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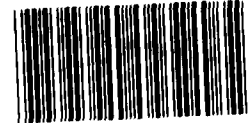
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ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL  
 MANAGEMENT DIVISION

B-203854

JULY 9, 1981

The Honorable L. H. Fountain  
 Chairman, Subcommittee on  
 Intergovernmental Relations  
 and Human Resources  
 House Committee on Government Operations



116276

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Subject: Review of Circumstances of the Mass Removal  
 of Statutory Inspectors General (AFMD-81-86)

On February 5, 1981, you requested that we review the circumstances of the mass removal of the 15 statutory inspectors general which occurred on January 20, 1981. You asked us to determine:

--Whether anyone critically examined the qualifications and performance of each former inspector general before January 20, 1981, and if so, to detail the extent and nature of any such review and identify its directors.

--Whether any Members of Congress were consulted about or notified of the pending mass removals on or before January 20.

--Whether any of the individuals designated to head the affected departments and agencies were consulted about or notified of the pending mass removals on or before January 20.

--What procedures are being followed in identifying and selecting nominees, who is in charge of doing this, and what timetable--if any--is there for sending the nominations to the Senate.

Upon receiving your letter, we immediately told our White House liaison about your request. We were in almost daily contact with our White House liaison on this issue for the next several weeks, and were told that our request for information was being considered by Mr. Fred Fielding, Counsel to the President.

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We kept your office informed of our attempts to answer your request. During this period, with the concurrence of your office, we furnished our White House liaison a copy of your February 5 letter. As of the end of March, the White House had not provided the answers to your questions.

On April 1 your subcommittee held hearings on the operations of the statutory offices of inspector general. At those hearings, Dr. Edwin Harper, Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), was the primary witness. When questioned about the firing of the inspectors general, Dr. Harper answered the four questions in your February 5 letter to us.

In essence, Dr. Harper said there had been no meaningful examination of the qualifications and performances of the inspectors general prior to their removal, and that the decision to fire them was based on the principle that it is each new President's prerogative to terminate his predecessor's appointees to posts in the executive branch.

Dr. Harper said that, according to people he had talked to, neither Members of Congress nor the designated heads of the affected departments and agencies were consulted about or notified on or before January 20 of the pending mass removals.

Finally, Dr. Harper said that he and Mr. Harold Steinberg, Associate Director for Management, OMB, and Mr. Paul Michele, Deputy Associate Attorney General, Department of Justice, made up the committee which screened the prospective candidates for the inspector general positions, and that he provided their recommendations to the President. The OMB Deputy Director said he believed nominations of some if not all of the five inspectors general reappointed by the President as of April 1 had been sent to the Senate for confirmation, and that the others would be submitted after full field investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Contrary to Dr. Harper's statement, the five inspectors general's names had not been submitted for Senate confirmation at the time of the April hearing. We met with Mr. Steinberg and other OMB representatives on May 7 to ask when those nominees' names would be sent, but the OMB officials declined to project dates.

On June 10 your subcommittee held its second hearing on the statutory offices of inspector general. The pace at which inspector general nominations were being submitted to the Senate for confirmation, and the adequacy of personnel and other resources available to inspector general offices were discussed.

Dr. Harper again was the primary witness. He said the President had nominated 15 of the 16 individuals needed to head the offices of inspector general. All of these individuals' names have been submitted to the Senate for confirmation, and two of them--Mr. Robert Brown, at the State Department, and Mr. Richard P. Kusserow, at the Department of Health and Human Services--had been confirmed as of June 10.

As of June 30 three inspectors general have been confirmed. They are

--Mr. Richard P. Kusserow, Department of Health and Human Services,

--Mr. Paul B. Boucher, Small Business Administration, and

--Mr. Robert L. Brown, Department of State.

If we can be of further assistance in this matter, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,



W. D. Campbell  
Acting Director