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United States Senate

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

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December 5, 2014

The Honorable Steve Linick
Inspector General
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Linick:

I am writing to request that you review the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI).

As you are aware, CARSI was established in 2008 to support anti-corruption and counternarcotics initiatives, judicial reform, corrections reform, and crime prevention in Central America.¹ The State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which jointly manage CARSI, have allocated over \$642 million since its inception to support programs in Belize, Costa Roca, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.²

In 2013, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that U.S. agencies, including the State Department, had failed to implement assessment measures to evaluate the effectiveness of CARSI initiatives.³ In response to this report, the State Department and USAID began developing a “comprehensive results framework” to compile results and evaluate the effectiveness of CARSI.⁴

¹ Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Agencies Considered Various Factors in Funding Security Activities, but Need to Assess Progress in Achieving Interagency Objectives* (Sept. 2013) (GAO-13-771).

² The State Department, *The Central America Regional Security Initiative: A shared partnership* (March 3, 2014) (online at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/224013.pdf>).

³ Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Agencies Considered Various Factors in Funding Security Activities, but Need to Assess Progress in Achieving Interagency Objectives* (Sept. 2013) (GAO-13-771).

⁴ Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, *Hearing on Challenges at the Border: Examining the Causes, Consequences, and Responses to the Rise in Apprehensions at the Southern Border*, Response to Questions for the Record Submitted to Deputy Assistant Secretary Francisco Palmieri by Senator Claire McCaskill (#3), 113th Cong. (July 9, 2014).

The Honorable Steve Linick
December 5, 2014
Page 2

I request that you assess the progress of the State Department's and USAID's efforts to implement measurable goals and metrics to understand the effectiveness of individual programs within CARSI. In particular, I request that you examine whether the goals and metrics are sufficient to measure the effectiveness of CARSI programs, whether the State Department and USAID are ending programs determined to be ineffective, and whether the CARSI program is effectively and judiciously allocating funds to support the Central American countries benefiting from CARSI.

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 consideration of my request. Please contact Charlie Moskowitz with the Subcommittee staff at (202) 224-6814 with any questions. Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to Kelsey_Stroud@hsgac.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting
Oversight

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