



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

May 28, 2020

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The Honorable  
Eliot L. Engel, Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Engel:

Thank you for your letters of May 16, May 21, May 22, and May 27 regarding President Trump's decision to remove Steve Linick from the position of State Department Inspector General. The Department is carefully reviewing your various requests for information, records, and interviews with several State Department personnel, and is committed to engaging with you in a good faith effort to accommodate these requests.

As you make clear in your May 21 letter, the decision and authority as to whether to remove a sitting Inspector General is vested to the President, and we note your recent correspondence to the President on this matter. Subject to the parameters of that authority, the Department will soon be providing a substantive response to your inquiries, as indicated in our interim response sent on May 22. To the extent your requests involve questions regarding ongoing open investigations by the Office of the Inspector General, we believe that it would be more prudent to direct your inquiries to that office.

In an effort to demonstrate our commitment to working with you, as an initial step, we are prepared to facilitate a discussion with Members of the Committee with Under Secretary for Management Brian Bulatao, whom you requested in your May 22 letter to appear before the Committee. Once the Department has the opportunity to finalize and transmit its written substantive response to your letters, we request to have a conversation at senior levels with you, Mr. Chairman, to find a mutual accommodation for the Department to respond to your requests for transcribed interviews and information related to this matter. We do have concerns, however, that you requested six senior State Department officials to participate in staff-led transcribed interviews in June – and commit to doing so within 5 days – without providing any details regarding their relevance to or involvement in the President's decision to remove the Inspector General.

We appreciate the interest among your Committee Members, and other Members of Congress, on this issue and we look forward to engaging with you in further discussions to reasonably accommodate the Committee's requests.

Sincerely,

Mary Elizabeth Taylor  
Assistant Secretary of State  
Bureau of Legislative Affairs