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***BEFORE THE***

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**“SECRET SERVICE ON THE LINE: RESTORING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE”**

***May 23, 2012***



Good morning Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the Committee:

I want to bring you up to date on the Office of Inspector General's (DHS OIG) plans to review and monitor the Secret Service's investigation of the April 11-12, 2012, incident in Cartagena, Colombia, involving Secret Service employees' interaction with Colombian nationals. Our role began almost immediately after the incident, when, on April 13, 2012, Director Sullivan and I discussed the events. We have since remained in regular contact. Director Sullivan and I met in person on May 1, 2012, and again on May 4, 2012. Director Sullivan has repeatedly stated to me his commitment to conduct a complete and thorough investigation. His actions so far have demonstrated that commitment.

Since our team started its work, the Secret Service has been completely transparent and cooperative with our inspectors and investigators. We have high regard for the effort the Secret Service has put forth thus far.

On April 26, 2012, I instructed our Assistant Inspector General (AIG) for Inspections and the Acting AIG for Investigations to review the Secret Service's handling of its internal investigation regarding the incident in Cartagena. On April 27, 2012, our Assistant Inspector General for Inspections and Acting Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Investigations met with officials from Secret Service's Office of Professional Responsibility (RES), which is conducting the internal investigation. At that meeting, we described the objectives of our review and learned more about the incident and the Secret Service's efforts as of that date. On April 30, 2012, our Assistant Inspector General for Inspections assembled a six-person team, led by a GS-15 Chief Inspector. That team is augmented by two investigators from our Office of Investigations.

On May 2, 2012, our team met with RES officials to begin what we envision as a three-part review. The first part has three overarching objectives. We will evaluate 1) the adequacy of Secret Service's response to the incident in Cartagena; 2) the adequacy of the scope, methodology, and the conclusions of its investigation; and, 3) the sufficiency of the corrective action(s) already implemented, as well as planned corrective action(s).

We plan to interview USSS personnel responsible for coordinating the agency's response to the incident and conducting its investigation. OIG investigators will participate in the interviews. We will interview personnel within the Office of the Director, the RES, those in charge of field operations, and USSS' office responsible for security clearances.

We will review all records, documents, and other materials related to the USSS investigation, including RES' standards for inspection/investigation. We will review protocols for advance teams, the USSS Code of Conduct, and disciplinary processes and records.

Our fieldwork concerning USSS' response to and investigation of, the incident will occur in Washington, DC. Here are some of the key questions we will address:

- What guidance/support has USSS leadership provided to its investigators?

- Who conducted interviews, how were they conducted, and who has the USSS interviewed?
- How many and what type polygraphs has USSS conducted, and how has information obtained benefitted the investigation?
- Did investigators conduct consistent, thorough interviews?
- Are there any specific rules agents must follow when operating in other countries? If so, what are they?
- What is the extent of supervisory oversight of advance teams?
- What actions or types of behavior does the USSS consider to be serious misconduct?
- How was that information used to determine administrative action, including revocation of security clearances? What was the threshold, i.e., behavior for termination versus lesser punishment? Who was the reviewing official for deciding administrative action?
- Is there a culture within the USSS that may have allowed this incident to occur?
- Have similar 'infractions' been reported in the past? What was their disposition?

We have already begun meeting with the RES staff members who interviewed the Secret Service employees who were in Cartagena at the time of the incident to learn more about the interviewers' methodology, their instructions from Secret Service Office of Professional Responsibility management, and their interview tools.

We have also begun to review the notes that resulted from interviews of nearly 200 Secret Service employees who were associated with the incident, as well as 25 employees of the Hilton and El Caribe hotels in Cartagena.

We plan to interview Special Agent-in-Charge Paula Reid, who had on-site responsibility for the Secret Service's Cartagena detail. We also plan to interview Director Sullivan.

We will review the Secret Service's report on its internal investigation as soon as it becomes available. Contingent upon our receipt of that report, our goal is to complete the first phase of our review and report our findings by July 2, 2012.

Immediately after we issue that report, we will begin phase two of our review, during which we will determine whether certain workplace conditions and issues have promoted a culture within the Secret Service that could have contributed to the Cartagena incident. We will examine the Secret Service's recruiting, vetting and hiring practices. We will also examine Secret Service Equal Employment Opportunity and Merit System Protection Board cases, communications within the agency, its administration of awards and discipline, training, and any other programs or functions that might cast light on the organizational culture of the Secret Service. This portion of our work will include site visits to the Miami Field Office and other field offices.

The third phase of our review will examine the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Secret Service and our office. Our goal here is evaluate changes in both Secret

Service and Office of Inspector General investigative capabilities since the MOU was created in 2003 and determine whether changes are necessary. It is likely that we will conduct this phase concurrently with phase two. We will report our findings on both phases later this year.

I want to stress that the Secret Service's efforts to date in investigating its own employees should not be discounted. It has done credible job of uncovering the facts and, where appropriate, it has taken swift and decisive action.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to answer any questions you or the members of the Committee might have.

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