



Photo: U.S. Embassy Beijing, China

OIG MONTHLY UPDATE



NOVEMBER 2017

MESSAGE FROM THE IG

This month's update is coming out later than usual because, in addition to reporting our work and results from October 2017, we wanted to highlight a number of important OIG products released in November 2017. These materials are listed on the second page and include the Semiannual Report to the Congress, Major Management and Performance Challenges reports, and an Advisory Notice regarding the Department of State's reform and redesign plans.

As we are now well into FY 2018, I also want to highlight OIG's accomplishments during the last fiscal year. In FY 2017, OIG published 142 reports and issued 773 recommendations. Moreover, OIG's work identified more than \$1 billion in potential monetary benefits, which is almost 12 times our budget.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In October 2017, a Department contract company agreed to pay over \$1.4 million to resolve allegations that it knowingly provided false information to the Department. OIG special agents determined the company did not comply with contractual obligations to ensure that U.S. embassy local guard force personnel were adequately trained.

In October 2017, a Department employee was suspended for 8 days without pay, received a warning letter, and was ordered to repay more than \$2,800 in shipping costs for abusing Unaccompanied Air Baggage policies while transferring to a new duty post. OIG special agents determined the employee attempted to ship 496 handbags and 78 handbag straps for a personally-owned business as household effects in order to avoid paying shipping charges and customs duty on these commercial items.

In *Management Assistance Report: Contract Terms and Guidance for Approving Student Training Expenses Relating to the Justice and Corrections Programs in Afghanistan Require Attention* ([AUD-MERO-18-14](#)), OIG found that the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs approved approximately \$5 million in payments for a variety of student training expenses between 2011 and 2016. These payments, which related to Corrections Systems Support Program and Justice Sector Support Program contracts, were not authorized under the contracts and that lacked supporting documentation. The Office of Acquisitions Management, which awarded the contracts, agreed to review the \$5 million that OIG determined to be unallowable and make a decision on any part of that amount that should be recovered. The Office of Acquisition Management also modified the contracts to clearly specify the extent to which student training expenses are allowable.

RECOMMENDATION STATUS

Department and BBG as of October 31, 2017:

830

OPEN
RECOMMENDATIONS

17

CLOSED
RECOMMENDATIONS
DURING OCTOBER

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FY 2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

OVER

\$1 billion

IN POTENTIAL MONETARY BENEFITS

142

PRODUCTS PUBLISHED

773

RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

Monthly Tabletop Crisis Planning Exercises (*Inspection of Embassy Nicosia, Cyprus*, [ISP-I-18-03](#), October 2017)

Embassy Nicosia held a half-hour crisis planning exercise once a month following country team meetings. The Regional Security Officer circulated a brief scenario—often based on recent world events such as an active shooter at a hotel or a grounded cruise ship—to country team members in advance. During the meeting, chaired by the Deputy Chief of Mission, section heads report how their staff would respond to the scenario. The regular exercises develop the embassy's "muscle memory" for crisis planning, and promote a whole-of-mission approach to emergency preparedness. Staff told OIG they found the exercises useful for sharing information on interagency responsibilities and capabilities, and that they contributed to the embassy's coordinated response to the hijacking of an Egyptair flight to Cyprus in March 2016.

Preparing for a Range of Crisis Situations (*Inspection of the Bureau of African Affairs*, [ISP-I-18-01](#), October 2017)

The Office of West African Affairs established standard operating procedures and planning guidelines to help country desks prepare for a range of crisis situations, such as evacuations and political and economic unrest. It developed internal procedures to rapidly shift additional employees to country desks to enhance policy response and to support embassies during crises. Office employees reported that these mechanisms helped them respond to crises.

REPORTS AND OTHER PRODUCTS ISSUED

- *Independent Accountant's Report on the Application of Agreed-Upon Procedures: Employee Benefits, Withholdings, Contributions, and Supplemental Semiannual Headcount Reporting Submitted to OPM* ([AUD-FM-18-02](#))
- *Inspection of the Bureau of African Affairs* ([ISP-I-18-01](#))
- *Inspection of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Office of Mobile Security Deployments* ([ISP-I-18-05](#))
- *Inspection of Embassy Nicosia, Cyprus* ([ISP-I-18-03](#))
- *Management Assistance Report: Contract Terms and Guidance for Approving Student Training Expenses Relating to the Justice and Corrections Programs in Afghanistan Require Attention* ([AUD-MERO-18-14](#))
- *Inspection of the Bureau of African Affairs' Foreign Assistance Program Management* ([ISP-I-18-02](#))
- *Audit of the Department of State Information Security Program** ([AUD-IT-18-12](#))
- *Audit of the Broadcasting Board of Governors Information Security Program** ([AUD-IT-IB-18-13](#))
- *FY 2017 Inspector General Statement on the Department of State's Major Management and Performance Challenges* ([OIG-EX-18-02](#))
- *FY 2017 Inspector General Statement on the Broadcasting Board of Governors' Major Management and Performance Challenges* ([OIG-EX-18-03](#))
- *Considerations for the Department of State's Ongoing Reform and Redesign Plans* ([Advisory Notice for Department Management](#))
- *Audit of the Department of State's Implementation of the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014* ([AUD-FM-18-03](#))
- *Audit of the Broadcasting Board of Governors Implementation of the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014* ([AUD-FM-IB-18-04](#))
- *Independent Auditor's Report on the Broadcasting Board of Governors 2017 and 2016 Financial Statements* ([AUD-FM-IB-18-10](#))
- *Independent Auditor's Report on the Department of State 2017 and 2016 Financial Statements* ([AUD-FM-18-05](#))
- *Independent Auditor's Report on the U.S. Department of State 2017 Closing Package* ([AUD-FM-18-06](#))
- *Semiannual Report to the Congress* ([April 1, 2017 to September 30, 2017](#))

*Report is classified or sensitive.



The Office of Inspector General conducts independent oversight of the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors on behalf of American taxpayers to:

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