The Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community Releases Its Semiannual Report to Congress

(November 2019) The Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community (ICIG) has released the ICIG's Semiannual Report to Congress for the period of April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019.

In his message presenting the Semiannual Report, the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, Michael K. Atkinson, highlighted the multi-faceted work of Inspectors General and their responsibilities and opportunities to be positive forces for change in the U.S. government. The primary role of Inspectors General is to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuses of authority relating to the programs and activities they oversee. An abuse of authority can take many forms, and Inspectors General are empowered, by law, to review and investigate such abuses of authority, from the minor to the more serious. In the most egregious matters, abuses of authority may involve an intentional violation of the law. In those most egregious matters, Inspector General Atkinson expressed the view that Inspectors General are among our nation's "first responders," who act swiftly and appropriately when – through audits, investigations, inspections, or reviews – possible wrongdoing is revealed.

Inspector General Atkinson also reiterated the ICIG's commitment to whistleblowers' rights and enforcing a program for authorized disclosures that validates moral courage without compromising national security and without fear of retaliation. Those who demonstrate the personal ethics and moral courage expected of individuals who have the honor and privilege of working for the American people should not suffer from or fear reprisal when they fulfill their duty to lawfully disclose information – or sound the alarm – regarding potential wrongdoing. The ICIG's recently established Center for Protected Disclosures supports this objective, and continues to increase the Intelligence Community's knowledge about whistleblowing rights and the lawful ways whistleblowers can make protected disclosures.

The Semiannual Report outlines the ICIG's projects and activities that align with its five programmatic objectives:

1. Improving the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Intelligence Community's Cyber Posture, Modern Data Management, and IT Infrastructure;

2. Enhancing Workforce Management;

3. Championing Protected Disclosures;

4. Improving Oversight of Artificial Intelligence; and

5. Integrating the Intelligence Community.

The Semiannual Report highlights the following activities, among others, for the period of April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019:

- The ICIG's Audit Division completed an audit of the management of "privileged users" by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). Privileged users are authorized to perform security-related functions over information systems that ordinary users are not authorized to perform. The ICIG issued nine recommendations related to the need to improve controls to efficiently and effectively manage and mitigate the risk that a trusted privileged user could inappropriately access, modify, destroy, or exfiltrate classified data.

- The Report includes summaries of the investigations conducted by the ICIG's Investigations Division during the reporting period.

- The ICIG's Inspections and Evaluations Division assessed the methods used by the ODNI to substantiate employees' post-secondary education claims made after they become ODNI employees. The ICIG recommended actions to mitigate insufficient verification controls and reduce vulnerabilities.

- The ICIG's Management and Administration Division developed and implemented a program to recruit for critical, hard-to-fill positons. The ICIG's pool of entry-level and mid-level candidates has increased and diversified since the program's implementation.

- The ICIG has continued its efforts to build awareness and common understanding of artificial intelligence and machine learning among Intelligence Community oversight authorities.

- The ICIG's Center for Protected Disclosures hosted a *National Whistleblower Appreciation Day* program to highlight the importance of whistleblowers and their contributions to good governance. The event included a panel discussion with senior leaders from the ODNI's Office of Civil Liberties, Privacy, and Transparency, National Counterintelligence and Security Center, Office of General Counsel, Intelligence Community Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Office, and Office of the Ombudsman. The panel provided attendees with information on various programs and services to get the "right information" to the "right people."

These activities and others are covered in greater detail in the full Semiannual Report.

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The Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 established the Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The ICIG's mission is to provide independent and objective oversight of the programs and activities within the responsibility and authority of the Director of National Intelligence, to initiate and conduct independent audits, inspections, investigations, and reviews, and to lead and coordinate the efforts of the Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum. The ICIG's goal is to have a positive and enduring impact throughout the Intelligence Community, to lead and coordinate the efforts of an integrated Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum, and to enhance the ability of the United States Intelligence Community to meet national security needs while respecting our nation's laws and reflecting its values.

The Forum consists of the twelve statutory and administrative Inspectors General having oversight responsibility for an element of the Intelligence Community. The Chair of the Forum is the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community.

For more information about the ICIG, please contact IC_IG_PAO@dni.gov or visit the ICIG's websites:
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