

March 30, 2001

KENNETH C. WEAVER  
CHIEF POSTAL INSPECTOR

SUBJECT: Audit Report - Postal Inspection Service International Travel and  
Assignments (Report Number OV-AR-01-001)

This report presents the results of our audit of Postal Inspection Service international travel and assignments (Project Number 00JA012OV000). Our objectives were to determine whether international travel was properly approved, and costs were reasonable, and international travel and assignments were in the best interest of the Postal Service. This audit was included in our fiscal year (FY) 2001 audit workload plan.

The audit disclosed that the Inspection Service's international travel practices could be improved. Specifically, the Inspection Service could not provide documentation to show that international travel requests were properly approved and justified. This report provided a recommendation to establish additional controls to ensure that international travel requests are reviewed and documented as required prior to the start of travel. Management agreed to implement this recommendation. Although international travel requests could be improved, the audit disclosed that international assignments were in the best interest of the Postal Service. Management provided comments to the report and agreed with our conclusions and recommendation. Management's comments, in their entirety, are included in Appendix B of this report.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff during the audit. If you have any questions, please contact Cathleen A. Berrick, director, Oversight, at (703) 248-4543, or me at (703) 248-2300.

Ronald K. Stith  
Assistant Inspector General  
for Oversight and Business Evaluations

Attachment

cc: James K. Belz  
John R. Gunnels

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b>	i
<b>Part I</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	1
Background	1
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	3
Prior Audit Coverage	4
<b>Part II</b>	
<b>Audit Results</b>	6
Travel Approval and Documentation	6
Recommendation	7
Management's Comments	7
Evaluation of Management's Comments	7
Lodging and Transportation Expenses	8
International Assignments	9
<b>Appendix A. Statistical Sampling Plan</b>	10
<b>Appendix B. Management's Comments</b>	15

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Introduction

This report presents the results of our audit of Postal Inspection Service international travel and assignments. Our objectives were to determine whether (1) travel was approved by the appropriate official and travel requests contained required supporting documentation, (2) lodging expenses were reasonable based on Department of State guidelines and business-class transportation was appropriately used, and (3) overseas assignments were necessary to support the Inspection Service mission and provided a direct benefit to the Postal Service. This audit was included in our fiscal year (FY) 2001 audit workload plan.

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### Results in Brief

The Inspection Service's international travel practices could be improved. Specifically, the Inspection Service could not provide documentation to show that all international travel was properly approved and justified as required by Postal Service and Inspection Service policy. This occurred because management controls were not effective in ensuring that investigative international travel was approved by the appropriate official and non-investigative international travel was supported by required documentation. Inspection Service officials advised us that international travel was reviewed and approved, even though they did not document those reviews. However, without documentation of these reviews, there is an increased risk that some international travel may not have been reviewed to ensure that it was cost-effective and provided a benefit to the Postal Service.

Although the Inspection Service's international travel approval and justification practices could be improved, we found that international lodging expenses were generally reasonable, and business-class transportation was appropriately used. In addition, we found that international assignments of postal inspectors supported the Inspection Service's mission and provided a direct benefit to the Postal Service. Specifically, all three international assignments supported criminal investigative activity impacting the United States mail. Further, these positions strengthened and supported Inspection Service relationships throughout the international law enforcement community.

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**Summary of  
Recommendation**

We recommend that the chief postal inspector establish additional controls to ensure that non-investigative international travel requests include required justifications and that these justifications are reviewed and considered prior to the start of travel.

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**Summary of  
Management's  
Comments**

Management agreed with the findings and recommendation, and stated they would modify the Country Clearance log by April 2, 2001, to ensure that travel requests are documented and considered. Management's comments, in their entirety, are included in Appendix B of this report.

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**Overall Evaluation  
of Management's  
Comments**

Management's comments are responsive to our findings and recommendation and the planned action will address the issues discussed in the report.

## INTRODUCTION

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### Background

An estimated 150 Inspection Service vouchers were filed for international travel during fiscal year (FY) 1999 at a cost of approximately \$308,740.<sup>1</sup> An estimated 34 percent of this travel was for investigative purposes, while the remaining 66 percent was for non-investigative purposes. Investigative travel is travel directly associated with a criminal investigation. Non-investigative travel includes travel associated with international training seminars, meetings, conferences, and other events not related to an investigation.

Postal Service F-15 Handbook, Travel and Relocation, August 1997, and updated in September 2000, establishes travel policy for Postal Service employees. The handbook requires that Postal Service International Business Unit officials approve all Inspection Service international travel, except official investigative travel and non-investigative travel to Canada and Mexico. The handbook further requires that the International Business Unit ensure that necessary travel documentation is prepared.<sup>2</sup> In March 2000, the chief operating officer and executive vice president delegated approval authority for Inspection Service non-investigative international travel to the chief postal inspector.

The Inspection Service Manual, Chapter 172.4 "International Travel," June 21, 2000, requires that travel requests for non-investigative travel be submitted to the Inspection Service's International Security Group for processing prior to departure. Travel requests for investigative travel, in the form of a letter, investigative memorandum, or electronic message, as well as non-investigative travel to Canada or Mexico, can be approved by a deputy chief inspector.

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<sup>1</sup> We could not identify the total number of individuals traveling internationally or the total cost incurred because the international travel account includes other costs associated with international travel, such as costs related to overseas assignments and international investigative expenses. As a result, we estimated the total number of individuals traveling internationally and the total cost incurred. See Appendix A for detailed information related to the projection.

<sup>2</sup> Travel documentation must include information supporting the initiation of the travel, including an invitation or announcement, a statement of justification, the expected benefit to the Postal Service, estimated cost, and a travel schedule.

In addition to international travel, the Inspection Service assigned three postal inspectors to overseas positions to assist other countries and the United States (U.S.) military in maintaining the integrity of U.S. mail throughout the world. Inspector assignments include:

- Manager, Message Research and Response Department, Directorate for Criminal Intelligence, General Secretariat of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).
- Security specialist, International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union.
- Projects coordinator, U.S. Army, Europe, and Seventh Army.<sup>3</sup>

Postal inspectors assigned overseas are periodically rotated and replaced by other inspectors. The Inspection Service pays salaries, relocation, and associated living expenses for all three of the inspectors assigned internationally. In addition, the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union pays a subsistence allowance to the assigned inspector.

A letter of appointment by the director general, International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union, March 1998, identifies position requirements and responsibilities for postal inspectors assigned to the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union. A June 8, 1998, Memorandum of Understanding between the Inspection Service and the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, U.S. Army, Europe, and Seventh Army, identifies position duties and requirements for postal inspectors assigned to the U.S. Army, Europe, and Seventh Army. INTERPOL officials identified that a position justification identifying inspector duties and responsibilities was prepared in the late 1980s, but could not provide a copy.

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<sup>3</sup> Postal inspectors assigned to INTERPOL and the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union report directly to the heads of these organizations. The postal inspector assigned to U.S. Army, Europe, and Seventh Army, reports to the inspector in charge, New York Metro Division, Inspection Service.

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**Objectives, Scope,  
and Methodology**

Our objectives were to determine whether (1) travel was approved by the appropriate official and travel requests contained required supporting documentation, (2) lodging expenses were reasonable based on Department of State guidelines and business-class transportation was appropriately used, and (3) overseas assignments were necessary to support the Inspection Service mission and provided a direct benefit to the Postal Service.

To determine whether travel was approved as required, travel requests contained required supporting documentation, lodging expenses were reasonable, and business-class transportation was appropriately used, we randomly selected and reviewed, using a cluster sample design, 178 vouchers in the Inspection Service's Accounts Payable and Reporting System for travel completed between September 13, 1997, and June 2, 2000. We further obtained and reviewed the F-15 Travel and Relocation Handbook, the Inspection Service Manual, Department of State Standardized Regulations, and documentation supporting travel requests. We also interviewed officials from the Inspection Service International Security Group, Postal Service International Business Unit, and Postal Service Corporate Accounting Office concerning Inspection Service international travel practices. See Appendix A for details of the sampling plan.

To determine whether overseas assignments were necessary to support the Inspection Service's mission and provided a direct benefit to the Postal Service, we obtained and reviewed associated criteria, Inspection Service domicile reviews, position vacancy announcements, work accomplishment narratives, and related correspondence. We interviewed officials from the Inspection Service International Security Group and New York Metro Division, as well as postal inspectors assigned to the General Secretariat, INTERPOL, and the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union regarding position requirements and Postal Service benefits.<sup>4</sup> We also interviewed the director of criminal investigations, General Secretariat, INTERPOL; director general, International Bureau of the Universal Postal

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<sup>4</sup> The postal inspector assigned to the U.S. Army, Europe, and Seventh Army, was not available to be interviewed.

Union; and director, Special Investigations and Fraud, Mannheim, Germany, Field Office, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, concerning organizational missions and inspector support.

We conducted the audit from September 2000 through March 2001 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We reviewed management controls over Inspection Service international travel practices and overseas assignments as they related to the audit objectives. We assessed the reliability of computer-generated data gathered and determined that it was sufficient to support audit conclusions. We discussed our conclusions and observations with appropriate management officials and included their comments where appropriate.

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**Prior Audit Coverage**

Three prior reports identified issues related to Postal Service international travel. Although these reviews did not address the Inspection Service's international travel practices, similar issues were identified.

The September 1999 OIG Review of International Travel Process, report number RG-MA-99-007, identified that 98 percent of Postal Service international travel requests submitted to the Postal Service International Business Unit were incomplete. For example, 94 percent of travel requests did not include supporting documentation that initiated the trip and 88 percent of travel requests did not include estimated travel costs. As a result, officials approved international travel without complete information regarding the cost-effectiveness of the travel or the relationship of the travel to Postal Service business. The OIG suggested, and management agreed, that the International Business Unit ensure that international travel requests include all required supporting information.

The February 2000 OIG Review of International Travel Process – Phase II, report number RG-LA-00-001, identified that lodging expenses appeared reasonable for the international travel vouchers reviewed. Specifically, lodging expenses for travel vouchers reviewed were only 9 percent higher than international lodging rates established by the Department of State. The Postal Service did not set expense limits for international lodging, but encouraged Postal Service employees to prudently plan travel. The report contained no suggestions.

The March 1998 Postal Service International Business Unit Study of Business Practices, identified that employees circumvented business-class transportation requirements and did not submit travel vouchers within required time frames. The review further identified that international travel vouchers were not properly reviewed. The Postal Service recommended that employees adhere to the ten-hour rule regarding business-class transportation and ensure that excessive travel costs are not incurred.

## AUDIT RESULTS

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### **Travel Approval and Documentation**

The Inspection Service could not provide evidence that all international travel was properly approved and justified. Specifically, the Inspection Service did not maintain documentation identifying that all investigative travel was approved by a deputy chief inspector, as required. Approval documentation did not exist for 37 of the 54 trips reviewed, or a projected 112 trips conducted from September 13, 1997, through June 2, 2000.

Also, requests for non-investigative travel did not contain all required supporting documentation, including the travel justification, benefit to the Postal Service, and estimated cost. All required supporting documentation did not exist for 83 of the 89 non-investigative trips reviewed, or projected 252 trips conducted from FY 1998 through FY 2000. Justifications did not exist for 46 of the 89 trips reviewed, and expected benefits to the Postal Service did not exist for 47 of the 89 trips reviewed.

Management controls were not effective in ensuring that all investigative travel was approved by a deputy chief inspector, as required, prior to travel initiation. The Inspection Service recently developed a tracking system; the Request for Country Clearance Log, to help ensure that international travelers receive required country clearances. The Country Clearance Log was established in January 2001, and identifies the date the travel was approved, the approving official, and other incidental travel information. The Country Clearance Log should help ensure that future requests for international travel are approved by the appropriate official prior to travel initiation.

In addition, management controls, such as a log summarizing required supporting information, were not effective in ensuring that Inspection Service officials obtained and reviewed all required supporting documentation justifying non-investigative travel. Although the Country Clearance Log will help ensure that international travel is appropriately approved, it will not help ensure that critical travel information, including the travel justification and benefit to the Postal Service, is collected and

reviewed prior to travel initiation. We believe that modifying the Country Clearance Log to include all required supporting information will help ensure that critical travel information is obtained and considered prior to travel approval.

Inspection Service officials advised us that international travel was reviewed and approved, even though they did not document those reviews. However, without documentation of these reviews, there is an increased risk that Inspection Service international travel may not have been necessary or benefited the Postal Service. More specifically, designated officials may not have fully assessed the need for international travel prior to travel initiation.

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**Recommendation**

We recommend the chief postal inspector establish additional controls, such as modifying the Request for Country Clearance Log, to ensure that non-investigative travel requests are documented and considered prior to travel initiation. These travel requests should include travel justifications, expected benefit to the Postal Service, cost estimates, an invitation or announcement, and a travel schedule.

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**Management's  
Comments**

Management agreed with the findings and recommendation, and stated that the Inspection Service will modify the Country Clearance log by April 2, 2001, to ensure that written documentation is prepared consistent with the recommendation. Management further identified that the Inspection Service established the Country Clearance log in January 2001 to track all investigative and non-investigative travel.

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**Evaluation of  
Management's  
Comments**

Management's comments are responsive to our findings and recommendation. The modification of the Country Clearance log should help ensure that non-investigative travel requests are fully documented and considered prior to travel initiation.

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**Lodging and  
Transportation  
Expenses**

Although the Inspection Service's international travel practices could be improved, we found that international lodging and business-class transportation expenses were generally reasonable. Specifically, we determined that 106 of 120 vouchers, or a projected 322 of 434 trips conducted from FY 1998 through June 2, 2000, contained expenses that were consistent with lodging rates established by the Department of State. The Department of State Standardized Regulations, updated monthly, establishes international lodging rates for federal agencies. The remaining 14 vouchers reviewed contained lodging expenses that did not materially exceed Department of State guidelines.

In addition, Inspection Service personnel generally utilized business-class transportation appropriately when traveling internationally. Specifically, we identified that only 10 of the 143 travel vouchers reviewed, or an estimated 30 of 434 travel vouchers, contained evidence of business-class air transportation. Although the F-15 Handbook allows business-class air travel for international travel exceeding ten hours for Postal Service employees, the Inspection Service Manual prohibits Inspection Service personnel from using business-class air travel at Postal Service expense. The ten instances identified where business-class transportation was used did not materially impact international travel costs. Specifically, taken together, these trips exceeded the cost of coach-class travel by approximately \$25,000.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> FY 2001 airfares were used to compute the difference in travel costs between coach and business-class international travel.

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## **International Assignments**

Postal inspector international assignments were necessary to support the Inspection Service mission and provided a direct benefit to the Postal Service. These positions further strengthened and supported Inspection Service relationships throughout the international law enforcement community. Specifically, all three international assignments supported criminal investigative activity impacting the U.S. mail. Also, the inspectors' supervisors and the Inspection Service position reviews identified that the positions provided a direct benefit to the Postal Service. The inspector assigned to the General Secretariat of INTERPOL maintained a worldwide crime-reporting database that gave the Inspection Service valuable insight into ongoing criminal activity involving postal operations in member nations. The inspector assigned to the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union provided professional advice and assistance to member countries on postal security matters. The inspector assigned to the U.S. Army, Europe, and Seventh Army, investigated criminal activity affecting the Postal Service and military mail in Europe.

In addition, inspectors in international assignments performed the duties for which the positions were created. Specifically, inspectors assigned to the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union and the U.S. Army, Europe, and Seventh Army, performed the duties specified in the agreements with their sponsoring organizations. Although there was no agreement available for the INTERPOL position, INTERPOL officials and supporting documentation identified that the inspector was performing duties required of the position.

## **APPENDIX A. STATISTICAL SAMPLING PLAN**

### **STATISTICAL SAMPLING FOR INSPECTION SERVICE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL VOUCHER REVIEWS**

#### **PURPOSE OF THE SAMPLING**

One of the objectives of this audit was to assess the Inspection Service's compliance with Postal Service policy regarding international travel and to determine the accuracy of the amount of the international travel vouchers. In support of this objective, the audit team employed a cluster attribute sample design that allowed statistical projection of several voucher attributes and variables.

#### **DEFINITION OF THE AUDIT UNIVERSE**

The universe consisted of Inspection Service international travel vouchers having travel occurring within the audit scope: September 13, 1997 through June 2, 2000.<sup>6</sup> The universe data was provided by a Computer Assisted Assessment Techniques team search of the Postal Service's Accounts Payable and Reporting System, using the date of the check that paid the voucher. The vouchers are stored in "batches" at several locations. The original database search provided a listing of 578 vouchers spread among 223 batches.

#### **SAMPLE DESIGN AND UNIVERSE MODIFICATIONS**

This audit used a cluster sample design that treats batches as clusters that contain from one to nine international travel vouchers, generally from one to four. Auditors reviewed all of the international travel vouchers contained in the sample of batches. Seventy batches were randomly selected for review of the international travel vouchers to provide a one-sided 95 percent confidence interval with an 8 percent precision, and an unknown level of compliance on the attributes to be measured. A 50 percent level of compliance on at least one attribute was assumed for sample size computations.

Upon finding several vouchers with travel dates outside the desired audit scope, the audit team reviewed the complete universe listing and excluded those travel vouchers with travel end dates prior to the beginning of FY 1998. The revised audit universe was 540 travel vouchers contained in 211 batches. The corresponding revised sample was, therefore, 178 vouchers spread among 66 batches.

After review of the sample by the audit team, 35 international travel vouchers were excluded from the sample because those vouchers were not travel-related. This necessitated adjustment to the universe using computations for subpopulations because the database could not be searched to remove other such vouchers from the

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<sup>6</sup> The end date is the last travel date that was in the Accounts Payable and Reporting System database at the time of the computer data run. We note that it is highly probable that some vouchers submitted later will contain travel prior to June 2, 2000. Any such vouchers are not included in these projections.

universe (i.e., physical review of the source documents for all vouchers would have been required). To perform the subpopulation calculations, we adapted the formulas from Chapter 11 (Estimation of Means and Totals Over Subpopulations) of Elementary Survey Sampling, Scheaffer, Mendenhall, and Ott, c.1990 for use with cluster samples.

The team also extracted from the universe those vouchers for which travel starts were between September 12, 1998 and September 10, 1999, to address FY 1999 questions. For the FY 1999-only questions, the FY 1999 vouchers already selected in the larger sample were extracted and projected to the FY 1999 universe. A total of \$330,616 was associated with the FY 1999 universe. All methodologies remained the same as for the broader scope.

## **STATISTICAL PROJECTIONS OF THE SAMPLE DATA**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The number of vouchers related to international travel was projected using the formulas for estimation of a population proportion for a cluster sample, as described in Chapter 8 of Elementary Survey Sampling, Scheaffer, Mendenhall, and Ott, c.1990.

All sample data were analyzed using subpopulation modifications to the formulas in Chapter 8 of Elementary Survey Sampling, Scheaffer, Mendenhall, and Ott, c.1990 for estimation of a population proportion or a population mean and total for a cluster sample. The FY 1999 cost projection was computed using direct projection of the sample data.

Because the subpopulation calculations relate both bounds and point estimate values to the overall audit universe, we also calculated percentages (for the point estimates only) for the conditional probabilities desired by the audit team.

### **RESULTS: FY 1998 – FY 2000**

(Audit universe = 540 vouchers in 211 batches with travel occurring between September 13, 1997 and June 2, 2000).

#### **Vouchers Related to International Travel**

Based on a projection of the sample results, we are 95 percent confident that 411 to 457 vouchers were related to international travel (76 percent to 84.6 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 434 of the vouchers, or 80.3 percent of the audit universe, were related to international travel. For the conditional probability calculations of point estimates only that follow, we used 434 vouchers as the subpopulation of vouchers that involve international travel.

## **Investigative**

### **Attribute 1: Investigative travel**

Based on projection of the sample results, we calculated that 112 to 215 international travel vouchers involved investigative travel (20.8 percent to 39.9 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 164 travel vouchers, or 30.3 percent of the audit universe, were for investigative travel. The conditional probability calculation is that 37.8 percent of 434 travel vouchers were for investigative travel. For the conditional probability calculations, of point estimates only, we used 164 vouchers as the number of investigative international vouchers that were travel related.

### **Attribute 2: Investigative travel voucher contained approval**

Based on projection of the sample results, we calculated that 37 (based on actuals in sample) to 227 travel vouchers did not contain approval (6.9 percent to 42.0 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 112 investigative international travel vouchers, or 20.8 percent of the overall audit universe, did not contain approval. The conditional probability calculation is that 68.3 percent of 164 travel investigative vouchers did not contain required approval.

## **Non-investigative**

### **Attribute 1: Non-investigative travel**

Based on projection of the sample results, we calculated that 220 to 320 international travel vouchers involved non-investigative travel vouchers (40.7 percent to 59.3 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 270 travel vouchers, or 50.0 percent of the audit universe, were for non-investigative travel. The conditional probability calculation is that 62.2 percent of 434 travel vouchers were for non-investigative travel. For the conditional probability calculations of point estimates only, we used 270 vouchers as the number of non-investigative international vouchers that were travel related.

### **Attribute 2: Travel voucher contained all required supporting documentation**

Based on projection of the sample results, we calculated that 178 to 326 non-investigative international travel vouchers did not contain all required supporting documentation (32.9 percent to 60.4 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 252 non-investigative international travel vouchers, or 46.6 percent of the audit universe, did not contain all required supporting documentation. The conditional probability calculation is that 93.3 percent of 270 travel non-investigative vouchers did not contain required supporting documentation.

## **Investigative and Non-investigative**

### **Attribute 1: Travel voucher contained lodging expenses**

Based on projection of the sample results, we calculated that 288 to 440 international travel vouchers contained lodging expenses (53.3 percent to 81.5 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 364 of the international travel vouchers, or 67.4 percent of the audit universe, contained lodging expenses. The conditional probability calculation is that 83.9 percent of 434 travel vouchers contained lodging expenses. For the conditional probability calculations of point estimates only, we used 364 vouchers as the number of travel vouchers that contained lodging expenses.

### **Attribute 2: Travel voucher with lodging expenses contained appropriate lodging rates**

Based on projection of the sample results, we calculated that 227 to 416 travel vouchers with lodging expenses contained the appropriate lodging rates (42.0 percent to 77.1 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 322 of the travel vouchers with lodging expenses, or 59.6 percent of the audit universe, contained the appropriate lodging rates. The conditional probability calculation is that 88.3 percent of 364 travel vouchers with lodging expenses contained appropriate lodging rates.

### **Attribute 3: Business-class transportation**

Based on projection of the sample results, we calculated that 12 to 49 vouchers involved business-class transportation (2.2 percent to 9.0 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 30 vouchers, or 5.6 percent of the audit universe, involved business-class transportation. The conditional probability calculation is that 6.9 percent of 434 travel vouchers involved business-class transportation.

## **RESULTS: FY 1999 ONLY**

(Audit universe = 178 vouchers in 70 batches with travel start dates between September 12, 1998 and September 10, 1999).

### **Attribute 1: FY 1999 vouchers related to international travel**

Based on projection of the sample results, we are 95 percent confident that 145 to 156 FY 1999 vouchers were related to international travel (81.3 percent to 87.6 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 150 of the FY 1999 vouchers, or 84.4 percent of the audit universe, were related to international travel. For the conditional probability calculations of point estimates only that follow, we used 150 vouchers as the projected subpopulation of FY 1999 vouchers that involved international travel.

### **Attribute 2: FY 1999 investigative travel vouchers**

Based on projection of the sample results, we calculated that 39 to 64 FY 1999 international travel vouchers involved investigative travel (21.8 percent to 36.0 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 51 of the FY 1999 international travel vouchers, or 28.9 percent of the audit universe, involved investigative travel. The conditional probability calculation is that 34.0 percent of the projected 150 travel vouchers in FY 1999 were for investigative travel.

### **Attribute 3: FY 1999 non-investigative travel vouchers**

Based on projection of the sample results, we projected that 85 to 113 FY 1999 international travel vouchers involved non-investigative travel (47.5 percent to 63.6 percent of the audit universe). The unbiased point estimate is that 99 of the FY 1999 international travel vouchers, or 55.6 percent of the audit universe, involved non-investigative travel. The conditional probability calculation is that 66.0 percent of the projected 150 travel vouchers in FY 1999 were for non-investigative travel.

### **Variable: FY 1999 cost associated with international travel**

In the sample, we observed travel voucher costs ranging from \$222 to \$6,546. We calculated that the total travel dollar amount for FY 1999 is between \$245,316 and \$372,164. The unbiased estimate of the FY 1999 total international travel voucher amount is \$308,740.

## APPENDIX B. MANAGEMENT'S COMMENTS



UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY GROUP

March 28, 2001

Ronald K. Stith  
Assistant Inspector General  
For Oversight and Business Evaluations  
Office of Inspector General  
1735 N Lynn Street  
Arlington, VA 22209-2020

Dear Mr. Stith:

This is in response to Draft Audit Report-Postal Inspection Service International Travel and Assignments (Report No. OV-AR-01-DRAFT), dated February 27, 2001. The stated objectives of this Audit were to determine whether (1) travel was approved by the appropriate official and travel requests contained required supporting documentation; (2) lodging expenses were reasonable based on Department of State guidelines and business-class transportation was appropriately used; and (3) overseas assignments were necessary to support the Inspection Service mission and provided a direct benefit to the Postal Service.

The Audit team reported that international lodging and business-class transportation were found to be reasonable. The Audit team also reported that postal inspector international assignments were necessary to support the Inspection Service mission and provided a direct benefit to the Postal Service. However, it was also reported that the Inspection Service could not provide documentation that all international travel was properly approved and justified. To that issue a recommendation was made that the chief postal inspector establish additional controls to ensure that non-investigative travel requests are properly documented.

We fully agree with these findings and the recommendation. In January 2001, the International Security Group created a "Country Clearance" log to track all investigative and non-investigative travel. This system tracks the requesting inspector(s), dates of travel, destination, reason for travel, name of approving official for investigative and non-investigative travel, and the date the country clearance was faxed to the Diplomatic Security Service. This log will be modified by April 2, 2001, to ensure that written documentation exists consistent with the recommendation.

We appreciate the input provided by your staff during this review and the recommendations made to strengthen our international travel policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald W. Hill".

Donald W. Hill  
Inspector in Charge