



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-24-16

What OIG Inspected

OIG evaluated the executive direction, foreign policy priorities, staffing, policy and program implementation, resource management operations, and information management operations of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 21 recommendations to the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. In its comments on the draft report, the bureau concurred with 20 recommendations and disagreed with 1 recommendation. OIG considers 20 recommendations resolved and 1 recommendation unresolved. The bureau's response to each recommendation, and OIG's reply, can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The bureau's formal response is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

September 2024

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

DOMESTIC OPERATIONS

Inspection of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs

What OIG Found

- The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Assistant Secretary and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary demonstrated Department of State leadership and management principles to communicate and foster resilience. The Assistant Secretary served as a principal advisor to Department leaders on policies relating to national security or U.S. military activities.
- The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs managed increased activity in several high-profile areas of concern to the Department, the administration, and Congress: support to Ukraine; the Indo-Pacific strategy, with a focus on Taiwan and the Australia-United Kingdom-United States enhanced security partnership; and support to Israel following the October 2023 Hamas attack.
- Bureau staffing did not keep pace with workload growth that resulted from the war in Ukraine, new Indo-Pacific strategy responsibilities, and the Israel-Hamas conflict. The bureau's efforts and Department workforce planning processes were ineffective in addressing the bureau's staffing requirements related to the surge of work on these foreign policy priorities.
- The bureau did not have a centralized system for tracking contracts. Contracting officer's representatives did not perform the majority of contract oversight.
- The bureau had deficiencies in grants management, including the lack of full and open competition for assistance awards.
- The bureau's systems development lifecycle process lacked documentation for management approvals and stakeholder decisions, and the bureau did not retain project documentation in a central location as required by Department standards.
- Spotlight on Success: The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs developed criteria-driven proposal processes for allocating certain assistance funding to meet specific strategic objectives.