



# HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State

ESP-20-01

## What OIG Reviewed

In response to a referral from the Department of State (Department) and requests from several congressional committees, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed allegations of politicized and other improper personnel practices by political appointees in the Office of the Secretary.

## What OIG Recommends

OIG made two recommendations to the Department: to institute training on the Department's merit-based personnel rules for political appointees and to consider discipline for any officials found to have violated these policies. The Department concurred with both recommendations.

November 2019

OFFICE OF EVALUATIONS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

## Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices Involving the Office of the Secretary

### What OIG Found

OIG reviewed allegations of politicized and other improper personnel practices involving officials in the Office of the Secretary. OIG ultimately determined that allegations pertaining to personnel decisions affecting five career employees at the Department warranted detailed analysis.

In one of these cases, OIG found that Department officials ended the detail of a career employee in the Office of Policy Planning after significant discussion concerning the employee's perceived political views, association with former administrations, and perceived national origin, which are non-merit factors that may not be considered in assigning career personnel under the Department's policies.

In two cases involving the assignment of career employees to Freedom of Information Act duties, OIG found no evidence that impermissible factors influenced the personnel decisions.

In the final two cases, there was inconclusive evidence, and OIG was unable to obtain essential information from key decisionmakers. Accordingly, OIG could not determine if improper considerations played a role in the decisions regarding the assignments of the two career employees.