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

# Report of Inspection

The Bureau of Public Affairs

**Report Number ISP-I-10-39, February 2010**

## ~~IMPORTANT NOTICE~~

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## **PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION**

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

### **PURPOSE**

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

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

### **METHODOLOGY**

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



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

*Office of Inspector General*

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

Harold W. Geisel  
Deputy Inspector General

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## KEY JUDGMENTS

- In 6 months, the Assistant Secretary has begun to strategize with the deputy assistant secretaries on bureau reorganization and to assess problems that predated his arrival. However, the Assistant Secretary has not communicated his strategic vision with all bureau personnel. Lack of internal communication, inadequate oversight of bureau management, and unresolved personnel problems have contributed to low bureau morale.
- At the time of the inspection, the critical position of principal deputy assistant secretary had been vacant for nearly a year. The position should be filled on an interim basis by a seasoned career professional with strong leadership skills.
- The new arrangement of the Assistant Secretary sharing briefing duties with the Spokesman resulted in initial confusion about who speaks for the Department.
- The Strategic Communication Unit deputy assistant secretary has important access to the Secretary, but needs to communicate information transparently to the Assistant Secretary and other colleagues and to draw more upon the talents of Foreign Service and Civil Service employees in the bureau.
- The Office of Press Relations (PRS) has a critical role to play in delivering accurate, timely information to the media through a variety of means. The Bureau must make a significant effort to restore the office and its professional staff to their central place in execution of the Bureau's key media relations activities.
- Ten years after public diplomacy was moved into the Department from the former United States Information Agency (USIA), the merger between public diplomacy and the Department is not yet complete. Public diplomacy has not received sufficient attention within the Bureau, even though it accounts for \$2.3 million in bureau funding. The Bureau should look for additional opportunities to factor the perceptions of foreign media into the crafting of public statements and in other aspects of its work.

- The Foreign Press Centers in Washington, DC, and New York are reaching out effectively to almost 3,000 U.S.-based foreign journalists, as well as to other foreign media professionals visiting the United States, providing them with access to policymakers and information for audiences about U.S. policy and American society.
- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) press office, attached by legislation to the Bureau, plays a key role in telling the story of U.S. humanitarian assistance and economic development aid, but the Bureau's lax oversight and ineffective support have prevented it from fulfilling its function. The Bureau must make staffing the USAID press office with qualified employees and supporting its operation a more urgent priority.
- The Bureau's small but highly motivated offices, responsible for electronic and digital communication, swiftly and authoritatively communicate foreign policy messages using a full range of new media tools. The effectiveness of these offices would be enhanced by a reorganization to combine the two offices into a single, unified office and the addition of staff to support this emerging, high-profile public affairs responsibility.
- The Office of Broadcast Services (PA/OBS) enjoys a strong reputation for customer service and technical expertise. However, acrimonious internal management problems have eroded teamwork and contributed to a tense and unproductive work environment. Bureau management must take action to address the leadership issues in the office.
- The Office of the Historian (HO) has experienced a positive transformation, including better morale, more civility, and a more open management style. The Bureau has made progress in implementing recommendations from a special OIG management review conducted in 2009, but more work is needed to implement the recommendations. The Bureau should continue to look for ways to streamline the compiling and editing of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series.
- The U.S. Diplomacy Center has worked for 9 years to develop a publicly accessible museum and educational center to showcase the practice of diplomacy and diplomatic history to the public. It has struggled to maintain bureaucratic support within the Department and to launch a fundraising campaign on a sufficient scale to provide adequate financing.







## CONTEXT

Diplomacy has always been about communication. In centuries past, nearly all of it was done privately and confidentially. Today, the means of communication are multiple and diverse. With 24-hour broadcasting, the Internet, and sophisticated telecommunications, the power of communication in international relations is unprecedented. The spoken word, however, is not just a means of communicating information about foreign policy. The spoken word, emanating from the President, the Secretary, or the Department spokesman, often makes foreign policy.

The Office of Public Affairs was created in 1944 in order to inform the American public about the nation's foreign policy and to foster better understanding of U.S. international strategy among foreign audiences. That mission, and the imperative of responding to changes in media technology and communications, remains largely the same decades later. With the arrival of the new administration, the Secretary announced a strategic focus on the use of smart power: using the full range of available tools to pursue a foreign policy that is energized by partnership, principles, and pragmatism. In addressing the Secretary's emphasis on new media, the Bureau is identifying and harnessing the latest social networking tools, such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, along with traditional print and broadcast media channels.

Organizationally, the Bureau is the public face of the Department. Other than the Secretary of State, the Assistant Secretary and the spokesman are the most visible public figures in the Department. The Bureau explains the Secretary's vision and interprets U.S. foreign policy interests and actions through the daily press briefing of Washington-based journalists from around the world, thereby reaching millions of readers and television viewers. Through its offices, the Bureau responds to the Department's and the Secretary's public correspondence and supervises Foreign Press Centers in Washington, DC, and New York. The Bureau also serves as a link to state and local governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), the media, and academic audiences. The Bureau maintains the Department's flagship Web site, [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov), and publishes the official diplomatic history of the United States, *Foreign Relations of the United States*. For the last 9 years, it has also been responsible for coordinating efforts to finance and construct the U.S. Diplomacy Center, a museum showcasing diplomacy and diplomatic history.

With the consolidation of USIA into the Department 10 years ago, PA has absorbed some USIA personnel and functions, such as outreach to foreign journalists and limited television broadcasting operations. PA also navigates the boundaries of the Smith-Mundt Act (22 U.S.C. 1461-1.a), working successfully to reach foreign and domestic audiences while complying with the law's limitations on the use of public diplomacy funds. The Bureau's staffing complement includes 175 Civil Service and Foreign Service employees and approximately 34 contractors. It has an operating budget of approximately \$13.5 million, which includes \$9.4 million for diplomatic and consular programs, \$2.3 million for public diplomacy, and \$1.8 million for capital investment.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Bureau is headed by an Assistant Secretary who brings relevant and broad experience from a career in the U.S. military, the private sector, and the National Security Council. Among his key responsibilities, the Assistant Secretary helps shape the input for the daily press briefings, which are accessed by millions of people every day and considered to be the definitive voice of U.S. foreign policy. The Assistant Secretary advises the Secretary on media strategy, coordinates sensitive messages with the White House, and strategizes with senior officials to craft accurate information for the public.

Four deputy assistant secretaries complete the front office leadership and management team, two of whom are Schedule C officers and two of whom are members of the Senior Foreign Service with extensive public affairs experience. A fifth deputy assistant secretary works exclusively for special envoys, primarily the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace, and has little involvement with the PA front office and few bureau supervisory responsibilities. There has been no principal deputy assistant secretary since the transition to the Obama administration, but the Assistant Secretary is working to identify someone to fill this position.

Under a new arrangement he initiated upon assuming duty in May 2009, the Assistant Secretary conducts the daily press briefing once per week, on average, and he does so with competence, ease, and a natural rapport with journalists. The Department spokesman conducts the daily briefing professionally and authoritatively on the other days, as does the deputy spokesman, who briefs the press corps when the Assistant Secretary and the spokesman are unavailable. The new arrangement initially created some tension and confusion within the Bureau and among journalists, as to who definitively speaks for the Department.

The Assistant Secretary is knowledgeable, dynamic, and successful in public outreach, conducting special press rollouts and daily briefings. In the 6 months he has been in his position, he has begun to assess the state of the Bureau and address some of the problems that predated his arrival. He has strategized with senior staff on ways to reorganize the Bureau. However, he has not communicated to all bureau personnel his vision or thoughts about reorganization. Neither he nor any of the deputies has devoted adequate time and attention thus far to the critical task of over-

seeing the management of the Bureau, where there are some offices with protracted and longstanding management and personnel problems and ineffective supervision. The lack of communication and unresolved personnel problems contribute to low bureau morale.

The spokesman, who is also a deputy assistant secretary, is an experienced, competent Senior Foreign Service officer. He received high marks from bureau personnel for strong mentoring and his friendly, outgoing, and helpful demeanor. The Spokesman is the Department's scheduled briefer 4 days per week, on average, under the new arrangement. Well-prepared and well informed on the issues, he is a serious and professional briefer who fields questions authoritatively and enjoys an excellent relationship with the press. The OIG team observed that the daily press briefings frequently are rescheduled on short notice and has made an informal recommendation that the bureau notify the press corps of any expected delays as far in advance as possible.

The deputy spokesman briefs the press corps when the Assistant Secretary and the Spokesman are unavailable. He is also a member of the Senior Foreign Service, with wide experience in public affairs. The deputy spokesman is a skilled, professional briefer who often responds to questions without referring to the briefing book. He served effectively as Acting Assistant Secretary and spokesman for 4 months during the transition to the new administration, and he is the only current senior member of the front office to have worked for both the previous and current administrations. Staff members consider him to be a good mentor and a helpful colleague.

Another deputy assistant secretary, who is responsible for outreach and public liaison, brings significant private sector expertise and strategic planning accomplishments to the bureau. Her management style is open and inclusive; she has strong interpersonal skills and actively listens to and counsels those she supervises. She engages bureau personnel by regularly attending office meetings; she met with all Department public affairs officers shortly after her arrival to develop a 3-month work plan and synergies among others in the Bureau. She shares her expertise with subordinates in a friendly, supportive manner, and staff praised and welcomed her leadership and management style. The Bureau would benefit from more fully integrating this individual into the full range of front office and bureau responsibilities, to include high level travel, when appropriate.

The deputy assistant secretary for strategic communication supervises a unit that is responsible for coordinating all communication, media, and press events related to the Secretary. This deputy assistant secretary directs the activities of four special assistants, all of whom are first-time Department employees. The special assistants are highly motivated and energetic. Under the deputy assistant secretary's leadership, the

Bureau arranges interviews with major television networks and special media coverage in documentaries and top newsmagazines. All employees under his supervision understand the Secretary's preferences and are knowledgeable about travel logistics, press optics, and interviews.

As noted above, media and press duties for the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace are handled exclusively and effectively by a talented and experienced deputy assistant secretary who works out of the Special Envoy's office. He has no bureau supervisory responsibilities but coordinates with the Assistant Secretary on briefings when necessary. This deputy assistant secretary enjoys positive relations with the press. Once an additional staff member is hired, the Bureau plans to expand this deputy's responsibilities to include support to other special envoys, but the press of routine work has provided few opportunities so far.

All personnel in the executive office are cognizant of and support Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and diversity, but some bureau employees feel that these principles could be better exemplified in practice. The OIG team shares their concerns. These issues are discussed later in the report.

## Strategic Planning and Internal Bureau Organization

Although the Assistant Secretary is approachable, gregarious, and easy to talk to, bureau personnel desire and require better, more, and regular communication from him, particularly regarding his strategic vision and goals for the Bureau, as well as his plans for organizational structure and the responsibilities of senior personnel. Employees throughout the Bureau, including some in the front office, lamented their lack of knowledge as to who is actually doing what. During the inspection, the Assistant Secretary hired a senior, experienced advisor to oversee the strategic planning process. This individual is working diligently and making inroads on this important assignment.

**Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should accelerate the development of a strategic plan and promptly communicate the Assistant Secretary's vision to employees, the Department, and the interagency community. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should oversee the preparation of a detailed organizational chart, clearly identifying front office positions, lines of authority, and responsibilities. This chart should include all deputy assistant secretaries and office directors. (Action: PA)

## Internal Communication

The Assistant Secretary holds daily wrap-up meetings with senior staff members, and he meets with office directors twice a month. However, when the Assistant Secretary travels, no one is designated to chair the meetings in his absence. There is also a daily, bureau-wide telephone conference, in which all offices participate. The Assistant Secretary and a deputy assistant secretary meet weekly with the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Thus far, the Assistant Secretary has not convened a town hall or all-hands meeting with bureau staff to foster teamwork, enhance morale, and improve communication. Bureau personnel stated they would welcome a town hall gathering, to include all front office personnel, in order to learn more about the Bureau's goals and strategies and the assigned responsibilities of deputy assistant secretaries for bureau operations.

**Recommendation 3:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should convene a town hall meeting and hold such meetings thereafter on a quarterly basis, to interact and communicate with all personnel. (Action: PA)

Occasionally, the Assistant Secretary visits selected offices. However, he has no effective and regular channel of communication with, or outreach to, the larger bureau population to observe employees in action and interact with them. Internal communication in the Bureau is hindered by the fact that bureau personnel work in six different locations, including three annexes. The Assistant Secretary's visits to two offices located in annexes were welcomed and well-received by staff. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the Assistant Secretary and the deputy assistant secretaries who are not already doing so visit bureau offices and staff more frequently, attend their meetings, and listen to and interact with personnel.

## Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

Nine months after the transition, the principal deputy assistant secretary position is unfilled. The absence of a principal deputy assistant secretary, who is traditionally responsible for coordinating the Bureau's management and personnel issues, con-

tributes significantly to weak bureau management and low morale. These problems are exacerbated by the rigorous preparation and time required for the daily briefing, which leaves insufficient time for the Assistant Secretary, the spokesman, and the deputy spokesman to fulfill adequately their supervisory and management responsibilities. The Bureau urgently needs to fill the position with an experienced senior leader who understands Department operations, personnel issues, and budgets.

**Recommendation 4:** The Bureau of Public Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should identify an interim, experienced career principal deputy assistant secretary to serve until a permanent appointment is made for this position. (Action: PA, in coordination with DGHR)

## Strategic Communication Unit

The Strategic Communication Unit was housed in the front office suite at the time of the inspection, but its staff members engaged in minimal and selective interaction and communication with others in the front office. They have successfully managed the Secretary's robust travel schedule and have expanded her media outreach by introducing innovative methods for media coverage and interviews, and by using new social media. However, this unit could be even more effective by tapping into the talent and expertise of other offices in the Bureau, developing synergies among the relevant units, and communicating fully, collegially, and regularly with the front office and with counterparts bureau-wide.

**Recommendation 5:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should develop a written plan to share information between the Strategic Communication Unit in the front office and other offices in the bureau, in order to further the positive impact and effectiveness of the Secretary's travel and media interactions. (Action: PA)

## Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy Programs

The public diplomacy elements of the Bureau—the Foreign Press Centers, the Office of Broadcast Services, and the Rapid Response Unit—are supervised by different deputy assistant secretaries. The OIG team concluded that these offices could support the public diplomacy goals of the Department more effectively if they all

reported to the same deputy assistant secretary. Doing so would promote better day-to-day management of public diplomacy operations within the Bureau and would enhance coordination with the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Having a single chain of command would foster efficient decision making — for example, on performance metrics, goals, budgets, and personnel.

**Recommendation 6:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should designate a deputy assistant secretary to oversee the public diplomacy elements within the bureau, including the Foreign Press Centers, the Office of Broadcast Services, and the Rapid Response Unit; this individual also should serve as a liaison with the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. (Action: PA)



## POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

### OFFICE OF PRESS RELATIONS

PRS is struggling to carry out its assigned responsibility of communicating U.S. foreign policy to the American public and the world via the media. The professionalism of the present staff of 17, and particularly the dedicated efforts of the deputy director, has kept the office functional during a time of upheaval and shifting instructions and responsibilities. Thanks to a perfect storm of administration transition, weak leadership, miscues, misunderstanding, personality conflicts, and poor communication, PRS has been marginalized.

PRS is the engine at the center of the Bureau's core function: providing the media with clear, accurate, and timely information about U.S. foreign policy for two main audiences—the American public and the world at large. PRS interacts with the media by preparing the Department spokesman for the daily press briefing; electronically pushing out additional information to the media (such as policy statements, press briefing transcripts, and transcripts of remarks and interviews); acting as the authoritative channel of information about the Secretary's schedule; responding substantively and in a timely fashion to all media questions; and arranging media coverage of Department events.

Each of the office's 10 public affairs specialists can handle every aspect of this intricate dance, and all of them can assist the five-person Media Events Unit in all but the official photographer's duties. In addition to daily interaction with the media, PRS staff members communicate with regional and functional public affairs officers throughout the Department and executive branch, and, in the case of the media events unit, with event planners at hotels, NGOs, professional organizations, businesses, and universities.

Responsibility for media relations is shared among PA and the press officers who are assigned to the Department's bureaus. The press officers outside PA report to their respective bureaus rather than to PA, a decades-old arrangement that is intended to ensure that press officers are responsive to their senior leaders and remain authoritatively informed on policy. PA's corps of generalist public affairs specialists, in

turn, coordinates the press guidance process and ensures that information is shared among the different offices that are responsible for press taskings. PRS adds value to this process as the central clearinghouse for current media activities throughout the Department. By design, PRS is a dynamic but reactive organization, focused on responding to daily events, crises, and breaking news. In interviews with press officers in the bureaus outside PA, the OIG team found that the bureaus were satisfied with their relationship with PRS. Some offices offered suggestions on how to improve the press guidance process, and others identified strategic planning and coordination as areas in which PA could improve.

Over time, PRS's central responsibilities have been stripped away, in whole or in part, and transferred to Schedule C employees and special assistants. These responsibilities include preparing the daily press briefing book, planning media events, and responding to press inquiries. The Assistant Secretary reassigned responsibilities based, in some cases, on a perception that PRS was not effectively carrying out its duties.

In the past, low morale in PRS has been related to overwork, but at present the morale in PRS is low because the office has lost status and lacks a clear role. Public affairs work is inherently time-sensitive and demands a high level of competence and expertise. One misstep can end up as front page news and negatively impact global perceptions of U.S. policy and actions. It is a pressure-cooker environment that can wear down even the most resilient individuals. Performing these tasks requires a clear understanding of policy and of fundamental operating procedures cemented by precise instructions from the front office.

PRS is now grappling with a set of interconnected and complicated problems. Solving them — and reestablishing the office as an efficient, trusted, and authoritative public affairs operation — will require effective leadership by the new PRS office director and a concerted effort to reestablish trust with the front office. The deputy director, with her expertise and institutional memory, can contribute to this effort. Together, PRS and the front office must sit down, listen to each other, and work out procedural issues to establish a functioning process that restores core responsibilities to PRS and enables the office to deliver a high quality product to the media.

## Preparation of the Daily Press Briefing Book

The preparation of the daily briefing book by the press office is a key activity, central not only to the success of the briefing but also to the efficient dissemination of breaking information to the press officers themselves, who must remain current on policy developments in order to perform their duties effectively. The removal of this function from PRS after tardy delivery of the press book and other perceived

lapses in its preparation have diminished the effectiveness of the office. What started as an incomplete understanding on the part of PA's new front office regarding PRS's role and processes, was compounded by PRS's own learning curve as its staff had to adapt to new leaders, perceptions, and ideas. Both parties made mistakes and had misunderstandings about the preparation of the daily press briefing book; this situation led to an evaporation of trust and confidence between the front office and PRS, and the subsequent diminution of the office's responsibilities.

The primary users of the briefing book, the Assistant Secretary and the spokesman, express dissatisfaction with the quality of the press guidance in the briefing book. The content of press guidance generally reflects the policy messages that senior leaders in the Department wish to convey. The OIG team did not review issues that may contribute to the substance of the guidance being less than useful for the PA front office. PA must be prepared to address issues of the quality of press guidance that originates from other bureaus with the relevant Assistant Secretaries and the senior levels of the Department, when necessary. Working collaboratively with the front office, the new PRS office director, in turn, should look for ways to provide the Assistant Secretary and the spokesman with press guidance that meets their expectations for quality and timeliness.

**Recommendation 7:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should convene a meeting between the front office and the Office of Press Relations to develop and implement mechanisms, written procedures, and quality control standards to permit the Office of Press Relations to resume responsibility for the preparation of the daily press briefing book. (Action: PA)

## Press Inquiries

PRS's public affairs specialists field questions from reporters around the clock. They maintain credibility and retain the media's trust by responding to every query with either substantive information or a comment that no information is available. However, the OIG team found that, under directions from the front office, PRS does not return some reporters' calls, for inquiries that are deemed sensitive. Because PRS has responsibility for cultivating good relationships with the media, the practice of not responding to press inquiries can be counterproductive. The office works in concert with regional and functional bureau public affairs officers throughout the Department and the executive branch to ensure timely and accurate replies so that the Department as a whole stays on message. The OIG team concluded the PA front office could improve internal communication by regularly sharing the outcome of

the press inquiries it answers. The Bureau's front office must routinely communicate with PRS to convey the most up-to-date information about what the Secretary and Department principals are saying about current events.

**Recommendation 8:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should establish and implement written procedures for the Office of Press Relations to follow in responding to press inquiries. These procedures should include a method for identifying inquiries that need to be referred to senior officials in the bureau, a requirement that the Office of Press Relations respond to all press inquiries in a timely manner, and a system by which the front office will communicate with the Office of Press Relations and the relevant bureau offices regarding the outcomes of press inquiries. The Bureau also should routinely provide the Office of Press Relations with up-to-date information on what the Secretary and Department principals are saying about current events. (Action: PA)

## Transcription Support

The Secretary's robust engagement with the media has increased the number of remarks to be transcribed during her travels. Problems with recording, transcribing, editing, and releasing the Secretary's comments, particularly those pertaining to her overseas travel, have led in a number of cases to incomplete transcripts and delays in releasing transcripts to the media.

To ensure a successful transcription outcome, embassy public affairs officers and the Secretary's traveling team must work together on all technical support requirements. This is particularly important when the Secretary travels to countries with poor communications infrastructure. Based on a review of practices successfully followed in previous administrations, the OIG team identified four best practices that can lead to enhanced quality control for the transcription process:

1. The Secretary's traveling party conveys information to the overseas embassy about its requirements for on-the-ground technical equipment and personnel, and confirms ahead of time that these requirements can be met.
2. The traveling party should transmit its own backup audio files to the Washington-based transcription unit, and should ensure that the embassy also has transmitted its high-quality audio files to the Washington transcription unit as quickly as possible.

3. The traveling party edits draft transcripts as soon as they are complete. This process involves a quality control review that is best performed by someone who was present when the remarks were made.
4. The traveling party clears the transcribed remarks for distribution and releases them directly.

In the past, the Bureau assigned either a press officer from PRS or a special assistant to travel with the Secretary and be personally responsible for the full range of technical support, editing, clearance, and release of transcripts. This practice served the Department and the Secretary well.

The current practice is for a member of the traveling party to transmit audio files back to Washington for transcription. Although detailed instructions about the Secretary's technical support requirements for overseas media events have been sent to the overseas embassies, technical problems on occasion have compromised the quality of the audio files transmitted to Washington. However, the individual in charge does not confirm in all cases that the transcription unit has received usable audio files. The result in these instances has been poor audio recordings and incomplete transcripts.

In addition, under the current system, the designated member of the traveling party does not edit the draft transcript, obtain clearances, or release the final, cleared document. Editing has been assigned to PRS in Washington, but these editors have limited knowledge of what was said. They cannot rely on notes, memory, or backup recordings, nor can they consult with members of the media or others in the traveling party who may have heard the remarks. Clearly, transcript editing is more efficient and accurate when it is performed by a person who has heard the remarks; if discrepancies or uncertainties arise, they can be discussed directly with the Secretary. Also, when the traveling party obtains clearances, time zones and schedules do not cause delays in the release of final transcripts.

The system currently used by PA for transcribing the Secretary's comments could work more efficiently if the Bureau adopted transcription-related best practices in order to improve quality control and technical support.

**Recommendation 9:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should designate a qualified member of the support team traveling with the Secretary to be responsible for the recording and transmission to Washington of the Secretary's remarks for transcription. The same member should edit the draft transcripts, obtain clearance for the final product, and release it to the media. (Action: PA)

## Media Event Planning

Media event planning is another PRS core function that has been transferred to the front office. Media event planning is an outreach activity for the entire Department that in previous administrations has always involved close interaction with PRS and the front office. The Bureau's plan to lodge part of this function, the Secretary's media events, in the new Strategic Communication Unit will work more effectively, however, to the extent that this new unit can draw formally on the talents of PRS staff members with experience and capabilities in media events planning. On the one hand, the front office notes that it is shorthanded in carrying out certain key functions, including event planning. On the other hand, PRS reports being left out of the process or being brought in late to execute incomplete plans with which they are unfamiliar. To assist in meeting the Bureau's objectives, PRS should be formally involved as a partner in event planning, bringing together career Civil Service and Schedule C staff.

**Recommendation 10:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should develop and implement a written plan to incorporate media event planning expertise and support from employees in the Office of Press Relations into major Department media events. (Action: PA)

## UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT'S PRESS OFFICE

The Bureau's USAID press office is responsible for managing press and media relations for USAID. This arrangement stems from the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6581), which assigned responsibility for press functions at USAID to the Department. USAID's press office was made part of PRS in 1999, and the two agencies executed a memorandum of understanding in 2000 listing the implementing responsibilities of both the Department and USAID.

The arrangement is institutionally awkward and has created an uneasy relationship between the USAID press office and PRS. The two offices need to interact more closely in order to understand better their respective roles and responsibilities for carrying out core press duties. This would be furthered by a formal orientation session involving all employees in both offices. The OIG team has made informal

recommendations that the bureau conduct these training sessions and distribute information describing the history of the office and its role within both the Bureau and USAID.

At the time of the inspection, four of the office's eight positions were vacant, and the office had been without a permanent Schedule C office director for almost a year. Nonexistent onsite leadership and a lack of oversight and policy direction by PA and USAID have created a dysfunctional operation in a key office responsible for informing the world about American development assistance and humanitarian aid. Workloads and portfolios are not distributed equitably. Interpersonal tensions are palpable. The office's efficiency and productivity are suffering without a clear chain of command, strategy and planning sessions, policy direction, and set procedures to coordinate guidance and interview clearances with PRS. These problems require a strong acting leader, who can stabilize the office until a permanent office director is appointed.

**Recommendation 11:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should assign a press officer with management experience to serve as acting office director for the United States Agency for International Development Press Office. (Action: PA)

## Schedule C Office Director

Shared responsibility between the Department and USAID can work with a good faith commitment and effort by all parties. At the time of the inspection, neither the Department nor USAID had upheld their respective responsibilities under the memorandum of understanding. The USAID press office lacks access to USAID decisionmakers. As a result, it does not have direct knowledge of development and humanitarian assistance policy directives and initiatives, and receives information and instructions mainly second-hand from various USAID offices. Of the eight press officer positions transferred from USAID to the Department by law, seven were to be located at USAID headquarters and one located at the Department, to act as a liaison with USAID to help ensure adherence to and promotion of the Administration's foreign policy and foreign assistance goals. At the time of the inspection, no liaison officer had ever been located at the Department, and the Schedule C office director position had been vacant for nearly a year.

The office cannot effectively address its many challenges until a new office director is in place. In order to execute USAID's media outreach function effectively, that office director must enjoy the close confidence of USAID's senior leadership.

The memorandum of understanding between the Department and USAID calls for USAID to select Schedule C appointees for the USAID press office. That practice has not been observed recently, so the Department has made the selections for Schedule C appointees in the USAID press office, to the detriment of the office's efficiency.

**Recommendation 12:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should fill the director of the United States Agency for International Development press office position with a candidate selected by the United States Agency for International Development's senior leadership. (Action: PA)

## FOREIGN PRESS CENTERS

The foreign press centers in Washington and New York are reaching out effectively to almost 3,000 accredited, U.S.-based foreign journalists, as well as to members of foreign media who are visiting the United States. It gives the media access to policymakers and provides them with information about U.S. policy and American society. By helping foreign journalists produce accurate reports about the United States for audiences in their home countries, the foreign press centers are contributing significantly to the national security goals of the United States. A Senior Foreign Service public diplomacy officer with good access to the bureau front office leadership serves as the overall director of both foreign press centers. He has a clear vision for the centers, which he has shared with the staff. He solicits their input and recommendations on programs and long-term strategy in biweekly strategy sessions with all staff.

The centers became part of the Department in 1999, at the time of consolidation between the Department and the former USIA. A third foreign press center, located in Los Angeles, was closed in 2008. A program assistant at the Washington foreign press center now has specific responsibility for continuing outreach to the West Coast-based foreign media. The foreign press centers are unique in the PA bureau, as their primary audiences are members of the foreign, rather than domestic, media. Their work complements and parallels the overseas public diplomacy mission performed by U.S. missions abroad.

For these foreign journalists, the foreign press centers facilitate interview requests, provide information, and arrange briefings with U.S. officials and private sector experts on topics of interest. Both the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary



have given well attended briefings at the Washington foreign press center. The centers make use of academic and private sector representatives, as well as government spokespersons, to provide the foreign journalists with a broader understanding of American society. Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman recently held a briefing at the New York foreign press center, for example.

The centers arrange reporting tours on high priority issues for U.S.-based foreign journalists, funded by their news organizations. The Washington foreign press center also arranges tours for journalists nominated by U.S. missions overseas. For these tours, the respective posts fund their nominated journalists' international travel to reach the United States, while the foreign press center finances all domestic costs of the tour, using funds provided specifically for this purpose by the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

The OIG team conducted a survey of overseas public affairs officers to evaluate the effectiveness of these journalist tours and other foreign press center services, including the support provided to facilitate interviews for visiting media. Two-thirds of posts that responded to the survey had requested assistance from the foreign press centers, and nearly 80 percent of posts had sent journalists to Washington on tours arranged by the foreign press centers. A majority of respondents rated these trips as successful or very successful in advancing public diplomacy goals.

## Washington Foreign Press Center

The recently arrived Washington foreign press center director, who reports to the overall director, is also an experienced public diplomacy officer. He supervises a staff of 12 program officers and administrative support staff, which is a mix of Foreign Service and Civil Service employees. The Washington foreign press center holds weekly staff meetings, which facilitate communication and cooperation among the staff and generate creative ideas for new programs. The Washington office also recently compiled a staff list, with the duties of each staff member and the name of the back-up staff member. This list resolves the problem of staff not knowing whom to consult on a particular issue. These steps, along with keeping accurate and up-to-date position descriptions for all staff members and dealing fairly and expeditiously with time and attendance issues (as recommended later in this report), should improve internal staff relations and enhance overall morale.

## New York Foreign Press Center

The New York foreign press center has been without a director for 11 months, since the Schedule C director departed in January 2009. The current staff of five

includes three Civil Service employees, one Foreign Service officer, and one contractor. The acting director, a Civil Service employee, is maintaining the status quo while awaiting a new director. His preference for working independently and not holding regular meetings has created a feeling among the staff of being leaderless and adrift, leading to less than optimal morale. The overall director of the foreign press centers, who is based in Washington, recently attempted to provide more direction for the New York office, by holding weekly telephone calls with the New York staff, as well as biweekly strategy sessions, in which the New York staff participates by digital videoconference. Although this has been helpful, the New York office needs more focused leadership and better internal communication. To facilitate filling the director position and to avoid lengthy gaps between directors, the overall director is trying to change the New York foreign press center's director position from a Schedule C to a career Foreign Service position.

The New York foreign press center will move out of its current commercial space to a new site, colocated with the United States Mission to the United Nations (USUN), including the USUN press office, sometime in 2010. The New York staff is concerned that the new location will be distant from public transportation, compared to the location of the current facility. They are also concerned that, as a government building with tighter security, it might be less accessible to foreign journalists, who are the foreign press center's clientele. However, the OIG team found the new site to be accessible, attractive, and adequate in size. In addition, being colocated with USUN and across the street from the United Nations could give the foreign press center more opportunities for access to USUN principals, joint programs, and other Department-UN synergies. In regard to the staff's concerns about increased security restricting foreign media, the OIG team has made an informal recommendation that PA meet regularly with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's site representatives at USUN, in order to reiterate the importance of maintaining access for accredited foreign media, as a consideration during planning and construction of the new offices.

## OFFICE OF REGIONAL MEDIA OUTREACH

The Office of Regional Media Outreach (RMO) is working hard to fulfill its mission of planning and implementing national, regional, and local media outreach programs to enable the Department to communicate key public affairs messages to the American people. Although it has achieved some notable successes, the lack of a permanent director, the chronic problem of unfilled positions and, most importantly, lack of clear communication and direction from the bureau's leadership, have constrained significantly the office's effectiveness during the first 11 months of this administration.

The office's main functions are to develop and implement media outreach initiatives on major Department priorities and to facilitate interviews with major U.S. media for Department principals and officers at overseas posts. Each public affairs specialist on the RMO staff has a portfolio that includes geographic and functional bureaus, with a particular region of the United States for which he or she has primary responsibility. RMO public affairs specialists develop and implement media outreach strategies on high priority issues identified in their portfolios, working with the PA front office as well as relevant functional or geographic bureaus. Recent successful strategies have focused on the Sudan, food security, and trafficking in persons, and have incorporated a variety of media instruments, including briefings, interviews, and placement of printed materials.

The office's other major responsibility is to facilitate interviews with Department officials, which includes coordinating clearances. Journalists may call or email the office with a request for an interview, either with a specific person or on a particular issue. The public affairs specialist with responsibility for that issue or bureau reviews the request, contacts the appropriate bureau to determine whether a representative of the bureau is available to do an interview, and then works with the PA front office to obtain the necessary clearances. RMO also coordinates the clearance process for interviews with ambassadors and other embassy officers with major U.S. or international news organizations. RMO notifies the bureau or post when the clearance is granted or denied and adds the information to an RMO database that tracks all interviews that have been scheduled and completed. RMO has received high marks from the regional bureau public affairs offices for its work in coordinating interview requests.

RMO specialists also work proactively to arrange interviews and place op-eds, articles, and video products with the media, using the RMO's database of journalists and media outlets. The office works closely and effectively with the Office of Public Liaison to promote synergies between the Office of Public Liaison's outreach activities (such as the Hometown Diplomats Program) and RMO's media outreach. If an ambassador is giving a speech in Cleveland, for example, the RMO would arrange interviews with members of the local media there. In addition, RMO is responsible for managing the contract with the service that prepares news clips twice daily for electronic distribution within the Department and to other government agencies and departments. As part of its media outreach, RMO also organizes an annual conference at the Department for editorial writers.

Until the change of administrations in January 2009, RMO had a Schedule C director and another Schedule C employee. Those two positions became vacant

with the departures of the incumbents. The office currently has nine positions in its staffing pattern, but only six are filled. A GS-13 public affairs specialist serves as the acting director.

## Interview Clearance Procedures

The PA front office has made a number of changes in procedures for arranging and clearing interviews. For example, RMO is no longer responsible for arranging interviews for the Secretary; that is handled by the deputy assistant secretary for strategic communication and his staff of special assistants in the PA front office. Interviews with the special envoys are handled by their own staffs. A staff assistant in the PA front office has been coordinating the clearance of some interviews. Some bureaus are going directly to the staff assistant for clearance; others are contacting RMO. Although RMO has close and productive relations with the deputy assistant secretary who supervises the office, its relations with the Assistant Secretary and others in the PA front office are sporadic and yield little guidance or vision. All of these issues have contributed to confusion and a feeling of demoralization in the RMO office.

Adding to the confusion is the fact that no new guidelines have been prepared on the process for clearing interviews, either domestically or overseas. A cable, currently in the clearance process, has been prepared by the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy outlining the clearance process for interviews overseas. This should help to correct the confusion regarding international interview clearances, but the process for domestic interviews remains unclear.

**Recommendation 13:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should revise and update existing written guidance to clarify interview clearance procedures for domestic media activities. (Action: PA)

Also contributing to RMO's low morale is the physical condition of the office. It is dark, and there are openings in the ceiling. The OIG team has informally recommended that PA address these problems, to improve the physical environment of the RMO.

## Merger of Regional Media Office

The RMO acting director has worked with energy and commitment to keep her small team focused on its core functions and to develop productive relations with the

media, the PA front office, and public affairs officers in the regional and functional bureaus. Because RMO is working closely with the media, and often on very tight deadlines, the OIG team believes it would be beneficial to make RMO a unit within the Office of Press Relations. Merging RMO with one of the bureau's largest and most important offices would promote better coordination among the media functions within the bureau and enhance RMO's profile.

**Recommendation 14:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should merge the Office of Regional Media Outreach with the Office of Press Relations, making it a unit within the Office of Press Relations headed by a deputy director for regional media outreach. (Action: PA)

## RAPID RESPONSE UNIT

The Rapid Response Unit (RRU) monitors foreign media coverage to provide Department and other U.S. Government officials a real-time view of how foreign audiences perceive U.S. policy. The unit lives up to its name, as its daily products contain the latest news found in foreign print, electronic, and broadcast media. RRU collects and disseminates its products quickly and efficiently. RRU's mandate has evolved since the office was established in 2004. Originally, the office focused on responding to issues related to the Middle East, with a goal of countering disinformation in the Arabic-language media as rapidly as possible. This communication effort was tied to the strategy of using regional media hubs to respond to the foreign news cycle in real time. In the last several years, however, RRU has expanded its reporting to encompass the other major world regions. The OIG team's survey found that customers in regional bureaus rate RRU products as useful in supporting public diplomacy overseas.

RRU's main product is the morning report, which is available by 8:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time every day. This report summarizes foreign news and editorials related to U.S. foreign policy and contains talking points from Department or other senior U.S. Government officials. Recipients of the report have quick and easy electronic access to the reports through an internal Web site and email. RRU also provides a daily afternoon report, entitled "Below the Fold," which reports on issues not covered in the morning report. "Below the Fold" provides more details and expanded messaging on hot topics. RRU also produces for the PA front office the major foreign headline news report, which identifies four or five selected topics of interest and corresponding media headlines. There are further reports focusing on regions,

including the “Early Alerts,” which report on East Asia, Europe, Eurasia, and Latin America, along with “Arab Messages” reports, and summaries from the pan-Arab media. The office director provides final clearance on all RRU products.

A Civil Service office director and a Foreign Service deputy office director manage RRU. Overall, the office benefits from strong internal leadership, and as a result it enjoys good morale. The office director and deputy have established clear procedures for compiling, editing, and distributing final products. The current management team divides the office workload between morning and afternoon shifts, in order to provide nearly 24-hour coverage. Two rehired annuitants contribute remotely to the early alert reports.

Interaction with the PA front office is accomplished essentially through the Assistant Secretary. There was formerly more direct interaction with the deputy spokesman, but with a change of administration, this connection with the front office has diminished.

## OFFICE OF BROADCAST SERVICES

OBS enjoys a strong reputation among its customers for responsive service and technical expertise. The office produces and distributes video content featuring the Secretary and Department principals to worldwide media outlets. In the last five years, the office has realigned its mission to make supporting the Secretary’s broadcast requirements its core activity. The office’s second primary function is support to public diplomacy outreach at overseas missions. This includes the acquisition of broadcast materials for overseas media markets and production of broadcast video projects, in cooperation with foreign journalists who are nominated by U.S. missions overseas. The office also provides content for the American Embassy Television Network (AETN), which is transmitted via satellite to U.S. diplomatic missions overseas. OBS is organized into an operations branch and a production branch, which focus, respectively, on daily broadcast support requirements and public diplomacy activities.

### Internal Leadership Issues

Although in the main the office carries out its core duties effectively, it has been plagued by serious internal leadership problems that have weakened morale, teamwork, and efficiency. Many in the office, even those who are sympathetic to the of-

office director's goals and objectives, describe the workplace climate as contentious and acrimonious, with mutual mistrust between the office director, who was appointed in 2005, and the employees in the office.

Concerns and complaints are widespread among the staff as to whether EEO principles are being followed. Tensions have boiled over into confrontations between the office director and employees that resulted in disciplinary or administrative actions against subordinates on several occasions. Several employees expressed concerns to the OIG team that violence in the workplace could result because of the high levels of workplace animosity and tension.

In 2008, at the insistence of the Department's Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR), the office held a day-long offsite mediation session to improve teamwork and reduce conflict. S/OCR also appointed an ombudsman to monitor the EEO environment in the office for 1 year. The office director has attended leadership and management training and participated in both initiatives.

Despite these remedial efforts, the OIG team found that the climate of poor leadership has persisted since these interventions. As part of the inspection process, the OIG team conducted interviews with all staff members and distributed personal questionnaires to office employees. Employees gave the office director especially low marks for fairness, allowing dissent, and problem solving. They gave slightly higher scores for judgment/decisiveness and clarity. Overall scores were well below those of comparable senior leaders inspected by OIG in the recent past.

The office director attributes employee discontent to resistance to change among the staff and weaknesses in their technical skills, which he felt he has addressed forthrightly. Supporters of the director point out that, at the time of his arrival, lax management procedures and abuse of overtime by office employees were issues that needed to be addressed with a firm hand. They note that the director's technical savvy and focus on procedural improvements have contributed to a more professional organization, in some respects.

However, approximately three-quarters of staff interviewed by the OIG team cited a range of poor management practices — to include micromanagement, public humiliation and bullying of subordinates, failure to show proper respect for racial and religious diversity, a strongly directive management style, and a focus on exact performance of the technical elements of broadcast production, to the exclusion of interpersonal management and team building — as serious leadership failings that have damaged relations between employees and their supervisor.

Equally serious, the public diplomacy function, which constitutes a significant part of the office's responsibility, has been allowed to atrophy. The office receives approximately \$1.25 million in public diplomacy funding to support production of cooperative television productions with foreign journalists and acquisition of commercially-produced broadcast materials for overseas broadcast. The OIG team found that public diplomacy programs essentially operate autonomously, with little direction or oversight from the office director. The cooperative production program received high marks from the overseas public affairs officers surveyed by the OIG team, and this program has clear performance measurements to document outcomes for its investment. The acquisition branch, however, may be overstaffed for its modest mission and does not have performance measurements to determine the impact of its programs.

The office's staff includes a subset of employees from the former United States Information Agency, whose responsibilities formerly focused on production of customized content for distribution to overseas audiences. Many of these employees are not productively engaged. One employee spends 90 minutes a day editing video clips, and performs no other duties. Four employees work in the acquisitions unit, a function that has sufficient work for only one or two employees, because of its modest \$350,000 annual acquisitions budget. Several employees affiliated with the foreign press center branch also have relatively limited duties. The net result is a significant underutilization of employees and additional costs for, among other things, hiring contractors to produce cooperative broadcast projects, when in-house employees are available to perform some of these functions.

The common denominator of these problems is the office director's leadership. The current leadership dynamic has created an environment of mutual suspicion and recrimination. One employee cited a three-page memorandum that the office director issued to all staff on the proper use of the office coffee pot as an example of the unproductive interchange that now prevails. A substantial number of employees report being treated disrespectfully by the office director and prevented from carrying out assignments, concerns at the heart of many complaints. The OIG team found that no performance evaluation had been prepared for the office director in the past 2 years; this issue is addressed in the Resource Management section of the report.

The office has seen many changes in the last decade: transfer into the Department in 1999 from USIA, a digital revolution in broadcast technology, reorientation of the office's core mission, and the forceful leadership style of a new office director who was accustomed to working in the private sector. The office director has been effective in promoting acceptance of several of these changes, but has failed in leading the office toward the positive, professional dynamic it now needs. Notwith-



standing other mitigating factors, the director is accountable for creating an environment of poor morale, high employee turnover, and acrimony in the workforce that has damaged the office's ability to carry out its mission. These deficiencies must be addressed by bureau leadership quickly and decisively.

**Recommendation 15:** The Bureau of Public Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should transfer the office director for the Office of Broadcast Services to a nonsupervisory position. (Action: PA, in coordination with DGHR)

**Recommendation 16:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should assign a career employee to serve on an interim basis as acting office director of the Office of Broadcast Services, until the director's position can be advertised and filled. (Action: PA)

## Strategic Direction for Broadcast Services

The OIG team found that the approximately \$6 million broadcast studios opened in 2005 have been underutilized as production facilities. Neither they nor AETN has clear performance metrics and goals. The main broadcast facility is sometimes in use as little as once a week to produce projects incorporating interviews with the Secretary and Department principals. OBS produces limited content targeted to specific media markets or foreign policy objectives, even though it has the staffing and capacity to deliver more such products.

OBS manages the AETN, a satellite broadcast service that reaches U.S. overseas missions and the general public. Although the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) provides satellite time without charge to the Department, satellite operations are still costly to the government because of fixed costs for procurement and support. The OIG team found that AETN does not have clear performance measurements and lacks strategic goals. AETN's content consists primarily of video clips of officials taken from daily recordings of the President, the Secretary, and the Department. OBS does not track viewership statistics for AETN at overseas posts or the general public. The OIG team conducted a survey of public affairs officers overseas to assess the effectiveness of AETN among its target audience. The majority of survey respondents either expressed no opinion about the value of AETN broadcasts or said that AETN was of limited value in advancing their foreign policy goals. Many PAOs reported that the satellite dishes and converter boxes needed to receive

AETN did not function at their posts. The value of continuing AETN as a broadcast service is questionable, in view of its limited impact. However, AETN's satellite broadcasting capability might have value to the Department's public diplomacy goals if it were reprogrammed to other purposes.

At present, neither the broadcast facility nor AETN is reaching its full potential as a powerful tool to amplify messages abroad. OBS could play a more prominent role in communicating foreign policy priorities, but it needs strategic direction and performance metrics, developed as part of the Department's public diplomacy outreach strategy.

**Recommendation 17:** The Bureau of Public Affairs, in coordination with the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, should develop a plan to incorporate performance measurements and strategic goals for the Office of Broadcast Services' broadcast activities. (Action: PA, in coordination with R)

## OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

The Office of Public Liaison and Intergovernmental Affairs (PL) provides a channel for inquiries from state and local elected officials and the American public regarding U.S. foreign policy. The office coordinates domestic speaking events for the entire range of Department officials, and it arranges events both in Washington and in states around the country for public organizations on any issues within the Department's purview.

Office productivity as a whole has decreased recently, compared to the previous 2 to 3 years. This is due to understaffing, which leaves the office in a reactive mode and without sufficient resources to promote the Department's messages. The pervasive morale problems that were evident in the OIG's 2002 inspection continue, but the appointment of a new office director has been a positive step. The office director already has taken steps toward improving office communication and has infused the staff with a new energy to reevaluate office priorities and clarify individual officer functions.

The office's organized team structure has deteriorated through staff attrition and the failure to hire replacements. At the time of this inspection, previously robust sections had dwindled to a single officer. The Washington Programs Section is the most

visible section in the office. It brings thousands of visitors to the Department each year for events, facilitates coordination between the audience and speakers, and addresses other administrative details, such as security and building access procedures.

The OIG team identified the Hometown Diplomats program as a best practice in the 2002 inspection report, and this program continues to flourish. By programming public speaking events during an officer's personal travel, PA is able to tap into community-level audiences, such as schools, local government offices, and local media outlets, at no cost to the Department. Participants in the past have been recognized by the Secretary in a personal letter that was included in their performance record. PL is working to continue this practice with the current administration.

The Public Information Section has clear duties in responding to incoming mail, email, and phone calls, but no longer has an identified team leader. Officers assigned to the section have other primary or secondary duties. Functionally, the section keeps abreast of the work. A weekly report to the PA front office identifies trends in public inquiries and opportunities for speaking and other public engagement in different regions of the country.

Functions performed by other sections in the office are not as clearly defined. The remaining sections of PL include the intergovernmental affairs, nongovernmental organizations liaison, and regional programs sections. These once robust sections, each of which had included three or more employees, are now being managed by just one person. The intergovernmental affairs section used to be its own office, managed by a Schedule C appointee with grade and responsibility equivalent to the director for PL. Presently, the officer managing the portfolio is a GS-12, who concurrently works part time on programming for the Hometown Diplomats section. NGO outreach is similarly coordinated through one employee who is responsible for maintaining contact with organizations and individuals throughout the country. Complicating matters, the NGO section has problems managing its database of organizations and individuals, and their respective areas of interest. Staff members reported that although the database is functional, it requires consistent input and regular updating. The regional programs section mirrors Washington programs by coordinating Department interaction with civic and foreign policy groups, but its events are programmed outside of the Washington area.

Although functional, the intergovernmental affairs, NGO, and regional programs sections all are understaffed. These reductions in staffing directly affect PA/PL's ability to work proactively with its target audiences. Identifying team leaders for each section in the office will be critical, in order to clarify supervisory lines of authority and to reinvigorate employee morale and productivity. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation on how to distribute management responsibilities within

the office in order to assist in this reorganization. In common with other offices in the Bureau, many employees reported that their position descriptions were out of date and no longer reflected actual responsibilities.

## OFFICE OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

The Office of Electronic Information is responsible for overall operations of the Department's flagship Web site, [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov). The Department's website draws an average of approximately 18 million unique visitors a month and is one of the Bureau's most visible outreach tools. The 12-person office is headed by an acting director, after the recent retirement of the director. Two supervisors report to the director, and all other employees in the office report to one of the supervisors. Both supervisors understand and perform their responsibilities well, and morale is high among employees.

The office's workload has increased dramatically over the past year, with the new administration's use of new media and its emphasis on transparency in government. As a result, the present staff must maintain more Web sites and work additional overtime hours, in order to keep up with the demand. The Department's [state.gov](http://www.state.gov) Web site has become the premier public information portal for conducting much of the Department's business with the public. As electronic publishing has replaced print media to an increasing degree, Department bureaus expect all information to be made available immediately on the Web site — which requires EI editors to review, edit, and post increasing quantities of online material for some 60 bureaus and offices. In addition, the round-the-clock, worldwide news cycles require constant updating of official documents, regardless of the hour. During the first 9 months of the present administration, the website posted a total of 61,000 pages of online information — nearly as much information as was published in the last 8 years combined.

EI also has responsibility for creating and maintaining special websites, which diverts a significant amount of time away from regular, ongoing duties. EI has developed 12 new Web sites in the first 9 months of 2009, as opposed to five for all of 2008. Staff must spend additional time implementing and maintaining these new sites. Meanwhile, editing and posting [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) content in a shortened format that can be accessed by mobile devices requires a separate process — and more staff time. EI is having an increasingly difficult time keeping up with the workload. This is particularly evident in the number of overtime hours the duty officer must perform. The OIG team left an informal recommendation that the bureau document

its current and projected workload and personnel requirements, so that resources for additional staff support can be provided — either through reprogramming existing bureau positions or including a request in the 2012 Bureau Strategic Plan for increased support.

## DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CENTER AND “NEW MEDIA”

The Digital Communication Center (DCC) is a small office tasked with developing and disseminating cutting-edge “new media” communications, to include social media such as Facebook and Twitter, the Department’s blog, *Dipnotes*, postings to YouTube, and text messaging. The Bureau has been nimble in capitalizing on media developments that are comparable, in some respects, to the invention of television, radio, and the printing press.

Bureau leadership includes careful crafting of messages for new media distribution, to supplement traditional print and broadcast channels. For example, within minutes of the Secretary’s arrival in a foreign country, messages are sent on Twitter and Facebook announcing key details of the trip to subscribers. Later in the day, the blog site is updated with details. Key speeches are posted immediately to YouTube and other media sites, in many cases within minutes of their completion, along with photographs, if available. Several interlocutors cited the interagency communications campaign launched to support the President’s speech in Cairo earlier this year as an especially effective outreach effort that made full use of new media to amplify the administration’s message. The business of public affairs increasingly will require that similar approaches become standard practice for supporting the rollout of important initiatives for the President and the Secretary.

The DCC office of four employees is productive, but like its counterpart, EI, it is stretched to the limit in terms of what it can do with its current staffing level. The acting office director manages the office effectively, with an emphasis on timely communication, innovation, and teamwork. The office holds a weekly meeting with representatives from PA, the Bureau of International Information Programs, the Bureau of Information Resource Management, and the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, in order to coordinate requirements among bureaus with new media operations. The proliferation of online media outlets requires a selective focus on supporting communications only with those Web sites that reach the largest audiences. Some areas of new media outreach — such as posting on non-Department blogs, text messaging, and live video streaming — are not regularly used by PA, because of the Bureau’s limited staffing and resources. However, these venues could play a larger role in the future.

## Merger of EI and DCC

The organizational division between EI and DCC inhibits interchange of personnel and technical expertise within the bureau. DCC employees possess strong technical qualifications and have forged a close working relationship with the PA front office. EI, in turn, manages the Department's flagship Web site, [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov), and has significant personnel, contracting, and technical resources deployed to support this important platform. The division between the two offices causes duplication of effort in regard to many administrative and management functions that are required by separate offices. The division also does not allow the Bureau easily and seamlessly to support technical operations in the absence of a DCC staff member. The OIG team believes that, in order to retain its innovative and entrepreneurial management culture, DCC should be preserved as a separate unit under a larger EI umbrella. With the burgeoning workload in both offices, a merger would allow greater cross-training, enhance internal communication, and prevent duplication of effort.

**Recommendation 18:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should merge the Office of Electronic Information and the Digital Communication Center, keeping the Digital Communication Center as a separate unit within the combined office. (Action: PA)

## OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

The Office of the Historian (HO) prepares the official documentary record of U.S. foreign policy for publication in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS). It also prepares historical studies of the United States to assist in policy development, makes recommendations to other bureaus on the preservation of records, and undertakes outreach programs in order to disseminate information to the public. A recent OIG management review revealed serious shortcomings in the office and resulted in 24 recommendations.<sup>1</sup> In the context of the inspection of PA, the OIG team conducted a limited review of HO, to assess the implementation of those recommendations and to ascertain the effects of the previous management review in improving the management of the office.

<sup>1</sup> Management Review of The Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Report No. ISP-I-09-043 (May 2009).

The OIG team found that three of the 24 recommendations had been implemented and significant progress had been made on the remainder. At the same time, the team found that action was urgently needed to complete implementation of the remaining 21 recommendations. The previous management review and subsequent implementation of its recommendations have improved the management of HO and lifted staff morale, but as implementing the other OIG recommendations has taken longer than expected, morale has begun to decline. The OIG team reaffirmed the recommendations from the previous report, examined additional issues, and made new recommendations<sup>2</sup>.

## OIG Management Review

The OIG team determined that much has changed since the spring 2009 inspection. A retired ambassador, who has a doctorate in history, had served as acting historian through the late summer of 2009. He appointed nine working groups to address major challenges the office faced, and informed the groups they would be expected to deliver their reports in July. The working groups were effective in developing solutions and resolving issues. They also drew the many members of the office together, and this interaction tended to reduce the tensions in the office. Morale improved dramatically. Some of the working groups completed their work, others were consolidated, and three continue to function. The new acting historian, who served from spring through fall 2009, also introduced a more open style of management. The staff now had more information about pending decisions and other issues that would affect their work. Again, this new openness reduced tensions and improved morale.

Generally, most HO staff welcomed the OIG report and have supported most of the report's recommendations. Indeed, they are anxious to see the recommendations implemented quickly. The report and the recommendations in it seemed to boost morale in the office during the summer, but since then many of the historians have expressed disappointment at the slow pace at which some of the recommendations have been implemented. For example, the recommendation to improve HO office space likely will take several years to be implemented, even with active support from the Bureau, because of real estate planning, security accreditation and review, and capital funding requirements that must be sequentially addressed with other offices in the Department.

Since the departure of the acting historian, who served during the summer of 2009, the Department has appointed another retired ambassador, who holds doctorates in history and political science, to serve as acting historian. PA plans to convert

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

the historian's position to a Senior Foreign Service position with a 3-year term, and will continue the practice of selecting former ambassadors with doctorates in history for the position. This arrangement is designed to provide the office with a leader who knows the Department and can serve as an advocate for HO within the Department and the executive branch as a whole, but who also has understanding of history as a discipline and has credibility within the academic community of diplomatic historians. There is widespread support for this approach within the office.

Both acting historians have improved morale, reduced factionalism, and strengthened the spirit of civility in HO. Both have introduced greater openness and a more participatory style of management that enables staff to contribute to decisions which affect the office. The staff gave both leaders high marks. However, HO has other lingering issues, including staff concerns about the aforementioned delays in addressing serious physical office space deficiencies; the slow pace at which contractor personnel are converted to career status; inequities concerning position grades when converting contractor positions to direct-hire positions; and perceived poor service from the Office of the Executive Director (EX). The OIG team found, in general, that the bureau was addressing most of these issues. However, it had not communicated with the HO staff regarding its progress on these issues, nor had PA set realistic expectations for its timeframes in terms of concluding the ongoing OIG recommendations. This issue is addressed in the Resource Management section of this report.

## Streamlining the Production of the Foreign Relations of the United States Series

Despite improvements, HO faces the very difficult challenge of accelerating the compilation and publication of FRUS volumes so that it can come into compliance with the statutory 30-year deadline for publication. By law, the Department is required to publish the FRUS not more than 30 years after events recorded.<sup>3</sup> The Secretary of State is required to report to the relevant congressional committees on any failure to comply with the publication deadline.<sup>4</sup>

The office is behind schedule in meeting the statutory FRUS deadline: HO historians only now are compiling the contents of the volumes covering the foreign policy of the Carter administration (1977-1981). This is not surprising, given HO's limited resources, the other special projects that require staff attention, and the complexity of the task at hand. Nonetheless, a careful review of the procedures used to produce the FRUS series is called for, and might lead to more efficient outcomes.

<sup>3</sup> Title 22, U.S.C. Section 4351(c)(2007).

<sup>4</sup> Title 22, U.S.C. Section 4354(e)(1)(B)(2007)



Editing and publishing a volume of the FRUS is a complex process; knowledgeable senior HO staff members attest that it is significantly more complex than writing and editing a book. In general, production involves three major phases. First, a historian selects a few hundred documents and other items that will form a FRUS volume — out of thousands of documents in the files and archives of the Department and other agencies, including the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Council. The compiling historian must provide citations and annotations for all the selected materials. Second, a division chief and the general editor conduct first and second reviews of the selected documents. Third, the declassification and publication staff conducts further editing and negotiates the declassification of the classified documents. Although the participants in each phase know the processes in their respective phases well, very few, if any, know all phases of the process. Perhaps no single individual fully understands the entire process. The office as a whole would benefit from documentation of the entire FRUS production process, and employing a system for diagramming the elements of this task — such as process mapping — could help HO more easily comply with the publication deadline

In process mapping, employees complete a flow chart of a complex process. The flow chart shows how tasks are related, including the sequences of tasks, and how a subsequent task may be dependent on the completion of a preceding task. Sometimes process mapping results in new arrangements whereby the time required for the overall process can be reduced, even though the time required for individual components does not change. Process mapping allows the office to identify improvements in efficiency and effectiveness through a focused analysis of the interrelated parts of the process.

**Recommendation 19:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should arrange for a facilitator to conduct process mapping exercises to document the overall processes by which the volumes in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series are produced, with the aim of improving efficient production. (Action: PA)

OIG's management review made two recommendations with regard to the general editor position: first, that PA should announce and fill the permanent position, and, second, that PA should appoint an acting general editor. In response, PA promptly appointed an acting general editor, and on the recommendation of the acting historian, it now has selected a general editor. These steps represent progress.

Even when a permanent general editor reports for duty in 2010, HO still will face the tremendous challenge of attempting to comply with the 30-year FRUS

publication deadline. In meeting this deadline, one concern is the general editor's ability to review each volume shortly after the first review has been conducted by the division chief. Ideally, a general editor can review about eight volumes a year, provided his or her efforts are concentrated exclusively on editing. However, the HO general editor also must manage approximately 20 historians, including the three division chiefs who are working on the initial compilation of FRUS volumes. In this managerial role, the general editor must undertake other related but nonetheless time consuming duties — such as problem solving, negotiating, and interacting with other agencies, including defense and intelligence agencies, presidential libraries, and the National Archives. The general editor takes on these duties in order to reduce impediments to the compilation of documents by the historians (for instance, by determining the locations of documents, obtaining access to them, declassification, and citation); however, these additional duties take up time the general editor could be spending on reviewing the FRUS volumes.

In fact, the acting general editor has found that these responsibilities consume so much time that the actual editing of volumes has become almost impossible. To achieve compliance with the 30-year deadline, HO will need to accelerate the rate of publication to approximately 12 volumes per year. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation that HO reprogram an existing position or request a position through the 2011 Bureau Strategic Plan to address this bottleneck in FRUS production.

## Implementation of Previous and Current OIG Recommendations

Morale in HO has eroded as the progress on implementation of OIG's recommendations has appeared to slow. This decline is attributable in part to the lack of information about progress on the recommendations. More information about that progress would contribute to better morale. For some of the recommendations, information on implementation is readily available to HO. For other recommendations, HO must depend on EX to supply information through regular updates.

**Recommendation 20:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should provide a monthly report on the progress and status of the implementation of recommendations from the previous Office of Inspector General report assigned to the Bureau of Public Affairs for the Assistant Secretary, the relevant deputy assistant secretary, and the acting historian, until all recommendations have been implemented. (Action: PA)

## U. S. DIPLOMACY CENTER

In 2000, Secretary of State Albright launched the U.S. Diplomacy Center. The Center, once fully operational, would advance the goals of the Department by promoting public understanding of diplomacy and U.S. foreign policy, encouraging interest in the Foreign Service and other careers in the Department, and providing a historical perspective on today's events.

The Foreign Affairs Museum Council was established as a nonprofit organization to work with the Department in creating the Center. Although the Center has programs that extend beyond this concept, a museum with artifacts illustrating the history and practice of diplomacy is at the core of the diplomacy center. The Department has provided a direct hire staff of five employees and three contractors to the Center. However, the capital funds are to be raised by private donations, with a fundraising goal of \$50 million. At this time, \$1.3 million in private funds have been raised. Although the Diplomacy Center has a small exhibit on the second floor of the older part of the Harry S. Truman Building depicting the plans for the diplomacy center, the creation of a museum must be put on hold until more progress is made in the private sector fundraising.

Despite slow progress in fundraising, the Center has conducted educational programs and is working steadily on creating the museum. It has assembled and catalogued a collection of 5,000 artifacts for exhibition and has created traveling exhibits that have toured the U.S. and attracted tens of thousands of viewers. It has developed interactive educational programs for educators and students, and has made presentations at national educational conferences. In 2009, the Center placed on its Web site an impressive virtual exhibit on the Berlin Wall. This exhibit illustrated the history of Berlin — including not only the building of the Wall in 1961, the famous “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech of President John F. Kennedy, the 1987 Berlin Wall speech of President Ronald Reagan, and the dismantling of the Wall in 1989 — but also the recorded voices of American diplomats who served in Berlin and dealt with the complex diplomatic and legal problems caused by the divided city.

In the past, fundraising has been hampered by the failure to think about philanthropy on a level and scale commensurate with the goal of raising \$50 million. Such sums cannot be raised through small contributions, nor can they be raised entirely from the community of retired diplomats, despite the retirees' enthusiasm for the Center's concept. Funding must be sought from individuals and foundations capable of making multi-million dollar contributions. In September 2008, the Center contracted the services of a fundraising expert, who has created a fundraising plan

with timetables for securing major gifts. Creation of the Center has been endorsed by all living former Secretaries of State. Secretary Clinton has signed a letter of support for the concept. Former Secretaries of State Albright, Baker, Kissinger, and Powell have hosted luncheons with prospective donors. Other former secretaries and ambassadors have been supporting fundraising efforts as well. Recent progress in developing the capability to raise funds at the appropriate level is encouraging, but the Center must identify feasible and realistic targets. It also needs the active involvement and support of other leaders in the Department, who will join Secretary Clinton in demonstrating their full support for this project.

Although the vision for the Center is clear, plans have not been combined into one document that presents the concept as a coherent goal with measurable targets. A business plan was developed for the Center several years ago, but an updated business plan would better prepare the Center for large-scale fundraising, and would assure the Department that its vision for the Center can be realized. Many have expressed concern that, after 9 years, the Center has not made adequate progress. PA needs to produce an updated business plan with concrete objectives, which documents activities undertaken to date and lays out a roadmap for completing the Center in a reasonable timeframe.

**Recommendation 21:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should develop and adopt a comprehensive strategic business plan for the U.S. Diplomacy Center that projects the future development of the Center, including fundraising goals, target donors, and outreach strategies, as well as plans for the museum's collections, operations, research and development, organization, staffing, and budget — all of which should be aligned with timetables for the accomplishment of each goal. (Action: PA)

The OIG team also is concerned that the Center has found it difficult to engage with the Department and the foreign policy community at a senior level. The Center needs distinguished and influential supporters to interact with the Department and work with prospective donors, in an advisory and volunteer capacity. Such individuals could include former Secretaries of State and current and former senior officials with an interest in telling the story of American diplomatic history.

**Recommendation 22:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should identify and recruit high-ranking public or private officials to serve actively on the board of the nonprofit corporation responsible for the U.S. Diplomacy Center. (Action: PA)

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

	<b>Authorized Direct-Hire Employees</b>	<b>On-Board Direct-Hire Employees</b>	<b>Total Funding FY-2009 in \$</b>
	184	175	
Diplomatic and Consular Programs	-	-	\$9,408,000
Public Diplomacy	-	-	\$2,297,300
Capital Investment	-	-	\$1,824,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>\$13,529,300</b>

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The office provides human resources, financial, logistical, and information management support for the bureau. It is generally effective in meeting the needs of its customers and, for the most part, has high morale. The office of 20 employees emphasizes good customer service, although this aim is not uniformly achieved.

The current executive director, who has worked in the executive office since its establishment in 1999, possesses broad knowledge of the Bureau and the Department, and she exhibits a desire for her unit to perform at its optimal level. To be more effective, however, she must focus on overseeing the management of the bureau as a whole, in addition to managing the executive office itself. Her vision should change from one directed to the internal operations of the executive office to one also focused on the front office and the other offices within the Bureau.

The executive director has already started making some of these changes. At the beginning of this inspection, all section heads within the executive office were

reporting to the executive director and none to the deputy executive director. After discussions with the OIG team, the executive director has changed the reporting structure: starting with the new rating period, the human resources and general services section heads will report directly to the deputy director, while the budget and information technology section heads will continue to report to the executive director. This will give the executive director more time to listen and attend to the needs of the bureau as a whole.

## Communication with Bureau Customers

Some bureau employees raised complaints about lack of support from the executive office. In some cases, PA was unaware of customer service issues and perceptions within the bureau about the office's services. For example, customers in HO have a very strong perception that EX does not understand what the historians do or how they do it. Although a certain level of complaining is inevitable in any service organization, the executive director and her staff could reduce the level by informally communicating and interacting with customers more frequently.

**Recommendation 23:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should schedule informal meetings, at least twice a year, between the executive director and employees of each Washington-based division within the Bureau of Public Affairs, in order to hear and respond to their issues and concerns. This should include, in particular, reaching out to the Office of the Historian to request a briefing from that office on its unique mission, function, and support requirements. (Action: PA)

## Human Resources

The human resources (HR) office reacts to most of the personnel issues it encounters, but it needs to be much more forceful and active in resolving some of the broad personnel issues that confront the bureau. The Foreign Service Institute's Human Resources Office (FSI/EX/HR) provides some HR services as a shared services provider; these include staffing and classification support. Generally, both PA and FSI are satisfied with the support that FSI/EX/HR provides and deem the shared services model a success.

Other areas of human resource management, such as performance management, employee relations, and employee development, are handled by the PA executive office. The human resources section needs to become more assertive in correcting

deficiencies in these areas and bringing problems to the attention of the front office, when necessary. The OIG team found significant lapses in bureau procedures for documenting employee performance, a key responsibility for ensuring good management and leadership. These lapses extended to the entire performance management cycle, and are discussed below.

## Position Descriptions

Many employees in PA do not have accurate position descriptions. Supervisors, employees, and members of the executive office have not been diligent in reviewing and maintaining up to date position descriptions. 3 FAM 2638.2 a. requires that each Bureau's position descriptions undergo a formal maintenance review on a periodic basis, to ensure their adequacy and verify the proper evaluation and classification of all positions within the Bureau. PA last reviewed its position descriptions in 2002. Accurate position descriptions are necessary management tools, to ensure that the goals and objectives of an organization are being carried out efficiently and effectively.

**Recommendation 24:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should undertake a formal maintenance review of its position descriptions and classification determinations, to verify the proper evaluation and classification of all positions within the Bureau. (Action: PA)

## Performance Plans

Besides not having up to date position descriptions, many employees do not have performance plans and do not know their major work assignments and responsibilities. This is because supervisors have not been sufficiently diligent in establishing performance plans for their employees. 3 FAM 2823.3-1 requires all supervisors to establish performance plans, generally within 30 days after initial assignment to the job. Performance plans are an integral part of ensuring that an organization's goals and objectives are identified and addressed. In addition, an employee's performance cannot be measured unless there are specific criteria against which to measure it.

**Recommendation 25:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should require all supervisors to establish performance plans with the employees they supervise, using the appropriate personnel forms. The bureau also should require supervisors to certify that these performance plans have been completed by submitting all plans to the executive office no later than 30 days upon an employee's arrival; supervisors should do this for all employees. (Action: PA)

## Performance Evaluations

The OIG team found deficiencies in the next, and perhaps most important, link in the performance management chain: completion of employee appraisals. In an unacceptably high number of cases, bureau supervisors have not completed annual Civil Service performance appraisals. For the rating period ending December 31, 2008, 22 percent (32, out of 147) of Civil Service appraisals were not completed, and fully 24 percent (38, out of 159) of Civil Service evaluations were not completed in 2007. According to the *Foreign Affairs Handbook*, the appropriate rating official must prepare an annual performance appraisal for each employee (3 FAH-1 H-2821.3 [7]). If they do not, their respective bureaus must provide the Office of Civil Service Personnel Management with a list of delinquent raters no later than 90 days after the end of the rating cycle (3 FAH-1 H 2825.4).

Performance appraisals are an important managerial tool. When supervisors do not provide employees with feedback on their performance, they miss an important opportunity to guide employees on what they are doing well, where they can improve their performance, and how to meet the Bureau's critical goals and objectives. By failing to complete evaluations, supervisors also are conveying a message to their employees, that their work is not valuable. The Bureau must use all tools at its disposal to ensure that evaluations are submitted in a timely fashion for all employees during the next rating cycle.

**Recommendation 26:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should issue a bureau-wide notice on the responsibilities of employees, supervisors, and reviewing offices in regard to the performance appraisal process; the wording of this notice should be consistent with the language of the *Foreign Affairs Manual* and *Foreign Affairs Handbook*. (Action: PA)



**Recommendation 27:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should send a list of delinquent employee appraisals to the Assistant Secretary within 45 days of the close of the next performance rating cycle, in order to remind supervisors of the importance of completing appraisals in a timely manner, and the consequences of not doing so. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 28:** The Bureau of Public Affairs, by the annual deadline, should develop a list of delinquent raters and transmit this list to the Bureau of Human Resources. (Action: PA)

## Orientation Program

There is no formal orientation program for new employees. Because turnover in the Bureau is higher than average, this oversight adversely impacts both employees and the Bureau as a whole. Orientation programs allow employees to obtain information on operating procedures, learn about services such as payroll, travel, and employee benefits, and understand where particular offices fit into the organization. 13 FAH-1 H-132.1 states that entry-level training programs are intended to provide an orientation to the work assignments and environment of the Department, and to instill in Civil Service and Foreign Service personnel the knowledge and skills that will enable them to perform their duties. The OIG team found that, because of the lack of an orientation program, new employees often waste time or perform their duties incorrectly because of this lack of knowledge.

**Recommendation 29:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should create an orientation program that includes an overview of the Bureau, discussion of support services, and information on Department- and bureau-specific policies and procedures. Orientation materials should include an organizational chart of the bureau, organizational charts for each office, and a current telephone directory. (Action: PA)

## Facilities and General Services

The general services section provides the full range of logistics support appropriate for a domestic bureau. It does a good job of meeting the demands of bureau employees, as well as ensuring that proper management controls are in place and followed. The section works together well and distributes back-up duties as needed.

The purchase card program is well documented, with sufficient separation of duties. The executive director reviews all purchases before the bill is sent to the budget office for payment. Nonexpendable inventory procedures are in place, and the Bureau has submitted annual property reconciliation reports, which are within acceptable limits.

Travel services received lower marks than other services from employees within the Bureau, due in part to the complexity of the Department's electronic travel application. The section has been proactive in anticipating user difficulties and reaching out to office coordinators with training and support. After the section has trained the travel coordinators, it will open this training to any bureau employee who would like to become more proficient with the electronic travel application. Some employees noted that they do not know where to go for answers and advice when the bureau travel coordinator is unavailable. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation on this issue.

## Financial Management

The financial management team is ably led by a new employee with a great deal of financial experience within the Department. Financial planning and budgeting records are well-maintained, and communication between the financial management section and the rest of the executive office staff is excellent. The section has undertaken several new initiatives to streamline office functions, including enhancing the budget tracking system to make it more user friendly and easier to access, and reorganizing the travel function so that one person can have greater control in monitoring travel expenses. The section needs to make sure that it maintains the same level of communication with other bureau offices.

## Information Management

The information management office is well-run and responsive to its customers. The employees work in a congenial atmosphere and form an effective team to meet the challenges they face. When discussing the information management office, two large issues dominate: consolidation of help desk support under the Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM) and the status of plans to merge PA's legacy network, the Public Affairs Computer Exchange (PACE) system, into OpenNet.

## Consolidation of Information Management Support Services

Bureau employees expressed dissatisfaction with the Department-wide migration to a centralized help desk model under IRM, which began in June 2009. Employees throughout the bureau complain about the length of IRM's response time and overall poor responsiveness by IRM. One particular area of concern is with computer issues dealing with the PA-specific PACE network. Because of IRM's consolidation in the PA Bureau, employees are required to submit trouble tickets directly to the IRM help desk, even when the issue involves the PACE operating system. However, IRM does not support PACE, so its response time is long and its customer support weak. This may be, in part, because the IRM help desk has to refer PACE-related trouble tickets to EX; nonetheless, IRM is often slow to forward these requests, which is frustrating to the end users. What used to take hours now often takes days. Good customer service is critical for any organization. Poor help desk support not only leads to great frustration on the part of bureau employees but also is reducing the PA's ability to work effectively and efficiently.

**Recommendation 30:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should assume direct responsibility for all Public Affairs Computer Exchange information management support requests. (Action: PA, in coordination with IRM)

The future of the legacy PACE network is the second significant information management issue facing the Bureau. Most Department employees work exclusively on the OpenNet system for unclassified material, and on the ClassNet system for classified processing; however, all employees in PA are connected to the PACE system for both intrabureau and external communications, and a growing number also have accounts on the OpenNet system for access to the rest of the Department. The net result is that employees must have two computers at their desks. The arrangement is cumbersome, inefficient, and expensive.

PA and IRM are taking active steps to resolve this problem, by consolidating the PACE operating system and OpenNet. IRM estimates that, within 18 months, the two systems will be combined, but it will be able to move the PACE email system into the OpenNet system by the summer of 2010. Both bureaus have exhibited a strong desire to move toward a single system and are making progress toward this goal.

## Security

### **Best Practice: Bureau of Diplomatic Security Bureau Security Officers**

**Issue:** Most domestic bureaus assign the responsibilities of bureau security officer to an employee as a part time, collateral duty. In some cases, responsibilities are not carried out diligently and consistently, because employees lack an understanding of relevant security regulations or view the duty as a secondary priority. In the absence of diligent supervision, security infractions or violations can occur. As the custodian of a large number of highly classified cables and documents stored for use by the Office of the Historian, PA must follow stringent regulations concerning the storage, handling, and control of Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information materials. Compromise of these materials can have serious consequences for national security and can also result in administrative penalties for employees deemed accountable for any lapses in their handling.

**Response:** The Bureau of Diplomatic Security appointed a full-time employee, who also serves as bureau security officer for three other domestic bureaus, to be the bureau security officer. Working with PA staff, the employee set up an innovative training schedule to certify PA employees to handle Top Secret information, establish sound security protocols, and address professionally and responsively the range of security requirements the bureau faces.

**Results:** No employees in the bureau received security infractions or violations in the last year, records required by regulations were well maintained, and the bureau was discharging its responsibilities to protect national security information in an effective manner.

## MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

PA generally follows proper management controls and observes separation of duties. The Bureau has designated a management controls officer who is serious about his duties. It has developed and issued necessary bureau-wide notices and policies, but in some instances these policies have not been updated or reissued in years. The executive office, however, already has begun updating the standard policies and procedures, and continued doing so during the inspection. The OIG team has left an informal recommendation requiring that this process be completed.

### Time and Attendance Controls

Although many management control procedures are in place and being adhered to, there is one notable, bureau-wide management control failure: proper reporting of time and attendance. The OIG team received allegations of time and attendance abuses from a number of offices in the Bureau, the most common being that employees come to work late or leave early. Although not working 40 hours per week, some employees are not putting in annual leave slips. Time and attendance reporting is therefore inaccurate for these employees.

There are several possible causes for these time and attendance abuses: lack of adequate oversight by supervisors, lack of proper enforcement of established time and attendance procedures, and low morale among some employees. Whatever the reason, this type of management control failure is prohibited. 4 FAH-3 H-532.1 states that employees must work a 40-hour week. 4 FAH-3 H-524.1 requires that an accurate record of the time an employee works be kept for all employees. Time and attendance abuse also creates morale problems for employees working a 40-hour week, as they often have to perform extra duties to cover those who are not working the required number of hours.

PA must adopt more stringent time and attendance reporting procedures. Currently, PA does not require employees to submit time and attendance forms. The OIG team believes that the nature of time and attendance problems requires documentation of the following information by employees for each pay period: the pay period number; the dates covered; the specific calendar days in a weekly format for the two weeks of the pay period; a legend denoting the attendance or leave category.

ries, such as regular duty, annual leave, sick leave, overtime, compensatory time, etc.; a signature line for the employee, including the statement: “I certify this to be a true and correct submission of hours worked;” and a signature line for the supervisor.

**Recommendation 31:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should develop and require the use of a time and attendance form that all employees and their supervisors must sign and submit to their time and attendance clerks. (Action: PA)

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should accelerate the development of a strategic plan and promptly communicate the Assistant Secretary's vision to employees, the Department, and the interagency community. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should oversee the preparation of a detailed organizational chart, clearly identifying front office positions, lines of authority, and responsibilities. This chart should include all deputy assistant secretaries and office directors. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 3:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should convene a town hall meeting and hold such meetings thereafter on a quarterly basis, to interact and communicate with all personnel. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 4:** The Bureau of Public Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should identify an interim, experienced career principal deputy assistant secretary to serve until a permanent appointment is made for this position. (Action: PA, in coordination with DGHR)

**Recommendation 5:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should develop a written plan to share information between the Strategic Communication Unit in the front office and other offices in the bureau, in order to further the positive impact and effectiveness of the Secretary's travel and media interactions. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 6:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should designate a deputy assistant secretary to oversee the public diplomacy elements within the bureau, including the Foreign Press Centers, the Office of Broadcast Services, and the Rapid Response Unit; this individual also should serve as a liaison with the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 7:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should convene a meeting between the front office and the Office of Press Relations to develop and implement mechanisms, written procedures, and quality control standards to permit the Office of Press Relations to resume responsibility for the preparation of the daily press briefing book. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 8:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should establish and implement written procedures for the Office of Press Relations to follow in responding to press inquiries. These procedures should include a method for identifying inquiries that need to be referred to senior officials in the bureau, a requirement that the Office of Press Relations respond to all press inquiries in a timely manner, and a system by which the front office will communicate with the Office of Press Relations and the relevant bureau offices regarding the outcomes of press inquiries. The Bureau also should routinely provide the Office of Press Relations with up-to-date information on what the Secretary and Department principals are saying about current events. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 9:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should designate a qualified member of the support team traveling with the Secretary to be responsible for the recording and transmission to Washington of the Secretary's remarks for transcription. The same member should edit the draft transcripts, obtain clearance for the final product, and release it to the media. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 10:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should develop and implement a written plan to incorporate media event planning expertise and support from employees in the Office of Press Relations into major Department media events. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 11:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should assign a press officer with management experience to serve as acting office director for the United States Agency for International Development Press Office. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 12:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should fill the director of the United States Agency for International Development press office position with a candidate selected by the United States Agency for International Development's senior leadership. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 13:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should revise and update existing written guidance to clarify interview clearance procedures for domestic media activities. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 14:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should merge the Office of Regional Media Outreach with the Office of Press Relations, making it a unit within the Office of Press Relations headed by a deputy director for regional media outreach. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 15:** The Bureau of Public Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should transfer the office director for the Office of Broadcast Services to a nonsupervisory position. (Action: PA, in coordination with DGHR)



**Recommendation 16:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should assign a career employee to serve on an interim basis as acting office director of the Office of Broadcast Services, until the director's position can be advertised and filled. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 17:** The Bureau of Public Affairs, in coordination with the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, should develop a plan to incorporate performance measurements and strategic goals for the Office of Broadcast Services' broadcast activities. (Action: PA, in coordination with R)

**Recommendation 18:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should merge the Office of Electronic Information and the Digital Communication Center, keeping the Digital Communication Center as a separate unit within the combined office. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 19:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should arrange for a facilitator to conduct process mapping exercises to document the overall processes by which the volumes in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series are produced, with the aim of improving efficient production. (Action: PA)

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**Recommendation 28:** The Bureau of Public Affairs, by the annual deadline, should develop a list of delinquent raters and transmit this list to the Bureau of Human Resources. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 29:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should create an orientation program that includes an overview of the bureau, discussion of support services, and information on Department- and bureau-specific policies and procedures. Orientation materials should include an organizational chart of the bureau, organizational charts for each office, and a current telephone directory. (Action: PA)

**Recommendation 30:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should assume direct responsibility for all Public Affairs Computer Exchange information management support requests. (Action: PA, in coordination with IRM)

**Recommendation 31:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should develop and require the use of a time and attendance form that all employees and their supervisors must sign and submit to their time and attendance clerks. (Action: PA)

## INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover operational matters not requiring action by organizations outside the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau. Informal recommendations will not be subject to the OIG compliance process. However, any subsequent OIG inspection or on-site compliance review will assess the mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Daily Press Briefings are often rescheduled on short notice.

**Informal Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should notify members of the press corps of delays in the delivery of the Daily Press Briefing as far in advance as possible.

There is no effective and regular channel of communication by the PA front office with, or outreach to, the larger bureau population to observe personnel in action and to interact with them.

**Informal Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of Public Affairs' senior leaders should regularly visit bureau offices and staff, attend their meetings, and listen to and interact with personnel.

### USAID PRESS OFFICE

The USAID press office is part of the Department's Bureau of Public Affairs. The relationship between PRS and the USAID press office is not clearly understood by either group.

**Informal Recommendation 3:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should publish and distribute a management notice describing the function and history of the United States Agency for International Development press office, and outlining the respective duties and responsibilities of the Office of Press Relations and the United States Agency for International Development press office in making this arrangement work.

**Informal Recommendation 4:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should hold a formal orientation session bringing together the two offices to discuss how to improve coordination and communication.

## FOREIGN PRESS CENTERS

The New York Foreign Press Center will move from its current commercial office space to the building which will house the new USUN offices in 2010. Although the Foreign Press Center will be located on a floor with access to the public and outside the secure area, journalists and other visitors will need to go through a security screening and have their equipment swept to gain access.

**Informal Recommendation 5:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should work closely with the United States Mission to the United Nations security and construction site managers to ensure that public access and Internet availability considerations are adequately addressed in the new U.S. government office space.

## OFFICE OF REGIONAL MEDIA OUTREACH

The physical appearance of the Office of Regional Media Outreach is dark and somewhat dingy, with openings in the ceiling exposing mechanical equipment. This has contributed to a feeling among the staff that they are not valued.

**Informal Recommendation 6:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should enclose the ceiling of the office of the Regional Media Office and provide the office with better lighting to improve the physical appearance of the work environment.

## OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

Supervisory reporting relationships and work responsibilities are poorly defined. The office director must identify team leaders and provide clear duties and responsibilities for personnel assigned to the office.

**Informal Recommendation 7:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should clarify supervisory reporting relationships and work responsibilities for personnel assigned to the Office of Public Liaison.

## OFFICE OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

EI is having an increasingly difficult time keeping up with the workload. This is particularly evident in the number of overtime hours the duty officer must perform.

**Informal Recommendation 8:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should document the workload and requirements for additional employees in the Office of Electronic Information, so that resources can be provided either through reprogramming of existing bureau positions or requested in the 2012 Bureau Strategic Plan.

## THE OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

HO now has only one editor to perform the second edit of each volume of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* and to lead the approximately 20 historians who compile and annotate the volumes. The general editor must also conduct negotiations with outside entities and solve problems for these historians. Experience has shown that one person cannot perform these functions in a sufficiently timely manner to allow the production of the series to meet the 30-year statutory deadline.

**Informal Recommendation 9:** The Bureau of Public Affairs should either reprogram an existing position in the Office of the Historian or request a position through the 2011 Bureau Strategic Plan to create a second general editor position for the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series.

## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Many employees are unaware of where to go for answers and advice when the bureau-wide travel coordinator is unavailable.

**Informal Recommendation 10:** The Bureau of Public Affairs' executive office should republish its notice on duties and responsibilities for the executive office, including the back-up duties of employees.

The executive office has developed and issued necessary bureau-wide notices and policies, but in some instances these policies have not been updated for years.

**Informal Recommendation 11:** The Bureau of Public should complete the updating and issuance of bureau-wide policies and procedures and distribute them widely.

## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Arrival Date</b>
Assistant Security	Philip J. Crowley	5/2009
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary	Vacant	
Deputy Assistant Secretary	Cheryl A. Benton	5/2009
Deputy Assistant Secretary	Ian C. Kelly	5/2009
Deputy Assistant Secretary	Jonathan M. Prince	1/2009
Deputy Assistant Secretary	Philippe I. Reines	1/2009
Deputy Assistant Secretary	Robert A. Wood	8/2008
Digital Communication Center	Daniel D. Schaub	1/2009
Office of Broadcast Services	Michael J. Murphy	
Office of Electronic Information	Janice E. Clark	10/2009
Foreign Press Centers	Gordon K. Duguid	6/2009
Office of the Historian	Edward Brynn	10/2009
Office of Public Liaison	Olive Sampson	10/2009
Office of Press Relations	Mark C. Toner	10/2009
Rapid Response Unit	Leonard F. Scesny	9/2006
Office of Regional Media Outreach	Urenia M. Young	1/2009
U.S. Diplomacy Center	Stephen H. Estrada	4/2008
Executive Director	Hattie O. Jones	





## ABBREVIATIONS

AETN	American Embassy Television Network
DCC	Digital Communications Center
Department	U.S. Department of State
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EI	Office of Electronic Information
EX	Office of the Executive Director
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FRUS	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i>
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
FSI/EX	Office of the Executive Director, Foreign Service Institute
FSI/EX/HR	Human Resources Office, Foreign Service Institute
HO	Office of the Historian
IRM	Bureau of Information Resource Management
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OBS	Office of Broadcast Services
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PA	Bureau of Public Affairs
PACE	Public Affairs Computer Exchange
PL	Office of Public Liaison
PRS	Office of Press Relations
RMO	Office of Regional Media Outreach
RRU	Rapid Response Unit
R	Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
S/OCR	Office of Civil Rights

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIA	United States Information Agency
USUN	United States Mission to the United Nations



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