

2 FAM 130

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S OVERSEAS PRESENCE

(CT:GEN-327; 05-22-2006)
(Office of Origin: M/R)

2 FAM 131 TYPES OF DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS

(CT:GEN-327; 05-22-2006)

- a. *There are seven* categories of embassies under the Overseas Staffing Model, ranging from very large (e.g., Moscow) to very small (e.g., St. George's).
- b. U.S. *missions* to *international organizations* are embassies accredited to International Organizations. Two of them are in the United States: *the* United States Mission to the United Nations (USUN) and *the* United States Mission to the Organization of American States (USOAS).
- c. Legations are diplomatic establishments headed by a minister. The United States has had legations in the past but has none at this time.
- d. U.S. interest sections (USINTs) operate under the auspices of a protecting power in a country with which the *United States* has no diplomatic relations. USINTs are structurally and functionally similar to embassies. Havana is the only current USINT.
- e. U.S. liaison offices (USLOs) are precursors to *the* establishment of embassies. Tripoli is the only current USLO.
- f. Consulates general *have* chief of mission (COM) authority, such as *CGs* Hong Kong and Jerusalem.
- g. Consulates *general* (which range from large, *such* as Frankfurt and Sao Paulo, to small, such as Halifax) handle a range of functions.
- h. Consulates, which are usually fairly small and "consular"-oriented, such as *consulates Merida*, Nogales, and Nuevo Laredo.
- i. American Presence Posts (APPs) are small, usually one U.S. direct-hire

officer with no locally engaged staff (LES). APPs are legally *consulates*, and the opening or closing of an APP is governed accordingly.

- j.* Branch *offices are* rare operations that are part of an embassy but *are* located in a different city. Current *branch offices* are in Astana, *Kazakhstan*; Banja Luka, *Bosnia-Herzegovina*; Pristina, *Kosovo*; and Douala, *Cameroon*.
- k.* Consular agencies *are staffed by* locally-resident agents *who* provide non-visa consular services. Many of these agents are resident U.S. citizens.
- l.* Virtual Presence Posts (VPPs) *have* no resident U.S. employees, either *U.S.* citizens or locally engaged. VPPs allow established posts to provide a low but formal level of diplomatic engagement with important cities or regions. Generally, they utilize a three-pronged strategy of regular, targeted visits from mission personnel, ongoing public affairs activities, and “virtual” engagement by means of Web sites dedicated to the environs of the nominal “VPP” city or region.

2 FAM 132 *RESERVED*

(CT:GEN-327; 05-22-2006)

2 FAM 133 AMERICAN PRESENCE POSTS (APP)

2 FAM 133.1 *The Purpose of an APP*

(CT:GEN-327; 05-22-2006)

APPs are one type of post in a range of options for U.S. diplomatic representation. Their utility is limited to places where an Embassy requires a mission presence focused on narrow objectives, with limited capabilities, affordable within existing mission resources with relatively small augmentations of funds for security and facilities. They are available to limit the potential demand for general-purpose consulates and to retain presence in locations where the United States Government (U.S.G.) requires diplomats but cannot afford, or does not require, a fully capable consulate. Overseas missions create APPs largely from existing resources; this tends to limit demand for APPs in locations with no current presence.

2 FAM 133.2 Background

(CT:GEN-327; 05-22-2006)

- a. The American Presence Post (APP) concept was advanced in 1998 by then-U.S. Ambassador to France Felix Rohatyn, as a means to provide focused American diplomatic presence in specific locations. An APP is “a special purpose post with limited staffing and responsibilities. It is established as a consulate under the Vienna Convention” (see 2 FAM 111.2).
- b. The key concepts associated with APPs are:
 - (1) **Simplicity:** One or two American officers, with very few associated local employees;
 - (2) **Focus and Proximity:** Exploiting opportunities to influence key national sectors in a location associated with those sectors (e.g., in Winnipeg, trade and agriculture; in the APPs in France, trade and public diplomacy);
 - (3) **Low Cost, Self-financed:** Established in locations where the local infrastructure can provide the means of operations, such as commercial or host-Government office space, commercial communications, and skilled staff. Sponsoring embassies are expected to provide most of the resources to establish and maintain an APP;
 - (4) **Unclassified Operations:** No start-up or recurring costs or manpower associated with vaults, 24/7-cleared American guards, Controlled Access Areas, control of classified materials, installation and maintenance of classified communications systems; and
 - (5) **No Visa or Routine Passport/ACS Operations:** Provision of emergency American Citizens Services only; avoidance of costs and manpower associated with visa issuance: no teller windows or associated hard-line; no Consular waiting area; no archive of visa application information.
- c. The Department of State has no plans to establish “APP embassies,” although the distinction may be unimportant. For example, Embassy St. George’s, Grenada, has only one U.S. resident officer, with its non-resident U.S. Ambassador *based* in Bridgetown, Barbados. St. George’s matches the definition of APP in all respects but name.

2 FAM 133.3 Experience

(CT:GEN-327; 05-22-2006)

- a. Proposals for *establishing* APPs have arisen, in all cases, from the cognizant embassies and have been based on one of two phenomena:
 - (1) An embassy perceives an exploitable opportunity to advance mission goals by relocating some of its assets to an APP location where there is no established presence (as occurred in Winnipeg); and
 - (2) The Department downsizes a consulate general or consulate, and the embassy successfully advocates the retention of a very limited U.S. officer presence.
- b. In either case, *establishing* or closing an APP must:
 - (1) Meet priority objectives of the Mission Program Plan and Bureau Program Plan;
 - (2) Represent a demonstrably more efficient or effective use of existing mission resources;
 - (3) Be approved by the Under Secretary for Management; and
 - (4) Be notified to the Congress when it constitutes a post opening or closing.
- c. In most cases, proposing embassies observe that they are spending mission resources to provide special services in the target location, usually by TDY coverage from the embassy. The embassy will often believe that it can improve product and reduce resource outlays by moving an officer to the target location.

2 FAM 133.4 Security and Administrative Support

(CT:GEN-319; 04-08-2005)

- a. The security standards for consulates apply to APPs. There is no cost or efficiency gain associated with APP status per se. The Secure Embassy Counterterrorism and Construction Act, Public Law 106-113 (FY-2000), requires APPs to meet mandatory 100-foot setback requirements, or be granted a waiver. Other Overseas Security Policy Board security standards apply as well. To most efficiently contain costs, the expectation is that most APP facilities would be located in commercial office spaces; waivers to setback would be granted in accordance with the law; and security standards for an office in a tenant of commercial office space would be applied, providing adequate but lower cost security.
- b. APPs should receive most administrative support from the associated

embassy, to keep local staffing as small as possible.

- c. Cost containment results from the very small presence, limited consular function, and the lack of classified infrastructure and maintenance.

2 FAM 133.5 Conclusions

(CT:GEN-319; 04-08-2005)

APPs are by definition designed to utilize limited means for limited goals. They serve niche markets in the Mission Program Plan. Requiring embassies to provide the resources for opening APPs constrains their proliferation. They are a “presence” option as a low-cost, defined alternative to small consulates.