

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

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Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Banks, and distinguished members of the Military Personnel Subcommittee -- Good Afternoon. I am Lieutenant General Leslie Smith, the Army Inspector General. Thank you for the privilege of appearing before you to speak about the Army Inspector General (IG) System and how we function to assist Soldiers, Army Civilians, and Families—all in the interest of enhancing and sustaining the Army's combat readiness. On behalf of the Acting Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Mr. Whitley, and our Army Chief of Staff, General McConville, thank you for your support to the military.

We exist for one thing—to help ensure the Readiness of our Army. Since the creation of the U.S. Army IG System 243 years ago at Valley Forge in 1778, Inspectors General have been charged to inspect, observe, train, and report misconduct. This duty has evolved into our four key functions: Inspections, Assistance, Investigations, and Training. I will talk about how we conduct those functions in the framework and organizational structure of the Army IG system.

At the Headquarters, Department of the Army level, I am independent, and I report directly to the Secretary of the Army. However, in accordance with Title 10, U.S. Code, section 7020, I am charged by law to cooperate fully with DoD IG, and we achieve this cooperation primarily by resolving allegations of Whistleblower Reprisal, resolving Army-related cases submitted through DoD's Hotline, and investigating Army senior officials—all under the direct oversight of DoD IG. However, as I stated earlier, and in accordance with the same statute I just mentioned, I work directly for the Secretary of the Army, but we maintain a very close working relationship with DoD IG, which enables smooth transfers of information and casework.

At the Department of the Army level, we conduct independent inspections of systemic issues; we resolve allegations against Army senior-officials; and, as stated earlier, we resolve Whistleblower Reprisal allegations and DoD Hotline cases. We refer other allegations that represent serious criminal misconduct to the Army's Criminal Investigation Command and discrimination cases to Equal Opportunity or Equal Employment Opportunity Offices. We work hand-in-hand with these agencies and others to process cases, ensuring that each individual matter gets to the right agency for assistance in what we call a "warm handoff."

Additionally, we provide policy, training, and assistance to Army IGs worldwide. We also provide trends analysis and impartial advice to Army senior leaders in all components. For example, our Inspections Directorate is in direct support of the Army's focus on countering harmful behaviors. This effort includes behaviors such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, discrimination, and extremism among others. Our Inspections Directorate also recently concluded inspections on the Army's Equal Opportunity Program and the Army Suicide Prevention Program. These inspections allowed us to help Army senior leaders recognize and address these critical Army-wide issues that affect readiness. Also, being independent affords us the ability to understand the scope and challenges the Army faced during the privatized housing crisis and to recommend solutions to Army senior leaders. We were able to quickly shift our assets and deploy to 73 locations across the United States to get a strategic look at the problem and help provide insights and recommendations.

Across the Army in all components—active, reserve, and National Guard—we have 1,441 IGs in more than 200 IG offices, each with just enough military and civilian personnel to perform our IG functions effectively. We need IGs at these various echelons of command to serve the unique needs of their general-officer commanders in the numerous specialty commands and organizations across the force. In this capacity, these “field IGs,” with direct oversight from me as the head of the United States Army Inspector General Agency, adapt the four IG functions to meet the readiness needs and goals of those field commanders.

All Army IGs work within the parameters of our guiding regulation, Army Regulation 20-1, Inspector General Activities and Procedures, and the procedural guidelines found in five separate doctrinal guides, most notably The Inspections Guide and The Assistance and Investigations Guide. Those guides also articulate clearly defined processes for our smooth interaction and the transfer of casework with DoD IG and other Services as necessary. In short, we have a fully developed and highly mature IG system that routinely adapts its functions to meet the changing requirements of the Army and the Nation as a whole. In the context of this robust policy and doctrinal foundation, the Army's field IGs remain **responsible** directly to their respective commanders, but **responsive** to the Army IG and the needs of the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army. We also provide, to our major subordinate

command IGs, independent policy guidance, training, and oversight. Included in this mix are the IGs assigned to the Adjutants General in the 54 states and territories.

The Army provides oversight of Army readiness through the performance of the four IG functions – Inspections, Assistance, Investigations, and Training. This oversight begins at the top and works downward through each echelon of command. Ultimately, the Army’s commanders are responsible for the readiness, training, good order, and discipline of their formations; our IG system is designed to complement and bolster the readiness efforts of these commanders. We strongly believe that commanders and field IGs have the ability to solve their own internal challenges with our added support as needed. The Department of the Army IG provides this support while also overseeing the Army’s multitude of critical systems, functions, and programs, including Army-wide focus areas. Everything that we do as Army IGs revolves around keeping the Army in a high state of mission readiness so that we can fight and win our Nation’s wars.

Every Army IG takes a special IG oath to “uphold the standards” of the Army “without prejudice or partiality”—even when the Army may be part of the problem. These words represent a tall order—and one that all IGs, particularly me, take very seriously. If an IG falls short of this standard, I have the authority to revoke that IG’s credentials. While I do not enjoy this requirement, I have taken steps to revoke several IG credentials (both military and civilian). We occupy a position of public trust, and we must never violate that trust.

In closing, the IG Agency is both independent and integrated. We are an independent agency that provides credible and impartial oversight. We are also an integrated agency serving vertically and laterally as the “eyes, ears, voice, and conscience” of our commanders in the field, helping preserve the Army’s readiness through our four critical functions—Inspections, Assistance, Investigations, and Training.

Thank you, again, for taking the time to discuss the importance of the Army IG System.