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United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
Office of Inspector General

Report of Inspection

Embassy Port Moresby,
Papua New Guinea

Report Number ISP-I-09-25A, February 2009

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PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, as issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the BBG, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and the BBG. 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; whether U.S. interests are being 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; whether instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this inspection, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on-site interviews; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.

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- The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 4 and October 3, 2008; in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, between October 20 and 24, 2008; and in Honiara, Solomon Islands, between October 18 and 20, 2008. Ambassador Rudolf V. Perina (team leader), Dr. Louis A. McCall (deputy team leader), Joseph S. Catalano, Ernest J. Fischer, and Peter Stella, Jr. conducted the inspection.

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CONTEXT



Embassy Port Moresby is responsible for three countries: Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. Papua New Guinea was governed by Australia until 1975, while Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands were under French and British colonial rule, respectively. All three countries have made considerable progress since attaining independence but continue to be troubled by deep political, social, and economic problems.

With a population of over 6.7 million from over 800 tribes, each with their own distinct language, Papua New Guinea is the largest country among Pacific island nations. National elections held in 2007 were a marked improvement over previous ones, particularly in terms of the reduction of violence. Although endowed with natural resources and the third richest biodiversity in the world, Papua New Guinea remains underdeveloped and suffers from a high crime rate and epidemic rates of HIV/AIDS.

Following a period of violence and ethnic instability in the Solomon Islands, the government fell to the opposition in late 2007 after a successful vote of no confidence. Despite this peaceful and democratic change of leadership, political stability remains fragile, and the country faces serious economic challenges. The Embassy established a consular agency in Honiara, Solomon Islands, in 1999. A physical office for the consular agency was rented starting in 2006.

Vanuatu has experienced incidents of ethnic violence in recent times but continues on the road to developing democratic practices and good governance. It has made economic progress through international investment and the tourist trade. Although there is no permanent Department of State (Department) representation in Vanuatu, the country is the recipient of a multiyear \$65 million compact from the Millennium Challenge Corporation and has an active Peace Corps program with about 100 volunteers.

U.S. relations with all three countries are excellent and have strengthened noticeably in recent years, partly as a result of increased and more visible U.S. humanitarian assistance.

The three countries are also recipients of international military education and training funding.

The key U.S. strategic goal is to strengthen democracy and good governance in all three countries. Other important embassy priorities are protecting American citizens, promoting global health through an expanded HIV/AIDS assistance program, and strengthening regional stability through cooperation with allies and friends.

Embassy Port Moresby has nine direct-hire American employees, three American local hires, and 51 LE staff.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The current Ambassador, who arrived at post in October 2006, is effectively promoting U.S. goals in the region through an active diplomatic agenda. She has raised the visibility of the United States through increased humanitarian assistance programs and skilled use of public diplomacy. Her efforts are helping to dispel the perception of the last decade that the United States is withdrawing from the region following security-related reductions of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Peace Corps, and other high-visibility programs in the 1990s.

Her efforts to promote global health by combating HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea have earned particular recognition and resulted in a seven-fold increase of U.S. HIV/AIDS assistance. She works closely with the embassy Defense attaché resident in Suva, Fiji, and the Pacific Command in Honolulu to bring Department of Defense humanitarian programs to the region, such as two Pacific Partnership ship visits that provided medical and engineering assistance to victims of a tsunami in the Solomon Islands and a cyclone in Papua New Guinea in 2007. She has good working relations with Peace Corps and Millennium Challenge Corporation representatives in Vanuatu and visits both there and the Solomon Islands regularly.

The Ambassador's outreach efforts are assisted by a small but dedicated embassy staff. Despite difficult living conditions stemming from security concerns in Port Moresby, staff morale is good. The Ambassador is skilled at using the Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) process to guide and focus work priorities. She has an informal management style that contributes to embassy cohesion and accomplishment. She holds weekly country team meetings and monthly gatherings of all embassy employees. She takes care to mentor the post's two entry-level officers and to support Equal Employment Opportunity objectives. A new deputy chief of mission (DCM) took up duties at post in September 2008.

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POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC REPORTING AND ANALYSIS

Embassy Port Moresby has a single first-tour, entry-level officer for political/economic reporting. That same officer covers the public diplomacy function. The LE staff person with political/economic/commercial specialist duties (position number P20000) left the Embassy just prior to the inspection for a better paying position. The mandated reporting burden and the burden of delivering demarches to the three countries under Chief of Mission (COM) authority falls on this single officer. The post has requested another entry-level program position in its FY 2010 MSP to address this need. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) team supports the request. The Embassy has limited resources to cover programs in the host countries of Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. The consular agency in Honiara, Solomon Islands, is a platform for outreach that is not limited to consular work. This is addressed in greater detail below in the subsection on consular affairs.

The combined tasks loaded on this one reporting officer, now working without a political/economic specialist, are so great that discretionary reporting is restricted. In addition, this officer is responsible for the environment, science, technology, and health portfolio with which she can do little. The regional environmental officer at Embassy Suva is relied upon for coverage of this area. Nevertheless, given Papua New Guinea's endowment of biodiversity, the threat to it from theft of forestry resources, forestry mismanagement, the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the entire Asia-Pacific region, and fisheries issues in the Solomon Islands, there is scope for a more active hand in these areas in coordination with the regional environmental officer. A local nongovernmental organization received a grant from the USAID regional office in Bangkok to work on HIV/AIDS programs. However, no one at Embassy Port Moresby has been designated in writing as a grants officer representative to provide oversight of U.S. HIV/AIDS funds of \$2.6 million. The organization is, nevertheless, well and favorably known to the Embassy. The OIG team informally suggested that the Embassy advise the USAID regional office in Bangkok that it would welcome having a Department officer in Port Moresby act as a grants officer representative for the program.

The embassy has a reasonable reporting and travel plan that does not commit itself to projects that are beyond its resources. Although it is a practical nod to reality, it is a disappointment to a mission that sees much more that can be done and would like to do it, given additional resources and time. The quality of reporting is good. Although it is brief, it touches on the main issues and provides some biographic background on principals and new actors. OIG encouraged the post to include more “think pieces” with the post’s analysis of trends and probable outcomes or impacts as they relate to economic, political, and social stability. The volume of reporting is light. Even with a satisfactory solution to telecommunications problems, highlighted in the section on management controls, the volume of reporting would not be expected to increase without the addition of another reporting officer.

Economic/Commercial

The embassy attempts to be helpful to U.S. businessmen new to this market. The Ambassador and DCM have traditionally done their part in that regard together with the single officer in the political/economic section. The Foreign Commercial Service officer at Embassy Canberra partners with the post and helps support commercial services. A major U.S. energy firm is expected to spend \$10 billion over 30 years to export liquefied natural gas from Papua New Guinea. Such a large investment over an extended period is likely to have spinoff opportunities for U.S. exports of heavy and specialized equipment. The current officer is not in a position to report on or develop opportunities in the energy area. This is another reason the OIG team supports the post’s request for an additional program officer.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

This is a nonpresence post for public diplomacy, but the lone political/economic officer also looks after the day-to-day public affairs function as the de facto public affairs officer (PAO). She is the only officer at post with a grants warrant. The newly created position of regional PAO at Embassy Suva provides support to the public affairs program of Embassy Port Moresby. The regional PAO visited Embassy Port Moresby as the post was in the process of bringing back the Fulbright and Humphrey programs. These programs and the International Visitor Leadership program are very limited in the number of positions available and are based on allocations from the regional PAO, whose staff assists with the administrative aspects of these programs. The political/economic officer maintains frequent communication with the regional PAO and with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs’ (EAP)

Office of Public Diplomacy. She is supported by an LE staff public diplomacy assistant, who is also the protocol assistant. The public diplomacy assistant is a former journalist who also previously worked in the same position at the Australian High Commission.

The Ambassador is the engine of the post's public diplomacy effort. The recently arrived DCM also is from the public diplomacy cone. The Embassy thus has a robust public diplomacy program despite being a nonpresence post. The tracking of press placements reveals an abundance of favorable press. The visit of the USNS Mercy, a hospital ship, in July 2008 was a high point that built up a large amount of goodwill with repeated ripples of good press. The political/economic officer has good experience in public diplomacy coordination with the Pacific Command and the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet Command. The regional PAO has been generous in funding the post's public diplomacy program requests. The Department does not earmark public diplomacy representational funds for nonpresence posts.

Because of its distance and isolation, Embassy Port Moresby had not had an extensive speaker program. Because it did not realize it had digital videoconferencing (DVC) equipment and did not have a DVC solution in place to overcome what would have been unacceptably poor video through the OpenNet system, the post could not take advantage of DVC opportunities in the past, including those involving neighboring posts, in order to make wider use of speakers. The post also could not connect local journalists with the Foreign Press Center in Washington. In addition, Washington has requested DVCs for purposes of MSP review, which the post was not able to comply with. The OIG team recommended that DVC equipment be installed in a multipurpose room and that integrated services digital network lines with the host country telecommunications provider be used for the video and audio links to support high quality DVCs. The political/economic officer immediately put together a notional program for FY 2009 that would make good use of DVCs to supplement speakers in support of MSP goals.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Port Moresby should install its digital videoconferencing equipment and incorporate digital videoconferences into its public diplomacy outreach program. (Embassy Port Moresby)

The public affairs section provides content for the embassy Web site, but the webmaster position, now vacant, is in the information management section. The post also hosts virtual presence post Web sites for the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.¹

¹ The site for Vanuatu is <http://www.usvpp-vanuatu.org/>

The Solomon Islands virtual presence post was the first one established by the Department.² The sites are not used to their full potential and are not kept current.

CONSULAR OPERATIONS

The consular section in Port Moresby includes one American officer and two LE staff. A half-time consular agent and one LE staff member in Honiara, Solomon Islands, supplement the consular team. (Comment concerning the consular agency follows below.) About 2,500 U.S. citizens live in Embassy Port Moresby's consular district, which includes Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. More than 2,000 American tourists visit the district annually. Protection of American citizens and strengthening U.S. border security form the most important consular mission priorities cited in the FY 2010 MSP. The Embassy's well-organized warden system, Emergency Evacuation Plan, and visa program satisfy those requirements. The consular unit performs routine services in a timely manner. The consul exercises functional and managerial supervision; LE staff recently completed Foreign Service Institute training courses. The staff fields approximately 400 telephone calls and 150 written questions each month. Consular and other personnel travel from Port Moresby to outlying areas and the other nations on consular business as needed. The staffing level appears adequate to deal with the current consular workload.

The Embassy plans to move into a new chancery in several years. The consular section currently occupies quarters adjacent to the present chancery's main entrance. The waiting room seats about 10 consular clients. Waiting space affords entry to wheel-chair bound persons but has no drinking water available and lacks direct access to toilets. Two teller windows facilitate client interviews; office work space seems sufficient.

American Citizen Services

American consular district residents include missionaries, a few businesspeople, and assistance workers. Some U.S. residents and visitors encounter minor problems while others suffer violent crimes, including rape and murder. The unit maintains relationships with host country authorities to help in such matters. Staff travel availability, the consular district size, and transport scheduling realities constrain the section's work outside of Port Moresby. The OIG team informally recommended developing, funding, and implementing a comprehensive outreach and travel plan.

² The site for the Solomon Islands is <http://www.usvpp-solomonislands.org/>

During FY 2008, the embassy processed five death cases, 180 passport requests, and 10 consular reports of birth to American citizens abroad applications. The consular section wisely invests in a warden system to alert U.S. citizens to potential problems and routine matters. Changeable political and weather conditions in this geographic area underline the necessity for this system and the requirement to ensure that it works. Back-up communication system options include telephonic message distribution. Efforts continue to improve and update the warden system.

Visa Services

The visa unit adjudicated about 40 immigrant and diversity immigrant, and 800 nonimmigrant visa applications in FY 2008. Limited economic opportunities contribute to the failure of 20 percent of first-time applicants to qualify for American visitor visas. Antifraud measures include information verification and investigations, generally possible only in Port Moresby neighborhoods. Assiduous visa application adjudications safeguard U.S. borders by identifying and excluding potential terrorists, thwarting illicit immigration, and assisting legitimate travel to the United States. The consul and his alternates focus on lawful and fair eligibility adjudication.

The Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) selected Embassy Port Moresby for a pilot laptop nonimmigrant visa (LNIV) program with the Solomon Islands being a trial location. The LNIV program permits consular officers to interview visa applicants away from consular sections. Visa units at the “home section” complete visa processing with passports being returned to applicants via a courier service. This program, intended to manage workloads and serve visa seekers, remains in the pilot program stages. Regulatory implementation awaits methodology verification, cost determination, and successful field testing. CA expects user fees to cover all LNIV costs, although geographical bureaus may pay officer travel and subsistence costs.

Embassy Port Moresby consular leadership drafted a robust LNIV plan including regional security office involvement in LNIV site location, cost estimates, and securing CA approval. The consul expects to begin LNIV processing at the consular agency premises in Honiara in November 2008. When the results of this trial and information from other pilot plan locations become available, CA will determine whether to formally establish the program and determine fee structure worldwide.

The Visas Viper Program stipulates that information on “people who may threaten the welfare of the United States” held by mission elements be given to the consular section for forwarding to the Department. The Department reviews such consular reports to identify persons for inclusion in the Automated Visa Lookout System. Embassy Port Moresby’s Visas Viper committee meets regularly — this Embassy’s milieu results in few submissions.

Solomon Islands Consular Agency

U.S. consular agents perform limited consular services in places without standard Department missions. The consul at Embassy Port Moresby supervises a half-time consular agent and a full-time LE staff member at a consular agency in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands. Honiara, situated on the island of Guadalcanal, lies about 900 miles southeast of Port Moresby. Americans resident in and visiting the Solomon Islands express sincere appreciation for the agent and the services she provides. CA funds consular agent salaries, although regional bureaus fund office and administrative expenses. Consular agencies, with their modest operating expenses, are a useful means of protecting American citizens and their interests.

Situated on the second floor of a private office building, the agency lies close to the town center. A private stairway provides access to an attractive and spacious office. Staff meets wheelchair confined clients at the ground floor stair entry. The agency displays an exterior sign and other required symbols. The agency experienced some difficulties with consular fee collection issues and records maintenance. The OIG team counseled the agent on these issues via informal recommendations.

About 160 U.S. citizens live in the Solomon Islands, and some 900 Americans, including yacht crews and their passengers, visit throughout the year. The consular agent and her assistant typically process several passport applications and welfare and whereabouts cases per month. She also visits arrested and imprisoned American citizens, assists with federal benefits, provides voting information, works on death and estate cases, and offers other consular services. The agent's tenure has witnessed shipwrecks, evacuations, and abduction cases. Her well-established, far-reaching circle of contacts enhances her ability to help American citizens and enables her to organize and support official U.S. visitors to the region.

In addition to her primary consular responsibilities, the agent performs a multitude of other tasks, including intensive liaison between regional authorities and the embassy. Senior Department officials and Embassy Port Moresby leadership look to the agent for this nonconsular work. She coordinates many official visits each year and often represents U.S. interests to the Solomon Islands Government. Those skills are particularly useful when U.S. military units visit the Solomon Islands. Owing to its historical importance dating from World War II, the Solomon Islands attract annual pilgrimages to battlefields and grave sites. The consular agent adroitly uses her contacts to perform myriad administrative and protocol tasks to support these taskings and visits. Her activities range from following up on high-level issues to public affairs work, from briefing visitors to scheduling contacts with host government officials, from transmitting requests for entry to Solomon Islands airspace, to laying commemorative wreaths.

The agent's reports and the OIG team's observation indicate that she spends many hours per week supporting nonconsular U.S. Government-related activities. The agent spends personal funds for official representation activity not relating to her consular work. These situations do not link to consular agent obligations and responsibilities.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Port Moresby should ask the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs to separate the Solomon Island consular agent's embassy support responsibilities from her consular duties and complete an agreement to compensate the agent for expenses incurred on official embassy business. (Action: Embassy Port Moresby, in coordination with EAP)

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Embassy Port Moresby currently has an experienced management officer in charge who previously served at Embassy Canberra. Under his leadership, with EAP executive office and Embassy Canberra support, this is an opportune time for Embassy Port Moresby to improve administrative operations. Embassy Port Moresby is scheduled to move into a new embassy compound in the 2010-11 time frame.

Agency	U.S. Direct- Hire Staff	U.S. Local- Hire Staff	Locally Employed Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2008
State – D&CP	8	3	41	52	\$2,366,400
State – Public Diplomacy			1	1	\$2,000
State – Diplomatic Security	1		8	9	\$619,597
State – Representation					\$15,350
State – OBO					\$991,174
Office of Defense Cooperation			1	1	
Totals	9	3	51	63	\$3,994,521

Note: Positions shown are filled positions.

Source: Embassy Port Moresby

MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Management operations are struggling to provide adequate services. Staffing gaps and underperformance of some staff have had predictable negative consequences for management operations. In general, the mission community is not satisfied with management operations as evidenced by the scores given on the OIG workplace and quality of life questionnaire. Financial services are among the lowest rated operations. Management of the housing program and customs and shipping were highly rated operations. Embassy Port Moresby is not an International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) post so there are no ICASS customer survey results to report. Embassy Port Moresby is not direct charging the Security Assistance Office (SAO), resident at Embassy Suva, for office space, security, or other services for its LE staff member at Embassy Port Moresby. In the absence of ICASS, direct charging is the acceptable alternative.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Port Moresby, in coordination with Embassy Canberra, should direct charge the Security Assistance Office at Embassy Suva for office space, security, and all services provided. (Action: Embassy Port Moresby, in coordination with Embassies Suva and Canberra)

The management officer is a Foreign Service officer at the FS-01 grade serving in an FS-03 position. His experience and recent position in Australia, where his family members continue to reside, serves the post well. He has already identified and remedied many glaring management problems and wishes to get the management operations working smoothly during his tenure. Some management shortcomings will take time and help to overcome. The management officer is assisted by a general services officer and information management officer. A community liaison office coordinator reports directly to the Ambassador. The management officer directly supervises the financial management operations and the human resources operations. Embassy Canberra provides excellent support in both areas. Embassy Port Moresby provides administrative services to the consular agent in the Solomon Islands and to the Millennium Challenge Corporation in Vanuatu.

Embassy Port Moresby's workload has increased with its support for ship visits, military visits, and the International Military Education and Training program. Embassy Port Moresby has sufficient staff numbers, but LE staff managerial skills are lacking throughout its operations. This places more responsibility on the American officers and the few LE staff who do manage. Embassy Port Moresby's uncompensated assistance to SAO at times has overwhelmed cashiering operations.

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Financial Management Operations

Embassy Port Moresby's financial management operations are under performing. Financial management operations are supervised by the management officer. He is assisted by a financial specialist, two voucher examiners, a cashier, and an accountant with Embassy Canberra's Financial Management Center (FMC) who spends 50 percent of her time on Embassy Port Moresby's financial affairs and visits quarterly. The importance of this accountant's sustained assistance to post cannot be overstated. The management officer no longer allows the staff of financial management operations to be tasked with nonfinancial matters. Such activities contributed to the operation's difficulties.

A number of problem areas have been identified by Embassy Canberra's LE staff accountant. The most significant is the three-month backlog of vouchers to be administratively approved prior to submission to FMC Canberra. There had been an 18-month backlog. (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

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Human Resources and Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights Matters

Human resource operations function well. The lone LE staff member is supported by Embassy Canberra. Although the number and frequency of visits are down, Embassy Canberra remains responsive to posts needs. LE staff compensation and benefits are current. Currently, post has seven exception rate range positions: heating, ventilation, air conditioning/electrical technician, plumber, trades assistant, regional security office assistant/secretary, DCM secretary/special project assistant, facilities maintenance supervisor, and public diplomacy/protocol assistant. The high number of exception rate range positions is a good indicator of the difficulty post has in competing for qualified employees in certain positions. There are some indications that the hiring process needs to become more stringent and add a testing element. Because there is evidence to suggest that resumes may be exaggerated, post should resist hiring until background information has been fully vetted. The inspection team strongly encouraged post to double its efforts to screen candidates for its positions.

The post has made the continued training of its LE staff a high priority. It may wish to make it an MSP goal. The inspection team strongly suggested that post take the steps necessary to train its LE staff. The inspection team made an informal recommendation that Embassy Port Moresby require that each LE staff member have an individual development plan.

The post has a designated a nonresident Equal Employment Opportunity counselor. There is no Federal Women's Program manager. The inspection team strongly suggested that post designate a Federal Women's Program manager and informally recommended that a resident Equal Employment Opportunity counselor be designated.

GENERAL SERVICES OPERATIONS

General services operations, which includes facilities maintenance, received a mixed review. The motor pool, housing, and customs and shipping are performing well. Procurement, warehousing, nonexpendable and expendable property control,

the safety and occupational health and fire protection programs, and facilities maintenance are not performing well. The general services officer has a staff of 29. While here only two weeks, the general services officer has already gained a solid grasp of his operations. Assistance from Embassy Canberra on general services operations matters could prove very beneficial. A memorandum of understanding between Embassies Port Moresby and Canberra for provision of assistance on general services has never existed. The management officer is actively pursuing such assistance, in the form of training visits, from Embassy Canberra. The OIG inspection team supports the idea.

As noted above, the procurement section relies too heavily on petty cash purchases. The section is now committed to expanding the use of its purchase card, blanket purchase agreements, and purchase orders. It has had approximately 20 active blanket purchase agreements in place for years.

Embassy Port Moresby lacks a warehouse and receiving area. It does have ample storage space in its basement for eight storage areas. This is far from an ideal arrangement and complicates property issuance activities for the two responsible LE staff. Flammable items are now stored in a 20-foot ventilated shipping container behind the chancery building. Until two weeks ago, flammable items had been stored in the basement. The reliability of property records remains in question. Both the 2005 and 2007 property management reports reported nonexpendable inventory shortages exceeding one percent. In 2005, there was a reported nonexpendable shortage of \$80,669 and in 2007 a shortage of \$21,601. Based on observations of his property staff during a recent auction sale and a spot check of expendable and nonexpendable property in storage, the general services officer has already concluded that his property staff are not performing well.

Embassy Port Moresby's safety and occupational health and fire protection programs were found to be less than robust. The announced inspection did spur the general services officer to form an occupational safety and health committee and move flammable items out of the basement. The inspection team encourages the post to continue implementation of a safety and occupational health program.

The facilities maintenance section consists of a facilities maintenance supervisor and 16 staff members. The staff is composed of one maintenance foreman/air-conditioning technician, one painter, one plumber, one carpenter, one trades helper, seven laborers, three gardeners, and one cleaner. The seven laborers are in fact warehousemen who assist with facilities maintenance tasks when not involved in warehousing activities. While this staff is large, it is not now appropriate due to the dearth of skilled positions. It certainly will not be appropriate for the new embassy

compound. The facilities maintenance supervisor agrees with the inspection team's assessment that the maintenance staff is both large and inappropriately staffed. The section had trades assistants for all the skilled positions. Such staffing provided more even coverage.

The facilities maintenance section is responsible for the chancery, chief of mission residence, DCM residence, and the six government-owned townhouses. Nevertheless, the facilities maintenance supervisor and staff struggle to maintain these facilities and other projects. Staffing certainly plays a role. The management officer questions the managerial skills of the U.S. local-hire facilities maintenance supervisor and attributes at least some of the section's poor performance to this. The general services officer intends to actively participate in the maintenance program and make any required changes as they may arise.

New Embassy Compound

The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) has reached an agreement with a property owner to hold property in the Harbour City area until it is purchased. The purchase contract, which was supposed to be finalized in October 2008, has not yet been signed, and post has returned the funding to OBO. The new embassy compound will be an OBO small secure compound with an expected completion date of 2010-11.

RIGHTSIZING REVIEW

The Office of Rightsizing (M/PRI) Rightsizing Review took a hard look at Embassy Port Moresby's management operations. It recommended the elimination of the general services officer position. It argued that the mission was too small to justify the position. The inspection team disagrees with M/PRI's assessment. The inspection team supports leaving the position in place for two, two-year tours in light of the dearth of managerial talent now resident in the general services office LE staff and to ensure a sound management controls program in the general services office. M/PRI suggested that positions be eliminated for a janitor, a driver, and two laborers. These positions have been eliminated. M/PRI also suggested that a trades assistant position and a computer operator position be eliminated. Post intends to keep these positions.

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(b) (6)(b) (6)(b) (6)(b) (6)(b) (6) It is imperative that the person hired in the vacant position be vetted well to ensure that the information management section can strengthen its foundations. A digital technical specialist or operations officer from the Regional Information Management Center at Embassy Bangkok would be best equipped to vet the applicants. The pool of applicants is large, but of poor quality, and fraudulent documentation of qualifications is commonplace.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Port Moresby should enlist the assistance of the Regional Information Management Center at Embassy Bangkok to vet applicants to fill the vacancy in position number 55001. (Action: Embassy Port Moresby, in coordination with RIMC Bangkok)

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QUALITY OF LIFE

SCHOOLS

Department allowances cover tuition costs. The Department provided no grant to either school. A regional educational officer of the Department's Office of Overseas Schools visited the schools in March 2007 to evaluate needs. That officer reported that parents held mixed opinions about the schools with most finding them suitable for students below the 7th grade level and acceptable at the higher grades.

MEDICAL UNIT

The Embassy has no medical unit, but specialists are available on call. First aid kits and a defibrillator are located within the chancery. An arrangement with the Australian High Commission provides most medical support, a condition that satisfies embassy staff. The Department's Office of Medical Services and the regional medical offices in Singapore and Tokyo support the Embassy. A regional medical officer visited Port Moresby within the last year.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

A community liaison office coordinator position exists at Embassy Port Moresby but was vacant at the time of the inspection. The Embassy plans to fill the position shortly. The community liaison office space contains a lending library and information on the host country available to staffers.

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MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The management officer serves as the post management controls coordinator. The post's management controls program is weak. Post has not conducted a risk assessment in several years. Both the management officer and the general services officer have stated that management operations benefited by filling out the OIG functional questionnaires, as areas for improvement were identified. Post would derive similar benefits if it were to complete risk assessment questionnaires. The inspection team informally recommended that post require all its sections to complete risk assessment questionnaires and correct any identified management control weaknesses.

The post submitted the COM annual management certification on August 20, 2008. It reported no management control weaknesses without the results of a risk assessment exercise recommended above.

Embassy Port Moresby owns and operates a 42-foot boat for emergency evacuation purposes. Embassy Port Moresby employs an LE staff boat captain to pilot the boat. He is the only authorized pilot of the boat and is paid overtime for any hours worked outside of normal business hours. The Embassy uses the boat for representational events and has determined that it is in the best interest of the embassy to allow the boat to be used for recreational purposes, as the boat's engines need regular use. Direct-hire American employees are required to pay for recreational use of the boat in accordance with published fees in the administrative notice on the embassy boat policy. The fees attempt to capture the full cost of fuel for boat usage. It is not certain that they do. What is certain is that the recreational fees do not include the boat captain's compensation, which then has the U.S. Government subsidizing these trips. Most recreational use of the boat would take place outside of normal business hours, either on weekends or evenings so overtime compensation would be appropriate. An informal recommendation addresses the need for post to capture the full cost of fuel and the boat captain's compensation to be paid for by the recreational users.

Consular Controls

The Embassy properly designated accountable consular officers (ACO), consular subcashiers, and alternates. The consular agent in Honiara collects consular fees that the consular subcashier processes. The OIG team's random ACO records and

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Embassy Port Moresby should install its digital videoconference equipment and incorporate digital videoconferences into its public diplomacy outreach program. (Embassy Port Moresby)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Port Moresby should ask the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs to separate the Solomon Island consular agent's embassy support responsibilities from her consular duties and complete an agreement to compensate the agent for expenses incurred on official embassy business. (Action: Embassy Port Moresby, in coordination with EAP)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Port Moresby, in coordination with Embassy Canberra, should direct charge the Security Assistance Office at Embassy Suva for office space, security, and all services provided. (Action: Embassy Port Moresby, in coordination with Embassies Suva and Canberra)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Port Moresby should enlist the assistance of the Regional Information Management Center at Embassy Bangkok to vet applicants to fill the vacancy in position number 55001. (Action: Embassy Port Moresby, in coordination with RIMC Bangkok)

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Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Port Moresby should calculate the full cost for operating the emergency evacuation boat to include compensation for the boat captain and charge that amount to recreational users.

Embassy Port Moresby has not evaluated its management control program, which is weak. The COM annual management certification was submitted without the benefit of a thorough review of the post's management control program.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Port Moresby should conduct a risk assessment exercise and correct identified weaknesses as a basis for the next Chief of Mission Annual Management Certification.

Embassy Port Moresby's Equal Employment Opportunity counselor resides at Embassy Canberra, and the Embassy lacks a Federal Women's Program manager.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Port Moresby should designate a resident Equal Employment Opportunity counselor and a Federal Women's Program manager.

Embassy Port Moresby provides training opportunities for its LE staff but does not have Individual Development Plans that would better direct limited training funds to key courses in a progressive pathway.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Port Moresby should require that each locally employed staff have an individual development plan.

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PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Leslie V. Rowe	10/06
Deputy Chief of Mission	Bruce P. Kleiner	09/08
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Michael Bakalar	11/07
General Services	Matthew Britton	10/08
Information Program Management	William Hamer	10/07
Consular	Edward Fajardo	08/07
Consular Agent Solomon Islands	Keithie Saunders	12/99
Political/Economic/Public Diplomacy	Kimberly Strollo	02/08
Regional Security	Bernard Nixon	08/07
Other Agencies:		
Department of Defense (Embassy Suva)	Cmdr. Robert L. Forwood	08/08
Peace Corps Vanuatu	Edward Stice	08/08
Millennium Challenge Corporation Vanuatu	Charles Sethness	04/08

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACO	accountable consular officer
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
COM	Chief of Mission
DCM	deputy chief of mission
Department	Department of State
DVC	digital video conferencing
EAP	Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
FMC	Financial Management Center
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IMS	information management specialist
M/PRI	Office of Rightsizing
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
LE	locally employed
LNIV	laptop nonimmigrant visa
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
PAO	public affairs officer
SAO	Security Assistance Office
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VOIP	voice over Internet protocol

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of Federal programs
and resources hurts everyone.

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