



U.S. Consulate General Edinburgh, Scotland

## April 2020

Even during the unprecedented disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, OIG continues working to fulfill its mission to provide oversight of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for Global Media. However, this crisis is likely to affect the nature and quantity of OIG’s reports and overall work in the coming months. For example, we are unable to travel overseas, and our ability to perform classified work is limited by our efforts to promote social distancing and maximize telework for our staff.

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In March 2020, the Department issued letters of admonishment to two U.S. Government Purchase Card holders for failure to follow Federal Acquisition Regulations. OIG special agents determined that, from 2013 through 2015, the cardholders routinely approved transactions they knew to be split purchases that were intended to avoid exceeding the \$3,000 micro-purchase threshold. Final adjudication concerning a supervisor’s role in the matter is still pending.

In March 2020, a Department employee and spouse agreed to pay an administrative settlement to resolve allegations that they defrauded the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, Foreign Service Benefit Plan through the submission of false claims for reimbursement of services from 2013 through 2015.

In March 2020, the Department suspended and proposed debarment for three grantee organization employees who submitted false claims to the Government. OIG special agents determined that, from September 2016 through August 2017, while administering a grant program to improve radio and television broadcasting skills for journalism students throughout Afghanistan, the individuals submitted false claims for the salary for a manager position at one of the media operations center even though this position never existed. The Department

### RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS

as of March 31, 2020

699\*

Open  
Recommendations

56\*

Recommendations  
Closed During March

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\* Classified recommendations are not included in these totals because of delays in preparing classified materials due to OIG’s effort to maximize telework and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

had also recovered \$21,900 from the grantee organization in November 2019.

In March 2020, a former contracting officer representative who served as a facilities maintenance supervisor resigned after it was discovered he did not disclose, as required, outside business employment and activities to the U.S. Embassy where he worked. OIG special agents determined the former employee worked with the same contractors in the scope of his official duties and in his outside business activities. In addition, the employee solicited a gift from a prohibited source and knowingly made misrepresentations regarding material facts to OIG.

In response to a recommendation contained in a 2018 report, *Inspection of Embassy Guatemala City, Guatemala*, INL-Guatemala (INL-G) provided three key benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of Guatemala’s aviation operations. These benchmarks include: 1) deterring the flow of illicit narcotics in Guatemala, 2) disrupting narcotics (including poppy and coca production), and 3) creating a sustainable system and process for logistics and maintenance for

the aircraft. Additionally, a bilateral working group involving INL-G and the Government of Guatemala continues to meet and monitor progress in these areas.

In response to a recommendation in a 2019 report, *Inspection of Embassy New Delhi and Constituent Posts*, Embassy New Delhi approved the reprogramming of one Information Management Officer position in International Cooperative Administrative Support Services, resulting in \$81,331 being put to better use.

In response to a recommendation in a 2019 report, *Audit Lessons Learned from Office of Inspector General Audits Concerning the Review and Payment of Contractor Invoices Supporting Overseas Contingency Operations*, the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs (NEA-SCA), in coordination with the Regional Contract Support Office in Frankfurt, Germany, provided Contracting Officer's Representative training support to the NEA-SCA staff at U.S. Mission Afghanistan. In addition, the Regional Contract Support Office's training program is now required for all newly assigned CORs to Embassy Kabul and available for other post personnel. As a result, OIG closed one recommendation in the report.

## NEW WORK STARTED

- Audit of Foreign Per Diem Rates Established by the Department of State

## REPORTS ISSUED

- *Information Report: Risk Assessment of the Department of State Grant and Cooperative Agreement Closeout Process (AUD-CGI-20-25)*
- *Audit of the Office of the Coordinator for Assistance to Europe and Eurasia's Oversight of Foreign Assistance Funds Transferred to Implementing Partners (AUD-CGI-20-12)*
- *Audit of Selected Bureau of Administration, Office of Operations, Office of Facilities Management Services, Contracts (AUD-CGI-20-21)*
- *Management Assistance Report: Foreign Service Institute Wireless User Access Controls (ESP-20-03)*
- *Management Letter Related to the Audit of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, U.S. Section, FY 2019 Financial Statements (AUD-FM-20-23)*



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