



Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

June 21, 2024

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Via Electronic Transmission

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations

The Honorable Ben Cardin
Chairman
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

The Honorable James E. Risch
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

The Honorable Gary Peters
Chairman
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Rand Paul
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

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The Honorable Michael McCaul
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Gregory Meeks
Ranking Member
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
House Committee on Oversight and Accountability

The Honorable Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and Accountability

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members,

Pursuant to requirements in the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47, March 23, 2024) and corresponding Senate Report (S. Rpt. 118-71), I am providing a report on Department of State Office of Inspector General (State OIG) staffing and funding needed to ensure continuity of oversight related to Afghanistan following the prospective sunset of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). As explained below, we do not foresee the need for substantial additional continuing resources to facilitate SIGAR's sunset. However, more flexible hiring authorities and a \$2 million increase in our base appropriation would allow OIG to quickly add staff, including former SIGAR staff if needed, and fund any travel required to seamlessly transition SIGAR's Department of State-related work to State OIG.

State OIG has long been committed to overseeing Department of State-led programs and operations in Afghanistan. We established a permanent presence at Embassy Kabul beginning in 2008, and our personnel were there on the ground conducting oversight until the ordered departure of embassy personnel in 2021. With the Department of State continuing to support Afghanistan-based programming and maintaining related diplomatic operations in Doha, Qatar, State OIG has maintained a robust Afghanistan-related work plan, issuing 22 reports since the evacuation of Embassy Kabul. This work continues with a focus on topics like the screening and vetting of Afghan evacuees and the disposition of Embassy Kabul's defensive equipment and armored vehicles. Just last week, my Department of Defense (DoD) IG counterpart and I visited the Qatar-based Afghan evacuee processing facility that recently transitioned from DoD to Department of State management and will be the focus of a State OIG inspection in the fall.

Our Afghanistan work continues to involve extensive coordination to promote comprehensive, coordinated oversight coverage. This coordination dates to 2007, when OIG participated in the

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Southwest Asia Joint Planning Group and contributed to coordinated Afghanistan oversight plans with OIGs under the Comprehensive Audit Plan for Southwest Asia. That coordination continues today under the Lead Inspector General framework for oversight of overseas contingency operations and involves the DoD and U.S. Agency for International Development OIGs, SIGAR, and the broader oversight community. In addition, following the Embassy Kabul evacuation, OIG worked with the Department of Homeland Security OIG to establish the OIG Afghanistan Project Coordination Group to share information about, and deconflict oversight work related to, the relocation and resettlement of Afghans.

State OIG will continue to leverage these connections and its expansive oversight toolkit and experienced personnel base to ensure continuity of oversight related to Afghanistan when SIGAR ceases operations. SIGAR's June 2021 transition plan indicated that as it transitioned to shutdown, it would look to complete ongoing work, refrain from taking on new assignments, and deactivate its hotline. Under these circumstances, State OIG would consult with SIGAR personnel managing its core functions and assess whether to adopt or integrate into other workplans, projects that SIGAR plans to cancel. With respect to investigations, State OIG would assume responsibility for any joint investigations pertaining to Department of State programming, funds, or personnel.

In the context of State OIG's already significant portfolio of Afghanistan-related work, we do not anticipate the need for substantial additional resources to provide continuity of Afghanistan oversight after SIGAR sunsets. However, with State OIG's dynamic oversight portfolio of emerging world crises involving the Department of State, a \$2 million increase in State OIG base funding and additional hiring flexibilities, such as direct-hire authority, would enable OIG to meet any new requirements without impact to other oversight. This funding and enhanced hiring flexibility would allow OIG to quickly add staff, including former SIGAR staff if needed, and fund any travel required to seamlessly transition SIGAR's Department of State-related work to State OIG.

Thank you for your support of OIG's oversight mission and interest in our work. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or our Director of Congressional and Public Affairs, Ryan Holden, at ryan.d.holden@stateoig.gov or (571) 349-9259.

Sincerely,



Cardell K. Richardson, Sr.
Inspector General
U.S. Department of State