Dunn Loring, Virginia.

⁷ Cable 2015 STATE 23542, "Mentoring for a Stronger Department of State," March 5, 2015.

⁸ Cable 2015 STATE 125440, "Managing Employee Misconduct and Deficient Performance," November 3, 2015.

Internal Controls over Weapons Improved, but Other Problems Remained

MSD's internal controls over weapons improved since changes in practice that occurred in January 2016, but internal control issues remained with other types of Sensitive Protective Equipment (SPE)⁹ and with ammunition. DS and MSD staff told OIG that inadequate property tracking procedures, inaccurate MSD databases, changes in the bureau's SPE inventory policy, a lack of accountability, and insufficient senior oversight of the annual inventory process caused the previous problems.

To counter ongoing issues with unaccounted weapons and other SPE equipment, in January 2016, DS stationed two logisticians from its Defensive Equipment and Armored Vehicle Division at the armory where MSD stores its weapons. They established stringent controls over the movement of weapons in and out of the armory, replaced the previous error-prone tracking system, and conducted a 100 percent physical inventory of SPE to establish a documented baseline for future inventories. OIG's review showed that all weapons have been accounted for since January 2016.

However, discrepancies continued in inventories of SPE other than weapons. The office's annual SPE inventory showed 142 unaccounted items valued at \$81,262 in FYs 2015 and 2016 and 22 unaccounted items valued at \$21,350 in FY 2017. In January 2017, all of the non-weapon SPE items that had been stored at other locations were relocated to the MSD armory and placed under Defensive Equipment and Armored Vehicle Division control.

OIG spot-checked the armory database for 27 randomly selected SPE items, including 10 weapons of 8 different types and various types of optical equipment. OIG found that the processes followed by the logisticians were practiced and efficient, and 100 percent of the items selected were properly and promptly accounted for. OIG concluded that MSD's armory controls met the requirements in 12 FAH-9 H-042(1).

Internal Controls for Ammunition Were Inadequate

OIG found that internal controls over ammunition were inadequate and that ammunition supplies stored at satellite training locations were readily available to individual employees without appropriate safeguards. OIG found that agents did not always follow an MSD policy, dated June 2016, that required agents to account for ammunition used for training in a ledger and to repeat the process when they returned any unused ammunition. An OIG analysis of the four quarterly inventory reconciliations performed by MSD from July 2016 through April 2017 indicated overages of \$58,003 and shortages of \$85,030.

Following discussions with OIG, MSD improved accountability by transferring large amounts of ammunition to a secure warehouse facility. In May 2017, MSD issued a revised standard

⁹ SPE refers to equipment, such as weapons and optical equipment, such as night-vision goggles, issued to agents in support of their law enforcement, security, and protective missions.

operating procedure for ammunition which established stringent and enforceable internal controls. OIG found that these new internal controls met the requirements in 12 FAH-9 H-042(1).

Permanent High-Level Administrative Oversight Lacking

MSD did not have anyone permanently assigned to provide high-level oversight for its administrative operations and procedures. The Government Accountability Office's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*,¹⁰ however, suggests that federal entities define key roles to meet objectives and that employees in those roles retain ownership in order to fulfill the overall responsibilities assigned to the unit. In August 2016, MSD established a temporary position for an employee to exercise high-level, unified oversight of the MSD administrative functions. OIG found that the two DS Special Agents, each of whom held the position for only a few months, were instrumental in implementing significant improvements in MSD personal property internal controls, including the examples described above. These Special Agents also prepared, drafted or updated 50 standard operating procedures on all areas of MSD operations. Based on these accomplishments, OIG concluded that there is a compelling justification to establish a permanent position to maintain the improvements and to provide long-term stability in the direct oversight of contracts, budget, and property management. Without permanent senior oversight, the office risks reverting to its former practices, including an inability to effectively manage SPE.

Recommendation: The Bureau of Diplomatic Security should make the Office of Mobile Security Deployments' temporary administrative chief a permanent position. (Action: DS)

Travel Compensatory Time Procedures Not in Line With Department Guidance

OIG found that MSD was incorrectly interpreting the Department's policy on using travel compensatory time in 3 FAM 3176 and cable 2008 STATE 080816.¹¹ MSD did not require that employees use or forfeit travel compensatory time within 26 pay periods of its accrual. When OIG raised this issue, MSD issued an April 2017 management notice that correctly detailed the program's requirements. OIG reviewed the management notice and considered it adequate to meet Department standards.

Warehouse Operations Lacked an Automated Stock Control System

OIG reviewed the MSD warehouse, which primarily stores and maintains non-sensitive equipment such as flashlights, uniforms, and helmets, and found it to be orderly and well run. However, OIG also found that although the Excel spreadsheet the warehouse used listed the type of gear and its location, the spreadsheet could not be used to track inventory items and stock levels. Although this inadequacy was largely offset by the institutional memory and

¹⁰ Government Accountability Office, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* (GAO-14-704G, April 2014), sections 3.06 and 3.07.

¹¹ Cable 2008 STATE 080816, "Compensatory Time Off for Travel – Revised, Final Regulations – New Provisions," July 28, 2008.

expertise of the current warehouse staff, it could be difficult for a new employee to master warehouse inventory controls in a timely manner. OIG advised MSD to use a more sophisticated system to track its inventory, including possible options available through the Bureau of Administration's Property Management Division. DS, MSD and the Bureau of Administration's Office of Logistics Management agreed to work together on a solution.

RECOMMENDATION

OIG provided a draft of this report to Department stakeholders for their review and comment on the findings and recommendation. OIG issued the following recommendation to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. The bureau's complete response can be found in Appendix B. The bureau also provided technical comments that OIG incorporated, as appropriate, into this report.

Recommendation: The Bureau of Diplomatic Security should make the Office of Mobile Security Deployments' temporary administrative chief a permanent position. (Action: DS)

Management Response: In its October 13, 2017, response, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security concurred with the recommendation. The bureau noted that it had updated the internal organizational structure of the office to depict the new position. The bureau further stated that once the Department's restrictions on hiring and lateral transfers are lifted, it would attempt to establish the position in the General Schedule to ensure permanence and continuity.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the bureau has made the Office of Mobile Security Deployment's temporary administrative chief a permanent position.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Title	Name	Arrival Date
Office Director		
Director	Kevin Maloy	7/2014
Division Chiefs:		
Deputy Office Director	Stephen Marquette	8/2016
Division Chief	Justin Rowan	9/2013
Section Chiefs		
Operations Chief	Bryan Scruggs	5/2013
Operations Chief	Hank Jones	8/2013
Operations Chief	Corey Ford	7/2011
Training Chief	E. Sam Messick	7/2013
Administrative Chief	Richard Fritz	6/2014

Source: Office of Mobile Security Deployments

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Department of State Office of Inspector General, Office of Inspections, Inspector's Handbook.

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. This inspection covered two broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Resource Management:** whether resources were being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and whether financial transactions and accounts were properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

OIG's specific objectives for this inspection were to determine whether:

- The Director of the Office of Mobile Security Deployments (MSD) delivered performance that complied with applicable leadership criteria.
- MSD provided effective support to overseas posts for emergency situations, assisted Bureau of Diplomatic Security protective details with augmented tactical support, and provided training to American personnel and family members at posts.
- MSD properly targeted internal training, if agents met applicable training standards, and if training enabled agents to accomplish their mission.
- MSD performed administrative functions in accordance with Department standards and policies, whether internal controls were adequate to mitigate risks, and whether oversight and supervision were appropriate.
- MSD's property management function complied with applicable criteria, operated effectively, and protected property against waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement.

Methodology

OIG reviewed pertinent records; circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted interviews with Department and on-site personnel; and observed daily operations. OIG visited domestic training sites and traveled to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to observe an Integrated Mobile Training Team. OIG conducted 173 interviews and reviewed 89 personal

questionnaires during the course of the inspection. Prior to finalizing the report, OIG reviewed its substance, findings, and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by the review.

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



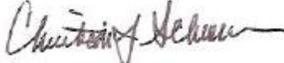
United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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October 13, 2017

INFORMATION MEMO TO INSPECTOR GENERAL LINICK – OIG

FROM: DS – Christian J. Schurman 

SUBJECT: Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) response to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Inspection of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Office of Mobile Security Deployments (DS/T/MSD) (ISP-I-17-48), September 2017

Below is the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's response to the recommendation, and suggested edits, in the subject report.

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Diplomatic Security should make the Office of Mobile Security Deployments' temporary administrative chief a permanent position.

DS Response (10/13/2017):

DS concurs with the OIG's recommendation and has updated the internal organizational structure of the office to depict this. Upon lifting of Department hiring and lateral transfer restrictions, DS will make efforts to establish a General Schedule (GS) employee to ensure the position is permanent, and to establish continuity.

DS has the following suggested edits to the draft report:

Page 5, Leadership Challenges, First Paragraph:

- The sentence reads "Nonetheless, the office faced, on average, a 13.7 percent shortfall in agents during the past 3 years."
- RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: Rewording to "Nonetheless, the office faced, on average, a 13.7 percent shortfall in staffing in the three years prior to 2017. This shortfall resulted in 14 agent positions, or two and a half teams, being unstaffed. The staffing shortfall increased in 2017 to 38 percent; a shortfall of 38 agent positions or staffing for six and a half teams."

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Approved: DS – Christian J. Schurman

Drafted: DS/T/MSD – Lee Evans, 703-618-7903

Cleared: DS/DSS – W. Ashbery (ok)
DS/EX – W Terrini (ok)
DS/EX/MGT – M. Scherger (ok)
DS/MGT/PPD – C. Oehrig (ok)
DS/T – S. Moretti (ok)
DS/T/MSD – J. Thomas (ok)
M – J. Bucha (ok)
M/PRI – J. Schechter-Torres (ok)

ABBREVIATIONS

DS	Bureau of Diplomatic Security
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
MSD	Office of Mobile Security Deployments
SPE	Sensitive Protective Equipment

OIG INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS

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