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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6250

May 10, 2013

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
2530 Crystal Drive, 9th Floor
Arlington, VA 22202-3940

Dear Mr. Sopko:

I recently learned that you have reported receiving pressure from executive branch agencies to curtail your statutorily defined responsibilities to conduct independent and objective oversight over U.S. funded reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. In remarks before the New America Foundation, you stated that government representatives have made repeated requests that your office pre-clear press releases or allow them to edit the titles of SIGAR's audit reports. You also stated that you have been criticized by executive branch officials for speaking to members of Congress and the public regarding the activities of your office.[1]

Any attempt to impede the independent and objective oversight of SIGAR or any Inspector General, either directly or indirectly, is unacceptable and repugnant. I therefore ask that you provide me with detailed information regarding these attempts so that I may take steps to hold the departments and agencies in question accountable. I also ask that you inform me immediately if you receive similar pressure in the future.

The jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight is set forth in Senate Rule XXV clause 1(k); Senate Resolution 445 section 101 (108th Congress); and Senate Resolution 64 (113th Congress).

Thank you for your service and your efforts to identify and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan. If you have any questions, please contact me or ask your staff to contact Alan Kahn with the Subcommittee staff at (202) 224-7155.

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[1] John F. Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, Remarks on Afghanistan, New America Foundation (May 8, 2013).

Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight

cc: Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight