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Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-25-20

Office of Inspections

September 2025

Inspection of Embassy Riga, Latvia

BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

UNCLASSIFIED



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General

United States Department of State

ISP-I-25-20

What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected the executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management operations of Embassy Riga.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 17 recommendations to Embassy Riga. In its comments on the draft report, the embassy concurred with all 17 recommendations. OIG considers all 17 recommendations resolved. The embassy's response to each recommendation and OIG's reply can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The embassy's formal response is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

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What OIG Found

- The Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission regularly engaged the Latvian government and people to maintain close relations, especially on issues of mutual concern, such as Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.
- The Ambassador inconsistently modeled the Department of State's leadership and management principles of self-awareness, valuing and developing people, and collaboration.
- The embassy did not consistently coordinate its public diplomacy program across all embassy sections.
- The American Spaces program lacked proper oversight and coordination.
- The embassy and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs did not establish a memorandum of understanding defining the financial management support the embassy would provide to the bureau.
- The embassy had internal control issues in its human resources, financial management, general services, and facility management operations.
- The embassy's information management and information security operations, including account management processes, non-enterprise networks, cybersecurity operations, and records management program, did not fully comply with Department standards.
- Spotlight on Success: Embassy Riga's Regional Security Office established the International School Security Working Group to enhance the safety and security of international schools in Latvia.
- Spotlight on Success: Embassy Riga's Facility Management Office instituted an innovative and sustainable landscaping design and maintenance program that conserved embassy resources.

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CONTEXT



Figure 1: Map of Latvia (Source: CIA World Factbook).

Latvia has a population of 1.8 million, of which approximately 34 percent speak Russian as their native language. Latvia was part of the Russian Empire before World War I. The United States established diplomatic relations with Latvia in 1922 following Latvia's independence in the years after World War I. In 1940, the Soviet Union invaded Latvia and forcibly annexed it. The United States did not recognize the annexation of Latvia into the Soviet Union. The U.S. government permitted Latvian representatives accredited by the independent Latvian government to remain in the United

States with diplomatic status, and the U.S. position was that diplomatic relations with an independent Latvia continued uninterrupted from 1940 to 1991. The United States and Latvia resumed normal diplomatic relations in 1991 after Latvia declared independence from the Soviet Union.

Since regaining its independence, Latvia has embraced democracy and the principles of an open market. As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), Latvia has been a leader in defending Ukraine's right to exist as a sovereign, democratic country. Among NATO allies, Latvia provides one of the highest percentages of gross domestic product per capita in military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. It has welcomed thousands of Ukrainian refugees, allocated significant budgetary resources for Ukraine reconstruction efforts, and implemented sanctions against Russia. The United States has provided security assistance to Latvia, including programs funded by the Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training appropriations.

At the time of this inspection, Embassy Riga had 42 U.S. direct-hire authorized positions, 8 eligible family members, and 130 locally employed (LE) staff working for the Department of State (Department). The embassy also had 17 U.S. direct-hire employees and 9 LE staff working for other U.S. government agencies, including the Department of Defense and the Department of Justice.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluated the embassy's executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.¹ A related classified inspection report discusses the embassy's security program. This inspection, in part, relates to Overseas

¹ See Appendix A for additional details.

Contingency Operation Atlantic Resolve and was completed in accordance with OIG's oversight responsibilities described in Section 419 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.²

On January 21, 2025, the Secretary of State issued guidance to the Department on the Administration's priorities.³ The Department subsequently disseminated initial guidance on foreign assistance, public diplomacy, consular operations, personnel evaluation, planning and policy documents, and other Department activities. At the time of this inspection, the Department was developing detailed implementation guidance on these and other policy initiatives. Therefore, OIG did not assess the embassy's implementation of the new guidance as part of this inspection.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Conflict in Ukraine Heightened Focus on Latvia's Security and Defense Posture

Formerly part of the Soviet Union and a current member of both NATO and the EU, Latvia took steps to address its heightened security and defense concerns following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. For example, Latvia increased its defense spending to almost 3.5 percent of gross domestic product in 2025 with further increases set for 2026—above NATO's 2 percent target. Latvia joined NATO and EU actions in response to Russia's invasion, including hosting an expanded NATO presence through the NATO Multinational Brigade Latvia, donating military equipment to Ukraine, backing sanctions against Russia, and supporting Ukrainians displaced by fighting in Ukraine. Bordering Russia and near Ukraine, Latvia encountered Russian drone activity over Latvian territory, sought to block Russian "shadow fleet" operations, and countered "weaponized migration" that tested its border security.

Embassy Operations Affected by Locally Employed Staff Salary Increases Not Keeping Pace With Inflation

Salary increases for Embassy Riga's LE staff have not kept up with inflation in Latvia, which was driven by rising energy costs and regional instability caused by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. In 2023, the inflation rate in Latvia was 20.1 percent.

In 2024, in response to local inflation, the Department reviewed Embassy Riga's LE compensation package; the results of which supported increasing compensation for those on the FSN-6 to -11 salary schedule but not for lower graded staff (FSN-4 and below). The embassy implemented a 2 percent increase for grades FSN-1 to -5. In 2024, an independent market analysis commissioned by the embassy found that, despite the embassy's intent to compensate LE staff at the 85th percentile, key roles such as chauffeurs, guards, and tradespersons earned below the 50th percentile of the Latvian labor market. In 2022 and 2023, the embassy reported half or more of LE staff resignations were salary related. In addition, the introduction of the

² 5 U.S. Code § 419, "Special provisions concerning overseas contingency operations."

³ Cable 25 STATE 5156, "New Administration Priorities," January 21, 2025.

Department's Global Medical Contract in 2024 inadvertently raised the tax burden for LE staff as the health insurance premium was considered taxable income in Latvia. The embassy told OIG that this income disparity negatively affected recruitment and retention and could jeopardize operations critical to U.S. interests in Latvia. The embassy also reported that many lower graded LE staff struggled financially, and 60 percent of staff took on second jobs, creating potential security and safety risks.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

OIG assessed leadership based on interviews, staff questionnaires, and OIG's review of documents and observations of embassy meetings and activities during this inspection.

Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

The Ambassador, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in Riga in February 2023. His previous assignment was as Deputy Assistant Secretary with responsibility for Russian affairs in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), also a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in Riga in August 2023. Her previous assignment was as Political-Economic Section chief at Embassy Antananarivo, Madagascar.

OIG determined the Ambassador and DCM generally demonstrated communication principles consistent with the Department's leadership and management principles in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214b(4).⁴ The Ambassador and DCM listened to the concerns of the LE staff regarding salaries and health insurance premiums, worked with the Department on these issues, and provided updates to the LE staff, including a resolution on the health insurance premiums issue. Although the embassy had not obtained resolution on salary compensation at the time of this inspection, LE staff told OIG they perceived the Front Office was doing what it could to work with the Department on their behalf. The LE staff also praised the Ambassador for the clear and professional messaging he provided in frequent town hall meetings.

However, OIG concluded that the Ambassador inconsistently modeled the Department's leadership and management principles in 3 FAM 1214b(6) and (8) related to being self-aware and valuing and developing people. In interviews with OIG, some employees stated that, when dealing with the Ambassador, they were unsure of his demeanor and that at times he would react angrily and in an intimidating manner. Several of the embassy's U.S. direct-hire personnel described the Ambassador as having anger management issues or lashing out in reaction to minor problems. In addition, according to staff, the Ambassador did not apologize in instances where the cause of the issue was his mistake. As a result, some employees said they were afraid of the Ambassador and were wary about approaching him or communicating directly with him. Staff also told OIG that they felt demoralized by the Ambassador's frequent emails in which he accused staff of incompetence or not caring and that responding in detail to his

⁴ The Department's leadership and management principles outlined in 3 FAM 1214b are (1) model integrity, (2) plan strategically, (3) be decisive and take responsibility, (4) communicate, (5) learn and innovate constantly, (6) be self-aware, (7) collaborate, (8) value and develop people, (9) manage conflict, and (10) foster resilience.

complaints, as he demanded, took time from their other duties. When OIG discussed these issues with the Ambassador, he stated he was not aware that his responses were viewed negatively by staff.

OIG also found the Front Office did not consistently collaborate across all embassy elements, contrary to 3 FAM 1214b(7). Some staff stated that most communications with the Front Office were filtered through section chiefs, and that sections did not regularly communicate or coordinate with each other. Although the embassy had two active working groups, the embassy lacked working groups to collaborate on many cross-cutting issues. Additionally, as described in the Public Diplomacy section of this report, the embassy did not consistently coordinate its public diplomacy program.

Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

OIG found the Ambassador and DCM generally led the embassy in advancing U.S. foreign policy goals in accordance with 2 FAM 113.1b(1) and (6), which charges chiefs of mission with representing the interests of the United States and maintaining close relations with the government of the receiving state. The Ambassador and DCM regularly engaged Latvian government officials and Latvian citizens on issues of bilateral interest and of regional concern, such as Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Ambassador used the 20th anniversary of Latvia's NATO accession in 2024 to highlight the U.S.-Latvian security relationship, including agreements on the purchase of defense equipment, actions to strengthen Latvia's borders with Russia and Belarus, and joint military training exercises. The Ambassador also promoted embassy support for U.S. businesses, training on countering Russian sanctions evasion techniques, and Latvia's desynchronization from the Russian electricity grid.

Additionally, OIG found the Ambassador and DCM led the Country Team in accordance with 1 FAM 013.2a requirements to exercise full responsibility for the direction and supervision of all U.S. executive branch employees. The Front Office held weekly meetings with the various section chiefs and agency heads in the embassy, led alternately by the DCM and the Ambassador and DCM together. The DCM routinely attended meetings the Ambassador had with visitors, and embassy staff told OIG that their perception was the Ambassador and DCM worked closely as a team.

Adherence to Internal Controls

OIG found the Ambassador and DCM prepared the FY 2024 Annual Chief of Mission Management Control Statement of Assurance in accordance with 2 FAM 022.7 and 2 FAM 024d, which requires chiefs of mission to develop and maintain appropriate systems of management control of their organizations. The embassy reported a few issues but no serious deficiencies. During this inspection, OIG found internal control issues, which are discussed in the Resource Management section of this report.

OIG reviewed consular records and determined that the DCM was reviewing the nonimmigrant visa adjudications of the Consular Section chief in accordance with 9 FAM 403.12-1a and b and 9 FAM 403.12-2b.

Security and Emergency Planning

OIG found the Ambassador and DCM oversaw the embassy's security and emergency preparedness programs consistent with Department guidelines in 2 FAM 113.1b(5). The Front Office held weekly meetings with the Regional Security Officer to review the security program. OIG determined the embassy's Emergency Action Plan met Department requirements and that the Ambassador and DCM participated in embassy drills. During this inspection, OIG observed an organized and rapid evacuation of the embassy due to a false alarm. Additionally, the Ambassador and DCM participated in monthly radio checks. The Ambassador and DCM acknowledged that participation rates in monthly radio checks were low and discussed with OIG strategies to increase staff participation.

Spotlight on Success: The Regional Security Office Established an International School Security Working Group in Latvia To Enhance Safety, Security, and Collaboration

The Embassy Riga Regional Security Office established the International School Security Working Group to enhance the safety and security of international schools in Latvia. Recognizing the various risks faced by schools in politically sensitive or unstable environments, the Regional Security Office created a collaborative platform for sharing best practices, addressing common security challenges, and improving coordination among participants. The working group brought together representatives from the international schools, the embassy's Regional Security Office, local first responders, and security professionals. Through the integration of specialized training, facility assessments, and practical drills, the group helped create a more secure environment for students and staff across international schools in Latvia. Importantly, the working group was designed not only for schools attended by students under chief of mission authority but also included other international schools in Latvia, ensuring broad participation and comprehensive security solutions across the region.

Equal Employment Opportunity

OIG found the embassy's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program complied with Department standards in 2 FAM 1511.1a and the leadership principles in 3 FAM 1214b(6). The embassy had two trained U.S. direct-hire EEO counselors and two trained LE staff EEO liaisons. OIG observed that EEO notices were prominently displayed in public areas of the embassy.

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

OIG found the embassy did not have a First- and Second-Tour (FAST) program for the three FAST employees in the embassy. The FAST employees acknowledged that the DCM was available for mentoring and that some of them had availed themselves of that opportunity. According to 3 FAM 2242.5a and b, the DCM is responsible for ensuring that FAST employees

are well trained and properly counseled and evaluated. After OIG discussed this with the DCM, she took steps to start a FAST program. During this inspection, she looked at a model from another embassy and consulted with the three employees on designing a program, which they took steps to implement. Because the embassy was taking steps to start a FAST program, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OIG assessed Embassy Riga’s policy and program implementation through a review of the advocacy and analysis work of the Political-Economic and Public Diplomacy Sections and the U.S. citizen and visa services provided by the Consular Section. OIG also conducted a limited review of the embassy’s foreign assistance coordination. OIG found the embassy generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation. However, OIG made recommendations to address deficiencies in the Public Diplomacy and Consular Sections, as discussed below.

Political-Economic Section

OIG reviewed Embassy Riga’s Political-Economic Section, including its leadership and management, policy engagement and coordination, cable reporting, Leahy vetting,⁵ commercial promotion, and end-use monitoring functions.

The Political-Economic Section worked with the Department of Energy to support Latvia’s February 2025 desynchronization from the Russia-linked Belarus, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, or BRELL, electricity grid to a European electricity network—a policy outcome praised by the Secretary of State. The section also promoted U.S. business opportunities, including in the defense and security sectors, provided Latvian grantees assistance for Ukrainian refugees, and implemented end-use monitoring requirements. Despite the section’s accomplishments, OIG noted that the section relied on ad hoc discussions rather than regular coordination mechanisms, such as working groups, to address embassy goals and objectives as discussed in the Foreign Assistance section of this report.

In interviews with OIG, Department and interagency representatives welcomed the Political-Economic Section’s cable reporting, but several expressed interest in more reporting on political-economic developments. OIG’s review of 39 reporting cables and 44 demarche response cables prepared by the section from July 1 to December 31, 2024, found the reporting cables to be relevant to U.S. interest in topics such as bilateral and regional defense and security matters, trade, infrastructure, and Ukrainian refugee issues. In addition to reviewing

⁵ The Leahy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 prohibits the United States from furnishing certain assistance to a unit of a foreign security force if the Department has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. See 22 U.S. Code § 2378d and 9 FAM 303.8-5(B). Leahy vetting is the process of determining whether the Department has credible information that units or individuals proposed to benefit from certain assistance have committed a gross violation of human rights. The Department helps implement a similar law applicable to “amounts made available to the Department of Defense” for assistance to foreign security forces. See 10 U.S. Code § 362.

cable reporting, OIG determined that the Political-Economic Section did not use daily or weekly activity reports to inform Washington audiences of activities that could supplement daily Public Diplomacy Section media summaries. Although not required, daily or weekly activity reports can detail specific issues not included in cable reporting and reach interagency offices that do not have regular access to cable reporting systems.

As described below, OIG found the section had an outdated Leahy vetting standard operating procedure, which it corrected during this inspection. Overall, OIG determined the Political-Economic Section generally complied with applicable Department standards.

Embassy's Leahy Vetting Procedures Were Outdated

During this inspection, OIG found the embassy's Leahy vetting standard operating procedure was last approved by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in 2020. However, embassy offices told OIG they were not familiar with the outdated 2020 standard operating procedure and instead followed separate Leahy vetting procedures, thereby increasing the risk of noncompliance with recent changes to Leahy vetting requirements. After OIG brought this issue to Embassy Riga's attention, the embassy worked with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to obtain approval for an updated Leahy vetting standard operating procedure that incorporated recent changes to vetting requirements. Because the bureau approved it in February 2025, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section's leadership, strategic planning, reporting, resource and knowledge management, federal assistance awards, educational and cultural programs, media engagement, and American Spaces. Discretionary funds for the section's grant-supported program activity from FY 2023 to FY 2025 were approximately \$200,000 per fiscal year. OIG reviewed 20 out of 62 grant files—16 recently closed and 4 open awards—with a total value of \$313,316 and found the files generally complied with Department standards. During this inspection, the section developed a standard operating procedure for monitoring and documenting grants.⁶ In addition, Washington representatives noted the quality of the section's reporting. Overall, OIG determined the embassy's public diplomacy activities met Department standards and guidance with the following exceptions.

Embassy Did Not Consistently Coordinate Its Public Diplomacy Program

OIG found the embassy did not consistently coordinate its public diplomacy program across all embassy sections. According to 10 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-021g1, an embassy's public diplomacy section, under the leadership of its public affairs officer, "develops and conducts the country-wide public diplomacy strategy and program for the mission, using a 'whole of mission' approach that engages all parts of the mission." For example, Public Diplomacy Section staff told OIG that although they had a social media calendar, they

⁶ The grants reviewed were subject to the Department's Federal Assistance Directive, version 7.0, October 2022, and subsequent versions.

sometimes learned of other sections' events too late, impacting opportunities for social media engagement. In another instance, the embassy implemented a significant public diplomacy initiative without first coordinating with key embassy sections. When the initiative led to negative public responses, the embassy did not convene a group to discuss lessons learned and determine how to fulfill a major public diplomacy objective. Staff attributed the overall lack of public diplomacy program coordination to the Front Office not instituting processes for collaborating on cross-cutting issues, as noted in the Executive Direction section of this report. By not coordinating the embassy's public diplomacy program with working-level officers and key LE staff in other sections to get their input and advice, particularly on significant public-facing events, the Public Diplomacy Section risks not being able to achieve its strategic objectives.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Riga should coordinate its public diplomacy program across the embassy in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

American Spaces Program Did Not Conform to Department Standards

OIG found the Public Diplomacy Section's management of the American Spaces program in Latvia did not meet Department standards for oversight and coordination.⁷ The embassy had an American Space in Daugavpils and an Affiliate Space in Riga, which had been reclassified from a full American Space designation in 2023.⁸

Oversight of the American Spaces program should be under a U.S. direct hire and included in that officer's work requirements, in accordance with Department standards.⁹ The embassy's American Spaces Coordinator, an LE staff member, reported directly to the Public Affairs Officer, but the officer did not have these oversight responsibilities in his work requirements. As a result, OIG found there were unclear lines of supervision that negatively impacted the section's ability to effectively oversee the American Spaces program. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs also had concerns about the embassy not providing effective oversight of

⁷ According to 10 FAM 381 and 382b, American Spaces are the U.S. government's primary public cultural and information centers abroad that provide digitally enhanced physical platforms for effective engagement with foreign audiences in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives. They provide public diplomacy programming focused on English language learning, educational advising, alumni networking, cultural programs, and information about the United States. According to 10 FAM 383b, American Spaces comprise facilities that are leased, owned, or operated by the U.S. government and those that are hosted and operated by partner institutions. American Spaces located in the facilities of, and operated by, institutional partners are often referred to as American Corners and binational centers.

⁸ An Affiliate Space is more limited than an American Space; the embassy drives and manages these spaces. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Managing American Spaces Handbook*, version 2.0.3, page 10, January 2025.

⁹ According to the Standards for American Spaces, "One permanent American direct-hire Foreign Service Officer (FSO) provides regular oversight and guidance. [The] FSO has management oversight written into work requirements." See Department of State, Office of American Spaces, *The Standards for American Spaces*, page 4, January 1, 2016.

the American Spaces program when it determined that the Public Diplomacy Section had used American Spaces Support Funds for non-American Spaces programming.¹⁰

With respect to coordination, OIG saw there was a lack of information sharing among other members of the Public Diplomacy Section who also had duties relevant to American Spaces. Insufficient coordination within the section undermined its ability to deliver on embassy goals and meet program standards as established by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Without the necessary U.S. direct-hire oversight and coordination, the American Spaces program in Latvia underperformed. Additionally, without changes in these areas, the embassy risks its one remaining American Space not being able to fulfill its purpose as a strategic venue for public diplomacy programming to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Riga should manage the American Spaces program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Consular Operations

OIG reviewed Embassy Riga's consular operations, including U.S. citizen services, crisis preparedness, management controls, visa services and processing, and fraud prevention programs.

Embassy Riga's Consular Section was staffed by one U.S. direct-hire consular officer and three LE staff, who together were able to meet demand for all consular services with minimal appointment wait times. Eligible Latvians may visit the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program.¹¹ Consequently, half of Embassy Riga's nonimmigrant visa applicants were third-country nationals, primarily from Ukraine and Russia. In December 2024, the Department consolidated immigrant visa processing for all Nordic and Baltic countries at Embassy Stockholm. At the time of this inspection, Embassy Riga was no longer issuing immigrant visas. The embassy estimated that 2,100 U.S. citizens reside in Latvia, and another 57,800 visited Latvia in 2024.

During this inspection, the Consular Section corrected the following issues identified by OIG:

- Updated consular systems user roles to comply with the requirements of 7 FAH-1 H-660.
- Updated lists of local doctors and hospitals in accordance with 7 FAM 311.1(4).
- Worked with the Public Diplomacy Section to establish a digital crisis communication plan as required by 7 FAH-1 H-449.

¹⁰ According to 10 FAM 382b, the American Spaces program focuses on five core programs: English language learning and teacher training; educational advising and promoting study in the United States; alumni networking, projects, and activities; cultural and outreach programs; and information about the United States.

¹¹ The Visa Waiver Program, administered by the Department of Homeland Security in consultation with the Department of State, permits citizens of designated countries to travel to the United States for business or tourism for stays of up to 90 days without a visa.

Except as noted below, OIG found Embassy Riga’s consular programs generally complied with 7 FAM, 7 FAH-1, 8 FAM, 9 FAM, applicable statutes, and other Department policies.

Embassy Did Not Maintain an American Liaison Network

OIG found the embassy did not meet Department standards for maintaining an active American Liaison Network.¹² According to 7 FAM 071, the American Liaison Network facilitates regular two-way communication between Department employees and U.S. citizen constituencies abroad on topics such as security, health, voting, and travel. Consular section chiefs are responsible for management of the network, including conducting periodic testing, updating Citizen Liaison Volunteer contact information, recruiting Citizen Liaison Volunteers to ensure adequate coverage of the consular district, and meeting periodically with the volunteers. Consular Section staff were aware of the requirement but told OIG they had not established one due to Latvia’s small size, the relatively small number of U.S. citizens resident in Latvia, and because changes to consular automated systems made managing U.S. citizen registrations cumbersome. Without an updated and tested American Liaison Network, the embassy could be hampered in supporting U.S. citizens during a crisis.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Riga should establish an American Liaison Network in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Foreign Assistance

U.S. foreign assistance to Latvia from FY 2021 to FY 2024 totaled more than \$194 million, with most funding allocated to foreign military financing. Due to a January 2025 pause on most categories of U.S. foreign assistance, OIG did not assess embassy compliance in managing foreign assistance pending new Department foreign assistance and policy guidance. However, OIG found the embassy lacked any assistance coordination mechanism to assess and monitor U.S.-funded foreign assistance activities and programs in Latvia. According to 1 FAM 013.2k(6), the chief of mission has a “significant role in directing and supervising” foreign assistance programs, and 2 FAM 113.1b(4) requires “establishing an effective system of internal controls” at the embassy, in part to prevent waste and mismanagement. Due to the foreign assistance pause, OIG advised the embassy to consider creating a foreign assistance working group to aid the Ambassador in directing and supervising foreign assistance programs and strengthening the embassy’s internal controls and management of future U.S. foreign assistance programs.

¹² An American Liaison Network is a country-based network of volunteers composed of representatives from key U.S. citizen constituencies, including faith groups, business communities, retirees, and students. The volunteers, known as Citizen Liaison Volunteers, are private U.S. citizens who assist consular sections in several ways, including emergency assistance to U.S. citizens, disseminating information, identifying local resources to assist U.S. citizens, and maintaining local contacts who might be of use to consular operations.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Riga's operations and internal controls in human resources, financial management, general services, facility management, and general management including the employee association, Health Unit, and Community Liaison Office. During this inspection, the embassy corrected eight internal control issues OIG identified. Specifically, the embassy:

- Corrected contracting officer's representative (COR) delegation memorandums (14 FAH-2 H-143.2a(2)).
- Secured materials at the warehouse that could be used as improvised weapons (14 FAH-1 H-311b).
- Created a secure receiving area (14 FAH-1 H-312.1 and 14 FAH-1 H-313.1-2a).
- Designated a fuel card control officer (Motor Pool Procedures Overseas,¹³ Section 2.4a).
- Secured the cabinet where LE staff official personnel folders were stored (5 FAM 467.2a(18)).
- Undertook a review of the circumstances of employment of each relative of an employee at the embassy to ensure compliance with nepotism rules (3 FAM 8314).
- Corrected permissions for an employee who had access both as a systems administrator and timekeeper in the time and attendance system (Post Access Security Controls Guidance for WinT&A,¹⁴ Section 6).
- Updated its fire watch procedures in the Emergency Action Plan (15 FAM 813.5b).

OIG found the embassy generally implemented processes and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and Department guidance, except as described below.

Human Resources

Locally Employed Staff Position Descriptions Did Not Comply With Department Standards

Embassy Riga did not review LE staff position descriptions for accuracy as required by Department standards. According to 3 FAM 7313.1(4), supervisors of LE staff are responsible for ensuring that position descriptions adequately and accurately reflect assigned duties and responsibilities. Based on discussions with staff and a review of position descriptions, OIG found 18 positions had not been sent to the Department's regional classification center for classification. Of those that had been classified by the embassy and the regional classification center, OIG observed that six contained significant inaccuracies in the duties or supervision being exercised by the incumbent, despite annual certifications that the position descriptions were current and accurate. For example:

- An FSN-9 employee whose position description included overseeing seven units and directly or indirectly supervising 18 employees had been supervising only two units and

¹³ Bureau of Administration, Motor Pool Procedures Overseas, October 2022.

¹⁴ Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services Global Financial Management Systems, Post Access Security Controls Guidance for WinT&A, January 22, 2019.

5 employees since approximately 2019. The U.S. direct-hire supervisor of the section took on direct supervision of the remaining units and employees.

- An FSN-4 employee whose position description included supervising four drivers and coordinating driver duties, such as creating and managing driver schedules, was not doing so; the coordination duties accounted for 25 percent of the work of the position. The U.S. direct-hire supervisor of the section directly supervised the drivers, while driver duty coordination was done by another employee in the section.
- The daily duties performed for more than 5 years by two FSN-6 clerks were significantly different than what was in their position descriptions. The positions, which were initially intended to rove among the units in the section, had evolved into distinct portfolios not accurately reflected in the position descriptions.

Staff shared with OIG several reasons for the inaccurate position descriptions, including not having time to update them, being unaware a particular position existed, or fearing changes would lead to employees resigning. Inaccurate position descriptions can directly affect LE staff members' level of compensation.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Riga should review and revise locally employed staff position descriptions and classify them in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Time and Attendance Program Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards

OIG determined the embassy's time and attendance program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG reviewed the time and attendance records for U.S. direct-hire employees and LE staff across four pay periods and found the following issues:¹⁵

- Premium compensation was not approved in advance for 83 of 85 requests (97 percent) (4 FAH-3 H-523.2).
- The embassy did not use the required standard form (DS-3060) to authorize premium compensation for LE staff (4 FAH-3 H-518b).

Management Section staff acknowledged that premium compensation requests were not approved in advance and told OIG the embassy was using the incorrect form because they believed an embassy could choose the form it wanted LE staff to use. During this inspection, the embassy issued a management notice regarding the use of standard forms; however, the embassy had not yet fully implemented the changes to bring its time and attendance program into compliance with Department standards. Failure to comply with Department standards for time and attendance increases the risk for waste, fraud, and mismanagement of U.S. government resources.

¹⁵ OIG reviewed pay periods 5, 14, 20, and 26 in 2024.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Riga should manage its time and attendance program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Financial Management

Embassy Did Not Use Ledgers To Record and Track Its Employee Accounts Receivables

Financial management staff archived copies of bills of collection and corresponding receipts of payment but did not document outstanding employee accounts receivables in a ledger. According to 4 FAM 232.1-1c and 4 FAM 033.2-6, embassies must ensure that financial management staff maintain accurate subsidiary ledgers and develop procedures to accurately track and record accounts receivable. Management Section staff told OIG there were no standard procedures to record and track employee accounts receivables in a ledger because the low transaction volume did not necessitate a more structured process. Failure to keep an accurate accounting of employee accounts receivables in a ledger increases the risk that funds payable to the U.S. government could go uncollected.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Riga should implement ledgers to accurately record and track employee accounts receivables in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Embassy Riga Lacked a Memorandum of Understanding Documenting Its Management Support for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

OIG found that Embassy Riga and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) did not establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining the level of support the embassy's Financial Management Unit would provide. The Financial Management Unit provided International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS)¹⁶-specific financial services for INL, which did not have a presence at Embassy Riga.¹⁷ The services included obligating and de-obligating funds, certifying funds availability, and providing monthly status of funds reports without an MOU. According to 6 FAH-5 H-393.1b and c, there must be an established MOU and subscription of services between an overseas post and agencies without a presence at post for support services provided by the ICASS platform, should charges be necessary. Although OIG found email communication and advice of allotments that provided instructions on how to manage funds, neither INL nor the embassy could provide an MOU that outlined roles, responsibilities, and cost reimbursement for services provided.

A 1999 letter of agreement on law enforcement with the government of Latvia established INL-funded projects designed to help the Latvian National Police combat organized crime. Updates to the letter of agreement in 2004, 2019, and 2022 resulted in a larger financial commitment

¹⁶ ICASS is the principal means by which U.S. government agencies share the cost of common administrative support services at most diplomatic and consular posts overseas. Through the ICASS working capital fund, service providers recover the cost of delivering administrative support services to other agencies at overseas missions.

¹⁷ According to 6 FAH-5 H-222.4-1c(3), the Department has a number of entities, including INL, that are treated as autonomous organizations for ICASS purposes.

and a broader program area. For example, Embassy Riga has managed project funds on behalf of INL to support programming to counter cybercrime, transnational organized crime, and money laundering in Latvia, Malta, Cyprus, Greece, and other European countries. Embassy Riga demonstrated this breadth of service during OIG's inspection when financial management staff coordinated with Embassy Nicosia to close an outstanding travel advance for a Cyprus-based traveler who attended Federal Bureau of Investigation training 5 months earlier.

Embassy Riga staff told OIG that their support to INL without an MOU began as a modest task but had since evolved into a significant financial management responsibility. Failure to establish an MOU with clearly defined roles and responsibilities compromises the ability to manage financial services in support of INL by the ICASS platform.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Riga, in coordination with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should formalize its support for financial services in a memorandum of understanding that defines roles, responsibilities, and cost reimbursement for services provided. (Action: Embassy Riga, in coordination with INL)

General Services

Embassy Property Controls Did Not Comply With Department Standards

OIG found the embassy's property controls did not comply with Department standards. Specifically, the embassy did not conduct a semiannual management review and spot checks of its expendable and nonexpendable property. Embassy Riga had a five-person property unit consisting of a property supervisor, a warehouse supervisor, a receiving clerk, and two tradespersons. The property supervisor was responsible for the embassy's annual inventory and maintained property records in the Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS).¹⁸ According to 14 FAM 416.2c, the individual responsible for maintaining property records must not participate in the physical inventory count, when sufficient resources exist, to maintain adequate separation of duties. If a separation of duties is not possible, 14 FAM 411.2c requires the accountable property officer, property management officer, or authorized designee, to conduct a semiannual management review. In addition, 14 FAM 411.2-2b(8) requires the accountable property officer to conduct quarterly, unannounced spot counts of expendable and nonexpendable property to verify the accuracy of property records. Management Section staff told OIG they were unaware of the requirement for the accountable property officer to conduct a semiannual management review and did not conduct spot checks due to limited resources and what staff described as a "low fraud environment." Failure to conduct and document a semiannual management review and regular spot checks leaves the embassy vulnerable to theft and hinders accurate property inventories.

¹⁸ ILMS encompasses all Department supply chain functions in one integrated web-based system. ILMS is designed to upgrade Department supply chain management by improving operations in areas such as purchasing, procurement, warehousing, transportation, property management, personal effects, and diplomatic pouch and mail.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Riga should manage its property controls in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Embassy Did Not Maintain Complete Electronic Contract and Contracting Officer's Representative Files

OIG found Embassy Riga did not maintain complete contract and COR files in ILMS, as required by Department of State Acquisitions Manual 604.802. The embassy maintained contract and COR files in paper-based or shared electronic files. Before and during this inspection, embassy staff began moving some contract documentation to ILMS. However, gaps in documentation such as offers, invoices, and COR delegation memorandums remained. Staff told OIG they began using ILMS in 2020 but did not have the necessary COR file permissions in ILMS until 2022. Maintaining contract and COR files in nonofficial systems of record impedes the contracting officer's ability to exercise required oversight of the embassy's procurement function.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Riga should maintain contract and contracting officer's representative files in the Integrated Logistics Management System in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Facility Management

Embassy's Non-High-Rise Residential Properties Did Not Meet Minimal Fire Safety Standards

OIG found 37 of the embassy's 38 non-high-rise residential properties did not meet minimal fire safety standards that require two exits or fire-rated exit stairways on each floor.¹⁹ An October 2023 Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) fire safety inspection also found that one of the embassy's non-high-rise apartment units did not have access to stairs protected by 1-hour fire-rated construction. According to 15 FAM 813.7-6b(1), each non-high-rise apartment unit on each floor must have access to at least two exits or exit stairways, and interior exit stairways must be enclosed. Department guidance in cable 22 STATE 25472²⁰ outlines fire code safety infrastructure standards for non-high-rise residential buildings, including the requirement for interior exits to be constructed and enclosed with fire-rated materials and fire-rated doors. Management Section staff told OIG that apartments with secondary stairwells, especially those constructed with fire-rated materials, are rare in Riga and are not required by local fire code. According to 15 FAM 813.7-3c, exceptions²¹ may be requested where an

¹⁹ According to 15 FAM 813.7-6a, non-high-rise buildings are buildings with an occupied floor located less than 75 feet above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access.

²⁰ Cable 22 STATE 25472, "Supplemental Fire and Life Safety Guidance for Leasing Non-High-Rise Functional and Residential Property," March 16, 2022.

²¹ To receive an exception, the appropriate embassy officer must recommend the exception to the fire standards or equivalencies, the Emergency Action Committee must concur with and obtain chief of mission concurrence and acceptance of risk for the exception request, and the embassy must submit a cable to OBO requesting approval. See 15 FAM 813.7-4a.

embassy deems that the application of a fire standard, or fire equivalency,²² is not obtainable or feasible. At the time of this inspection, OIG found that embassy staff had yet to coordinate with OBO on mitigation options nor had the embassy requested any exceptions. Management Section staff told OIG that they were aware of the requirement to coordinate with OBO, but they had not prioritized this task. Failure to adhere to Department fire safety standards increases life and safety risks to non-high-rise property residents.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Riga, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should manage its non-high-rise residential properties in accordance with Department standards for fire protection or obtain exceptions to the standards. (Action: Embassy Riga, in coordination with OBO)

Embassy's Fire Protection Program Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards

The embassy's fire protection program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found that the embassy did not:

- Inspect its residential fire extinguishers monthly and record dates on the inspection tags or electronically (15 FAM 843c).
- Perform and log weekly functional tests of its fire pump and monthly inspections of its fire sprinkler system inspections as required in 15 FAM 841a.
- Perform and log monthly emergency lighting inspections as required in 15 FAM 844a.

Staff told OIG they were unaware of the requirements to inspect residential fire extinguishers monthly and to test fire protection systems and maintain records outside the standard preventative maintenance schedule. Failure to regularly inspect fire extinguishers and perform other important inspections on emergency lighting, fire sprinkler systems, and fire pumps increases the risk that fire protection instruments may not be operable when needed.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Riga should manage its fire protection program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Embassy Did Not Complete Annual Written Assessment of Post's Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program

Embassy Riga's post occupational safety and health officer did not complete annual written assessments of the embassy's safety, health, and environmental management program as required by Department standards. OIG found that the embassy had completed only one written assessment since 2019. Department standards in 15 FAM 968d require the post occupational safety and health officer to complete an annual written assessment of the embassy's safety, health, and environmental management program and submit it to the designated post safety and occupational health administrator and to OBO by December 31 each

²² According to 15 FAM 813.7-3b, "fire equivalencies" refers to the acceptable level of variance from the established standard approved through OBO's Office of Fire Protection. Fire equivalencies represent an accepted degree of risk tolerance.

year. According to Management Section staff, other work commitments prevented them from completing the assessments. Failure to inspect the embassy's safety, health, and environmental management program increases risks to the safety of embassy personnel.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Riga should complete and document an annual written assessment of post's safety, health, and environmental management program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Spotlight on Success: Embassy Instituted Innovative Landscaping Practices To Conserve Resources

Embassy Riga's Facility Management Office instituted an innovative and sustainable landscaping design and maintenance program that conserved embassy resources. Due to shortages with gardening staff, the Facility Management Office staff minimized maintenance-intensive grassy areas by introducing wild growth spaces on the compound. The wild growth areas yielded several benefits to the embassy community. For instance, they promoted increased biological variety through the emergence of new succulents and wildflowers. They also allowed the volunteer-managed on-compound beehive to thrive. With less land to maintain, the embassy saved hours of gardening staff time and reduced its water usage. To maintain its representational lawn space, the embassy leased a robot lawn mower to reduce manual labor. Facility Management Office staff also replaced high-maintenance shrubs that required extensive pruning with easy-care perennial flowers, some of which were reused potted plants procured as centerpieces for the 4th of July celebration. Finally, the office staff used funds from the Greening Diplomacy Initiative to expand a storm drain to divert water into an irrigation tank for reuse, which allowed the embassy to use storm water for irrigation rather than domestic city water.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Riga's information management and information security operations, including unclassified and classified operations and non-enterprise networks,²³ telephone and radio programs, mail operations, emergency preparedness, and cybersecurity responsibilities. The embassy's Diplomatic Technology (DT) unit, which at the time of this inspection included two U.S. direct hires and five LE staff members, supported more than 200 users, providing unclassified and classified network support, mobile and telephone services, radio programs, mailroom services, and emergency and satellite communications. During this inspection, DT unit staff corrected eight deficiencies identified by OIG. Specifically, the staff:

- Included the current emergency destruction plan in the communications security account as required by 5 FAH-6 H-432a and b.
- Updated and tested the information technology contingency plan for its classified network as required by 12 FAM 623.7a, 12 FAM 632.3-2c, and 5 FAM 852.10(4)(c).

²³ The Department defines a non-enterprise network as an internet connection from a commercial or government internet service provider on a Department-owned and operated discrete non-sensitive unclassified local area network that is not connected to any other Department system.

- Completed required registration for the embassy's non-enterprise networks as required by 5 FAM 872.1a and b.
- Supplied personal protective clothing and eyewear for use in the mailroom screening facility as required by 15 FAM 957.6a, 14 FAH-4 H-121.1, and 14 FAH-4 H-331.2c.
- Brought scanning percentages and customer directory records for mailroom operations into compliance with 14 FAH-5 H-412(4), 14 FAH-5 H-432.1b, and 14 FAH-5 H-434.1g(1).
- Affixed security classification labels on unclassified equipment as required by 12 FAM 632.1-5c and 12 FAH-10 H-262.2-1b.
- Installed fire extinguishers in DT telecommunication rooms in accordance with 12 FAH-10 H-272.11-1c(2).
- Posted access control lists for DT telecommunication and computer rooms as required by 12 FAH-10 H-272.1-2(2) and 12 FAH-10 H-272.2-2(4) through (6).

OIG determined DT unit staff generally implemented information management and information security requirements in accordance with Department standards, with the following exceptions.

Embassy Did Not Establish an Account Management Process in Accordance With Department Standards

Embassy Riga did not establish an account management process in accordance with Department standards. According to 12 FAH-10 H-112.1-3b and c, the information systems security officer (ISSO) must review, at least annually, the list of information systems users to determine whether all users require access to the network and that all temporary, terminated, or transferred accounts have been deactivated or removed. OIG found the embassy had more than 60 group accounts that had not been reviewed by DT unit staff to ensure they were still needed. DT unit staff told OIG that a documented process for managing account access reviews did not exist and that other office priorities prevented them from devoting time to document a process and conduct account management reviews. Failure to properly manage user accounts increases the risk of unauthorized access to Department information and data.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Riga should implement an account management process for reviewing user accounts in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Embassy Did Not Establish a Local Configuration Management Protocol in Accordance With Department Standards

Embassy Riga did not establish a local configuration management protocol²⁴ as required by Department standards. According to 5 FAM 114.6-2a, 5 FAM 862.1b, and 5 FAM 867(9), embassies must establish and document a local configuration management protocol to ensure that the hardware, software, or network components installed on a network does not adversely affect the existing local information technology infrastructure under the operational control of

²⁴ In November 2024, the Department updated FAM references to the "local IT configuration control board" to "local configuration management protocol." For example, see 5 FAM 114.6-2, "Local Configuration Management." At the time of this inspection, the references in 5 FAM 862.1b and 5 FAM 864c, last updated in June 2024 and October 2018, respectively, continued to refer to the "local IT configuration control board."

DT unit personnel. OIG found the embassy had a local configuration control board at one time, but the board was no longer active. DT unit staff told OIG they did not need a local configuration management protocol since there were no locally developed applications. However, without an active local configuration management protocol, the embassy will be unable to properly review and approve any future locally developed applications or changes to existing hardware, software, or network components for which they are responsible.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Riga should establish a local configuration management protocol in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Information Systems Security Officers Did Not Perform Duties in Accordance With Department Standards

Embassy Riga's ISSOs did not perform required ISSO duties in accordance with 12 FAM 642.4-5a and c, 12 FAH-10 H-712.3b(3), 12 FAM 637.1-9, 5 FAM 846, and 5 FAM 847. OIG found that the ISSOs did not maintain automated information systems logs and records or review them on a monthly basis. Furthermore, ISSOs did not review user file transfer logs or the monthly audit reports for potential security-related incidents. OIG also found that the ISSOs did not implement virus protection for all systems or use firewall technology to provide protection for internal networks connected with non-Department networks. DT unit staff responsible for performing ISSO duties were not full-time ISSOs and told OIG it was difficult to allocate time to perform the required tasks in addition to their other DT responsibilities. Failure to perform required ISSO responsibilities leaves Department networks vulnerable to potential unauthorized access and malicious activity.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Riga should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Embassy Did Not Manage Non-Enterprise Networks in Accordance With Department Standards

Embassy Riga did not manage non-enterprise networks in accordance with Department standards. Specifically, the embassy's non-enterprise networks contained unapproved hardware and software, did not have installed firewalls, and were not monitored as required by 5 FAM 872.3c, 5 FAM 847a, and 12 FAH-10 H-312.5-2. DT unit staff told OIG they were aware of non-enterprise network requirements, but higher priority tasks and staffing shortages affected their ability to perform the work. Failure to monitor and implement required security protections on non-enterprise networks increases the potential risk for loss of confidentiality, integrity, and availability of systems and data hosted on those networks.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Riga should manage its non-enterprise networks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Embassy's Records Management Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards

Embassy Riga's records management program did not comply with Department standards. Specifically, the embassy did not retire records in accordance with 5 FAM 418.9(5), capture records generated on nongovernment electronic messaging applications within 20 days as required in 5 FAM 435d(1), or archive diplomatic notes in the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset, as required in 5 FAH-1 H-621e.

The DT Chief, designated as Embassy Riga's records coordinator, took several steps to establish a records management program for embassy personnel to follow that complied with Department standards. For example, the DT Chief created an automated form that was disseminated monthly to staff, reminding them to capture electronic messages as official records. The DT Chief also sent guidance outlining each employee's records management responsibilities, details on what constitutes a record, and instructions on how to perform records management requirements. Furthermore, the DT Chief sent reminders to all staff to retire records and provided training opportunities for staff. Despite the DT Chief's actions, the lack of embassy leadership's attention towards noncompliance by personnel affected full adherence to records management requirements. The lack of an effective records management program increases the risk of loss of information and historical records that affect the embassy's ability to conduct policy analysis, decision-making, and archival research.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Riga should manage its records management program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

RECOMMENDATIONS

OIG provided a draft of this report to Department entities for their review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued the following recommendations to Embassy Riga. The embassy's complete response can be found in Appendix B. The embassy also provided technical comments that were incorporated into the report, as appropriate.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Riga should coordinate its public diplomacy program across the embassy in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga coordinated its public diplomacy program across the embassy in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Riga should manage the American Spaces program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga managed the American Spaces program in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Riga should establish an American Liaison Network in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga established an American Liaison Network in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Riga should review and revise locally employed staff position descriptions and classify them in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga reviewed and revised locally employed staff position descriptions and classified them in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Riga should manage its time and attendance program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga managed its time and attendance program in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Riga should implement ledgers to accurately record and track employee accounts receivables in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga implemented ledgers to accurately record and track employee accounts receivables in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Riga, in coordination with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should formalize its support for financial services in a memorandum of understanding that defines roles, responsibilities, and cost reimbursement for services provided. (Action: Embassy Riga, in coordination with INL)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga formalized its support for financial services in a memorandum of understanding that defines roles, responsibilities, and cost reimbursement for services provided.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Riga should manage its property controls in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga managed its property controls in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Riga should maintain contract and contracting officer's representative files in the Integrated Logistics Management System in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of December 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga maintained contract and contracting officer's representative files in the Integrated Logistics Management System in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Riga, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should manage its non-high-rise residential properties in accordance with Department standards for fire protection or obtain exceptions to the standards. (Action: Embassy Riga, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted it endeavors to find non-apartment residences whenever possible, but it is rare to find residences under the rental benchmark and within Regional Security Office-approved neighborhoods. To comply with this recommendation, the single real property manager will recommend that the Emergency Action Committee and Chief of Mission accept the risk of an exception to fire standards or equivalencies and submit a cable to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations requesting blanket approval by the end of the first quarter of FY 2026.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga managed its non-high-rise residential properties in accordance with Department standards for fire protection or obtained exceptions to the standards.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Riga should manage its fire protection program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga managed its fire protection program in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Riga should complete and document an annual written assessment of post's safety, health, and environmental management program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga completed and documented an annual written assessment of post's safety, health, and environmental management program in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Riga should implement an account management process for reviewing user accounts in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation. The embassy estimated completion by the fourth quarter of FY 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga implemented an account management process for reviewing user accounts in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Riga should establish a local configuration management protocol in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga established a local configuration management protocol in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Riga should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga completed all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Riga should manage its non-enterprise networks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga managed its non-enterprise networks in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Riga should manage its records management program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: In its August 4, 2025, response, Embassy Riga concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted that it disagreed with the characterization of its leadership and that its leadership strongly supports records management and has actively pursued technological solutions to routinely capture records, including diplomatic notes and electronic messages. Additionally, the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission regularly remind Country Team members to back up their communications.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. OIG acknowledges embassy leadership's support for records management. However, at the time of this inspection, OIG determined that the lack of embassy leadership's attention towards noncompliance affected full adherence to records management requirements. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Riga managed its records management program in accordance with Department standards.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Agency/Section/Title	Name	Arrival Date
Chiefs of Mission:		
Ambassador	Christopher Robinson	2/2023
Deputy Chief of Mission	Julia Jacoby	8/2023
Chiefs of Sections:		
Consular	Amy Simms	8/2024
Political-Economic	Stephanie Kang	8/2024
Management	Caitlin Bauer	7/2024
Information Management	Gregory Higgins	9/2022
Public Diplomacy	William Couch	8/2023
Regional Security	Christian Shults	7/2022
Other Agency Representatives:		
Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché	Lt. Col. Seamus Quinn	8/2023
Office of Defense Cooperation	Lt. Col. Ross Kastner	8/2023
Legal Attaché	Gregory Paciorek	3/2024
Department of Justice	Michael Grant	6/2022

Source: OIG generated from personnel data provided by Embassy Riga.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted from January 2 to April 10, 2025, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2020 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspections Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department of State (Department) and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM). This inspection, in part, relates to Overseas Contingency Operation Atlantic Resolve and was completed in accordance with OIG's oversight responsibilities described in Section 419 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

Objectives and Scope

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive Officer of USAGM, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and USAGM. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved and U.S. interests are accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy; and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; and whether instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

Methodology

OIG used a risk-based approach to prepare for this inspection. OIG conducted portions of the inspection remotely and relied on audio- and video-conferencing tools in addition to in-person interviews with Department and other personnel. OIG also reviewed pertinent records; circulated surveys and compiled the results; and discussed the substance of this report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, and organizations affected by the inspection. OIG used professional judgment and analyzed physical, documentary, and testimonial evidence to develop its findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.

This review was conducted consistent with the FY 2024 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for Operation Atlantic Resolve, Including U.S. Government Activities Related to Ukraine, which was released in October 2023 by the Inspectors General of the Departments of State, Defense, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



*Embassy of the United States of America
Riga, Latvia*

August 4, 2025

UNCLASSIFIED

THRU: Brendan Hanrahan, EUR Senior Bureau Official

TO: OIG – Lisa Rodely, Acting Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: Embassy Riga - Christopher Robinson, Ambassador

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Inspection of Embassy Riga, Latvia

Embassy Riga has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by OIG:

Recommendation 1: Embassy Riga should coordinate its public diplomacy program across the embassy in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation. Building on the existing collaboration across the Mission, Embassy Riga has institutionalized a streamlined, Mission-wide approach to public diplomacy. To unify the Embassy’s public outreach, the Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) launched an interagency Strategic Communications Working Group, which engages all parts of the Mission and maintains a shared editorial calendar to align messaging across the interagency. In addition, PDS worked with the Front Office to revise the Mission's Briefing Checklist (BCL) templates and media policy, instituting clear guidelines for press engagement and social media into all planning for public engagements. These efforts have strengthened interagency coordination, ensuring that all sections and agencies participate in public diplomacy programming and maximize public-facing opportunities to advance U.S. foreign policy.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Riga should manage the American Spaces program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation. While strategic planning for American Spaces was always integrated into Post's annual strategic planning document, the planning was not always followed through by the American Spaces Coordinator. Post has made supervisory chain changes to address these shortcomings. Post has reassigned supervisory responsibility for the American Spaces Coordinator (LE Staff) from the Section Chief (PAO) to the Public Diplomacy Officer. This officer's work requirements include both the Emerging Voices and Established Opinion Leaders portfolios, as well as cultural programming. This will result in better coordination with the rest of the PD team. Moreover, the American Spaces Coordinator has been instructed to better strategically plan and reconcile his activities and programs to align more effectively with his position description, particularly concerning our American Spaces.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Riga should establish an American Liaison Network in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation. The Consular Section is actively working on creating an American Liaison Network (ALN).

Recommendation 4: Embassy Riga should review and revise locally employed staff position descriptions and classify them in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has 89 position descriptions. Embassy Riga has reclassified 16 positions since January 2025. The embassy will continue to engage supervisors to update 17 outdated position descriptions by December 2025.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Riga should manage its time and attendance program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation. The embassy implemented the recommendation on February 7, 2025 by changing time and attendance user roles. Embassy Riga also distributed guidance on February 3, 2025 directing employees and supervisors to start using the correct forms for overtime.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Riga should implement ledgers to accurately record and track employee accounts receivables in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation. The embassy implemented Atlas Financials an ADG accounts receivable program to record and track employee accounts receivable on March 17, 2025.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Riga, in coordination with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, should formalize its support for financial services in a

memorandum of understanding that defines roles, responsibilities, and cost reimbursement for services provided. (Action: Embassy Riga, in coordination with INL)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Riga coordinated with INL Washington to draft a new ICASS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will take effect in FY 2026. The ICASS MOU formalizes the support for financial services. With the new MOU, Embassy Riga, in coordination with INL Washington, requests the closure of this recommendation.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Riga should manage its property controls in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation to maintain its property controls in accordance with Department standards and has implemented the recommendation to the extent possible within its resource constraints.

Since the inspection, the property office has shrunk from 5 to 2 people. Without the ability to rehire staff, the embassy must rely on expensive contracted laborers to conduct routine operations and even participate in reviews and spot checks. Nevertheless, the accountable property officer (APO) held a March 18, 2025 meeting with the property team to review deficiencies. The APO conducted spot checks of expendable items on March 31, April 7, and May 28, 2025 and found zero missing items. The APO conducted a spot check of warehouse items March 13, 2025 and May 28, 2025. Because the embassy no longer has laborers, we are unable to safely complete the spot check from May 28, 2025 due to the location of the three items within the warehouse. The APO made the decision to wait until contract labor is hired in the first quarter of fiscal year 2026 to assist with annual inventory to finish this spot check for the three remaining items (lamps). The next quarterly spot checks will be done before the end of FY 2025.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Riga should maintain contract and contracting officer's representative files in the Integrated Logistics Management System in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with this recommendation. Since the inspection, we have started maintaining these files following the required standards and will continue to do so moving forward on all active contracts. CORs on new contracts are requesting access to contract files in ILMS upon appointment to maintain compliance with standards. CORs on existing contracts will review their contract files and add any missing materials by the end of FY 2026 Q1. To support compliance, the Contracting Officer (CO) will conduct semi-annual reviews of contract files to verify that all mandatory documents are included in the first quarter of each fiscal year. The expected completion is December 2025.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Riga, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should manage its non-high-rise residential properties in accordance with Department standards for fire protection or obtain exceptions to the standards. (Action:

Embassy Riga, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation to the extent it is realistic within resource constraints. As the report points out, local fire codes do not require interior exits in apartment buildings to be constructed and enclosed with fire-rated materials and fire-rated doors. The embassy endeavors to find non-apartment residences whenever possible, but it is rare to find residences under the rental benchmark and within RSO-approved neighborhoods. When looking for apartments, the embassy follows fire standards as much as possible, finding apartments on lower floors with two exits and/or with fire protection systems. With OBO assistance, the Embassy recently acquired five new staff housing units in a non-high-rise residential building, and even these are not constructed to OBO's fire standards. To comply with this recommendation, the single real property manager will recommend the Emergency Action Committee and Chief of Mission accept the risk of an exception to fire standards or equivalencies and submit a cable to OBO requesting blanket approval by the end of 1Q FY 2026.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Riga should manage its fire protection program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation and will make every effort possible to conduct regular testing within our resource constraints.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Riga should complete and document an annual written assessment of post's safety, health, and environmental management program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with this recommendation. The last SHEM inspection was in July 2024.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Riga should implement an account management process for reviewing user accounts in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with the recommendation. The embassy is establishing an SOP which will be executed annually starting in fiscal year 2025 quarter four.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Riga should establish a local configuration management protocol in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management Response: Embassy Riga concurs with this recommendation. According to 5 FAM 863.2 system level IT memberships for system configuration management should consist of a local IT chairperson and added members as appropriate. For Embassy Riga, the DTO will represent as the local IT chairperson and develop a plan for configuration management in compliance with Federal laws, regulations, and policies.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Riga should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management response: Embassy Riga concurs with this recommendation. Given resource constraints on duties, time, and hiring, Embassy Riga will make every effort possible to prioritize ISSO responsibilities. Since the inspection, the DT team has routinely reviewed logs and identified a suspicious event which affected other Missions as well.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Riga should manage its non-enterprise networks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management response: Embassy Riga concurs with this recommendation.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Riga should manage its records management program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Riga)

Management response: Embassy Riga concurs with this recommendation but disagrees with the characterization of the Embassy's leadership. The embassy's leadership strongly supports record management and has actively pursued technological solutions to routine capture of records, including diplomatic notes and electronic messages. The Ambassador and DCM regularly remind Country Team members to back up their communications.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Julia Jacoby, Deputy Chief of Mission.

ABBREVIATIONS

COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DT	Diplomatic Technology
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EU	European Union
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAST	First- and Second-Tour
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
ILMS	Integrated Logistics Management System
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
ISSO	Information Systems Security Officer
LE	Locally Employed
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations



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