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September 12, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

I write to you today regarding the United States Department of State Office of Inspector General (State OIG) report entitled, "Evaluation of the American Assistance Explosive Detection Canine Program – Health and Welfare."¹ This report analyzes the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Office of Antiterrorism Assistance (DS/ATA) Explosive Detection Canine Program (EDCP), which provides specially trained dogs to foreign countries to assist in the fight against terrorism. The report raises concerns that the State Department has not taken adequate steps to ensure that dogs placed into service in foreign countries through this program receive adequate nutrition, living conditions, or veterinary care.

I am especially troubled by the report's findings that some of the dogs placed in Jordan through the EDCP program have been underfed, kept in unsanitary kennels, and become infested with external parasites.² Some of the dogs placed there have contracted preventable diseases and even died due to negligence and improper care. According to State OIG, at least 10 canines died in Jordan from medical issues between 2008 and 2016.³ Furthermore, while State Department personnel conducted oversight visits to Jordan in order to address concerns regarding the conditions there, State OIG's report indicates that procedural changes made as a result of these visits may not have been consistently implemented. A veterinary team from the State Department's Canine Validation Center observed multiple dogs in an emaciated condition months after improvements supposedly began.⁴ While dogs placed in other countries under the program appear to have better living conditions, the State OIG report notes that some kept in the Middle

¹ U.S. Dep't of State, Office of the Inspector General, *Evaluation of the Antiterrorism Assistance Explosive Detection Canine Program – Health and Welfare* (2015), available at <https://www.oversight.gov/sites/default/files/oig-reports/ESP-19-06.pdf>.

² *Id.* at 10-17.

³ *Id.* at 10.

⁴ *Id.* at 12.

Eastern country of Oman have been kept in kennels with rough concrete, standing water, and fans for cooling. Inspectors found that dogs were being treated for sores they had developed as a result of living in these conditions.⁵

According to the State OIG report, the State Department is responsible for placing dogs into potentially unsafe conditions. The IG found that “[t]he Department routinely provides dogs to foreign partners without signed written agreements that outline standards for minimum care, retirement, and use of the canines, and the Department conducts health and welfare follow-ups infrequently and inconsistently.”⁶ When State OIG recommended that the State Department cease providing additional canines to Jordan until a plan is implemented to ensure proper care in that country, the State Department refused, claiming that it had already taken steps to address concerns about the conditions there and that “national security related efforts focused on protecting American interests” were also at issue.⁷ Furthermore, when asked, the State Department “could not provide detailed information about dogs in programs other than Jordan...”⁸ In its report, State OIG claims to be unaware of any planned follow-up visits to assess the health and welfare of dogs placed in the countries of Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Nepal, or Oman.⁹

According to State OIG, the State Department has spent millions of taxpayer dollars in antiterrorism assistance funds for the EDCP.¹⁰ It has also invested substantial resources in the development of a program at the Canine Validation Center (CVC) in Winchester, VA, to ensure that dogs and their foreign handlers are properly trained. According to a DS/ATA official who spoke with State OIG, a 30-day foreign handler course for 15 trained dogs at the CVC costs approximately \$450,000.¹¹ However, it appears the State Department has not undertaken the same level of due diligence to ensure that the dogs remain healthy and capable of performing their work after they are sent overseas. The best trained dog in the world is still ill-equipped to protect American interests if it is sick or starving.

It is important for Congress to know whether the EDCP is operating effectively and efficiently and whether animals involved in the program are being treated according to the humane and ethical standards that the American people undoubtedly expect. In order for Congress to understand State Department’s current efforts to improve the EDCP and address concerns raised by the September 2019 State OIG report, please contact my staff to schedule a briefing and answer the following no later than September 27, 2019:

1. Which EDCP partner nations have signed written agreements formalizing their responsibilities of caring for working animals they receive from the United States? Which partner nations have not signed agreements? Please provide copies of all written agreements. For those partner nations that have not signed agreements, explain why not and describe any plans to establish agreements in the future.

⁵ *Id.* at 19.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.* at 20.

⁸ *Id.* at 19.

⁹ *Id.* at 18-19.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 19.

¹¹ *Id.* at 3.

2. Please provide the latest version of the DS/ATA standard operating procedure first approved on November 19, 2018, relating to evaluation criteria for foreign partners and procedures for conducting annual health and welfare reviews.
3. Please describe the initial assessment process that the State Department follows when deciding whether to admit a new partner nation to the EDCP. What due diligence does the Department undertake to ensure that the country is capable of providing suitable care for canines that are placed under its care? Does the State Department plan to make changes to its current procedures in response to findings of State OIG's September 2019 report?
4. Please describe current procedures for conducting health and welfare assessments of the canine facilities abroad. In addition, please describe the progress of all current efforts to strengthen assessment procedures.
5. For each of the partner nations currently participating in the EDCP:
 - a. Please list the number of active duty canines that have died under the care of the partner nation since January 2015 and explain the circumstances of each death to the extent known.
 - b. Please describe current plans to address the health and welfare of canines currently in the country. If there is no such plan, please explain why not. Describe all efforts to respond to specific concerns raised in State OIG's September 2019 report.
 - c. Please provide the number of health and welfare checks that have been completed since January 2015.
 - d. Please describe any health and welfare checks that are scheduled to take place in the future. If no health and welfare checks are scheduled, explain why not.
 - e. For each health and welfare check that has indicated unhealthy or unsafe conditions since January 2015, please provide related documentation. Describe all steps the State Department took to address the situation, including efforts to work with foreign officials to address concerns as well as any plans for terminating funding, removing canines from the program, or altering plans to provide additional canines to the program. If the State Department chose to leave canines in place and/or send additional canines to a facility with a history of negative health and welfare reports, explain the Department's reasons for doing so.
6. What specific steps has the Department taken to remedy concerns with treatment of EDCP canines in Jordan, as described by State OIG? What steps is the Department taking to ensure consistent and effective implementation of those changes?

I anticipate that your written reply and most responsive documents will be unclassified. Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committee. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all unclassified information directly to the Committee, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. Although the Committee complies with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information, it is not bound, absent its prior agreement, by any handling restrictions.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please contact Daniel Parker of my Committee staff at (202) 224-4515.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on Finance

cc: The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance