



OIG Office of Inspector General

U.S. Department of State • Broadcasting Board of Governors

UNCLASSIFIED

May 25, 2016

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
United State Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel
United States House of Representatives
2462 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
United State Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
United States House of Representatives
2230 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United State Senate
437 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam B. Schiff
United States House of Representatives
2411 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United State Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators and Representatives:

This responds to your letter dated March 9, 2016,¹ which was addressed both to me and to the Inspector General for the Intelligence Community (ICIG).² In that letter, you emphasize that the work of inspectors general must be "impartial, independent, and diligent." I agree—partisan politics have no role in the operation of any office of inspector general.

Your letter states that, based on public reports, you have questions about the Department of State Office of Inspector General's (OIG) review of the email practices of the current and past four Secretaries of State and their immediate staff. The letter cites a potential whistleblower who has publically and anonymously accused OIG of political bias. However, any suggestion that the OIG or its employees are biased is without merit.

The work of OIG is independent, fact-based, and non-partisan. Our review was initiated after the Secretary of State and multiple Congressional committees requested that we examine records preservation, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) processes, and email practices in the Department and in the Office of the Secretary. To ensure the impartiality and objectivity of our

¹ This letter also responds to Congressman Engel's letter to me dated March 1, 2016.

² The ICIG responded by separate letter dated May 6, 2016.

work, the review spans two decades and covers the tenures of five Secretaries of State. The results of this review are primarily contained in two OIG evaluations assigned to the Office of Evaluations and Special Projects: the first report was issued to the Department on January 5, 2016, and addresses issues relating to compliance with FOIA; the second and final report was issued to the Department on May 24, 2016, and addresses email and cybersecurity practices.³ Both reports identify longstanding, systemic issues in the Office of the Secretary and the Department and are designed to improve the Department's programs and operations. In fact, the Department accepted all of the recommendations that we made in these reports.

As to your other inquiries, OIG has consistently provided information to Congress in a bipartisan and bicameral manner. This is true both for this review and for more routine matters. To provide just one example of our commitment to keeping Congress "fully and currently informed," OIG provides written monthly updates to over one hundred Congressional staff members regarding its operations as well as recently issued reports and ongoing work.

In closing, I assure you that OIG and its staff have adhered to our oversight mission in a non-partisan and impartial manner. I respectfully ask that OIG's work be judged objectively on its merits.

Sincerely,



Steve A. Linick
Inspector General

cc: The Honorable Bob Corker
The Honorable Ron Johnson
The Honorable Charles Grassley
The Honorable Richard Burr
The Honorable Ed Royce
The Honorable Jason Chaffetz
The Honorable Devin Nunes

³*Evaluation of the Department of State's FOIA Processes for Requests Involving the Office of the Secretary*, ESP-16-01 (January 2016) and *Office of the Secretary: Evaluation of Email Records Management and Cybersecurity Requirements*, ESP-16-03 (May 2016), both available at www.oig.state.gov.