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House of Representatives

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January 12, 2010

The Honorable Peter Orszag
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Orszag:

We have recently received information that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) may have taken actions to undermine the budgetary independence that Congress provided to Inspectors General in the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008.

In crafting the Inspector General Reform Act, Congress was responding to instances where Inspectors General who conducted hard-hitting investigations of top agency officials had their budgets cut by those same officials, in apparent retaliation. In an attempt to identify and forestall such situations, the Act provided statutory authority for Inspectors General to advise Congress if "the budget submitted by the President would substantially inhibit the Inspector General from performing the duties of the office."

We have received correspondence from the Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) alleging that OPM received a "not so veiled threat from OMB" that if the Inspector General exercised its statutory authority to advise Congress that the proposed budget was inadequate, OMB "will make life miserable" for the OPM IG.

Such statements, if made, are entirely improper. They are a direct threat to the independence and integrity of Inspectors General, and an affront to clear Congressional intent as expressed in statute. The Committee is beginning an investigation in this matter. As an initial step, we will be determining whether other Inspector General offices have received such threats.

The Honorable Peter Orszag
Page 2

We are also requesting that you conduct an internal investigation of this matter and communicate the results of your review to the Committee no later than January 22, 2010.

Sincerely,



Edolphus Towns
Chairman



Stephen Lynch
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal
Service and DC

cc: The Honorable Darrell Issa
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform