



United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

Inspector General

JAN 28 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: M – Patrick F. Kennedy

FROM: IG – Harold W. Geisel, Acting 

SUBJECT: Limited Review of *Business Class Travel Made by Front Office Officials of the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs* (AUD/SI-09-08, Jan. 2009)

Per your December 2008 request, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted a limited review of business class travel made by officials of the Front Office of the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) during fiscal years 2007 and 2008. The purpose of the review was to determine whether the OES Assistant Secretary and the four deputy assistant secretaries complied with federal and Department of State guidance as it relates to overseas and business class travel. OIG found that OES officials did not always adhere to travel regulations for properly preparing, authorizing, and maintaining documentation required by the guidance.

Scope and Methodology

OIG reviewed 30 travel authorizations; 30 travel vouchers; and supporting documentation that included DS Form 4087, Authorization Request for Business Class Air Travel, memoranda, travel itineraries, airline tickets, and receipts for lodging and miscellaneous expenses. OIG compared the travel authorizations with the itineraries and the vouchers to determine when travel authorizations were created, authorizations were properly approved by a supervisor, and expenses were accurate and allowable. OIG found that business class travel expenses represented \$258,512 (about 83%) of the \$311,154 of total travel expenses for the 30 vouchers. Each OES official used business class for every trip.

To conduct its review, OIG spoke with officials from the Bureau of Administration's Travel and Transportation Management Office and the Bureau of Resource Management's Office of Financial Review in Charleston, SC. OIG also reviewed Federal Travel Regulations; the Foreign Affairs Manual (14 FAM 560-567, "Allowable Travel and Miscellaneous Expenses"); Department directives and cables; and Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-08-07, January 8, 2008, *Use of Premium Class Travel*.

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Preparation of Travel Authorizations and Authorization Requests for Business Class Air Travel

Of the 30 travel authorizations reviewed, OIG identified the following deficiencies (more than one deficiency may apply to one authorization):

- 25 authorizations included a DS Form 4087 citing travel in excess of 14 hours, the length of travel required to justify business class accommodations. However:
 - Five of these trips were actually less than 14 hours (from one TDY stop to another).
 - Four of these authorizations were signed by officials at a level lower than that of the traveler.
 - Three authorizations had no authorization signature, employee signature, or authorization date.
- 5 travel authorizations did not include a DS Form 4087.
- 18 authorizations included actual expenses for lodging and meals but were not supported by a memorandum indicating approval that actual expenses could be incurred. The analysis showed that lodging expenses exceeded the established per diem rate by up to \$188 per night.
- 11 authorizations were prepared after the traveler had returned from TDY.
- 7 authorizations did not reflect the business class authorization in Section 5, "Other Authorizations," or Section 11, "GTR Ticket Information" of the travel authorizations.

Reimbursement for Travel Expenses

Of the 30 travel vouchers reviewed, OIG identified the following deficiencies (more than one deficiency may apply to one voucher):

- 29 vouchers were missing some or all of the required supporting documentation required for reimbursement, such as receipts, authorization and approval memoranda, and itineraries.
- 2 vouchers showed that the traveler had not followed the route established in the itinerary.

In addition to the 30 vouchers selected, OIG reviewed one separate authorization for a coach fare trip that contained a reimbursement of \$2,064. However, OIG determined that the actual cost based on supporting documentation was \$900. This matter was referred to OIG's Office of Investigations for review.

The Department's travel regulations are clear and are in agreement with Federal Travel Regulations. The requirements are not flexible but are important in the government-wide policy on travel. However, additional oversight is needed to ensure that OES Front Office staff complies with the established travel regulations.

Recommendation 1: OIG recommends that the Undersecretary for Management consider appropriate actions to ensure that travel authorizations, travel vouchers, and DS Forms 4087 (*Authorization Request for Business Class Air Travel*) for officials of the Front Office of the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific

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Affairs comply with Federal Travel Regulations and Department of State guidance. Such actions should ensure that required supporting documentation is accurate, complete, and properly approved by appropriate officials.

We would appreciate a response from an appropriate Department official within 30 days as to the actions taken or planned to address recommendation 1. Actions taken or planned are subject to follow-up and reporting in accordance with OIG resolution procedures.

OIG appreciates the cooperation and assistance of Department staff in conducting this limited review. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call me at (202) 663-0361 or Mark W. Duda, Assistant Inspector General for Audits, at (202) 663-0372.