



U.S. Embassy Brussels, Belgium

May 2023

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In response to a recommendation, the Department of State Bureau of Administration revised its internal guidance regarding its facility emergency action plans. After issuance of the September 2022 report *Audit of Department of State Emergency Action Plans at Selected Domestic Facilities* ([AUD-SI-22-36](#)), the bureau approved an action memorandum that updated the internal guidance related to responsibilities for Senior Department Officials, now redesignated as Senior Department Representatives (SDR). The updates include guidance that the SDRs are no longer required to complete a full facility emergency action plan. Furthermore, these changes will be codified in an upcoming revision to the Foreign Affairs Manual.

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

Innovative Products Help Combat Russia’s Disinformation, Advance Mission Goals (*Inspection of the U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, [ISP-I-23-16](#))

The U.S. Mission to North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (USNATO) Public Diplomacy Section responded to Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine with innovative visual social media products to combat Russia’s disinformation, educate skeptical audiences about NATO, and reinforce the transatlantic alliance. Audience engagement figures across USNATO’s social media sites speak to the success of the section’s efforts: 239,000 on Twitter, 193,000 on Facebook, and 169,000 on Instagram. The figures were the highest among missions in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs region in 2022.

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Evacuation Data Card Program Assisted Staff in Planning for Possible Evacuations (*Review of the U.S. Agency for Global Media Response to Russia’s 2022 Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine*, [ISP-IB-23-14](#))

RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS

as of May 31, 2023

1,005*

Open
Recommendations

10**

Recommendations
Closed During May

[View Recommendations](#)

*Includes 46 recommendations associated with the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC).

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

Reports

Ongoing Work

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) developed an in-house evacuation data card program to prepare and support Ukraine staff for evacuation. Modeled on the Isolated Person Recovery Plan used by the Department’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the U.S. military, the data card program assists RFE/RL personnel in planning their own evacuation and provides RFE/RL with information to help locate missing personnel during an evacuation. Most staff in Ukraine completed the form, and RFE/RL expanded the program to include staff in Moldova and Kyrgyzstan.

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Outreach Programs to At-Risk Communities Helped Counter Violent Extremism (*Inspection of Embassy Brussels, Belgium*, [ISP-I-23-11](#))

Embassy Brussels’ Public Diplomacy Section used its extensive local contacts, including exchange program alumni, in communities throughout Belgium to reach new at-risk populations to counter violent extremism. A Bureau of Counterterrorism report noted that the section’s efforts “led to new or updated policies, strategies, and programs that respect the civil rights and liberties of all Belgian residents and have improved Belgium’s ability to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism.”

NOTABLE OPEN RECOMMENDATION

In the 2017 report, *Audit of the Oversight of Fuel Acquisition and Related Services Supporting Department of State Operations in Iraq* ([AUD-MERO-17-16](#)), OIG recommended that the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) conduct a study to determine the appropriate numbers of trained, technically experienced, and certified oversight personnel required to oversee the Baghdad Life Support Services contract and Operations and Maintenance Support Services contract. In its March 2023 response, NEA stated that it continues to make progress on the Contract Oversight Study regarding the appropriate Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) level and any subject matter technical expertise for the COR, with specific consideration of assignment length. Completion of the study was expected by the end of second quarter of FY 2023. NEA's next response is due in June 2023. Despite the actions taken by NEA, OIG is concerned that the Contract Oversight Study is taking more than 6 years to complete. Completion of the study would allow NEA to determine the proper amount of oversight for the Baghdad Life Support Services contract and Operations and Maintenance Support Services contract.

NEW WORK STARTED

- *Audit of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, U.S. Section, FY 2023 and FY 2022 Financial Statements*

REPORTS ISSUED

- *Audit of U.S. Agency for Global Media FY 2022 Compliance With Payment Integrity Requirements* ([AUD-FM-IB-23-19](#))
- *Classified Review of Emergency Action Planning Guiding the Evacuation of U.S. Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan* (AUD-MERO-23-15)
- *Audit of Department of State FY 2022 Compliance With Payment Integrity Requirements* ([AUD-FM-23-18](#))
- *Inspection of the U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* ([ISP-I-23-16](#))
- [Semiannual Report to the Congress, October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2023](#)

UKRAINE OVERSIGHT

In May, OIG released two reports related to Ukraine oversight. In *Review of the U.S. Agency for Global Media Response to Russia's 2022 Full-scale Invasion of Ukraine* ([ISP-IB-23-14](#)), we made four recommendations to improve USAGM and network compliance with federal standards and regulations. These include systematically tracking and reviewing federal hiring processes, implementing practices to ensure adherence to editorial review standards, and improving and disseminating procedural guidance for grantee organizations covering distribution and receipt of Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act funding.

In *Inspection of the U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* ([ISP-I-23-16](#)), we found that the mission's workload increased significantly with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission led the mission in achieving significant foreign policy successes to gain NATO support for Ukraine. We made four recommendations involving mission-wide emergency drills, the implementation of a professional development program, a training program on how NATO works and how to negotiate in NATO committees, and the identification of reasons for delays in transmission of cables on North Atlantic Council meetings and implementation of a plan to improve the timeliness of these reports.

- *Review of the U.S. Agency for Global Media Response to Russia's 2022 Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine* ([ISP-IB-23-14](#))
- *Inspection of Embassy Brussels, Belgium* ([ISP-I-23-11](#))
- *Classified Inspection of Embassy Lomé, Togo* (ISP-S-23-22)
- *Classified Inspection of Embassy Cotonou, Benin* (ISP-S-23-20)
- *Classified Inspection of Embassy Beirut, Lebanon* (ISP-S-23-10)
- *Classified Inspection of Embassy Abuja and Constituent Post, Nigeria* (ISP-I-23-09)
- *Sensitive But Unclassified Annex to the Semiannual Report to the Congress, October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2023*
- *Classified Semiannual Report to the Congress, October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2023*