



INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

**Statement of
Sean O'Donnell
Acting Inspector General,
Department of Defense
for a Hearing on**

***Department of Defense Inspector General
and the Service Inspectors General:
Roles, Responsibilities and
Opportunities for Improvement***

Before the Subcommittee on Military Personnel

Committee on Armed Services

U.S. House of Representatives

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Good afternoon, Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Banks, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Inspectors General of the Department of Defense and the Military Services.

On January 27, 2020, I was sworn in as the Inspector General of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and, since April 6, 2020, I have served concurrently as the Acting Inspector General of the Department of Defense.

Today, I am here representing the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (OIG). Pursuant to the IG Act, the DoD OIG was established as an independent and objective unit to detect and deter waste, fraud, and abuse in DoD programs and operations; to promote the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of these programs and operations; and to help ensure ethical conduct throughout the DoD.

Perhaps the most important hallmark of the DoD OIG is its independence. This independence ensures the objectivity of our work and safeguards against efforts to influence or obstruct our operations. Congress has protected our independence by, among other things, placing the IG under the general supervision of the Secretary of Defense, meaning the Secretary cannot direct or prevent the work of the DoD OIG unless such a prohibition is necessary to preserve national security. In addition, Congress requires that the DoD IG receive timely access to all documents and other information available to the Department.

The DoD OIG employs approximately 1,750 dedicated oversight professionals. We are responsible for, among other things, one of the largest financial statement audits in history, evaluating highly complex and highly classified DoD programs, and investigating billions of dollars in potential fraud. To put our overall workload into perspective, in Fiscal Year 2020, the DoD OIG issued 138 audit and evaluation reports, contributed to criminal recoveries of \$2.69

billion, conducted 35 administrative investigations, and oversaw 499 senior official or retaliation investigations completed by the Military Services and Defense agency OIGs. We do all of this despite having a proportionately smaller staff than other Federal OIGs. As a point of comparison, the larger Federal OIGs typically have a ratio of departmental staff to OIG staff of between 50 to 1 and 200 to 1. The DoD OIG ratio is closer to 1,700 to 1.

The DoD OIG is not alone in ensuring robust oversight of the DoD. We are part of what we call the Defense Oversight Community, which includes the four Military Service IGs, the Military Criminal Investigative Organizations, the Service Auditors General, and Defense agency IGs, including the Federal IGs for four Defense intelligence agencies. The IG Act recognizes the important role of the Defense Oversight Community by, among other things, requiring the DoD OIG to give particular regard to the Defense Oversight Community's work with an eye toward avoiding duplication and ensuring coordination and cooperation. To this end, I chair the Defense Council on Integrity and Efficiency, which brings the Defense Oversight Community together through various committees and working groups to coordinate and discuss best practices. In addition, I meet quarterly with the Service IGs to discuss common issues.

One of the most significant ways in which the DoD OIG interacts with the wider DoD is through the DoD Hotline. We offer the DoD Hotline as a confidential, reliable means to report fraud, mismanagement, or other criminal or administrative misconduct that involves DoD personnel and operations, without fear of reprisal. Every year, the DoD Hotline receives approximately 16,000 contacts.

This volume often requires the DoD OIG to refer contacts to an appropriate entity within the Defense Oversight Community, including the Service IGs. For senior official misconduct allegations, we generally assume responsibility for conducting investigations of allegations of

misconduct against three- and four-star general and flag officers, Presidential appointees, and Senior Executive Service members in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Similarly, we generally refer allegations against one- and two-star general and flag officers and SES members within a Service to the corresponding Service IG, and oversight the resulting report of investigation. With respect to whistleblower retaliation allegations, the DoD OIG handles complaints involving DoD contractors and other select employees, security clearances, and sexual assault. We will generally refer whistleblower retaliation allegations involving military Service members to their respective Service IG.

Even when we refer a contact to another entity, we retain oversight responsibility. As such, we require that the receiving entity conduct the inquiry according to quality standards that ensure independence and objectivity. For most referrals, we also require the receiving entity to submit a written report to the DoD OIG for oversight. If the DoD OIG determines that the report is deficient, we return the report to the reporting entity to resolve the deficiency. We include the Service IG work that we oversight in our semiannual reports to the Congress, in which we summarize our activities for the preceding 6-month period. We also look forward to working with the Service IGs in the implementation of our oversight of diversity and inclusion in the DoD and the handling of supremacist, extremist, and criminal gang activity in the Armed Forces, as required by section 554 of the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act.

Finally, the DoD OIG conducts detailed quality assurance reviews of the Service IGs' administrative investigations. Our reviews cover their hotline, whistleblower reprisal, and senior official complaint investigations and operations. These reviews have identified areas for improvement, such as establishing performance metrics, improving case management systems, and implementing procedures to protect complainant identity. We have also identified best

practices, such as publishing IG misconduct trends and process improvements to improve timeliness.

In closing, overseeing increasingly complex Defense Department programs and activities, as well as Hotline and other complaints, requires the best staff, training, and other resources—not only for the DoD OIG but also for the Service IGs and the broader Defense Oversight Community. Adequately funding IGs is a valuable investment—not only for handling investigations of misconduct but also for deterring waste, fraud, and abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon, and I look forward to answering your questions.