



Chairwoman Barbara Lee
Subcommittee on Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Hearing: Critical Management Issues – U.S. Diplomatic and Development Agencies
April 14, 2021

As Prepared

Thank you all for joining us for this hearing on the oversight of critical management issues at the Department of State, United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).

I am pleased to welcome State Department Acting Inspector General Ms. Diana Shaw, USAID Acting Inspector General Mr. Thomas Ullom, and a special welcome and congratulations to the new DFC Inspector General, Mr. Anthony Zakel.

The Offices of Inspectors General play a fundamental role in providing independent oversight and equipping Agency heads and Congress in their work to ensure the accountability and effectiveness of taxpayer dollars. This is especially true in fragile or conflict settings, where the monitoring and evaluation of these programs are even more challenging.

The independence and the non-partisan nature of the Offices of the Inspectors General are absolutely critical to both their Departments and Agencies of jurisdiction but also to congressional oversight. Unfortunately, the prior administration and former Secretary of State did not respect that independence and intervened when they did not like the direction of a particular report or investigation. This has weakened accountability to the public. As Chairwoman of this Subcommittee, it is my intention to support your offices and the indispensable role you play in our oversight responsibilities. I also hope the Biden Administration moves quickly to nominate qualified individuals to fill these important positions.

The Offices of the Inspectors General issue annual reports identifying critical management issues where improvements need to be made and assess whether United States government investments in national security, economic growth, global health security, human rights, and governance continue to be efficient, effective, and in line with our foreign policy interests. Today's hearing is an opportunity to discuss the latest findings in these reports and other pressing matters.

As Chairwoman of this Subcommittee, I want to continue strengthening the integrity of these programs and the agencies that implement them while also promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion so that people of color, women, and other minorities have opportunities in the foreign policy sphere. Secretary Blinken has publicly committed to increasing the diversity of the Department's workforce as a priority.

He has already taken some initial steps to do just that. In fact, on Monday, he announced the appointment of Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley as the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the Department of State. Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley has been a tireless leader and advocate for inclusion in the U.S. foreign policy workforce, and as Chair of this subcommittee I will be looking for ways to support her efforts. I encourage all of our IGs here today to hold Agency heads accountable to achieve this worthy goal so that our foreign affairs workforce reflects the diversity of America.

I understand that management challenges are always a work-in-progress, and I am committed to working with your offices as well as Secretary Blinken, the future USAID Administrator, and the future CEOs of USAGM and the DFC to address these complex issues while making progress on our shared diplomatic and development goals around the world.

Thank you again for being here, and I look forward to your testimonies.