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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6225

June 10, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are deeply concerned that the two lead agencies carrying out the international programs and activities of the United States, the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), have been operating without permanent Inspectors General for a considerable period of time. The Department of State has not had an Inspector General since 2008 and USAID has had a vacancy since 2011. Inspectors General play a crucial role in identifying ineffective programs, process weaknesses, and wasteful spending that undermine public confidence in government.

It is critical that your Administration provide this Committee with highly qualified nominees who can function independently and objectively in these positions in the near future. In a recent hearing before this Committee, Secretary Kerry testified that he would like to see the Department of State's Inspector General vacancy filled quickly and noted that the White House had recently selected a highly qualified nominee. It has been over a month since that hearing and we await the nomination.

It is vitally important that the Inspectors General are able to function independently and objectively. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has, since 2007, documented the lack of adherence to proper auditing standards and the lack of independence and autonomy within the Department of State's Office of Inspector General (OIG). In particular, GAO has noted that the Office is led by "management and Foreign Service officials [, which] is not consistent with professional standards for independence;" the "use of Foreign Service Officers … to lead OIG inspections resulted in, at a minimum, the appearance of independence impairment;" and the "OIG relied on inspections rather than audits to provide oversight coverage resulting in gaps to the audit oversight of the department."[1] It is imperative that the next Inspector General at the Department of State resolves these matters and protects the independence and credibility of the OIG.

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[1] *See generally* Government Accountability Office, Inspectors General: Activities of the Department of State Office of Inspector General, GAO-07-138 (Mar. 23, 2007) link; Government Accountability Office, Inspectors General: Limitations of IG Oversight at the Department of State, GAO-08-135T (Oct. 31, 2007) link; Government Accountability Office, State Department Inspector General: Actions to Address Independence and Effectiveness Concerns Are Under Way, GAO-11-382T (Apr. 5, 2011) link.

The Committee stands ready to assist your Administration in any way it reasonably can to fill these vacancies.

We appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
Chairman

Bob Corker
Ranking Member