



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ESP-24-01

What OIG Reviewed

At the request of several U.S. Senators, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed whether Department of State (Department) officials complied with all relevant laws and regulations regarding the suspension of the security clearance of Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley and whether the Department followed standard practices following the suspension of the clearance.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made three recommendations to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to ensure prompt notification of security clearance actions, to amend its guidance on Information Facilities and Access Restrictions, and to consider whether guidance is needed regarding notice to supervisors and colleagues when an employee's security clearance is suspended. OIG made one recommendation to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and Global Talent Management to develop standard procedures for when a political appointee's security clearance is suspended. Finally, OIG recommended that the Under Secretary for Management send periodic reminders of the requirement to report allegations of serious or criminal misconduct to OIG.

September 2024

OFFICE OF EVALUATIONS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Special Review of the Department of State's Handling of the Security Clearance Suspension of the Special Envoy for Iran

What OIG Found

Department officials generally followed standard procedures in the suspension of Special Envoy Robert Malley's security clearance. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security immediately assessed and acted upon the adverse information it received regarding Mr. Malley. The Department deviated from the way that suspensions are typically delivered by delaying notification to Mr. Malley until senior Department officials were apprised of his suspension. The delay allowed him the opportunity to participate in a classified conference call after the suspension was approved, but before he was notified. Also, Department officials restored his access to Sensitive But Unclassified information systems, although such access is usually restricted for individuals in circumstances similar to Mr. Malley. A key justification for the restoration of access was concern that, if Special Envoy Malley was restricted from accessing his Department email account, he might use a personal email account as his primary means of conducting government business, which is explicitly prohibited by Department policy.

OIG also found that the lack of standard policies for political appointees and the lack of supervision of Special Envoy Malley led to significant confusion as to what work Mr. Malley was authorized to do following the suspension. The Department failed to consistently notify employees who regularly interacted with Mr. Malley that he was no longer allowed to access classified information. These conditions likely led to Special Envoy Malley engaging on issues outside the limited scope of issues on which he was authorized to work. Finally, OIG found that the Department did not report the allegations against Mr. Malley to OIG, as required by the Department of State Authorities Act.