

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Harare,
Zimbabwe

Report Number ISP-I-05-37A, September 2005

~~IMPORTANT NOTICE~~

~~This report is intended solely for the official use of the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, or any agency or organization receiving a copy directly from the Office of Inspector General. No secondary distribution may be made, in whole or in part, outside the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, by them or by other agencies or organizations, without prior authorization by the Inspector General. Public availability of the document will be determined by the Inspector General under the U.S. Code, 5 U.S.C. 552. Improper disclosure of this report may result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.~~

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY JUDGMENTS	1
CONTEXT	3
EXECUTIVE DIRECTION	7
Leadership	7
Interagency Cooperation.....	8
Entry-Level Employee Mentoring Program	9
Facilities.....	9
POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	11
Mission Performance Plan	11
Political, Economic and Commercial Affairs	12
Public Diplomacy	13
Consular Operations	19
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	23
Rightsizing	23
Management Section.....	24
Human Resources	25
Locally Employed Staff Issues.....	25
Post Language Program	26
Financial Management Operations	27
International Cooperative Administrative Support Services	28
General Services Office	28
Facilities and Real Property	30
Facilities Management	31
Travel.....	32
Information Management and Information Technology Security	32
QUALITY OF LIFE.....	35
Morale	35
Community Liaison Office.....	35

International School	36
Employee Association	36
Health Unit Operations	37
MANAGEMENT CONTROLS	39
Consular Section	39
FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS	41
INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS	43
PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS	51
ABBREVIATIONS	53

KEY JUDGMENTS

- Embassy Harare aggressively pursues U.S. policy goals in Zimbabwe in a challenging environment of a meltdown economy and triple-digit inflation. The United States is making a difference in Zimbabwe, although official relations are strained, and contacts with senior Zimbabwean government officials are extremely limited.
- The mission effectively focuses on the two main U.S. goals of promoting democratic systems and practices and addressing the crisis associated with the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Interagency coordination with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Defense (Defense) is close and collaborative.
- The Ambassador has been effective in spurring the Administration to conduct a senior-level review of U.S. policy toward Zimbabwe, and he has actively participated in that review. Decisions on possible adjustments in policy and resources are expected soon.
- The public affairs section (PAS) is facing an uphill climb in coordinating and focusing its activities following a dearth of sustained leadership. The public affairs officer (PAO) arrived six weeks before the start of the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) on-site inspection. With the Ambassador and deputy chief of mission (DCM), the PAO is bringing order and coherence to PAS operations.
- Leadership of the mission has been strong. The staff saw the Ambassador and DCM as being rough-edged and insensitive during the transition period after the two officials arrived in 2004. That view has lessened with time, but a residue remains. Inspectors counseled both officials regarding the need to balance strong leadership with sensitivity in communicating with American and locally employed staff (LES) to encourage greater teamwork between the staff and the front office.

CONTEXT

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in southern Africa that borders South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, and Mozambique. Of its population of approximately 13 million, 82 percent are Shona, 14 percent are Ndebele, less than one percent is of European origin, and three percent are from other ethnic groups, including Asian. Agriculture, mining, and tourism are the principal components of a once-flourishing economy that has suffered serious decline in recent years because of mismanagement and the autocratic rule of Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe.



President Mugabe's land reform policies dismantled Zimbabwe's commercial farm system, forced many long-resident white farmers from their land, and seriously damaged the economy. Other negative influences include manipulation of interest rates and high government spending. These factors, coupled with reduced foreign investment and tourism, have led to a five-percent decline in the gross domestic product in 2004 and triple-digit inflation.

President Mugabe and his party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front, have ruled Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. Mugabe's increasingly unpopular and isolated government confronts growing dissatisfaction with its economic policies and its 25 years of single-party rule. The steady decline of living standards in the late 1990s led to general discontent and violent riots that galvanized the main trade union federation, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, into forming what has become the main opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change.

The Movement for Democratic Change, led by Morgan Tsvangirai, charged that the two-thirds majority of parliamentary seats won by Mugabe's party in the March 2005 election was obtained by fraud, intimidation, and ballot-stuffing. A two-thirds majority will enable Mugabe's government to change the constitution to entrench its position further. Southern African observers endorsed the election

results, but a local group of monitors and some western countries, including the United States, said the election was not free and fair. The next presidential election will be in 2008, and the 81-year-old president has not ruled out standing for election again.

Despite the decline in basic freedoms, Zimbabwe retains the prerequisites for a successful democratic transformation when conditions permit. It has an educated populace, vestiges of a once highly productive economy, and a large and vocal civil society, including independent elements in the judiciary, parliament, and the press.

U.S. relations with Zimbabwe are extremely strained as a result of U.S. criticism and actions toward the nation. During her confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in early 2005, Secretary Rice described Zimbabwe as one of six "outposts of tyranny" in the world. Zimbabwe in turn accuses the United States of violating Zimbabwe's sovereignty and seeking to overthrow the Mugabe regime.

A principal goal of the U.S. mission in Harare is the promotion of democratic systems and practices. U.S. support for civil society and democratic elements has helped these groups to survive intense government repression over recent years. A second objective is global health. With an HIV infection rate of 25 percent, Zimbabwe faces a demographic catastrophe over the next decade. Over the last five years, the United States has been the single largest donor supporting Zimbabwe's fight against HIV/AIDS. In spite of a collapsing health care system and the emigration of health professionals, Zimbabwe provides better care to HIV/AIDS patients today than it did in 2000, in large part because of U.S. assistance.

The U.S. mission in Zimbabwe consists of representatives of the Department, USAID, Defense, and CDC. It includes 66 official Americans and 219 LES.

At the time of the inspection, Zimbabwe had skyrocketing inflation, with a large difference between the official, artificially low exchange rates for the U.S. dollar and the informal market rate. Commodities such as sugar, maize, milk and cooking oil were scarce and often unavailable in local markets. Food shortages also were exacerbated by the lack of foreign exchange. Most gasoline stations had no fuel, although there was some diesel fuel for sale in a few locations. The tourist sector had virtually collapsed, with the closing of many hotels, lodges, and tourist sites. The embassy commissary was purchasing its supplies from South Africa and bringing them into Zimbabwe duty-free (but still paying a value-added tax on purchases in South Africa). During the on-site inspection, the government of Zimbabwe undertook a nationwide crackdown on illegal vendors and others

engaged in the parallel market, stating that the government was working to prevent stockpiling and price gauging. Police and military roadblocks were common. Embassy officers did not predict a quick end to the economic crisis and expect additional difficulties before the situation is resolved.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

LEADERSHIP

The Ambassador arrived in August 2004, bringing extensive experience in Africa and elsewhere from his nearly 25 years in the Foreign Service. He had been Ambassador in Angola, another highly challenging assignment. The Ambassador recently received a Presidential Distinguished Service Award, given to select senior Foreign Service officers who have made significant contributions in foreign affairs.

The Ambassador has made a difference in his nine months at post. He spurred the Administration to review its policy toward Zimbabwe, which had been characterized by acrimonious public exchanges that did not move Mugabe's government toward more democratic practices. The Ambassador also actively participated in the current senior-level review. Decisions on possible adjustments in policy and resources are expected shortly.

The Ambassador and DCM led an inclusive process to develop the Mission Performance Plan (MPP), which focuses on the two principal U.S. goals of encouraging democratic governance and addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis. All sectors of the mission collaboratively work to advance these goals. Well over 100 LES and more than 60 American personnel offered to join the mission effort to serve as observers of Zimbabwe's March 2005 parliamentary elections. USAID, CDC, and the Defense attaché office work together with the embassy in a well-coordinated U.S. effort to combat HIV/AIDS.

The DCM arrived in late 2004 for his first assignment in Africa. He is an FS-01 officer with experience gained mainly in nations of the former Soviet Union. The DCM works closely and well with the Ambassador and moves easily into the role of chargé d'affaires when necessary.

The embassy's management practices are strong. It has an efficient and highly regarded management counselor who tightened procedures and corrected a number of deficiencies in the months prior to the inspection.

Some Americans and LES say the Ambassador and DCM were a bit rough-edged and insensitive in how they asserted strong leadership and instituted changes in the months after their arrival. This view has ameliorated over time, although assessments provided by staff on OIG questionnaires and repeated in personal interviews suggest the view somewhat remains. The Ambassador and DCM responded positively to counseling from OIG on the need to balance strong leadership with sensitivity in communicating with Americans and LES to encourage greater teamwork between the staff and the front office.

Despite sensitivities over the front office's leadership style, Embassy Harare is working effectively toward achieving U.S. goals in a focused, strongly led, and well-coordinated effort.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Agencies represented at the embassy are the Department, Defense, USAID, and CDC. Interagency coordination is strong, and all agencies work toward the relevant goals and objectives in the MPP.

The embassy's number-one goal is encouraging democratic systems and practices. Roughly \$6 million in USAID funds have been allocated annually to democracy and governance efforts in Zimbabwe over the past few years. The sum was reduced to \$3.4 million in FY 2005. The embassy is appealing that reduction in the context of the current senior-level, Administration review of U.S. policy on Zimbabwe. The embassy instead has asked for funding to increase from \$12 million to \$13 million.

Implementation of the democracy and governance effort has been characterized by close cooperation between USAID and embassy elements and frequent meetings are chaired by the Ambassador and/or DCM. Both USAID Harare officials and the front office described cooperation between the embassy and USAID as outstanding.

On HIV/AIDS, U.S. funding in Zimbabwe from all sources totals approximately \$20 million and is mainly provided through CDC and USAID. Although Zimbabwe is not a focus country under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, substantial funding has been allocated to it in light of that nation's high infection rate. USAID and CDC officials described coordination with the embassy on HIV/AIDS as excellent, and in Washington the Global AIDS Coordinator said the effort in Zimbabwe was a model for other African programs.

Cooperation with the Defense attaché is also good, on political-military matters and on HIV/AIDS, for which Defense has allocated \$275,000 for Zimbabwe, principally to support voluntary counseling and testing centers.

ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYEE MENTORING PROGRAM

Embassy Harare has 12 entry-level officers and specialists, and the DCM is responsible for the entry-level mentoring program. He meets with entry-level personnel on arrival and periodically thereafter, in groups and individually. Specialist personnel in areas such as information technology and security tend to look more toward their home offices for mentoring in their career specialty than to the DCM.

In a group meeting with OIG, all entry-level personnel expressed positive views of their mentoring experience and their work in Harare. Several expressed appreciation for having the opportunity to rotate to other sections and/or to accompany more-senior officers on trips out of the capital or to official meetings. When asked, all said they intend to continue their careers in the Foreign Service.

FACILITIES

The front office focuses on the multiple facilities that make up Embassy Harare. The Department is planning to begin construction of an NEC in 2006, which will consolidate all U.S. agencies and provide a safer and more homogenous setting for American and local staff. OIG has addressed the embassy security programs in a separate classified report. Although Zimbabwe is in economic decline and it is difficult to obtain supplies and services locally, OBO does not foresee delays to the construction plan.

The chancery opened in 1983 and is in fair condition. The main chancery compound is comprised of a chancery building and a general services annex. Several single-story buildings on the compound house the offices of human resources, financial management, travel, health, motor pool, and several other management functions. The community liaison office (CLO) and cafeteria are in a short-term-leased building situated between the human resources office and travel offices. All Department and those of the Defense attaché are on the compound, except the PAS.

USAID, CDC, and the PAS are in separate facilities in different locations. All of these offices are within Harare's city limits and are no more than 10 to 15 minutes by car from the embassy. These facilities are:

- The USAID office complex, which is in a mixed residential and office neighborhood. The complex occupies two government-owned plots located across the street from each other. One compound has two office buildings on 1.5 acres, and the other compound has three office buildings. Total office space is 874 square meters, housing 82 American and local staff.
- The CDC offices, which are downtown on the top two floors of the Nestlé office building. The office space measures approximately 1,040 square meters and houses 37 American and local staff.
- The PAS, which is in Harare's central business district in a building owned by the government of Zimbabwe. The PAS occupies two floors, totaling approximately 1,002 square meters. The section's total complement is 17, including American and local staff.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

MISSION PERFORMANCE PLAN

The current MPP, dated February 2005, arose from an inclusive process led by the Ambassador and DCM and involving all mission elements and agencies. The plan contains four performance goals: encouraging democratic systems and practices, addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis, strengthening administrative services, and exposing U.S. policies and values to Zimbabweans. Washington officials said the MPP is well focused in its articulation of U.S. policy goals and well targeted in its relevance to Zimbabwe. OIG agrees. (Coordination of the mission-wide effort regarding the MPP's first two goals was addressed in an earlier section of this report.) The MPP's goal of strengthening administrative services is well articulated. The strategies described target key areas, and the tactics described set goals that, if reached, will make a significant contribution.

Two areas of the MPP's administrative services section deserve emphasis. One is the need to conduct a rightsizing analysis to identify potential salary-cost savings through the possible elimination of positions. Embassy Harare is generously endowed with positions in some areas, compared to other African posts. The second area to emphasize is the need to maximize shared administrative services under the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) program when a new embassy is constructed and agencies are collocated. USAID in particular duplicates most embassy administrative services from its compound at a separate location. An analysis should be conducted to determine whether some of these might be consolidated with collocation in a new embassy site. These issues are addressed in the rightsizing and ICASS sections of this report.

The fourth MPP goal is advanced primarily by the PAS, in coordination with other elements of the mission. The performance of the section has been problematic for the reasons described in the public diplomacy section of this report.

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

Political, economic, and commercial affairs sections were consolidated into one section in the spring of 2005 with the departure of the chief of what had been the separate economic section. A single integrated section should produce a more streamlined operation and offer the opportunity for cross training and sharing of back-up responsibilities.

Although post reporting plans are no longer required, the section developed one at the DCM's suggestion, vetted it with Washington, and integrated it with a travel and representation plan. The economic crisis in Zimbabwe and the lack of Department funding severely inhibit the section's ability to conduct extensive travel and representation.

The section participated actively in the development of the MPP and targets reporting and advocacy activities to further mission goals under the active leadership of the Ambassador. Washington end-users had high praise for Embassy Harare's reporting, particularly in the period leading up to and after the March 2005 parliamentary elections. One agency noted the desirability of additional reporting on the Zimbabwean government's thinking, but this agency acknowledged the difficulty of doing so, given Zimbabwe's strained relations with the United States and the fact that contacts with Zimbabwean officials are extremely limited.

The section cooperates well and closely with other mission elements and agencies, particularly with USAID in furtherance of the democracy and governance goal. Weekly meetings chaired by the Ambassador with the DCM, political section, USAID, and PAS discuss how to advance the democracy and governance effort through USAID-funded programs and the advocacy of the political and public affairs sections.

The political/economic/commercial section is relatively generously staffed, compared to other African posts. It has four officers, one office management specialist, three LES, and a family member self-help coordinator. An additional reporting officer on a one-time, two-year tour will arrive this summer. The section may benefit from review as part of the rightsizing analysis planned under the administrative section of the MPP.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The PAS has not had continuing oversight by a PAO over the past few years. The current PAO arrived just six weeks before the beginning of OIG's on-site inspection and, with the Ambassador and DCM, is bringing order and coherence to PAS operations. With the dearth of sustained leadership in recent years, the PAS faces an uphill climb to coordinate and focus its activities. In addition, although the two American officers are working to improve section management, the 16 LES have frequently been underutilized and have lacked effective supervision. The front office identified the situation when OIG arrived at post, and the inspection results bore out this judgment.

Public Affairs Office Space

PAS is located in roomy quarters on two floors of leased space in a commercial office building on a major street in downtown Harare. The information resource center (IRC), educational advising center, distribution center, and auditorium are on the mezzanine level, and other offices are located one floor above. The building was privately owned until 2004, when it was purchased by the government of Zimbabwe. Since then, there have been problems with utilities in the building, including the lack of water, leaks, and electrical outages. PAS employees feel that government security forces are keeping a protective eye on the building. The lack of parking is also an issue.

In May 2005, OBO approved the embassy's request to sign a replacement lease for PAS. The new space measures 850 square meters and is located in the East Gate Shopping Center in downtown Harare. The embassy expected to sign the lease by July 1, 2005, if all security waivers were obtained. Further information on the proposed space is included in the classified OIG report.

Public Diplomacy and the Mission Performance Plan

A first-tour, entry-level officer serving as the acting PAO wrote the PAS section of the MPP and participated in the off-site MPP meeting. The front office re-viewed the MPP closely, and much of the MPP was carried over from previous years. Overall, mission management believes the PAS supports MPP objectives, but all agree that much more could be done. The Ambassador, DCM, and PAO are prepared to devote attention in the next year to making sure that PAS activities are prioritized and focused on MPP goals.

Exchange Programs

Embassy Harare runs an active exchange program that in FY 2005 had 25 participants in such high-priority areas as democratic systems and HIV/AIDS and such lower-priority areas as nongovernmental organization (NGO) management. These numbers include two participants in the Fulbright Junior Staff Development program and one in the Fulbright Senior African Research Program. They also include two U.S. Fulbright lecturers/researchers to Zimbabwe in community medicine and drama. Thus, although there was a clear link between some exchange programs and the MPP, the correlation was inconsistent. There have been few follow-up activities for the exchange programs, primarily due to the lack of continuity in the American staffing of the PAS. Although there is some mission involvement in the selection of candidates for exchange programs, most of the names are submitted by PAS staff. The Ambassador and DCM participate in the final selection and approval of candidates. The PAO, Ambassador, and DCM are aware of the gaps in the exchange programming and are discussing ways to bring the programs into better alignment with the MPP. The embassy is generally pleased with the quality and abundance of good exchange-program candidates. There is no Fulbright commission in Zimbabwe.

Cultural Center Activities

In FY 2005, the cultural center directed a number of programs associated with Black History Month, including a press teleconference on African cultural elements, an essay contest, video shows, and involvement with an African-American film festival. A separate video show focused on great female achievers who struggled against the odds. International Education Week activities included a "paintbrush diplomacy" art project conducted with the primary schools and a program to increase awareness of educational opportunities in the United States. Additional press teleconferences highlighted responsible press activities, African cultural elements, and the American dream.

The cultural center activities, although well implemented and received, demonstrate the width of the PAS perspective, but are not always relevant to the strategy and tactics in the MPP. OIG discussed with PAS and embassy officers ways in which the embassy could bring the cultural center activities into better conformity with mission-wide strategies.

Educational Advising Center

The U.S. Educational Advising Center in the PAS is supervised by the educational advisor, an expatriate American citizen, and has intensive involvement with a number of students and other clients seeking to further their educations. During the month of April 2005, for example, the center advised over 400 individuals and another 360 persons in groups. The center conducts group sessions that are well attended and also offers services in four satellite centers. Because of the lack of hard currency in Zimbabwe, the center also collects Zimbabwean dollars from individuals who wish to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), turning the money over to the financial management center for conversion to U.S. dollars, and submitting the SAT registration fees on behalf of test takers.

The United States Student Achievers Program helps talented, economically disadvantaged students who lack only the financial resources and access to information to better their educational futures. The program finances the costs of the application process and assists in other ways. The PAS is gradually expanding the United States Student Achievers Program in Zimbabwe: Nine students graduated from U.S. universities in 2004; 13 will graduate in 2005; 14 in 2006; 21 in 2007; and 20 in 2008. In addition to the United States Student Achievers Program, Embassy Harare assisted in sending 27 students to the United States from the U.S. Education Advising Center for the fall semester of 2004 and two for the spring semester of 2005.

(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)

OIG, however, also found that the education-advising clerk is not reconciling his intake funds with the receipts given to individuals purchasing materials from the center. OIG counseled the PAS staff on ways in which this could be done.

During the September 2005 Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) registration process, the embassy collected fees for the exam in both Zimbabwean and U.S. dollars. The Zimbabwean dollars were deposited with the embassy's Class B cashier, who requested a check for the amount in U.S. dollars. The educational advisor then would write a personal check in U.S. dollars for the amount collected, and PAS submitted both checks to Educational Testing Service, which conducts the SAT. OIG counseled PAS and embassy officials on the ethical issues involved in mixing personal and official (although not appropriated) funds. Embassy officials noted that they had previously counseled the employee involved about this matter and would ensure that it did not happen again.

Grants

The PAS handles grants of from less than \$100 to a few each year that total \$4,000 to \$5,000. In a review of the grant files, OIG found only one set of two grants that had objectives that were tied to the MPP. In addition, the explanations for how some grant amounts were calculated were incorrect. Other grant files lacked descriptions of how budgets were determined, even when this information was called for in the wording of the grant. Grantee reports were missing in all but two files. Some grants for large amounts included no information on what was to be done or how the money was to be used. One grant did not specify the amount. Another grant called for an acknowledgement of the receipt of the funds with a letter or statement, but none was available.

The embassy's grant process is not being handled according to good management practices. There is little or no coordination of grant areas with MPP priorities, and grants are not being monitored. OIG counseled the PAS on establishing good grant procedures.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Harare should establish and implement grant management procedures that include linking grants to Mission Performance Plan priorities, requiring and monitoring the submission of reports from grantees, and assuring that grant documents are prepared in a standard fashion with all relevant information. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Information Resource Center

The IRC's mission statement and annual plan are tied to the MPP, and its four employees all have degrees in library science and maintain an effective operation. The IRC has seating for 53 users, and during the 24 hours per week that it is open, the seats are almost always fully occupied. The regional information resource officer visited Harare in April 2005 and gave the IRC guidance on weeding out and improving its collection of 4,600 titles. The regional information resource officer noted that the IRC continues to be a busy, vibrant, and very public facility.

Although one of the MPP's strategies is to explain American policies to the people of Zimbabwe, providing information to opinion leaders to build understanding of U.S. objectives and policies, the IRC staff admits that it is not reaching the right audience. The staff is hindered in attracting its desired audience -- lecturers, teachers, journalists, NGO employees, and government officials -- by the location and ownership of the PAS offices, the lack of parking, and the requirement that patrons leave cell telephones at the door and enter through the metal detector. In addition, some of the members of the desired audience do not want to be seen entering U.S. government offices and prefer to meet PAS contacts elsewhere. However, the IRC staff has implemented an outreach program to establish and maintain contacts with the over 250 names on the contact list at other locations than the IRC.

The IRC also collects funds from users for photocopies, translation fees, printing from CD-ROMs, and replacement of lost and damaged materials, depositing the funds daily with the PAS subcashier.

Press Section

Zimbabwe has two daily and four weekly newspapers that are government controlled and five independent weekly newspapers. Although the independent newspapers are theoretically free of government oversight, they face some restrictions because advertisers do not want to be associated with either political side and because harassment and incarceration of journalists occurs when the government is displeased by an article.

The basic news source in Zimbabwe is radio. There are four government-controlled radio stations and one government-operated television station. Satellite television from South Africa is available but not affordable for many residents.

Studio Seven, a Voice of America radio program that is broadcast for one hour each evening, is widely heard. Buses and taxis play the program, and rural areas have community listening groups. The PAS sometimes submits stories to Studio Seven.

The government of Zimbabwe's hostility toward the United States hampers the placement of news articles in the local media. Although the embassy has good rapport with the media, it is not always successful in placing stories. Some news articles submitted by the embassy are given neutral leads by the press or are attributed to other sources. Placements may be delayed. Newspapers may include direct quotations from Washington File articles but add critical comments. Often, excerpts from articles submitted by the embassy are embedded in other stories. The embassy believes it is successful in placing articles on such topics as HIV/AIDS or U.S.-Zimbabwean relations but less successful in inserting articles on the outcome of the March 2005 election.

American Corners

American Corners are being established to bring America's message to the world, counter negative preconceptions, maintain an open dialogue, and promote understanding. Embassy Harare's American Corners, in Mutare and Bulawayo, deal extensively with student educational materials and student advising. The embassy hopes to establish a third one in Gweru if funding is available.

Ryan White Corner

The PAS is establishing the Ryan White Corner section in the IRC to disseminate materials on HIV/AIDS. It could also serve as a lending library to civic organizations. The PAS does not yet have funding to establish this center, which it hopes will use materials donated by USAID and the CDC.

PAS Subcashier

(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

(b) (2) However, the subcashier has not received a cash verification since November 2004. The embassy agreed that a cash verification would be done immediately and repeated quarterly.

CONSULAR OPERATIONS

With the assistance of the DCM and the regional consular officer, who visited the embassy a month before the OIG inspection, the consular section prepared well for the inspection. The temporary duty (TDY) consular section chief corrected nine procedural shortcomings identified during the regional consular officer's visit. Although the section chief has been at post for only four months, the section is well managed and provides efficient service to visa clients and American citizens. The new consular chief, scheduled to arrive in June 2005, will need to address several long-term projects that the TDY chief has appropriately deferred. The embassy's front office supports the visa referral system, and the DCM reviews the section chief's visa decisions. Although not given many responsibilities in the 2007 MPP, consular officers are well integrated into embassy affairs. Other sections of the embassy provide the consular officers with information relevant to their border security responsibilities.

Staff

The section's three LES positions are appropriate, given the range of services provided by the section. The LES are aware of a need for more cross training and will address that when the new consular chief arrives. When fully staffed, the section has two full-time Foreign Service officers and a part-time officer who helps with nonimmigrant visa (NIV) interviews. OIG concluded that any reduction in officer positions would negatively affect the quality of service, prevent the section chief from developing much needed contacts, and not allow time to complete plans and projects. When workload permits, the entry-level officer could enhance her professional development by working on short-term tasks for other sections, as when she helped the political section during the March 2005 Zimbabwean elections.

Space

The consular work area is small, but adequate. The section has kept files to a minimum by periodically sending material to the Department's Kentucky Consular Center. The public waiting area seats only 20 customers. The remaining clients must wait outside the embassy. There is no room for expansion should workload increase, but more space should be available when the NEC is completed.

Management

The amount of time spent on public inquiries burdens the consular section. The 2004 consular package estimated that 2,500 staff hours were devoted to public inquiries. The TDY section chief has limited inquiries to certain hours, but more needs to be done. A telephone-tree answering system exists, but many callers still want a human interlocutor. The section is updating its web page, but many Zimbabweans lack Internet access. The PAO said it is not easy to place articles in the local newspapers, but if there is genuine news, such as a warning about a visa scam, it might be possible. The embassy will soon publish a monthly newsletter with consular content that will be on the web site and distributed to organizations throughout the country. OIG informally recommended that the consular and PAS chiefs meet monthly to plan dissemination of general consular information and specific fraud warnings.

The section chief recently drafted four standard operating procedures, but more are needed, as required by Chapter Six of the Consular Management Handbook. For a small consular section, these procedures provide integrity beneficial to LES and officers, especially when there is turnover.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Harare should complete the standard operating procedures required by the Consular Management Handbook's Chapter Six. (Action: Embassy Harare)

OIG found that the embassy's public receptionist prescreens visa applications. Since the receptionist is not a consular section employee, OIG suggested that he only check to see if the applicant has an appointment and not do any other screening. The section chief and information management chief implemented OIG's suggestion.

Visas

Although there are few visa referrals, there have been occasions when other sections have indicated a lack of understanding of the mission's visa-referral policy and the visa process in general. OIG informally recommended that at least once a year, preferably after the summer staff turnover, the consular section should redistribute the referral policy and meet with all mission American employees to discuss that policy and other visa procedures.

The section handles immigrant visas for Embassy Luanda. However Embassy Harare must frequently contact Embassy Luanda for help in contacting the applicants and for verification of documents. The regional consular officer agreed to work with the two embassies and the Bureau of Consular Affairs to see if Embassy Luanda could obtain authorization to accept immigrant visa applications and issue the visas. OIG supports this effort.

American Citizens Services

Despite strained relations between the U.S. and Zimbabwean governments, there is good cooperation between local working-level officials and the consular section on antifraud cases and American citizen emergencies. However, consular officers have relied mainly on one consular LES employee for contact with these officials, and this LES will be leaving the embassy in June 2005. OIG informally recommended that, as soon as possible, the new section chief should establish contacts with local government officials, local airlines managers, and the consular officers of other embassies. The consular section agreed to prepare a prioritized list of the most useful contacts. Since Victoria Falls is the principal destination for American tourists in Zimbabwe, OIG advised the section to develop better contacts at that location.

The consular section has no record of completing a Disposition of Remains report, as required by 7 FAM 251. Without a current report, the consular section is not able to provide accurate information to family members of a deceased American citizen.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Harare should complete a Disposition of Remains report and transmit a copy of it to the Bureau of Consular Affairs. (Action: Embassy Harare)

The consular section believes that as many as 500 of the 2,000 Americans in the registration database are no longer in Zimbabwe. The section hopes to be able to clean out the database when new American citizens services computer software is installed later in FY 2005. There are 30 active wardens, too few for the number of Americans believed to be in Zimbabwe. OIG informally recommended that the section increase the number of wardens.

The consular section has not prepared a plan for handling major accidents or disasters involving Americans. While the mission's Emergency Action Plan has lists of hospitals, morgues, and doctors, the consular officers do not have sufficient understanding of how the local authorities and airlines would manage a disaster such as an airplane crash. OIG informally recommended that the section prepare a disaster plan and meet with those who might be involved in accident response.

Antifraud and Border Security

One LES employee attended an antifraud course at the Foreign Service Institute in March 2005 and is using that knowledge to help the section develop a focused approach to its antifraud and border security efforts. Given the small size of the section, OIG advised that the section concentrate on fighting organized fraud, sharing information within the embassy, and developing contacts.

Conditions in Zimbabwe warrant the steady increase in the NIV refusal rate. A recent validation study suggested that even a higher refusal rate might be justified. OIG informally recommended that the new consular chief review the effectiveness of the section's interviews in light of the study's results.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency/Funding Source	U.S. Direct-Hire Positions	U.S. Local-Hire Positions	LES Positions	Total Staff Positions	Total Funding (000)
State – Diplomatic and Consular Programs	19	5	10	34	957
State – ICASS	11	3	78	92	1,914
State – Public Diplomacy	2	0	15	17	536
State – Diplomatic Security	2	1	21	24	1,211
State – Marine Security Guard	6	0	0	6	0
State – Representation	0	0	0	0	26
State – OBO	1	0	0	1	138
Defense Attaché Office	4	1	0	5	137
USAID	14	2	66	82	1,734
CDC	7	1	29	37	3,468
Totals	66	13	219	298	10,121

RIGHTSIZING

Embassy Harare is amply staffed with American and LES personnel, and all sections have sufficient employees. Some embassy personnel believe, however, that there may be more information management and office management specialist staff than needed. OIG believes that information management is appropriately staffed, although it has more American employees than many African posts. The office management specialists are busy, and, during periods of turnover, there are barely enough such workers.

During the inspection, OIG learned that USAID is considering significantly reducing its presence in Zimbabwe over the next two years. Although the cuts would affect any plans to consolidate services between the Department of State and USAID, the cuts would not greatly affect ICASS services because USAID does not participate in many ICASS areas.

The embassy has not conducted a rightsizing review to prepare for the move to an NEC and to determine whether some American and LES positions could be eliminated. Planning for the NEC coincides with two other matters that could result in staff reductions, the lack of funding from U.S. government agencies and the current economic and political climate in Zimbabwe.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Harare should conduct a rightsizing review in preparation for the move to a new embassy compound to determine whether some American and locally employed staff positions could be eliminated. (Action: Embassy Harare)

MANAGEMENT SECTION

The operation and customer service orientation of the management section received high scores on OIG questionnaires. The management counselor, who was highly praised for customer service, stresses the importance of customer service to staff and holds them accountable. OIG found the management team was well prepared for the inspection and open in discussing areas that needed improvement.

Zimbabwe's economic problems have adversely affected the operational budget. To keep up with inflation, LES received two salary increases of 30 percent to 40 percent in 2004. To fund these increases, the Bureau of African Affairs reduced funding in other budget areas. Consequently, there is limited discretionary funding for items important to employee morale, such as training and travel. The LES salaries and benefits represent 75 percent of the total ICASS budget.

The management section responded to its budget difficulties by implementing \$100,000 in cost-saving measures. The embassy is aggressively seeking reimbursements of the value-added tax and is eliminating contracts, reducing overtime, restricting business class travel, and paying vendors in U.S. dollars. Other cost saving measures are also being considered.

Procuring goods and services locally is challenging due to Zimbabwe's foreign currency shortage. Another problem is that skilled professionals and tradesmen have moved to neighboring Zambia and South Africa. This means that finding experienced local contractors who will provide quality work at reasonable prices is difficult. To compensate for local shortages, the embassy is procuring some goods and services from Zambia and South Africa. The embassy makes a supply run about every six weeks to one of these countries.

Despite these obstacles, the management section is providing good service to its ICASS customers. Some American officers in the section are serving for the first time in their positions. Despite their lack of experience, they provide good supervision and strive to improve working conditions.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The human resources section provides outstanding support to its ICASS subscribers. The section's scores on all human resources-related categories were very high. The section's accomplishments include implementation of the Computer Assisted Job Evaluation program with no appeals, conversion to an offshore pension plan, and implementation of multiple salary increases for local staff. The LES handbook was revised after five years. Survivor HIV/AIDS health benefits were extended to employees' family members.

The human resources officer also provides regional support to Embassies Lusaka and Lilongwe and visits to these embassies quarterly.

LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF ISSUES

Zimbabwe's hyperinflation is eroding LES income, lowering staff morale. The economic situation has also affected the embassy's ability to recruit and retain employees. The embassy has taken significant steps to match LES salaries and benefits with the rate of inflation. In the past 12 months, the LES has received two 30 to 40 percent salary increases.

In May 2005, the Department authorized the temporary payment of LES salaries in U.S. dollars to ease the economic hardships. The specifics of how dollar payments will be made were still being worked out at the close of the inspection. The embassy provided counseling to employees about restrictions regarding trading

currency on the illegal parallel market. LES are required to sign a letter acknowledging that they understand these stipulations before they receive dollar payments.

The embassy has also tried to improve the welfare of the LES by increasing health care benefits. HIV/AIDS treatment and antiretroviral medicines are given to LES members' surviving and immediate family members. Pension contributions are no longer made to the government pension system, but to a newly established offshore pension program.

The embassy's accommodations have been widely appreciated by LES, but local staff believe more are needed. The LES said it would like to see quarterly wage surveys and more frequent salary adjustments. The LES wants the mission to match the salary increases given to comparable organizations. Embassy officials say United Nations organizations pay their local staff 30 percent more, but the mission is unable to do the same.

The LES was also pleased to see cultural awareness training incorporated into orientation programs for American employees, because there have been occasional misunderstandings between American supervisors and LES. The LES requested that this practice be expanded and continued. The embassy is also organizing cultural awareness training to help LES adapt to American cultural issues.

One of the biggest LES complaints is the time it takes to implement salary increases. OIG found that the LES do not have a good understanding of Department approval processes and that more information about Department policy needs to be provided to staff. OIG made an informal recommendation in this area.

POST LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Embassy Harare has secured funding from the Foreign Service Institute to set up a Shona language laboratory. Although Zimbabwe's official language is English, Shona is the indigenous language spoken most widely in Harare. The language program is scheduled to start in September 2005 after the summer transfer season. The mission believes implementation of this program will boost the morale of American and local staff.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

The financial management section received below average scores in all financially related categories. Comments on questionnaires and OIG interviews revealed discontent with the section's cashiering services and processing of travel vouchers.

Complaints about cashiering services center around three issues: hours of operation, official exchange rate, and accommodation exchange policy. OIG found the embassy's policies on these matters are appropriate. Cashier operating hours are adequate for embassy operations and accommodation exchange. American employees are given the legal prevailing rate of exchange, rather than the higher parallel market rate. The availability of U.S. dollars to American employees is necessarily limited, given the shortage of foreign currency available through the U.S. disbursing officer's bank.

The financial management section has had problems with processing travel vouchers within ICASS standards. The financial management officer responded to this deficiency by tracking the number of days it takes to process travel vouchers. He developed a spreadsheet for this purpose that includes the date an employee submits travel vouchers, the date the voucher examiner approves the travel voucher for certification, and the date the travel voucher is paid. In addition, a second employee now processes travel vouchers. These changes are already yielding results; the spreadsheet shows that recent travel vouchers were processed within ICASS standards.

A Paris-based financial management rover reviewed financial operations in March 2005 and identified several management control weaknesses. OIG found that some of these weaknesses had been corrected, and others were being resolved.

An April 2005 inspection of financial operations found financial operations operating at an acceptable level, but that closer supervision of LES was needed. OIG also found that closer supervision of LES and periodic monitoring of staff performance were warranted. OIG made informal recommendations addressing financial management issues.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

At this post, ICASS provides comprehensive administrative services to the Department, CDC, and Defense. Administrative services are less integrated for USAID, which maintains its own executive office, facilities, warehouse, motor pool, and three residences. The embassy has taken steps toward combining services by forming a joint agency housing pool. Additional steps to reduce overlapping services have been halted because of the political and economic uncertainty in Zimbabwe. Whether agencies can afford to incur additional increases in ICASS costs is also a factor, although consolidation may bring cost savings to the U.S. government. OIG believes there may be more scope for sharing interagency services. Embassy Harare has not done an analysis to determine whether combining of duplicative services could save money for the U.S. government.

The ICASS council meets regularly and has published standards for service providers. Relations among agencies are professional and productive. Agencies' memoranda of agreement are current.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Harare should conduct a cost analysis of duplicative services provided by the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development, and if savings are identified, combine the duplicative services. (Action: Embassy Harare)

GENERAL SERVICES OFFICE

The general services office received a good score on the OIG workplace and quality of life questionnaire. Staff praised housing, maintenance, and the quality of furnishings. In other areas, general services' scores were lower than average. The office acknowledges that improvements and closer supervision are needed in personal property management and procurement. The general services officer has implemented corrective action and anticipates improvement in weaker areas.

The embassy hired an LES quality assurance specialist to develop standard operating procedures and to improve general services operations. The quality assurance specialist has a background in International Organization for Standardization procedures. The International Organization for Standardization 9000

program is a quality management effort designed to capture and document the steps needed to provide a service and then to seek continual quality improvement of those services.

Procurement

The procurement section is performing adequately, but is not always doing follow up. This is the most common complaint lodged by mission personnel. The general services officer is striving to improve the performance of the section by developing better procedures. OIG believes use of Web Pass software would yield better tracking capabilities. The electronic procurement module of Web Pass will allow a requestor to track procurement requests throughout the entire procurement cycle. OIG made several informal recommendations addressing procurement issues.

Personal Property Management

The embassy reported an inventory shortage of 1.15 percent in nonexpendable property in the 2005 property management report. Additional inquiry disclosed that items were determined to be missing in 2004, but were left in the property management records. This discovery brought the inventory shortage below OBO's maximum acceptable level of one percent.

To prevent further shortages and discrepancies, the general services officer has strengthened controls over property management. Efforts include retraining warehouse staff to complete DS-584 forms every time property is moved from one location to another. Warehouse staff must now present a signed DS-584 form to local guards before removing property from embassy facilities. The general services officer is developing comprehensive standard operating procedures in this area.

Motor Pool Operations

The general services office motor pool employs 11 LES, including a supervisor, a dispatcher, and a mechanic. Another four drivers are employed by the Marine Security guard detachment and one driver works for the front office. The condition of motor pool vehicles ranges from fair to good. OIG left an informal recommendation regarding motor pool issues.

The sole mechanic has a hard time maintaining the official vehicles. The vehicle used to transport the inspection team had a crack across the windshield.

Embassy officers say that the mission cannot afford a replacement windshield because of limited ICASS funding. Obtaining vehicle parts locally is problematic because of the economic situation and the scarcity of parts. The embassy takes official vehicles to be serviced in South Africa, which is about eight hours away.

Safety and Occupational Health and Environmental Management

The facilities maintenance specialist is reinvigorating a safety program that had become weak and has instituted a number of programs, such as obtaining Hepatitis A vaccinations and safety shoes for maintenance staff that boosted morale. Respirator awareness training and material-safety data programs have also been established.

The mission has not corrected some deficiencies identified by the site visit of OBO's Safety, Health, and Environmental staff and in fire and life safety reports. The post's safety and occupational health officer is aware of these deficiencies and is instituting corrective action in areas that require minimal funding. Expensive items, such as an automatic sprinkler system for the chancery and a fire suppression system for the commercial stove in the cafeteria, are unlikely to be funded by OBO because of the plans to construct an NEC in 2006. OIG left informal recommendations to address these safety issues.

FACILITIES AND REAL PROPERTY

Office Space Allocation and Layout

There is no overall design of the chancery compound, which is an arrangement of government-owned and leased buildings on three adjoining plots. The main compound includes the chancery, general services annex, and a series of connected single-story buildings. Rather than having a separate location for public access, the consular section waiting room is awkwardly situated between two controlled-access areas. The chancery compound rests on two government-owned parcels separated by a smaller short-term-leased property. Collocation with other agencies is not possible - USAID, CDC, and the PAS all have large staffs and are located offsite in leased space. The dispersal of personnel among different compounds hinders effective teambuilding, communication, and efficiency. The separation also encourages the duplication of administrative services.

The various government-owned and leased office space is near or in downtown Harare, presenting a security concern because of Zimbabwe's deteriorating political and economic conditions. OIG addresses the mission's security programs in a separate classified report.

The Department's planned construction of an NEC is expected to resolve the mission's security, chancery design, and operational problems. Plans indicate a design phase scheduled for 2006, with completion planned for 2010. The \$84.7 million dollar construction project includes a 6,815 square meter chancery, a 1,784 square meter USAID annex, a 740 square meter Marine Security guard residence, and warehouse and support facilities totaling over 3,000 square meters. The NEC will accommodate 212 desks and 170 employee parking spaces, along with separate visitor parking.

Chancery

The chancery is 23 years old and is in fair condition. Renovation and upgrades of support systems are needed but are not planned, due to the planned NEC.

Housing

American officers reside in a mix of 12 government-owned and 32 leased residences. The residences are in fair to good condition. Staff housing was highly praised in OIG questionnaires and interviews. The Ambassador's and DCM's residences are in good condition and were recently refurbished.

USAID is a member of the mission housing pool, but still maintains its own inventory of three government-owned and ten short-term-leased residences.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

The facility management specialist is customer service oriented and is improving the maintenance section's performance. In the past year, the facility management specialist has reorganized the work order process for better tracking, developed written policies and procedures for the maintenance section, and submitted a plan to reorganize the maintenance section to achieve cost savings.

The maintenance unit received an above average score on the OIG questionnaires, for quality of maintenance and repair on housing. Mission personnel generally praise the maintenance section for its prompt responses to work order requests. Maintenance and upkeep of the chancery received a lower than average score on the OIG questionnaires, largely due to the age and condition of the chancery.

TRAVEL

The embassy contracts with a company called Travel House for travel services. Travelers have complained that they are not provided with the most competitive fares and that the agency is neither responsive nor creative in assisting travelers with arrangements and advice. OIG made informal recommendations to help resolve the communication and performance problems.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY

Embassy Harare's information management office adequately meets the needs of the 170 users at the embassy compound, general services warehouse, and public affairs offices. It also meets most Department information management and information technology security requirements. The information management officer (IMO) and his staff have performed well in all areas of information management, including records and configuration management, mailroom and telephone operations, and have maintained high customer service. However, some improvement is needed.

The embassy has 130 workstations and 11 servers on the unclassified network, 23 workstations and three servers on the classified network, and 14 stand-alone Internet workstations; 13 supporting the IRC and one workstation at the Ambassador's residence. Standard Department software and locally approved applications run on the workstations and servers. The information management office is also responsible for reception and switchboard operations.

Information Management

The IMO manages a staff of three information management specialists (IMS) and nine LES. OIG observed how the IMO's support and guidance keeps office morale high and motivates a technically proficient staff to deliver professional customer service that was rated above average by embassy employees on the OIG questionnaire.

The information management office interacts constructively with its customers to provide needed technical solutions. For example, the IMO is working with the PAO to find a digital videoconferencing solution for the PAS. OIG informally suggested that the IMO research the requirements for implementing digital videoconferencing over the unclassified network, to overcome telecommunication restrictions and cost constraints in Zimbabwe. He plans to work with the Department's Information Technology Configuration Control Board for guidance on doing so.

OIG also identified two areas where management of the section could be strengthened. Although the IMO has an emergency destruction plan and contingency plan, the two documents have not been included in the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), in accordance with Department guidance. In addition, OIG believes that restructuring the office to give more day-to-day information systems officer and information program officer responsibilities to the two senior IMS staff would give the IMO more time to fulfill strategic planning and management reporting requirements. OIG left informal recommendations on these matters.

Information Technology Security

The mission's information technology security stance is satisfactory. The information technology staff has ensured that all Bureau of Diplomatic Security operating system guidelines have been implemented on the workstations and servers.

(b) (2)(b) (2)

(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)

Recommendation 6: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

Information Management Security Officer

Currently, the IMO is the information systems security officer (ISSO) for both the classified and unclassified networks, which is an inadequate separation of duties between managing day-to-day systems operations as the IMO and overseeing or monitoring systems operations as the ISSO. All of the IMS staff have attended the ISSO training and can be assigned ISSO duties.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Harare should designate the senior information management specialist in the information processing center as the information systems security officer for the unclassified network and designate the senior information systems security officer in the information systems center as the information systems security officer for the classified network.
(Action: Embassy Harare)

The CLO coordinators assist those family members who want to work with obtaining jobs. There is a bilateral work agreement between the United States and Zimbabwe, and three family members are working on the local economy - two at NGOs and one at the Harare International School. Another 12 family members work within the embassy - one at USAID, one at CDC, and the remainder in Department offices.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

At (b)(2)(b)(6) enrollment totals 403, of which 31 students are from the official U.S. community. Embassy families expressed high approval of the school curriculum, with only occasional comments about needed improvements in sports equipment and the drama program. (b)(2)(b)(6) is initiating the international baccalaureate program, starting this year in the eleventh grade and adding the twelfth grade in 2006. However, even without the full international baccalaureate program, all seniors graduating this year have been accepted at the universities of their choice.

With the increases in inflation, (b)(2)(b)(6) has had to review its expenditures carefully. The school hires about 50 percent of its teachers locally and the remainder from overseas. As the school is set up under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it technically does not exist as a school under the Ministry of Education. This arrangement continues to work more or less smoothly for the school. With the help of ambassadors from the students' home nations, the school has been able to counter any issues raised by the host government.

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION

The American Embassy Welfare and Recreation Association operates a commissary and the Department's Homeward Bound program, under which posts that have no Army Post Office send mail to the United States. The association's audit and financial reports are up to date, and the organization operates with a small profit.

The association allows members to buy products on credit and bills them at the end of each month. At the time of the inspection, some \$2,400 in bills had been outstanding for more than 30 days. OIG informally recommended that the board

of directors work with the association's only employee - a family member who works about eight hours per week - to be sure that payments are up to date.

(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

The American Embassy Welfare and Recreation Association pays one U.S. dollar in annual rent to the embassy under a revocable license agreement prepared in 2003. Most of the association's furnishings and equipment belong to the embassy, although OIG was not able to find a list of these items. OIG left informal recommendations regarding these issues.

HEALTH UNIT OPERATIONS

One Foreign Service health practitioner and two locally hired nurses staff the health unit. The office averages from 100 to 180 office visits per month from American clientele. The health unit also provides flu shots to the LES. OIG found the health unit was well managed, inventories were up to date, and that expired medications were disposed of promptly. Narcotics and other drugs are maintained in a locked cabinet.

The regional medical officer visits Embassy Harare about every six months, spending less time at this medically well-staffed post than at other embassies in the region. Few medical evacuations have occurred, and the patient population is generally healthy.

Medical unit staff expressed to OIG their concern with the declining numbers of medical personnel in the local community. Many physicians have left Zimbabwe to seek better paying positions in other countries, and those who stay are often gone for long periods of time to work in other locations for hard currency. The health unit estimates that 80 percent of medical personnel with training from institutions outside of Zimbabwe have either left the country or frequently go out of the country for periods of time. As the local economy deteriorates, there is an accompanying decrease in the quality of other medical services, such as laboratory results. In addition, medical supplies and medications are harder to find locally.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The annual chief of mission certification for internal controls disclosed no weaknesses. The Bureau of Resource Management's risk assessment questionnaire also disclosed no material, internal control weaknesses.

Embassy Harare places a high priority on internal controls. The management office is implementing policies and procedures to reinforce adherence to internal controls across its operations. The section has made progress, but its efforts have not reduced the need for additional monitoring and closer supervision.

CONSULAR SECTION

In Zimbabwe U.S. dollars can be exchanged on the parallel market at an unofficial rate that is significantly higher than the official rate. The officers providing consular services do not routinely ask applicants whether they paid in local currency or U.S. dollars, nor are officers comparing the answers to the receipts, as required by the Consular Management Handbook, Section 724.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Harare should establish procedures under which officers providing consular services must ask applicants whether they paid their visa fees in local or U.S. currency and compare the answers to the receipts for services provided by the consular cashier. (Action: Embassy Harare)

FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Embassy Harare should establish and implement grant management procedures that include linking grants to mission performance plan priorities, requiring and monitoring the submission of reports from grantees, and assuring that grant documents are prepared in a standard fashion with all relevant information. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Harare should complete the standard operating procedures required by the Consular Management Handbook's Chapter Six. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Harare should complete a Disposition of Remains report and transmit a copy of it to the Bureau of Consular Affairs. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Harare should conduct a rightsizing review in preparation for the move to a new embassy compound to determine whether some American and locally employed staff positions could be eliminated. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Harare should conduct a cost analysis of duplicative services provided by the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development, and if savings are identified, combine the duplicative services. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Recommendation 6: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Harare should designate the senior information management specialist in the information processing center as the information systems security officer for the unclassified network and designate the senior information systems security officer in the information systems center as the information systems security officer for the classified network. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Harare should establish procedures under which officers providing consular services must ask applicants whether they paid their visa fees in local or U.S. currency and compare the answers to the receipts for services provided by the consular cashier. (Action: Embassy Harare)

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.

CONSULAR SECTION

The time spent on public inquiries burdens the consular section. Although it is not easy to place articles in the local newspapers, the embassy should try to use the local media to inform the public about visa procedures and other consular information. The embassy will soon be publishing a monthly newsletter with consular content that will be on the web site and distributed to various organizations throughout the country.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Harare should have the consular and public affairs section chiefs meet monthly to plan public dissemination of general consular information and specific fraud warnings.

Although few visa referrals occur, other sections have occasionally indicated a lack of understanding of the mission's visa referral policy and visa process.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Harare, at least once per year, should redistribute the mission's visa referral policy and hold a meeting for all of the mission's American employees to discuss that policy and other visa procedures.

Consular officers have relied mainly on one of the consular section's LES for contact with local working-level officials. This employee was to leave the embassy in June 2005.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Harare should have the new consular section chief, soon after arrival, establish contacts with local government officials, local airlines managers, and consular officers of other embassies. This should include contacts in the area of Victoria Falls.

The consular section has only 30 American citizen wardens to contact as many as 1,500 resident Americans in emergencies.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Harare should increase to at least 50 the number of wardens in the warden system.

The consular section has not prepared a plan for handling major accidents or disasters involving Americans. Although the mission's EAP lists hospitals, morgues, and doctors, the consular officers do not have sufficient understanding of how the local authorities and airlines would manage an event such as an airplane crash.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Harare should have its consular section prepare a disaster plan and meet with those local and host-government officials who would be involved in responding to a major accident.

Conditions in Zimbabwe warrant the steady increase in the NIV refusal rate. A recent validation study suggested that even a higher refusal rate might be justified.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Harare should review the effectiveness of the consular officers' nonimmigrant visa interviewing in light of the results of the 2005 validation study.

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION

The American Embassy Welfare and Recreation Association allows members to buy products on credit and bills the employees at months' end. At the time of the inspection, \$2,400 was outstanding for more than 30 days.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Harare should establish procedures to keep payments to the American Embassy Welfare and Recreation Association up to date.

Embassy Harare and the American Embassy Welfare and Recreation Association have a revocable license agreement that was prepared in 2003. The agreement has not been updated to include all current provisions.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Harare should update its revocable license agreement with the American Embassy Welfare and Recreation Association.

The American Embassy Welfare and Recreation Association has furnishings and equipment belonging to Embassy Harare but does not have a list of which items belong to the association and which to the embassy.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Harare should update its inventory of items in use by the American Embassy Welfare and Recreation Association and issue an annual list to the association.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The current health care contract was completed and signed in 1984. The embassy does not have procedures to make certain that health care contracts are reevaluated after five years. A new solicitation for a health care services contract is underway.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Harare should develop procedures that require periodic reevaluation of its health care contract.

LES employees are concerned about American officers' cultural insensitivity and inappropriate oral communication.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Harare should make certain that the American orientation program includes information about local customs, attitudes, and sensitivities.

LES employees do not understand the Department's policy on salary and wage increases.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Harare should issue an administrative notice describing the embassy's policies and procedures on salary and wage increases.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Some employees do not understand the Department's budget process.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Harare should issue an administrative notice describing the policies and procedures of the embassy's budget process.

Program offices do not always receive timely updates on budgets from the financial management office, to plan programs and expenditures.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Harare should develop and implement procedures to ensure that the financial management office provides program offices with the status of fund reports.

In some instances, cash verifications of the advances provided to the subcashiers are not being conducted, despite the requirements of 4 FAH-3 H-397.2-2 and 2-3.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Harare should conduct cash verifications of advances provided to subcashiers.

Embassy Harare employees sometimes do not submit travel vouchers within five working days of the completion of authorized travel, despite the provisions of 4 FAH-3 H-465.1-1.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Harare should ensure that employees submit a voucher for reimbursement of travel expenses within five working days after the completion of authorized travel.

Embassy Harare is not always paying invoices within 30 days, despite the requirements of the Prompt Payment Act. In some instances, the embassy has paid penalties.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Harare should implement procedures to ensure that vendors are paid within 30 days.

PROCUREMENT

Embassy Harare uses a database for tracking procurements.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Harare should install WebPass software and provide staff training on its use.

Some staff members complain that procurements take too long.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Harare should issue an administrative notice reminding staff about the time and staff requirements involved in unclassified and secure procurements.

When delays arise in processing procurement requests, the procurement section does not advise customers when the goods and services will arrive.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Harare should provide customer service training to the procurement staff.

The procurement unit frequently receives incomplete procurement requests.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Harare should redesign its procurement request form, highlighting required information.

Sometimes, required contract documentation is not placed in contract files.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Harare should develop procedures that ensure that all required documentation is included in contract files.

MOTOR POOL

At the end of each month, the motor pool manager must review the completed Form DS-1775, Monthly Fuel/Oil Consumption Report, comparing the kilometers-per-liter rate for the month with that of the previous month. However, this procedure is not being performed.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Harare should develop and implement procedures to make certain that the motor pool supervisor reviews the monthly fuel and oil consumption report, identifies significant variances, and investigates possible problems.

SAFETY

Embassy Harare has not fully complied with the fire and life safety recommendations in the *Embassy Harare Fire and Life Safety Report*, June 17, 2004.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Harare should implement the corrective actions for the fire and safety recommendations reported in the *Embassy Harare Fire and Life Safety Report*, dated June 17, 2004.

Embassy Harare has not fully complied with safety recommendations reported in the *Embassy Harare Safety, Health and Environmental Management Stop Visit*, dated October 24, 2004.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Harare should implement corrective action for the safety recommendations reported in the "*Embassy Harare Safety, Health and Environmental Management Stop Visit*," dated October 24, 2004. (Action: Embassy Harare)

TRAVEL

The mission's staff believes the travel contractor, Travel House, does not provide travelers with the most competitive fares and does not provide responsive customer service.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Harare should require the contracting officer's representative to monitor the contract, ensure that its terms and conditions are met, and recommend canceling the contract if services are inadequate.

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Harare should use an administrative notice to remind staff that cheap or restricted fares found on the Internet and elsewhere may not meet U.S. government travel regulations.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The embassy information technology contingency plan and emergency destruction plan have not been included in the EAP, per 5 FAM 121.1b-8a.

Informal Recommendation 28: Embassy Harare should add its information technology contingency plan and emergency destruction plan to its Emergency Action Plan.

The information management office responsibilities and duties have not been assigned or delegated in a manner that provides for optimal performance from the staff or service to the customers.

Informal Recommendation 29: Embassy Harare should restructure the information management office so that the senior information management specialists assume information systems officer and information program officer responsibilities.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Christopher W. Dell	08/04
Deputy Chief of Mission	Eric T. Schultz	08/04
Chiefs of Sections:		
Administrative	Michael A. Raynor	08/04
Consular	Lauren Marcus	03/04
Political/Economic	Win Dayton	08/03
Public Affairs	Tim Smith	04/05
Regional Security	Raymond Yates	03/05
Other Agencies:		
Department of Defense	COL Daniel Hampton	01/03
U.S. Agency for International Development	Paul Weisenfeld	08/02
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Shannon Hader	05/04

ABBREVIATIONS

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CLO	Community liaison office
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
Defense	Department of Defense
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IMO	Information management officer
IMS	Information management specialist
IRC	Information resource center
ISSO	Information services security officer
LES	Locally employed staff
MPP	Mission Performance Plan
NEC	New embassy compound
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
TDY	Temporary duty
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development