

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON  
MILITARY PERSONNEL  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**SUBJECT: SENIOR LEADER MISCONDUCT –  
PREVENTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**STATEMENT OF: LIEUTENANT GENERAL STAYCE D. HARRIS  
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your invitation to testify before you today.

As the Air Force Inspector General, I am responsible to independently and continuously inspect, assess, investigate and report to the Secretary of the Air Force on the readiness, economy, efficiency and discipline of the Air Force to improve mission effectiveness. Part of that responsibility includes resolving any complaint involving an Air Force general officer or officer selected for promotion to brigadier general, member of the Senior Executive Service, or political appointee--and retirees of each category. Complaints against Air Force Senior Officials are investigated by a dedicated team of investigating officers, with diverse backgrounds. Our Senior Official investigators are augmented by a team of imbedded attorneys from the office of the Air Force Judge Advocate General to help ensure we meet all legal and regulatory requirements. In the past 5 years, an average of 36 Senior Official investigations involving one or more uniformed Air Force general officers or general officer-selects have been conducted each year.<sup>1</sup> Those investigations substantiated one or more violations in an average of 15 cases each year. So, on average, a violation of some type is substantiated in just under one half of these investigations.<sup>2</sup>

The top three categories of substantiated violations may be generally characterized as ethics issues, improper handling of personnel matters, and unprofessional relationships – in that order. Ethics issues result primarily from violations of the Joint Ethics Regulation and have included use of public office for private gain, post-government employment rules violations, and wrongfully accepting gifts. Improper handling of personnel matters is most often characterized by violating the processes and procedures for performance reports, promotion recommendations, or hiring practices. And, unprofessional relationships may be improper superior / subordinate relationships, demonstrating undue favoritism, or other similar issues.

It is critical to me, and to our Secretary, that Air Force Senior Official investigations are independent, thorough, impartial, objective, and as timely as possible. Additionally, it is crucial that we meet all legal requirements to ensure our work promotes the discipline, efficiency, and economy of our force.

To those ends, the Air Force Inspector General office responsible for the conduct and/or oversight of these investigations<sup>3</sup> is free, both in fact and appearance, from impairments to independence. My Senior Official investigators gather and report

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<sup>1</sup> It is not uncommon for a single investigation to involve more than one subject. In some of those investigations, most frequently Air National Guard cases, more than one uniformed military senior official is a subject.

<sup>2</sup> The average number of uniformed military senior official subjects against whom a substantiation is found each year is 16. This is one greater than the average number of cases each year because some investigations involve more than one uniformed military senior official subject.

<sup>3</sup> A small number are conducted by DODIG, a COCOM, or OSI. IGS is involved to some degree in all these cases.

evidence in an unbiased and independent manner to determine the validity of an allegation or to resolve an issue. This includes inculpatory and exculpatory information. We strive to investigate and report in a timely manner as we appreciate this is especially critical given the impact investigations have on the lives of both our complainants and subjects, as well as the mission of the Air Force. Finally, our Senior Official investigations are initiated, conducted, and reported in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. We conduct these investigations with due respect for the rights and privacy of all those involved. And, our imbedded attorneys, assisting in every investigation, help ensure we remain on target.

Our process in conducting Senior Official investigations is robust and includes multiple layers of review before I make a determination on findings and conclusions. From the outset, a team of one Investigating Officer and one embedded attorney is assigned to each case, and they work the investigation in partnership from start to finish. As our investigations conclude, our closure process includes a peer review, legal assistance review, reviews by the deputy and director of my Senior Official Inquiries directorate, and a formal and independent legal review signed by the Director of Administrative Law for the Air Force. Then, the report comes to me for review and approval. Following my approval, the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Defense provides an oversight review of each of our investigations. Investigations with substantiated allegations are referred to the appropriate command action authority to determine what disciplinary action might be warranted. And finally, we do not close our case until that command action authority provides my office with a report of any actions taken.

My deputy and I use a variety of venues and products to promote education and awareness across our Senior Official population. It is important to me that we not only investigate complaints against our Senior Officials, but that we also work to reduce the incidents of misconduct by our most senior decision makers. Currently, my focus for Senior Official investigations is improving timeliness. We must continue to maintain the highest level of quality in our investigative work and reports, but also reduce the time it takes to complete these investigations.

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, in conclusion, I very much appreciate this committee's continuing support of the Air Force and your interest in our efforts to prevent misconduct by our most senior leaders. This hearing afforded us a renewed opportunity to review and improve our processes in this important area.