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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Bridgetown,
Barbados

Report Number ISP-I-09-33A, June 2009

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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
Acting Inspector General

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CONTEXT



Scattered across the eastern Caribbean Sea are the seven island countries that make up the Lesser Antilles, an island grouping once known as the British West Indies. The most populous is Barbados, with 280,000 people; the largest is the Commonwealth of Dominica, with 290 square miles. Others include the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The

seventh island nation, Grenada, has a tiny U.S. Embassy, a mission whose existence is rooted in the successful U.S. ouster of Cuban troops in 1983. Collectively, these seven nations have slightly more people than Delaware (800,000) and somewhat less land area (1,150 square miles) than Rhode Island.

Among these islands, Barbados is regarded objectively and by itself as the most significant, thus its capital Bridgetown is the logical choice for a U.S. Embassy. The first of the former British West Indies islands to gain independence in 1966, Barbados had had the longest uninterrupted colonial experience of any British colony—300 years of being a favored possession that left it with relatively good infrastructure, a decent standard of living, and a strong sense of unity. When George Washington made his sole trip outside of North America, it was to Bridgetown, Barbados, then the third largest port in North America. The Barbados economy — like that of most of the seven island countries — rested initially on tobacco, then on sugar, and now on tourism. Its population, like that of the other islands, is mostly of African descent.

All seven governments are democratic. Rule of law is strong, respect for human rights norms high, and literacy near universal. Barbados itself ranks behind only the United States and Canada in the Western Hemisphere in terms of the United Nations' human development rating. Collectively, these islands command attention from the United States chiefly by dint of location. They make up much of the United States' important "third border" through which immigrants, investment, trade, and narcotics transshipped from Colombia through Venezuela flow. While the seven

countries covered by Embassy Bridgetown still look to London for cultural identity, they are increasingly drawn into the U.S. orbit due to media, infrastructure, telecommunications, education, emigration, business, tourism, geography, and narcotics, as well as other law enforcement factors.

Besides formal accreditation to seven countries — much the most of any U.S. mission — the Bridgetown Embassy has varying degrees of responsibility for French, Dutch, and British insular possessions throughout the Caribbean. The mission includes 37 State Department direct-hire staff members as well as representatives from the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Internal Revenue Service within the Department of Treasury. There are 119 local employees in Barbados, Grenada, and Antigua. In addition, there are 98 Peace Corps volunteers located in all the eastern Caribbean countries except Barbados. Expenditures in FY 2008, including locally disbursed assistance, totaled \$33.3 million.

Embassy Bridgetown – Caribbean Island Coverage by Agency/Section

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Consular Section

Anguilla (U.K.)
Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados
British Virgin Islands (U.K.)
Dominica
Grenada
Guadeloupe (French)
Montserrat (U.K.)
Martinique (French)
Netherlands Antilles (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba)
St. Barthélemy (French)
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Martin (French)
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Facilities Management Section

Grenada

Information Management Section

Grenada
Antigua and Barbuda
Martinique

Management Section

Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados
Dominica
Grenada
Martinique (French)
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Political Economic Section

Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados
Dominica
Grenada
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Public Diplomacy Section

Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados
Dominica
Grenada

Public Diplomacy Cont...

St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Office of Regional Affairs

Antigua and Barbuda
Anguilla (U.K.)
Barbados
British Virgin Islands (U.K.)
Cayman Islands (U.K.)
Dominica
Grenada
Guadeloupe (French)
Martinique (French)
Montserrat (U.K.)
Netherlands Antilles (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba)
St. Barthélemy (French)
St. Martin (French)
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Regional Security Office

Anguilla (U.K.)
Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados
British Virgin Islands (U.K.)
Dominica
Grenada
Guadeloupe and other French Antilles (France)
Martinique (France)
Montserrat (U.K.)
St. Barthélemy (French)
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Martin (France)
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL - CDC

Antigua and Barbuda
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Dominica
Grenada
Jamaica
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent and the Grenadines

CDC Cont...

Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION - DEA

Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados
Dominica
Grenada
Martinique (French)
St. Barthélemy (French)
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE - IRS

Aruba (Dutch)
Anguilla (U.K.)
Antigua and Barbuda
Bahamas
Barbados
Bermuda
Bonaire (Dutch)
British Virgin Islands (U.K.)
Cayman Islands (U.K.)
Curacao (Dutch)
Dominica
Grenada
Guadaloupe (French)
Haiti
Jamaica
Martinique (French)
Montserrat (U.K.)
St. Barthélemy (French)
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Maarten/St. Martin (Dutch/French)
St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Trinidad and Tobago
Turks and Caicos Islands

LEGAL ATTACHÉ OFFICE - LEGATT

Anguilla (U.K.)
Antigua and Barbuda
Aruba (Dutch)
Bahamas
Barbados
Bermuda
Bonaire (Dutch)
Cayman Islands (U.K.)
Curacao (Dutch)
Dominica
Grenada
Guadeloupe (French)

LEGATT Cont...

La Desirade (French)
Les Saints (French)
Marie Galante (French)
Martinique (French)
Montserrat (U.K.)
St. Barthélemy (French)
St. Eustatius (Dutch)
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Maarten (Dutch)
St. Martin (French)
St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Turks and Caicos Islands

MILITARY LIAISON OFFICE - MLO

Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados
Dominica
Grenada
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION SERVICE - NCIS

Anguilla (U.K.)
Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados
British Virgin Islands (U.K.)
Dominica
Grenada
Guadeloupe (French)
Martinique (French)
Montserrat (U.K.)
Saba (Dutch)
St. Barthélemy (French)
St. Maarten (Dutch)
St. Martin (French)
St. Eustatius (Dutch)
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Trinidad and Tobago

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - USAID

Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados
Dominica
Grenada
St. Lucia
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

-END-

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

BACKGROUND

Executive direction at Embassy Bridgetown faces several unusual, if not unique, challenges. The chief of mission is accredited to seven countries and responsible for two consular agencies as well as oversight of the U.S. Embassy in St. George's, Grenada, an anomaly discussed later in this report. In addition, agency chiefs serving under the chief of mission in Bridgetown have broad and varying mandates — with the Internal Revenue Service, for example, responsible for 24 countries. The ill-organized, less-than-responsive governments of the eastern Caribbean frustrate efficient diplomacy. Dominica's elusive prime minister, for example, dodged the Ambassador's farewell call and failed to show for two previous meetings, despite confirmed appointments. Along with failures of governmental coordination, the front office contends with fusty bureaucratic attitudes and oversensitivity to slights from a powerful country that is seen as passing judgment on them. The preceding chart illustrates the complexity of working a diplomatic portfolio that necessitates frequent travel on erratic airlines with expensive and infrequent flights.

Bridgetown's chief of mission operates in an increasingly competitive diplomatic environment. In the 1980s the United States was "the game in town," including a robust USAID presence; in the 1990s, the United States was cast as trying to undermine the economies of the islands and pursuing narcotics traffickers so aggressively as to affront the islands' sovereignty. In 2009, the Caribbean islands no longer care quite so much about the United States. European Union assistance dwarfs that of the United States. Venezuela looms large, thanks to oil money, proximity, and President Chavez' desire to take the fight to the United States wherever possible. Iran, ranging out from a diplomatic beachhead in Caracas, has gained recognition from the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Cuba, less a threat than in decades past, still leverages its health and educational programs. China has opened embassies throughout the Caribbean and showered attention and largesse on the tiny island states who feel neglected. During the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) inspection, a Chinese vice premier visited Barbados.

The chargé d'affaires and the former Ambassador have sought to restore the notion that the United States is the partner of choice. To gain maximum influence in the personalized world of Caribbean diplomacy, both have traveled extensively to nurture the island leaders — the linchpins for achievement of the U.S. agenda including counternarcotics goals, promotion of U.S. business, and support for American citizens. In so doing, the mission chief carries forward a strategy pursued by the departed, political-appointee Ambassador who drew on her private aircraft and funds to make 140 trips within the eastern Caribbean. This largesse is no longer available, leaving the Embassy even more strapped for essential travel funds. All Department sections, with the exception of consular affairs, lack adequate travel and representation monies to cover their multi-island responsibilities in the Caribbean where even short flights cost hundreds of dollars. See the recommendation in the resource management section of this report regarding corrective action for chronic shortfalls in funding for Embassy Bridgetown.

MANAGEMENT OF THE EMBASSY

While the OIG team found that the Ambassador was an effective public figure, day-to-day management of the mission fell to deputies who, de facto, served as chief operating officers. Her initial deputy chief of mission (DCM) presided over the Embassy with skill, but a floundering successor left soon after arrival. A series of temporary DCMs ensued who collectively left little mark on the mission. Concurrently, the management section saw five supervisory officers come and go. Officers describe the Embassy as adrift and thirsting for a real DCM when the current incumbent (now chargé d'affaires) arrived in May 2008. On his third tour in Barbados and third tour as a DCM, this officer is a polished leader with a command presence that furthers his overall control of the mission. A wealth of regional experience enables him to know the pulse of the Caribbean countries. Staff describe him as approachable, gifted at putting interlocutors at ease, and otherwise skilled at running a tight but friendly ship. He has the Bridgetown Embassy firmly back on track.

The front office has outstanding relations both with subordinate officers within the Embassy as well as with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) and other Washington-based agencies. Mutual respect is evident. Policy congruence is high. Information flows two ways and appears directly proportionate to the amount of importance individual issues have for the United States. All eight agency chiefs resident at Embassy Bridgetown describe interagency relations as conflict-free and driven by a quest for synergies through information sharing rather than by competition for greater bureaucratic turf. The chargé d'affaires effectively chairs a large law enforcement working group that includes representatives from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the military liaison office,

the Customs and Border Protection Agency, the Naval Criminal Investigation Service, the Internal Revenue Service, and various Department section chiefs. Here, as in other meetings, the front office is adept at putting those below at ease and encouraging their full participation in solving issues.

The chargé d'affaires has continued the departed Ambassador's relatively robust regime of meetings. Besides daily stand-up meetings where agency and section chiefs quickly exchange views, there is a weekly country team gathering. This larger session includes those below the agency/section chief level as well as the Peace Corps director in Saint Lucia and the chargé d'affaires in St. George's. The latter two participate electronically. Given the intense travel load, the daily stand-up meeting, and various thematic gatherings, the OIG team believes that this country team could meet biweekly. This would unburden the many small sections/agencies. The Embassy could also focus episodically on just one of its seven countries at this biweekly country team, thus allowing a sharper focus and otherwise reducing the inevitable temptation to view all the Eastern Caribbean micro-countries as a collective entity. The OIG team left two informal recommendations to this effect.

The Embassy could also tighten its posture toward temporary duty personnel who are, in fact, either serving long-term or are part of a series of shorter stints of duty that in aggregate become long-term. The military liaison office, the Department of Homeland Security, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Internal Revenue Service all have or have had temporary duty employees who seemingly should have been subject to National Security Decision Directive 38 processes wherein the chief of mission has control over the size, composition, and mandate of overseas full-time mission staffing for all U.S. Government agencies. The presence of large numbers and/or long-serving temporary employees — the Internal Revenue Service has had 13 in 4 years — burdens the management section unfairly in that these temporary employees are not captured fully in estimating support costs. The OIG team left an informal recommendation on this subject but notes the chargé d'affaires is already seeking National Security Decision Directive 38 authority more aggressively than has been the case in the recent past. The chief of mission, for example, drew on National Security Decision Directive authority to reduce the Naval Criminal Investigative Service's proposed four direct hires to one.

MISSION STRATEGIC PLAN

Embassy Bridgetown's draft 2011 Mission Strategic Plan is a concise, particularly well-written, internally consistent presentation of U.S. policy and goals. As such, it

makes a strong case that the United States and the eastern Caribbean nations covered by Bridgetown share a common commitment to democracy, rule of law, and free markets that offers a solid foundation for bilateral partnerships. However, the perception that the United States is less engaged in the region than in years past and that military rather than diplomatic instruments of influence are favored frays relations. Further, while other agencies involved in the Embassy's paramount counternarcotics/security objective are amply staffed, the Department has somewhat marginalized itself by cutting resources. Broadly speaking, this courts a situation wherein the Caribbean regional agenda increasingly could be set without reference to the United States.

Embassy Bridgetown's lead drafter for the Mission Strategic Plan was the chief of the political/economic section. The front office also reviewed the document with admirable care. Embassy Grenada, a separate mission that nonetheless operates under the direction of Embassy Bridgetown, was incorporated into the plan's development and review process.

While the Mission Strategic Plan exercise is useful in itself in that it forces embassies to think holistically, the OIG review for Bridgetown suggests that this goal could be reinforced through greater mission participation in the Washington reviews up the line and a more careful reading of the plan by the Department. No one in the Department, for example, chose to challenge the 2010 chief of mission statement that the Embassy is responsible for territories and countries that cover 150,000 square miles — a number off by a factor of a 100. The Department review of the 2010 plan did clarify the need for additional resources, including a technical assistant for the regional security office. Left unaddressed by the Department and the Embassy is that WHA, rather than the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, funds support costs for Embassy Bridgetown's activities in Dutch, French, and British possessions in the Caribbean, including the consular agency in Martinique.

The Embassy itself also refined the 2010 document via a mid-year review that set more quantifiable measurements for the indicators related to consular, public diplomacy, and management objectives. In so doing, the Embassy also made the cogent argument that the general Mission Strategic Plan focus on quantifiable metrics skews the document towards areas/indicators where it is possible to quantify. Yet, these may not be the highest priority goals. Allowing greater flexibility in terms of setting quantifiable targets would better capture many aspects of diplomatic engagement that are inherently hard to quantify.

ENTRY-LEVEL OFFICERS

The OIG team commends the chargé d'affaires for rejuvenating the entry-level officer program that was all but nonexistent prior to his arrival as DCM in May 2008. (Four short-term DCMs had paid little or no attention to junior staff development.) While the Embassy still lacks a formal entry-level officer program, it engages meaningfully in all of the activities traditionally associated with this endeavor.

The chargé d'affaires (as DCM) writes the performance review statements for Embassy Bridgetown's six nontenured officers and, uniquely, has taken on the task of drafting reviews for entry-level specialists such as the assistant regional security officer and the office management specialist for security. He hosts themed lunches for entry-level officers including specialists. He includes them in country team as participants and note takers on a rotational basis and has drawn on entry-level officers to observe elections in Grenada as well as to develop a "green Embassy" program. The chargé d'affaires has a standing offer to help those bidding on assignments, including strategies for choosing onward jobs that mesh best with individual talents and developmental needs. When the front office does its annual planning for representational events, it does so in a fashion that leaves the lower ranks feeling that they are on equal ground with other Embassy elements.

MORALE

Visitors to Barbados may marvel at the turquoise waters and crescent-shaped beaches, but official life in the Caribbean islands can be wearing. There is a perception that Washington views service in "the islands" as soft duty and that promotions are hard to come by. Dealings with the host government tend to be formal, if not stiff. Reciprocity issues, such as tax rebates and vehicle importation, frustrate Embassy management, which lacks a lever to accelerate the import or repayment processes. The cost of living — food prices far exceed those of the United States — concerns officers with families in particular. While the OIG team is not in a position to question the cost of living allowance, it appears to merit review.

American employee morale in Barbados has historically ebbed and flowed chiefly in response to the quality of post leadership. At present, morale is generally high. Appreciation for the front office, and both the departed Ambassador and the chargé d'affaires, is evident. Both officers, especially the then DCM, scored well above average on confidential employee questionnaires. These questionnaires also highlighted the work of the mission's two community liaison office coordinators who encourage team activity and spirit.

Front office initiatives have addressed a host of issues including spousal employment and the inevitable mutual housing envy. In so doing, they have fostered an atmosphere of cohesion, collaboration, and coordination. A monthly all-hands meeting, including both Americans and local staff, enhances the sense of team and also sparks input from a talented group of local employees. The DCM's decision to review personally all local employee performance evaluations, and his personal style in relating to the local employees, are models for any front office.

The front office also upgraded the newcomer orientation program to include, among other initiatives, outside speakers such as historians. These presentations help bridge sharp cultural differences between Caribbean and American staff that are somewhat masked by the common language. The transition from a living quarters allowance system to government-leased housing has removed another irritant for new arrivals.

SECURITY

While the security threat for Embassy Bridgetown is generally low, mission managers must deal with a special situation wherein their two regional security officers operate in seven geographically dispersed island nations and seven other dependent territories. Responsibilities also include support for Peace Corps programs in six countries, Embassy St. George's, and consular agencies in Antigua and Martinique. Further, the regional security office combats terrorism through its coordination of a large antiterrorism assistance program, which has trained over 200 law enforcement officers. The former Ambassador travelled regularly throughout the region to support this program.

The chargé d'affaires appropriately maintains a true open-door policy for his security team, with ready access at any time. The front office also supports security programs via the country team mechanism as well as in the larger monthly gathering of all mission staff, American as well as national. This ensures a culture of security at the Embassy, including excellent protection of classified information as evidenced by a low rate of documented violations. The chargé welcomes Marines to his home on frequent occasions and otherwise displays exceptional attention to their well-being.

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OTHER COUNTRIES UNDER EMBASSY BRIDGETOWN CHIEF OF MISSION AUTHORITY

The Ambassador to Embassy Bridgetown is also accredited to the six-member states of the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), all of which gained independence from the United Kingdom between 1974 and 1983. The relatively recent independence of these small nations raised the issue of what kind of diplomatic representation the United States would establish in a time of declining resources. Eventually, the United States established embassies in Grenada and Antigua, headed by permanent charges d'affaires. At present, there is a small Embassy in Grenada and an even smaller consular agency in Antigua.

The island nation of Grenada has approximately 110,000 people in an area of 133 square miles, or twice the size of Washington, DC. The United States and some Caribbean states intervened on the island in 1983 to protect U.S. citizens and counter a Marxist regime with heavy Cuban influence. Embassy St. George's opened immediately thereafter. At its peak, it had 15 officers and about 30 local employees. The only other permanent diplomatic missions now in Grenada are from Venezuela, Cuba, and China.

After years of downsizing, Embassy St. George's no longer fits any of the conventional Embassy or constituent post models. There is one officer and four (soon to be five) local employees. Embassy St. George's is one of the few one-officer U.S. embassies in the world. This officer normally reports to the Ambassador in Embassy Bridgetown through the DCM in Bridgetown. Most administrative support for the Embassy comes from Embassy Bridgetown, WHA's regional center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and the regional information management center. The Washington-based regional consular officer for the western hemisphere provides consular support.

The American officer in Embassy St. George's has chief of mission responsibilities in some areas, but the incumbent's title and status suffer multiple interpretations. The most common title is principal officer — an appellation for the head of a U.S.

consulate but not for an Embassy. The officer also has the ad hoc title of chargé d'affaires (but not specified as either ad interim or permanent), which seemingly accords the incumbent limited chief of mission authority. For example, this officer must inform Washington upon leaving Grenada and must do the annual chief of mission accountability survey. In most other ways, however, the officer is subordinate to Embassy Bridgetown authority, in a fashion similar to that of a consulate's principal officer.

Embassy Grenada maintains a diplomatic note list separate from Embassy Bridgetown's and handles demarches and other communications to the Government of Grenada. The Embassy supports high-level official and U.S. military ship visits to the country. The Embassy's American officer drafts most of the major required political and economic reports, including the human rights report, the trafficking in persons report, the international religious freedom report, and the investment climate statement. The officer sends unclassified or SBU reporting on topics of interest to Washington after clearing the messages with Embassy Bridgetown. The Grenada-based officer also contributes to reporting and memos from Bridgetown.

Approximately 4,000 Americans reside in Grenada. Among these are 1,200 students and faculty at St. George's University, children born in the United States to Grenadian parents, and a substantial retired contingent. Embassy Grenada has a small but steady consular workload, chiefly American citizen services in the form of passport renewals and extra pages, but also deaths, welfare and whereabouts cases, and notariats. Grenadians must go to Embassy Bridgetown to apply for visas.

The historical basis for the establishment of Embassy St. George's has gradually faded in importance. The Embassy in Grenada represents more a response to problems of the past than needs of the present, but for bureaucratic reasons it is not easily dismantled. On several occasions over the past 15 years, most recently in 2006, WHA and/or OIG have recommended closure of Embassy St. George's. Congressional interest may have prevented a closure in the 1990s. Washington parties decided to keep the Embassy open in 2006, apparently to counter the influence of the other permanent diplomatic missions as well as to provide consular services. Nonetheless, the Embassy's workload has shrunk to well less than that of a small consulate in most countries — and far smaller than the workload of some consulates that the Department has closed over the past two decades.

Embassy St. George's provided fewer consular services in 2008 than the consular agency in Antigua where the U.S. Embassy was shuttered some time back. For 2008, Embassy St. George's issued 220 passports and nine reports of birth, performed 246 notariats, and dealt with three illnesses, three deaths, one arrest, 225 services for social security benefits, 1,300 registered American citizens, and five complex children's

issues cases. By comparison, for 2008 the consular agency in Antigua with a smaller staff reported 680 passport applications and 25 reports of birth (sent to Embassy Bridgetown for adjudication and issuance), 30 notariats, one death, 62 arrests, 2,500 registered American citizens, two medical evacuations, and a handful of other services. There was no agent present in Antigua for a significant part of the year.

The OIG team finds no compelling reasons of population size, cultural link, economic relationship, or other factors justifying the maintenance of a small Embassy in Grenada while the other five OECS states of similar interest to the United States have one consular agency. The OIG team reviewed various options for increased coverage in the six OECS nations ranging from virtual presence posts to American presence posts with at least one American officer. Virtual presence posts would not provide enough of a platform for visitors from Embassy Bridgetown. Security issues and associated costs for an American presence post would be prohibitive. American presence posts have rarely been implemented in recent years, in large part because local embassies must provide the personnel and most of the funding.

The OIG team believes that consular agencies provide the best, most cost-effective means to increase diplomatic representation in the OECS. To provide more equitable U.S. diplomatic representation in all six OECS states, adequate essential American citizen services, and a decent office platform for visitors from Embassy Bridgetown, the OIG team favors covering the six OECS nations with three consular agencies. This would involve adding one agency in Saint Lucia and downgrading Embassy St. George's to an agency. Much of the cost of adding consular agencies and staff would be offset by the savings from downsizing Embassy St. George's.

Saint Lucia, with about 165,000 people, has much the largest population of the six OECS nations and is also home to the regional Peace Corps director and staff. An agency in Saint Lucia would also provide better geographic coverage of the OECS nations. Further, Saint Lucia may become the capital for a permanent secretariat if the OECS attains greater political integration. The barebones consular-agency staffing pattern of one or two local employees standard in most of the world may need to be beefed up slightly to two or three local employees for Saint Lucia, Grenada, and Antigua because they are separate countries. WHA and the Bureau of Consular Affairs would need to work out an equitable funding arrangement whereby WHA pays for program activities. A slightly enlarged consular agency for OECS nations would afford a platform to support visiting officers from Embassy Bridgetown as they conduct bilateral diplomacy. The agency in Antigua may need two or more local employees because the chief's position was left vacant for some months in 2008 until the security clearance for a new employee could be obtained.

If Embassy St. George's were downgraded to a consular agency and a third agency were added in Saint Lucia, the workload of Bridgetown's consular section would increase, but not unbearably. The biggest addition to Embassy Bridgetown's workload would result from the consular agent's inability to issue passports or consular reports of birth. Agents are not authorized to perform various other actions independently, but these would not be onerous for Embassy Bridgetown. An agency must be visited once a year by the supervisory Embassy.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should request a conversion in the status of Embassy St. George's from an Embassy to a consular agency. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA and CA)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should increase the staffing of the consular agency in Antigua to at least two local employees. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA and CA)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should create a consular agency in Saint Lucia. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA and CA)

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SECTION

The combined political and economic section, staffed by five officers, one professional associate, one office management specialist, and two national employees, performs well its operational and coordinating responsibility for the mission's three top goals in the region: combating international crime and drugs; bolstering counterterrorism efforts and promoting economic prosperity; and protecting ecosystems and providing humanitarian assistance.

The section works closely with other agencies at the Embassy to advance these goals. It covers amply the political, economic, commercial, labor, and science issues in its portfolio and tries to carry out public diplomacy media events whenever possible. The section chief, a mid-level officer, does not favor one function over others, as often happens in combined political and economic sections. A section with so many staff members to cover just Barbados would not be justified, but the greatly increased time and effort needed to cover five of the six OECS nations (and Grenada, if the Embassy there is downgraded to a consular agency) justifies the staffing. Interpersonal relations in the section are good. A professional associate who started in January 2009 oversees the counternarcotics program run by the Department. This is a short-term substitute for the full-time narcotics affairs officer position that has remained unfilled since 2006. One local employee assists in all traditional functions of the section except for counternarcotics and law enforcement; the other provides administrative assistance in those two areas.

U.S. Assistance to Barbados and Eastern Caribbean

Barbados and the six OECS countries have longstanding ties to the United States. Part of the "third border" of the United States, they are partners on peace, security, law enforcement including counternarcotics, trade, health matters, education issues, and regional democracy. The modest amount of U.S. foreign assistance promotes economic transparency, helps generate investment, and develops human and institutional capacity. U.S. programs also seek to protect the region's fragile ecosystems.

Currently, the Embassy does not have a development assistance working group or cluster. Given the planned large increase in regional HIV/AIDS funding (see below), and the attendant increase in staff, OIG recommended informally that the Embassy establish such a working group.

Due to their small populations and moderate per-capita income, Barbados and the six OECS nations receive modest U.S. foreign assistance. With a per-capita gross domestic product of \$17,300 a year, Barbados is ineligible for most bilateral USAID assistance. While the OECS states have much lower incomes than Barbados, and all are above poverty levels, significant poverty exists throughout these states. The USAID office at Embassy Bridgetown disburses some regional and national funds, including HIV/AIDS relief, biodiversity conservation, trade facilitation and private sector development, and disaster risk reduction, to the various nations. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also has a regional presence in Bridgetown that extends beyond Barbados and the six OECS states. The Peace Corps works in each of the six OECS states but not in Barbados.

In the Caribbean region, HIV/AIDS remains one of the leading causes of death. The small eastern Caribbean nations lack the financial or human resources to adequately combat the disease on their own. The support of the United States is critical in helping the region to mitigate the disease's impact.

Currently, USAID and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention each spend several million dollars combating HIV/AIDS in the region, thus supporting a strategic goal of the mission. The first regional compact, operating as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, will start in May 2009. The U.S. Government will increase funding in the 12-nation region by \$15 million a year. Embassy Bridgetown will establish a three-person administrative office, with the overall regional coordinator in Bridgetown and perhaps one staff member in Embassy Kingston. Embassy Bridgetown's military liaison office will hire a program officer to distribute some of its own separate funding to fight the disease. The Peace Corps will also participate. The combination of old undisbursed money and new regional money for HIV/AIDS will enable the U.S. Government to build partnerships with countries that provide integrated prevention, care, and treatment programs, along with supporting orphans and vulnerable children. The coordinator in Bridgetown will work under the authority of the Department's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, which has overall coordination authority for all U.S. Government spending related to HIV/AIDS. The local coordinator will report to Embassy Bridgetown's DCM.

The Embassy has focused regional assistance to the eastern Caribbean on enhancing the region's capacity to disrupt and deter narcotics trafficking, terrorism financing, money laundering operations, and other financial crimes, as well as on strengthening judicial and legislative support mechanisms that improve law enforcement. The Embassy pursues these objectives with technical assistance, provision of equipment, training programs, and small grants under Diplomatic Security Antiterrorism Assistance funding. More broadly, it does the same with training and infrastructure improvements through International Military and Education Training and Foreign Military Financing accounts.

The Department's major assistance program involves narcotics and law enforcement funds from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Spending for this program in FY 2008 shrank drastically to \$65,000, after previous annual spending of about \$2 million. Projected outlays for FY 2009 amount to \$269,000. Antiterrorism assistance program funds for the region from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security totaled \$350,000 in FY 2008 and might reach the same level in FY 2009. The political section manages narcotics control and law enforcement assistance. The regional security office oversees antiterrorism assistance. In addition, the regional nations benefit from the efforts of Embassy Bridgetown's military liaison office through International Military Education and Training funds (\$650,000 in FY 2008), and Foreign Military Financing funds, which were cut to zero in FY 2008 due to legal issues but will equal \$1 million in FY 2009, along with hospital and civic action ship visits and exercises. Foreign military financing supports a technical assistance field team in Puerto Rico that keeps regional coast guards operating, enabling them to participate in counternarcotics and maritime border patrol operations.

Planning Documents

In recent years, overlapping planning documents have proliferated, and the mission must prepare them with little apparent coordination in Washington. These include the performance plan and review prepared by the USAID office, which looks back one year and ahead one year in an attempt to incorporate all U.S. Government assistance plans. The second is the Mission Strategic Plan, which looks back one year and ahead three. This Department-driven document serves as the template for planning internal Embassy resources, programs and assistance. The political and economic section coordinates the strategic goal papers, and the management section prepares the data tables. Under the planning process for the Department's Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance, the USAID office in Embassy Bridgetown prepares an operational plan to capture Department and USAID assistance, minus any of the new HIV/AIDS money under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

Under the President's new regional compact for HIV/AIDS relief, the Embassy will have to prepare a new country operational plan. The Embassy manages the difficult task of preparing these multiple, overlapping documents as a team and with an eye for consistency. Regarding funding numbers, the Embassy is able to reference its requests against a matrix of standardized goals that helps to simplify matters.

The performance plan and review, the Mission Strategic Plan, and the operating plan are single documents for Embassy Bridgetown, covering Barbados and the six OECS nations. They do not include the dependencies under the authority of Embassy Bridgetown or the other countries handled by other agencies. This makes for a prolix drafting and review process. The Embassy asked Washington how it should track performance indicators — since Embassy elements have such different jurisdictions — but Washington had no useful answer, other than to include whatever the Department covers. In effect, the Embassy is drawing up planning documents that do not track adequately with the areas it covers. Not surprisingly, performance indicators are skewed. The new country operating plan in the offing for the 12 nations in the new regional HIV/AIDS compact will further complicate matters. OIG made some general suggestions and observations in the section below on the burden of required reporting.

Counternarcotics

The arc of islands that define the eastern limit of the Caribbean Sea have become convenient stepping stones for drug traffickers pushing their product from point of origin to consumers in the United States and Europe. Venezuelan traffickers move cocaine from Colombia up through the islands. Marijuana, some grown on the islands, also moves in quantity. Drugs travel in so-called “go fast boats,” which can reach a speed of over 80 knots. Drugs also move in containers on ships and on fishing boats. The available evidence suggests that the volume of drugs transiting the region is increasing. Although the effect is impossible to quantify, some of those working to stem the flow believe that pressure on traffickers being exerted by the Merida initiative, which emphasizes suppression activity in Mexico, is pushing their routes eastward.

The immensity of the sea and the grievous limitations of counternarcotics forces in the Lesser Antilles make checking this movement an outsized challenge. The anti-drug forces on each of the islands are small in number and hampered by substandard equipment. Corruption, inadequate training, and unresponsive judicial systems corrode their effectiveness. Regional cooperation is less than seamless. (b) (2)
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The Embassy believes, and the OIG team concurs, that establishing a vetted maritime unit of the regional security system would pay substantial dividends by increasing the rate and volume of drug seizures.

Competition further complicates regional cooperation. Both Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago aspire to the lead role in security writ large in the eastern Caribbean. Basing assets such as the regional security system in Barbados does not sit well with Trinidad and Tobago. In the name of the Caribbean Community, and without consulting member nations, that country's government canceled the initial meeting of a U.S.-proposed regional security dialogue scheduled for December 2008. Closer to home, the six OECS nations to which Embassy Bridgetown is accredited look askance at what they perceive as the overweening influence of Barbados, which arrogates to itself the status of first among seven equals. Those governments ask Barbados to pay a disproportionate share of the cost of maintaining the regional security service at the same time requesting that the Barbados coast guard patrol their waters.

While the bulk of the drugs pass through the eastern Caribbean to consumers elsewhere, the toxic runoff of the business spills onto the islands. Drug consumption is an issue of concern to the national governments. Underemployed young people are particularly susceptible to the subculture of drugs, illegal guns, gangs, and thrills that trafficking breeds. Over time, the social instability that drug trafficking encourages could become a security issue for the United States — the more so as weaker island governments are ripe for drug-trafficker efforts to exercise veto power over anticorruption initiatives.

At the time of the inspection, two of the six Drug Enforcement Administration's investigator positions at the Bridgetown mission were slated to be moved elsewhere in the region. No one has encumbered the American officer position in the Embassy's narcotics affairs section since June 2006; the chief of the political and economic section oversaw activities funded by the counternarcotics budget until January 2009. At the time of the inspection, the Embassy had found a short-term solution by hiring a former Drug Enforcement Administration officer, under the professional associates program, to manage the now modest narcotics assistance program. That person is married to an Embassy staff member and will leave Barbados at the conclusion of the employee's tour in mid-2010.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should fill the vacant slot in the narcotics affairs section. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with DGHR and INL)

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs continues to fund space for the narcotics affairs unit, along with the salary of a single local employee. The program budget allocation from that bureau sank from a high of about \$2 million in previous years to as low as \$65,000 in FY 2008; the FY 2009 budget is \$269,000. Recent OIG interviews with bureau personnel indicated a worrisome unfamiliarity with the Embassy; one interlocutor did not realize that Embassy Bridgetown is accredited to seven separate countries and also covers numerous possessions of France, Great Britain, and Netherlands.

All seven of those countries have felt the impact of the drop in counternarcotics funding from the United States. (b) (2)

The chargé d'affaires, who held the narcotics assistance portfolio in a previous tour in Bridgetown, knowledgeably oversees the mission's counternarcotics activities. The law enforcement working group meets weekly under his direction. Representatives from all relevant section and agency heads, including the military, participate. In part because most agencies are short on both human and financial resources, teamwork is good and a spirit of camaraderie prevails. Turf battles are few and do not rise to a level requiring management's intervention. Coordinating the training of host country officials is an ongoing challenge.

Law Enforcement

As noted in the executive direction section of this report, Embassy Bridgetown hosts representatives from an array of Federal Government agencies, including the military, which deal with law enforcement. The chargé d'affaires exercises collegial and effective control over their programs and personnel. Well-informed about ongoing issues, he achieves in the law enforcement working group the kind of collaboration and information sharing that minimizes conflicts and duplication.

As the countries of the West Indies readied themselves to host the cricket world cup in 2007, they approached the United States for assistance in beefing up their security. Out of that effort grew a "joint regional command center," housed in an office building on the same compound on which the Embassy is located. The center

includes government personnel from the islands along with representatives from the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency, which rotates officers for periods lasting from 45 to 90 days. The primary task of those officers is using the "advanced passenger information system," which identifies criminals traveling by airplane or ship, along with other databases that track criminals, fugitives, and potential terrorists. Working regionally, under the aegis of the command center, permits the U.S. Government access to important data that regional governments would otherwise be reluctant to share.

The growing presence of U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel, and the volume of work their monitoring generates, presents a management challenge to Embassy Bridgetown. The implications, including unfunded costs, of supporting high numbers of personnel on temporary duty are discussed elsewhere in this report.

A previous DCM tasked the regional security office with oversight and liaison with the Customs and Border Protection staff. In practice, this translates to a much-increased workload because the two regional security officers play a critical role in a jury-rigged system of coordinating efforts to apprehend fugitives across 14 jurisdictions in the eastern Caribbean.

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Political Reporting and Analysis, Counterterrorism

The political and economic section provides significant political, economic, and commercial reporting, which Washington end users praised for volume and quality. The section is responsible for Barbados and all of the OECS nations save Grenada, which is covered mainly by the officer at Embassy St. George's. The reports done by Embassy Bridgetown were cited for covering a broad range of political, economic, and commercial topics in several countries, including cables such as 09 Bridgetown 114, 08 Bridgetown 701, 08 Bridgetown 646, 08 Bridgetown 237, and 08 Bridgetown 125. Washington readers appreciated these spot reports, including those on local Islamic communities and diplomatic ties with Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, and China. Nonetheless, Washington would welcome more volume in all areas, including biographic reporting. The provision of more travel and representation funds would facilitate this increase in quality reporting.

Representation and Travel

Given the small size of the nations that Embassy Bridgetown is accredited to, the Embassy reporting officers strive to report on topics of general or regional interest in Washington. In many ways, the more important function of the political and economic section is to make representations to host governments on a frequent, in-person basis to show the flag and build official contacts for U.S. operational and policy issues that may arise. If the Embassy lacks sufficient travel and representation funds, the officers in Bridgetown, with all of the costs attendant on posting them overseas, offer little advantage over someone based in Washington in terms of covering the eastern Caribbean.

Political-Military Activities

The political and economic section coordinates its issues with the military liaison office, which has the only permanent Department of Defense positions at the Embassy other than one person in the Naval Criminal Investigative Service office, which opened in September 2008. A small U.S. Air Force tracking station is located on Antigua. Some limited status of forces agreements in some of the nations cover visiting U.S. military personnel, but the lack of a full status of forces agreement in most states requires that the Embassy's military liaison office exchange diplomatic notes with the relevant host government to cover many visiting U.S. military personnel.

The military liaison office takes the lead in handling limited Foreign Military Financing credits, International Military Education Training, and military procurement opportunities. Its commander reports directly to the U.S. military Southern Command in Miami, Florida. In the absence of a Defense attaché at the Embassy, the military liaison office handles ad hoc requests for assistance from the Defense attaché at Embassy Caracas and from elements of the Department of Defense in Washington, for such matters as air clearances and other traditional Defense attaché work. The Embassy's military liaison office also acts as the coordinating hub for a series of long-term temporary duty personnel. Some arrive with the intent to roll over short-term tours for a few years to conduct training and regional programs under chief of mission authority, including anticrime professionalization training and civic and humanitarian programs. The costs the Embassy bears for these temporary duty personnel have not been fully captured by the Embassy's shared cost procedures (see management section below). The number of Department of Defense visitors in the various countries covered by Embassy Barbados can vary considerably, peaking when ships visit for civic and humanitarian work.

Trade Promotion, Environment, Science, and Technology

Despite limited financial resources, the political and economic section has done an outstanding job of promoting U.S. commercial interests in the wake of the Department of Commerce's 2007 departure from Embassy Bridgetown. The section's deputy takes the lead, expanding his original portfolio to include much more than just labor affairs. Embassy financial resources in the commercial area are limited to small business facilitation incentive funds from the Department that allow political and economic staff to travel for commercial training and some commercial activity. These funds equaled \$26,000 in FY 2008 and may grow to \$42,300 in FY 2009. The increase of these scarce Department funds reflects the self-generated efforts of the section.

The Embassy does not have an economic and commercial cluster or working group. The OIG team found this acceptable, given the low-level, intermittent nature of trade and commercial issues in the Embassy apart from activity handled entirely by the political and economic section. Ad hoc efforts by the political and economic section to communicate with the few relevant sections or agencies regarding commercial matters appear adequate.

Bilateral trade statistics vary in quality, and U.S. foreign direct investment figures are not readily available. Exporters from the seven nations under Embassy Bridgetown enjoy preferential access to the U.S. market under the Caribbean Basin

Initiative, with the program up for renewal in September 2010. While the governments of various nations profess interest in expanding trade talks with the United States under the umbrella of the regional group of Caribbean nations, CARICOM, talks have not progressed significantly. The Embassy coordinates with other U.S. embassies in the CARICOM's single market and economy initiative, but in actual practice the degree of CARICOM integration is minimal.

The political and economic section works closely with the Department of Commerce regional Foreign Commercial Service office in Embassy Santo Domingo, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Caribbean trade office in Miami, and Trade Development Agency officials in Washington. The section has worked hard in recent years to create an American Chamber of Commerce in Saint Lucia, to start chambers in other OECS nations, and to revive a moribund chapter in Barbados. These chambers will allow the section to benefit from their resources. The section will also solicit in-kind contributions from U.S. firms to conduct 4th of July celebrations in OECS nations. The OIG team advised the section to follow in-kind regulations carefully and to consult with the Department's Office of the Legal Adviser's ethics unit if questions arise.

The section responds mainly to local requests for trade facilitation and advocacy from U.S. firms. Under a recently concluded memorandum of understanding with the Department of Commerce, and using Department business promotion funds, two section officers and one local employee will travel to Foreign Commercial Service offices in Embassy Santo Domingo to receive training and certification to engage in some of the Department of Commerce's standardized business promotion programs, including its gold key service.

The section's deputy coordinates environment, science, and technology issues. He works with USAID and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the HIV/AIDS and biodiversity areas. The section responds to day-to-day requirements from Washington such as presenting demarches on global issues and requesting host government support in multinational bodies.

The Burden of Required Reporting

Since the abolition of the worldwide special Embassy program, small missions devote disproportionate time to all-Embassy assignments, which pose much less of a burden for major U.S. Embassies. St. George's has just one officer to do all the reports. Embassy Bridgetown has five officers in its political and economic section but must do the full set of reports not only on Barbados but also on the five other countries it covers. Embassy Bridgetown and St. George's thus face a daunting challenge

of reporting even though their countries have parliamentary democracies, clean elections, high respect for human rights and professional police forces. Bridgetown staggers under the load of annual reports, including over 60 mandated by Congress (which would increase if St. George's closes), on subjects ranging from human rights to religious freedom, trafficking in persons, and investment disputes, among others. Each is based on a separately defined statute with different reporting schedules and standards, some in conflict. Many of the mandated reports carry the possibility of sanctions. Thus, dialogue with host governments can be prickly and beyond the skill or experience of the relatively junior officers at small embassies who typically craft these reports.

Above all, the OIG team favors a simplification of the different deadlines, guidelines, and timelines for these many reports, especially for those not mandated by Congress. Ideally, small missions like Bridgetown would prepare an omnibus report covering these required topics at one time, once a year. Embassy Bridgetown could then draw upon individual sections needed for reports due later in the year, as none of these reports relies heavily on timely information, given the lengthy processing procedures in Washington.

At a minimum, the Department might amalgamate mandated reports into logical subgroups. For example, an omnibus economic report could address the investment disputes, intellectual property, and national trade estimate reports. A homeland security report could cluster the counterterrorism, money-laundering, and narcotics reports. A human rights and democracy report could embrace the human rights, religious freedom, trafficking in persons, advancing freedom and democracy, and labor reports.

Further, the OIG team believes that the Department could discuss how to simplify certain more complex and overlapping reports such as the lengthy Mission Strategic Plan, operating plan, performance plan and review, and the country operating plan required by USAID and the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance. In so doing, small embassies and missions with little likelihood of receiving major assistance would prepare an Internal Revenue Service 1040-A-style "short form."

Overall, the OIG team finds that the current mandated annual report system invites duplication of effort and undercuts the effectiveness of individual reports. For one thing, the time officers spend researching and writing these reports is time not spent addressing the serious, global, underlying issues they reflect. The goal of these reports, after all, is not just to publicize the issues under scrutiny but to provide a platform for action.

The OIG team also notes that in 2008 the Department initiated a variety of worldwide data collection exercises, including among others, those related to ambassadorial funds, crisis and emergency planning, and global partnership. In some instances, these requests seek material already submitted in other forums. At times, the Department-provided data processing software is not user-friendly and still has many problems that need to be addressed.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The number of people working in the public affairs section of the Bridgetown Embassy is smaller than the number of island nations to which the Embassy is accredited. Distance, logistics, and a paucity of resources combine to create a formidable challenge to the mission. “Telling America’s story” is a core function for an Embassy in the Caribbean, where the United States has been and will always be a gigantic fact of life on the psychological horizon. Negative impressions of Americans and the U.S. Government readily find a platform on the airwaves and the front pages. In Barbados and the other eastern Caribbean nations, the United States is all too easily depicted as the country that deports dangerous criminals to their shores and rejects visa applicants without a smile.

A capable public affairs officer directs a vigorous effort to counter those negative stereotypes in seven small but separate countries. The chargé d’affaires is attuned to the importance of public diplomacy, including the role of culture in generating goodwill. He explicitly backs the public affairs officer’s campaign to enlist officers from other sections and agencies to build public events into their schedules, especially when they travel. The section itself has set a goal of reaching two islands with each of its individual programs.

Resources shape and constrain public diplomacy in Bridgetown. The public affairs officer has dramatically increased the number of programs the mission carries out, and media coverage is more than respectable. Taking on the eternal bureaucratic conundrum — doing more with less — he has charged all his employees with responsibilities for putting together programs. Although the intention was laudable, the experiment is not entirely successful. Not all of them have the skills, temperament, or interest to do program work.

More generally, a small number of people labor at a large number of public diplomacy tasks. While they are dedicated professionals who believe in their mis-

sion, the number of programs, activities and responsibilities they have taken on has reached saturation level. (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

The Embassy has requested a second position for an American officer in public diplomacy, along with an additional local staff position in the same section, through the mission strategic plan. The OIG team believes that the importance of public diplomacy in a region so close to the United States, coupled with the immense challenge of sustaining a meaningful public presence on seven islands, more than justifies the Embassy's request. During the course of the inspection, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs approved the American officer position for inclusion in the President's 2010 budget, obviating the need for the formal recommendation the OIG team would have left on that subject.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Bridgetown should create an additional position for locally employed staff in the public affairs section, and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs should fund the position. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA)

Pending those actions, the Embassy could shift some of the section's responsibilities for programming as currently assigned. The OIG team left an informal recommendation on that subject.

Exchanges

The International Visitor program meets a critical standard in linking the grantees and the programs in which they participate to the mission's goals and priorities. The public affairs section staff explains and promotes the program competently within the mission. The OIG team found inappropriate nominees in the current slate. The local employee who manages the program is new to the job and has received training only in using the database. The program would benefit from the employee's deeper understanding of the program and its goals, along with the nuts and bolts of running it.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, should send the local staff member who runs the International Visitor program for training specific to the program. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with ECA)

Because of intense, competing demands, the public affairs officer has devoted less than optimal time to the International Visitor program. Given the importance of the program and its high profile among mission activities, he should focus on this activity throughout the coming cycle, ensuring full mission involvement at every stage of the process. The OIG team left an informal recommendation to that effect.

The director of the information resource center also runs the Fulbright program. Because the latter is modest in scope, this is a workable, if not ideal, arrangement. As the mission seeks an appropriate role for the information resource center (discussed below), expanded outreach work may make managing both the center and the Fulbright program untenable.

The Embassy has done a commendable job nurturing an alumni organization into being. They worked hard and smart to bring together former grantees of the Fulbright and International Visitor programs. The first meeting was held in October 2008. Like similar Departmental organizations around the world, this one will succeed or flounder based on whether it finds a mission and purpose beyond the merely social. Observers of the Barbadian scene suggest that the country does not have a culture of volunteerism. Having properly invested time and effort in launching the organization, the Embassy should work with appropriate discretion helping members shape its future. The OIG team left an informal recommendation on that subject.

Information Resource Center

The information resource center occupies an attractive space in the chancery adjacent to the public affairs section. It has subscribed to important databases that are not widely available in Barbados, although access to the “free” Internet is common on the island. These databases represent a rich potential to attract targeted professional contacts whom the Embassy would like to influence. The center is not heavily trafficked, in part because security concerns complicate access to the Embassy. The regional information officer, a Washington-based specialist from the Bureau of International Information Programs, recently visited the mission. The officer determined that the center needs to find its niche and define its mission. The OIG team emphatically concurs with that assessment. The Embassy has explored issuing a form of identification to frequent users to facilitate their entry; at the time of the inspection, none had been issued.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Bridgetown should issue appropriate identification to users of the information resource center identified by public affairs section staff. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Electronic outreach by the director of the center is respectable for an operation of its modest size, but the Embassy website lacks dynamism, and the public affairs officer is working with the center's local employee to improve it.

American Corners

The Embassy has submitted a request to the Bureau of International Information Programs for two American corners, to be located on two of the islands to whose government the Embassy is accredited. (American corners provide bibliographical and other program resources for a dedicated space housed in a local institution such as a library.) If the Embassy's request succeeds, the corners may significantly bolster the mission's presence. The OIG team commends the initiative but cautions that these new American corners will place an additional burden on a public affairs section staff already under strain.

CONSULAR SECTION

Embassy Bridgetown's consular district encompasses seven island nations and five overseas departments, posing out-of-the-ordinary challenges to a consular section that is adequately staffed and housed but overdue for a management tune-up.

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(b) (2) The section also needs to provide more training for local employees and ensure cross training so that employees can backstop each other.

The section consists of an FS-02 officer occupying the FS-01 section chief slot, an FS-03 in the FS-02 deputy slot, four entry-level officers, two consular agents, and 15 local staff. At the time of the inspection, the section chief had been present for not quite 4 months and the deputy for less than 1 month. One local staff position had been vacant for nearly 4 months, and one officer had curtailed and left just the week before. One consular agent had resigned in mid-2008; a replacement had not yet received the necessary security clearance.

The section has sufficient work space although in a less-than-optimal configuration. For the public, there are two small waiting areas linked by an open-air walkway. The local press periodically focuses on complaints from celebrity visa applicants who must cross this walkway in the rain.

If the consular district consisted of a single nation, the section's responsibilities would be easily manageable from Bridgetown. Instead, the consular section must work with many host countries, each unique in political, commercial, legal, and economic protocols. Even the tiny Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis has its own central authority and a full set of government ministries, courts, police departments and prisons. Communication with this web of authorities can only be effective face to face. Acknowledging this complexity, the Bureau of Consular Affairs provides the section with travel funds every year to ensure essential contact with government officials and the two consular agencies as well as with American citizen residents, visitors in distress, and prisoners.

Consular Controls

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Consular management could do better in terms of ordering its priority tasks. The Department encourages consular sections to forward category 1 case files to the (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2) for scanning and storage, unless they can readily accom-

moderate this work locally. Bridgetown's consular management, however, has made scanning a high-priority task while neglecting the growing backlog of nonimmigrant visa interview appointments. The inspection team informally recommends that consular management review its time management and work priorities so as to concentrate on high-value tasks first.

Consular Travel

Although consular management is aware that it receives travel funds from the Bureau of Consular Affairs, it is not otherwise adequately informed on the subject. Consular managers did not know from which fund the money was allotted, when it was allotted, how much has been used, and how much remains. OIG research, however, determined that the former consular section chief had requested the money from machine-readable visa funds. The current consular chief was provided a spreadsheet explaining all allotments and payments to date.

There is no comprehensive travel plan. Consular officers often range outside of Barbados, but required trips, such as visits to American prisoners, are not differentiated from optional calls on local government officials or American citizens residing on islands other than Barbados. The consular officers assist other mission sections by performing occasional contact and reporting work during consular trips, even if doing so prolongs their travel. The Bureau of Consular Affairs should not be the sole source of travel funds; instead, WHA has an obligation to pay for most if not all Embassy travel, including consular operations. The consular section was not focused on the need to keep some travel money in reserve in case of a crisis— anything from political violence to an earthquake — that might require a U.S. consular presence. The OIG team also notes that WHA has not funded travel by consular officers, even in situations where the monies should be coming from program funds provided by the regional bureau rather than the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

Local staff members never travel outside of Barbados and do not know police, immigration, and justice officials in other countries covered by Embassy Bridgetown. Consular regulations allow local staff members to perform prison visits and many other duties that involve travel, including checking on federal benefits recipients. During a 2-year tour of duty, a consular officer might travel to meet a local authority once or twice, then pass that contact to another officer. Such hand-offs do not build the long-term relationships that are essential to consular work. Local employees can and should create and maintain those relationships through regular travel. The Embassy does not have a consular travel plan for officers and local employees that includes mandatory visits to consular agents and prisoners and allows for any

emergencies that might arise. The plan should be shared with other mission sections to allow consular employees to assist other mission elements. Greater provision of travel funds by WHA would facilitate cross-section cooperation.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Bridgetown should prepare a consular travel plan that includes travel by local staff as appropriate and is shared with other mission sections. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

An as-yet-unsigned memorandum of understanding between the United States and Antigua in settlement of a longstanding World Trade Organization gambling dispute contains a provision for the Department to “establish a program of regular visits of consular officers to Antigua and Barbuda for the purpose of conducting visa interviews.” Bridgetown consular management is already devoting undue time in advance planning for this program. Realistically, the signing of this memorandum of understanding is likely a year or more away and implementation further still. The OIG team views it as premature to address funding and execution of these visa-related responsibilities.

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The consular section’s training program for officers and local staff needs attention and a systematic approach. The training should include interview coaching for officers and on-line classes, regional conferences, and training in Washington for locally employed staff. Interviewing officers ask visa applicants the sorts of questions discouraged by consular training, waste time reviewing easily-forged documents, and otherwise do not handle cases efficiently. Local staff training is “watch-and-do.” The section chief has, however, begun writing standard operating procedures for major consular functions. The deputy is gathering records from the local staff to create a coherent training history and plan for them.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Bridgetown should develop a complete orientation and training plan for consular officers and local staff. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Consular management lacks a precise knowledge of unit workloads and what such loads mean in terms of entry-level consular officer time. Officers rotate from

unit to unit, serving full-time in American citizen services and in immigrant visas even though there is no need for a full-time officer in either unit. The backlog of nonimmigrant visa interview appointments has grown from 12 to 84 days in less than 2 months during the section's traditional slow season, because of management's failure to commit enough officer time to interviews.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Bridgetown should revise its rotation plan for entry-level consular officers, assigning primary responsibility for certain consular units to individual officers but also including substantive daily work in the nonimmigrant visa unit for every officer. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

American Citizen Services

More than 13,000 American citizens are registered in Embassy Bridgetown's consular district, and two million tourists visit every year. These citizens encounter few situations that prompt them to seek assistance from the Embassy. Most arrest cases are drug-related and occur in the British Virgin Islands for which Embassy Bridgetown has consular responsibility.

Visas

Embassy Bridgetown's consular managers ensure that interviewing officers are alert to shifting political and economic situations in the entire district. This awareness is correctly used to perform fair and realistic adjudication of nonimmigrant and immigrant visa applications.

Consular management should, however, revise the nonimmigrant visa appointment system. Effective consular sections use appointment systems to balance workloads, not to defer work. The numbers of appointments per day are far less than for other U.S. embassies with similar customer bases.

The Bureau of Consular Affairs currently requires that travelers on the strictest time schedules — F1 and J1 students, B1 businessmen, and B2 travelers with genuine emergencies — be given priority or even be exempted from appointment systems if necessary to ensure timely travel to the United States. Over time, the consular section has added to the categories of applicants accepted on a walk-in basis, eventually creating an alphabet soup of exemptions so extensive that there is no way to know how many visa applicants will appear on any given day. All the while, the actual appointment system has accumulated a backlog almost 3 months long.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Bridgetown should increase its nonimmigrant visa interview appointments within norms established by the Bureau of Consular Affairs to reduce the backlog to less than 5 calendar days and then not exceed this 5-day maximum backlog other than in exceptional cases. It should also recalibrate its acceptance of walk-in applicants to include only those meriting special, immediate service. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2008 \$000
State – D&CP	28	0	20	48	\$2,037
State – ICASS	4	5	52	61	4,496
State – Public Diplomacy	1	0	4	5	419
State - MRV	0	2	3	5	210
State – Diplomatic Security	1	0	13	14	985
State – Marine Security	1	0	4	5	214
State – Representation	0	0	0	0	32
State – OBO	1	0	0	1	10,155
State - INL	1	0	1	2	374
Treasury	1	0	0	1	107
MILGROUP	3DH,4TDY	0	2	9	257
USAID	1DH, 1TCN	1	6	9	10,189
DEA	8	1		9	205
Peace Corps	3	0	9	12	2,600
CDC	2	1	1	4	279
NCIS	1			1	112
GRENADA-PROG	1	0	4	5	272
GRENADA-OBO					129
GRENADA -REP					3
GRENADA -DS					189
Totals	62	10	119	191	\$33,264

The management section experienced significant personnel turbulence until the summer of 2008. The arrival of several new officers at that time has stabilized and improved operations. Nonetheless, the Embassy still suffers from the lack of financial and personnel resources from Washington. The lack of resources particularly

affects the ability of the facilities maintenance officer to do preventive maintenance on the new Embassy building, as well as correct deficiencies in the building. The management counselor, who arrived in September 2008, is the fourth officer in this position in 2 years. The financial management officer position has been vacant since May 2008, and no replacement is in sight. A significant gap existed in general services operations, where for several months a first-tour assistant general services officer provided the only on-site American presence. The facilities maintenance officer position was also vacant for 10 months. Fortunately for the Embassy, highly qualified and talented local employees lead both the financial management and human resources units. Good as they are, these employees are not in a position to convince the Department that the Embassy is grossly underfunded and seriously understaffed, particularly in local employee positions in facilities maintenance and other units. The management counselor has not achieved much on that score, either.

At the time of the inspection, less than halfway through the fiscal year, the Embassy had received one advance of funds but needed another. Records showed that, prior to the advance, the Embassy was already in a negative position and would again be short of funds almost immediately. The Department promised that a second advance was forthcoming. This advance could only temporarily provide relief and would not come close to fulfilling requirements.

EMBASSY FUNDING

The bureau established targets for FY 2009 that appear to have ignored both historical costs and increased requirements due to the acquisition of a new building in January 2007. These inadequate targets contributed significantly to underfunding the Embassy. For example, electricity costs in FY 2008 exceeded \$950,000, yet the directed target for FY 2009 was just over \$402,000, an amount that would cover less than 6 months of operation. The Embassy estimated that it would need about \$975,000. Official travel and maintenance costs were also drastically cut by the Department without any apparent valid explanation.

The move to the new building has also resulted in a significant number of unfunded requirements if the building is to be adequately maintained, thereby reducing future expenditures. These requirements are estimated to cost about \$950,000 in FY 2009. WHA has recognized the shortfall and will recommend a \$739,000 increase in mid-year funding.

give new employees a copy of the book. All employee evaluations are current. The evaluation process in place is exemplary due in large part to the involvement of the chargé d'affaires and the emphasis he places on the process. He personally reviews all evaluations and sends back those requiring modifications or corrections.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT UNIT

Overall, financial operations are effective. A local employee financial management specialist supervises the staff on a day-to-day basis and is authorized to certify vouchers up to \$15,000. The financial management officer position has been vacant for over a year, and a replacement has yet to be identified. An officer from the Florida regional center visits the Embassy about every two months and otherwise provides financial management support.

Cashier operations scored well on both the OIG workplace and quality of life questionnaire and the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) customer satisfaction survey.

The Embassy sorely needs a financial management officer to alleviate the pressures now faced by the local staff, ensure timely funding, and put in place procedures to recover support costs when applicable. A lack of candidates/bidders for the position may be attributed in part to the relatively low grade (FO-3) of the position. The Embassy also needs an on-site human resources officer. Combining the two disciplines and raising the grade (FO-2) could result in qualified, experienced personnel bidding.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Bridgetown should request, and the Bureau of Human Resources in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs should approve, the upgrade of position number 51-034000 financial management officer from FO-03 to FO-02. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with DGHR and WHA)

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The ICASS council last met on January 14, 2009. One major concern was the recognized shortfall in funding of about \$1.5 million. The council proposed steps to reduce costs such as operating generators instead of using city power, turning off lights, and adjusting temperatures building-wide. These measures would be in addition to cuts already made in contract costs, procurement of office supplies, and postponing building repairs. While these actions may have a slight impact on funding requirements, in all likelihood they will engender extra costs in future years. In addition, there are no funds to provide required regional support to the seven countries and numerous possessions covered by Embassy Bridgetown. Funding for the Embassy has to be increased to a realistic level.

Some costs of operations can be offset by charging agencies for support provided for employees at posts on long-term temporary duty assignments. The cable State 081046 dated July 28, 2008, recognized the problem. Paragraph 2 states “decreasing budgets, scarce resources and seemingly constant growth in mission and staffing has put a significant strain on many posts. A frequent refrain is that the number of temporary duty personnel has increased substantially and is eroding the ICASS platform because most temporary duty personnel do not pay into ICASS.” The cable established thresholds of \$500 for 7 days and encouraged establishment of temporary duty policies. The Embassy’s temporary duty policy and procedures appear to have lapsed. In FY 2007, the Embassy billed other agencies for costs of \$68,000. There were no billings made in FY 2008, and none had been made for FY 2009 at the time of the inspection. Recovery of costs incurred, if billed, will be significant. Records showed 23 employees on long-term temporary duty — some are assigned for 11 months. The OIG team estimates that costs amounting to \$125,000 can be recovered.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Bridgetown should implement procedures to charge agencies to recover support costs for employees on long-term temporary duty. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

Facilities maintenance operations are understaffed and underfunded. The unit is led by an experienced and engaged facilities management officer who arrived October 2008 and quickly identified and tried to address several major facilities problems.

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Facilities maintenance staffing falls far short of the necessary positions. The unit has 13 active staff members, including the facilities management officer, three administrative positions, and three gardeners dedicated to the official residences. The remaining six trade positions support the chancery and over 60 residential units. The facilities maintenance section has a backlog of approximately 600 preventive maintenance work orders, 200 housing work orders, and more than 100 general work orders pending action.

The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations conducted a workload analysis of the facilities maintenance staff in 2005, prior to the move into the new Embassy building. The analysis recommended that Embassy Bridgetown increase the total number of maintenance employees from 9 to 17. Four of the recommended positions have still not been added, specifically a storekeeper, two air conditioning technicians, and an electrician. The facilities management officer identified four more positions as necessary to meet ICASS service standards and physical security requirements, including a metal worker/welder, an inspector/contract specialist, a painter, and another electrician.

The facilities maintenance engineer is currently acting as an inspector, and spends 100 percent of his time on administrative issues. The section should have an inspector/contract specialist to manage these duties and the facilities maintenance engineer should return to conducting facilities maintenance functions.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should establish and fund an inspector/contract specialist position. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA)

The facilities maintenance section is responsible for approximately \$3 million of spare parts to support several million dollars of dynamic equipment. At the time of the inspection, there was no recorded inventory of parts and materials, and no internal control procedures to maintain accountability for parts, supplies, and materials. The 2005 workload analysis recommended that Embassy Bridgetown establish a storekeeper position.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should establish and fund a storekeeper position. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA)

Recommendation 20: Embassy Bridgetown should establish and implement control procedures to maintain accountability of parts, supplies, and materials. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

The facilities maintenance unit does not have enough trade specialists on staff to perform routine preventive maintenance and repair. In particular, the unit needs specialists to work on air conditioning system replacements and maintenance, (b) (2) (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2) and preparation of housing, among other responsibilities. Without increasing the number of full-time engaged laborers, this work will require costly contracts and overburden the section.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should establish and fund the following trade positions: two electricians, two heating, ventilation and air conditioning technicians, a metal worker/welder, and a painter. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA)

Embassy Bridgetown prepared its last budget request for facilities maintenance using cost estimates based on the previous Embassy facilities. As a result, the facilities maintenance operation is severely underfunded. (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
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There is also a lack of funding for the mission's regional facilities maintenance responsibilities in St. George's, Grenada. The facilities management officer must periodically visit the chancery and chargé d'affaires' residence in St. George's to oversee facilities conditions (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)



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The facilities maintenance unit was just beginning the use of WebPASS electronic work orders at the time of the OIG inspection. The new work order clerk, administrative assistant, and facilities management officer were all working together to develop procedures and controls that would make the best use of the electronic system.

The unit’s work order paper files were poorly organized and lacked any customer follow-up or evaluation at close-out. The OIG team informally recommended that new procedures be instituted and include measures to solicit customer feedback and include this with the work order files.

GENERAL SERVICES UNIT

The general services office provides a satisfactory level of service — and does so despite the challenge of having to serve a growing Embassy community with fewer administrative staff. The general services staffing was decreased by the reduction-in-force in 2007, just as Embassy Bridgetown moved into a new chancery. A first-tour assistant general services officer led the office for several months in 2008, during which he improved the relationship with the interagency housing board and implemented clear procedural controls for the assignment of services. Despite the dedication and leadership of the general services office, the staff is overtaxed and cannot continue to perform at such high levels if the Embassy continues to increase in size without a corresponding increase in administrative support.

Procurement and Contracting

Embassy Bridgetown is a participant in the locally employed staff procurement pilot program, overseen by the Department's office of the procurement executive, whereby local employees are given warrants as procurement agents. The procurement agent was granted the authority to sign purchase orders and contracts up to \$25,000 in a memorandum of agreement executed in January 2007, and renewed in April 2008. The mission's participation in this program has reduced the time for completing routine purchase orders and, most important, provided continuity in procurements during the turnover of American personnel.

The general services office supervisor is responsible for reviewing procurement activity on a monthly basis, performing spot reviews and analysis, and providing reports of the benefits and challenges of the program to the Department's Office of the Procurement Executive on a quarterly basis. These reports are necessary to provide Congress, OIG, and the Office of the Procurement Executive with information when making a decision on a permanent program.

The senior general services officer assumed responsibility for procurement supervision shortly after the first quarterly report was submitted for the renewed pilot program, but did not review the memorandum of agreement for the pilot program. She currently reviews and initials problematic or unusual purchase orders, while the procurement agent signs the routine orders. The general services office has not made the two subsequent quarterly reports or continued the monthly review of procurement activity. These reports are necessary to assure oversight of procurement as well as provide information on the pilot program to the Office of the Procurement Executive.

Recommendation 25: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should review and complete all oversight and reporting requirements for the locally employed staff procurement pilot program. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with A)

Motor Pool

Embassy Bridgetown's motor pool is understaffed and under-resourced. The staff includes four chauffeurs, one of whom is dedicated to the chief of mission. The DCM's driver also serves as a general driver for the mission, whenever possible. Drivers frequently work overtime. Motor pool services are in high demand, in

good part due to the high number of temporary duty personnel assigned to Embassy Bridgetown. The vehicles are generally reserved for the longest distance official trips. The motor pool dispatch directs those requesting shorter trips to use taxis and submit vouchers for reimbursement. The workload study conducted by the regional human resources officer recommended hiring another chauffeur, and OIG agreed.

The motor pool supervisor is responsible for all administrative duties related to motor vehicle services and is also the dispatch officer. He often takes home paper-work in order to keep up. When he is not available, his responsibilities devolve on another section of the general services office. No cross-training program, however, is available. A part-time eligible family member administrative assistant position would increase efficiency in the office as well as provide continuity when the motor pool supervisor is on leave or otherwise unavailable.

Recommendation 26: Embassy Bridgetown should establish and fund a part-time eligible family member administrative assistant position for motor vehicle services. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

The motor pool vehicles are in good condition, but controls for daily and weekly vehicle safety checks are not enforced. Some inventory records contained inaccurate data. The OIG team addressed both of these problems in informal recommendations.

Real Property

Embassy Bridgetown is challenged by a growing American presence. The mission leased a new chancery in 2007 that is spacious and well organized, as well as equipped with state of the art support systems. Embassy Bridgetown also leases a small warehouse near the chancery from the same landlord. The Embassy recently became a furnished mission, which has increased the warehouse inventory significantly. The mission's storage needs have outgrown the existing warehouse space, and Embassy Bridgetown is in the process of leasing the adjoining warehouse for storage and a maintenance workshop.

The new warehouse lease is currently on hold, pending a decision from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. The bureau approved a lease waiver for a 5-year fixed-rate in the amount of \$90,000 a year for the new space. After approval of the lease, the new facilities management officer identified several upgrades needed to bring the space into compliance with occupational safety and health requirements. The landlord agreed to implement some of these improvements under the approved

agreement. Other improvements, however, would have to be made at the mission's expense, estimated at \$43,000. The landlord offered to amortize the additional expenses over the life of the lease, increasing the annual lease to \$100,920. This is still less than comparable warehouses in Bridgetown and maintains the benefit of close proximity to the chancery. Embassy Bridgetown has submitted a request to Washington for additional funding to cover these expenses and is waiting for an official response.

Recommendation 27: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should fund the necessary improvements to Embassy Bridgetown's new warehouse space. (Action: OBO)

The chief of mission residence and the DCM residence are both government-owned properties. The chief of mission residence is located nearly an hour from the chancery; however, the location provides an excellent venue for representation with ample outdoor space for the July 4th event and a fine view of the western coast. The residence was vacant at the time of the inspection and showed modest signs of wear that merit attention before the arrival of a new ambassador. The swimming pool in the back of the yard requires the installation of a pool fence and other required safety measures; this is addressed in the recommendation below for all housing.

The housing pool contained 52 leased residences at the time of the inspection, and the general services office expected to add 9 more in the course of the coming year. The inter-agency housing board frequently receives orders from Washington for new personnel a month or less before the arrival date. This makes it difficult for homes to be either leased or vacated and prepared for new occupants in a timely manner. Many new arrivals must use temporary housing for a number of weeks. The board and general services office are working together to minimize this problem.

Embassy Bridgetown leases 10 houses that have residential pools. The mission's occupational safety and health officer inspected these pools in December of 2008, and found deficiencies in all of them. The OIG team's inspection of housing also noted deficiencies in pool safety precautions. While some leases provide for the landlord to install a pool fence, the leases generally do not include the other safety requirements. The OIG team informally recommended that the Embassy include a swimming pool safety checklist with the property condition survey used in the lease negotiations. Embassies with pools under Department control, whether by residential lease or by ownership, are required by 15 FAM 957.4 to implement the appropri-

ate design or operational safety requirements found in the safety, occupational health and environmental management resource guide. These deficiencies heighten the risk of injury and liability for the Embassy.

Recommendation 28: Embassy Bridgetown should establish and implement a corrective action for all residential pools. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

The current property condition survey used when negotiating leases includes only a check for an existing pool fence. To improve compliance with safety requirements for future leases, the OIG team informally recommended that the property condition survey include a swimming pool safety checklist.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SECURITY

Embassy Bridgetown operates a comprehensive information management and information systems security program. The unit scored well on the ICASS survey. OIG questionnaires reported good marks for information management services from users at the Embassy. Notwithstanding an otherwise busy portfolio, the information management unit has addressed some of the issues left unresolved after the move to the new Embassy building 2 years ago. Overall, information management resources have been stretched due to limited staffing and a workload that has increased as Embassy Bridgetown has grown in size. Since the OIG's previous inspection in 2001, the number of workstations and servers supported has doubled. Information management staffing has remained constant.

The information management unit is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and security of the Department's sensitive but unclassified local area network (OpenNet), classified local area network, dedicated Internet networks, blackberry program, telephone/radio operations, unclassified and classified pouch, and mailroom operations. The unit operates a regional information systems officer program providing quarterly support to Embassy St. George's as well as intermittent support to consular agencies in Antigua and Martinique. The OpenNet network consists of 168 workstations and eight servers; the classified local area network has 16 workstations and seven servers. The information management unit is staffed with three American officers — the supervisory information management officer, an information systems officer, and an information management specialist. Local staff includes two systems-support employees, three mail/pouch employees, a telephone/radio technician, and a switchboard operator.

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In February 2002, the Embassy temporarily established a local-hire systems administrator position that was primarily assigned to the consular section. This position, however, was terminated in May 2005. An October 2008 memorandum by the regional human resources officer addressed the need for an additional position in the information systems center.

The backbone of Embassy operations, the OpenNet network supports the basic administrative, correspondence, and command and control elements of Embassy operations. (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2) It would be prudent to add a position that could provide systems support to the consular section in addition to assisting the current systems administrators. OIG agrees with the need for an additional position and fully supports the Embassy’s initiative thus far. A formal recommendation regarding this issue appears in the management section of this report.

Help Desk Operations

Embassy Bridgetown lacks an automated system to track and manage computer help desk issues. The current procedure requires users to contact the information systems staff directly either via telephone calls or e-mails which are handled on a first-come first-serve basis. The Embassy is currently implementing a service request system to track and manage help desk calls. The application was developed at another Embassy and disseminated informally throughout the Department. Although the OIG inspection team found no issues with remediation of help desk calls by existing means, an automated help-desk application would reduce staff time. It would also help staff prioritize calls, identify systemic issues, and better gauge the level of customer service received by users. Information managers could then draw on this data to document operations for ICASS reporting purposes. Given the already ample workload of the information systems center, the implementation of a helpdesk application could be a significant aid to the effectiveness and efficiency of information management operations at post. The OIG team supports the Embassy’s decision to implement the help desk application.

Recommendation 29: Embassy Bridgetown should implement a help desk tracking application to help manage and prioritize help desk operations at post. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Training of Local Staff

The local information management staff lacks the requisite technical training necessary to ensure quality information technology support. Local staff administrators have not completed the CompTIA network plus course that is the prerequisite for enrolling in more advanced courses at the Foreign Service Institute. The information management staff members do not have individual development training plans, even though 5 FAM 121.3 states that information systems officers are responsible for developing such plans for their staffs to ensure skill development needs are met. Both local administrators have worked for the Embassy for over 25 years but have taken only minimal training courses. Without continuous technical training, the information management staff is unable to keep their knowledge and skills current in a constantly evolving discipline.

Recommendation 30: Embassy Bridgetown should create individual development training plans for locally employed information technology employees based on assigned job responsibilities, mission needs, and professional development. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Pouch Escort Duties

Information management staff perform all classified pouch escort duties, which take about 20 hours per month. The 12 FAM 151.1 regulation states that the classified pouch escort duty is the responsibility of all agencies using the classified pouch. The information management officer has discussed with the management counselor the possibility of making pouch escort duty a shared responsibility of all agencies using the pouch. The Embassy has, in fact, drafted a management notice stipulating the courier duty officer responsibilities of all agencies using the classified pouch. The OIG team concurs with the need to allocate pouch escort duties more equitably and supports this initiative.

Recommendation 31: Embassy Bridgetown should require all agencies using pouch services to share in pouch escort responsibilities. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

High Frequency Network Authorization

Embassy Bridgetown lacks documented host government approval for the radio network and plans to address this and other neglected authorizations. 5 FAM 541 (c) requires embassies to obtain such approvals for specific frequencies to ensure interference-free radio use. The OIG team briefed the Embassy regarding the handling of this issue by other WHA missions, including strategies that have proven effective. While the information management officer has contacted the host government service provider, the issue remains unsolved.

Recommendation 32: Embassy Bridgetown should obtain approval from the government of Barbados for the frequencies used on the radio networks. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Radio Inventory

The Embassy has no accurate inventory of its current radio equipment. According to 5 FAM 121, the information management officer is responsible for the accountability of all information technology equipment and assets. The previous information management officer had permitted the issuance of radios without requiring a hand receipt. As a result, the Embassy lacks an accurate inventory of its radio equipment and thus has neither accountability over the equipment nor a precise knowledge of its location.

Recommendation 33: Embassy Bridgetown should establish and maintain a complete inventory of its radio equipment. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

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Information Systems Security Officer Designation

Although information systems security officer duties are being performed, these security functions are not appropriately separated at Embassy Bridgetown. A memo dated November 18, 2008, designates the information systems officer who manages the sensitive but unclassified network as the information systems security officer for both the unclassified and classified networks, and the information management specialist as the alternate information systems security officer for both networks. The individual that manages the system should not also be responsible for security oversight of that system. The information system duties can be realigned to have the information management specialist designated as the information systems security officer for the unclassified network; the information systems officer can be designated as the information systems security officer for the classified network. The current designation results in an inadequate separation of duties creating an internal control weakness.

Recommendation 35: Embassy Bridgetown should realign the duties of the information systems security officer position to ensure the appropriate separation of information systems security officer duties. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

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QUALITY OF LIFE

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

Two part-time activist coordinators manage Embassy Bridgetown's community liaison office with evident skill. The office is located on the main floor of the chancery and is easily accessible by personnel and family members. The coordinators partner with the American Embassy Employees' Association and the Marine security guards for numerous community events. They also liaise with the local schools and are responsible for the orientation sponsorship program, which was heavily taxed by the influx of Foreign Service officers in 2008. The community liaison office's financial accounts are managed by the American Embassy Employees' Association.

EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

The American Embassy Employees' Association is small but active. It maintains a limited inventory of gift items with Embassy logos and has recently opened a shop on CafePress.com that allows them to reduce the on-hand inventory. The employees' association has a strong relationship with the community liaison office for coordinating social events for members. The by-laws need to be updated to reflect the increased number of members-at-large on the board of directors. The OIG team addressed this in an informal recommendation.

MEDICAL UNIT

Embassy Bridgetown employs two part-time registered nurses to staff the health unit during standard business hours. The nurses consult with a local medical advisor for prescriptions and referrals to local medical services. A regional medical officer and a nurse practitioner visit quarterly to provide exams and other services to personnel. The health unit is well-equipped and provides an excellent environment for medical consultations.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Equal Employment Opportunity counselor and the federal women's program coordinator are both newly assigned to their positions. The Equal Employment Opportunity counselor completed training in December 2008. Both were receptive to suggestions for development of their programs. Because the incumbent Equal Employment Opportunity counselor is a supervisor, a request for a volunteer, non-supervisory counselor was distributed shortly before the OIG inspection, and the expectation is that the position will be filled soon.

The local employees' handbook does not include a section on Equal Employment Opportunity policy and procedures. The Equal Employment Opportunity counselor has asked to participate in the drafting of an updated handbook.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The annual chief of mission management control statement of assurance for 2008 did not report any management control weaknesses. At the time of the inspection, the Embassy was performing a physical inventory of non-expendable items and had begun the reconciliation process. As discussed in the facilities maintenance section of this report, there was a significant weakness in the lack of inventory records and controls for about \$3 million of spare parts, and for radios.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should request a conversion in the status of Embassy St. George’s from an Embassy to a consular agency. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA and CA)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should increase the staffing of the consular agency in Antigua to at least two local employees. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA and CA)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should create a consular agency in Saint Lucia. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA and CA)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should fill the vacant slot in the narcotics affairs section. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with DGHR and INL)

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Recommendation 6: Embassy Bridgetown should create an additional position for locally employed staff in the public affairs section, and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs should fund the position. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, should send the local staff member who runs the International Visitor program for training specific to the program. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with ECA)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Bridgetown should issue appropriate identification to users of the information resource center identified by public affairs section staff. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Bridgetown should prepare a consular travel plan that includes travel by local staff as appropriate and is shared with other mission sections. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

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Recommendation 11: Embassy Bridgetown should develop a complete orientation and training plan for consular officers and local staff. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Bridgetown should revise its rotation plan for entry-level consular officers, assigning primary responsibility for certain consular units to individual officers but also including substantive daily work in the nonimmigrant visa unit for every officer. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Bridgetown should increase its nonimmigrant visa interview appointments within norms established by the Bureau of Consular Affairs to reduce the backlog to less than 5 calendar days and then not exceed this 5-day maximum backlog other than in exceptional cases. It should also recalibrate its acceptance of walk-in applicants to include only those meriting special, immediate service. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should establish budget targets based on actual requirements and agreed-upon funding to meet both diplomatic and support requirements. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, should establish and fund the following positions: a human resources (eligible family member) assistant; an information management assistant/Web administrator; an accounting technician; a chauffeur; a housing coordinator (eligible family member); a supply assistant (warehouseman). (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with WHA)

Recommendation 25: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should review and complete all oversight and reporting requirements for the locally employed staff procurement pilot program. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown, in coordination with A)

Recommendation 26: Embassy Bridgetown should establish and fund a part-time eligible family member administrative assistant position for motor vehicle services. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 27: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should fund the necessary improvements to Embassy Bridgetown’s new warehouse space. (Action: OBO)

Recommendation 28: Embassy Bridgetown should establish and implement a corrective action for all residential pools. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

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Recommendation 30: Embassy Bridgetown should create individual development training plans for locally employed information technology employees based on assigned job responsibilities, mission needs, and professional development. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 31: Embassy Bridgetown should require that all agencies using pouch services to share in pouch escort responsibilities. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 32: Embassy Bridgetown should obtain approval from the government of Barbados for the frequencies used on the radio networks. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 33: Embassy Bridgetown should establish and maintain a complete inventory of its radio equipment. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 34: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(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 35: Embassy Bridgetown should realign the duties of the information systems security officer position to ensure the appropriate separation of information systems security officer duties. (Action: Embassy Bridgetown)

Recommendation 36: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

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

Because the Embassy is accredited to seven separate nations and also covers territories belonging to France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, mission officers spend significant time in travel. Most agencies and sections are relatively small, and the mission holds a range of information-sharing gatherings. For these reasons, meeting weekly as the entire country team unnecessarily burdens staff. Holding that meeting every other week would improve efficiency with little loss to internal communication.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Bridgetown should change its country team meeting from a weekly to a biweekly meeting.

Based in Bridgetown, the mission naturally tends to view in the aggregate the other six nations to which it is accredited. While they share many similarities, these island nations vary enough that they represent different diplomatic challenges. Periodically focusing the country team meeting on a specific nation would sharpen the focus and reduce the temptation to view them as a collective.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Bridgetown should periodically devote a country team meeting to each of the seven nations to which it is accredited.

Embassy Bridgetown hosts a high number of personnel from an array of Federal agencies, including the military services, on temporary duty — some of it protracted in nature. Because of their temporary status, they do not fall under the chief of mission's authority to control staffing guaranteed by National Security Decision Directive 38. Their numbers, and the fact that they spend significant time in Barbados, put an undue burden on the management section, and the costs of supporting them are not fully captured.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Bridgetown should tighten its procedures for dealing with personnel on temporary duty, invoking National Security Decision Directive 38 as needed.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SECTION

New financial and personnel resources from various agencies will soon come to Embassy Bridgetown for various development and health assistance projects. Currently there is no working group or cluster to discuss and coordinate development assistance in the Embassy.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Bridgetown should establish a working group on development assistance that would meet regularly.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The program responsibilities and position descriptions for the local employees in the public affairs section may not be efficient and realistic.

Informal recommendation 5: Embassy Bridgetown should review the program responsibilities of the local employees in the public affairs section and adjust their position descriptions accordingly, to maximize efficiency and reach a sustainable workload.

Embassy participation in the International Visitor program varies among sections and agencies.

Informal recommendation 6: Embassy Bridgetown should review mission participation in the International Visitor program to ensure that the modest number of grantees provide maximal return on investment.

The Embassy does not make maximum use of the experiences and skills of the members of the alumni association.

Informal recommendation 7: Embassy Bridgetown should work discreetly but steadily with members of the alumni association to help define its mission and the goals that flow from the mission.

CONSULAR SECTION

The financial management section requires that consular cashiers personally replace all counterfeit notes they inadvertently accept, regardless of the quality of the counterfeit.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Bridgetown should request relief from this obligation pursuant to 4 FAH-3 H399.3.

The consular section is spending time on tasks that are not urgent or could be sent elsewhere for completion.

Informal Recommendation 9: Consular management should review its time management and work priorities so as to concentrate on high-value tasks first.

MANAGEMENT SECTION

All of the swimming pools at leased residences failed to comply with the Department's safety requirements. The current property condition survey used when negotiating leases includes only a check for an existing pool fence.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Bridgetown should include a swimming pool safety checklist with the property condition survey used in lease negotiations.

The work order paper files were poorly organized, and the housing files included only requests without the accompanying work orders. Work orders were also missing any follow-up or final evaluation from the requestors.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Bridgetown should establish and implement work order procedures to maintain complete files.

Most procurement files, while generally in order, lacked information tracking the distribution of the purchase orders and any follow-up with vendors. The OIG team addressed this in an information recommendation.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Bridgetown should implement procedures in order to track the distribution and follow-up of purchase orders.

The motor pool inventory records in the integrated logistics management system contain inaccurate data, including incomplete identification numbers.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Bridgetown should review and correct all inaccurate data in the integrated logistics management system.

Drivers are not completing the daily and weekly vehicle safety checklists in the daily logs.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Bridgetown should implement controls for daily and weekly vehicle checks.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Chargé d'affaires	Brent Hardt	05/08
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Marcia Norman	08/08
Consular	Nicole Theriot	11/08
Political and Economic	Ian Campbell	08/07
Public Affairs	John Roberts	08/07
Regional Security	Gary Truchot	07/08
Regional Coordination	Elizabeth Foley	01/09
Other Agencies:		
Department of Defense		
Military Liaison Office	Edward Gaynor	07/08
Naval Criminal Investigative Service	Brian Moran	09/08
Department of Health and Human Services		
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Shirley Lecher	04/08
Department of Homeland Security		
Customs and Border Protection	Temporary duty personnel	
Department of Justice		
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Samuel Bryant	08/06
Drug Enforcement Administration	Charles Graham	09/06
Department of Homeland Security	Karl Brown	01/06
Department of Treasury	Cheryl Kast	08/03
U.S. Agency for International Development	James Goggin	10/06

ABBREVIATIONS

DCM	deputy chief of mission
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OIG	Office of Inspector General
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WHA	Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

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of Federal programs
and resources hurts everyone.

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Arlington, VA 22219
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