



One Hundred Eighteenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

February 7, 2024

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write to follow up on the December 1, 2022 letter from Chairman McCaul regarding the State Department's refusal to comply with requests from the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

On December 1, 2022, Chairman McCaul sent a letter to the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) demanding that the Administration immediately reverse course and reinstate compliance with SIGAR. In response, USAID again began engaging with SIGAR regarding oversight of ongoing assistance to Afghanistan. However, despite this request and additional, repeated engagement from the chairman, members, and staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the State Department continues to ignore congressional demands for the department to cooperate with SIGAR's oversight of ongoing humanitarian and development assistance programs in Afghanistan.

On November 14, 2023, SIGAR John Sopko testified to the committee that the State Department continues to subvert SIGAR's oversight authority, adding that this is the "least cooperative State Department" that SIGAR has worked with since the creation of the office in 2008. The department's subversion of congressionally mandated oversight is highly disappointing and unacceptable.

Mr. Sopko's testimony revealed an ongoing pattern of obstruction by the State Department. Mr. Sopko's testimony established that the State Department ordered employees not to talk to SIGAR, consistently delayed scheduling meeting requests, denied SIGAR access to "sensitive" and "internal" documents, refused for two and a half years to schedule a meeting between Mr. Sopko and Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West, and refused to respond to at least 30 outstanding requests for information, several of which have been pending for over a year, and half of which are simple document requests.

This obstruction, despite repeated efforts by both SIGAR and Congress to encourage the State Department to comply with SIGAR's oversight efforts, are a flagrant violation of federal law (P.L. 110-181 § 1229) and run contrary to President Biden's stated commitments to transparency

and accountability. It is unacceptable for the State Department to continue to refuse to cooperate with SIGAR.

We request that the State Department immediately and verifiably:

- Fully reinstate compliance with SIGAR.
- Rescind all directives to staff requiring they not communicate with SIGAR;
- Provide SIGAR with all “sensitive” and “internal” documents which have been requested;
- Respond to all outstanding requests for information; and

We ask that you verify to this Committee the actions the State Department takes to resolve these issues by February 23, 2024. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



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MICHAEL T. McCAUL  
Chairman  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



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CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress



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JOE WILSON  
Member of Congress



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DARRELL ISSA  
Member of Congress



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ANN WAGNER  
Member of Congress



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BRIAN MAST  
Member of Congress



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TIM BURCHETT  
Member of Congress



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RONNY L. JACKSON  
Member of Congress



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YOUNG KIM  
Member of Congress



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MARIA ELVIRA SALAZAR  
Member of Congress



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BILL HUIZENGA  
Member of Congress



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AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN  
RADEWAGEN  
Member of Congress



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FRENCH HILL  
Member of Congress



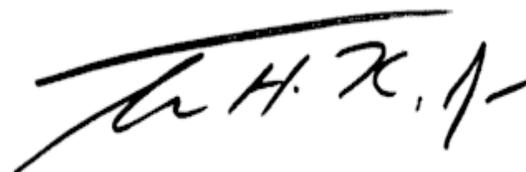
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JIM BAIRD  
Member of Congress



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MICHAEL WALTZ  
Member of Congress



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THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.  
Member of Congress



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MICHAEL V. LAWLER  
Member of Congress



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CORY MILLS  
Member of Congress



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RICH McCORMICK, M.D., M.B.A.  
Member of Congress



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KEITH SELF  
Member of Congress

CC: Ranking Member Gregory Meeks