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

Report of Inspection

Embassy
Pristina, Kosovo

Report Number ISP-I-10-38A, March 2010

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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 instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

METHODOLOGY

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



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

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- Embassy Pristina's management team pursues an ambitious, five-point nation-building program in a new country where history imposes many obstacles to success. All embassy elements are engaged; policy implementation is comprehensive and energetically led. Internal coordination is good, as is that with the resident international organizations. This is particularly important given the high amount (over \$123 million) of U.S. Government assistance to Kosovo.
- Embassy officers enjoy unusual access to and influence with Kosovo's leaders. This both advances embassy goals and leads to job satisfaction. Morale is consequently good, especially among those with policy-related duties. However, the load is heavy and the pace fast. The embassy's human resources need careful management.
- With much overlap among political, economic, and rule-of-law issues, the combined political/economic section works well. The OIG team supports the embassy's intention to increase formal reporting and to add a public diplomacy and outreach component to all aspects of the section's work. The section chief will need to work with the front office to balance and prioritize this new workload.
- Embassy Skopje provides visa and American citizen services to residents of Kosovo; however, the prospect of a new embassy chancery calls for careful planning for the expansion of consular services, including visa processing, in Pristina.
- The justification for Pristina's 20 percent danger pay allowance should be reviewed. Although ethnic tensions remain, much progress has been made in creating a democratic, multi-ethnic nation. Reductions in the United Nations (UN) mission and in the internal security Kosovo Force reflect both progress and the absence of the former wartime conditions.
- Management operations are well run and greatly improved since the last inspection. The locally employed (LE) staff is now trained and performing well without the high degree of supervision once required.

- Real property concerns will remain a key resource challenge until the new embassy compound is completed in 2015.
- The Community Association of Pristina Employees is a newly formed organization that has experienced growing pains. Embassy Pristina should seek assistance from the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs in Washington to firmly establish the controls necessary to stabilize the organization.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 8 and 25, 2009 and in Pristina, Kosovo, between September 28 and October 9, 2009.

CONTEXT

A conventional analysis of the Republic of Kosovo's future would offer few reasons to be optimistic. This new country is located in a part of Europe that is poor



in resources but rich in ethnic hatreds. During no part of its 1,500 or so years of history has it experienced anything but autocratic rule, the “autonomy” and economic development offered during the Tito period notwithstanding. It is landlocked and has little industry. Its agricultural base is generally antiquated. Annual per capita gross national product is less than \$1,000; unemployment stands at 40 percent.

Although sometimes referred to as “Old Serbia,” the Kosovo region has long had a mostly Albanian population, with Serbs

being the largest of several minorities. Increasing economic and social dominance by the Albanians in the 1960s and 1970s led to an exodus of Serbs and, in the late 1980s, to a reaction by the Serb-led government in Belgrade to the growing Albanian prominence in the province. Kosovo's combustible ethnic mix ignited and fighting flared between the communities and between Kosovo Albanians (Kosovars) and the Yugoslav army. In 1999, a Yugoslav ethnic cleansing campaign led to massive Kosovar refugee flows into neighboring countries. A NATO bombing campaign finally put an end to the ethnic cleansing, and the Yugoslav army departed. Kosovo's population is now about two million; 90 percent is Albanian, and the Serb component is a much reduced 8 percent. Intercommunal tensions continue, but the 3 days of widespread violence that took place in 2004 have not been repeated.

In June 1999, the United Nations (UN) created a virtual mandate over Kosovo via Security Council Resolution 1244 and the UN mission in Kosovo assumed all government functions. Representations were established to supervise Kosovo's fulfillment of its undertakings and, ultimately, to supersede the UN. These representations include the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, International Civilian Office/European Union Special Representative (ICO), and the European Union Rule of Law Mission, plus a collection of formal and informal coordinating or non-coordinating sub-groups. The UN also sanctioned the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) with a security mission that includes providing protection to Serb enclaves. KFOR's strength of 15,000, soon to be reduced to a "deterrent posture" of 10,000 in 2010, has 33 national components. The 1,500-strong U.S. contingent is the largest. Taken together—allowing for the wide variation in the effectiveness of the civilian agencies—they have created what one experienced participant calls "the most complicated international environment" he has ever seen.

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008, and soon after U.S. Office Pristina became U.S. Embassy Pristina. Today 62 countries recognize Kosovo, even as Serbia and Russia actively oppose Kosovo's independence, arguing that it is still a province of Serbia. Kosovo's newfound freedom is clouded by the International Court of Justice's accepting a Serbian request for an advisory opinion on Kosovo independence.

In the declaration of independence and later in its constitution, Kosovo pledged adherence to the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (known as the Ahtisaari Plan, after the former president of Finland who served as the UN Special Envoy for Kosovo Status negotiations). The Ahtisaari plan includes stipulations regarding decentralization of governing authority, protection of minorities, adherence to the rule of law and, broadly, a democratic system. Kosovo's aim is to become part of the Euro-Atlantic system.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Embassy Pristina carries out ambitious nation-building diplomacy with a well defined set of goals, strong leadership, and a dedicated and energetic staff. Since their arrival in August 2009, the experienced Chief of Mission and the deputy chief of mission (DCM) have provided regular guidance and supervision. While the 2011 mission strategic plan (MSP) established a general policy framework for mission operations, the new leadership will present its own, broader recommendations for 2012. Relations between the Ambassador and the DCM are close and harmonious, with the latter acting as the Ambassador whenever necessary.

There are numerous command and control mechanisms. Five times a week, all section chiefs and agency heads come together for a press briefing; immediately afterwards, they huddle with the Ambassador or DCM. Once a week, a country team meeting brings in additional embassy elements plus American representatives of the ICO and KFOR. Section chiefs each meet weekly with either the Ambassador or DCM, while working groups at regular intervals discuss rule of law, counterterrorism, and trafficking in persons. These smaller groups are the forums for discussion that the larger country team meetings cannot be. Frequent meetings with senior military representatives demonstrate a close working relationship with the military, which the American commanding general confirmed to inspectors in a conversation at Camp Bondsteel. At least once a week, the Ambassador and DCM meet with the KFOR chief of staff and with the director of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Less often, they chair additional working groups in which USAID has a direct interest. These include economic growth, municipal elections, and consolidation of Department and USAID management platforms.

Initiatives flow from a front office that encourages inclusiveness. The Ambassador has reached out to sections and non-Department representations to bring them more closely into structured policy implementation by, for example, a fuller participation in the MSP process. He has removed limitations on outreach, and he permits officers to have contact with any Kosovo official with whom they need to deal. Security is a high priority; an early directive updated the emergency action plan and reissued security policies. On the downside, the strong focus on policy operations, that is, on moving Kosovo in the directions it needs to go, has had a restricting effect on reporting. As the situation stabilizes, more frequent reporting can be expected.

Relations with the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) are excellent and intense. Numerous email exchanges convey information and, above all, coordinate briefing memoranda, policy proposals, and agendas. There are also periodic coordinating review sessions of the five-power or “Quint” ambassadors from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. When the Quint is held at the steering group level, the Department’s responsible deputy assistant secretary travels to Pristina, thereby providing extra opportunities for embassy-Department dialogue. To ensure better coordination with neighboring U.S. Embassies, a secure video teleconference takes place each week among Embassies Pristina and Belgrade and EUR.

Embassy Pristina is a highly focused, closely supervised policy machine. Leadership is good and so, therefore, is motivation. Though there has so far been no call to show it, equal employment matters can be expected to rank high on post management’s agenda. Morale is good, highest among the many new arrivals. Partly because of this newness and partly because of the high-stakes, high-profile work, there is enthusiasm and much job satisfaction in policy sections.

With the energetic front office, the pace is fast and the embassy stretched, particularly in the political/economic, management, and public diplomacy sections. The 2011 MSP requested additional positions, and the 2012 MSP will request still more. Some new positions have been approved, but there are no entry-level officers at the moment. Even with additional people, the Ambassador and DCM need to manage carefully their high-performing human resources. The present pace and workloads cannot be kept up forever.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Much was accomplished in the years of the UN administration and during the 19 months of Kosovo's—and the embassy's—short existence. There were elections, a structure of democratic government was set up, and operating agencies and institutions were put in place. However, much more remains to be done. American policy, like that of other EU and NATO countries, aims to create a new nation that would contribute positively to Balkan security and stability.

The Ambassador has articulated a strategy with five major policy goals: building the institutions of Kosovo's government and society; ensuring that minorities participate in this process; furthering the development of the country's economy; grounding government and society in the rule of law; and working with European partners to give Kosovo a self-sustaining road to a European future. All together these goals add up to an ambitious, complex, and expensive nation-building agenda that derives from the overarching U.S. goal of a whole, peaceful, and free Europe.

Embassy Pristina manages more than 30 programs, totaling \$123.6 million in FY 2009. These programs support the embassy's five major goals and constitute American diplomacy in Kosovo. It is almost entirely operational; it has many dimensions; it faces many obstacles, but ultimately it is the embassy's management tier that recommends the policies, supervises their implementation, and sets the ground rules for the entire U.S. mission's day-to-day operations.

Embassy Pristina is a new mission, born on April 8, 2008, when the former U.S. Office Pristina was raised to full diplomatic status. It is also a new team. Only a small minority among the American staff have been in Kosovo for more than a year, and many for only a few months. However, as the embassy of the country that contributed enormously to Kosovo's independence, that outshines most EU entities in efficiency and effectiveness, and that, in more ways than one, delivers the goods, Embassy Pristina exerts a wide and unusual influence over the Kosovo Government's policies and actions. Both the cause and effect of this influence is the embassy's access to all levels of government by all members of its operating elements, regardless of rank or title. Whenever necessary, which is frequent, a mid-level officer will report that a problem was worked out with the relevant cabinet minister. Not many missions offer its officers this kind of opportunity and the huge satisfaction that goes with it.

Political/Economic Affairs

Because Embassy Pristina operates in a highly complicated international environment with unusual access to and influence with the Government of Kosovo, the work of the political/economic (P/E) section goes well beyond traditional advocacy. Officers spend much time with government ministers and other officials, who consult them on a daily basis on actions, large and small. The OIG team witnessed this first-hand when rumors of Albanian school children being poisoned prompted the Minister of Communities and Returns to call the FS-03 officer responsible for relations with minority communities. Within minutes, the DCM was on the phone to the prime minister's office, calling for a quick response to calm fears and stop rumors.

There is a lot of pressure from Washington to ensure that Kosovo's independence succeeds. As a result, officers work in excess of 50 hours a week, primarily on operational matters. Although Washington offices and agencies expressed a high degree of satisfaction with embassy reporting, most reporting is done through emails, including a daily document called "Pristina Bullets." Official reporting via cable has tended to be limited and focuses on reporting events following their conclusion, rather than as they unfold. The new Ambassador and DCM, as well as Washington consumers, have indicated a desire for more frequent spot reporting, which already has begun and now occupies 15 to 20 percent of the section's time. This reporting generally includes a comment section which provides context and analysis.

At the same time, the new front office team has asked all embassy sections to incorporate public diplomacy and outreach into everything they do. This is an important initiative, but it also requires time. The Ambassador has indicated the need to re-evaluate the U.S. relationship with the government of Kosovo. He wants to encourage Kosovo to be more self-reliant and gradually reduce the embassy's direct involvement in the functioning of the government. However, this is a mid-term goal, and for now the government continues its heavy reliance on the embassy and not on the ICO, whose mandate is to supervise Kosovo's independence and the constitutional commitment to the Ahtisaari Plan. Thus, the requirements to maintain vigorous and constant advocacy, to increase formal reporting, and to boost public diplomacy and outreach mean that officers will continue to put in long hours of overtime, including on weekends.

P/E's eight Americans and eight LE staff are led by an FS-02 section chief. There is a deputy section chief, three mid-level political officers, a mid-level economic officer, a mid-level economic/commercial officer occupying a position on temporary loan from Embassy Minsk, one office management specialist, and eight LE staff members. An American contract employee embedded with NATO's ministry assis-

tance team at the Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force serves as the security affairs advisor, and another American contractor from the Export Control and Related Border Security Program arrived this summer. A law enforcement affairs officer from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) oversees three INL rule of law programs. There are no entry-level officers in the section.

The 2011 MSP includes a request for a political/military officer to focus on Kosovo security issues, and particularly the newly established Kosovo Security Forces and its civilian-led ministry. This will become especially important when the security affairs advisor completes his contract next year. During the inspection, the embassy received indications from the Department that the political/military officer position may be filled in FY 2010 with an entry level officer, as a result of the current surge in Department hiring. The MSP also includes a request for a permanent economic position to replace the officer currently on loan from Minsk. The OIG team supports the need for both of these positions. In addition, the current office management specialist supports the DCM as well as the 17-member section. The Ambassador and DCM have raised informally with the Department the need for a second office management specialist in the front office, and they plan to include a request in the next MSP, which the OIG team supports.

At the time of the inspection, the embassy was considering submitting a request for a review of the position classification for the P/E chief position, in light of the expanded portfolio and the section's bilateral and multilateral work in this Class 3 mission. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to submit a request for a review of the position classification.

The P/E chief reports that the section continues to attract a large number of bidders for its vacant positions, particularly those that are not language-designated. This means the section tends to be staffed with dedicated, highly motivated, and extremely competent officers. In fact, the OIG team was struck by the high caliber of officers throughout the embassy. Everyone in P/E has a clear sense of the importance of the work the section is doing. The Ambassador has clearly articulated his goals—in fact, he spoke about these five goals when he presented his credentials—and all officers in the section have them prominently displayed in their offices, as well as reflected in their work requirements. Since there is some discrepancy in priority and emphasis from the most recent FY 2011 MSP, the OIG team informally recommended that the post send a cable alerting the Department to the changes, rather than waiting for the FY 2012 MSP cycle.

Communication and coordination within the section and between the section and the rest of the embassy appear to be excellent. With much overlap among political, economic, and rule of law issues, the combined section works well. Work re-

quirements are in place, and regular counseling sessions occur. There are regular staff meetings for all members of the section, in addition to meetings that include just the American officers. Working groups on counterterrorism, trafficking in persons, rule of law, and economic growth function well.

LE staff members possess excellent knowledge of the issues and have access to key players at all levels of the government. Their English language skills are exceptionally strong. The Ambassador routinely asks the subject matter expert from the LE staff to accompany him to meetings with government officials. One LE staff member has compiled a notebook of comprehensive background and other written briefing material that is provided to each new incoming officer to the section, which the OIG team commends. It also includes extensive biographic information. However, there were no classified biographic files with, for example, information on negotiating styles. This was the subject of an informal recommendation during the last inspection, but evidently was never carried out. The OIG team informally recommends again that the embassy request assistance in establishing a classified biographic reporting program.

Approximately 30 percent of the population of Kosovo lives in Pristina. Points throughout the rest of the country can be reached within two hours. Travel, therefore, takes place frequently throughout the year and at virtually no cost. During the inspection, the OIG team reviewed the section's plan to travel to at least seven municipalities prior to the mid-November municipal elections.

Representational events have not been held as frequently as desirable, due in part to funding constraints. All but one of the events hosted by the section were held in the last 2 months of the fiscal year. Since entertaining in restaurants is easy and relatively inexpensive, the OIG team suggested that the section plan events in restaurants throughout the year, and that they reach out to counterparts at other bilateral missions. In the financial management section of this report the OIG team recommends development of an annual representation plan. That said, the embassy enjoys great access to Kosovo decision makers and has contacts with all players throughout the government and the international community. The new team has already expanded its contacts with members of the political opposition.

Economic and Commercial Affairs

The ranking economic officer monitors developments of Kosovo's emerging economic, legal, and regulatory framework; provides direct guidance to government officials who are drafting and implementing new legislation; and reports on Kosovo's energy and financial sectors. The officer also spends up to 30 percent of his time serving as coordinator of all U.S. Government assistance, except that related to rule

of law. This assistance amounts to approximately 30 programs totaling over \$123 million. EUR cited the section's excellent reporting on the effects of the global financial crisis on Kosovo.

The American Chamber of Commerce, in existence since 2002, has 45 members and is a good partner for the embassy in promoting the steps needed to make Kosovo an attractive investment climate. Commercial interest, investment, and advocacy, although not yet significant, are expected to increase over time. The biweekly economic working group chaired by the Ambassador often focuses on energy issues. Support for the embassy's commercial activities supposedly is provided by the U.S. Commercial Service regional representative in Zagreb who covers four countries, but this individual has not visited Kosovo in the past two years. The U.S. Commercial Service used to fund one LE staff position in Pristina, but it no longer does so. The Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program provided funds for a workshop on intellectual property rights issues in the past year, and it may do more as Kosovo works towards World Trade Organization membership. The Foreign Agricultural Service representative in Sofia visits once a year. The Treasury Department funds a cash management/debt advisor for Pristina, whose office is at the Ministry of Finance. A second Treasury Department officer is expected to be assigned to Pristina in the next few months to work as a financial crimes advisor.

Rule of Law

INL rule of law programs in Kosovo total approximately \$40 million, with an additional \$5 million from USAID. This is approximately one-third of the overall U.S. Government assistance levels for Kosovo. This high funding level was designed to support Kosovo's transition to independence, and therefore is expected to drop off significantly over the next few years. There has been some discussion of whether the rule-of-law function should be separated from the political/economic section. At this time, the OIG team found that the rule of law function is placed rightly within the political/economic section and should not be split off into its own section.

A newly assigned law enforcement affairs officer from INL oversees the following three programs:

- A senior police advisor has direct oversight of the U.S. Civilian Police Contingent and the prosecutors and judges who are participating in the European Union Rule of Law Mission. Since December 2008, the United States has seconded 80 police officers, three prosecutors, and one judge to these organizations. The INL police advisor also spends a significant portion of time reporting on critical security and law enforcement incidents.

- The embassy also has a resident legal advisor from the Department of Justice's Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training (OPDAT) program. The resident legal advisor focuses on training and building capacity in Kosovo's prosecutorial corps and strengthening the relationship between police and prosecutors. The resident legal advisor also trains judges and defense attorneys and provides technical assistance on legislative drafting. Recruitment for a second OPDAT resident legal advisor was taking place at the time of the inspection.
- The Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) focuses on capacity building within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, training ministry personnel, and developing legislation and related regulations.

One of the first goals of the new law enforcement affairs officer in P/E is to determine who is doing what, and where. He already has established that a lack of adequate information-sharing and collaboration among all of the players in the international community point to redundancy, overlap, and waste. He also notes that coordination in Washington among INL, EUR, and DOJ can result in delays between planning and funding. For example, the embassy has just received funding for the FY 2008 work plan.

Bureaucratic difficulties aside, there is close coordination and collaboration within the embassy. The Ambassador has tasked an active rule of law working group to develop a framework to guide its work for the next 3 to 5 years. This framework will include a strategy for creating demand for justice, respect for justice, and access to justice.

Trafficking in Persons

The embassy has an active trafficking in persons working group, chaired by the DCM and with representatives from political/economic, public diplomacy, USAID, ICITAP, OPDAT, and INL in attendance. Kosovo devotes high-level government attention to anti-trafficking and continues to make steady progress. (b) (7)(C)
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The Ministry of Internal Affairs has a new anti-trafficking secretariat, whose employees will use a new database to help track victims of trafficking and their traffickers. The working group expressed concerns, however, regarding an unexplained decrease in the number of identified victims of trafficking, the limited use of shel-

ters by victims, and the inability of embassy officers to visit the government-run shelter. USAID intends to intervene with the Minister of Justice to obtain permission for a visit. The group also discussed a recent project of the public affairs section, in which the section took five television journalists to the United States to focus on trafficking, and the trafficking awareness month scheduled for this October. For the next meeting, the DCM directed the members of the group to be prepared to discuss concrete steps the Government of Kosovo can and should be taking in trafficking prosecution, protection, and prevention to help the embassy develop an overall strategy to assist its efforts.

International Civilian Office

Three Department officers are seconded to the ICO, the organization responsible for supervising Kosovo's independence and implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan. In addition to the three direct-hire employees, who enjoy embassy support, ICO has five American contractors and several others who are hired directly. The ninth meeting of its oversight body, the International Steering Group, took place in Kosovo during the inspection. This group is made up of 25 senior government representatives from the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, other recognizing states, and the European Commission. The discussion focused on the future of the organization and its exit strategy. The meeting took place just as decentralization efforts began in earnest and preparations for municipal elections, the first elections since independence, got underway.

Foreign Assistance

U.S. Government assistance to Kosovo focuses on Embassy Pristina's MSP goals. These include building public sector capacity, solidifying the rule of law, promoting private sector-led economic growth, and strengthening the inclusion of minorities in Kosovo society. Funding comes through a number of sources and is implemented by various offices of the Department and other agencies.

In FY 2008, the U.S. Government budgeted approximately \$146.6 million in foreign assistance to Kosovo. The multi-agency, 33-part effort directed \$52 million of the total towards programs in the thematic areas of peace and security, \$41 million to economic development, \$35 million for rule of law, and \$16 million in health and education reform. Foreign military assistance received \$1.5 million; non-proliferation, anti-terrorism, and demining received \$500,000; and international military education and training received \$381,000. The FY 2009 foreign assistance appropriation is approximately \$123.6 million. As Kosovo builds its institutions and gains stability, U.S. Government direct assistance likely will continue to decline.

Embassy Pristina and EUR pay close attention to the coordination of assistance, and they maintain close communication. Reflecting the size and complexity of the assistance effort in Kosovo, two officers in the political/economic section serve as the embassy's assistance coordinators. One is responsible for rule of law programs and the other coordinates all other assistance.

Communication among embassy elements involved in assistance management is good. The Ambassador chairs a biweekly assistance coordination working group on economic policy and assistance, and the DCM chairs a biweekly working group on rule of law. Both working groups include all embassy units involved in these programs, including USAID and representatives from the Departments of Defense, Justice, and Treasury. The DCM also meets with the two assistance coordinators each week. The European Union and other international donors also conduct very large assistance programs in Kosovo. A donor assistance group meets monthly to exchange information and coordinate specific programs. Embassy Pristina is active in that group. The two embassy assistance coordinators provide excellent support for the flow of information among embassy elements and between the embassy and the international group. This has resulted in significantly improved performance in the international assistance effort. They also maintain close communication with EUR's Office of Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, which praised Embassy Pristina's management of the Kosovo assistance effort. The OIG team fully endorses this approach.

Refugee Affairs

International humanitarian organizations hoped the final determination of Kosovo's status would provide the impetus for internally displaced persons and refugees (about 365,000 persons) to decide whether to return to their homes or integrate locally. Since 1999, only about 20,000 displaced persons have returned to Kosovo. Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) funding facilitated the return of minority populations (primarily Serbs) to Kosovo through programs such as reconstruction of destroyed homes, property restitution, and economic development projects to provide employment. However, following independence, the international communities that work with refugees have had a diminished presence in the Balkans. The PRM regional refugee coordinator position in Belgrade will be abolished in 2010. During the inspection, the refugee coordinator visited Embassy Pristina and noted that the mission consistently has provided excellent support for PRM's work in Kosovo.

Public Diplomacy

Under the new Ambassador and DCM, Embassy Pristina's public diplomacy team has been drawn to the center of the overall mission effort to ensure Kosovo's development into an independent, multiethnic, and democratic state. Public diplomacy activities enjoy the strong support of the front office. They include a comprehensive range of Department programs and countrywide initiatives that target youth, elites, and multi-ethnic communities, all critical to MSP goals. More could and should be done, but a modest increase in resources will be required.

The public affairs section consists of a public affairs officer (PAO), an assistant public affairs officer (APAO), and ten LE staff members. The newly arrived PAO is experienced and immediately upon arrival began working with the new DCM and the staff to develop a public diplomacy strategic plan for the next year, something which had been lacking. The PAO was able to take only the short Albanian language course at the Foreign Service Institute before beginning this assignment, so the PAO's language skills are not strong. The APAO has served for one year in this assignment and speaks Albanian and Serbian. In addition to providing senior public diplomacy coordination within the embassy, the PAO also serves as the embassy spokesperson and supervises all public affairs media activities. The APAO coordinates exchanges and an active cultural program, assists in managing a large and complex grants program, and supervises management of the Information Resource Center and three American Corners in Kosovo, including the placement and supervision of two English language fellows each year. Shortly after arriving in Pristina, the new Ambassador recognized the need for one additional American officer in the public affairs section to serve as information officer and assume responsibility for the embassy's rapidly growing information and media portfolio. The OIG team agrees with this assessment. Embassy Pristina has made a request to EUR for the additional position, and at the time of the inspection, EUR was considering this request.

The PAO attends the daily embassy staff meetings and the weekly country team meeting, all chaired by the Ambassador. There is also a weekly meeting with the DCM, and MSP theme working groups include the PAO. The Ambassador is one of the embassy's best public diplomacy assets; he skillfully engages the Kosovo public and media. The public affairs section has developed an ongoing public diplomacy strategy plan for the Ambassador, and the PAO meets with him daily to coordinate upcoming events.

The public affairs section provides excellent media support for all the mission's agencies. These include USAID and the Departments of Justice and Defense elements involved in law enforcement and military training. Each morning, the senior

staff meeting begins with a comprehensive media review, and the section circulates electronic versions to all mission elements.

The PAO, APAO, and two LE grants assistants manage a complex small grants program that in FY 2009 received \$1.6 million in funding, including \$350,000 in Democracy Commission grants. Cooperation among embassy elements on grants management is good, and the DCM chairs an interagency panel to evaluate Democracy Commission grant applications. The PAO and APAO are both certified to issue grants. The grants assistants have close support from the embassy financial management office and keep complete records on each grant, including follow-up reporting.

American Corners

A small Information Resource Center in the embassy compound is staffed by an LE information resource assistant who maintains the embassy Internet site in English, Albanian, and Serbian; manages the Information Resource Center; and directly supervises operations at the embassy's three American corners. The American Corner in Pristina is at the National and University Library of Kosovo. Another is at the Regional Library of Prizren, and a third is in the northern city of Mitrovica. There are memoranda of understanding with all three American Corners, as well as work requirements for the directors of the three facilities. All maintain up-to-date book and periodical collections, as well as workstations with free Internet access. Programs focus on English language instruction to a variety of groups, ranging from popular courses for elementary school students to those serving business and professional needs. Each year two English language fellows from the United States coordinate the language programs countrywide and the work of a large corps of native-speaking volunteers.

The American Corner in Mitrovica is of particular importance, because it is located in a northern province of Kosovo populated predominantly by Serbs. This is a conflict region where some local Serbs do not recognize the independence of Kosovo. Because these ongoing tensions occasionally have led to violence, embassy travel to the region is restricted and direct oversight of the American Corner in Mitrovica is limited. The public affairs information resource assistant maintains close email contact with the director of the American Corner in Mitrovica, and public affairs staff members try to visit the facility at least once a quarter. Although the facility is in a reduced program mode, the embassy believes it is very important to keep the American Corner in Mitrovica open, with the hope that it will be positioned to fully serve key Serb audiences when the political issues eventually are resolved.

Information Outreach

The public affairs section works well with elements throughout the embassy to draw media attention to U.S. Government programs in Kosovo. The section works collegially with the USAID mission and clears USAID press releases.

The embassy distributes Department information materials through the American Corners. It does not, however, identify audiences that are key to achieving each MSP goal and target them with information. Though the Government of Kosovo and Embassy Pristina are less than two years old, the critical importance the embassy places on communicating U.S. policy to the leadership and population of Kosovo requires more focus on targeted information outreach. Although the embassy communicates with key contacts by email, especially in Pristina, there currently is no effort to provide them with U.S. Government policy information. The embassy maintains a very effective contact database that could provide the foundation for developing a targeted information outreach program. The sole LE staff member in the Information Resource Center could not handle this additional work, and the embassy should seek funding for an additional position. The OIG team made an informal recommendation on this topic.

Educational Exchanges

The public affairs section sends approximately 25 participants a year to the United States on the International Visitor Leadership Program. All programs are closely aligned to MSP themes. For example, during the inspection, as part of the embassy's effort to help the Kosovo Government build an effective Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the embassy sent six senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Washington for three weeks to study Department operations. The section also manages seven Fulbright scholars per year, two graduate students, two senior scholars who travel from Kosovo to the United States, and three American senior scholars who travel to Kosovo. Up to three Kosovo scholars participate in the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship program each year. The PAO chairs a committee that includes other mission elements for the selection of Humphrey and Fulbright grantees.

Just two years old, the Kosovo-U.S. Alumni association now has more than 500 members. Membership is open to all participants of U.S. Government-funded exchange programs, including those of USAID and other agencies. The association maintains an office in Pristina and conducts an active program supporting exchanges.

The public affairs section also supports the American Center, a local institution in Pristina that provides educational advising and testing services. Support includes small grants, staff training, and donated materials.

Consular Operations

Embassy Skopje provides most consular services for Kosovo, including all visa services. The two capitals are an hour and a half hour apart by car. A consular officer travels to Pristina every two or three weeks and makes unscheduled visits for emergencies. A trained and experienced LE staff member in Kosovo supports the visiting consular officer from Skopje, responds to inquiries, conducts fraud investigations, and provides certain other services for American citizens, as approved by the consular officer. There are no immediate plans to expand consular services beyond the current arrangement, and none appear to be needed at the present time. However, the advent of Kosovo's independence and the projected construction of a new embassy compound (NEC) are converging to provide impetus for expansion of consular services in Pristina.

American Citizen Services

About half of Skopje's American citizen services workload is from Kosovo, as is approximately 40 percent of the visa work (both immigrant and nonimmigrant). Camp Bondsteel, the KFOR base where U.S. forces in Kosovo are located, is situated about half way between Pristina and Skopje. The camp's residents account for much of the American citizen services work for Skopje. The American consular officer from Skopje visits the camp occasionally, and an arrangement is working satisfactorily for expeditious service for Camp Bondsteel residents, who travel to Skopje seeking passports and other consular services.

There are an estimated 1,100 American citizens in Kosovo, many of them dual nationals. About 350 are registered with the embassy. The warden system of 15 designated individuals is supplemented by an informal network of representatives of organizations in the country, such as the police, international organizations, missionaries, and non-governmental organizations. The embassy sends its warden messages primarily by email and is beginning to use text messages to cell phones. Both missions disseminate warden information, and Skopje efficiently drafts and obtains necessary clearances for warden messages for Pristina.

Physical Environment

Space is limited in Pristina's consular section. There are three interview windows, one in a tiny "privacy" room. There is no distance between the first two windows; the cramped waiting room holds eight chairs. Conducting even routine services can be cumbersome and time-consuming, because clients seen in the privacy room must maneuver around the others in the waiting room. In the work space there is one private office for the consular officer, two work stations for LE staff, and files and

office equipment filling every available nook. Providing additional services at Pristina would require more space to accommodate the extra staff and increased clientele, as well as for equipment and controlled items.

At one time the embassy considered remote processing of visa applications and, in anticipation of this possibility, constructed a separate entrance for consular visitors, a temporary holding area for applicants, and a walkway (known as the “chute”) in 2008 to accommodate them. The cost of this project was in excess of \$40,000. However, the Bureau of Consular Affairs never approved remote visa processing, and the new entrance, walkway, and holding area remain unused. The obstacles to remote visa processing appear to be the greater demand on the visiting consular officer’s time, including more frequent visits to Pristina to interview and fingerprint the applicants, and the need for better connectivity to allow electronic transmission of the visa applications to Skopje for processing, plus the necessary transport of the passports to and from Skopje for the approved visas to be physically placed in them. All controlled items, such as visa foils, remain in Skopje.

Expanding Consular Services

Although the current arrangement for consular services works well, Embassy Pristina is looking to the future. As a new country, the Government of Kosovo is establishing diplomatic and consular operations abroad, and it will expect missions in its capital to reciprocate. As indicated, the current U.S. mission in Pristina does not have sufficient space to add services. However, the planned NEC should include appropriate space for consular operations. The embassy believes that the Government of Kosovo eventually will press for visa services from Embassy Pristina. Other missions in Pristina already have begun to process visas. The construction of the NEC will enhance expectations of expanded consular services, and the embassy and the Department need to plan now to provide them. The current MSP does not address this issue. Future MSPs should include a proposal for adding consular services, and the embassy should develop a plan to expand consular services in conjunction with the construction of the NEC. Issues of space, staff, and equipment need to be included.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and Embassy Skopje, should prepare a plan for the future expansion of consular operations in Kosovo that includes appropriate space in the new embassy compound and mission strategic plan requests for additional consular staff. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with CA and Embassy Skopje)

Improving Consular Operations

In the interim, there are steps the embassy can take to ensure better communications with and supervision of its limited consular operation. There is no backup consular officer who could act in an emergency or provide effective oversight to the one LE staff member, who operates largely independently. Although there has been no complaint of a lapse of service, and the consular officer from Skopje has been very attentive and responsive to Pristina's needs, it would be prudent to designate at the embassy an officer who has consular experience, to be a backup in the event Skopje is unable to provide needed services to Pristina in a timely manner. Any number of emergency situations, such as a closed border, major catastrophe, untimely absence from post, or sudden surge in workload, could negatively affect Pristina's or Skopje's ability to provide services. The backup officer also could provide an extra measure of supervision for the one consular employee, especially oversight over his fraud investigation and cashiering responsibilities.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should identify an officer with consular experience to serve as a backup consular officer for the mission, and seek appropriate authority for that officer to perform consular services in Kosovo. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with CA)

The consular officer from Skopje attends monthly Visas Viper meetings and country team meetings, when in town. The consular officer also conducts "referral school" for new officers, to alert them to the current requirements for recommending contacts for visas. About 20 officers attended the most recent session in September, which included a PowerPoint presentation about the new, worldwide visa referral policy. The consular officer in Skopje and the DCM are in frequent contact, and there were no complaints from either party about communications. However, the consular officer is not in Kosovo on a weekly basis, and at some country team meetings issues may arise that could be of interest or concern to consular operations, and conversely, some consular issues of general interest may not be shared with the country team. A recent instance of the former was the announcement of a planned naturalization ceremony at Camp Bondsteel, an item of interest that the consular officer did not know about until informed of it by an inspector. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address the need to inform the consular officer on a regular basis of relevant issues discussed in the country team meetings and to ensure that consular information of general interest is disseminated to the country team.

Security

The security program at Embassy Pristina is well run and effective. The Ambassador and the DCM both are involved personally in the oversight of the security of the embassy. The senior regional security officer (RSO) has completed a comprehensive review of the various security programs and was taking action to address any identified issues. For a more detailed evaluation of Embassy Pristina's security programs, see the classified annex to this report.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Hired Contractor	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY2009 in \$000
State - D&CP	41		3	257	301	25,255
State - Marine Security	6			3	9	90
DOJ - OP-DAT	2			2	4	761
DOJ - ICI-TAP	1	2		1	4	86
Treasury International Affairs	2				2	64
USAID - Operating Budget	9			41	50	4,265
USAID - ASP				12	12	722
USAID - Programs	5			28	33	47,500
Defense Attaché Office	4	1		1	6	188
Office of Defense Cooperation	1			2	3	222
Totals	71	3	3	347	424	79,153

Data provided by Embassy Pristina

ASP= Alternate Service Provider

On April 8, 2008, U.S. Office Pristina officially became U.S. Embassy Pristina. A great deal has changed regarding resource management since the 2003 OIG inspection of U.S. Office Pristina, all of it positive. A lengthened tour of duty to two years

allows for needed operational continuity. Then, LE staff members were described as inexperienced. Now, they are trained, experienced, and for the most part solid performers. The Department has recognized several for their outstanding performance. Procurement and property management activities, then cited as serious weaknesses, now are run well. Embassy Pristina is no longer dependent on the Regional Service Center Frankfurt for financial and human resources management. All regional support provided to the mission received high marks. International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) customer satisfaction survey scores are high. Morale is high among both American and local staff members, and they work well as a team.

Danger Pay

Since its establishment in 2008, and for well justified reasons pertaining to its predecessor office, Embassy Pristina receives a 20 percent danger pay allowance. This is in addition to a hardship differential of the same amount. Danger pay is authorized for U.S. Government civilian employees in foreign areas where there exist, “conditions of civil war, terrorism or wartime conditions which threaten physical harm to . . . the health or well being” of employees. Allowance rates range from 15 to 35 percent.

Inter-ethnic violence on the scale of a civil war took place in Kosovo during the late 1990s, until a NATO bombing campaign brought about its end in 1999. During that period there were massive population movements, and the Serb minority shrank to about 8 percent of today’s population. Serbs largely are grouped in ethnic enclaves and are protected by KFOR, whose primary mission is to promote internal peace and stability. KFOR played a role in putting down widespread ethnic disturbances in 2004.

Since 1999, and more recently, since its declaration of independence in 2008, the Republic of Kosovo has benefitted from large-scale foreign aid aimed at creating a democratic, multi-ethnic state. Much progress has been made in the establishment of political and administrative institutions and, to a noticeably lesser degree, in the integration of the Serb community. Tensions remain, but there is growing optimism that the Kosovo operation will succeed. As European organizations gradually supplant it, the UN mission has been reduced by two-thirds, and KFOR itself intends to reduce its presence to a deterrent posture of 10,000 in 2010. There is no civil war, and there are no wartime conditions in the capital. The terrorism threat is rated high, as is the case now at many U.S. Embassies.

The embassy intends to submit its biannual danger pay factors form (FS-578) in the spring of 2010. The OIG team believes that the changes in the circumstances underlying the original justification for danger pay call for its review before that time.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should complete and submit an updated danger pay factors form that accurately reflects those conditions in Pristina that justify either a continuation of the allowance at its present rate, a change in the rate, or its discontinuance. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the A)

Discontinuing the allowance would have significant resource implications, especially on housing and the health unit, because it probably would be followed by a change in policy that presently precludes family members under 21 years of age from accompanying employees on assignment to Pristina. In addition, the Office of Overseas Schools does not sponsor a school in Pristina. Nonetheless, the OIG team believes that a review of the danger pay allowance should be focused strictly on the presence or absence of the stipulated factors.

Management Operations

Management operations are well run and greatly improved since the last inspection. The LE staff members are now trained and perform well without the high degree of supervision once required. The effective management officer is praised universally, and just has agreed to stay for a third year. All American supervisors are fully engaged and performing at a high level. The LE staff and their American supervisors are working closely as a team; the esprit de corps is evident. All would be better positioned if the management officer had weekly meetings with key officers, the LE supervisors, and the RSO or his delegate in attendance. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address this issue. In the past year, the housing and facilities and maintenance sections have had notable successes.

The mission has grown significantly. In the past year alone, the number of American officers supported by administrative operations has increased by seven. Most impacted by the sheer volume of work and the requirements of multiple jobs is the financial management/human resources officer (FMO/HRO). The mission will be seeking to split these responsibilities and add a new position. The management officer was precluded from making a case for the position in prior MSPs, but will do so in the 2012 MSP. The general services officer likewise is required to shoulder significant facilities maintenance responsibilities at a post where his stewardship cannot be overstated. The number of LE staff members in administrative operations

appears to be sufficient. The consolidation of Department and USAID management platforms should result in fewer LE staff members in management roles.

Consolidation of Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development Management Platforms

Embassy Pristina, a Tier 3 post, already has made significant progress in its consolidation efforts. Both the Ambassador and the DCM strongly support consolidation at the earliest possible time. Most Department and USAID management platforms should be consolidated prior to the move to the NEC in 2015. Current Department guidance calls for Tier 3 posts to combine as many as 13 support services by the end of FY 2010, even if the services are not colocated in the same building or compound. To date, eight support services have been combined. These include warehousing, expendable supplies, leasing, LE staff payroll, eligible family member programs, Foreign Service National initiatives, recruitment, and mail/messenger/pouch. Embassy Pristina already boasts a Department-run housing pool supported by USAID-run furniture and appliance pools. USAID manages the warehouse operation that includes controlling non-expendable and expendable property. The five other support services, namely motor pool, residential property maintenance, shipping and customs, administrative procurement, and language training, are under working group review. The OIG team applauded embassy consolidation efforts thus far and encouraged the embassy to continue working towards total consolidation of support services.

Rightsizing

The 2007 rightsizing review of U.S. Office Pristina factored into its 2012 staffing the embassy's projections for the NEC and the Department and USAID consolidation of management platforms. Consolidation was projected to cut one U.S. direct-hire position and nine LE staff positions, and to add one U.S. direct-hire facilities manager to maintain the NEC. The rightsizing review did not project additional management positions. The current number of U.S. direct-hires already exceeds the 2012 projection by nine positions. A new rightsizing review will be conducted to correspond with space planning for the NEC in order to ensure the accuracy of staffing projections.

Real Property

The present embassy compound is a four-acre tract of land comprised of 19 buildings, including office and residential units. The embassy leases the buildings,

The on-compound Chief of Mission residence is woefully inadequate. The mission's search for alternatives thus far has identified one residence under construction, but with insufficient setback, and a build-to-lease option with an uncertain completion date. The mission awaits Bureau of Diplomatic Security and OBO determinations on these options.

General Services Operations

The general services office provides high quality services to the mission, as evidenced by the high scores on the ICASS customer satisfaction survey and the OIG workplace and quality of life questionnaires. The general services office (GSO) is led by an experienced officer who also serves as facilities maintenance manager. He is assisted by the facilities manager resident at Embassy Skopje. The quality of office space understandably received low scores on the OIG questionnaire. As noted above, USAID provides warehousing and expendable and non-expendable property control, to include managing the mission's furniture and appliance pools.

Housing Office

The housing office successfully has added language into OBO's standard leases that allows OBO to return residences to landlords in the condition they are in at the time of lease termination. To date, 15 residential leases, new or renegotiated during 2008-2009, have this clause. Considering the alterations made to these premises, this effort potentially could save thousands of dollars in costs which otherwise would be needed to restore the residences to their original condition. This effort will continue. There is an active inter-agency housing board.

Procurement Office

The procurement office just completed a very busy year. A review of procurement actions for the year revealed just how far this office has come since the last inspection. Each of the four LE staff members is well trained and performing at a high level. Procurements are competed and advertised, when required; procurement instruments are well written, appropriate, and well administered; files are complete. Contracting officer's representatives are trained and participate in technical evaluations. Since 2007, whenever it applies, the office has included the Foreign Acquisition Regulation clause 52.222-50, combating trafficking in persons, in all solicitations and contacts.

Motor Pool

The motor pool operation is managed effectively and provides service to all but the Ambassador and Marine security guards. The motor pool has its own garage and auto mechanics who are equipped to handle most requirements for all vehicles in the motor pool. Nine members of the protection security unit double as drivers for the Ambassador. The Marine security guards have three dedicated drivers who are not part of the embassy motor pool. The motor pool has seven drivers and a supervisor; one of the drivers doubles as the dispatcher. Controls are in place to safeguard motor pool resources, to include vehicles, fuel, and driver time.

Embassy Pristina justifies vehicles and drivers for trips that the community liaison office (CLO) sponsors as a “Use Advantage to U.S. Government.” Although the drivers are paid for their service, the CLO has not been charged for other trip costs, such as gasoline. CLO is not exempt from the charge. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address this requirement.

Travel Office

The travel office operation does not have the problems experienced at other missions. Its very limited outgoing routing and airline options, coupled with its solidly performing travel management center, have made service very straightforward. The mission receives very favorable pricing from its travel management center.

Shipping and Customs Office

The shipping and customs office also operates smoothly. It benefits greatly from cooperative customs officials and a geographical location that is easily served by the European Logistical Support Office. At the present time, all incoming shipments of privately-owned and government-owned vehicles are routed to Embassy Skopje, where they receive diplomatic plates. The vast majority of outgoing shipments use the international government bill of lading method of shipping. The European Logistical Support Office makes the determination of shipping method based on pricing information provided by the shipping and customs office.

Facilities Maintenance and Repair Office

The facilities maintenance and repair office, supported by the facilities maintenance officer at Embassy Skopje, provides effective service under very challenging circumstances. Gardening and custodial crews are part of the office.

The facilities maintenance and repair office was instrumental in reducing the mission's energy costs through a number of initiatives that include the optimization of the compound's central heating system and weather stripping windows and doors.

The duties of the custodians include servicing the temporary duty (TDY) quarters operated by the Community Association of Pristina Employees (CAPE) at the start and completion of stays. While CAPE is responsible for expenses associated with this work, it has not paid for them. Further, the custodians should not be responsible for cleaning TDY quarters. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address this requirement.

Warehousing and Property Management

USAID is the embassy's alternate service provider for warehousing and expendable/non-expendable property. This includes managing the furniture and appliance pools. USAID's property staff serves the mission well. Since the last inspection, when USAID played a similar role, ICASS took over the responsibility with very spotty results. In 2006, the responsibility once again shifted back to USAID, but the transfer did not go well, as evidenced by the 2006 Property Management Report that recorded a non-expendable shortage of \$104,764 (3.26 percent) and overage of \$125,095 (3.89 percent). It took USAID a year and a half to reconcile the discrepancies and create a baseline in which it had confidence.

The warehouse is spacious, organized, and well-equipped. All aspects of property management appear sound, with the exception of residential property inventories. Although employees are required by regulation (14 FAM 416.3 and 14 FAM 416.4) to sign their residential inventories, some have not done so. After several attempts to obtain a signature, the property staff informs the employee that failure to sign the inventory is taken as acceptance of the inventory. This approach could postpone employee inventory challenges until departure. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address this requirement.

Safety and Occupational Health Program

The mission safety and occupational health program is both robust and effective. The occupational safety and health committee, which recently met, includes

the post occupational safety and health officer, DCM, RSO, deputy RSO, foreign service health practitioner (FSHP), and representatives from USAID and the human resources office.

The mission has a good working relationship with the local fire department, which has visited the compound and whose cooperation will be essential in any firefighting effort.

Human Resources

The human resources officer (HRO) is also the financial management officer. The officer manages the office with assistance from four LE staff members. The HRO has a human resource background, as does the management officer, who at one time provided service to Pristina from the Regional Support Center in Frankfurt. Due to the wealth of HRO experience at post, Pristina requests little support from Frankfurt. The office functions smoothly.

Work requirements statements and employee evaluation reports are done in a timely manner. The LE staff handbook was completed in 2007, but at least one portion of it is out of date. The office is in the process of assembling a new handbook. The mission awards program recently was changed from a twice-a-year to once-a-year event. This seems appropriate for a mission of this size. However, it should be noted that the awards program scored low on the inspector's quality of life questionnaires.

The embassy does not have a viable LE staff association; USAID has one. Management and the inspection team have encouraged LE staff to establish an association, but the LE staff appears unreceptive. Nevertheless, LE staff associations serve as excellent tools to help foster good relations between American and local employees, and the OIG team advised management to continue to encourage the formation of an association.

LE staff salaries remain above comparable salaries paid to employees at comparator entities. Salaries were set ten years ago according to the local compensation plan in Belgrade, which had higher salaries than the going rate in Pristina. Although there has been some gap-closing over the years, the most recent Office of Overseas Employment review does not support a wage increase.

There is no LE staff orientation program at post, but one is planned. The mission should also have an LE staff mentoring program for incoming staff. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address this requirement.

There are only three eligible family members employed by the embassy. The mission should look for additional opportunities to employ spouses, due to the lack of outside activities in Pristina. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address this requirement.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Adequate emphasis is placed on Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). The recently selected embassy EEO coordinator has appropriate training. A Federal Women's Program Manager also has been appointed. The mission recently added a second EEO bulletin board on the compound. The mission provided mandatory EEO and sexual harassment training to all local staff in 2009. Two LE staff EEO liaisons have been identified; some informal training for them is desirable. Discussions with American and LE staff did not elicit any current concerns or complaints about EEO matters.

Financial Management

The financial management office provides services to the Department and four other agencies. As noted previously, the FMO doubles as the HRO. The officer has six staff members, including a Class B cashier. There are also three subcashiers at post. Cash counts are performed regularly and effectively. The mission has requested an extension of the waiver under 4 FAH-3 H394.2-6 that would allow increased cash payments to vendors. While progress has been made in converting to electronic fund transfers, some elements in the economy still require cash payments.

The senior financial specialist has distinguished himself as a regional asset. He is also a programmer and has developed a computerized telephone billing process that eliminates paperwork and submits accurate invoices to embassy employees. The system works well and is "cutting-edge," but the inspectors noted that several bills went unpaid for long durations, two for as long as 12 months. More aggressive follow-up is needed to collect funds from the delinquent payers. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address this requirement.

There is a new ICASS chairperson, the current director of ICITAP. Although he served previously as a member of the ICASS council in Tirana, Albania, he never received formal ICASS training. The OIG team informally recommended that the ICASS chairperson receive such training when time permits.

Representation

Of the mission's \$20,900 in representational funds for FY 2009, the Ambassador used about half, and the rest went to the DCM, management, public diplomacy, political/economic section, and the RSO. This was an appropriate distribution of representational funds for the embassy; however, the timing of representational fund use was weighted heavily toward the end of the fiscal year. About 65 percent was spent in September shortly after the Ambassador, the DCM, and several other officers arrived. It was used appropriately for welcome events, but next year such an end of year spike would not be appropriate. Representational funds should be used throughout the year, with an emphasis on smaller rather than larger events. Many of the September events were large gatherings for new mission staff to meet their counterparts, but at least one event was described on a representational voucher as a "party." The OIG team addressed this with an informal recommendation.

Information Management and Information Security

Embassy Pristina operates an effective information management (IM) and information systems security program. The high ICASS survey results and the general consensus of mission staff support this judgment. The OIG questionnaires show users' high scores for IM services, and Department affiliates report a high level of satisfaction, as well. In addition to being very strong technically, the IM section provides a high level of customer service. IM operations are very well maintained, despite resources that are stretched due to limited staffing, the irregular facility structure, insufficient office space, and the increased workload from the growing tenant agencies at the mission. Since OIG's last inspection, the number of supported workstations and servers has more than doubled, while the IM staffing level has remained constant.

The IM staff is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and security of the Department's unclassified network (OpenNet), classified local area network, dedicated Internet networks (DIN), unclassified and classified pouch, and telephone and radio operations, as well as mailroom operations. The OpenNet network consists of 178 workstations and eight servers; the classified local area network has seven workstations and six servers. There is one information management officer, one information systems officer, one information management specialist, and the following LE staff members: three systems-support employees, one telephone/radio technician, one mail/pouch employee, and two switchboard operators. The IM section largely adheres to Department IM guidelines and the industry's common practices. Additional comments on the section can be found in the classified annex to this report.

Staffing Constraints

For several years the IM operations have been managed effectively, despite a minimal level of staff resources and intermittent staffing shortages. The newly appointed information management officer has begun recovering from the excess workload resulting from the staffing shortage, while successfully operating the Information Programs Center (IPC). From April 2009 to mid-July 2009, the previous information management officer was the sole American in charge of IM operations. To its credit, the mission was able to maintain positive systems support with minimal support from the Regional Information Management Center in Frankfurt, Germany. At the time of the inspection, with the recent arrival of the first-tour information management specialist, the IM section was fully staffed for the first time in nearly six months.

Mailroom Operation

Embassy Pristina manages an active mail and diplomatic pouch operation, but without adequate staff. As identified during the 2003 OIG inspection, the mailroom has continued to be a critical element of embassy operations and is essential to overall mission morale. The mailroom operation has only one dedicated position facilitating the various mailroom duties, in addition to providing a number of other collateral duties. Although the mailroom continued to function adequately from its transition from the Army Post Office, the duties have continued to grow, requiring daily backup support from the Information Systems Center administrators and telephone operators. The mailroom should be adequately staffed to provide operational coverage, without requiring the support of an already stretched IM staff. Without the appropriate level of staffing for the mail operation, there will continue to be intermittent operational disruptions that negatively affect mission operations.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Pristina should establish an additional mailroom position to appropriately staff the mailroom operation. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Information Programs Center Operations

The IPC's operational hours continue to be an issue of contention, as was identified in the 2003 OIG inspection report. There are no regular operating hours, and the cause is a lack of a formal agreement by all parties using the IPC. In addition, most parties using the IPC are relatively new. The result is that the information management officer and information systems officer incur a significant amount

of overtime to provide IPC service. Regardless of the cause, mission management should standardize and confirm the hours of operations to minimize disruptions to operations. During the course of the inspection, management undertook to regularize the IPC operational hours.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Pristina should establish standard information programs center procedures, including normal hours of operation, and circulate the procedures as a mission notice, reserving to the Chief of Mission the authority to change or extend the hours. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Radio Frequency Network Authorization

Embassy Pristina lacked officially documented host government approval for the radio network. The regulations (5 FAM 541 c.) require embassies to obtain approval for specific frequencies to ensure interference-free radio use. The OIG team briefed the embassy regarding other Department missions' handling of this issue, and which strategies have proven to be effective. Fortunately, host nation cooperation is likely to be favorable. The information management officer initiated correspondence to the government service provider to try to address the issue, but approval was not yet forthcoming.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Pristina should obtain approval from the Government of Kosovo for the frequencies used on the radio network. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Radio Program Upgrade

Embassy Pristina's radio program is in need of an immediate upgrade. The seasoned radio technician reported that the radios are old, and he is unsure of the radio coverage area. Embassy security relies heavily on the operation of the radio program to protect the Chief of Mission, who travels frequently to areas needing coverage. The information management officer was in the process of formally requesting the upgrade from the Bureau of Information Resource Management's radio programs branch according to Department approved procedures in 5 FAH 2-H-750. Although the radio program branch has priorities elsewhere in the world due to civil unrest and the political climate in other locations, several neighboring EUR posts recently were upgraded. With respect to the potentially unstable environment, the OIG team agreed with IM management that there is a critical need for a radio program upgrade at the embassy.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should upgrade the mission's radio program. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with IRM)

Dedicated Internet Networks

The OIG team confirmed that Embassy Pristina is operating DIN computer(s) in the public diplomacy annex and the GSO training room. In June 2006, the Department's information technology change control board authorized Embassy Pristina to operate the DIN in the public affairs annex. The waiver has been up for renewal since May 2009. An additional DIN currently is servicing the GSO training room, but the embassy has not requested the necessary renewal of authorization for the DIN in the public diplomacy annex or the required DIN waiver in the GSO training room networks.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Pristina should request a waiver from the Department's information technology change control board for the dedicated Internet networks located in the public diplomacy annex and the general services office training room. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Regional Computer Security Officer

A regional computer security officer has not visited Pristina since June 2005. Although there is no regulation that mandates annual visits, they are considered to be a best practice for overseas missions. Such a visit can be vital to an embassy's security posture. Since there has been a recent and substantial growth in Embassy Pristina's network, it would be prudent for the regional computer security officer to conduct a site visit.

Recommendation 10: The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs should conduct a site audit of Embassy Pristina's computer infrastructure. (Action: EUR)

QUALITY OF LIFE

Pristina is a difficult place to live, although improvements in the infrastructure are slowly coming about. Danger pay and hardship pay are both set at 20 percent. As a result of the factors that underlie the approval of danger pay for those assigned to the embassy, American eligible family members under the age of 21 are not allowed to accompany officials assigned to Pristina. In addition, there is no adequate American School in Pristina and little for children to do, even if they are permitted to travel to Kosovo.

Cooperative Association of Pristina Employees

The Cooperative Association of Pristina Employees (CAPE) is still in the process of being established and is experiencing growing pains. It provides the following services: TDY quarters, dry cleaning, gift shop, restaurant, and an Internet/cable TV bill payment service.

Documents such as CAPE's compliance certification, audits, and financial statements were delivered late to the Department. The CAPE board has had difficulty hiring and retaining competent managers and accountants. The charter and by-laws are in place and are appropriate. Membership fees are entirely refundable.

Visitors use the TDY quarters in accordance with an agreement between Embassy Pristina and OBO's Office of Real Estate. There is a license agreement between the Department's Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs and the embassy, which documents the formula used to distribute income from the proceeds of rental receipts. That formula states that CAPE may retain a management fee for running the operation, not to exceed 15 percent of gross revenue. CAPE also is allowed to keep a reserve fund for future replacement of furniture and equipment. Remaining proceeds are credited to an ICASS account. However, as of the OIG inspection, a schedule had yet to be developed between the office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs and the board. In the absence of a reserve account for income from the TDY quarters, the profit margin seemed excessive. Additionally, the char force was used occasionally to clean the TDY quarters, and CAPE should fund this expense. The embassy would benefit from the expertise of, and possibly a visit by, a CAPE management/audit team, from the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs to ensure compliance with policies and guidance.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Pristina should request that the Bureau of Administration should provide assistance to enable the Cooperative Association of Pristina Employees to establish appropriate controls over the operation of the association. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with A)

Community Liaison Office

A part time (20 hours a week) community liaison coordinator worked some uncompensated hours in order to provide needed support to the mission. ICASS scores from earlier this year indicated the CLO was the lowest rated of all the services provided. That situation appeared to have improved with a change in CLO leadership. One challenge for the CLO is meeting the diverse needs and expectations of mission members from all agencies.

The sponsorship program received high marks, as did the CLO's promotion of activities such as trips and social gatherings. With a dearth of outside activities available to the community, the OIG team informally recommended that the mission establish a CLO advisory committee to assist in developing new ideas that meet all employee needs.

Orientation for American employees was held for the first time recently, and it was mostly well received. The mission should find a way to orient newcomers who arrive after the orientation session but before the next summer rotation cycle. This could be done by taping the orientation session, summarizing it in a PowerPoint presentation, or holding a mini-orientation session prior to the summer cycle. The OIG team made an informal recommendation to address this requirement.

Other Morale Issues

The Embassy compound had a feral cat population that made its home near the embassy's snack bar. Several mission employees fed the cats and generally took care of them. The cats were vaccinated, and they were seen by some as a positive morale factor. However, other mission employees considered the cats a health issue, because of their proximity to the snack bar and the fact that some employees fed the cats on the snack bar patio. The embassy nurse agreed to contact the appropriate office in the Department to determine the proper manner in which to deal with this issue. Once guidance is received, the mission should issue a policy on the handling of the cat population. The OIG team made an informal recommendation on this matter.

Health Unit

The health unit provides effective care to the embassy community. The new FSHP covers Embassy Skopje and is assisted by a full time nurse. The regional medical officer from Embassy Belgrade and the regional psychiatrist from Embassy Vienna provide satisfactory care. The U.S. Army hospital at Camp Bondsteel provides care only for the seriously injured. The health unit provides all primary care requirements, as local care providers are considered unacceptable. All other care is provided at facilities outside the country. The health unit is considering using an alternative air medical evacuation provider, as the embassy has experienced delays in several recent evacuations.

As presently configured, the health unit could not easily accommodate children. To do so the unit would need more space, staff, vaccines, and probably a full time FSHP. Also, as part of a plan for allowing eligible family members under the age of 21 at the mission, the FSHP would like a child-friendly emergency room.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The mission has made great strides since the last inspection in terms of improving management controls. Experienced managers in the management section and previous assistance from the Regional Support Center in Frankfurt enabled the embassy to improve controls. Furthermore, the management section began the production of a management controls handbook in line with the Department's recently released instructions. An eligible family member professional associate hired by the management section was doing the work. This then will become the underpinning for the next Chief of Mission assurance. The DCM also is closely involved in the management controls process.

Most LE staff members have received appropriate training, which is an improvement since the previous inspection, and cross-training is prevalent within sections. One LE financial specialist is looked to by other missions for training and assistance. Twice in the last five years, LE staff members from Pristina have been EUR's candidate for Foreign Service National of the year.

Public diplomacy grants appear to be well managed. Other grants are monitored by USAID.

Consular Management Controls

Since Embassy Pristina's consular section does not perform most routine consular services, such as passport or visa adjudication, consular accountability tasks involve only limited fee collections. The section has a standalone automated cash register system, such as that issued to consular agents, and this is sufficient for the limited amount of fees collected. The consular officer resident in Skopje visited Pristina during the inspection and performed the appropriate accountable consular officer monthly reconciliation. There is a backup LE staff member for the consular section, who plans to take the distance learning FSI cashiering course. The section has excellent standard operating procedures that are up to date, and file cabinets contain appropriate equipment, forms, and files.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should upgrade the mission's radio program. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with IRM)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Pristina should request a waiver from the Department's information technology change control board for the dedicated Internet networks located in the public diplomacy annex and the general services office training room. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Recommendation 10: The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs should conduct a site audit of Embassy Pristina's computer infrastructure. (Action: EUR)

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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.

The work of the combined political/economic section in this Class 3 embassy is highly complex. Given the breadth of the work and the extensive bilateral and multilateral coordination in which the section is involved, the OIG team found that the grade level of the section chief's position should be reviewed.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Pristina should submit a request to the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs asking for a review of the grade level of position 10001021.

The newly arrived Ambassador has clearly outlined his five goals, and they are prominently displayed in offices throughout the embassy and used in developing work requirements. There was some variance between these goals and the goals stated in the 2011 Mission Strategic Plan. The Ambassador has also identified a number of needs for additional staffing and has informally requested new positions.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Pristina should send a cable to the Department to inform interested offices and other agencies of the Ambassador's goals, as well as requests for new positions, before the next mission strategic plan cycle.

LE staff members prepare most biographic reporting, which does not include classified information known to American officers. The embassy did not maintain classified biographic files.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Pristina should develop classified biographic information, with, for example, information on negotiating styles, to supplement the information in the existing biographic files.

Embassy Pristina does not conduct an electronic information outreach program to key audiences. This is a function that is traditionally managed by the Information Resource Center. The center has only one locally employed (LE) staff member and will require one additional information specialist to perform the information outreach function.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Pristina should seek funding for one additional locally employed staff position to manage an electronic information outreach program to key target audiences throughout Kosovo.

Because the visiting consular officer from Skopje does not attend country team and other general meetings of Embassy Kosovo on a regular basis, there is no systematic way to ensure that the officer is kept current on relevant information of concern to consular operations or conversely that consular matters of general interest had widespread dissemination.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Pristina should ensure that the consular officer is informed of issues discussed at the country team and that consular related items of interest are disseminated to the country team in a timely manner.

The management officer does not conduct weekly meetings.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Pristina should require the management officer to hold weekly staff meetings with key officers and locally employed staff supervisors. Attendance of the regional security officer or his delegate would be beneficial.

The community liaison office did not pay a fee for the use of motor pool vehicles for recreational trips sponsored by the community liaison office.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Pristina should ensure that the community liaison office pays a fee that captures the full cost of operations for motor pool vehicle use for community liaison office-sponsored trips.

The LE staff custodians currently service the Community Association of Pristina Employees temporary duty quarters for no charge.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Pristina should require the Community Association of Pristina Employees organization to hire its own custodians or pay for any work done at the temporary duty quarters by the locally employed staff custodians.

USAID property managers did not require employees to sign their residential inventories even though the Foreign Affairs Manual is clear that this is mandatory.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Pristina should require employees to sign their residential inventories.

The embassy did not have an LE staff employee association despite encouraging the LE staff to form one.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Pristina should continue to encourage the locally employed staff to form an employee association.

Embassy Pristina did not have an LE staff mentoring program.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Pristina should develop a locally employed staff mentoring program.

There are only three eligible family members employed at Embassy Pristina.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Pristina should look for additional opportunities for employment of eligible family members.

Embassy Pristina does not aggressively collect for personal telephone call charges.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Pristina should improve its telephone bill collection process.

The ICASS council chairperson has not had any formal ICASS training.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Pristina should send its new International Cooperative Administrative Support Services chairperson to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services training.

The Embassy did not have a representation plan that allocates funds. Large events were held in place of smaller, more informal events.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Pristina should develop a representation plan that allocates funds to sections, ensures that representation events are held throughout the year, and focuses on small, intimate events instead of large functions.

Embassy Pristina does not have a CLO advisory committee.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Pristina should establish a community liaison office advisory committee that meets periodically to discuss community liaison office activities, with an emphasis on fulfilling all eight of the community liaison office responsibilities as defined by the family liaison office.

Although the embassy conducted its first ever orientation recently, there is no mechanism available to orient employees that arrive in the October-April time frame.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Pristina should find a way to hold mini-orientation sessions for those employees arriving after the annual orientation session in September.

The Embassy has had a feral cat population residing near the snack bar. The FSHP asked for guidance from the Office of Medical Services relating to the health consequences of having an animal population near food services.

Informal Recommendation 18: When the Embassy's Foreign Service health practitioner receives a response from the Office of Medical Services, the Embassy should issue a management notice to the community relating to the care and feeding of the cat population.

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Christopher Dell	8/2009
Deputy Chief of Mission	Michael Murphy	8/2009
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Trudy Bagley	9/2008
Consular	Lauren May (resident in Skopje, Macedonia)	
Political/Economic	Louis Crishock	8/2009
Public Diplomacy	Emelia Puma	8/2009
Regional Security	David Hodson	7/2009
Other Agencies:		
Department of Defense	Col. John McDevitt	6/2009
U.S. Agency for International Development	Patricia Rader	9/2008
Department of Justice	Kimberly Moore	6/2008
Department of Treasury	Anne Schwartz	11/2007

ABBREVIATIONS

APAO	Assistant public affairs officer
CAPE	Community Association of Pristina Employees
CLO	Community liaison office
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DIN	Dedicated internet network
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EUR	Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
FMO	Financial management officer
FSHP	Foreign Service health practitioner
GSO	General services office
HRO	Human resources officer
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
ICO	International Civilian Office/European Union Special Representative
IM	Information management
IMO	Information management officer
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IPC	Information programs center
IVG	International voice gateway
KFOR	Kosovo Force
LE	Locally employed
MSP	Mission strategic plan

NEC	New embassy compound
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OPDAT	Overseas Prosecutorial Development and Training
PAO	Public affairs officer
P/E	Political/economic section
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
RHRO	Regional human resources officer
RSO	Regional security officer
TDY	Temporary duty
UN	United Nations
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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