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**Office of Inspector General**  
**United States Department of State**

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ISP-I-24-09

Office of Inspections

February 2024

**Inspection of Embassy Singapore,  
Singapore**

BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

UNCLASSIFIED



# HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State

ISP-I-24-09

## What OIG Inspected

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

## What OIG Recommends

OIG made 23 recommendations: 21 to Embassy Singapore, 1 to the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and 1 to the Bureau of Information Resource Management.

In its comments on the draft report, the Department concurred with 22 recommendations and disagreed with 1 recommendation. OIG considers all 23 recommendations resolved. The Department's response to each recommendation, and OIG's reply, can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The Department's formal responses are reprinted in their entirety in Appendix B.

February 2024

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

Inspection of Embassy Singapore, Singapore

## What OIG Found

- The Ambassador did not model some Department of State leadership and management principles.
- The Ambassador twice committed to consulting services for the embassy without following Department acquisition guidance and processes, leading to unauthorized commitments totaling \$9,900.
- The embassy had approximately \$48,000 in outstanding travel vouchers, extending back to December 2021, related to the Ambassador's travel that either had not been submitted for reimbursement or lacked sufficient supporting documentation to pay the travel claim.
- Multiple embassy sections noted that the Ambassador developed poor relationships with some Singaporean ministries and that his actions, in some cases, hurt progress on Integrated Country Strategy goals and objectives.
- The Ambassador's many projects frequently were unattainable, diverted the embassy's limited resources, and detracted from the staff's ability to perform core duties. Staff also questioned the utility of some projects in promoting U.S. interests in Singapore.
- The Economic-Political Section did not consistently meet Department deadlines for mandatory reports and cable reporting.
- Information management operations had internal control shortcomings related to information security practices, management of printers and non-enterprise laptops, and emergency and evacuation radios.
- Spotlight on Success: The Public Diplomacy Section teamed with 50 alumni to develop a program to mentor underserved students from Singapore's Institute of Technical Education to enable them to compete more effectively in the workforce.

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## CONTEXT



**Figure 1:** Singapore is an island city-state among numerous sea routes (Source: CIA World Factbook).

The Republic of Singapore consists of approximately 60 islands, with an estimated population of nearly 6 million people. Located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, this island city-state is nestled among multiple sea-going trade routes, including the Strait of Malacca to the west, the Singapore Strait due south, and the Straits of Johor to the north, all of which are transit routes through and to the South China Sea, Indian Ocean, and Pacific Ocean.

Singapore is one of the United States' strongest bilateral partners in Southeast Asia, fulfilling an important role in regional security and economics. The United States and Singapore cooperate on security-related issues, including border and maritime security, military preparedness, cybersecurity, and

counterterrorism. Singapore also is a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

For more than 55 years, the U.S.-Singapore relationship has thrived due to mutual economic interests, robust security and defense cooperation, and cultural ties. The countries are close partners in support of the rules-based economic and security order in the Indo-Pacific region and have consistently partnered to address global threats and challenges, including efforts against terrorism, transnational crime, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. More than 30,000 U.S. citizens live in Singapore. Each year, nearly 4,000 Singaporeans study in the United States and more than 1,000 U.S. citizens study in Singapore.

The United States and Singapore also work together for greater impact throughout the region and globally. One mechanism that further strengthens the cooperation for the benefit of the Indo-Pacific region is the U.S.-Singapore Third Country Training Program. Aimed at providing technical assistance and training to ASEAN member states and Timor-Leste, the program focuses on connectivity, sustainable development, and regional resilience. Since the program was established in February 2012, Singapore and the United States jointly have organized 65 courses and trained more than 1,300 government officials from ASEAN member states, Timor-Leste, and the ASEAN Secretariat in the areas of trade, intellectual property, environment, health, urban planning, disaster management, and cybersecurity, among others.

Embassy Singapore's top three strategic objectives, as outlined in the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) approved on March 16, 2022, are:

- Enhance safety and security at home and abroad through a strengthened U.S-Singapore partnership.
- Promote the United States' economic growth and prosperity. Partner with Singapore to create new green economy opportunities and mitigate the climate change crisis.
- Highlight U.S. leadership and strengths to demonstrate the comparative advantages of the United States as an indispensable partner in education, culture, and democratic principles.

At the time of the inspection, Embassy Singapore had 173 authorized U.S. direct-hire positions. Of these, 66 were Department positions. The remaining 107 positions were filled by other U.S. government agency employees, including staff from the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Embassy Singapore also had 153 locally employed staff members and 13 eligible family member positions.

OIG evaluated the embassy's executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.<sup>1</sup> A related classified inspection report includes discussion of the embassy's security program and issues affecting the safety of mission personnel and facilities, certain aspects of the information management program, and certain aspects of policy implementation.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTION**

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OIG assessed Embassy Singapore's leadership based on interviews, staff questionnaires, and OIG's review of documents and observations of embassy meetings and activities during the on-site portion of the inspection.

### **Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct**

The Ambassador, a first time, non-career chief of mission, arrived in December 2021. He was previously an entrepreneur and philanthropist. The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in July 2022. Immediately prior to his arrival in Singapore, he served as the DCM and Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., at the U.S. Embassy in Luxembourg from 2019 to 2022. Before that he served for 2 years on the National Security Council staff as the principal Southeast Asia advisor.

#### ***Ambassador Did Not Model Some Leadership and Management Principles***

Based on surveys and interviews of embassy staff and discussion with embassy leadership, OIG determined the Ambassador did not model some of the Department's leadership and

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

management principles in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214b.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, as detailed below, OIG found the Ambassador did not model integrity, plan strategically, collaborate, or communicate. The Ambassador's perspective, which also is detailed below, was that although there had been a difficult transition when he assumed his position, morale had improved under his leadership, and he was confident that he had gained the trust of his staff. OIG concluded that the embassy operated with varying degrees of effectiveness under the Ambassador's leadership, and a review of his conduct and performance by the Department is needed.

### *Model Integrity*

The Ambassador did not hold himself to the highest standards of conduct, performance, and ethics to model integrity, as defined by 3 FAM 1214b(1).<sup>3</sup> Department and embassy staff told OIG the Ambassador was dismissive of Department regulations and requirements and had a difficult time understanding the limits of working within the government. For example, as detailed below, under the Ambassador's direction, the embassy failed to follow Department acquisition guidance and processes, leading to unauthorized commitments totaling \$9,900. In addition, the Ambassador did not follow many of the Department's travel and reimbursement policies and requirements while performing his approved official travel nor did he seek required exceptions to these policies, leading to approximately \$48,000 in outstanding travel vouchers, extending back to December 2021.

### Ambassador's Actions Led Embassy to Incur Two Unauthorized Commitments

OIG found that under the Ambassador's direction, the embassy failed to follow Department acquisition guidance and processes when the Ambassador committed to two consulting services that caused the embassy to incur two unauthorized commitments totaling \$9,900. The consultant submitted two invoices for payment—one for \$5,650 for a furniture research project for a temporary chief of mission residence and another for \$4,250 for a redesign of the embassy's cafeteria—despite the embassy's contracting officer never authorizing the expenditures.

According to 14 FAM 215a, an unauthorized commitment occurs when a contractual agreement is made that is not binding to the U.S. government because the official who made the agreement lacked the requisite authority to do so. Only warranted contracting officers, acting within the limits of their warrants, or acting upon specific authorization from the Bureau of Administration's Office of the Procurement Executive, may sign acquisition agreements.

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

<sup>3</sup> According to 3 FAM 1214b(1), modeling integrity encompasses the following: "Hold yourself and others to the highest standards of conduct, performance, and ethics, especially when faced with difficult situations. Act in the interest of and protect the welfare of your team and organization. Generously share credit for the accomplishments of the organization. Take responsibility for yourself, your resources, your decisions, and your action."

Contractors who act on unauthorized commitments do so at their own risk and are not entitled to consideration (payment) unless the unauthorized commitment is ratified.

The Ambassador lacked the authority to enter into a contractual agreement as he was not a warranted contracting officer. OIG found the contracting officer was unaware that the work had been performed until the consultant submitted the invoices to the embassy via the Ambassador. OIG determined the Ambassador committed to the services without the contracting officer's approval because he was unaware of the Department's acquisition regulations and directives. Unauthorized commitments may result in personal liability for the individual who made the commitment; moreover, vendors may be at risk of not receiving payment for services performed and goods delivered. Department guidance permits the conversion of unauthorized commitments to legal contracts by ratifying the commitments in question. Because the embassy reported to OIG that it did not ratify the commitments and it had determined the two invoices should be treated as personal expenses of the Ambassador, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

#### Embassy Had Unliquidated Obligations Resulting From Delays in the Submission of Ambassador's Travel Vouchers

OIG found the embassy had unliquidated obligations resulting from delays in the submission of travel vouchers for the Ambassador's travel. Specifically, OIG found approximately \$48,000 worth of outstanding travel obligations extending back to December 2021 that either were not submitted for reimbursement or lacked sufficient supporting documentation to pay the travel claim.<sup>4</sup> OIG found that as of May 2023, the Ambassador had completed only 2 of 13 vouchers. OIG's review of the unliquidated obligations and related travel expenses found that the Ambassador did not follow many of the Department's travel policies or requirements<sup>5</sup> for performing official travel listed in 14 FAM 500 and the reimbursement of official travel expenses, also listed in 14 FAM 500. OIG determined that despite having authorized travel orders with approved itineraries, the Ambassador often elected to arrange travel himself based on his personal preferences. In addition, OIG determined that despite having authorized travel orders with approved itineraries, the Ambassador did not follow the itineraries and instead arranged travel himself based on his personal preferences and for his convenience. Specifically, the Ambassador did not:

- Use the embassy's travel management center<sup>6</sup> and instead purchased tickets through other travel agents and sites (14 FAM 541a-c).

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<sup>4</sup> According to 4 FAM 225d, unliquidated obligations for prior year travel must be targeted and adjusted to zero if they cannot be documented as valid obligations that will be liquidated.

<sup>5</sup> Although Department standards permit exceptions to the use of noncontract air carriers and other travel-related requirements, the traveler must obtain approval for the exceptions; see 14 FAM 542.2a and c. At the time of the inspection, OIG did not find approved exceptions to the travel requirements discussed in this finding. In addition, the Ambassador did not provide approved exceptions in response to the draft report.

<sup>6</sup> A travel management center is a commercial travel agent under joint contract with the General Services Administration, Department of State, and other foreign affairs agencies.

- Use the embassy's centrally billed account or any other preferred payment method for his airline tickets (14 FAM 543.1a).
- Use contract carrier fares<sup>7</sup> where available and authorized in travel orders, but instead flew unauthorized airlines, routes, and classes (14 FAM 542b).
- Comply with the Fly America Act<sup>8</sup> and instead used foreign carriers to leave and enter the United States (14 FAM 581.4a).
- Submit travel vouchers<sup>9</sup> promptly and within the required period (14 FAM 5171a).

OIG also determined the Ambassador requested to be reimbursed based on his initial approved travel authorization. However, because he never submitted travel vouchers for some trips, submitted vouchers without the required supporting documentation, or submitted vouchers that mixed personal and official travel, embassy staff responsible for reviewing and approving travel claims had difficulty determining what and how much should be reimbursed to the Ambassador. By not clearing up unliquidated obligations, the embassy risks not being able to put these funds to better use. In addition, by not adhering to Department and federal travel policies and regulations and instead performing official travel based on personal preference or convenience, the Ambassador risks being responsible for excess travel costs, or, in some cases, all charges incurred for travel that did not comply with governing regulations and standards.<sup>10</sup>

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Singapore should review all unliquidated obligations related to the Ambassador's travel in accordance with Department guidelines and federal regulations and put up to \$48,000 to better use. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

### *Plan Strategically*

Although the Ambassador approved the embassy's ICS, as discussed under Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives below, OIG found the Ambassador did not plan strategically with regards to specific initiatives by developing and promoting attainable, shared goals<sup>11</sup> with embassy sections. For example, he asked the Public Diplomacy Section to explore his idea to

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<sup>7</sup> Contract carriers are U.S. certified air carriers that are under contract with the government to furnish federal employees and other persons authorized to travel at government expense with passenger transportation service. This also includes General Services Administration's scheduled airline passenger service between selected U.S. cities and airports and between selected U.S. and international cities and airports at reduced fares.

<sup>8</sup> The Fly America Act, 49 U.S.C. § 40118, establishes as a legal requirement that all U.S. government-financed air travel be performed on U.S.-flag air carriers unless such travel by foreign air carrier is a matter of necessity or when U.S.-flag carrier air service is unavailable.

<sup>9</sup> Travel claim (voucher): A written request, supported by documentation and receipts where applicable, for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of official travel.

<sup>10</sup> In response to the draft report, the Ambassador noted that when requesting travel based on his personal preferences, he understood that he would be responsible to pay any travel costs not reimbursable under Department standards.

<sup>11</sup> According to 3 FAM 1214b(2), planning strategically encompasses the following: "Develop and promote attainable, shared short and long term goals with stakeholders for your project, program, team, or organization. Provide a clear focus, establish expectations, give direction, and monitor results. Seek consensus and unified effort by anticipating, preventing, and discouraging counter-productive confrontation."

show the 2022 Super Bowl for free to outdoor public audiences, despite Singapore's limitations on outdoor events because of COVID-19, the lack of popularity of American football in Singapore, and the cost to the embassy to put on the event. Staff told OIG that, these obstacles notwithstanding, the Ambassador insisted they keep trying to organize the Super Bowl event, and he blamed them when the event could not be arranged. In another example, in January 2023, the Ambassador directed embassy staff to work with the U.S. Navy to organize a reception on the USS Makin Island that would feature a concert by an American professional pianist who was a friend of the Ambassador. Although the embassy ultimately considered the event to be successful in its goal of raising awareness about U.S. policy regarding Ukraine, staff told OIG they had limited time to plan the event and faced challenges with logistics and budget. The reception, which included placing a piano on the ship's deck, cost \$27,812, leading the embassy to reduce funding for other public diplomacy programs that might have more effectively advanced U.S. interests in Singapore.

### *Collaborate*

OIG found the Ambassador failed to establish constructive working relationships with all embassy elements.<sup>12</sup> He struggled to establish trust with embassy staff because of his poor relationship with the previous DCM, the staff's perception that he rejected the embassy's 100-day engagement plan, and his apparent lack of interest in their work. Staff members told OIG the Ambassador and the former DCM had a tense relationship, with the Ambassador rejecting the latter's advice on activities to help the Ambassador adjust to his new position. Embassy staff noted further that the Ambassador dismissed the embassy's suggested plan for the Ambassador's engagements during his first 100 days at post. Staff members also told OIG the Ambassador did not make an effort to understand the work of their sections or read briefing materials they prepared. He instructed them to pursue projects that appeared to them to reflect his personal priorities over broader foreign policy interests. These priorities included a search for a new chief of mission residence, his instructions to staff to obtain VIP treatment for him at popular cultural events, and the pursuit of the public Super Bowl event detailed above.

### *Communicate*

OIG found the Ambassador did not offer and solicit constructive feedback, nor was he always cognizant of the morale and attitude of embassy staff.<sup>13</sup> Staff expressed frustration with the Ambassador's frequent last-minute changes and cancelations to his schedule, and prolonged indecision regarding his participation in embassy-sponsored events. They described coordination with the Front Office as "next to impossible" and cumbersome to the point that some embassy sections were reticent or fearful of engaging with the Ambassador unless absolutely necessary. Numerous staff described a fear, and even direct threats, of reprisal from

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<sup>12</sup> According to 3 FAM 1214b(7), collaborate encompasses the following: "Establish constructive working relationships with all mission elements to further goals. Share best practices, quality procedures, and innovative ideas to eliminate redundancies and reduce costs. Create a sense of pride and mutual support through openness."

<sup>13</sup> According to 3 FAM 1214b(4), communicate encompasses the following: "Express yourself clearly and effectively. Be approachable and listen actively. Offer and solicit constructive feedback from others. Be cognizant of the morale and attitude of your team. Anticipate varying points of view by soliciting input."

the Ambassador. They described his mannerisms with personnel as belittling and intimidating and said that he frequently spoke disparagingly about U.S. government employees and the Department.

### *Ambassador's Perspective*

The Ambassador told OIG embassy morale improved under his leadership, although he also gave credit to the lifting of previous COVID-related restrictions and the arrival of the current DCM for some of the improvement. He said embassy culture was relaxed prior to his arrival and the embassy was in a state of disrepair since there had been no ambassador for the previous 5 years. As such, he said he was working to improve the embassy's infrastructure. The Ambassador also told OIG a combination of hopefulness and apprehension marked his arrival because he was a political appointee and not a Foreign Service officer. He said it had been a difficult transition because the Foreign Service staff had learned how to manage without an ambassador, and while he had a rocky start gaining people's trust, the Ambassador was confident that he had now done so.

### *Conclusion*

OIG concluded the embassy operated with varying degrees of effectiveness under the Ambassador's leadership for many of the reasons enumerated above, as well as others described later in this report. As a positive, OIG determined the Ambassador and the DCM established a good relationship, and the Ambassador often accepted the DCM's guidance. Embassy staff also reported to OIG that embassy operations and morale improved somewhat after the DCM arrived. Nevertheless, staff told OIG the DCM had a difficult job in managing the Ambassador's expectations of embassy employees and significant improvements in the Ambassador's leadership approach were still needed.

As stated in 3 FAM 1214b, supervisors and managers have a unique opportunity and responsibility to lead by example and foster the highest attainable degree of employee morale and productivity. As the seniormost manager in the mission, the Ambassador does not just have a responsibility to lead by example and in accordance with the Department's leadership and management principles, but an obligation to do so. Because, as described above, the Ambassador did not always lead in accordance with the Department's principles, which had a negative impact on both embassy operations and employee morale, OIG determined the mission would benefit from a thorough review by the Department of the Ambassador's compliance with the principles.

**Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should assess the Ambassador's compliance with the Department's leadership and management principles and, if appropriate, take corrective action. (Action: EAP, in coordination with GTM)

## Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

### *Embassy Developed Integrated Country Strategy But Missed Opportunities to Advance Goals*

OIG determined the embassy developed its March 2022 ICS in accordance with instructions in 21 STATE 107242,<sup>14</sup> requiring overseas missions to complete a new 4-year ICS that aligns with the administration's priorities. The embassy also used an offsite meeting in November 2022 to review ICS progress.

The embassy furthered the ICS goal of strengthening the U.S.-Singapore partnership by increasing cooperation on cybersecurity and the sale of additional U.S. military aircraft, as well as by supporting the visit of Singapore's Attorney General to the United States. The Ambassador had a range of contacts with numerous Singaporean ministries, other foreign missions, and the private sector. For example, from March to May 2023, the Ambassador met with Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Home Affairs, Attorney General, and Minister of Education. Additionally, the embassy provided OIG with 26 cables documenting the Ambassador's meetings or interactions with cabinet ministers, senior officials, and other counterparts between his arrival at the embassy in December 2021 and June 2023 when the on-site portion of the inspection concluded.

However, OIG determined the embassy missed some opportunities to advance ICS goals. Multiple embassy sections noted the Ambassador developed poor relationships with some ministries and his actions, in some cases, hurt progress on ICS goals and objectives. Specifically, it was described that the Ambassador often was unprepared on issues and made statements that were counterproductive to a section's work. Staff also noted the need for the Ambassador to conduct more meetings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ambassador told OIG meetings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were unproductive with only an exchange of talking points and no real discussions. During the inspection, OIG observed that the Ambassador accompanied a visiting congressional delegation to a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

OIG also found the Ambassador had limited contacts with Singapore's traditional media. For example, at the time of the inspection, he had held only two press events since his arrival in Singapore, one of which was off-the-record. The Ambassador told OIG there was no need for him to deal with Singapore's traditional media and he preferred to use social media. Staff told OIG the Ambassador appeared indifferent to the embassy's social media priorities and focused instead on the number of followers on his official Instagram account, which as of March 2023 had 825 followers.

## Adherence to Internal Controls

OIG found that the Ambassador and the DCM generally oversaw the preparation of the FY 2022 Annual Chief of Mission Management Control Statement of Assurance in accordance with 2

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<sup>14</sup> Cable 21 STATE 107242, "Launch of Mission Planning," October 21, 2021.

FAM 022.7(1) and (5), which require chiefs of mission to develop and maintain appropriate systems of management control of their organizations. In preparing the Statement of Assurance, the Management Section collected input from relevant sections and briefed the DCM on weaknesses and deficiencies. Although the Statement of Assurance affirmed the embassy completed all required information systems security officer duties, OIG found the embassy did not carry out these duties, which should have constituted a post-level significant deficiency in the Statement of Assurance. This issue is discussed in more detail in the Information Management section of this report. Additionally, as discussed later in this report, OIG found internal control issues in grants management, consular management, resource management, and information management.

OIG confirmed the DCM carried out regular reviews of the Consular Section chief's nonimmigrant visa adjudications, as required by 9 FAM 403.12-1 and 9 FAM 403.12-2a and b.

### ***The Ambassador Submitted Referrals Without Completing the Required Briefing***

Although the Ambassador had been advised on the Nonimmigrant Visa Referral and Priority Appointment Request Program,<sup>15</sup> at the time of the inspection, he had not signed a compliance agreement indicating he agreed to comply with the program's rules. The Ambassador submitted visa inquiries on behalf of several individuals. However, inquiries of this nature are only permissible when the individual has a signed compliance agreement under the program rules in 9 FAM 601.8-1(A). OIG reviewed all signed compliance agreements and did not find one for the Ambassador. The agreement is signed at the conclusion of the briefing, and the absence of the signed agreement indicates a briefing did not take place. Advocacy for the issuance of a visa, or for special processing considerations, outside the parameters of the Nonimmigrant Visa Referral and Priority Appointment Request Program, is strictly prohibited.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Singapore should require the Ambassador to attend a briefing on the Nonimmigrant Visa Referral and Priority Appointment Request Program and sign a compliance agreement. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

### ***Embassy Singapore Did Not Fully Comply With Department Gift Fund Registry Requirements***

OIG found Embassy Singapore did not fully comply with Department gift requirements under 2 FAM 960. Between November 2022 and March 2023, the embassy received tickets to entertainment events occurring in Singapore which were used for representational purposes and provided to the Community Liaison Office for distribution to embassy staff. OIG determined the embassy did not report the tickets on the Gift Fund Registry, contrary to 2 FAM 962.10. The acting Management Counselor was unaware of this requirement. By not following 2 FAM 960, the embassy risks the appearance of impropriety when accepting gifts on behalf of the Department.

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<sup>15</sup> Under the Nonimmigrant Visa Referral and Priority Appointment Request program, officials under chief of mission authority can advocate for the issuance of a nonimmigrant visa or for special processing consideration of a nonimmigrant visa application.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Singapore should comply with Department standards regarding the acceptance of gifts. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

## **Security and Emergency Planning**

OIG found the Ambassador and the DCM's leadership of the security and emergency preparedness programs generally was consistent with the Department's guidelines in 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-721a. The embassy's emergency action plan was up to date and met Department requirements. The embassy also conducted an annual review of the security memorandum of agreement between the chief of mission and the geographic combatant commander as required by 2 FAH-2 H-116.4b.<sup>16</sup>

However, OIG found the Ambassador did not participate in any security drills in the first five months of 2023, and participated in only two drills in 2022, because the drills generally occurred while he was away from the embassy or out of the country. As such, he was unable to lead by example and emphasize through his participation in drills that emergency preparedness was a priority for the mission in accordance with guidelines in 12 FAH-1 H-762a. Non-participation by the Ambassador could weaken the culture of preparedness within the mission to respond to a crisis.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Singapore should schedule embassy-wide security drills when the Ambassador is present and able to participate, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

## **Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**

OIG found that the embassy's Equal Employment Opportunity practices were consistent with 3 FAM 1514.2<sup>17</sup> and the Department's leadership principles in 3 FAM 1214b(6) and 21 STATE 60514.4.<sup>18</sup> Embassy staff told OIG the DCM emphasized the importance of diversity and inclusion. The embassy posted Equal Employment Opportunity information on its bulletin boards and on its SharePoint site.

Embassy staff told OIG that the Ambassador and the DCM supported the embassy's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council. Council members told OIG the Ambassador encouraged a gay pride event and advocated for the accreditation of same-sex couples by the

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<sup>16</sup> The memorandum of agreement between the Department of State and the Department of Defense assigns security responsibility for Department of Defense personnel in foreign areas. Under the terms of the agreement, the chief of mission is responsible for providing security to all Department of Defense personnel in country who are not under the command of a geographic combatant commander. The agreement is required to be reviewed and signed annually.

<sup>17</sup> This section of the FAM was removed in July 2023, after fieldwork for this inspection concluded. These principles are still incorporated in other Department guidance, including 2 FAM 1510.

<sup>18</sup> Cable 21 STATE 60514 "Policy Statements on Diversity and Inclusion and Equal Opportunity and Harassment," June 11, 2021.

Singapore government. Council members told OIG the DCM enabled greater locally employed staff participation in council activities by incorporating DEIA principles in work requirements and helping the council establish a strategic plan.

## **Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals**

OIG concluded the DCM's efforts to mentor First- and Second-Tour (FAST) Foreign Service professionals were fully consistent with 3 FAM 2713b and the Department's leadership principles in 3 FAM 1214b(8), which require leaders to value and develop employees through mentoring, coaching, and other opportunities. FAST personnel told OIG the DCM oversaw the program, implemented by the FAST Council, that included a networking event at the DCM's residence with foreign diplomats and Singapore officials, discussions on career issues, and meetings with Department visitors.

## **POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

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OIG assessed Embassy Singapore's policy and program implementation work performed by the Economic-Political, Public Diplomacy, and Consular Sections through interviews with embassy staff of each section and a review of documentation. OIG found the embassy generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation. However, OIG made recommendations to address issues in the three sections, as discussed below.

### **Economic-Political Section**

OIG reviewed the Economic-Political Section's leadership and management, policy implementation, reporting, grants management,<sup>19</sup> and Leahy vetting.<sup>20</sup> OIG found the section generally operated in accordance with Department standards and coordinated its work with other embassy offices and agencies. Department stakeholders gave the section positive marks for competence and cooperation, although some pointed out the section frequently missed reporting deadlines. Office morale within the section was positive, with employees generally expressing satisfaction with their work responsibilities and with section leadership. However, several employees noted the section carried a heavy workload which contributed to reporting delays, as discussed below.

OIG found the Economic-Political Section's employees were familiar with the ICS and that it generally guided their work. OIG reviewed the section's 110 reporting cables transmitted between October 2022 and May 2023 and found they supported ICS goals and Department priorities. The section also transmitted a daily email update to stakeholders in the Department, other overseas posts, and other agencies, which staff consolidated into a cable every few

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<sup>19</sup> The section managed a single cooperative agreement valued at \$651,655 that provided regional cybersecurity capacity-building programs. An Economic-Political Section officer served as the grants officer representative; an official in the Department's Office of Acquisition Management acted as the grants officer.

<sup>20</sup> The Leahy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 prohibits the United States from furnishing certain assistance to a unit of a foreign security force if the Department has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. See 22 U.S.C. § 2378d and 9 FAM 303.8-5(B).

weeks. The section also occasionally produced analytical cables that provided insight on issues of particular interest to Washington stakeholders such as Singapore's relationship with China.

### ***Section Did Not Submit Mandatory Reports, Cable Reporting in a Timely Manner***

OIG found the Economic-Political Section did not consistently meet Department deadlines for mandatory reports and cable reporting, including demarche responses and Blue Lantern export control checks.<sup>21</sup> The section missed Department-mandated reporting deadlines on its annual report submissions, sometimes by several months. For example, the embassy's submission for the Trafficking In Persons Report was 91 days late, and its submission for the Country Reports on Terrorism was 32 days late. In addition, the section submitted five of the six Blue Lantern end-use monitoring cases closed between March 2022 and June 2023 after the Department's deadline; the overdue cases took between 100 and 845 days to be completed.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the section frequently transmitted reporting cables several weeks after the events being reported, contrary to Department guidelines on the importance of timely reporting.<sup>23</sup>

Economic-Political Section employees told OIG their workload burden often prevented timely reporting and the ability to perform all their assigned duties within associated deadlines. They cited support for the high volume of official visitors to Singapore, which they said fell disproportionately on the section, as a primary element of this burden. Section staff also said frequent Front Office taskers affected their workload, and the part-time detail of a political officer to the Front Office further reduced section resources. Finally, staff noted lengthy delays by leadership, both within the section and in the Front Office, in clearing reporting. Failure to take action and report results in a timely manner risks leaving the Department and other stakeholders uninformed about activities that shape policymaking.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Singapore should implement a plan to improve the timeliness of annual report submissions, Blue Lantern export control checks, demarches, and reporting cables, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

## **Public Diplomacy**

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section's leadership, strategic planning, reporting, resource and knowledge management, federal assistance awards, educational and cultural programs, and media engagement. OIG determined the section's efforts supported Embassy Singapore's

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<sup>21</sup> Blue Lantern is a Department-managed end-use monitoring program established to implement the Arms Export Control Act and International Traffic in Arms Regulations and to verify the legitimacy of the export of items on the United States Munitions List (see 22 U.S.C. § 2785(a)(2)(A)). In order to detect and deter illegal and unauthorized arms transfers, the Department may request embassy officers to conduct inquiries with foreign government and business representatives and make site visits.

<sup>22</sup> The Blue Lantern Guidebook, issued by the Office of Defense Trade Controls Policy in the Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, sets deadlines between 30 and 45 days for an embassy to conduct a Blue Lantern check, depending on the type being conducted.

<sup>23</sup> Cable 22 STATE 30947, "The Importance of Diplomatic Reporting, and its Disclosure and Release," August 25, 2022.

ICS goals and were integrated embassy wide. Embassy Singapore's website and social media platforms hosted appropriate and up-to-date content, much of it locally generated, and complied with Department standards. The Public Diplomacy Section also made good use of Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs programs, and maintained wide-ranging relationships with media, educational, cultural, and private sector partners that advanced ICS goals. Overall, OIG found the embassy's public diplomacy activities met Department standards and guidance, with the exception discussed below.

***Some Public Diplomacy Grant Files Lacked Evidence of Competition, Merit Review, Monitoring, or Closeout Review***

OIG reviewed 20 grant and cooperative agreement files with a total value of \$665,052 and found that they generally complied with Department standards and that funds were used for their intended purpose.<sup>24</sup> However, several files lacked evidence of competition, a merit review, monitoring, grantee final report, or final section review. The Department's Federal Assistance Directive<sup>25</sup> requires that federal assistance awards generally be competed in a full and open competition; evaluated by a review panel; and monitored to ensure adherence to programmatic and financial management performance objectives as well as the accomplishment of the intended activities, goals, and objectives. Furthermore, the official federal awards file is to be documented with a written program assessment at closeout.<sup>26</sup> Staff told OIG the lack of documentation for competition, merit review, monitoring, or a written assessment occurred because of staffing gaps<sup>27</sup> and a heavy workload, exacerbated by Front Office demands for logistically complicated outreach events and social media engagement. Failure to properly document grant files impair the section's ability to identify and mitigate risk, monitor program implementation, evaluate program results, and ensure accountability for public diplomacy resources. Because grants officers and grants officers' representatives began documenting the files with evidence of competition, merit review, monitoring, and documentation required for closeout, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

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<sup>24</sup> OIG reviewed a selection of 20 grants out of a universe of 70 grants totaling \$1,337,594 awarded from January 1, 2021, to March 15, 2023. The sample included all grants and cooperative agreements greater than \$25,000 and four grants slightly below \$25,000. (i.e., grants of \$24,853, \$24,939, and two grants of \$24,990).

<sup>25</sup> The Department's Federal Assistance Directive (FAD) establishes internal guidance, policies, and procedures for all domestic and overseas grant-making bureaus, offices, and posts within the Department when administering federal financial assistance. See 1 FAM 212.2.

<sup>26</sup> Standards relevant to this finding were FAD, October 2021, Chapter 2 F1-4 (Pre-Federal Award Requirements: Conduct an Open Competition to Select a Recipient; Chapter 2 H1-2 (Pre-Federal Award Requirements: Conduct a Merit Review of Proposals and Recipient Selection; Chapter 4.D. 5 (Post Federal Award Requirements: Monitoring and Reporting); Chapter 4.D.4-5 (Post Federal Award Requirements: Monitoring and Reporting: Performance Progress Report, Desk Monitoring and Site Visits); and Chapter 5C (Closeout: Grants Officer Responsibilities).

<sup>27</sup> The resource coordination specialist, who was primarily responsible for ensuring that grants files were properly maintained, departed in November 2022 and her successor did not join the section until May 2023. The resource coordination assistant, who also oversaw grants compliance, left the section in August 2022 and her successor joined the section in November 2022.

### Spotlight on Success: Partnering with Program Alumni to Mentor Underserved Students

Embassy Singapore's Public Diplomacy Section teamed with 50 alumni of its programs to mentor 50 underprivileged students from Singapore's Institute of Technical Education to enable them to compete more effectively in the workforce. The U.S. Embassy Alumni Mentoring Program matched 50 students from the institute with 50 Fulbright, International Visitor Leadership Program, and Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative alumni. U.S. corporate partners hosted sessions with the students and mentors that were designed to prepare students to compete for jobs while also introducing them to American business practices. In addition, the mentoring program created opportunities for Embassy Singapore to conduct other public diplomacy initiatives with the institute and corporate partners.



**Figure 2:** U.S. Embassy Alumni Mentoring Program group photo at Boeing Singapore Training Center, May 20, 2023 (Source: Embassy Singapore).

### Consular Operations

OIG reviewed Embassy Singapore's consular operations, including section leadership, U.S. citizen services, crisis preparedness, management controls, visa services and processing, outreach, and fraud prevention programs. At the time of the inspection, Embassy Singapore's wait time for nonimmigrant visa appointments remained low, allowing it to set aside blocks of visa appointments for residents of other Asian countries with long appointment wait times. However, the diverse range of applicants required more staff time and resources to deal with language barriers, to verify documentation from a variety of countries, and to resolve fraud concerns.

During the inspection, consular personnel addressed one issue in immigrant visa processing by revising workflows to ensure officer oversight of documents submitted by applicants, in accordance with the Management Controls Checklist for Immigrant Visa Operations.

OIG determined Embassy Singapore's consular operations complied with guidance contained in 7 FAM, 9 FAM, 7 FAH, applicable statutes, and other Department policies, with the exceptions noted below.

***Wait Time for U.S. Citizen Services Exceeded Time for Visa Appointments***

OIG found the appointment wait time for U.S. citizen services, such as passports and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, exceeded the wait time for nonimmigrant visa appointments, contrary to guidance in 7 FAH-1 H-263.7(d). Embassy staff told OIG the Front Office focused its attention on visa wait times and encouraged the Consular Section to devote more staff to visa services, reducing the available resources for U.S. citizen services. Failure to appropriately manage appointment wait times could result in U.S. citizens continuing to wait longer for embassy services than non-citizens.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Singapore should manage U.S. citizen services and visa wait times in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

***Embassy Failed to Resolve Fraud Referrals Within Required Timeframe***

OIG found the Consular Section failed to resolve pending fraud referrals within the required timeframe. Of the 37 referred cases pending with the Fraud Prevention Unit for investigation at the time of the inspection, 27 had been pending for more than 60 days, contrary to standards in 7 FAH-1 H-941.2(b). Consular managers told OIG the increase in applicants from outside Singapore led to an increased number of fraud referrals. In addition, the sole fraud prevention investigator was assigned to the unit part-time and therefore had insufficient time to work on these cases, leading to the backlog. Failure to resolve referrals to the Fraud Prevention Unit in a timely manner delays the final adjudication of services for U.S. citizens applying for passports and other citizenship documentation and for foreign nationals applying for visas.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Singapore should resolve fraud referrals in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

***Refused Immigrant Visa Paper Files Not Destroyed on Schedule***

OIG's review of immigrant visa files found the section did not destroy refused immigrant visa case files on schedule. File retention guidance in 9 FAM 601.6-3 states that paper files for refused immigrant visa applications may be retained for a certain period depending on the type of refusal, but once that period elapses, the relevant records from the files should be scanned into the electronic case file and then destroyed. Consular personnel told OIG they were unaware of this guidance and believed the files should be retained indefinitely. Failure to destroy files on the appropriate schedule increases the amount of unnecessary personally identifiable information being held by the section.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Singapore should destroy immigrant visa files according to Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

### ***Erroneously Refused Visa Cases Not Appropriately Resolved***

OIG reviewed the nonimmigrant visa processing system and found those cases in which an applicant's visa had been accidentally refused prior to being issued were not appropriately resolved. According to 9 FAM 303.3-4(D)(2), when a case is refused in error in the nonimmigrant visa processing system, the adjudicating officer is required to send a cable<sup>28</sup> to the Department requesting that the erroneous refusal record be deleted from the system. The consular chief told OIG that she was unaware that adjudicating officers did not notify the Department via cable as required. Failure to send the proper cables can result in visa applicants having incorrect records of refusal in the nonimmigrant visa system, which could make it harder for them to qualify for a visa in the future.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Singapore should follow Department standards regarding incorrectly refused visa cases. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

## **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

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OIG reviewed Embassy Singapore's management operations and internal controls in general services, facility management, human resources, and financial management. During the inspection, the embassy corrected two internal control issues identified by OIG. Specifically, the embassy:

- Worked with the Financial Management Office, the Regional Security Office, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to research and de-obligate approximately \$172,000 in unliquidated obligations related to the embassy's local guard force contact from previous fiscal years (4 FAM 225c and d).
- Updated the Chief of Mission memo to provide a justification for home-to-work transportation for the DCM (14 FAM 432.3c(4)).

Overall, OIG found the Management Section generally implemented required processes and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and Department guidance. However, OIG found that the lack of a permanent management officer since August 2022, despite coverage from experienced temporary duty management officers, led to some challenges with continuity, as detailed in the exceptions noted below.

### **General Services**

#### ***Embassy Did Not Fully Comply With Department's Motor Vehicle Safety Standards***

Embassy Singapore did not fully adhere to the Department's overseas motor vehicle safety standards. Specifically, OIG found operators of official vehicles regularly exceeded the 10-hour per day limit on duty shifts, contrary to 14 FAM 433.8a. OIG reviewed time and attendance

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<sup>28</sup> Known as a CLOK cable, it requests the Department to enter, correct, or delete a lookout from the Consular Lookout and Support System database.

records for six pay periods in 2023<sup>29</sup> and found the embassy's motor pool drivers exceeded 10 hours on duty on 12 occasions, working shifts of between 11 and 17 hours. In addition, OIG found one non-motor pool driver exceeded the 10-hour limit on duty shifts on at least 28 occasions over the same six pay periods. OIG determined the embassy's drivers worked these additional and excessive overtime hours to support the Front Office. In many cases, overtime had neither been planned nor scheduled in advance and in many cases additional hours were needed to provide support at the last minute and longer than originally requested. In addition, the loss of one dedicated Front Office driver exacerbated this issue. Failure to enforce driver duty limits decreases motor vehicle safety and increases the risk of injury to drivers, passengers, and the public, as well as damage to U.S. government property.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Singapore should enforce driver duty limits for all mission drivers, in accordance with Department motor vehicle safety standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

***Embassy Did Not Complete Procurement File Closeout Process in Accordance With Department Guidelines***

Embassy Singapore did not complete procurement file closeout in the Department's electronic filing system within the required timeframes. OIG found that at the time of the inspection, the embassy had a backlog of 1,192 procurement files from FY 2015 to the first 5 months of FY 2023 that were ready for closeout but had yet to be closed out in the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS).<sup>30</sup> Guidance in 14 FAH-2 H-573.2b states that contracts issued under simplified acquisition procedures should be closed out immediately after the contracting officer receives evidence of receipt of property and final payment. Embassy staff told OIG the files were not closed out because of competing priorities and a heavy workload in the General Services Office. Failure to close out procurement files within the required timeframe increases the risk of inaccuracies in procurement records and internal control issues in procurement operations.

**Recommendation 12:** Embassy Singapore should close out its procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

***Embassy Did Not Administer Its Contracts in Accordance With Acquisition Standards***

The embassy did not administer its contracts in accordance with Department and federal acquisition standards. OIG found that the embassy's contracting officer's representatives did not consistently complete the required annual performance assessments for the embassy's two

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<sup>29</sup> OIG reviewed overtime records for embassy drivers for pay periods 4 through 9, including adjustments recorded in those pay periods for previous pay periods.

<sup>30</sup> The Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS) is an integrated web-based system that encompasses all Department supply chain functions in one system. ILMS is designed to upgrade Department supply chain management by improving operations in areas such as purchasing, procurement, warehousing, transportation, property management, personal effects, and diplomatic pouch and mail.

contracts above the simplified acquisition threshold,<sup>31</sup> as required by Federal Acquisition Regulation 42.1502(b). OIG found the embassy last assessed the janitorial services contract in 2021 and the health and life insurance contract for locally employed staff in 2020. In addition, the embassy did not document these last performance assessments for either contract in the government-wide Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System, as required in 14 FAH-2 H-142b(21) and Federal Acquisition Regulation 42.1502(a). Embassy staff told OIG these issues occurred because of turnover in the contracting officer's representatives administering these contracts and a lack of management oversight. Failure to regularly assess contractor performance increases the risk of fraud, and can result in excessive costs, misuse of U.S. government resources, and substandard contractor performance.

**Recommendation 13:** Embassy Singapore should administer contracts in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

## Facilities Management

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

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

- Correct all deficiencies identified in the July 2022 Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report. Some higher risk recommendations remained open at the time of OIG's inspection. These recommendations included replacing locks on the fire doors in the Marine Security Guard residence, installing the magnetic releases on doors on the fourth floor of the chancery, and implementing a program to inspect, test, and maintain the chief of mission residence fire alarm system. According to 15 FAM 813.3c and d, embassy personnel must correct deficiencies on a priority basis and submit all results to OBO's Office of Fire Protection no later than one year from the date of the fire and life safety inspection.
- Conduct operational or functional checks of the embassy's fire protection systems including daily checks of the main fire alarm detection panel and monthly inspections of the sprinkler system. According to 15 FAM 841a, the facility manager, general services officer, or senior maintenance manager must review the detection panel daily, inspect the sprinkler system monthly, and ensure a weekly functional test of each installed fire pump is performed. Additionally, a log must be kept and available for review during OBO visits.
- Ensure occupants conduct monthly residential fire extinguisher and smoke alarm checks. According to 15 FAM 843d, residents must conduct a visual inspection of their fire extinguishers monthly for operable condition and report any deficiencies to the

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<sup>31</sup> The Department's Overseas Procurement Guide, dated July 2021, states the current simplified acquisition threshold is \$250,000.

facilities manager or general services officer. Residents must also conduct monthly smoke detector inspections as required by 15 FAM 842b.

- Include the fire protection system in its Building Maintenance Expenses program. According to 15 FAM 841e, enrollment in the program is required and ensures annual inspection and testing of fire protection systems is conducted by certified subject matter experts.

Embassy staff told OIG they were unaware of some requirements and that other factors, including delivery delays for building materials and equipment to fix deficiencies as well as low resident participation in residential fire safety equipment inspections, contributed to these issues. Failure to comply with the Department's fire protection standards increases the risk of injury, loss of life, and damage to property.

**Recommendation 14:** Embassy Singapore, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore, in coordination with OBO)

#### ***Embassy Did Not Properly Manage Facility Management Expendable Supplies***

OIG found that Embassy Singapore did not track or manage its facility management expendable supplies (spare parts, building materials, and tools) in the ILMS Expendable Management System, as required by 14 FAM 414.2-1a(2). Staff told OIG they were unaware of this requirement and lacked the staff needed to enter items into the system. Failure to account for expendable property in the Department-approved property record system increases the risk of mismanagement and theft of embassy property.

**Recommendation 15:** Embassy Singapore should administer its facility management expendable supplies in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

## **Financial Management**

#### ***Embassy's Foreign Per Diem Rates Were Out of Date***

OIG found Embassy Singapore's per diem rates were out of date. According to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances, the embassy last submitted its hotel and restaurant reports in 2014. Department of State Standardized Regulations 074.2 states that the hotel and restaurant reports must be submitted biennially. Embassy staff told OIG they were unaware these reports were overdue. Failure to submit reports every 2 years, as required, could result in overpayment or underpayment of travel expenses to U.S. government personnel.

**Recommendation 16:** Embassy Singapore should submit its hotel and restaurant reports to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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OIG reviewed the embassy's Information Management (IM) operations, including classified, unclassified, and dedicated internet network<sup>32</sup> computer operations; records management; physical protection of IT resources; classified communications security; emergency communications preparedness; telephone program; and pouch and mail services.

During the inspection, embassy IM staff took the following steps to remedy issues identified by OIG:

- Stopped storing passwords on removable media (12 FAH-10 H-132.4-4c).
- Labeled media and IT equipment with authorized security labels to show the highest level of information processed by or stored on the systems (12 FAH-10 H-262.2-1).
- Instituted access and maintenance logs for managing the embassy's telephone system (12 FAH-6 H-651.5-6c (1) and (2)).

OIG determined the embassy's IM operations generally complied with Department standards, with the exceptions discussed below.

### ***Information Systems Security Officers Did Not Perform All Required Duties***

Embassy Singapore's Information Systems Security Officers (ISSO) did not perform all required systems security duties. According to 12 FAM 613.4 and 5 FAH-11 H-116a(1), ISSOs are responsible for implementing the security program for information systems, the minimum requirements for which are detailed in the Bureau of Information Resource Management's ISSO checklist.<sup>33</sup> OIG found embassy ISSOs did not perform, or document routine duties included in the ISSO checklist or outlined in 12 FAH-10.<sup>34</sup>

Additionally, the ISSOs did not have the classified and unclassified ISSO accounts needed to perform the duties until OIG brought it to their attention. During the inspection, IM staff created those ISSO accounts. OIG determined these issues occurred because ISSOs did not plan time for the ISSO duties. At the start of the inspection, the ISSO for the Department's OpenNet and the embassy's dedicated internet network started to use the checklist to add the duties to his calendar, but the classified ISSO had yet to start planning to perform the duties. OIG issued management assistance reports in May 2017 and December 2020 that highlighted widespread

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<sup>32</sup> A dedicated internet network is dedicated internet access from an internet service provider on a department-owned and -operated discrete non-sensitive unclassified local area network that is not connected to any other Department system.

<sup>33</sup> The ISSO checklist includes a description of 53 tasks, an explanation of minimum tasks to be performed, and how often they need to be performed.

<sup>34</sup> Guidance in 12 FAH-10, the Department's Information System Security Controls and Procedures Handbook, establishes the minimum mandatory security controls and procedures for managing risk that results from threats and vulnerabilities that could impact the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of Department Automated Information Systems.

Department failures to perform ISSO duties.<sup>35</sup> Failure to perform required ISSO responsibilities leaves Department networks vulnerable to potential unauthorized access and malicious activity.

**Recommendation 17:** Embassy Singapore should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

***Local Information Technology Configuration Control Board Did Not Comply With Department Standards***

OIG found the embassy's local IT Configuration Control Board did not comply with all Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the board lacked a configuration lifecycle management plan to track, maintain, and report locally procured and approved hardware and software, as required by 5 FAM 862.1a and c. In addition, the board did not consistently update iMATRIX<sup>36</sup> with information on locally installed hardware and software, as required by 5 FAM 862.1c. The incumbent IM managers in 2020 established the embassy's first local Configuration Control Board as required in 5 FAM 115.6-2 and started to inventory legacy hardware and software procured prior to establishing the board. However, not having a lifecycle plan for managing locally approved hardware and software operating on the embassy's network could create vulnerabilities that could compromise Department information.

**Recommendation 18:** Embassy Singapore should require its local Information Technology Configuration Control Board to comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

***Embassy Lacked Standard Operating Procedures for Managing Printer Security***

The embassy did not have standard operating procedures for managing the security of its classified and unclassified printers. For example, IM staff did not change network printers' passwords regularly as required in 12 FAH-6 H-541.5-11(k) and 12 FAH-6 H-542.5-11(n). IM staff told OIG they were unaware of the printer password change requirements. Furthermore, a Bureau of Diplomatic Security review of the embassy's unclassified printers revealed multiple configuration issues because the staff did not consistently follow Department security configuration standards in 12 FAH-10 H-182.3(1)(c). Not properly configuring printers and regularly changing printer passwords creates security vulnerabilities and weakens the Department's network security posture.

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<sup>35</sup> OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Non-Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Duties by Overseas Personnel* (ISP-17-24, May 2017); OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Continued Deficiencies in Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Responsibilities at Overseas Posts* (ISP-21-07, December 2020).

<sup>36</sup> The integrated Management Analytics and Technology Resource for Information eXchange, or iMATRIX, is the Department's tool for organizing and tracking its IT investments, projects, and assets, including services, systems, and products.

**Recommendation 19:** Embassy Singapore should implement a standard operating procedure for managing its classified and unclassified printers in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

***Embassy Printer Management Practices Did Not Adhere to the Department's Printing Policy***

Embassy Singapore installed more than 70 network and 10 desktop printers for its 309 OpenNet users, contrary to the Department's printing policy in 5 FAM 313.2 to maintain an optimal printing environment. At the time of the inspection, IM staff were planning to spend \$70,000 to replace end-of-life and failing printers, rather than working with embassy sections to determine the optimum network printer locations to reduce the number of printers. The use of individual desktop printers, combined with not optimizing network printer locations, increases expendable supply and maintenance costs and power consumption while also increasing security vulnerabilities.

**Recommendation 20:** Embassy Singapore should manage its printers to maintain an optimal printing environment in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

***Embassy's Non-Enterprise Laptop Issuance and Tracking Procedures Needed Improvement***

Embassy Singapore's procedures for issuing and tracking non-enterprise laptops did not meet Department standards in 14 FAM 412.4-2a-c and 12 FAH-10 H-164.2. IM staff issued non-enterprise laptops for long-term use but did not require users to sign the required standard form<sup>37</sup> to acknowledge security training. Additionally, the IM staff allowed an embassy section to maintain a separate inventory list. As a result, the users in that section swapped laptops based on preference of device models without completing the mandatory property transfer form in the Department's asset management system and informing the IM staff. Inadequate inventory controls create the potential for mismanagement or misuse of government property, as well as security vulnerabilities.

**Recommendation 21:** Embassy Singapore should implement procedures for issuing and tracking non-enterprise laptop devices that comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

***Embassy Lacked Memorandum of Agreement for Managing Regionalized Classified Networks***

Embassy Singapore did not have a signed memorandum of agreement with the Bureau of Information Resource Management to host the Classified Network Regionalization<sup>38</sup> hub in

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<sup>37</sup> Department Standard form 7642 is used to request non-enterprise mobile devices and acknowledge completion of security awareness training.

<sup>38</sup> ClassNet Regionalization is a Bureau of Information Resource Management program that consolidates the Department's Secret level classified network IT resources and services into regional hubs. Embassy Singapore is one of the backup hubs supporting posts in the East Asia and Pacific region, and a Regional Information Management Center staff member assigned to Singapore administers the hub servers.

accordance with 5 FAM 151.<sup>39</sup> OIG reviewed a 2016 draft memorandum of agreement between the Bureau of Information Resource Management and East Asian and Pacific Affairs discussing the regionalization, operation, and support of classified networks, but the document did not specify the roles and responsibilities of embassy IM staff. Although the Bureau of Information Resource Management's Regional Information Management Center staff managed the hub servers in Singapore, embassy staff were unclear how IT contingency planning and information security responsibilities for the embassy's classified network differed from that of the regionalized hub network. For example, at the time of the inspection, the staff was in the process of completing an IT contingency plan template designed for a hub post rather than the template specified for the post's classified network operations, which is what they should have been using. Embassy staff did not know why a memorandum of agreement was never completed. Not having a memorandum of agreement outlining roles and responsibilities creates uncertainties in service delivery and security practices.

**Recommendation 22:** The Bureau of Information Resource Management, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Embassy Singapore, should implement a memorandum of agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities for the management of the Classified Network Regionalization hub and the operation of Embassy Singapore's classified network. (Action: IRM, in coordination with EAP and Embassy Singapore)

***Embassy Emergency and Evacuation Radio Program Was Ineffective***

The embassy's emergency and evacuation radio network did not meet Department standards in 5 FAM 541b and 5 FAM 542.3.5. At the time of the inspection, IM staff were unable to produce records showing that all authorized embassy employees were issued emergency and evacuation radios. Furthermore, the emergency network provided insufficient coverage among those embassy residences located in the northern part of the island due to a malfunctioning repeater supporting the area. These issues occurred because the IM staff did not adequately plan to resolve the repeater issue, did not have standard operating procedures for tracking and inventorying the radios, and did not institute good record keeping practices. Not addressing these issues leaves the embassy unprepared to communicate with its employees in the event of an emergency.

**Recommendation 23:** Embassy Singapore should bring its emergency and evacuation radio program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

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<sup>39</sup> According to 5 FAM 151, service agreements provide the Bureau of Information Resource Management and the Department with the insights and expectations required to deliver services to the Department.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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OIG provided a draft of this report to Department stakeholders for their review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued the following recommendations to Embassy Singapore, the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and the Bureau of Information Resource Management. The Department's complete responses can be found in Appendix B. The Department also provided technical comments that were incorporated into the report, as appropriate.

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Singapore should review all unliquidated obligations related to the Ambassador's travel in accordance with Department guidelines and federal regulations and put up to \$48,000 to better use. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation. The embassy estimated completion by the end of the second quarter of FY 2024.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore reviewed all unliquidated obligations related to the Ambassador's travel in accordance with Department guidelines and federal regulations and put up to \$48,000 to better use.

**Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should assess the Ambassador's compliance with the Department's leadership and management principles and, if appropriate, take corrective action. (Action: EAP, in coordination with GTM)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response,<sup>1</sup> the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore assessed the Ambassador's compliance with the Department's leadership and management principles and, if appropriate, took corrective action.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Singapore should require the Ambassador to attend a briefing on the Nonimmigrant Visa Referral and Priority Appointment Request Program and sign a compliance agreement. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

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<sup>1</sup> In a January 24, 2024, email to OIG, the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs noted it submitted a combined official response document from the bureau and Embassy Singapore.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore required the Ambassador to attend a briefing on the Nonimmigrant Visa Referral and Priority Appointment Request Program and sign a compliance agreement.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Singapore should comply with Department standards regarding the acceptance of gifts. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore complied with Department standards regarding the acceptance of gifts.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Singapore should schedule embassy-wide security drills when the Ambassador is present and able to participate, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore scheduled embassy-wide security drills when the Ambassador was present and able to participate, in accordance with Department guidance.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Singapore should implement a plan to improve the timeliness of annual report submissions, Blue Lantern export control checks, demarches, and reporting cables, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore implemented a plan to improve the timeliness of annual report submissions, Blue Lantern export control checks, demarches, and reporting cables, in accordance with Department guidance.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Singapore should manage U.S. citizen services and visa wait times in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore managed U.S. citizen services and visa wait times in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Singapore should resolve fraud referrals in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore resolved fraud referrals in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Singapore should destroy immigrant visa files according to Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore destroyed immigrant visa files according to Department guidance.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Singapore should follow Department standards regarding incorrectly refused visa cases. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore followed Department standards regarding incorrectly refused visa cases.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Singapore should enforce driver duty limits for all mission drivers, in accordance with Department motor vehicle safety standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation. The embassy estimated completion by the end of the second quarter of FY 2024.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore enforced driver duty limits for all mission drivers, in accordance with Department motor vehicle safety standards.

**Recommendation 12:** Embassy Singapore should close out its procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation. The embassy estimated completion by the end of the third quarter of FY 2024.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore closed out its procurement files in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 13:** Embassy Singapore should administer contracts in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore administered contracts in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 14:** Embassy Singapore, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore, in coordination with OBO)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation. The embassy estimated completion by the end of the third quarter of FY 2024.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore's fire protection program complied with Department standards.

**Recommendation 15:** Embassy Singapore should administer its facility management expendable supplies in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation. The embassy estimated completion by the end of the fourth quarter of FY 2024.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore administered its facility management expendable supplies in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 16:** Embassy Singapore should submit its hotel and restaurant reports to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore submitted its hotel and restaurant reports to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 17:** Embassy Singapore should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

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

**Recommendation 18:** Embassy Singapore should require its local Information Technology Configuration Control Board to comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore required its local Information Technology Configuration Control Board to comply with Department standards.

**Recommendation 19:** Embassy Singapore should implement a standard operating procedure for managing its classified and unclassified printers in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation. The embassy estimated completion by the end of the second quarter of FY 2024.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore implemented a standard operating procedure for managing its classified and unclassified printers in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 20:** Embassy Singapore should manage its printers to maintain an optimal printing environment in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore managed its printers to maintain an optimal printing environment in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 21:** Embassy Singapore should implement procedures for issuing and tracking non-enterprise laptop devices that comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore implemented procedures for issuing and tracking non-enterprise laptop devices that comply with Department standards.

**Recommendation 22:** The Bureau of Information Resource Management, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Embassy Singapore, should implement a memorandum of agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities for the management of the Classified Network Regionalization hub and the operation of Embassy Singapore's classified network. (Action: IRM, in coordination with EAP and Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 22, 2024, response, the Bureau of Information Resource Management disagreed with this recommendation. The bureau noted the roles and responsibilities are outlined in Section 4 of the Service Level Agreement Between Regionalization of ClassNet Services Hubs and Regionalized Sites, version 2.1.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. OIG acknowledges that the Bureau of Information Resource Management's draft Regionalization of ClassNet (CNR) Service Level Agreement for CNR Hubs and Regionalized Sites version 2.1, dated January 2023, mentions the roles and responsibilities of the Regional Diplomatic Technology CNR Staff and other support teams in Section 4. (At the time of the inspection, OIG requested but did not receive from the bureau the latest draft version of the service level agreement.) However, OIG found the draft service level agreement, including the RACI, or responsible, accountable, consulted, and

informed, matrix, did not mention the roles and responsibilities of the hosting hub—in this case, Embassy Singapore—for information technology contingency planning. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts a final and signed service level agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the hosting hub for information technology contingency planning.

**Recommendation 23:** Embassy Singapore should bring its emergency and evacuation radio program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** In its January 24, 2024, response, Embassy Singapore concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Singapore’s emergency and evacuation radio program complied with Department standards.

## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Agency/Section/Title	Name	Arrival Date
<b>Chiefs of Mission:</b>		
Ambassador	Jonathan Kaplan	12/2021
Deputy Chief of Mission	Casey K. Mace	07/2022
<b>Chiefs of Sections:</b>		
Consular	Anny C. Ho	08/2020
Economic/Political	Adedeji E. Okediji	08/2022
Management	James Forbes <sup>a</sup>	04/2023
Public Affairs	Justin Higgins	08/2022
Regional Security	Scott A. Berman	12/2021
Regional Medical Office	Dr. Chayan C. Dey	07/2020
<b>Other Agency Representatives:</b>		
Custom & Border Protection	Donald M. Anderson	10/2017
Defense Attaché Office	CAPT Raymond O. Owens, III	07/2020
Federal Aviation Administration	J. Christopher Carter	06/2021
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Brett B. Chabot	07/2020
Homeland Security Investigations	Dawn-Marie Barriteau	08/2020
Office of Defense Cooperation	COL Steven X. Li	07/2022
Department of the Treasury	Jeffrey K. Baker	08/2020
U.S. Commercial Service	Christopher R. Quinlivan	08/2019
Agriculture Affairs Office <sup>b</sup>	Timothy R. Harrison	08/2021

<sup>a</sup> James Forbes, a re-employed annuitant, arrived in April 2023 as a temporary duty management officer. He also served in this position from September to December 2022.

<sup>b</sup> Embassy Singapore's Agriculture Affairs Office has two LE staff members; the supervisor is based at Embassy Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**Source:** Generated by OIG from data provided by Embassy Singapore.

## APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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This inspection was conducted from March 13 to September 29, 2023, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2020 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspections Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

### Objectives and Scope

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

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

### Methodology

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

## APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

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*Embassy of the United States of America*

*Singapore*

*January 24, 2024*

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THRU: EAP – Daniel Kritenbrink, Assistant Secretary

TO: OIG – Arne Baker, Acting Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: Embassy Singapore—Jonathan Kaplan, Ambassador

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

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

**OIG Recommendation 1:** Embassy Singapore should review all unliquidated obligations related to the Ambassador’s travel in accordance with Department guidelines and federal regulations and put up to \$48,000 to better use. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with the recommendation. As of January 11, Post has processed seven out of ten pending vouchers, accounting for \$32,280.76. Of these, three vouchers, worth \$17,937.83, are completed closed. The balance is either with the Manila Post Support Unit for processing or has been returned to Post for additional documentation. The embassy continues to compile the necessary documentation to resolve all outstanding travel vouchers relating to the Ambassador’s travels. The Embassy intends to complete submission of outstanding travel vouchers by the end of second quarter in FY 2024.

**OIG Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should assess the Ambassador’s compliance with the Department’s leadership and management principles and, if appropriate, take corrective action. (Action: EAP, in coordination with GTM)

**Management Response:** The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP) concurs with the recommendation. EAP will assess if the Ambassador was compliant with the Department’s leadership and management principles. If that assessment reveals deficiencies that must be addressed, EAP will work with GTM to take any appropriate corrective actions.

**OIG Recommendation 3:** Embassy Singapore should require the Ambassador to attend a briefing on the Nonimmigrant Visa Referral and Priority Appointment Request Program and sign a compliance agreement. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. On September 6, 2023, the Ambassador attended a briefing on the Nonimmigrant Visa Referral and Priority Request Program with the Consular Chief and signed the compliance agreement. A copy of the signed compliance agreement is available.

**OIG Recommendation 4:** Embassy Singapore should comply with Department standards regarding the acceptance of gifts. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with the recommendation. Embassy Singapore re-issued the management policy on gifts on April 25, 2023, to ensure all mission personnel are aware of the Department standards regarding the acceptance of gifts and that the procedures for acceptance of gifts were being followed. Gifts, going forward from that date, were being approved and logged either with the EDCS Gift Fund Registry or with the Embassy's Gift Log depending on type of gift received. For past gifts of tickets to cultural events, memos documenting these gifts were completed.

**OIG Recommendation 5:** Embassy Singapore should schedule embassy-wide security drills when the Ambassador is present and able to participate, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with the recommendation. Post has scheduled all required drills for the first half of 2024 and will adjust as necessary to accommodate the Ambassador's schedule.

**OIG Recommendation 6:** Embassy Singapore should implement a plan to improve the timeliness of annual report submissions, Blue Lantern export control checks, demarches, and reporting cables, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with the recommendation but notes that Post had been in communication with the relevant points of contact in the Department regarding the instances of late annual report submissions mentioned in the report. Those examples were due to the delayed receipt of required input from local contacts. To address that concern in the future, Post will submit partial responses with a projected timeline for providing any missing data. To address the appearance of untimely responses, Post has improved the internal tracking and coordination of items pending clearance. The Front Office and the Economic and Political Section regularly reconcile their respective tasking trackers to ensure items are completed with their deadlines. When the lack of substantive response from local contacts prevents a complete, substantive response, the section submits partial responses noting that the requested action was taken prior to the deadline.

**OIG Recommendation 7:** Embassy Singapore should manage U.S. citizen services and visa wait times in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Singapore and its Consular Section views U.S. citizen services as its highest priority. The Consular Section reviews and shares internally both ACS and NIV wait times on a weekly basis to monitor fluctuations and seasonal demand and ensure appropriate staffing is allocated to keep passport and CRBA wait times low. Post is aware of the need to prioritize ACS services and will adjust appointment availability accordingly to maintain that precedence. Given our relatively small size, we also anticipate the assignment of the additional consular officer approved for Singapore Consular last April 2023 will help expand our capacity to maintain this standard.

**OIG Recommendation 8:** Embassy Singapore should resolve fraud referrals in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Singapore Consular is implementing a plan to resolve fraud referrals pending for more than 60 days. Several of the cases pending longer than 60 days are due to pending action by Kentucky Consular Center related to suspected petition fraud or by requests for documents from applicants that remain outstanding. Due to staffing shortfalls, there is no officer, or LE staff member solely dedicated to fraud prevention. We hope to resolve the human resource capacity with the arrival of an additional consular officer and LE staff member before Summer 2024.

**OIG Recommendation 9:** Embassy Singapore should destroy immigrant visa files according to Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Singapore Consular expects to complete this recommendation by end of January 2024.

**OIG Recommendation 10:** Embassy Singapore should follow Department standards regarding incorrectly refused visa cases. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Since May 2023, Singapore Consular has updated standard operating procedures to ensure adherence with 9 FAM 303.3-4(D)(2).

**OIG Recommendation 11:** Embassy Singapore should enforce driver duty limits for all mission drivers, in accordance with Department motor vehicle safety standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Since the OIG inspection in May 2023, Embassy Singapore Motor Pool has filled its driver vacancies and re-

programmed an ICASS driver position as a COM driver position. With a full staff now onboarded and trained, GSO Motor Pool fulfillment of Front Office requirements and unscheduled movements outside of core work hours is feasible within the parameters of the Department's driver duty limits. Data from recent pay periods confirm that drivers are putting in less hours. In addition, Embassy Management will be requiring all section and agency heads to read the rules relating to Post's motor vehicle safety policy and acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that their sections/agencies comply with this policy. This will be implemented by the end of Q2 FY2024.

**OIG Recommendation 12:** Embassy Singapore should close out its procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy concurs with this recommendation. The GSO Procurement team is working towards completing all procurement file closeout processes in accordance with Department guidelines by the end of Q3 FY 2024.

**OIG Recommendation 13:** Embassy Singapore should administer contracts in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore).

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Singapore, in collaboration with A/OPE, hosted two training courses in October 2023—FSN Commercial Acquisition and Contracting Officers Representative (COR) Training. All GSO procurement staff completed the FSN Commercial Acquisitions training. COR and potential COR for Embassy contracts completed the course. Post also instituted the use of A/OPE's COR Appointment System for all COR nominations.

**OIG Recommendation 14:** Embassy Singapore, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore, in coordination with OBO)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Post Facilities management team now performs the required routine inspections and checks on fire safety equipment and systems. Monthly residential fire extinguisher and smoke alarm checks have been implemented. OBO Fire Marshall will be visiting Singapore Jan 25-Feb 1, 2024. Post anticipates that its fire protection program will comply with Department standards by the end of Q3 FY 2024.

**OIG Recommendation 15:** Embassy Singapore should administer its facility management expendable supplies in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. GSO is currently working with the facilities management team to inventory all expendable supplies and implement a procedure for the tracking and use of these supplies. Approximately 50 percent of Facility Management's expendable supplies are now entered in the ILMS Expendables module. We anticipate this to be completed by the end of Q4 FY 2024.

**OIG Recommendation 16:** Embassy Singapore should submit its hotel and restaurant reports to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Survey of hotel and restaurant and hotel data was submitted on June 26, 2023. This resulted in a decrease of Singapore's per diem rate. An updated report was recently submitted on December 4, 2023, and we are waiting comments from the Office of Allowances.

**OIG Recommendation 17:** Embassy Singapore should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Post is performing ISSO duties to the best of their ability with allotted time and available resources. To ensure 100% compliance, Post will identify specific tasks that can be carried out remotely and leverage the enterprise resources of the Global ISSO Office in the IRM/Cyber Operations directorate and the Regional ISSOs reporting to the Bangkok Regional Diplomatic Technology Center. Post does have the appropriate accounts and access to perform the full range of assigned duties. Updated ISSO designation cables were sent in August 2023, and ISSO training is scheduled for April 2024. Post consistently maintains an A grade in iPost.

**OIG Recommendation 18:** Embassy Singapore should require its local Information Technology Configuration Control Board to comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore Concur with this recommendation. A formal LCCB charter and system was in place prior to the OIG inspection, however the Charter and member document had not been uploaded to the ITCCB SharePoint. Post will contact ITCCB and provide them with the documentation. Due to the burden on post, LCCB would generally only be used in case of an emergency. The department level IT CCB system is used as the routine system to approve hardware and software for all DOS systems and networks. There have been zero products introduced to DOS networks through the LCCB approval process in the last three years.

**OIG Recommendation 19:** Embassy Singapore should implement a standard operating procedure for managing its classified and unclassified printers in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Post is now using the setup guides provided by the Department of State for printer security and will be in compliance with Department standards by the end of Q2 FY2024.

**OIG Recommendation 20:** Embassy Singapore should manage its printers to maintain an optimal printing environment in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Singapore IRM team are now continuously evaluating printing requirements and working toward ensuring the Mission maintains an optimal printing environment. The IRM staff are using the opportunities such as end-of-life and lifecycle replacement to reduce the total number of printers in use. And new supplies will not be ordered for printers nearing their end-of-life period.

**OIG Recommendation 21:** Embassy Singapore should implement procedures for issuing and tracking non-enterprise laptop devices that comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Post is now using ILMS Loanable Property module for all equipment loans, including for issuing and tracking non-enterprise laptop devices. Acknowledgement of security training and use are now required of all users.

**OIG Recommendation 22:** The Bureau of Information Resource Management, in coordination with EAP and Embassy Singapore, should implement a memorandum of agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities for the management of the Classified Network Regionalization hub and the operation of Embassy Singapore's classified network. (Action: IRM, in coordination with EAP and Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Post is working with Washington GITM and RIMC-CNR and local CNR hub administrators to finalize MOAs. We anticipate this to be completed by the end of Q3 in FY 2024.

**OIG Recommendation 23:** Embassy Singapore should bring its emergency and evacuation radio program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response:** Embassy Singapore concurs with this recommendation. Post is now using ATLAS Directory Radio module and ILMS Loanable Property Module to track all radio assignments. Post plans to work with RIMC-Radio on possible solutions to radio coverage issues on the northern part of Singapore.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Casey Mace, Deputy Chief of Mission.



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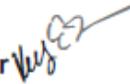
United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

January 22, 2024

Read by \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE FOR ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR INSPECTIONS SANDY J. LEWIS**

FROM: IRM – Kelly E. Fletcher 

SUBJECT: (U) IRM's Response to the OIG Draft Report: Inspection of Embassy Singapore, Singapore

The Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM) provides the following response to recommendation 22 of the OIG Draft Report: Inspection of Embassy Singapore.

**Recommendation 22:** The Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM), in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Embassy Singapore, should implement a memorandum of agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities for the management of the Classified Network Regionalization hub and the operation of Embassy Singapore's classified network. (Action: IRM, in coordination with EAP and Embassy Singapore)

**Management Response (January 2024).** IRM does not concur with this recommendation. The roles and responsibilities of the Regional Diplomatic Technology (RDT) ClassNet Regionalization (CNR) Staff and other support teams are outlined in Section 4 of the [Regionalization of ClassNet Services SLA for CNR Hubs and Regionalized Sites v2.1.pdf](#), which includes a RACI chart. IRM will obtain SLA signatures.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Craig Hootselle or Robin Flemming.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAST	First- and Second-Tour
ICS	Integrated Country Strategy
ILMS	Integrated Logistics Management Center
IM	Information Management
ISSO	Information Systems Security Officer
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations

## OIG INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS

---

Joseph R. Donovan Jr., U.S. Ambassador, Retired, Team Leader

Dan Chen, Team Manager

Daniel Vergamini, Team Manager

John Finkbeiner

Martha Fikru

Mark Jeleniewicz

Thomas Leary

Matthew Lunn

Kathryn Schlieper

Joseph Talsma

Erik Winther

### **Other Contributors**

Dolores Adams

Caroline Mangelsdorf

Rebecca Sawyer



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