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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

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MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FROM:

g Clay Johnson III, Deputy Director for Management of OMB and
Chairman, President's Council on Integrity & Efficiency, and
Executive Council on Integrity & Efficiency

SUBJECT:

Agency and OIG Working Relationships

I submit to you the attached set of relationship principles which I believe can help Agencies and Offices of Inspector General work most effectively together.

The PMC, PCIE, and ECIE developed and distributed these principles two years ago. I resubmit them to you PMC Members now as we have many new members. Separately these principles will be resubmitted to the IGs, CFOs, CIOs and CAOs.

WORKING RELATIONSHIP PRINCIPLES FOR AGENCIES AND OFFICES OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

The Inspector General (IG) Act establishes for most agencies an Office of Inspector General (OIG) and sets out its mission, responsibilities, and authority. The IG is under the general supervision of the agency head. The unique nature of the IG function can present a number of challenges for establishing and maintaining effective working relationships. The following working relationship principles provide some guidance for agencies and OIGs.

To work most effectively together, the Agency and its OIG need to clearly define what the two consider to be a productive relationship and then consciously manage toward that goal in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

By providing objective information to promote government management, decision-making, and accountability, the OIG contributes to the Agency's success. The OIG is an agent of positive change, focusing on eliminating waste, fraud and abuse, and on identifying problems and recommendations for corrective actions by agency leadership. The OIG provides the agency and Congress with objective assessments of opportunities to be more successful. The OIG, although not under the direct supervision of senior agency management, must keep them and the Congress fully and currently informed of significant OIG activities. Given the complexity of management and policy issues, the OIG and the Agency may sometimes disagree on the extent of a problem and the need for and scope of corrective action. However, such disagreements should not cause the relationship between the OIG and the Agency to become unproductive.

To work together most effectively, the OIG and the Agency should strive to:

Foster open communications at all levels. The Agency will promptly respond to OIG requests for information to facilitate OIG activities and acknowledge challenges that the OIG can help address. Surprises are to be avoided. With very limited exceptions primarily related to investigations, the OIG should keep the Agency advised of its work and its findings on a timely basis, and strive to provide information helpful to the Agency at the earliest possible stage.

Interact with professionalism and mutual respect. Each party should always act in good faith and presume the same from the other. Both parties share as a common goal the successful accomplishment of the Agency's mission.

Recognize and respect the mission and priorities of the Agency and the OIG. The Agency should recognize the OIG's independent role in carrying out its mission within the Agency, while recognizing the responsibility of the OIG to report both to the Congress and to the Agency Head. The OIG should work to carry out its functions with a minimum of disruption to the primary work of the Agency.

Be thorough, objective and fair. The OIG must perform its work thoroughly, objectively and with consideration to the Agency's point of view. When responding, the Agency will objectively consider differing opinions and means of improving operations. Both sides will recognize successes in addressing management challenges.

Be engaged. The OIG and Agency management will work cooperatively in identifying the most important areas for OIG work, as well as the best means of addressing the results of that work, while maintaining the OIG's statutory independence of operation. In addition, agencies need to recognize that the OIG also will need to carry work that is self-initiated, congressional requested, or mandated by law.

Be knowledgeable. The OIG will continually strive to keep abreast of agency programs and operations, and Agency management will be kept informed of OIG activities and concerns being raised in the course of OIG work. Agencies will help ensure that the OIG is kept up to date on current matters and events.

Provide feedback. The Agency and the OIG should implement mechanisms, both formal and informal, to ensure prompt and regular feedback.