



October 2022

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In response to a recommendation in a 2021 report, *Inspection of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations’ Office of Fire Protection (ISP-I-21-22)*, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) modified its Real Property Application database to allow embassies to identify residential units and functional spaces that are in high-rise buildings. This is a critical first step in assisting both embassies and the Department of State (Department) in mitigating fire risks associated with these high-rise properties.

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In October 2022, an individual was sentenced to 24 months’ probation and ordered to pay \$314,335 in restitution for her role in a business email compromise (BEC) scheme. Previously, this individual and two co-conspirators, who were sentenced last April, pled guilty to charges based on their involvement in the scheme. OIG and FBI special agents determined the individuals tricked the Department and a non-profit agency into wiring at least \$575,000 into bank accounts they controlled for the purpose of enriching themselves and their co-conspirators. It is estimated the Department and U.S. Grains Council lost over \$281,000 because of the BEC scheme.

SPOTLIGHTS ON SUCCESS

Cooperation Ensures Balanced and Unbiased Reporting (*Targeted Inspection of the U.S. Agency for Global Media: Editorial Independence and Journalistic Standards and Principles, ISP-IB-23-01*)

In line with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s (RFE/RL) editorial policy, the Armenian and Azerbaijan language services cooperated during the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 to ensure balanced and unbiased reporting. Even before the October 2020 outbreak of armed hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the RFE/RL Editorial Board discussed with the Armenian and Azerbaijan Language Service Directors the need to exchange their journalists’ reports. RFE/RL’s Standards Editor monitored both language

RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS

as of October 31, 2022

957* Open Recommendations	65** Recommendations Closed During October
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[View Recommendations](#)

*Includes 46 recommendations associated with the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission and excludes 1 Department of State report that has 27 recommendations.

**This number includes 28 recommendations closed on OIG’s classified network.

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services’ content to evaluate balance. For example, both services included stories from the perspective of the opposing side on civilian casualties, based on official statements, impartial experts, and civilian interviews. Both services used reports prepared by the Central Newsroom, which drew on both services’ material and added regional and international context. In addition, the services had balanced and unbiased coverage of the conflict despite anger and threats from elements of the services’ audiences and pressure by regional governments to influence their reporting.

Consulates General in Mission Canada Reduce Burden on Duty Officers (*Inspection of Embassy Ottawa and Constituent Posts, Canada, ISP-I-23-04*)

Because the safety and security of U.S. citizens overseas is a top Department priority, all diplomatic missions have duty officer programs with U.S. direct-hire personnel serving on a rotational basis to assist Americans after normal operating hours. Consulates General Calgary, Halifax, Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, and Vancouver built on this model by contracting with call centers to respond to non-emergency inquiries and to relay emergency calls to the duty officer. The consulates general each developed and provided detailed scripts to the contractors to assist

with screening and to ensure the call centers could relay accurate information in routine, non-emergency cases. As a result, there was a decrease in the number of calls to the duty officer, reducing the after-hours burden for U.S. direct-hire personnel.

NOTABLE OPEN RECOMMENDATION

OIG issued *Inspection of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (ISP-IB-17-21)* in May 2017. In this report we recommended, in part, that the International Broadcasting Bureau, in coordination with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), should establish a written protocol on background investigations to comply with the grant agreement. The Broadcasting Board of Governors (now referred to as the U.S. Agency for Global Media) Office of Investigations did not have sufficient staff to carry out complete investigations on all prospective RFE/RL employees or to conduct periodic reinvestigations of employees. Moreover, procedures governing such investigations were incomplete. BBG's Offices of Security and General Counsel drafted a protocol in June 2016, but, at the time of the inspection, the protocol remained unfinished. OIG is concerned that it has taken more than 5 years to create a process to perform comprehensive background checks on prospective employees, and periodic reinvestigations of employees. Such delays put RFE/RL personnel and operations at risk of compromise.

NEW WORK STARTED

- *Review of Embassy Kyiv's Operating Status*
- *Review of End Use Monitoring of Security Assistance to Ukraine*

REPORTS ISSUED

- *Independent Accountant's Report on the Application of Agreed-Upon Procedures: Employee Benefits, Withholdings, Contributions, and Supplemental Semiannual Headcount Reporting Submitted to the Office of Personnel Management (AUD-FM-23-02)*
- *Compliance Follow-Up Review of the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program (AUD-MERO-23-01)*
- *Information Report: International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, U.S. Section, 2022 Charge Card Risk Assessment (AUD-CGI-23-05)*
- *Information Report: Department of State 2022 Purchase Charge Card Risk Assessment (AUD-CGI-23-03)*
- *Information Report: Department of State 2022 Travel Charge Card Risk Assessment (AUD-CGI-23-04)*
- *Information Report: U.S. Agency for Global Media 2022 Charge Card Risk Assessment (AUD-CGI-IB-23-06)*
- *Targeted Inspection of the U.S. Mission to the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal, Canada (ISP-I-23-02)*
- *Targeted Inspection of the U.S. Agency for Global Media: Editorial Independence and Journalistic Standards and Principles (ISP-IB-23-01)*
- *Inspection of Embassy Ottawa and Constituent Posts, Canada (ISP-I-23-04)*
- *Classified Inspection of Embassy La Paz, Bolivia (ISP-S-23-03)*

Photos: U.S. Secretaries of State (*Department of State Flickr*)

- John Forsyth, July 1, 1834 to March 3, 1841
- Lewis Cass, March 6, 1857 to December 14, 1860
- William H. Seward, March 6, 1861 to March 4, 1869



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