

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

STATEMENT OF

**VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD P. SNYDER
NAVAL INSPECTOR GENERAL**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

SUBJECT:

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INSPECTOR GENERAL AND THE
SERVICES INSPECTOR GENERALS: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND
OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

APRIL 15, 2021

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Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Banks, and military personnel subcommittee members –

Thank you very much for having us here today to discuss the roles, responsibilities and authorities of the Service Inspectors General.

The Naval Inspector General (NAVIG) office and duties are established by statute, specifically 10 U.S. Code Section 8020. The NAVIG reports directly to the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) as an Echelon I (Secretariat-level) organization, and has the authority to inspect, investigate, and or inquire into any and all matters affecting the discipline or the military efficiency of the Department of the Navy (DON). NAVIG is the senior administrative investigative official in the DON and the principal advisor to SECNAV, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps on all matters concerning inspections and investigations. Additional direction and authority is provided in a number of Department of Defense (DoD), SECNAV, and NAVIG policies. NAVIG is the Inspector General for both the DON and the Navy as a Service. The Deputy Naval Inspector General for Marine Corps Matters, is the principal advisor to the CMC and SECNAV on Marine Corps inspections and investigations and generally operates independently with respect to the Marine Corps as a Service. Our two offices coordinate closely, as necessary.

The Office of the Naval Inspector General (NAVINSGEN) ensures an independent and objective evaluation of all complaints within NAVIG's purview, with the exception of complaints retained by the Department of Defense IG. These complaints are received through a variety of means, including email, letter, facsimile, and phone, and at various IG offices in the NAVIG enterprise. Complaint totals have risen steadily over the last several years. In response, the DON has increased resources devoted to the Hotlines Division to address the rise in

complaints and provide increased oversight capability and to the Senior Officials Investigation Division to address a rise in senior official complaints.

NAVINGEN conducts periodic inspections of commands and region visits, to assess program compliance, program effectiveness, and risk to the Department of the Navy (DON). Special assessments and inspections, health and safety assessments, research and evaluation reports, and site visits are also conducted. In the last three years, 32 of these activities were conducted, and they were primarily focused on areas interest, risk or concern to the DON. These assessments frequently include a pre-inspection survey and focus group meetings to help identify areas of concern and provide commanders an assessment of command climate. We also have an intelligence oversight responsibility to help ensure standards are being met within the intelligence community.

NAVINGEN is not involved in criminal investigations nor audits, as NAVIG is separate and distinct from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Naval Audit Service.

NAVIG Enterprise

The NAVIG enterprise, those performing IG functions throughout the Navy, is large, consisting of 27 Echelon II, 66 Echelon III, 49 Echelon IV, and 2 Echelon V Command IGs who report administratively to NAVIG for policy and oversight and report operationally to their respective Echelon Commander for most command-level matters. Additionally, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Office of Naval Research, and the Naval Audit Service have people performing IG functions. This structure provides the supported commander a valuable command-level resource for executing their duties of command. Each of our IG offices has both investigation and inspection functions, and all IGs are expected to perform their roles in a fair,

impartial and independent manner. NAVIG is responsible for providing policy guidance, training and professional oversight to that end. IG offices at more senior provide additional oversight and may perform IG functions should there be any concern about fairness or impartiality. The lower echelon IG offices may receive complaints directly from a complainant and investigate the complaint to conclusion on its own, with a few exceptions. All complaints, no matter where they are received, must be logged into the central tracking systems called the Naval Inspector General Hotlines Tracking System (NIGHTS). The status of each complaint is tracked from initiation to conclusion in NIGHTS. Because the NAVIG enterprise is large, world-wide, and has considerable activity, several steps have been taken to ensure consistency in approach throughout the enterprise. For example, notification requirements are in place for high-visibility complaints so that NAVIG is made aware of any complaint that may require high-level attention and expertise to address. Resources were increased for the Training Division to provide more, and more effective, training and education to our personnel. There are several other written policies in place to address issues such as confidentiality, investigative standards, IG selection processes and the conduct of preliminary inquiries. Quality assessment reviews are conducted of lower echelon IG offices, with the goal of identifying those areas that could benefit from improvement and thereafter providing the required training and mentoring to improve their performance.

Independence and Impartiality

We operate pursuant to a number of SECNAV policies, and we are governed by the principles of independence and objectivity. From our governing instruction, all IGs in the NAVIG enterprise provide independent, objective and professional IG services and operate without command influence, pressure, coercion or fear of reprisal. Navy IGs are directed to refer

a matter to the next higher echelon IG when determined it is inappropriate to inquire into a matter due any risk of undue influence or impartiality. We are required by statute to cooperate with the DoD Office of Inspector General (OIG). Our substantive work on senior official cases and military whistleblower reprisal cases is worked closely with our legal staff and is reviewed by the DoD OIG for quality, accuracy and oversight approval. Cases are sometimes referred from the DoD OIG to NAVIG for information only or for appropriate action. Similarly, some non-senior official cases are referred from NAVIG headquarters to lower echelon IG offices. Action referrals require a feedback report to the referring office for review and oversight. Complaints involving allegations against a DON senior official are reviewed by both my office and the DoD OIG. Each member of the NAVIG office is dedicated to accurate, fair, neutral and appropriately transparent investigative and inspection assessments. If an allegation of misconduct is tentatively substantiated, the subject is provided an opportunity to respond before a final decision is made. The same transparency is true for assessment results. The draft inspection results are provided to the inspected command for their review of factual accuracy. We follow multiple steps to ensure that our final product is unbiased and accurate. Findings of investigations and inspections are provided to the chain of command for action deemed appropriate.

The processes that I have seen employed during my almost three-year tenure as NAVIG, and the products produced, have been professional, fair, and neutral to all parties involved. NAVIG supports warfighting readiness through execution of investigations, assessments and oversight, and NAVIG routinely briefs the IG missions, functions and findings at the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center, Flag Officer and Senior Executive Seminars and numerous other

venues to further that mission. We are committed to enabling Navy warfighting capability and supporting our Sailors, Navy civilians and their families.

Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Banks, and military personnel subcommittee members, thank you for your continued support of our Navy and our people. I look forward to your questions.