



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In November, a former on-site safety coordinator for a Department of State (Department) contract company was debarred for 3 years. OIG and Diplomatic Security special agents determined the individual sold surplus materials from a Marine Security Guard Residence construction site and failed to report the sale to avoid paying an associated duty to the local government.

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A Department employee received a warning for participating in a fraudulent reimbursement scheme involving a business providing educational services for Gifted and Talented (GT) Instruction. OIG special agents determined while the business provided an initial consultation on GT educational resources, it primarily provided a mechanism for customers to submit educational expenses directly, circumventing the Department’s Financial Management Officer’s review. Previously, in May 2023, the employee reimbursed the Department \$887 for unallowable educational expenses.

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Also in November, a co-conspirator of a former U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) Contracting Officer (CO) who was sentenced to 2 years in prison for fraud pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit bribery and honest services wire fraud. Sentencing is scheduled for December 13. OIG and FBI special agents had detected fraud involving the CO and two other individuals from late 2014 to 2016. The CO provided preferential treatment that included the awarding of a professional staffing contract worth millions of dollars and steering the procurement process to benefit the co-conspirators and a contracting firm.

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In response to a recommendation in *Audit of the Department of State Implementation of Policies*

RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS

as of November 30, 2023

1,042*

Open
Recommendations

39**

Recommendations
Closed During November

[View Recommendations](#)

* Includes 53 recommendations associated with the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). Total also excludes 1 Department SBU report with 13 recommendations (11 recommendations are resolved, and 2 are unresolved).

**Includes 5 recommendations closed on OIG’s classified network.

Reports

Ongoing Work

Intended To Counter Violent Extremism ([AUD-MERO-19-27](#), June 2019), the Bureau of African Affairs revised and released updated guidance related to countering violent extremism to all domestic staff. The updated guidance now aligns the Bureau of African Affairs regional strategy objectives, subobjectives, and performance indicators for countering violent extremism with Department and Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism strategies, goals, and objectives.

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Major management and performance challenges facing the Department and the USAGM were identified in annual reports issued in November. In the [Department report](#), OIG identified deficiencies in safety and security, stewardship, and staffing and organizational structure. In the [USAGM report](#), information security and management and contract and grant management were identified as major challenges.

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

Task Approval Process and Record Keeping Streamlined (*Inspection of the American Institute in Taiwan-Taipei and Kaohsiung*, [ISP-I-24-07](#))

American Institute in Taiwan-Taipei (AIT/T) Information Management staff collaborated with the AIT/T Front Office and other sections to develop a Front Office task tracker that is accessible from a desktop or mobile device. The Front Office used the tracker to assign tasks, such as requesting briefing materials, planning bilateral meetings, and drafting cables. The tracker provides a portal for users to create and track tasks at various review and approval stages. It also creates a centralized record repository for the tasks and supplemental documents. The staff developed this innovative solution using approved enterprise applications to solve a problem common to posts around the world, such as delays in task approval timelines due to accessibility and version control issues. Since its implementation, multiple posts have emulated AIT/T's tracker, and the Bureau of Information Resource Management highlighted the innovative tracker as a best practice.

NOTABLE OPEN RECOMMENDATION

In the December 2020 report, *Management Assistance Report: Continued Deficiencies / Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Responsibilities at Overseas Posts* ([ISP-21-07](#)), OIG recommended that the Bureau of Global Talent Management, in coordination with others, should conduct an organizational assessment of the information systems security officer (ISSO) program to determine the feasibility of creating full-time overseas positions and implement the results of the assessment with an appropriate reporting structure for those positions. This recommendation has been open for nearly 3 years. Implementation of this recommendation would help determine workload distribution in support of dedicated full-time ISSOs and provide information on the appropriate ISSO reporting structure. Furthermore, using the results of an organizational assessment, the Department could address issues with the reporting structure to ensure adequate oversight and management of the ISSO program.

UKRAINE AND AFGHANISTAN OVERSIGHT

In the November *Review of Department of State End-Use Monitoring in Ukraine* ([ISP-I-24-02](#)), OIG found that the Department had performed limited in-person "primary" end-use monitoring (EUM) activities in Ukraine as the evolving security situation allowed, but that it also depended on secondary EUM procedures, including relying on the Ukrainian government to assist directly and indirectly with EUM. OIG recommended that the three bureaus responsible for performing EUM on assistance in Ukraine develop and implement new EUM standard operating procedures or update existing procedures for use in non-permissive conditions and evaluate the use of alternative EUM procedures in Ukraine. Additionally, OIG recommended that the bureaus consult with one another and, as practicable, adopt common approaches where they are applying EUM to common items or recipients. In response to OIG's recommendations, the three bureaus described plans to develop or update standard operating procedures and conduct evaluations to guide EUM practices going forward.

Also in November, the Lead Inspector General quarterly report for [Operation Enduring Sentinel](#) (OES) was released. During the quarter, the Lead IG and partner agencies published six reports related to OES, including reports on the Department's evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul in August 2021 and the termination of contracts after the fall of the Afghan government.

Finally, OIG released its [Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2024](#), which notes that we are committed to our robust body of ongoing and planned Ukraine-related oversight work. We will also continue oversight of programs and operations related to Afghanistan. The plan lists Ukraine and Afghanistan-related projects initiated in FY 2023 that are expected to be completed in FY 2024.

For complete lists of such work for Ukraine, go [here](#).

For complete lists of completed, ongoing, and planned work related to Afghanistan, go [here](#).

REPORTS ISSUED

- *Information Report: Department of State 2023 Travel Charge Card Risk Assessment* ([AUD-CGI-24-04](#))
- *Information Report: Department of State 2023 Purchase Charge Card Risk Assessment* ([AUD-CGI-24-03](#))
- *Information Report: International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, U.S. Section, 2023 Purchase Card Risk Assessment* ([AUD-CGI-24-05](#))
- *Information Report: U.S. Agency for Global Media 2023 Purchase Card Risk Assessment* ([AUD-CGI-IB-24-06](#))
- *Independent Auditor's Report on the U.S. Agency for Global Media FY 2023 and FY 2022 Financial Statements* ([AUD-FM-IB-24-08](#))
- *Independent Auditor's Report on the U.S. Department of State FY 2023 and FY 2022 Financial Statements* ([AUD-FM-24-07](#))
- *Audit of the Planning, Design, Construction, and Commissioning of the Central Power Plant at U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq* ([AUD-GEER-24-02](#))
- *Review of Department of State End-Use Monitoring in Ukraine* ([ISP-I-24-02](#))
- *Inspection of the American Institute in Taiwan-Taipei and Kaohsiung* ([ISP-I-24-07](#))
- *Classified Inspection of Embassy Singapore, Singapore* (ISP-S-24-09)
- *Classified Inspection of Vienna Tri-Mission* (ISP-S-24-04)
- *Fiscal Year 2023 Inspector General Statement on the Department of State's Major Management and Performance Challenges* ([OIG-24-01](#))
- *Fiscal Year 2023 Inspector General Statement on*

the U.S. Agency for Global Media's Major Management and Performance Challenges ([OIG-24-02](#))

- [Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2024](#)
- [Lead Inspector General for Inherent Resolve | July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023](#)
- [Lead Inspector General for Operating Enduring Sentinel | July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023](#)

NEW WORK STARTED

- *Audit of Worldwide Protective Services III Initial Training Consolidation Initiative.*
- *Audit of U.S. Agency for Global Media FY 2023 Compliance With the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019*
- *Review of the U.S. Department of State FY 2023 Budget Formulation Compliance Report and Detailed Accounting Report*
- *Audit of the Department of State's Administration of the Shipment and Storage of Personal Effects During Post Assignment Travel*



The Office of Inspector General conducts independent oversight of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for Global Media on behalf of American taxpayers to:

- Promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Identify vulnerabilities and recommend constructive solutions.

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