

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 21, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

The Committees strongly oppose President Trump’s abrupt notice of removal—at your recommendation—of State Department Inspector General Steve Linick, and we urge that he be reinstated immediately. Mr. Linick’s removal is the latest in a series of politically motivated firings of Inspectors General by President Trump.

Based on longstanding concerns with your actions—and new reports this week about potential abuses—this assault on the integrity and independence of Inspectors General appears to be an intentional campaign to undermine their ability to expose corruption and protect taxpayer dollars from waste, fraud, and abuse.

**Interference with Ongoing Work of the Inspector General’s Office**

The Inspector General Act states that the head of an agency may not “prevent or prohibit the Inspector General from initiating, carrying out, or completing any audit or investigation.”<sup>1</sup> Any attempt by you or your office to interfere with the Inspector General’s investigation of yourself is illegal and will be thoroughly examined by Congress.

On May 18, 2020, you confirmed in a press interview that President Trump fired Inspector General Linick at your recommendation. You stated:

I went to the President and made clear to him that Inspector General Linick wasn’t performing a function in a way that we had tried to get him to, that was additive for the State Department, very consistent with what the statute says he’s supposed to be doing.<sup>2</sup>

Later that day, President Trump confirmed that he acted based on your recommendation, stating about Inspector General Linick: “I don’t know him at all. I never even heard of him.

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<sup>1</sup> 5a U.S.C. §3(a).

<sup>2</sup> *Pompeo Says He Didn’t Know Fired Inspector General Was Investigating Him*, Washington Post (May 18, 2020) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/pompeo-says-he-didnt-know-fired-inspector-general-was-investigating-him/2020/05/18/3ab08dca-9923-11ea-b60c-3be060a4f8e1\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/pompeo-says-he-didnt-know-fired-inspector-general-was-investigating-him/2020/05/18/3ab08dca-9923-11ea-b60c-3be060a4f8e1_story.html)).

But I was asked to by the State Department, by Mike.”<sup>3</sup>

This is not an adequate basis to remove an independent Senate-confirmed Inspector General. It appears that you may have taken this step because the Inspector General’s office has been investigating your actions as Secretary, including allegations that you improperly directed appointees to perform personal tasks<sup>4</sup>, as well as your role in the President’s decision to sell billions of dollars of weapons to Saudi Arabia last year under an emergency declaration.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, we are concerned about a new media report this week that describes a series of lavish dinners that you have been hosting with prominent Republican officials, commentators, and public figures—all at taxpayer expense.<sup>6</sup>

State Department regulations prohibit the use of Diplomatic Reception Rooms for functions “that have a partisan, political, sectarian, or similar nature or purpose” or for functions “of a personal nature, such as private parties or other social events which are not affiliated with, or in support of, official U.S. Government business.”<sup>7</sup>

However, according to this new report, you have been using historic State Department facilities, government employees, and taxpayer resources to put on these so-called “Madison Dinners,” which are “elaborate, unpublicized affairs that Pompeo and his wife, Susan Pompeo, began in 2018 and held regularly in the historic Diplomatic Reception Rooms on the government’s dime.”<sup>8</sup>

The official foreign policy nature of these events is unclear, and the reporting describes the invitees as follows:

The records show that about 29 percent of the invitees came from the corporate world, while about a quarter of them hailed from the media or entertainment industries, with conservative media members heavily represented. About 30 percent work in politics or government, and just 14 percent were diplomats or foreign officials. Every single member of the House or the Senate who has been invited is a Republican.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Dale, *Twitter* (May 18, 2020) (online at <https://twitter.com/ddale8/status/1262474801085591560>).

<sup>4</sup> *Fired State Department Watchdog Was Probing Whether Pompeo Made Staffer Walk His Dog, Pick Up Laundry*, NBC News (May 17, 2020) (online at [www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/fired-state-department-watchdog-was-looking-whether-pompeo-made-staffer-n1208981](http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/fired-state-department-watchdog-was-looking-whether-pompeo-made-staffer-n1208981)).

<sup>5</sup> *Fired Watchdog Was Investigating Trump Administration Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia*, Politico (May 18, 2020) (online at [www.politico.com/news/2020/05/18/linick-administration-arms-sales-saudi-arabia-265024](http://www.politico.com/news/2020/05/18/linick-administration-arms-sales-saudi-arabia-265024)).

<sup>6</sup> *Pompeo’s Elite Taxpayer-Funded Dinners Raise New Concerns*, NBC News (May 19, 2020) (online at [www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/ncna1210746](http://www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/ncna1210746)).

<sup>7</sup> 6 Foreign Affairs Manual 1034: Ineligible Functions (online at <https://fam.state.gov/FAM/06FAM/06FAM1030.html>).

<sup>8</sup> *Pompeo’s Elite Taxpayer-Funded Dinners Raise New Concerns*, NBC News (May 19, 2020) (online at [www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/ncna1210746](http://www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/ncna1210746)).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

The report notes: “It’s unclear whether the inspector general was also investigating the Madison Dinners, but two administration officials told NBC News that Linick made some type of inquiry to the protocol office last week, before he was fired. One of the officials said Pompeo’s office was then notified.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Conflicts of Interest for Political Appointee Selected as Acting Inspector General**

We also strongly oppose President Trump’s selection of Stephen Akard, the Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, to be Acting Inspector General.<sup>11</sup> Ambassador Akard lacks the independence, qualifications, and experience necessary to be an effective Inspector General.

Prior to his current tenure in the State Department, Ambassador Akard worked for the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, and before that served in the administrations of then-Indiana Governor Mike Pence and other Indiana governors.<sup>12</sup> Though he has experience as a Foreign Service Officer earlier in his career, Ambassador Akard appears to have no investigatory or law enforcement experience, which leaves him unprepared to oversee the Office of Inspector General’s hundreds of audits and investigations each year.

It is also our understanding that Ambassador Akard would continue leading the Office of Foreign Missions while serving as Acting Inspector General. Under this troubling arrangement, Ambassador Akard would report to you while simultaneously serving in a role that is required by law to be independent. Ambassador Akard would have an inherent conflict of interest that would prohibit him from having the independence necessary to conduct fair and rigorous oversight of the Department and of your actions. This environment could severely chill whistleblower disclosures to the Office of Inspector General because whistleblowers might fear that their identity could become known to an official still reporting to you. Ambassador Akard’s dual appointment also may chill communication within the Office of Inspector General if auditors or investigators are concerned that he will share information with you before it is appropriate.

### **Conclusion and Requests**

The Committee on Oversight and Reform has jurisdiction over the Inspector General Act, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs has jurisdiction over matters involving the State Department.

For the reasons set forth above, we urge you to advise President Trump to halt the termination of Inspector General Linick. If Ambassador Akard remains Acting Inspector General, he should resign as Director of the Office of Missions and recuse himself from all matters involving that office or the Office of the Secretary.

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<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Trump Ousts State Department Watchdog*, Politico (May 15, 2020) (online at [www.politico.com/news/2020/05/15/state-department-inspector-general-fired-261536](http://www.politico.com/news/2020/05/15/state-department-inspector-general-fired-261536)).

<sup>12</sup> Office of Foreign Missions, Department of State, *Biography of Stephen J. Akard* (Sept. 16, 2019) (online at [www.state.gov/biographies/stephen-j-akard/](http://www.state.gov/biographies/stephen-j-akard/)).

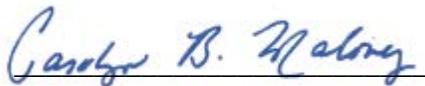
Our Committees are also considering legislative reforms in response to the President's removal of Inspector General Linick, the appointment of Ambassador Akard, and broad attacks on Inspectors General across government.

In furtherance of these legislative efforts and our oversight of the State Department, we request that you produce to the Committees all documents and communications related to the following topics by June 4, 2020, including communications with the White House or within the State Department:

1. The change in status including removal, demotion, or replacement of Inspector General Linick;
2. Any evaluation of the qualifications or suitability of Ambassador Akard to perform the duties of State Department Inspector General;
3. Guest lists and manifests for each Madison Dinner;
4. Invoices, expenditures, and approvals relating to the Madison Dinner series, including regarding the use of the K Fund or other accounts, as well as salary and overtime expenses for State Department employees and outside contractors or vendors; and
5. All ethics guidance sought or received relating to the Madison Dinner series.

An attachment to this letter provides additional instructions for responding to the Committees' requests. If you have any questions about these requests, please contact Oversight Committee staff at (202) 225-5051 or Foreign Affairs Committee staff at (202) 225-5021.

Sincerely,



Carolyn B. Maloney  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Eliot L. Engel  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Affairs



Gerald E. Connolly  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Government Operations



Joaquin Castro  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and  
Investigations

Enclosure

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo

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cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Michael McCaul, Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Jody B. Hice, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Lee Zeldin, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

## Responding to Oversight Committee Document Requests

1. In complying with this request, produce all responsive documents that are in your possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or your past or present agents, employees, and representatives acting on your behalf. Produce all documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that you have a right to copy, or to which you have access, as well as documents that you have placed in the temporary possession, custody, or control of any third party.
2. Requested documents, and all documents reasonably related to the requested documents, should not be destroyed, altered, removed, transferred, or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee.
3. In the event that any entity, organization, or individual denoted in this request is or has been known by any name other than that herein denoted, the request shall be read also to include that alternative identification.
4. The Committee's preference is to receive documents in electronic form (i.e., CD, memory stick, thumb drive, or secure file transfer) in lieu of paper productions.
5. Documents produced in electronic format should be organized, identified, and indexed electronically.
6. Electronic document productions should be prepared according to the following standards:
  - a. The production should consist of single page Tagged Image File ("TIF"), files accompanied by a Concordance-format load file, an Opticon reference file, and a file defining the fields and character lengths of the load file.
  - b. Document numbers in the load file should match document Bates numbers and TIF file names.
  - c. If the production is completed through a series of multiple partial productions, field names and file order in all load files should match.
  - d. All electronic documents produced to the Committee should include the following fields of metadata specific to each document, and no modifications should be made to the original metadata:  
  
BEGDOC, ENDDOC, TEXT, BEGATTACH, ENDATTACH, PAGECOUNT, CUSTODIAN, RECORDTYPE, DATE, TIME, SENTDATE, SENTTIME, BEGINDATE, BEGINTIME, ENDDATE, ENDTIME, AUTHOR, FROM, CC, TO, BCC, SUBJECT, TITLE, FILENAME, FILEEXT, FILESIZE, DATECREATED, TIMECREATED, DATELASTMOD, TIMELASTMOD,

INTMSGID, INTMSGHEADER, NATIVELINK, INTFILPATH, EXCEPTION,  
BEGATTACH.

7. Documents produced to the Committee should include an index describing the contents of the production. To the extent more than one CD, hard drive, memory stick, thumb drive, zip file, box, or folder is produced, each should contain an index describing its contents.
8. Documents produced in response to this request shall be produced together with copies of file labels, dividers, or identifying markers with which they were associated when the request was served.
9. When you produce documents, you should identify the paragraph(s) or request(s) in the Committee's letter to which the documents respond.
10. The fact that any other person or entity also possesses non-identical or identical copies of the same documents shall not be a basis to withhold any information.
11. The pendency of or potential for litigation shall not be a basis to withhold any information.
12. In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(d), the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and any statutory exemptions to FOIA shall not be a basis for withholding any information.
13. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552a(b)(9), the Privacy Act shall not be a basis for withholding information.
14. If compliance with the request cannot be made in full by the specified return date, compliance shall be made to the extent possible by that date. An explanation of why full compliance is not possible shall be provided along with any partial production.
15. In the event that a document is withheld on the basis of privilege, provide a privilege log containing the following information concerning any such document: (a) every privilege asserted; (b) the type of document; (c) the general subject matter; (d) the date, author, addressee, and any other recipient(s); (e) the relationship of the author and addressee to each other; and (f) the basis for the privilege(s) asserted.
16. If any document responsive to this request was, but no longer is, in your possession, custody, or control, identify the document (by date, author, subject, and recipients), and explain the circumstances under which the document ceased to be in your possession, custody, or control.
17. If a date or other descriptive detail set forth in this request referring to a document is inaccurate, but the actual date or other descriptive detail is known to you or is otherwise apparent from the context of the request, produce all documents that would be responsive as if the date or other descriptive detail were correct.

18. This request is continuing in nature and applies to any newly-discovered information. Any record, document, compilation of data, or information not produced because it has not been located or discovered by the return date shall be produced immediately upon subsequent location or discovery.
19. All documents shall be Bates-stamped sequentially and produced sequentially.
20. Two sets of each production shall be delivered, one set to the Majority Staff and one set to the Minority Staff. When documents are produced to the Committee, production sets shall be delivered to the Majority Staff in Room 2157 of the Rayburn House Office Building and the Minority Staff in Room 2105 of the Rayburn House Office Building.
21. Upon completion of the production, submit a written certification, signed by you or your counsel, stating that: (1) a diligent search has been completed of all documents in your possession, custody, or control that reasonably could contain responsive documents; and (2) all documents located during the search that are responsive have been produced to the Committee.

### **Definitions**

1. The term “document” means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to, the following: memoranda, reports, expense reports, books, manuals, instructions, financial reports, data, working papers, records, notes, letters, notices, confirmations, telegrams, receipts, appraisals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, prospectuses, communications, electronic mail (email), contracts, cables, notations of any type of conversation, telephone call, meeting or other inter-office or intra-office communication, bulletins, printed matter, computer printouts, teletypes, invoices, transcripts, diaries, analyses, returns, summaries, minutes, bills, accounts, estimates, projections, comparisons, messages, correspondence, press releases, circulars, financial statements, reviews, opinions, offers, studies and investigations, questionnaires and surveys, and work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices thereto), and graphic or oral records or representations of any kind (including without limitation, photographs, charts, graphs, microfiche, microfilm, videotape, recordings and motion pictures), and electronic, mechanical, and electric records or representations of any kind (including, without limitation, tapes, cassettes, disks, and recordings) and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disk, videotape, or otherwise. A document bearing any notation not a part of the original text is to be considered a separate document. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate document within the meaning of this term.
2. The term “communication” means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information, regardless of means utilized, whether oral, electronic, by document or otherwise, and whether in a meeting, by telephone, facsimile, mail, releases, electronic

message including email (desktop or mobile device), text message, instant message, MMS or SMS message, message application, or otherwise.

3. The terms “and” and “or” shall be construed broadly and either conjunctively or disjunctively to bring within the scope of this request any information that might otherwise be construed to be outside its scope. The singular includes plural number, and vice versa. The masculine includes the feminine and neutral genders.
4. The term “including” shall be construed broadly to mean “including, but not limited to.”
5. The term “Company” means the named legal entity as well as any units, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations, limited liability companies, trusts, subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, departments, branches, joint ventures, proprietorships, syndicates, or other legal, business or government entities over which the named legal entity exercises control or in which the named entity has any ownership whatsoever.
6. The term “identify,” when used in a question about individuals, means to provide the following information: (a) the individual’s complete name and title; (b) the individual’s business or personal address and phone number; and (c) any and all known aliases.
7. The term “related to” or “referring or relating to,” with respect to any given subject, means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, reflects, identifies, states, refers to, deals with, or is pertinent to that subject in any manner whatsoever.
8. The term “employee” means any past or present agent, borrowed employee, casual employee, consultant, contractor, de facto employee, detailee, fellow, independent contractor, intern, joint adventurer, loaned employee, officer, part-time employee, permanent employee, provisional employee, special government employee, subcontractor, or any other type of service provider.
9. The term “individual” means all natural persons and all persons or entities acting on their behalf.