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From: Naval Inspector General

Subj: AREA VISIT TO BAHRAIN

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 5040.3A  
(b) SECNAVINST 5430.57G

1. The Office of the Naval Inspector General conducts area visits to naval installations worldwide, as directed by references (a) and (b). Area visits provide senior Navy leadership with objective assessments of the mission support to tenant commands and quality of life support to Sailors, DON civilians, and their families stationed in these locations. Area visits purposely cut across command lines to identify Navy-wide concerns and systemic issues requiring resolution. We visited Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates from 19-27 September 2016. This report documents our findings.
2. During our visit, we assessed mission support, security programs, facilities, quality of life programs, safety and environmental compliance, and Sailor programs. Prior to our visit, we conducted an anonymous survey, and during the visit we facilitated focus group discussions with a representative sample of the workforce. During the assessment, we conducted brief visits to the United Arab Emirates (b) (7)(E).
3. Overall, we found Sailors and tenant commands in Bahrain are receiving the support they need, but the installation is faced with acute challenges involving military construction delays and cost overruns, facility space limitations on the installation, complex host-nation relationships, civilian hiring challenges, and high personnel turnover. We found these last two issues, civilian hiring and personnel turnover, challenged almost every aspect of operations in Bahrain.
4. Specific details regarding deficiencies, recommendations, and analysis of the survey and focus group discussions will be forwarded to the cognizant commands under separate correspondence.
5. My point of contact is (b) (7)(C), Director of Inspections. (b) (7)(C)

  
HERMAN A. SHELANSKI

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NSA BAHRAIN



**NAVAL INSPECTOR GENERAL AREA VISIT TO BAHRAIN  
19-27 SEPTEMBER 2016**

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## Background

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The Naval Inspector General (NAVINSGEN) conducted an area visit to Bahrain from 18-27 September 2016. Our last area visit to Bahrain was in 2006. The team was augmented with subject matter experts from Navy Installations Command (CNIC), Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy for Policy (DUSN (P)), Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC), Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR), and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT).

During the visit, we assessed the overall support provided to tenant commands in Bahrain by the installation and other commands tasked to provide such support. Specifically, we assessed mission support functions, security programs, facilities, safety, environmental, and Sailor programs. Additionally, we conducted surveys and focus group discussions to assess the quality of work life (QOWL) and home life (QOHL) for Navy military, civilian personnel, and their families stationed in Bahrain.

The inspection team obtained information through survey and focus group responses, document reviews, group discussions, and face-to-face interviews. A detailed listing of all areas assessed is captured below.

## Areas/Programs Assessed

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### Mission Support

- Airfield Operations
- Port Operations
- Command Communications and Relationships
- (b) (7)(E)
- Jebel Ali

### Tenant Support

- Command Managed Equal Opportunity
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Manning & Manpower
- Human Resources Office
- Personnel Support Detachment
- Department of Defense Dependent School (DoDDS)
- Noncombatant Evacuation Operations
- State Department Engagement

### Public Works, Housing & Safety

- Facilities
- Housing
- Energy
- Environmental
- Overseas Drinking Water
- Safety and Occupational Health
- Transportation

### Security Programs

- Physical Security and Antiterrorism Force Protection
- Law Enforcement
- Emergency Management
- Operations Security

### Prevention and Response

- Casualty Assistance Calls Program
- Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention
- Overseas Screening
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Response
- Suicide Prevention

### Community Support

- Child and Youth Programs
- Fleet and Family Support Center
- Legal Support
- Medical/Dental Support
- Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
- Navy College Office
- Navy Exchange
- Religious Support
- Voting Assistance

### Senior Enlisted Engagement

- CPO 365
- Single Sailor Programs
- Transition GPS

## Observations and Findings

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The inspection team examined Naval Support Activity (NSA) Bahrain's performance in providing operational support services to tenant commands, their deployed assets, service members, DoD civilians and dependents. We found that Sailors and tenant commands in Bahrain are largely receiving the support they need, but the installation is faced with acute challenges including military construction (MILCON) delays and cost overruns, space limitations, complex host nation relationships, civilian hiring challenges, and high personnel turnover. We found these last two issues, hiring and personnel turnover, permeated almost every aspect of operations in Bahrain.

NSA Bahrain's location in the Kingdom of Bahrain makes it a key resource for units operating in the region. The installation provides services to over 140 tenant commands, representing each of the armed services, various DoD agencies, coalition maritime forces from 29 countries, (b) (7)(E)

The base has grown dramatically in the last two decades, but the increase in personnel has outpaced the increase in base footprint, resulting in a constrained network of crowded facilities. In 2010, the pier area was expanded and became NSA II; in 2014, a bridge over the highway was added to ease transportation to and from NSA I and II; and in 2016, a new barracks on NSA II was constructed. Additional facilities, including a new headquarters building, galley, more transient quarters, and a waterfront maintenance facility, are all included in the future master facilities plan.

NSA Bahrain self-reported that they struggle to maintain an updated status of tenants utilizing their facilities, due to the near constant influx of transient personnel from a wide array of commands and agencies. Due to this underlying uncertainty of who is utilizing base facilities, NSA Bahrain is challenged to effectively provide necessary support services.

## MISSION SUPPORT

### *Hiring and Personnel Turnover*

A confluence of factors affects manning in Bahrain, which in turn impacts mission accomplishment. 90 percent of personnel are on 12 month orders which creates a higher than normal turnover rate. The high percentage of 12 month orders is a result of the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) mandated tour lengths of 12 months unaccompanied and 24 months accompanied, and a cap on dependents in Bahrain. The high turnover rate impacts nearly every command function, as personnel spend a larger than normal portion of their tour "storming and norming" with far less "performing". The turnover rate negatively impacts mission accomplishment, knowledge management, and readiness. This is both literal and figurative, as short tours can create a short-term mindset.

12 month tours in Bahrain don't always equate to 12 months on station, especially when factoring late arrival and early departure combinations, which are fairly common. The housing search and approval process in Bahrain is more lengthy and manpower intensive than normal duty stations, due to heightened security concerns. Factoring in late arrival, a few days to acclimate, weeklong command indoctrination, housing search, and early transfer from the command, the time actually performing the job is often ten months. Overseas Tour Extension Incentive Program (OTEIP) policies should create opportunities to lessen turnover rate, however the application timelines are incongruent with 12 month orders. Sailors face application deadlines very shortly after arrival, and commands have little time to evaluate Sailor performance before deciding if they're a good fit.

## 2016 NAVINGEN AREA VISIT TO BAHRAIN

The overseas screening process creates gaps when personnel (or dependents) fail to screen. Detailers' efforts to solicit volunteers for overseas assignments can lead to time-late detailing; this sometimes forces commands to choose between accepting a gap to get properly trained personnel or taking untrained personnel simply to get them sooner. The lengthy security clearance approval process impedes productivity, as members often arrive without final clearance adjudication. Additionally, commands have limited ability to designate "key billets" for 24 month orders due to DoD policy limitations.

In many Navy commands, government civilians provide continuity to balance the military turnover; however, this is not the case in Bahrain, because regulations cap overseas tours at 5 years for civilians. Even if Department of the Navy (DON) civilian employees desired to stay longer, which many do, DoD policy provides barriers. Bahrain's Human Resources Office (HRO) has billet gaps and leadership challenges of its own, which exacerbate an already challenging job of filling overseas positions. The average time to hire a civilian in Bahrain is 155 days, far exceeding the Navy's goal of 80 days.

### *Airfield Operations*

(b) (7)(E)



### *Port Operations*

(b) (7)(E)



### *Command Communications and Relationships*

The NSA Bahrain Commanding Officer has a robust outreach program, aimed at maximizing communication flow to tenant commands. Outreach includes monthly "town hall" meetings with tenant commands and meetings with Family Readiness Groups, biweekly visits to area orientation, articles in the base newspaper, messages on Armed Forces Network (AFN) radio, and 12 suggestion boxes spread throughout the installation. The focus groups, interviews, and survey comments corroborated our positive observations.

(b) (7)(E)



(b) (7)(E)



*Jebel Ali*

(b) (7)(E)



**TENANT SUPPORT**

*Command Managed Equal Opportunity*

The NSA Bahrain Command Managed Equal Opportunity (CMEO) program is compliant with governing instructions. The Command Climate Specialist (CCS) is proactively engaged in improving the command climate and providing support to NAVCENT, (b) (7)(E) Naples, and 16 additional tenant commands.

*Equal Employment Opportunity*

The NSA Bahrain Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program is not fully compliant with governing directives. There is a lack of established command Reasonable Accommodation (RA) procedures and only 30% of NSA Bahrain civilian employees have completed the federally mandated annual EEO training requirements.

*Manning & Manpower*

NSA Bahrain is 90 percent manned (993 of 1,102 billets authorized). Specifically, military manning is 108 percent (866 of 801 billets authorized) and civilian manning is 75 percent (60 of 80 billets authorized). NSA Bahrain is working hard to fill the vacant civilian billets; however, there are challenges with the Human Resources Office (HRO) as outlined below.

*Civilian Human Resources*

During our visit, we received numerous complaints about poor performance by the HRO, specifically concerning civilian hiring delays and pay setting. The Bahrain HRO provides support to the installation and associated tenant commands. The HRO's reporting supervisor is CNREURAFSWA, with the base CO having performance rating input. The HRO has two key positions that are currently vacant; these vacancies left the office staffed with the HR manager as acting director, a GS-11 HR Specialist and six Foreign Nationals to function in a high tempo environment. To complicate matters, during the recent summer PCS season, HRO employee leave periods were not staggered, which further contributed to the hiring delays. Unfortunately, the acting HR Director was away from the office during our visit, and this absence limited our ability to thoroughly assess the situation.

**Civilian Hiring**

Civilian recruitment in an overseas environment holds specific challenges. In 2016, it took an average of 128 days for Bahrain's HRO to hire civilian employees via merit promotion and 182 days when using external recruitment. This end-to-end hiring metric is more than double the Navy's goal of 80 days.

There are numerous factors that impact recruitment timeliness including medical requirements, security screening, and obtaining a passport. We recognize that the solution to overseas recruitment challenges and lengthy hiring timeframes does not reside solely in the HRO, and that it is important for leaders to view this entire process as a system from identification of an upcoming vacancy, through classifying and advertising the position, to selection and eventual arrival of the new hire. Teamwork with all stakeholders is critical to shortening the timeframes to bring new employees onboard. NSA Bahrain established a Working Group to help understand and resolve the situation. Additionally, as a mitigation measure, Navy Region EURAFSWA self-reported they intend to assign HR personnel on temporary assignment to augment the HRO and reduce the backlog of hiring actions.

### **Pay Setting**

Our inspection noted numerous complaints from foreign nationals (FN) employed by NSA Bahrain. These complaints included: inability to acquire health care insurance and workman's compensation, dissatisfaction with paying into Bahrain's unemployment (1%) account, not receiving an increase to their allowances, and starting at paygrade step zero (vice step one). While the HRO is unable to change the government of Bahrain's policies regarding civilian employment, in some cases, HRO leadership could reduce confusion through better communication and more frequent status updates for the FN employee's complaints.

### *Personnel Support Detachment*

Our pre-inspection survey and focus group results shows the NSA Bahrain Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) suffers from a similar reputation as the HRO, meeting performance metrics in only 7 of 16 categories according to the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS). However, the Bahrain PSD has made significant improvements in 2016, including: outreach and communications with waterfront commands, customer service hours, and continued training of Command Pass Coordinators (CPC).

### *Department of Defense Dependents School (DoDDS)*

DoDDS is a well-managed institution providing a quality educational experience. (b) (7)(E)

### *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*

NSA Bahrain Instruction 3440.4A is well documented and current. The incremental changes in the plan are captured with each bi-annual exercise.

## **FACILITIES, ENVIRONMENTAL, ENERGY CONSERVATION, AND SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**

Facilities and real property space limitations create challenges for Navy missions in Bahrain. The space limitations are a result of the combined effects of growth in tenant population without a corresponding growth in real estate for U.S. Navy use.

### *Facilities*



NREURAFSWA and NSA Bahrain have ineffective controls over the tenant population onboard the installation, and therefore struggle to effectively align theater missions, tasks, and basing assets. We recommend increased communication with NAVCENT to better share information. (b) (7)(E)

On a positive note, the NSA Bahrain command element is actively involved in a facility utilization process that relocates tenant commands not making best use of space into other facilities that better fit their requirements.

## **Military Construction**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has responsibility for the execution of military construction projects in Bahrain. Thirteen projects programmed between Fiscal Years 2008 and 2016 have had significant problems with schedule and quality, which negatively impacted mission accomplishment and quality of life. (b) (7)(E)

CNIC has been involved in addressing these delays, and USACE owes NAVFAC a plan to correct these problems. We will provide NREURAFSWA a separate issue paper to further articulate the matter.

## **Base Operating Services (BOS)**

Public Works Department (PWD) Bahrain provides BOS to the tenant commands in Bahrain (b) (7)(E) and it monitors contractor performance through on-site Performance Assessment Representatives (PAR), who are themselves contractors. This arrangement is in conflict with the Naval Facilities Acquisition Supplement, which defines a PAR as a government official. NAVFAC has plans to hire civilian employees to replace the contractor PARs (b) (7)(E) and is also forming a plan to determine how to replace the BOS contractor in the UAE with government officials.

## *Housing*

The Navy has authority to grant dependent entry approval into Bahrain (b) (7)(E) and has requested (b) (7)(E). NSA Bahrain has no accompanied on-base housing; and all families occupy residences off-base.

## **Unaccompanied Housing**

Barracks 263 operates under a waiver from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations & Environment) because its 2+2 configuration does not meet Navy unaccompanied housing standards. The second barracks at NSA 1 has a 2+0 configuration. NSA Bahrain (b) (7)(E) in a 1+1 configuration, and then recall the unaccompanied E-3s and E-4s who were living off-base.

## **Accompanied Housing**

In a housing program review performed in 2016, CNIC Headquarters found the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) to be understaffed to perform its functions, supported an installation request to hire six additional positions, and recommended filling three housing staff vacancies. FFSC personnel validate the force protection and life safety features of off-base housing rented by service members and U.S. civilian employees, verify that landlords are not setting rents above market rates, ensure residents' leases are written properly, and resolve disputes between service members and landlords. The understaffing results in an extended housing check-in process, increased temporary living allowance



The safety program is compliant and well managed. The Safety Office completed a self assessment in January 2016, which accurately reflected the compliant status of the overall safety program.

### **Safety and Occupational Health (SOH) Organization and Staffing**

The NSA Bahrain Safety Office supports NSA Bahrain, NAVCENT, PWD, and other tenants based in Bahrain. The Safety Office is fully staffed, although the civilian Safety Manager position has been filled since July 2015 by an active duty Aviation Safety Officer, with limited experience in installation-level SOH.

In a 2013 Safety and Occupational Health Management Evaluation (SOHME), CNREURAFSWA recommended a grade increase for the Safety Manager from GS-0018-12 to GS-0018-13. The SOHME cited “the complexities and responsibilities associated with directing a program which supports multiple high hazard industrial operations” to justify the grade increase. NSA Bahrain has been unable to hire a civilian Safety Manager since the last one departed in July 2015 and has compensated by assigning an active duty officer.

Local-hire civilian employees provide the cohesiveness and continuity that sustain Bahrain’s safety program. They are fully qualified safety professionals with an invaluable knowledge of NSA Bahrain and its tenant commands. Their working knowledge and effective use of CNIC’s safety management software program – ESAMS – is above average compared with other installations we’ve visited.

### **Explosive Safety**

The requirements on the NSA Bahrain explosives safety program (b) (7)(E)

. However, there has been no increase in supervision or oversight. NSA Bahrain should consider hiring additional explosive safety officers.

### **Traffic Safety**

NSA Bahrain has no motorcycle training range, and CNIC has not funded motorcycle training overseas. Although there is no motorcycle training available in Bahrain, there are currently 31 documented motorcycle riders. NSA Bahrain should re-assess the need for a local motorcycle safety course.

### **Zone Inspections**

The NSA Bahrain Executive Officer accompanies Safety personnel on weekly zones inspections at various parts of the installation. During our visit, Safety personnel inspected a Morale, Welfare and Recreation food service area (the “Oasis”, located in building 261) and identified a floor in the food preparation area that requires replacement. This practice of zone inspections demonstrates active Command support for the safety program.

### **Transportation**

Public Works Transportation self-reported that leased vehicles assigned to tenant units are used in violation of home-to-work prohibitions. NSA Bahrain has a plan to monitor traffic at the gates to identify offenders.

## SECURITY PROGRAMS

### *Command Security Overview*

Bahrain is (b) (7)(E)

Throughout our visit, we were impressed with the professionalism of the Security Force.

### *Physical Security and Antiterrorism/Force Protection (ATFP)*

NSA Bahrain's physical security program, ATFP, and law enforcement programs (b) (7)(E)

NSA Bahrain's ATFP plan is current, and has been exercised through force protection condition (FPCON) Charlie to ensure resource levels are sufficient to support their current mission.

NSA Bahrain only utilizes (b) (7)(E)

### *Law Enforcement*

The Operations Division, primarily responsible for the law enforcement and security patrols, (b) (7)(E). Following their last Mission Profile Validation – Protect (MPV-P) assessment, additional posts have been manned. The MWD division (b) (7)(E). There are (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E)

### *Operations Security (OPSEC)*

OPSEC at NSA Bahrain is compliant with governing directives. NSA Bahrain has a formal OPSEC program under the supervision of a properly trained and qualified OPSEC officer, and has effectively integrated their own OPSEC program into the programs of the major tenant commands, and into the base ATFP program.

### *Emergency Management*

Emergency Management at NSA Bahrain is compliant with governing directives, with only minor deficiencies noted. NSA Bahrain maintains a Local Dispatch Center (LDC) capability. (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) NSA Bahrain is currently pursuing improvements to their Mass Notification System (MNS) to ensure real-time notification is made to personnel on post. In order to maintain permanent manning of the LDC, (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

## PREVENTION & RESPONSE PROGRAMS

NAVCENT's Prevention and Response Programs are effective and executed in accordance with governing instructions, with the exception of the Sexual Assault Prevention Response program.

### *Sexual Assault Prevention Response*

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program is not fully compliant. The Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), SAPR POC, and the Victim Legal Counsel (VLC) are actively engaged with NSA Bahrain and tenant commands. Updates to command instructions, service record reviews, and training completion are required to bring this program into compliance.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

We observed community support programs were effective in supporting the Bahrain community. Manning shortfalls are placing a strain on the existing workforce, limiting the number of services that can be provided. There is a particularly large strain on Medical and Dental support.

### *Medical and Dental Support*

The Naval Branch Health Clinic provides excellent care for NSA Bahrain, within the limits of their manning. The clinic serves enrolled family members, base tenant commands, and ships operating in the region. However, they face a number of challenges including: the imposition of customs fees on medications, medical supplies and equipment; an increasing demand for mental healthcare, particularly pediatric mental healthcare and Educational Development Intervention Services (EDIS); the impact of high staff turnover; and keeping up with increasing demand for care in a high OPTEMPO AOR.

The most serious risk to the mission is medications and medical supplies are being delayed in customs awaiting release approval from the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the National Healthcare Regulating Agency (NHRA). The NHRA recently imposed customs fees on medications, vaccinations, medical supplies and equipment. Although the defense cooperative agreement under which the base operates

specifies medical supplies are not to be charged customs fees, the MOH and the NHRA recently began holding up supply shipments until fees were paid.

## **SAILOR PROGRAMS**

Sailor programs are compliant with governing directives. The installation provides activities suited to the population it supports, and Sailors generally enjoy the services provided.

## **Survey and Focus Group Findings**

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We conducted surveys and focus group discussions to assess the quality of home life (QOHL) and work life (QOWL). Our overall assessment is that NSA Bahrain is supporting tenant commands and adequately providing quality of life (QOL) services for Sailors and their families, and civilian employees within existing constraints.

Pre-visit survey and focus group discussions indicated QOHL and QOWL at NSA Bahrain were lower than our historical area visit averages, but were similar to the average for overseas locations. Primary negative impacts to QOHL and QOWL included concerns over cost of living, spouse access to employment, and length of workday.

## **Deficiencies and Recommendations**

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A comprehensive list of deficiencies and recommendations will be forwarded to NREURAFSWA under separate correspondence.