



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

Office of Inspections

Inspection of Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Report Number ISP-I-12-11A, February 2012

~~Important Notice~~

~~This report is intended solely for the official use of the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, or any agency or organization receiving a copy directly from the Office of Inspector General. No secondary distribution may be made, in whole or in part, outside the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, by them or by other agencies or organizations, without prior authorization by the Inspector General. Public availability of the document will be determined by the Inspector General under the U.S. Code, 5 U.S.C. 552. Improper disclosure of this report may result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.~~

PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2011 by the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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 instances 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.



United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its responsibility to promote effective management, accountability, and positive change in the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office, post, or function under review. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

The recommendations therein have been developed on the basis of the best knowledge available to the OIG and, as appropriate, have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that these recommendations will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations.

I express my appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'H.W. Geisel'.

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

Table of Contents

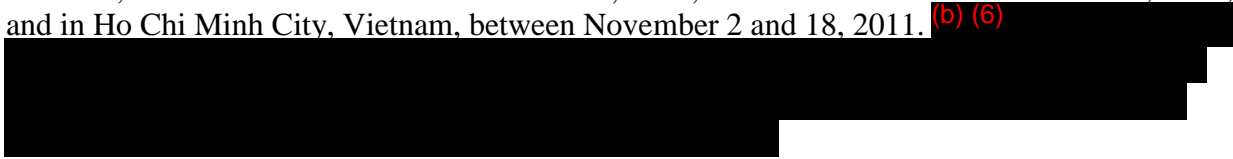
Key Judgments	1
Context	3
Executive Direction	4
Policy and Program Implementation	7
Reporting and Analysis	7
Public Diplomacy	11
Consular Affairs	18
Innovative Practice: Piecing It Together	20
Resource Management	30
Management Overview	31
General Services	35
Facility Management	37
Human Resources	38
Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's Program	41
Financial Management	41
Information Management	43
Quality of Life	46
Management Controls	49
List of Recommendations	52
List of Informal Recommendations	57
Principal Officials	60
Abbreviations	61

Key Judgments

- The Ambassador in Hanoi, the consul general in Ho Chi Minh City, and their respective deputies, should be at the forefront of an effort to more effectively coordinate embassy and consulate general operations. Increasing and formalizing regular, planned working visits of American and local employees between the two posts are a necessary step.
- Embassy Hanoi's reporting is generally comprehensive and of high quality, although staffing gaps and the loss of a position have adversely affected Hanoi's output. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City has not reported frequently enough or in sufficient detail on the official activities, meetings and policy views of the consul general.
- Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City have devoted much time and effort to resolving outstanding adoption cases from Bac Lieu province. Once these are resolved, the embassy must focus on its next steps as Vietnam deposits its ratification of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.
- The Ambassador should ensure that the worldwide referral policy for nonimmigrant visas is strictly enforced at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. Consular managers need to improve efficiency in immigrant visa processing at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City by instituting a number of operational and procedural changes.
- Embassy Hanoi provides an outstanding example of intramission and interagency cooperation and coordination with the public affairs section (PAS). Representatives from embassy and consulate general sections and from other U.S. Government agencies at post are actively engaged in interagency working groups to advance Mission Strategic and Resource Plan (MSRP) goals.
- Overall management operations at Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City are effective, although stronger cooperation and teamwork between the two are necessary.
- Securing long-term title to property in Hanoi for a new embassy compound remains a top mission goal. U.S. Government-controlled property in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City should be retained until a new compound is acquired. In the interim, the embassy has successfully relieved some overcrowding at the dysfunctional chancery by moving offices from the chancery to commercial office space.
- The need for heightened involvement by embassy management in the mission's management controls program is evident. Management control procedures at both Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City need to be carefully reviewed to ensure that employees at every level are fully aware of their responsibility for ensuring that controls are in place to protect assets and to avoid any perception of conflict of interest.

All findings and recommendations in this report are based on conditions observed during the on-site review and the standards and policies then in effect. The report does not comment at length on areas where OIG did not identify problems that need to be corrected.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 7 and 27, 2011; in Hanoi, Vietnam, between October 20 and November 2, 2011, and between November 19 and 21, 2011; and in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, between November 2 and 18, 2011. (b) (6)



Context

The U.S. relationship with Vietnam is growing in importance. Relations were normalized in 1995, but it is only in the past few years that Vietnam has taken on real significance for U.S. policymakers, as they have focused upon addressing China's growing influence in Southeast Asia. For its part, the Vietnamese leadership is walking a fine line between the United States and China, as it seeks to expand its own role and influence. Both sides assert that the Vietnam War – which the Vietnamese call the “American War” – has receded as a factor in the current relationship, but traces of mutual suspicion still linger. As one of the few remaining avowedly communist countries in the world, Vietnam is challenged to balance its economic liberalization with continued political authoritarianism, areas where the United States is viewed as both role model and threat. Building this partnership is a delicate, long-term process.

According to the World Bank, Vietnam is the world's most rapidly transforming country, with one of the fastest rates of poverty reduction anywhere. U.S.-Vietnam trade has increased 17-fold in the past decade, and both countries are active participants in the Trans-Pacific Partnership process, negotiating a possible, multinational trade agreement. Vietnam's rapidly growing urban middle class is creating new markets for both goods and ideas. However, the development of human rights, democratic governance, and civil society lags behind the pace of economic reform. Vietnam's leaders remain focused on ensuring domestic stability and continuing single-party rule, and they have responded to the challenges of an increasingly wired and informed population with increased media censorship and repression of dissidents. The decisions that Vietnamese leaders take now and over the next few years will help determine whether Vietnam remains wedded to a centrally controlled governmental model, or one that evolves into a more open and pluralistic state.

Beyond Vietnam's obvious potential as an economic partner, there are important strategic reasons to build a strong partnership with Vietnam. The United States shares with Hanoi an interest in ensuring regional peace and stability, particularly in the South China Sea (which the Vietnamese call the East Sea). Vietnam's historically tense relationship with China presents opportunities for further U.S. engagement, and Vietnam is looking to enhance its relationships with other major powers. Bilateral defense and security cooperation between the United States and Vietnam continue to mature, although a focus on internal security and an outdated “people's war” doctrine have hampered military modernization and limited the ability of Vietnamese forces to cooperate in a bilateral or multilateral security environment. On the other hand, U.S. programs to locate, remove, and destroy Vietnam War-era, unexploded ordinance and landmines, which affect some 20 percent of Vietnam's land mass, are well received.

The Department of State (Department) is the largest agency in Mission Vietnam, followed by the Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Department of Defense. Vietnam was among the first countries in which a President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program was established to help combat HIV/AIDS. Although funding for PEPFAR's Vietnam program is being reduced, it remains the largest program in Asia, with a budget of \$69.8 million in FY 2012. Both the Ambassador and deputy chief of mission (DCM) are newly arrived at post, and many other senior positions in both the embassy and the consulate general turned over in summer 2011.

Executive Direction

Embassy Hanoi has undergone a major turnover in personnel in recent months. At the time of the inspection, the Ambassador had been at post for a little over 2 months and the DCM about 3 months. The Ambassador is off to an excellent start, demonstrating leadership and interpersonal engagement. Public diplomacy is high on his list of priorities, and his outreach skills are outstanding. The strong interest of the Vietnamese public in American life, culture, and education provides multiple opportunities for people-to-people contact. Before the Ambassador's arrival in Hanoi, he recorded a video of his preliminary thoughts and goals for his tenure in Hanoi, some of it in Vietnamese, for a television interview. An estimated 20 million viewers watched the interview. Another 6 million people viewed it after it was posted on the Internet.

Under the Ambassador's leadership, operations at the embassy are running smoothly. The country team operates with cohesion and confidence. The DCM, who served in the economic section in Hanoi a decade ago, also has taken charge quickly, and she has the Ambassador's full confidence. The DCM pays attention to the interests and concerns of entry-level officers, as do the counselors who report to her. Her approach is direct and no-nonsense, and she has a mind for detail.

Staff morale among sections and agencies in Hanoi is high, notwithstanding the fact that the chancery building is an inadequate, (b) (5), and ramshackle structure. U.S.-Vietnam discussions about a new embassy compound have been dragging on for several years. The deliberations have been impeded by Vietnamese authorities' unwillingness to grant a lease term that is acceptable to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO). In the meantime, post management is striving to enhance the overall security posture in the chancery, as well as at two outlying office buildings – both of which are far superior to the chancery in terms of layout and efficiency.

The Ambassador also has engaged decisively with the embassy's sole constituent post: the large and influential Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). On his introductory visit to Ho Chi Minh City, the Ambassador stressed to the American and Vietnamese staff that, as Chief of Mission, he values the important role of the consulate general and expects the embassy and consulate general staffs to function as "one mission, one team." His message was especially welcome in view of a number of legacy issues, including Ho Chi Minh City's continuing role as the economic and commercial hub of the entire country, the persistent cultural and historical differences between Vietnam's North and South, and the symbolic significance that today's consulate general is located on the site of the former embassy.

Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, until recently, have operated more like two, separate missions than one, cohesive entity. The embassy has not provided, nor has the consulate general sought, regular guidance as to how the two posts can best operate together. With the arrival of new staff in summer 2011, both the embassy and the consulate general have started thinking about ways to project a "one mission, one team" face to the government and people of Vietnam and to the respective mission staffs. A necessary step to improving the mission's cohesiveness will be increasing and formalizing a process whereby

American and local employees conduct working visits between the two posts, for consultations and training.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Hanoi should implement a plan for American and local staff to conduct regular, working visits between Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

In addition to the Department, agencies represented at Mission Vietnam include the Foreign Agricultural Service, the Foreign Commercial Service, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and USAID. The Department of Homeland Security also has an office at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City.

Mission leadership actively promotes Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's programs and principles.

The mission's security programs are well managed and appropriately focused on the country's security threat ratings. The regional security office benefits greatly from the support and continued interest of the Ambassador and DCM. Moderate deficiencies were noted in the physical security and emergency preparedness programs, which are highlighted in the classified annex to this report.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City is a complex environment that places heavy demands on the consulate general staff and on the consul general personally. Located in a dynamic port city, the consulate general serves a region that largely equates to the territory of the former South Vietnam. The legacy of the "American War," as many Vietnamese call it, is never far from the minds of those who serve at this post.

The consulate general staff, including all agencies, is nearly two-thirds as large as the staff at Embassy Hanoi. In addition to its economic and political focus, the consulate general handles all immigrant visas, except for adoptions, processed in Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City consistently ranks as one of the Department's five busiest immigrant visa posts), as well as the normal range of other consular services. Almost all of the American staff, including the deputy principal officer, arrived only months before this inspection. The consul general is one of the few holdovers, having arrived in summer 2010. In his first year at post, the consul general carried out his duties with energy and commitment. In his second year, he needs to work more systematically and transparently with his deputy and the entire team, to coordinate consulate general operations with the embassy. As noted, both posts profess a philosophy of "one mission, one team," but the challenges of history and geography (the two cities are 800 miles apart) dictate that this motto must be constantly tended, if it is to reflect reality. For example, Embassy Hanoi's MSRP goal for education emphasizes Vietnam's need for higher education, but the consul general sees a need to focus also on primary and secondary education, as well as vocational training. However, the mission does not have the time, resources, and access to address all these areas. (Access to high schools is granted only after passing through several layers of local authorities.)

(b) (5)

Efforts in this area seem to be under way, but success will require hands-on involvement by the recently arrived deputy principal officer, who is serving in that capacity for the first time. Like any deputy, he is expected to function as the principal officer's chief operating officer and trusted confidant. However, while the current deputy principal officer attended the DCM course on an ad hoc basis, it is not currently a requirement. The inspectors believe that future incumbents, serving in this consulate general that is larger than some embassies, would benefit from taking this course. The consul general has begun recently to delegate major responsibilities to the deputy principal officer, which is a welcome development that should be systematically expanded. The deputy needs to engage proactively and at appropriate levels – inside the post, with Embassy Hanoi, and with Washington agencies – while keeping the consul general informed.

The consul general is fluent in Vietnamese and has a deep understanding of the host country's culture and norms. However, he only infrequently writes cables regarding his meetings outside the consulate general. It is important that he include other officers in all meetings related to political and economic affairs, human rights, the environment, energy, adoption concerns, treatment of minorities, and other matters relevant to their respective portfolios. The expertise of these officers should be called upon, even if it means relying on interpreters in some situations. (The Vietnamese language is notoriously difficult; even language-qualified officers sometimes require assistance from native speakers in unscripted situations.) The officers could act as note takers, and write cables or provide other information coming out of these meetings. In a closely controlled political environment such as Vietnam, no post official, including the consul general himself, should meet with Vietnamese officials unaccompanied. As an added benefit, in a culture that venerates seniority and status, including officers in meetings would enhance their ability to develop contacts and follow up independently on important issues.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Hanoi should require that all meetings attended by Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City staff and related in any way to official matters include a note taker. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Executive office operations also need attention. The consulate general staff is unclear about the division of labor between the executive office's office management specialist and the locally employed protocol assistants. (b) (5)

The deputy principal officer is responsible for defining the responsibilities of front office employees and developing a workable division of labor. In doing so, the deputy principal officer will need the express support of the consul general.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Hanoi should deconflict, separate, and clarify the work requirement statements and position descriptions for all Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City front office staff members. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Policy and Program Implementation

Reporting and Analysis

Mission Vietnam's reporting is generally of good quality, comprehensive, and well aligned with its MSRP goals. However, as in many missions, much useful material does not make the leap from email to formal cables or the Department's internal, online resources.

The inspection team reviewed 6 months of reporting cables from both Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, a period which coincided with an extended gap in the embassy's front office, the loss of a reporting position in the embassy's political section, several high-level visits, and sustained activity on two major policy initiatives. Not surprisingly, the embassy's analytical reporting volume suffered, as many cables were related to visits or responded to instructions or inquiries from Washington. The political and economic sections had developed reporting plans that were yet to be shared with the newly arrived Ambassador. The inspection team encouraged them to do so, in order to benefit from his perspective and prioritization.

The consulate general has produced some valuable and insightful reporting, but generally there is far less reporting than would be expected of a post of its size. Material provided by a consulate general often ends up in cables from the embassy, and there is a vibrant, informal exchange between the respective political and economic sections. More telling, however, is the lack of emphasis upon reporting by the consul general, who does not routinely report on his own activities nor provide comprehensive readouts. For example, a single cable reported on his visits to 6 provinces over the course of 7 months. This disinclination both eliminated a major source of reporting, as compared to previous years, and undercut the ability of other officers to follow up on his meetings. The inspection team counseled the consul general and his deputy to follow standard reporting practices.

Many overseas missions and their country directorates in Washington exchange end-of-day emails containing operational information or late-breaking reporting. Distribution of these emails is, by definition, limited. The information they contain should be included in front-channel cables in the following days or supplemented by direct contact between Vietnam-based action offices and the wider Department and Washington interagency community. Embassy Hanoi and the Vietnam directorate have such an exchange (referred to in Mission Vietnam as the official-informal), to which the consulate general provides input. In addition to contributing to the official-informal, the consulate general produces a "Ho Chi Minh City Highlights" email and an activity report to the Ambassador. While these are scheduled to be produced weekly, their preparation is irregular; they are drafted by entry-level officers already pressed with their consular duties, and appear not to be a management priority. Staff at both the embassy and the consulate general conceded that items from the official-informal and other documents often do not find their way to front-channel reporting. The inspection team made several suggestions to the leadership to review and reform the full range of communication channels, to advance the mission's policy effectiveness.

Political Affairs

The political section in Hanoi performs well in pursuing an active, bilateral agenda, but it is unduly stretched. The counselor is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and actively mentors his staff in a positive atmosphere. He is getting the most out of a section that lacks deep Foreign Service experience (one mid-level officer, one entry-level officer, a Civil Service detailee, and an eligible family member) but is well supported by a strong locally employed staff.

The political section lost a position during the last assignment cycle, when one position (number 10253135) was shifted from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City. This position originally was intended to manage and staff an American Presence Post in Danang (Vietnam's fourth largest city), but the post was never funded. Both the previous and current incumbents devote less than 25 percent of their time to Danang, which could be covered from either the embassy or the consulate general. The consulate general has devised expanded reporting activities for this newly obtained position, but the embassy has had to cut back in important areas to compensate for its loss. At the embassy's urging, the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP) requested, and in March 2011, the Bureau of Human Resources agreed to return this position to Hanoi. The embassy raised this issue with the inspectors several times, as EAP never notified them of this approval.

In collaboration with the economic section, the political section keeps up-to-date biographic files on an easily accessible, shared drive. The section purges old files and creates new files regularly. The embassy also has adopted and is implementing a comprehensive approach to managing its contacts database.

Economic Affairs

The economic section in Hanoi has strong staffing and effectively pursues its trade, export control, and microeconomic agenda. Its officers are enthusiastic and engaged, and uniformly speak highly of the management styles of the counselor and her deputy. Reporting cables are a good mix of spot reporting and analysis.

The embassy has taken the unusual step of assigning the deputy economics counselor to attend each round of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade negotiations, in which both Vietnam and the United States are participants; no other embassy has a representative at every round. This responsibility takes her away from the post for considerable amounts of time, since rounds are held throughout the Pacific Rim. Mission management believes this level of engagement (and expenditure) pays off, by helping develop clearer insights into the state of the negotiations – a benefit which is difficult to evaluate, particularly since few of these insights can be found in front-channel cables. A series of cables analyzing the bases and limitations of Vietnamese negotiating positions would be especially helpful to Washington readers, as the negotiations enter what are hoped to be their final rounds in 2012.

Political-Military Affairs

Political-military affairs are part of the portfolio of the mid-level political officer and are covered adequately, given the state of the bilateral relationship. As defense cooperation and

military-to-military relations expand between the United States and Vietnam, additional resources will be required.

Leahy Vetting

A limited amount of U.S.-sponsored training is provided to Vietnamese security forces and is subject to Leahy vetting. Leahy vetting is managed by the embassy's political section, with input from offices in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Environment, Science, Technology, and Health

A robust section in Embassy Hanoi is responsible for reporting and analysis on science, technology, health, and environmental issues. Two such issues have important visibility in the bilateral relationship: the monitoring and remediation of dioxin contamination sites, caused by the use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War; and the Lower Mekong Initiative, a multinational, four-pronged strategy to stimulate development and environmental awareness in the Mekong River watershed. Headed by an FS-03 officer in his first such tour, the section also has a newly arrived, entry-level officer and one local employee. Another entry-level officer in Ho Chi Minh City also covers these issues as part of her economic portfolio, with the support of a local employee. While she does not formally report to the Hanoi officer, he clears the consulate general's cables and coordinates with the consulate general on issues of common interest.

Despite the importance of the issues and this considerable level of staffing, very little activity is reflected in front-channel cables. Some cables have languished for weeks after the event about which they were intended to report. It is unusual for an officer at this level to head a section and directly report to the DCM (all other section heads are FS-01s or FS-02s). Greater supervisory attention is required to ensure timely management of the issues and reporting. In similar posts, that supervision is provided by the economic counselor.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Hanoi should fold the environment, science, technology, and health section into the economic section. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City has a political-economic section which is informally but functionally integrated. The FS-02 economic and political officers co-manage the section, which includes two additional officers (one political, one economic) and six local employees (one position is currently vacant). They are also among the strongest speakers of Vietnamese in the consulate general. The local employees have portfolios which, to a limited extent, include both economic and political areas. They report to several different officers, depending upon the subject matter. The co-managers are appropriately graded, collaborate well with one another, and make the co-management approach work well. The arrangement is sometimes confusing to other sections of the consulate general, however, and their successors would be challenged to replicate their success. In addition, as noted above, the front office has not been contributing to reporting, thereby depriving customers of an important dimension of the consulate general's activities.

Two approaches can be taken to address this situation. One would be a combined political-economic section, headed formally by the deputy principal officer (an FS-01), with the deputy to be designated as required from between the two FS-02s. The other approach would be to split the combined section into independent, political and economic sections, each headed by an FS-02 reporting to the deputy principal officer, and make related adjustments to the position descriptions of the local employees. Either approach would clarify supervisory lines, as well as emphasize the reporting responsibilities incumbent upon the front office. A further step to enhance coordination and mentoring from the embassy, regardless of the approach taken, would be to have the relevant embassy section head serve as the rating or reviewing officer for each FS-02 officer, as is currently the practice with the public affairs, management, and regional security officers at the consulate general.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should restructure the political-economic reporting function at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, to clarify supervisory relationships and reporting responsibilities. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with EAP and DGHR)

Coordination

The political and economic sections in Hanoi have weekly meetings for all staff, including their local employees. These meetings are lively and elicit participation by all. The combined section in Ho Chi Minh City takes a less formal approach, since the American and local employees sit in close proximity to each other. In Hanoi, the Ambassador or DCM chairs weekly or biweekly coordination meetings (economic, health, etc.) involving section heads and other agencies. The consulate general has a weekly meeting for reporting officers and the front office to discuss upcoming events and reporting projects.

There is lively coordination, by email and telephone, between the sections in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, including between local employees. The consulate general routinely clears cables from Hanoi with relevant embassy elements, but the embassy does not clear its cables with the consulate general with similar regularity. With limited exceptions, that clearance process works smoothly, but the status of cables should be a regular part of the dialogue between the DCM and the deputy principal officer. In addition, many of the cables that come to the embassy are also relevant to the Ho Chi Minh City reporting staff but are unavailable to them. The inspection team suggested several possible solutions.

Outreach

Political and economic officers in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City engage in outreach activities, some of their own devising and others arranged by the PAS. A relatively small number of the officers are fluent in Vietnamese, so the majority of these engagements are conducted in English. (See discussion of language designated position in the human resources section of this report.)

Representation

Representation funding appears adequate, although allocations among sections for FY 2011 were unusual. A misguided decision by embassy's interim leadership to suspend all representation activities pending the new Ambassador's arrival skewed spending and undercut the ability of officers to pursue their representational responsibilities. All political and economic officers, as well as some local employees, made appropriate use of representation funds. In Ho Chi Minh City, relatively large amounts were spent on items or activities not in line with mission guidelines or which had limited connection to the pursuit of U.S. national interests, including flowers for other countries' national days. The inspection team counseled post management in both cities on the cost-effective use of representation funds, and the embassy has issued updated mission-wide guidance.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief¹

Vietnam is one of the 15 countries that received substantial HIV/AIDS related resources in the early years of the PEPFAR program, even though the national HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is well below the rates in other former PEPFAR focus countries. The epidemic in Vietnam is concentrated among specific groups, including intravenous drug users and sex workers, with prevalence rates ranging from 25 percent to 50 percent.

PEPFAR funding for Vietnam peaked at \$87.8 million in FY 2010 and is declining, but it still accounts for the overwhelming majority of total U.S. aid to Vietnam. The out-year funding picture is uncertain, and program managers are concerned that a precipitate decline in PEPFAR funding might outpace the Vietnamese Government's ability to assume responsibility. A senior team from Washington was in Vietnam during the inspection team's visit to review these issues.

The Ambassador and DCM provide strong executive oversight and support of the PEPFAR program, while leaving most day-to-day operations to the PEPFAR coordinator and the PEPFAR team. USAID and the Centers for Disease Control implement the largest parts of the bilateral PEPFAR assistance program, each accounting for almost half of the total annual PEPFAR budget, with additional activities by units of the U.S. Navy and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The Department of Health and Human Services withdrew its health attaché for budgetary reasons in 2010. The embassy turned to the Navy's Bureau of Medicine in 2010 to provide a health affairs attaché, who has been at post about a year. Lacking either a public health background or international and interagency experience, the incumbent has struggled to find a role, beyond providing an additional layer of coordination.

Public Diplomacy

The Hanoi public affairs officer (PAO) manages a creative and well organized program. Vietnam is a difficult program environment: the government requires advance permission to conduct programs outside U.S. Government premises, controls the print and electronic media, and sometimes limits access to Internet sites. Despite these problems, there is a great hunger in

¹ OIG conducted an extensive review of the PEPFAR program in Vietnam in 2010. See OIG Report No. ISP-I-11-07, - *Review of PEPFAR at Select Embassies Overseas* (December 2010).

Vietnam for information and education. The embassy's PAS has responded to these challenges successfully with a targeted effort, and clear results. In the academic year 2010-2011, 14,800 students from Vietnam studied at U.S. colleges and universities – ranking Vietnam as 8th worldwide in absolute numbers of students in the United States. In FY 2011, the PAS sent more exchange grantees to the United States through the Voluntary Visitors program than any other embassy. The American Center in Hanoi hosts approximately 3,000 visitors per month. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City formally opened its American Center in September 2011, and already it has received about 800 visitors monthly.

Mission and Interagency Integration

Embassy Hanoi provides an outstanding example of intramission and interagency cooperation and coordination with the PAS. Embassy sections and representatives from other U.S. agencies are actively engaged in interagency working groups to advance MSRP goals, such as education, which is a policy priority; digital outreach; weekly press planning meetings; exchange program grantee selection; small grants award evaluations; and participation in the speaker programs. Representatives from Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City participate in these working groups by speaker phone or digital video conference. When the PAS was awarded extra end-of-year funds, the PAO sought input from other sections on how best to employ these resources to support policy priorities. The Hanoi PAS designates a proportion of its program funds for PAS Ho Chi Minh City, to use according to its MSRP needs. The Hanoi public diplomacy section clears on all MSRP goal papers and provides input for the chief of mission MSRP statement.

Management and Strategic Planning

Hanoi

Located in a separate office building known as the Rose Garden annex, the embassy's PAS staff includes the PAO, cultural affairs officer, press officer, one public affairs assistant (an eligible family member), and 21 local employees. The American Center/library is located in the same building. The PAO has exhibited strong leadership by forging a senior management team of American and local supervisors, providing strategic direction and empowering them to plan, delegate, and manage their subordinates' performance. He also has developed an online leadership training curriculum, which he has taken himself. Each subsection has created a combined program-travel-representation matrix that is linked to the budget plan and clearly indicates MSRP goals. The section is appropriately staffed, and all position descriptions were reviewed last year. The PAO is developing a system to measure program effectiveness through a survey that will record qualitative shifts in audience attitudes.

The section benefits from an experienced public affairs assistant, who prepares regular program reports and Mission Activity Tracker entries; edits and reviews English language material from local staff to be published in print or online; helps plan and execute programs; and oversees day-to-day operations of the American Center. Because the regulations have been unclear regarding performance evaluations for eligible family members, she only recently began receiving timely, written evaluations. However, she has yet to receive regular performance review counseling sessions.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Hanoi should require the public affairs assistant's supervisor to conduct regular performance review counseling sessions and document at least one of those sessions on form DS 1974.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

The consulate general PAO and assistant PAO, both of whom arrived in summer 2011, supervise 11 local employees. Their section is located in a bright, new space in an office building that also houses the American Center library and is within walking distance of the consulate general. An additional American officer is scheduled to arrive in June 2012. The Ho Chi Minh City PAS has not focused its program on MSRP goals and does not coordinate strategic planning with PAS Hanoi or use Hanoi's well developed matrix system that integrates program, travel, and representation events and is clearly linked to the budget plan and MSRP goals.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Hanoi should institute joint public affairs strategic planning sessions and staff exchanges with Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, using the embassy's program-travel-representation matrix in pursuit of Mission Strategic Resource Plan goals. (Action: Embassy Hanoi).

The PAS in Ho Chi Minh City has undergone a number of recent changes. It moved into a new facility in August 2010, converted the two Education USA employees from contractor to local employee status, hired a new American Center director, and formally opened the center to the public in September 2011. PAS Ho Chi Minh City subsections have not coordinated their actions with each other, resulting in a less cohesive PAS.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Hanoi should reorganize Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's public affairs section using Embassy Hanoi's senior team leadership structure, and should train section leaders on the embassy's online leadership training curriculum. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Grants Management

The embassy PAS and consulate general PAS manage a total of approximately 200 grants per year. Most are small travel grants for exchange visitors or small program expenses. Since both PAOs and the cultural affairs officer are the only Department officers with grants warrants, the public affairs sections execute grants for other mission sections and for PEPFAR, although those sections are responsible for managing their own, respective grants. The PAS local employees in Hanoi and the local staff member in Ho Chi Minh City who oversee the records have had the appropriate training. Both PAS offices carefully document all grant activity and budget data. However, the files lack the formal designation letters. Also, the names of the grants officer representatives are not listed on the proper form in the grants management database, which is in violation of the Office of the Procurement Executive Grants Policy Directive 28.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Hanoi should enter the name of each grants officer representative in the grants management database and supply each grants officer representative with the required letter outlining the specific responsibilities for managing grants. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Management of Education and Exchange Programs

Education is a mission priority and a means to attain MSRP goals, especially as Vietnam becomes more integrated into the world economy, increases respect for human rights and rule of law, improves its health system, and maintains sustainable development. The public affairs sections have spearheaded the effort to engage the Government of Vietnam in reforming its higher education system and increasing the employability of its graduates. For the past 4 years, PAS has partnered with USAID and Vietnamese Government offices and institutions to organize annual education policy conferences that have generated education reform initiatives. This year, the mission's education working group formed bilateral education advisory groups with the host government to further drive education policy reform. This working group is a model of interagency cooperation. The Department sections and other agencies in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City coordinate educational programs, leverage efforts, and strategize on engaging the Vietnamese Government in educational reform.

The Fulbright program, managed by PAS without a Fulbright Commission, is integral to the mission's educational reform strategy. It has a well coordinated mix of American and Vietnamese scholars, researchers, and graduate students, supplemented with other, smaller educational exchanges. The Fulbright English Teaching Assistant programs, in which young American university graduates teach English at provincial educational institutions, help communicate American culture and values within Vietnam's atmosphere of limited academic freedom. Funding from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs directly supports the Fulbright Economics Training Program, a long-standing partnership with Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and the Ho Chi Minh City University of Economics to train mid-career professionals in public policy and economic analysis.

The DCM chairs the mission's International Visitor Leadership Program selection committee. All program visits are tied to MSRP goals. All Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City sections and agencies are invited to nominate candidates, and the final, mission-wide selection committee meets via digital video conference. Both public affairs sections make extraordinary use of the Department's Voluntary Visitor program, sponsoring 80 participants last year and seeking mission-wide input on how to maximize the use of extra funds and leverage resources with the host government and local institutions.

With Vietnam's increased demand for access to information about the United States and the world, along with an intense interest for study in the United States, comes a desire to learn English. Both public affairs sections use a multitiered approach to supporting English instruction by "training the trainers" with English language fellows and specialists; Fulbright English teaching assistants; English Access microscholarships; and online teacher training. While PAS Hanoi has a cultural affairs officer and five local employees managing the embassy's educational and cultural programs, PAS Ho Chi Minh City has only two local employees to cover the consulate general's portfolio. Given the importance of English language programs, the arrival of a third American officer in Ho Chi Minh City in summer 2012 should provide an opportunity to assess whether the consulate general PAS needs an additional local employee to help oversee the English language training programs.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Hanoi should use the arrival of the third public affairs officer in Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City as an opportunity to assess whether an additional local employee is needed in the consulate general's public affairs section.

Media Relations, Reporting and Social Media

The PAS in Hanoi crafted a multiphase media strategy to introduce the newly arrived Ambassador to Vietnamese audiences. While still in Washington, the Ambassador conducted a television interview that was shown on Vietnamese TV after his arrival. An estimated 20 million viewers watched the interview. Another 6 million people viewed it after it was posted on the Internet. Given the restrictive media environment, there is surprisingly great interest in information about the United States. There are 17,000 registered journalists and 2 million bloggers in Vietnam; many Vietnamese receive their news online, where information is not as regularly controlled. Recognizing their influence, PAS monitors blogs daily and has included a weekly blog highlights as part of its media reporting. The EAP press office has called the daily reports, which include input from the consulate general, "excellent." The section also has produced a number of well researched, analytical cables on Internet freedom, educational reform, the media landscape, and the state of English language teaching in Vietnam.

For the first time in several years, the section is participating in two different "TV Co-op" projects, in which television documentary crews from the host country travel to the United States to produce a series of programs on a particular theme. The documentary crews and embassy agree in advance that the programs will be broadcast on partner channels in Vietnam (with some excerpts on social media platforms). With full funding and logistical support from the Department, these two, separate projects will produce documentary reports on vital MSRP topics, including Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, U.S.-Vietnam trade relations, and environmental conservation efforts in the Mississippi Delta, with lessons and implications for the sustainable development of Vietnam's Mekong Delta.

The Hanoi PAS maintains the embassy's Internet site in English and Vietnamese, which is updated daily with links to local sites to other U.S. agencies and embassy-related sites. The section also maintains an interactive, Vietnamese-language Facebook page, with 7,600 regular fans.

The consulate general's Internet site, however, is out-of-date. The OIG team urged the PAS to make the Web site more engaging, assess the staff's technical skills, offer more training as needed, and consult closely with the PAS Hanoi webmaster. The section also should highlight the Web site's link to the American Center's new Facebook page.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Hanoi should update Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's English and Vietnamese Web sites, evaluate the technical skills of the consulate general's public affairs staff, and provide appropriate training in Web site development and maintenance.

Media Connectivity

Many Bureau of International Information Programs resources are available only through OpenNet. However, because the American Center is open to the general public, the local employees who work there must go to other offices to access their OpenNet accounts. This arrangement impedes productivity. Constructing a private workspace would be one solution, but the section must evaluate the cost and benefit of doing so.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Hanoi should conduct a cost-benefit analysis regarding the viability of constructing private office space in which American Center employees can securely access their OpenNet accounts.

For security reasons, there is no wireless Internet access at the embassy's American Center, which limits the usefulness of the its new iPads. The OIG team discussed this situation with the embassy's information management (IM) section, but due to the technical complexity of the issues, no decisions had been made by the end of the inspection. It is important that the mission continue to research ways to resolve these issues and still comply with Department regulations in 5 FAM 790-792.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Hanoi should explore the feasibility of establishing wireless Internet access or otherwise maximizing the usability of the Hanoi American Center's iPads. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Speaker Programs

Supplementing its modest allotment of U.S.-based speakers, the embassy PAS and consulate general PAS manage a strong program of local speakers, including mission personnel, visiting U.S. Government officials, Fulbright grantees, English teaching assistants, and exchange program alumni. This year, the Hanoi section initiated a five-part series on "The American Way of Doing Business," with speakers from embassy sections and agencies. For example, on a Saturday morning in October, an economic officer spoke to an audience of over 100 students and guests on: "What International Property Rights Mean to You." The Ho Chi Minh City American Center, which formally opened in October 2011, already conducts an active and varied mission speakers program. Despite Vietnam's complex, bureaucratic requirements, both PAS offices are making a successful effort to reach audiences in provincial institutions outside the two major cities.

American Centers and American Corners

Hanoi

Located in an embassy annex, the Hanoi American Center is open 6 days a week and receives over 3,000 visitors monthly from the target audience of students and young professionals. Many local educational institutions bring students for lecture programs on such topics as "American Business Etiquette," followed by an introduction to the Center's facilities and the Education USA student advising office. Managing an active lending library of books and DVDs, the center also offers computers with Internet access, in addition to several new iPads. To

meet the increased audience demand, the center expanded its 4-member local staff's reach by using local, unpaid student interns to assist with film showings, club meetings, speaker program logistics, English conversation sessions, and library collections maintenance.

The American Corner at Haiphong University, however, has long been problematic. Located in Vietnam's third largest city, the facility has suffered from the university's inconsistent management and refusal to open programs to outside audiences. The embassy has rightly decided to cut its losses and is currently investigating other Haiphong institutions as possible American Corner partners.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

The recently opened Ho Chi Minh City American Center is already attracting near-capacity audiences for its speaker programs. The library is full of students, and the center is already planning to expand its hours and institute a student intern program. The center's energetic, new director is eager to explore new outreach methods, but the Ho Chi Minh City staff could benefit from increased communication and exchange with the more experienced American Center staff in Hanoi.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Hanoi should increase communication and staff exchanges between the American Centers in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

The PAS in Ho Chi Minh City manages a very active American Corner at Danang University, which has completed seven programs so far this year. This accomplishment is especially commendable, because it takes a great deal of planning and work to arrange for the speakers and program content. The section first must gain the required approval from several layers of government and institutional authorities, and then submit any handout materials (translated into Vietnamese) for prior approval. Local authorities do not allow the American Corner to advertise, so PAS sends invitations by mail and email. The section staff has very good relations with the American Corner director, who is very interested in maintaining a steady stream of contact.

Educational Advising

The Education USA program in Vietnam also is a success story. There is a huge desire for information about American colleges and universities, as Vietnamese families become more affluent and place great importance on U.S. higher education. The number of Vietnamese students studying in the United States has tripled in the past 3 years, reaching 14,800 in 2011. As noted above, Vietnam now ranks 8th in absolute numbers of students in the United States. In trying to meet this demand, the capable Education USA team has partnered with consular officers to conduct frequent outreach visits to schools and student/parent groups throughout Vietnam. They also coordinate with the Foreign Commercial Service's marketing activities for U.S. higher education institutions. The PAS works with USAID on its education partnerships targeted in engineering and high tech fields, as well.

The Ho Chi Minh City PAS has no dedicated space in which to conduct individual consultations and store materials. Since entry to the controlled space requires 24-hour advance

notice, it is difficult to accommodate same-day appointments or drop-in requests. Individual sessions with students and parents often cover sensitive topics, such as family finances and student grades, and require a quiet space that provides some privacy. The OIG inspectors discussed reconfiguring the office layout to use an underutilized space for this purpose.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Hanoi should convert space outside the hardline at the Ho Chi Minh City American Center into an enclosed area for use by the Education USA staff when counseling visitors. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Alumni Programs

Vietnamese alumni of U.S. exchange programs are essential players in the public affairs outreach programs, although they are not permitted by the Government of Vietnam to register as an alumni organization. Operating outside the restrictions placed on American speakers, these alumni can more easily engage with wider audiences as credible, informed communicators about their American experience. A local employee in the Hanoi PAS serves as alumni coordinator assistant, with responsibility for the entire country. This position is currently funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, but that funding is due to expire in FY 2013. The OIG team supports the mission's request to fund this position, as a priority in its MSRP.

Consular Affairs

The consular section in Hanoi is an efficient operation, with strong leadership, capable employees, and high morale. Although small in size, it has dealt with complicated issues over the past few years, including the termination of adoptions from Vietnam in 2008 and the resolution of most adoption cases that were in the pipeline. At the time of the inspection, 16 cases from Bac Lieu Province were pending. Department employees in both the embassy and in Washington had spent enormous amounts of time on these cases, which had generated much press and congressional interest. The consular chief estimates that she spends 60 percent of her time on issues related to the Bac Lieu cases.

Vietnam signed the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption in December 2010, and deposited its ratification during this inspection. The consular section is monitoring Vietnam's new adoption law and its implementing decree and circular. The mission is preparing to resume adoptions once again, but under Hague Convention procedures the process will be new, both for the section and for the Government of Vietnam. The embassy and Department must balance public demand for quick implementation with legal requirements, to ensure that Vietnamese implementation complies with U.S. and Hague Convention requirements. The embassy's executive office is fully supportive of and engaged in this and other consular issues. The consular chief has frequent contact with both the Ambassador and the DCM.

Workload in the consular section is growing steadily. The embassy was planning to begin a construction project shortly after the inspection to add consular work space and windows. The only immigrant visa applications Embassy Hanoi processes are for adoptions; the remaining applications are processed at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. The consulate general plans to institute a drop box system for nonimmigrant visa renewals in its consular district. Embassy

Hanoi now handles renewals for the entire country, so the drop box program likely will lead to a decrease in Hanoi's visa workload. Passport services increased 23 percent from FY 2009 to FY 2010, and 10 percent from FY 2010 to FY 2011. Nonimmigrant visa adjudications increased 42 percent and 16 percent during the same periods. The mission has seen a 106 percent increase in the number of U.S. citizen tourists to Vietnam between 2000 and 2011. Fortunately, staffing has also grown.

The section currently has three officers, but is scheduled to have five by fall 2012. The local staff numbers nine, and an additional position has been tentatively approved. One full-time and one part-time eligible family member assist. Because workload varies greatly by season, the section hires temporary employees to assist during the summer. Once the two new officers (one of whom is an FS-02 adoptions officer) arrive, the section will be well staffed. An FS-02 level officer may be needed to implement the new adoption procedures, but this position might more appropriately be an FS-03 level position in the future. Whether five officers are needed will depend on whether workload continues to increase and whether adoptions resume – and, if so, at what volume.

Recommendation 11: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should monitor Embassy Hanoi's consular workload to determine whether five officers, including an FS-02 adoptions officer, are necessary. (Action: CA)

American Citizens Services

As noted above, U.S. citizens are traveling to Vietnam at a rapidly growing pace. The United States ranks fourth in the number of visitors to Vietnam, after China, Korea, and Japan. It is difficult to provide services to U.S. citizens, given Vietnam's bureaucratic requirements, but the consular section works hard to overcome difficulties and to relay U.S. concerns to Government of Vietnam officials. The Government of Vietnam is generally slow to notify the embassy about arrests or to grant access to U.S. citizen prisoners, and it requires diplomatic notes to schedule prison visits. It also does not permit visits without a Vietnamese official being present and insists that all verbal exchanges take place in Vietnamese. The embassy continues to raise these issues with local officials, but to date there has been virtually no change in policy.

The American citizens services unit began offering appointments in August 2011. This arrangement permits officers and local staff to concentrate on visa work in the morning; it also allows for better control of the American citizens services workload. At the time of the inspection, the unit still was permitting nonemergency, walk-in cases, but it has conducted extensive outreach urging Americans to use the appointment system. The unit plans to require appointments for nonemergency work, which is consistent with Department guidelines. Few passport applicants take advantage of the courier pass-back procedures that the nonimmigrant visa unit requires. The inspectors urged the unit to consider wider implementation of this option for passport applicants.

Nonimmigrant Visas

The unit has an attractive waiting area with sufficient seats and an adequate number of windows for processing. Most applicants are processed quickly, and passports with visas are

returned via courier. The embassy instituted a courier renewal program in 2010, which includes renewals for the entire country. This program accounts for 17 percent of the mission's nonimmigrant visa workload. Hanoi's referral policy complies with Department guidelines, and the consular chief monitors it carefully. The mission had been setting aside some appointment slots for use by the PAS, but it corrected this practice after the inspectors noted that these cases should be handled through the referral system. The unit hosts a monthly Web chat for visa applicants, which is a useful outreach tool. Most applicants for visitor visas receive multiple-entry, 12-month visas. Vietnam does not provide reciprocal treatment to U.S. citizens. It is unusual for U.S. citizens to receive visas for more than 3 months or for more than a single entry.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Hanoi should ask the Bureau of Consular Affairs to update the reciprocity table for Vietnam, to reflect a maximum 3-month, single-entry validity for B1/B2 visas. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Fraud Prevention Unit and Visas Viper Program

One local employee and the entry-level officer work part-time on fraud and coordinate closely with the fraud prevention unit in the consulate general. Although Hanoi is a high-fraud post, much of it is readily detected. The fraud prevention unit also assists the consulate general with investigations of immigrant visa cases.

The embassy has held regular Visas Viper meetings, with appropriate attendance, and provides timely reports to the Department.

Innovative Practice: Piecing It Together

Innovative Practice: Piecing It Together – Improving Understanding of Missionwide Activities

Issue: First-tour officers must absorb a great deal of information, not just about the section in which they work, but also about other sections and how the mission functions as a whole. Often understanding the bigger picture is neglected because of the demands of working in a particular section or a particular unit.

Response: Consular managers at Embassy Hanoi created a list of 100 items that entry-level officers should complete during their first tour. The tasks include consular-specific items, such as obtaining briefings on how to handle the appointment schedule; adjudicating 100-plus visas in one day; learning how to complete a validation study; and processing a consular report of birth abroad. General items include meeting with the regional security officer for coffee; meeting with consuls from three other countries; reading the MSRP; and having lunch with two officers who have served consular tours to learn about their experiences.

The entry-level officer receives five pieces of a 500-piece puzzle for every item completed; the puzzle is displayed in the consular section and other people in the section can help the employee fill in the puzzle as he or she obtains pieces.

Result: Training becomes a fun exercise, with a visible result as the officer completes various tasks and fills in the puzzle. Others in the section become more involved in the training exercise as they assist the officer.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

The consulate general's immigrant visa workload consistently ranks as one of the Department's five busiest immigrant visa posts. (b) (5)

One source of concern among entry-level officers involves transparency and their uncertainty about the rotation and portfolio assignments. To address these concerns, the section managers modified the rotation/portfolio assignment process and schedules.

The consular section chief arrived shortly before the OIG inspection. Officers have welcomed his friendly, open manner and the depth of knowledge he brings to the job. In an effort to provide consular officers with as much information as possible about the work of other sections, during the weekly consular staff meeting he provides information about the section heads meeting. The deputy principal officer also participates in the consular meeting to emphasize the importance of the section and to provide other details on mission-wide activities.

The consular chief also serves as consular coordinator for Mission Vietnam. He has traveled to Hanoi once already and plans to travel as necessary, but at least quarterly, for consultations with the Hanoi consular staff, executive office, and Vietnamese consular officials. Because he is responsible for consular operations throughout the country, he should play a supervisory role in the consular section in Hanoi. Currently the DCM rates and the Ambassador reviews the consular section head in Hanoi. Changing work requirements so the consular coordinator is the rating officer would allow for a more unified consular operation in the country; it also would ensure that the current strong cooperation between the sections is institutionalized, and not dependent on personalities.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Hanoi should revise work requirements so the consular section chief in Hanoi is rated by the consular coordinator and reviewed by the deputy chief of mission. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

In addition to being the consular coordinator, the consular chief supervises 5 mid-level officers, 14 entry-level officers, 61 local employees, and 2 eligible family members. This large consular section deals with widespread fraud and faces difficult issues with the host government. Preliminary statistics for FY 2011 indicate an overall workload of 52,000 immigrant visa adjudications; 63,000 nonimmigrant visa adjudications; and 5,500 special citizens services cases. Given the volume and complexity of the work, the position should be reviewed to determine whether it should be upgraded from FS-01 to FE-OC.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should request a review of the consular chief position at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to determine whether the position should be upgraded. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with CA and DGHR)

The consular section was redesigned in 2011. The work area now is sufficient and open, with good line-of-sight for supervision. Since the only access to other areas of the building is through the consular section, the waiting areas for visa applicants are outdoors, where the seating

is adequate and covered. The American citizens services waiting area is indoors, and all Americans are given combinations to enter the consular section. OBO plans to update existing windows and add more windows in May 2012. Doing so will require some reconfiguration of the current office space. According to 7 FAH-1 H-282 (9), when evaluating consular space and design, a mission should consider control of access to the consular section by other parts of the post.

Recommendation 15: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Hanoi, should review construction plans to determine whether access to the consular section in Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City could be better controlled by modifying the current structure, and include such modifications in the scope of work for the approved rehabilitation of the consular section. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Hanoi)

Shortly before the inspection, a visiting Diplomatic Security team determined that, pending additional construction, local staff could no longer retrieve files from the immigrant visa storage facility without the presence of a cleared American employee. (b) (5)

The inspectors suggested hiring an eligible family member to perform this duty until the construction is completed.

American Citizens Services

The unit emphasizes customer services to its clientele. It is open to the public for 3 hours every day, and accepts emergency cases at any time. Workload is increasing in this unit: consular reports of birth abroad increased 20 percent in FY 2011, and the passport workload increased almost 6 percent. The unit is staffed with a mid-level supervisor, an entry-level officer, and five local employees. Local employees from the nonimmigrant visa unit assist during nonpeak seasons and are thereby cross-trained, so they can provide backup as needed. The unit currently provides appointments for passport and consular report of birth abroad applications, but not for notarial services. Because of changes in intake procedures as a result of the OIG inspection, the mission plans to institute an appointment system for these services.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City does not currently have a warden system, as required by 7 FAM 070 and 12 FAH-1, which leaves a gap in its ability to maintain contact with American citizens in emergency situations. The consulate general has only informal contact with Americans living in several provinces.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Hanoi should establish a warden system for Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Nonimmigrant Visas

The nonimmigrant visa work flow is efficient, and most applicants are in and out quickly. The unit is led by a mid-level officer. At the time of the inspection, the unit was staffed by 4 entry-level officers and 16 local employees. Nonimmigrant visas officers and local staff help out frequently in other sections when they are able to do so, during the nonpeak season. The inspectors encouraged counselor managers to consider assigning nonimmigrant visa personnel to

the immigrant visa unit during these periods. Workload remained steady in FY 2010 and FY 2011, but the consulate general plans to institute a drop-box system for renewal cases, as a convenience for applicants in Ho Chi Minh City. This change could lead to an increase in workload, as the embassy currently handles many of these cases. The unit permits applicants to enter the facility whenever they arrive, without regard to appointment times, which leads to overcrowding in the waiting room.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Hanoi should implement and enforce a policy that nonimmigrant visa applicants be admitted only at the time of their appointment at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City.

The consulate general executive office, including both American and local staff, frequently contact the consular section to pass on information about specific visa applicants. For instance, they might ask the section to review a case; tell why they believe an applicant is qualified; or ask the consular chief or another manager to conduct a second interview. These practices violate the Department's worldwide referral policy, which mandates that no information on specific cases be passed to the section outside of formal referrals. It is appropriate for the executive office to forward relevant correspondence to the consular section, but it should not ask for special treatment of visa applicants or advocate on their behalf outside the referral system. Shortly before this inspection, the deputy principal officer told local staff to stop sending cases directly to the consular section.

There are several issues regarding the way the referral system is handled at the consulate general. Not all referrals indicate how that referral directly supports U.S. national interests; they also do not specify the nature and degree of contact the person making the referral has had with the applicant, as is required by 9 FAM Appendix K.

The inspectors counseled the consul general and the deputy principal officer on the Department's referral policy. They suggested having cards printed, explaining that visa eligibility is determined by strict legal requirements and that the consulate general's leaders cannot influence the decision. This card, which could be given to anyone inquiring about visas, also could refer applicants to the consulate general's Web site for additional information. The consul general accepted this suggestion.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Hanoi should not allow mission employees to use any method other than Class A and Class B referrals to provide information on nonimmigrant visa applicants. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

The consular chief instituted a policy for all sections in Ho Chi Minh City to forward all visa-related correspondence to the consular section, which will handle it directly. However, there is no electronic mailbox in which to collect this information.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Hanoi should set up an email box at the consular correspondence unit in Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City for consulate general personnel to use for all visa-related correspondence.

The mission's referral policy is out-of-date. As stated above, the referral practices conflict with Department policy on what constitutes a legitimate referral. The consular officers at the consulate general have not been trained on the Department's policy. Because compliance has been an issue, it will be important for the Ambassador to review a monthly report on all referral cases, including information on any email or other contacts that circumvent the policy.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Hanoi should reissue its visa referral policy, under the Ambassador's signature, and provide training for all staff at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City on the requirements and process for making visa referrals. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 19: Embassy Hanoi should require the consular coordinator at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to give the Ambassador a monthly report on all Class A and B referrals in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, indicating who made the referral and including information on any instances of visa-related information being relayed outside the referral system. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

The Bureau of Consular Affairs has stated that posts must make expedited appointments available for a limited group of applicants, such as those who must travel for a medical emergency. In October 2010, the consulate general amended its internal policy regarding expedited appointments to add inappropriate categories – including a category for cases of special interest generated by the executive office and a category for immediate family members of local employees. When the OIG team raised this issue, the consulate general stopped expediting appointments requested by staff, and also posted information online regarding who may request an expedited appointment. Officers seeking expedited appointments now will request them through a Class B referral, provided the applicant meets the criteria defined in 9 FAM Appendix K.

Immigrant Visas

The consulate general's immigrant visas section is led by a unit chief (who is also the deputy consular chief) and a deputy unit chief. At the time of the inspection, 6 entry-level officers and 25 local employees worked in the unit. The local employees are divided into six teams. Each team is responsible for various tasks, which are rotated from one team to another on a monthly basis.

The consulate general consistently ranks among the top five posts worldwide in terms of immigrant visa workload. In FY 2010, it was fifth in total applicants, but second in adjudications. These statistics are an indication of the large number of applicants (between 50 and 60 percent of all applicants) who are refused under Section 221(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, because they lack required documents or proof of entitlement to an immigrant visa. In FY 2011, preliminary statistics indicate that Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City still ranks fifth in total applicants, but it has dropped to fifth in total adjudications. The change indicates that the unit is making progress toward its continuing goal of reducing the Section 221(g) refusal rate. In FY 2011, total applicants and total adjudications dropped by 16 percent and 13 percent, respectively, as a result of a retrogression of visa numbers available. (Visa

retrogression occurs when more people apply for a visa in a particular category or country than there are visas available for that month.)

The consulate general has a high level of fraud, particularly marriage fraud, which makes the work difficult. Even though the workload dropped overall, the number of hard-to-adjudicate marriage cases increased. In July 2010, the consulate general completed a project to review a backlog of approximately 1,400 Section 221(g) refusal cases that had not been reviewed because of workload.

The unit does not enforce appointment times. For instance, an applicant with a 10:00 a.m. appointment may be seen before an applicant with an 8:00 a.m. appointment. This arrangement is inefficient and can cause significant delays; some applicants wait up to 4 hours for an interview.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Hanoi should implement and enforce a policy that immigrant visa applicants be admitted only at the time of their appointment at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City.

Appointments are scheduled in the morning, and applicants who are refused under Section 221(g) are told to come back on a specific afternoon, normally 3 weeks later. As a result, officers often spend all day interviewing at the window (seeing first-time applicants in the morning and those who have been refused in the afternoon), leaving little time for other tasks. Managers try to schedule 2 days per month for training and other duties, and individual officers set some time aside for “off-line” mornings. However, officers frequently are unable to do other tasks during an “off-line” morning, because they are asked to fill in for interviewing officers who may be on leave. Similarly, the in-service days are usually taken up with other activities. Consular managers agreed that providing one day a week without appointments would give officers a chance to pursue training or handle other tasks, such as completing advisory opinion requests and drafting petition return memoranda.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Hanoi should revise the immigrant visa interview schedule at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, from 5 days per week to 4 days per week.

The consulate general’s Web site contains information about required visa documents, but it is confusing and not well presented. Also, the National Visa Center does not link to post’s Web site. The consulate general’s Web site does not emphasize the importance of having all documents available for the interview. It would be helpful to make key information clear and prominently visible, for example, by using a checklist of required documents. The inspectors encouraged the unit to work with the PAS on ways to make additional information available to immigrant visa applicants, to better prepare applicants and reduce the Section 221(g) refusal rate. The change in schedule noted above will permit officers to engage in such outreach activities.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Hanoi should improve the Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City Web site, ask the National Visa Center to link to the Web site, and pursue other outreach opportunities to educate the public about the immigrant visa application process.

Officers have somewhat differing views on which immigrant visa cases should be approved immediately and which should be returned to the Department of Homeland Security for revocation. Since the Department of Homeland Security approves all petitions before they are sent to a post for issuance, only it can revoke a petition. The mission has made efforts to hold adjudication meetings, but these meetings often are held during lunch, due to time constraints. The overall goals of these meetings should be consistent adjudications and fewer Section 221(g) refusals.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Hanoi should hold regular adjudication meetings at a time other than during lunch in the immigrant visa unit at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City.

The mission has a policy called “self clearing” that permits experienced, entry-level officers to send, without a manager’s review, memoranda requesting revocation of a petition. Given the sensitivity of these memoranda and the need for consistency, a manager should review all of them before they are sent to the National Visa Center for transmission to the Department of Homeland Security.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Hanoi should revise Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City’s petition return policy, to require managers to review all memoranda requesting revocation of a petition before sending the memoranda to the National Visa Center. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Some officers indicated that managers spend little time on the visa line. The inspectors emphasized the importance of managers spending some time adjudicating on the line, both to understand any systemic problems and to regularly see the types of cases that officers encounter.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Hanoi should require that the Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City immigrant visa managers spend at least 1 hour per week, and the consular chief some time each month, adjudicating immigrant visa cases.

The inspectors discussed several procedural changes with consular managers to improve visa processing. The unit had been taking applicants’ photos after checking documents and immediately before the interview, and officers were collecting fingerprints during the interview. Officers were unable to authorize printing of visas at the window, because biometric results were not ready before the interview was completed. Taking photographs earlier in the process would allow more time for biometric processing. In addition, if an eligible family member took the applicant’s fingerprints before the interview, it is more likely that all the information would be ready in time for officers to authorize visa printing at the window. This approach also would prevent officers from having to handle an approvable case the second time. The inspectors also asked the Bureau of Consular Affairs to consider letting Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City participate early in the roll-out of its new electronic visa application, which requires applicants to upload their photographs as part of the application process.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Hanoi should capture photographs for Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City at the time files are received from the National Visa Center.

One team of local employees checks documents at the window, and another team enters data at their desks. It would be more efficient to have the same person both check documents and complete data entry.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Hanoi should revise Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's intake procedures, so the same person checks documents and enters data.

The correspondence unit is a part of the immigrant visa unit, and operates an information window that is staffed 6 hours a day to provide information to the public. This information is also available on the Web site. Given the unit's workload, staff time could be better used on other tasks. It may be useful to have the window open for 2 hours a day, so applicants can drop off passports for visa renewals, provided the consulate general implements the system discussed earlier.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Hanoi should close the information window at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, except for a limited amount of time for applicants to drop off passports for nonimmigrant visa renewals.

Language Proficiency Requirements

Vietnamese is an extremely difficult language. Most officers must study at the Foreign Service Institute for 44 weeks to obtain a 3/3 (general professional proficiency) level. Political, economic, public affairs, management, and regional security officers find that having some facility in Vietnamese, even at the 2/2 level (limited working proficiency), is essential for building relationships, managing staff, and engaging vendors. The Foreign Service Institute states that someone with a 3/3 "is consistently able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on ... professional topics. ... (I)n face-to-face conversation ... comprehension is quite complete." However, experience in Vietnam has shown that even people who can speak at or above the 3/3 level, which is considered fluent, often need to use an interpreter to understand the nuances of conversation.

The situation is somewhat different for consular officers, who must interact with Vietnamese speakers for hours on end while conducting interviews. All consular positions at Mission Vietnam are language designated. Supervisors are required to achieve a 3/3 proficiency level. Entry-level officers, whose positions are 2/2-level language designated, receive 26 to 32 weeks of language training. Several consular officers told inspectors that after only one year of language training and testing at the 3/3 level, they did not have the language facility to adequately understand Vietnamese without the help of an interpreter.

The nonimmigrant visa applicant pools differ significantly in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In Hanoi, applicants tend to be better educated and are easier to understand. In addition, there are fewer dialects in the northern part of the country than in the South. In Ho Chi Minh City, in addition to having a different pool of nonimmigrant visa applicants, officers conduct immigrant visa interviews, which are more complicated and require a more

extensive vocabulary. Consular officers in Ho Chi Minh City, but not in Hanoi, use local staff as interpreters for both immigrant and nonimmigrant interviews. Most officers in Ho Chi Minh City indicated that, even if they could conduct an effective interview in Vietnamese, it is far more efficient to use interpreters, although they do find it useful to have a general understanding of what the applicants and interpreters are saying. Consular officers also indicated the language training at the Foreign Service Institute did not help them conduct consular interviews; many were more comfortable talking about nuclear nonproliferation than about family relationships.

The criteria for designating language study for a particular position (per 13 FAM 221 b.(1)) is that “only those positions where language proficiency is essential, rather than merely helpful or convenient, should be designated...” Language training, although useful, is expensive and time consuming. As such, it should provide officers with the particular language skills needed to adequately perform their job.

Recommendation 21: The Foreign Service Institute, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should revise the Vietnamese language training curriculum to reflect the professional requirements of consular officers in conducting visa interviews.
(Action: FSI, in coordination with CA)

Fraud Prevention Unit and Assistant Regional Security Officer for Investigations

As noted, Vietnam sees high levels of fraud. The consulate general’s fraud prevention unit consists of a manager, an entry-level officer assigned on a rotating basis, an eligible family member, and five local employees. The fraud manager previously was deputy chief in the immigrant visa unit and is therefore well positioned to understand the issues facing the immigrant visa unit. Immigrant visa fraud issues constitute 95 percent of the fraud prevention unit’s work. As a result of the backlog reduction project in the immigrant visa section, many of the files that had been sitting in the immigrant visa unit were transferred to the fraud prevention unit for investigation, creating a large backlog in that office.

To deal with the workload, the manager reviews all referrals as they come in, to decide which may be handled quickly (that is, settled with a quick phone call); which should be investigated or otherwise require more work; and which should be returned to consular officers. As a result of her regular communication with referring officers, fewer cases that do not warrant review are being referred to the fraud prevention unit. Other officers in the consular section also are helping with the backlog, as time permits.

Both the fraud prevention unit and the immigrant visa unit are reviewing files to determine which petition returns are likely to result in revocation and which are likely to be reaffirmed. The Department of Homeland Security reaffirms the majority of petitions that are returned for revocation, so this work is critical for managing immigrant visa workload. The inspectors encouraged the consular section to work with the National Visa Center to continue to fine tune its revocation memoranda.

The energetic assistant regional security officer for investigations works well with the fraud prevention unit and the consular section. He has an investigative background and is

working with consular officers to increase their understanding about which cases may ultimately result in law enforcement action.

The consulate general holds regular Visas Viper meetings with appropriate attendance. One report during the past year was submitted late, and the inspectors reminded staff of the importance of timely reporting.

Resource Management

Agency	U.S. Direct- Hire Staff	U.S. Local- Hire Staff	Foreign National Local- Hire Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY2011
Department – D&CP	44	9	128	181	\$ 4,737,206
Department – ICASS DS	0	0	110	110	\$ 1,130,800
Department – ICASS Traditional	12	13	178	203	\$ 6,767,200
Department – ICASS OBO	0	0	0	0	\$ 3,803,300
Department – Public Diplomacy	5	2	31	39	\$ 1,152,920
Department – Diplomatic Security	8	1	18	27	\$ 1,220,144
Department – Marine Security	6	0	4	10	\$ 89,300
Department – Representation	0	0	0	0	\$78,201
Department – Machine Readable Visas	24	3	22	49	\$ 1,081,931
Department – Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations	1	0	0	1	\$ 4,572,114
Department – Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs	0	0	0	0	\$ 746,532
Export Control	0	0	1	1	\$24,450
Total State	100	28	492	621	\$ 25,404,098
PEPFAR -- OGAC	0	0	0	0	\$ 366,021
Department of Treasury	2	0	2	4	\$ 168,100
Foreign Agriculture Service	3	0	8	11	\$ 592,383
Department of Defense	18	0	26	44	\$ 1,495,335
Drug Enforcement Administration	3	0	3	6	\$ 350,000
Department of Homeland Security	2	0	3	5	\$ 443,863
Foreign Commercial Service	4	1	17	22	\$ 1,131,716
Department of Health and Human Services	14	0	45	59	\$ 3,482,800
USAID	23	0	40	63	\$ 40,463,000
Other Foreign Assistance	0	0	0	0	\$ 123,446
Total Other Agencies	69	1	144	214	\$ 48,616,664
Totals	169	29	636	835	\$ 74,020,762

Management Overview

Embassy Hanoi is well funded and adequately staffed in most management sections, and it has kept pace with the growth in the rest of the mission. It is in line with the size of an expanded mission population. Despite the Government of Vietnam's lengthy approval process for new positions, Mission Vietnam has grown in the number of its U.S. direct-hire positions. Negotiations for a new embassy compound have stalled, due to the Government of Vietnam's unwillingness to grant a lease term that is acceptable to OBO. Leasing additional office space has relieved overcrowded conditions in the chancery, where long overdue renovations are either completed, underway, or soon to begin. At Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, all off-compound agencies and several Department sections recently moved into consolidated space in a commercial building. Embassy and consulate general management employees are working to improve cooperation between the two entities.

Management Operations

The embassy management office is led by an experienced management counselor who only recently arrived. The office is comprised of 15 U.S. direct-hire employees, 10 eligible family members, 106 local staff members, and 3 cleared American contractors. The consulate general's management office consists of 6 U.S. direct-hires, 59 local employees, 2 eligible family members, and 1 cleared American contractor. The goal of both management offices is to begin working as one team. As a first step, the Hanoi management counselor and Ho Chi Minh City management officer have weekly telephone conversations. Staff exchanges between the two offices also are planned as a way to build teamwork, procedural consistency, and cross training. Both officers and local employees will participate in these exchanges. This arrangement is expected to bolster Hanoi's support and oversight of Ho Chi Minh City's administrative operations.

Survey respondents indicated high satisfaction with International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) and management operations. In Hanoi, the management office staff is cohesive and the operation effective. The local employees, some of whom are approaching 15 years of service with the mission, are not as experienced as their counterparts in other missions. Staff training and development remain a top mission priority, as some employees are still developing skills.

Obtaining an information systems security officer position is at the top of Hanoi's management agenda, and the OIG team supports adding the position. Its 2014 Mission Resource Request (MRR)² will include this request. The embassy also will seek to raise the grade of the regional security officer position from an FS-02 to an FS-01, to reflect an increase in responsibilities as the mission has grown in size and importance over the past several years. The embassy also will seek to raise the grades of the supervisory general services officer and human resources officer positions from FS-03 to FS-02. The OIG team supports the request for these grade increases, which the embassy will include in its 2014 MRR.

² In December 2011, the Department issued 11 STATE 124737, which discontinued the MSRP. The MRR (3-year strategic plan, with shorter annual resource requests) replaces the MSRP beginning with the FY 2014 budget cycle.

The mission also might add a human resources officer position at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City if it determines that the position is needed, after assessing both human resources offices once the enhanced interaction initiative is in place. During the inspection, Embassy Hanoi successfully challenged the imminent expiration of the mission's unique conditions of work allowance (which the Department provides to local employees at certain posts to offset the external hardships they may endure as a result of working for the U.S. Government). The conditions that led to this allowance continue in Vietnam. The embassy provided the Bureau of Human Resources with the required information on which to base its decision. The embassy is developing standard operating procedures to capture and provide this information in a timely manner.

Embassy Hanoi will begin a virtual transition to ICASS Standard during FY 2012 and will implement the change formally in FY 2013. It is investigating the practicality of having the post support unit in Bangkok handle its travel vouchers. Local staff compensation in Thailand is higher than in Vietnam, but outsourcing this task will obviate Embassy Hanoi's need to fill a vacant voucher examiner position.

The embassy is working with EAP and the Office of Foreign Missions to address the large number of reciprocity issues between the U.S. and Vietnamese Governments. Once a comprehensive list of issues is prepared, it will be presented to the Government of Vietnam.

To date, the mission has successfully consolidated 10 of 13 administrative functions identified by the Joint Management Council's Collaborative Management Initiative. The three services not yet consolidated are motor pool, administrative procurement, and local staff payroll. The requirement for the consolidation of the latter two has been deferred. The mission has asked the Joint Management Council to allow USAID to retain its motor pool. Both USAID and Department management agree that there are no cost or operational benefits to be gained by consolidating motor pools until the offices are colocated. The Joint Management Council has yet to respond. The inspection team believes the mission's business case for maintaining separate motor pools at this time has merit.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

The management office is led by an experienced, newly arrived management officer. In addition to his other duties, he has direct responsibility for the human resources and financial management portfolios. His two general services officers and the contract facilities manager are also new arrivals. At the time of the inspection, the consulate general was still sorting out its relationship with the embassy.

Human resources services received low survey scores, and the medical unit was by far the least favored management service. The management office is aware of both issues and is addressing them. (b)(5)(b)(6)

The new management team has rapidly strengthened operations and management controls, but the OIG team cautioned that they should do so in consultation with Embassy Hanoi.

Real Property

In an attempt to improve overcrowding at the chancery, Embassy Hanoi has moved several agencies from the Rose Garden annex to new offices in the Tung Shing building, across town. This has allowed consular affairs and human resources units, as well as the facilities manager and parts of the general services unit, to move out of the dysfunctional and overcrowded chancery and into better and more modern offices. Property and facility management employees work out of the warehouse. OBO space planners are working on a comprehensive redesign of chancery office space, which should greatly improve working conditions. Consulate general offices for all off-compound agencies have been consolidated into the Diamond Plaza building, a short walk from the compound.

Negotiations to acquire land for a much-needed, new embassy compound have stalled over the Government of Vietnam's unwillingness to grant a lease term that is acceptable to OBO. OBO has selected a 10-acre site, named Ciputra, as the preferred location for the new facility. The Government of Vietnam, which is interested in acquiring a new embassy in Washington, DC, recently withdrew from a proposed property exchange that could have delivered new sites to both sides on a reciprocal basis.

Notwithstanding the lack of progress to date, the need for a new embassy compound remains, and all paths to acquiring a site should be open, including purchasing the Ciputra site, acquiring it through trade, or using a combination of both approaches. The U.S. Government has restricted ownership of three properties in Hanoi: the chancery compound, the American club, and the chief of mission residence. The American club is excess property, with an estimated appraisal value of \$40 million. The acquisition of a site for a new embassy compound is the mission's paramount priority in Hanoi, so it would be advisable to retain the American club property until a site for the new compound has been acquired; the American club, as well as the current chancery, could be part of a negotiated trade for the Ciputra site. Furthermore, until the Government of Vietnam provides a site for the new embassy compound, it would be wise to declare a moratorium on property disposals throughout Vietnam, as well as a moratorium on the Government of Vietnam acquiring new property in the United States.

Recommendation 22: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should retain the American club property until a new site for the new embassy compound has been acquired. (Action: OBO)

In the current chancery, OBO is replacing the elevator, making other handicapped accessibility improvements, and replacing the lighting and drop ceilings in controlled access areas. At the chief of mission residence, OBO is installing an elevator and constructing other handicapped accessibility improvements. Contracts have been awarded to replace the residence's roof and heating and air conditioning systems. The independent government estimate for the roof project was \$500,000. Due to a misunderstanding among Embassy Hanoi, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, and OBO, the request for proposal called for all cleared American workers, when local workers could have been used. This mistake surfaced only after the Bureau of Administration awarded the contract for \$700,000, based on the unnecessary requirement. Immediate action by the Department could minimize the U.S. Government's loss. The contractor

was scheduled to visit Hanoi in November 2011, at which time the embassy intended to discuss possible remedies.

Recommendation 23: The Bureau of Administration, in coordination with Embassy Hanoi, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should take immediate action to minimize the U.S. Government's loss associated with the roof replacement contract for the chief of mission residence. (Action: A, in coordination with Embassy Hanoi, OBO and DS)

During the predeparture residential inspection of property number 2001, the former facility manager discovered that the occupants had painted and written on multiple walls and other surfaces of the residence, causing thousands of dollars in damages. The inspection team visited the residence and verified the extent of the damage. The occupant was not billed for the damages before he left post and to date has not been presented with a bill.

Recommendation 24: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should assess the damages to the residence at property number 2001, bill the former occupant for repair costs, and confirm that payment has been received. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with EAP)

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

The two-story consulate general office building was constructed in 1999 as an interim facility. Given that obtaining a new consulate general compound is unlikely, the building is scheduled for a \$3.7 million security upgrade. To better house the increased number of consular section employees, additional cubicles have been installed. A \$5.3 million consular renovation project to enlarge consular office space and create more interview windows is scheduled for FY 2015. In 2011, the PAS and all off-compound agencies were colocated to leased offices in the Diamond Plaza building.

The U.S. Government has "restricted" ownership of four properties in Ho Chi Minh City: the consulate general compound, the off-site warehouse, the Le Quy Don vacant lot, and the Ba Huyen Thanh Quan vacant lot. The latter two are excess properties. OBO has expressed interest in constructing a residential facility on the Le Quay Don property, through a possible public-private partnership. The Le Quay Don and Ba Huyen Thanh Quan properties could be part of a trade for the Ciputra site in Hanoi.

Recommendation 25: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should not pursue a public-private partnership nor dispose of either the Le Quay Don or Ba Huyen Thanh Quan properties in Ho Chi Minh City until a site for the new embassy compound in Hanoi has been acquired. (Action: OBO)

The consulate general has 46 fully serviced apartments, 8 detached residences, and the consul general's apartment. Although OBO discourages leasing fully serviced apartments, it recognizes the unavailability of suitable, nonserviced apartments. Fully serviced apartments are furnished, and the lease cost includes maid service, cable television, and Internet services. Efforts to convince landlords to reduce lease costs in conjunction with the removal of any of

these services have proven futile. OBO determined, based on guidance from the Office of the Legal Advisor, that it is unnecessary to charge residents for the extra services at this time.

In 2010, the embassy's former financial management officer erroneously approved using \$101,000 of ICASS funds to renovate the community center. The use of ICASS funds to renovate or construct permanent facilities is not permissible under Department guidance, unless specifically authorized by law (11 STATE 023955). OBO has expressed dissatisfaction with the way the project was handled and also has voiced concerns regarding the safety of the building. The work was completed without OBO's required approval and building permits. According to Embassy Hanoi's facility manager, OBO has since provided \$5,000 to the embassy to make handicapped accessibility improvements to two bathrooms. OBO will not reimburse the mission for the renovation work. In the July 2011 chief of mission statement of assurance, Embassy Hanoi reported this incident and described its plans to work with OBO to resolve it. The OIG team considers the issue closed.

General Services

The Embassy Hanoi general services office, with the exception of its procurement unit, performs well. The travel section requires some adjustments. The general services office is led by a knowledgeable supervisor and two assistant general services officers, one of whom was recently added as part of the Diplomacy 3.0 exercise. The office is adequately staffed with local employees, as well. Despite the growth of the mission over the last several years, the supervisory general services officer position is graded FS-03. In its next MRR, the mission will lobby to increase the grade for this position to FS-02, and the OIG team supports the grade increase.

At Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, the general services office is highly regarded and performs well, with a few exceptions (noted below). The office is led by an enthusiastic, second-tour officer who is assisted by a first-tour officer in the newly created position. Both officers were in language class with the management officer prior to their arrivals at post, which has facilitated team-building.

Procurement

The procurement unit in Hanoi is performing at a less than satisfactory level. While the section satisfies customer demands for goods and services, it does so in a less than optimal way. The inspection team found incomplete contract files, as well as poorly prepared and managed blanket purchase agreements. The general services officer is aware of the latter problem and is actively working to rectify the problem. Training for the procurement supervisor and the procurement contract assistant is already scheduled. The Office of the Procurement Executive has already agreed to provide a staff assistance visit.

Recommendation 26: Embassy Hanoi should implement standard operating procedures for maintaining complete contract files and properly preparing and managing blanket purchase agreements. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

The Ho Chi Minh City procurement office has been ordering some packing and shipping services without the proper procurement instruments (*Federal Acquisition Regulations* 4.101). The office provided vendor quotations to the Seattle Despatch Agency for its determination on the most favorable shipment method. If the Despatch Agency determines that the services should be procured locally, a customs and shipping assistant notifies the selected, local shipping company without involving the contracting officer. Approximately 20 percent of these services are procured locally. A number of options are available to procure packing and shipping services, including purchase orders, blanket purchase agreements, and indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contracts. Not involving the contracting officer circumvents proper procurement requirements and can result in unauthorized obligations.

Recommendation 27: Embassy Hanoi should prepare a proper procurement instrument for Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's packing and shipping requirements. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Travel

The embassy's travel section performs effectively, although the travel assistant spends about 40 percent of his time on nonofficial travel demands. The supervisory general services officer intends to minimize this distraction, so the travel assistant can focus more on handling official travel requests.

The mission lacks a travel management contract, and its agreement with its current travel agency has lapsed, although both parties abide by the terms of the former agreement. The embassy found the General Services Administration contractor did not perform as well as the selected travel agency. The travel agency charges a fee equal to 4 percent of the cost of each ticket, and bills monthly.

Recommendation 28: Embassy Hanoi should compete and award a contract with a travel management center for its mission-wide travel requirements. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Warehouse and Property Management

The warehouse and property management section at Embassy Hanoi perform effectively, although 19 residential property inventories were not signed by employees. Obtaining employees' concurrence on the accuracy of the residential inventories at the start of their tours tends to minimize disagreements in preparation for their departures. Additionally, the property management report for FY 2010 lacked assurances from the information management and medical staffs, confirming that they had completed their required inventories.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Hanoi should implement procedures for employees to sign residential inventories within 30 days of their occupying assigned residences.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Hanoi should implement procedures for the information resource management and health units to inventory their property and make note of their respective inventories on the property management report.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

The consulate general's on-site, expendable property warehouse is disorganized and cluttered. The staff needlessly maintains stock control cards, even though they are also using an electronic stock-control system.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Hanoi should require Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to properly organize its expendable property warehouse and cease using manual stock control cards.

The consulate general's off-site, nonexpendable property warehouse is well organized and well maintained. The newly constructed warehouse is located on "restricted," U.S. Government-owned property and intended for intermittent use. It has an enclosed receiving area, but because the staff is not located there and it lacks OpenNet connectivity, the receiving takes place at the expendable property warehouse. The estimated cost to install OpenNet connectivity at the actual receiving area is \$10,000. Based on a September 26, 2011, Bureau of Diplomatic Security finding, the mission will establish intermittent workspace for the warehouse supervisor, four warehousemen, and the receiving clerk, with the understanding that, due to security regulations, they may not routinely occupy this space continuously for the entire workday. It also will install OpenNet connectivity. The OIG team endorses this plan.

None of the four warehousemen drive trucks, nor do their position descriptions require them to do so. Deliveries that require a truck are handled by either contractors or motor pool drivers. This way of doing business is not optimal. A fifth warehousemen position is now vacant, and the supervisor is slated to retire; these changes in staffing provide an opportunity to revisit the issue of truck driving duties.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Hanoi should revise the position descriptions for the Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City warehousemen to include driving duties, and fill the warehouse unit's vacancies with individuals who are licensed to drive trucks.

Facility Management

The embassy's facility management office performs effectively. It includes 25 tradesmen and administrative personnel, 12 janitorial staff members, and three cleared American contractors who handle work in controlled access areas. The facility manager arrived in January 2011. Prior to his arrival, the mission's occupational safety and health committee last met in October 2009. The committee, chaired by the Chief of Mission, met in September 2011 and plans to meet semiannually. At the meeting, the committee discussed recommendations from the 2009 report of the Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management. The inspection team reviewed the mission's compliance with that report's recommendations. To date, 83 percent of the recommendations have been closed.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

The Ho Chi Minh City facility management office serves the consulate general well. Support from Embassy Hanoi is satisfactory. The staff, which includes tradesmen, gardeners, and custodial employees, is managed by a contractor facility manager. Their focus is solely on the consulate general compound. The occupational safety and health committee was inactive until recently, but the program itself is robust. The post occupational safety and health officer's assistant recently was third runner-up for the Department's post occupational safety and health officer's assistant award. Most of the recommendations from the 2009 report of the Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management report have been addressed.

The unit recently completed a \$1.2 million telephone replacement project and consular space configuration. A \$3.7 million compound security upgrade is planned for 2012. The consulate general's recommended changes to the project were noted during a recent physical security team visit. A \$5.3 million consular renovation project is envisioned for FY 2015.

The facility management office keeps a supply of building materials, as well as miscellaneous supplies, in a storage room adjacent to its offices. It does not maintain property records on these materials and supplies. The expendable property warehouse is near the facility management office, so the property management team could store this property there and manage it.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Hanoi should require Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to consolidate the facility management's office materials and supplies, store them in the expendable property warehouse, and properly control them.

Human Resources

The human resources office in Hanoi is both capable and effective, as reflected by positive survey responses. The American unit chief has worked hard to develop and fine tune the capabilities of her team of seven local employees and three local-hire Americans. There is a link to human resource services on the embassy's intranet site. With the backing of the embassy's new management counselor, the human resources officer is redoubling her efforts to enhance support to Ho Chi Minh City. This effort will require building a mutually beneficial relationship with Ho Chi Minh City's new management officer and his three-person staff to foster seamless customer service and communication in both directions. In view of the size and complexity of the mission, the management counselor has proposed upgrading the human resources officer position from FS-03 to FS-02. The inspectors support this initiative.

In Ho Chi Minh City, several off-cycle employee performance evaluations for entry-level officers were late, including four that were 3 months overdue. As mentors, supervisors of entry-level officers should pay particular attention to the timely counseling and evaluation of their untenured employees.

Recommendation 29: Embassy Hanoi should require supervisors to properly counsel and mentor entry-level officers and submit their performance evaluations on time.
(Action: Embassy Hanoi)

All delinquent work requirements statements for Foreign Service staff in Hanoi were completed during the inspection. However, the work requirements statements for 16 consulate general employees are still outstanding. In addition, work requirements statements, mission-wide, do not consistently address the need to submit employee efficiency reports (for either American or local employees) on time.

Recommendation 30: Embassy Hanoi should include a work requirement for all supervisors of American and local employees, to complete their employees' work requirements and performance evaluation reviews on time; and it should rate the supervisors accordingly. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

The mission awards program is well structured, funded, and advertised. Ceremonies are held twice each year. The interagency, joint awards committee reviews award nominations from both the embassy and consulate general. However, the inspectors found a pattern at Ho Chi Minh City of yearly awards being given to the same individuals and groups, which devalues the awards program for other employees. As EAP has cut the mission's 2012 awards funding by 29 percent in FY 2012, it is particularly important that the award process be seen as fair and equitable.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Hanoi should instruct members of the awards committee to carefully examine patterns of repetitive awards, to maintain the integrity of the awards program.

Mission Vietnam staff is generally well trained, and increasing numbers of employees are taking advantage of free training online. The mission would benefit from a comprehensive training plan that could be adjusted as priorities change. Such a plan would help the embassy meet the most urgent training needs. Allocating funding specifically for training purposes would highlight the importance of training as a mission objective.

Recommendation 31: Embassy Hanoi should establish a comprehensive, mission-wide training plan, and allocate specific resources for training. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Both the embassy and consulate general are late in submitting their retail price surveys and living pattern questionnaires to the Department. The delay could put the mission's U.S. direct-hire staff at a disadvantage, in the event that an increased cost of living allowance is justified.

Recommendation 32: Embassy Hanoi should submit the embassy's and consulate general's retail price surveys and living pattern questionnaires to the Department as soon as possible, and establish standard operating procedures for the timely submission of all future submissions. (Action: Embassy Hanoi).

In Hanoi, the locally employed manager of the chief of mission residence was, until 2009, a member of the official residence staff, and thus worked under contract directly for the Ambassador. In 2009, the embassy requested that the bureau reprogram a vacant local position to be that of residence manager. The justification for the change was the position's broad scope of

responsibility. After initial misgivings within post management and the EAP executive office, EAP approved reprogramming the permanent position. The position description was tailored to fit the abilities of the Ambassador's residence manager, and reclassified at the highest possible level. It was advertised internally for 1 week, rather than being advertised broadly outside of the mission, after which the Ambassador's incumbent residence manager was hired into the permanent position at an annual salary increase of \$2,000.

Recommendation 33: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should determine whether the residence manager position should be a local direct-hire position or a contract employee working directly for the Ambassador as a member of the official residence staff. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with EAP and DGHR)

(b)(5)(b)(6)



Recommendation 34: (b)(5)(b)(6)




Locally Employed Staff Committees

In Hanoi, the locally employed staff association committee is made up of representatives from each section and agency. Board members are now selected by the different sections and agencies. The board is considering switching to general elections, in an effort to promote greater interest among local staff in association activities. The association raises funds through the sale of embassy logo items and garage sales. The new Ambassador and DCM have met with the board once and will continue to do so as needed. The new management officer plans to meet with the board quarterly.

The Ho Chi Minh City locally employed staff association has a 10-member board. It operates independently of the embassy association, but the two groups meet once a year to discuss topics of common interest and participate in the "Mission Cup" soccer match. The focus of the consulate general association is raising funds for charity and the care of family members who are in need. As is local custom, the board organizes visits to family members and donates funds for weddings, funerals, and other important family events. It is partnering with the community liaison office to organize joint cultural events with American staff to promote mutual understanding. Funds are raised through the sale of logo items, but inadequate controls are in place to ensure proper management of sales proceeds. The board has sought management's advice on how to make sure its fund raising activities are within established guidelines.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Hanoi should advise the locally employed staff associations in both Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City on establishing appropriate guidelines and procedures for cash management, logo item sales, and other fund raising activities.

Local staffing in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City is stable, and morale is generally good. There is concern, however, that the 2-year wage freeze, coupled with rapid inflation, is rendering mission employment less attractive. There is concern that outside job opportunities will become more attractive when the local economy improves. (b) (5)



Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's Program

Mission Vietnam has an active Equal Employment Opportunity program. In Hanoi, there are two American counselors and six local staff liaisons strategically placed across section and agency lines. Ho Chi Minh City has two American counselors and four local staff liaisons. Counselors and liaisons have received formal, Equal Employment Opportunity training. An Office of Civil Rights team visited Vietnam in August 2011 and trained all available American and local employees. Both posts have Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's Program information prominently displayed on bulletin boards throughout their facilities, as well as OpenNet links to a wealth of information on both these programs.

Financial Management

The financial management office in Hanoi, which received high scores on both the OIG questionnaires and the ICASS customer service satisfaction survey, is directed by a dedicated FS-02 financial management officer whose job knowledge and commitment to customer service have served the mission well. She and her local staff of 12 are well organized and trained to effectively support the financial needs of both the embassy and consulate general. The financial management office in Ho Chi Minh City consists of a cashier and a voucher assistant.

The inspection team found payment vouchers (travel, representation, official residence expense, etc.) to be in good order and fully documented in all but a few instances. Attuned to important details, the financial management officer stopped the improper practices of making official residence reimbursement payments to the former Ambassador's house manager, rather than to the Ambassador. The financial management officer also changed the practice of retroactively charging residence staff overtime to the representation budget, rather than to the relevant event. The unit carefully monitors unliquidated balances of prior-year obligations for contracts and grants to ensure that program offices liquidate and deobligate funds as quickly as possible. In February 2012, the financial management officer's initiative to have travel vouchers audited and certified by Bangkok's post support unit will be implemented, negating the need to fill a vacant local staff position.

In September 2011, the embassy spent \$11,614—22 percent of its annual representation budget—on a large order of American wines, which was surplus to its immediate needs. Per 3 FAM 3246.3-6 b., posts are not authorized to use excess, year-end funds to purchase wine that is not a bona fide need of that fiscal year.

Recommendation 35: Embassy Hanoi should not use excess year-end funds to purchase wine that is not needed in the current fiscal year. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

The Chief of Mission, DCM, and consul general are required to contribute 3.5 percent of their base salary towards the annual, usual household expenses of their official residences. On three occasions, the consul general in Ho Chi Minh City paid his official residence expense contribution one month late. According to regulations (3 FAM 3257 b.), official residence expenses must be paid or reimbursed monthly.

Recommendation 36: Embassy Hanoi should enforce the requirement that the Chief of Mission, deputy chief of mission, and consul general submit their official residence expense payments monthly. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Cashiering

(b) (5)

The cashier provides accommodation exchange to the community, since banking regulations do not permit establishment of a retail operation in the embassy and use of ATM machines is discouraged, due to the high incidence of credit card fraud and identity theft. The Hanoi cashier operation is exceptionally well organized, automated, and efficient. Unannounced cash counts take place monthly, and subcashier verifications are up- to- date.

The Class B cashier at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City maintains an accountability of (b) (5) and provides accommodation exchange to the official American community. As in Hanoi, the cashier runs a well organized operation, with all safeguards in place. The Bangkok Regional Finance Center cashier monitor visited Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in April 2011, and found all accounts and procedures in order.

International Cooperative Administrative Services System

The financial management officer has forged an excellent relationship with the ICASS chair and the council. They take the ICASS process seriously, collaborate on ways to improve service where necessary, and keep the community informed of their actions. The Ho Chi Minh City management staff participates in ICASS meetings via video conferencing. Mission Vietnam received overall customer satisfaction results higher than the EAP and worldwide averages, and was graded “A” on its 2011 budget scorecard. A PowerPoint presentation on developing ICASS budgets, developed by the financial management officer, was widely distributed as “how to” guidance for other ICASS posts. ICASS funding to Mission Vietnam is

generous. In Hanoi, ICASS service standards are posted at each service provider's office to ensure full transparency. The consulate general plans to post its standards, as well.

Rest and Recuperation Travel

U.S. direct-hire employees in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City receive rest and recuperation travel benefits, which reflects the challenges of living in Vietnam. In accordance with regulations (3 FAH-1 H-3721.4), both the embassy and consulate general earlier this year submitted to the regional bureau its required justification to continue this benefit.

Post Differential

Until 2011, U.S. direct-hire employees in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City received a 25 percent post differential (hardship) allowance. In February 2011, the Department reduced Hanoi's differential to 20 percent, based on post's biannual differential questionnaire, submitted to the Office of Allowances. In August 2011, Ho Chi Minh City's differential was revalidated at 25 percent. (b) (5)

OIG found that conditions in Hanoi merit a differential no lower than that of Ho Chi Minh City. Inspectors noted that embassy management did not review or clear consulate general's submission for mission-wide consistency in characterizing the relative degree of hardship at each post.

Recommendation 37: Embassy Hanoi should coordinate all submissions of Embassy Hanoi's and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's post differential questionnaires, to ensure that relative differences in hardship at both posts are accurately reflected. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Information Management

The IM section, working in a challenging environment, is an efficient, well managed operation that generally meets customer needs, as evidenced by high marks on OIG questionnaires. Operations between Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City are cohesive, and the two units communicate effectively via digital video conferences. The OIG team inspected all facilities, reviewed systems and operating procedures, and assessed the mail room, and concluded that internal operations are solid, and the two units are up-to-date on all standard operating practices. Given that a new embassy compound is not in the foreseeable future for Embassy Hanoi, the OIG team determined that its IM work space needs attention. Additionally, both posts face staffing issues, due to the requirement that American, rather than local, IM staff handle unclassified systems oversight. Both issues are addressed below. Contingency planning, information management, and physical security issues are covered in the classified annex of this report.

Space

Since the 2005 OIG inspection, Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City has created new offices and a new training facility; implemented a new telephone system, developed Facebook sites for customers, hosted IM representation events; and is forging ahead with cost-saving

programs. In contrast, Embassy Hanoi operates in an old, tight work space requiring renovation, and it struggles to keep up with a growing customer base at four different locations. At Embassy Hanoi, incoming mail is stored in the hallway, blocking the emergency exit. During the inspection, the unit identified new office space in the front of the building, which would be ideal for mail operations. The cost of moving mail operations to that space would be \$10,000. The OIG team endorses the relocation of the mail room.

Customers located at Embassy Hanoi's Rose Garden annex require IM assistance, yet technicians do not have onsite workspace. Rose Garden staff would be better served if IM had space and a staging area on site, so that they could quickly resolve issues and save time that would otherwise be spent traveling between sites. The OIG team visited the Rose Garden during the course of the inspection and identified available space.

Recommendation 38: Embassy Hanoi should establish work space for information management staff in the Rose Garden annex. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

During a tour of embassy offices, the OIG team determined that some printers have not been networked, in accordance with the Department's Greening Diplomacy Initiative. Networking printers saves energy, is more efficient, and reduces the costs associated with having multiple, separate printers and related supplies (maintenance costs, toner, etc.).

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Hanoi should network all printers for the embassy's offices.

Staffing

The local staff is prohibited from performing OpenNet system administrative functions, including desktop support, due to a recent Bureau of Diplomatic Security computer security review. Thus, American IM staff must oversee and resolve unclassified systems and desktop support issues, in addition to handling their regular duties. This requirement has generated regular overtime work for the American staff. However, the most recent MSRP did not include a request for a new, full-time U.S. direct-hire position in the IM section. Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City should reassess their staffing needs, including the need for an information systems security officer, to make sure they can perform critical security duties and meet all mission needs.

Recommendation 39: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should review information management assets mission-wide, to resolve information management understaffing. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with EAP and IRM)

The Global Information Technology Modernization program has just published the latest core training requirement for IM professionals, and it is important for all cleared American staff to take advantage of this funded program. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City is scheduled for the global technology refresh this fiscal year, and it would be prudent for staff to take training on the hardware that will be installed.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Hanoi should require the entire mission's information management staff to complete Global Information Technology Modernization program training.

Dedicated Internet Networks

Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City have an abundance of Dedicated Internet Networks. Many are registered and heavily used, but there is an opportunity to reduce these networks, now that the staff has settled into new offices in both locations. These networks require service and support, which is a burden on the IM staff. Per 5 FAM 872.1, the embassy should reduce the number of Dedicated Internet Networks wherever possible.

Recommendation 40: Embassy Hanoi should conduct an inventory of its Dedicated Internet networks and consolidate the Networks, where possible. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Local Information Technology Change Control Board

Embassy Hanoi has established a local information technology change control board. However, the majority of the board members are from the IM section. Per 5 FAM 862.2, the local change control board should include other members, as appropriate. Adding representatives from other sections, such as public affairs, would prevent the appearance of conflict of interest, as well as increasing the IM staff's knowledge of its customers' business needs.

Recommendation 41: Embassy Hanoi should include representatives from different sections in the local information technology change control board. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recently, one embassy section purchased equipment that was not cleared by the IM officer, resulting in confusion as to whether it could be technically supported.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Hanoi should require all sections to clear any requests for computer equipment with the information management officer.

Different sections contribute to the Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's intranet site. However, not all links work, nor is all the material updated. For example, the IRM organization chart was outdated and did not match the telephone directory. Additionally, the link to Embassy Hanoi's intranet site is located on the lower right side of the page and does not reflect a "one mission" concept. This situation can be frustrating to customers seeking information.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Hanoi should require Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to monitor, verify, and update links in a timely manner.

Quality of Life

Health Unit

Health unit staffing at Embassy Hanoi consists of a Foreign Service health practitioner, two registered nurses, and an administrative assistant. Neither the outgoing nor incoming health practitioner was in Hanoi during the inspection. This position also has responsibility for Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. The outgoing Foreign Service health practitioner noted inadequate staffing and inadequate facilities as major concerns, and called for the addition of a locally hired doctor, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner. The inspection team concurred regarding the inadequacy of health unit facilities, which has only one examination room and no storage for temperature-controlled medications. However, the team was not convinced of the need for additional medical staff at this time. The planned expansion of the health unit into adjacent space will permit needed improvements, including allowing for private discussions that cannot be overheard in adjacent rooms.

Recommended immunizations for Vietnam include Japanese encephalitis. However, the health unit does not stock Ixiaro, the Federal Drug Administration-approved vaccine, due to the high cost of the two-shot series. Told of this situation, the regional medical officer indicated that ICASS has never had an issue funding vaccinations, regardless of the cost, and that Ixiaro would be made available and provided as required. Based on this assurance, the OIG team has confidence that Ixiaro will be made available at post.

The regional medical office at Embassy Bangkok has launched a promising pilot project, involving electronic medical records. Thus far, more than 870 patient records are registered in the embassy's account on Practice Fusion, a free, Internet-based system that meets both the President's mandate for electronic health records and all Federal requirements for protecting personal information. The system provides for medical charting, e-prescribing, document management, appointment scheduling, and more. Once its effectiveness is proven, this project could improve operations at both the Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City health units.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

The Ho Chi Minh City health unit was experiencing a period of uncertainty and poor customer service at the time of the inspection. Health unit staffing consists of a registered nurse and an administrative assistant. With the departure of its long-serving doctor left the post. Since then, more the Foreign Service health practitioner from Hanoi and the regional medical officer from Bangkok have made more frequent visits. The mission has pressed for its own Foreign Service health practitioner, but neither the Office of Medical Services nor EAP has agreed to fund the position. Any decision regarding the establishment of this position should wait until a locally hired physician is in place. The inspectors anticipate that filling the physician position will negate the need for a Foreign Service health practitioner. Although six applicants have applied for the position, the consulate general believes the candidates will find the salary too low. Washington has denied an increase in salary, as the exception rate range mechanism is affected by the Federal wage freeze. The deployment of a telemedicine hook-up linking

Ho Chi Minh City with Bangkok, already requested from the Office of Medical Services, should bolster confidence in the health unit, as it will allow real-time medical consultations.

Community Liaison Office

The community liaison office at Embassy Hanoi is staffed by a full-time coordinator and full-time, locally employed administrative assistant. Plans call for the addition of a part-time (20 hours per week) coordinator. By all accounts, the office performs well and meets mission expectations. Like other offices in the chancery building, the community liaison office is cramped. The two employees share one work area, and the office's administrative assistant must leave the room during sensitive conversations with American customers. There is no bilateral work agreement, but 16 family members are employed outside the embassy, and 11 eligible family members are employed inside the embassy.

In Ho Chi Minh City, the community liaison office is staffed by two part-time (20 hours per week) coordinators and a full-time, locally employed administrative assistant, who also writes the community newsletter. Going forward, the coordinators will overlap several hours per week, enabling them to better organize community activities and their other shared responsibilities. Three family members are employed outside, and seven work inside, the consulate general.

Employee Association

The American Community Association of Hanoi's sole activity is operating the American club. For many years after the United States and Vietnam reestablished diplomatic relations, the club did a robust restaurant and special-event business from its U.S. Government-owned facility in the heart of the old city. As Vietnam has prospered, families have moved to the suburbs, where a number of high quality restaurants have opened. Consequently, the club has become less relevant and has fallen on hard times. Few embassy employees use the facility, except to attend community events. Today, the club derives virtually its entire revenue by renting its facilities to outside organizations for special events. For security and other reasons, the club has become more restrictive as to which groups may rent the club and, as a result, is now operating at a loss.

In 2010, a turnover in key association positions resulted in lapses in internal controls, which now are being addressed by the association board. With the full support of the new Ambassador and DCM, the association recently hired a new, energetic manager with food and beverage industry experience in the West, to develop strategies to reverse the club's fortunes. The board and manager should seek advice from the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs, as the association works to turn the club around and make it relevant to the official American community. As the association board charts the way ahead, it should keep in mind that any future purchase agreement between the Department and the Government of Vietnam for a new embassy site could include the American Club property.

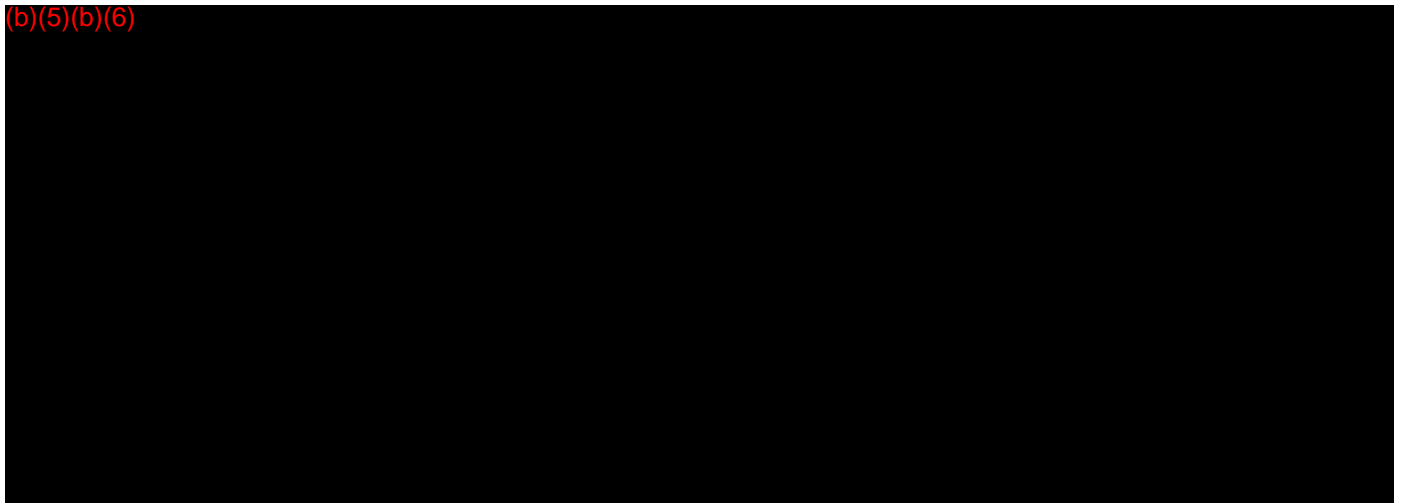
Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Hanoi should request a visit by an appropriate official of the Bureau of Administration's Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs, to advise the new American Club manager and association board on stabilizing association operations.

Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City has not established an employee association, although management is assessing the viability of establishing a canteen on consulate general premises.

Overseas Schools

In April 2011, the regional education officer from the Office of Overseas Schools visited the Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City schools and deemed them generally acceptable, particularly at the primary and middle school levels. However, both the embassy and consulate general have an away-from-post education allowance, due to the relative differences in curriculum and exceptionally small size of its high school classes. No parents were taking advantage of the allowance at the time of the inspection.

(b)(5)(b)(6)




Management Controls

The need for a heightened involvement by embassy management in the mission's management controls program is evident. The Chief of Mission is the post management controls coordinator; his alternate is the management counselor. At Ho Chi Minh City, the management officer fills this role. None of these individuals were at post when the chargé d'affaires ad interim submitted Mission Vietnam's annual statement of assurance on management controls for the period ending June 30, 2011. The chargé concluded that the results of internal and external reviews provided reasonable assurance that management control objectives were achieved. She cited compliance with various requirements in financial reporting, property management, vehicle inventory, housing and construction program management, and safety and health. However, inspectors found several issues, not included in the statement of assurance, that require attention.

Fundraising

Since at least 2008, Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City have raised funds for charitable causes in conjunction with their respective July Fourth events. An insert inviting guests to contribute to a specific charitable cause, in lieu of sending flowers, was included with both the Ambassador's and consul general's invitations to the events. In Hanoi, guests were requested to send donations directly to a specified charity. In Ho Chi Minh City, cash donations were collected at the event by local employees, who forwarded the money to the charitable organization.

For the 2011 Fourth of July event, Ho Chi Minh City decided to use the locally employed staff association as a conduit for its charitable giving. Funds raised would be deposited with the association treasurer, and charitable organizations selected by a committee chaired by the consul general. (b) (5)



(b) (5)



(b) (5)



Importation of Personal Vehicle

The consul general in Ho Chi Minh City circumvented host government importation restrictions by bringing in a vehicle that was more than 5 years old. There have been no reported repercussions. The stated reason behind the importation was to encourage the host government to relax this importation requirement, but the matter has not gained any momentum. It has not been followed up with a diplomatic note, nor was the issue raised with the Office of Foreign Missions. No other exceptions to the rule have been attempted, though some officers were encouraged to also import vehicles older than 5 years.

Consular Management Controls

Consular managers in Vietnam are following correct procedures for the control of accountable items. Access to the consular section in Hanoi is controlled, and access to the consular section in Ho Chi Minh City is addressed earlier in this report. Accountable items are well secured, and accountable officers are designated in writing, with backups also designated in writing. The accountable consular officers at both posts had sometimes delayed signing daily accounting sheets, but both officers began daily signatures during the inspection.

Supervisory officers were adjudicating referrals in Ho Chi Minh City. In Hanoi, a nonsupervisory officer had approved Class B referrals, sometimes because he was the only officer available. During the inspection, the consular chief issued guidance that this practice should end, and that if a nonsupervisory officer was acting as a supervisor, it should be clearly reflected in the notes. The correct officers conducted adjudication reviews, but in Ho Chi Minh City reviews were not at the levels required by 9 FAM 41.121 and 41.113 PN 17. The level of reviews was low, because acting supervisors did not realize they should review all the cases that were normally reviewed by the supervisor on leave. The consular chief in Ho Chi Minh City issued new guidance to resolve this problem.

In Hanoi, a technical glitch was resolved that had caused difficulty for the DCM's review of the consular chief's adjudications. She completed the required reviews during the inspection and plans to continue with these reviews. Consular automated systems are up to date. The consular, shared tables are current, and user roles are correctly assigned and maintained.

In Ho Chi Minh City, the backup consular cashier does not have her own cash advance; she and uses the consular cashier's drawer and advance when the cashier is out, which is contrary to guidance in 7 FAH-1 H-734.5 b. and 4 FAH-3 H-393.4-3 d.

Recommendation 45: Embassy Hanoi should provide a separate cash advance and a separate safe drawer with a separate combination for the backup consular cashier in Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendations in this report address other areas, including the visa referral system in Ho Chi Minh City.

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Embassy Hanoi should implement a plan for American and local staff to conduct regular, working visits between Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Hanoi should require that all meetings attended by Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City staff and related in any way to official matters include a note taker. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Hanoi should deconflict, separate, and clarify the work requirement statements and position descriptions for all Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City front office staff members. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Hanoi should fold the environment, science, technology, and health section into the economic section. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should restructure the political-economic reporting function at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, to clarify supervisory relationships and reporting responsibilities. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with EAP and DGHR)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Hanoi should institute joint public affairs strategic planning sessions and staff exchanges with Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, using the embassy's program-travel-representation matrix in pursuit of Mission Strategic Resource Plan goals. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Hanoi should reorganize Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's public affairs section using Embassy Hanoi's senior team leadership structure, and should train section leaders on the embassy's online leadership training curriculum. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Hanoi should enter the name of each grants officer representative in the grants management database and supply each grants officer representative with the required letter outlining the specific responsibilities for managing grants. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Hanoi should explore the feasibility of establishing wireless Internet access or otherwise maximizing the usability of the Hanoi American Center's iPads (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Hanoi should convert space outside the hardline at the Ho Chi Minh City American Center into an enclosed area for use by the Education USA staff when counseling visitors. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 11: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should monitor Embassy Hanoi's consular workload to determine whether five officers, including an FS-02 adoptions officer, are necessary. (Action: CA)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Hanoi should ask the Bureau of Consular Affairs to update the reciprocity table for Vietnam, to reflect a maximum 3-month, single-entry validity for B1/B2 visas. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Hanoi should revise work requirements so the consular section chief in Hanoi is rated by the consular coordinator and reviewed by the deputy chief of mission. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should request a review of the consular chief position at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to determine whether the position should be upgraded. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with CA and DGHR)

Recommendation 15: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Hanoi, should review construction plans to determine whether access to the consular section in Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City could be better controlled by modifying the current structure, and include such modifications in the scope of work for the approved rehabilitation of the consular section. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 16: Embassy Hanoi should establish a warden system for Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 17: Embassy Hanoi should not allow mission employees to use any method other than Class A and Class B referrals to provide information on nonimmigrant visa applicants. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Hanoi should reissue its visa referral policy, under the Ambassador's signature, and provide training for all staff at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City on the requirements and process for making visa referrals. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 19: Embassy Hanoi should require the consular coordinator at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to give the Ambassador a monthly report on all Class A and B referrals in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, indicating who made the referral and including information on any instances of visa-related information being relayed outside the referral system. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 20: Embassy Hanoi should revise Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's petition return policy, to require managers to review all memoranda requesting revocation of a petition before sending the memoranda to the National Visa Center. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 21: The Foreign Service Institute, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should revise the Vietnamese language training curriculum to reflect the

professional requirements of consular officers in conducting visa interviews.
(Action: FSI, in coordination with CA)

Recommendation 22: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should retain the American club property until a new site for the new embassy compound has been acquired.
(Action: OBO)

Recommendation 23: The Bureau of Administration, in coordination with Embassy Hanoi, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should take immediate action to minimize the U.S. Government's loss associated with the roof replacement contract for the chief of mission residence. (Action: A, in coordination with Embassy Hanoi, OBO and DS)

Recommendation 24: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should assess the damages to the residence at property number 2001, bill the former occupant for repair costs, and confirm that payment has been received. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with EAP)

Recommendation 25: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations should not pursue a public-private partnership or dispose of either the Le Quay Don or Ba Huyen Thanh Quan properties in Ho Chi Minh City until a site for the new embassy compound in Hanoi has been acquired. (Action: OBO)

Recommendation 26: Embassy Hanoi should implement standard operating procedures for maintaining complete contract files and properly preparing and managing blanket purchase agreements. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 27: Embassy Hanoi should prepare a proper procurement instrument for Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's packing and shipping requirements.
(Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 28: Embassy Hanoi should compete and award a contract with a travel management center for its mission-wide travel requirements. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 29: Embassy Hanoi should require supervisors to properly counsel and mentor entry-level officers and submit their performance evaluations on time.
(Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 30: Embassy Hanoi should include a work requirement for all supervisors of American and local employees, to complete their employees' work requirements and performance evaluation reviews on time; and it should rate the supervisors accordingly.
(Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 31: Embassy Hanoi should establish a comprehensive, mission-wide training plan, and allocate specific resources for training. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 32: Embassy Hanoi should submit the embassy's and consulate general's retail price surveys and living pattern questionnaires to the Department as soon as possible, and

establish standard operating procedures for the timely submission of all future submissions. (Action: Embassy Hanoi).

Recommendation 33: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Human Resources, should determine whether the residence manager position should be a local direct-hire position or a contract employee working directly for the Ambassador as a member of the official residence staff. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with EAP and DGHR)

Recommendation 34: (b)(5)(b)(6)



Recommendation 35: Embassy Hanoi should not use excess year-end funds to purchase wine that is not needed in the current fiscal year. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 36: Embassy Hanoi should enforce the requirement that the Chief of Mission, deputy chief of mission, and consul general submit their official residence expense payments monthly. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 37: Embassy Hanoi should coordinate all submissions of Embassy Hanoi's and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's post differential questionnaires, to ensure that relative differences in hardship at both posts are accurately reflected. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 38: Embassy Hanoi should establish work space for information management staff in the Rose Garden annex. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 39: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should review information management assets mission-wide, to resolve information management understaffing. (Action: Embassy Hanoi, in coordination with EAP and IRM)

Recommendation 40: Embassy Hanoi should conduct an inventory of its dedicated Internet networks and consolidate the networks, where possible. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 41: Embassy Hanoi should include representatives from different sections in the local information technology change control board. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

Recommendation 42: (b) (5)



Recommendation 43: (b) (5)



Recommendation 44: (b) (5)

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the content of Recommendation 44. The text "(b) (5)" is visible at the top left of the redacted area.

Recommendation 45: Embassy Hanoi should provide a separate cash advance and a separate safe drawer with a separate combination for the backup consular cashier in Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. (Action: Embassy Hanoi)

List of Informal Recommendations

Informal recommendations cover operational matters not requiring action by organizations outside the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau. Informal recommendations will not be subject to the OIG compliance process. However, any subsequent OIG inspection or on-site compliance review will assess the mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Hanoi should require the public affairs assistant's supervisor to conduct regular performance review counseling sessions and document at least one of those sessions on form DS 1974.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Hanoi should use the arrival of the third public affairs officer in Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City as an opportunity to assess whether an additional local employee is needed in the consulate general's public affairs section.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Hanoi should update Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's English and Vietnamese Web sites, evaluate the technical skills of the consulate general's public affairs staff, and provide appropriate training in Web site development and maintenance.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Hanoi should conduct a cost-benefit analysis regarding the viability of constructing private office space in which American Center employees can securely access their OpenNet accounts.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Hanoi should increase communication and staff exchanges between the American Centers in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Hanoi should implement and enforce a policy that nonimmigrant visa applicants be admitted only at the time of their appointment at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Hanoi should set up an email box at the consular correspondence unit in Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City for consulate general personnel to use for all visa-related correspondence.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Hanoi should implement and enforce a policy that immigrant visa applicants be admitted only at the time of their appointment at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Hanoi should revise the immigrant visa interview schedule at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, from 5 days per week to 4 days per week.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Hanoi should improve the Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City Web site, ask the National Visa Center to link to the Web site, and pursue other outreach opportunities to educate the public about the immigrant visa application process.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Hanoi should hold regular adjudication meetings at a time other than during lunch in the immigrant visa unit at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Hanoi should require that the Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City immigrant visa managers spend at least 1 hour per week, and the consular chief some time each month, adjudicating immigrant visa cases.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Hanoi should capture photographs for Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City at the time files are received from the National Visa Center.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Hanoi should revise Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City's intake procedures, so the same person checks documents and enters data.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Hanoi should close the information window at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, except for a limited amount of time for applicants to drop off passports for nonimmigrant visa renewals.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Hanoi should implement procedures for employees to sign residential inventories within 30 days of their occupying assigned residences.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Hanoi should implement procedures for the information resource management and health units to inventory their property and make note of their respective inventories on the property management report.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Hanoi should require Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to properly organize its expendable property warehouse and cease using manual stock control cards.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Hanoi should revise the position descriptions for the Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City warehousemen to include driving duties, and fill the warehouse unit's vacancies with individuals who are licensed to drive trucks.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Hanoi should require Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to consolidate the facility management's office materials and supplies, store them in the expendable property warehouse, and properly control them.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Hanoi should instruct members of the awards committee to carefully examine patterns of repetitive awards, to maintain the integrity of the awards program.

Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Hanoi should advise the locally employed staff associations in both Embassy Hanoi and Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City on establishing appropriate guidelines and procedures for cash management, logo item sales, and other fund raising activities.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Hanoi should network all printers for the embassy's offices.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Hanoi should require the entire mission's information management staff to complete Global Information Technology Modernization program training.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Hanoi should require all sections to clear any requests for computer equipment with the information management officer.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Hanoi should require Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City to monitor, verify, and update links in a timely manner.

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Hanoi should request a visit by an appropriate official of the Bureau of Administration's Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs, to advise the new American Club manager and association board on stabilizing association operations.

Informal Recommendation 28: (b) (5)



Principal Officials

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	David Shear	08/11
Deputy Chief of Mission	Claire Pierangelo	07/11
Consul General Ho Chi Minh City	An T. Le	08/10
Chiefs of Sections (Hanoi):		
Administrative	Raymond Kengott	08/11
Consular	Deborah Fairman	07/11*
Political	Harry R. Kamian	08/09
Economic	Jessica M. Webster	07/10
Public Affairs	Christopher W. Hodges	09/10
Regional Security	Michael Brenn	09/11
Other Agencies:		
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Bruce Struminger	07/09
Department of Commerce	Sarah Kemp	08/11
Department of Defense	Patrick Reardon	01/09
Department of Homeland Security	Sene Tchen	12/09
Department of Treasury	George Mullinax	10/08
Drug Enforcement Administration	Scott Sutherland	01/09
Foreign Agricultural Service	Jeanne Bailey	09/09
U.S. Agency for International Development	Frank Donovan	11/08

**07/11 as section chief; arrived at Embassy Hanoi 08/09*

Abbreviations

BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
Department	U.S. Department of State
EAP	Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
MRR	Mission Resource Request
MSRP	Mission Strategic and Resource Plan
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

**FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE,
OR MISMANAGEMENT**
of Federal programs hurts everyone.

**Contact the
Office of Inspector General
HOTLINE**
to report illegal or wasteful activities:

202-647-3320
800-409-9926

oighotline@state.gov

oig.state.gov

Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of State
P.O. Box 9778
Arlington, VA 22219

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~